THE INVENTION AND (RE) CONFIGURATION OF SPACE IN SELECTED KENYAN TELEVISION DRAMAS

BY

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been submitted for the award of

a degree in any other University.

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DEDICATION

To
The loving memory of
my late Dad,
who always hankered for this,
but left too early,
before it finally happened.

My Mum,
whose unwavering support,
has seen me,
this long,
and is always my enterprise.

And
Frankryan Akuma,
Lispher Nyaboke,
the baton,
is effectively passed on to you.

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ABSTRACT

The study interrogates the invention and (re)configuration of space as a social construct in Kenyan television drama. While focusing on selected local television dramas; **Mheshimiwa, Mother-in-law** and **Tabasamu**, the study examines manifestations of space, and how characters contest, and (re)configure emergent spaces in the contemporary society. The first television drama aired on *Kenya Television Network (KTN)* whereas the second and third air on *Citizen Television.* The study investigates space in the selected television dramas as an intersection and a conversation with various formations, past and present, in a bid to understand socio-cultural, economic and political realities in Kenya. The study employs the theorization of space to explore the framing and dramatization of space in local television drama. Hinged on an iterative research design, primary data was obtained from a close examination of three purposively sampled local television dramas. Purposively selected episodes of the three dramas were studied and information obtained regarding space was recorded and considered data for analysis and interpretation. Secondary sources that comprised texts, dissertations, scholarly publications and articles related to the area of study were consulted. Guided by the research objectives, primary and secondary data obtained were analysed, interpreted and collated using thematic content analysis. Limited access to the television dramas due to suspicion of being a pirate masquerading as an academic and copyright issues were key challenges that this study faced. From the analyses, it emerged that local television drama exploits spaces such as the family, court, political and the everyday space to make sense of various issues affecting society. Issues such as political leadership, material affluence, youth identity formations, social referents and sex(uality) discourses are not only figured but also contested, invented and reconfigured in society as portrayed in local television drama. It also emerged that young female professionals were depicted as challenging patriarchal practices and that to them, sexual pleasure is viewed as a desire that is related to their status as career women, but above all to possibilities generated by being relatively independent from social control. Strengthened by their financial independence, this category of women is at the vanguard in reconfiguring subjectivities and social complexities of sexuality in the contemporary Kenyan society. In this way, local television drama functions as a popular site for exploring and understanding emerging moral issues that characterize young women's sexualities in Kenya. Consequently, the study concludes that artistic sensibilities in local television drama crystallize in the characterization of women as being in the forefront in challenging masculinity and reconfiguration of emergent practices of feminine power and agency in society.

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OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

In this study, the following terms are used as:

Space: a social construct and/or medium with its own consistency and productive agency; hence viewed as actively being a productive condition of social significance rather than being merely the visible, transparent receptacle for events, objects, and meanings (Lefebvre,1994).

Social construct: an idea, event, object or notion that appears to be natural and obvious to people who accept it but may or may not represent reality, so it remains largely an invention or artifice of a given society.

Spatiality: It is used in the same capacity as Keith and Pile (1993, p.6) who deploy the term to refer to the way that the social and the spatial, or society and space are "inextricably realized one in the other." This encompasses the many different conditions and circumstances in which people experience society and space.

Invention: used in the same capacity as Lorde (1978) and Mutahi (2011) in the:

    i. Construction of meaning through reclaiming that language which has been made to work against a people.

    ii. Act of self-revelation which facilitates the transformation of silence into language and action, in the process, allowing for visibility of an individual.

(Re)configuration: The act of re-shaping, re-figuring and/or re-inscribing a particular item through language, and/or action in a work of art.

CHAPTER ONE

CONCEPTUALISATION OF THE STUDY

1.1 Background to the Study

Over the last four decades, television has not only undergone considerable change but has substantially impacted on the transformation of societies in the world also. Authors such as Silverstone (1994) argue that television creates an 'ontological trust' in society through the consensus view it projects. That is to say, for example, children watching television learn a host of expected views, behaviours, responses and knowledge - the ontological what is what of the present world. In part, television thus works to bind and create a certain social order. Gauntlett and Hill (1999) explore how television is part of the social setting at home. The two scholars point out that television provides audiences with great levels of enjoyment because viewers actively choose much of what they watch, when to watch and show considerable reflection on those choices. More broadly, television watching is embedded into the social context of the home. Televisions are frequently watched as a household activity, bring families together albeit with viewing conflicts, and social activities around television embed it into broader social discourses and networks.

Barker (1999) observes that since its introduction into the household, "television has quickly become a site of popular knowledge about the world and daily brings people into contact with ways of life other than the one into which they have been born" (p.3). Thus, ever since the early 20th century, television has been a technology that never ceases to amaze and fascinate its users. With its widespread popularity, arrays of

programming genres are being developed each day to interest its diverse viewers. Today, television programming is enthralling: news broadcasting, entertainment news, talk shows, situation comedies, soap operas, educational programs, game shows, and reality shows, among many others. With all of the potential genres of programming and the constant need to keep audiences interested, it is inevitable that television producers will soon begin to combine and morph genres.

One of the popular genres of television programming is teledrama. Each television drama takes its form from a specific genre and its narrative typically relies on a particular theme to generate relationships between the characters and the plot. A full length television drama can have up to an average of twenty to thirty episodes and is aired according to seasons (Bignell, Lacy & Macmurraugh-Kavanagh, 2000). As Kenyan television drama is the subject of interest in this thesis, this study highlights some of its format details. Kenyan television drama is made up of weekly episodes. An episode usually lasts for a minimum of twenty-two minutes and a maximum of twenty eight minutes. A season, which comprises thirteen episodes, is often considered the shortest length of a television drama for airing. Kenyan television drama is known for a variety of themes and topics explored in the different dramas. Genres of Kenyan television drama include romance, tragedy, situational comedy, children's drama, soap operas, and docudrama among others. Plots of most of these drama genres are predetermined and more flexible in terms of their narrative structures. Most of these dramas have a wider appeal to their audiences because of a combination of factors such as their creative presentation of social realities, depiction of characters experiencing and

facing challenges that appear familiar to the audience, and creation of characters and situations that the audience easily identifies with (Lloyd, 2010).

While examining the topology of British television drama, Hallam (2000) argues that television drama plays an enormous role in the development and dissemination of multiple ideologies at different levels. This is made possible through its particular programming, total flow and kaleidoscope of images. It is imperative to point out that it is not just when the characters in the drama are making speeches or declaring their fundamental values that the ideologies are disseminated but through the merger of images in the minds of the audience as they form a composite picture of the world and the context which the drama represents. It is in this way that the rhythms of television drama can be viewed within the realm of our everyday lives. Hence, television drama as a medium gives a characteristic shape to the dramaturgy of our times. Perhaps more powerfully and pervasively, television drama provides the collective images, stereotypes and myths of popular culture as reflection and representation of society.

Focusing on the intersection between television and the realm of the everyday lives, Silverstone (1994) argues that "television is a central dimension of our everyday lives and yet its meaning and its potency vary according to our individual circumstances" (p.1). This implies that television plays an essential part in the politics of everyday life, because its power is always mediated by the social and cultural worlds which we inhabit. Although founded in the everyday life with the sphere of the popular, television

drama is seen as a site of opposition because its influential intervention has to be understood in a broader historical context.

Caughie (2000) further points out that there is a complex and intricate relationship between the production and reception of television drama and the larger pattern of experiencing and coming to terms with the world. Its stories both express and affect the push and pressure of a wider world. Every television drama, reveals something of the dynamics of the interacting nexus of forces in the society which has produced it. In the same vein, every drama, at least implicitly, embodies elements of a world view, in the sense that it symbolically conveys certain premises about what sort of world it is and about how the social order is structured. In doing so, it either acquiesces in the status quo or it queries it, challenges it, dissents from it or poses alternatives to it. Looked at in this way, television drama will be deemed pervasively ideological in nature.

It is against this backdrop that this study sought to interrogate the invention and (re)configuration of space in selected television drama in Kenya. The analysis above has shown that there is evidence that television drama is being shaped by contemporary consciousness, in ways that are crying out to be understood. To this end, it is the study's supposition that studying local television drama offers an understanding on ways in which space is invented and (re)configured in the Kenyan context.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Television has revolutionalised societies in the world over for decades now. Various programs aired on television have brought forth far reaching and fundamental changes, not only in how people spend their time, but also in how they perceive the world, codify experiences, relate to others and respond to various issues in society. With its depiction of the dramas of everyday life, television provides a compelling medium not only to influence national consciousness but also to contest, invent and (re)configure various aspects in society. Through cinematic language, image and sound, television (re)produces a vision of the world for its audiences as it entertains them.

This study, however, examines television drama in the Kenyan context from the perspective of spatial representation(s) in society rather than it being a mode of entertainment. The study interrogates how local television drama engages in the invention and (re)configuration of space in society. Focusing on **Tabasamu**, **Mother-in-law** and **Mheshimiwa**, the study investigates how spatial constructions in society are dramatized, invented and (re)configured through local Kenyan television drama and how these constructions invoke certain consciousness in the contemporary society. Further, the study examines how female characters in the local television dramas contest and reconfigure patriarchal practices, in the process, inventing their spaces in society. Ultimately, the study shows how Kenyan television drama can inventively be used as a site upon which creative artists ingeniously interrogate various issues of concern in society.

1.3   AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study interrogates the invention and (re)configurations of space in Kenyan television drama. Specifically, the study addressed the following objective:

1. Investigate manifestations of space in the selected Kenyan television drama.

2. Interrogate how space is invented and (re)configured in society as shown selected Kenyan television drama.

3. Examine how female characters contest, invent and (re)configure the patriarchal practices in society as depicted in selected local television dramas.

1.4   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. How is space manifested in selected Kenyan television dramas?

2. In what ways is space invented and (re)configured in society as shown in selected Kenyan television dramas?

3. In what ways do female characters contest, invent and (re)configure patriarchal practices in society as depicted in the selected local television dramas?

1.5   ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was founded on the following assumptions; that:

1. Space is a construct which is manifested in various ways in selected Kenyan television drama.

2. Space is invented and (re)configured in Kenyan society as portrayed in selected local television dramas.

3. Female characters contest, invent and (re)configure patriarchal practices in society as depicted in selected local television dramas.

1.6   JUSTIFICATION AND SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

Television is arguably one of the lesser-emphasized fields of inquiry in the relatively short histories of communication, cultural studies, and mass media studies in Kenya today. Several practical reasons explain why television studies have gained traction within the last twenty-five or so years. This situation has been occasioned by the fact that television studies as a discipline is in a continual process of development and the ongoing production of new television programmes, made by new and changing institutions under changing conditions and with new technologies, continually generates new questions that require critical attention. This study sought to contribute to this growing area of knowledge by focusing on representations of space in local television drama, an aspect of television drama aesthetics. In this, the study investigated how local television drama genre contests, invents and inscribes emergent spaces in Kenyan society. Similarly, the study hopes to contribute to the growing knowledge in popular

culture in Kenya through the examination of local television drama as a subset of popular cultural expression.

Thompson and Mittell (2013) aver that "much of television scholarship is focused on understanding the industrial, regulatory, and reception contexts" (p.3). The two scholars point out that "expertise about the medium's history, aesthetics, structures, and cultural importance to provide critical analyses of specific programs" (p. 4). This study is a response to Thompson and Mittell's (2013) call for critical ansalyses while adhering loosely to and expanding upon the structural conditions of the four tenets outlined in Gray and Lotz (2012). The two scholars identify four areas television scholars should recognize and analyze in this connection: programs, audiences, institutions, and contexts. This study focused on the practice of television drama, as a sub-set of television programs, one of the tiers in television studies. This study focuses upon the fact that it offers insights on the invention and (re)configuration of space in local television drama. It thus makes a significant contribution to television studies in Kenya, television drama in particular.

Scholars who have focused on the practice of Television Studies in Kenya such as Amutabi (2013) and King'ara (2014) have paid attention to the history of broadcast television. In this, the two scholars have explored in detail factors surrounding the introduction of television broadcasting in Kenya and issues that have historically instigated how television producers in Kenyan television conceptualise audiences. The two scholars have also highlighted how prevailing political and economic conditions in

Kenya continue to influence and affect the processes involved in the production of television programmes. The two scholars' observations provided impetus to this study as we sought to interrogate not only how political and economic conditions in the country are figured but also how screenwriters productively engage these two issues in the figuration of space in the selected local television dramas.

This study was motivated by the fact that as societies continue to develop, new spaces and forms of expression emerge. These emergent forms of popular cultural expression have often benefitted disadvantaged groups such as women in the society. Considering that patriarchal practices largely favour men, women have devised a number of ways of surviving or resisting the stifling patriarchal practices in society. The women's modes of survival have not only found their way into popular cultural modes of expression but also shape and influence these cultural productions. Local television drama is one of the popular cultural forms of expression where often women's resistance to masculine practices in society is dramatized and figured. However, no much critical attention has been paid on how local television drama often portrays women's resistance to patriarchal practices. This study sought to address this lacuna in knowledge by examining how female characters in the selected local television contest, invent and (re)configure various patriarchal practices in society.

1.7   SCOPE AND DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study sought to interrogate the invention and (re)configuration of space in local television drama in Kenya. In order to conduct an in-depth analysis, the study focused on three selected local television dramas: **Mheshimiwa, Mother-in-law** and **Tabasamu**. The choice of these three (3) local television dramas was arrived at using Spearman's sample size methodology and a pre-determined selection criterion on how they bring out various facets of spatial representations and intersections as outlined in the target population (see p. 39-41 in the target population section).

Cognisant of the multifaceted ways in which space is conceptualized by different scholars (see p.12-23 in the review of related literature section), this study delimited itself to the understanding of space as a social construct and/or a medium upon which perpetuation, contestation, creative invention and (re) configuration takes place. In this way, the study interrogated and presented a spatial exegesis as dramatized in the selected local television dramas. Again, since the conceptualization of space varies from scholar to scholar, the study restricted itself to the theorization of space by Michel Foucault and Henri Lefebvre based on their intersection points as elaborated in the theoretical framework herein (see p.36-37 of the theoretical framework). However, in the course of the analysis, the study incorporated ideas on space from Judith Butler, Dick Hebdige, Edward Soja and Gayatri Spivak.

This study confined itself to a critical examination of disparate purposively selected episodes of the three (3) selected local dramas. The use of purposive sampling was

imperative in selecting disparate episodes for this study considering the fact that there were cumulatively two hundred and thirty (230) episodes of the three (3) local TV dramas that were watched and reviewed. Suffice to note here are the limitations of access to the local television dramas for this study vis-à-vis the episodes that were possibly to be reviewed for purposes of providing material for critical examination. An independent reading and critical synthesis of the selected episodes devoid of interviews of artists involved in their production was conducted. This was so because the study focused on the qualitative aspects of the selected television dramas and therefore its conclusions were to be prejudicial if the artists were to be involved in defending or explaining their approaches in production.

1.8 REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This section reviews related literature for this study in twofold:

i. Review of related literature on space. This serves primarily to provide a background on the issues that form the basis for this study, to set the terms of debate and delineate the philosophical and theoretical debates upon which this study has been anchored. At the tail end of review of related literature on space, we have pointed out how space has been deployed throughout the current study.

ii. Review of related literature on television drama. This serves to situate television drama in the context of historical debates and cultural shifts which characterize television drama discourse in the world, Kenya in particular. The section explores the historical development of television drama and its practice in Kenya. In the course of the review, specific gaps that this study hopes to fill are pointed out.

1.8.1 Mapping the Concept and Study of Space

'Space' is a contested term. Various scholars do not agree on its single definition but instead, they put forth a number of definitions, each of which highlights certain aspects of space. Harvey (1973) points out that "the problem of the proper conceptualization of space is resolved through human practise with respect to it" (p.13). With this in mind,

the real question for this section not only remains "what is space?" but also "how is it that different human practises create and make use of distinctive conceptualizations of space?" The aim of this section is therefore not to define space *per se* but to clarify what we are talking about when we refer to space. To this end, we turn not to definition but to genealogy in the strictest sense of the term – a discussion of the origins and changes in spatial understanding. We argue that it is possible to identify 'types' of space – from abstract space to social space – that have been the focus of this study at various points in time and that can all provide valuable insights for an analysis of space within the context of television drama in Kenya.

A genealogy of space has the advantage not only of highlighting the history of thought about space but also of demonstrating ways in which spatial discussions bring to the fore different types of space over time. In studying local television drama, we shall benefit from a broad understanding of space and its adjacent notions, allowing for a comprehensive appreciation of the spatial notions contained therein. The range of definitions surveyed in this section thus facilitates the identification and differentiation of these types of space. For purposes of synthesis, the analysis of space has been divided into sub-themes based on a historical scheme developed herein. Finally, let us note that this section endeavours to map the study of space but does not claim to present a comprehensive view of it.

1.8.1.1 Classical Greek Philosophy on Space

Plato is one of the Greek philosophers who conceptualize space as receptacle in his Timaeus (Cooper, 1997). His 'likely story' (*eikos muthos*) of creation portrays space as a receptacle (*hupodoche*), a passive vessel in which creation is placed, and is in many ways representative of the role of space in Greco-Roman and Judaeo-Christian cosmogonies in general. Here, space as backdrop precedes the existence of place as locality – 'places for things' – which can only exist by definition once the process of creation has begun. Space also precedes time, since the latter too cannot exist as night and day without the planets.

Plato's understanding of the notion of space thus emerges from the necessity of considering where the demiurge places his creations and the resultant properties of this space. If space is to 'contain' creation, Plato surmises, it must clearly be some sort of receptacle. He argues that space must be a receptacle capable of retaining its own qualities, even during the very act of containing. Plato says of the receptacle, "Its nature is to be available for anything to make its impression upon, and it is modified, shaped and reshaped by the things that enter it" (Cooper, 1997, p. 50c). To be perfectly receptive in such a manner, space itself must be free of all characteristics, since a characterized space would be unable to yield to the particularities of the objects being received. As such, Plato identifies space as a third category for his consideration, one distinct from the world of becoming (creation) and the world of being (the forms). Space is a thing unto itself, one that makes becoming possible. In the world of becoming, then, space remains an unchanging constant, a passive pre-condition of

existence. Thus, Plato argues that the mind apprehends space by a sort of intuitive reasoning that functions without the need for sensory information. Plato's interest in cosmogony leads him to identify abstract space as a necessary precondition for creation.

Aristotle (1934) departs from Plato and ends up with a radically different result as a consequence. Aristotle's interest in physical phenomena gives place much greater prominence. He begins with that which is most immediate to the senses, the object itself, and only then moves to the abstract. While Plato's space is receptive, Aristotle's place is circumferential. As a result, one of Aristotle's major points of consideration becomes the level at which this boundary between object and environment can be determined. Aristotle thus considers the body as a whole, since most referential or demonstrative statements make reference to the whole body rather than the parts. He concludes that space and place are equivalent for any given object.

To Aristotle, the space that an object occupies is equal to its place. But space can also exist without a body. Here, Aristotle describes space as potential place; space is an area in which there could be an object but is not. In a sense, then, space is everywhere for Aristotle, though his emphasis on place leads him to make explicit a distinction between full space – place, space that is occupied by an object – and empty space – space which could hold an object but does not. This definition of space, like Plato's formulation, also acknowledges a receptive quality to space – things can still occupy space.

Aristotle takes his spatial theory one step further by considering the way in which place makes possible the orientation of bodies in space, a point upon which Kant and other phenomenologists would later build upon. Aristotle writes, "every sensible body has locality" (Aristotle, 1934, p.205b). Because of this, beings can locate other objects in space from their own standpoint, using the place of their bodies as for reference. For Aristotle, however, this orientation is not in fact relative to the body but is absolute and universal.

1.8.1.2 Understanding Space during the Enlightenment period

Through the Cartesian concept, Descartes (Casey, 1997) defines space as *res extensa*, the extension of an object. Here, space was closely linked with matter: an object occupied space according to its material shape and magnitude. Like Aristotle, an object's place was closely related to the space that it occupied. Under Descartes, space becomes absolute, free from modification or contingency, as it was for Plato. While Aristotle argued that space and time were important categories for naming and sorting sense perceptions, Descartes elevates space above perception. As space and creation are again brought closer, the former becomes the sum of the extension of all that is.

Kant addressed the topic of space in his inaugural dissertation and early writings on space (Kant, 1929). Here, time and space are presented as universal principles that make possible knowledge about sensory phenomena. Space does not originate in the senses but is presupposed by them. That is, objects can only be perceived if they first exist in space. Kant posits, "Absolute space has a reality of its own, independent of the

existence of all matter, and indeed as the first ground of the possibility of the compositeness of matter" (Kant, 1929, p.20). With this characterization, Kant negates Descartes perspective by making space part of the nature of the mind. Space is neither an endlessly extended container, nor is it formed in the relation of existing objects, but it is subjective, "issuing by a constant law from the nature of the mind, for the co-ordinating of all outer sense whatsoever" (Kant, 1929, p.61). For Kant, space belongs to the mind as a form of intuition that makes sensory perception possible. Place is reduced to position, as the relative location of an object before other objects. The role of place as a locator in space is usurped by region, which becomes the new standard of reference.

Kant (1950) builds on his theory of space where he clarifies the exact nature of space with respect to the mind. In this, Kant argues that space is the very condition for the appearance of external objects. From this perspective, space is indeed real and objective insofar as it conditions human experience of things. At the same time, space is subjective, in that it belongs to the subject's openness to the external world; it only exists from the perspective of the human subject. For this reason, we can conceive of objects in space in our minds without recourse to the senses. Kant's work on space is also influential to the current study since he locates space in the mind of the human knower. This space, despite the fact that it can only be perceived subjectively in portions, remains the same, unitary and homogeneous throughout.

1.8.1.3 Space in Post-Structuralist Philosophy

Most often cited in discussions about Foucault and space is his "Of Other Spaces" (1986). Foucault sees the world as a network of places and that this can be related to the way in which space has been defined. Foucault's great concern in "Of Other Spaces" is the individual's ability to carve out a space of resistance in the midst of these surrounding forces of oppression. He proposes a solution to this problem through his concept of the heterotopia.

As the name suggests, heterotopias are sites that stand in discordant relation to other sites. If the world can be seen as a network of interconnected places, then heterotopia is the place that does not quite fit in and, as such, can become a space for resistance, for escaping the prevailing spatial order. Foucault defines heterotopias as sites:

> that have the curious property of being in relation with all the other sites, but in such a way as to suspect, neutralize, or invert the set of relations that they happen to designate, mirror, or reflect (Foucault, 1986, p.23).

Without being an organized space of resistance, the heterotopia disrupts power structures by refusing to 'fall in line' with the order established by the prevailing series of sites. Foucault's heterotopia thus makes it clear that no spatial order is total, that certain spaces will always escape its grasp and disrupt the prevailing order.

De Certeau (1984) built on the argument that the individual creates space through his daily actions, thereby reasserting human agency in the face of oppressive social

structures. Cutting through an alleyway instead of taking the main thoroughfares can become an act of resistance, he argues, a rejection of the prevailing order. To the extent that these actions are intentional, the creation of spaces of resistance can even be willed and controlled. Contrary to Foucault, for whom the individual often appears as a passive unit within a grid of oppressive power structures, De Certeau's individual is an active agent and, as such, can choose to resist.

To this end, De Certeau makes a distinction between 'tactics' and 'strategies.' On the one hand, strategies are the tool of the majority, of the dominant spatial power. They are the method through which power makes a space its own. Tactics, on the other hand, are the tools through which minority forces make majority elements their own, asserting their own identity in the process. Since the majority owns the social space in question, the minority can, at best, encroach temporarily upon this space, using time to its advantage. Everyday practices like walking, shopping, or reading are tactical. Even for De Certeau, then, space remains an instrument of the majority culture that cannot be easily appropriated. Only time, properly managed, can be turned to the oppressed party's benefit. Space remains oppressive, crushing in its ideological content.

1.8.1.4 Space and Social Philosophy

To social theorists, the focus on space shifts form abstract definitions to space as a variable worthy of investigation in social questions. Gregory and Urry (1985) observe, "Spatial structure is now seen not merely as an arena in which social life unfolds, but rather as a medium through which social relations are produced and reproduced" (p.3).

Thus, social theorists focus on the ideological content of space, as well as its propagation and its hold on society. For our purposes in this discussion, we look at a select few social theorists of space.

Lefebvre's (1994) notion of space integrates Marxist theory into geography as he sought to understand the role ideology might play in the creation of social space. He argues that space can never be neutral because it is ideologically informed. His assertion that space is not innocent but revolutionary at the time. Ultimately, he wished to dispel two common myths: that everything occurring in space is obvious and transparent and that space is something that exists absolutely free from social influence and production. Rather, he argues, social space takes its shape from the ideologies that society espouses.

One of the guiding questions that Tuan (1977) poses in understanding space is: "In what ways do people attach meaning to and organize space and place?" In this, Tuan describes the difference between space and place as being one of scope. He points out that while we associate place with belonging, with a feeling of security, space is experienced and yearned for as boundless freedom. He thus links place, a space of our own, and biology. Our place is where our needs – "food, water, rest" (Tuan, 1977, p.3) – are met. Primarily, spaces are perceived and organized by the senses. They are the realms in which direct experience can occur. But they also represent the potential for movement, for activity. Above all, spaces are symbolic. Similarly, the role of the body here remains the same. Tuan posits that it is our body's specific being-in-place that imposes a directional and orienting schema upon the world (Tuan, 1977, p.34). So while

space can only arise from place, place must itself be formed from space as well and that only affectively charged space can become place.

Harvey (1990) points out that the social and the spatial must intersect because social processes play out in space. He strives to make this exact point by relating the spatial form of the city to the social processes that shape it. His concern lies primarily with questions of urban planning and architecture, demonstrating that the city can be "a symbol of our values, our hopes and our fears" (Harvey, 1990, p.31). Harvey, like Lefebvre, points out that space is not innocent but is loaded with the baggage of those who create it. The city is not merely a physical being; it is a creative act. Social space is a reaction to this act, "Social space is made up of a complex of individual feelings and images about and reactions towards the spatial symbolism which surrounds that individual" (Harvey, 1990, p.34). Contrary to Lefebvre, however, Harvey wishes to emphasize the relational dimension of space, allowing for a greater heterogeneity of meaning at the individual level. Here, Harvey argues for a fragmented sense of space, one that highlights "the multiplicity of the objective qualities which space and time can express and the role of human practises in the construction" (Harvey, 1990, p.203). An end to attempted conceptualizations of space as an absolute category and recognition of its contingency on practice and perception, Harvey argues, are essential first steps.

Soja (1989) argues that space must be understood as a product of social processes. This produces a double prescription in the sense that society cannot be studied without paying attention to space, and space cannot be understood without also considering

social processes. As a result, social space becomes that type of space without which others cannot be grasped. The study of space and of different types of spaces must begin with the notion of social space, to which all other forms can be related. Soja points out that it may indeed be space, rather than time, which "hides consequences from us" (Soja, 1989, p.1), which deploys power relations and serves as the most revealing lens for analysis today.

Massey's (1994) work incorporates feminist themes and gender relations into spatial theory. She argues that if space is socially informed and constructed, then gender relations must be taken into consideration as part of this equation. Massey reasserts a notion of place as a 'meeting place,' an area in which certain social relations and activities intersect, "Instead of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings"(Massey, 1994, 154). As such, space is under constant social construction and has no existence proper to the relations that exist within it. Yet it is these social relations that make multiplicity and difference within space possible highlights Massey (Massey, 2005, 9).

This survey has shown that no consensus exists on a single definition of space. This multiplicity of definitions has been accommodated in this study by focusing on manifestations of space, an approach that was useful in interrogating local television drama. Since each definition of space emerges from particular contexts and analytical concerns, they need not be mutually exclusive. So local television drama, for example,

might make use of abstract, physical, social space in dramatizing various issues in contemporary Kenyan society. As shown above, the enlightenment period required a conception of space as something that could be explained and controlled. Space was something uniform that human knowledge could grasp universally. Such a conception could be consistent with how local television drama seeks to represent reality. This is one possibility. But if space is not to be seen as a passive backdrop, then considering different types of space and the ways in which reality unfolds through them can help break space down into a manageable analytical category. Social space, as theorized by Lefebvre, provides one such example, and local television drama can contribute to such a discussion as well.

With respect to local television drama, space is much less productive as a phenomenon for analysis in itself than are spatial categories – metaphors, relations, and other manifestations. While local television drama has conceptions of space implicit in it and there is value in identifying them, we were interested in developing a spatial reading of local television drama – an 'invention and (re)configuration space,' as the title suggests – that looks not necessarily at space itself but rather at what space does in local television drama, the purpose that it serves and the ways in which it is deployed, often unintentionally, by the artists.

1.8.1.4 Spatio-Temporal Relations

Time and space frequently appear as structuring coordinates of the everyday, as one of the few stable and framing factors of social life. Mikhail Bakhtin (1981) found out that time and space are the primary categories of perception, and cannot be separated. The perception of time and space in real life has changed through the centuries because of technological development and studies within astronomy and geography, which have altered the spatio-temporal experience. Bakhtin demonstrated this spatio-temporal experience in creative works of art using the concept of the chronotope, showing how that the two are interconnected.

In order to understand the relationship between time and space in creative works, Bakhtin (1981) viewed the chronotope as literally meaning time and space and used the chronotope specifically to categorize literary genres. Bakhtin felt that within literary genres there was a sense of natural connectedness between temporal and spatial relationships and that this association was artistically expressed in literature. That is to say, in the literary chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are amalgamated into one carefully constructed, concrete whole and this whole can be used to separate distinctive genres (Bakhtin, 1981). Bakhtin employs the literary chronotope to discern shifts in representations of space and time that occur within the novel. Arguing that the artistic chronotope is a "formally constitutive category of literature" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.84), he avers:

> In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope (p. 84).

By fusing space and time, Bakhtin developed a literary chronotope which typifies the distinctive 'world' occupied by its characters. In deploying the chronotope as a concept, the reader recognizes discursive patterns framed by artistic use of consistent spatial and temporal 'indicators.' For Bakhtin, the value of this notion stems from the imbrications of historical circumstances and generic conventions that infuse literary production.

In this study, the key issue is not pitting space against time, but examining the deep integration of time and space into one unified "time-space" framework of experiences and meanings which, often, results into a reconfiguration of the said spaces. This analytical framework envisages the idea that temporal experience is embedded in spatial experience, and vice versa. In this regard, time confers orientation and irreversibility to space: the neutral geometric structure of space gives way to an emotional plotting (Ricoeur, 1984) where episodes of a drama relate places and objects with events, paths with processes, and spatial sets with temporal sequences. Temporal structures such as calendars, rhythms, and events are constructed in a social space and there is spatial "scope of temporal structures: how broadly they are recognized and enacted within communities" (Orlikowski and Yates, 2002, p.695).

Without disparaging in any way the temporal component of Bakhtin's notion, the analysis of reconfigurations of space in this study foregrounds a poetics of space as it unfolds in the context of local television drama in Kenya. If this choice necessitates the privileging of space over time, it does so to take note where time "thickens, takes on flesh" (Bakhtin, 1981, p.84) in the dramatic form. The congealing of time in the plots of local television dramas for this study proves paramount for denoting not only fundamental shifts in dramatic actions and storyline, but also for spurring broader considerations of social, cultural, political and economic orientations in the spaces. The unique chronotopes elaborated throughout this chapter spur reflections on the intersection of history, visual culture and the manner in which we experience and think spaces. To this end, the task of examining chronotopic imagination in television drama may be understood as a timely intervention, whereby this analysis opens paths to rethink about our present spatial conditions and embedded meanings thereof.

A spatial epistemology of television drama in Kenya, as pertains to this study, proceeds by recognizing that space, like time, exists freely in nature as well as symbolically in creative works of art. The ways in which we fill up space is a matter of our own design and consciousness in the same way that we purposefully sketch our time with demarcations, details and events. In other words, and as Soja (1989) would put it, we daily engage in "the social production of space and the restless formation and reformation of geographical landscapes" (p.136). Said (1995) says "space acquires emotional and even rational sense by a kind of poetic process, whereby the vacant or the anonymous reaches of distance are converted to meaning for us here" (p.55). Of

importance in this observation is Said's anchoring of spatial imaginations in creative works such as drama and the ability to decipher meanings embedded in these spaces through critical interpretations. This is central to this chapter as the interpretive relationships between real and imagined spaces.

The analysis of manifestation of space looks at spaces in the selected Kenyan television drama at three levels: physical, lived and representational. This in turn gives us an important pointer to the nexus between time and space as it essentially serves to open up history to interpretive literature that considers not only the geometry of spatial structures but most importantly, the many varied layers of the cultural and social landscapes in question (Soja, 1989, p.18). Indeed, the whole notion of factual history entails the processes of selection, ordering and narration of material just as fiction does (White, 1987). Or to just put it in the elegant words of Greenblatt (1985), "history has lost its epistemological innocence" (p. 102). To this end then, attempts to paint the spatio-temporal contexts of a work of art can make no claim of stability, for history (time) is complicated and conflicted, and very often it's always subjective. As such and as Massey (1999) points out, Lefebvre's emphasis on the importance of considering space not only as the geometry of space and time, but also its lived practices and symbolic meanings is central to this study as well.

1.8.2 Television Drama - A Brief Overview

While looking at early television in Europe, Britain in particular, Thumin (1995) presents an incisive analysis of era-specific accounts of how television drama evolved in the 1950s and issues of gender and identity on the big screen. Though her study was anchored on the 1950s, it particularly focused on the gendered nature of drama and its audiences in that period. This situation was predicated on the influence of feminist scholarship on the production of television programmes, especially in the area of popular drama and its audiences. A key focus in her study was how the rise of feminism influenced television productions, television drama in particular.

Jacobs (2000) presents a thorough analysis and documentation of early television drama. In the text, Jacobs demonstrates that drama from the era of live television had an aesthetic of its own and was not simply stage drama shoehorned into the studio. In his incisive analysis, Jacobs shows the development of early television drama from the innovations of Sydney Newman and **Armchair Theatre**, to the golden age of **The Wednesday Play** and asserts that early television drama had developed its own aesthetic standard dimension. This observation was key and integral to the present study because space is one of the aesthetic dimensions that we sought to examine in the Kenyan context as mediated through television drama.

Bignell, Macmurraugh-Kavanagh and Lacey (2000) deal primarily with television drama in the 1960s and the 1970s and include accounts by directors, writers and producers. The writers observe that the period is generally seen as crucial to the

development of the aesthetic forms and cultural significance of television drama. Television drama at this time had gained more prominence in television airwaves as it not only entertained but also gained recognition and attracted large audience. The period also saw the rise of various sub-genres of television drama to meet the demands of the ever-growing audience. Further, the scholars point out that television's past is very much part of its present. The passion for drama of both the past and present is fed by a rapidly increasing number of websites devoted to television drama, in both singular and generic forms. These postulations were important to the current study in a sense that they helped us understand the transformation of television drama and how the past shapes television drama productions, with a particular focus on the Kenyan context.

Thornham and Purvis (2005) provide key approaches useful in the study of television drama, and the ways in which they have been employed in television criticism over the past thirty (30) years. The two scholars provide the connection between television drama and the postmodern trends. They argue that despite the recent fragmentation of audiences across multiple viewing options, television's dramatic works can win audiences not only larger than many forms of theatre and cinema, but ones that cut across differences of age, gender, class and region in ways simply not available to other forms of performance and distribution. In the period before channel diversity, these factors of size and social inclusion heavily defined the medium's political and social impact across all its output. In this way, television drama gives a sense of identity to its audience. The two scholars also point out that in the analysis of TV dramas, genre is not a given of everyday social experience so much as it is potentially a way of marking

social experience (Thornham and Purvis, 2005). This study is cognizant of this argument and builds on it as we transcended the categorization of local TV drama into sub-genres and relied on the selected television dramas' similarities in their representation of space as its analytical prism.

Lacey (2006) opines that "the writing of television drama history, particularly when programmes themselves are at issue, can seem a paradoxical activity" (p.3). This is so because, as she points out, until the 1960s, television was conceived as an ephemeral medium, its programmes lost to the immediacy of the moment of transmission and its history of no general interest (p.6). Lacey's supposition echoes Bryant (1989) who argues that archiving television programmes was a haphazard business driven more by the internal demands of the broadcasters than any clear curatorial policy aimed at preserving material for posterity. This section presents a historical overview of television drama studies. The analysis is aimed at providing a historical trajectory of examining television drama within the Kenyan context.

Television drama is not a unique invention in Africa because its history and usage is intertwined with issues related to African nations. A number of African countries use television drama to sensitize their citizens about various issues in their societies. In South Africa, as Ives (2007) points out, television provides a compelling medium for influencing a normative national consciousness. This implies that through its programming, television in South Africa is used to enhance national consciousness among its citizens. In this way, the political, economic, social and cultural ideologies of

the South Africa nation are disseminated. In South Africa, for example, TV drama has been used to propagate the nation's ideologies such as good social ideals and fight the social stigma against HIV/AIDS among South African youth. This analysis was insightful to our study as we investigated how the nation space is figured and mediated through television drama in the Kenyan context.

This study pays attention to the individual characteristics of television drama. These characteristics embody political, social, economic as well as cultural inclination in terms of their productions, which in turn has had varied implications on the audience. Of interest here is how selected local television dramas engage spatial constructions in ways which often mix 'public' modes with forms of address and portrayal having strong elements of the 'private', 'domestic', 'family', informal and colloquial. More broadly, the domestic character of television and its engagement with realism has had implications for the scope and styling of television plays or series. These implications shape (and constrain) the spatial constructions of television drama; hence it formed the subject of investigation in this study. This formed a critical focus of this study as we examined manifestations of space in the selected television dramas and how female characters in the TV dramas contest and (re)configure the phallocentric canon in society.

1.8.3 Television Drama in Kenya

A study conducted by African Cultural Regeneration Institute (ACRI) in Conjunction with KNATCOM-UNESCO (2012) entitled, *Unearthing the Gems of Culture: Mapping Exercise for Kenya's Creative Industry,* notes that acting for television has proved popular with the Kenyan audience (p.87). Kenyans enjoy watching local drama shows aired on various television stations depending on the ability of these shows to connect to them. In fact, television drama as a genre has been around since the 1960s when actors like Mzee Pembe graced the Kenyan television screen. Other actors like Benson Wanjau (Ojwang' Hatari) and Mary Khavere (Mama Kayai) followed in the 1970s with their rib-cracking comedies presented exclusively in Swahili, reaching millions of households courtesy of the state-owned **Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC)** television station. **Tushauriane**, a Swahili television series directed by Greg Adambo featuring Kenyan fine actors like Dennis Kashero and Tony Msalame premiered in the late 1980s, becoming arguably one of the most popular productions to ever hit the Kenyan television screens.

Wesonga (2011) examines the portrayal of secondary students and their behaviour patterns in Kenyan television drama. While focusing on **Tahidi High**, a local television drama, the study shows how setting, characterization and language play a pivotal role in understanding secondary school students. In the quest for the students to discover themselves, the findings show the dilemmas, fear of alienation, responsibility and role taking, naive idealism and role modelling as some of the issues attendant to teenage identity crisis. Wesonga's findings illuminated the current study particularly on the

beleaguered identity among the youth, considering that the secondary school students, though students, are in their early stages of youth life.

Mugubi and Kebaya (2012) observe that "The media has largely played a pivotal role in the development of theatre in Kenya" (p.109). They argue that theatre has had its share of limelight through the media. As they point out, for over two decades, names such as Mzee Ojwang (Benson Wanjau), and Mzee Tamaa (Peter Lukoye) of the **Vitimbi** and **Vioja Mahakamani** fame respectively are names we all grew up entertaining us with their unique brand of humour (Mugubi and Kebaya, 2012). These television drama programmes dominated the state-owned television broadcaster for quite a long time and the artists are household names in Kenya over the years. These artists and many others have consistently entertained Kenyans at public events and holidays.

Mugubi and Wesonga (2012) argue that the choice of words in various levels of communication in any show such as television drama is palpable. The level of communication raises above sheer choice of words to embrace a broader exalting and humanizing sense or the opposite – a diminishing and dehumanizing sense. They aver that "Language in **Tahidi High** comes out as a tool of expression of the quest for freedom; a form of protest and a means of affirming identity. **Tahidi high** is characterized by a language that portrays students' desire to free themselves from both parental and institutional demands" (p.184). Further, they observe that two modes of linguistics expression can be identified in television drama: the use of a Kenyan slang, Sheng - a use of a blend of English and Kiswahili with slightly more emphasis on

English. However, the two scholars paid little or no critical attention to how the said local television drama contests, invents and (re)configures space in the Kenyan society. This study, however, focuses on how space is invented and (re)configured in the selected local television drama hence the two scholars postulations were useful insofar as they informed the focus of this study.

Mbogo (2012b) examines how the court, as performance space, is appropriated and represented in Kenyan television drama. **Vioja Mahakamani***,* the longest running television program in Kenya, as Mbogo observes, is the forerunner of the courtroom as a performance space in Kenya. Other television dramas that have also made use of court as performance space in Kenya include **Nairobi Law** and **Mashtaka**, which premiere on *Citizen Television*. Mbogo's insights only focus on the court as a space upon which the drama is played out. This study extends Mbogo's argument by focusing on how space is invented and inscribed in the selected television dramas.

Amutabi (2013) provides a historical trajectory of the growth and development of the media in Kenya in what he calls "Media boom in Kenya and celebrity galore". In this incisive study, Amutabi points out revolutionary programing strategies adopted by both radio and television stations in Kenya with the advent of media freedom. In television programing, he underscores the fact that most television stations in the country adopted forward looking strategies which saw the introduction of television drama in their programming menu. Amatubi then glosses over narrative overviews of successful local television dramas like **Papa Shirandula**, **Tahidi High**, **Mother-in-law, Inspekta**

Mwala, and **Beba Beba** which are aired by various television stations such as *Citizen Television*, and *Nation Television (NTV)*. He argues that these dramas have a wider appeal to their audiences because of their storylines that are not only easy to follow but the audience easily connects and identifies with them. The current study enriches and enhances Amutabi's argument by focusing on spatial representations as revealed in the selected local television dramas in order to show how these dramas depict the invention and (re)configuration of space in the Kenyan society.

Gitimu (2013) analyses Mise-en-Scene in serial drama in Kenya. The study focused on the role of setting in **Siri**, a local television drama, as a technique and enabler of edutainment components of the edutainment dramas. Her findings show that setting is key and part of the material fabric of serial drama edutainment. Further, the finding show that characters and various objects placed on set have an impact on setting as the drama seeks to achieve its edutainment impact on the target audience. Gitimu's findings were critical to the current study as they illuminated on the spatial-temporal components of setting in our analysis of space in selected television dramas in Kenya.

Using a stylistics approach, Mugubi (2015) analyses the sociopyschological patterns that influence communication disposition in children's television drama in the Kenyan context. Focusing on **Machachari**, a local television drama, the author examined how plot, language, character portrayal, subject matter, music and the role of humour help us understand various sociopyschological patterns of communication among children. The study concluded that the subject matter in children's drama should be chosen cautiously,

conflicts in every episode of the dramas be resolved and that plots in children's dramas be simple (Mugubi, 2015, p.36-37). This was arrived at based on the fact that children have unique idiosyncrasies different from adults. The current study builds on Mugubi's study and departs from his analytical prism by focusing on how features of style, such as symbols, allegories and metaphors of flux, among others, are integral in understanding the invention and (re)configuration space in the selected TV dramas.

In sum, the review of related literature has shown that despite the fact that there are quite a number of local television dramas in our television screens currently, there is little critical examination of television drama as a genre in Kenya. And whenever there are, the focus of such critical works has not been on the invention and (re)configuration of space in local television drama. As such, we sought out to investigate manifestations of space in local television drama, spatial discourses on sex(uality) and politics, and the mapping metaphor among others because the study was predicated on the assumption that studying local television drama offers important ways to examine and understand the representation, contestation, invention and (re)configuration of space in television drama within the Kenyan context.

1.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study hinges on space theory. Spatial discourses have become prominent in contemporary studies in the recent years. In the arts and social sciences, the spatial discourse has been a dominant mode of analysis with emphasis being placed on the historical relationships of events and their subsequent effects. Tuan (1977), for instance, considers ways in which people feel and think about space, how they form attachments to home, neighbourhood, and nation, and how feelings about space and place are affected by the sense of time. However, herein, we engaged the spatial discourse from a critical perspective focusing on how critical interpretations can benefit from ongoing discussions on space and identity. Thus, in order to illuminate how space is manifested, contested and invented in local television drama in Kenya, this study anchored itself on Michel Foucault and Henri Lefebvre's theorization of space.

Space is a derivative of the tripartite interaction between certain elements crucial to its construction. Lefebvre (1991) perceives space to combine three elements: land as private property or other systems of territorialisation; the built environment as everyday resource and the spatial medium of human interaction (Shields, 1991). While characterizing space as material and concrete existence, Lehntovuori (2005) equally notes that space is a three-dimensional grid and an endless continuum. The reality constructed by space thus has potentials of yielding multiple perspectives that go beyond the physical.

According to Lefebvre, space should not be considered as some pre-existing void that is filled by social activities but is actually created through social actions. Thus, Lefebvre's conceptualization of space is connected with the idea of the 'The Production of space' based on the assumption that every society produces its specific space. Hence every society is spatialized in its own unique way (Lefebvre, 1991). Lefebvre's analysis of social space brings to the fore the home landscape as an important component of space because it circumscribes our interpretation of the domestic, private space as being largely passive and separate from the public. It helps us visualize how women are subjected to increasingly intolerable conditions at home and offers every reason as to why they need to go out and make demands. In a slightly different sense, threats such as austerity measures and political representation affect the home as the "last bastion of a 'secure social order' and shapes external political conditions" (Lefebvre, 1991, p.54). The contest of space is, therefore, clearly bound up with issues of gender and power. This was demonstrated in our analysis of television drama.

Massey (2000) holds that social space is not an empty arena within which we conduct our lives but rather something we construct around us. As such, space is not synonymous to a vacuum, for it also serves a significant contextual function. As Jaffe and Sanderse (2010) argue, space and specific locations provide more than a contextual backdrop for social processes by actively structuring and mediating social action while continuously undergoing change through social action itself. In other words, space and context are often involved in a reciprocal interaction characterized by mutual transformation in both directions. As Kalipeni and Zeleza (1999) rightly observe, "in as

much as space is socially constructed the social is spatially constructed, too" (p.2). Consequently, "space is at once result and cause, product and producer" (Lefebvre, 1991, p.142). In the urban context, therefore, social circumstances shape spatial conceptions, even as space itself influences social relations.

In his examination of what he calls "other spaces", Foucault (1986) posits that "these 'other spaces' are generally embedded in a system of spatial effects of power and are located in a society where all places are in a certain relation to power and to each other" (p.23). Foucault identifies these spaces as heterotopias as opposed to utopias. He further observes that heterotopias are heterogeneous spaces which are "Places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society - which are like counter-sites, a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites…are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted" (p. 24). Foucault's heterotopias spaces in this argument, as does Lefebvre's, are meant to describe the very real, simultaneous, and live spaces, in which we live our lives, while leading away from a reductionist binary of time and space that downplays the social in favour of time as the reliable organizer of the world (Soja, 1996).

Both Lefebvre and Foucault demonstrate that history is entwined with the social production of space in the trialectics of space which links space, time and social being (Soja, 1996). This restructuring of history as Soja (1996) points out "essentially serves to open up history to interpretive literature that considers not only the geometry of spatial structures, but most importantly, the many varied layers of the cultural and social

landscapes in question" (p.18). Soja also points out that Foucault turns his attention toward the spatiality of social life by theorizing the relations between and among the so-called 'external' or socially social-mediated spaces (Soja, 1996, p.17). While not negating the importance of historical rootedness, Foucault endeavours to examine the way spatialities, as sites for lived, and socially-meaningful experiences, are simultaneously abstract and concrete.

In this study, space theory has been used as an analytical process aimed at understanding first the social framing of space in local television drama and how various ideologies have been used to invent and (re)configure space within various socio-cultural landscapes in Kenya. This position was informed by Gupta's and Ferguson's (1992) observation that postcoloniality problematizes the relationship between space and culture, which in turn helps in understanding social changes and cultural transformations as situated within interconnected spaces. Therefore, space theory is seen as an analytical conversation with various spatial formations and relations in a bid to understand the present realities of space as manifested in local television drama in Kenya.

Foucault's and Lefebvre's spatial arguments were deemed relevant to this study in two ways. First, the consistent emphasis on drawing spatial practices and representations back to an immediate and lived dimension coincides with the way spatial criticisms seek to achieve this same goal. Lefebvre (1994, p.1) consistently argues for the primacy of everyday life and criticizes limitation of the study of space to geographers and

sociologists. The second way in which both Foucault's and Lefebvre's theorization of space were relevant to this study was on their contribution not only to recognizing space as produced but of emphasizing on the role and significance of the 'body' in spatial configurations of power, identity and subjectivity. The way certain bodies are constructed as aberrant or out-of-place coincides with fluctuating combinations between the bodies in question, the spaces they live in, and the degrees to which they adhere to or contest dominant prescriptions of embodied social ideologies and other aspects of identity.

The twining of Foucault's and Lefebvre's spatial theorizations was useful to the study in that it provided a clear tangent upon which the study was anchored and allowed for the examination of space as a site where meanings are produced, maintained, and/or contested; thereby shaping possibilities and limits for the subject as dramatized in the selected local television drama. The fact that there are intersections in the two scholars' postulations on spatial practices also justified their integral use in this study. The framework furthermore provided an alternative notion of power in which the self takes action against spatial practices which stifles it and is seen as actively involved in the process of becoming a visible and an intelligible subject in certain spatial set ups.

1.10 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section establishes the research methodology used in this study. A detailed exploration of the research design, sample size selection technique, data collection and analysis procedures is outlined.

1.10.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study engaged a qualitative research design because it relied on textual analysis in examining the invention and (re)configuration of space in Kenyan television drama. Brunsdon (1990) observes that "qualitative judgements have always been central to television studies, they have just remained implicit" (p. 74). To make these judgements meaningful, Brundson observes that points of intersections and particular patterns must be identified among television dramas being studied. Scholars such as Nelson (1997), Geraghty (2003), Jacobs (2006) and Cardwell (2006) propose the use of textual analysis not only as an interpretative tool but also an evaluative one in examining television drama. For instance, Nelson (1997) contextualises textual analysis of popular television drama series in relation to technical, economic, institutional, cultural and aesthetic developments for a period of forty years, while Jacobs (2000) combines textual studies of early television drama with detailed archival research. Jacobs' essay is particularly useful and lends credence to this study as he explicitly engages with evaluative judgements on television drama serials based on their textual elements (2001, p. 433). He argues that there is no question that a deeper and fuller understanding of a television drama can be achieved by watching and interpreting its episodes. He reinforces this view through close textual analysis of an individual episode of **ER** (NBC, 1994-2009).

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For this particular study, an iterative research design, which is one of the underpinnings of qualitative study, was employed. An iterative research design is principally deductive since it involves identifying, analyzing and refining parameters under study. It is simply a very dynamic qualitative approach where insight and learning is gathered by allowing ideas or concepts to be developed through repeated and comparative interfaces with the subjects under study.

The central principle of an iterative research design is constant analysis and interpretation because it takes case rather than variable perspective (Creswell, 2014). This means, in part, that the researcher takes different cases to be wholes, in which variables interact as a unit to produce specific outcomes. In this study, variables were the multiple ways in which space is manifested, how it is dramatized, contested, invented and inscribed in society through local television drama. Hence, during the analysis, aspects of manifestations of space were treated as units that constitute part of the larger understanding of space as portrayed in television drama in Kenya. Thus, a case-oriented perspective assumes that variables interact in complex ways. As issues of interest are noted in the data, they are compared with other cases (episodes) for similarities and differences in the selected local television shows. Through the process of constant comparison, emerging spatial constructs and the ways in which they interact, enact, contest and invent were examined resulting in an analysis that is typical of iterative research design. By deploying an iterative research design, this study

illuminated how space is realized, and shed light on emerging discourses of space in the selected local television drama.

1.10. 2 TARGET POPULATION

There is an upsurge of local television drama in Kenya today due to increased demand mainly from local television stations. There are sixty (60) local television dramas have been aired by various television channels in Kenya to the present (see appendix 3). However, in order for to interrogate the invention and (re)configuration of space in the Kenyan context mediated through local television drama, the study needed to determine the sample size to be studied. More importantly, in determining the sample size for this study was the confidence level. The confidence level that was to give a higher level of accuracy of the findings was also needed. For this reason, this study settled for a confidence level of 99% considering that the confidence level of any research can never be 100% (Creswell, 2014). Thus, Spearman's formula presented below was used to determine the sample size for this study:

$$\mathbf{ss} \quad = \quad \frac{z^2 * p * (1-p)}{c^2}$$

Where;

$\mathbf{ss}$ = sample size,

$\mathbf{z}$ = z value (e.g. 2:58 for 99% confidence level. The confidence level tells you how sure you can be. It is expressed as a percentage and represents how often the

true percentage of the population where one would pick an answer lies within the confidence interval. The 99% confidence level means you can be 99% certain, which was the preferred level of confidence for this study).

p= Percentage picking a choice, expressed as decimal (0.5 used for the sample size needed)

c= confidence interval, expressed as decimal (e.g. 0.05= ±5)

Calculating sample size (ss) = $\dfrac{ss}{1+ (ss-1/pop)}$

Pop= Population

Note that the choice z = 2:58 arises because this is the z value appropriate for a 99% confidence interval.

Based on the above calculations, the sample size for this study was arrived at as three (3) local television dramas.

The next task was to determine the three (3) specific dramas to be studied out of a pool of over sixty (60) local television dramas (see appendix 3). The three (3) local television dramas were then selected based on a predetermined criteria of importance guided by the teachings of Patton (2001, p.238) as follows:

i.   Political life

ii.   Youth life

iii.   Family life

iv.   Urban-rural intersections

v.   Inter-generation and inter-class intersections

vi.   Peri-urban and slum life intersections

vii.   Youth and political life Intersections

Based on the above criteria, the study settled on the following three (3) local television dramas: **Mother-in law**, **Mheshimiwa**, and **Tabasamu**.

1.10.3 SAMPLE SELECTION TECHNIQUE AND SIZE

In iterative research design, the sampling method and the system of analysis are intimately related. An iterative study design requires the sampling technique and size to be in synch to allow for meaningful comparison and integration of data in an iterative cycle. Therefore, this section discusses the sample selection technique and the sample size for the study.

1.10.3.1 Sample Selection Technique

Purposive sampling was used as a method of sample selection of disparate episodes for this study. Purposive sampling as a technique, points out Orodho (2004), refers to a deliberate choice of a sample due to its unique qualities. This implies that purposive sampling principally relies on the judgments of the researcher when selecting items, in

this case episodes, to be studied. Put simply, because the main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on particular characteristics of a population that are of interest and which will best enable the researcher to answer set research questions, the researcher decides what needs to be known and then proceeds to selects a sample from the target population that best exemplifies the characteristics the researcher is interested in.

1.10.3.2 Sample Size

The sample size was drawn from purposively chosen episodes of the three selected local television dramas. In order to determine the number of episodes to be studied from each television drama, the study relied on the criteria advanced by Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) that 10% of the sample size is representative enough for the entire population to be studied. Thus, the episodes were selected as follows:

Television Drama	Available Episodes for Review (Sept 2013)	Selected Episodes for Study
Mheshimiwa	50	5
Mother-in-law	100	10
Tabasamu	80	8
Totals	230	23

Source: Researcher

1.10.4 DATA COLLECTION

1.10.4.1 Primary Data

Primary data for this study was obtained through a rigorous, close examination and analysis of disparate episodes drawn from three selected local television dramas. Guided by the objectives of this study and an observation guide (see appendix 2), episodes from selected television dramas were watched and information obtained regarding space recorded and considered as data for analysis and interpretation.

1.10.4.2 Secondary Data

Library research involving reading of secondary sources was undertaken. Texts, dissertations, scholarly publications and articles related to the area of study were consulted. Relevant materials on spatial formations and contestations in drama, space and characterization, style, and social concerns were consulted to support and augment primary data.

1.10.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Since this study was qualitative in nature, data analysis, interpretation and presentation required qualitative methods as well. Thematic content analysis was used in the analysis of data obtained from both primary and secondary sources. Thematic content analysis allows for the identification, analysis and interpretation of data based on patterns (themes) that emerge from the corpus under study (Creswell, 2014). To this end, a theme captured something important about the data in relation to the research questions and represented some level of patterned response or meaning within the data set. Most

importantly, the analysis was guided by an understanding that the 'keyness' of a spatial theme was not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measures but in terms of whether it captured something important in relation to the overall research question and objective. Thematic content analysis was plausible for this study because it provided a more detailed and nuanced account of one particular theme, subtheme or group of themes, within the data. The themes and subthemes obtained were analysed, compared and interpreted guided by the objectives of the study. The primary objective of the study was to show how space as a social construct is invented and (re)configured in local television drama in Kenya. Therefore, themes such as manifestation, contestation and (re)configuration of space and respective subthemes were critically examined. A thorough and comprehensive synthesis and interpretation of data based on patterns from primary sources together with secondary sources was carried out in order to come up with a coherent final study. For easier analysis and interpretation, the study was structured into chapters with each chapter addressing a single objective for this study.

1.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations have become a focal in point of attention in research. This study sought to address a number of ethical issues in order to proceed smoothly. One of the central ethical issues that confronted this study was how to manage the research convention of confidentiality in relation to visual material – episodes from the selected television dramas. Therefore, the first task was to seek consent from producers, directors and the local television stations that air the shows regarding their usage in this study. The task proved uncomplicated since both verbal and written consent was

obtained which entailed the use of selected local television dramas purely for data elicitation and illustration purposes. The consents were subject to protection of episodes from the selected television dramas which demanded that they be kept securely, not shared, and that their usage should not lead to any breach of agreed upon confidentiality. Note-worthy is the fact that seeking express consent was also in the interest of obtaining good data (Banks, 2001 & Pink, 2007).

The purpose of employing visual data in a research of this magnitude is because visual images are able to reveal more about phenomena compared to text (Sweetman, 2008). The use of clips from selected television dramas to augment the thrust of this study proved problematic because consent for subsequent use of clips in the dissemination of the findings posed copyright issues. Having sought consent to use episodes of the selected television dramas solely for elicitation purposes, it was deemed necessarily to seek more formal consent before using the television drama clips as part of text in my thesis. Copyright issues arose and the idea of using the clips was abandoned because it proved costly and attracted legal implications.

1.12 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter one (1) lays the critical foundation of the study and delineates the problem of study, outlines the study objectives, captures the scope and delimitation of the study. It tackles the research gaps that the study sought to address through a review of related literature, lays out the theoretical framework as well as the methodology of the study. Chapter two (2) to four (4) are structured as analytical

chapters. In line with objective one of the study, chapter two (2) focuses on manifestations of space in local television drama. The chapter provides a narrative overview of various television dramas studied then proceeds to explore various ways in which space is realized in Kenyan television drama. In chapter three (3), the study delves into (re)configuration of space in local television drama while chapter four (4) examines how female characters contest and reconfigure the phallocentric canon in society. Lastly, chapter five (5) recaps major findings of this study.

CHAPTER TWO

MANIFESTATIONS OF SPACE IN TELEVISED LOCAL DRAMAS IN KENYA

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores manifestations of space in Kenyan television drama. In line with the first objective of this study, the chapter presents trajectories of how space, as a social construct, is rendered in local television drama. The analysis is informed by Edinsor's (2002) supposition that the relationship we have to places, rather than being conceived solely as representative and cognitive, is embodied, sensual, bound up in what we do in space, in how we co-ordinate our movements and organise routes and nodes around which we orientate ourselves, in how we feel and sense them, in what we focus on and ignore. This is emphatically, then, not a static spatial reification but an ongoing process through which space is (re)produced. This chapter therefore, interrogates how space is conceptualized in local Kenyan dramas and how places and social rules are codified through contextual and varying power-based connections between characters, spaces and activities associated with these spaces. In analyzing manifestations of space in local television drama, the chapter focuses on:

a) Everyday space

b) Family space

c) Political space

The three types of spaces above form the focus of this chapter because they are viewed as umbrella spaces while other spaces such as symbolic, social, communal, public,

private, domestic and youthful spaces among others are interspersed in them and therefore cannot be analysed in isolation.

In interrogating spatial conceptualizations in local television drama, this chapter goes down and extends paths developed by two theorists on space: Michel Foucault and Henry Lefebvre. Both Foucault's and Lefebvre's theorization of space as a paradigm of intellectual enquiry are crucial in this analysis. Their argument on space as a process of meaning making in a work of art is cognate to our analysis because it requires us to reflect on the selected local television dramas in relation to context, materiality, relationship, causality and interaction. Meaning is thus a function of the space in which it emerges. In this regard, there is no definite meaning that can be assigned to a work of art. Rather, for that meaning to be attained, a more profound interrogation is demanded; one that asks questions about position, location, social context, contours and dimension. These observations are central to our spatial analysis as we explore patterns of figuration in local televised dramas.

2.2 Synopsis of Local Television Dramas under Study

This section presents a brief overview of storylines of selected local television dramas television dramas for this study:

2.2.1 Mother-in-law

Mother-in-law is a local television drama which airs every Sunday on *Citizen TV* station from 7:30 PM to 8.00 PM. The show follows the story of the Mwambas and sometimes the Mitegos. The show revolves around Charity, who is simply known as

mother-in-law. Charity, mother-in-law, is the central figure in the show and is surrounded by a rich cast of relatives and workers. Her husband is called Mwamba. Mwamba is a laid back patriarch who is subservient to his wife, Charity, who represents the image of an African matriarch. Charity and Mwamba have three sons – Jack, Charlie and Robert. Many of the events in the show take place in Mwamba's and Jack's houses. Jack's wife is known as Alison. Charlie used to be an alcoholic but is now saved. Robert is a medical doctor who lived and worked in the United States but has relocated to Kenya. He is married to Lisah while Charlie to Selina. Charlie is depicted as the family's black sheep.

The Mwambas are portrayed as an upper-class family, living in a rather expensive-looking house and have employed domestic workers. Jack and Alison have three children – Tina, Mike and Angie. Tina is in college and so is her brother Mike. Angie, the last born, is in high school. The three children are socialized and raised in affluence, so when their father Jack is fired from his job, there is economic meltdown in the household until he moves to Sudan in search of a job. He is later joined by his wife, Alison.

Jack and Alison have employed a watchman, a cook and a mechanic. The cook is called Mustafa, while the mechanic is known as Rasta (Rass). Rasta develops a romantic relationship with Tina much to the chagrin of Alison and mother-in-law. This is the only time that Alison seems to agree with her mother-in-law. Rass is from a low social and economic background and his elopement with Tina is not appreciated by Jack's family.

There is also a domestic labourer in the household, called Maria. Maria is the cook for mother-in-law.

Generally, the drama explores the complexity of an extended African family life where Charity, the mother-in-law, still feels that her sons are young children to be taken care of, even though they are already married. She wants her daughters-in- law to dress decently, listen to and consult with her and assume the roles of 'African' women. Charity does not want her daughters-in-law to domineer her sons and therefore decides to police them. For instance, Alison does not like her mother-in-law because of her domineering role in the household. She dominates Jack to the disgust of Alison. The two women cannot just exist in the same space for there is too much bad blood between them. The same applies to Lisah and Selina. This situation puts the daughters-in-law in a collision path with their mother-in-law and their husbands, who listen more to their mother than them. The constant tussles between mother-in-law and her daughters-in-law form the bulk of the action of the play.

2.2.2 Tabasamu

Tabasamu is a local television drama which aired every Monday on *Citizen TV* from 9:45 PM to 10.30 PM and replayed every Sunday afternoon between 2.00 PM and 2.30 PM. The drama currently airs on the 'Supersato banner' on *Citizen TV* between 3.00 PM and 3.30 PM. The main characters in the show are Wivina, Maya, Zenah and JB – who share an apartment. Other characters include Gabriela (Gabby), Kamenyi, Mr. and Mrs. Justice Phillip (JB's parents), Mheshimiwa (Gabby's brother), Rose, Lukah, Mr.

and Mrs. Muka, Musyoka, Penny, Rita, Calvin(Calvo) and Brother Francis among others.

Tabasamu*,* which loosely translates to "smile", is a local television drama that revolves around three young, upward mobile professional women and room-mates: Wivina, Maya and Zenah, who share an apartment with a young man named JB. The show explores the day-to-day social issues and complexities of urban relationships among the youth through the lives of these young women and JB. This is revealed through their everyday lives as they conduct their daily chores at home, office and/or the social places that they frequently visit. In exploring the everyday lives of the youth, **Tabasamu** brings to the fore the fluidity of youth identity and the role of parenting. Wivina, Maya, and J.B are youthful characters in the show whose identity spaces and formations are beleaguered.

Additionally, the show explores prevailing social conditions upon which lives of the youth in society flourish, often, without encouragement or recognition of official cultural practices in society, and sometimes in defiance of them. The youth portray social concerns that signal their appreciation of multiple modes of being, how they sustain such modes of being and constantly infuse them with new life. In this, important aspects of their lifestyle are reflected in having a "fast life".

2.2.3 Mheshimiwa

Mheshimiwa aired on Mondays between 7.30 PM and 8.00 PM on *Kenya Television Network (KTN)* and replayed every Sunday afternoon between 3.00 PM and 3.30 PM. Major characters in the show are Mheshimiwa Kabaila, Habbakuk, Jiwe, Nyati and Magdalina. Other characters include Alfayo, General, Petronila, Monica, Lynn and Polycarp among others.

 Mheshimiwa, which loosely translates to "The Honourable", is a compelling local television drama whose storyline revolves around lifestyles of local politicians and their activities both in public and behind the scenes. The show satirizes political antics of Mheshimiwa Kabaila, who is viewed as a prototype of the new political breed. Mheshimiwa Kabaila's entry into politics is through political euphoria that characterizes general elections. His party of choice is popular at the time and he is elected into office by his popularity at the grassroots, which only stems from the fact that as a teacher in a primary school in the area he was revered by parents, guardians and pupils. Mheshimiwa Kabaila leaves his rural constituency to the city to take up his parliamentary duties accompanied by his wife Magdalina, who has hurriedly resigned as a nursery school teacher, and with their two children: Edwin and Evalina. His life from then on is a comical progression from a lackluster to a know-it-all-politician who is always waiting for the elusive assistant ministerial docket. On her part, Magdalina's ambitions have gone astronomical and her finger is on almost everything her husband does by virtue of being the MP's wife. In this enthralling drama, each episode tackles a

new issue in the Kenya political scene ranging from national scandals to despicable utterances by politicians at funerals and harambees during weekends.

2.3 The Everyday Space: Tabasamu

This section illuminates the importance of everyday aspects of social life and how the aspects are etched into local television drama. It examines how everyday activities provide a canvas upon which television drama in Kenya is framed and the routine maintenance of social life as is evident in drama - the constant daily creativity of making and remaking the social world, the links between these everyday practices and the reproduction of social institutions as manifested in television drama. Couched on Goffman (1959)'s notion of the presentation of the self in the everyday life, the section explores the importance of everyday spaces within the dramaturgical model of social interaction as portrayed in **Tabasamu**. Genre notwithstanding, the drama is analysed on the basis of how it utilizes and portrays the everyday space. As Thornham and Purvis (2005) point out, genres are one of the many ways in which texts are made available to readers, viewers and listeners; and writers, directors and producers use genres in the fictional and factual representation of reality. Film noir, soap operas, situational comedies, romantic comedies, science fiction or police dramas suggest something of the breadth of generic and sub-generic categorizations. However, in this section and indeed the rest of this chapter, these schematic approaches, with their stresses on form, design and meanings of genres, are not called into question. But attention is paid on the local television dramas' similarities in their representation of space as the analytical scheme. This criterion is based on the realization that genre is not a given of everyday social

experience so much as it is potentially a way of marking social experience (Thornham and Purvis, 2005).

It is important to point out that at this juncture that in this thesis, everyday life refers to the mundane details of social interaction, habits, routines and quotidian realms experienced most of the time by most people in their daily endeavours (Chamberlain, 1999). This chapter therefore posit that the figurations of everyday activities in local television drama in Kenya fall within realm of Lefebvre's trialectics of space. On the one hand, Lefebvre's trialectics refer to the triad of "spatial practice," "representations of space," and "spaces of representation" while on the other, it refers to "perceived," "conceived," and "lived" spaces. These everyday activities constitute the spatial practices of the social phenomena of people as lived in society. This is evident in **Tabasamu** as various characters such as Maya, Wivina, Peninah (Penny), Calvin (Calvo) and Bother Francis among others daily exploits expose their everyday activities in work and domestic spaces respectively. For instance, the humdrum activities of characters such as Calvo and Brother Francis in using religion as a means of earning a living (**Tabasamu**, Episode 7 & 8) or invent dubious ways of getting money among others cannot be taken for granted apparently because they contain exciting moments in which decisions are made, identities enacted and displayed. This is so because their survival stories in the slum area introduce social relationships, norms, and moral values, concurring with Anthony Gidden's (1986) idea that "self-identity is a product of a world that pre-exists the individual" (p.19). These stories, therefore, become narratives that provide what Giddens calls "a sense of shape, time and space to people" (p.7) as is the

case with the duo (Calvo and Brother Francis) and their daily escapades in the slum environment.

Space is produced by inhabitants through habit, through a constant engagement with the world which relies on familiar routines, which constructs an ongoing spatial mapping through the enaction of everyday mobilities. Calvo and Brother Francis wake up every morning worried about where to get their next meal, a situation which often leads them to commit various crimes ranging from religion fraud to conniving to selling none-existent land to unsuspecting businessmen in order to earn a living (**Tabasamu**, Episode 8). Worth noting is the notion that habits organize life for individuals, linking them to groups so that "a cultural community is often established by people together tackling the world around them with familiar manoeuvres" (Frykman and Löfgren, 1996, p.10–11). These shared habits between Calvo and Brother Francis, for instance, strengthen affective and cognitive links, constitute a habitus consisting of acquired skills which minimize unnecessary reflection every time a decision and/or a way forward is required from either one of them.

In reproducing the everyday life, **Tabasamu** employs pseudo-narration and acting in rendering the everyday stories. For instance, in the process of narrating to his friend Brother Francis his encounter with a lady who caught his eye (Penny) in a church service and their subsequent meeting in the street, Calvo ends up turning the story into an enactment of some sort with his friend acting out the role of the lady, Penny (**Tabasamu**, Episode 11). Once the play-within-a play is over, Calvo confesses to his

friend that "it's not love but his quest to get money that makes him to reach out to Penny" (**Tabasamu**, Episode 11). These stories play an important role in the development of both his self and collective identities among actors and the audience. Highmore (2002) observes, "everyday life is not simply a name given to a reality readily available for scrutiny; it is also the name for aspects of life that lie hidden" (p. 1). This observation points out that in examining the everyday, it's important to focus on the visible and the invisible, the uttered and unuttered in order to come up with a well-grounded view of the everyday. This is evident in Calvo's hidden motive in feigning friends with Penny.

Highmore (2002) further points out that "everyday life can both hide and make vivid a range of social differences" (p.2) implying that the everyday has a potential of producing, not difference, but commonality. Juxtaposing the everyday activities of Calvo and Brother Francis with those of Maya and Wivina for instance leaves a lot to be desired. The activities and stories of Calvin and Brother Francis endear themselves to a commonality characterized by the low-key life in the slums while those of Maya and Wivina endear themselves to another commonality marked off by affluence in the upstream environment that they live. Lefebvre (1991) views everyday life as:

> profoundly related to all activities, and encompasses them with all their differences and their conflicts; it is their meeting place, their bond, their common ground. And it is in everyday life that the sum total of relations which make the human - and every human being - a whole takes its shape and its form (p.97).

To make sense of this novel conception, it is imperative to note that any everyday undertaking in **Tabasamu** as pointed out in the commonalties above constitutes part of the manifestations of everyday activities as explored in local television drama, apparently in different ways. Highmore (2002, p.5) points out that "the everyday life as an object of study sits uncertainly on these two perspectives (the particular and the general)" and that it is important to look at how these range of dualities impact on the everyday life.

The lives and everyday activities of of Wivina, Maya and JB at home, office or the social places that they frequently visit in **Tabasamu** sheds more light on their social formations as well. Wivina, Maya, and J.B are youthful characters in the show whose identity spaces and formations are beleaguered. **Tabasamu**'s representation of youth spaces shows that the everyday life of the youth and the knowledge of these figured spaces play a role in their future identity formations. The notion of the 'figured world' as espoused herein refers to "a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others" (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner & Cain, 1998, p.52). The figured world is therefore characterized by aspects such as behaviours within certain social environments and cultural models. These aspects emphasize on how people make sense of their worlds through simplified cognitive cultural schemes or routines representing their knowledge of objects, situations, events, sequences of events, actions, and sequences of action which characterize the everyday life. These schemes are fundamental in our ability to interpret

the identity of various characters in the show. For instance, JB has a besieged identity throughout the show. Evidently, his identity, as a youth, is affected by his parents and his relationships. JB, the only child of renowned Judges Mr. and Mrs. Phillip, has refused to take a job as an operations manager of a local bank that his father has procured for him. Rather he opted to stick with the job he is passionate about: Photography or "taking photos" as his father calls it. JB's refusal to take his father's job choice leads to acrimony in the family.

The role of parents in shaping and influencing destinies of their children is brought into sharp focus through JB - Judge Phillip's saga in **Tabasamu**. Judge Phillip cannot hide his displeasure at his son's refusal to take a job he has taken the pain to secure for him. He wonders how JB can have "the audacity to refuse a better paying job and opt for taking photos!" (**Tabasamu**, Episode 7). Implicit in this whole saga is Phillip's everyday reputation in society. JB's family is held in high esteem in society because both his parents are judges of the high court and are leading an affluent lifestyle. To ensure that his son's future is secure and the family's legacy maintained, Judge Phillip uses his fame and influence to procure a job for his son without following proper recruitment procedures. Ironically, Judge Phillip's act is an affront to the practices of law, which he is a strong defender and etches his living from. To his utter disbelief, the 'boy' does not fancy the offer but opts to do photography, a decision which will dent Judge Phillips everyday reputation as judge. To him, JB is a disgrace not only to the family but to him as an individual in that he (JB) has put the family's reputation on the line. Judge Phillip therefore moves swiftly to avert this situation by first asking his wife

to persuade him. When the persuasions failed to yield any fruits, he decided to deny him all the luxuries as his final attempt to make him succumb to the pressure of taking the job. This also fails as JB opts to leave home and rent his own house.

While living on his own, JB receives no assistance from his father. His mother, however, does not give up on him. She, for instance, relentlessly begs her husband, Judge Phillip, to give their son a chance to pursue his own life in the career that he has chosen. She goes ahead to urge her husband to support their son by opening him a studio fitted with modern photography equipment, which Judge Phillip declines without giving it a careful thought. JB's mother's efforts to persuade her husband to rescind his decision regarding their only child are in tandem with the practices of a great mother in society as espoused by Campbell (2008):

> She is the incarnation of the promise of perfection; the soul's assurance that, at the conclusion of its exile in a world of organic inadequacies, the bliss that once was known will be known again: the comforting, the nourishing, the "good" mother-young and beautiful-who was known to us, and even tasted, in the remotes past. (p. 111).

Campbell's observation on creative aspects of a mother points to the ideal mother who embodies all the qualities of a good mother as perceived by a child while growing up. An ideal mother nurtures and protects all her children. She never abandons them in their hour of need even though they might be good or bad given that they both spring from her womb. Thus, Campbell (2008) views an ideal mother as a source of life to everything that lives and one whose capabilities have been tested with time. These

descriptions befits JB's mother as she struggles to convince her husband to change his stand on JB. She further makes attempts to reach out to JB, locates where he lives and secretly helps him out.

The fact that JB has a fraught personal identity is not in question despite the fact that he has moved out of his parents' home. It is not only his father who poses a threat to his personal identity but also his girlfriend Gabriela, commonly referred to as Gabby throughout the play. In episode 8, JB narrates his experiences with Gabby to his friend Kamenyi, who he meets in a local pub. He narrates to Kamenyi the troubles he has had to endure with his girlfriend who he even does not know well. He openly admits to his friend that he neither understands her background nor how they got together. He laments that he does not understand her personality at all and has no idea what to do with her.

JB's revelations are part of the many aspects of a beleaguered youth identity in the vagaries of everyday lives of the youth. Strikingly, however, is the representational space upon which JB narrates his story – in a pub. Most importantly, the narrative is not told over a bottle of beer but as they are playing a game of cards. The story therefore cannot be misconstrued as being under the influence of alcohol. Thus, the game of cards can be viewed as a representational space upon which the story is framed. Consequently, the game helped JB to dialogue with his inner self and then share the dialogue with his peers. In this way, the credibility of the story is enhanced as the game is seen as a therapeutic tool that opens up JB's tormented soul.

Gallelli and Fanelli (2010) point out that through games, an individual dialogues with himself/herself and is thus "able to bring out, alongside his/her own ordinary self, those aspects of the self which are not expressed in everyday life, and to confront these constructively" (p. 105). A game thus enriches the process of definition of one's own personal identity, enabling the individual to (re)interpret his/her own experience in the new narrative space. In this way, **Tabasamu** fosters the self-searching process through which an individual defines his/her own locus in relation to the ongoing exploration of what the self may become within particular spatial and temporal frames. Through the game, JB assesses himself and his relationship with Gabby. He remembers the embarrassment that Gabby caused him while taking photos of a group of models for a television advertisement (**Tabasamu**, Episode 7). He elucidates to his friend how he had a difficult time calming her down, explaining to her that he had no affair with the models but was only doing his job. He agonised at how she tore some of the models' clothes while she sprinkled others with water and paint messing up with the photo session.

Noteworthy in JB's narrative is the exploration of his relationship with Gabby within a time-space framework. The framework enables his friend Kamenyi to share his experience within the spatio-temporal dimensions, which no longer coincide with specificities of place and time. Gallelli and Fanelli (2010) further opine:

> The disappearance of the main coordinates of the game gives access to a subjectivity that is not bound to the spatial context and that is free to adopt and experience manifold selves, which can be temporary, partial, contradictory and divided, within the various positionings and the social and cognitive connections provided by the virtual reality. (p. 106).

The above observation points to the fact that as participants in the game shift their interest to their own narrative, they only continue playing as a mere formality considering that they are immersed in exploring themselves through the narrative. This is evident as both JB and his friend Kamenyi are actively involved in the story and even Kamenyi attempts to offer various suggestions to get JB out of his present predicament. Kamenyi sympathizes with JB's ordeals at the hands of Gabby but wonders why he has to put up with her. He posits:

> **Kamenyi**: What is it that Gabby gives you that other ladies do not have? Why can't you drop her and pick a more decent and mature lady?"
>
> **JB**: "Shhhhh, you don't know Kamenyi. I have tried to leave her but each time I try I find it rather difficult to do it because she threatens to commit suicide. Gabby is an enigma to me!" (**Tabasamu**, Episode 8).

Hence, the game of cards provides JB and his friend a symbolic space where they align their fears, share their relationships' experiences, acquire knowledge of the world, and accomplish important processes in self-identity building. JB's narrative therefore serves to specifically show the turbulent spaces that the youth operate in.

JB's narrative dimension can be linked with the mind's ability not only to discern but also to create meanings and make sense of the world around an individual. The mind's

decisive ability helps people to understand the meaning of the experiences they directly or indirectly go through or simply witness. JB's narrative is therefore a thought structure used to order his social reality. However, through the narrative, JB shows reservations in bringing the Gabby narrative to an end by simply breaking up with her. As long as Gabby is in his life, the narrative will continue in different directions as we witness later on when the narrative is complicated with Gabby stabbing him (**Tabasamu**, Episode 11) and/or meeting his parents (**Tabasamu**, Episode 13) . As a consequence, JB's narrative thought reveals a spatial-temporal frame through which a harmonious relation is established between him, as the narrator and his friends, as an audience that actively participates in the (de)construction of the narrative's meaning(s).

Through JB's escapades in everyday life, we are able to see how the youth struggle to form their own personal identities in a figured world. JB's experiences, as a representation of the youth, shows how the self is always in conflict with its surrounding social environment as a result of the way in which every individual interprets and (re)constructs his/her actual spaces of existence. The notion of a figured world thus, helps the individual to interpret various concepts like cultural models or schemes embedded in their spaces of existence as important constituents of their identity formation. The figured world also helps individuals like JB and Kamenyi to conceptually come to construct their self-identities in their socio-cultural and historical environment. In this way, youthful characters in **Tabasamu** are historically, socially, and culturally constructed and their personal identities are realised through their everyday interactions and how they operate in their localized and temporal spaces.

The everyday space is also evident in other local television dramas such as **Papa Shiladula. Papa Shirandula**, which means "father of Shirandula", is a comic television drama that explores escapades of the main character, Papa Shirandula, who poses as an IT manager to his family yet he is a watchman. The everyday in **Papa Shirandula** is partly captured by Papa's reflexive habit of leaving home to work in a suit, while on his way changes into his uniform and then proceeds with the journey to work. In the evening after work, he repeats the same by getting into the bush changing from his uniforms into his suit then proceeds home. This therefore constitutes his everyday routine. The repetition of this daily routine constitutes a realm of "common-sense", habitual performance which offers a deep understanding of the character and identity of Papa - that of a charade. Papa's facade is further highlighted in disparate discourses with his mutual friend Njoro from whom he easily gets favour, cover and support.

Accordingly, Kebaya (2015) observes that **Papa Shirandula** offers Kenyans an opportunity to reflect and laugh at and/or about their society. The show employs laughter to expose the pain of low income earners in the country, explores ethnic identities and provides a site upon which the essence of personhood and nationhood is performed. Ethnic undertones are clearly portrayed by the heavy accents, behaviours and mannerisms of Shirandula, Njoro, Winbroda, and Naliaka among other characters. Due to this, **Papa Shirandula** appeals to majority of Kenyans based on how it foregrounds ethnic realities and stereotypes that are endemic in modern day Kenya. This situation concurs with Bakhtin's (1984) argument that the power to laugh, and the right

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to be laughed at, is the minimal constituent of 'subaltern' people who never miss any opportunity to entertain themselves.

2.4 The Family Space: Mother-in-Law

Local television drama's predilection to analogies of the everyday life in society is evident in how some of the dramas appropriate and perform the family space as a basic unit of society. Genre notwithstanding, this section sets out to examine how local television drama depicts and appropriates the family space using **Mother-in-law**. The centrality of the family space in Kenyan television drama is not a new concept since for decades now local dramas have made use of the family set up to foreground conflicts that exist in various binaries such as individual desire and family interest, modernity and tradition, family turmoil and national turmoil among others. Binaries such as the pursuit of romance and maintenance of the family's social status are often polarized and intertwined with the development of the story. **Mother-in-law** captures lightheartedly the vagaries of everyday life of ordinary citizens in the family space. The show explores social, cultural, and economic issues affecting ordinary families in their attempts to live their daily lives.

In **Mother-in-law**, the notion of the family which is traditionally considered a domestic and conservative space is foregrounded and presented as being in a synecdochic relationship with the society and the nation. In this trope of synecdoche, the family with its parallel hierarchical structures is seen as a microcosm of the state. The confusion and indecisiveness that is evident among various characters in **Mother-in-law** is a replica of the manner in which the national leadership operates. The "house" and the ''family'',

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the "tribe" and the "nation" as well as the relationship between Mwamba and his wife

Charity, his three sons and daughters-in-law and the grandchildren gives immediacy to

the panoramic view of the state. Noteworthy is the notion that the family space mirrors

that of the nation and how other modes of quotidian identification of family practices

are invariably imbricated within routine ways of being national. Drawing parallels

between the everyday family practices and the national practice helps us to recognise

ways in which national identity is differently scaled. This position is informed by

Edinsor (2002) who argues that local rhythms are often co-ordinated and synchronised

with national rhythms, local customs may be considered part of a national cultural

mosaic, national institutions penetrate local worlds, and national news systems collect

information from the localities which make up the nation. This interrelational process

shapes shared sentiments and sensations, forms of common sense, and widely

disseminated representations to provide a matrix of dense signification.

The image of the family space as an allegory of the national space is enhanced by

orderly governance of society not merely in the strict supervision of the family but in

the head of the family's own mastery of his position and role. Mwamba, the head of the

family in **Mother-in-law**, displays excellent crisis management skills as his wisdom is

called upon many a times to save his family. In most of these instances, he overrules

decisions made by his wife, Charity, amidst her protests to enhance family cohesion and

unity. Charity sometimes makes decisions that favour her preferred son Charles, or

Charlie as he is commonly known throughout the T.V drama. Charity's decisions, often,

put Charlie at loggerheads with his other brothers. In such cases, Mwamba's wisdom is

called upon more often, rendering Charity's decisions a nullity as he decides to the contrary. The relationship between the family space and its immediate environment in **Mother-in-law** is seen as being isomorphic in its structure and functioning as portrayed by Mwamba's family. The Mwambas have a direct mastery and control of their family space but not their social environment in many respects. Their space is shrouded in mystery as they have maintained minimal or little contact with their neighbours. Often, the Mwamba family is depicted as being aloof from many activities in their neighbourhood. The link between the family spaces as a microcosm of the state is portrayed as an on-going organic connection in which the smallest unit contributes to the stability of the whole. Thus, the familial synecdoche is much more than a symbolic relationship, being endowed, here, with agency.

Douglas (1996) points out that "television families are seen to offer lessons about appropriate family life and, in a more general sense, to affect the way in which people think about the family" (p. 676). This observation points out that while watching television programs such as television drama, members of the public have a chance to reflect on their own families. Thus, in foregrounding the individual desires in the family, **Mother-in-law** questions the potency of individual desires within the family space that cause pain and suffering among family members. In one of the episodes of **Mother-in-law** (Episode 33), Charity almost ruins her family by setting her two sons, Robert and Charlie, against each other. Charity advises Charlie to claim ownership of the long stalled family house that is near completion. She claims that Charlie should assume ownership of the house rightfully because he is the last born and that he has

been loyal to the family. This decision angers Robert (Bob) who has contributed so much money towards its completion in the hope that he will move in once the house is completed.

The two brothers (Robert and Charlie) engage in brawl over the inheritance of the house. Their wives are also sacked into the war as they try to outdo each other. Lisa, for instance, asks Robert, her husband, not to give up his claim to the house. She takes the initiative to remind Robert that it was time they moved from his mother's house. For them to do, so there are only two possibilities: rent a house or claim the family house under construction. However, because of the financial challenges that they are facing at the time, it was ideal for Robert to claim the new house. Celina, Charlie's wife, also does the same to her husband. Further, the two women undertake to visit the house separately. Coincidentally, they meet at the new house and tear into each other. In the course of their fighting, Mwambia, their father-in law, who had also visited the house, comes out and separates them. After carefully listening to the stories of the two daughters-in-law, he realizes that they are fighting for the house. To show them that they are fighting for nothing and contrary to Charity's insinuations at the beginning of the episode, he declares that he is renting out the house.

The above episode thrusts the family space into the public limelight indicating that the notion of the family as a domestic sphere is explicitly and/or implicitly impacted on by the family's public status within the social fabric. For example, the issue of property inheritance that is largely a family affair finds its way into the public as the workers and

neighbours get wind of the Mwambas fighting for property. In this way, the family space which is traditionally conceived largely as domestic space is deconstructed and its meaning destroyed as the notion of privacy loses it is meaning with the involvement of the workers and neighbours in the inheritance tussles of the Mwambas. By thrusting the putatively private family space into public sphere, the said episode shows that the family is no longer closed off from the world but is an element of public space intimately linked with its larger environment.

As pointed out above, Lisa's act of taking Robert to their bedroom to discuss the issue of the house is of utter significance in our discussion of the family space as a private sphere. Lisa literally pulls Robert from the public glare to the bedroom, a private space (Episode 33). It is in this private space that she is able to express her fears of Robert losing in his quest to inherit the house under construction if he does not act fast. This observation concurs with Besley (1985) postulations that "the subject has fallen into a "private" domain beneath the social visibility, a space marked with the stigma of social "privation"" (p. 35). The bedroom socially marked and construed as a private space, gives Lisa the requisite privacy to implore her husband to step up his claim for the house once its construction is over.

The flawed porousness of the family space is further attested to by the workers in **Mother-in-law**. The workers are involved in spreading, gossiping, spying and soliciting private family information. Mariah, Charity's house help, leads in this role. She is heavily involved in the circulation of Mwamba's family information to other workers

such as Wanade, the gardener, Ninger, the gatekeeper among others. For instance, the house inheritance saga spreads like bushfire among the workers courtesy of Mariah. She is very crafty and omnipresent in every event. For instance, Mariah is the only one present when Lisa and Celina are fighting over the house. It is worth noting that she still hopes that she could still be married to Charlie with the support of Charity, his mother. She therefore makes sure that she is aware of anything that is happening in the Mwamba family. Mariah sometimes conceives and participates in the slandering that occurs among the Mwamba brothers and their wives. Mariah detests Celina, Charlie's wife, for she considers her a rival. At this juncture, it is quite clear that apart from abstruse matters, the family space is very much conducted in the public space. Hence, little is concealed from the prying eyes or attentive ears of the servants who which might besmirch the reputation of the family as Charity constantly decries throughout the show.

As a Christian, Charity does not fancy any gossip relating to her family's misdemeanors for it apparently portrays her in bad light in the eyes of her fellow Christians. Note-worthy here is that Charity considers herself as a perfect Christian with a perfect family. She, for example, does not take kindly the news that Charlie drunk too much hence failed to find his way home ending up sleeping in a ditch in the neighbourhood (Episode 38). When Charlie finally gets arrested for being drunk and disorderly, she considers that as the devil's work and requests Mwamba to move fast to secure Charlie's release before the news spreads. Ironically, walls do have ears, therefore, the neighbours eventually get wind of Charlie's waywardness. One of the Christian neighbours

immediately comes to console Charity over what has happened to her and to find out whether Charlie has been released; much to Charity's chagrin.

The family space, thus, is portrayed not as a private domain which exists in isolation or in opposition to the public space but as a particular sector of the public sphere. This is revealed through the multihued characters' lives, activities and daily social interactions with their immediate family members, servants and the neighbourhood. Therefore, **Mother-in-law** succeeds in showing how porous the family space is within the Kenyan setup. In the TV drama, there is a clear and often a straightforward intersection between the family space and the national space. This extensive permeability of the public space into the private space and vice versa characterizes contemporary local televised drama in Kenya. This implies that the public character of the family space is prominently figured within the Kenya society as a result of the intersections of these two spaces.

The family space is also manifested in other local television dramas such as **Vitimbi**. **Vitimbi**, which translates to "tricks", "machinations", or "deceptions", is a local comic television drama that features the family of Mzee Ojwang', a hilarious patriarch. As the TV drama depicts, Mzee Ojwang is constantly in trouble with his family because he has either been duped, cheated his wife or his ignorance has been exposed. In this regard, the individual's actions and desires are pitted against family welfare and, in a sense, expose the intrigues that characterize the family space. Often these privileges that are accorded to the head of the family are in conflict with other family members. Thus, as is the case with **Mother-in-law**, **Vitimbi** shows how a family suffers because of unwise

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actions of the head which are as a result of his trickery aimed at his own self-aggrandizement.

The figuration of the family space as a metonymy of the nation is not only depicted in **Mother-in-law** but also in other local television dramas such as **Vitimbi**. **Vitimbi**, for example, is one such local television drama that exploits the figuration of the family space as a representation of the nation. The family of Mzee Ojwang' is presented as representation of the nation. That's to say, Mzee Ojwang's actions in the family space can be read as metaphorical representations of the nation. His position as head of the family is representative of that of the head of the nation. This then raises serious questions regarding his integrity and reliability as leader of the nation. For instance, it is clear that the nation's economy will suffer due to the leader's intrigues as represented in the dwindling fortunes of Mzee Ojwang's hotel when he takes money from there to enjoy with his mistress. Creditors refuse to continue oiling the machine that feeds the nation and the citizens are rendered jobless as symbolized by Mzee Ojwang's workers who are left with nothing rather than roaming about aimlessly. Whereas this episode is predicated on the family space, it should be viewed as a spatial representation of the national administration in the public sphere. The episode epitomizes the fact that the development of any nation flourishes or falters depending on the choices taken by its leadership. Mzee Ojwang's misdemeanors are a representation of poor leadership which makes the general citizenry to suffer as is evident from his workers such as Mogaka in this episode. Equally important is the notion that television drama as an aspect of popular culture must be understood for its multimedia capacities and interrogated for

social referents that they invoke. These social referents are critical in the analysis and understanding popular forms, since like other art forms, they do not occur in a vacuum but rather are created within national contexts which they speak to and potentially shape.

2.5 The Political Space: Mheshimiwa

This section, in various ways, examines how local television drama deploys space as a site for performing, and exploring political power. In this way, television dramas and their actual performances in poeticized spaces such as parliament are seen as gesturing towards what Odhiambo (2008) calls "an explicit putative agency: the struggle against oppression, repression, subjugation, power abuse and exploitation"(p.25). By appropriating political performance spaces, local television dramas help us recognize how dramatic art can be used as a safe space to imagine, dramatize and explore emerging political issues affecting Kenyans.

Parliament as a representational space is figured prominently in **Mheshimiwa**. The space provides the producer with the poetic license to strip bare and lampoon the activities of the Honourable Members, as wielders of power, expose their inadequacies as well as imaginatively admonish them. Nyati, for example, is implicitly admonished when he loses an election contest by Kabaila, an eloquent primary school teacher (**Mheshimiwa**, Episode 6). Nyati, whose name symbolizes, power and magnanimity does not understand how the people of Tumbili constituency can fail to elect him. Nyati fails to notice that Kabaila's entry into politics is through the ecstasy that characterizes

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election times. Kabaila's party of choice is popular at the time and he is elected into political office by virtue of this euphoria without regard to his leadership attributes. His popularity at the grassroots only stems from the fact that teachers in the rural setting are a revered by parents, pupils and villagers.

Mheshimiwa, like other local television dramas, enables the public to gaze at the various ways in which power is consumed by bodies of leaders and consequently the way such powers are (ab)used on the bodies of the people of Tumbili constituency. Abuse of power is clearly foregrounded when Kabaila, fills all CDF positions with his close friends and relatives. General (Hezron), formerly Kabaila's campaign manager, declares himself the chairman of CDF without giving others a chance to express their interest in the post. The other positions in the committee are also dished out to members present in the meeting without proper selection procedures. Immediately he takes over the chairmanship of CDF in Tumbili constituency, General, plots on how to swindle money from the CDF kitty through the payment of projects that are never there or do not ventilate the wishes of the constituents. When the members protest, he uses trickery to silence them. He even goes ahead to convince Mheshimiwa Kabaila not to visit the constituency too often because as he says, "With General, everything is under control" (**Mheshimiwa**, Episode 5). It is in this sense that television dramas can be interpreted as sites for performing power within the political arena.

In the political space, power is essentially functional and is, as Odhiambo (2008) puts it, "a function of performance within specific relations and spaces" (p.29). This is clearly

manifested in **Mheshimiwa** as the honourable members of parliament vary their activities and power performances from one space to another. These power shifts in spacio-temporal frames are portrayed as the MPs move from their constituencies (often rural area), to the city, parliament, parliamentary committees and the high class hotels where they broker deals. Mheshimiwa Kabaila, the hero of Tumbili constituency, experienced power immediately he won the election. He suddenly realized that he has become significantly important and influential overnight. He, for example, brokers a deal of being either appointed minister or assistant minister if he withdraws his candidature for chairman of the powerful finance committee in parliament. Kabaila's power machinations are a clear exemplification of "the body's own Will and Desire" (Odhiambo, 2008, p.29). Thus, Mheshimiwa Kabaila, as character, can be read as a symbolic representation of post-colonial Kenyan leaders who seek self-aggrandizement to the chagrin of their subjects. Further, his withdrawal from the contest figures what happens in the Kenyan parliament where parliamentarians canvass and trade various committee positions without due considerations such as requisite knowledge and skills for the position.

Mheshimiwa, therefore, exemplifies the fact that there is a political stake in space in the sense that it is the medium, the instrument and objective of struggles and conflicts (Lefebvre, 2000, p.35-36). This is portrayed in the spatial figurations of parliament in the drama. The figuration of parliament in **Mheshimiwa**, though regarded as the highest symbol of representation of the people, is endemic of political machinations and underhand deals. Often, these cut throat deals leave the involved parties with a myriad

of expectations, often leading to battered souls. This is exactly what befalls Mheshimiwa Kabaila who waits in vain for the elusive assistant ministerial appointment after entering into a deal with other members of parliament.

The intersection between the countryside and the city is also figured in the political space. This situation is best exemplified by the Kabailas. After winning the election contest, Mheshimiwa Kabaila leaves his rural constituency to the city to take his official position as an M.P. He was accompanied by his wife Magdalina Kabaila, who has hastily resigned as a nursery school teacher, and his two children. This spatial movement from the rural area to the metropolis is significant because the Kabailas are set to experience a totally new life in an urban area as opposed to the rural life they have known all their lives. According to Lefebvre (2000), the urban daily life is where the stakes of a revolutionary struggle are found. These struggles for and in the urban space is symbolic given that the space is what various social groups and classes are competing for. This is exactly what the Kabailas encounter as they struggle to settle. In their first evening in the city (**Mheshimiwa**, Episode 3), the Kabailas were attacked by thugs as they are looking for a place to spend a night. To this end, they (the Kabailas) are ushered into a new world where struggle is the order of the day.

Language is another important aspect that is predominantly figured in the political space. Language is used as a powerful tool for political manipulation. Language is "system of values - its suppositions, its geography, its concept of history, of difference, and its myriad gradations of distinction - becomes the system upon which social,

economic and political discourses are grounded" (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 1995, p.283). Thus, the interpolative functions of language in the political space serve to privilege the Honourable Members, as wielders of power, compared to ordinary citizens. At this level of language use, a lot of tact and strategy is needed for the sole purpose of maintaining power domination. Linguistic strategies like use of metaphor, similes, hyperbole, symbolism, humour and dialogue are extensively used by politicians such as Mheshimiwa Kabaila, Nyati, and Habbakuk to convince, deceive and/or persuade the citizens to support them in their courses (**Mheshimiwa**, Eposide 7 & 10). The use of language for individual gains provides the very language with authoritative power to infiltrate and influence the minds of the citizens to act in a certain way, often in favour of those in power or those seeking the power.

In the political scene, politicians use their language skills as a power tool to keep off their competitors and to gain support from citizens on a regular basis. In **Mheshimiwa**, the power of political language is heavily underlined. General, for example, uses his language skills to persuade the CDF committee to accept a proposal to purchase a tractor that is aimed at jump-starting development projects in Tumbili constituency (**Mheshimiwa**, Episode 7). Despite the fact that the tractor is neither urgent nor is it required at that time, General argues that Mheshimiwa Kabaila personally had asked him to ensure that the tractor is acquired soonest possible, though this is mere fabrication. General also use the same language to keep off Mheshimiwa Kabaila from coming to Tumbili constituency saying everything is under control despite widespread protests from the Tumbilians about the kind of development projects initiated in the

constituency (**Mheshimiwa**, Episode 5). In this regard, language is figured as one of the main locus of oppressive power within the political space.

2. 6 Chapter Summary

The crux of this chapter has been to examine manifestations of space in local television drama in Kenya. The chapter aimed at identifying and situating the discourse on space within local television drama as the central focus of this study using **Tabasamu**, **Mother-in-law**, and **Mheshimiwa**. The everyday, family, and political spaces were examined in this chapter. Various characters who operate, live in and whose social lives are impacted by the various spaces have been examined and their role in the spatial formations highlighted. From the analysis, it emerges that space is figured differently in a number of local television dramas. The different spaces analysed impacted on the social formations, activities, operations, behaviours and mannerism of various characters who operated or lived in the said spaces. The chapter further revealed that the historical trajectories of television dramas analysed be it diachronic or synchronic are straddling between private and public spaces manifestly as a result of artistic interpellations which are both individual and collective. Ultimately, it emerges that spatial figurations in local television drama influences the nature of identity formations, power relations, relationships and material wellbeing of various characters in the shows.

The next chapter focuses on the invention and (re)configuration of space in local television drama as portrayed in the selected dramas for this study.

CHAPTER 3

(RE)CONFIGURATION OF SPACE IN KENYAN TELEVISION DRAMA

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the study dwelt on spatial trajectories in local television drama where we demonstrated various ways in which space is etched into and realized in the dramas. The chapter showed that space figures similarly and/or differently in various local television dramas, genre notwithstanding. In line with objective two of the study, this chapter probes text(ualitie)s of local television drama by looking at how local television drama conceptually construct and (re)configure spaces. The chapter proceeds by examining the intersections between these imagined spaces, as predicated in local dramas, and corresponding spaces in society. By looking at the relationship between spaces in the dramas and their corresponding spaces in the real world, the chapter aims at showing how these spaces are imaginatively constructed and (re)configured in television drama in Kenya. Beyond interrogating the relationships in these spaces, the chapter delineates characters that are sketched into these spaces showing how instrumental they are in not only (re)configuring but also injecting specific characteristics and agency into these poeticized spaces. To do this, the chapter focuses on:

    i.   Framing and dramatizing the Kenya nation

    ii.   Metaphorical mappings and reconfigurations of social referents

    iii.   Reconfiguring sex(uality) discourses within the everyday social space

Local television drama is increasingly becoming a common feature in the domestic spaces in many households in Kenya. This observation is in consonance with Amutabi (2013) and Musila (2010) who argue that local dramas dominate discussions in most households in Kenya. In a sense, these discourses, recreate and revisit a people's perceptions of the spaces and places that they daily inhabit as manifested in the local dramas. Like other popular cultural productions, television drama originates from specific contexts and debates over the culture of a people are necessarily bound by temporal as well as spatial considerations. Hence, the relationship between cultural forms and places where they occur may be symbolic for places help shape cultural forms while cultural forms are in turn crucial in mediating "understanding of space and places" (Connell and Gibson, 2003, p.2).

This chapter looks at the social production of space as intertwined with history and that these spaces are influenced, informed and/or shaped by certain forces in the social world. This in turn brings to the fore the nexus between history and space as it essentially serves to open up history to interpretive literature that considers not only the geometry of spatial structures but most importantly, the many varied layers of the cultural and social landscapes in question (Soja, 1989). Consequently, this chapter contends that an idea of space-time analysis demands a re-examination in which space and time are clearly distinguished in rendering the meaning(s) embedded in the spaces. Accordingly, reference is made, for example, to Bakhtin's concept of chronotopes, Lefebvre's social production of space and Foucaultian genealogies. It is thus not surprising that in the course of my analysis, language lends itself to an expansive

investment of the chronotope, the literary space-time, in what could be referred to as an imagination of the deep space.

3.2 Framing and Dramatizing the Kenyan Nation

The section examines how local television dramatists understand, frame and dramatize the nation. It also delineates how, as part of popular culture, television drama plays a role in creating an informed citizenry and critiques the nation. Hence, as the principal task in this section, relationships between local television drama and the nation is interrogated. A key way in which this can be achieved is by assessing ways in which contemporary television drama in Kenya function as a space through which national myths and public experiences are contested, invented, mediated and reconfigured. This will then allow this study to bring together spatial threads in the local television drama and their relationship to national politics. To this end, connections are established on how local television drama becomes a site through which contemporary artistes and their audience experience and mediate national politics, sketch various ways in which the public engages with power, show how the practice of political leadership is discerned in the country and finally show how television drama reconfigures official discourses of the nation. Data for analysis in this section is mainly drawn from **Mheshimiwa** which this study considers seminal in initiating the sort of creative spatial maneuver of framing and dramatizing the nation hence functioning as political critique of the nation. The show's mode of political critique abets in concretizing local television drama as a platform through which Kenyans formulate a creative critique of political power in the nation.

Mheshimiwa is read as an attempt by the artist to frame a national dialogue where issues such as political leadership, mismanagement of public resources, among others, are debated. On the basis of this, cogent interpretations of **Mheshimiwa**, as a television drama, can be made against the backdrop of prevailing political realities in Kenya today. The basic premise of this section is that local television drama is a viable site for imagining the nation (Anderson, 1991). Presumably, by reflecting and moulding thoughts and practices of a nation, television drama can overcome obstacles to unity, corruption, nepotism, and ethnicity and help to formulate and reconfigure ideals that the public envisions the country to embrace. Additionally, it is presumed that television drama can offer incisive criticism of political leadership, thereby steering the political practice away from excesses that endanger wishes of the people.

In reading **Mheshimiwa** as one of the many ways in which creative artists in local television drama depict their understandings of the nation, this section proceeds from an indulgence that national space is where ideas of the nation are produced and consumed, where material and cultural artefacts that hold important symbolic positions are located and their symbolism strengthened through official narratives of the nation. Thus, in **Mheshimiwa** certain specific geopolitical markers such as parliament, constituencies, elections and Constituency Development Fund (CDF) can be seen as signifying 'nationness'. While thinking about the significance of publicly revered symbols and their importance in the discourse of nationhood, parliament, for example, stands out as one such symbol of nationhood. This is so because it's in parliament where politics and

issues pertaining to the governance of the nation are debated. Consequently, emerging public consciousness of the nation can be seen on the basis of how the dramatist depicts spatial signifiers of the nation such as parliament.

The artist's framing of the nation in **Mheshimiwa** is predicated upon the parliamentary space, where national politics is acted out. The title of the show, **Mheshimiwa**, which loosely translates to 'The Honourable Member of parliament', tells it all. The term 'The Honourable Member' is used to refer to Members of Parliament. It therefore follows that the show*, **Mheshimiwa**,* is grounded on the conduct of Members of Parliament. And when the opening episode begins, it instantaneously paints the picture to viewers of the dramatist's conceptualization of what a 'Mheshimiwa' as a national leader, is like. Again, **Mheshimiwa** is also about refiguring the ugly aspects of Members of Parliament that have not only cast parliament in bad light but are detrimental to the overall development of a nation. In singling out such ugly scenes, the TV drama exposes the ulterior motives of members of parliament in the name of representing their constituencies. Therefore, the appellation 'Mheshimiwa' is in no doubt derived from the societal reference to a Member of Parliament, but can also be understood as a satirical representation of their activities.

The fact that in Kenya, the title 'Mheshimiwa' has multiple meanings depending on the social space upon which it is played out cannot be gainsaid. A number of factors such as the activities and utterances of the honourable members and the audience's (dis)approval of such activities and utterances attest to this assertion. Therefore,

Mheshimiwa, as a television drama, is central to this interrogation because it insightfully burrows into political practices and discourses in Kenya thereby not only capturing but also exposing the ills of our elected leaders. Indeed, the show vividly captures Kenya's corrupt political culture which is very well known to the average Kenyan. In it there are politicians, like Habakkuk, Kabaila, Jiwe and Nyati, whose interests range only between their own bellies, immediate families and mistresses; only recoursing to their constituencies at election times. The satirical presentation of the parliamentarians' practices in the show invokes laughter, shock and trepidation in the audience. By exposing these political ills, **Mheshimiwa** attests to Mbembe's (1992) observation that "people by their laughter kidnap power and force it as if by accident, to examine its vulgarity" (p.8). **Mheshimiwa** is, actually, a political rendering of the post colony in which the politicians' quest for wealth and prestige "contains within it, elements of crudeness and the bizarre that the official order tries hard to hide, but which the ordinary people bring to its attention, often unwittingly" (Mbembe, 1992, p.8-9).

As it is, two critical questions that **Mheshimiwa** implicitly raises are: First, what changes members of parliament once they take office? and second, why does the national leadership buttress these bizarre activities by politicians? Of course, these questions arise partly out of bad political practices in which whoever gets into politics knows pretty well that once (s)he assumes office, the first major project is to recoup the money spent in the election campaigns. This in turn has "the potential to put in the nation under siege and threaten its existence" (Kanyinga and Okello, 2010, p.4). Thus, what we need to see in **Mheshimiwa**, first and foremost, is the artist's ingenious attempt

in representing, truthfully, the political greed that ails the nation. This study suggests then, that by sheer artistic representation, in which political realities of the Kenyan state are reconfigured, the artist is staging a 'counter-narrative' and in the process generating a 'counter-discourse' regarding national formation.

This study considers the above situation as a 'counter-narrative' precisely because the show disregards the official discourse of the nation where members of Parliament are often viewed as selfless, hardworking and honest leaders. By the mere fact that it rejects this official discourse, the show generates, a 'counter-discourse' which challenges the official discourse of the nation. In other words, the concept of nationalism in Kenya which is riddled and emasculated by corrupt practices by state agents such as national leaders who look for alternative ways to quickly enrich themselves while in power, is re-inscribed in **Mheshimiwa** through artistic imagination. This means that in reconstructing and staging national political practices through local television drama, the show assumes "the form of popular thought as means of contesting power" (Odhiambo, 1999, p.38).

A closer look at the artistic trajectory of **Mheshimiwa** demonstrates that, other than allegorizing national desires, it foregrounds individual desires. The TV drama portrays individual desires as a subversion of those of the nation and grounded on the need to acquire more and more wealth. This indicates that **Mheshimiwa** is framed as a creative engagement with the individual as well as the national form. In doing this, the drama employs an interesting pun on the idioms of corruption: my people. "My people" as a

pun is heavily alluded to in the show and is constantly invoked by various characters -
particularly those in power, such as Mheshimiwa Kabaila, Habakkuk and Nyati - for
their own selfish interests. For example, Mheshimiwa Kabaila says "if I am given
akaportifolio like that of assistant minister, my people will be very happy. In fact they
will love it" (**Mheshimiwa**, Episode 3). In other words, my people as a pun, on the one
hand, casts a sense of belonging while on the other hand, it invokes a sense of collective
identity. The use of the collective identity here is symbolizes a shared responsibility that
the people of Tumbili constituency should be ready to shoulder.

The most interesting bit in this pun is the deliberate way in which the surplus meaning
around the pun lampoons discourses of corruption among honourable members of
parliament for their preoccupation with eating and the stomach (Mbembe, 1992 &
Bayart, 1993). Both Mbembe and Bayart argue that the term eating is critical in power
discourses in postcolonial Africa. Metaphors such as the national cake which were
coined at independence to mirror national development, as Nyairo (2005) points out,
have not only lost their meanings but are subverted and have become vulgarized clichés.
They are understood in literal and practical terms as harbingers of corruption; a
corruption that thrives on the avaricious exploitation of the state and its resources for the
accumulation of wealth by a few individuals (Nyairo, 2005, p.205).

In line with Mbembe's (1992) framework of exposure of the vulgarity of eating in
postcolonial states, **Mheshimiwa** satirises public officials whose understanding of their
role in office does not go beyond self-aggrandizement and never takes into account the

needs of others. The heated exchanges during the formation of the CDF committee at Tumbili constituency paint the picture starkly:

> **Mheshimiwa Kabaila**: Tuna majina mangapi tunayotarajia? (How many names are we expecting?)
>
> **Alfayo**: We have Josephat…
>
> **Magdalina**: (Interrupts) Hehehehe. Nilikuwa nimesahau my cousin (I had forgotten my cousin). He needs to be in this committee. He has such brilliant ideas.
>
> **Alfayo**: Huyo mtu mwenye hajui kusoma, hajui kuandika, atawezaje kazi? (How will he be able to work yet he doesn't know how to read and write?)
>
> **Petronilla**: (to magdalina) Really! What do you think you are doing? It is unfair that you have three people in the CDF committee when I have none.
>
> **Magdalina**: Funga mdomo wewe mwanamke. Hata sijui unafanya nini hapa… (Shut up. I even don't know what you are doing here.)
>
> **Petronilla**: (sikiza- listen) Mimi sio Malaya na mimi sio mwanamke. Mimi ni Petronila. Mheshimiwa, tell your wife, mwambie, pesa ya Kampeini ulitoa wapi? kama hukutoa kwa this maendeleo ya wanawake treasurer that you love to hate. (I am neither a prostitute nor just a woman. I am Petronila. Please tell your wife where you got the campaign money if not from me.)
>
> **Magdalina**: shut up, loose mouth. I don't want you anywhere near here. Get out….
>
> **Mheshimiwa Kabaila**: (to Magdalina) You know you can't force these people to do things our way. We have to listen to them.
>
> **Magdalina**: You don't know the kind of money that comes to CDF. We need somebody to manage it well.
>
> **Mheshimiwa Kabaila**: But look, Josephat cannot be the chairman when we have chairman hapa (referring to Hezron). Kumbuka chairman has been with us throughout the campaigns na yeye ndiye alikuja kwa ofisi yangu akaniambia nisimame M.P.(Remember chairman has stood with us throughout the campaign period and he is the one who encouraged me to contest).

> **Magdalina**: Kwa hivyo that means atakuwa chairman kila
> mahali. He is the chairman of your party, kwani
> huko hawamlipi vizuri? (Does that mean that he
> becomes the chairman of everything? Does that
> imply that party chairmanship does not pay well?)
> (**Mheshimiwa**, Episode 3)

The jostling for positions in the CDF committee as is evident in the above excerpt
shows that self-interest compounded by the sheer need to have like-minded people in
certain positions regardless of their qualifications is a major impediment to
development. As is evident from the excerpt, Josephat, does not know how to read and
write but he is strongly proposed by Magdalina into the CDF committee in order to
protect her interests: the dire need to control CDF money. This is what she implicitly
refers to when she says "manage it well" in the above conversation regardless of the fact
that Josephat is illiterate. At this juncture, it is imperative to note that appointments to
CDF committees across the country cannot escape the eye of any average Kenyan
citizen. This is so because such appointments have sparked controversy for the simple
reason that Members of Parliament sometimes flout public appointment procedures and
go ahead to appoint their own relatives and cronies, to the distaste of the public.

To this end, in **Mheshimiwa**, the artist has succeeded in creatively foregrounding the
national political culture. This supposition concurs with the point that Mbembe (1992)
makes in the articulation of ways in which the ruled facilitate and participate in the
performance of state power, replicating its codes in their everyday practices and
churning out new idioms to graphically name their nation's political culture. This, in my
opinion, is the reason as to why **Mheshimiwa** is read as a dramatization of the Kenyan

political culture. The TV drama functions as an alternative space upon which the public imaginatively and exposes corrupt political practices in society. Since the dramatization of the political culture is from the margins, the drama not only reconfigures but also contributes to national political practices by highlighting key issues that impinge on nationhood such as canvassing for ministerial positions seldom considered in official narratives of the nation.

By figuring corrupt political practices, **Mheshimiwa** engages with the national discourse by foregrounding aspects that have crippled national development. In this way, the image of the politicians is subverted from its usual place of "honour" and reconfigured as an object of ridicule concerned with besmirched pursuits of corruption whose local euphemism is 'eating' (Wa Mungai 2010). Among such practices are the constant schemes and connivance by those in power to swindle the general public and, in the process, turning development to where 'real food is' as is evident in Polycarp's telephone conversation with Mheshimiwa Kabaila:

> **Polycarp**: Mheshimiwa kumbuka kuwaambia hao watu wa CDF kwamba they need to prioritize the buying of tractors first. (Horourable remember to inform the members of the CDF committee that they need to prioritize the buying of tractors first.)
> **Mheshimiwa Kabaila**: Polycarp, I told you we need water and electricity urgently not tractors in this area.
> **Polycarp:**Mheshimiwa sikiza na unisikize vizuri. (Honourable, Listen and listen very carefully). I have seen people like you who have been there. Whose interest is spending a whole day wanting to please everyone only to retire to a very poor future.
> **Mheshimiwa Kabaila:** Oh please. I don't want to be damn rich. May be stinking rich. No, no please.
> $\qquad\qquad\qquad$ (**Mheshimiwa**, Episode 3)

As is evident from the above conversation, Mheshimiwa Kabaila's reaction and resistance to Polycarp's proposal to ask the CDF committee to prioritize and endorse the buying of tractors can be read as a lone voice of reason amidst a morass that is founded on self-interest. In resisting Polycarp's suggestion, Kabaila lives to his election billing as the hero of Tumbili constituency. Kabaila's lone voice of reason is further amplified in his maiden speech in parliament thus:

> … Mr. Speaker sir, the people of Tumbili constituency walk long distances in order to access the district hospital. The roads are very bad. This in turn causes fatal loss of lives because most of the people die before they are attended to in hospital. If you ask me, Mr. Speaker sir, I'd rather have hospitals one kilometre apart. Same to schools. Mr. Speaker sir, like when wives try to outdo each other much to the satisfaction of the man, the many schools and hospitals will compete with each other and in the process the standards of education and health care will go up, much to the satisfaction of the people of Tumbili constituency.
>
> (**Mheshimiwa**, Episode 4)

The above excerpt shows that Mheshimiwa Kabaila is development conscious and ventilates the plight of his people. He, thus, outlines what the people need in order to spur development in Tumbili constituency. However, in my own view, **Mheshimiwa** fails to develop this perspective to its logical end, especially on how to manage small time expectations. In this, one wonders whether the 'lone voice' figure, like that of Kabaila, can achieve the onerous task of saving the tainted image of nationhood. To this end, **Mheshimiwa** foregrounds the seemingly perpetual temporariness not only of lone figures like Kabaila but the nation itself, which is always caught in this temporality.

Ironically, Kabaila's logical position fades like a passing cloud as he succumbs to corrupt political practices. This is evident in his conversation with Mheshimiwa Habakkuk:

> **Mheshimiwa Kabaila**: I was in a CDF committee last week. You know everyone wants to be in the CDF committee. I am now trying to harmonize these figures and see who fits where.
> **Mheshimiwa Habakkuk**: So that you can have something for the wallet.
> **Mheshimiwa Kabaila**: Exactly. The wallet must be catered for. Otherwise why are we working? (Conversation is dropped as Magdalina walks in)
> (**Mheshimiwa**, Episode 4).

The above conversation shows that Kabaila has quickly learnt the ropes, hence his change of tune. This in turn indicates that temporality does not hold as he allows personal interests to override his reasoning. The heroic grandeur that catapulted him to power as Member of Parliament for Tumbili constituency disappears immediately he gives in to the corrupt demands that are synonymous to the political culture. This singular experience therefore serves as a metonymic figuration of national anxieties and failures that are being repeated even with change of political leadership. Thus, in **Mheshimiwa**, the postcolonial nation is framed as a space of tension between promises and betrayals, a split and a share of emotions between the optimism of a good future and the nagging uncertainties of the present realities which are occasioned by a corrupt political culture.

In this way, **Mheshimiwa** foregrounds how graft in public institutions is crippling development by simply turning the discourse on development to the direction of where 'real food is'. This turning not only sabotages but also reconfigures the narrative of development to the ruthless corollary dictum 'you eat where you work' often used in Kenya to justify corrupt activities. This is evident in the conversation between Polycarp and Lynn in Mheshimiwa Kabaila's parliamentary office. Polycarp is complaining of Mheshimiwa Kabaila's lack of commitment and cooperation to see through the deal of buying tractors:

> **Polycarp:** Just imagine I bought Mheshimiwa Kabaila dinner on my own account. Lakini bado hakuingiana kwa box (But he has not agreed). He is supposed to be in town right now but sijui yuko wapi (I don't know where he is). Really I don't know what is wrong with this man! Huyu mtu ni mhard sana. Yeye ako na bahati sana. Lakini sijui ni kwa nini haelewi. Sielewi why he doesn't understand kwamba siasa ni biashara. Wacha nikwambie, akiendelea hivyo, atakuwa akiona watu na vitambi kwa dirisha! (This man is very difficult. He is very lucky. But I neither know nor understand why he doesn't get it that politics is business. Let me tell you, if he continues this way, he will see others' tummies through the window).
>
> **Lynn:** Siwezi taka kuimagine kuona Mheshimiwa Kabaila na kitambi. Atakapojaribu kuingia kwa gari, tumbo yake ndio tu atakuwa anapigia honi, pipipipipipi. (I can't imagine seeing honourable Kabaila's pot-belly! The car will start hooting when he will try to board it.)
>
> **Polycarp:** Just imagine kama hii deal nilikuwa nimechorea ya CDF, jamaa angejipata na 4 million shillings pesa taslimu lakini anaendelea kulala akingojea kamshahara. … (Just imagine this CDF plan went through as I arranged, he would have pocketed Kshs. 4 million but let him continue sleeping while waiting for his salary).
>
> (**Mheshimiwa**, Episode 5)

The above conversation shows that Polycarp is deliberately refiguring and buttressing the language of graft. In this, he implicitly equates politics to business where graft abounds and shows that the faint hearted, like Mheshimiwa Kabaila, may not survive. Consequently, **Mheshimiwa** pushes viewers to rethink the extent to which graft has been institutionalized in public offices on the one hand, and the more brutal exploitation of individuals, the state and the public resources on the other. In my opinion, the show portrays the riddle of corruption as a moral problem situated somewhere between eroded personal morality and lack of accountability occasioned by shunning structures put in place to effectively monitor the use of public resources.

The graft that **Mheshimiwa** explores is truly a national culture that is rampant in various institutions of government. From small acts in everyday spaces to practices in the highest office, graft paves way for disorder that is truly instrumentalised (Chabal and Daloz, 1999). Core in this disorder is corruption as a critical dynamic which dominates and continually disrupts the realization of development, be it at local or national level. Right from the CDF offices at the constituency level to the national level, a large majority of the officials involved are courting graft. For instance, Hezron, the chairman of the CDF committee, is keen on making a kill on whatever he lays his hands on. This is the sole reason why Mheshimiwa Kabaila directs Alfayo, his personal assistant, "to count the heads of goats, camels and chicken" (**Mheshimiwa**, Episode 5) slaughtered for his homecoming party because he (Hezron) is not trustworthy.

At the national level, Members of Parliament such as Mheshimiwa Kabaila, Jiwe and Habakkuk are busy scheming to get "something for their wallets" (**Mheshimiwa**, Episode 5). Thus, the disorder caused by graft has become national praxis to the extent that the nation seems to be bound together principally through its collective moral poverty. This is indeed true based on the urgency with which various characters, especially politicians and their cronies in the TV drama acquire wealth. As a result, most of them neither trust nor keep long term friendships as they easily disagree and/or eventually fall out when the deal becomes sour. This shows that not only does corruption thrive on the moral economy of disorder that privileges "informal, uncodified and unpoliced approaches to socio-economic and political action" (Nyairo, 2005, p.205), but also amounts to a reality of profitable opportunities for the likes of Kabaila, Hezron, Habakkuk and Polycarp, who know how to work the system to their advantage.

A metaphor of flux, politics is depicted in **Mheshimiwa** as the agent for social (dis)unity and economic (im)mobility; the agent that clamours for the national cake which is eventually truncated to an individual cake. Indeed, political alliances, a strand which cuts across Kabaila, Habakuk and Jiwe, are linked to this metaphor. The three politicians have formed an alliance which enables them support each other in dubious deals. This situation mirrors the practice of politics in Kenya in light of this metaphor as it implicitly depicts contradictions, multiple functions and conflicts that politicians generate in society. In this way, **Mheshimiwa** unmasks Members of Parliament's insatiable desire for wealth and links their individual desires to the operations of the state. Implicitly, material effects and queer activities of parliamentarians such as

Mheshimiwa Kabaila, Habakkuk and Jiwe play a critical role in political power (re)alignments and relations which in turn has an effect on the operations of parliament. To this end, the show seems to suggest that the political leadership is in an undeclared pact to exploit the country's resources; much to the detriment of the general citizenry.

The artist's portrayal of the plight of the masses in **Mheshimiwa** echoes Frantz Fanon's ambivalent understanding of the masses both as the exploited group and having the potential to provide revolutionary change in the postcolonial state (Fanon, 1967). Fanon's observation is significant to this chapter for it offers an explanation to Mheshimiwa Kabaila's election. By reconfiguring the ghost of corruption, turning it into open discourse rather that a hidden script of political machinations and functioning, **Mheshimiwa** easily engenders a revolution of dissent among the masses as it happens to Nyati. Tired of Nyati's lack of development, the people of Tumbili constituency vote him out almost to the last man. Kabaila, though less endowed with financial resources compared to Nyati, wins the elections with a landslide. Nyati does not believe that he can lose an election to Kabaila, whom he refers to as "a mere primary school teacher". He posits:

> … what does Kabaila know about politics? He is just a nonstarter! He is just a mere primary school teacher and a political greenhorn. He has nothing to offer to the people of Tumbili constituency. Let me go to court. I will teach him a lesson. He cannot take away my seat just like that!
>   (**Mheshimiwa**, Episode 2)

Nyati's reaction to his loss is seen as a replica of Kenyan politics where losers do not accept defeat but instead rush to court to contest the results like what happened in the

2007 disputed presidential elections results in Kenya (Kanyinga and Okello, 2010). However, through **Mheshimiwa**, the artist reinforces the possibilities of a political revolt in the society staged peacefully through the ballot by the citizens. This kind of political revolution elicits different reactions from different characters, as is seen in Mheshimiwa Kabaila and Nyati, who are positively and negatively disposed to revolutionary transformation in society respectively. Therefore, the show offers an alternative space upon which citizens' critiques of the political leadership in the country coalesce.

Through revolutionary transformation, **Mheshimiwa** implicitly creates the need for political awareness among the masses. This is clearly shown through the actions of the people of Tumbili constituency. Political awareness is a key factor in enabling people to understand their needs, rights and actions to be undertaken in case their rights are infringed or trampled upon. The people of Tumbili constituency are shown as being alive to the fact that they can only realize development in their constituency if they make politically correct choices. However, by rejecting Nyati's monies in favour of the popular but unproven primary school teacher, Kabaila, the people of Tumbili constituency affirm Fanon's (1967) observation that African masses are not gullible pawns.

Again, by voting in Kabaila, a political greenhorn, the people of Tumbili constituency set a precedent and a base for their own historical process of development. This process requires a break from past practices, which, in essence, derailed development in their

constituency. Part of that historical past is doing away with the incumbent Member of Parliament, Nyati, through the ballot. On the one hand, Nyati is a victim of a historical process that is dynamic and one which opens up possibilities for development and economic growth in the constituency. On the other hand, Kabaila is a benefactor and implicit embodiment of the tumultuous historical process whose philosophy he champions. This is, for example, evident in his homecoming speech:

> Watu wa Tumbili, sasa nyumbani tumefika. Kura mlipiga vizuri sana.Wale mbweha wengine tukawashinda wametoroka na kuingia msituni. Sasa ni wakati wa maendeleo. Mlipigia kura ya maendeleo na maendeleo nitawaletea. Maji nitawaleta, barabara nitawatengenezea, mashule tutatengeneza na sitima nitawaletea karibu kabisa na manyumba yenu. (The people of Tumbili, we are now at home. You voted well and we trounced our opponents who have since disappeared into the forest. It's now time for development. You voted for development and I will do exactly that. Piped water, tarmacked roads, schools and electricity will be at your doorstep).
> (**Mheshimiwa**, Episode 5)

This reveals that the historical and political consciousness of the people of Tumbili constituency finds its ultimate expression in the figure of Mheshimiwa Kabaila. He heralds a new dawn which is more radical and revolutionary but aims at steering the constituency towards development and economic growth. The optimism and zeal of the people of Tumbili constituency parallels the Kenya state in that the Kenyan people are filled with optimism each time they elect new political leaders. They hold the hope that a lot will change with the change of the nation's political leadership, which seldom happens after all.

The pseudo-historical and political consciousness that Mheshimiwa Kabaila embodies is, however, subverted when he takes office. Immediately, he is sworn in, he forgets the drive that brought him to parliament. He appropriates the mannerisms of his immediate predecessor and turns a blind eye to the wishes of his people, who he ironically keeps referring to as "my people". Further, he joins the parliamentary cartel of Mheshimiwa Habakkuk and Jiwe in his pursuit of individual greatness and material satisfaction. Thus, the dramatist, through the allegorical characters of Kabaila, Habakkuk and Jiwe shows how a people's revolution is nipped at the top and reconfigured to an individual's quest for wealth and material satisfaction.

Mheshimiwa Kabaila, in his new position as betrayer of people's aspirations, allegorizes a political consciousness which is based on self-interest as opposed to the collective and social ethos that govern society. The need to make quick wealth is the sole motivation behind him joining the parliamentary power cartel that is headed by Mheshimiwa Habakkuk. The cartel's singular purpose is to broker deals, trade parliamentary positions, and negotiate for ministerial positions in government. In this regard, the irony and façade that surrounds Mheshimiwa Kabaila, the ineptitude and arrogance of Habakkuk, and Nyati's preoccupation with the narrow capitalist enterprise, all point to "an allegory of the embattled nation" (Jameson, 1991, p.86). This marks a definite shift away from the revolutionary model espoused by the masses to the individualist model aimed at self-aggrandizement.

The constant figuration of time is another important allegorical marker in the dramatic frame of **Mheshimiwa**. The drama is predicated on what can be seen as a semblance of the Bakhitian chronotope with a specific time scheme in which the dramatic action swings from the past to the present in terms of time. In each of the two time zones, experiences of the dramatic actions are not just lived and relived, but past experiences form a parallel and a commentary of the present circumstances. In pitting the past against the present, an interlocution is created between the development platform on which Mheshimiwa Kabaila campaigned and the present realities that characterize his present tenure as Member of Parliament for Tumbili constituency. For instance, his metamorphosis immediately he took office is presented as a reconfiguration of Nyati, his immediate predecessor. Mheshimiwa Kabaila's constitution of the new Tumbili constituency CDF committee tells it all because all the appointments are based on favouritism and nepotism. For example, Hezron, the chairman of CDF committee was his campaign chairman. Josephat, the treasurer, is Magdalina's nephew. Notably, Magdalina is Mheshimiwa Kabaila's wife. In a sense, Kabaila replicates the same old order which made the people of Tumbili constituency to reject Nyati and had hoped to forget so fast. To this end, the two different time frames (then/now, now/then) are connected by some kind of development within 'continuity' and change within 'permanence'. The past political condition of Tumbili constituency seems to replicate itself in the present in a linear fashion and the allegorical reconfiguration of time works to highlight this relationship. The allegorical reconfiguration of time in **Mheshimiwa** would seem to point both to continuity and permanence, a situation which parallels the Kenyan nation.

In Mheshimiwa Kabaila's behaviour, **Mheshimiwa** captures the enigmatic but allegorical time frames in which the past confronts the present. Allegory here works through the duration of the dramatic action, a process through which a distance is fashioned between past and present action. In this way, an ironical situation is created in which the present stands in judgment over the past. Nyati's past actions parallels those of Kabaila in the present. Kabaila's ascendancy to power is as result of a people's rejection of empty rhetoric and dare need for development. Instead of steering Tumbili constituency to greater development, Kabaila, like Nyati, abandons the development agenda - a platform on which he campaigned. Kabaila is thus reconfigured as a continuation of the past. Through shoddy projects, such as buying tractors which for example, is aimed at freezing the CDF kitty a cool four million shillings, the people of Tumbili constituency discover that Kabaila is no different from his predecessor. Therefore, through dramatic action and discourse, the past is paralleled with the present. The people of Tumbili constituency remain victims of political exploitation and economic deprivation which leaves them underdeveloped and vulnerable to manipulation by the political class. The present situation in Tumbili constituency remains a reflection of the past. Tumbili constituency's political situation is an allegorical representation of the nation. Elected political leaders on a platform of turning around development and economic prosperity of their constituencies abandon these campaign pledges immediately they get into office and instead flaunt their power and accumulate wealth in dubious ways.

Mheshimiwa is a daring local television drama that performs and delivers its political message by drawing heavily from a Kenyan narrative of history in a way that, as shown already, reconfigures the empty political rhetoric of the nation. In his attempt to stage power, the dramatist, by all means possible, stretches the show's possibilities and borrows the Kenyan political idiom on which the show is founded and grounded. The artist falls back to the constituency as a metonymic representation of the nation to, first and foremost, construct the political realities of the nation and to effectively reconfigure aspects that undermine the realisation of nationhood such as excessive greed, corruption and betrayals that characterize political leadership in the nation state.

3.3 Metaphorical Mappings and Reconfiguring Social Referents

This section probes how local television drama constructs and reconfigures places in ways in which such places are represented in the dramas, and certain aspects incorporated in local dramas are indicative of specific places in the real world. Irrefutably, local television drama generates various discourses of the city, and this section proceeds by probing how the relationships between cultural forms like television drama and places, are symbolic. In this regard, my analysis of representations of place in local television drama is guided by Foucault's (1980) commitment to resituating geography, of spatial terms, in shaping our understanding of the knowledge of places.

The section embraces Foucault's critical practice that projects space (place), like time, as key to mediating human existence. In the same vein, Soja (1996) echoes Foucault's position when he argues for a critical practice grounded on the "triple dialects of space,

time and social being" (p.137). Both Foucault and Soja help us appreciate that space is a man-made entity. Equally important, the two scholars foreground the fact that there are many indicators that must be probed in seeking to understand ways in which people shape places and vice versa. To this end, it is worth noting that filling out both space and time is partly achieved by cultural productions. Like other cultural productions, television drama emanates from within specified geographical locations. Hence, in dramatizing place, television drama not only metaphorically maps and redefines place, as it does to time, but also writes and revises our perceptions of these places. While not wishing to minimize the validity of the social critique that can be achieved through local television drama, this section argues that **Tabasamu** is a symbolic critique of social and moral realities of Kenyan urban life.

Arguments in this section are framed around the theoretical understanding of how urban spaces, like the city, are viewed as products of social and cultural engineering. People shape the places around them just as much as places themselves influence social behaviour and cultural practice. Data for analysis in this section is largely drawn from **Tabasamu** to illustrate the dramatist's portrayal of the novel ways of how people have inhabited social spaces in the city; increasingly privileging individual genius in trying to make the marginal spaces habitable. This refiguration of the city is achieved through what de Certeau (1998) terms the "surreptitious creativities" (p.156) that proliferate the margins. The reading of place in **Tabasamu** and ways in which it dramatizes place adopts de Certeau's thinking and moves away from the ideal(ised) to seek instead, understandings of alternative practices of representing place in creative works of art

such as television drama. Beyond focusing on socio-economic contexts surrounding the poeticized locations, spatial senses in which local television drama succeeds in foregrounding urban class stratification in modern Kenya is emphasized.

Arguably, in exploring vagaries of everyday life in the city, **Tabasamu** moves away from high-class to low-class lifestyle in the slums. In this way, the mapping metaphor through the cinematic technique moves us from the experience of affluent living to that of lack in slums as it juxtaposes the lifestyle of Calvin (Calvo) and Brother Francis, the two characters living in the slum, to that of, for example, JB and his roommates, at the high end. This shift in spatial representation from affluent to deplorable locations in the slums in **Tabasamu** and the events that unfold in these locations are in consonance with the usage of the Bakhtinian concept of the chronotope in this thesis. This is so because even in this section, our analysis privileges space over time as a way of discerning meanings embedded in these locations. Thus, much as **Tabasamu** configures with what many will call official discourses of subaltern existence, it does nonetheless inject moments of the untold and often ignored aspects of life in the margins through the image of the slum.

Slums form a permanent fixture in Kenya's informal settlements especially in cities and major urban centres across the country. For example, slums in Nairobi have existed since the city's inception (Mutisya and Yarime, 2011). Life is very difficult to approximately over two (2) million people in Nairobi's informal settlements. The residents in these areas live in deplorable conditions lacking the most basic needs and

social amenities and face multi-dimensional challenges which require multi-dimensional interventions such as clean water supply and improved sanitation, energy, solid waste management, housing, schools, and hospitals (United Nations, 2006 & Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions, 2008). Therefore, through the slum, **Tabasamu** dramatizes the differentiations and incongruities of postcolonial urban life in Kenya and can be read as a statement of the ways in which cultural forms can reproduce and reconfigure capitalist spatiality.

Indeed **Tabasamu***, in episodes 7, 8 and 9 ingeniously parallels luxurious and slum lifestyles as a way of mapping life in the city. It exposes the pathetic conditions that Calvin and his friend, Brother Francis, live in. For example, the house and the surrounding environment where they live are portrayed as hostile and inhabitable. The two characters share a one-roomed house which is poorly ventilated, made of scraps of old corrugated iron sheets and timber (**Tabasamu**, Episode 7). Noteworthy is the fact that life is made more unbearable by an awful stench both from the open sewer that passes in front of their house and the dumping ground, which is a few yards away from where the house is located. Implicitly, this whole scenario can be read symbolically to mean that the two characters' metamorphosis may fail to begin because their expectation and renewal is not only chocked away but also smells of rot and waste. Therefore, the allegorical space (place) where these two characters live and etch a living encourages the artist's mapping and orchestration of the dual-voiced dialogue showing their understanding of place as "a palace and a slum" (**Tabasamu**, Episode 7). This means that although the two are living in a slum, they view their one-roomed house as a

'palace'. In this way, the show reconfigures, in its representation, living conditions of a people played against the socio-economic realities of slum life in Kenya today.

Unmistakably, woven into the fabric of the dramatic rendering of **Tabasamu** are people and a landscape of turbulent, restless and disenfranchised Kenyans living in poverty and deprivation in slums. Because of the conditions that they live in, the youth, for example, are forced to devise ways to fend for their livelihoods. Wa Mungai (2014) alludes to this fact when he points out that "young people in the slums are forced to make hard choices and often wrong ones" (p.103). This situation is clearly captured in **Tabasamu** as the play depicts a pattern of survival strategies and projects images of innovative ways of living in the slums albeit criminal and unethical. Episode 7, for example, vividly captures this image when Calvin and Brother Francis connive to swindle Raha Zetu, a tour company, where Maya and Penny work in the name of religion. Calvin and Francis mastermind a deal about an impending visit to their church by guests from abroad. They went ahead, approached a tour company, negotiated and signed an exclusive agreement of picking the visitors from the airport and taking them round the country when they arrive. Throughout the episode, the two characters and a lady they had incorporated into the scheme are portrayed as holier-than-thou. They carry Bibles whenever they go and their discourses are restricted to a religious register. Phrases such as "praise the Lord", "the Lord loves you", "hallelujah", "my sister/brother in Christ" among others (**Tabasamu**, Episode 7) punctuate their dialogues. On the day of the visitors' arrival, the car sent to pick the guests is carjacked by Calvin and Francis, who apparently had leased it to the tour company. Eventually, the tour company ended up paying them four

hundred thousand Kenya shillings as an out of court settlement for the damages. However, little did the tour company know that this was simply a ploy considering that there were no guests after all.

In another instance, in episode 8, Calvin and Brother Francis mastermind yet another deal of selling a plot to an unsuspecting property developer. The plot was located a few yards away from where the two lived. The two characters searched for a willing buyer and when they found a proper developer, they showed him the plot that they were selling. Posing as genuine sellers, they haggled on the selling price and eventually agreed on a sum total of three million Kenya shillings. The property developer went ahead to pay six hundred thousand shillings as down payment and the rest was to be cleared when they were to hand over the title deed for the plot to him at an agreed date later. Immediately they received the down payment, they both threw away their sim cards and replaced them with new ones. The unsuspecting property developer later learnt that he had been duped and was unable to recover his money since the two characters were untraceable. At this juncture, it is important to point out that the two instances cited above reveal that the people in the slums creatively devise ways of earning a living regardless of whether the ways are just or unjust. Perhaps to them, it is the end and not the process which matters.

In figuring the slum, as place and setting for some of the episodes, **Tabasamu** limits its engagement with the moral ethos in society to a much localized experience**.** Localization as an interlocutor of social and moral formation in the show is also evident

in the discourses framed around Calvin and Brother Francis which are largely in Sheng. Sheng is a combination of English and Kiswahili whose origin is attributed to the low class neighbourhoods in Nairobi city (Ogechi, 2005). However, it has become widespread in most Kenyan urban centres especially among the youth. These dynamics ensures that the play easily connects to slum dwellers, where the use of standard English is relative because of low education standards. Through localization, therefore, the playwright brings into sharp focus the declining morality in slums due to the prevailing socio-economic conditions. As a result, issues of fear, crime and insecurity spring up as highlighted in the activities of Calvin and Brother Francis.

In confronting the vagaries and nuances of life in the periphery, **Tabasamu** sketches and reconfigures into cultural imagination new marginal spaces, injecting agency and enterprise for those occupying such spaces. Therefore the TV drama perfectly enacts what Bhabha (1994) points at when he argues that "the affective of social marginality – as it emerges in non-canonical forms- transforms our critical strategies" (p.172). For instance, episodes 7 and 8 capture the spatial and social geography of the slums, gleans a better understanding of the people who inhabit these slums, and the pleasure and dreams that lubricate their daily existence. In Foucaultian terms, slums are real socially produced places whose essence is very different from that of the ideal(ised) city where issues such as insecurity are not properly addressed. However, to characters like Calvin and Brother Francis, engaging in crime is the only means of earning their daily bread. Crime is indeed a 'real' enterprise in slums because the cultural economy of the slum to some extent relies and runs on crime. Olang and Okombo (2012) indicate that some of

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the enterprises in the slums are either dealing with illegal businesses or are operating illegally while a large percentage of youth living in slums are involved in crime in one way or another. Therefore, in mapping the social geography of the slum, crime features as a daily routine to slum dwellers either as victims or victimizers.

Most importantly, **Tabasamu**'s spatiality discourses help us envision behaviours and mannerisms in society. The key question that the artist implicitly asks the audience through the show is: when faced with challenges in life, is it right to resort to crime? In this regard, space is viewed as an integral element in the evolution and definition of character. As the two characters, Calvin and Brother Francis, plot to defraud unsuspecting members of the public and companies, we are made to realize that it is the location, the site of marginality, of lack and deprivation that has compelled these young men to resort to crime. Equally telling is the widespread sense of self-doubt, inadequacy and despair among the youth in the slum. Indeed one can easily say that all the characters in this drama are strongly defined by their social and structural environment.

Through Calvin and Brother Francis, however, what comes out strongly is the insidious ingenuity and moral logic that dominates their actions and engagements. In other words, one can argue for a relationship between the spectacle of spatial "disarray" and the preponderance of crime and insecurity as rendered in this television drama. This is so because we have seen the two characters grow within a constrained socio-economic culture of the slum and consequently, degenerate into unconventional practices as their mainstay within their complex spatio-temporal surroundings. As the mapping metaphor

portrays disorder and loss of social patterning in the slums' physical architecture, so too is the logic of disorder which is shown as having crept into the lives of its residents who have metamorphosed dramatically to embrace an inverted morality. In projecting the uptight socio-economic conditions and attendant social dilemmas through the slum, **Tabasamu** as a television drama contests and reconfigures particular moralities in society.

The slum as metaphor in **Tabasamu** brings out an image of a deteriorating society peopled by the good and bad, the victimizers and vulnerable, morally upright and the corrupt. The general atmosphere is that of squalor, putrefaction and social degradation. To this end, the slum is depicted as a wasteland, a place devoid of physical and moral order and is a threat to urbanization. At the heart of this "messy" environment are Calvin and Brother Francis as symbols of the morally corrosive dimension of existence in the slums. Through Calvin and Brother Francis, **Tabasamu** not only decries the socio-economic vulnerabilities of people living in the slums but also helps to typify these places and related experiences thereof. Such experiences, as wa Mungai (2014, p.103) observes, relate to crime of assorted nature and material despair as an index of a dissolute moral condition. The two characters are, therefore, framed out as "bad boys" worthy condemnation while drawing on sympathy and support for those who constantly struggle to make the slum a better place to live in. Ultimately, the T.V drama succeeds in refiguring the slum through the ways in which it invokes lived experiences in slums as marginalized spaces as something that is real, that has its quotidian and even has genius moments.

3.4 Reconfiguring Sex(uality) Discourses in Society

This section focuses on how local television drama frames and (re)configures sex(uality) in society. Sexuality, being a complex and individual phenomenon is influenced by social norms, culture, and personal experience, and is said to be socially constructed (Fine, 1993). All these affect the way individuals define, feel and perceive their sexuality. Therefore, diverse "sexualities" exist even within the same environment (Baber & Allen, 1992). In Africa, for example, discourses on sexuality usually center on beliefs, attitudes in traditional cultures and religions. However, interrogating sexuality in Africa is problematic because the very term sexuality "conjures up discussions about sources of oppression and violence" (Tamale, 2011, p.1) for both Africa's past and present. For instance, traditional African culture controlled sexuality through patriarchy, which functioned through the fragmentation and atomization of women. This shows that not only was patriarchal discourse highly sexualized, reflecting ''male sexual imagery of conquest, penetration and subjugation'' (Tamale, 2011, p.19), but it also played an important role in articulating and specifying ideas about African sexuality.

By interrogating intersections of sexuality in local television drama, this section examines ways in which characters negotiate and reconfigure sexuality in their daily endeavaours and in the process, engendering possibilities for resistance and social change that is both individual and systemic. Data for analysis in this section is drawn from **Tabasamu** in exploring the different ways in which various characters ascribe meanings to their sexuality and develop sexual scripts and how sexual experiences influence their meanings and behaviours. This section is therefore couched on

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Foucault's (1978) position that sexualities are constantly produced, changed, modified, and the nature of sexual discourse and experience changes according to the social-cultural environment that the individuals involved find themselves in. Hence, socio-cultural norms within society form an integral part in any discussion on matters sexuality.

Sexuality in **Tabasamu** illustrates that the society and various aspects of human nature and agency have a direct impact on the conceptualization of sexuality in many characters in the show. Characters such as JB, Gabby, Maya, Penny, Wivina and Rita are portrayed as having different preferences towards sexuality based on the socio-cultural spaces in which they have grown and their interactions with the outside world. However, we hasten to point out that **Tabasamu** takes into account the subtle, and not-so-subtle cultural flows within which discourses of sexuality are framed and take place. It therefore should be read like other practices that are often an offshoot of Kenyan mainstream culture given that the drama is not necessarily a manifestation of "a vulgar decadence" (Wa Mungai, 2014). Thus, **Tabasamu** points out the fact that local television drama forms one of the critical spaces where Kenyans not only dramatize sex and/or sexuality openly but also, more critically, that such discourses have become a popular analytical prism through which they revisit and reconfigure issues pertaining sex in society.

The primary assumption upon which arguments on the sexual discourse are framed in this section is that Kenyans have always talked about sex albeit in a codified form and

that in contemporary times, sexual discourses have become less and less euphemistic (Wa Mungai, 2014). An apt illustration of this observation might be seen in the way JB discusses with Kamenyi his sexual escapades with a school girl who eventually landed him a heavy beating from her father (**Tabasamu**, Episode 12). Kamenyi wonders why JB cannot tame his sexual appetite and if not why he hardly dates decent ladies. JB's response to his friend's prodding explicitly maps the actual conceptualization of sexuality in the Kenyan society today. He says:

> **JB**: You know Kamenyi it doesn't matter who I get, all I care about is that my sexual needs are met. You see….
> **Kamenyi**: (Interjects) even when the girls eventually inflict physical harm to you? First it was Gabby. She almost killed you. Imagine if the knife caught your heart. And now it is the school girl. Even before Gabby's wounds could heal!"
> **JB**: (laughing) Kamenyi, Kamenyi, Kamenyi. Do you even have a girlfriend?
> **Kamenyi**: My girlfriend is not what we are talking about here. We are talking about you and your very many women who cause you trouble!
>
> (**Tabasamu**, Episode 12)

The above conversation between JB and Kamenyi shows that sexuality is among topics that form part of social discourses in the contemporary Kenyan society. Interestingly, sexuality as a discourse is an explicit concern among young people who, ironically, are not contemplating marriage. This situation reconfigures the traditional as well as Biblical understanding of sexuality which views sexuality as a preserve of married people in society. Noteworthy in the conversation is the fact that the sexuality discourse not only centres on the male gender's anxieties and troubles in relationships but also on his attempts to reconfigure his position in the sexual escapades though his efforts are

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thwarted by the unusual actions that have been finagled upon him by his female companions.

The situation that JB finds himself in as shown in this episode (Episode 12) shows how a love-rapt male is reconfigured into a feminized captive exposing not only his vulnerability but also the understanding that love is "full of fear, anxiety, doubt, care, peevish and suspicions"(West-Pavlov, 2006, p.111). The episode depicts clearly that JB is drawn perilously to Gabby. She is the object of his desire regardless of the fact that this brings him physical, emotional and psychological torture. JB's love for women, especially Gabby, constantly threatens to undermine the hardened boundaries of the male self. JB finds it hard to disentangle himself from Gabby. Gabby domineers and controls JB practically all aspects in their love-life. In this way, Gabby reconfigures the traditional conceptualization of sexuality, where a woman was considered submissive and obedient to a man, to suit her immediate requirements. Hence through her, **Tabasamu** shows that contemporary ladies in the city have turned the discourse onsexuality to their own ends. This is not to say that young people in the city do not pursue relationships according to the normative romantic relationships template (Wa Mungai, 2014). However, the depiction of non-normative relationships, as is evident in the JB-Gabby case, enables us to make deductions about the nature of social change, since they can be taken as indicators of sexual makeovers that are becoming possible in the modern day Kenyan society.

In his reflections on the cultural dimension of globalization, Appadurai (1996) points out strongly that the most valuable feature of culture is difference. In this regard, culture, broadly seen as both a social and historical process, is viewed by Appadurai not merely as a substance but as a dimension of phenomena, a dimension that attends to situated and embedded difference of categories such as gender and class. The central thesis in the foregoing observations is not just an attempt by the author to point to the diverse ways in which culture has been appropriated in contemporary discourses on sexuality but also the various categories of expression in which its usage has been embedded. This situation is indeed true of **Tabasamu**. The show explores the changing dynamics of culture in Kenya with the advent of modernity and globalization. For instance, the fact that Wivina, Maya and JB are living together as housemates is a cultural affront prompted by modernity since the traditional spaces are valorized. The life style of the three housemates is a further display of a violation of traditionally-sanctioned mode of living among unmarried ladies and men. The traditional code does not envisage unmarried men and women living in the same house but it so happens in **Tabasamu**. A further disturbance to the traditional space which drives the dramatic momentum in **Tabasamu** is Gabby's actions that could be termed as a subversion of the normative romantic template. It is evident that her actions are self-driven, which in turn result in reconfiguring the 'improbable' and/or 'unimaginable' in her love affair with JB. As we shall demonstrate in detail in the next chapter, Gabby's actions should be read as self-constructive and allegorical of an evolving gender system that seeks to assert itself in a gender-demarcated society in diverse ways.

Strikingly, however, is the fact that the ladies in **Tabasamu** are left to run the show of love as opposed to men. Wivana, Maya, Rita and Gabby, are all at the forefront in running their love lives as they wish. They call the shots in the relationships. This reversal of roles is a significant indicator of the kind of social changes in terms of sexuality that are taking place in society today as mediated through local television drama. In this, women who would traditionally wait for men to pursue them, have turned the tables, leaving males in utter confusion in the wake of such relationships. Gabby pioneers in this position as she is portrayed as being combative throughout the relationship, towards a figure, JB, who is a passive receptor of love. Here, the experience of love is figured as a perforation of the masculine. The fact that Gabby manages to recreate her space in the relationship cannot go unnoticed:

> **Gabby**: (Answers a phone call) what a pleasant surprise
> **JB**: (Irritated) Look, no more phone calls to my house, associates and friends.
> **Gabby**: That's lovely. How nice to know that you appreciate me. You are such a gentleman.
> **JB**: (Raising his voice) You know what? You are crazy, you are bogus.
> **Gabby**: Lovely, such a nice compliment. You are such a gentleman.
> **JB**: (Stands up and shouts) You are crazy. No more phone calls to my house, family and associates, you hear?
> **Gabby**: I will do as you wish. It is really nice to hear from you again.
> **JB**: I ever wonder how I got into this relationship in the first place.
> **Gabby**: Don't you worry. Everything will be ok when we hook-up again.
> **JB**: Aaaaaaaah. (Hangs up and breaks into sobs)
> (**Tabasamu**, Episode 11)

The conversation above shows that indeed Gabby is an enigma in JB's life. It also provides the conceptual underpinning of masculine insecurity predicated on experiences of love and sexuality. Nonetheless, what stands out at the end of the above conversation is the fact that JB breaks into tears when he is confronted with difficulties in his relationship. Traditionally, it is unethical for a man to cry, let alone, doing so in the public (Kenyatta, 1938). This is so because, on the one hand, tears were viewed typically as an expression of women's emotional temperament, and often their usage rendered men to be viewed as effeminate. On the other hand, men were viewed as non-effeminate beings whose temperaments should always remain intact. Paradoxically, Gabby comes out as the 'male' figure through her actions which leave JB a battered soul. Thus, the fact that JB breaks into tears after an altercation with Gabby symbolically shows that he has surrendered his masculinity to the porous space typical of femininity.

Noteworthy is the fact that tears are a threat to masculinity not so because in society crying is identified as a feminine behaviour because, in patriarchal terms, "it is a symptom of a humoral function central to the feminine construction" (West-Pavlov, 2006, p.111). On his part, Foucault (1999) argues that effeminacy is largely viewed as a spatial affair, a matter of frequentation and behaviour. He further pointed out that women, in general, are associated with effeminacy. The two scholars attest to the traditional view that crying is a women affair. However, in **Tabasamu**, JB is ironically depicted as effeminate compared to Gabby and thus a negation of the social space for men and women in society. JB's inability to control his emotions is a clear indication

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that he has surrendered his space as a man. JB's crying thus reveals his inability not only to control his love life but also his emotions as a man. His breaking into tears can, implicitly, be paralleled to his close proximity to womankind which in turn infiltrates his manhood and erodes its contours.

Kamenyi laments JB's loss of masculinity under the pressure of feminine influence when he quips:

> Haki ya nani JB. Kwani manzi anaweza kufanya ulie? Wewe sasa ni mwanaume aina gani? I really man does not cry over a woman. What has become of you man. You cannot continue this way. If I were you, I would rather do away with the women than cry of them.
>
> (**Tabasamu**, Episode 12)

Kamenyi's utterances points to JB's close proximity and inclination to the female gender which has rendered his sense of masculinity permanently precarious. In African societies, masculinity is based upon a temporal and spatial separation of femininity. The men are required to keep their distance and only maintain simple casual contacts with the female gender. In many African societies, when a boy reaches the age of about 10 years, he is taken away from his nurse, normally his mother, who had been taking care of him and trusted to the tutors of male attendants as he undergoes circumcision. During this period, he is taught on how to behave as a man. The teachings that the boy receives when being initiated to manhood played a central role in the boy's formation (Kenyatta, 1938).

The passage from childhood to incipient manhood, therefore, involves a change in the social space. This change was spatially marked considering that the young man would not access the privilege and care from his mother but rather would be plunged into the world of men. Masculinity in its traditional configuration was indeed not a given. Rather, it was an inherently secondary state, achieved by extraction from a prior domain in which male children were spatially integrated in a feminine world. In this regard, JB's masculine existence is constantly threatened in the show in twofold: his constant fall back into an original situation of ubiquitous femininity by always associating and being in the company of women and two, by confiding in his mother, in most cases, as opposed to his father. Thus, JB's inclination to women is portrayed as a form of differentiation upon which his masculinity is shown as nothing more than a temporal respite. His triangulation in the feminine world as shown in his proximity to women affords women, like Gabby, a chance to assert themselves in his own social space. The net effect of this assertion is that the women easily reconfigure themselves in his spatial preoccupations and wield a greater influence in his life. For instance, Gabby's positive influence on JB's life can be seen in her willingness to help him. In Episode 9, JB lands a big contract from an international journalist of putting together a photo album of all the birds in a local national park. Unfortunately, he has no funds to undertake this project that he views as breakthrough in his photography career. His efforts to secure a loan from his friends and associates do not bear any fruits. It is Gabby who comes to his aid by giving him fifty thousand Kenyan shillings (Kshs. 50,000) to jump start the project much to his disbelief. In another instance in Episode 10, when JB finally bows

down to pressure from his father to take up a job in the bank, Gabby buys him a new suit. However, this time round, JB rejects the suit as is evident in this conversation:

> **Gabby**: I hope the suit I bought you fits you well.
> **JB**: (Surprised) What suit? I can't put it on. I threw it away. Right now it should be on its way to Dandora dumpsite.
> **Gabby**: (Surprised) You mean you threw away such an expensive suit I bought for you?
> **JB**: Listen and Listen very carefully. I don't want anything from you. You hear?
> (**Tabasamu**, Episode 10)

This conversation clearly shows that JB's masculine space is entangled with women. This situation reconfigures the feminine into the space of the masculine blurring the boundary upon which manhood was traditionally predicated. As a man, JB is expected to maintain a causal distance between him and Gabby. However, this is not the case as Gabby as controls and has a voice in his space endangering JB's masculine existence.

The reinvigoration of women into men's space, thus, shows a clear indication of women shedding off the dictates of patriarchy to go for what they want in their lives. Women characters in **Tabasamu** who are able to subvert masculinity include Gabby, Rita, Wivina and to some extent Maya. Rita, for instance, teams up with Maya to successfully plot a revenge mission to a man who apparently defrauded them (**Tabasamu**, Episode 12). Again, Rita and Maya show their abilities in choosing and dating the men they want as opposed to wait for the men to come for them. Wivina, on her part, refuses to give in to sexual advances from the area Member of Parliament, who eventually turns out to be her brother. In all these instances, masculinity appears as a

spatial and temporal contingent manipulatable by the female gender in their quest for self-aggrandizement and fulfillment in life.

It is notable from **Tabasamu** that sexism is a major source of metaphors through which discourses on sexuality in society are presented. Both male and female characters are framed as active participants in these discourses. **Tabasamu** has shown that the female characters subvert and reconfigure the notion of being 'objects of the male gaze' to 'subjects of the male gaze' in sexual circles. This thread runs through Gabby, Maya, Rita, Wivina and Penny. Beyond this, the women are seen as key players in the sexual pleasure as they set the terms for sexual engagement. At any rate, the women portrayed in the show are stable financially. They cannot be considered as timing gold-diggers who lose their morality as soon as they come into contact which rich men. In this way, therefore, **Tabasamu** manages to reconfigure the sexuality discourse in the Kenyan society.

3.5 Chapter Summary

In interrogating (re)configurations of space in this chapter, the foundational analytic proceeded from examining various figurations of spaces in local television drama and their corresponding spaces in the real world. Couched on social production of space as advanced by Lefebvre and Foucault, and a modification of the Bakhtinian concept of the chronotope as a model for analysis, the framing and dramatization of the nation, the mapping metaphor and the social referents, and the ensuing discourses on sex(uality) in society as portrayed in the selected television dramas were explored. From the analysis,

it emerges that prevailing political issues, historical facts and socio-cultural aspects in society inform, influence and shape spatial conceptualization, framing, and reconfiguration in local television drama. Through the artistic interpellations, it also emerged that the local television drama imaginatively constructs socio-cultural and political realities of the Kenyan nation and effectively reconfigures aspects that undermine realisations of nationhood such as excessive greed, corruption, and retrogressive political practices, among others. Ultimately, it emerged that local television drama provides an alternative space upon which the public frames, dramatizes and critiques issues affecting society and, in the process, reconfigures 'new ways' of tackling such issues as well as their world view.

The next chapter focuses on the changing canon as women take up agency across various domains in the public sphere.

CHAPTER FOUR

FEMALE CHARACTERS AND PATRIARCHY

4.1 Introduction

In line with objective three, this chapter interrogates how female characters in local television drama can be seen as being at the vanguard in contesting and reconfiguring various aspects of the social space such as gender, sexuality and culture in Kenya. The chapter illustrates how female characters, particularly young female professionals, first, embody social transformations, and second, reconfigure different modes of being in society as seen through the prism of their re-conceptualization of and ensuing lifestyles in the social spaces that they operate and live in. Hence, the characteristics, activities, and behaviours of certain characters in the selected local television dramas are easily associated with certain spaces and places. This observation concurs with Pratt and Hanson (1994) who observe that the association of characters to certain places is imperative while at the same time fixing in space certain traits of the places themselves (p.11). Consequently, the chapter focuses on:

i.   Patriarchal contestations and spatial reconfigurations

ii. Women, professionalism and patriarchal practices

iii. Representing the revolutionary female character

By being mindful of how local television drama engenders debates on issues such as cultural heritage, gerontocratic power relations and conventional morality on the one hand, and personal sexual relationships, intimacy and self-definition on the other, this

chapter investigates feminine agency across various domains as predicated by local television drama and how these exceed the mere fissures of masculine ideology as female characters contest and seek to reconfigure patriarchal practices in society today. This chapter argues that the selected local television dramas paint a picture of women's agency within the business of their everyday existence and interactions. Additionally, it argues that it is within social spaces that women, who form the bulk of the subaltern, in the Spivakean parlance, articulate ''their own scripts which envision alternative ways of ordering political, public and private life'' (Tripp, 2000, p.27).

To validate the thrust of arguments, this chapter engages an exegesis of local television dramas' simultaneous depiction of female characters and dramatic deployment of their actions, discourses and roles as metaphors for social transformation. Couched on Foucault's figuration of the body as a socially produced regime of knowledge and power, my analysis demonstrates how local television dramas project female characters' bodies as symbols of sexualized identity and knowledge. In the same vein, the chapter shows how the same bodies can be read as canvasses that intersect between the semiotic and material dimensions of gender power and the re-imagination of society. The chapter, therefore, illustrates how the dramaturgy of local television drama, using female characters, their bodies and subversive dramatic discourses, engenders critical debates and reconfigures emerging social norms in society. In a sense, such a dramaturgy gestures towards what Alden (1991, p.68) refers to as "the feminist challenge to patriarchal authority" and an "attempt to create convincing and interesting female characters" showing them as being attuned to agency and power.

4.2 Patriarchal Contestations and Spatial Reconfigurations

The phallus as a symbol for masculinity is common in the Kenyan society. Roberts (2000) observes "the concept of the phallus is more or less inescapable in discussions of masculinity" (p. 7). On his part, Heath (1989) provides an intriguing characterization of the centrality of the phallic symbol in conceptions of masculinity as the "eternal problem of the phallus" (p. 26). These observations are pertinent to this section because they adumbrate postulations that the phallus is not only mediated through the symbolic but also forms an integral part in discourses to do with femininity and masculinity in society. However, it is in the realm of symbolic change and transformation that this section makes an intervention. This is so because the agency of historical veracity enables local television dramatists to represent issues that facilitate a clear understanding of people and their social environments. For this reason, local television drama occupies an interstitial space that relates both to the nature of gender relations and power dynamics prescribed by culture and the reconfigurations of these spaces which go hand in hand with on-going changes in gender relations in society. A critical examination of local dramas such as **Mheshimiwa, Mother-in-law** and **Tabasamu** largely portray inept men and multiple facets of strong women who have appropriated discourses of agency and are operating successfully in male dominated spaces and spheres of influence.

Paying attention to the centrality of representational systems in selected local television dramas - of images, visual representations and structures of looking - this section is keen on illustrating how local television drama uses female characters' voices, bodies

and sexuality as metaphors for reading complexities, contradictions and (re)constructions of the postcolonial Kenyan society. Consciously aware of the fact that scholars such as Stratton (1994), Shaw (1995), Etoke (2006) and Odhiambo (2007) have all singled out the tenuous reality of attempting to read the postcolonial nation within the ambits of sexuality and motherhood, the section does not seek to simplify these tropes into singular monolithic concepts for analysis, but embarking on an exegesis of ways in which these tropes can be productively engaged in interrogating (re)figurations of social spaces in local television drama. In the process, it uncovers attempts by various female characters to reconfigure patriarchal practices in society. Indeed, and as demonstrated in Bhabha (1990) and Anderson (1991), the figuration of nationhood is always fluid because it is viewed as an imagined, constructed and contested terrain, the tropes of sexuality and motherhood are equally fluid and problematic. Therefore, this section proceed from the assumption that gender is a set of lived and embodied realities, and hope to demonstrate how local television drama's attempts at highlighting issues relating to women in society is, in many ways, a conscious strategy for reconfiguring and re-imagining the postcolonial Kenyan society.

At this juncture, it is important to point out that the Kenyan society, like many other African societies, is largely patriarchal in nature (Kabaji, 2008). Patriarchy is said to be a system of male authority that oppresses women through its social, political and economic institutions (Kabaji, 2008, p.37). This situation legitimizes patriarchy in most African societies, Kenya being no exception. Even more broadly, patriarchy refers to the web of economic, political, social and religious regulations that enforce the

domination of women by men throughout the ages (Jones, 2000). Institutions and processes that comprise the patriarchal system are conceptualized as webs of gendered relations, which sustain and reproduce male social power such as within various cultural sites, that is: language, religion, media and popular culture, and education. Another cultural site where patriarchy is evident is that of the household, where matters regarding sexuality, reproduction and violence (or lack of) are central.

Emerging demands and trends in society today have compelled women to contest and cross-over traditionally defined social spaces thus, blurring the boundaries of operation as outlined by patriarchy. In this way, women have managed to inject feminine agency into these social spaces. It is to these feminine trajectories that the chapter now turn while focusing on local television drama in Kenya. It focuses on the specificity of feminine everyday practices which are elided by male points of view. Here, local television drama is read as paying tribute to spatial parameters that female characters valorize and whether their reactions are indicative of and/or are pointers to emerging social attitudes, behaviours and mannerisms in the Kenyan society today.

To seek knowledge, power and agency in popular forms of expression such as music and local television drama, to name but a few, is to wrestle with contradictions (Nyairo, 2015). This setion is conscious of this tussle that Nyairo alludes to while interrogating local television drama's attempt to articulate various ways in which female characters have taken up agency in society today. Most importantly, the section is keen on showing how local television drama wrestles with patriarchal practices where men's power in

society is enshrined. As such, local television drama texts are read as sites for discursive power struggles in society. This is so because television drama refers outwards to a recognizable contemporary social world with its historically specific cultural anxieties, debates and discourses. Therefore, the framing of a woman within television drama, based on these conditions, is that of a figure whose meaning(s) is contested, invented and/or negotiated, and that television drama offers a wide range of positions for interpretation and identification of women in society.

This section, therefore, sets out to examine the redefinition of phallic spaces and their cultural meanings through the use and representation of female characters in local television drama. In doing so, the section sets out to elucidate processes of spatial reconfiguration showing how female figures emerge and redefine their social and cultural roles. The section also addresses what Heath (1989) has curiously called the 'eternal problem of the phallus' as a symbol for masculinity. Here, the phallus is viewed as an eternal problem because it not only refuses to go away but it is also the subject of contestation in the analyses and exegeses of masculinity and patriarchy. It is important to point out at this stage that although masculinity has something to do with what it means to be a man or manly (Waliaula, 2010), it does not preclude the possibility of females exhibiting masculine attributes as this section extrapolates. A closer look at the selected local television dramas reveal that exclusively male spaces undergo a reconfiguration predicated on women taking up the discourse of agency aimed at breaking barriers of phallocentric practices that not only bar women's access to male spaces but also stifles their voices. Strikingly, however, is the fact that male characters

like Mwamba in **Mother-in-law** and Kabaila in **Mheshimiwa** contest these "aggression" and/or "encroachment" of women into masculine spaces. More importantly, this contestation of male domination presents a subtle and constant re-configuration of these social spaces.

In using character archetypes such as Charity in **Mother-in-law** and Magdalina in **Mheshimiwa**, local television drama taps into an endogenous matrilineality in African cultures (Waliaula, 2010) and crystallizes in an enunciation of a subversive dramatic discourse that not only gives meaning to a historical past but also shows agency in female characters. Female characters in the three selected local television dramas reveal a general continuum that reflects the maturity of dramatic processes as well as that of female characters themselves in society. Charity in **Mother-in-law** resists attempts to be silenced by her husband, Mwamba, and actively participates in all family decisions, often, making some of them single-handedly. Magdalina, in **Mheshimiwa** refuses to succumb to pressure from her husband, Kabaila, the newly elected Member of Parliament for Tumbili constituency, to remain at their rural home as he goes to Nairobi to commence his duties as a Member of Parliament. Wivina and Maya in **Tabasamu** also resist all attempts from their male friends to dictate terms to them and instead set the agenda and exert control in all forms of relationships that they get into. Thus, the common thread that runs through these local television dramas is the process of maturation of female characters who deconstruct social spaces from which they articulate their rejection of certain patriarchal practices and, in the process, reconfigure emergent forms of women's social expression in society.

Like Lefebvre (1991), for whom space is an "instrument and object of struggles and conflict" (p.35-36), the selected local television dramas are often presented as battlegrounds because the masculinization of space through the phallocentric canon has constantly eclipsed the place of women across Africans cultures over the ages. This eclipsing of women has compelled female characters like Charity in **Mother-in-law** to aggressively and constantly fight for their spaces in male dominated spheres of influence. In doing this, the female characters overturn phallocentric requirements that erode female power in society. In overturning the phallus, women are shown as agents and facilitators of social change in society through a reconstitution process in local television drama. Thus, the transformation of the female figure occurs in major symbolic spaces such as the public space whose changes suggest a new and emergent cultural index. In this way, spaces and power structures are remapped and the magnified role of women given primacy in local television drama.

Charity in **Mother-in-law**, for instance, makes possible some of the critical extrapolations of phallocentric contestations and spatial reconfigurations of emergent forms of femininity in Kenya that "retrieve masculinity from the parochial matrix in which certain critical inquiries have embedded it" (Onyanyo, 2007). It is important to point out that we pay particular attention to Charity in this section because more than any other female character in the TV drama, she openly contests, takes on male characters, voices her displeasure and exerts herself in male dominated spaces. We therefore not only explore Charity's exceptional feats in contesting patriarchal practices

but also enact what can be read as feminine-masculine index in local television drama. The fact that Charity, as an archetype in **Mother-in-law***,* dramatizes the reconfiguration of space in society is uncontestable. This is clearly manifested in her refusal to succumb to male domination as a female figure who is averse to any submission to the phallocentric canon. Strikingly, Charity's appropriation of the public space and her instinctive authority seems to reflect on **Mother-in-law**'s attempt at remapping social spaces in society. In this, the T.V drama deconstructs ways in which patriarchy has slowly removed self-identity and individual foundations in society. The social spaces provided for by patriarchal structures confine women to domestic spaces such as homestead, kitchen, and garden but Charity resists this invisibilisation by patriarchal structures. Hence, the TV drama carefully weaves the discourse of women's appropriation and valorization of male dominated spaces and culture as Charity asserts her voice in all family undertakings and decisions.

Of importance to this analysis is Butler's (1988) thought provoking arguments on ways in which linguistic constructions create reality in general through the speech acts which we engage in in everyday life. By endlessly citing the conventions and ideologies of the social world around us, Butler (1988) observes that in the performative act of speaking, we "incorporate" that reality by enacting it with our bodies, but that "reality" nonetheless remains a social construction (p. 272). This is the very situation that we find in **Mother-in-law**. Charity comes out as a character who not only creates but also lives in her own social space. She is a towering figure, stubborn and nonsensical especially to her daughters-in-law. She always has her way in whatever she wants. In this way, she

succeeds in creating what Butler terms as artificial conventions in the larger family space to appear to be natural. By constantly acting according to her intentions, feelings, and free will, Charity injects her subjectivity and agency.

As we have pointed out, what is required for the hegemony of heteronormative standards to maintain power is continual repetitions of gender acts in the most mundane of daily activities such as the way we walk, talk, and gesture among others. The heteronormative situation and yearning for power is clearly portrayed in the character of Charity. Charity cuts the image of an abrasive, contemptuous, single-minded, and protective matriarch. She is portrayed as one who builds and destroys in equal measure. Her conduct and actions in the entire show attests to this. It is in this way that she manages to persuade the men around her without fear and due consideration of the repercussions of her actions. For example, when she contradicts Mwamba, her husband, in many family decisions, she does so by openly voicing her opinions and expressing her discontent of Mwambia's point of view. In this way, Charity distinguishes herself as a modern matriarch whose space is felt in the larger family space. In the familial space, Charity, as a matriarch freely exerts her influence as a single entity or in conjunction with the men succeeding in subverting the already scripted hegemonic social conventions and ideologies that govern patriarchal societies.

Charity, by all means, exerts her power in the family which she has warmed herself into and, to an extent, in direct contradiction with her husband Mwamba. Her figuration is that of a brute mother-in-law who is brash, critical, rude, and anachronistic. This is

evident in Episodes 19 where Charity has visited the family of her first born son, Jack and was meant to stay for a weekend. However, she extends her stay to a month until her grandchildren start asking each other, in whispers, when she will be leaving because she had become a nuisance. In the meantime, we are treated to a circus of confrontations between Charity and Alison, her daughter-in-law, in a number of things ranging from social etiquette to food. Eventually, everything degenerates into a deluge of terse replies and veiled insults while the mother-in-law becomes the harbinger of marital problems in the extended family space. Orawo (2011) observes "The complexity between the mother-in-law (Charity) and her daughter-in-law (Alison) clearly portrays the volatile and unbearable relationship between the in-laws" (p. 281). Doreen's observation clearly points to the acrimonious relationship between Charity and her daughters-in-law. Hence, through her actions, Charity ably introduces a strong and influential matriarchal space in the show which, unfortunately, comes at a cost of complexity and enforcement of matriarchy. We cannot forget that Charity's high abrasive status comes from a sense of conservatism that has been nurtured by Mwamba, her husband. Mwamba always prowls near Charity, rebuking her from time to time for her actions as a man absolutely standing on his space.

Throughout **Mother-in-law**, Charity is portrayed as having stepped out of a "fetishised figure of male fantasy" (West-Pavlow, 2006, p.111) into masculine roles given the fact that she operates and domineers masculine spaces. Considering her age, Charity's actions could be read as an outright subversion of patriarchy. As such, she has lost her traditionally defined feminine characteristics like kindness, humaneness and

motherliness (Dipio, 2014) and has become masculinized. Instead, she is now cold, driving, ambitious, self-centred and manipulative, just like the men whose spaces she has usurped. In doing this, she has appropriated the "male gaze" and stepped into the masculine position, which she has excelled. Therefore, Charity is depicted as a lioness that stops at nothing in escaping from domesticity and finding her own niche in male dominated spaces, not even reproaches from her husband, Mwamba, can stand on her way.

In line with women's struggle for self-fulfillment (Odhiambo, 2011), **Mother-in-law** has shown that female characters like Charity have reconfigured womanhood, prioritizing female individualism and empowerment, thereby subverting the seeming powerlessness of women in patriarchal societies. By extrapolation, female characters like Charity have upturned the saliency of women transformation of the public sphere in society. In this regard, Charity can be read as an embodiment of the true spirit and heart of a drama for social change. She is the blood, mind and vocalizer of the dramatist's new woman in postcolonial Kenya. In line with this position, the sinew of the dramatic paradigm in **Mother-in-law** is seen to be moored in feminising aesthetics for democratised public sphere and the formation of a modern ''counterpublic'', which vouches safe women's visibilisation in society.

Worth noting is the fact that **Mother-in-law**'s aesthetic preoccupation dovetails with Loomba's (2005) observation that women's position in the postcolonial experience is that of unbroken imaginings of disparate levels and paradigms of liberation; a method of

''re-writing indigenous history, appropriating postcolonial symbols and mythologies, and amplifying where possible, the voice of women'' (p.191). Charity best symbolizes these postcolonial women alluded to by Loomba as she is a complete contradiction of the fabled good woman, who was traditionally kept in reserve until the ultimate crisis strikes. Then as the world crashes around the man's world, the woman in her supremacy descends and sweeps the shards. Thus, the use of Charity as trope deconstructs the patriarchal space, which is a gendered and asphyxiating landscape that calibrates phallic tyranny and the invisibilisation of women in the public domain.

Additionally, postcolonial women challenge the rationale behind public-private dichotomy founded on a patriarchal wall that impinges on their contribution to social spaces. Traditionally, women were largely denied access to the public sphere, which was widely viewed as ''an institutionalized arena of discursive interaction'' (Sow, 2015). Through Charity, the traditionally guarded public space is not only contested but laid bare. Her stand, though considered over-domineering, is crucial to understanding women empowerment in Kenya through the expansion of the public sphere in using television drama. In order to over-turn the public-private dichotomy thesis, Charity resists what Evans (1987) calls ''being pushed or tempted into accepting subservient or degrading or decorative roles'' (p.134) from her male counterparts such as Mr. Mwamba, her husband. Through her, the show brings out the fact that women have become active participants in every aspect of the social space. Accordingly, Sow (2015) opines that it is only through women's active participation and representation that the social and public sphere could be widened for policies that could help galvanise

sustainable socio-cultural and economic transformation. Hence, through Charity, **Mother-in-law** invokes the female principle that challenges the public-private dichotomy by considering every individual, women being no exception, as being integral in the public sphere and as partakers in economic, social and political actions.

However, there is verbal and visual evidence that contrasts between public (masculine) and private (feminine) discourses in **Mother-in-law**, particularly between Charity and her daughters-in law. The contrast is shown in various exchanges, sometimes heated, that characterize Charity's and her daughters-in law's interactions in both public and domestic spaces. These exchanges, as Orawo (2011) observes, portray the volatile and unbearable relationship between mother-in-law (Charity) and her daughters-in-law (Alison, Lisah and Selina). This is so because of the fact that Charity has lost her femininity and has assumed the feminine-masculine posture. She therefore not only wields power over her sons but her daughters-in-law also. Consequently, the daughters-in-law vehemently protest this kind of insubordination from their mother-in-law resulting in constant wrangles in this extended family pitting mother-in-law and her daughters-in-law.

At the heart of feminine exchanges and debates lie questions and anxieties about gendered and sexual identities in society. On the one hand, **Mother-in-law** opens these debates and calls them to question in using female characters like Selina, Lisah and Alison. Through this, the drama does not alienate its audience for it tackles issues that are easily located and understood in society and resonates well with modern family

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challenges. On the other hand, the show is at the centre of both masculine and feminine identities in negotiating and configuring emerging spatial dimensions in gendered spaces. As such, characters like Charity gives impetus to new and emerging forms of sexual identities in society, which are not contingent upon age, marital and economic status but on personal convictions. Hence, gender in **Mother-in-law**, as a local television drama, is projected not only as a site for difference and repression but also as site that is complicated by multiple positions across social status, sexuality, age, and cultural difference. This realization is a clear indication that power is experienced differently by women in society depending on a range of individual and subjective positions that they occupy.

In dramas that conform to fairly obvious and standard generic conventions, the sequence of events, character relations, locations and timing combine with the genre to construct certain expectations about meaning(s). However, Charity's stubborn demeanor becomes the means through which conventional "meanings" of femininity are "unmade" and patriarchal assumptions overturned in **Mother-in-law**. She valorizes most of the norms of domestic and erotic femininity as enshrined in the phallocentric canon drawing attention to and exposing the absurdity of such norms. Largely, Charity's "unruliness" makes such patriarchal norms visible and laughable for she exposes their inadequacies. This concurs with Mulvey's (2009) observation that such acts, like Charity's, disrupts conventional gender power relations and begins to construct another possible position for the female subject, one which can lay claim to desire rather than represent desirability. Noteworthy is the fact that laying claim to

desire is indeed the essence of negotiating and reconfiguring women's visibility in the public sphere.

The power of the "unruly" woman to disrupt patriarchal dictates on feminine norms as advanced by Mulvey (2009) is not only inherent in **Mother-in-law** but also in **Tabasamu**. Female characters like Rita, Wivina and Maya are busy debunking the feminine conduct and ideals accorded to them by the phallocentric canon. These female characters' undertakings draw attention to both the absurdities of the feminine ideal and its function as regulator of women's conduct and bodies in society. The spectacular display of characters like Rita challenging property ownership and in search for her identity, Wivina's stance on female responsibility and respectability from her male counterparts and Maya's undertaking on sexual identity all serve to show femininity as a mode that is fluid and always negotiated rather than something that comes out naturally. The three female characters offer potentially revolutionary, empowering and transgressive pleasures for its female viewers, implicitly encouraging them to understand and claim their sexuality and pursue their own ambitions and desires without being conditioned and suffocated by phallic requirements. Thus, like **Mother-in-law**, **Tabasamu** exposes inadequacies of the regulatory function of patriarchy on the feminine ideal and emphasizes on its ambivalent nature.

4.3 Women, Professionalism and Patriarchal Practices

Young female professionals embody social transformations and are easy targets to ventilate social concerns for they are part of the visible results of postcolonial opportunities in society today. A vast majority of these young female professionals are on their upward mobility and their lives point to the fact that societal transformations cause "shifting relations, including the symbolism of sex and gender" (Ross and Rayna, 1997, p.162). In this regard, these female professionals often challenge patriarchal ideologies that govern the social organisation of sexuality in the society. Silberschmidt (2001) opines that since colonial times, the social organisation and regulation of sexual beliefs and morals by religion, family, and/or state, are continually changing. Because of the changes that Silberschmidt alludes to, new spaces for experiencing sexuality and relationship formations have opened up. Similarly, young female professionals have dared masculine ideals that regulate the concepts of motherhood, gender and sex roles, and of husbands as breadwinners in society. Consequently, the conventional way of living provided for within patriarchal practices is contested as the choices that young female professionals make between competing practices of everyday living are portrayed as the very core of how they identify themselves.

This section interprets young female professionals' lifestyles not merely as expressions, but as a means of realizing and understanding subjective realities in society. Accordingly, local television drama, as a form of popular expression, is read as a site for performing sexualities and by acting as a source of moral expressions for young female audiences. By pulling together a number of disparate episodes in **Tabasamu**, the section

reflects on how young female professionals' sexualities in Kenya have been shaped and continue to be shaped by existing social structures. At the same time it illustrates how this category of young women is constantly resisting social boundaries. To this end, local television drama, **Tabasamu** in particular, is seen as an important site for gaining access to women's acts of resistance, defiance, and refusal to fit in existing public and/or social frames. Consequently, the section explore meanings of the concept of the young female professional, and in the process, tries to generate a reading of this figure arguing that local television drama offers more context-specific readings of how this figure can be understood in society today. Extrapolating on young female professionals' lifestyles as signifying practice in local television drama helps in understand their urban experiences and manifestations as coeval social phenomena (Fabian, 1983). In other words, local television drama is analysed as a subset of popular culture, not only to depict how the urban landscape and its new social and cultural formations has impacted on young female professionals, but also how it has highlighted the tensions that arise from new ideas and practices on masculinity and the entanglement of different cultural and social attitudes and practices surrounding sexuality and gender.

Local television drama, as is predicated in **Tabasamu**, explores the itineraries of young, professional, urbanite women and how they negotiate power structures in the urban space. Female characters in the show such as Wivina, Maya, and Rita emerge from socially and economically marked spaces and create their own niches in their professional world. Wivina, for example, works as a public relations manager and later on becomes her brother's campaign manager while Maya works as marketing manager

of Raha Zetu Tours and Travel Company. Traditionally, managerial positions were a reserve for men while women often deputized. The fact that both Wivina and Maya serve at managerial positions is a clear indication that women have taken up agency and are ready to favourably compete for positions that are a preserve for men. Evidently, **Tabasamu** is another creative piece of work that presents the evolution of the female character as she continues with her conquest of spaces controlled by men. Hence, as Spronk (2006) observes, young female professionals can now occupy a space that was formerly reserved for men, notably the public space of the work floor - through their professions, they also embody characteristics previously defined as male like having executive power.

It is imperative to point out that the female characters' professional lives parallels and interacts with issues confronting their private selves, disturbing the public-private hierarchy that underpins local television drama. For instance, Maya and her workmate Penny are constantly wrangling in the office because of the private lives that they lead. The two are competing over men and therefore find it difficult to conceal their rivalry even at work. This situation is evident through Maya's revelations as she ordered Phillip out of her house:

> Do you think I can go out with a man like you? No. Not at all. You ain't my type. I was just using you to get back at Penny. She has been on my nerves for long. Now you know. Philip, it is time for you to go. Out. Run along. (Gesturing for him to walk out). (**Tabasamu**, Episode 12)

Maya's revelation, as shown in the above excerpt, demonstrates that female characters are constructed across differences of competition, sexuality, lifestyle and that these differences are not only contestable but are negotiable also.

Popular representations of gender and sexuality in Africa, Kenya being no exception, are locked within colonial, religious, and/or traditional patriarchal narratives in an attempt to control women's sexualities. However, local television drama has emerged as an alternative site through which women's sexuality can be explored and visibilised in society. **Tabasamu** has taken lead in women visibilisation by not only presenting women's sexuality narratives but also in featuring young female professionals who deconstruct the working environment from a phallic structured ensemble to a more liberal and inclusive space. The working environment, often characterized by masculine practices is reconfigured to include feminine competences, co-operation and trust through the characterization of Maya and Wivina. Furthermore, the success of these two female characters in their work places exemplify the fact that women should be judged on the basis of their work ethic, competence, entrepreneurial and organizational skills rather than by their sexualized bodies. Mrs. Muka rightly points this out of Maya:

> **Mrs. Muka**: Ladies take it slowly. This is my game and I must play it well.
> **Mrs. Muka's Friend:** Did you see her? Does she even know her work?
> **Mrs. Muka**: Yes, I met her. (thoughtfully) Enyewe kazi anajua sana (Indeed she knows her work). In fact, she knows her work very well. She expertly and perfectly handles her clients. She explains detail to detail and she knows all these details like the back of her hand. I am

really impressed by her work ethic and knowledge.

<div align="right">(Tabasamu, Episode 5)</div>

This observation clearly shows that women have the necessary competence and skills to deliver on their roles at work. Thus, these young female professionals represent an emerging social group that understands its social space and operates in a recognizable way. Often, they see themselves as explorers of a 'modern' or 'sophisticated' lifestyle in the urban space, which is made possible from their earnings, thus:

> **Zena**: I haven't seen you guys of late. With all these late nights, you must be having a lot of fun.
> **Wivina**: Great fun, indeed.
> **Maya**: Oh yeah. That gives me an idea. Girls, we need a girls' night out. I am talking about club-hoping till 6 am in the morning. No guys, just us and of course I will buy the first two rounds of drinks.
> **Wivina**: It sounds like a plot.
> **Maya**: Yeah, it is.
> **Zena**: No No No. You gonna do it without me. I have classes and lots of work. Next time, may be.
> **Maya**: Honey, come on. Don't be such a party-puffer, live a little.

<div align="right">(Tabasamu, Episode 13)</div>

Again, from Maya's utterances, as shown in the above excerpt, we deduce that the sense of freedom among young female professionals is always located in their own articulation and display of independence, which often contravenes ways in which women are supposed to socialize as outlined by the phallocentric canon. Strengthened by their independent financial positions, they form a social group of women who implicitly and explicitly critiques conventional gender roles in society. Further, Maya has this to say to her roommates:

I have to enjoy every bit of my life. I have to choose where I spend and with whom. The choices are solely mine and I don't seek a second opinion. I especially do not like the moral lectures from you, Zenah. (**Tabasamu**, Episode 13)

In this regard, female characters such as Maya as predicated in local television drama are seen as representative of an emerging crop of young female professionals who are at the vanguard in expressing their own subjectivities and in the process reconfigure social complexities of sexuality in the context of contemporary Kenyan society. In this way, **Tabasamu** presents important indices for understanding emerging moral anxieties that characterize young women's sexualities in Kenya (Wa Mungai, 2014).

In the debate about postcolonial subjectivities, Werbner (2002) calls for studying how people realise their subjectivities in the subjects' consciousness of their personal or intimate relations. In the same vein, Foucault (1990) points out that sexuality is useful in studying how people realise their subjectivities because it can serve as a prism through which we can analyse how social developments generate (new) notions of self. The entry point for doing so is to take into account the "genesis of new communities of taste, sentiment and other markers of inclusion" (Meyer, 2004, p.4) and how they are embedded in larger structures in society. As is evident from **Tabasamu**, the young female professionals are engaged, on the one hand, in different processes of subjectivisation and identification as professionals and, on the other hand, their socializations as women, lovers and partners. These processes are integral and key indicators for self-identification and sexual orientation in society.

The question of how gendered subjects are constructed as sex objects and represented in local television drama shifts the focus of this study to the personal and intimate world of family and sexual relationships. A vast majority of the young female professionals as portrayed in the local television drama are unmarried though they are way past marriage age, at least according to the phallocentric canon. From discourses that ensue, female characters such Wivina, Maya and Rita among others have chosen to delay their marriages because either they need to work on their careers first or they prefer to delay the responsibilities that come with married life as Wivina quips:

> Marriage is not my cup of tea. I have important things to accomplish in my life. Top on the list is my career. I need to develop my profession. It is unfortunate that people rush to marriage without caring about their professional life. For me I can't to do that. After all I am not ready to be answerable to a man too soon. (**Tabasamu**, Episode 10)

A situation like Wivina's above often results in either prolonged dating and/or maintenance of casual relationships. Such relationships do not have strong emotional, physical and material attachments other than immediate gratification of desire. Maya adumbrates this position when she argues:

> I am not keen on committing to any man. Mine is simply dating and if I get bored with one, I move on to another. I only need to be happy. If the man can afford my happiness that is all I look for (**Tabasamu**, Episode 10).

Dating, in fact, is an integral element in young female professionals' lives and they actively date, mingle and have fun with people of opposite sex as Maya rightfully points

out. This state of affairs is lent credence by the fact that majority of these young female professionals are financially independent due to their relatively stable jobs. This translates into choices such as living on their own and enjoying their preferred lifestyles. Thus, these young female professionals reconfigure the ideals of the phallocentric canon as they inject new social practices into their lifestyles as a response to contemporary urban trends. Notably, the lifestyles of these young female professionals are a celebration of cosmopolitan possibilities ushered in by globalisation processes, what Appadurai (1996) terms a 'new cosmopolitanism' that unites the cultural, financial and political flows within and between non-western and western societies.

At this juncture, it is important to state that these young female professionals are cosmopolitans, not because of a cultural orientation to the West, but because of the convergence of global and local "cultural compliance" (Ferguson, 1999, p.45) that they embody. Implying that these professionals articulate cosmopolitanism characterized by a Kenyan flavour that they not only subscribe to but are proud of also. This "brand" of cosmopolitanism appropriates global practices which are localized in Nairobi prompting Nyairo (2005) to describe Nairobi as a place for the appreciation of a multitude of contemporary identities or modes of being based on a mix of local and global qualities. Fashionable dressing, going out and progressive attitudes are important markers of their 'modern' or 'sophisticated' personality. This is what Maya alludes to when she tells her roommates:

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> I like buying the latest trends in fashion and as long as my bills are catered for I have nothing to worry about. Again, as long as I can afford to go out every time I want that is all I need in life. And, of course, all I need is a man to have fun with to complete my happiness. (**Tabasamu**, Episode 10)

As Maya explains in this excerpt, the notion of sexual pleasure is seen as integral part to the sense of self of young professional women. Sexual pleasure, then, becomes a desire that is related to their status as career women, but above all to possibilities generated by being relatively independent from social controls enshrined in the phallocentric canon. In using Maya, Wivina and Rita, **Tabasamu** is at the forefront in foregrounding emerging erotic frames of reference of fast life in society today. Here, sexuality reflects a space for the young female professional to re-enact femininity by claiming entitlement to sexual pleasure. This situation reveals that the notion of sexuality assumes a new place in the articulation of contemporary self-identity among young female professionals and that both sexuality and romantic love are becoming central to their self-expression. Consequently, through **Tabasamu**, we deduce the power of local television drama, as a subset of popular culture, in shaping women's consciousness by supplying metaphors and narratives with which they process harsh quotidian realities (Appadurai, 1996).

In the patriarchal iconoclast, sexuality is understood as a natural element of a person that not only brings pleasure and happiness but is also a sacred and private discourse. However, young female professionals have negated this position by engaging in public representations and discussions on sexuality to reflect on and shape their own relationships. This situation is evident in Maya's discussion with her roommates:

Zena: You look so tired. What must have happened last night?

Wivina: I came in like 3 am in the morning. I had to attend that company launch fiasco.

Zena: How did that one go?

Wivina: All I have got to say is that it went well. And the company owes me big time. For all the sacrifices I have made this year, I need a promotion. Save for my good looks!

Maya: Hello and good morning everyone. I heard that you came in late last night. You have got a new man in your life?

Wivina: Does everything in life have to be about men?

Maya: Honey, it is all about men, duh!

Wivina: By the way, Kevin is becoming crab. He has become rogue in my life.

Maya: I think he is a nice guy. Actually, he is lovely.

Wivina: You say so. Because you don't know him!

Zena: I haven't seen you guys of late. What are you guys up to? With all these late nights, you must be having a lot of fun guys? …

Wivina: So, James? Is he still calling you?

Maya: Guh, it is worse than that. You know that man cannot take no for an answer!

Zena: That's what you get when you go out with married men?

 Maya: There you go again with your morality. Ok. Let me tell you this. If a man doesn't get satisfied with his wife, he will go and get it elsewhere.

Zena: So you volunteer the services? Listen if a man is not getting what he wants, he should talk about it with his wife.

(**Tabasamu**, Episode 10)

Sexual discourses such as in the excerpt above provide a platform for young female professionals to share their knowledge about love, explore healthy and unhealthy relationships, promote emotional bonding through shared sexual pleasure, and prioritize communication as part of the cosmopolitan practice in urban spaces. It is thus evident from **Tabasamu** that local television drama provides a space upon which young female professionals share new ways of being and knowing as well as respond to emerging

needs of young adults to acquire knowledge about love, sex and relationships, which is of course, against the customary jurisprudence provided for by the phallocentric canon.

The new brand of sexuality as lived out by the young female professionals in urban lifestyles as shown in **Tabasamu** sets this generation of young female professionals apart from other generations before them. This is so because their understanding and interpretation of sexuality is shown as a break from the normative notions of sexuality and gender outlined in the phallocentric canon. To this end, female characters such as Maya and Wivina make explicit the fact that gender and sexuality continue to shift, much to the detriment of existing gerontocratic power structures. The net effect of these changing gerontrocratic structures is the reconfiguration of womanhood. Implying that the image of African womanhood anchored in the patriarchal space as that of caring and homely is not only deconstructed but also substituted with that of professional womanhood, which is represented as egocentric and not family oriented. This is clearly shown through the female characters in **Tabasamu**. For instance, Wivina's firm insistence on professional engagement with Mheshimiwa paints this picture starkly. She says:

> **Wivina**: You know Mheshimiwa, business is business.
> **Mheshimiwa**: hahahaha Wivina. We can also talk about fun. It is not bad to say I like you, Wivina. (Moving closer to her)**.**
> **Wivina**: (Pushing him away) I think you are talking it too far. You called this meeting for us to discuss business. I am your Public Relations and Campaign manager. We therefore need to discuss business. I want to make it very clear, you are my client and nothing more. If you are insinuating

anything beyond that am sorry, I will not
work with you.
Mheshimiwa: (apologetic) Ok. Ok. I get you
clearly. I am sorry for my misbehavior**.**
Wivina: You better be!

(**Tabasamu**, Episode 4)

The above exchange depicts Wivina as independent minded, confident, focused, and a

determined professional eager to make something out of her profession rather than

indulge in sexual escapades with men like Mheshimiwa. Her sense of womanhood is

founded on a self that is independent, critical and persevering as opposed to that which

is submissive and receptive to male demands. This shows that Wivina has learned to

appreciate herself as a professional, positively reframing her gendered self and views

sexual desire as a subset of her sense of self. Accordingly, she has distinguished

between real intimate sex that involves emotions, body and soul, on the one hand, and

convenient, lustful, exploitative sex, on the other hand. This distinction forms the basis

upon which she rejected Mheshimiwa's sexual advances for she knew that his was

simply a spur of the moment. Again, Wivina's firm stand shows that young female

professionals have managed to develop a sense of self in a context of changing gender

and sexual constructions. Most of these young female professionals have managed to

withstand pressures associated with dominance of women by men, sexual prowess of

being good time girls and having double standards in matters sexuality depending on the

social standing and class of the man that they are dealing with.

Dominant sexual discourses in Kenya represent female sexuality largely in relation to

procreation (Muriungi, 2007). In this, motherhood is perceived as ultimate prize and

expression of womanhood. As such, women who are married and/or mothers are not only seen as having fulfilled the phallic requirements but are respected and held in high-esteem. Accordingly, women's sexual reputations are framed around these notions as women take care not to appear sexually assertive. A closer look at **Tabasamu** shows that the sexual discourse predicating feminine sexuality on procreation is fast changing and is being replaced by emerging sexual trends where sex is perceived as an embodied sensation. Characters like Maya, Wivina and Rita have taken up this discourse, acknowledging female sexual desire independent of procreation and hence making sexual desire intrinsic to femininity. Therefore, emerging from the conceptualization of women, professionalism and the phallic canon as portrayed in **Tabasamu** is the fact that the bodies of young female professionals can be read as "markers of sexual transgression" (Muriungi, 2007, p.291) for they defy patriarchal practices that govern sexual morality, people's understanding of the rules that governed sex and sexuality and instead introduce their own understanding and practice of sexual identity in society.

4.4 Representing the Revolutionary Female Character

Local television drama deploys a number of images in order to effectively render its message(s) to intended audience(s) and in representing a number of issues in society. Perhaps the most enduring and recurring image within the symbolic representation of a nation is that of the revolutionary female character. This image foregrounds ways in which women are figured as part of the national revolution, but only in reproductive ways (Chatterjee, 2012). In other words, the image of the revolutionary female character is common in national liberation struggles but, often, seeks to locate women's

revolutionary agency within motherhood. This image epitomizes ways in which women's bodies stand metaphorically for the society and, in the process, reveal the contradictions and complicities in the deployment of women's bodies in popular cultural forms of expression. Such popular forms of expression like television drama, song and music position women as individuals who have played an integral role in the revolution for national liberation while simultaneously representing the conflation of their bodies as a symbol of the nation.

Deploying local television drama as a point of departure, this section discusses how dominant visual tropes within popular culture help in foregrounding the representation and interpellation of women in society. The section argues that more than being just forms of visual representation, local television drama can be seen as a site for articulation, negotiation, and (re)configuration of women in society. In this, I explore how the female figure has transformed overtime and how local television portrays this signification or meaning of women's agency in society. By visually mapping the female figure as deployed in local television drama, the section shows how women's narratives are performed in creating new spaces within male dominated discourses and practices.

The analysis of a revolutionary female character assumes that the representation of gender and, in particular the female gender, in local television drama possesses a crucial role in the formation of public consciousness and collective experiences of social life. This assumption obliges us to ask the question of which forms of community representation of women that television drama contributes to mould. Considering that

local television drama is designed from the onset to speak to disparate audiences, this question is as good as not asked because the relevant social context is assumed as given. Thus, a good starting point is how society vests masculinity with power and femininity with powerlessness in the phallocentric canon. In this, men are presented as powerful and all-knowing whereas women are seen as powerless and with limited knowledge. This situation could not be allowed to remain intact in local television drama for the simple reason that local television drama not only foregrounds forms of social transformation but also responds to emerging and changing practices of power in the contemporary Kenyan society. Thus, in local television drama, female characters are presented as liberated, independent, modernized, revolutionary and resistant to the traditional practices of power as is the case with Charity in **Mother-in-law**, Wivina and Maya in **Tabasamu** to mention but a few. Thus, female characters are shown as individuals capable of exercising power debunking the myth that if women are let into positions of power, they will fail disastrously, abuse or misuse the power (Odhiambo, 2011).

In its association of power to the male gender, the patriarchal practice imagined that women are vulnerable and therefore needed male protection (Dipio, 2014). Women's vulnerability was predicated on the fact that they were viewed as inferior beings not able to protect themselves when confronted with danger. However, local television drama deconstructs and reconfigures this imagined feminine vulnerability to an extent of showing that women are capable of thriving on their own and that men can be vulnerable in a number of ways. Through the use of female characters such as Charity

and Celina, for example, **Mother-in-law** exposes Charlie's vulnerability showing that he also needs protection, least from his own mother, Charity. Charity's titular strength and power provides a derisive critique of men in the show and by extension of masculinity in postcolonial Kenyan society. Local television drama, therefore, reconfigures the masochist fantasies offered in male-centred drama where the erotic gaze is central by creating female characters such as Wivina, Maya, and Rita in **Tabasamu**; Charity, Celina, and Alison in **Mother-in-law** and Magdalina in **Mheshimiwa**, who are powerful and have different sexual orientations in life. These female characters have appropriated agency, command the public space, discursive authority and control the gaze.

Masculinity is often predicated upon the erection of boundaries against others, particularly against the mother and femininity in general, and equally upon refusal of desire which inevitably accompanies a converse and equally constitutive identification with masculinity (Butler, 1997). However, by undermining phallic boundaries that govern social spaces through the various activities of female characters such as Charity, Wivina and Rita among others threaten the essence of masculinity as predicated in local television drama. The construction of Charity as feminine-masculine in **Mother-in-law**, for example, threatens social spaces of male characters in the show for the simple reason that she penetrates male characters rather than being penetrated. Throughout the drama, Charity's femininity is presented as a perforation or near-perforation of the masculine body, and this symbolic action is read as being concomitant to feminine penetration of the masculine in society. This situation suggests a reading of phallic

tropes pervading both social space and popular culture as projections and a deconstruction of the masculine self. In this regard, phallic imagery in local television drama is deconstructed through revolutionary activities of female characters such as Charity and is replaced by womanhood. Through Charity, **Mother-in law** offers the rawest psychological portrait of male characters struggling to define themselves in spaces far distant from their past with secure, albeit restrictive and reconfigured definitions of roles by women around them.

Conversely, the figuration and reconfiguration of female characters in **Tabasamu** involves a crash of the female and the social world. While often oppressed by institutionalized phallocentric practices that maintain male domination, female characters seek new avenues to emancipate themselves from stifling social spaces. **Tabasamu,** like **Mother-in-law**, illustrates how women have confidently appropriated and occupied public spaces. Rita, Maya and Wivina, whose lives are set against the urban space, do not have to retreat to their bedroom to discuss issues affecting their lives but rather appropriate the public in addition to the private spaces for their discourses. Notably, the discussions of Rita, Maya and Wivina centre on women's friendship and socio-economic empowerment deconstructing women as "eroticized objects of the male gaze" (Mulvey, 2009). These discussions help reconfigure women's images that reverse both the gaze and a shared structure of looks. This in turn creates an image that establishes a primary identification of women with each other and an ironic distance from the phallic world, which they observe around them. The discussions on socio-economic empowerment of women also give a clear indication that these female

characters have taken control of their bodies in a way that emphasizes the performativity of femininity and sexual identity. More than once Rita, for example, looks at and appreciates her figure in the mirror (**Tabasama**, Episode 10 &11). In appreciating herself in the mirror, it shows that she appreciates her sexual and self-identity. By seeing herself in the mirror, Rita's sense of self is reconfigured by her own idealized, eroticized image regardless of the disjuncture in her relationships with men. Further, through Rita, **Tabasamu** as a local drama foregrounds the image of a contemporary woman as both desiring and desirable with a tinge of ambiguity and valorization of the grounds of her womanliness.

The ironic visual display of men in local television drama is a constant feature in **Tabasamu**. On the one hand, in various instances in the show, men such as JB and Kamenyi are made to look preposterous so that we as the audience are invited to share a knowing exchange of glances with women (**Tabasama**, Episodes 8, 11 & 13). The image of women, on the other hand, is depicted as constructive, composed and controlled. In a sense, this invites our knowing complicity or reverses the male gaze in a way that exposes the inadequacy and absurdity of male characters like JB. JB is, for example, presented as someone whose erotic experiences are negotiated through social displacement as he confronts the shifting constructs of masculinity in the face of the feminine-masculine, Gabby. Gabby's act of stabbing JB is also read as the female's effort to forcefully penetrate the masculine body. However, on the one hand, Gabby's predatory intrusion into the body of the masculine is not only seen as a perforation but also a threat to masculinity because it erases phallocentric borders upon which the body

is predicated. On the other hand, the action depicts JB as a helpless and displaced male subject foregrounding how the masculine self is not only endangered but also vulnerable in the hands of a strong-willed feminine. Indeed, what seems to structure the narrative of **Tabasamu** is the ongoing dialogue on the (re)configuration of individual identities based on own desires, wishes, feelings, freedom and choice while romance, marriage, and family structures are all portrayed as counter-narratives in the dialogue. This is so because these counter-narratives are encountered on the fringes of the female characters' lives and are usually employed to validate their choices.

The world of women that **Tabasamu** foregrounds, through its female characters, is that in which individual identity reigns supreme and is the order of everyday existence where individual women's dreams, fantasies and images are played out. The reconfiguration of these individual identities is not founded on social and class differences but rather on the appropriation of contemporary style in terms of fashion, socialization, association and grooming. The visual changes in the portrayal of women in the show resonates with Brunsdon's (1997) postulation of "the changed context of debate on feminist-related issues" (p.10) which preoccupies local television viewing allowing popular television drama in Kenya to be analysed as "sites of intense cultural negotiation"(Pender, 2002, p.42-43) as well as personal and popular pleasure. In sum, local television dramas frame female characters as active decision makers in most of their undertakings. The framing makes their voices and not those of men, the bearers of discursive authority. This is presented as a revolution in relation to the patriarchal

discourse because women are created as subjects not objects of the male gaze upon which patriarchy is predicated.

4.5 Chapter Summary

As its key trajectory, this chapter sought to interrogate how female characters are at the forefront in contesting and reconfiguring various aspects of the social space in the Kenyan society. Based on patriarchal contestations, the role of professionalism, and representations of revolutionary female characters, the chapter has shown how local television drama enables women to contest and reconfigure masculine practices and cross-over traditionally defined social spaces through their subversive activities and discourses. In this way, women have managed to inject feminine agency into the poeticized social spaces that they invest, to configure emerging trends of women expression and reflect on the vibrancy of culture in society today.

Through the analysis, it is evident that processes of spatial remapping as predicated in the selected dramas validate the unique aesthetic qualities of local television drama in Kenya. Evidently, social spaces speak to female characters who are the bearers for social change. Charity in **Mother-in-law** synthesizes the idiosyncrasies of most female characters at an advanced age in local television drama and her social stance towards the phallocentric canon can be read as an ultimate sacrifice that the generation in which she belongs has to make in order to remain relevant in society today; the social struggles of Rita, the thoughtful and social stand of Maya and indeed the warrior-like demeanor of Wivina in **Tabasamu** are all symbolic of changes that are quickly sweeping through

society today. As is evident from arguments in this chapter, all these female characters share a singular determination of refusing fatalism as a result of patriarchy, to reconfigure the phallocentric canon, and to actively participate in the reconstruction of space solidly anchored in emerging trends in the Kenyan society today.

This chapter has also shown how young female professionals in Kenya display their conceptualization of sexuality in ways that challenge conservative patriarchal views, often requiring a deeper understanding of how they negotiate their sexualities in a society which is rapidly changing. In this, female characters are framed as having taken up agency, command the public space, possess discursive authority and control the gaze providing a derisive critique of masculinity in postcolonial Kenya. In the same vein, we have also shown how these young women are sources of new and emerging anxieties associated with female professionalism and their specific location within the Kenyan social imaginary.

The next chapter sums up major arguments that emerged throughout this study, recaps key features of the study, and suggests possible areas that require further research.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter presents a recap of major issues that have emerged in the study, establishes whether the study objectives have been met and questions that the study raised have been answered. Despite the fact that this chapter brings to an end discussions that we began in this study, it shall be ostentatious to assume that interrogations into practices of television drama in Kenya have come to a close. Therefore, the chapter also delineates areas for further study owing to the realization that television drama is a site of endless significations and possibilities.

5.2 Summary and Conclusions

This study examined the invention and (re)configuration of space in Kenyan television drama. Specifically, the study presented a critical exegesis of space in three selected local television dramas: **Mother-in-law, Mheshimiwa** and **Tabasamu**. One of the key interests of this study was examining manifestations of space in local television drama. This was largely explored in chapter two of the study. Grounded on the first objective of the study, the chapter showed how various spaces are represented in local television drama. And second, emphasis was laid on the realizations of space in the selected television dramas as opposed to the genre categories where these dramas belong because genre is not a given of everyday social experience so much as it is potentially a way of marking social experience (Thornham and Purvis, 2005).

Based on the aforementioned, the chapter then examined figurations of the family, political, and the everyday spaces in local television dramas. At this point, the critical question that the study sought to answer was: How were these spaces manifested in the dramas? Throughout the analysis, it emerged that these spaces are straddling between private and public, the social and symbolic manifestly as a result of artistic interpellations which are both individual and collective. Further, the chapter showed that the representation of these spaces had symbolic connotations as the artists sought to portray political, social, cultural and economic issues in their social contexts. It emerged that familial space, for instance, in local television drama was used as a metonymy of the nation. As such, deteriorating relationships among family members mirror that of state organs, and speaks to the questions of gender and power relations in a wider sense. To this end, the study concludes that local television drama offers an alternative site upon which various concerns in society are imaginatively portrayed and creatively interrogated.

This study affirmed that the (re)configuration of space in contemporary Kenyan society is foregrounded in local television drama. Couched on the social production of space, the third chapter showed that the artists' invention and (re)configuration of space is informed by prevailing socio-cultural, political and historical facts in society. As painstakingly argued in the chapter, local television drama functions as a site to glean and understand subtle and overt issues in society. Issues such as political leadership, material affluence (or lack of it) as shown through the mapping metaphor and social referents as well as sex(uality) discourses were explored in chapter three showing how

artistes sought to understand them. From the analysis, it emerged that through the reconfiguration of antinomies of political leadership in the country, the screen writer sought to understand and dramatize the nation. Based on these findings, this study argued that as a popular art form from the margins, **Mheshimiwa**, for instance, exemplifies how the artist frames the nation from a political sense. Hence, society should learn to listen to unlikely voices which emerge away from mainstream discourses. Thus local TV drama can be viewed as a way of staking claim to the political space as a means to both symbolic and actual power. This is so because, as popular art forms are viewed to be limited to matters of leisure and pleasure, the act of probing them for their engagement with nationalist and political discourses can be interpreted as an act of dissemination, of performing and seeking to inventively reconfigure from the margins unsanctioned narratives of the nation.

Findings regarding framing and dramatizing the nation reveals that local television drama does not serve elite objectives in pacifying the masses and coercing them into line with the national project but foregrounds key issues that affect the nation such as corruption, underdevelopment, mismanagement of national resources, favouritism and nepotism among others. To this end, the study showed that television drama is indeed committed to dramatizing from the margins issues affecting society regardless of the standpoint of the state, which positions itself as the repository and arbiter of "the truth of the nation" (Bayart, 2000, 1993 & Billing, 1995). On the basis of this, the study concludes that the prevailing socio-cultural and political conditions in Kenya are creatively etched into television drama, control the dramatic discourse and engender

certain spatial dramatizations. The idea of invention and reconfiguration is underlined here based on how television dramas such as **Mheshimiwa** artistically use popular spaces to not only generate social consciousness but also offer imaginative solutions to various issues affecting society.

The fourth chapter investigated how female characters in local television drama were in the forefront in contesting and reconfiguring patriarchal practices in society. In line with objective three of the study, the chapter sought to address ways in which female characters contest and/or reconfigure various patriarchal practices as depicted in the selected local television dramas. While focusing on their activities, choices and lifestyles that they lead, the chapter showed how female characters such as Charity (**Mother-in-law**), Wivina, Maya, Rita (**Tabasamu**) and Magdalina (**Mheshimiwa**) not only contest but also reconfigure the patriarchal practices in society. Indeed, the chapter sought to answer the question: In what ways do female characters contest, invent and (re)configure patriarchal practices in society? As is evident from arguments advanced in the chapter, female characters refused to succumb to patriarchal dictates and instead opted to inventively and actively participate in the reconstruction of space in the Kenyan society today. Female characters are projected as bearers of change in society through their acts of configuring women voices and expression in society. By privileging female characters, female bonds and pleasure accrued from reconfiguration of various cultural practices in society, the study concludes that local television drama provides the inventive social space through which women could explore that which is subordinate within culture, that is, the subordination of women. This is a significant

trope of the selected local television dramas given that as a 'licensed space', television drama explores the experiences and subordination of women at a time they are capable of 'having it all' and their lifestyle choices are opening up.

The notion of sex(uality) as an integral aspect to women's sense of self was also examined in chapter four. Findings from the analysis showed that young female professionals challenge conservative patriarchal views and that to them, sexual pleasure is viewed as a desire that is related to their status as career women, but above all to possibilities generated by being relatively independent from social control. The study also drew parallels between processes of contemporary identity formation, developing a sense of self as a 'modern' woman, and appropriating sexuality as central to self-expression. The study showed that strengthened by their financial independence, this category of women is at the vanguard in reconfiguring subjectivities and social complexities of sexuality in the contemporary society. In this way, local television dramas such as **Tabasamu** function as important indices for understanding emerging moral anxieties that characterize young professional women's sexualities in Kenya.

Another critical issue raised from discussions in this study is the conceptualization of masculinity in society. The findings have shown that masculinity is under threat as women invent themselves and take up agency in society. Except in a few instances, the selected local television dramas portray male characters such as Mheshimiwa Kabaila and Habakkuk in **Mheshimiwa**, JB and Kamenyi in **Tabasamu** to mention but a few as being trapped in the past, crippled by traditional ideologies of manhood and are

oblivious of their own failure to respond to the changing dynamics in society. The construction of women as vulnerable and weaker beings through patriarchy is deconstructed and reconfigured by the activities of female characters such as Charity in **Mother-in-law** and Gabby in **Tabasamu**, who were depicted as feminine-masculine. This alternate position ties in best with the concept of invention in that as women seek to shape their destinies through resisting patriarchal oppression, invention requires that they engage in the reconfiguration of patriarchal requirements that silence and invisibilise them. Consequently, the study concludes that artistic sensibilities in local television drama crystallise in the characterisation of women such as Charity, Wivina, Magdalina among others as being integral in the decline of masculinity and reconfiguration of emergent practices of feminine power in society. These characters best exemplify local television drama's commitment to giving new meaning to womanhood against what traditional values offered.

5.3 Recommendations for Further study

a. The current study delimited itself to a comparative analysis of the invention and (re)configuration of space in **Mother-in-law, Mheshimiwa** and **Tabasamu**. This study therefore recommend that a similar critical exegesis can be conducted on other local television dramas not covered in this study.

b. The current study has been conducted through the prism of space as manifestly invented and (re)configured in local television dramas. The selected local

television dramas can be subjected to other critical trajectories to unearth the rich knowledge embedded in them.

c. Extensive and intensive studies should be conducted regarding to broadcast historiography with a particular focus on how television drama in Kenya creates agency for the human texture missing from text-based reconstruction approaches.

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Mutua, A. **Beba Beba**. Golden Productions/NTV.

Ngige, N. **Inspekta Mwala**. Citizen TV.

Langiri, G. **Papa Shirandula**. Citizen TV.

Wambugu, K. **Mali.** Al is On productions/NTV.

APPENDIX 1

ANALYTICAL FRAME

CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY	DESCRIPTIONS
Material Signifiers/ Typologies	Characters Décor/Objects Physical spaces/ Symbolic spaces Juxtapositions/Proxemics	Spatial realizations Relative spaces and positions Proxemics (Relationships) as indicator of socio-cultural behaviour Links/Contrasts Kinaesthetics Spatial embodiments
Narrative Content/Space Segmentations	Systemic follows/ Constrained Flows	signifiers and clusters Symbolic clusters Relational clusters
Language Utilizations	Nature of Language/Figures of Speech in relation to spatial realizations	Metaphorical usage Allegorical usage Symbolic usage Sensationalism and embodiments
Paradigmatic Axis/ Representations	Spatial Intersections/ Screen façade/outside World	Socio-Cultural intersections Economic intersections Political intersections Urban-rural intersections
Narrative Logs	Interpretations and analysis	Sub-sections of the chapters Examples for analysis

APPENDIX 2
Observation Guide

1. Name of TV drama under study ……………………………………………………………
2. Number of episode under study ……………………………………………………………
3. Key highlights of the episode

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
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   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………

4. Character(s) under focus …………………………………………………………………...
5. Character items and associations in the episode:

   a. Spatial Item of association ………………………………………………………………
   b. Explanation
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
6. Spatial realizations of the episode

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
7. Spatial relations to:
   a) Character

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
   b) Subject matter

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
   c) Real world

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
8. General Comments

   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………………………………………………………………………………………………

Appendix 3

A List of Local Television Dramas

	Name of Television Drama		Name of Television Drama
1	Jastorina	31	Higher Learning
2	Mabeshte	32	Nairobi Law
3	Mashtaka	33	Fedheha
4	Mheshimiwa	34	Vituko
5	Mother-in-law	35	Wash and Set
6	Kona	36	Bebabeba
7	Jane and Abel	37	Fruit salad
8	Almasi Ashiner	38	Tushauriane
9	Maskani	39	Makutano Junction
10	Maisha	40	Mama Duka
11	Mali	41	Tahidi High
12	Siri	42	Vioja Mahakami
13	Housemates	43	Vitimbi
14	Classmates	44	Usiniharakishe
15	Habibu	45	Family Affairs
16	Selikali ya Bibi	46	The Search
17	Cheche	47	Lunch Time
18	Sumu La Penzi	48	About Turn
19	Wingu la moto	49	Men of Office
20	Pray and Prey	50	Catching the Flak
21	Moto	51	Jamii ya Mzee Pembe
22	Machachari	52	Kivunja mbavu
23	Tabasamu	53	Kinyonga
24	Changing times	54	Tausi
25	Saints	55	Plot Ten
26	Lies that Bind	56	Chipukizi
27	Changes	57	The Turning Point
28	Briefcase	58	Men of Office
29	Better days	59	Pendo
30	Papa shirandula	60	Inspekta Mwala

Source: Researcher (Est. Sept. 2013)