Echoes of ngoma: Tracing the influence of East African music on Afro-Indian sacred ceremonies.

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Abstract

During the second millennium, East Africa formed significant ties with the Indian Ocean world, fostering economic exchanges and cultural interactions. These connections underscored the intertwined histories of East Africa and Asia, revealing the complex nature of human migration and cultural exchange. Central to African cultural traditions, Ngoma musical practices played a vital role in various ceremonies, including rituals, weddings, and work. The migration between East Africa and East Asia facilitated a musical exchange that impacted Afro-Indian traditions, particularly within popular Sufism. This study examines how traditional Ngoma musical performances from East Africa influenced the rites and ceremonies of Afro-Indian followers of popular Sufism, focusing on how these practices were adapted and modified for devotional musical performances.

Keywords: Ngoma; Goma; East Africa; Afro-Indian Music; Sacred Musical Performances; Cultural Exchange; Indian Ocean World

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1. Introduction

The second millennium marked a period of significant interaction between East Africa and the broader Indian Ocean world, establishing substantial economic and cultural exchanges. Scholars documented this historical connection, exploring the profound implications of African and Asian migrations, particularly in trade, maritime navigation, slavery, and the exploration of resource-rich environments (Gupta, 2003). These interactions facilitated the exchange of goods and fostered deep cultural interconnectedness between these regions, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of human migration and its impact on societal development during this era (Gupta, 2003). The continuous exchange between these regions laid the groundwork for a rich tapestry of shared traditions and innovations that still resonate in contemporary cultural practices.

Music played a pivotal role in shaping and reinforcing communities' cultural identities within these complex exchange networks. Particularly among Afro-Indian communities, music in rituals and ceremonies became deeply intertwined with the social fabric, serving as a medium for expressing collective values, beliefs, and emotions (Janzen, 1992a; Lidskog, 2019). The Ngoma tradition, originating from African cultural practices, exemplified this phenomenon. Ngoma, which encompassed drumming, dancing, and singing, represented more than entertainment; it functioned as a fundamental component of social practices that contributed to the cohesion and continuity of cultural identity (Janzen, 1992a and 1992b). Through these musical expressions, communities preserved their heritage, navigated their evolving identities, and maintained a sense of unity in the face of external influences and internal change.

Ngoma's significance manifested across various life events and communal activities. In rituals, for example, Ngoma facilitated communication with the spiritual realm, invoked ancestral spirits, and marked significant life transitions such as births, marriages, and deaths (Janzen, 1992a and 1992b). These musical practices played an integral role in collective participation in rituals, strengthening bonds among community members and reinforcing shared cultural heritage (Janzen, 1992a and 1992b). In the context of weddings, Ngoma music symbolizes joy, prosperity, and the continuity of traditions, ensuring that cultural values passed down through generations (Janzen, 1992a and 1992b). By anchoring these life events in shared musical traditions, communities reaffirmed their cultural resilience and the ongoing relevance of their ancestral customs.

Additionally, Ngoma extended its role to work-related activities, such as communal farming or fishing, where music facilitated cooperation and coordination, reinforcing social ties and a collective sense of purpose (Janzen, 1992a and 1992b). This widespread use of Ngoma across various aspects of life underscored its importance in maintaining social cohesion and cultural identity within the community. Integrating music into everyday tasks enhanced productivity and fostered a collective spirit, turning routine activities into opportunities for cultural expression and unity.

On the other hand, Afro-Indian communities, particularly those along the East African coast, experienced significant influence from the historical migration and interaction between East Asia and East Africa. This cultural exchange enriched the Ngoma tradition, infusing it with new elements while preserving its essence (Lidskog, 2019). The adaptation of Ngoma by Afro-Indians, especially within the context of popular Sufism, illustrated the dynamic nature of cultural identity, where external influences were absorbed and integrated into existing practices. This adaptation process solidified the community's sense of belonging. It showcased the resilience and continuity of cultural traditions amidst changing social landscapes (Lidskog, 2019). Through

this cultural synthesis, Afro-Indian communities demonstrated their ability to innovate while honoring their roots, creating a living tradition that continues to evolve and thrive.

This study explored traditional Ngoma musical performances from East Africa and their influence on the rites and ceremonies practiced by Afro-Indian followers of popular Sufism. The research specifically focused on the similarities between Ngoma practices in East Africa and their adaptation into Afro-Indian Sufi devotional music. By examining how these practices had been modified and integrated into a new cultural context, the study shed light on music's role in preserving cultural identity and fostering social cohesion in communities undergoing significant cultural exchanges. The findings highlight the transformative power of music as a tool for cultural preservation, adaptation, and the creation of new, hybrid traditions that enrich the communities involved.

The study's objectives rested on the historical context of migration processes between East Africa and Asia, facilitating the introduction of African music to the Indian subcontinent. Africans who were brought to India, mainly as enslaved people, recreated musical instruments and performances that honored their Afro-Indian ancestors. These practices included rituals such as Ngoma, which had a counterpart in the Goma ritual of Gujarat, India, performed for African saints within popular Sufism (Basu, 2008; De Silva Jayasuriya, 2008). By focusing on these cross-cultural adaptations, the study contributed to a deeper understanding of how traditional African musical practices influenced and were preserved within the Afro-Indian cultural milieu, particularly in the context of religious and ceremonial performances. This cross-pollination of traditions enriched India's cultural landscape. It provided a meaningful way for displaced communities to maintain a connection with their heritage, ensuring that their cultural expressions continued to thrive in a new world.

In summary, the study highlighted the significance of Ngoma in maintaining cultural identity and social cohesion among Afro-Indian communities. Through a detailed exploration of the parallels between East African Ngoma practices and their adaptation into Afro-Indian Sufi music, the research underscored the enduring power of music as a vehicle for cultural expression and continuity across diverse cultural landscapes. By revealing the deep-rooted connections between these musical traditions, the study offered valuable insights into how cultural practices can survive, adapt, and flourish even in the face of displacement and change, ensuring that the legacies of the past remain vibrant and influential in the present and future.

2. Historical connections between East Africa and Asia

Since the second millennium BCE, communication between Asia and the coast of East Africa played a significant role in shaping the relationship between these regions (Gupta, 2003). This connection focused on interactions involving trade, navigation, slavery, and the search for habitation (Chami, 1994; Pollard and Okeny, 2017). Evidence of these ties emerged, such as discovering a copal pendant in Tell Asra, Mesopotamia, believed to have originated from the Mozambican coast (Meyer et al., 1991). Additionally, scholars noted the introduction of three Southeast Asian food plants-yam, taro, and banana-into East Africa during the 14th and 15th centuries (Bovin et al., 2013; Blench, 1996; Mbida et al., 2000). These exchanges illustrate the intricate web of connections that facilitated the movement of goods and the diffusion of cultural practices, setting the stage for a long-lasting interdependence between these regions.

Moreover, a 7th-century C.E. text from India, Dasakumaracarita, described an island off the coast of East Africa, likely along Zanzibar's coast. The text mentioned the creation of a harbor, trading activities, villages,

goods, marine activities, and coastal populations in the Somali (Swahili) region, providing evidence of the connection between the East African coast and Asia during the transition from BCE to C.E. (Gupta, 2003). This historical account further underscores the deep-rooted connections that linked these distant regions, facilitating the exchange of commodities and ideas, languages, and cultural expressions that would influence both societies for centuries.

The study focused on the period starting around 1300 to gather historical resources needed to address the issue of the East African slave trade, which became significant for Indian and Arab traders. Afro-Asian civilizations emerged as a result of the sale and transportation of enslaved people around the Indian Ocean region. Ngoma's musical practices played a critical role in numerous social rituals and activities within African cultural traditions. On the one hand, Ngoma symbolizes the musical influence exchanged between East Africa and the Indian Ocean, which is the core topic of this study. This period of intense interaction and cultural blending highlights the role of music as a powerful medium through which displaced communities could assert their identity and maintain continuity in their artistic practices despite the disruptions caused by migration and enslavement.

Migration and the machinery of the slave trade played pivotal roles in spreading musical knowledge from East Africa's bustling coasts to the vast Indian Ocean region. This historical dynamic allowed the rhythmic beats of Ngoma, which resonated with the pulse of the Swahili coast, to reach distant shores, particularly the Indian subcontinent. Despite the traumatic circumstances of forced migration, Ngoma served as a channel of cultural resilience, crossing seas to honor ancestral legacies and provide solace through entertainment. These musical exchanges enriched the cultural tapestry of distant places. They underscored the enduring connections between communities separated by distance yet united by the universal language of music. Through Ngoma, the displaced Africans found a way to preserve their cultural memory and pass it on to future generations, ensuring that their heritage would not be lost despite their challenges.

Scholars also explored and refined their understanding of Ngoma. For instance, Mapana (2007) referred to Ngoma as a specific type of drum, such as the Muheme drum, initially used in women's initiation rites in the Dodoma region of Tanzania but later adapted for various religious, political, and other contexts. Askew (2003) defined Ngoma as a Bantu term referring to a traditional dance or a musical event involving music, dancing, song, instrumentation, and beats and also translated it as "drum" or "music in general." Furthermore, Askew noted Ngoma as a musical activity on the Swahili coast. Similarly, Blacking associated Ngoma with Venda spirit possession dances. At the same time, Edmondson (2001) described it as a traditional dance emphasizing movement and song lyrics. This diversity in interpretations and applications of Ngoma across different regions and contexts highlights its adaptability and central role in the cultural lives of various African communities, making it a symbol of cultural continuity and transformation.

Gearhart (2005) highlighted that Ngoma, a Swahili music and dance tradition on the East African coast, included music and dance elements. In Central and Southern Africa, Ngoma is widely referred to as a drum, singing, dancing, and healing ritual centered on a specific song or call-and-response set (Nannyonga, 2015). Ngoma represented a healing process or technique, almost pervasive in Bantu-speaking Africa south of the equator (Thornton, 2009; Van Dijk et al., 2000; Janzen, 1991). Additionally, Gunderson (2013) characterized Ngoma as a cultural institution in Africa and the African diaspora, where dance, music, or Ngoma served as a platform for powerful societal connection and rallying. These insights into Ngoma's role as a cultural and healing practice underscore its importance as an art form and as a vital thread in African and African-

descended communities' social and spiritual fabric, providing continuity and a sense of identity across generations.

The study highlighted Ngoma's profound significance within African communities south of the Sahara, particularly those along the East African coast. Ngoma played a crucial role in exchanging musical instruments, fostering connections between East Africa and the Indian Ocean world. Ngoma formed an integral part of the musical encounters experienced by individuals subjected to the harrowing journey of slave migration from East Africa to India. These findings resonated with earlier scholarly arguments that conceptualized Ngoma as an essential component of this historical narrative. The study's conclusions emphasize how music, through practices like Ngoma, becomes a crucial vehicle for cultural survival, helping communities connect to their origins while navigating new environments and challenges.

During their migration, Afro-Indians faced the challenge of relocating without any possessions from their homeland (Basu, 2008; De Silva Jayasuriya, 2008). The forced migration led them to adapt and innovate, developing new musical instruments and preserving their cultural practices in their new home in India. Their geographical relocation prompted a profound introspection into their cultural heritage, compelling them to reconsider what they could bring from their African roots to enrich their lives in India. Faced with the need to preserve their cultural identity and express their heritage through art, Afro-Indians created musical instruments, among which the Goma stood out as a significant example. The Goma, known among Afro-Indians in India, represented a musical instrument and a symbol of resilience and cultural continuity in the face of adversity (Basu, 2008; De Silva Jayasuriya, 2008). This creative adaptation highlights the enduring human spirit in the face of displacement. It underscores how cultural practices evolve yet remain anchored in the desire to preserve and honor one's heritage.

The process of crafting these instruments and practicing music served not only as a means of artistic expression but also as a form of cultural preservation. Afro-Indians found a way to reconnect with their roots and pass down their traditions to future generations by producing and utilizing instruments like the Goma. Moreover, this cultural adaptation and innovation extended beyond musical expression to various aspects of their daily lives. The Afro-Indian community in India demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability, integrating elements of their African heritage into the fabric of their new society while embracing aspects of Indian culture (De Silva Jayasuriya, 2008). In essence, the story of Afro-Indians in India illustrated persistence, creativity, and cultural fusion. Despite migration and displacement challenges, they carved out a space in their new home, enriching Indian society and community with their unique blend of cultural heritage and innovation. Their journey serves as a powerful reminder of the capacity of cultural traditions to adapt and thrive, even under the most challenging circumstances, ensuring that the legacy of the past continues to influence and inspire future generations.

3. East African coastal inhabitants experience musical exchange through the migration in both Asia and East Africa

The inhabitants of the East African coast experienced a rich musical exchange through migration between Asia and East Africa. This historical movement facilitated blending of diverse musical traditions, instruments, and styles. As people traveled and settled along the coast, they brought their unique musical heritage, which intertwined with the local sounds. This cultural interaction enriched the region's musical landscape, leaving a

lasting legacy reflecting the diverse influences and connections formed through centuries of migration and trade. Ultimately, this blend of traditions created a dynamic musical culture that resonated through generations, illustrating the powerful impact of intercultural exchange on developing regional identities.

Considering the Swahili civilization's role in giving East African coastal inhabitants a sense of belonging, it is essential to recognize that although the towns and ports developed due to foreign intervention, scholars like Nurse and Spear (1985), Kusimba (1999) and Horton (1996) argued that the Swahili civilization, responsible for the development of East African port cities, originated from African customs. The Swahili civilization played a significant role in developing these port cities, which supports this view. During the colonial era, some presumed that the ruins found in coastal towns must have belonged to Arab colonies. However, recognizing the Swahili civilization's African roots reaffirms the agency of local communities in shaping their own cultural and architectural heritage, challenging narratives that have historically overlooked indigenous contributions.

Some scholars, such as Meier (2016), suggested that constructing stone buildings in cities along the East African coast resulted from internalizing an external ideal. This hypothesis indicated that the diverse society along the East African coast emerged from the interaction between people from the outside world and the natives. These people came to engage in trade and settle the land. Still, their ultimate goal involved building cities to dominate the coastal regions economically and politically. This perspective underscores the complex layers of influence and ambition that shaped the area, where external aspirations and local practices combined to create a unique urban landscape that reflected cooperation and competition.

The assumption that external cultures heavily influenced the Swahili civilization partly arose due to the proximity of Arab cities to the East African coast. Scholars previously underestimated Africans' historical and cultural capabilities, believing they lacked the necessary sophistication to construct stone cities. However, as revisionist scholars delved deeper into historical texts, they concluded that external influences on Swahili culture reflected contemporary cultural exchanges rather than a lack of indigenous development. This shift in perspective highlighted Islam's significant role in shaping the identity of the Swahili people, as evidenced by the integration of Islamic practices and architectural styles into Swahili society (Gilbert, 2002; Negedu, n.d.; Iddrisu, 2023). This re-evaluation of Swahili history reasserts the importance of recognizing indigenous agency and how local cultures selectively integrate foreign elements to enhance and enrich their traditions.

The Swahili language structure derived from Bantu, with influences on its vocabulary from Arabic, Persian, and South Asian languages (Lodhi, 2000). The ideas in the preceding argument described the Swahili civilization on the East African coast due to contact between the African Bantu, Arabic, Persian, and South Asian lexicons. The migration of people within and outside the East African coast due to trade, sailing, and slave operations contributed to this civilization. These extensive interactions facilitated blending of diverse linguistic and cultural elements, leading to the unique Swahili culture. As a result, the inhabitants of the East African coast became well-acquainted with the local African and distant Asiatic world regions, fostering a rich and multifaceted civilization. This linguistic and cultural fusion became a cornerstone of the Swahili identity, demonstrating how sustained intercultural contact can create a vibrant, pluralistic society that continues to influence the cultural dynamics of the region.

Most people residing on the East African coasts descended from individuals brought as enslaved people from Africa's interior to Zanzibar before migrating to Asia (Fabian, 2019). Some remained on the East African coast, primarily in Zanzibar, working as enslaved laborers on clove plantations (Wahab, 2022). The transportation of people and the trade of musical instruments took place extensively within these premises.

The most important types of sailing vessels of the period, steamers and dhows, facilitated the migration of people from one location to another during these activities (Editors, 2017; Suzuki, 2017). This movement of people and goods not only reshaped the demographics and economies of the regions involved but also laid the groundwork for a lasting cultural exchange that continued to influence the musical and social practices of the Swahili coast and beyond.

Additionally, inhabitants of the East African coast originated from the interior of East Africa. These people traveled to the East African coast for various reasons, including enslavement, domestic activities, and trade. This interaction led to the flourishing of cultural exchange along the East African coast (Sheriff, 1987). The Kiswahili language emerged from interactions between the Bantu people of Africa and people from the Asiatic area who spoke Arabic, Indian, and other languages. This interaction also established the Swahili culture (The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, 1980). As these diverse groups converged on the coast, they contributed to a shared cultural and linguistic heritage that formed the backbone of Swahili society, illustrating the power of cross-cultural exchange in creating cohesive and resilient communities.

4. Process of migration of people between East Africa and Asia as the result of the musical exchange

In this section, the study explored the process of migration between East Africa and Asia that resulted from the rich musical exchange. The movement of people facilitated the blending and adaptation of musical traditions, significantly influencing the rites and ceremonies practiced by Afro-Indian communities, particularly those involved in popular Sufism. This migration not only spread Ngoma musical practices but also led to their transformation and integration into new cultural contexts. Through this blending of traditions, both regions experienced a cultural enrichment that fostered new forms of expression, illustrating cultural identity's dynamic and evolving nature in response to migration.

Migration from one place to another inevitably led to the encounter and sharing of cultural traditions. Appadurai (1996) demonstrated how globalization and cultural flows showed that migration contributed to the circulation of ideas, values, and practices across borders. His concept of "cultural scapes" underscored the interconnectedness of cultures in an increasingly globalized world. Furthermore, scholars like James Clifford (1997), Homi K. Bhabha (1994), and Stuart Hall (1990) explored the complexities of cultural identity formation in diasporic communities. Their works highlighted how migration disrupted traditional notions of belonging and created hybrid identities drawn from multiple cultural sources. These insights emphasize that migration is not just a physical relocation but a transformative process that reshapes cultural landscapes, resulting in the continuous evolution of identities.

Human interaction produces culture, as is evident wherever people gather (Manning, 1996). The movement of people from the coast of East Africa to the broader Indian Ocean world fostered regional interaction, evolving into a process of cultural exchange at the regional level (Gilbert, 2002). Growing regional interaction, whether driven by commerce, migration, or invasion, fostered the development of a regional culture. This regional culture became a tapestry woven from the diverse influences of those who traveled, settled, and interacted across these regions, highlighting cultural exchange's rich and multifaceted nature (Rajbhandari, 2019).

The migration of people to the East African coast and the Indian Ocean world is directly connected to musical exchange (Alpers, 2009). Alpers (2009) posited that the movement of people across the Indian Ocean facilitated trade and the exchange of musical traditions, instruments, and styles. Muslim merchants from India traveled to the coast of East Africa in search of goods such as elephant tusks, gold, hides of wild animals, and people to enslave. Conversely, the migration of Indians to the East African coast resulted in converting the indigenous people to Islam through the practice of Sufism (Prange, 2018). This exchange of goods and cultural practices underscores the intertwined histories of these regions, where music and religion served as bridges that connected disparate communities and fostered a shared cultural heritage.

Prange (2018) discussed the impact of the migration of Indians to the East African coast, highlighting that this migration led to the conversion of indigenous people to Islam through Sufism. He explained that the influx of Indian migrants brought with them their cultural practices, including religious beliefs and rituals associated with Sufism. This cultural exchange facilitated the spread of Islamic teachings. It introduced qasida music, a form of Islamic devotional poetry set to music, to the Muslim communities on the East African coast, enriching the local cultural and religious landscape. The introduction of such traditions influenced local practices. It exemplified the fluidity of artistic boundaries, where new influences could be harmonized with existing customs to create enriched, hybridized traditions.

People also migrated from the East African coast as Africans served as sailors and soldiers. Additionally, the process of enslavement led to Africans arriving in the Indian Ocean world, particularly in India, where they worked in agricultural plantations, military, administrative, and domestic activities (Walz and Brandt, 2016; Alpers, 2009; La Rue, 2021). This migration occurred because Africans served as sailors and soldiers, as well as due to the process of enslavement. Many people left their homes along the coast of East Africa as a result. This movement of people under varying circumstances contributed to the dissemination of African cultural practices, including music, across the Indian Ocean, leaving an indelible mark on the cultural landscapes of the regions they touched.

Those who left the East coast of Africa and made their way to India and other parts of the Asian world due to being sold into slavery had nothing but their souls and talents to bring with them from Africa (Basu, 2008; De Silva Jayasuriya, 2008). Forced into slavery, these individuals left Africa, facing traumatic experiences that made them lose hope of both living in their new homes and returning to their homelands (De Silva Jayasuriya, 2008). This hardship led Africans to remember their origins. Confronted with the challenges of reaching a new and unfamiliar country, they initiated new cultural pursuits by constructing musical instruments, such as Goma instruments, which they used to amuse themselves and remember their ancestors (De Silva Jayasuriya, 2008). This creative resilience illustrates how, even in the face of extreme adversity, cultural practices can serve as a source of strength and continuity, helping displaced communities preserve their identity and maintain a connection to their heritage.

This section attempted to summarize the literature on the migration between East Africa and Asia, driven by a rich music exchange. This migration created opportunities for interaction in various forms, including trade, establishing settlements, adventurous expeditions, exploring new regions, and spreading religious faith. These interactions significantly influenced both regions' cultural and social landscapes, leading to a complex web of relationships that shaped their histories. The study aimed to comprehensively understand the historical connections and exchanges between East Africa and Asia by focusing on these aspects. Exploring these dynamics proved crucial for understanding how music, as a cultural vehicle, facilitated artistic exchange and

economic, social, and religious interactions, ultimately contributing to the intertwined destinies of these two regions. By examining these exchanges, the study sheds light on the enduring legacy of cross-cultural interactions and how they continue to influence the cultural identities and practices of the communities involved.

5. Theoretical framework

The study employed comparative theory, a methodological framework used in anthropology and sociology, to examine and understand the similarities and differences among various cultural traditions, societies, and social phenomena. This approach systematically compared diverse aspects of these traditions, including beliefs, practices, institutions, and social structures. The primary objective of comparative theory is to identify patterns, causal connections, and fundamental principles governing human behavior and social organization across different cultural contexts (Xie, 2013). By leveraging this framework, the study revealed the underlying dynamics that connect seemingly disparate cultural phenomena, offering a broader understanding of how societies develop and maintain their unique identities.

Felski and Friedman (2013) investigated the foundational theories underpinning comparative analysis and thoroughly examined how various disciplines approached comparative studies. It provided an in-depth exploration of the methods used in conducting comparisons, highlighting techniques such as case studies, which involved detailed examinations of specific instances or phenomena; cross-national comparisons, which contrasted different countries to identify patterns and variations; and historical analyses, which traced developments over time to understand changes and continuities. Additionally, the book covered other approaches and methodologies used in comparative research, emphasizing their relevance and application across different fields of study (Felski and Friedman 2013). This comprehensive approach underscores the versatility of comparative theory as a tool for analyzing complex cultural and social systems, making it invaluable for scholars seeking to understand the intricacies of human societies.

In the study of the influence of traditional Ngoma music from East Africa on Afro-Indian sacred musical performances, comparative theory served as a crucial framework. It aimed to identify and understand the commonalities and differences between these cultural traditions by comparing traditional Ngoma with Afro-Indian sacred musical practices. This approach allowed for an in-depth examination of various aspects, such as musical styles, performance practices, and underlying cultural beliefs, ultimately uncovering patterns and principles that shaped these distinct yet interconnected musical traditions. By doing so, the study highlighted the unique features of each tradition. It illuminated the shared cultural threads that have woven these communities together, revealing the influential role of music in maintaining and bridging cultural identities across geographical and temporal divides.

6. Methodology

The study employed a comprehensive interdisciplinary approach, integrating various research methodologies to explore the influence of traditional Ngoma music from East Africa on Afro-Indian sacred musical performances (Dey, 2023). The research captured the complexity of cultural exchanges that shaped these musical traditions by combining historical contextualization, cultural anthropology, linguistic analysis, and

performance analysis (Takao, 2022; Barton, 2018; Nettl, 2005; Campbell, 2018). This multifaceted approach enabled a nuanced understanding that transcended the limitations of any single discipline, thus providing a more comprehensive exploration of the subject matter (Szostak, 2004). Ultimately, this interdisciplinary approach allowed for a more prosperous and integrated analysis of the cultural phenomena under study (Newell, 2001).

Historical Contextualization: The study began with a broad historical overview of the connections between East Africa and the Indian subcontinent, situating the discussion of Ngoma within the narrative of cultural and musical exchanges facilitated by migration and trade. This approach leveraged published research to provide the necessary context. By understanding the historical backdrop, the study traced the roots of Ngoma music and its migration, which is crucial for identifying how events shaped these musical forms. This perspective highlighted the development of these traditions and explored the socio-political factors that influenced their transformation. Understanding this context was fundamental to appreciating the depth of cultural integration and the resilience of these traditions (Wynne-Jones, 2017; Pouwels, 2002; Sheriff, 1987).

Cultural Anthropology: The research incorporated insights from secondary sources that described the role of Ngoma in various East African cultural settings and its influence on Afro-Indian communities. Although direct participant observation was not conducted, the study drew on existing ethnographic studies to understand how these musical practices were embedded in cultural contexts. Through cultural anthropology, the study examined the social functions of Ngoma, such as its role in rituals and community bonding. This approach allowed the research to dig into the lived experiences of those who practiced and preserved these traditions, revealing how music was vital to cultural identity and continuity. Thus, cultural anthropology was integral to uncovering the social dimensions of Ngoma (Nettl, 2005; Katan and Taibi, 2021; Hobsbawm and Ranger, 2012; Morley, 2014).

Performance Analysis: The study examined descriptions of musical performances and rituals, focusing on how these practices had been adapted in Afro-Indian contexts. This analysis illuminated the transmission and transformation of musical styles, emphasizing the impact of migration and cultural exchange. By focusing on performance, the study captured the dynamic nature of Ngoma music as it evolved in different cultural settings. Performance analysis explored how musicians navigated tradition and innovation, maintaining cultural heritage while adapting to new influences. This perspective was crucial in understanding how each generation reinterpreted musical practices. Consequently, the study highlighted the creative processes involved in cultural transmission, showcasing the adaptability of these traditions in changing social landscapes (Nettl, 2005; Janzen, 1992a and 1992b; Ruth Crawford Seeger's Worlds, 2007).

Comparative Analysis: The study identified and discussed similarities and differences in musical practices by comparing elements of Ngoma and its Afro-Indian counterparts. This comparative approach synthesized existing discussions and comparative musicology studies to conclude the influence of these traditions. The method contextualized Ngoma within a broader framework of African and diasporic musical practices, identifying patterns of continuity and change across regions. By highlighting shared elements and distinct adaptations, the study deepened the understanding of how cultural practices evolved across landscapes. Additionally, this analysis provided insights into cultural hybridization, where different traditions blended to create new expressions. The comparative approach enhanced the study's interdisciplinary exploration by linking local practices to global trends (Xie, 2013; Dovetail Editorial Team, 2023; Bhabha, 1994; Parzer and Mijić, 2024; Rubdy and Alsagoff, 2014).

This interdisciplinary methodology allowed for an in-depth exploration of the interconnectedness of East African and Afro-Indian musical traditions. It offered a nuanced understanding of how cultural practices were transmitted, adapted, and transformed across boundaries. The research provided a richer analysis of Ngoma music by integrating insights from multiple disciplines. It contributed to broader discussions on the role of cultural practices in shaping identities in a changing world. This approach underscored the importance of interdisciplinary research in capturing the complexity of cultural phenomena, ultimately enhancing our understanding of how traditions like Ngoma continued to thrive in diverse settings. Therefore, the study served as a model for how interdisciplinary approaches could deepen our understanding of cultural practices (Nettl, 2005; Titon et al., 2009; DjeDje, 1992).

Selecting regions, musical traditions, and historical periods followed specific criteria to ensure relevance and depth (Gao, 2023). The research focused on regions with documented historical connections between East Africa and Afro-Indian communities, mainly coastal areas involved in the Indian Ocean trade networks, as demonstrated by Beaujard (2015). These regions, including Zanzibar and Gujarat, served as focal points for the study due to their historical significance in exchanging people, goods, and cultural practices (Alpers, 1976). This strategic selection of regions ensured that the study focused on areas where cultural interactions were most intense and influential, thereby maximizing the potential for uncovering significant insights into the fusion of musical traditions. As a result, the research was able to trace the intricate pathways of cultural diffusion, shedding light on the processes that have shaped the musical landscapes of these regions.

Furthermore, the selection of musical traditions focused on those with evident syncretic elements that reflected the blending of East African Ngoma with Afro-Indian musical practices (Dey, 2023). The study chose traditions where this fusion was most pronounced, allowing for a detailed examination of the influences and adaptations. For instance, the research examined specific drumming patterns, dance forms, and lyrical content that demonstrated the integration of Ngoma elements into Afro-Indian sacred music (Dey, 2023). By focusing on these syncretic traditions, the study highlighted the transformative power of cultural exchange in creating new, hybrid forms of musical expression, which served as living testimonies to the enduring connections between these regions (Retief, 2023). This focus provided a deeper understanding of the cultural synthesis. It underscored the resilience and creativity inherent in these musical traditions as they evolved and adapted to new cultural contexts.

The historical periods chosen for the study corresponded to significant phases of cultural exchange, such as the height of the Swahili Coast's influence in the Indian Ocean trade (15th to 19th centuries) and the colonial era when intensified interactions occurred—these periods provided a chronological framework for tracing the development and transformation of the musical traditions in question. This chronological approach allowed the study to map the evolution of musical practices over time, showing how historical events and socio-political changes directly influenced the fusion and adaptation of cultural elements in musical traditions (Wynne-Jones 2017; Pouwels, 2002; Sheriff, 1987).

The selection of case studies involved identifying specific communities and musical practices within the chosen regions and historical periods that exemplified the research focus. Criteria for selecting case studies included the continuity of musical traditions, the presence of ritualistic and sacred elements, and the availability of historical and ethnographic data. Consider rewriting it as a complete sentence. By choosing these case studies, the study provided concrete examples of how cultural exchange manifested in specific

communities, offering a grounded, empirical basis for its broader theoretical claims (Cohen, 2013; Nettl and Russell, 1998; Hobsbawm and Ranger, 2012).

The study analyzed musical influences by using criteria such as identifying shared rhythmic patterns, melodic structures, and lyrical themes that indicated cross-cultural connections. The analysis also considered the social and ritualistic functions of the music, examining how these elements evolved or persisted through cultural interactions. By comparing these influences across different case studies, the research uncovered syncretism and adaptation patterns that revealed these musical traditions' dynamic nature. This comparative analysis provided a deeper understanding of the mechanisms through which cultural exchange influenced musical practices, emphasizing the importance of continuity and change in the evolution of these traditions (Barton, G. 2018; Cameron et al., 2015).

In summary, the interdisciplinary nature of this study, combined with clearly defined criteria for selecting regions, traditions, historical periods, case studies, and analytical frameworks, enabled a dynamic and holistic understanding of the evolution and significance of Afro-Indian sacred musical performances. This comprehensive approach deepened the knowledge of Ngoma music's influence. It demonstrated the broader value of interdisciplinary humanities and social sciences research. The study's findings underscored the interconnectedness of global cultures. They highlighted the role of music as a powerful medium for cultural transmission, adaptation, and innovation (Nettl, 2005; Higgins, 2010; Merriam, 1964; Bohlman, 2013; Hernandez, 2009; Nettl and Waterman, 2017).

7. Findings and discussion

7.1. Ngoma practice in East Africa (ritual) and Goma practice in India

The practice of Ngoma in East Africa and the Goma tradition in India represent rich cultural rituals deeply embedded in their respective societies. Ngoma, a term encompassing a variety of musical and dance traditions, is integral to the social, spiritual, and communal life in East Africa. It serves as a medium for storytelling, healing, and celebration. In contrast, the Goma practice in India, often associated with Sufi traditions, combines music and dance to achieve spiritual transcendence and devotion. Despite originating in different cultural contexts, both practices highlight the profound role of music and dance in expressing and preserving cultural identity and spirituality. The shared emphasis on music and dance as vehicles for cultural expression highlights the universal ability of these art forms to connect different traditions and nurture a strong sense of community and continuity.

The Ngoma practice in East African rituals and the Goma practice in India both emphasize the significance of musical performances by Ng'anga and Dogoli Ngoma, which originate from the East coast of Africa. These performances are central to sacred ritual events, during which leaders often enter a divination trance or undergo a form of spiritual infliction (Janzen, 1992a and 1992b). The music and the ceremonial context in which it takes place connect participants deeply with their spiritual and cultural heritage. Additionally, the study focused on investigating the various aspects of the Afro-Indian Goma musical ritual practice. This comprehensive examination explored how these practices have evolved, their significance in contemporary contexts, and their role in facilitating cultural exchange and continuity between African and Indian communities. By investigating the intricacies of these musical rituals, the study aims to illuminate the broader

cultural, social, and spiritual implications of Ngoma and Goma practices, underscoring their importance in maintaining and fostering a shared heritage across continents. Through this exploration, the study highlights these traditions' resilience and ability to adapt and thrive in new environments while preserving their core cultural significance.

The study compared and contrasted the essential elements of Ngoma musical practices from the East African coast with Goma musical performances by Afro-Indians brought to India due to enslavement from the East African coast. This comparison, conducted in various locations throughout the Asiatic world, highlighted the similarities and differences in musical traditions shaped by migration and cultural exchange. Ngoma's musical practices originated from the East African coast, while Afro-Indians performed Goma's musical rituals in their new homeland (De Silva Jayasuriya and Pankhurst, 2003). By examining these parallel traditions, the study sheds light on how cultural practices evolve in response to new contexts and challenges, revealing the enduring connections between Africa and its diaspora. This comparison not only enhances our understanding of the cultural exchanges that have shaped these traditions but also underscores the ongoing relevance of these practices in preserving cultural identity and fostering a sense of belonging across generations and geographies.

7.2. Ng'anga Ngoma

The Zigua ethnic group, located along Tanzania's coast and in the Tanga regions on the East coast of the Indian Ocean, actively practices the Ng'anga Ngoma, a tradition deeply woven into their cultural fabric. The community uses Ngoma as a pivotal ritual for exchanging the medicine man's bag, or mkoba, which plays a central role in their spiritual practices. Swantz (1990) highlights the esteemed position of the medicine man, who commands respect due to his expertise in herbal remedies, rituals, and invocations that address illnesses and ward off evil forces. The ng'anga Ngoma has persisted for generations, a vital practice reinforcing cultural and spiritual beliefs. Janzen (1992a) explores Ngoma as a complex healing practice that intertwines spiritual, psychological, and physical elements deeply embedded in the cultural and social structures of Central and Southern Africa. The Zigua community actively preserves this practice, passing it down through generations, demonstrating their commitment to maintaining their cultural heritage and Ngoma's crucial role in their social and spiritual lives (interviews with Epimack Luanda and Halfan Matitu, April 2022).

The clan chief of the Zigua ethnic group traditionally shoulders the responsibility of safeguarding the mkoba, ensuring the clan's protection from harmful influences. Upon the death of a clan leader, the community performs a ritual to select a new leader who will continue this protective role. If the selection process experiences delays, a clan member may fall ill with an unexplained sickness, prompting the family to consult the medicine man for a diagnosis (interview with Epimack Luanda, April 2022). This practice reflects the community's belief in the spiritual connection between leadership and the clan's well-being, emphasizing the urgency of maintaining traditional roles to secure communal health and stability.

The medicine man bases his diagnosis and treatment plan on the results of health assessments. After identifying the illness, he informs the community of its nature. The clan's ancestors then designated an individual to take on the chief role of guarding the mkoba. The medicine man, who carries and maintains this sacred bag, plays a central role in the clan's spiritual practices. During this process, the ritual exchange of the mkoba symbolizes the transfer of responsibility and spiritual protection (interview with Epimack Luanda, April 2022). This exchange ensures the continuity of leadership and reaffirms the clan's connection to their ancestors and the protective traditions that sustain their community.

The Zigua community conducts a special Ngoma ritual in response to crises such as unexplained deaths, severe hunger, natural disasters, or pandemics like COVID-19. Koley and Dhole (2020), in their work the COVID-19 Pandemic: The Deadly Coronavirus Outbreak (n.d.), discuss various aspects of the pandemic, including its spread, management, and global impact. During the Ngoma ritual, medicine men enter a trance state to communicate with ancestors, seeking guidance to overcome the disaster. The ritual involves inviting members of other families and traditional healers from neighboring villages to witness the mkoba exchange. This event holds great significance, with participants presenting ceremonial objects and offerings to appease the ancestors and seek their counsel. Involving external families and healers strengthens communal bonds. It incorporates diverse knowledge and practices, enhancing the ritual's effectiveness in resolving the crisis (interview with Epimack Luanda). This collective effort underscores the importance of community involvement and integrating different healing traditions, demonstrating how collaboration and shared cultural practices can effectively address and mitigate adverse events.

7.2.1. Procedures for exchanging the medicine man's bag (Mkoba).

Getting people ready for the event involved inviting participants and providing essential information about the rituals. Traditional medicine practitioners played a significant role in assisting the event organizers with this process. The family also prepared an animal, such as a goat, sheep, chicken, or cow, to sacrifice to the ancestors. They extracted the blood from the animal or used some internal organs to make a prophecy to the ancestors. At the same time, the attendees consumed the remaining flesh. This preparation process not only set the stage for the ritual but also reinforced the communal bonds by involving everyone in the sacred act of offering and consumption, thereby ensuring that the spiritual and social aspects of the ritual were closely intertwined.

During the invocation of the spirits of the ancestors at the shrine, the leader, who was also a traditional healer, was joined by group members. They collectively explained the issue that troubled the clan, the community, or the sick person. Having already entered a trance state or been affected by practicing divination, the leader communicated with the spirits. When the traditional healer was in this state, they spoke in a language the other members did not understand, conveying messages to the ancestors about the community's problems or the sick individual needing their intervention. Despite the unfamiliarity of the language, the spirits responded favorably, providing guidance and solutions to address the community's concerns. This process highlighted the deep connection between these practices' spiritual and physical realms, illustrating how traditional healers served as vital intermediaries between the community and their ancestral spirits.

During these spiritual dialogues, Ng'anga Ngoma invoked the spirits or ancestors through their performance. Other participants contributed by singing, dancing in circles, or sitting still while clapping their hands. The musicians, as shown in Figure 1, either remained seated or stood while playing their instruments.

Figure 1. Ng'anga ngoma playing instruments, singing and clapping
(Source: Ng'anga Ngoma group)

In contrast, others sang call-and-response songs, as shown in Figure 2, adorned in costumes of animal skins, bird feathers, and tree leaves. This vibrant and dynamic performance created a powerful communal experience where music, dance, and ritual combined to strengthen the connection with the ancestors. The use of costumes and traditional instruments further enhanced the cultural authenticity of the event, reinforcing the importance of preserving these practices as a living tradition that continues to unite and empower the community.
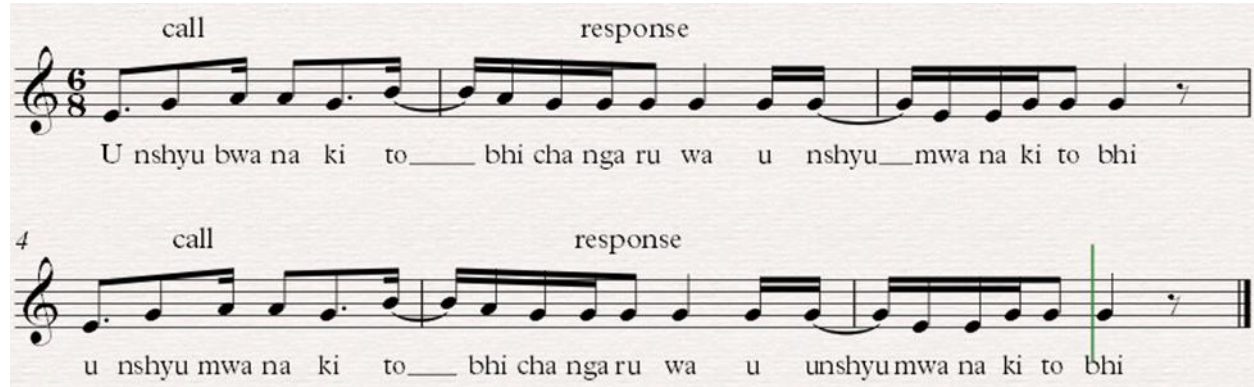
Figure 2. Unshyu mwana kitobhi changaruwa, a song from the ng'anga ngoma performance (Source: Ng'anga songs transcription)

"Unshyu mwana kitobhi changaruwa" is one of the songs in the ng'anga tradition that healers use to summon spirits. It indicates that the little bird is flying and landing on a tree in a very majestic manner. It is accomplished in a manner analogous to that of the healer while in a trance. The healers perform the songs when they call upon the spirit, connecting the various activities of exchanging the bag. The audience stays persuaded to pay attention to the rhythmic and melodic patterns and the gestures used in ng'anga. Following the traditional healer's conversation with the spirit, the new leader immediately begins their responsibilities

as the holder of mkoba, which signals the beginning of the process of mkoba submission (interview with Epimack Luanda, April 2022).

7.3. Dogoli Ngoma

Dogoli Ngoma is a traditional dance practiced by members of the Zaramo ethnic group along the coast of the Indian Ocean in Dar es Salaam and the surrounding areas. Their ancestors were the ones who initially established the dogoli Ngoma many years ago (interview with Halfan Matitu 2022). The purpose of Ngoma is to anticipate or make a prophecy about the cause of the illness and ascertain how and which treatment would be most successful in curing the sick individual (Swantz 1990). Swantz (1990) highlights that the medicine man plays a crucial role in Zaramo society as a healer, spiritual guide, and mediator between the physical and spiritual realms. The dogoli Ngoma procedures are very similar to the ng'anga Ngoma procedures, and the healing process appears to be the same in both.

The Ngoma procedure begins with identifying a sick member, referred to as *mteja* in the Zaramo ethnic group and *muwele* in the Zigua ethnic group. Once identified, a treatment plan is developed for the ill individual, followed by the selection of the traditional healers, or (fundi) in Zaramo, who will be responsible for treating the patient. The traditional healer often solicits the assistance of other healers to expedite the recovery process. The leader or traditional healer also invites the spirits or ancestors, (*mahoka or mizimu*) in Zaramo, to participate in the healing process. They do this by singing in a call-and-response format, as seen in the music score figure 3, playing instruments such as drums and shakers, clapping hands, and engaging in rhythmic, cyclical dances.

Figure 3. Sewela song from the dogoli ngoma performance (Source: Dogoli songs performance Transcription)

"Sewela kyugi sewela" is a dogoli song sung by healers to connect with the spirit world during the diagnosis of a sick person's ailment and to determine the best course of treatment through music. As the ritual progresses, the healers enter a trance of divination known as (kupandisha) in Zaramo. After some singing and dancing, the ritual briefly pauses, allowing the traditional healer to pray in this trance. Following the prayer, the cycle of singing and dancing, known as (kuvina), resumes, accompanied by the rhythm of drums, percussive instruments, and shakers, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Drums, percussive instruments, and shakers played during the dogoli ngoma performance (Source: Dogoli ngoma instruments performance, photo by Ladslaus Kiatu.)

During these moments, the healers discuss the issues facing the sick person with the spirits they communicate with. The spirits then guide the healer, providing instructions on diagnosing the illness's cause and outlining the treatment needed. This interaction between the healers and the spiritual realm underscores the deep cultural belief in the power of music and ritual to access and interpret the divine will, which is crucial in restoring health and harmony to the afflicted individual.

Ng'anga and Dogoli are two distinct ngoma musical performances conducted by healers' fundi as part of various spiritual possession activities within their divination rituals. These performances involve multiple activities, such as exchanging the medicine man's bag and shield, which are essential for guiding and protecting the clan. If the family responsible for the medicine man's bag fails to complete the process by the specified deadline, people believe an adverse event or circumstance will likely occur within the family line. This belief emphasizes the critical importance of adhering to traditional practices and rituals to maintain the spiritual and physical well-being of the community. By following these time-honored traditions, the community ensures that their ancestors' protective and healing powers remain effective.

The Zigua ethnic group uses Ng'anga ngoma music to cope with tragedies, as it helps to distract and alleviate the impact of the event. On the other hand, the Dogoli ngoma, originating from the Zaramo ethnic group, is employed to make prophecies regarding individual illnesses within the clan. Despite the differences in the issues addressed by each type of Ngoma, the process of resolving these problems is similar for both groups. Both use ngoma as a tool for traditional healers to address and solve illness-related issues. Both types of ngoma represent the spirit possession music developed by ancestors to help solve problems within the clan or community. Ngoma mirrors other spirit-possession music from the East coast of Africa, similar to the Goma music of Afro-Indians in India, performed during spirit-possession rituals to honor and remember the ancestors. These parallels highlight the shared cultural threads that run through different communities, illustrating how music and ritual are universal tools for maintaining cultural identity, addressing communal issues, and connecting with the spiritual world.

8. Goma practice in Afro Indians

When considering the musical practice of Goma among Afro-Indians, it is essential to explore how Goma music made its way to the Afro-Indians from the East coast of Africa and what motivated those people to bring this type of music (De Silva Jayasuriya and Pankhurst, 2003). Enslaved people from the Swahili coast introduced Goma music to the Afro-Indians, bringing with them the rich cultural heritage of their homeland. The Swahili world, understood as part of the western region of the Indian Ocean (Gooding, 2022), became exposed to foreign cultures due to the extensive participation of its people in the commercial world of the Indian Ocean (Wynne-Jones and LaViolitte, 2018). Although there were many reasons for the migration of people from Eastern Africa to Western India and other parts of the Indian marine realm, slavery played a significant role in this movement (Gilbert, 2002: pp.7-34). This migration facilitated the spread of Goma music. It established enduring cultural connections that continued to influence the Afro-Indian communities long after the abolition of slavery.

Before and after the mission to abolish slavery, the Sidi people (Afro-Indians) would often escape from their masters' homes and hide in nearby forests to avoid being recaptured (De Silva Jayasuriya, 2008). Following the abolition of the slave trade, these formerly enslaved individuals formed communities in the forests, where they sought to preserve their cultural heritage. They concluded that the best way to honor their forefathers was through Goma musical performances, derived from the Swahili word "Ngoma," meaning a drum played for sacred music, dancing, and singing (De Silva Jayasuriya, 2008). This practice became a powerful symbol of cultural resilience and a means for the Sidi community to maintain a connection to their African roots while establishing a new identity in their adopted homeland.

The Sidi people carved out a niche in Gujarati, as Ki-Zerbo, (1990) discussed in the UNESCO General History of Africa. They examined the processes that shaped the emergence of a collective Sidi identity through interaction with the host society, exploring the dynamics involved when a distinct group like the Sidis engages with the broader culture in which they reside. The journey that uprooted Africans—Sidi enslaved people and seamen—from Zanzibar to Gujarati was marked by the preservation and adaptation of cultural practices, including Goma music, which played a crucial role in connecting the East African coast and the Afro-Indians (Basu, 2008: p.162). As practiced by the Afro-Indians, Goma music reflects the complex history of maritime connections across the Indian Ocean, highlighting the shared spiritual beliefs and cultural practices that transcend geographic and cultural borders.

The Goma practice in India emerged from the connection between the world of the East African coast and the Indian Ocean region. This connection was facilitated by trade activities that brought enslaved people from the East African coast to India (Ki-Zerbo, 1990). Goma music, a "reflection" of Ngoma music from the East African coast, was introduced by Afro-Indian/Sidi people who had been enslaved due to these trade activities (Basu, 2008: p.162). This musical tradition became a testament to the enduring cultural links between Africa and India, forged through the hardships of slavery and the resilience of the human spirit.

These trade activities, driven by the movement of enslaved people from the East African coast to the Asiatic world, played a pivotal role in establishing connections between these regions. Without this possibility of exchange, the cultural link between the East African coast and the coast of India within the Indian Ocean world might never have developed. As a result, Goma music serves as a significant cultural bridge, reflecting the Ngoma traditions of East Africa and embodying the historical and spiritual connections that bind these two

regions. This connection underscores the importance of understanding how cultural practices evolve and adapt across different contexts, offering insights into how music serves as both a mirror of the past and a vehicle for preserving cultural identity in new and changing environments.

9. Comparable elements shared and not shared between the East African Coast's Ngoma and Goma in Gujarat, India

Comparative theory, utilized in anthropology and sociology, is a robust framework for examining the similarities and differences among cultural traditions, societies, or social phenomena. Scholars apply this theory to systematically compare aspects such as beliefs, practices, institutions, and social structures, aiming to identify patterns, causal connections, and fundamental principles governing human behavior and social organization across diverse cultural contexts (Xie, 2013). When comparing the Goma performances among Afro-Indians with Ngoma in East Africa, Basu (2008: 162) identified vital elements that map the similarities, including masked dances, rhythmic styles, African-origin musical instruments, and call-and-response singing patterns. These comparisons underscore the deep cultural connections between these traditions and demonstrate the enduring influence of African musical practices across different continents, thereby illustrating the shared cultural heritage that resonates through these performances (Stone, 2008).

However, Basu's research did not directly trace Siddi music to its ethnic roots through specific instruments, rhythms, and vocal styles. Instead, Basu emphasized how the historical context of slavery and its abolition influenced the movement of symbols, ritual practices, and beliefs, leading to the establishment of Goma as a significant aspect of Siddi identity in Gujarat (Basu, 2008: pp. 163-164). This focus highlights the dynamic nature of cultural identity, showing how historical events and migrations have reshaped cultural practices, creating new forms of expression that honor ancestral traditions while adapting to new environments. The evolution of Goma within the Siddi community serves as a testament to the resilience of cultural traditions, reflecting the community's ability to preserve and adapt its heritage in response to changing circumstances.

According to Basu (2008) and De Silva Jayasuriya (2008), the Goma musical practice among the Siddi community shares notable similarities with Ngoma practiced along the East African coast and in Africa south of the Sahara. These scholars analyzed these similarities by comparing Ngoma and Goma music, focusing on distinct elements such as the Ng'anga and Dogoli Ngoma performances on the East African coast. They drew on videos of Goma performances and existing literature to make these comparisons, using the characteristics of African music identified by researchers like Basu (2008), De Silva Jayasuriya and Pankhurst (2003). This methodical comparison deepens our understanding of how these musical traditions have evolved while retaining core elements from their African origins, illustrating the continuity of cultural practices across different geographical and historical contexts.

One significant similarity in the comparison is the rhythmic patterns in both regions, rooted in African rhythms. These patterns define the authentic African musical concept, emphasizing rhythm that resonates deeply with both communities. The study observed that the timing of repetitions in the music determines the rhythm, relying on a dominant rhythmic focus with repetitive elements. This rhythmic expression extends to gestures and spoken words that enhance the music in songs, vocal performances, and instrumental music, such as drumming and dance (Kubik, 2010; Chernoff, 1991; Agawu, 1995). The connection between these rhythmic styles in Goma and Ngoma underscores their shared cultural heritage, revealing how rhythm is a fundamental

link between these traditions. The persistence of these rhythmic patterns across different contexts illustrates the role of music in maintaining cultural identity and continuity.

Researchers from various disciplines, including musicology, psychology, and neuroscience, suggest that rhythm creates a compelling force that captures and often dominates attention during performances (Agawu, 1995). This theory becomes evident when dancers in Ngoma and Goma performances imitate the movements and gestures of animals. Additionally, the melody, often structured around call-and-response settings, as Basu (2008) noted, complements the improvisational singing characteristic of African melodies rooted in oral traditions (Chernoff, 1991). The combination of rhythm and melody in these performances creates a powerful and engaging experience, connecting participants and audiences to their cultural heritage. The ability of these musical forms to captivate and engage communities underscores the enduring power of music as a tool for cultural expression and continuity.

The expansive and resonant vocal tones characteristic of African songs has influenced the music of the East African coast, known as Ngoma, and the music of the Afro-Indian people, known as Goma. These musical traditions share similarities not only in their vocal styles but also in their visual and performative elements. Both traditions utilize costumes made from natural materials such as tree leaves and animal skins, incorporating elaborate headpieces crafted from peacock feathers or another bird feather, as seen in figure 4 below. Additionally, body painting is integral to their performances, adding a visual dimension that complements their music's rich, resonant sounds, as seen in figure 5. This confluence of auditory and visual elements underscores the deep cultural connections between these practices, illustrating how cultural expressions can transcend geographical boundaries and evolve while maintaining a connection to their origins. Through these shared practices, Ngoma and Goma music continue to serve as vibrant expressions of cultural identity, linking the past with the present and preserving the legacy of their ancestral traditions. The synthesis of these elements in performance highlights the multifaceted nature of cultural preservation, where music, dance, and visual arts collectively contribute to the resilience and continuity of cultural traditions.

Figure 5. Performers of Goma music practice in one of the festivals (Source: Dhamal /Goma dance Stock Photos and Images)

Linguistic differences in ceremonial music further illustrate the diversity within these traditions. Along the East African coast, vernacular languages were predominantly used. However, performers sometimes used Swahili (interview with Epimack and Matitu Halfan, 2022). This difference in language use reflects the diverse linguistic landscape of the region, where vernacular languages carry deep cultural significance in rituals (Coats, 2016). In contrast, Siddi or Gujarati is the only language in Goma music.

Meanwhile, the Gujarati and Siddi communities celebrate yearly festivals to honor their African ancestors, viewing them as sacred moments for spirit possession (Jeychandran, 2023). Some songs in Swahili incorporate Swahili words, even though the singers may not fully understand their meaning (De Silva Jayasuriya, 2008). This linguistic diversity within musical traditions highlights the complex interplay between language, culture, and spirituality. It underscores how communities adapt practices to preserve cultural identity across different regions.

Afro-Indian music predominantly employs melody to praise Allah within the Sufism framework and to honor ancestors (De Silva Jayasuriya, 2008). When performed in the context of East Africa, these songs take on more profound significance, often serving as calls to ancestors and channels for communicating with spirits, particularly for invoking specific spiritual possessions (Janzen, 1992a and 1992b). Melody in these rituals emphasizes the spiritual connection between the performers and their ancestors, reflecting a shared cultural heritage that transcends geographical boundaries. This musical practice not only reinforces spiritual beliefs but also provides a vital link to the cultural roots of the Afro-Indian and East African communities, illustrating the enduring power of music as a medium for spiritual and artistic expression.

The East African coast significantly influenced Ngoma, Afro-Indian sacred musical performances, and other fundamental elements of these traditions. Mapping the aspects of African enslavement that occurred from the East coast of Africa to India reveals these influences. This process led to the establishment of Afro-Indian communities across India, including Gujarat, Hyderabad, and many other places throughout the Asiatic world. The Afro-Indian music known as Goma, which held the same meaning as the Ngoma practiced on the East African coast, was brought to these settlements by enslaved people (De Silva, Jayasuriya 2008). The transplantation of Ngoma to India through these forced migrations demonstrates how cultural practices can survive and adapt to new environments, preserving the core elements of the tradition while integrating influences from the host culture.

Therefore, a comparative analysis of Ngoma and Goma performances reveals the intricate interplay of rhythm, melody, and community participation that defines these musical traditions. By understanding the use of polyrhythms, call-and-response, dynamic variation, improvisation, and various vocal techniques, one can gain a deeper appreciation for the cultural significance and the evolving nature of these performances. These techniques highlight the performers' skill and creativity and underscore the importance of these traditions in maintaining cultural identity and fostering communal bonds. Thus, thoroughly analyzing these techniques offers a richer and more integrated understanding of Ngoma and Goma performances (Liu et al., 2024).

In conclusion, a comparative Table 1, highlighting the key similarities and differences between Ngoma practices on the East African Coast and Goma practices in Gujarat, India, would reveal the deep cultural connections between these traditions. Such a comparison would showcase how the essence of Ngoma was maintained across continents while also evolving to reflect the unique experiences of the Afro-Indian communities in their new surroundings. This synthesis of cultural practices underscores the resilience of these

musical traditions and their ability to serve as a bridge between past and present, linking communities across time and space through shared cultural expressions.

Table 1. Highlights showing similarities and differences of the influence of Ngoma and Goma

S/n	Element	Ngoma (East African Coast)	Goma (Gujarat, India)	Comments
1.	Dance Formation	Men and women dancing in circles	Men and women dancing in circles	Both practices involve circular dance formations.
2.	Musical Instruments	Includes African-origin instruments like the footed drum Collection of musical instruments,	Some with African origins Both practices feature instruments with African roots,	Both practices feature instruments with African roots, emphasizing the historical connection.
3.	Vocal Style	Call-and-response pattern	Call-and-response pattern	Call-and-response singing is a common element in both traditions.
4.	Rhythm	African rhythmic emphasis with repetition	African rhythmic emphasis with repetition	Rhythmic patterns are fundamental in both, showcasing the African influence.
5.	Language	Vernacular languages and sometimes Swahili	Siddi or Gujarati; occasional Swahili words	Language use varies, with Ngoma sometimes using Swahili and Goma predominantly using Siddi or Gujarati.
6.	Costumes and Visual Elements	Natural materials, animal skins, peacock feathers, body painting	Natural materials, animal skins, peacock feathers, body painting	Both traditions use similar costumes and body decoration materials, enhancing visual appeal.
7.	Melody and Song Themes	Call to ancestors, spiritual communication, Praise to Allah within	Sufism, honoring ancestors	Themes of songs differ, with Ngoma focusing on ancestor worship and Goma blending Sufism and ancestor honor.
8.	Performance Context	Spiritual possession, ceremonial occasions	Honoring African ancestors, sacred occasions	Both practices involve significant spiritual and ceremonial contexts.

9.	Cultural Influence	Strong African cultural influence	African cultural influence via historical slavery	The African cultural heritage is evident in both practices, though Goma reflects a mix due to historical slavery.
10	Annual Celebrations	Various ceremonial and ritual events	Gujarati and Siddi festivals honoring ancestors	Both traditions feature annual celebrations, though the specific occasions may differ.

The comparative framework underscored the deep cultural connections between Ngoma and Goma, highlighting how historical contexts such as slavery and migration shaped these practices. Both traditions shared significant rhythmic, vocal, and visual similarities, reflecting their African roots. Differences primarily arose in language use and specific thematic focuses in their music and performances. This comparison illustrated how cultural practices could maintain their core elements while adapting to new environments, showcasing the resilience and adaptability of African cultural traditions as they evolved in response to changing social and geographical contexts.

The influence of traditional Ngoma from East Africa on Afro-Indian sacred musical performances could be explored through a multifaceted discussion that investigated historical connections, cultural exchanges, and the enduring impact of these musical traditions. Ngoma, deeply rooted in East African cultures, served as a musical expression and a vital part of rituals, healing practices, and community gatherings. Historically, its rhythms, drumming techniques, and call-and-response patterns played a significant role in connecting communities with ancestral spirits, providing a spiritual foundation that resonated across generations (Janzen, 1992a; De Silver Jayasuriya, 2008). This exploration highlighted the importance of Ngoma in maintaining cultural continuity, emphasizing its role in preserving a sense of identity and community across time and space.

The historical connections between East Africa and Afro-Indian communities, mainly through the Indian Ocean trade, laid the groundwork for transmitting Ngoma's musical elements to the Indian subcontinent. These exchanges facilitated the assimilation and adaptation of East African musical traditions, including Ngoma, within Afro-Indian communities. As a result, sacred musical performances in these communities began to reflect a blend of African and Indian cultural influences, creating unique hybrid forms still practiced today (Wynne-Jones and LaViolette, 2018). This blending of traditions demonstrated the dynamic nature of cultural exchange, where new forms of expression emerged from the interaction of different cultures, enriching the musical heritage of both regions.

A comparative analysis between Ngoma and Afro-Indian sacred musical performances revealed striking similarities in rhythmic structures, drumming techniques, and the use of music in religious rituals. Both traditions used music to invoke divine presence, communicate with ancestors, and induce trance states, underscoring the spiritual significance of their musical practices. Incorporating specific Ngoma elements, such as drum rhythms and dance movements, into Afro-Indian sacred music highlighted the syncretism and cultural fusion that shaped these traditions over time (Janzen, 1992b). This analysis illustrated how music was a

powerful spiritual connection and cultural preservation tool, bridging the gap between different communities and their ancestral roots.

In contemporary contexts, the relevance and revitalization of Ngoma-influenced sacred music within Afro-Indian communities became important cultural priorities. Efforts to preserve and reinterpret these musical traditions were evident in the work of cultural organizations, religious institutions, and community leaders. Modern interpretations of Ngoma-influenced music reflected a deep respect for tradition and an openness to innovation, influenced by globalization, technology, and ongoing cross-cultural interactions (Rice, 2014; Bohlman, 2013). These efforts to maintain and adapt Ngoma-influenced music underscored the community's commitment to preserving their cultural heritage while engaging with the modern world, ensuring these traditions remained relevant and vibrant.

Ethnographic perspectives offered valuable insights into how Afro-Indian communities perceived the influence of Ngoma on their sacred music. Through interviews, oral histories, and fieldwork, researchers explored the lived experiences of musicians, spiritual leaders, and community members, providing a deeper understanding of these performances' symbolic meanings and ritual significance. Case studies of specific communities, such as the Siddis of Karnataka and Gujarat, illustrated how Ngoma's influence manifested in particular rituals and ceremonies, contributing to the rich tapestry of Afro-Indian sacred music (De Silva Jayasuriya and Pankhurst, 2003; Dey, 2024; Bhatt and Bhaṭṭa, P. 2019). These ethnographic accounts highlighted these communities' cultural continuity and adaptation, showcasing the enduring relevance of Ngoma-influenced practices in shaping their identity and spirituality.

The challenges of transmitting Ngoma-influenced musical knowledge across generations amid migration, urbanization, and changing cultural values posed significant concerns for the continuity of these traditions (Rapoport et al., 2021; Bakan, 2012, p. 45). However, opportunities for cultural exchange between East African and Afro-Indian communities offered a promising avenue for strengthening these connections. Cultural festivals, academic research, and digital platforms could play a crucial role in promoting and sustaining the ongoing dialogue between these regions, ensuring that the influence of Ngoma on Afro-Indian sacred musical performances remained a vibrant and evolving tradition (Rutagand, 2024). By fostering these exchanges, communities could continue to celebrate their shared heritage, preserving the rich cultural legacy of Ngoma while adapting to contemporary contexts.

10. Future research

Future research on the connections between Ngoma and Goma could address several significant gaps identified in the current study by incorporating various directions. Firstly, the current study lacks detailed ethnographic evidence, particularly fieldwork that documents the lived experiences of performers and community members involved in Ngoma and Goma music. Therefore, future researchers should conduct ethnographic studies to capture the nuances of these traditions, providing a richer understanding of their cultural significance, daily practices, and methods of transmission within communities.

Additionally, while the study emphasizes the historical context, particularly the impact of slavery, it does not sufficiently explore contemporary manifestations of Ngoma and Goma. Thus, research focusing on the modern-day evolution of these traditions would offer a more balanced perspective, revealing how these

practices have adapted to changing cultural and social landscapes, thereby providing insights into their resilience and ongoing relevance.

Furthermore, although the role of vernacular languages in Ngoma and Goma music is mentioned, it is not explored in depth. Consequently, future research could examine the linguistic aspects of these traditions, including the use of specific dialects and the significance of language in ritual performances. Such a linguistic analysis could uncover how these traditions communicate and preserve cultural identity and how language influences the interpretation and meaning of the music.

Moreover, while the study briefly compares Ngoma and Goma, it does not engage extensively with the broader spectrum of cross-cultural influences. Therefore, future research could expand the comparative framework to include other African and diaspora musical traditions, such as those in the Caribbean or Brazil. This broader analysis could reveal universal elements and region-specific adaptations, offering a comprehensive understanding of the global significance of these musical practices.

Additionally, the influence of globalization on Ngoma and Goma music is an area that requires further investigation. Future research could explore how global cultural flows have impacted these traditions, examining whether these influences have led to adaptation, resistance, or both. Understanding these dynamics could provide critical insights into the contemporary relevance and evolution of Ngoma and Goma within the global cultural context.

Moreover, investigating the role of youth in transmitting Ngoma-influenced traditions is crucial for understanding the sustainability and future of these practices. Future research could focus on how younger generations engage with these traditions, the challenges they face, and the strategies they employ to keep them alive in modern contexts. This focus could offer valuable insights into how traditional practices are being reinterpreted and adapted by the next generation.

Finally, the study does not adequately address the role of gender in the performance and transmission of Ngoma and Goma. Thus, future research could explore how gender influences these traditions, including who performs certain musical styles and how they are taught and perceived within the community. Analyzing gender dynamics could provide a deeper understanding of the cultural and social forces shaping these traditions.

By addressing these gaps, future research can provide a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of Ngoma and Goma, contributing to the broader discourse on cultural preservation, adaptation, and identity in a rapidly changing world.

11. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study illuminated the deep and longstanding connections between East Africa and the Asiatic world, particularly India, through the lens of musical and cultural exchanges. By examining evidence from as early as the first millennium and focusing on interactions from the thirteenth century onward, the research highlighted the complex web of commercial, social, and cultural relationships that shaped the coastal regions of East Africa and the Indian subcontinent (Gupta, 2003; De Silva Jayasuriya and Pankhurst, 2003). The detailed analysis of traditional ngoma from Tanzania and their parallels with Afro-Indian Goma practices in

Gujarat underscored the enduring impact of these interactions (Wynne-Jones and LaViolette, 2018; Gilbert, 2002).

This cross-cultural exchange influenced musical traditions and significantly preserved and transmitted cultural heritage across continents. The study ultimately revealed that these interactions fostered a shared musical legacy, which continues to resonate in the sacred practices of both regions, serving as a testament to the enduring cultural bonds forged through centuries of exchange (Gooding, 2022; Askew, 2003; Mapana, 2007).

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