

Performing the self: Rappers, Urban Space and Identity in Dar es Salaam

by

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A thesis submitted to the University of Birmingham for the degree of DOCTOR OF
PHILOSOPHY

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February 2014

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ABSTRACT

Hip hop is part of a global economy of music, images and signs. In Tanzania, since political and economic liberalisation in the 1990s, local musical forms which appropriate the practice of rapping have become popular. Rapping has become a widespread practice which has produced musical stars as well as unrecorded 'underground' rappers. This study explores the aesthetic, performative and ideological commonalities and differences between these two forms of rapping. Situated at the intersection of debates about masculinity, youth and globalisation, this study will contribute to ongoing debates about new forms of identity and sociality created by rappers. It explores both appropriation from the transnational circulation of styles and signs as well as local orders of meaning rappers use to fashion themselves. While recognising the difficult social and economic conditions under which young people in Dar es Salaam live, I view rapping as productive and highlight the creativity, inventiveness and ingenuity of rappers.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Researching and writing this PhD thesis has been a collaborative project during which I have received advice, support and encouragement, personal and intellectual, from a great many people. There is not sufficient space to thank everyone and so I hope any omissions will be forgiven.

I am profoundly indebted to my doctoral supervisor, Karin Barber, for her guidance and support. She has helped to identify new avenues of inquiry, and encouraged me to pursue them. The completion of this thesis would not have been possible without her personal and intellectual generosity.

This study has been made possible by the time, interest and kindness of the numerous rappers, DJs, producers, journalists and music fans whom I met and worked with in Dar es Salaam. Their goodwill, kindness and willingness to allow me to spend time 'hanging out' with them made fieldwork an immensely enjoyable and inspiring experience.

This study has benefitted immensely from the friendship, and willingness to discuss my ideas, shown by Hashim Rubanza, Mkuki Bgoya, Walter Bgoya, Mwinjaka ally Mwinjaka, Atienno Dock and Kibacha Singo. The warmth and generosity of Ramadhan Mlehamo's friendship, as well as his endless willingness to discuss my experiences in Dar es Salaam, were immensely helpful; *tuko pamoja*.

I have been fortunate to be based at the Department of African Studies and Anthropology at the University of Birmingham, which has provided a wonderfully engaging and encouraging intellectual environment for my research. I'd particularly like to thank present and former members of staff Stewart Brown, Insa Nolte, Kate Skinner, Lynne Brydon, Reg Cline-Cole, Keith Shear, Paulo de Moraes Farias, Katrien Pype, Toby Green, Paul Ugor, Max Bolt and Benedetta Rossi for fostering such a warm and supportive atmosphere.

I thank current and former doctoral students at Birmingham University for many discussions and debates but, most importantly, sharing their friendship; in particular, Saima Nasar, Rebecca Jones, Nozomi Sawada and Jo Skelt.

I am grateful for the institutional support I have received for this research. My six month fieldwork trip to Dar es Salaam was enabled by my former employers the African Studies Association UK, and 2008-2010 President William Beinart in particular. Kevin Da Costa was hugely helpful in supporting my grant application to the Arts Council to bring Hashim Rubanza to the UK as a resident artist.

I owe a huge debt of gratitude to my family and, in particular, my parents Hugo and Henriette Kerr for offering support and encouragement throughout my research and writing.

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

Introduction

I first travelled to Dar es Salaam to conduct fieldwork in 2006. This initial experience in Tanzania, meeting rappers, producers, radio presenters and Tanzanian music fans, had a significant effect on me, and on my subsequent thinking. Prior to travelling to Tanzania, I had done what research I could into Tanzanian popular music which was then, with a few notable exceptions, largely absent from the 'world music' sections of British record shops.¹ Before my trip, I had not been able to gather very much information on the music of Tanzania. What was most striking to me, as a new arrival in Dar es Salaam, was the vitality of the popular music scene. Music was everywhere. Not only did it stream out from restaurants, bars and passing vehicles; it was a common topic for discussion. While popular music in general, and certainly hip hop, are largely closely associated with distinct groups in society in the UK,² contemporary Tanzanian popular music was a hot topic for discussion in Dar es Salaam, across the whole of society.³ In Dar es Salaam, discussions about popular music touched upon ideas about the nation, and national culture, societal morals and the distinctions and divisions between the generations. It was a space within which new forms of behaviour, most obviously relating to displays of consumption and sexuality, could be

¹ The genre of World Music has been much analysed and critiqued as essentialising and reductionist (Feld 2000, Huq 2006, 65) and I use the term here as a descriptor of the genre markers at that time in commercial music sales in the UK. In general music stores in the main, only recordings of Remmy Ongala and Dr Hukwe Zawose were available. Two recordings of rapped music, both on the Out Here label, were available: the 'Bongo Flava: Swahili Rap from Tanzania' and the X-Plasterz album 'Maasai Hip Hop'.

² Popular music in the UK is largely associated with a variety of different sub-cultures hip hop, reggae, punk, indie for example, sub-cultures with their own sense of style, ways of sociality, beliefs and practices.

³ This is not to suggest that these new musical genres, Bongo Flava, Hip Hop and RnB, were universally popular but that they seemed to have a resonance with popular discussion which 'youth' or 'urban' genres in the UK did not.

displayed and were contested. This is not to suggest that all forms of popular music were, or are, universally enjoyed. Indeed, this contestation forms part of a society wide contestation of norms and values. In 2006 I attended two meetings of a group of musicians who played older, popular Tanzanian musical forms of *bolingo* and *dansi*. This group was established partly in response to the popularity of new popular musical genres including Bongo Flava and hip hop. While its members were worried about the impact new musical styles were having on the demand for their performances, and critical of the amount of airplay given to them, they also admired the music for opening up new spaces of discussion. That Tanzanian popular music, performed in Swahili, was capturing the popular imagination was a source of pride. A pride that Tanzanian music, in Swahili, was now the most popular music in Dar es Salaam's night clubs and bars, as well as a cultural export to neighbouring countries. These new forms of popular music had become part of imagining the nation itself. Young people, in particular, were able to identify with these new musical performers.

During the first interviews that I conducted in 2006, and when 'hanging out' (Geertz 2001, 106) with rappers, there was a palpable sense of the dynamism of these new genres of popular music. There was an excitement about the possibilities that these new musical forms might engender, creatively and economically, for both rappers and producers. Circuits of live performance, which involved travelling to Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, were being opened up for rappers. Artists were ambitious about expanding their audience, within and outside Tanzania. Producers were borrowing from the hip hop, reggae and RnB genres to develop their own distinctive production styles. While rappers were conscious that they were able to address new, and at times controversial, topics in their songs, boundaries could be traversed and the propriety of both lyrical and video texts was

widely and keenly debated. These new forms of cultural expression were clearly important. This new form of music, in its texts, performance and creation of new forms of sociality, manifestly had something to say about contemporary Tanzanian experience. There was something vital, both in the sense of significance and of energy, about the production and reception of this new musical form.

Research Questions

Hip Hop

In the later 20th and early 21st centuries, hip hop has become a global musical phenomenon. Hip hop artists, such as Kanye West, Jay Z, Eminem and 50 cent, are global celebrities and hip hop is one of the predominant musical genres globally. In 2009, hip hop accounted for over half of the top ten digital downloads in the world (Morgan and Bennett 2011, 176). At the same time, rapping and hip hop cultures have become the subject of scholarly study. There have been numerous studies of the development of hip hop, including studies of 'global' hip hop (Toop 1991 and Mitchell et al 2001), Francophone hip hop (Durand et al 2002), African hip hop (Charry et al 2012) and East African hip hop (Ntarangwi 2009). There have also been a number of studies that have looked at the phenomenon within a single country, such as those on hiplife in Ghana (Osumare 2012 and Shipley 2013), Brazil (Pardue 2008) and hip hop in Japan (Condry 2006). Numerous indigenised forms of hip hop have attracted scholarly interest from Morocco (Almedia 2013) to Iran (Johnston 2008). There have also been a number of studies of hip hop in Tanzania. These have explored the topic from a range of different viewpoints, from exploring the development of the music economy, the use of identification with an ethnic group or the content of the songs (Perullo

2005, 2007, 2011, Englert 2003, 2008, Thompson 2008, 2010, Reuster-Jahn 2005, Stroeken 2005, Omari 2009, 2011, 2013,).

While there has been a great deal of scholarly attention on global expressions of hip hop, including a body of work on hip hop in Tanzania, the majority of such studies has focused on commercially successful rappers. The focus of a section of this present thesis is on rappers who are unable to record; ‘underground’ rappers. It focuses on the cultural production of youth excluded from the mainstream functions of the music industry in Tanzania. This offers new perspectives on contemporary cultural production among marginalised youth in Tanzania.

There have been several studies of more marginal and less commercially successful, or ‘underground’, hip hop in sites as diverse as San Francisco (Harrison 2006) and Cuba (Sanders 2012). The term ‘underground’ is used by both Harrison and Sanders in its cultural studies sense - denoting a sub-culture in opposition to a dominant culture⁴. ‘Underground’ does not, in the Tanzanian context, have the same connotations as within cultural studies discourse more generally. It refers to a rapper’s inability to record. Two studies of rapping in Tanzania have also made mention of underground rap (Englert 2008, 75 and Reuster-Jahn 2008, 56). There has, however, been no systematic, and in depth, study of underground rapping, as such, in Tanzania. In chapter 4, which focuses on underground rapping, I explore the physical and social spaces within which rapping occurs. A major focus of this section of the thesis is on the spaces for performance which have been developed by

⁴ In Harrison’s study of hip hop in San Francisco, this resistance to hegemonic culture is expressed through an aesthetic of do-it-yourself CD production which is at odds with the mainstream music industry’s control of cultural production. In Cuba, underground rappers draw attention to the Afro-Cuban heritage which is marginalised from mainstream discourse on the island.

rappers, and the ways in which these spaces have enabled new forms of sociality; on the ways in which rapping has enabled underground rappers to construct distinct forms of masculinity, and on their rapping as a platform for strategies of legitimisation.

Youth, Masculinities and Urban Space

My work on underground rappers fits into a wider literature on masculinity, youth and urban space, and into discussion of new forms of socialities created by young people across Africa. This includes work by Masquelier on young men and tea ceremonies in Niger (Masquelier 2013), Weiss on barbershops in Arusha (Weiss 2009), Geenen's work on gangs in Kinshasa (Geenen 2009) and Biaya on street culture and leisure in Addis Ababa, Kinshasa and Dakar (Biaya 2005). This body of work addresses a diverse range of social phenomena, from the *fada* conversational groups which are centred upon the tea drinking ceremony in Niger to *bande* gangs in Kinshasa, who are often engaged in petty criminality. Yet related themes about the ways in which young men in African cities constitute new forms of sociality, based in their control of physical space, is common to this body of work. Each of these forms of sociality is different and seeks to create spaces marked by different activities and rituals. While there are interrelated themes which run through this body of work, each form of sociality offers its own insights. The study of underground rappers in Dar es Salaam offers a unique perspective on these new forms of sociality. In each site the participants are responding to local circumstances and embedding their practices within local discourses. While rappers share some features of their behaviour with the *fada* and *bande*, there are also striking differences. Rappers appropriate an international musical medium for their performance. They take control of space, not only physically but sonically. Most striking, in

my fieldwork, were the Kampu; events organised by underground rappers in their home neighbourhoods, at which they and their associates perform. These events, while only dominating a small part of the physical space of the neighbourhood, dominated a far larger area sonically. Underground rappers in Dar es Salaam focus their activities not only on the constitution of themselves, but on the creation of songs and texts. In common with the *fada* in Niger and *kinyozi* (barber's shops) in Arusha, underground rappers are engaged in debate. The skilful use of language lies at the centre of these forms of masculine identity. For underground rappers, these texts are entextualised, remembered and performed time and again. Texts operate, in such a context, on a number of levels. They are a means for rappers to demonstrate their knowledge, to show their skills, to represent their lives and also to intervene in the social world. Discursive legacies of the Ujamaa era of Tanzanian politics also play a significant, and particular, role in the ways in which rappers constitute themselves as such.

With young people now making up the majority of the population in many African countries, Tanzania included, 'youth' has become a significant subject of study. Youth have been viewed by the state as both a hope for the future and a danger in the present. For many scholars, African youth have frequently been perceived as living through a time of crisis. This crisis, born of neoliberal economic reforms, is marked by the retrenchment of the state and the disappearance of employment and educational opportunities for young people (Weiss et al 2004). The privatisation of state services and liberalisation of the economy play an important role in the story of rapped music's development in Tanzania.

I hope that this study will contribute to the understanding of ways in which young people in Africa are coping, in straitened circumstances. This study will chart the ways in which neoliberal reforms have acted as a dual dynamic, simultaneously enabling and constraining the expression of young people in Dar es Salaam. Neoliberal reforms have opened up a space within which rappers have adopted sometimes seemingly contradictory points of view, at once contesting the validity of the reforms as well as celebrating the consumption that it has made possible. My study focuses on the contestation over the control of institutions (chapter 3) and the possibilities for self expression enabled by neoliberal reform (chapter 7). Rather than seeking to reify rapping as resistance, or to see it as a celebration of neoliberal reforms, I will seek to draw out the ways in which it is a medium for engaging with a changing world and contemporary reality. While there can be no denying the straitened and changing circumstances of youth in Dar es Salaam, young people's lives are marked not only by their marginality but also by the creative and innovative ways in which they have dealt with their circumstances. I will seek to place my focus not on the notion of the crisis of youth, or youth in crisis, but on the ways in which young people are able to use rapping as a means to engage with those circumstances intellectually and creatively.

The Global Circulation of Signs

Many of these news forms of sociality described in the literature on youth draw on global signs as a way of constituting themselves. As has been observed in different settings across the globe, consumption is also a means of production (Miller 1992, 164, Weiss 2009, 18-19, Behrend, 2002, 47-48). Furthermore, it has been argued that media genres created in distant places, and often in foreign languages, can be used by local audiences to describe

local conflicts and articulate moral dilemmas (Fair 2009 and Larkin 2004 and 1997). In this research strand, reception has become central to understandings of the creation of identity, in a world of increased circulation of global goods. There has been a great deal of interesting work done on the ways in which the consumption of global media is used for the construction of local identities. The barbers in Arusha (Weiss 2009), as well as the Shege⁵ in Kinshasa (Biaya 2005, 220), draw on globally circulating signs as a means of fashioning the self. This global circulation of signs, and its local appropriations, has become a major concern of research. A key concern of scholarly work on globalisation has been the interaction between the local and the global. Studies have frequently focused on the ways in which the global is domesticated and indigenised (Magubane 2006, 208). Indeed a great deal of work on hip hop in Africa emphasises the ways in which this global form has been localised. Concerns with the appropriation of elements of global musical style are important to the study of rapping in Dar es Salaam. In this thesis I wish to focus on rapping as a form of production: a form of production which draws on the global order of signs but, perhaps even more importantly, on local registers of meaning. This thesis will contribute to understanding through a focus on how rappers use both 'global' and 'local' discourses in the creation of their texts and the constitution of their selves.

Methodology

The research for this thesis was carried out over three separate research periods in Dar es Salaam in 2006, 2009 and 2010. In total, I was able to spend approximately 10 months in the field. The fieldwork methodology adopted consisted primarily of semi-structured

⁵ The Shege is "a 'viveur' who thrives in times of crisis and whose typical pastime ('kobenda kopo' – drinking, and 's'ambiancer' – living it up)" (Biaya 2005, 220)

interviews and participant observation or 'hanging out'. I sought to interview as wide a range of participants in the creation, production, dissemination and distribution of rapped music as possible. I was able to conduct interviews with over 70 participants in rapped music. I also sought to spend as much time as possible 'hanging out' with the various different actors in the field. Spreading my fieldwork over three trips has enabled me to develop very close relationships with a number of artists. Returning to my research site over a number of years has allowed me to chart the changes that have taken place within the wider music industry, as well as individual careers. When I returned to Tanzania in 2009, for my longest fieldwork period, I lived in the house of a rapper Hashim Rubanza. While I sought to interview a diverse range of artists who were at various stages in their careers and performing different styles of rapped music, I was also able to establish very close relationships with a number of the rappers and producers. These close relationships enabled ethnographic research of a more detailed kind. Building close relationships with your research subjects presents its own difficulties, of course, in no way unique to this study. As a close associate, or friend, of your research subjects you may be called upon to offer advice, or act as a resource in the lives of your research subjects. I acted as an intermediary in establishing a relationship between one of the underground rappers with whom I spent a great deal of time, and a studio. These kinds of close relationships can lead to their own complications, as in this case, where there was a misunderstanding about the agreement between the rapper and the studio. The rapper felt that he had been promised a particular piece of music and the studio that he had not written lyrics for the song fast enough with the result that they had given it to another artist. In the end this led to a stalemate between the studio and artist and no song was recorded. This presented a challenge to the relationships I had established with both studio and rapper, both of which,

thankfully, I was able to maintain. Becoming involved in the practice which you are researching is not unusual in ethnographic fieldwork. While it can present challenges, it also opens up the possibility of developing new areas of understanding. Indeed, in Archambault's study of mobile phone usage in Mozambique, it is through her stepping into the field that she comes fully to understand the etiquette and values attached to mobile phone usage (Archambault 2009, 8). The attempt to help a rapper gain access to a studio similarly enabled me to observe more closely the detail of the relationship between producer and rapper. I was able to gain a better understanding of the 'politics' of these processes, precisely because I was closely involved with all participants and was personally implicated in this process.

Since the 1980s there has been a great deal of critical commentary of the production of anthropological knowledge (Clifford and Marcus et al 1986, Fabian 1991, 2012). In the most critical of the commentaries, the gaining of knowledge from subaltern research subjects has been equated with the colonial exploitation of natural resources. This has found its outlet, in part, in subaltern studies and in various attempts to allow the subaltern voice to be directly heard. Ethnographic enquiry has responded to this critique in a variety of different ways. A significant trend has been the recognition within ethnographic texts of the contribution of research participants as co-producers of knowledge. This more narrative-focused ethnography seeks to make texts which are clear about the relations of power that exist between the researcher and their research participants.

Research is a dialogical process. Knowledge exchanged and produced during the course of research is very much part of a collaborative project. Interviews are a process of discussion,

rather than a simple provision of information. Ethnographic research changes not only those who are the subject of research but the researcher him or herself (Fabian 2012, 447). Rappers, and other research participants, have taken part not only as subjects of the research, but as interlocutors within it. I have sought to recognise the contribution of my various collaborators throughout my thesis, and to allow their voices to be heard. In particular, a number of the actors in the field of cultural music production in Dar es Salaam, with whom I have maintained longstanding relationships, have continued to help shape my research through their engagement with my research questions and findings. One area of my fieldwork in which I found collaboration particularly useful was in the translation of song texts. In some instances I have co-translated texts with collaborators, discussing the various meanings of the text as it is translated. In others I have translated texts and then sought further assistance with their meaning from rappers. Working with rappers KBC, Hashim and D-Knob in the translation of song texts has proved extremely valuable for the wider understanding of their meaning. Many Swahili words have multiple meanings. The various meaning of words opens up texts to multiple interpretations. Translating texts with rappers has enabled me to gain a fuller grasp of the multiple meanings and readings of these texts.

I have been drawn into my field of research as an active participant. The process of research is dialogical, not only in the sense that the researcher may gain knowledge from dialogue with his research participants but also in the sense that the researcher may be viewed as a potential source of knowledge and opportunity for research participants. As described above, I have occasionally acted as a source of connection between rappers and studios. Artists and studios have also occasionally approached me for advice, which I have given to

the best of my ability. On one occasion in particular, which forms the basis for chapter 6, I have stepped across the boundary from researcher to active participant in my field of research. In 2010, I received a small grant from the Arts Council UK which enabled me to invite a rapper for a residency in the UK. Entering the field, while it presents challenges for the idea of the researcher as neutral observer, also offers a great many insights into the field of research. This type of research methodology is not without precedent. The work of Barber on Yoruba theatre (Barber 2000), Fabian on painting in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo) (Fabian 1996), Askew on cultural troupes in Tanzania (Askew 2002), Chernoff on rhythm in African music (1979), Collins on pop music in West Africa (Collins 1985) draw on fieldwork experiences gleaned from being an active participant in their respective fields of study. Entering the field and engaging in the practical action of creating music has, I believe, contributed to my understanding of rapped music. Having the rapper Hashim staying with me in the UK was useful for this study not least because my opportunities to travel to Tanzania were limited. Being involved in the creation of music, rather than observing from the outside, gave me greater insight into the politics of music production, the creation of artists' identities and the creative process of writing rap lyrics.

My initial awareness of popular music production in Dar es Salaam stemmed from a longstanding interest in popular music. Since my early twenties I have been involved practically, in one way or another, in the production and dissemination of popular music. For many years I organised musical performances at, and worked as a consultant for, the Roskilde music festival in Denmark. More recently I have co-run a small record label producing hip hop. These experiences, though outside my field of research, have proved useful when conducting my research. Being a fan of popular music, and having some

knowledge of hip hop, has helped me to be regarded as part of a musical community in many instances. For example, during my fieldwork I conducted recorded interviews on a small MP3 player which was equipped with a microphone. I also stored some music on the MP3 player and took a small pair of headphones with me. On one particular occasion I had been taken by a rapper to a studio to meet a producer. The producer seemed a little suspicious of a foreigner with an interest in popular music production. After the rapper who had facilitated the introduction had finished recording, I mentioned that I had some music with me and the producer, still a little suspicious, suggested I could play him something. We stayed in the studio long into the night, and well after the rapper had departed, listening to the music that I had brought and the producer's own recordings. Following this initial meeting I was invited back to the studio whenever I wished. Some knowledge of hip hop, and, in particular, hip hop producers, acted here as an indication that in some way we belonged to the same community of practice. Having been involved in various ways in the business of music also enabled me to discuss the practice of musical production and dissemination which most frequently concerned producers and rappers.

Having experience of the everyday politics and negotiation involved in the production and dissemination of music also gave me some useful insights into the politics of music production in Dar es Salaam. The production and dissemination of music is beset with relationships of power, whether in Europe or Tanzania. Different actors in the field, for example producers, rappers, promoters and radio DJs, are able to influence the ability of an artist to record or perform. While the actors in musical production may vary between

Europe and Tanzania, the same principles of inclusion and exclusion apply.⁶ Concerns about exclusion from spaces, and about who is able to make aesthetic choices about which music is made visible or audible, all highly significant for an artist's future popularity, are common to both Tanzania and Europe.

There have also been limitations to my research. This thesis focuses on the production of popular music in Dar es Salaam. During the course of my research I took short trips to Morogoro and Arusha, but the vast majority of data was gathered in Dar es Salaam. This was a conscious choice on my part, to enable the detailed development of networks and relationships, and promote the continuity of 'hang out' with the same rappers, for extended periods. Rappers, and their recordings, are mobile. There is an extensive performance network across Tanzania, within the region and in Europe and the United States. Tanzanian rapped recordings are popular particularly in neighbouring countries, especially Kenya and Uganda. The research in this thesis reflects more closely on a single site of music production than on the mobility of the music. There are also vibrant, though smaller, music scenes in particular in Arusha, Morogoro and Mwanza. Many of the regional cities in Tanzania have their own rappers, recording studios and radio stations. The musical scenes in these cities are in some ways distinct from that of Dar es Salaam. It would be both interesting and valuable to be able to offer a comparative study of rapped music production across Tanzania. Restrictions on time, and the desire to produce a more grounded ethnography of a single site, precluded me from travelling to other cities for long enough to conduct detailed fieldwork.

⁶ In my experience of music production and dissemination in Europe, print media, and in particular websites and blogs, play a far greater role in the dissemination of music than they do in Tanzania.

Returning to Dar es Salaam over a number of years has enabled me to notice some of the development of popular music. Of its nature, popular music production is processual; popular culture is something which is constantly changing and emergent. Leaving the field also enabled me to look at my data, to reflect upon it and return to examine those questions which were of particular interest. Though I interviewed a number of underground rappers during my extended fieldwork period in 2009, the significant differences between them and recorded rappers only emerged when I reviewed my data. Having said this I also recognise that there are significant advantages to extended fieldwork and that the more time spent in the field can only benefit ethnographic work. Extended fieldwork allows the researcher to build larger networks, to become more fully embedded in those networks and to pursue their questions in more detail.

Where possible I have conducted translations for this thesis collaboratively, and where this has not been possible I have sought feedback from Tanzanian Swahili speakers on my own translations. Working collaboratively on translations has made this research much richer and fuller, I believe. Rapped musical expression frequently relies on what is commonly termed in Dar es Salaam 'street Swahili' and often draws heavily on word play. This has made the translation of texts without reference to support from Tanzanian Swahili speakers more difficult.

As has been noted by several scholars, the understandings of the producers of popular culture are frequently privileged in studies. An audience's reception of texts may be significantly different from the intended meaning of its producers. Although I did spend a significant amount of time discussing song texts, music videos and musical personalities

with audience members during the course of my fieldwork, I found it difficult to do this in a systematic way so that it could contribute as data to this study. In particular, it was time consuming, and often difficult, to identify the precise parts of texts which would particularly ignite discussion among audience members. A greater, and more accurate, emphasis on the reception by audiences of rapped music texts, both audio and visual, would have enhanced this study.

Conclusion

In this thesis I have sought to draw attention to what I believe is an exciting and interesting form of cultural production. The practice of rapping in Dar es Salaam is one of great vitality and diversity, and I hope to have captured some of that in this study. Popular culture is an important field of study in and of itself. Important, not only in its reflection of social life, but in the ways it is a force in shaping social life.

I hope to have added to the study of musical production in Tanzania through this thesis and, in particular, through my focus on the under-researched topic of underground rap performance. Informal 'underground' performance by young men forms an alternative music economy in Dar es Salaam. I aim to contribute to ongoing debates about youth under newly liberalised regimes through a reading of the sometimes contradictory dynamics of liberalisation. Though enabled by liberalisation, rapped music has also been a space for the contestation and critique of the changes brought about by the processes of liberalisation. This is a dynamic which has to be approached with some subtlety. Liberalisation has enabled new relations of production as well as new spaces for articulating visions of Tanzanian reality, but it has also provoked anxiety about such changes.

In this thesis I have sought to contribute to wider, ongoing scholarly debates about youth, agency and sociality in Africa. The chapter on underground rapping, in particular, will, I hope, throw some light on new forms of sociality developed by young people in straitened circumstances. While youth have frequently been cast as in crisis, or as living through crisis, I wish to shift the focus to the creativity and ingenuity of young people living in extremely difficult circumstances. While acknowledging the distance for rappers in Dar es Salaam from the global order of signs, I wish to shine a light on the ways in which rappers participate in local discourses. Rapping is a means through which rappers fashion themselves. This act of self-styling draws on existing discourses and their associated symbolic presences. The performance of rapping acts on a local, and a global, order of relations. Rappers embody both global and local discursive practices simultaneously in their creative construction of self.

CHAPTER 2 – DAR ES SALAAM – AN INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This thesis will focus upon the production and consumption of rapped music in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. While Dar es Salaam is no longer the capital of Tanzania,⁷ it is its largest city, the commercial capital⁸ and the centre of Tanzania's music industry. Rappers from across Tanzania are drawn to settle in Dar es Salaam. The vast majority of the musical infrastructure, studios, radio and TV stations are based in Dar es Salaam.⁹ Far from being simply a neutral space in which the creation of popular culture takes place, the city has shaped the way that rapped music is created. There is a dialogical relationship between the city and the music created in it, each responding to the other. Dar es Salaam, *Bongo*¹⁰, as a historically constituted space, has been central to the creation, production and consumption of rapped music. In turn, rapped music practice has shaped and marked the city. The city has provided inspiration for, and been the topic of, many rapped music songs. Rapped music has played a significant part in popular discourse about the city.¹¹

The city of Dar es Salaam is not simply a backdrop to the creation of rapped music, but is an essential character in forming rapped music. In this chapter I wish to offer a brief introduction to Dar es Salaam which I hope will provide important context for my later

⁷ The capital of Tanzania was moved to Dodoma in 1974.

⁸ Dar es Salaam generates over 45% of Tanzania's industrial output and 70% of Tanzania's GDP (UN Habitat 2009, 6)

⁹ Dar es Salaam is certainly not the only space within which rapped music is created and consumed in Tanzania and there are vibrant local scenes in many Tanzanian cities. During my fieldwork I visited both Morogoro and Arusha. Some significant work has been done on rapped music in Arusha with a focus on youth and hip hop cultures. See Weiss, 2009; Thompson, 2008; Lemelle 2006

¹⁰ Dar es Salaam is popularly referred to as Bongo in Tanzania from the Swahili word ubongo (brain). The city is perceived to be a space within which you need to use your brain to survive. (See Sanders 2008, 156)

¹¹ See later discussion of Professor Jay's song Bongo Dar es Salaam

chapters. The historical development of the city offers a valuable way of introducing themes which will be significant throughout this thesis. These themes include: the development of Dar es Salaam as a coastal city which has long been part of networks of trade and cultural exchange, the colonial and post-colonial development of Dar es Salaam and its distinctive division into different neighbourhoods, and the histories of young men and labour in the city.

History of Dar es Salaam

Dar es Salaam¹² has long been part of what is increasingly being conceived of as Indian Ocean networks of trade and cultural exchange (Bertz 2011, Spear 2000, Bang 2011, Sheriff 2011, Brennan 2012). My own focus on rapped music draws on the idea of cultural exchange between the United States and Tanzania in what has been termed the black Atlantic (Gilroy 1993). It is important to recognise the long history of trade along the East African coast, and the lasting legacies that this has left on East African commercial, cultural and social life (Burton 2001 a). From the 8th century onwards, the East Coast of Africa was connected in trade with Europe, Asia and the Arab world (Spear 2000, 261). Kilwa, in what is now Tanzania, was a notable centre of trade on the coast between the 11th and 15th centuries (Iliffe 1979, 35-36). Much of the coast of East Africa in what is now Tanzania and Kenya was under the control of the Sultan of Oman from the seventeenth century onwards, until the onset of German colonialism in the 1880s.

A coastal Swahili culture was born from the meeting of Arabs and Africans along the East African coast; indeed the word Swahili derives from the Arabic word for coast (Askew 2002, 33). Swahili society was one that was urban from its inception in the first millennium AD (Burton 2001a, 8). The contact between Africans and Arabs had results described by Bryceson:

racial inter-marriage between Africans and Arabs generated a creole language and culture, which bridged racial and tribal barriers. Adherence to cultural and Islamic values, rather than skin colour per se, were the outward markings of the Swahili identity (Bryceson 2009, 256).

Swahili culture has been described by Spear as a “middleman culture” made up of cultural brokers which linked the hinterland with traders on the coast (Spear 2000, 276).

By the time that Dar es Salaam was founded in 1862 by Sultan Majid of Zanzibar, there were already notable trading centres in Mombasa, Zanzibar and Bagamoyo. There was an important trade from the interior in slaves, ivory, fish, gum and copal. Dar es Salaam was part of a world in which there were networks of trade operating across the Indian Ocean. The Sultanate that ruled from Zanzibar had important social and political ties with Oman, and its rulers were of Arab rather than African origin. Though founded in 1862, construction of Dar es Salaam did not begin until 1865-66 (Brenan and Burton 2007, 16). From its founding, the mix of Arabs and Africans, as well as trade with the interior, made Dar es Salaam somewhat cosmopolitan.

In 1887, the Deutsch Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft obtained formal rights to collect custom duties in Dar es Salaam, and by 1891 the city had become the new capital of German East Africa. During the early colonial period, the population of Dar es Salaam grew steadily from 3,000 in 1887 to 10,000 in 1894, 13,000 in 1898 and 20,000 by the turn of the century (Burton and Brennan 2007, 26). As a port, Dar es Salaam, in the late nineteenth century, was one of a series of towns along the East African coast through which goods could be imported and exported. During the nineteenth century its importance as a trading centre continued to grow, and was further strengthened with the completion of a rail link to Mwanza in 1928. The population of Dar es Salaam grew largely through labour migration from the interior. Much of this migration was cyclical, with migrants moving between Dar es Salaam and their home region. In a 1930 native census, 167 different African ethnic groups were registered as living in Dar es Salaam (Burton and Brennan 2007, 34).

The inter-war and post war years also saw the development of distinctive forms of African urban culture. Football clubs were established in the 1920s and 1930s by urban Africans (Tsuruta 2007, 199). Coffee houses *mikahawani* and tea houses *hoteli* became important sites of social interaction for the urban African population. Distinct, urban musical forms such as, the *beni Ngoma*, *Taarab* and *Dansi* developed from the turn of the century (Martin 1982, Graebner 2007, Suriano 2009, Askew 2002). Both Graebner's and Suriano's work suggests that *dansi* and *beni Ngoma* were "quintessentially urban and pan-ethnic" (Suriano 2009, 270).

There was an upsurge in Dar es Salaam's population from the 1930s onwards (Burton 2003, 335). The increase in population also led to the expansion of the city and the development

of the first shanty areas in Buguruni, Keko and Gerezani. Insufficient housing was provided by the colonial administration, and so informal settlement in the peri-urban areas expanded. These new areas could not be as easily regulated by the colonial state, and the houses in them were often built from poor materials. Areas such as Keko were considered by many urban Africans as desirable places to live because of their proximity to the port and the railway (Limbumba 2010, 173). Between the 1957 (the date of the last colonial census) and 1967 (the date of the first post-independence census) Dar es Salaam's population tripled from 93,363 to 272,821 (Burton and Brennan 2007, 53). Despite the focus of TANU, the ruling party following independence, on rural development and the virtues of rural life, urban migration and the expansion of the city continued.

In the 1970s there was an expansion of planned settlements in Sinza, Mikocheni, Kijitonyama and Mbagala (Nguluma 2003, 23). However the building of planned settlements could not keep pace with the increase in population, and unplanned settlements in Kinondoni Hanna Nasif and Mwananyamala also expanded. Since 1992, in line with broader policies of privatisation and liberalisation, the state has sought to sell state owned housing stock; since 2002 the amount of housing stock being sold has grown (Nguluma 2003, 24). Into the twenty first century, Dar es Salaam's population has continued to expand and the population according to the 2012 census was 4.36 million people. Dar es Salaam accounts for approximately 10% of Tanzania's population (2012 Population and Housing Census, 2).

Informal Settlements - *Uswahilini*

Since its foundation by the Sultan Majid of Zanzibar, Dar es Salaam had been divided into different zones reflecting class divisions. The 1924 township rules formalised these racial and social divisions. Europeans occupied the city centre, the area now known as Kisutu was largely occupied by Asians and what is now called Kariakoo was occupied by Africans. The area of Mnazi Mmoja separated the European occupied city from the African areas, acting as a buffer zone between the two areas. These different areas of Dar es Salaam came to be referred to by the racial origin of their occupants, thus *uzunguni* (for the European occupied areas), *uhindini* (for areas occupied by Asians) and *uswahilini* (for areas occupied by the Swahili people i.e. Africans) (Smiley 2009, 180).

While these racial categorisations may no longer hold true, the terminology of *uzunguni*, *uhindini* and *uswahilini* is still used in contemporary Dar es Salaam. It is unplanned settlements which are now commonly referred to by the term *uswahilini*. *Uswahilini* is defined by Lewinson as a space within which

Houses are often built without government permits on informally acquired plots of land; services such as schools, roads, clinics, electricity and pipe water are usually provided after the fact, when the city government decides that the residents are really there to stay. (Lewinson 2007 206)

Many of Dar es Salaam's residents translate *uswahilini* as 'squatter area' or 'slum' in reference to the lack of permits that people living in these areas have to the land they have built their homes upon. *Uswahilini* areas vary quite considerably. While, in the newer settlements, few houses may have rights to the land and very few services such as

sanitation or water are provided centrally, older, informal settlements may well have large numbers of occupants with land rights and some services. While initially hostile to the development of informal settlements, since the 1970s there has been an acceptance by the government of such settlements and recognition of the important role that they play in offering housing to the urban poor. There has been a programme of upgrading, the issuing of land rights and the installation of services in unplanned settlements since the 1970s (UN Habitat 2010, 15). That said, many *uswahilini* areas do not have access to piped water, drainage, electricity or a formal road network. 22% of houses in *uswahilini* areas have no access to piped water at all, only 30.5% have access to piped water on their plots and only 65% of homes are connected to the electricity supply (Lusugga Kironde 1995, 84). In the areas of Hanna Nasif (in which I conducted part of my research) and Vingunguti (close to Kiwalani another of my research sites) 71% of homes had no electricity and 77% were made of temporary building material (Brenan and Burton 2007, 65). *Uswahilini* areas now account for the majority of the housing stock in Dar es Salaam, with 70% of the housing in Dar es Salaam in *uswahilini* areas (Ngware 2006, 301).

Gaining the rights to land is by no means a simple matter in Tanzania. Only usage rights, and not ownership in the western legal sense, are recognised by the Tanzanian state (Owens 2010, 258). In *Uswahilini* neighbourhoods, plots of land may be purchased.¹³ Any purchase is required to be recognised by the local ten cell leader or politician (Kombe 2005, 118). Once this has been achieved, the purchase may then be recorded with the land registry. From 1978/79 to 1991/92, there were 261,668 applications to Dar es

¹³ While all land is owned by the state (Nnkya 2007, 3-4) a system outside of state control allowed for land transfer in informal settlement (Burra 2002, 143-144). Occupancy rights are increasingly being recognised by the state in *uswahilini* through the The Tanzanian Urban Land Management and Reform Project (Parsa, A. Nakendo, F. McClusky, W. J. Page, W. M. 2011, 696)

Salaam City Council for plots but only 17,751 plots were allocated (Lusugga Kironde 2000, 158). Since the 1999 Land Rights Act the state has sought to identify, and give legal rights to, all land plots in *uswahilini* areas through the Comprehensive Urban Land Property Register for Economic Empowerment of Residents in Unplanned Settlements in Dar es Salaam Project. By 2007 this project had given land rights to 61,000 of the plots identified (UN Habitat 2010, 19). Despite this there is still a great deal of uncertainty among residents in *uswahilini* neighbourhoods regarding their usage rights to land.

A number of the rappers that I interviewed lived in the *uswahilini* neighbourhoods of Buza, Mwananyamala, Keko and Kinondoni Hanna Nasifu. These areas varied considerably. Buza is a peri-urban neighbourhood situated on the edge of the city close to the larger planned area of Mbagala. While Buza is an unplanned area, due to its location on the outskirts of the city it does not have a high housing density. Livestock, and small farming plots, are frequently located between the houses in Buza. Buza was connected to the Tandika and Mbagala areas by small *panya* ('rat') *dala dalas* and had no direct, formal bus connection with the city centre.

This is in contrast with both the *Uswahilini* neighbourhoods of Keko and Hanna Nasifu, which are only the short distance of a few kilometres from the centre of Dar es Salaam. Keko is one of the oldest unplanned *uswahilini* settlements in Dar es Salaam (Lupala 2002, 33). It is situated approximately 3 km south from the centre of the city along the Kilwa Road. Both Keko and Hanna Nasifu are heavily populated and the houses are tightly packed in around each other. Hanna Nasifu developed in the 1970s, as the city extended out along Bagamoyo road (Burton and Brennan 2007, 53). Situated

approximately 4 km north from the city centre, Hanna Nasifu is overlooked by new apartments built next to Muhimbili hospital. Hanna Nasifu has a population of approximately 20,000 (Sheuya 2007, 445) and borders the *uzunguzi* area of Upanaga and the planned neighbourhood of Kinondoni. Located in a dip close to the Msimbazi creek, it is subject to occasional flooding. In May 1991 the area was subject to heavy flooding due to which 72 houses collapsed (Nguluma 2003, 36).



Figure 1 – The area of Kinondoni Hanna Nasifu

A characteristic of *Uswahilini* areas is the maze of narrow roads and alleyways through which you have to pass to access houses. The unplanned nature of these areas means that the houses form an elaborate jigsaw pattern of properties, linked frequently by narrow alleyways between the houses which twist and turn through the neighbourhood. Small businesses such as shops, bars, butchers, and home brewing, as well as the making

and selling of foods such as *vitumbua*¹⁴ and chapatis, are frequently run from the verandas of houses (Kachenje 2005, 20). Fruit, vegetables, and occasionally fish, are sold by men and women walking along the narrow alleyways with their wares on their heads. For those unfamiliar with an area a guide is frequently required to help navigate the network of small alley ways.

The socio-economic background of *uswahilini* residents is far from uniform (Lewinson 2006 a, 478). As Nguluma has suggested; “informal settlements accommodate a wide range of social and economic groups of people, from poor to wealthy households” (Nguluma 2003, 32). Residents in *uswahilini* neighbourhoods are in waged labour, engaged in small or medium sized *miradi* or projects, work as *deiwaka*¹⁵ or are unemployed. The size and quality of housing in *uswahilini* neighbourhoods varies greatly. Some houses may be a single room, made of temporary building materials with only a sheet covering the entrance. Others have been able to build considerable structures on their plots of land; dwellings with several rooms, built from permanent building materials and with a variety of amenities. Perhaps most strikingly, in the *uswahilini* area of Mwananyamala, I have seen houses with high walls and electrified fencing. These houses had been constructed on two stories and had water tanks and, in some instances, satellite dishes. These neighbourhoods are important sites of social mixing. As Lewinson describes:

¹⁴ *Vitumbua* are small round pancakes or dumplings made from rice flour and commonly consumed in *uswahilini* areas.

¹⁵ *Deiwaka* refers a form of casual employment gained from day to day for which there is no contract.

While the neighbourhoods of *uswahilini* would seem to be the domain of poor marginalized urbanities, there was a surprising degree of class diversity within them. Sometimes tidy bungalows sat next to half-finished cement block houses, and most government workers rented rooms or even built their own houses within these areas. (Lewinson 2007, 207)

Despite this diversity within *uswahilini* neighbourhoods, there was a strong sense among many of those that I interviewed that *uswahilini* neighbourhoods were distinct from the planned and *uzunguzi* areas of Dar es Salaam. There was a sense that there was a form of *uswahilini* culture, a set of norms and behaviours distinct from other areas of Dar es Salaam. This may be a feature of the fact that the houses are tightly packed around each other and that most houses have no glass windows, so that conversations can be overheard, or everyday practices, such as the cooking of food, observed. Life, in *uswahilini* neighbourhoods, is lived communally, for the majority of people. The Swahili house form of shared housing dominates in *uswahilini* areas.¹⁶ In Swahili houses, several individuals or families may rent rooms in the same house. Each family has to share communal facilities such as sanitation and kitchen, and so the lives of the families resident in each house are closely intertwined. This notion of an *uswahilini* culture suggested that in *uswahilini* people “gossip and rumour prevail, and one constantly feels that one is being watched.” (Moyer, 2006: 169).

In *uswahilini* and peri-urban neighbourhoods there is little state bureaucracy. Local institutions have developed to provide some services such as the *Sungusungu* defence

¹⁶ The Swahili house is typically a long corridor with rooms on either side which can be rented to individuals and families, and a communal veranda and backyard (Nguluma 2003, 24-30)

teams (Tripp 1997, 13-14) and local development associations (Mhamba and Titus 2001, 223). *Uswahilini* football teams and competitions have also developed. These areas are characterised as carnivalesque (Moyer 2006, 171). *Uswahilini* is associated with the occult practice of '*juju*'.¹⁷ Rumours about the influence of *juju* on public life are common, with one example being its influence on the outcome of football matches.¹⁸

There was a strong sense among many of my research informants that these neighbourhoods represented the normative spaces of Dar es Salaam. That, in contrast to the life that was lived in better off neighbourhoods, life in *uswahilini* was the authentic, 'real' life of the city. The characteristics ascribed to *uswahilini* included the willingness to share, to help neighbours and an engagement with the lives of those that lived around you. There was a sense that while *uswahilini* presented challenges to their residents, these neighbourhoods embodied true Tanzanian values.

Uswahilini areas occupy that paradoxical position of being at once marginal and central to the city of Dar es Salaam. They are marginal in terms of the provision of services by the state, the presence of state agencies and legal protections. The land upon which *uswahilini* areas are built is marginal and in the most severe cases prone to flooding. Houses are mostly single storey and largely hidden from view by the larger buildings which line the main streets which run alongside these areas. They are, in many senses, invisible. This sense of marginality and invisibility is keenly felt by the residents. Yet it is

¹⁷ *Juju* is the ability of individuals to interact in some way with occult powers to influence the world around them. A number of my friends and research informants told me that they had witnessed people who had been influenced by *juju*.

¹⁸ For a discussion of *juju* and its influence on football in Tanzania see Beez 2006 and Leseth 1997

uswahilini areas that house the majority of the city's residents. These are, in a literal sense, the normative residential spaces of the city.

Labour

Until the Second World War, trade had been the major reason for the majority of Africans to migrate to Dar es Salaam. The majority of migrants were farmers or traders, though many were also employed as domestic servants (Brennan and Burton 2007, 28). After the war, industrial development took place to the south of Dar es Salaam and building labour became a major source of employment (Iliffe 1979, 387). Increased labour in the docks and on the transport network led to the development of a unionised African workforce. In 1947 there was a major strike of African Dockworkers seeking higher wages and they were joined by the Railways African Association, the workers ultimately gaining wage rises from their employers (Brennan 2012, 113). Migration into Dar es Salaam continued as young people, principally men, came looking for the possibility of work and to escape the taxes levied upon them in the countryside. Migration outstripped employment in the final years of the colonial era, and the early post-colonial era, as Africans came and established informal businesses, providing services to urban employed Africans (Burton 2007, 122).

Post-independence Tanzania was a single party state governed by the Tanganyika African Union, TANU, led by Julius Nyerere. At independence, considerable quantities of important cash crops were produced by settler owned plantations and all the banks and insurance companies were foreign owned (Liviga 2011, 4). With the Arusha Declaration of 1967, Julius Nyerere and TANU laid out the ideas of African socialism which Tanzania was to pursue up

until the mid 1980s. Tanzania was to follow the model of a developmental state. Over 400 parastatal organisations were created, allowing the state to regulate and control much of what was produced in Tanzania. The principles of self-sufficiency, state control and the primacy of rural production were adopted by the state. Nyerere located the source of proletarian culture and consciousness in the peasant (Ivaska 2011, 16 and Nyerere 1969, 233).

By the late 1970s the Tanzanian economy was experiencing problems. Exports were reduced by 50% between 1970 and 1980 and between 1974 and 1988 real wages fell by 83%. As Tripp says:

Tanzania fell into economic crisis and stagnation in the late 1970s. The crisis manifested itself in various ways, including a balance of payments crisis; poor performance in the agriculture and industrial sectors; government budget and trade deficits; and declining standards of living for most ordinary citizens. (Tripp, 1997, 62)

From the early 80s onwards, the state adopted a number of programmes aimed at liberalising the economy, including the National Economic Stabilization Programme (1981), the Structural Adjustment Programme (1982), the Economic Recovery Programme (1986) and the Economic and Social Action Programme (1989-1991). Local markets in food, no longer strictly regulated by the state, were recognised in 1982. In 1986 the requirement for a permit to move food was abolished, and in 1987 the staple foods of millet and sorghum were decontrolled (Tripp 1997, 166). According to data from the Marketing Development

Bureau quoted in Tripp, 90% of marketed maize, and 75% of rice, were sold not in official but in parallel markets between 1980 and 1987 (Tripp 1997, 166). Over the period of the implementation of the various economic restructuring programmes, there was a collapse not only in the value of wages but in the possibility of waged labour. Nationalised and parastatal organisations either closed, or those that stayed open could not keep wages in pace with inflation.

Prior to the implementation of structural adjustment policies, there had been an informal sector operating in Dar es Salaam. However, following the implementation of structural adjustment policies, informal employment became the major source of income for most individuals. 62% of Dar es Salaam's population is involved in the informal economy (Integrated Labour Force Survey 2000/1, 59) and this sector is continuing to expand at a faster rate than the formal employment sector in Dar es Salaam (The Economic Survey 2009, 102). Van Donge defines the informal sector as

the world of economic activities outside the organized labour force
where labour is not recruited on a permanent or regular basis for fixed
rewards (van Donge, 1992, 185).

The main informal activities in Dar es Salaam were the selling of food, running of small shops or *dukas*, or selling of fruit and vegetables and urban agriculture (National Informal Sector Survey 1991, 8). These are highly visible forms of informal trade, which can be seen across much of Dar es Salaam. Common forms of informal trade include the sale of a variety of food and drink such as *mamantilie* or 'mother bring to me' - the sale of home cooked

food on the streets. Another popular form of informal economic activity are coffee sellers, called *makahawa*, who walk on foot around the city in the early mornings and late afternoons carrying a full kettle filled with coffee in one hand and a pot with small cups in the other. A single small cup of coffee can be purchased for 50 Tanzanian Shillings, the equivalent of 2 pence. Street vendors, or *machinga*, represent another important form of informal economic activity largely undertaken by young men. *Machinga* may sell anything from cigarettes and peanuts to sunglasses or DVDs. A great number of those working in the informal economy are young people, and around 82% of those are self employed (Integrated Labour Force Survey 2000/1, 64). The forms of informal economy typically conducted by young men such as *makahawa* or *machinga* often involve investment by a second party. The goods for sale are purchased by a second party who then takes a percentage of the profit made by the *makahawa* or *machinga*. The young men are then left with only a percentage of their profits after having paid their financial backer.

Casual labour which is typically referred to as *deiwaka*, or day worker, is also a common form of employment for young men. *Deiwaka* is gained on a daily or weekly basis, without a formal contract and often without fixed wages. This type of employment may vary, for example, from manual labour to working as a bus conductor, bus driver or taxi driver. One of the principal characteristics of day worker work is its unstable nature, with the availability of work, and remuneration for it, varying from week to week. A well researched example of *deiwaka* work, and the various hierarchies involved in the practice of the informal economy, is that of work on local buses or *dala dalas* (Rizzo 2002, D'hondt 2009, Plat, Pochet, Olvera 2003, Ngowi 2005).

The name *dala dala* derives from the word dollar, the equivalent of the 5 TSH price of a ride¹⁹. Transport in Dar es Salaam during the *Ujamaa* period was delivered by a state run bus company. Private buses were first allowed to operate in 1986, and since then they have become a ubiquitous form of public transport. Bus routes crisscross the city, with the destination of each bus written across its front. There are usually two people working on a *dala dala*, the driver and a conductor. Buses are rarely owned by the driver or conductor, the driver is usually required to return a fee each day to the bus's owner, who, in turn, is responsible for the upkeep of the vehicle. As D'hondt describes:

Fixed labor contracts are rare, and remuneration works on a franchise-like system: instead of receiving a wage, drivers are expected to return a fixed fee to the owner each day; what remains of the revenue is to be shared between driver and conductor (D'hondt, 2009, 1965)

In his study of *dala dalas* in Dar es Salaam, Rizzo discovered that “82.9% were employed not only without a written contract, but without a fixed wage” (Rizzo, 2002, 146). What we see, in all the cases of *machinga*, *makahawa* and *dala dala*, is the important role of patrons with the financial capability to invest in the purchasing or supply of goods. Since the retrenchment of the state, labour has frequently become casual, rather than waged, without fixed contracts or wages and where remuneration is garnered through a share of the profits from the venture with backers or owners.

¹⁹ The 5 Tanzanian Shilling price in 1983 was the equivalent to a dollar, the current fare is approximately 250 TSH (Rizzo 2002, 155).

Tripp's study provides an insight into the growth of *mradi* - informal economic projects - as the Tanzanian state has found itself increasingly unable to provide jobs, wages and services. Tripp's study suggests that in 1988, at the time it was conducted, 90% of household income was gained from informal projects rather than through contracted, waged labour. *Mradi* are frequently run by children, young people and women (Tripp 1997, 105). The change in the economy, from one largely offering employment through state or parastatal organisations to one in which *deiwaka* and *mradi* are the largest sources of income, has thus led to a shift in those who are creating income. There are low rates of formal employment in Dar es Salaam. According to the Integrated Labour Force Survey of 2006 only 33% of Dar es Salaam adults are unemployed (Integrated Labour Force Survey of 2006, 4).

At the same time as waged labour was collapsing, cost sharing initiatives in education and health care were also instituted in the 1990s. Parents and patients were asked to contribute to the costs of health care and secondary schooling. Private providers were allowed to deliver health care and education, which had previously been the preserve of the state. Harrington (1999, 219) quotes the Proposals for Health Sector Reform report showing that by 1994, 40% of all health service delivery points were privately owned. With cost-sharing initiatives there was also a reduction in the number of children enrolled in primary school in the early 90s (Vavrus 2005, 182). While Tanzania has seen increases in GDP, poverty and lack of access to services such as education and health care remain a significant problem for the poor, both rural and urban. As Lusugga Kironde writes:

If 2,000 calories per day is taken as the minimum requirement, well over

half the rural population, a third of the population in urban areas apart from Dar es Salaam and a quarter of the population in Dar es Salaam fall below the poverty line (Lusugga Kironde, 1995, 83-84).

Young Men and the City

Young men, migration and unemployment have been viewed as a problem by both the colonial and post-colonial state. In the years prior to, during and immediately following the Second World War, migration to Dar es Salaam increased significantly. A very considerable proportion of the migration into Dar es Salaam was young men from rural areas seeking work. The migrations of young men to Dar es Salaam led to a population that was both predominantly male and youthful. In 1956 ninety five percent of the population was under forty five (Burton and Brennan 2007, 48). This influx of young men was perceived as a problem by both the colonial authorities and much of the more established African urban population (Burton 2001a, 203-204). Young men were referred to by some established locals as *wahuni* or hooligans. Colonial officials regarded urban living as a negative influence on Africans, leading to moral decline, and feared disorder if young African men were to migrate to urban areas in large numbers (Burton 2001b, 201-203). Employment opportunities fluctuated as the economy expanded and contracted, and so many of these new youthful migrants periodically engaged in casual labour or petty crime (Burton and Brennan 2007, 36). Young men came to urban areas seeking not only employment, but also greater freedom from their elders. The perception of urban youth as problematic, potentially destabilising and a risk to the social order continues through the post-colonial period up until the present day.

The post-colonial Tanzanian state had a somewhat paradoxical relationship with youth, who were cast as both the hope of the nation and potentially dangerous and destabilising (Brennan 2006, 238). Through the TANU Youth League, young people, and in particular young men, were given a role in building the nation (Brennan 2006). Youth were heralded as being central to the development of the nation. The behaviour of urban youth, however, was also criticised by TANU. The state followed policies of *Ujamaa* which valorised rural life, cast the urban unemployed as lazy and living from the toil of hard working peasants (Burton 2007, 129-130). Campaigns to repatriate the urban poor were implemented shortly after independence, in 1962 and 1964. Indeed, attempts to remove the urban poor, beggars and hawkers from the city centre have continued intermittently up until the present (Lusugga Kironde 1995, 86). The post-colonial state, and the urban elite, continued to view urban youth with some suspicion, and unemployed or underemployed youth have continued to be described by the elite as *wahuni* (hooligans). During the high-period of *Ujamaa*, the Tanzanian state focused on collective villagisation, rural food production and self sufficiency (Cornelli 2012, 172). Urban youth did not fit neatly into this picture of the nation.

Conclusion

Since its foundation over 150 years ago, Dar es Salaam has developed as a city in relation to historical dynamics of trade, colonialism, independence and labour migration. The legacies, for instance, of the colonial division of the city into districts defined by race and class can still be seen. These historical dynamics continue to shape the city and influence the production of culture therein. As we shall see, later in this thesis, *uswahilini*

neighbourhoods have become a central space for particular forms of rapped music performance. The *uswahilini* neighbourhoods in which these performances take place are not incidental to the performances, but essential elements in shaping those performances. Since the colonial period, the twin dynamics of youth and labour have been an important part of discourses about the morality of life in the city. These discourses about urban life, youth, labour and morality have continued to shape discourses in and about city life.

CHAPTER 3 – INTRODUCTION TO POPULAR MUSIC, HIP HOP AND RAPPED MUSIC IN DAR ES SALAAM

Introduction

This thesis is situated within the study of a number of different fields. In it I draw on scholarship about cultural production in Tanzania, hip hop and global forms of hip hop and the context for contemporary cultural production. This work fits within the broader, scholarly discourse on media flows, globalisation and the use of global signs to construct the self (Shipley 2009, Samper 2004, Weiss 2009, Prestholdt 2009). As many scholars agree (Van Binsbergen Van Dijk and Gewald 2004, Ntarangwi 2009, wa Mungai 2009), globalisation has become a central concern of contemporary research on cultural production in Africa. Exciting contemporary scholarship has focused on the ways in which transnational goods and images, such as home decorations, musical genres and television programmes, are understood and appropriated by local audiences and cultural producers. Scholars have increasingly begun to look at the ways in which individuals and groups employ globally circulating signs and symbols to fashion themselves. The imagination has become central to the work of self-fashioning, and a principal means through which agency is expressed (Appadurai 1996, 31).

Tanzanian Popular Music

In the 1890s, a form of musical and dance performance developed in Lamu, Kenya, before spreading along the Swahili coast. *Beni Ngoma* was derived, at least in part, from the brass band music, military parades and uniforms that accompanied colonial military drill. Freed

slaves were often handed over to missionaries on release from British naval ships along the Swahili coast, and they had often been exposed to British military ceremony, including drills and brass band music. It was residents in the Swahili-speaking quarters of coastal towns along the coast of Kenya and Tanganyika, however, who were the early practitioners of this *beni ngoma*. It was young Swahili Muslim men who were the first to establish Beni associations (Ranger 1975, 17). *Beni ngoma* spread along the coast and the first associations were formed in Dar es Salaam in the 1920s. In *beni*, military drill was combined with a “continuing tradition of communal competition as expressed through dance, procession, and mimic combat” (Ranger, 1975, 15). This created a cultural form with roots in both European brass bands and military parades, and local cultural norms and practices. While *beni ngoma* continued among coastal traditions of competition, *beni* associations were, as Graebner has said, “self-consciously modern” (2007, 180). Although *beni ngoma* was a cultural practice which appropriated costume, and to some extent form, from military drill, Ranger has argued that this was perhaps less in imitation than in a conscious desire of young men to appropriate symbols of “the modern” (Ranger 1975, 108).

During the late nineteenth century, Sultan Seyyid Barghash, who ruled Zanzibar between 1870 and 1888, sought to introduce elements of the court culture he had been exposed to on visits to India and Egypt into his own court. *Taarab*, a musical form which drew heavily on Egyptian court music, subsequently became popular in the Zanzibari court. *Taarab* was initially played on the Arabic scale, using Egyptian instruments. As a musical form performed at court, *taarab* was music for the political and racial elite. *Taarab* first began to become more widely and popularly accessible in the 1920s, when Siti binti Saad, a Zanzibari woman of slave origins, began to sing *taarab* in Swahili. At this time the instrumentation for

taarab also moved from instruments available in the court to instruments more popularly available. *Taarab* began to move from being elite to popular music. By the 1930s, Siti binti Saad was being flown to India by the record label His Masters Voice (HMV). During her stay in India she was able to record 31 songs (Perullo 2011, 44). In the 1930s, *taarab* became part of the popular culture of Dar es Salaam, as clubs such as the Egyptian Music Club and Alwatan Musical Club, who performed *taarab*, became popular. This may, in part, have been a reflection of the popularity of Egyptian music recordings, in particular those of the great Egyptian singer Oum Kulsum, and of Egyptian films, among Dar es Salaam's more elite residents. (Graebner 2007, 181 and Perullo 2011, 43) Rhythms from *ngoma* were incorporated into *taarab* along the Swahili coast, and Egyptian instruments replaced with more easily accessible western guitars and drum kits. As Askew says "taarab exemplifies the Swahili talent for assembling transnational musical bricolages" (Askew 2002, 109)

Taarab was characterised by the poetic nature of its lyrics, rich with metaphor. The composition of *taarab* lyrics draws on long established traditions of Swahili verse (Khamis 2001, 147). This metaphoric and poetic nature has led to *taarab* being an ideal medium for expressing *mafumbo* (riddles or hidden meanings), *mipasho* (messages) and *vishindo* (challenges) (Askew 2002, 134). During live performance, the meaning, *mafumbo*, *mipasho* and *vishindo* of *taarab* songs can be appropriated by the audience. Through the tipping of the lead singer, or evocative dance movements performed during a song, its deeper, more subtle meanings may be claimed by members of the audience (Lange 2002, 173-4). Social reality is negotiated through the public appropriation of songs' messages, meanings and challenges. The meaning of this appropriation is constructed by the audience, through their

understanding of the text, including its hidden meanings, and the social reality of the appropriator. Meaning, in the act of appropriation, is implicit not explicit.²⁰

Much as with *beni ngoma*, competition between *taarab* clubs became a prominent feature of its performance. Askew charts the competition between the Tanga based *taarab* groups of Young Novelty and Shabaab al-Watan, Black Star Musical Club and Lucky Star Musical Club in the 1970s, and between Golden Star Taarab and White Star Taarab in the 1980s. As *taarab* evolved and changed it has incorporated electronic instruments. The lyrics of contemporary *taarab* have become less metaphoric, and rather more direct and explicit in their meaning. *Taarab* lyrics, which frequently deal with love and romantic entanglements, have become more explicitly sexual in their lyrics since the 1990s. *Vishindo* has become a more prominent part of the *taarab* repertoire. This new form of *taarab*, incorporating western and electronic instruments, has become widely popular; in 2010 *taarab* was said to be the most popular musical genre in Dar es Salaam (Perullo 2011, 216). Classic *taarab*, which continues to use the Arabic scale and Egyptian instruments, is still performed in Dar es Salaam, and in particular in Zanzibar.

As with *beni ngoma*, the genre of *dansi* has its origins in the colonial encounter. *Dansi* originated in Mombasa, and came to Dar es Salaam via Tanga in the early part of the twentieth century. It was first composed on acoustic guitar, drums, mouth organ and accordion, and was accompanied by ballroom dancing. (Suriano 2011, 395) The first *dansi*

²⁰ Indirect forms of communication are not confined to *taarab* and can also be seen in the citations from the lyrics of *taarab* songs sometimes printed on *kangas* (large pieces of cloth worn in wrap-around style by women). The texts on *kangas* also act as a means of publically conveying indirect messages (Beck, 2005).

band in Dar es Salaam was the Dar es Salaam Jazz Band, formed in 1932 (Graebner 2000, 230). At its inception, *dansi* was associated with urban elites. The bands played at weekend dance parties, during which ballroom dancing would take place. Clubs were formed, to which bands were affiliated, and were frequently organised along regional or occupational lines (Tsuruta 2003, 199). Thus as Suriano says “early *dansi* was associated with Christianity, urbanity, elitist individualism, formal education and good manners” (2011, 393). It is worth noting that ballroom dancing caused something of a moral panic in Tanganyika. Men and women dancing together was viewed by members of the African elite, as well as colonial officials, with disapproval (Suriano 2011, 397-398). Close physical contact between the opposite sexes in public, as occurred during ballroom dancing, as well as some of the clothing worn, in particular by female dancers, was seen as a transgression of the moral order.

Through the 1930s and 1940s, as Latin, Cuban and Caribbean music became popular through many parts of Africa, *dansi* began to incorporate elements of these musical genres. Afro-Cuban rhythms and dances became popular. Following the Second World War, former soldiers returned having been exposed to new forms of music played with new instruments. Horn sections were incorporated into *dansi* bands, which increased in number and popularity. *Dansi* became a musical genre more consciously urban than elite. Throughout the 50s and 60s *dansi* continued to develop stylistically, incorporating electric guitars and increasing in popularity. In the late 50s and early 60s, *dansi* band clubs events were important sites for political discussion and played a role in raising funds for the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU). *Dansi* bands were able to convey political messages about TANU and its leaders, and “to produce positive publicity to promote them, so that people

would respect them”, and “citizens would know who their leaders were”” (Mzee Mustafa Ally quoted in Suriano 2009, 271).

After independence, *dansi* continued to be immensely popular. Following political crisis in Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo), there was an influx of Congolese musicians into both Kenya and Tanzania, and *dansi* incorporated stylistic elements from Congolese rumba and soukous (Perullo 2008 and Salter 2007, 304-318). Perhaps most notable was Dr Remmy Ongala, who though born in Congo, became one of the most famous proponents of *dansi* globally, and a well respected star within Tanzania, with his band Orchestra Super Matimila (Sanga 2010a, 62). While many of the great bands were built around regional associations, the Morogoro, Tabora and Kilwa jazz bands being examples of this, other bands became supported by state and parastatal organisations, for example the Urafiki Jazz Band (Urafiki Textile Mill), Orchestra BIMA Lee (National Insurance Corporation), and DDC Mlimani Park (Dar es Salaam Development Corporation).

With the Arusha Declaration of 1967, Tanzania began to follow a policy of African Socialism in which the state was to play an active role in national culture. As Julius Nyerere said in his inaugural Presidential address:

I believe that its culture is the essence and spirit of any nation. A country which lacks its own culture is no more than a collection of people without the spirit that makes them a nation..... When we were at school we were taught to sing the songs of the Europeans. How many of us were taught the songs of the Wanyamwezi or of the Wahehe? (Nyerere 1966, 186)

The notion of a “national culture” was to influence Tanzanian national policies profoundly over the next forty years. Musical genres were classified as either national or foreign. *Kwaya*, *ngoma*, *dansi* and *taarab* were considered national while others, for example funk and soul, were considered foreign. As state and para-state organisations were the largest patrons for musicians, and state policies, to a large extent, dictated what was played on the radio, this had a significant impact upon musicians. As Askew has shown there was frequently a disjuncture between the rhetoric of the state and the implementation of its policies. Political actors, in particular the youth wing of TANU/CCM, were active in contestations over what was appropriate behaviour for Tanzanian citizens (Ivaska 2002, 584). In the 60s and 70s there were conflicts between youth in Dar es Salaam over the playing of soul music and the wearing of mini skirts. Ivaska argues that this contestation of national culture was

as much a vehicle for negotiating anxieties about urban order, gender chaos, and undisciplined youth in a cosmopolitan capital as a tool for overcoming a colonial past (Ivaska 2011, 38).

Popular culture was a space in which both state actors, musicians and the audience could construct notions of themselves, and of the wider nation.

It is important to situate the production of rapped music, which is my concern, within a wider, historical framework of popular music production and consumption in Dar es Salaam. In the genesis of the three genres outlined above, key roles have been played by

members of the African elite. In *beni ngoma*, the elite were often returned slaves, in *taarab*, often those with access initially to the Zanzibari court, and in the case of *dansi*, educated urban Africans. It is worth noting that each of the genres travelled along the Swahili coast, or from Zanzibar, before becoming popular in Dar es Salaam. Each of the genres began with the appropriation of “foreign” instruments or music styles. These instruments, and forms or performances, were mixed with indigenous forms and put to the service of expressing local realities and concerns. In the case of *beni* and *dansi*, young urban men were significant in the development of these forms. In the case of *dansi*, the music came to be seen as a particularly urban genre during the 30-50s. Anxieties about the indigeneity of *beni*, *taarab* and *dansi* have existed at different times among in Tanzania.

Hip Hop

Hip hop has become something of a predominant global genre. As hip hop has achieved a greater global reach, the most successful rappers have become global pop stars. The biggest stars in the USA, such as 50 Cent, have had their lives made into films, while other stars such as Jay Z and Dr Dre have diversified their business interests and developed personally branded ranges of consumer goods such as clothing and sound technology. Hip hop seems to have captured the contemporary zeitgeist, from the 1990s through to the present day. Localised forms of hip hop have developed in spaces as diverse as Samoa (Henderson 2006) and Morocco (Almeida 2013). Since the 1970s, hip hop, and musical forms derived at least in part from hip hop, have gone on to become ever more globally ubiquitous and fragmented. Rappers have become pop stars, and hip hop has well and truly entered the mainstream media in the global north (Fernando Jr 1995, 17). Hip hop has

developed a series of sub-genres which use the musical form to express a range of different subjectivities and social positions.

Since the 1980s, hip hop has been a subject of scholarly research. The growth of hip hop in Europe and the United States has provoked both 'moral panic' (Perkins 1996, 1) and celebration of its counterhegemonic capabilities. Hip hop has been conceived as a culture, containing five elements: Emceeing, DJing, Break dancing, beatboxing and graffiti.²¹ There have frequently been contestations within the genre itself about what constitutes hip hop, and what music, and which individuals, are hip hop. For many artists, fans and scholars, hip hop has been conceived as music made by marginalised youth which expresses the reality of their lives and carries a counterhegemonic message. I have chosen to focus on the act of rapping, rather than the genre of hip hop, in part not to get dragged into debates about which artists are or are not hip hop. My preference is to view hip hop as an open set of practices which are appropriated differently across the globe.

Hip hop was first used a term to denote musical forms practised in New York during the late 1970s. These typically involved the setting up of a sound system to play music in a communal space such as a local park. DJs played largely funk or soul records. Technology evolved to create the mixer, whereby DJs were enabled to move easily from a track on one record to one on another. This allowed DJs to isolate, combine and replay their favourite rhythmic sections of funk and soul records. By moving between two records they could effectively elongate a section, which then became known as the 'break'. Microphones allowed young men at these events to rap over these extended rhythm sections. Kool Herc,

²¹ Beatboxing is "an artistic form of human sound production in which the vocal organs are used to imitate percussion instruments" (Proctor, Bresch, Byrd, Nayak and Narayanan 2013, 1043)

a West Indian migrant to New York who had set up a sound system in 1973, is commonly cited as the first hip hop DJ. Since the 50s, in Jamaica, singers had sung, or 'toasted', over instrumental reggae records at dance events (Hebdige 1987, 65). The rapping element of hip hop has multiple origins and can be traced to 'singjay' Jamaican MCs, the spoken soul and funk vocals of artists like Isaac Hays, 'scat' jazz singing and the vocal games of 'signifying' and 'the dozens'. Several commentators have drawn the roots of rapping all the way back to West African *griots* (Perkins 1996, 2 Toop 1991, 19 Keyes 1996, 225 Banks, 2010, 240, Shusterman 1995, 273).

Since the 1970s, hip hop in the United States has given rise to many variations. Most theorised of these sub-genres have been gangsta rap and conscious rap. These two genres are often seen to symbolise competing messages of hip hop, hip hop as hyper-masculinity and as political resistance. 'Gangsta rap' might best be described as narratives (typically first person narratives) of 'life on the street', including stories of drug selling, violence and explicit sexual content that, as Perkins says, "celebrates hustling, street crime, women abuse, and the gun as social equaliser" (1996, 18). This has been theorised, by Silverstein in France and Kelley in the United States, as a form of guerrilla capitalism, an infiltration and exploitation of the system on the rapper's own terms (Silverstein 2002, 48, Kelley 1996, 130). 'Message' or 'conscious rap' is characterised by its socially conscious messages, typically about marginalised members of society. American conscious hip hop has frequently included references, both in clothing worn by rappers and in song texts, to a link with 'mother Africa'. Ernest Allen observes that

the nationalism of politically, culturally, or religiously orientated rappers

tends towards a grand, often millennial vision of how things might or ought to be (Ernest Allen, 1996, 164).

Much of the writing on hip hop has theorised the genre as belonging in binary categories: gangsta/conscious, underground/commercial and in African studies African/American. These binary categories, however, often fail to express the complexity of the artistic expression. Artists may move between categories, or draw on stylistic devices associated with one sub-genre to express themselves in another.

Potter and Rose use Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s notion of 'signifying' as a framework through which to view the bricolage of samples used by hip hop producers, and rappers' verbal references to other songs and speeches. As Potter says:

Signifyin(g), briefly put, is both the trope of pastiche and a pastiche of tropes, and its most central trope is that of the sly exchange of the literal for the figurative, and hip hop is its most profound and lively incarnation (Potter 1995, 18).

References, both in text and as samples, enable hip hop artists to speak to another artist's work, appropriating its meaning. Rose sees samples as "points of reference, as a means by which the process of repetition and recontextualization can be highlighted and privileged" (1994, 73). Emcees and rappers frequently reference each others' work by quoting lines from songs. Referencing and recycling are central to the production of hip hop. Through its range of intertextual references, hip hop speaks back to another artist's work. Sampling

firmly embeds hip hop within a long history of African American musical production. As with samples, rappers' referencing of each others' lyrics builds a corpus of knowledge in which each text is more fully understood when its intertextual references are known.

Hip hop is constituted as a form of knowledge. This knowledge is displayed in two forms. In the first the rapper is portrayed as an educator. In much conscious or message rap, rappers style themselves as street teachers or 'professors'. The songs of rappers offer listeners knowledge of life in the city, of history, science and politics (Shusterman 1995, 271).²² For example, KRS-One, one of the early generation of rappers from New York, has styled himself as an educator through his music²³. As Potter writes:

a particularly skilled rapper is known as a "techa" or a "professa", who
"drops knowledge" on the mic and gives her/his opponent "schoolin"
(Potter 1995, 21).

Hip hop itself is constituted as the object of knowledge. Its use of samples and intertextual references becomes the subject of study.

Hip hop has, since its inception, been closely associated with the performance of masculinity. While there have been notable female hip hop artists, it has been a music genre dominated by the masculine persona. While US hip hop represents a diversity of

²² Rapper Chuck D from the rap group Public Enemy described hip hop as CNN for Black people.

²³ KRS stands for 'Knowledge Reigning Supreme'; his 1990 album as part of the group Boogie Down Productions was entitled 'Edutainment'.

different voices, performing masculinity is central to the persona of many rappers. As Kubrin, writing about gangsta rap, argues:

toughness and the willingness to use violence are central to establishing viable masculine identity, gaining respect, and building a reputation (Kubrin 2005, 375).

Some of the central features of hip hop cultures, for example 'battling' between rappers, in which rappers brag about their skills and knowledge while disparaging the skills of other rappers, lends itself to a performance of masculinity. This hyper-masculinity of rappers is perhaps most fully embodied in a figure such as 50 Cent who, according to his own autobiography, has been shot 9 times.

Hip Hop in Africa

A significant body of scholarly work on hip hop in its various forms in Africa has developed over the last decade. In a number of African countries, the origins of local hip hop genres can be traced to the access of African elites to imported recordings (Charry 2012, 3-4). Recordings of American hip hop tapes and CDs were sent to Africa by relatives living abroad. Early hip hop performances in many countries, for example in Ghana and France, were in either French or English (Shipley 2009, 632 and Auzenneau 2002, 110). In a number of countries across Africa the growth in popularity of hip hop can be traced to two principal dynamics. The first important dynamic was the expansion of private media outlets which occurred across Africa during the 1990s. Private media, newspapers, television, and in

particular radio not controlled by the state, were able to broadcast and discuss new forms of popular music. New media outlets, established in the 90s, sought local content to print and broadcast, and included much of the locally produced hip hop in their programming. The second important dynamic has been the use of local language as a medium of hip hop. In some countries, including Ghana, Gabon and Kenya, use of local language has included a significant degree of code switching between French/English and local languages. In the Kenyan context, for example, local hybrid languages, such as *sheng*, commonly associated with urban youth, have become a medium for hip hop lyrics (Samper 2004, 37 and Koster 2013, 94).

In both Ghana and Kenya there has been a conscious effort on the part of artists to indigenise the hip hop form. In Ghana this has taken the form of 'hiplife', a blending of musical elements from hip hop and Ghanaian high life music (Arthur 2013, 4). Samples of highlife recording have been used by hip hop producers to create a recognisably Ghanaian sonic landscape. This attempt to create a recognisably national sound has also occurred in Kenya where as Githiora writes

Hip Hop artists have either retained or continued to re-create traditional musical forms and practices by remaking modern music that is grounded in popular traditional forms (Githiora 2008, 92).

In Kenya this has occurred through sampling of music as well as speech, and the replaying on songs of recognisable traditional melodies and rhythms. For Nyairo, this borrowing of textual elements from a global music genre, as well as local musical and political sources,

shows artists' ability to transform both into something new. This suggests that the binary categories of 'global' and 'local', or 'indigenous' and 'foreign', to describe popular culture in which a matrix of different cultural symbols are activated in cultural production may be obsolete (Nyairo 2004, 189).

Hip hop gained popularity in a number of African countries, as policies of economic liberalisation and state retrenchment were implemented. Shipley argues that, in Ghana, hiplife provided a means for people to negotiate with these shifting realities. As the older, socialist and Pan-Africanist ideologies recede, hip hop is a means for participating in the new logics of individualism and consumption. Hiplife has given rise to a new generation of entrepreneurs, who have sought to participate in the symbols of success displayed by much admired American hip hop stars. Hiplife stars mark themselves out as participating in a cosmopolitanism marked by the satisfying of bodily desires and consumption of clothes associated with an African American hip hop aesthetic. As Shipley states:

In the neoliberal moment local and global racial politics are often articulated in the language of individual accumulation and consumption rather than collective political movements (2009, 647).

Hiplife represents a local response to the neoliberal moment, which prioritises individual accumulation and consumption over Pan-Africanist, collectivist politics.

In contrast, much that has been written about Senegalese hip hop foregrounds its critique of power and the post-colonial state. Hip hop emerged in Dakar during the late 80s, a

period in which youth were active in protesting against then President Diouf. During 1988-89 there were school strikes which lasted almost a whole year. Hip hop emerged in this politically charged environment, and this has given Senegalese hip hop a role not only in socio-political commentary but also in political action (Herson 2011, 28). Rappers in Senegal have used their music to speak directly and openly to political issues. As Benga says:

Rap is a manifest preaching of political messages on the daily urban hardships.

It embodies the shout of city dwellers that are condemned to silence

(Benga 2002, 81).

Recently, hip hop has been an active part of the *Y'En a Marre Movement*, credited by Gueye with helping to topple the government of President Abdoulaye Wade in 2012 (Gueye 2013, 39). New, local and popular forms of hip hop have, on occasion, been appropriated by politicians across the continent. In 2002 the song *Unbwogable* by Gidi Gidi Maji Maji was appropriated by the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) in Kenya in their electoral challenge against sitting President Daniel Arap Moi (Nyairo and Ogude 2005, 241).

There are a few important themes which arise out of the diverse range of studies of hip hop in Africa. In many cases, the development of hip hop has been linked to the joint dynamics of the liberalisation of the media and the indigenisation of the medium of hip hop. Hip hop has not, however, followed a universal path; in some spaces hip hop has been an actively political medium, while in others it has sought to contest moral and social norms. Across Africa, hip hop has been a space for contesting both moral and social values.

Tanzanian Rapped Music

Since the arrival of American hip hop recording in Tanzania in the 1980s, a varied local rapped music scene in Tanzania has developed. The first hip hop recordings arrived in Dar es Salaam in the mid 1980s. Films on breakdancing, such as *Wild Style* and *Breakin'*, which feature early hip hop recordings in their soundtracks, were shown in Dar es Salaam (Perullo 2007, 254). High duties on imported goods ensured that hip hop recordings were principally available only to wealthier Tanzanians, or those with connections to expatriate Tanzanians living abroad. As a consequence, many of the first generation of rappers in Dar es Salaam came from the wealthier areas of Dar es Salaam such as Upanga and Oyster Bay. In many cases these rappers were attending secondary school at the time and were able to replicate the English verses of their favourite American hip hop recordings. The group, De-Plow-Matz, whose family were diplomats, are illustrative of the elite nature of many early Tanzanian rap groups. The first rap performances in Dar es Salaam were in English, though by the early 90s recordings of hip hop in Swahili had started to appear.²⁴ 'Yo Rap Bonanza', held in 1991, was the first major rap competition held in Dar es Salaam (Lemelle 2006, 235). 1991 was the same year that Saleh Jabir released what is commonly cited as the first Tanzanian rap recording in Swahili, 'Ice Ice Baby – King of Swahili Rap' (Englert 2003, 77 and Charry 2012, 15). The recording and circulation of rapped music in Swahili was essential to its growth in popularity throughout Tanzania. Rapping in Swahili gave artists access to a much wider audience. Since its inception in Dar es Salaam, Tanzanian rapped music has moved from a largely elite pastime, frequently centred upon secondary schools and conducted for the most part in English, to a popular and ubiquitous form of Swahili

²⁴ Released in 1991 Saleh Jabir song 'Ice Ice Baby – King of Swahili Rap' was the first Swahili rap track released ().

language popular culture. As Reuster-Jahn suggests; “*Bongo Flava* has successfully established itself as a mainstream cultural phenomenon” (Reuster-Jahn 2008, 43).

As rapped music has moved from the margins to the mainstream in Tanzania, a heterogeneous range of genres and sub-genres have incorporated rapping into their forms. Rapping can be found in the Tanzanian genres of bongo flava, hip hop, dancehall reggae and RnB. These genres have spawned sub-genres, which Omari (2009) outlines as rap katuni (cartoon rap), gangsta (hardcore rap), message rap and playa (party or commercial rap) (Omari 2009, 4). The boundaries of, and meanings ascribed to, these genres and subgenres are frequently contested by artists, popular culture commentators and fans of Tanzanian rapped music. Genres and sub-genres are ascribed ideological, gendered and symbolic meanings.

The development of private media has been essential to the development of rapped music in Tanzania. The Tanganyika Broadcasting Company, later Radio Tanzania Dar es Salaam (RTD) was founded by the colonial state of Tanganyika. Following independence, the Tanzanian state placed a great deal of emphasis on the support and development of national culture. The state supported a number of competitions and performance groups. Cultural troupes and RTD were tasked with supporting Tanzanian culture, and campaigns were launched against cultural forms and practices deemed foreign, notably soul music and mini skirts (Ivaska 2011 and Askew 2002). During this period, RTD was the principal recording studio in Tanzania, and was tasked with not only broadcasting but recording music. RTD recorded music deemed to be national, which included two *dansi* bands a week as well as *kwaya* and “traditional” groups (Wallis and Malm 1984, 260). Pressure could be

brought to bear on musicians to make their songs more appropriate, for example by removing sexual words, so that songs would fit suitably within the state supported notion of the nation. Following independence, successful musicians and bands in Tanzania were expected to support the messages of the state. As Perullo states; “music, plays, stories, and poems became pro-socialist and pro-Tanzanian” (Perullo 2011, 74).

The Broadcasting Services Act of June 11 1993, signed by President Ali Hassan Mwinyi, allowed private individuals and businesses in Tanzania to buy licences to broadcast on radio or TV. This liberalisation of the media, and the consequent proliferation of radio stations in particular, was an essential factor in the growing popularity of rapped music in Tanzania. By 2001 there were ten radio stations operating in Dar es Salaam (Brennan and Burton 2007, 65). These stations, no longer restrained by the nationalist policies of Radio Tanzania Dar es Salaam, dedicated a significant amount of their broadcast time to local rapped music. The proliferation of new media not only enabled new forms of music to be disseminated more widely, but opened a discursive space for the performance of new identities. It is really these two events operating in tandem, the recording of rap music in Swahili together with the liberalisation of the media, that enabled rapped music to become successful in Tanzania.

Liberalisation of the media was part of a broader process of liberalisation of both political and economic life in Tanzania. The Political Parties Act of 1992 instituted the beginning of multi-party democracy in Tanzania, and the first multi-party elections were held in 1995 (Liviga, 2009, 7). Following the institution of multi-party politics, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), the only party to govern Tanzania since independence, has continued to win

elections with significant majorities. As outlined in the previous chapter, since the early 1980s a series of programmes to liberalise the economy have sought to “dismantle controls and restrictions and encourage more active participation of the private sector in the economy” (Liviga 2011, 10).

The liberalisation of the economy not only enabled the import of music but of recording equipment. An important development in the history of rapped music was the opening of independent studios in the early 90s. As Tanzania liberalised its economy from the late 80s, imported goods dropped in price, which enabled individuals to import studio equipment from abroad. The Don Bosco studio opened in 1991 and was followed in the early 90s by Mawingu, P Funk’s and MJ Productions studios. These four studios are those in which many of the seminal early rapped records in Tanzania were recorded and the producers, in particular P Funk, Master J and Bonnie Luv (who recorded at Mawingu), are cited by many Tanzanians today as the founders of the Bongo Flava genre. Groups such as Kwanza Unit, GWM, the Villains, KBC, Hardblasters and Mr II were recorded in these studios. This form of rap, delivered in Swahili, came to be referred to as Bongo Flava. Bongo is derived from the Swahili word *ubongo* or brain, and *ubongo* has become shorthand in Tanzania to describe the city of Dar es Salaam - a city which requires the use of the brain, and cunning, to survive. Once outside of Tanzania the whole of Tanzania becomes ‘Bongo’. So Bongo Flava is the musical flavour of Dar es Salaam, or Tanzania, and was used as a term to describe rapped music or hip hop delivered in Swahili and emanating from Tanzania.

In this thesis I have chosen to focus on the practice of rapping, rather than a specific musical genre. I will borrow here from Keyes description of rapping as “talking in rhythm

over music or an internally realized beat” (1996, 225). Genre definitions are highly ideological and are heavily contested. I explore the use of genre boundaries as a means of ordering, and of inclusion and exclusion. The act of rapping can broadly be situated within a set of genres referred to as *muziki wa kizazi kipyra* or music of the new generation. This term is loosely defined, referring to the music made by a generation rather than to a specific set of stylistic elements. *Muziki wa kizazi kipyra* contains a set of genres, rap, hip hop, Bongo Flava, RnB and ragga many of which contain rapping, at least in part. While the boundaries to the collective and individual genre categories can be slippery, there are some broad characteristics that define this set of genres. One characteristic of the genres contained within *muziki wa kizazi kipyra* has been their use of electronic music production. Some groups in this genre remain part of bands; the majority of the musical production is done using computers. While songs in older, more established musical forms such as *taarab* and *dansi* often had longer songs of 6 to 8 minutes in length, *muziki wa kizazi kipyra* genres often have songs which are shorter, at 3 to 4 minutes. These genres were also defined by their appropriation of musical elements and style from the wider African diaspora, in particular the United States and the Caribbean. As Perullo says:

Kizazi kipyra refers to a generation of youth who generally came of age during neoliberal reforms in the 1990s. It refers to people’s interest in being active participants in international movements of music, fashion, and identities that have become prominent in the past two decades. (Perullo 2011, 34)

The genres which form part of *muziki wa kizazi kipyra* are defined by the historical moment in which they became popular in Tanzania. This ‘new generation’ is defined by the neo-

liberal moment in which they were making the transition from 'youth' to 'adult'. My informants described themselves as producing music within a range of genres including ragga, RnB, hip hop and Bongo Flava. Some artists performed songs across a range of these genres, while others remained performing within a single genre. Two of the genres (Bongo Flava and Hip Hop) were ascribed particular weight by my informants. A different definition of Bongo Flava was offered by almost every one of my informants. It was described as Tanzanian hip hop, as well as all Tanzanian music which contained musical elements from exogenous genres such as reggae or RnB. I will include some of the definitions offered below.

Afande Sele, an established male rapper based in Morogoro: "Bongo Flava is a music from Tanzania, I mean rap music. People are saying I'm doing hip hop or Bongo Flava there is no difference."

King Crazy GK, an established male rapper based in Upanga, Dar es Salaam described Bongo Flava thus: "Hip hop is a culture, Bongo Flava it's in hip hop. Hip hop is the mother of Bongo Flava."

Carola Kinasha, a female singer of traditional fusion music based in Dar es Salaam: "You know Bongo Flava is confusing for me because when it started the word was there to stand for rap music done in a Tanzanian way or with Kiswahili, but right now every thing that comes on the market is called Bongo Flava."

Omari Muba, a rapper based in Kiwalani Dar es Salaam: “I don’t know what is Bongo Flava. There is no Bongo Flava. Even this hip hop is Bongo Flava, *taarab* is Bongo Flava, all of them. They are meaningless.”

While the term may be open to multiple interpretations and even rejections, it remains significant within Tanzanian popular culture discourse.

Much of the early rapped music in Tanzania was characterised by the socio-political nature of its lyrics. Rap music of this period focused on issues such as “Aids, drug use, government corruption, lack of jobs, and the impossibility of attaining a visa to leave the country” (Fenn and Perullo 2000, 24). This is what rapper Sugu has described as ‘*hali halisi*’ or the real situation. As Sugu himself said:

There was real Bongo Flava like *hali halisi*, we were rapping for the people,
we were rapping real life you know.

Remes quotes Mr II invoking former President and Baba wa Taifa (Father of the Nation) Nyerere, when describing himself as the Nyerere of rap (Mr II quoted in Remes 1999, 1). Much writing on Bongo Flava and hip hop in Tanzania places considerable focus on the social and political positivity of its lyrics, seen in contrast to the frequently conspicuous materialism and misogyny of American rap music (Remes 1999, 14 and Englert 2003, 81). For Stroeken this focus on “the real situation” is born of “the indifference of the post-socialist generation to the normative project of the visionary founding fathers” (2005, 501). He sees Tanzanian rappers’ description of the real situation as “invoking the impasse”

(2005, 505), and their refusal to offer visions for the future as a strategy that leaves the listener and artist to find the solution together. Through invoking the impasse, rappers immunise themselves against the “suspicion of moralism” (2005, 490).

Much writing about Bongo Flava / hip hop in Tanzania has focused on the way in which this musical form has been indigenised and domesticated. This work responds to the theorists of globalisation such as Appadurai, who describes the way that

as forces from various metropolises are brought into new societies they tend to become indigenized in one way or another: this is true of music and housing styles as much as it is true of science, terrorism, spectacles and constitutions (Appadurai 1996, 32).

Saavedra Casco charts the ways in which rapping in Tanzania builds upon an older tradition of Swahili poetry. He argues that rap in Swahili continues to fulfil the role previously fulfilled by poets, to “express the people’s grievances, joys and feelings towards events that affect their everyday lives” (2006, 230). Englert describes the way in which the musical accompaniment to Tanzanian rapped music, the ‘beats’, are being consciously Africanised by producers. An example of this might be the fusion of *taarab* and rap music by MC Cool Para, producing a style referred to as ‘tarrap’ (Englert 2003, 82). One Tanzanian rapper, Mr Ebbo, adopted a Maasai identity as a source of national pride and as an authentic African identity. Though not himself Maasai, Mr Ebbo wears dress associated with the Maasai identity and has sought to incorporate local melodies and rhythms into his beats (Ntarangwi 2009, 39).

X-Plasterz, a hip hop group from Arusha, are one of very few Tanzanian hip hop groups who have attempted to enter the international music market. They have had an album released on a German record label Out:Here. Their album, entitled 'Maasai Hip Hop', consciously seeks to place members of the group as part of a wider Maasai identity. One of the group's members, Yamat, is Maasai. On the opening track of the album "Dunia Dudumizi" Yamat performs using a rhythmical Maasai vocal singing technique. In many of their international performances, Yamat performs 'traditional' Maasai dances, and in one of their videos they are seen travelling from Arusha to Maasailand and engaging in Maasai rituals. Thompson has problematised the way in which X-Plasterz have sought to highlight their Maasai identity when appealing to a Western audience and their international identity when appealing to a local audience. X-Plasterz Maasai costume, dance and singing project ideas of authentically African identity for western audiences. However, for a local audience they highlight their links to a global music industry, in part through referring to their Dutch manager Thomas Gesthuzien. As Thompson explains, on the Swahili version of the X-Plasterz website Thomas is mentioned using his full name Thomas Gesthuzien while on the English language version he is mentioned using a nickname J4. Thompson highlights the ways in which identity may be constructed, and used as part of a strategy to place artists in relations to both local and international music markets (Thompson 2008, 38-39).

A further strong theme in the literature on hip hop, Bongo Flava and rapped music in Tanzania, is a focus on the way in which the imaginative practices of young people enable them to negotiate the neoliberal moment. The consumption and reproduction of both local and global symbols is a form of fashioning a self. Value is created in the neoliberal moment

through a creation of the self. Weiss, in his analysis of young men and their appropriation of signs and symbols in part through barber shops, says that:

For Arusha's young men perhaps the most compelling global signs and images of personhood – and especially of a public persona – are embedded in the world of rap and hip hop music and style (Weiss 2005, 113).

This account of imaginative practice focuses on the gap between the imagined possibilities of global desires and the realities of local existence, or as Jean and John Comaroff write:

Hip hop, Air Jordans, and Manchester United colours may animate youthful imaginations almost everywhere, often serving as a poignant measure of the distance between dream and fulfilment, between desire and impossibility, between centres of great wealth and peripheries of crushing poverty. (2005, 27)

In "Street Dreams and Hip Hop Barbershops", Weiss links the signs and symbols of transnational religion to the symbols of popular culture. Transnational religion, and popular culture, both offer symbols through which meaning and understandings of life are generated by young men in Arusha. Common themes are suggested in the ways in which apocalyptic visions of the future are offered by both religious doctrine and by rappers. Both religious preachers and rappers offer a critique of modernity, while using modern means of communication to spread their message. A major trope for both becomes the centrality of reality which

is characterized not as a style, interpretation, or even a way of knowing and speaking, but simply as an embodiment of the fundamental reality it expresses.

Voice here is evidence of the authenticity with which it speaks (Weiss 2009, 206).

The trope of authenticity, of the real and of 'keeping it real', remains central to notions of hip hop culture. Weiss draws attention to the dual nature of much of Tanzania's hip hop communication. Lyrics which on one hand offer apocalyptic visions of life in the modern world in which boundaries are transgressed and lives disturbed, also offer the mark of the real, and images of wealth and success, the potential of imagination.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I hope to have offered a brief overview of popular music production in Tanzania, and a brief introduction to hip hop and its principal theoretical frameworks. There are significant continuities between the development of rapped music and older forms of popular music in Tanzania. Many of the main questions raised about rapped music in Tanzania, both in academic literature and within Tanzania, regarding its indigeneity and morality have their antecedents in discussions about earlier musical forms. Since *beni ngoma*, if not before, artists on the Swahili coast have used elements from both local and international cultural practices to inform their own. *Beni ngoma*, *dansi* and *taarab* have all borrowed elements from other music genres to form something new. Notions of increasing amorality, and indeed moral panic, can be seen not only in the reaction of contemporary commentators to rapped music videos and lyrics but traced back to episodes of panic in the 30s over ballroom dancing, and, later, the wearing of the mini skirt.

Rapped music developed in the context of a specific set of circumstances that arose in the late 80s and early 90s. Major economic and political changes were part of an environment in which rappers were able to become local stars. While Tanzania may long have been part of a global circulation of images and information, this circulation now happens on an unprecedented scale and at unprecedented speed. Contact between different parts of the world now happens with greater ease than at any other point in human history. Young people form a greater proportion of Tanzania's population than ever previously recorded. As with previous popular musical forms young people have used music as a way of engaging with the world around them.

CHAPTER 4 – STUDIOS, RADIO STATIONS AND DISTRIBUTORS

Introduction

The ability of rappers in Dar es Salaam to achieve success is circumscribed by access to networks and institutions. Gaining access to studios in which music can be recorded, and the media through which music can be disseminated, is essential to the process of becoming a well known and established artist. In this chapter I will explore the networks and institutions that enable the recording and dissemination of rapped music. The individuals and nodes in these networks frequently intersect with, and are dependent upon, one another. Artists, studios, radio shows and event organisers are all dependent upon each other, in part at least. Success, for an individual and for an institution, is, in part, contingent upon their relationships with the other various actors in the field of popular music production, dissemination and distribution. Relations between institutions, networks and individuals are diffuse, and suffused with relations of power.

The focus of my fieldwork has been on the act of rapping and the persona of the rapper. This included spending time with rappers as they navigated relationships with studios, attending recording sessions, press conferences and meetings with representatives of the media. A great deal of important data was gathered from ‘hanging out’ with, and speaking to, rappers. Rappers were keen to discuss the ways in which the Tanzanian music industry operated, and frequently complained that it did not work more effectively. I was also able to talk to, and engage with, a wide variety of actors in the field of popular music production. The various actors that I engaged with included radio presenters and DJs,

studio owners and producers and print media journalists. While I was able to meet a wide range of actors in the field of popular music production and dissemination, the principal focus of my research is on the rappers themselves, and their discourses.

Relations between the different parties involved in music production and dissemination can be fraught. During the course of my interviews with the various actors in this field, there were frequent suggestions that one or more of the parties involved in the production and dissemination of music were not fulfilling their role appropriately. What roles should be fulfilled by the various actors, and whether these roles were being appropriately fulfilled, was contested by various actors in this field. What I will seek to do, below, is to sketch out the relationship between various actors in the field of music production and dissemination, and the discourses that are variously employed around their roles.

The issues that I explore in this chapter, which focuses on the micro-politics of cultural production; on the contestations of control over, and access to, various pertinent resources, are common to cultural production across the globe, including in the west (Marshall 2012, 87-88 and Rose 1994).²⁵ Control over what is played on the radio, and the role of major record labels' marketing budgets, are issues of concern for musicians and music fans in the west. Payola, the illegal exchange of money for radio play, continues to be a feature of Western music industries (Fairchild 2012, Percival 2007, 186-189). A focus, in much of the literature on hip hop, has been on struggles over control of the process of production, and the income derived from the sale of hip hop, in the United States, and its

²⁵ It was the development of FM radio stations in the United States during the late 1960s, and their decision to play whole sides of albums, which enabled styles like progressive rock (prog rock) to become successful during the late 60s and early 70s (Covach 2000, 13-14). More recently, the internet and possibilities for online radio, downloading and pirating / sharing of music have prompted much debate.

incorporation into the mainstream music industry (Negus 1999). Major record labels have been characterised as leaving artists who, having been “exploited by ruthless music executives ended up broke, destitute and bitter” (Keyes 2004, 121). The concern of scholars, and cultural commentators, has not only been with the economic relation between artist and label but on the impact co-option into the mainstream music industry has on the texts of songs. In this chapter, I will seek to explore not only the issues of control and access to resources that exist within the production, distribution and dissemination of rapped music, but the discourses employed by actors to validate their own positions.

***Wasambazaji* - Distributors**

Distributors (*wasambazaji*) are an important node in the dissemination of popular music in Dar es Salaam. The current distributors in Dar es Salaam act to a great degree as producers of CDs, tapes and videos and as wholesalers through which copies of CDs and tapes can be bought by other sellers. One company, GMC Wasanii Promoters Ltd., based in the Kariakoo area of Dar es Salaam, remains the main producer and distributor of rapped music CDs, DVDs and tapes. Other local and national sellers of popular music come to the headquarters of GMC in Kariakoo to select and purchase popular music cassettes, CDs and videos. This includes the street sellers, *wachinga*, who represent the most visible form of music sales in Dar es Salaam. During the 1980s, cassette tape became a popular medium for consuming music. Cassette tapes, as opposed to vinyl records, could be reproduced with relative ease and relatively little investment in the technologies of reproduction. This led to the development of tape duplication centres in Tanzania in the 1980s. Initially foreign recordings were duplicated, and could be distributed widely in Eastern Africa. The

individuals and networks who established these centres of tape duplication have continued to be the major players in the reproduction and distribution of popular music in Tanzania (Perullo 2011, 300-301).

GMC hold a virtual monopoly over the large scale production of rapped music, and its distribution within Tanzania. Rap artists bring their recordings to the distributor and agree a fee for the production of a certain number of copies. Fees vary, based on the popularity of the artist in question, and once a deal has been struck the artist most commonly gives his master recording to the distributor and cedes ownership of the recording to the distributor. As Morogoro based rapper Afande Sele describes:

If you want to sell your music you have to go and see one company, if I want to sell my music I'm going to see GMC. Everybody is going to GMC so that GMC is taking your masters and they told you that we are giving let me say for example 100, if you say no I prepared this music for 300 they say we haven't enough so take your masters and nowhere to go to sell your music.

A supplementary fee will be paid to the artist if additional copies of the album are produced by the distributor.

The relationship between artists and distributors is suffused with tension. Artists were sceptical about the veracity of the figures for album sales that were given by distributors. It was suggested that the distributors replicated copies to those agreed in the contract

between artist and distributor, thereby depriving the artists of some of the income to which they were entitled. As one of the rappers I interviewed said

there is no transparent business. You don't know how many copies they sell. You know Tanzania have 40 million people and there is no any artist who has sell to 1%. How? ... I don't want to bring my stuff to you and I know that you are stealing me.

This view is also expressed by Perullo, who has said; "It is widely believed that many distributors sell albums illegally, even those that are under contract" (Perullo 2011, 284). Artists commonly felt that their labour was exploited by the distributors. The time and expense of producing the music, and videos for the promotion of the music, was paid for by artists themselves, who then felt that they should receive a greater remuneration for their labour from the distributors. Distributors are felt by artists to be wealthy, and to have gained this wealth by exploiting the labour of artists. The distributors in Dar es Salaam are largely Asian Tanzanians.

Some artists have sought to gain greater control over the production, distribution and sale of their music. Rapper Innocent Sahani (D-Knob) produced and sold copies of his album Bomoa Mipango (destroyed plans) released in 2007. Already a recognised artist, with a number of songs and videos which had featured in the Tanzanian media, D-Knob sold copies of the album at shows and on the streets to fans that recognised him. Copies of the album were produced through a small CD duplication machine which was owned by some of D-Knob's friends. Artists and studios have also begun to explore means of selling their

music online through services such as iTunes, Amazon and CD Baby. Selling of music through online services requires access to a bank account, and purchasing music online demands access to a debit or credit card. Online media for selling music are principally aimed at selling music to an expatriate East African audience.

An increasingly common means of consuming music in Dar es Salaam is through small shops, or stalls, equipped with a computer which can copy CDs. Some of these informal music distributors are a means of supplementing an existing business, and a computer may be located in a business such as barber's or a small shop. This informal music economy has several advantages over the more traditional distribution networks. Customers can purchase the songs that they wish to have, then have them transferred onto a phone, USB storage device or burnt onto a CD. Mobile phones have become an increasingly common way of storing, listening to and sharing music in Dar es Salaam. Customers pay only for the songs that they purchase, and can pick and choose their favourite songs; not being confined to purchasing an entire album. These small shops and stalls often have access to music which is not yet available for commercial sale; which has only been released to radio stations, but not made available for CD purchase. These informal music sellers do not pay the artists for their recording (Perullo 2011, 338).

Radio

The most significant institutions in the dissemination of rapped music in Dar es Salaam are radio stations. Many commentators have noted the importance of radio as a medium in Africa (Gilberds, H. and Myers, M. 2012, Fardon, R. and Furniss, G., 2000, Mano, W. 2011).

As Fardon and Furniss have argued “African public cultures at a national level are – not only still but increasingly – radio-driven cultures” (Fardon, R. and Furniss, G., 2000, 16-17). There has been an active radio station in Dar es Salaam since the radio station “Sauti ya Dar es Salaam” (The Sound of Dar es Salaam) was established by the colonial authorities in Tanganyika, in July 1951. As the name suggests, its signal could be received for up to 25 miles from the transmitter in Dar es Salaam (Sturmer 1998, 78). In 1955 the radio station became Tanganyika Broadcasting Service (TBS), and by independence the service was able to broadcast to almost the whole country. Radio was already an important medium in Tanzania at this time. As Ambler suggests of Dar es Salaam in the 1950s:

radio and newspapers were "powerful media" even though most people were unable to read. People gathered around the Arab-run shops where radios were playing or listened to radio transmitted over speakers in the main market. (Ambler 2002, 124)

Radio continued to be an important medium following Independence. In 1965 in a process of ‘Tanzanisation’, TBS became Radio Tanzania Dar es Salaam (RTD) (Sturmer 1998, 115). Radio was to play a key ideological role in propagating the messages of Tanzania’s one party state. Broadcasting on radio was perceived as means of educating the population and, as Wakati suggests:

Radio Tanzania was a party and Government instrument, whose prime concern was to further the efforts of the Party and the Government to mobilise the masses to participate fully in building their nation and to

maintain the policy of socialism and self-reliance (Wakati 1986, 213).

The post-colonial Tanzanian state also decreed that RTD was to broadcast 90% local music, in support of its cultural policies. This policy of playing local music not only influenced what was broadcast, but the styles of local bands. As Sanga argues:

In order to win a Tanzanian audience, and in order to get their songs aired on RTD, most Congolese-Tanzanian musicians deliberately incorporate Tanzanian musical elements. They also address Tanzanian local and political issues in the lyrics of their songs. (Sanga 2010 b, 66)

In the early 1990s, as in many other African countries, the Tanzanian state began to allow for the development of private media. By 2009, Perullo estimates that there were 52 private radio stations operating in Tanzania (Perullo 2011, 5-6). The liberalisation of the media has opened up a space away from the state policy of supporting local music genres, and exempt from the state's definition of national culture. The development of both private studios and radio has been critical to the development of rapped music within Tanzania.

Radio remains the primary medium through which music is consumed in Tanzania. As the Tanzanian state was not to develop a television station until 1994, radio was, and remains, the predominant medium for the consumption of music and news in Tanzania (Askew 2009, 211). Access to, and ownership of, radios is more widespread in Dar es Salaam than is access to television. Data from the World Radio and TV Receivers, quoted by Mytton, suggest that, in 1995, 90% of Dar es Salaam's residents owned a radio (Mytton 2000, 35).

Following the liberalisation of the media, Radio One, founded in 1994, was the first radio station in Dar es Salaam to dedicate itself exclusively to entertainment (Reuster-Jahn and Hacke 2011, 6). As rapper Gwamaka Kaihura King GK said:

the young had no place, had no radio, had no TV, before the youngsters had no voice. The only radio which was there was radio Tanzania and that radio Tanzania was centered on the age between 40 and 50, the young who are many who had voice had no place to express themselves. But when Radio 1 came in that was a voice, it acted like a voice of young so they had a chance to speak out.

It was shortly followed by Clouds FM, a radio station established by Joseph Kussaga, owner of the Mawingu recording studio. Clouds FM, Radio One and East Africa Radio are currently the predominant radio stations operating in Dar es Salaam. Clouds FM has come to occupy a preeminent role in the dissemination of rapped music in Dar es Salaam. Despite the limited geographical reach of its broadcasts, gaining radio play on Clouds FM was perceived as very significant by the rappers that I interviewed. There are a number of factors that have influenced the important role of Clouds FM in the dissemination of rap music. The owner of Clouds FM is Joseph Kussaga, who has been involved with the development of rapped music since the mid 90s in Tanzania. Another important factor may be that while East Africa radio, which covers much of Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania and is based in Dar es Salaam, frequently broadcasts shows in English, all of Cloud FM's shows are in Swahili. There is a common perception among rappers that Clouds FM has been better at producing programming that people wish to listen to. As the rapper D-Knob says of Clouds FM:

before anyone believed in Tanzanian music, Clouds was there, Clouds was promoting Tanzanian music before they had a radio or a media house. They were the ones with sound system going everywhere playing local music, nobody was doing that. When the music started to pay everyone jumped into music but Clouds was a monopoly in the music..... Founder of Clouds FM or what do they call it MD, he was an MC, those guys used to sing and dance they know everything about street talent.

This may include the presenters on the radio station including elements of gossip gleaned from tabloid newspapers, facebook or the “pavement radio” (Pype 2009, 545) in their discussion. There is a sense among rappers in Dar es Salaam that Clouds FM has a significance disproportionate to its size and reach.

Gaining airplay on the private FM stations is essential to an artist’s success in contemporary Dar es Salaam. It is primarily through radio play that the audience are able to hear a rapper’s songs. Songs are released to the radio stations prior to being made commercially available for sale on albums or compilations. Many songs are released on to the radio and may never be made commercially available for sale. Thus the only media through which such songs can be heard are on the radio or at a live concert. As Perullo says:

Once a song became popular on the radio, artists were then assured of well-attended concerts and, by the late 1990s, strong album sales (Perullo 2007, 264)

It is felt by a great many artists that radio exerts significant control over their careers. Radio stations were regularly accused of operating a 'payola' system; payola being "the act of exchanging cash or promotional consideration for airplay" (Fairchild 2012, 328). A group of DJs and presenters acting in tandem at one of the major radio stations was said to receive a payola payment of 1 million Tanzanian shillings from rappers, or the studios in which songs were recorded, to guarantee regular play of a single song across all four of their prominent radio shows. Regular play of a song across these four shows offered a guarantee that the song would become well known. The issue of payola is widely discussed among those involved in the Tanzanian music industry, both artists and radio presenters. The pervasiveness of discussion about payola leads me to believe that there is some truth in the accusations.

The control exerted by radio presenters over which genres and songs are played on the radio is contested by rappers. Rappers felt that radio presenters' choices of music to play on the radio were not motivated only by the musical quality of a given song. That radio stations gave a disproportionate amount of air-play to particular artists and did not play enough rapped music, focussing on singing and 'empty' music with lyrics about love and 'the good life'. Radio presenters, and managers from radio stations, are involved in the management of rappers or singers. The conflict perceived between the commercial interest of radio presenters and managers, and their control over the music aired on radio, was a vexed subject for many rappers. As one producer told me:

what they like to play on the radio now is love songs, song without any

message which are easy listening. They are trying to shape the Bongo Flava into that direction.

Rappers who tried to deal with serious socio-political issues would not receive airplay, it was widely felt.

Radio stations, in particular Clouds FM, are deemed by many rappers to have a close relationship with *wasambazaji* the music distributors. It is suggested that the advice of radio station executives was sought by *wasambazaji* before offering to distribute an artist's music. This relationship between the radio and *wasambazaji* is particular relevant in the case of new, less established artists. It was also suggested, by a number of rappers, that executives from the radio might try to intervene, on occasion, where there had been a disagreement between the radio station and the artist. Rappers express unease about the commercial relationship between private institutions determining the path of their careers.

The radio stations also represent an important medium for the promotion of concerts and performances in Tanzania. A large annual event, Fiesta, in the programme of which rapped music is heavily featured, is organised by Clouds FM. Fiesta tours the country, presenting Tanzanian artists who perform *muziki kizazi kipyra* to audiences across Tanzania. Each year, Fiesta culminates in a final, major event held in Dar es Salaam which features a prominent foreign rapper. In the past these have included Ja Rule, Jay Z, Busta Rhymes and Ludacris. Rumours abound, among fans of rapped music and rappers in Dar es Salaam, about the fees paid to these international stars, which are generally believed to be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. In the run up to Fiesta, numerous local artists are asked to perform. As

many as 20 to 40 'local' artists may perform one or two songs each at Fiesta. There is considerable prestige associated with performing at Fiesta, as artists are thereby associated with a prominent guest artist and perform to a large audience. However there is a critique among Tanzanian artists that they are offered negligible remuneration, in comparison with the exorbitant fees prominent international artists are said to receive. Fiesta is organised by Prime Time Promotions, a company affiliated to Clouds FM. Several radio and TV stations are directly involved in the organisation of events. As concerts represent their major source of revenue for many artists, radio stations play a crucial role, not only in playing music but in promoting events and inviting artists to perform at concerts. Many of Tanzania's main media outlets are concentrated in just a few hands.²⁶

Radio Presenters – DJ's

It is, however, radio presenters and DJs who play a day to day role of engaging with rappers. Radio presenters and DJs act as cultural intermediaries, mediating between rappers, studios and the airwaves. It is radio presenters who decide, by and large, which music is broadcast on the radio. They play a crucial role, not only in deciding what is to be played, but how the music being played is to be framed. The most well known radio presenters in Tanzania have become celebrity figures in their own right. A prominent presenter, for example, on Clouds FM is Fetty, a Tanzanian of Somali and Yemeni origin who began working at Clouds as an intern, after completing her schooling. Since then, she has studied presenting at the Point Blank school in London and has a regular weekly show

²⁶ Clouds FM, Clouds TV and Prime Time Promotions are all part of a single company the Clouds Media Group. Radio One, the Channel 5 TV station and East Africa Radio and TV, as well as two Tanzanian newspapers are owned by IPP Media.

presenting Bongo Flava on the radio. Her show, on Sunday afternoons, includes a section *kali za kale* (old is strong) which features older songs from *muziki kizazi kipyra*. Her show also contains a section of new and previously un-played music. A feature of Fetty's show is the discussion of events in the lives of musicians, which are taken from the gossip sections in local newspapers, as well as from Facebook and Twitter. As well as the radio show, Fetty has been a presenter for many competitions and performances organised by Prime Time Promotions and Clouds FM, including presenting artists at Fiesta. Despite being a radio personality, Fetty has celebrity status and is recognised by people across the city.

Through their selection of music to be played, and their framing of that music, radio presenters define the canon of *muziki kizazi kipyra* (music for a new generation). In her show on the radio, Fetty selects 'golden oldies', thereby playing an important role in helping to define the history of *muziki kizazi kipyra*. Radio presenters, such as Fetty, are granted an authority, "a power to consecrate objects (with a trademark or signature) or persons (through publications, exhibitions, etc.) and therefore to give value" (Bourdieu 1993, 75). They act as cultural intermediaries who are "differentiated by their explicit claims to professional expertise in taste and value" and who thereby "impact upon notions of *what*, and thereby *who*, is legitimate, desirable and worthy" (Maguire, J. S. and Matthews, J. 2012, 552). The contours of the genre of *muziki kizazi kipyra*, or Bongo Flava, are defined, at least in part, through the enactment of this power to name. By selecting not only new music, but playing particular older songs, presenters such as Fetty play a significant role in defining the boundaries of rapped music in public space.

Genre boundaries, and what belongs in the canon of *muziki kizazi kipya*, are hotly contested. This can, perhaps, most clearly be seen in the discourse of naming music, where artists prescribe differing meanings to genres such as hip-hop and Bongo Flava, claiming and rejecting these genres based, in part, on their perceived ideological relations. A common complaint, and one here articulated by Ntarangwi, is that “FM radio stations tend to play songs that have less socially serious messages” (Ntarangwi 2009, 119). Many of the rappers that I interviewed critiqued the media for supporting music which they felt did not fulfil the proper role of rap music in educating society. In this, we can see how radio becomes a space not only for contesting access to financial resources, mediated in part by access to radio play, but the very meaning of the musical genres themselves.

Contestations over the role of the media reflect the shifting ideological landscape of media in Tanzania. Immediately after independence, the Tanzanian state occupied the position of being the only recorder and broadcaster of Tanzanian music, and the arbitrator of which musical genres were considered national. The liberalisation of the media since the mid 1990s has lessened the state’s control over the power to record and disseminate music. Private institutions, radio stations, distributors and studios now hold power over the means both of producing and disseminating popular culture. It is not only the notion of who controls the means of production and dissemination of music that is contested by rappers, but the values against which music is evaluated by private institutions. As Skinner suggests in Mali, music can be used to trace what he calls a “gradual discursive move” (Skinner 2012, 530), from the nation to the state. In Tanzania music traces the discursive move has been on of shifting ownership and control over the media.

Studios

Central to the development, and current production, of rapped music in Dar es Salaam are private studios in which rappers are able to record their songs. Recording music is not a new phenomenon in Tanzania. In the 1930s, the Columbia record company recorded a number of Tanzanian artists in a hotel room in Dar es Salaam (Graebner 2007, 181). Taarab artist, Siti Binti Saad, travelled to India in the 1920s to record some music for His Master's Voice (HMV) (Perullo 2011, 43-44). Following Tanzanian independence in 1961, a recording studio was developed as part of Radio Tanzania Dar es Salaam, the national radio station, and this was the only operational recording studio in Tanzania up until the early 1990s (Perullo 2011, 71). In line with the cultural policies of the Tanzanian state, this studio only recorded musical genres designated as Tanzanian by BASATA the National Arts Council.

The first independent studio to be developed in Dar es Salaam was at Don Bosco Youth Centre, which opened between 1990 and 1991 in Upanga. This studio was followed by Mawingu (Cloud) studio started by Joseph Kussaga and for which Bonnie Luv was the producer (Perullo 2011, 249). Paul Matthyse (P Funk) and Joachim Kimario (Master J) both started their respective studios, Bongo Records and MJ Records, in 1995 and 1996 respectively. These four studios, Don Bosco, Mawingu, Bongo Records and MJ studios, were responsible for recording almost all of the early Tanzanian rap recordings. Of these four studios, the latter three are still operating in Dar es Salaam today, though Mawingu studio is no longer engaged principally in recording popular music.

The establishment of independent studios was linked to a wider liberalisation of the economy. Several factors influenced the growth in studios. Private businesses, including recording studios, were to be encouraged after the liberalisation of the economy. During Julius Nyerere's leadership of Tanzania, the private accumulation of wealth had been perceived in a negative light by the state. Control of much of the economy was in state or para-state hands, including much cultural production. Prior to the liberalisation of the economy, most bands had been linked with state or para-state organisation, and state sponsorship was the most significant support for musicians. Following liberalisation, import duties were slowly lowered which also affected the importation of studio equipment. Most significantly of all, the rise of new FM radio stations meant that independently recorded music could be played on the radio.

In Tanzania, in the 1990s, setting up a studio was a significant financial investment. Perullo estimates that the cost of importing equipment to establish a studio in Dar es Salaam was between \$6,000 and \$10,000 (Perullo 2011, 248) in 1997. The first independent studios were therefore either linked to an institution, as with Don Bosco, funded by wealthier individuals as Mawingu, or established by Tanzanians who had been educated abroad (in Holland and the United Kingdom respectively, in the cases of P Funk and Master J). In Master J's case it was, in part, from his time in the UK that he was able to buy, and bring back to Tanzania, some studio equipment. By their nature, studios required a degree of capital investment, and producers and studio engineers usually required at least some formal training in how to set up and use the equipment. The development of private studios, established by young men who had been at least partly educated abroad, and had been exposed to new musical forms, was central to the development of Bongo Flava. As

Sanga argues of Gospel music in Tanzania: “the popularity of Muziki wa Injili in Tanzania can be attributed to the proliferation of recording studios” (Sanga 2010 b, 146). The same can be said for the development of rapped music in Dar es Salaam.

In the case of private studios in Dar es Salaam, the producer is frequently the owner of the studio, as is the case with Bongo Records and MJ studios. Indeed the producer in studios in Dar es Salaam frequently fulfils a number of different roles in the process of musical production. Roles fulfilled by the producer include: creating the music, recording vocals, acting as a studio engineer, mixing and mastering the music, managing relationships with artists and acting as a conduit between the recording artist and the various media outlets. The most established producers, in particular P Funk and Master J, have become household names; as well known as many of the rappers and singers whose music they have produced. As some of the best known studios have become well established, as is the case with MJ Studios which has now been running for 17 years, the production process may be delegated. Master J, for example, has handed the day to day production of music over to another producer, Mako Challi.

Over the last ten to fifteen years in Dar es Salaam there has been a proliferation of new studios. On my first visit to Dar es Salaam, in 2006, there was only a handful of studios, of which all the artists that I interviewed spoke. These were principally Bongo Records, MJ and FM Studios where Finnish producer Miikka Mwamba was working. Having songs produced and recorded in this handful of studios was seen as a requirement for success by the established artists that I interviewed. There was scepticism about the quality of production at other, less established studios. In both my return trips, in 2009 and 2011, it was clear

that the diversity of studios now being used by artists has greatly increased. AY, for example, who I interviewed in 2006, and who was at the time recording a number of tracks in P Funk studio, was, in both 2009 and 2011, recording in a wide variety of studios. Rappers today work with a variety of different studios in order to maintain as broad a set of networks as possible. It is relatively rare for artists to have a whole album produced in a single studio, as producers' and studios' fortunes and popularities ebb and flow. AY, in particular, deliberately focuses on producing a variety of different tracks, in varied styles and with a diverse 'sound' to them, in order to appeal to the broadest possible market. This includes recording in Ugandan and Kenyan studios.

There can be no doubt that there has been a great increase in the number of recording studios in Dar es Salaam, as Perullo suggests that in 2008 there were 51 commercial studios in operation in Dar es Salaam (Perullo 2011, 244). This increase in the number of studios has been a response to the growing popularity of locally produced music. However, I would also argue that this has, at least in part, been facilitated by a change in the material conditions required to establish a recording studio. Producer Miikka Mwamba said "nowadays the equipment is quite cheap, almost everyone who has some financial good situation can buy a computer and keyboard." As Maisonneuve argues, in relation to the development of the vinyl record in Europe:

It is important to realize the fact that the relationship to music is rooted in a material culture which evolves according to techniques, objects and agents by

which it exists. The very material reality of music, and hence also its aesthetic potential, are defined and modified by this material setup. (Maisonneuve 2001, 105)

With an increasingly large proportion of the musical production process able to be fulfilled by computer software, commercial studios are increasingly manageable, and managed in fact, with less and less physical equipment. Producers are able to access computer software which attempts to replicate the sound of instruments and synthesisers. In the course of my research I visited half a dozen operating commercial studios in Dar es Salaam which are engaged in recording rapped music for commercial release, all of which do this.

Rapped songs have a musical accompaniment, popularly referred to as a 'beat'. Characteristically, rappers would go to a studio and select a beat from a number of compositions that the producer has already created. The beat is then given to the rapper on a CD or USB pen to take away, listen to and compose lyrics for. Once his composition is complete, the rapper returns to the studio to record his song. The length of each section of the song, verse and chorus, can be altered to fit the song composed by the rapper, using the software on which the beat was created by the producer. On rarer occasions a rapper may arrive in a studio with a completed written song, select a beat and immediately record his vocals. The rapper D-Knob describes his current relationship with producer Miikka Mwamba, who is no longer based in Dar es Salaam, thus:

sometimes I just call him and tell him like I have this track I think we should do, it will be big and he will be ok you just go and record and send me those vocals.

He sends it back, I listen to it, if I like it I tell him this is good if I don't like it I just talk to him, I like it could you do this and this and this. So he mixes it again.

It should be noted that producers are able to record the vocal part for a song multiple times, taking parts of each vocal recording to construct a final 'full' recording. The final version may be made up of multiple vocal parts stitched together to form a whole song.

Parallel to the development of commercial studios has been a recent growth in what are termed in Dar es Salaam 'local' studios. Local studios are characterised by the notion that their productions are not of a high enough quality to receive radio play. They are also deemed to lack the connections that commercial studios have. In the main, local studios consist of a basic recording set up, comprising a computer equipped with music production software, and a microphone. They are most frequently situated in the house of the person operating the studio and are not usually run on a full time basis, but are an ancillary hobby, and income, to the main employment of the producer. One local studio that operated in the Msasani area of Dar es Salaam, and which I visited, was operated by the son of a tailor. He worked with his father in his shop during the daytime and produced and recorded music in the evenings. Local studios operate as commercial ventures, to some extent, and a recording in a local studio might cost between 10,000 and 50,000 Tanzanian shillings.

The growth in local studios has, in part, been enabled by new developments in technology, and the availability of pirated recording software. As McNeill suggests of music production in Venda, South Africa:

Central to its continued survival is the abundance of cheap second-hand computers and pirated software. Illegal copies of computer programmes such as Nuendo and Cubase are easily available, and once installed they provide a virtual recording studio which, with practice, talent and a reasonable microphone, can produce recordings that closely mimic a professional sound. (McNeill 2012, 94)

As local studios are not registered, it is impossible to be sure of their number. Many of the rappers that I met had recorded songs at local studios, and had copies of their recordings stored on CD or on their mobile phones. The category of 'local' is based on a notion of quality, and of the commercial potential of the recording, rather than an objective assessment of the quality of the equipment and technology used.

At the time we met, in 2011, Octavian Thomas (O-Key Ghettochild), an underground rapper from Keko, had begun to visit a newly established studio. I was invited to come to a recording session, and arranged to meet O-Key in the city centre so that we could travel together to the studio. The studio is based in the neighbourhood of Sinza, just off the Sheikilango road. After jumping out of the *dala dala*, we walked across some open ground and began following a narrow path between houses. Loud music could be heard, as we approached the gate to the compound containing the studio. The yard in front of the house was full of young men whom we followed into the house and entered the living room. The room was filled with as many as a dozen young men, some of whom sat on a couch and some on chairs in the middle of the room, while others sat along the edge of a dining table.



Figure 2 – Mesen Selecta and O-Key at the De Fatality studio in Sinza



Figure 3 – Duke at the MLAB studio Kinondoni

In one corner of the room was a desk, on top of which a computer screen was visible, seated at which was Mesen Selecta, the owner of, and producer for, the studio.

The young men in the room were aspiring artists who had come to the studio in order to select music to which they were to record songs, or to attempt to make a connection with the studio in the hope that they would be able to record there sometime in the future. One or two of the young men in the studio were engaged in writing, or adjusting, lyrics which they had written prior to arriving at the studio. Music was blasting from two monitor speakers placed on either side of the desk. Mesen Selecta sat at his desk and played music to the prospective artist, dispensing advice on what each artist should do with the song they were being given. Cubase, the music software programme, was running on the computer screen in front of him and he adjusted blocks of sound, adding, subtracting and moving them as the artists listened. There were brief gaps in the playing of music, as one song was finished and another song selected to record, or to adjust.

It is from this home that the De Fatality International Music record company and studio are run by Mesen Selecta. Mesen Selecta had started to produce music while he was studying in Arusha in 2007, as a means of raising money to complete his secondary school education. He had initially used a friend's computer, and a demonstration version of the computer programme Fruity Loops. These initial beats were sold for between 10,000 and 20,000 TSH and in 2009, on finishing school, Mesen Selecta returned to Dar es Salaam and began working in a variety of different studios including Confidence, One Mic and No Name. The income available from working at these newly established studios was not sufficient, and so in 2010 Mesen Selecta established his own studio and record label.

The studio set up was fairly simple. The only equipment used was a computer, a microphone and a small DJ mixer through which the signal from the microphone passed before going into the computer. The computer on which the music is recorded belongs to his father, who also supported Mesen Selecta in purchasing a microphone for recording vocals. All the vocals were recorded in the same living room in which the production of the music was taking place. The computer was used both for producing the music and for recording vocals. This set up is reminiscent of that ascribed to 'local' studios. What differentiates this studio, however, is that recordings from this studio are able to gain radio play. The De Fatality facility was largely used to record artists who had not previously recorded music, as was the case with O-Key, for example. However, the studio was also being used by some of the better known Tanzanian rappers, notably Godzilla, and this had enabled the studio to develop wider connections with media outlets and, in particular, with radio stations. Mesen Selecta had developed a particular sound to his productions, which were characterised by high pitched synthesiser sounds and prominent bass parts. In a competitive music market in which artists were keen to stand out, this distinctive 'sound' had encouraged some more established artists to frequent the studio.

Another of the studios in which I spent a great deal of time, which is called Music Lab or MLAB and is based in the Block 41 part of Kinondoni just behind the Biafra bus stop, can be contrasted to De Fatality. MLAB's studio is part of an office complex which is hidden behind a large gate and high walls which face the street. It is comprised of three rooms, an empty room which one enters from the office car park, to either side of which are two studios one

for recording live instruments and another for recording vocals. In 2009, when I first encountered the studio, only one of the rooms, that for recording vocals, had been equipped and was operational. This studio space comprised a small narrow room with a computer, a screen and a computer keyboard. At the end of this room was a small vocals booth, separated from the larger space by a soundproofed wall which included a window so that the rapper and producer could see one another. In 2011, when I returned, the second studio, used for recording live instruments, had been equipped and was operating.

The studio had been established in 2009, shortly before I arrived in Dar es Salaam for my second research trip. In line with the model of earlier studios, such as MJ and Bongo Records, the studio was funded by Patrick Gondwe on his return to Tanzania from a period studying in Birmingham, UK. A childhood friend of Patrick's, Duke Gervalius, had long had an interest in music and had been learning how to produce music. Prior to Patrick's departure to the UK to study, they had agreed that they would develop a studio together on his return. Patrick returned to Dar es Salaam in 2008, and was employed in one of the major banks. He used some capital to rent the studio space, to have it soundproofed and equipped with the necessary technology to begin producing and recording artists.

Additional capital had to be earned to enable the studio to be soundproofed and equip the additional studio space for recording live musicians. The work of managing MLAB is divided between Duke and Patrick. MLAB's studio is occupied six days a week, from midday until the early evening, by Duke, who meets artists, produces music and records vocals during this time. Patrick has taken a key role in managing MLAB's own artists, in drawing up contracts and in conducting negotiations with media outlets.

While both MLAB and De Fatality work on a model in which they have their own 'stable' of artists, in order to earn sufficient income they also produce for, and record, artists not associated with the studio, on occasion. This enables the studio to forge a greater web of connections, and also brings in additional income. For example, Ruge Mutahaba, from the Clouds FM radio station, requested that MLAB record some of the artists involved in the Tanzanian House of Talent. It is also notable that while both studios were started with a focus on producing music styles associated with *muziki kizazi kipya*, they both now produce a more diverse range of music styles in order to increase the revenue of the studio. While Mesen Selecta produces a number of more afro-pop influenced styles, MLAB have used their additional studio space to record bands. Of the MLAB artists, perhaps the two to become best known in Tanzania are Nick Mbishi, a rapper, and Grace Matata, an afro-pop soul singer.

Negotiating the Production of Rapped Music

Studios are spaces of contestation and negotiation. They are spaces within which various actors employ the power that they have accrued to influence the process of recording music. This is not to suggest that the power of all the actors in the process is equal. New artists who are eager to record may come to a studio on several occasions. As was the case in both MLAB and De Fatality, these aspiring artists frequently had to wait outside, or in waiting rooms, on some occasions only to be told to return another day when the producer has time to listen to them. For those artists that have established contact with a studio, these are spaces within which both lyrics and 'sound' of their songs is negotiated. On one of my trips to a studio I frequently visited I met the owner and asked him how work at the

studio was progressing. He said that he was disappointed as he had just heard a re-recorded version of one of their songs being played on the radio. A rapper had recorded a song at their studio. On hearing the song, the owner felt that the lyrics were too explicitly politically confrontational and had asked the rapper to consider changing one or two elements of his song, including the explicit mention of a politician's name. Following this exchange, the owner found it difficult to contact the artist and finally, on the day we met, had heard the song recorded at his studio had been re-recorded using different accompaniment or 'beat'.

For many artists, studios are key spaces in the politics of pursuing a career as a rapper. The negotiation of relationships with the studio owners and producers is key to the possibility of being recorded. One of the underground rappers with whom I had spent a great deal of time, Mwinjaka ally Mwinjaka (Mbaya Wao), had regularly expressed the opinion that he now wished to try and record some songs; that this was 'his time'. Prior to leaving Dar es Salaam in 2009 I suggested that I could take him along to the MLAB studio, with which I had developed a good relationship, and introduce him to Duke and Patrick. Mbaya Wao was asked to perform some of his songs over musical accompaniment from Duke and was asked to return to the studio later. After my departure from Tanzania, MLAB agreed to record three songs for Mbaya Wao and he returned to the studio to select a 'beat'. When I returned to Tanzania in 2011, Mbaya Wao had still not recorded a song. On returning to MLAB he discovered that someone else had recorded on 'his' beat and he was discouraged, choosing not to return and select another beat.

It is within the process of recording that the possibilities not only of recording as such, but in which style, with what words and against what musical accompaniment, are all negotiated between artist, producer and studio owner. Each of the actors in this relationship has social capital and power, which they can use to affect the recording that they wish to produce. A new artist in an established studio may be in a relatively weak position vis a vis dictating the sound or content of their song, whereas a better known artist, who can afford to pay for a beat and owns the song, is in a relatively strong position. Rappers such as Mbaya Wao, who have neither the financial, nor social capital of more established artists, are not able to gain a significant amount of control over the recording process. As they cannot pay for the beat, this may end up being sold or given to another artist. More established artists are able to pay the studio for their services, and so gain a greater degree of control over the process of recording and ownership over the recording. A more established artist, like the rapper and owner of 41 Records, Lufunyo, may not pay for a 'beat' but rather use their social capital as an established artist and studio owner to exert control over the recording process.

As Ngwair says in his song, 'Nipe Dili'

Nimesha amua mimi kufanya muziki

I've already decided to do music

Kuja fote wani nao wana taka mahela

I get to forty one (records) and they also want money

So studios in Dar es Salaam are important spaces in which control over the sounds, ownership and finances of musical products are negotiated. They are, we might argue, suffused with an ideological tension about power and control; about who may be in control of this process and to what extent the 'authentic' voice of the artist can speak. As Waterman argues of Juju bands in Nigeria:

Social relationships within juju bands are suffused with an ideological tension between hierarchical and communal norms that is characteristic of Yoruba society as a whole (Waterman 1990, 163).

Studios are important nodes of connection for many artists. It is through studios that artists establish connections to the all-important media networks, and thereby have the possibility of achieving fame. While many of the best established artists have developed their own networks with radio and TV presenters, studios are important zones of connection for the majority of the less established artists. As the example earlier shows, this relationship between artist and studios is not fixed in the studios' favour in perpetuity. Artists are able to move between studios and, if unsatisfied with one studio, may be able to record in others. More established artists, such as AY, frequently record songs for an album in a variety of different studios. When an artist in this situation pays for the 'beat' they gain ownership of the recording. Power is not a fixed property belonging to one of the actors; it is present in the actions taken by the actors in music production to influence who and what is recorded.

In recording sounds, studios enable the artists' music to become mobile. It is through the recording process that their work is able to be transmitted. Songs can now be stored as digital files and easily replicated, stored on phone or USB pens, and even sent as attachments to emails. The mobility of the sounds of recordings is an important feature of contemporary music production in Dar es Salaam. Those artists who have paid for recording frequently take their recording away on a USB pen, or burnt onto a CD. Artists who had recorded in a local studio often had these recordings stored on their phones. Some studios have also taken to emailing songs to radio DJs and journalists as a way of gathering promotion. Producers themselves are often mobile and can be encouraged to move from studio to studio. Kenyan producer Dunga was, for some time prior to my stay in Dar es Salaam in 2009, based at 41 Records, a studio owned by Lufunyo and based in the Block 41 area of Kinondoni. In fact, Dunga's production style, referred to as 'Dunga Bounce', came to define the sound of 41 Records productions for some time. On returning to Nairobi Dunga was able, for some time, through the mobility and transmissibility of recorded music files, to continue to produce music for artists which was recorded in Dar es Salaam. Indeed a Tanzanian producer, Lemar, who Dunga worked with at 41 Records, travelled to Kenya on numerous occasions following Dunga's departure. Lemar, who by then had established his own label called Fishcrab, in Kariakoo, would travel to Kenya with an external hard drive holding his productions, and record songs with Kenyan artists before returning to Dar es Salaam.

Conclusion

Liberalisation of the media, and falling import duties, enabled the development of new private institutions: studios, radio and TV stations. These new institutions played a central role in the production, and growing popularity, of rapped music. While they have been central to the development of rapped music, private institutions have also engendered anxiety about how, and by whom, control is exerted over rappers' careers. As Barber argues of FM radio in Kenya, liberalisation has moved, rather than removed, control over programme content so that

censorship is now practised by advertisers rather than government, and if advertisers pull out, the radio station may be forced to sack employees and even close down (Barber 2009, 15).

While, when the state was the largest sponsor of musical production, popular music was expected to contain socio-political messages, there is now contestation within rapped music over the role that new private institutions are playing in supporting 'empty' music.

Each of the actors in the field of music production, distribution and dissemination has some power to shape the content and popularity of popular music. The content and sound of songs is negotiated between the producer and rapper during the recording process. Social capital is unevenly distributed between producers and rappers, who, depending on their standing, financial capability and connections, are able to exert varying degrees of control over their own recordings. Distributors and media play a role in shaping the content, styles and sound of the music which is to receive airplay on the radio and be selected by distributors for sale. This is not to suggest that any one actor in the field exerts absolute

control over the popularity of popular music but rather that it is contested and negotiated between these various actors.

CHAPTER 5 –UNDERGROUND RAPPING

Introduction

Rapped music in Dar es Salaam is a highly audible and very visible cultural phenomenon. It can be heard in *dala dalas* (local city buses) and bars as well as from shops and houses across the city. Rap music videos can be seen on the television, and rap songs heard on radio stations. The most successful rappers have become national stars and perform across Tanzania and in neighbouring countries. On arriving in Dar es Salaam for my first fieldwork trip I established contact with some of the currently popular Tanzanian rap artists, attended concerts and visited studios. One of my research associates, Hashim Rubanza, introduced me to a rapper called Mbaya Wao who had been part of the Kikosi cha Mizinga collective. I was invited to visit Mbaya Wao outside his family's barber's shop in Kijitonyama, where, on his single day off work each week, Mbaya Wao would spend time with a number of his friends who were also rappers. Through these meetings, I established contact with a number of other rappers. These rappers had not recorded music and had gained little or no financial reward from their rapping. Yet it was clear, from the amount of time and intellectual energy they devoted to the practice of rapping, that rap music played a significant role in their lives. I became aware of a less visible area of rap music practice in Dar es Salaam. These meetings sparked questions about where this informal rapping took place, about who was performing rap, why and for whom.

Defining Underground

The focus of this chapter is on what are referred to in Tanzania as *andagraundi* or “underground” rappers. *Andagraundi* is a somewhat difficult term and it is complicated to pin down precisely what constitutes an underground rapper. At its most basic level as a descriptor, the term “underground” refers to those rappers who have yet to achieve widespread fame or renown. Underground rappers are those who have not been able to gain a level of city-wide or national recognition. Reuster-Jahn defines underground as “rappers who have not yet released an album” (Reuster-Jahn 2008, 56) while Englert defines *andagraundi* as “those who have not yet experienced success on a larger scale” (Englert 2008, 75).

A rapper’s ability to record and disseminate music through the various media outlets is, to a significant degree, contingent on their financial means. As Maduka²⁷ said “if you are in Dar es Salaam and you want to make Bongo Flava popular you have to have money. That is the first thing, regardless if your track is not very good or meaningful but money first.” The majority of artists I met who considered themselves underground had not recorded music. Some underground rappers had recorded songs and even achieved some airplay on the radio. These artists, nonetheless, still considered themselves underground. As a category, “underground” is slippery and artists move from being considered underground to famous, or known, and in some cases may move back again to being underground. However, once a certain level of renown is achieved it ceases to be possible for an artist to move back to the

²⁷ At the time working Maduka was working for an NGO which produced the magazines FEMA, Si Mchezo (No Game), as well as FEMA TV and radio shows.

category of underground. Notions of fame are relative and who was “underground” and who was not was contested.

The vagaries of the musical career of James Masunzu (Kid J) illustrate the slippery nature of the category ‘underground’. While at school in Morogoro, James had formed a musical group with some friends and recorded two songs at a studio in Morogoro. Neither James and his friends, nor the studio, had sufficient funds to enable these songs to be disseminated through the media. James moved to complete his education in Mbagala, Dar es Salaam in 1999. In 2000 he recorded three songs in a Dar es Salaam studio at which Miikka Mwamba was the producer. One song in particular, *Chelea Pina* (cool and clean), was frequently broadcast on the radio and its popularity enabled James to perform shows. James said that he was still asked by people to perform *Chelea Pina* at gatherings in his local neighbourhood.²⁸ When Miikka Mwamba returned to Finland, James no longer had access to a studio and has not recorded since. While in Morogoro, despite having recorded, James regarded himself as underground, as the songs that he recorded were not played on the radio. Once in Dar es Salaam, having established regular contact with a studio and gained radio play, James no longer perceived himself as underground. In 2009, when I encountered James, it had been several years since he had recorded and he once again considered himself an underground artist. This is despite *Chelea Pina* still occasionally being played on the radio.

²⁸ James performed *Chelea Pina* at the maskani which I most commonly frequented in Msasani and from my discussion with members of the maskani afterwards it was clear that they were familiar with the song. This was already 10 years since the song had been recorded and so the song must have been a hit, to some degree.

The term “underground” has a different meaning in the Tanzanian context than within Western popular cultural discourse. In Western discourse on popular culture the underground is associated with notions of a subculture at odds with the hegemonic culture (Fikentscher 2000, McLeod 1999, Harrison 2006, Szemere 1996). The underground artist eschews commercial success and embodies a certain, if variable, degree of resistance to hegemonic cultural meanings, with resistance to “prevalent moral and aesthetic codes and values” (Fikentscher 2000, 5). It is important, here, to draw a distinction between the meanings of the term “underground” within these two different contexts. The notion of belonging to a subculture, in the cultural studies sense of a cultural phenomenon reacting against the hegemonic culture, is at odds with notions of being underground in Tanzania. The status of being underground, in the Tanzanian context, does not imply a rejection of the norms and styles of mainstream Tanzanian musical practice. Underground rappers adopted a variety of positions vis-a-vis the music industry and its various cleavages in Tanzania. Some rappers have achieved a certain degree of fame which subsequently dissipated; others saw their underground status as merely a stage on their path to fame and fortune. Some rappers adopted critical positions towards the Tanzanian music industry and its main institutions. Underground rappers’ texts have heterogeneous meanings and cannot easily be described as resisting a cultural mainstream. Being underground is characterised by an exclusion from the relations of musical production and dissemination.

Rap music and hip hop are frequently associated in academic texts with subaltern, marginalised citizens. As Harkness writes, of underground rappers in Chicago:

emphasis on class also served to affirm the existing cluster of boundary conditions governing authenticity – affording ‘realness’ to members of the working and lower classes, and ‘fakeness’ to those from the middle and upper classes (Harkness 2012, 294).

Being an underground rapper is thus determined by exclusion; largely determined by access to money and networks from the world of musical production, distribution and dissemination. While underground rappers are excluded from the circuits of production and dissemination, I would be reluctant to describe this as a practice solely of a subaltern group. Rather, it is a practice which is defined by the space within which it occurs.

Who are the Youth?

Underground rapping can be seen against a wider discourse on the precarious and marginal position of African youth. In 2005 62% of the continental population was under 25 (Mabala 2011, 160), 43% of Tanzania’s population is under 15 (National Bureau of Statistics 2013, 34). Young people have become an important focus of scholarly research over the last twenty years. Much of the literature on youth in Africa has focused on a “double dynamic” of young people on the continent (Honwana and De Boeck 2005, 10). In the double dynamic African youth are at once the majority of the continent’s population and increasingly marginalised from the political and social sphere. As John and Jean Comaroff write “‘youth’ stand for many things at once: for the terrors of the present, the errors of the past, the prospect of a future” (Comaroff 2005, 20). In this reading of the current position of African youth they are at once a source of hope and optimism, as a potential source of change and progress, but also a powerful and destructive force to be feared. Youth have been

represented as “dangerous, criminal, decadent, and given to a sexuality that is unrestrained and threatening for the whole of society” (Diouf 2003, 4).

Much scholarly work on African youth has been focused on notions of crisis and marginality (Christiansen, Utas and Vigh 2006, Abbink and Van Kessel 2005, Honwana and De Boeck, 2005). The focus of this research strand has been on the withdrawal of the state from the provision of services during the late 1980s and early 90s and the subsequent dissipation of the optimism experienced by the post-independence generation. Education and employment opportunities have disappeared, and the current situation is perceived as a period in which young people in Africa experience multiple exclusions. These include exclusion from politics, from the public sphere and from participation in a global imaginary. One focus has been placed on the global circulation of images, symbols and signs. On the provocation of desires in a globalised world, with the ultimate desire being that of emigration. Jua argues that “youths have tended to privilege self-interest over communal interests” (Jua 2003, 33). Young people exist in a time in which Mbembe states, “the future horizon is apparently closed, while the horizon of the past has apparently receded” (Mbembe 2001, 16-17).

Much of the research on young people has problematised the category of youth (Diouf 2003, Christiansen, Utas and Vigh 2006, Abbink, 2005). The category of ‘youth’ is much contested, in particular in the African context, and here I draw on Durham’s notion of youth as a social shifter and an indexical term rather than a fixed age category (Durham 2004, 592-593 and Durham 2000, 116). Youth are characterised not by fixed categories of age but through relations to markers of adulthood. Among underground rappers, youth is more

closely associated with a set of social signifiers, for example employment, marriage and social status, than directly indicated by an individual's age. The young men that engage in underground rap remain categorised as "youth" as they struggle to gain the social and financial capital necessary to achieve the standing that would mark their entry into adulthood. The act of rapping was commonly associated with young, unmarried and underemployed men.

Underground Rapping in Dar es Salaam

During my two lengthier periods of fieldwork in Dar es Salaam I was able to meet, and interview underground rappers from a variety of different neighbourhoods across Dar es Salaam including Buza, Kiwalani, Mwananyamala, Keko, Mikocheni, Kijitonyama, Msasani, Mburahati, and Sinza. All of the underground rappers that I met were men and they varied in age between 16 and 31. Of the underground rappers that I interviewed, the majority were in their late teens or early twenties. Rapping in Dar es Salaam is an activity carried out largely by men and there have been very few prominent female rap artists. In the course of my research I did not encounter any female underground rappers. As I shall explore in this chapter, underground rapping occurs in places of male sociality and is closely tied to the performance of masculinities.

The underground rappers that I interviewed came from a heterogeneous range of backgrounds. They were comprised of those who had been born and raised in Dar es Salaam as well as recent migrants to the city. The rapper Gang Star (Ally Mohammedi) was born and grew up in the Msasani neighbourhood of Dar es Salaam, for example. Others,

such as Sokwe (Memed Osmay), had moved, through different districts of Dar es Salaam, as well as living for some time in Mtwara. A smaller, but significant, number of rappers had recently migrated to the city. There were a variety of causes for their migration. Gazar B (Bkhari Mahadhara) moved from Mtwara to Dar es Salaam in 2010 in order to improve his economic opportunities. Unusually, Bkhari did not have any family in Dar es Salaam and had moved to the city on his own. After a few months in the city he had managed to gain employment in Kawe as a carpenter. One rapper, Soul Jezzy (Abubakari Amini), had migrated to Dar es Salaam from Arusha in order to study at a seminary. A small number of those that I interviewed had migrated to Dar es Salaam to pursue their education, and were awaiting the opportunity to study at University.

Rappers are engaged in a variety of different economic activities. Mbaya Wao was in formal salaried employment at Shoprite, a South African owned supermarket chain with branches in the Mikocheni and Masaki neighbourhoods of Dar es Salaam. As is common in Tanzania, this employment was for a 6 day working week with up to 12 hours per day spent at work. In July last year, during my second extended research trip to Tanzania, Mbaya Wao was made a supervisor at the supermarket. However those in this type of regular and salaried employment formed a small proportion of the rappers that I interviewed. The largest number of rappers was engaged in what is termed in Dar es Salaam *deiwaka* (day work) or *kazi siku moja moja* (work gained day by day). The rapper Gang Star (Ally Mohammedi), for example, was engaged in various types of day work during my fieldwork. When I initially met Ally he was working as a taxi driver in the Msasani neighbourhood of Dar es Salaam. The majority of taxi drivers at the stand where Ally was working hired their cars from wealthier Tanzanians. At the end of each week the driver is required to return an agreed

sum of money to the owner of the car. The owner of the car is responsible for its upkeep and the driver for purchasing petrol and keeping the car clean. As a *deiwaka*, Ally's employment came about only when one of the drivers was, for some reason, unable or unwilling to drive his car. This was often during less profitable periods such as in the late evening or early morning when customers were scarce and the car's regular driver was resting. Before receiving the car a fee was agreed between Ally and the regular driver and any income generated on top of this fee was Ally's to keep. In some instances the fee agreed with the regular driver was not achieved, in which case Ally worked at a loss. By its nature, day work is insecure. There may be periods when an individual is out of work, and the remuneration received for work is negotiated on a day by day basis. On one occasion, the owner of a vehicle that Ally was regularly driving as a *deiwaka* saw him driving her car and asked the principal driver to no longer hire the car to a *deiwaka* who she perceived as less careful. Personal relationships and networks with those who are able to offer employment, in Ally's case the regular drivers, are important. The decision of who to offer your car to gave the regular drivers some power and there were periods when, for a variety of reasons, Ally might not have access to a vehicle. During these periods Ally would seek other forms of *deiwaka* work which included driving a *dala dala*.

In Rizzo's work on *dala dalas* in Dar es Salaam he describes the way in which drivers of *dala dala* gave their vehicles to *deiwaka* for a portion of the day. From this, those in day work, or what Rizzo terms "*watu wa benchi* (people on the bench)", were able to earn a very modest income (Rizzo 2011, 1189). Rizzo recognises three classes of workers on *dala dala* routes, the regular drivers, *deiwaka* who usually act as bus conductors and *wapiga debe* (one who beats on tin) whose role is to attract customers in between stops. This model of different

classes could be extended to the area in which Ally was working as a taxi driver in Msasani. There were the regular drivers, who had made agreements with the cars' owners, the *deiwaka* who were often to be found seated at the local maskani waiting for the opportunity to gain some customers or drive a car. The third group were a group of car washers, for whom the taxi drivers were a major source of custom and who operated from a football pitch next to the maskani. These three forms of workers perform different roles, the work of one contingent on the decisions of the other. A hierarchy was clearly in operation between those engaged in the three different forms of labour. The difference between the three classes operates not only on the level of social status and access to symbolic capital of a vehicle, but also in financial terms. Regular drivers earned greater income and could use the car as a way of gaining additional income when not in use, *deiwaka* earned less than regular drivers but could develop a set of regular customers. The car washers earned significantly less than either the *deiwaka* or regular drivers.

Another source of income-generating activity engaged in by rappers was what is termed *mishe mishe*. This was frequently translated as "looking for money", or "permanent struggle" (Reuster-Jahn and Kiebling 2006, 151) but might be colloquially defined by the English term 'hustling'. It was often difficult to pin down precisely what set of activities the rappers were referring to when they said that they were engaging in *mishe mishe*. This activity seemed to refer to acting as an intermediary in some form of business. An example included a situation in which a rapper sought to gain a fee from playing a part in the linking of a tenant to a house for rent. The finding of housing to rent in Dar es Salaam can be a difficult affair which relies on personal networks. There are numerous opportunities to insert oneself into this network and seek to gain a portion of the rental fee thereby. Other

forms of *mishe mishe* included the sale of goods, both legal and illegal. Quiz B, a rapper who originated from Tanga on the coast north of Dar es Salaam, gained his income from being an intermediary in the trade in oranges which came to Dar es Salaam from Tanga. On meeting one of the young rappers with whom I was introduced at a *maskani* in Mwananyamala, it was clear that the sale of marijuana formed a significant part of its economic activities. The members of the *maskani* were sitting on a series of benches and tree trunks which lay on the ground. Each of the benches had a large amount of marijuana laid on newspaper which was being divided into smaller packages wrapped up in newspaper. Another artist I interviewed informed me that he had been selling marijuana in order to make a living, since moving to Dar es Salaam a number of years earlier. Much like *deiwaka*, the ability to conduct *mishe mishe* is contingent on others, on the ability to insert oneself into a business deal, or on getting access to goods which could be sold on at a profit.

The degree of educational attainment varied among the underground rappers that I interviewed. It is common practice, in Tanzanian schools, for pupils to re-sit part or all of a school year. A small number of the rappers who I interviewed had yet to complete primary school and some, though having completed primary school, had not attended secondary school. The majority had attended, but not completed, secondary school education and a small number were awaiting the opportunity to attend University. Following independence, education was a priority for Julius Nyerere's government (Nyerere 1969, 267-290, Cornelli 2012, 47-49). With government investment and the introduction of compulsory enrolment, by 1980 the school enrolment rate in Tanzania had reached 98% (Kondylis and Manacorda 2012, 36). The liberalisation of the economy from the late 1980s onwards led to the

establishment of private and fee paying schools, both primary and secondary, and a subsequent fall in overall school enrolment rates to between 66% and 75% by the late nineties. In 2002, enrolment fees at primary schools were abolished and enrolment rates have since been steadily rising (Vavrus 2005, 183). However, fee payment for secondary schooling, and payment for those resources necessary for study, are still commonplace in Tanzania. Access to education is commonly seen by Tanzanians as essential to improving one's lot in life, and the degree of education that an individual has received is one of the key markers of an individual's social status.

None of the underground rappers that I encountered came from the wealthier areas of Dar es Salaam, which may be a reflection of the relative affordability of recording music for rappers from wealthier families. Among the rappers that I met, many of whom spent a great deal of time rapping together, there was a great deal of heterogeneity, both in their work and in their educational experience. While none of the rappers came from areas designated as *uzunguni*, or had access to the most elite secondary school establishments, their backgrounds did vary considerably. If one was to use the distinction that Rizzo makes between classes, then rappers clearly represent divergent class categories. Rapping was not only engaged in by those most marginalised in education and employment.

***Maskani* – Spaces of Sociality and Recognition**

In many ways the heterogeneity of underground rappers reflects the heterogeneity of the spaces within which their performances occur. The spaces in which rapping takes place have played a significant role in shaping rapped practice. I conducted fieldwork at a number

of key sites, situated right across the city. These included Buza, Kiwalani, Mwananyamala, Keko, Mikocheni, Kijitonyama, Msasani and Sinza. These areas vary quite considerably. Kijitonyama and Sinza are comprised of largely planned housing, with streets in grid-like patterns and with formal connections to both water and electricity supply (though these are regularly subject to shortages). Msasani and Mikocheni were largely planned areas occupied by wealthier middle class families but had *uswahilini*, informally established and unplanned areas of greater poverty, within them. These areas were often poorly supplied in terms of water and electricity services. In the case of Msasani there is a significant *uswahilini* neighbourhood behind the recently constructed American embassy. Buza and Kiwalani are both some distance from the centre of the city and have a mixture of planned and *uswahilini* housing. Both Buza and Kiwalani are less densely populated than all the other more central neighbourhoods. Kinondoni and Keko are large *uswahilini* areas which are densely populated. As outlined earlier in this thesis, *uswahilini* neighbourhoods are diverse and house a growing number of middle class families. Significant numbers of government employees choose to build, or rent, housing in *uswahilini* neighbourhoods, and this has led to a degree of class heterogeneity in these areas.

Across *uswahilini* neighbourhoods, street corners, occupied by men and referred to as *kijiweni* (little stone) or *maskani* (dwelling or abode), are the dominant sites of male socialising. *Maskanis* vary in their nature; some are almost permanently occupied and acquire their own markings of permanence such as plastic chairs and wooden benches. Other *maskanis* have a more temporary quality, moving between sites in the neighbourhood. *Maskanis* are frequently situated at the site of some form of labour or commercial activity, such as by taxi stands or close to shops. Particularly for younger men

with less access to money, *maskanis* may be situated at any recognisable landmark, for example under a large tree or on a street corner, and need not have any permanent features. These *maskanis* are frequently not occupied during the day but become occupied in the evening.

Maskanis are marked as particular sites, distinct from *mitaa* 'the street', through the spatial occupation of the *maskani* by young men and by the enactment of rituals such as the shaking of members' hands on entering and leaving the *maskani*. Through their physical occupation, as well as marking, of space these young men engage in a resignification of this space. The *maskani* is signified as a base or dwelling separate from the undifferentiated street. As Langevang suggests of spaces in which young men gather in Accra; "essentially it is the spatial gathering of the bodies of young men that produces the base" (Langevang 2008, 232). While there is neither fixed membership, nor any official leadership, at a *maskani*, some forms of social control by its members are enacted. In situations of conflict an individual may be reprimanded or asked to leave the *maskani*. *Maskanis* have also been sites of concern and possibly of social disturbance for idle youth. As Perullo writes

Due to the visibility of *kijiwani*, many citizens have come to associate youth who gather on street corners as lazy, unimaginative, dirty, and parasitic.
(Perullo 2011, 32)

Maskanis are open social spaces and can be joined by new members. However, in all of the rappers' *maskanis* where I spent time they informed me that wealthier Tanzanians,

described in street Swahili as *mboga nane*²⁹ (eight side dishes), would not be welcome at the *maskani*. I was informed that nothing would be done to prevent someone considered *mboga nane* from spending time in the *maskani*, but they were not appropriate places for wealthier Tanzanians, as they had their own spaces in which to socialise.

The physical space occupied by *maskanis* vary. Mbaya Wao's *maskani* was situated next to a barber's shop in which one of his friends, Majivu (which means ashes), also a rapper, worked. A wooden bench was kept in the barber's shop and could be taken out when members of the *maskani* were meeting. Electricity from the barber shop could then be used to play music. This *maskani* is unusual in having access to electricity on which to play music. Most rap performances in *maskanis* are not accompanied by music, the rhythm being set internally by the rapper or by clapping from the *maskani*'s other members. Salim Muba's *maskani* in Kiwalani is situated at a passageway between buildings and there are no features that indicate this to be the site of a *maskani* apart from in the instance that the bodies of the young men occupy the space.

²⁹ *Mboga nane* refers to the number of accompanying dishes which wealthier Tanzanians are believed to accompany their staple of rice or ugali.



Figure 4 – Salim Muba and his *maskani* in Kiwalani Dar es Salaam



Figure 5 – Mbaya Wao and Majivu drinking coffee at the *maskani*

A *maskani* represents a site of belonging for often marginal young men in the city. These are spaces controlled by the young men that occupy them. *Maskanis* are spaces of intense discussion, gossip, joking and storytelling (Moyer 2003, 145). They provide a space for performance and enjoyment for those excluded by lack of money from night clubs, bars and other formal places of pleasure. As Moyer points out, these were frequently places associated with linguistic virtuosity and “outsiders come to Maskani to hear stories; they are rarely disappointed” (Moyer 2005, 32). For the majority of the underground rappers that I encountered, *maskanis* were principally sites for the practice and discussion of rapping. As Kizito, an underground rapper, says of his *maskani* in Chang’ombe; “it is our principle if you don’t know how to do that” (to rap) “you cannot share in *maskani*.” Mbaya Wao’s *maskani* was frequented by other rappers and was a site for sharing lyrics, ideas and discussions which centred largely on rapping. There were numerous times during our meetings in which a number of those in the *maskani* would break into their lyrics, accompanied by music from the stereo. Each rapper in the group would take a turn to rap, and would receive praise and critique from the other members of the *maskani*. While others passing on the street could briefly join this *maskani* to listen, unless they also wanted to rap they were not welcome to stay for too long. Membership of the *maskani* was dependent on the ability to rap, and in this, I think, my membership was the exception which proves the rule. As Weiss’ work on *kijiwenis* in Arusha (Weiss 2009), Geenen’s work on gangs in Kinshasa and their use of public space to create *salle* (a living room) (Geenen 2009) and Masquelier’s work on *fadas* (tea ceremonies) in Niger (Masquelier 2013) all point to the appropriation of public space by young people in Africa to perform new forms of sociality. Young people occupy, make and name space as a way of resignifying and, as Geenen argues, to “colonize with value and meaning” (Geenen 2009, 360).

For others, such as Salim Muba's *maskani* in Kiwalani, the membership of the *maskani* was a mixture of rappers and non-rappers. As Salim described:

sometimes we can be five of us, or sometimes my friends they can be there,
and I can be rapping and they can be listening to me; that's what we are doing.
Even if they are not hip hop artists, they can listen to me. So that they can give
me their comments.

The degree of seriousness with which these rappers took the practice of rapping varied. Salim's brother, Omari Muba, had recorded and performed rap music since 2001. Salim hoped to follow his brother into the music industry, and consequently viewed rapping as a possible source of income, and took the skills required to achieve this very seriously. For others in the *maskani*, rapping was something done solely for the entertainment of the other members of the *maskani*.

Mamadou Diouf argues that

Excluded from the arenas of power, work, education, and leisure, young
Africans construct places of socialization and new sociabilities whose function
is to show their difference, either on the margins of society or at its heart,
simultaneously as victims and active agents, and circulating in a geography
that escapes the limits of the national territory. (Diouf 2003, 5)

Maskanis are the key site within which underground rappers are able to perform their identities as rappers. It is within the confines of a rapper's own *maskani*, and depending on the rapper's local renown at other *maskanis*, that his identity as a rapper can be fashioned and negotiated. A rapper who called himself Man Go Tree, or Mma Njaa, described how he would be asked on the street to perform for other *maskanis* in the areas of Kinondoni, Magomeni and Mbagala.

People who have the problem like me, they have no money to pay to go to a nightclub but they want to hear what the artist sings..... I don't get paid money. But when people tell me that I perform well this is worth more than money.

Mma Njaa expressed his ability to rap as something intrinsic to personhood; an innate ability. He said that he felt he had been placed here by God to give a message to people, that his ability to rap was in fact a God given gift. The identity of the rapper differentiates him from the other *maskani* members. He sees himself, and to a greater or lesser extent is seen by others, as an individual marked out from the group. When performing he uses both his words and his physicality to assume centre stage, to express himself and to occupy social space.

***Kampu* – Performance and the Politics of Presence**

Some *maskanis* have developed more formal structures, and a wider and more defined role within the lives of its members. *Kampu* are in many respects similar to *maskanis*; they often occupy a defined space, sometimes marking it with graffiti, and members meet on a

frequent basis. However, *kampu* are differentiated from *maskanis* by their level of organisation, and the wider role that they seek to play in their members' lives. Members of *kampu* are asked to contribute financially to the organisation of events comprising musical and dance performance. A large number of the underground rappers I interviewed had performed at *kampu* throughout the city. These were key spaces in which underground artists could perform on a stage, and to an audience which was larger than their *maskani*.

These events, called *kampu* (from the English camp) or *vigodoro* (small mattress), are only held in the informal neighbourhoods of *uswahilini*. The use of equipment to amplify sound enables the *kampu* to address a far wider group of listeners. Typically starting in the evening at 9 or 10 pm and ending, electricity permitting, in the early morning, *kampu* dominate *uswahilini*, both spatially and sonically. Staged in an open area of *uswahilini*, often a street or sports pitch, *kampu* form a local spectacle. The narrow streets will be blocked for vehicles as a stage is erected at one end of the open area and speakers at the other mark out the space for the *kampu*. Large loudspeakers transmit music, as well as the voice of performers, across *uswahilini*. Each member of the committee contributes financially to the arrangements of the event. Such funds are used to finance the building of a stage, renting of sound equipment and supply of drinks for the performers. Contributions vary from 5,000 Tanzanian Shillings³⁰ per person upwards. These events exist largely outside the control of the state, entrepreneurial and communal interests. There is no police presence at *kampu*, though the local police, or political leader of the *mtaa* urban area, are informed that the *kampu* will be held. The organising committee, also referred to as *kampu*, invites rappers, singers and dancers from local *maskanis* and other *kampu* to perform.

³⁰ The equivalent of five dollars.

Handwritten letters, or text messages, are sent to other *kampu* and *maskanis* inviting people to perform. No remuneration is offered to invited performers and no charges are made for attending *kampu*. The event formally begins with the invitation of the organising committee onto the stage to receive a piece of cake in recognition of their contribution. Dance and musical performances follow this. A rota of artists who are due to perform is kept by members of the organising committee, who preside over the event, announcing each performer as they begin their act. Gaps in between performances are common, as electricity cuts out or generators run out of fuel. While dances may be accompanied by music from older, more established music genres of bolingo, a music form heavily influenced by Congolese Rhumba, or *dansi*, a Tanzanian music genre with its origins in the fox trot, Afro Cuban and Congolese music (Askew 2002, 90), singing is almost exclusively in genres associated with *muziki wa kizazi kipyaa* – reggae, RnB, Hip Hop and Bongo Flava. I include below an extensive extract from my field notes about a *kampu* I attended in Keko.

A stage had been erected in one of the streets and was blocking access for anyone but pedestrians who could manoeuvre on either side of the stage. The stage itself was made from wooden planks built into a frame which extended approximately 10 feet into the air. There were loudspeakers on either side of the stage and a stack of loudspeakers further down the road away from the stage – effectively marking the area in which the *kampu* was to take place. The audience at the *kampu* was of mixed age and gender. In a stall, from which music was sold during the daytime, placed close to the stage, a DJ had been installed.

The first part of the performance was a thank you to all those who had financially contributed to the organisation of the event; this was done by inviting them on to the stage and giving them a piece of cake. There were between 20-30 people in the organisational committee and each of them appeared to be in their mid teens to early 20s. The whole event was presided over by 3 young women who, using a microphone, invited participants to the stage. This was followed by a series of dance performances, some done by individuals while others were performed by groups. The performances varied between those that gave the impression of having been tightly choreographed and practised to those that seemed largely improvised. These performances were followed by singers and rappers who performed over instrumental tracks which had been given to the DJ.

There were constant interruptions to the performances as there was no electricity supply that day. While a generator had been procured, it did not dispense enough power to run the sound system consistently. This led to tension between some of the younger male members of the audience and frequent fights broke out and disrupted the performances. The degree of violence displayed in the fights escalated as the event continued. Initially there was a degree of pushing and shoving between some of the young men, later, sticks were picked up, and towards the end of the *kampu* large stones had been picked up and thrown by some of the young men.

As O-Key said of organising his *kampu* in Keko:

you have to promote your *kampu* so people can know it. Let's do a celebration, so like celebration we have to invite as many people from other areas.

Those who perform regularly at *kampu* can gain status and become local celebrities. *Kampu* form a local economy of reputation, in which both the collective *kampu*, and individual rappers' importance, can be recognised. This reputation can enable performance much further afield, with underground rappers I have interviewed travelling as far as Arusha, approximately 650 kilometres, and Dodoma, approximately 520 kilometres from Dar es Salaam, to perform. O-Key said that he performed so many *kampu* in one year that "you can't count it". Underground rappers receive no remuneration for performing at *kampu* but are offered a space of recognition.

Young men involved in the *kampu* are occupying and claiming both social and physical space. *Kampu* are thus a means through which young people assert control over physical, sonic and social space. They represent a politics of presence. While young people dominate organisation and performance at *kampu*, the audience is made up of a mix of children, youth and adults. In part, this may be a reflection of the difficulty inhabitants of the area have in sleeping. Young people make up the most active and engaged members of the audience, dominating the dance area in large boisterous groups, while the older members of the audience usually stand at the side of the performance and dance area, looking on. More than the *maskani*, *kampu* are transgressive spaces. During these concerts, the smell of marijuana and *gongo*³¹ hangs in the air. Performers, and the audience, are able to

³¹ Gongo is a form of locally produced spirit.

engage in more sexually explicit dialogue than is acceptable in public spaces in the everyday.

Young people also transgress boundaries through their domination of public space. In prolonged breaks in the programme, disturbances and fights between young men sometimes break out. Music booms from the speakers, making conversation difficult, even with those in close proximity. Large groups of principally young men move around the performance area, joining in with notable performances and dancing to popular songs. Less popular, or accomplished, performers frequently receive a raucous reception. The audience engages the members of the organising committee, as they announce each act, with requests, sometimes ribald requests. Young men, in particular, occupy areas in close proximity to the stage. The audience for the performances waxes and wanes, as members disappear down the web of narrow alleys only to reappear later.

Uswahilini neighbourhoods are central to the practice of underground rapping. These are the spaces in which *kampu* are held and where many of the *maskani* in which underground rappers meet are situated. Not all of the underground rappers that I interviewed lived in *uswahilini* neighbourhoods, though those rappers that lived in planned housing areas would frequently travel to *uswahilini* areas to perform at *maskani* and *kampu*. The organisation of *kampu* is closely tied to the spaces within which they are held. *Kampu* are held exclusively in *uswahilini* neighbourhoods, and can be read as an assertion not only of individual but of collective identity. They are an expression of neighbourhood pride, of pride in a distinctly *uswahilini* culture. As I suggested in the first chapter, *uswahilini* neighbourhoods are perceived by residents as different from

uzunguzi or *uhindini*; to have their own distinct culture. They are liminal spaces within which transgressive behaviour occurs. *Kampu* subvert the social order by placing young people in charge of social space and allowing transgressive behaviour such as the consumption of *gongo* and marijuana.

Uswahilini areas are perceived by many underground rappers as marginal spaces not frequently visited by outsiders, and largely ignored by the authorities and the elite. In Mvasani, there are *uswahilini* neighbourhoods which spread out along either side of Kimweri Avenue. As the houses are low, the neighbourhood is obscured from view by the larger shop fronts and businesses which line the Avenue. Many *uswahilini* neighbourhoods are effectively invisible, in this way. These are characterised, by the rappers that I interviewed, as spaces within which communitarian values are practised; where neighbours take care of one another and in which residents can safely borrow from each other. *Uswahilini* areas are, paradoxically, presented by rappers as both marginal and central. They are home for the majority of Dar es Salaam's residents and vital to the practice of rapping.

Since the turn of the nineteenth century, when hometown development and security associations were founded, various forms of association have provided an important element of social life in Dar es Salaam (Tripp 1997, 13). Local associations, often more closely associated with the African elite, have played a part in the development of local football teams and dance bands (Graebner 2000, Tsuruta 2003). The development of *kampu* has in many ways followed the associational model. Both Ze Boy One Dar (Seif Nunduma) and Bkhari Mahadhara had been fundamental to the founding of *madini*

(diamond) *kampu* in Kindondoni Hanna Nasifu. As well as organising two events, members of *madini kampu* had continued to contribute to a fund following events. This fund could then be called on by its members in times of celebration or adversity, for example to pay for a funeral or wedding. Bakhari explained that before the *kampu* event was beginning it was explained that “the aim of the *kampu* was helping each other”. *Kampu* generate city-wide networks of young people; networks that can be activated to help individuals deal with adversity, celebrate occasions and find work and opportunities. As Fokwang suggests, in the case of Cameroon

associations therefore provide scope for the construction and articulation of new identities, sociabilities and emergent forms of citizenship, which potentially deny the state its primary role in defining citizenship (Fokwang 2008, 161).

It is also possible to see, in the more practical arrangement of *kampu*, young people’s response to living in precarious and difficult circumstances. These new social phenomena, developed by young men in Tanzania, may be seen to represent a form of moral economy or economy of affection. In the moral economy “a subsistence ethic of social responsibility underlies moral values” (Bryceson 2010, 267), while the economy of affection is one “in which the affective ties based on common decency, common residence, etc., prevail.....familial and other communal ties provide the basis for organized activity” (Hyden 1982, 18). Through *maskanis* and *kampu* young men form a series of ties and relationships with others in their neighbourhood. In the instances of the *Madini kampu* and the KGM *maskani*, these relationships involved supporting significant social events in the lives of its members.

While I have sought to illustrate that the young men engaged in rapping come from heterogeneous backgrounds, a great number of them are living in extremely precarious positions. Both *kampu* and *maskanis* offer such young men ways of developing ties of affection, through which they can not only negotiate the city but seek to support each other in times of adversity. While it may be stating the case too powerfully to suggest that *kampu* or *maskini* represent a moral economy, or economy of affection, these models offer interesting ways to explore the reciprocity required of residents from the same neighbourhoods, in their development of *kampu*.

Underground Performance Practice

Rapping is not only a musical act, but also a physical and performative act. Underground rappers' lyrics are delivered in rhythmical, staccato verses. Rapping including the speed and force with which raps are delivered, and the projection of the voice is an act of physical exertion. The act of rapping alters the bodily stance, and breathing. Rapping is commonly accompanied by bodily movements made in time to an imagined beat. Bodily gestures, such as the use of hand gestures or the nodding of the head to emphasise the rhythm, often accompany rapping. More public performances at *kampu*, or in well attended *maskanis*, might include, for example, the bending of knees and a hand grabbing the crotch of the trousers by rappers. This is a stance commonly associated with male rappers in Tanzania. The act of rapping affects rappers' physicality and subjectivity.

Kuchana (rapping) is regarded by underground rappers as a principally masculine activity. The very act of rapping, as opposed to singing, is perceived as 'hard', 'tough' or 'aggressive' and therefore suited to the performance of masculinity. The forceful movement of rappers' hands into space around them, as well as emphasising the rhythm of the rapper's speech, helps to dominate physical space. It is through the very physicality of rap performance that underground rappers are able to embody the persona of the rapper. Rapping is a form of subjectivity; as the rapper Soul Jeezy said:

sometimes you can be at home chilling and you find yourself automatically singing or rapping because it came up it just came up from the bottom of your heart and it came up from your brain. So you find yourself automatically singing and rapping.

For many underground rappers, the persona of the 'rapper' is embodied at all times, not only during performances. One way in which rappers embody their identity as a rapper is by adopting an artistic name different from their given or family name. For some rappers, for example Mbaya Wao, or bad man, his artistic name represented a projection of his artistic persona. The name Mbaya Wao suggests a toughness that is both physical and lyrical. This representation of masculinity in the choice of names was not peculiar to Mbaya Wao; another of the underground rappers I interviewed had taken the title Sokwe (Gorilla). In other instances, for example the rapper Nywele Mbili (two hairs), his artistic name referred only to an element of his personal appearance. For the most committed of underground rappers, their identity as a rapper is embodied at all times and performed in their way of

holding themselves, of walking and talking. This sentiment was most fully expressed by the rapper Omari Muba:

being a rapper OK I feel great, I feel that I am complete now. Before being a rapper I was not complete, I was not a rapper... You do just like a man, a soldier, it's hard music, you can express something hard.

Being a rapper is linked to both physical and psychological toughness. Mbaya Wao explained that the knowledge and understanding he had acquired through rapping influenced his everyday behaviour and relationships with family, friends and work colleagues. There were regularly moments of tension between the managers and workers at the supermarket where Mbaya Wao worked. During the course of my research several of his colleagues working on the shop floor were fired. Mbaya Wao credited his ability to navigate the politics of his work environment to an understanding of the world he had gained from rapping. Being a rapper was part of Mbaya Wao's subjectivity, his very being in the world. As he expressed this, "you're born a man so you have to show the world I am a man."

Displaying Knowledge

This masculine persona of the rapper is sustained not only through the performance of masculinity but through the acquisition and displaying of knowledge. Having knowledge is an essential element of a rapper's identity. Acquiring and mobilising knowledge, broadly constituted, enables rappers to create new texts. Rappers draw on different forms of

knowledge. Other texts, including books, newspapers and films are a form of knowledge mobilised by rappers. As rapper O-Key said:

You can't compose music without to open books. Today I can do the revolutionary track, so I have to learn about Martin Luther King. So you get knowledge there, you get more knowledge so you can write your tracks.... In the music studying is a daily life if you want to do biggest music, and beautiful tracks, the tracks that you use the brain, you have to study daily. For example in my room there are so many books over there. I used to study every day because I'm doing the hip hop and hip hop you have to study.

Texts help to give rappers knowledge, which they could then use to interpret the world. For example the narratives in films offered both a knowledge of life in a different place, typically America or Nigeria, as well as of different subjectivities. In one exchange at the *maskani* in Kiwalani I was questioned about Hitler and whether the holocaust really had happened. The groups knowledge about the building of the autobahns in 1930s Germany was reinterpreted such as to offer a critique of the corruption and weakness of Tanzania's current political class. The wider the sources of knowledge the better, and more interesting, lyrics rappers would write.

One rapper, Francis Stephen Nehata, who called himself Mad Brain or Che Mkweli (true Che), described a process akin to conducting a form of field work which he engaged in to give his lyrics substance. At this time Francis was working as a civil engineer building Dodoma University and had returned to Dar es Salaam to visit family. Francis spent time

both with children living on the streets as well as with prostitutes at some of Dar es Salaam's more notorious bars. This research, conducted over the course of several years, was to enable Francis to understand and describe the 'reality' of the situation in which these people found themselves. This was work that Francis compared to that of being a journalist.

Rapping is a space for self improvement. It is a space outside formal education, from which many underground rappers are excluded by financial demands, in which rappers are able to gain, exchange and demonstrate knowledge. Knowledge acts as a form of social capital, the displaying of which is able to elevate the status of the individual within their *maskani*.

Rappers frequently describe their role in society as one of educators or teachers. Majivu, who is a barber and was part of Mbaya Wao's *maskani*, expressed the role of the rapper as being like that of a passenger in a bus which is being badly driven. The role of the rapper is to be voice of the passengers and to inform and advise bus drivers in which aspects of their driving they are making mistakes. In this analogy, rappers are of the people, but the rapper has a special role to act as their voice and advise how the driver (the political elite) should correct their driving (the way in which the country is going).

The role of educator was not only applied to the political elite, but was assumed by rappers in relation to the wider public. Rap was, for example, also seen to have a role in educating people about social issues such as Aids. Underground rappers also saw a role in educating the wider society about life in *uswahilini*. As Mbaya Wao explained:

Music is a good to speak different problems, the life that we face which is

basically based on a society especially on economics and politics and what and what. The problem facing society. You have to show society different feelings, how people looks like and how the society is.

In this underground, rappers place themselves firmly within an established tradition of popular music in Tanzania, with Martin writing of Mbaraka Mwinshehe that he assumed “the role of urban musician as educator” (Martin 1991, 51). Dr Remmy Ongala has also been noted by many scholars for using his role as a musician to educate his audiences, as Hilhorst suggests “Remmy plays on his reputation as a ‘Doctor’ to educate his audience” (Hilhorst 2009, 107).

Rappers also display knowledge and skill in the very ability to rap. Rap itself is constructed as a form of knowledge. This knowledge can be displayed through the intertextual referencing of other rappers’ work or through displays of skill in the ‘art’ of rapping. Skills specific to rapping, such as “flow” and “rapport”, are defined by rappers. While both concepts are somewhat difficult to pin down, “flow” is defined by Alim as “the temporal relationship between the beats and the rhymes” (Alim 2006, 15). Rapport might loosely be defined as the relationship between the beats and the voice of the rapper. Rapport and flow are skills that can be acquired, that can be learnt from both the exchange of opinions with other rappers, and from listening to other rappers’ music. Listening to rap music becomes a form of acquiring knowledge in itself. An individual’s depth of knowledge of rap music can be measured. Rappers can study the “skills” of other rappers and seek to learn new ways of expressing themselves from this. These skills, as well as the general knowledge of language and skill in using language, can be measured, somewhat subjectively, by

rappers. Rappers can thereby compare their degree of knowledge, and the level of their skills, against each other.

Rapping provides a medium for the domestication of ideas. It is, in part, through the creative process of thinking of lyrics that the knowledge and ideas acquired by rappers are domesticated. When writing or thinking of lyrics, rappers are interrogating the knowledge they have gained, and finding ways to rearticulate this. Rappers do not passively consume the images, ideas and knowledge that they gather but rearticulate this knowledge embedded within their own discursive frames. For example, as earlier cited, rappers in Kiwalani imagine the building of the autobahns in Germany as a developmental project. Rappers not only domesticate ideas, but confront the problems that they encounter in everyday life. Much of the content of the lyrics of underground rappers deals with the difficulties faced by young, underemployed men. As Soul Jeezy explained:

When I say knowledge, the knowledge I am talking about is hip hop knowledge. Like for instance when you go on the street there is a way to survive in the street, how we live in the street, how we communicate with our people. How can you put a message on a music. When you listen to hip hop you can find a people getting very deep knowledge and explanation. So that you get something from there is talking about street, talking about life, any kind of situation is there where you get knowledge.

In the process of expression rappers are able to transform the problems that they rap about into meaning. As Weiss writes of barber shops in Arusha; “‘having thoughts’ is not only

about creatively working through present conditions so as to realize a meaningful future; it is about *confronting* the present as an obstacle to that realization” (Weiss 2005, 110). By creating texts about the difficulties that they face, rappers become actor; they are not only acted upon by local and global forces, but domesticate and rearticulate these forces.

Subjectivities and Embodying the Rapper

Rappers, both in the physicality of their performance as well as their quest for, and articulation of, knowledge, embody the persona of a rapper. In this process of embodiment, underground rappers are linking themselves to a transnational imaginary of the rapper. Ways of walking and talking are influenced by globally circulated images. Elements of style, for example the wearing of baseball caps, come to influence the style of underground rappers in Dar es Salaam. The physicality of hand gestures (popularly referred to as ‘rap hands’), and of head nodding, borrow from the transnational imaginary of rap images and videos. Videos offer ideals of how to rap. Even while some may not fully grasp the lyrics, significant tones, cadences and patterns of speech can be borrowed from them nonetheless. Underground rappers talk of each other’s ‘swagger’, a term borrowed from the global hip hop lexicon. As defined by Bradley

Swagger, or just *swag*, is the essential quality of lyrical confidence. It expresses itself in an MC’s vocal delivery, in confidence and even brashness. *Swagger* is difficult to describe, but you know it when you hear it. (Bradley 2009, 180)

Swagger, becomes Swag in the Kenyan context and is defined by Mose below as

the element or component, made up of braggadocio, lyrical and performance skill that first, gives an artist a unique 'street' identity and secondly, a symbolic capital that gains him the credibility crucial in producing a hip hop aesthetic and being representative of a marginalized periphery (Mose 2013, 112)

More broadly defined by underground rappers in Tanzania, swagger is the confidence with which rappers hold themselves and the attitude that they project. In the line below, taken from one of the rappers at the *Manjutu maskani* in Mikocheni, the artist uses the idea of swagger to suggest that it is dangerous to challenge him. His swagger is dangerous to other rappers.

Hii ni danger zone kuwa makini usitusu hii ndio swagger

This is the danger zone be careful don't try this is swagger

Swagger is a nebulous concept, frequently referred to but hard to pin down. It is a significant but mercurial quality; a term frequently used, and borrowed from the lexicon of global speech related to the hip hop genre. Swagger is a form of subjectivity.

Underground rappers fashion themselves as part of a pantheon of global hip hop performers. Underground rappers engage in a physical practice, whose forms are in part taken from a transnational practice. Perullo argues, of the early rappers in Tanzania

Imitation was a means to embody the persona of others imagined to be successful, powerful, and prosperous. (Perullo 2011, 164-165)

Underground rappers are not so much imitating, as using global images as part of a wider repertoire of images and idealised persona from which to fashion themselves. This act of self-styling draws on existing discourses and their associated symbolic presences.

Underground rappers frequently articulate their dreams and desires as those of national and even international success. In 2009 I met Evans Venance (Evans MC) an underground rapper who lived in the accommodation reserved for the workers and their families at the Oyster Bay police station in Msasani. Evans was 22 and had been rapping since he was 16. In 2005 he had recorded 6 songs at a friend's studio, though he had not had the financial ability to release these songs to radio stations. He had performed at talent shows organised by local media organisations, including those frequently held at Coco beach in Dar es Salaam. Despite a seemingly limited field of connections, and access to the financial resources required to publicise his music more widely, Evans expressed the belief that, given an opportunity, one day he would become an internationally famous artist. This expression of confidence in their ability, and dreams of success, was something that I encountered with several of the rappers that I interviewed. In some instances, this was expressed as a belief that they would achieve international success; in other instances, as a belief that they were as proficient an artist as those who were internationally successful. This self confidence might here be interpreted as an expression of swagger. It might also be read as a further embodiment of the persona of the transnational figure of the rapper.

An important feature of embodying the persona of the rapper is engaging in the same practice as that of established global rap stars. There is equivalence to their behaviour, of which rappers are keenly aware. They are conscious of rapping as a transnational practice. This said, when asked about their relationship to the global practice of rapping, underground rappers were keen to stress that they were the same as, but also different from, the transnational figures that they referenced. Underground rappers engage in a complex of both claiming similarity with, and distance from, the transnational figure of the rapper. Lunya, a rapper from Kiwalani, explained that he rapped because it was in his blood, because he is black, and that 50 Cent and Jay-Z were also Africans like him. Rappers such as The Game were of the same race and doing the same things as him. Lunya was equally keen to stress that their lives were different, that theirs was a good life while his was hard and difficult. This equivocation of rappers was not always based around race, as Kizito, when explaining why he liked the rapper Eminem, drew equivalence between him and a well known Tanzanian rapper. “He (Eminem) is struggling like African. He’s struggling the same like Jay Moe.”

Rapping is not only a physical act, but one which acts on a rapper’s subjectivity. When discussing how they felt when rapping, the Swahili word *mzuka* was frequently used by underground rappers. *Mzuka* is translated by Reuster-Jahn and Kiebling as a “‘sudden apparition, pop-up, spirit, ghost’” (Reuster-Jahn and Kiebling 2006, 160). It was translated, by many of my informants, as ‘to be possessed; possession’. Lunya described his feeling when rapping as “*mzuka kubwa sana*” as to be very high or deeply possessed. Stroeken, writing on Chwezi spirit possession, suggests that to be possessed, in part, “signals expansion of consciousness, sense, and self” (Stroeken 2006, 787). I do not wish to make

the case that the practice of rapping by underground rappers is analogous to that of spirit possession. However the common use of the word *mzuka*, and descriptions of feeling such as this by Omari Muba “I feel great so higher the place than no one can be. In a feeling that no one can touch that feeling”, suggest it is a means through which the rappers can expand and alter their consciousness. The act of rapping transforms the emotional state and subjectivities of underground rappers. Rapping is a transformative state, a state of being possessed, of being moved by strong emotions and of extending oneself beyond the confines of the physical self.

The subjectivity of rappers is altered when they rap; they perceive themselves, and others, differently. De Nora, writing about listening to music rather than the practice of making music, has argued that “music has transformative powers, it 'does' things, 'changes' things, 'makes things happen'.” (DeNora 1999, 32). Rapping is part of generating a sense of personhood for rappers. Rappers become someone; they create a social self which they perform, and which is recognised by their peers. Part of their practice seeks a change in social status. As Trapido writes of *mikiliste* (a category similar to the *sapeur*) in Kinshasa:

the *mikiliste* sensibility was a bid for status by an initially marginal group and that the movement was about escaping, in a fairly transient way, the psychological stress of being an ‘empty’ or ‘insignificant person’.

(Trapido 2011, 205-206)

This work of constructing the self through rapping, I would argue, is aimed not only at gaining recognition from the other young men at the *maskani*, or wider society in the

uswahilini neighbourhood, but is also aimed at a production of self for the individual.

DeNora further suggests that

actors engage in aesthetic reflexive activities of music consumption so as to produce themselves as types of actors imbued with specific feeling forms, attributes and identity characteristics, and as objects of knowledge to themselves and to others (DeNora 1999, 53).

This argument can be applied as well to the production as the consumption of music.

Underground rappers are engaged in producing themselves not only as social selves, but in the “articulation of self-image and for the adaptation of various emotional states associated with the self in social life” (DeNora 1999, 32). Engaging in rapping is a form of psychological agency, through which rappers are able to produce a self-image. As described earlier, this self-image is often inhabited more widely than in the moments of rapping, and thereby informs their social selves. Underground rappers, with little access to resources, use rapping as part of the work of fashioning the self; this self is not fashioned only as a person in reference to others but principally as a person in reference to the self.

Rapping, and the construction of identity by an underground rapper, is both a corporeal and imaginative practice. It is through this practice that underground rappers are able to associate themselves with a wider world of hip hop. During my research, the same international rappers, Nas, Jay Z and Tupac Shakur, were most commonly cited by rappers as role models and inspirations. The identity performed by underground rappers, including styles of rapping, the physical presence and ‘swagger’ of underground rappers, draws on

these transnational images. All of the underground rappers that I interviewed cited American rappers among those that had most influence upon them. Rap performance enables underground rappers to occupy imagined spaces in which they link themselves to the transnational practice of rapping. While many underground rappers were not able precisely to follow the lyrics of their favourite American rappers, they were familiar with, and drew on aspects of, their transnational image as artists to inform their own identity as rappers.

Thugs and Gangsters – Rapping and the Transnational Imagination

As has been noted by several observers of popular culture in Tanzania (Sanga 2010b, 152, Reuster-Jahn and Hacke 2011, 2, Perullo 2009, 108), figures of American hip hop practice, such as 50 cent, have become ubiquitous. Indeed, in Dar es Salaam, as in much of urban Tanzania, images of famous American rappers are common in barber shops (Weiss 2009). Frequently cited as an influence by underground rappers, Tupac represents perhaps the symbol of the rapper *par excellence*. With family members who had been part of the Black Panther movement in America, and named after the Inca leader Tupac Ameru, who fought against Spanish colonisation, Tupac's songs frequently deal with notions of marginalisation, impoverishment and the struggle of life in American inner cities. In his image, his lyrics, and ultimately in his life, he portrayed an image of masculinity, of toughness and of struggle. Tupac is perceived to symbolise a particular form of identity summed up in the term 'thug life', taken from his album title 'Thug Life Volume 1'.³² Thug Life was represented in his

³² Tupac's career and musical legacy is fiercely contested. For some commentators he has come to represent the violence and misogyny associated with hip hop, while for others he represents a voice speaking for marginalised young African American men from the inner city.

physical presence, as Tupac had this term tattooed across his chest. Tupac's public persona occupied two, often seemingly contradictory, positions. He engaged in political activism that "challenged White supremacy, discrimination, and injustice" (Stanford 2011, 3), yet his lyrics also often included "misogynistic lyrics, celebration of "thug-life," and association with violence" (Stanford 2011, 3-4). Since his death from a shooting in November 1994, Tupac has only exerted more power as a symbol of rap practice. The story of Tupac's feuds with other rappers, notably Notorious Big, and his unsolved death from a shooting, have made him a potent symbol. Prestholdt suggests that Tupac has the "ability to narrate divergent subject positions" which "when combined with his general criticism of systemic injustice and empathy for perpetrators as much as victims of violence, made Tupac a potent mirror of diverse desires: for courage and power, even among those who share few experiences beyond the celebration of Tupac" (Prestholdt 2009, 201). Thug life, and the figure of the "gangsta" embodied by Tupac, and its attendant discourses, has been widely appropriated in urban young men's lives (Weiss 2009, 124-126 and Weiss 2002, 103).

Underground rappers in Dar es Salaam have also appropriated the terminology of Thug Life. Tupac's music, life story and symbolic presence are consumed domesticated and re-articulated by underground rappers. O-Key said of his decision to perform rapped music:

The only one who inspired me to do music in this world is Tupac, because I get the tape of Tupac, so when I went to school I used to listen him. So he inspired me too much to do this game. I do want to do like him so it make me to like hip hop and go in hip hop.

Underground rappers come to see themselves as a part of a pantheon which includes Tupac. Ally Mohammedi, an underground rapper from Msasani, used the artistic title of Gang Star. The artistic name of Mbaya Wao, or Bad Man, was used by an underground rapper from Kijitonyama. Underground rappers appropriated this discursive frame, and referred to themselves as thugs and gangsters. O-Key described a genre of the songs that he created as gangster songs and described them thus; “This is the kind of music we call gangster music because it tells about reality, real reality of life in our country.” In discussions, as well as on occasion in their lyrics, rappers referred to themselves as thugs and gangsters. Salim Muba, a rapper from Kiwalani, finished one of the recordings I have of his lyrics with the line in English: “This is the gangster language, Kiswahili”.

While underground rappers in Dar es Salaam appropriate the discourse of Thug Life and the gangsta, this discourse is imbued with local meanings. As O-Key described himself “gangster is like me, it’s a person who come from the real hood, the poorest street. People like you, poor people like when you talk about real life.” For Uthman Issa, an underground rapper from Kijitonyama, Tupac’s character was similar to that of Tanzania’s first president, Julius Nyerere. Tupac is seen by Uthman to personify qualities associated with Nyerere. He is someone who spent time with poor people, and sought to represent the poor and downtrodden. Tupac’s life is cast as an example of the African socialist values of familyhood. Both Tupac and Nyerere are thus recognised as spokesmen for the poor and marginalised. Thug life is here cast through the prism of Tanzania’s, and Nyerere’s, African-socialist ideology. Uthman explained to me that “original people involved in hip hop implemented *Ujamaa* among themselves”. He said “hip hop is a real, someone like Mbaya Wao would buy a soda and offer everyone, fake person would buy a soda and drink it by

himself". The symbol of Tupac and of the gangster are appropriated by rappers, and used to symbolise a set of locally inscribed meanings. Rapper Hannf B described the gangster as "the person who really like to share with people, they share together they discuss. He's a man of the people." O-Key who described his music as that of a gangster described the life of a gangster thus:

gangster is the type of life, he's the man of the people who used to share ideas, to chill with hommies and share ideas with friends. So it's a normal people.

At the heart of *Ujamaa* was a belief in African traditional values which were constituted of "features, such as democracy, human rights, egalitarianism, education for self-reliance and women's liberation" (Stöger-Eising 2000, 129). These principles were reflected in the principles of respect for each other, communal ownership and hard work (Stöger-Eising 2000, 130).

***Kujitegemea* Rapping and Self Reliance**

An important principle of the *Ujamaa* project, and one which is still current in Tanzanian political discourse, is that of *kujitegemea*, or self reliance (Sanders 2008, 117). *Kujitegemea* is used in reference not only to the self-sufficiency of the nation, but also to an individual's self-sufficiency; the individual's struggle to provide for themselves and their family. The group of rappers with whom I spent time in Kiwalani regularly referred to themselves as Thugs and Gangsters, and to their lives as Thug Life. When we discussed the meaning that they attributed to these terms together, it was clear that what they attributed to the notion

of being a Thug was very different from the preconceptions that I had of the term. For them, Thugs worked hard and took care of their family; the notion had none of the violent or criminal associations that it has in the global north. Tupac's ideal of Thug Life is perceived by underground rappers in Dar es Salaam as a tale of struggle for *kujitegemea*. "Thug Life" becomes a reference point for those living in the poorer *uswahilini* areas. Being a thug or a gangster is to be living a life of hard work and struggle. The figure of the thug shares characteristics with the image, as portrayed by Tupac, of the rapper's ability to deal with the hard realities of life, and primarily their ability to struggle. Rappers identify with the "community of sentiment" (Appadurai 1996, 8) in which both they and Tupac are perceived to share qualities.

Underground rappers are able to embody at once the spirit of the rapper with that of socialist notions of citizenship; to be at once like Tupac and Nyerere. As Pype writes of wrestlers in Kinshasa:

In the enactment of a traditional fighting event, *libanda*, Kinshasa's *sportifs* simultaneously embody tradition and modernity, two worlds that all too often have been de-/prescribed as irreconcilable (Pype 2007, 266).

It is in the same instance of embodying the values of Thug Life, as rearticulated by rappers, that they embody, simultaneously, the spirit of the transnational rapper and that of the values of *Ujamaa*. The performance of rapping acts on a local and a global order of relations. The embodiment by underground rappers of a transnational figure is the embodiment of global and local discursive practices simultaneously.

As Pitcher and Askew have argued:

socialism has left institutional, aesthetic, psychological and discursive legacies that African peoples and their governments have rejected, appropriated and reconfigured in order to reflect on the past and to negotiate the terrain of contemporary life. (Pitcher and Askew 2006, 11)

The discursive legacy of *Ujamaa* is appropriated by underground rappers. This helps to legitimate their position within society, and offers a space within which they are able to critique current political realities from within officially sanctioned discourse. Tanzania may have “jettisoned” (Kaiser 1996, 231) *Ujamaa* in favour of more market orientated policies, but lip service to the values of *Ujamaa* still abound in Tanzanian society. Indeed, the Tanzanian Constitution still makes reference to both *Ujamaa* and *kujitegemea* as founding principles of the state. The object of the state is said to be to foster a “nation of equal and free individuals enjoying freedom, justice, fraternity and concord, through the pursuit of the policy of Socialism and Self Reliance which emphasizes the application of socialist principles” (Tanzanian Constitution 1977, 13). Respect for Nyerere, and an avowal of principles such as equality, hard work and self-sufficiency, cannot, though, simply be read as support for *Ujamaa*.

Underground rappers adopt a critical approach to the project of *Ujamaa*, while using its principles to critique both the past and the present. A large group of rappers who I met in the Mburahati / Kigogo area of Dar es Salaam described their group as a collective, in

Swahili *familia* or family. I met 12 members of the group, which comprised a core of members with loose affiliates. The collective was organised along lines which replicated the concerns of *Ujamaa*, with an emphasis on self sufficiency (their aim was, in the end, to be able to record their own music), hard work and equality (each member had equal rights in the collective). Their collective was based around their *maskani* and had previously been called KGM. In the course of one group interview they raised a number of issues which they felt music had a role to highlight in the public sphere. A particular concern was that there was no *haki* (justice) for poor people in Tanzania. They expressed explicit criticism of the current Tanzanian government for having abandoned many of Nyerere's ideals. When questioned directly about *Ujamaa*, they expressly said that they were not socialists and did not believe in *Ujamaa*. Uthman Issa, though suggesting a strong likeness between Nyerere and Tupac, was keen to stress that this did not necessitate a belief in *Ujamaa*. Indeed, when asked specifically about the achievement of Nyerere and current President Kikwete, he suggested that both achieved "*nusu kwa nusu*" or fifty fifty.

Askew's work on *nyimbo za maombolezo* (songs of lamentation) following Nyerere's death, again takes notice of the paucity of mentions of *Ujamaa* in these songs. She suggests that artists have been careful not to mention *Ujamaa* and upset neo-liberal sensibilities. Her argument continues that there is a process of "conversions/translations" (Askew 2006, 39) of socialist values into postsocialist values in these songs. Many of the ideas associated with the project of African socialism are still a salient part of the discursive framework of contemporary Dar es Salaam. When looking at continued support for Socialism in post-socialist societies, Straughn suggests that socialist ideas form part of "cultural *repertoires* that exist in the form of discursive representations" (Straughn 2009, 491) that can be called

upon as part of ideational strategies. Other theorists of post-socialism have focused on it as a period of transition (Burrell 2011, Velikonja 2009) “in so far as they are constituted under a new ‘regime of representation’” (Brandtstädter 2007, 132). In the case of Tanzania, while *Ujamaa* policies may largely have been abandoned by the state, the chief architect of *Ujamaa*, Julius Nyerere, remains an important legitimising force for the state, and for CCM, the governing party. Julius Nyerere, also called Baba wa Taifa (Father of the Nation) in Tanzania, remains credited with gaining Tanzania’s independence and with creating a nation without inducing ethnic violence.

Performing Masculinity

This transnational figure of the rapper signifies a specific masculine identity associated with marginality, struggle and strength. The figure of the rapper enables underground rappers to construct a masculinity which appropriates the figure of the thug. Through the embodiment of the rapper and the thug, underground rappers create a masculinity based on notions of struggle rather than strength. While, for the fighters and *sapeurs* that Pype describes, strength, force or courage are the main components of masculinity (Pype 2007, 258), underground rappers in Dar es Salaam create masculinities based on their ability to endure and triumph against the struggles of everyday life. As with the *bills*, *yankee* and *bakumbusu* in Kinshasa (Pype 2007, 264-265, Gondola, 2009 a) underground rappers use mediated images to construct forms of masculinity. The *bills*, *yankees* and *bakumbusu* have drawn on cinematic heroic figures, the Cowboy and the Kung Fu fighter, in their construction of forms of masculinity. For the underground rapper in Dar es Salaam, the image of the rapper has been used in the creation of new forms of masculine identity. The Swahili terms *msela* and

mchizi were used by underground rappers to refer to each other and their social group.

While difficult to pin down, these terms denote marginalised youth and were equated with the English term of gangster or thug (Reuster-Jahn and Hacke 2011, 5).

The creation and performance of rapped music have been used by young men in Dar es Salaam to create opportunities in which they can, both materially and intellectually, improve their lives. Networks set up around the practice and performance of rapping support rappers through expanding their network of associations, as well as making financial resources available to them. These associations offer support to marginalised youth, who in some instances have no family in the city to support them. The practice of rapping links young men with diverse educational and employment opportunities in a common intellectual and artistic endeavour. As Simone has suggested; “the process of coming up with new modalities of associating and cooperating capable of dealing with rapidly changing realities is continuous” (Simone 2008, 88). The identity performed by underground rappers, in *maskanis* and *kampu*, draws on the transnational circulation of signs and symbols. Rapping, and the construction of identity by an underground rapper, is both a corporeal and imaginative practice. Rappers in hip hop videos symbolise a way of being. Through the consumption and domestication of global signs and symbols they are able to construct new social selves. It is through the adoption of style, a lexicon associated with hip hop, and the very physicality of rap performance, that underground rappers are able to embody the persona of the rapper. Through rapped performances in *maskanis* and *kampu*, underground artists are able to perform themselves and assert their control over narrative and social space. Rapping provides a medium through which young men are able to engage with, rearticulate, and confront the problems that they face.

CHAPTER 6 – TRACING CAREERS TRAJECTORIES

Introduction

The most successful and long established rap artists in Tanzania have become household names. Successful rappers' songs are ubiquitous on the radio and rappers' videos are frequently shown on TV. Rappers' nominations for international awards and performances are featured on Tanzanian television news. A number of programmes, but perhaps most notably *Mkasi* (scissors), an interview programme set in a barber's shop, focus on the lives and opinions of Tanzania's most popular rappers.³³ Popular artists' personal lives have provided a source of stories for local tabloid newspapers such as *Sani*, *Ijumaa* and *Kiu*. A number of glossy magazines whose principal source of stories is Tanzanian musicians and film stars have also been established.³⁴ The most successful of Tanzania's rappers have become national celebrities, in effect. Rappers' personae, as well as their music, have become a feature of their status as celebrities.

As rapped music in Tanzania has moved from elite to popular form, rappers have often shifted from being marginal figures to respected cultural icons. Professor Jay's album "*Machizi, Jasho na Damu*" (Blood, Sweat and Tears) was cited, by many of the rappers and audience members I interviewed, as a key watershed moment in the increased respectability of rappers. The socio-political commentary of the album, which focuses on the difficulties experienced by the Dar es Salaam resident, is credited with expanding the

³³ *Mkasi* has been shown on air since 2011, in the show prominent local figures, which have included including rappers such as Mwana FA, Afanda Sele as well as producers like P-Funk are interviewed in a beauty salon while they have their hair cut.

³⁴ The magazine *Babkubwa* is one such magazine which places a great deal of focus on the lives of rappers.

audience for rapped music in Tanzania. In particular, the song *Bongo Dar es Salaam*, with its sometimes comic narrative of the strategies employed by the city's residents to get ahead, could be recognised and appreciated by both young and old. An indication of this move of rappers towards the mainstream as cultural figures is that the endorsement and support of rappers has been sought by political parties during election campaigns. Current President Jakaya Kikwete has frequently sought to associate himself with popular rappers for example. As Reuster-Jahn argues, in her article about the 2005 election campaign in Tanzania:

maybe the most important gain was that the artists used the elections for negotiating their image and role in society with the aim to become recognised more widely. This included the artists being regarded as fully-fledged members of the society, as well as their songs being acknowledged as relevant contributions to national culture and public discourse. (Reuster-Jahn 2008, 62)

While rappers have certainly become more established figures there have continued to be moral debates in Tanzania about their behaviour. Since at least the colonial period, musicians have been associated with asocial traits and perceived as; "*wahuni* i.e. vagabonds, drunkards, drugtakers" (Graebner 1997, 110). Rappers have frequently been perceived as *wahuni* (Perullo 2005, 76: Suriano 2007, 208). Though this perception is contested, as King Crazy GK said

if you were rapping you were taken as *wahuni*, gangster, even the mothers

beat their children because they were afraid of you. About 5 years or 8 years ago we started to change, from copying from outside we started to use even our language Kiswahili and we started singing about things that are happening in our society, we started singing about corruption, we started singing about AIDS, we started singing about African love....That is when people turned to listen to us, that's when we started selling.

In this chapter, I will look at the careers of some of Tanzania's most successful rappers, exploring the creation and negotiation of their identities as celebrities and the ways in which rappers' new-found celebrity becomes a space for the contestation of moral values.

The proliferation of privately owned media, free from direct state control, described earlier, has opened a new space for the articulation of celebrity identities. As Englert argues:

Bongo Flava music has helped to shape a generational identity of those who grew up in the era of liberalisation and multi-party politics (Englert 2008, 76).

This new space provided by private media has enabled the articulation of new models of contemporary Tanzanian identity. Coupled with the changing nature of public and economic life under the new liberalised regime, this has led to a space for the contestation of normative practice and morals. The celebrity identities of rappers, disseminated through the media, both challenge and confirm normative moral ideas. Haas and Gesthuizen have suggested

a new moral community is being created. This community is deeply rooted in Tanzanian culture yet also embraces new elements and ideas in reaction to the changing political and economic landscape. (Haas and Gesthuizen 2000, 281)

By interrogating the histories and construction of identities by rap artists, including the shifting models of identity, it is possible to explore how these identities reflect the shifting and contested values of Tanzanian society.

Ambwene Yessayah - AY

Over the last twelve years, Ambwene Yessayah, whose stage name is AY, has become one of the most well established Tanzanian rap performers. AY started rapping in 1996 at the age of 15, while he was studying at a boarding school in Morogoro. His initial interest in rapping was spawned from hearing American rapper Dr Dre, as well as groups such as NWA and House of Pain. Tanzanian rapper Mr II, as well as the groups Kwanza Unit and De-Plow-Matz, were also an early influence on AY. In 2000, as part of a group S.O.G. which he had established with friends from school, he recorded and released an album. Following this experience AY decided he wished to pursue a career in music and moved to Dar es Salaam. His first solo album was released in 2003, and he has since established himself as a commercially successful rapper. AY has been described as *MC we Commercial*, the commercial MC. AY himself describes getting this title thus:

The main producers from East Africa they call me *MC we Commercial*, you

know commercial hip hop. So if you join in a commercial hip hop you're supposed to be flexible, I know how to sing, I know how to rap. I'm the founder of commercial here in Tanzania.

The moniker of *MC we Commercial* situates AY as an artist who responds to the desires of the public; as an entertainer. By situating himself as *MC we Commercial*, AY consciously sets his style and identity in opposition to the 'hardcore' style of rapping which was prevalent in Tanzania during the early 2000s.

AY is a young entrepreneur, an artist responding to the new opportunities of the liberalised economy. The identity which AY projects, as well as his successful career, have assisted him in gaining work advertising brands such as Kilimanjaro beer, Vodacom and Malta Guinness. Part of the work associated with marketing contracts includes appearing in TV, print and radio adverts as well as at shows organised by a sponsoring company. Since achieving celebrity status, AY has sought to consolidate his financial position by establishing a number of businesses related to his musical career. A clothing label, along with a booking agency through which both he and other East African artists can be booked to perform, have been established. These additional commercial activities, as well as providing income, have also further emphasised his status as *Mc we Commercial*.

In 2006, when I first visited Dar es Salaam, AY was a member of the East Coast Team / Army (ECT). ECT was a group of rappers, including well known rappers Mwana FA, Imam Abbas and King Crazy GK. A number of East Coast Teams songs and videos were frequently broadcast on radio and TV. The aesthetic of this group was more closely linked to 'hardcore'

rap, and GK in particular was keen to include socially conscious lyrics in his songs. Stating in 2006 that “musicians are the politicians.... We are talking, we are talking to people.” ECT were regularly seen sporting army fatigues in their videos and some of their songs, for example *Itikadi Zetu* (Our Ideology), contained references to violence, a subject which is unusual in Tanzanian popular music.

Get up get up GK na East Coast babe

Get up get up GK and East Coast babe

Usishangae tunashika machine gun na tunaingia mpaka ndani

Don't be scared we have machine gun and are coming inside

Naruka ukuta na nazama straight mpaka ndani

I jump over the wall and force myself straight in

Individual members of the team were able to record solo albums, and in 2006 AY left East Coast team to follow a solo career.

AY has been one of the most consistent and successful of Tanzania's rappers. Since arriving on the scene in 2003 there has rarely been a time when one of his songs has not been playing on the radio in Tanzania. On each of my three trips to Tanzania, in 2006, 2009 and 2011, AY has been busy recording, performing and shooting videos. The consistency with which he has continued to release music year after year, and his considerable work ethic, have been praised by a number of the other rappers I interviewed. During my 6 months of fieldwork in Dar es Salaam in 2009, I was able to meet with AY a number of times, but these meetings were invariably sandwiched in between the work of managing his career. We met

at his press conference having been nominated for an MTV Africa award, at the studio while he recorded his song 'Kings and Queens' and at performances he gave at Msimbasi Secondary School.

A significant strategy which AY has pursued in establishing himself as a musical artist has been collaboration with other artists. Collaborations involve singers, rappers or musicians performing on each others' songs; typically another rapper or singer would perform a single verse, or the chorus, on a track. Collaborations are used by artists as a means through which to expand their audience. They act as a means of introducing your music to the fans of the artist with whom you collaborate, and of establishing relationships and networks. AY's first album featured a collaboration with Lady Jay Dee, a very well known female singer from Tanzania, on the song *Machoni Kama Watu* (Eyes Like a Person).³⁵ AY has recorded songs with a significant number of the most prominent Tanzanian Bongo Flava artists, including Fid Q and Mwana FA. Some of the songs on AY's second album featured collaborations with artists from further afield in East Africa; notably, *Binadamu* ('Human Being'), featured the Ugandan artist Maurice Kirya and was nominated for a Kora Award in 2005. There were further collaborations with East African artists, including Stan Boy from Kenya on the song *Mademu Watafutaji* and the Ugandan artist Chameleone on the song *Nasema Nao* ('I'm talking to \ with them'). Another feature of AY's collaborations from this period was his working, with video producers such as African Pictures from South Africa, Ogopa DeeJays based in Nairobi and Paparazzi in Uganda on videos. When I first met AY in 2006 he was already highly focused on the East African, rather than purely Tanzanian, market. Collaborations with video producers and artists helped to make his name known to

³⁵ *Machoni Kama Watu* means in this context that the person looks human but that their heart is not.

a wider East African audience. This has, in turn, gained AY the opportunity to perform widely across East Africa, including in Kenya, Uganda and Burundi. As live performances are the main source of revenue for such artists, this helped not only to expand his fan base but also his income.

AY has continued to collaborate with a wide range of artists from across East Africa and, as his career has progressed, from further afield. A notable feature of AY's use of collaborations has been how far afield AY has looked to develop his network of associations. As he described it: "you're supposed to learn from other artists; to share ideas from many artists inside and outside Tanzania." In 2008 he made a track in which he collaborated with the Nigerian brothers P-Square who were, at that time, among the biggest musical stars on the African continent. In 2013 both AY and his long term collaborator, and former member of East Coast Team, Mwana FA, collaborated with Nigerian singer J Martins. Developments in electronic communication, in particular the ability to share files via the internet, has meant that artists no longer need to be in the same studio, country or, indeed, on the same continent in order to collaborate. Though the initial contact and forms of collaboration may have been electronic, the collaboration between AY and P-Square has subsequently stretched further than simply performing on each others' tracks. They have performed concerts together, in Nigeria and East Africa. Over the last two to three years, AY's web of collaborations has stretched even further and he has worked with Miss Triniti from Jamaica, Lamiya, an RnB singer and Romeo, a rapper, both from the United States. The video for the song 'Speak with ya body' was shot and directed in the United States. When I visited Dar es Salaam in 2009, AY was keen to stress that 'the game' (the Tanzanian music industry) had changed and that the quality of songs

and videos was now paramount. AY suggested that artists would now be competing for exposure on media networks which stretched across the continent. Bollywood film production companies in India, as well as P-Square's video company in Nigeria, were being suggested as places where AY might look to shoot a video in order to stay ahead of the game.

Collaborations like these further provide an audible and visible reference to the expanding network and connections of an artist. Networks are very important in Tanzanian life and understood as connections and possibilities, as a form of wealth in people (Guyer and Belinga 1995). They are an important form of social wealth and opportunity. AY accumulates symbolic capital proportionate to his international connections, and is able to distinguish himself from other artists through the representation of these networks. Presented through the texts of songs and videos, these networks are an audible and visible display of AY's participation in an East African, pan-African and International music business. Thompson argues, of the Arusha based group X-Plasterz, that they use "imaginative manipulations" (Thompson 2008, 42) from which their public image is constructed. In X-Plasterz' case this is done by representation of themselves as international artists with a foreign manager for the Tanzanian audience, and as authentically African to an international audience, through highlighting their Maasai connections. AY also uses his international collaborations as a symbolic display of his own success.

The first TV stations were established on mainland Tanzania in 1993. By 1994 there were 3 stations running, and since then cable networks have enabled a significant number of

stations to become available (Sturmer 1998, 194). Two cable TV channels, Channel O and MTV Base Africa, have come to play an increasingly significant role in the dissemination of popular music in Africa. Channel O was established in the early 90s, and MTV Base Africa was launched in 2005. Both channels, which are based in South Africa, are available not only via cable networks across the continent but also in Europe and the US. These two TV channels offer opportunities for musicians to perform to a continent-wide audience, in a way not previously possible. Since establishing himself as a solo artist, AY has used the media to develop an audience. The range of AY's collaborations with artists from across the continent helps to make his videos desirable for regular showing on Channel O and MTV Base Africa. The development of these new media networks opens up opportunities for convening new continent wide audiences and becoming a continental celebrity. This sense of continent-wide celebrity has been further increased by giant media spectacles, such as Big Brother Africa. Featuring contestants from across the continent, and available on cable channels across Africa, Big Brother Africa is a major opportunity allowing artists to perform to continent-wide audiences. In 2009, AY performed at the finale of Big Brother Africa.

Linked to the expansion of continent-wide media have been a growing number of continental music awards. In 2009, AY was nominated for the award of best male hip hop vocalist by MTV Africa and, in 2012, was nominated for the Most Gifted East African Video, for the song 'I Don't Want to Be Alone' featuring Sauti Soul. He was also nominated for the Most Gifted Male Video for his song 'Speak with ya body' featuring Lamiya and Romeo, which was also nominated in the Most Gifted Video Africa category.

Another key feature of AY's artistic identity has been his flexibility in the genre or style of music that he performs. AY has stressed the need for artists to "pimp their game", i.e. to constantly develop their style, videos and identity. While consistently an artist situated within the broad genre of Bongo Flava, AY's songs frequently contain both rapping and singing. The first of the songs on which he sung rather than rapped was *Leo* ('Today') released in 2009. Since then AY has continued to cross genre boundaries, and on a recent recording, 'I don't want to be alone', with Sauti Sol from Nairobi, he records with a live band rather than on tracks made by a producer. Even more recently, *Party Zone*, released in 2012 and featuring Marco Chali, has AY rapping to a 4 / 4 house music beat. Code switching between English and Swahili have become an increasingly familiar aspect of AY's songs and 'Speak with ya body' is delivered almost exclusively in English. The use of English further emphasises AY's participation in an international field of music production, and his expanding networks beyond East Africa. Since the release of his first album in 2003, AY has approached a greater diversity of topics. Songs from 2003 such as *Binadamu* and *Mademu Watafutaji* contain strong moral messages, while more recent songs such as 'Bed and Breakfast' centre on the sexual experiences of Tanzanian young people.³⁶ More recently, AY's songs have dealt with his own success and access to 'the good life'. Changing the topics of songs, as well as musical styles, is a conscious strategy by AY to develop and maintain his audience. As he said:

I call it like bubblegum. You know when you get bubble gum then you
chew it after you get that taste, you just put it outside. You are supposed
to maintain your taste.

³⁶ Released in 2009/10 'Bed and Breakfast' explores the sexual experiences of young people without their own home in Dar es Salaam who go to bed and breakfasts in order to have sexual encounters with their partners.

Through stylistic adaptations, code switching, and collaborations, AY seeks to place himself as the artist with the new taste or flavour. This is a deliberate response to what is aesthetically innovative within the wider global field of popular music production.³⁷ There is a conscious adaptation of music styles and videos, which places AY firmly within the global field of popular music production.

The dominant narrative of AY's career has been one of continued success and recognition, a narrative of growing global fame, increased international recognition and financial reward. Through an increasingly wide network of collaborators and access to continent wide media, he has been able to situate himself as a global music star. This image of global success is sustained through media reports of collaborations, international tours and appearances at media events such as Big Brother Africa. In the video for his song Party Zone, released in 2012, AY is shown riding a large motorcycle before dancing in a night club while drinks are freely consumed around him. The text of the song, and its accompanying video, display enjoyment, consumption and the possibility of romantic relationships. These texts place AY in a privileged position as a successful individual, able to negotiate spaces unavailable to the majority of Tanzanians. The nightclub in the video represents a space of modern success, inhabited by those with access to financial resources. Hacke and Reuster-Jahn argue, of Bongo Flava, that its "narrative of artists' meteoric rise is derived from American Hip-hop imagination, as well as from local models" (Hacke and Reuster-Jahn 2011, 2). AY's narrative of success is complex. His participation in global spectacles is often portrayed as a

³⁷ The song Usijaribu borrows musically from the new style of hip hop production from the southern US popular at this time: crunk.

representation of Tanzanian popular culture. So that participation in international events, with foreign artists, is at once an expression of being a part of the world and a Tanzanian.

AY's celebrity identity, with his presentation of himself as not only an artist but an entrepreneur, has been made possible by the liberal political and economic reforms in Tanzania. His persona seems to embody post-liberalisation dreams of success, wealth and access to the international sphere. While AY has become something of a continent-wide star, he continues to recognise Tanzania as central to his success. Despite fame within the wider East African region, as well as with expatriate audiences, which has seen him perform in Malaysia, Poland and India, AY continues to perform at local schools in Dar es Salaam, for small fees, to ensure a local fan base. International success is important for the recognition gained at home. As Trapido argues, of the *mikiliste* in the Democratic Republic of Congo; "Europe is valued for the success it allows in Kinshasa" (Trapido 2011, 205). While AY has presented himself as *MC we Commercial*, and in some senses embodies shifting relations to wealth and consumption, part of his music's appeal in Tanzania is its social message. As AY said, when describing artists' interaction with the music industry in Tanzania: "That's the thing that we want, end of the day, we want money. So you're supposed to balance your music."

The Stubborn MC - Joseph Mbilinyi (Mr II / Sugu)

Another of the rappers in Tanzania to achieve lasting success has been Joseph Mbilinyi. Initially known by the artistic name of 2 Proud, Joseph changed his name to Mr II and is now known by the name of Sugu (stubborn). Originally from Songea, in Southern Tanzania, Sugu

grew up and went to school in the Mbeya region of Tanzania, close to the Zambian and Malawian border. Sugu began rapping in 1990 after he received a copy of the De La Soul album '93 Feet High and Rising' from a friend who had relatives in the United States. Sugu became fascinated by rapping, initially rapping in English and imitating the words on songs by well known American rappers. He moved to Dar es Salaam in the mid 90s to pursue a career as a rapper. Since the release of his first album, *Ni Mimi* ('It's Me'), in 1995, Sugu has gone on to release 10 albums over a 17 year period. Sugu is a household name in Tanzania, and was commonly cited as an important influence in the interviews that I have conducted with other rappers.

In 2006, when I first met Sugu, he was keen to stress that what he saw as the original meaning of Bongo Flava, Tanzanian hip hop, was being eroded, as a more diverse range of genre styles, performance types and musical elements was being introduced. It was clear that he felt strongly that the genre boundaries of this term were becoming too elastic, and beginning to include reggae and RnB influenced songs with no rapping in them. As Sugu said:

Bongo Flava was supposed to mean Tanzanian rap, Tanzanian hip hop, but things changed when everything got popular. When it blew up. It was like we were not ready when it blew up so everything lost control, because it was big and huge and not everybody could rap but many wanted to be in it, trying anything in Swahili. But it was easy for them to identify with Bongo Flava way to be accepted by the majority. Nobody was there to defend, nobody was there to educate people, to educate fans that this is not Bongo Flava, this is Bongo

Flava. Now we see the problems.

While other artists have incorporated elements of these genres into their songs, Sugu has continued to produce albums with a mainstream hip hop aesthetic. When speaking, Sugu uses linguistic terms associated with hip hop and references to both hip hop artists' work from Tanzania and the US. Like AY, Sugu has also sought international collaborations; his eponymous 2004 album, *Sugu*, was produced and recorded in the UK with production by Kenyan expatriate producer Sir Prestige. His 2006 album *Ujio Wa Umri* ('Coming of Age') was produced by a Swiss producer, DJ Link. Rather than expanding his audience into new markets, the aim of these collaborations seems to have been to maintain a consistent hip hop aesthetic. Sugu's identity as an artist is forged partly by locating himself within a wider pantheon of hip hop artists, and firmly and deliberately within the aesthetics of this global music genre.

Tensions between elements of the music industry have long existed in Tanzania. Artists complain that they do not receive a fair remuneration for the sale of their music, from the distributors of it. There have also been complaints of a payola (sometimes called 'pay for play') system, in which artists are expected to pay radio DJs for airplay (Perullo 2011, 233-4). Sugu has been an outspoken critic of such aspects of the Tanzanian music industry (Kibona Clark 2013, 10). In 2004 he organised a 'Hip Hop Summit' in Dar es Salaam, bringing together the major elements of the music industry: distributors, radio stations, artists and COSOTA (Copyright Society of Tanzania). Among other issues the summit sought solutions to issues of copyright infringement, and considered the suggestion that many pirated copies of artists' work freely circulated in Dar es Salaam. When I visited Tanzania In 2006,

discussions between representatives of the summit and Tanzanian politicians were still ongoing.

In 2006, there were rumours that a boycott of Sugu's songs had been instituted by one of the major radio stations in Dar es Salaam, Clouds FM. The reason given for this was that there had been a lack of willingness on his part to perform at Fiesta³⁸. As with many large events held in Dar es Salaam, Fiesta attracts sponsorship from many companies, including Tanzania Breweries Limited and major mobile phone networks. Details of the sponsorship arrangements are private. Rumours suggested that Sugu had complained about the fees offered specifically to Tanzanian artists asked to perform at Fiesta. There were further rumours that Sugu had refused to offer payola payments to DJs at Clouds.

In 2008, citing his disenchantment with opportunities afforded to a rapper in Tanzania, Sugu moved to the United States. Rumours circulated in Tanzania that this was related to his disagreements with Clouds FM, and the CD and tape distribution companies. Sugu returned to Tanzania in 2009, organising a 'welcome back' concert at the Diamond Jubilee Hall in Upanga, Dar es Salaam. Following his arrival back in Tanzania there were a series of public disagreements between Sugu and Ruge Mutahaba, one of the directors at Clouds media group. Ruge has long been a significant player on the Tanzanian music scene and was the force behind the establishment of the Tanzanian House of Talent (THT), a school for talented musicians. Sugu alleged that Ruge and Clouds had breached a contract he had been granted to work on the government Malaria No More project. This project sought to

³⁸ A series of events organised by the radio station and its promotions company Prime Time Promotions, Fiesta is comprised of a series of events held throughout Tanzania, largely in the major cities (Arusha, Mbeya, Mwanza, Dodoma etc). A final major event is then held in Dar es Salaam.

use musicians to highlight malaria prevention methods, and to distribute free mosquito nets.

In 2010 Sugu was elected as MP for the parliamentary seat of Mbeya, by CHADEMA, the main opposition party. Sugu has used this new position of authority to continue to press issues with Ruge and Clouds FM. Further arguments ensued after the Presidential election in 2010, during which the President of Tanzania, Jakaya Kikwete had pledged to donate the first Tanzanian mastering studio to local artists, if elected. Following his re-election the promised mastering studio, accompanied by a mastering engineer from the UK, arrived in Tanzania. The studio was initially placed largely under the control of THT, and so, by proxy, of Ruge. Sugu has been vocal in his assertion that the mastering studio donated by the President should be under the control of a group of Tanzania's leading producers, and accused Ruge of corruption. Matters reached a head on the 8th of July 2011, when Sugu was briefly arrested while organising an event due to take place at the same time as Clouds FM's Fiesta in Mbeya. He was released on the 9th of July, having spent 12 hours in jail, and spoke to the media about his belief that Clouds FM's networks had been influential in getting him arrested. Tensions were further raised when a group called Antivirus, which Sugu is believed to support and for which he has performed, released a mix tape which was highly critical of Clouds FM, and of Ruge personally. The Antivirus mix tape was not released through the traditional distribution networks but circulated through free links on the internet and free CDs distributed on the streets. During this period, the disagreement between Sugu and Ruge/Clouds continued to dominate media space in Tanzania. An agreement was brokered between Sugu and Ruge in 2012, when it was agreed that a group of Tanzanian producers should be in control of the mastering studio. The settling of the

disagreements between Sugu and Ruge was widely reported in the Tanzanian press, on radio and on TV.

Like AY, Sugu has established his own company, called *Deiwaka* after one of his own popular songs. While *deiwaka* work may have become a common feature of life in Dar es Salaam there remains some stigma attached to these forms of work as incomes tend to be low and uncertain. Sugu said

Deiwaka is like my charter, I had a song in 1999 which that had the title *Deiwaka* and it was talking about day to day hustling. It identifies my movement till this time. Before that no one admitted to be a *deiwaka*. *Deiwaka* was trying to pretend he was working. You find a guy doing a *deiwaka* in town he lives out of town for out of town he goes to the city centre in the evening he goes home and pretends he works in a bank, things like those. After I came with thing a song like that *deiwaka* everyone said it's ok and everyone was happy to identify with who he was.



Figure 5 – Sugu at his home in Sinza



Figure 6 – AY in Kijitonyama

Early on in his career Sugu described himself as Nyerere wa Rap (Nyerere of Rap). Nyerere remains an important figure within the Tanzanian social imaginary, and a potent symbol of the nation. Through his appropriation of the title Nyerere wa Rap, and using the concept of *deiwaka*, Sugu sets himself firmly within the tradition of Tanzanian music's political engagement. His long campaigns for artists' rights, and against corrupting private interests in the music industry, can also be read as a fight for workers' rights. His status as a celebrity rests on two main foundations, his status as one of the first popular rappers in Swahili and his outspoken critique of private interests in the music industry.

If you don't play Bongo Flava on your radio people shift, they shift. You got to play it. So they play it, the only problem, the only complaint is they don't play pure talent. We believe, we think they don't play what they were supposed to play, they don't play fairly..... If they play the real Bongo Flava which penetrated peoples mind wasn't this. There was real Bongo Flava, like *hali halisi*³⁹ rapping for the people.

His critique of the Tanzanian music industry has twice led to Sugu retiring from it. In 2002 he came to the UK, only to return in 2004. He retired once more, in 2008, emigrating to the United States, citing the difficulties of the Tanzanian music industry.

Witness Mwaijaga - Witness

There are very few female rappers in Dar es Salaam. One female rapper to have achieved significant fame is Witness Mwaijaga, who performs using the name Witness. Witness grew

³⁹ *Hali Halisi* meaning the real situation is taken from one of Sugu's own songs.

up in Dar es Salaam and attended school in the upmarket, Oyster Bay neighbourhood. Several members of Witness' extended family are involved in music, and, initially, she performed 'traditional' ngoma dances. In the early 2000s, Witness became interested in rapping and began to spend time at a number of studios. Gaining access to studios in the male dominated music industry was not easy.⁴⁰ Witness' breakthrough came in 2005 when she auditioned to take part in the Coca Cola Pop Stars competition being held in Kenya. At her audition, she initially performed a song by Dolly Parton but was asked to rap and, having delivered a rap, was chosen to participate.

Witness was one of the successful artists and along with two compatriots, Sarah and Langa, a group was formed called Wakilisha (Represent). Wakilisha were invited to South Africa as part of the prize for winning the Coca Cola Pop Stars competition. There, they were given training on aspects of the music industry and produced a single track and a video. On returning to Tanzania and experiencing difficulties with their manager, the group dissolved. Witness briefly tried to form a group with Langa but this again ran into trouble and again the group dissolved. In 2007, Witness was reunited with a Norwegian music producer who she had first encountered while attempting to record a song in a studio during 2001. Sigbjorn Nedland had built a studio locally, in which he was recording Tanzanian artists, with support from NORAD, the Norwegian aid agency. Together they recorded an album called Khaya Khaya which was released in Europe in 2008. As part of the promotion for the album, Witness and Nedland were invited to perform a number of shows in Norway.⁴¹

⁴⁰ The few female rappers who I was able to meet in Tanzania complained of sexual advances being made by other artists, managers and producers.

⁴¹ As part of this process Witness was interviewed on Norwegian television.

Witnesz returned to Dar es Salaam and began to work at establishing herself on the local music scene. She has recorded and released a number of songs with videos, including *Zero*, featuring well known rapper Fid Q, *Safari (Journey)* and *Attention Please*. However, she has struggled to establish herself and gain regular opportunities to perform in Tanzania. In 2011, when I returned to Tanzania, Witnesz had begun to work for a Tanzania TV production company and is currently working in a 'network' business. She has continued to make music, and in 2012 was invited to travel to the United States to attend numerous meetings, including the Brooklyn Hip Hop festival, as an agent of social and economic change.

Becoming an established female rapper in Tanzania is not easy. Being involved in music, let alone rapped music, is largely perceived as an unsuitable practice for women. As Perullo states:

women who perform live music, with the exception of taarab and gospel singers, are considered to be more meretricious than other women who work at nightclubs (Perullo 2011, 130).

Chana (rap) is seen in Tanzania as an inherently masculine practice. Witnesz addresses the idea of rap as an unsuitable role for a woman by presenting a counter-narrative in her songs. On the track *Safari* ('Journey'), recorded with Cpwaa and Zahir Zorro, Witnesz details the problems and triumphs that she has experienced on her journey to becoming successful in the rap game. Witnesz narrative legitimises her position as a rapper. *Zero*, another of Witnesz' tracks, recorded with Fid Q, is a battle song in which she suggests that anyone who

wants to battle her will get Zero. In the first verse of Zero, Witness references many of the seminal artists in the early history of rapped music in Tanzania (Gangwe Mob, GWM, Mack D), clearly placing herself in their lineage and claiming space for herself as a rapper. For many of the young Tanzanians I met, Witness' performance style and demeanour were aggressive. Through this, and her vocal claiming of a space within the hip hop pantheon, Witness claims the right to be part of the rap game.

Conclusion

As rapped music has become increasingly popular over the last two decades in Tanzania it has come to occupy more social and cultural space. Rappers are celebrities and have accrued symbolic capital; the

power to impose upon other minds a vision, old or new, of social divisions depends on the social authority acquired in previous struggles. Symbolic capital is a credit; it is the power granted to those who have obtained sufficient recognition to be in a position to impose recognition. (Bourdieu 1989, 23)

This occurs in what Bourdieu describes as a "struggle for the production of common sense or, more precisely, for the monopoly over legitimate naming" (ibid, 21). Popular culture is an important space within which the "legitimate naming" occurs. This is done not only through the texts of songs, but through the embodiment of properties in artists' identities. Artists Identities are sites in which ideas about society and morality are contested. Artists'

personae, the representation of themselves as artists, becomes a space for a moral discourse.

Neither the artists, the state nor the entrepreneurs who play a significant role in the creation and dissemination of these identities are able to impose categories. As Stokes says:

just as musical performance enacts and embodies dominant communal values, it can also enact in a powerful, affective way, rival principles of social organisation (Stokes 1994, 13).

The perceived identities of rappers provide a space for several actors, including the audience who consume their music and personae, to negotiate and contest morals and values. While artists may have accrued such symbolic capital as allows them to articulate and name contemporary Tanzanian society, this articulation is mediated by the audience. As Pye argues, in her discussion of TV celebrities in the DRC, a “celebrity’s image is thus created dialectically between audiences and performers” (Pye 2009, 547).

Perullo argues that the emphasis placed by artists on delineating their identities is part of the increased commodification of music in Dar es Salaam. Artists use identity as a means of differentiating themselves from one another, and of maintaining support from their audience. A particular form of identity may be highlighted by an artist, for example a masculine rap persona, with the aim of forming a bond with a section of the Tanzanian audience.

Artists create symbols, language, dress, bands, and songs to establish meaning and desire in the commodification of music and identity. Consumers not only respond to artists' identities; they also shape and determine which artists will become more successful, powerful and socially relevant (Perullo 2011, 120).

The logics of distinguishing oneself in a music market are part of what is at play in the way that artists present themselves. Artists' identities, along with their music, are consumed by their audience. For example, Maasai clothing and speech patterns have been used in very different ways by both the group X-Plasterz and Mr Ebbo to differentiate themselves from other artists (Thompson, 2010 and 2008). It seems to me that more is at play in artists' expression of identities than a simple attempt to gain a larger share of a musical market. Artists do not construct their personae as musicians merely to differentiate themselves from other artists. Artists' identities embody positions in the continued contestation of symbolic meanings in contemporary Tanzanian society. Through the identities that they present, artists embody particular notions of contemporary Tanzanian life. AY, Sugu and Witness represent three different attempts by rappers to shape the social world, in part through their presentation of their identities. Through his styling of himself as *Mc we Commercial*, AY embodies a particularly entrepreneurial response to the changing economic circumstances in Tanzania. This commerciality is expressed through AY's musical style, lyrics and collaborations. Sugu, who has chosen the moniker of Nyerere wa Rap, has also chosen to present himself as a representative of artists against media and state interests. While Witness's performance as a female rapper, by contrast, challenges gendered norms of behaviour.

CHAPTER 7 – DOGO HASHIM

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the life and work of a single rapper Hashim Rubanza or Dogo Hashim (young Hashim). Hashim represents something of an unusual case study. He is no longer a public performer or recorder of rapped music and was in part raised outside of Tanzania. While Hashim's life and musical career may not be representative of rappers in Dar es Salaam, I believe that a case study of his work is valuable to this thesis. Hashim was regularly referred to, by other rappers, as one of the most influential rappers from Tanzania. His lyrics were cited as paragons of rapped music expression in Swahili. He is, for some, a reference point, the very personification of 'a rapper'.⁴² As the rapper AY said of Hashim:

He's a bad news. I appreciate him more than he knows. There are a lot of people, a lot of artist that appreciate him for the new ideas.

The influence and importance given to Hashim by other rappers makes him a significant, if slightly unusual, figure in rapped music and an interesting example for a case study. Hashim's work and careers offer interesting insights into the ways that an artist can both construct and negotiate multiple identities. Over the course of my research I have been able to spend a significant amount of time with Hashim and, importantly for this chapter, to collaborate with him on the creation of some of his rapped recordings. I stayed with Hashim

⁴² Hashim's ability to rap in both Swahili and in English seems to have been influential in how he was viewed by other rappers.

in Dar es Salaam during my research trip in 2009 and he stayed with me in Birmingham during our collaboration on a musical project in 2010.

The complexity and multifaceted nature of my relationship with Hashim presents a challenge for a researcher. Through the experience of working together on a musical project, I have stepped across the divide and entered my field of research not only as an observer but as a participant. The process of musical production is full of relations of power. These were relationships of power that I no longer had simply to observe but in which I was now implicated. Being closely involved with establishing the project on which Hashim and I worked together also presented challenges to the notion of myself as an objective observer. However I believe that the advantages of being able to participate in, and gain close working experience of, the process of music creation from the inside far outweigh any disadvantages.

There are illustrious precedents to the idea of seeking fuller participation in the research process. Several notable anthropologists, working on various forms of media production, have also been active participants in their fields. Fabian, Barber and, more recently, Pype have been collaborators and participants in the process of painting and theatre in Zaire (Fabian 1996), theatre in Nigeria (Barber 2000) and TV in Kinshasa (Pype 2012) respectively. Collaboration with Hashim has offered me new insights into the field. The method of collaboration allowed me to view the processes of musical production, the writing of texts, the recording process and the negotiation between participants inside these processes. Being a full participant in the project enabled me not only to observe but to experience parts of the process of recording music.

Biography

Hashim was born in 1978 in the town of Bukoba, Northern Tanzania, close to the Ugandan border. Shortly after his birth, Hashim's family moved to Lansing, Michigan in the United States. Hashim's father, Yunnus Rubanza, had been awarded a place at Michigan State University to study for a PhD on Haya verbal morphology. The family remained in Michigan until the late 1980s. During the family's stay in the United States, Hashim's older sister, then in her early teens, began to develop an interest in popular music and began collecting cassette recordings of hip hop popular music. The period of the late 1970s and early 80s coincided with the development of hip hop and the first commercially available hip hop recordings. It was through his sister's interest in popular music that Hashim first encountered hip hop. While still a young child aged 7 Hashim had already begun practising rapping, memorising the lyrics of songs that he heard on the radio or on his sister's cassettes. These formative encounters with the practice of rapping were conducted in English. This interest in rapping and its performance was further enhanced by sessions in which Hashim would rap with his friends as they walked to and from school. As his repertoire and knowledge of rap lyrics grew, Hashim began to amend lines in the songs making them speak to his own experiences.

In 1990, following the completion of his father's doctorate, the family moved to Dar es Salaam where his father took up a position at the University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM). In the early years of the family's return to Dar es Salaam they moved frequently, living in Mbezi, Kimara and Ubungu before finally being offered accommodation at the University.

As a returning Tanzanian expatriate, Hashim spoke little Swahili, the language of the family home in the United States having been English, or his parents' first language Haya. Returning to Tanzania presented challenges for a young teenager, but Hashim was keen to immerse himself in learning a new language and city. It was during the first years on returning to Tanzania that Hashim first began to write his own rap lyrics. He developed a close friendship with the son of another of the academics working at UDSM, Seif Wamba, and they would exchange lyrics with each other. These early lyrics written by Hashim were largely a mixture of Swahili and English, though some songs were solely in one language and some contained verses in each language or code-switching between the two languages. Rapping was becoming increasingly important for Hashim and in 1993, at the age of 16, he recorded his first song. By 1998 he had recorded and released his first song. Hashim has established good connections with producers and studios in Dar es Salaam, as well as other rappers, and had the opportunity to make further recordings.

Rather than following the established route to gaining a career as a rapper, in 2001 Hashim moved to the Block 41 area of Kinondoni and began to engage with a collective of young men. The collective, based in a compound in Block 41, was to become the *Kikosi cha Mzinga* (tank battalion). It focused not only on rapping but also on having a wider engagement with the lives of its members. This was to be a space for mentoring, for discussion and for the creation and production of rapped music.⁴³ *Kikosi cha Mzinga* sought to respond to the issues faced by young men in the neighbourhood, such as the lack of employment. This was a space for the discussion, creation and performance of masculine identity. Members of the collective were 'taught' through discussions about

⁴³ There is a long history of urban association and leisure activities organised in Dar es Salaam including dance societies, football teams and communal associations (Burton 2003, 336-337).

their role as men in contemporary Tanzanian society. As the singer and Block 41 resident, Carola Kinasha, describes the collective:

When I came to their so called *kijiwe* and I sat with them, we talk, I realised that these kids are reading. You know whoever has a knowledge more than the others will come and give it in a very informal way.

This knowledge included an emphasis on how members should conduct themselves on the streets of Dar es Salaam. A feature of the masculinity performed by the collective is a focus on physical strength and the use of force. The very name of the collective references the masculine symbol of the tank. Further references to the military are made by the collective's use of military titles for its members.⁴⁴ Physical force, and the threat of violence, could be deployed by the collective in disagreements with other rappers. On one notable occasion, members of the collective attacked another rapper who they felt was copying Hashim's style of rapping. The confrontational attitude of the collective towards women, who were frequently dismissed by the collective as *malaya*, or prostitutes, is another means through which their masculinity was constructed and performed.⁴⁵ A feature of this masculine identity was its belief in the potentially harmful effects of femininity on masculinity. Women were perceived as hazards that could distract men and deprive them of their social standing. Femininity is both desired and dangerous. Masculinity is performed through resistance to the lure of femininity, through a disciplining of the self.

⁴⁴ Members of *Kikosi* refer to each other as *mjeshi* (soldier) and the Kikosi logo features the crosshairs from a rifle to make up the letter o.

⁴⁵ As Ratele (2011, 401-402) argues women's sexual relations are important to understanding the construction of masculinities.

The collective sought to provide a space for discussion and education. The young men who exclusively formed the membership of the collective were taught about the history of hip hop and Black Nationalist politics. Works by intellectuals and politicians such as Malcolm X, Kwame Nkrumah and Nyerere were read and discussed at the collective. The collective sought to provide a space for mentoring of the young men who attended. On occasion this involved acting as intermediaries in family conflicts. This was the case on an occasion in which Hashim acted as a mediator between Mbaya Wao and his father to resolve a family dispute. While the collective adopted some positions which challenged social norms in relation to women and the use of violence, it also sought to support family and communal structures.

By the time I first encountered Hashim, in 2006, he was no longer involved with *Kikosi cha Mizinga* and had stopped pursuing a career as a rapper altogether. Numerous reasons were given for Hashim's decision no longer to produce music. He expressed dissatisfaction with his ability to express himself freely, and felt that he was constrained by the music industry in Dar es Salaam. He sought greater control over the production and recording of music and expressed concern that in order to have songs played on public media, such as the radio and television, he would have needed to censor himself. During his career as a rapper, Hashim recorded relatively few tracks and very little of his music has been commercially available. The only commercially available recording of Hashim's rapping is his guest appearance on the song 'Not Ready', which featured on the 'Maasai Hip Hop' album by

Arusha-based hip hop group X-Plasterz. Copies of the few recordings that Hashim has made do circulate in small numbers informally in Dar es Salaam⁴⁶.

During my various research trips to Tanzania, I had been impressed by the regard in which Hashim was held by his fellow rappers and so approached him with the idea that I seek funding for him to come to the UK and collaborate with a number of musicians. In 2009 I applied for, and was awarded, an Arts Council grant to invite Hashim to come to the UK. Hashim came to Birmingham in 2010 for a six week period, during which time he collaborated with a number of rappers, producers and artists. A body of recordings were also produced during Hashim's stay and one live performance was given by Hashim. Since his visit to Birmingham, Hashim has adopted an ambiguous position towards the recordings made and these have not been made available to anyone other than the small circle of artists involved in their production.

Playing with Identity

Despite a somewhat ambiguous relationship to the music produced during his stay in Birmingham, it was clear that Hashim had enjoyed being able to express himself as an artist. Despite long periods in which he has not recorded or publicly performed, being an artist remained an important facet of Hashim's identity. When he came to the UK in 2010 he had not been recording or performing music, other than informally, for more than five years. During his six week stay in the UK, Hashim was able to engage with a range of artists working in diverse fields of cultural production. Throughout his visit he

⁴⁶ Hashim himself on occasion made copies of his recording on CD and sold these to individuals that requested them, though he did not have all copies of all the recordings he had made.

framed his identity in a variety of ways, depending on his interlocutors. He situated himself as an artist, a form of universal category, when encountering people not directly involved in the creation of hip hop, stressing the universality of his creative practice. Describing his creative work as 'poetry', or 'writing', he sought to situate it within a wider framework of creative acts. Being an artist is, as cast by Hashim, a gift - something intrinsic to the self. Thus when speaking about his career he said

I am going to embrace the fact that I was once a musician and have the mind of a musician and that a lot of musicians are looking at, you know, a lot of the decision that I have made.

Being an artist is not the result of a conscious choice but an essential attribute which belongs to certain individuals and not others. A great deal of emphasis in this idea of creativity was on the singularity and importance of the artist's (in this case the rapper's) vision. An individual artistic vision is, in his view, at the centre of the creative process. This is what Bourdieu and Nice argue creates an "ideology of creation" which "makes the author the first and last source of the value of his work" (Bourdieu and Nice 1980, 263). Hashim sought to locate value in his work by emphasising the universality of the creativity that it embodied. He placed his creativity alongside that of visual or literary artists. This view of the act of creativity as the product of a singular creative vision led Hashim into conflict with producers on occasion. As he stated:

I had problems with producers because I would always express what I wanted

to express. Part of it is because hip hop is not new to me, I know what it is all about, it's about expression, freedom of expression in fact.

An important feature of Hashim's relationship with the notion of himself as an artist is a particular focus on the 'art' of rapping; a focus not only on the persona a rapper should adopt but also on the technical skills required to be 'good' rapper. These skills are separated into elements such as "flow", "rapport" "punch lines" and "mathematics". Each of these elements of rapping relates to the use of language, voice or the relationship of the voice to the musical accompaniment. Mathematics describes the use of words, broken into syllables and rapped to create patterns. Flow is an aesthetic judgement of whether a rapper is able to articulate speech, pause in appropriate places and create dramatic tension. Rapport is the relationship between the voice of the rapper and the musical accompaniment. Punch lines are the ability to create impactful and often amusing lines. Hashim places a great deal of emphasis on the skill and technique of rapping. For him, skills are an important element of becoming successful and being recognised: as he said "if you got skills there is no discussion there. People like skills." The focus on skills and the 'art' of rapping link Hashim with the wider hip hop community; skills represent, for him, a universal quality on which all rappers can be judged. Skills are important to the battles between rappers. It is through an evaluation of skills that the strength of each rapper can be judged.

Since first encountering Hip Hop in the mid 1980s, it has played a significant role in Hashim's life, as both music and a form of cultural identification. He has been listening to

and performing rap for a large portion of his life. As he said when describing his initial contact with hip hop:

The things with rap is, you know, as a young man you experience for the first time something that speaks on your behalf, you know. And that is a really good feeling.

While he may no longer be performing or recording music, networks and relationships formed as a rapper remain significant for Hashim. The identity of a rapper, being part of what Alim has called “*translocal stylecommunities*” (Alim 2009, 104) has remained an important element in Hashim’s construction of his identity(s).

While visiting the UK in 2010, Hashim worked with a number of hip hop producers and rappers, including Kosyne, Myke Forte, Dockmini, Juice Aleem and Soweto Kinch. When meeting other artists who were performing or producing hip hop, Hashim was keen to stress not only that he was a rapper but that he had a ‘deep’ knowledge of hip hop. This performance of authenticity was done through the referencing of hip hop recordings that displayed a ‘deep’ knowledge of the genre.

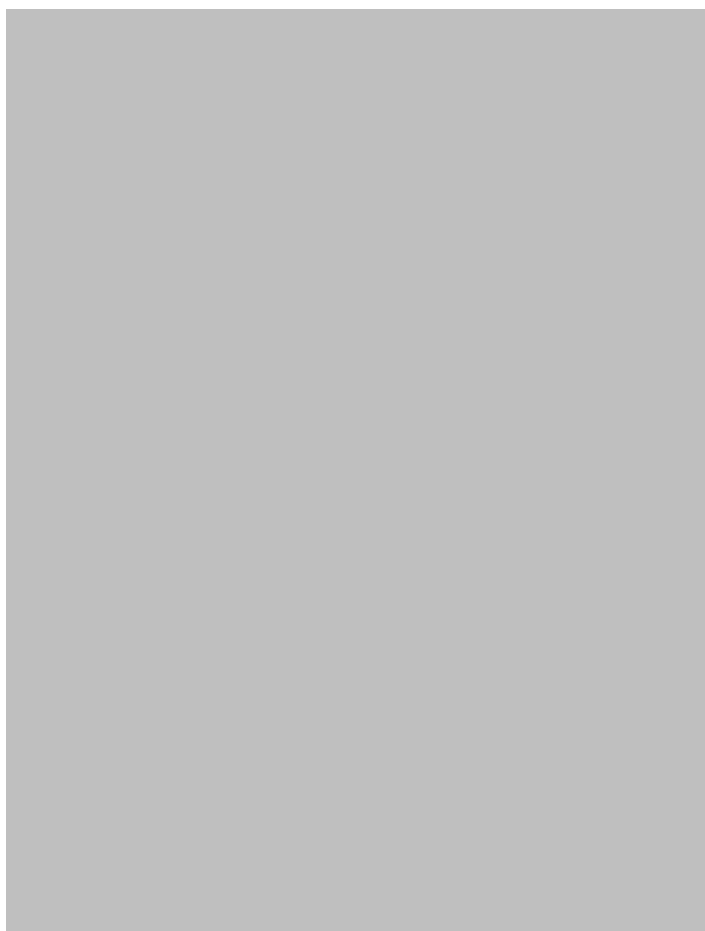


Figure 8 – Hashim and Myke Forte working together in Birmingham

Hip Hop is frequently cited by practitioners as a form of knowledge, as something within which an individual can demonstrate their familiarity. As Potter writes; “hip-hop constitutes itself as a knowledge, complete with its own discursive form, both citing and siting its own tradition(s)” (Potter 1995, 22). Knowledge of the history of hip hop, rappers, producers, lyrics and samples all help to establish a rapper as part of a global hip hop culture. Displaying knowledge authenticates a participant as a part of the hip hop culture. The breadth of this knowledge can be assessed and individuals consequently included or excluded from the global hip hop cultures. The notion of authenticity, the real, is central to hip hop discourse. As Harkness writes:

In hip-hop culture, authenticity is one of the most salient boundaries – who is and is not ‘keeping it real’ is of central importance.

(Harkness 2012, 285)

What, and who, is considered authentic is contested, and contingent upon the participants and the setting. Harkness’s study of authenticity in Chicago hip hop suggests it is “a set of cultural practices and rhetorical devices, used situationally to create, maintain, and occasionally traverse these boundaries” (Harkness 2012, 284). By embodying the identity of a rapper and performing themselves as members of hip hop culture rapper accrue social capital. Social capital gives hip hop practitioners a legitimate space from which to speak, and validity as representatives of this cultural form.

Hashim has constructed an identity in which he is an authentic producer and participant in hip hop culture. An important element of the *Kikosi cha Mzinga* collective’s activities were that the more experienced members mentored the younger members in the art of rapping. Hashim is someone, as the quote below shows, who is able to elucidate hip hop.

People misunderstood what realness was. Some people thought real hip hop was a live performance.... The rhyme format, is real hip hop that with a certain rhyme format, is real hip hop dependent on what you say? Some people thought that this hip hop I am doing is real because I’m saying real shit, even though the technical aspect of hip hop was not even present in this person’s music. Some people thought hip hop was real if a guy would provide you with a flow.

Hashim adopts the authoritative tone of an expert in the above discussions on hip hop. He is able to pronounce on what constitutes the real in hip hop. Though, as we shall see repeatedly in this chapter, there is some ambiguity in his final position on what real hip hop is.

As with the Kikosi collective, Hashim's persona as a rapper continues to embody a performance of masculinity. This masculine persona is performed in part through the assertion in his lyrics of his ability and superiority as a rapper. Physical strength and the use of force are also referenced in his performance of masculinity. The lines below, from 'Maisha Yale Pale' which was recorded while Hashim was in the UK, make reference to both his superiority as a rapper and to his physical strength and the threat of violence.

Kama Ngugi hamnisomi
 Like Ngugi you don't read (understand) me
 Hamjifunzi kwa masumbwi au ngumi
 You won't learn by fist fights
 Utafikiri ninazungumza na wajumbe mbinguni
 Like I'm talking to angels
 Situngi nabuni
 I don't just make shit, I create shit

This excerpt draws on the rhetorical style of boasting associated with much global hip hop. Hashim draws a comparison between himself and the Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o. Like Ngugi, Hashim is not read or understood. Hashim suggests his texts are deeper, more

complex, than those of other rappers. He also contrasts his own use of physical force in the form of 'fists and punches' with the 'angels' that he is addressing. The strength Hashim is claiming for himself here, in contrast to those he is addressing, is multiple, both textual and physical.

The act of identity creation is not only pertinent in the performance of the self for others but in the performance of the self for the self. As DeNora has argued in her study of music listening habits:

The 'projection' of biography is by no means the only basis for the construction of self-identity. Equally significant is a form of 'introjection', a presentation of self to self, the ability to mobilize and hold on to a coherent image of 'who one knows one is'. And this involves the social and cultural activity of remembering, the composting of past experiences, for the cultivation of self-accountable imageries of self. (DeNora 1999, 45)

As Hashim says of his early experiences of listening to hip hop

I recall myself sitting next to the radio listening to Easy-E and what Easy-E said, the first few lines he said never, I never wrote this down but I never forgot this. (Hashim then recites some lines from Easy-E Duz It). I never forgot that, that has always been in my head, I never forgot that.

Music as practice, as a form of production, has been central to establishing Hashim's identity as a rapper. The act of listening, itself a form of participation, also enables a space through which identity can be constructed. It is not only through his own acts as a rapper, but through his listening to, and knowledge of, hip hop that Hashim constructs himself as a participant.

Hashim is an observant Muslim, praying five times a day and observing as far as possible the obligations of Islamic practice. Islam is an important spiritual and social focus of his life. Religious practice plays an important role in structuring time, space and social relationships for him. Through the frequent wearing of the *kanzu* and *kofia*, which are associated with Muslim dress, Hashim is visibly identifiable as a Muslim in Dar es Salaam.⁴⁷ Performing music is held by many Muslims to be haram, or forbidden. Though there is no direct injunction against music in the Qur'an, discussions about whether or not music can be performed by Muslims has continued among Muslim scholars (Shiloah 1997, 144). The arguments of Muslim scholars who regard music as haram are based upon hadith, the traditions of the prophet. As there has been a growth of revivalist Islam, the propriety of the creation and performance of music by Muslims continues to be contested in Muslim communities across the globe (Marsden 2007, 473 and Larkin 2004, 98). There are many prominent American rappers, including Mos Def, Rakim, Ice Cube and Ghostface Killah, who are practising Muslims. In the United States many rappers have had strong links with the Nation of Islam and Black Nationalist politics (Abdul Khabeer 2007, 126). In Senegal many prominent hip hop artists are Muslim (Ntarangwi 2010, 1321), indeed a number of the

⁴⁷ The *kanzu* is a long sleeve ankle length gown associated with Muslim and the *kofia* is a Swahili term for the small hats frequently associated with Muslims.

rappers that I interviewed in Dar es Salaam were practising Muslims including Mbaya Wao, Imam Abbas and Salim Muba. However as Hashim expressed his own concerns:

There was a conflict of interest between my passion for music and my passion for Islam. It just was safer, because for a long time I struggled with it and I wasn't decided, so I stepped away from music.

Enacting the injunctions of his faith is important for Hashim. He has dedicated time to studying and learning about his faith. However his relationship with music and faith has remained open and somewhat ambiguous. Though when we first encountered each other he was not performing music publicly or recording, he still freestyled to entertain his friends. While still unsure of the religious propriety of making music he came to the UK and recorded and performed several songs during his stay.

The position that Hashim occupies within Tanzanian popular music is ambiguous. He is familiar to, and garners a great deal of respect from, many rappers in Tanzania. For a number of the rappers that I interviewed, Hashim was considered the best rapper that Tanzania had produced. One of the key features of Hashim's reputation is that it is founded, at least to some degree, precisely on the paucity of information available about him. Hashim has made only a handful of recordings, the majority of which are not easily available.⁴⁸ No music videos have been recorded, and so many of Hashim's admirers have not seen images of him. The reputation that continues to exist, among rappers, is based in part on the mystery of Hashim's absence. As the rapper D-Knob said of Hashim; "The

⁴⁸ In 2011 the website TZ Hip Hop recorded and made available a tribute mix of 6 of Hashim's tracks that they were able to find.

respect he created is bigger than his music.” It is an absence, rather than a presence, which ensures his continued status as a significant rapper.

A central feature of working with Hashim has been the multiple identities that he inhabits. These identities both enable and constrain Hashim in rapping. Or perhaps are adopted as enabling and constraining strategies by Hashim. He at once occupies multiple identity positions in relation to specific cultural and religious discourses and practices. These different social subjects, Muslim, rapper, artist, Tanzanian and global citizen, can be foregrounded as the situation demands. As Hall has argued “I use ‘identity’ to refer to the meeting point, the point of *suture* between on the one hand discourse and practice ” (Hall 1996, 5). His identity as a rapper, and as an artist, has been an important factor in Hashim’s fashioning of himself. His identities are multiple, processual and performative. The identities that Hashim inhabits are not fixed but are each part of a process of fashioning the self. We can see that Hashim’s construction of himself, as artist and rapper, is always in process, being fashioned situationally.

Hashim adopts a somewhat ambiguous relationship to his various identities, to the subject positions of identity and perhaps one might argue to the very concept of a singular fixed identity. As Hashim has said of the different voices that he has adopted during his rapping career:

If I look back now at my history in music, I look at it and I am like shit, there is no solid identity. But I can see trends, there a numerous, a few different identities that pop up and I can even pin point and tell you this one here is that guy, I can

tell you the state of mind of each one. In over 20 years these guys kept coming back...

Identity is here cast by Hashim as multiple and fluid. Each identity represents a form of subjectivity or an opportunity for expression. Identities can enable and constrain in equal measure. As Waterman writes of musical artists in the Yoruba speaking part of Nigeria:

the process of performance involves the consolidation of persons out of diverse, multifarious, overlapping materials, materials often borrowed from beyond the bounds of the Yoruba-speaking world. This process suggests a sophisticated conception of personality as an assemblage of traits, made coherent and sustained by the attention of others (Waterman 2002, 20-21).

The discourses which sustain identities can occupy contradictory positions, as is the case with Islam and music. Identities are thus to be negotiated. For Hess this multiplicity of rappers' identities is a feature of the genre itself: "rap artists obscure, confuse, or split their identities to subvert the often conflicting standards of authenticity and marketability" (Hess 2005, 298). In Hashim's case, however, the conflict is not between authenticity and the market but between different social representations of the self.

Hashim's relation with the notion of identity would seem to conform to the post-structuralist notion of identities as fluid and multiple. As Foucault has argued, rather than something stable and fixed, identity is created through discourse (Foucault 2000). Hashim is able to move between identities, each position enabling him to realise a

different set of possibilities. Equally, he employs ambiguity in relation to the various identities that he occupies. This ambivalence towards the identities themselves allows him freedom to move between the identity positions and not to be fixed to a singular identity. As Hashim himself has explained when asked about the different identities adopted in his music:

In Islamic theology and in popular belief here in Tanzania there is a thing that many people are aware of here. That some people are either cursed or blessed I don't know which one it is but they are cursed with what we Muslims like to describe as Djinnns. There are people who posses a few of them you know you have two, three, four, five, 16, 20, whatever the number. In western psychology this can be described as multiple personality disorder, where you have a guy who sometimes is this way and sometimes is that way.

The image of possession by Djinnns is used by Hashim as a metaphor for the multiple identities occupied by individuals.⁴⁹ If identity is a metaphorical form of possession, identities are not of the self but are a relationship to an external force. Djinnns can be either positive or negative. In Islamic practice in Tanzania, Djinnns may be accommodated or exorcised. Djinnns represent something of an ambiguous force in human life. Different forms of subjectivity are engendered by djinnns. If identities are then to be seen as metaphorical Djinnns, they are separate from the individual within which they reside. Djinnns are in the self but not of the self. Identity is a force which is to be countered, accommodated and negotiated with. As Barendregt and van Zanten suggest:

⁴⁹ Djinnns are Islamic "spiritual forces that are either inimical to mankind or that may serve individuals through positive and enlightened guidance" (Bravmann 1977, 46).

People live in a world of shifting identities, as they negotiate themselves as members of one or more local communities and a national structure, and are simultaneously linked to people all over the world through the possibilities of the present media-scape. (Barendregt and van Zanten 2002, 101)

Bauman has suggested that ambiguity represents a post-modern state of identity saying “the snag is no longer how to discover, invent, construct, assemble (even buy) an identity, but how to prevent it from sticking” (Bauman 1996, 25). Bauman suggests that people now occupy multiple identity positions and seek not to be fixed within a single position. Hashim’s approach to identities is frequently playful, they seem to some degree to represent strategies in a game of revealing and concealing the self. This is not to suggest that all of these identity positions are solely occupied strategically and situationally. Hashim has clearly deeply held convictions and attachments to these identities and their attendant practices and discourses. It is rather that identities are perceived by Hashim, like Djinns, as forces with which one engages and negotiates.

Meaning and Multiplicity in Hashim’s Lyrics

As with the identities that he occupies, Hashim’s lyrics are open to multiple readings. The lyrics of the song below, ‘Mysticism’, recorded while in the UK, address the subject of mystical beliefs and practices, mysticism here being a wider set of beliefs and practices than those associated only with Juju and the occult.

Huwezi kuelezea harufu ya bangi,

One can't describe the smell of marijuana

Wacha wenyewe wainuse

Let them smell it

Wacha waiguse

Let them feel it

Ni kama kwepo Ulaya ukajishuku kwa rangi

Like the feeling you get when in Europe and start feeling self-conscious of your colour

Wacha wenyewe wainuse

Let them sense/smell that

Wacha waiguse

Let them feel it

Haijalishi ka unapiga hatua

Doesn't matter if making progress

Au unapiga hisabati kama mwizi –napiga ya kuua

Or calculating moves (hitting maths) like a thief – my hit is to kill

Vita haviishi jua, litazama, litaibuka

The struggle (war) is never ending, the sun will set and rise (the struggle just goes on)

Kama amba la mwezi, wanga na wezi, si kwamba hawawezi kutamba ambako kuna

Like moon light, it's not that witches and thieves can't dominate in their field

Mwanga ni ushenzi napanga ya kupanga yana panguka

Wickedness, I make plans but all of them fall through

Wana sema kuna mchanga nimetambuka

They say somebody pulled the root on me (I have been bewitched)

Si mapema kusimama nakupiga rakaa

It not too soon for me to start performing salat

Kumi na moja ngumi na hoja zimekataa ngoja

Eleven to be precise, arguments and fists fight have failed, wait

Wanasisia wanakwambia ni imani potofu

Politicians say that this is make believe

Nenda kwake utakuta mganga

Go to their homes and find a witch doctor (someone who cures witchcraft)

Nani kipofu

Tell me who is blind here

Nyie ni wanga

You are witches.

The song is structured as a progression of linked vignettes. After the first six lines, each vignette is in the form of four loosely linked lines. Mystical practice, the topic of the text, is approached somewhat circumspectly. The opening lines explore mental states which it is not possible to know without having experienced them, for example the effect of marijuana and the alienation felt on arriving in Europe. The verse approaches its topic of mystical practices somewhat ambiguously. It is said that the narrator has had occult practices used against him, yet his own relation to these practices remains obscure. This central theme of the ambiguity of both discourse and practice is developed in the final image of the verse. In the final four lines, Hashim draws on the image of a politician, who having denied that witchcraft is real, employs an *mganga* or witchdoctor to cure or protect them from witchcraft. This is a central image for the song, an image which embodies the song's very

own ambiguity about mystical practices. The politician denies mystical practices and then engages in them. While the song opens with the notion that certain things cannot be explained until experienced, it does not explore within itself the experience of mysticism. Rather, mysticism floats throughout the song as a theme, not experienced but made reference to. This lack of experience of confirmation perhaps best reflects Hashim's outlook. When speaking about the topic of the song, he described mysticism thus: "I don't think it's well defined yet, these are just areas and sciences that we don't understand."

Occult practices have been theorised as a means of understanding the secret of unfettered accumulation and consumption (Comaroff 1999, 293) and provide "imaginative moral frameworks" (Sanders 2008, 122). Here it seems to me that Hashim approaches mysticism as a topic for the hidden, and mysteriousness of life, rather than as a tool for moral discourse. Hashim is careful throughout the verse never to confirm mystical practices, which are spoken about by others or viewed externally. The mystical stands for itself and for life's hidden forces.

The lyrics of *Mnyonge* (the meek) have a more linear structure delivered by a first person narrator. This song approaches a familiar theme in Tanzanian popular culture, that of gossip and jealousy (Weiss 2009, 144-146).

Maisha yangu mimi ni maisha yangu,

My life is my life

Nyinyi mnachokipata kwa kunifuata fuata ni nini

Really what is it that you get from following me (being in my business)

Na matatizo kibao, nahitaji likizo

I got mad problems, I need a vacation

Kama unaona na kipaji kichukue kama ndivyo

If you think I got talent, you can take it

Najihisi ka na laana ya Ibilisi

Feel like I got the curse of the devil

Najihisi kama Ghana kombe la Dunia Bondeni⁵⁰

Feel like Ghana at the world cup in South Africa (down in the crater)

Ni rahisi kuzungumza unapo kuwepo pembeni

It's easy to talk, when you're an onlooker

Sote tuna taka pepo mapepo pembeni

We all want heaven / bliss - Not things that possess you (a term used by Christians to describe Djinns – possession)

Nilipo kuwepo huwezi kuwepo leo

Where I'm at you can't be today

Semeni

Talk

Kama vile wanataka nizile

Like they want me to have sour grapes (to give up)

Kama vile wanataka nisile wabaki wao tu

Like they don't want me eat, so that only they remain

Mafao hu ambatana na fitina

Money always is accompanied with problems (politics)

⁵⁰ Dunia Bondeni or down in the crater is Swahili slang for South Africa.

Makao makuu maadui ni hao hao

Back at the capital our enemies are the same kind of people

Na kama hujui mambo yao ni yale yale

And if you don't know the kind shit they on – same shit

Kamuulize Bau Bau⁵¹

Ask Bau Bau

Sijui wana taka mi nikale kwao,

I don't know what they want- maybe for me to dine at their house

Nikalale kwao, nikavae hata sare sare nao

Sleep at their house, wear matching clothes

Haiwezekani.

Impossible.

This text is narrated from the position of the *mnyonge* (meek) of the title. The narrator is someone being followed, talked about and who feels cursed. In the verse the narrator addresses those who are envious of him. Jealousy is a central theme of much Tanzanian popular culture. Indeed the idea of jealous neighbours, colleagues and relatives feeds into the discourse of the occult dealt with in the previous song.

As Hashim is the narrator, this text can be read as a reference to jealousy of his talent and standing within Tanzanian popular music. While the narrator adopts the position of the meek, he uses this to assert his superiority over those he is addressing. This

⁵¹ Bau Bau is a friend of Hashim's from the Block 41 area of Dar es Salaam who was involved with Kikosi cha Mzinga and has stayed in Block 41. This acts as a form of 'shout out' as a space within which to recognise friends in the texts.

superiority is asserted through Hashim's distancing himself from his addressees. While they seek closeness to him by wishing him to visit them and stay in their houses, and by wearing identical clothes, Hashim is adamant that this cannot happen, is impossible. Those who are jealous of Hashim in effect desire to be like Hashim but he asserts that they cannot attain the position that he is in. The text acts as a means for asserting the authority of its narrator. The jealousy of others acts as a foil for Hashim to assert his own value.

Those that are jealous of Hashim seek to know about his life. They are described as following him, as onlookers and as those who talk. Through talking about him, these onlookers seek to control the presentation of Hashim to a wider public. This text can be read as a battle over stories or gossip, a battle about what is revealed and what is concealed. Hashim seeks to assert control over what is publicly presented about him, over his identity. Jealousy is here a contest about visibility, about what is to be made public.

Hashim's texts draw on multiple traditions. His lyrics, as is the case with *mnyonge*, draw on a tradition of rap battles and bragging. These lyrics are used to assert the supremacy and skill of their author. However Hashim also draws on a tradition of hidden messages and textual ambiguity in Swahili poetry (Topan 2006, 110). The Swahili use of language, in both song and written form, has a history of generating meaning which is subtle and dependent on context. As Askew writes:

For one thing, *ngoma* songs, like *taarab* songs and like the meaning-laden

sayings printed on the *kanga* worn by coastal women, draw on a long tradition of subtlety in language. Heavily saturated in metaphor and double entendre, *ngoma* song lyrics express a Swahili predilection and talent for verbal ingenuity. (Askew 2002, 76)

One of the songs recorded by Hashim while in the UK he titled “*Bangi ni bora kuliko mwanamke wa kihindi*” or Marijuana is better than “Indian women”⁵². The song, written as the story of a rapacious female who ruins a young man’s life, can also be read as the destruction of young men through the consumption of drugs⁵³. As the opening lines below show, the song also draws on popular discourses about consumption; in particular on discourses about women who are *tamaa* (avaricious).

Kama una mavumba anataka kadhaa

She wants your money

Kama umesimama anataka kukaa

If you are on the rise she wants to get with you

Majumba mitumba anayo taka kuvaa kama

Houses and the second hand clothes she wants to wear

Sio mitumba kuvunga ana achama

Are not second hand, acting like she doesn’t want to eat she opens her mouth to be fed

Ana tamaa ya kimbunga ilivyo

⁵² ‘*Mwanamke wa Kihindi*’ Indian Women is a reference derived from street Swahili for heroin which comes mostly from the Indian sub-continent.

⁵³ The injection of heroin has become increasingly prevalent in Dar es Salaam since the late 1990s (McCurdy, Ross, Kilonzo, Leshabari, Williams, 2006, 26)

She is greedy like a hurricane

A reference to Indian women also speaks to notions of racial division within Dar es Salaam (Brennan 2012, 200). This tension is sometimes popularly expressed through the perceived lack of inter-marriage between Asian and African Tanzanians.

Hashim's text speaks to multiple meanings and readings. Drawing on various popular discourses the texts can speak to multiple concerns. As the following example of our exchanges when going through some of the text from *mysticism* illustrate, the texts are made open to multiple readings.

David: *Unapiga hisabati kama mwizi* you hit maths like a thief.

Hashim: Making progress, stepping forward it has nothing to do with how wealthy you are, or what level of success you are in, or calculating moves as a thief. Being intricate in your calculations, you find yourself being very calculative. Because you are in this awareness you are self-conscious to the point you're calculating more than you normally would. So if I take you and put you in a predominantly black society, all eyes are on you; it changes your self-perception and how you go about things. You're suddenly now more aware, you don't want to do things to offend people, there are certain things you are more meticulous about.

David: *Kupiga* is to hit, but you can also say *kupiga sim* to call someone.

Hashim: It's the same way you hit the phone, and you *piga bao* which is to score. The terms *unapiga hisabati* is, if you directly translate it from Swahili, means also means to hit maths, like calculating maths but also to hit maths. I'm tying it in to how people

normally here apply mob justice to thieves as well. It's just something I inserted there to have word play, you know.

In the text, then, *unapiga*, to hit, can make reference to the intricate calculation of a thief and to the physical violence exerted against thieves.

Conclusion

Hashim's identities, as well as his lyrics, are marked by ambiguity and multiplicity. There is a conscious attempt to open both identities and texts up to multiple readings. He seeks to play with these, attempting for neither his identity nor the meaning of the text to be fixed within a single meaning. There is a playful quality to Hashim's expression in many of his texts. As with the song title "*Bangi ni bora kuliko mwanamke wa Kihindi*" which is not only open to multiple meanings but seems to tease the audience with its possible misreading. His song *Mysticism* also seems to play with meanings, addressing its topic so obliquely that the audience is left to infer the meaning. The popularity of Hashim as a rapper among his fellow rappers is directly related to this ingenious word play. It is this multiplicity of meanings, in his texts in particular, which has made Hashim so well respected among his fellow rappers. As D-Knob says of Hashim, "he was more conscious, you could be listening to his music and wondering what is he thinking." It is precisely the ambiguity and multiplicity of the meaning which is here set as the value of Hashim's lyrics.

CHAPTER 8 – GENRES AND TEXTS

Introduction

The intention of the act of rapping is the performance of a verbal text. Rapped texts are marked out, through their creation, performance and reception, as distinct from the general communication of everyday life. They are texts which have something to say; texts which demand the attention of listeners. In their content and form they are differentiated from everyday dialogue. Rapped texts are constructed and performed to draw attention to themselves. Some of the most well known lyrics from rapped songs in Tanzania have become sources for popular and political discourse.⁵⁴ Sections of rap lyrics have been doubly entextualised, first constituted as part of a text and then separated from the full text song and reinserted into other discursive frames.⁵⁵ Rapped texts are widely disseminated across media networks and the most significant songs continue to be transmitted temporally. Rapped lyrics in Dar es Salaam are, as Barber says in general texts often are:

hot spots of language: concentrations of linguistic productivity, forms of language that have been marked out to command heightened attention – and sometimes to stimulate intense excitement, provoke admiration and desire, or be a mainstay of memory (Barber 2007, 3).

⁵⁴ Bongo Flava was a significant part of both the 2005 and 2010 electoral campaigns and Tanzanian President Jakaya Kikwete is reported to have close relationship with many popular music stars. See Reuster-Jahn 2008 for discussion of the 2005 electoral campaign. This has included his paying the medical fees for the popular singer Ray C in 2012.

⁵⁵ See, for example, the term Hali Halisi (The Real Situation) coined by Sugu / Mr II as the title for one of his songs which has become a term used in everyday conversation. .

Rapped music texts represent a response to the experiences of their composers in contemporary Dar es Salaam. They are not, however, only a means of representing their creators' lived experience, but also a means of engaging with and altering that experience.

Over the period of my research, I have collected a significant amount of rapped music in both video and audio form. In this chapter, I have sought to draw out some of the common themes and concerns expressed within these lyrics. The central questions which I wish to explore here are: what constitutes the genre of rapped music? How are the boundaries of the genres constituted? What order of meaning do these genres refer to, and try to shape? How does rapped music constitute its audience?

The Creation of Texts

While in Dar es Salaam, I gathered two distinct forms of rapped musical texts. First among these are texts of recorded artists which are broadcast on the radio, made available on CD and via websites such as YouTube and East Africa Tube. The second set of texts that I gathered are those of underground rappers. Underground rap performances are typically not recorded and are broadcast only to an audience within earshot of the rapper. The audience for underground rap is required to be in the immediate vicinity. I recorded the performances of various groups of underground rappers in Kiwalani, Mwananyamala, Mikocheni and Kijitonyama in Dar es Salaam, using a digital camera. The forms of underground and recorded rapped performance differ. Recorded rapped songs are commodities which participate in an economy of musical broadcasting, performance and sale. They are recorded to musical accompaniment, referred to as the beat. Songs are

typically between three and five minutes long and follow familiar verse and chorus patterns in their structure.⁵⁶ The rapper D-Knob describes his current recording process thus

Right now I write my music in the studio, I stay studio, I listen to the track, I stay there all day. Then I write my lyrics on the phone then I rap.... I can rap, I can rest, I can rap again. Technology is big.

D-Knob goes to a studio, selects the beat he wishes to record upon and sets about writing his lyrics. The whole process of writing and recording may be completed in a single day. In D-Knob's description, as well as my own observations of recording sessions in studios, rappers arrived to record songs with their lyrics written on pieces of paper, notebooks or, increasingly, as notes in their mobile phones. In one recording session at the M-Lab studio I attended with the rapper Lufunyo, he had memorised all of his lyrics and gave a performance without reference to written text.

⁵⁶ There is a long history, in popular music production, of media, and, in particular, radio, dictating the length of songs as, to be successful, songs must be radio-friendly. (Fisher and Ahlqvist 2000, 304 and Negus 1993, 66).



Figure 9 – Chedi Ngulu from the group Masharikans recording in the studio Mwananyamala

While the structure may vary, there are typically three to four verses, each verse separated by a musical interlude or, more commonly, a repeated chorus. In each song the verses are comprised of the same number of lines. While the number of lines in a verse may vary between songs, each song has an internally regular structure.

The audience for recorded music is as wide as songs can be broadcast. With the developments in technology, songs are broadcast within Tanzania, throughout East Africa and, increasingly, globally. Songs and videos now circulate globally on the internet through online media such as Spotify, iTunes and YouTube. The potential audience for Tanzanian rap music is global and unmoored from the site of its production. Access to audiences is

mediated through radio, TV and internet networks. To gain a wide audience, then, recorded rap music must be sensitive to the demands of these networks.

Underground rap performances are more loosely structured. Performances most frequently take place at *maskani* or *kampu* at which rappers exchange lyrics with one another. These performances are not recorded. Rappers take turns to perform, and an individual rapper's performance rarely last longer than one or two minutes. Underground rappers do not use written lyrics during these performances, drawing on memory and invention to create the text. While underground rappers do not directly refer to written texts during what are ostensibly oral performances, lyrics which have been written, and in some cases recorded, may form part of the lyrical text of a song. Uthman Issa describes the process which he was instructed to go through to develop his lyrics by more established underground rappers in Arusha:

Sit down think about something write a line, go another day write four lines,
put them together see if they rhyme..... Write a few, think of them, come
another day write a few, think of them, memorise them, perfect them.

Another underground rapper, Kid James, used parts of his recorded songs as a structure around which to introduce improvised material. The boundary between what is oral and written is slippery. Texts which have been carefully crafted, written and re-written, are used by underground rappers in oral performances which place a creative premium on invention. Carefully crafted written material, and lines invented on the spot, are melded together to form a complete text.

Underground rap performances are not as tightly structured as recorded rap songs. The number of verses or lines performed by each rapper varies and is determined by the depth and breadth of their lyrical repertoire, by memory and by their creativity on the occasion. Underground rappers' performances speak to the texts that have been performed before them; they are in dialogue with one another. Dialogue could take the form of continuing to speak to themes addressed by the rappers performing prior to them, as was the case most frequently in the group of rappers associated with Mbaya Wao. Or, as at another *maskani* in Kiwalani that I regularly visited, dialogue can take the form of competition. The rap lyrics of the rappers in the Kiwalani *maskani* frequently spoke to one another, often using their lyrics to make jokes at the other rappers' expense. A few lines, either boastful of the rappers skill or dismissive of other rappers in the group, are delivered by each rapper before another member of the group replies.⁵⁷ As the Mikocheni based rapper Sizoh Wamichano described of his *maskani's* competitive weekend performances:

maybe we are going to make an exercise in the beach, maybe Coco beach or Msasani beach. We meet with other artists and make competition. No beat it is live, one verse, one verse, one verse, for everyone. If you are not strong, maybe after three rounds you are keep quiet.

Narrative, an important feature of recorded rap songs, is less common in underground rap performances. The nature of much underground rap performance, with its emphasis on dialogue and improvisation, does not lend itself to the development of narrative. Instead,

⁵⁷ Competitive performance has been a noted feature of Tanzanian popular music performance see Gunderson 2000 2010, Askew 2002, Lange 2000, Hill 377 2000.

each individual performance by a rapper was often made up of a series of connected vignettes. These vignettes were made up of boasts, advice and images. As we can see in the section below, taken from a recording of underground rappers in Mwananyamala, the song is focused on a series of comparisons between the performer and other rappers.

Nimeanza huu muziki tangu 1999,

I started this music in 1999

Bila waasisi ndiyo maana mi mkali kama Jadakiss⁵⁸

Without pioneers, that's why I'm the best like Jadakiss,

Japo wanaongea sana hizi levo hawazifii

Even though they talk a lot nowadays, they can't reach my level,

Wamenikosa kwa maneno wananisaka kwa bunduki

They couldn't get me with their words, now look for me with guns,

Napiga moyo konde najua watatoka nduki

I encourage myself to fight on, I know they gonna run,

Kweli binadamu mbaya,

Truthfully humans are evil,

Binadamu amejaa chuki namgushi, kwani nyota Njema huonekana asubuhi

Humans are full of hate I avoid them, because a good star can be seen in the morning
skies,

Mi ni beki mkali fowadi kwangu hazisumbui

I am a good defender, forwards don't worry me,

Mi ni mkali zaidi yao sema tu huwajui

⁵⁸ Jadakiss is an American rapper and part of the Ruff Ryders group.

I'm better than them but they don't know it,
 Nawalipua kwa mabomu kama Mbagala⁵⁹ sasa cheki wanavyotoka nduki,
 I blow them up with like the Mbagala bombs, now watch them run frantic,
 Wamesahau hata daladala
 They even forgot about daladala
 Wana meno mabovu nawang'oa bila ganzi
 They've got bad teeth I pull them out without using anaesthetic
 Hili gemu gumu kutoka,
 This game is too hard to make it
 Lazima ufanye kazi sio rahisi kama unavyozani mdwanzi.. yeah
 You must work really hard, it not as easy as you think sucker.. yeah

This rap delivers a series of linked images which do not coalesce into a narrative. In this verse the power, toughness and masculinity of the performer are extolled. Images of violence, of bombs and guns, pervade the verse. The rapper's lyrical strength is compared to recent explosions in Mbagala and, as with the bombs in Mbagala, the rapper sends his competitors running.

There are clear differences between recorded and underground rap performance. These differences influence not only the production and reception of the texts but the form and content of the texts themselves. It is important to recognise that these two forms of rap performance do not operate in opposition to each other, but rather form a dialogical relationship. Many underground rappers aspire to record, and draw considerable

⁵⁹ There was an explosion at a military base in the Mbagala area of Dar es Salaam in April 2009 when a number of civilians and soldiers were killed.

inspiration from recorded rapped music. Since 2010, underground rappers have drawn increasing media attention with radio and TV stations organising events and competitions at which they can perform. The phenomenon of underground rap has also influenced more established rappers. Notably, FidQ's "Freestyle Friday" series of videos on his Cheusidawa YouTube channel has featured performances by both established and underground rappers.

Genre Boundaries and the Ordering of Musical Space

As I set out at the beginning of this thesis, I have chosen to focus on the practice of rapping, rather than locate this work within a specific genre of hip hop or Bongo Flava. Rappers that I interviewed described themselves as performing a variety of different genres including commercial, hardcore, rap-ragga, hip hop and Bongo Flava. The genres of Bongo Flava and Hip Hop were attributed particular significance by rappers. Both of these genres act as a means of differentiating, but the meanings ascribed to these genres mean that differentiation is as much ideological as based around musical style. Genre definitions are a means of ordering.

Hip hop has been conceived by many practitioners and scholars as a culture. The culture of hip hop contains the elements of rapping or emceeing, DJing, graffiti and break or street dance (Pardue 2011, 103). For many, hip hop has a specific socio-political role as the voice of the marginalised, as "a form of subaltern agency" (Pardue 2011, 106)⁶⁰. Hip hop is celebrated as a counterhegemonic voice, a voice which speaks truth to power. Some

⁶⁰ See also Kahf 2007, Pate 2010,

Tanzanian artists, both recorded and underground, identified the music that they were making as hip hop. Symbolic practices, including style and discourse associated with the global genre of hip hop, were incorporated into their own musical practices. For those who identified their music as hip hop, an essential element of hip hop practice was that it dealt with the reality of everyday Tanzanian life. As Salim Muba, an underground rapper from Kiwalani, expressed it:

Hip hop is like talking the reality.... The content that someone is giving out,
hip hop you are talking different problem which are surrounding the society.

Rappers, here, make a claim to authenticity through bearing witness to the harsh reality of life in Dar es Salaam. Authenticity is also claimed, as the rapper continues to fulfil the proper role of the artist as *kioo cha jamii* (the mirror to society). Tanzanian music has a long history of offering socio-political commentary. Through fore-fronting their role as social commentators, discussing the problems which are surrounding society, Tanzanian rappers place themselves firmly within this tradition. Hip hop is claimed as an authentically African art form. The principal elements of hip hop culture: graffiti, rapping and street dance, are thought by some Tanzanians to be a modern representation of African traditions of cave painting, singing and dance. Hip hop is here cast as reclamation of 'traditional' cultural practices. As Uthman Issa described hip hop:

the way hip hop adapts, in so many places someone might ask where is this
coming from? And they will trace where it is coming from because hip hop
has adapted to that culture. Let's say we had poetry before, Swahili poetry

and they have taken Swahili poetry and that's got into *taarab* and people who used to listen to *taarab* adapted that to hip hop and took *taarab* lines and put them into hip hop.

Hip hop is sometimes set in direct opposition to Bongo Flava. Where hip hop is concerned with 'the real', Bongo Flava principally addresses 'fake' topics such as partying and enjoyment. A recurring image is of Bongo Flava as empty 'bubble gum' music. Bongo Flava, like bubble gum, has taste but no substance. It is briefly consumed and then discarded. The implication is that Bongo Flava is music that can entertain but cannot ultimately satisfy. It is something superficial. Rapping is cast as masculine, in contrast to the feminine singing in Bongo Flava songs. As D-Knob says:

a rapper is considered more powerful than the one who sings in Tanzania. You rap you talk about lots of things about street things and this guy talks about 'oh I love you baby'. I talk about I'm a bad man I talk about how politicians use us like this..... Rapper is more powerful in terms of his lyrics and his work, not in terms of money.

Bongo Flava artists also use a discourse of authenticity to cast it as local and Tanzanian. It is portrayed by these artists as an indigenous adaptation of global music styles. Hip hop is seen as exogenous, as embodying ideas foreign to Tanzania. Hip hop is cited as a 'hardcore' music genre by devotees of Bongo Flava. Its foreignness is situated in its texts, in the use of 'street' and 'unsuitable' language, and in its performance of hypermasculinity. The very word 'hardcore' suggests a genre which is tough, hyper-masculine and verging on the

violent. Bongo Flava, in contrast, is cast as local adaptation of form, and as better attuned to local norms and values. Its indigeneity is located in the language and topics of the verbal text. Dully Sykes is one of the artists who has most closely come to embody Bongo Flava, as opposed to hip hop. In 2010 he released a song called Bongo Flava, in which he expresses both his ability in, and his love for, the genre of Bongo Flava. The song begins with a child saying

Daddy uko Sweden, Mummy uko Holland, na mimi naenda States, na na na na na na

Daddy is in Sweden, Mummy is in Holland, and I'm going to States, na na na na na na

After which Dully Sykes begins to speak as the music begins and says

Kenya, Uganda mpaka Tanzania baby, hii ni entertainer, asante sana home shopping centre...

Kenya, Uganda to Tanzania baby, I'm an entertainer, thank you very much home shopping centre...

At the start of this song Dully Sykes contrasts himself with a spoilt child, whose parents are abroad and who will shortly be leaving for the United States. Sykes situates himself, geographically, absolutely within East Africa by making a number of thanks and shout-outs to local businesses, people and the neighbourhoods of Illala and Kariakoo. Dully Sykes not only situates himself, but the genre of Bongo Flava itself, as something local.

Artists operating in both the genre of hip hop and Bongo Flava draw on the idea of authenticity to situate their genres in opposition to something they seek to define as exogenous. As Peterson, in his work on the development of country music as a genre, has suggested:

The changing meaning of authenticity is not random, but is renegotiated in a continual political struggle in which the goal of each contending interest is to naturalize a particular construction of authenticity. (Peterson 1997, 220)

National culture, and the idea of authentically Tanzanian or African traditions, have occupied a privileged space in the nationalist discourse of the Tanzanian state. Rappers who perform both Bongo Flava and hip hop seek to define their genres as authentically African. Discourses based upon premise of authenticity seek to include, and exclude, music from consideration as part of the nation. These seek to create an ideological order of things within which not only a music genre, but its perceived set of attenuated values, is excluded.

Convening an Audience

As described earlier, the liberalisation of the media in Tanzania was significant in opening a new space from which rappers have been able to address their audience. Radio, and later television, have been central to rappers' ability to convene an audience. Music is frequently only made available for purchase, on cassette, CD and DVD, after it has already been played on the radio for quite some time. Much music played on the radio may never be sold through the official distribution channels. Music videos are expensive and time consuming

to produce, and so much music is only available via radio. Yet music occupies a central role in social space. It can be heard in the main spaces for socialising, and on public transport, and forms an important part of social discourse in Dar es Salaam.

While the state controlled media had been bound by the cultural policies of the post-colonial Tanzanian state, which had included broadly supporting the state itself, private media were less tightly controlled. Rapped music was, in the first instance, not sponsored by state or para-state organisations. It was recorded in private studios and largely broadcast on private media. As a consequence, rapped music was able to address its audience in new terms. The language of rapped texts used street Swahili, and addressed topics which had hitherto been taboo. Not only in their verbal text, but also in the text of their videos, rapped music videos contested the normative moral boundaries of Tanzanian society.

In the global north, hip hop has been conceived of as a sub-culture which seeks to convene a specialised audience; a sub-culture which seeks to differentiate itself from the larger culture, and to convene a narrower audience. In Tanzania, rapped music has, in the main, sought to address the nation. Cultural production in Tanzania, both oral and written, has a long tradition of addressing social concerns (Mlama 1995, 27, Gromov 2008, 10, Mazrui 2007, 39-40). Following independence, the state played a significant role in sponsoring cultural producers. National cultural policies played an important role in shaping the ways in which Tanzanian musicians addressed their audience. It was partly through popular culture, sponsored by the state, that the newly independent nation was imagined. Musicians played a role in praising politicians, the party and government policies. While

artists have used the new space of private media to contest social norms, and address previously taboo subjects, it is equally true that they have been careful not to alienate a wider audience. There is a negotiation between artists and their audience. Rapped music lyrics, and the lives of artists, have provided a space for a moral discourse on the nation. While rap music has contested some societal norms, in particular in its readiness to address sexual topics, it has often conformed to the existing roles of music within Tanzanian society.

Music with a Message

A great deal of Tanzanian rapped music has sought legitimacy by continuing to fulfil the prescribed role of addressing social issues. As a journalist described to me, “you have to try the best to throw out a good message. A good message is the message that is current issue.” As part of this legitimising project, Tanzanian rappers have continued to address their lyrics to society at large rather than convening a narrower subculture. The song Bongo Dar es Salaam, by Professor Jay, was cited on numerous occasions during my fieldwork as a significant point in the legitimisation of rapped music to a wider Tanzanian public. In this song Professor Jay uses his voice to speak directly to Tanzanian society about the difficulties of life in Dar es Salaam.

Nenda viwanja vikali vya Bongo ustaajabu

Go to different area in Bongo you are suprised

Na pita Slipway, Blue Palm na Mambo Club

Pass Slipway, Blue Palm and Mambo Club⁶¹

Kama hujazoea unaweza ukavunja shingo

You will be astonished if you are not used to it

Mambo Isidingo watu mkononi Nokia bingo

Like Isidingo⁶² people with Nokia in their hands

Huwezi jua yupi mtoto wa geti yupi changu

You can't know who is a rich girl and who is a snapper (a prostitute)

Wote wanameremereta kama mamtoni mwanagu

They're shining like the Western life

Professor Jay speaks to Tanzanian society as a whole about the changing circumstances instituted by the liberalisation of the economy. A key theme of the song is the increasing avarice, and significance of money, in Tanzanian society. In one humorous section Professor Jay describes an exchange between two individuals in which a fake gold chain is sold in exchange for fake money.

Aliyeuziwa cheni katoa hela bandia

The buyer of the chain pays in fake money

Aliyepokea hela naye kauza cheni ya bandia

The seller of the necklace sells a fake chain

Tuliozoea jiji tunasema ngoma draw

We are used to it, we say it's a draw

⁶¹ Slipway, Blue Palm and Mambo Club are all expensive place to eat and drink in Dar es Salaam.

⁶² This is a South Africa TV soap which was broadcast on Tanzanian television, representing the glamorous world of the wealthy black middle class.

Professor Jay is suggesting that this exchange has become emblematic of the changing social relations between Tanzania's citizens. The inauthentic has come to characterise social relations which are being corroded by the desire for wealth and rising inequality.

In a more recent example, we can again see that Roma addresses himself directly to the audience. His song, *Pastor*, explores religious plurality and corruption in the church. Roma directly addresses the audience and speaks to a broad theme of religious corruption.

Fanya ishara ya msalaba upokee haya mahubiri

Make the sign of the cross receive this sermon

Mimi ni mteule nawaletae injili nina usuhuda wa kiroho

I am chosen I bring the gospel I have evidence of eternity

Bwana iwaje msubiri natangaza upako na habari za mnara wa Babei

Mr how will it be to wait for prayer and news of the tower of Babel

Wachungaji wanalumbana wakigombea wanalala wakiamka wananizisha dini

Pastors they are misunderstanding fighting they sleep wake up and start religion

Hawaogopi damu ya msalaba Bible wanifanyia biashara

They are not afraid of the blood of the cross they do business with the Bible

Huwezi kuwa Yesu hata kama baba yako ni fundi seremala

You can't be Jesus even if your father is a carpenter

This song addresses two specific issues. Roma equates Pastors with business leaders and accuses them of being more interested in the accumulation of capital than the teaching of

religious practices. It is suggested that religious leaders no longer fear the teachings of the church, but are principally interested in starting religion as a business. The song also speaks to a specific religious discourse about new religious practices in Tanzania and, in particular, the growth of Pentecostal churches. Roma, who has styled himself in part as Roma M'Catholici (Roma the Catholic), draws specific criticism to new churches, to those who "wake up and start religion". The final line can thus be read in two ways. One suggests that to be a religious leader one cannot come from the poor background of a carpenter. In another reading, Roma can be read as speaking to the Pastors of the new churches and deriding their legitimacy as religious leaders, suggesting that even if they follow the bible they could not be Jesus.

It is not only through their choice of topic, but through their mode of addressing the audience, that rappers constitute their audience. In Roma's text, the audience is directly, personally addressed. Roma adopts an authoritative voice to address moral issues. He moves between multiple voices. In the opening two lines, Roma addresses his audience as a pastor, instructing his audience to make the sign of the cross and to listen to his sermon. Roma then moves to a voice, which we can presume to be his own, in which he offers a critique of religious practices and corruption within churches. The initial two lines of the song set the tone, and Roma continues to speak in a strident and moralising tone. Drawing on established modes of address confers authority on the rapper, and helps to legitimise his moralising discourse. Using multiple voices leaves some ambiguity about whether we are supposed to read Roma's adoption of the mantle of Pastor as sarcastic.

Code Switching and Swanglish

The use of Swahili as a lingua franca in Uganda and Kenya has enabled musicians from Tanzania to convene a wider regional audience. As rapped music has become a more established genre within Tanzania, so the geographical spread of its consumption has widened. In 2006, when I first travelled to Dar es Salaam, it was clear that the most established artists were travelling to Kenya and Uganda to perform. Subsequent visits have only shown that the inter-regional links with rappers, other musicians and media companies have deepened. A growing number of collaborations between Tanzanian and Kenyan artists attests to a growing desire to address a region-wide audience for the most successful artist.

As opportunities for continent-wide success have increased, particularly with the development of continent-wide TV stations such as Channel O, and media spectacles such as Big Brother Africa⁶³, some artists have begun to include more English in their songs. C’Pwaa song ‘Action’ which features Ms Triniti, Dully Sykes and Ngwear features an opening verse from C’pwaa delivered exclusively in English. AY has also increasingly incorporated English elements into his songs as he has gained increased access to media popular outside Tanzania. The chorus below, from his song Party Zone, with Marco Chali, illustrates this.

Dance tonight,

Drink tonight,

Smoke tonight,

⁶³ AY and C’Pwaa have both performed at Big Brother Africa in South Africa.

Nijipe raha tuu (I take fun)

Nihave (I have) fun tonight

Cruise tonight

Blast tonight

Stress zigooo (A huge load of stress)

The use of English does more than just help to communicate with an expanded continent-wide audience. By using English, rappers also communicate social status. In Tanzania, English is the language of secondary school education.⁶⁴ Use and knowledge of English are frequently perceived to be indicators of educational attainment and, as such, of class status. It is worth noting that, as in the text above, many of the songs that use English speak to issues of enjoyment and consumption. Implicit in this is the rapper's ability to participate in the global ordering of the world. Rappers are able not only to use a 'global language' but to participate in 'global' forms of consumption.

Code switching, and the adding of Swahili prefixes to English words to create what is described as 'Swanglish', have become an increasing part of the language used in Tanzanian rapped music, both recorded and underground. So that for example rappers use *kuhustle* for to hustle, *tuspend* for we spend and *nienjoy* for I enjoy.⁶⁵ In some cases the spelling of the original English word is also made to conform to Swahili spelling patterns. So the words '*wanasapoti*' (they support) and '*zinapromoti*' (they promote) are both adopted from English and indigenised. This code switching, the adding of Swahili prefixes to words and

⁶⁴ Primary schools education is taught in Swahili but on moving to secondary school education is delivered in English.

⁶⁵ All of these examples are taken from a single FidQ song Propoganda.

the use of Swanglish, indicate some changes in the way that the audience is addressed. It is suggestive of addressing an audience with some familiarity with English, and with the increased use of 'street Swahili' rather than standard Swahili.

Underground Rappers Imagining the Audience

The audiences convened by underground rappers differ from those of recorded rappers. Underground rappers rely solely on their vocal cords to broadcast their performance, and so their reach for an audience is considerably smaller. The audience for most performances by underground rappers comprises their group or *maskani*. One of the groups of underground rappers I met with regularly was based in Kijitonyama, north of the centre of Dar es Salaam. The group met each Monday, on the day that the principal organiser was free from work. A couple of benches would be arranged alongside the wall of one of the members, Mbaya Wao's, family compound. There was a core group of rappers who met almost every week, with other rappers attending on an ad hoc basis. Mbaya Wao and his close friend Majivu, who worked close by as a barber, were the most committed to rapping and consequently the two most regular attendees. The gatherings did not have a formal start or finish time but were arranged informally via sms messages on the day. While a focus of the group was that they were all rappers, these gatherings were not only for rapping but a place for friends to discuss problems and seek help. Rapping would take place intermittently, one rapper frequently taking over where another had left off. This would continue until there was a momentary lull when none of the group could any longer think of any lines, and the group would lapse into silence or conversation.

At *maskanis* such as Mbaya Wao's, the audience is convened as one with specialist expertise, an audience of fellow practitioners. Rappers address this specialist audience by frequently foregrounding the very textuality of their texts. Conscious reference to the structure of the text, to verses, lines and flow, are made by rappers. It is the very act of creativity that becomes the subject of the song itself. The audience are addressed as both those with an interest, but also with expertise, in the creation of texts. In the example below, we see the focus by Mbaya Wao on the character of his lines. He is intentionally referencing the textuality of the text as he performs it.

Mistari ni mingi wee hutoweza kuhesabu kama vile mchanga

It's too many lines for you, uncountable like sand

Na kwamba mistrari mikali kama panga

Lines are sharp like a machete

The text is made material, in the song's imagery, which allows it to assert its power to influence the material world. The lines of Mbaya Wao have the power to cut like a machete. Or as in the line below, the bars, or verses, can get the listeners drunk.

Shangaa ukizubaa izi baa kazaa ambazo wanalewa

You're surprised by these 'bars' that get them drunk

An audience of rappers is addressed not only as listeners, but also as fellow rappers and potential competitors. Rappers seek to express their talent for creating lines, rhymes and

verses in direct relation to that of their audience. The very mode of addressivity suggests an audience who may be engaged to address them back.

Usiulize kuhusu vina

Don't ask about rhymes

Kama mgunduzi zaidi ya Mchina

I'm more inventive than a Chinese person

Kwa vina mimi ndio wima

When it comes to rhymes I stand firm

Usikosa kunijua jina

Don't miss to know name (alternatively - you better know my name)

The references to the creativity, skill and strength of the creator of the text suggest a text which is in competition with other voices. The rapper seeks to highlight his own skills and inventive use of language, knowing that other rappers will speak back to his text.

A feature of underground rappers' texts is the degree to which they address the difficulties experienced by young men in Dar es Salaam. A recurrent topic of underground rappers' texts is their lives on the street, the difficulties of earning money and of romance. In this way, underground rap performances mirror the topics of recorded rap songs, and seem to be addressing a wider imagined national audience. There is a sense in which rap texts seem to be bearing witness to, creating a record of, the lives of these young men. In his book on barber shops in Arusha, Weiss argues that speaking of personal experience mediates against a crisis of reality. That:

Participation goes beyond upholding abstract, even sacred, principles, in maintaining moral strictures, or in accurately reflecting the circumstances of your peers; it requires engaging in these practices as a means of sustaining reality. This ontological crisis demands, in particular, that you make your voice an expression of your being-in-the-world, so that your identity or self-representation partakes of the reality it upholds. (Weiss 2009, 207-208)

I agree that rappers are engaged in a form of intellectual work; seeking to engage with, domesticate, appropriate and use the signs and symbols which circulate as part of a global order. Weiss, in Arusha, finds the salient focus on the 'real', a way for young men to engage with a crisis, and their exclusion from the global order of signs and symbols. Rapped texts are not only an expression of a rapper's being in the world, but seek to shape that world. Texts are not simply representations of life as is, but are active attempts to intervene in the world. These texts are, it seems to me, not only dominated by notions of crisis and exclusion but also by enjoyment, play and fantasy.

By addressing larger, 'universal' themes, these texts address a wider audience. Barber says of oral performance: "oral performances also convene an imagined audience, often exceeding the people actually present" (Barber 2007, 138). In the text below, which explores the nature of love from the position of an unrequited lover, the rapper is addressing broad, universal themes. Here, his imagined audience seems to be a wider Tanzanian public.

Ninayempenda ndio yule ameshapendwa

The one I love is already taken

Mapenzi sio dini mapenzi ni ya wawili

Love is not religion love is for two

Hayahitaji nyumba wala gari la kifahari

It doesn't need a house or expensive car

Mapenzi ya kweli umpate anayekujali

True love is to find someone cares for you

Mimi nabaki nahuzumika mapenzi

I will remain sad and blue about love

Niliyopata shori ame wiacha

My girlfriend has left me

Juu yake nimeteseka

Because of her I'm struggling

Yule malikia nilimzimikia

That Queen who I adore

Kitendo alichoni fanyia

What she did to me

Nikashindwa kuvumilia

I could not cope

Mapenzi matamu sana

Love is very sweet

Ukimpata anayekupenda

If you get the one who loves you

Mapenzi sio uchawi

Love is not magic

Mapenzi ni ya wawili

Love is for two

To fully embody the role of rapper, and to actively participate in the act of musical creation, underground rappers speak to an imagined audience beyond that of their fellow *maskani* members.

Themes

Wives and Playboys – Love, Sex and Romance

Popular culture has long been a space in which notions of sex, love and romance can be imagined and contested (Fair 2009, 75, Masquelier, 2009, 226-227). This is not only the case as seen in the work of Fair and Masquelier with imported media, but also in locally constructed texts. Love and romance are common topics for Tanzanian rapped music songs. A particular focus for these songs has been the changing gender relations in contemporary Tanzania. There have been a number of songs in which male rappers have outlined the qualities which they think a wife should possess. In songs such as 'Wife' by Daz Baba, and 'Kings and Queens' by AY, the rappers outline their idealised wife.

Kuwa soo mtaani kashfa kibao

Not a problem with street scandals

Ngwear⁶⁶ nimeshaamua milupo sasa no

Ngwear I decide women now no

Nahitaji honey yaani mwandani aendane nami

I need honey a lover to match me

Kuanzia tabia hadi vitu fulani

From the attitude to certain things

Ikiwezekana hata apandishe majani

Even possible to smoke marijuana

Lakini asiboreke anapokuwa nami

She is not bored when with me

Awe ana kata viuno kama amefunzwa unyagoni⁶⁷

She can move her waist like she studied unyagoni

Tuwapo kitandani awe ananipa burudani

When we are in bed she will give me joy

Daz Baba outlines the qualities that he would like in a wife. Early in the text the emphasis is placed on the normative values of the production of children and the respectful behaviour of his ideal partner.

Sasa nahitaji mrembo wa kuishi nami

Now I need a beautiful woman to live with me

Kuzaa na kulea watoto nami

To have children and raise them with me

⁶⁶ This is the name of another well known popular musician in Tanzania.

⁶⁷ A dance performed on the transition from childhood to adulthood for women

Later in the texts, several references are made to less normative values for a wife. These include her smoking marijuana and overt references to his ideal wife's sexual competency. This text acts as a space to assert a set of values in relation to gender relations. As I will explore below, rapped music texts act as a space to assert and contest the roles in gender relations.

A relationship between access to romance and financial resources has been widely documented (Cole 2004, Hunter 2009 and Trapido 2010, Silberschmidta 2001, 1821, Lewinson 2006 b, 99). The notion that love and sex are circumscribed by access to wealth, as Trapido says, has the corollary "that poor men are deprived of love, as much as other resources" (Trapido 2010, 127). This relationship between access to resources and access to love can be seen when comparing the text of Daz Baba, in which a man of resources explains what kind of woman he would like, and the text below from underground rapper Kid J who hopes for a romantic relationship.

Namtafuta mchumba wa kufurahi nae

I looking for a girlfriend to have fun with

Najua ipo siku nitakutana nae

I know one day I will meet her

Nitampeleka Home nikajivinjari nae

I will take her home to get cosy with her

Wanangu msikonde shem wenu nitakutana nae

Don't worry homies, I will meet your sister in law

Ataniliwaza atanituliza pale nitapokasirika

She will comfort me and calm me down whenever I'm annoyed

Maneno ya kweli na matamu atanileza

Sweet and truthful words she will share with me

Atanibembeleza pale nitapochoka

She will comfort me when I get tired

Atanipenda nami nitampenda tangu mapema

She will love me and I will love her back

Nitamwambia kabisa jinsi nilivyo asiye akanitenda

Will tell her all my habits so she won't do me wrong

Alilinde penzi letu nifenaz wasije vibopa wakamlagei

Will tell her to protect our love and don't let rich men lie to her

Kwa sasa mpenda akipendae na asiye kupenda achana nae yeah

For now love the one who loves you, haters just leave them alone yeah

Songs about romance reflect a genuine anxiety among young men over their access to love.

Kid J wants to “protect” his love from rich men who may lie. This unease about the relationship between money, in the form of rich men, and love represents unease not only about romantic relationships, but shifting social and economic relationships. In part, this is popularly articulated through a moral discourse which focuses on women who have become *tamaa*, avaricious. This is a discourse which focuses on the morality, or immorality, of women who desire consumer goods and are prepared to receive these in transactional relationship with wealthy men. As Newell has described:

A hoarder and private accumulator *par excellence*, the good-time girl is an *explanatory* figure (Newell 2002, 6)

This anxiety also is related to the increased economic independence of women, as wage labour has decreased and the *miradi* (projects) run by women in the informal economy have increased (Tripp 1997, 5).

The figure of the 'player' need not always be female. Nikki Mbishi's song 'Playboy', quoted below, outlines the romantic engagement between a young man, a playboy, and his girlfriend. The girlfriend is courted in the song and then abandoned by the playboy once he is satisfied.

Akauuta kiti akapozi mhudumu akaja nikaagiza chupa ya Bacardi mbuzi nusu
daja

She pulled up a chair the waiter came I ordered a bottle of Bacardi and half a leg
of goat

Kazi na dawa pombe na nyama utani na story nacheka utadhani Fetty⁶⁸
anampoza

Work and drugs alcohol and meat jokes and stories I'm laughing like Fetty

Spread joy mvinyo ukapanda kichwani sister duu akaanza visa

Spread joy wine my sister du started acting sexy

Nikahisi nikimpotezea ataniona nyoka wa kibisa

⁶⁸ Fetty is a radio DJ on the Clouds FM station.

I started thinking if I leave her alone she my think I suffer erectile disfunction
 Mashanzi ananiletea na blouse mbele imedis nikakodi uwanga
 She is flirting and the front of her blouse is open I rent ground (a room)
 Ili nyavu niwele tikisa mrembo hakulete utata
 So I can score the beautiful girl was behaving cool
 Shwadakta akazama ndani alipovua sindio nikadata nikapata raha
 It's ok to enter inside undress I go crazy and get happy

The relationship between the playboy and his girlfriend is largely mediated by his access to money. He is able to court his girlfriend by buying a bottle of Bacardi and leg of goat.⁶⁹ A general sense of moral decline pervades the figure of the playboy who drinks, takes drugs, engages in sex with his girlfriend before abandoning her shortly afterwards. The text displays unease with the ways in which money has affected romantic relationships, the shifting patterns of relationships and moral decline.

Tuspend – Consumption and its Anxieties

Consumption forms a sub-text within many rapped songs in Dar es Salaam. As in the song Playboy, consumption is an important backdrop to the narrative. It is, in part, through consumption that the identity of the Playboy is created; his ability to consume, and to enable his girlfriend to consume, is central to the narrative of the song and to the formation of his identity as a playboy. The identity of the playboy is, as Friedman has argued, created by the orchestration of consumer goods.

⁶⁹ Goat or *nyama choma* (roast meat) is a dish commonly served in bars and whose consumption is associated with wealthier Tanzanians.

Consumption is about the creation of a life world, an identity space, an imagined existence. It expresses a romantic longing to become an other in an existential situation where whatever one becomes must eventually be disenchanted by the knowledge that all identity is an arrangement of man-made products, thus an artifice. (Friedman 1991, 158)

Numerous studies have characterised the neoliberal moment of the late twentieth and early twenty first century as a time of conspicuous consumption. A time of what has been termed ‘millennial capitalism’, of accumulation without production, that has given rise to

locally nuanced fantasies of abundance without effort, of beating capitalism at its own game by drawing a winning number at the behest of unseen forces (Comaroff and Comaroff 2000, 297).

Rapped music in Dar es Salaam developed during this period of neo-liberal reform, a period of changing state discourses about wealth and consumption. Prior to the period of neo-liberal reform, wealth and consumption had negative connotations in Tanzania, Nyerere himself declaring that it would not be “easy here in Tanzania for an honest person – even a trader – to get rich quickly.” (Nyerere; quoted in Tripp 1997, 178). This was not merely political discourse; the Leadership Code of TANU/CCM did not allow party or state officials to own shares, and an austere aesthetic was displayed in the consumption patterns of many of Tanzania’s citizens (Lewinson 2006 a, 477). In both song and the texts of videos, rapped music songs and videos have charted shifting attitudes to the display of

consumption and wealth. It is partly through displays of wealth, in particular in music videos, that images of consumption have been made concrete.

One of the artists to have most embodied shifting attitudes to conspicuous consumption is Dully Sykes. Many of his songs, for example *Baby Candy*, *Dhahabu* (Gold) and *Utamu* (Sweetness), have addressed the topic of romantic love. Many of Dully Sykes' videos have been shot in spaces which are of privileged access to those with financial means. In the video for *Utamu*, Dully can be seen relaxing at an expensive beach side resort. This is a space to which the vast majority of Tanzanians have no access. While ostensibly dealing with romantic love, this narrative of romantic conquest is played out partly through the display of wealth. As Dully raps in his song *Baby Candy*

Unataka tuspend jig hug na rom

You want to spend (money) sex hug and romance

It is Dully's ability to satisfy the desire *tuspend* which leads to sex and romance. His songs make both visual and textual references to wealth and consumption.

Dully Sykes has styled himself as a Brotherman, a social category that bears some relation to the *sapeur* of Congo. Brothermen are characterised by their attention to appearance, by an interest in clothing and style. The Brotherman, Weiss argues, is: "someone whose ambitions are essentially pretensions" (Weiss 2009, 165). In his videos, Dully performs his identity as a brotherman through his dress, and his consumption in hotels and bars. The spending of the lyrics is made concrete in a visual image. Brotherman is a form of masculine

identity enacted through wealth and the exhibition of material goods. *Brotherman*, and *bishow*, a related category of masculine performance through displays of fine clothes, are two of multiple masculine social categories generated by young men in Tanzania. The majority of these categories *mchizi*⁷⁰, *msela*, *wahuni* (hooligans) are characterised by their stressing of their masculinity. *Msela*, from the English word sailor, has its origins in the work of Tanzanian migrant labourers on ships. Mbaya Wao described the category of *msela* as

you know someone call you *msela* it's someone who is ready for anything. It's a rank, respected rank for young people like me. *Mi ni msela* you don't worry anybody anything you can live in any way of life. If you call yourself *msela* it means you can live in anyway and you don't follow anyone. You live as you can, you depend on yourself even though sometimes you live with your family.

Msela is characterised by his self sufficiency and ability to deal with hardship. *Mchizi*, *msela* and *wahuni* all reference a form of masculine solidarity and friendship.

A feature of neo-liberal economic changes has been shifting patterns of income generation. Following the retrenchment of the state, and a collapse in state and para-state employment, there has been a growth in private projects as a means of generating wealth. Access to wealth through projects is uncertain. The newly liberalised economy can foster fantasies of a grand accumulation of capital. This double-dynamic of anxiety about the means of earning money, and the celebration of the idea of making a big deal, can be seen

⁷⁰ *Mchizi* is translated by Reuster-Jahn and Kiebling as "cool guy, friend" (Reuster-Jahn and Kiebling 2006, 148) with a possible etymology from *chizi* for white person or European (Reuster-Jahn and Kiebling 2006, 75). *Mchizi* and *msela* denote a form of youthful masculine friendship.

in the songs of rapped music artists. Ngwear's song *Nipe Dili* (Give me a Deal) expresses the desire of the artist to gain a deal. A deal is, here, a means of making money. Early in the song Ngwear declares:

Na make mo money mo doe mo pesa,
I make more money, more dough, more money

The object of Ngwear's desire is here named three times, to emphasise the point. Ngwear uses three different language registers, official English, American slang and Swahili to name the money for which he is searching. In the accompanying video, Ngwear is frequently displayed holding handfuls of money. The very physical object of money plays a role in the text of the song, and of the video in which Ngwear opens his hands full of money.

The narrative of this song is not one solely of a celebration of consumption, but displays an anxiety about the ability of the artist to access those things he would like to consume. In the excerpt below, the artist expresses both a liking for expensive imported food and drinks, as well as uncertainty about his access to them.

Tunapenda sana mawain mashampain
We very much like wine and champagne
Lakini ndio vile tena hatuna mahela
But this is just the way it is we don't have any money
Tunatamani mamisosi kumwaga ni mapiza mabaga
We crave a variety/plenty of food pizzas and burgers

Na mazaga mazaga

And different things to eat

Ila ndio vile tena hatuna mahela

But that's just the way it is we don't have any money

Later in the text, Ngwear addresses not only the consumption of wealth but how that wealth is to be gained. Ngwear displays his dismay at the idea of trying to earn money through the transportation of water, and counsels his listeners to *jimix* (to hustle). Further in the text, Ngwear suggests that people should be prepared to fix, and spend time in the police cell, in order to achieve a deal.

Wakati kichwa kina waza mamilion

While my mind contemplates millions

Vipi nita ride na mamaji ya staili hiyo

How will I possible achieve that with a water business like that

So kila kona ya mtaa we jimix

So hustle in every street corner

Piga dila za one two one two then five six

Do the basic deals like one-two,one-two, then move to five-six,

Ikiwezekana unapiga hata fix

If possible fix

Acha uoga wa kulala sijui kituo cha polisi

Stop being afraid of spending a night at the police

Bila mapene jua mengi utamiss

Know that without money you will miss out

Changing concerns about access to, and displays of, wealth are expressed through rapped music texts. Ideas about wealth and the display of wealth are complex. Following one of my interviews with Issah, from Big Dog Posse (a hip hop group based in Kinondoni), and Ronnie, a Tanzanian / German sometime member of the group, we watched the video for *Nipe Dili* and discussed the meaning of the text. As our discussion proceeded I asked whether the so called Richmond scandal,⁷¹ which was big news in Tanzania at the time, could be described as a deal. Ronnie and Issah agreed that a *dili* was usually in some way illicit and that the Richmond scandal would represent a very large *dili*. As our discussion wound to a close, Issah and Ronnie began to debate the dilemma of whether one should accept a *dili*. The discussion hinged on the notion of the foolishness of turning down any *dili* which might provide a large amount of capital. It was clear in the discussion that both Ronni and Issah thought that scandals such as Richmond were immoral, and damaging to the nation. Yet if, as an individual, you were offered such a *dili* you would be foolish to turn it down, as gaining a large *dili* could secure your, and your family's, financial future. The desire to consume, and the inability to realise that desire, are equally perceived as problems. Popular music allows a space for both the imagining and critique of consumption. Rapping about, and displaying, wealth is in many ways, in the Tanzanian context, a more radical break with the past than songs which cover socio-political commentary. Many rapped music texts speak to this complex, and sometimes paradoxical, view of wealth. It is both desired and despised.

⁷¹ The Richmond scandal concerned electricity generators sold to Tanzania by a company called Richmond but which did not arrive in Tanzania, though the state continued to pay the company for them. At the time of our discussion there was an electricity shortage.

***Kioo cha jamii* – Socio Political Commentary**

Rapped music in Tanzania, has been characterised as offering “greater visibility and voiceability of youth in public discourses” (Englert 2008, 76). Direct political and socio-political commentary remains a significant part of the rapped music oeuvre in Dar es Salaam. Direct commentary on political parties or politicians themselves is itself rare, though artists are invited to offer support to politicians by performing at political rallies and wearing the colours of political parties. More frequently, artists use their songs to directly address socio-political issues. I wish to focus in this section on two texts which use the figure of Nyerere as a way of addressing the present. In his song Tanzania, which was being played on the radio during 2010 and 2011, Roma offers a devastating critique of the current state of the nation. In this text Roma offers a view of contemporary Tanzania as a land descending into sin. As Roma raps in the chorus

Hii ndio Tanzania nchi yenye udongo wenye dhambi

This is Tanzania country with soil of sin

Wanalisaka sana taji la ushindi sema Tanzania

They pursue the crown of victory, speak Tanzania

Biblia nashikilia nakemea wanaogombania ufalme na umalikia

Holding the Bible oppose those fighting for kings and queens

Hii ndio Tanzania wanakaramu ya uifisadi dini zetu wanazifanya miradi

This is Tanzania blessed with corruption our religion they use for projects

In this song Roma offers a searing critique of the elite in Tanzania, singling out politicians and religious leaders for particular criticism. His critique draws on religious discourses and ultimately damns Tanzania's elites for occult practices. The elite are using the powers of darkness, and ghosts, to further their careers. In the section below, Roma makes strident claims against religious leaders

Nyumba za ibada wanazifanyia madhambi

They have turned house of prayer to a house for sin

Mizimu wapate taji la ushindi

A ghost gets a winners medal

Wanatumia dini kuuza dawa za kulevya

They use religion to sell drugs that make you unconscious

Wanatoa mapepo kwa kutumia nguvu za giza

They chase ghosts by using the power of darkness

Roma offers a carnivalesque vision of Tanzania in which the norms of society have been subverted. A Tanzania in which politicians are corrupt, certificates are fake and religious leaders are practicing dark arts. There is a religious and apocalyptic feel to Roma's description of Tanzania, as if the country were approaching the end of days.

The song ends no less stridently than it began with the lines;

Sipendi siwezi fumbia macho washuhudia

I don't like to close my eyes from seeing

Najua msema kweli kufa mapema

I know those who speak the truth die early

Lakini sijali kama mlimulia Amina

But I don't care like Amina

Roma finishes the verse defiantly; directly confronts the death, commonly believed to be suspicious, of the politician and former radio presenter Amina Chifupa⁷². Roma seems almost to be challenging the political elite to silence him.

In his song, Nyerere, Bonta loudly praises Tanzania's first Independence leader, finishing the chorus with the words "*Kila Kitu Nyerere*" (Everything is Nyerere). Bonta's song does not offer as strident a critique of the current political and social elite. Instead the focus of Bonta's text is praising Nyerere.

Yuko juu kama Kisaka wa Kenyatta namweka pale kama

He was on top like Kisaka an Kenyatta put there like

UG na Obote rest in peace kama Kwame Nkrumah

UG (Uganda) and Obote rest in peace like Kwame Nkrumah

Naongea kuhusu yeye alipinga World Bank na IMF

I speak about him he was against World Bank and IMF

Awakumbukwa zaidi ya Pele Maradona

He is remembered more than Pele or Maradona

Alingia dosari kwa goli la mkono

⁷² Amina Chifupa died in 2007 after having promised to name some of the major drug barons in Tanzania and their close relationship to the political class (Englert 2008, 84)

His image was stained due to the goal scored with his hand

Nyerere is compared by Bonta to a wide range of figures - not only to other leaders of African states, but to the footballers Pele and Diego Maradona. As the figure of Nyerere looms large, so he dwarfs the figure of Tanzania's current political leaders. The focus, over ten years since his death, on Nyerere's honesty and integrity offers an implied critical stance to Tanzania's current political leaders.

While Roma offers a strident and outspoken critique of the current state of Tanzania, taking the very unusual step of naming both a politician and a religious leader in the song, he is careful to place his song within the mainstream political nationalist and religious discourse. While economic policies in Tanzania may have altered following the neo-liberal reforms of the late 80s and 90s, the state has continued to praise Nyerere as *Baba wa Taifa* (father of the nation) (Becker 2013, 253). Nyerere, as a symbol, continues to embody values of peace, equality and virtue. Roma begins his song by referencing both the name of Nyerere and the date of Tanzanian independence. This helps to legitimise his voice, to place him as someone who speaks both to, and for, the nation. This is what Puig has referred to as "strategies of legitimation" (Puig 2006, 533).

While rappers may embrace some of the discourse from the *Ujamaa* period, and praise Nyerere, there are few mentions of *Ujamaa* itself. Bonta mentions Karl Marx, and praises Nyerere's resistance to the World Bank and IMF structural adjustment plans. By using the discourse associated with *Ujamaa*, and the spectre of Nyerere himself, the text aims to haunt the current political class. The *Ujamaa* discourse of equality and peace, and the idea

of the nation as a family, provides a space from which to critique current leaders. As the studies of Caplan (2007) in Mafia island, and Lal (2012) in Mtwara, have shown, the history and discourse of *Ujamaa* is constantly being reinterpreted. Socio-political commentary, in fact, represents a normative space for popular music performance in Tanzania. The role of commentator on society has a long established and accepted role within Tanzanian society. Political commentary might, in fact, be read as a conservative adherence to societal norms, and songs which foreground consumption and wealth as a more radical departure.

Intertextuality

The postmodernity of hip hop's forms, both musical and textual, has been noted by commentators. As Huq argues; "Rap is often cited as an example of postmodern music for its intertextuality and use of source material" (Huq 2006, 115). Using Gates' theory of signifyin(g), Rose has suggested that samples and intertextuality are used as means of signifying; that hip hop speaks back to older traditions and texts in a process of "repetition and recontextualization" (Rose 1994, 73), or as Gates said "by tropological revision or repetition and difference" (Gates 1988, 88). Hip hop texts are constantly seen to be speaking to other texts and tropes, so that as Pate has argued; "To listen effectively to rap is, in fact to 'read' it" (Pate 2010, 37).

Intertextuality is a significant feature of rapped musical texts in Tanzania. Rapped musical lyrics are a dense web of allusions to other texts. One significant point of intertextuality in Tanzanian rap performance is the use of a lexicon of terms associated with globally popular music genres of hip hop and ragga, in the form of single words, phrases or direct

quotations. In the popular hit from 2007, *Habari Ndio Hiyo* (That's The News), AY raps the following phrases in English before the beginning of his first verse in Swahili: "Take Money Money, Make Money Money". This song seems to take this phrase direct from a US hip hop song 'Trade Money' by the group Dilated People, which features the lines "Make money money, but please don't waste money, we don't love money but we don't hate money" in its chorus. While AY may not be seeking to reference this particular song, he is certainly seeking to draw on a trope of hip hop references to money and wealth.

In another of his songs, "Goodlook", featuring Ms Triniti, a British/Trinidadian Dancehall singer, AY again uses the opening of the song to make allusion to a particular set of global musical genres. The introduction to this song is spoken by several different voices, including that of AY. When AY says "inna mi yard" he draws on colloquial speech, slang, associated with the global popular music forms of reggae, ragga and dancehall.

Yeah toka B.Hits, Yes ayah, AY Ms Trinity, inna me yard

Yeah from B.Hits, ayah, AY Ms Trinity, inna me yard

You know bad gal akikutana na rude bwoy

You know bad gal she met a rude bwoy

Huwa ni fire

It's fire

That's a good look

That's a good look

When referring to himself as a 'rude boy', AY references a term with its origins in Jamaican Ska music, and commonly associated with reggae music. The figure of the 'Rude Boy' is one associated with masculinity, an "outlaw hero, breaking all the laws yet struggling against the forces of evil and oppression" (King 2002, 31). After this initial introduction to the song, AY sings his verse, which is delivered almost entirely in Swahili with two instances of code switching to English. In both of these instances the intertextual references are made at the beginning of the song, situating the song within a global framework of genres from the beginning. Through these references, AY seems to be seeking to index his song as participating in the global world of music making.

AY's image as an artist has been one not of hardcore rap and street culture, but of commercial and financial success. His success has been established on a clean cut image, an image which aims to appeal across wide sections of Tanzanian society. So it seems unlikely that he wishes to draw a parallel with the figure of the rude boy as imaged elsewhere. Rather, I read his referencing of the lexicon of terms associated with dancehall and reggae as a means of participation in the global music industry. Once unmoored from its original referents, the figure of the 'rude boy' takes on new meanings. This symbolic presence is embodied with a new understanding, and comes to signify participation in the international circulation of signs and symbols.

Rappers draw on a wide range of intertextual references when creating their texts. In the chorus cited below, from the FidQ song Propaganda, FidQ cites the film "Last King of Scotland". This film is based on a fictional relationship between a young Scottish doctor and Idi Amin, a former President of Uganda. The title of the film, The Last King of Scotland,

refers to Idi Amin's habit of taking grandiose titles. As a rare example of an international film that addresses East African history, *The Last King of Scotland* was popular among Tanzanian audiences. A large variety of pirated films, principally reproduced in China, are available in Dar es Salaam (Englert 2010, 138, Krings 2010, 28). Pirated films are sold by young men from the side of the road, and are widely consumed by those with the financial means to do so. The range of countries of origin, and genre, of these films is broad, with American, Indian and Nigerian films in particular widely available.

Polisi wanasapoti Gangsta Rap ili uhalifu uongezeke

Police they support Gangsta Rap to increase crime

Wabana pua kuimba mapenzi je itafanya ukimwi usepe

Pinch you nose (Bongo Flava singers) sing love song are they going to help AIDS to pass

Media zinapromoti beef⁷³ wanadai zinakuza muziki

The media promote beef claiming to promote music

Wadau wana wasanii wabovu - nyie wakali mtatoka vipi?

Stakeholders (DJ's) have bad (Wack) artists – How are you good artists going to succeed?

Hizi ni propoganda usiulize ni nani? ni yupi?

This is propaganda don't ask who? Which?

Saa ngapi? ilikuaje? na nani? ili iweje?

What time? What happened? And who? For what?

Hizi ni propoganda utaibiwa ukicheza blanda

⁷³ Beef is a term used to describe an disagreement or argument.

That is propaganda you will be robbed when you play you blunder

Yule Last King of Scotland sio Idi Amin wa Uganda

The Last King of Scotland is not Idi Amin of Uganda

The song, as its title suggests, addresses the idea of propaganda. As with many words in Swahili, propaganda has multiple, if related, meanings. It can be used to refer to communication sponsored by the state, or a political party, which is used to influence people's opinion about a societal issue. In street Swahili, propaganda is used to refer to duplicitous statements made by someone. To say a statement is propaganda is to suggest that what someone had said was factually inaccurate and, in the worst cases, make believe or deliberately mendacious. Throughout the chorus, Fid Q cites examples of propaganda. Here, FidQ plays the role of unmasking reality. The duplicity of institutions, including the police, the media and the somewhat ambiguous stakeholders, is revealed. Each is accused of supporting one position while publicly stating another. The police are said to support gangsta rap while saying they wish to reduce crime, the media are promoting 'beef'⁷⁴ between artists while claiming to promote music. Bongo Flava stars are singing love songs rather than tackling the issue of AIDS. In the final line of the chorus, FidQ uses the title of the film to suggest that the last King of Scotland of the film was not Idi Amin. The final line is also an act of unmasking, of revelation. Suggesting that things are not as they were told in the film, and that The Last King of Scotland of the film is not the same as Idi Amin, the ruler of Uganda. In this final line, Idi Amin becomes a clear metaphor for the rapper's ability to reveal the real from the fake, the truth from propaganda.

⁷⁴ Beef is a term for argument associated with hip hop globally and frequently used when there is a disagreement between two artists.

A further example of this kind of intertextuality can be found in a recording I made of a group of underground rappers in their maskani in Kiwalani. The following lines are delivered as part of a contest with another rapper, and aim to attest to the ability of the rapper delivering them.

Yeah yeah mimi ni mkali zaidi ya pilipili
 Yeah yeah I'm strong more than chilli
 Naongeza ukali sijueri wa kiburi
 I increase quality not bad for someone foolish
 Ni ukali wa mistari
 It is quality lyrics
 Ukinikuta popote usogee mbali
 When you find these move away
 Yeah yeah ni mistari yenye mvuto
 Yeah yeah lines with attraction
 Inakita kama kwato na mfano
 Sounds like an example
 Wa Mel Gibson na filamu ya Apocalypto
 For Mel Gibson and the film Apocalypto

Here, the rapper uses the image of the film to compare his strength to the characters from the Mel Gibson film Apocalypto.⁷⁵ Apocalypto centres around a conflict between two groups of Native American Indians, on the eve of the arrival of the conquistadors in Latin

⁷⁵ Released in 2006 Apocalypto is directed by Mel Gibson and was a significant commercial success.

America. The film features a central, male character who performs heroic acts in order to protect his family. The rapper seeks to draw a comparison between his power and ability, and that exhibited in *Apocalypto*. These kinds of intertextual references require interpretation. The meaning of the text cannot be fully comprehended without reference to a range of secondary texts. Both of these texts are setting themselves up to be explored and interpreted, they need to be interrogated by the listener for meaning to be generated. While the rapper from Kiwalani's text can be comprehended without fully understanding the plot of *Apocalypto*, this film can be interpreted as part of a trope. In the case of Fid Q's song, to grasp the use of the film *Last King of Scotland* fully it is important to have knowledge of the film. Idi Amin himself is a potent symbol to make reference to, in the Tanzanian context. The overthrow of Amin in 1979, with assistance from the Tanzanian state, is the only time that Tanzania has engaged in aggressive military action.

On occasion, artists have used segments of recorded speech in the composition of their songs. Roma, a newly established artist notable for his uncompromising choice of topics and the content of his songs, has used part of a speech by Julius Nyerere to introduce his song *Mr President*. The opening section of the song features a speech by Nyerere which acts as an invocation of the past. Nyerere, as father of the nation, is a symbolic figure who references the very creation and independence of the nation. Nyerere also acts as a symbolic exemplar of honesty and integrity. This speech by Nyerere is invoked by Roma to speak to the failings of the current Tanzanian political class. This sampling of speech also works as a form of memory which works by reintegrating older texts into new compositions. The act of remembering, here, is not value free, and the past is used to speak to the present. Memory is selectively chosen to act upon the present.

Religious Texts

Another set of texts on which artists draw are religious. Religious discourse, principally Christian and Muslim, occupies an important social space in Dar es Salaam. Islamic revival movements, as well as a diverse range of Christian denominations, have become increasingly active in Tanzania over the last ten to fifteen years (Heilman and Kaiser 2002, Turner 2009, Weiss 2009, 86-87). Large scale religious events frequently occupy physical, social and sonic space in the city.⁷⁶ Religious discourses are ubiquitous in Dar es Salaam. The following text from an underground rapper, recorded in Kijitonyama, is steeped in religious references. Religious symbolism of confession, crucifixion and prayer suffuse this verse. The text uses words associated with both Islamic and Christian religious discourse. God is referred to as *Maanani*, rather than the more common *Mungu*, in the first line of the text. *Maanani* is a word associated with Muslim religious practice. Later in the verse, direct references are made to the crucifix, Moses and the Israelites which form part of Christian religious discourse. This verse is not only permeated with religious symbolism but makes direct reference to religious texts and the writings of the prophets. The text points outward, to a religious body of texts from which the meaning of this verse is to be drawn. The text suggests that, to comprehend contemporary experiences, it is necessary to understanding the writings of the prophets.

Wasiopenda amani wamemsahau Maanani,

⁷⁶ During my fieldwork in Dar es Salaam in 2008 and 2010 I saw a number of large events organised by one of the new evangelical churches the Tanzanian Assemblies of God. One of these events, held on the playing field in front of the house where I was staying, lasted for three days, with sermons and musical performances lasting from the afternoon into the late evening.

Those who hate peace have forgotten about God

Kila aliyekwenda kinyume na haki mora

Everyone who went against justice

Atahukumiwa subulu ya haki inakuja imesaji

Will be punished, the crucifixion of justice is coming for them

Mazuri na mbaya yako ni bora ukiri

It's best that you confess your good and bad deeds

Kwa kinyama chako tubu madhambi yako

In your silence repent your sins

Manabi wa zamani wameandika kwa kila tunacho kiona

The prophets have written about everything we are seeing today

Shtuka sasa acha kunganga na shuka

Wake now stop hugging the bed sheets (stop sleeping)

Amka chakalika faidika kwa maisha yako

Wake up hustle and profit from your life

Usiache shughuli zako ukafuatilia maisha ya wenzako

Mind your business don't focus on other people's life

Utake wang'ang'anie haki zao

And force them to violate your rights

Shika adabu yako usijiukiza adui yako nani?

Respect yourself don't wonder who is your enemy

Hata unaecheka naye

Even the one you have a laugh with

Nasimama kwenya hoja sitaki kungoja nipate jasho langu

I put my foot down I no longer want to have to wait to reap the benefits of my sweat
(work/labour)

Sitaki kesho nakaza msuli nakua jasiri mwanao

I don't want to wait for tomorrow, I strengthen up and be brave

Naomba Mola kama Musa na wana Israeli

I pray to God like Moses and the Israelites

Both recorded and underground rappers draw on a wide selection of religious discourses to enrich their texts. As Quayson has suggested:

the Bible and the Quran, with their evocative symbols, language, and rhetorical devices, have become fully integrated into a matrix of orality, and thus also provide a rich payout of sentiments and views that get expressed in the apparently quotidian urban scripts that proliferate on the continent (Quayson 2010, 414).

The earlier text draws on religious discourse about the impending day of judgement, before which people need to confess their sins and repent. Another religious discourse is also present in the text, that of a gospel of hard work in order to achieve prosperity. The listeners are advised to wake up, hustle and profit before they can reap the benefits of their labour.

Rappers borrow from a range of different texts, older and modern, religious and secular, popular and elite, to enrich their own. Reference is made to Tanzanian nationalist, as well

as international, musical discourses. As Newell has suggested, of pamphleteers in West Africa, rappers

have confidently ignored the supposed dichotomy between “local” and “global”, freely picking material that suits their own agendas (Newell 2008, 17).

The texts created by rappers point outwards to a range of other symbols and texts. These intertextual references act as a secondary source of information which, if interrogated by the audience, enhance their understanding of the text. References to film, religious, musical and political texts are interwoven into rappers’ texts. As Nyairo suggests, of contemporary cultural practice in Kenya:

cultural purveyors in the postcolony borrow indiscriminately from an array of influences in their bid to weave a local imaginary (Nyairo 2004, 67).

Intertextuality allows not only for the construction of the text but, through the text, for the personhood of its author to be created. These textual references reflect the rappers’ familiarity with a diverse range of texts, and their ability to participate in the global circulation of signs and symbols. As D-Knob said, of his track *Elimu Mitani* (Street Education):

I wanted the song to be like a website where you can go in and get all the things about street education.

This metaphor of the text as a website is a fitting one. Websites are a series of linked pages, each page offering additional information and links. The text in this metaphor acts as a website, linking the listener through its references to other sources of knowledge. Each text opens up a myriad of references.

As rappers consume texts, they use them as part of the production of their own texts. The consumption of texts becomes a means of production. As Barber has argued:

'production' and 'reception' appear as moments in a cycle rather than two poles at opposite ends of a process. What is production is also reception; the act of reception is an act of production (Barber 1997, 358)

As they consume texts, rappers reintegrate these religious and secular, political and popular, texts into their own. These borrowings are reconfigured by their insertion into newly created texts. The meanings of intertextual references are elusive. When inserted into a new text, the meaning of the original text is reconfigured. As wa Mungai has argued of matatu culture in Nairobi:

It is, in essence, a performance characterized by slipperiness, a modality that makes meanings elusive, even as it enables multiple interpretations of the culture's intertextual and highly reflexive practices. For this reason, one must remain awake to the intriguing turns often taken by the sub-culture's tropes, for

even as sub-culture strikes an anti-mainstream pose, it simultaneously expresses a deep yearning for the symbols of the mainstream. (wa Mungai 2009, 269)

We should, I think, take heed of wa Mungai's injunction to pay attention to the slipperiness of intertextual references. Intertextual references open their meaning out to multiple interpretations. In Tanzanian rapped music, intertextuality with its web of local and global allusions makes texts open to multiple readings.

Conclusion

Rapping in Dar es Salaam is a creative and intellectual act. It is through their texts that rappers engage with the local and global orders of meanings, seeking to appropriate and reinterpret signs and discourses. These orders of meaning are domesticated, through rappers' own texts. Through the consumption of both global and local signs and symbols, rappers construct themselves. Rapped music has provided a key space for the contestation of societal norms and values. It has acted both as a space to celebrate, and to critique, the post-socialist patterns of consumption. We should, here, be open to the ambiguities of the positions adopted by rappers. The means to achieve mainstream success may be through socio-political commentary. The texts created by rappers seek not only to describe society, but also to act upon it.

Rapping is a form of utterance, which seeks not only to speak on behalf of the rapper but to act as a means of shaping their social selves. Rap texts seek not only to reflect society but to act upon it. It is in part through the texts of their rap songs that rappers fashion themselves

as actors, as social subjects in Dar es Salaam. Rap texts are a means through which rappers shape and assert their identity. As Barber has argued:

Personhood can thus be seen as emergent and processual: persons are not given but made, often by a process of strategic and situational improvisation.

(Barber 2007, 104)

Rap texts are the means through which rappers make and perform themselves.

CHAPTER 9 – RAPPING ONLINE AND IN THE DIASPORA

Introduction

So far this thesis has largely explored the production and dissemination of rapped music in Tanzania. Its principal focus has been on individuals and institutions operating in Dar es Salaam. This chapter will explore the mobility of both people and music in contemporary musical practice in Tanzania. Particular focus will be on Tanzanians in the diaspora who continue to be involved in the creation, broadcasting and distribution of music and the role that the internet plays in offering new spaces for connection, performance and dissemination. The mobility of people and music is not a new phenomenon. As Abu-Lughod and others have argued, the process of globalisation might best be conceived as multiple globalisations (Abu-Lughod, 1991). Prior to colonisation, there were well established networks of trade and cultural exchange along the East African coast (Sheriff, 2010). Music is an inherently mobile cultural form. Forms, genres and styles of music travelled with musicians between spaces long before music was recorded.⁷⁷ Since the invention of the phonograph record in the 1870s (Osborne 2012, 8), developments in the recording, preservation and dissemination of music have made music recordings ever more readily accessible. Recording, and other preservation technologies, have been able to capture performance and enable its dissemination via broadcast media. The development of computer recording equipment and the internet has further enabled the sale, distribution

⁷⁷ *Taarab*, with its origins in the early 20th century appropriation of Egyptian court music and focus on written lyrics (Khamis 2005, 205), is an example of the mobility of pre-colonial musical form. The mobility of cultural forms back and forth across the Black Atlantic (Gilroy 1991, 115) and the importance of oral verbal games in the development of hip hop point to the mobility of musical forms prior to the recording and dissemination of recordings.

and dissemination of recorded music. Mobility of both technology and musical genres has been central to the development of rapped music in Tanzania.

Internet technology has developed alongside that of musical recording and production. Since the mid 1990s and the liberalisation of telecommunications across East Africa (Mutagahywa 2005, 154), there has been a growth in the number of internet users in Tanzania. There has been a proliferation of internet cafes in Tanzania (Mercer 2004, 60-61) and an increase in the number of internet service providers (National Bureau of Statistics 2011, 52). Much of the academic work in Africa has focused on the internet as a tool of economic and social development (Yonazi 2010); the internet as a source of information and empowerment (Zanello and Maassen 2011). A digital divide between the West and Africa (what has been termed, “digital apartheid” (Fuchs and Horak 2008, 104) has also been a focus of academic research. Within East Africa, access to the internet is not evenly distributed and home internet connections are still largely the preserve of wealthier East Africans (Yonazi 2012, 5 and Mwesige 2004, 98). The internet has also been theorised by many academics as a space of democratic possibility (Ligaga 2012, 8). In this research strand the internet is perceived as a part of the public sphere accessible to ordinary citizens and unmediated by hierarchies which control access to other media. It has been theorised as a new space which offers means for citizens to present their grievances to power.

The development and spread of both mobile phone technology and the internet in East Africa has opened up new spaces for the expression of ideas and performance of identities by fans, artists and musical institutions. Technological resources such as email, Twitter and Facebook have eased connection and communication between those with access to the

internet or mobile phones. As Mercer argues, the internet is “the medium *par excellence*” (Mercer 2005, 260) for offering greater connection to “the world”. Appadurai’s concepts of *technoscapes* and *mediascapes* (Appadurai 1996, 34 and 35) provide a useful way to conceptualise the fluid flow of images and configuration of technologies between spaces. Websites, blogs and Facebook pages may be updated from multiple sites both inside and outside of Tanzania. Individual internet pages may be situated on several servers spread across the globe and make use of multiple technologies in their construction. These technologies are not situated in a single site but flow freely across national borders. The development of the electronic means of production and dissemination of media has been central to the ability of media to travel. For Appadurai, the imagination and the global circulation of images through the media are central to agency and the “transnational construction of imaginary landscapes” (Appadurai 1996, 31).

While the fluidity of the media and technoscapes has enabled the dissemination of media across the globe with increasing ease, the activity of actors in the online world is embedded in their social selves outside of the online space. Virtual spaces have enabled the creation of new identities, as, for example, in Venables’ study of Senegalese women’s use of online dating (Venables 2008, 473). Online spaces are performative, allowing the shaping of new identities. However, as Miller suggests in his work on internet use in Trinidad, activity online frequently replicates key aspects of social structures (Miller and Slater 2002, 199). The online activity of actors in creating and commenting on webpages, Facebook and Twitter is not a purely imagined space but one rooted in geographical spaces (Wilson and Peterson 2002, 453). Online activity is not dislocated from the offline lives lived by actors, but is a

means of influencing that life. In this respect, online activity seeks to negotiate, transform and reinforce social structures.

In this chapter, I will focus on the mobility of images, music and people, and on the intersection of mobilities in the production and dissemination of rapped music in Tanzania. Mobility has played an important role in the development of rapped music in Dar es Salaam. It is through the mobility of early hip hop recordings, imported to Tanzania on cassette and films' soundtracks, that rapped music in Tanzania developed. The movement of producers, in particular, has had an important role in the creation of rapped music. A number of Tanzania's most prominent Bongo Flava and Hip Hop producers have studied and lived abroad. Producers P-Funk and Lemar have both studied in the Netherlands, while Master J studied in London, for example. The movement of studio equipment, and more recently of software, has also played a part in the development of rapped music. While these producers have returned to establish their careers in Tanzania, there are a number of Tanzanians in the diaspora who have continued to remain active within the music industry. One of the most notable artists active while in the diaspora was the rapper Mr II also known as Sugu who left Tanzania to live in the United States, recording an album while in America and later returning to Tanzania to run for parliament.

Rappers in the Diaspora

Kibacha Singo – (KBC)

A number of rapped music artists of the early generations travelled outside of Tanzania to pursue their education. Some of these artists have remained resident abroad. Among those

to have moved from Tanzania are some artists prominent in shaping Tanzanian rapped music. KBC (Kibacha Singo) has been rapping since the late 1980s, when he would perform in school and at competitions. KBC later became a member of one of the first Tanzanian rap groups, Kwanza Unit (first unit), and performed on their final album released in 1999 entitled *Kwanzanians*. Following the completion of the album, KBC moved first to New York and then Birmingham, Alabama to pursue his University education. During this time, KBC continued to follow his interest in hip hop. Following an encounter with another hip hop enthusiast, in a shop selling music equipment, KBC began to be included in a local Birmingham, Alabama hip hop community.

Actually how I met the guys I was in this music shop that I always used to go like an equipment shop called Guitar Centre, in America they have Guitar Centres. So I used to go this Guitar Centre every now and then just look at different equipment different drum machines, just to look. This guy used to see me come there, 'hey like you come here all the time what music you listen to'. So he thought I was a producer. He was like you got an accent where you from and then boom, boom, boom, boom I'm from Africa... Well I spit⁷⁸ in Swahili, 'let me hear something', then I spat and he said actually I'm trying to set up a label you fit perfectly.

This engagement with local hip hop enthusiasts led to KBC agreeing to record and release an album for the Birmingham, Alabama-based record label Block Exchange Productions. Despite some of the songs for the album being recorded, the album was never completed

⁷⁸ To spit is here used as a reference to the act of rapping

and the songs which were recorded were not released. KBC became part of the group running the label and featured on an album released in 2002 by group Fawty Acres on the Block Exchange Productions label. The album featured a song, Safari (travel), with a title in Swahili, and KBC sang and rapped on a number of tracks on the album. Shortly after the album's release, the owner of the label moved to Atlanta, Georgia and KBC's involvement with the label became less frequent and eventually ceased. In 2004, KBC returned to Dar es Salaam and then, in 2007, moved to London where he continues to work.

While studying and working in the United States and the UK, KBC has kept in close contact with musical developments in Tanzania. He has remained in contact with his established networks of artists, DJs and producers in Tanzania. KBC has maintained contact with other members of Kwanza Unit, and in particular the rapper Rhymson who has continued to be an active participant in cultural production in Dar es Salaam.⁷⁹ Artists, in particular FidQ, have also come to have a close relationship with members of Kwanza Unit. By maintaining contact with his networks KBC has been able to develop relationships with new, and up and coming, artists and studios.

You know who is who, even like there are some kids who are doing it now, I haven't met them in person but I know their big brother is so and so, so you get to know what they are doing..... Some of them are artists who are under our friends, let's say like Lindu or some are under P Funk, it's always like it's the same umbrella. The kids that are under Duke they already know Duke is affiliated with

⁷⁹ Rhymson was the driving force behind a number of events held between 2007 and 2009 initially at the British Council in Dar es Salaam which focused on rapping and hip hop.

Fid, Fid is affiliated with us. It is always like a big tree and some branches and the roots.

Social capital associated with being a member of Kwanza Unit and among the early group of rappers in Tanzania, as well as his acknowledged expertise in hip hop, has allowed KBC to develop these relationships. When Tanzanian rappers travel to the UK to perform, KBC is frequently invited to attend, and he described being given shout outs as a sign of respect by visiting rappers.

When they come out here they will holler, yo I'm in town let's link up. If they have the show and we are free we will go to their shows. Like when FA comes or AY comes we will go.... FA always does like a tribute song to KU and they are like if it wasn't for those guys over there...

Despite having been resident in the UK for a number of years, KBC spends a great deal of time maintaining relationships with musicians, rappers, labels and studios "back home".

The role played by KBC in relation to rappers in Dar es Salaam is that of a cultural broker or intermediary. He uses the social capital that he has accrued to broker relationships between rappers, studios and the media. As demonstrated earlier, relationships between artists and radio stations can be suffused with tension. KBC can use his relationship as a former radio DJ on Clouds FM, to support rappers and help gain broadcasting time on the radio. The prestige of his position as one of the early generation of Tanzanian rappers also enables him to negotiate, and support artists with their relationship with video and studio

production companies. In particular, KBC, as well as the other members of Kwanza Unit, have been involved in supporting the career of rapper ZAiID (Swahili for “more”) a relative of Kwanza Unit member Zavara.

Let’s say like ZAiID every move as far as if it’s a business move or a promo move we orchestrate that in the background. Let’s say like the promotion, we have contacts on the radio, contacts on people who are doing live shows. So let’s say like Professor Jay is doing a show, Professor Jay is like our little brother we will be like, Jay, listen, I got my little nephew here he can open up for you, is there room for this? He will be like, ah OK tell him to come over, here is my number, call me and I know what I can do.

KBC’s continued intervention in the Tanzanian music industry is not, at least principally, motivated by commercial concerns. His role as a broker does not receive remuneration in the way in which, for example, a manager might demand, but is, rather, motivated by a desire to support the development of hip hop in Tanzania.⁸⁰ The role of intermediary requires expertise in order to assert legitimacy for particular artists (Maguire and Matthews 2012, 552).

Publicising and disseminating music has also provided a medium through which KBC has sought to act as a cultural broker. After arriving in London in 2008, KBC established his own

⁸⁰ The role of the cultural broker or intermediary who is motivated by other aims than those that are purely financial is one found not only among those in the diaspora but among cultural entrepreneurs in for example New Zealand (Scott 2012, 242)

website, Bongo Boom Bap, which seeks to publicise “Original, Organic, Bongo Hiphop”⁸¹.

Bongo, here, is used both as a reference to Tanzania and Dar es Salaam and to the bongo drum. Boom bap locates the project with the classic sound of hip hop from the late 1980s and 1990s and refers to the sound made by the kick and snare drum (Elafros 2013, 91). The website seeks to publicise hip hop which follows the original principles and philosophy of hip hop and is from “Bongo Urban Society”.

You will showcase people who have similar type of work people you approve or people you co-sign with. Whoever is doing something that I see like yes ok that’s an eye opener, I will give him a shout. Stuff that I will consider worthy of being on the Bongo Boom Bap is not much they don’t drop joints like that often.

This website offers a space through which to publicise rapped music created through the various networks of which KBC is part. It also represents a space through which a particular vision of Tanzanian popular music can be articulated. This is done not only through the selection, but also the framing, of the material that appears on the blog. Through situating the material posted as faithful to the original principles and philosophy of hip hop, KBC is able to express his own vision of what truly constitutes Tanzanian hip hop. Posts on the website feature new East African hip hop, ‘classic’ hip hop lyrics from rappers such as NAS and Rakim and posts which include videos about the process of making hip hop beats.

In the future, KBC aims to take the website from being a medium for disseminating the work of others to a space for publicising music he terms ‘Bongo boom bap’. Bongo boom

⁸¹ Quote from the website www.bongoboombap.blogspot.co.uk

bap is conceived by KBC as an 'Africanisation' of hip hop's musical, rather than verbal, production. The website will act as a space for the creation and dissemination of hip hop beat which uses East African samples, taking older East African recordings of music styles such as Dansi, Tanzanian jazz, Taarab, and Bolingo and using these as a source of samples for the creation of new music; thereby situating the production of Tanzanian hip hop within both a history of Tanzanian music and modern hip hop musical production. When Hashim Rubanza visited the UK in 2010 (see chapter 6), he established contact with KBC who came to visit Hashim in Birmingham on more than one occasion. While in Birmingham, KBC established relationships with a number of producers and began to discuss his ideas for the creation of 'authentic' African hip hop beats. Work on this project will progress by KBC giving music for sampling to the producers, and their use of this to create beats that fit the Bongo boom bap aesthetic. KBC has been learning how to produce hip hop beats himself, and begun to work on the creation of music that fits his Bongo boom bap template.

My whole thing is just the identity, the identity of the music, people they just want something that pops off, whatever is hot right now, if it's like some 808's they want to go for 808's.⁸² But if you take off the words you won't know like where is this from. Remember when you used to play 2 Live Crew, as soon as it came on you knew this is bass music, this is Miami, this is Florida. There should be a sound when you hear it, you are like OK this is Nigeria, this one comes from Sub-Sahara.

⁸² The Roland TR 808 is a drum machine with a very distinctive sound used on the production of popular music since the early 1980s. It was popularised on *Sexual Healing* by Marvin Gaye and *Planet Rock* by Afrika Bambaataa and the Soulsonic Force. Virtual drum machines are available as plug ins for contemporary studios which largely use computer software.

The development of musical software has enabled the development of virtual music production studios such as Reason, Fruity Loops and Garage Band (Prior 2009, 85). Virtual studios have allowed individuals such as KBC, without access to professional studios, to begin creating music. The Bongo boom bap project seeks to provide a bridge between East African and hip hop musical production, between the past and the present. Perhaps ironically, older East African recordings are more readily available in the global north, where a market in second hand records exists and where readily available internet connections allow access to blogs which post links to older, otherwise unavailable, African recordings from the early post-colonial period. The Bongo boom bap project seeks to reinsert older Tanzanian music into contemporary musical production, thus creating 'authentically' Tanzanian and East African hip hop beats which would also conform to the standards of authentic hip hop production. Hip hop has been characterised as a genre which "prizes and cultivates its memory" (Demers 2003, 41) in part through the use of samples. Samples in the US are a means for an artist to link themselves to the history of African American musicians. This acts as an "invocation of another's voice to help you say what you want to say" (Rose 1994, 79). The Bongo boom bap project seeks to invoke another's music, not only as a means of saying something on your behalf but as a means of legitimization. Through the use of samples, KBC seeks to position hip hop production within a longer history of African and Tanzanian popular music practice.⁸³

The production of the music for the Bongo boom bap project has required the development of relationships and networks in the UK. KBC has formed relationships with a number of UK

⁸³ Murthy offers an interesting analysis of the production of Indian music between the diaspora and home. Suggesting that both, for very different reasons, seek to present their music as part of an authentic pre-capitalist tradition (Murthy 2010)

based producers in both London and Birmingham. Since visiting Birmingham initially to meet with Hashim, KBC has established a close relationship with local producer Myke Forte. This relationship has been fostered through email exchange and membership of the same social media networks. KBC has also established relationships with a number of producers in London, including the development of relationships with work colleagues who also have an interest in hip hop and hip hop production. A key component in the formation of these relationships has been the recognition of a common interest in hip hop. These networks have been established in part through recognition of mutual membership of a community of practice.

Msafiri Kondo - (Solo Thang)

Solo Thang (Msafiri Kondo), another of the early generation of Tanzanian rappers, moved to live in Dublin, Ireland in 2006. Since moving to Ireland, he has continued to produce rapped music. In 2011 Solo Thang released an album entitled 'I am Travellah Volume 1'. The album was made available for purchase through a number of digital distribution networks such as iTunes and Reverbnation. The album's title makes reference not only to Solo Thang's travels from Tanzania to Dublin but also to his name, Msafiri, the traveller. Solo Thang has largely, though not exclusively, continued to record in Swahili. Like KBC, Solo Thang has maintained a network of contacts in Tanzania. Some of the songs recorded on the 'I am Travellah' album have featured both production and guest features from artists based in Dar es Salaam. These have included collaborations with more recently established artists in Tanzania, such as Godzilla and Q Chief, as well as more established artists such as Jay Moe. Addressing a Tanzanian audience remains the primary focus of Solo Thang's musical

production, and Tanzania remains central to Solo Thang's musical practice. He has been involved in the organisation of events in Dublin at which Tanzanian artists are invited to perform⁸⁴. This enables him to maintain and develop his networks back in Tanzania.

Collaborations act as a means of expanding an artist's audience and drawing on the audience of the artist with whom he or she collaborates. For an artist such as Solo Thang, who lives outside of Tanzania, collaborations provide a means of linking himself to new musical developments within that country.

Solo Thang has also established strong local networks in Dublin. He works with local studios, video production companies and venues in the organisation of events. In order to broaden his appeal to a largely non-Swahili-speaking Dublin-based audience, Solo Thang has recorded songs in English. He has also collaborated with other English language artists on his album, including local Irish singer Niam Chambers and American rapper Bolaji.

Collaborations help to situate Solo as a mainstream hip hop artist, able to perform equally alongside artists from the United States. For both KBC and Solo Thang, the genre of hip hop acts as a frame of reference through which they can position their work. Both situate themselves as part of a global hip hop community of practice. For Solo Thang and KBC, this community is enacted through their continued collaboration with its other members, producers and rappers. While each 'local' form of hip hop is distinct, they imply that there is a common frame of reference to both skills and to some degree influence. Mbaye sees a community of practice operating in Dakar and Ouagadougou between practitioners who

⁸⁴ There are a number of promoters of East African origin operating in the UK who invite East African artists to the UK to perform. In the course of my research I encountered a number of Kenyan promoters who had invited East African artists, including a number of Tanzanian artists, to perform in London and Milton Keynes.

share a hip hop philosophy (Mbaye 2011, 285-287). This philosophy draws on the idea of representing the community or hip hop as what Mbaye terms the “emotional site”.

Rapped Music Online

The internet has become a key tool through which artists in the diaspora, such as KBC and Solo Thang, maintain contact with musical developments ‘back home’. Digital music can now be exchanged easily over the internet and this can enable musical collaboration. Collaborators are no longer required to be in the same physical space. KBC is able to make music in the UK and send this to Tanzania for rappers to perform on. Email and social networking sites, such as Facebook, assist people in maintaining contact with networks in Tanzania. Websites, blogs and YouTube channels are inundated with the latest music videos from Dar es Salaam. In many cases, Tanzanians in the diaspora have been a key part of establishing an internet presence focused on Tanzanian rap music. One of the websites to place a major focus on rapped music from Tanzania is tzhiphop.com. Tzhiphop.com was established by a group of young men who had been involved in running the Vijana FM (youth) website. The impetus for establishing Vijana FM came from Al-Amin Kheraj, a Tanzanian from Dar es Salaam, who had been studying at Lafayette in the United States. On completing his studies in 2007, and while working in the United States, Al-Amin began seeking funding to open a community radio station on his return to Tanzania. These funding bids were unsuccessful and so Al-Amin remained working in the US before returning to Tanzania. While in the United States and contemplating his return to Tanzania, Al-Amin established the Vijana FM website as a response to the lack of readily available information on educational and funding opportunities. The website aimed to be a medium through

which information could be exchanged; the page is focussed on education and entrepreneurship.

The philosophy I guess was that some basic education shouldn't have such high barriers especially if it is supposed to create productive citizens who will then go and get a job one day. So I was thinking of a more informal way to disseminate these kinds of things and I thought sawa there is maths, science these kinds of things but there was all this informal and social knowledge that people could gain just by networking, learning from each other. I always envisioned how radio could be used for young people to bring up business ideas on a phone call on the air just so that other youths in other parts of the country could also call in and say 'hey I'm doing the same thing how did you manage to do this'.

On the homepage of the website its aims are neatly described in the words soma, sikiliza, angalia, changia (read, listen, watch, contribute). Vijana FM was established as a developmental project with the aim of providing access to information. Members of the group that ran, and contributed to, the website felt that there was a need to have space for publicising and discussing Tanzanian hip hop.

Tzhiphop.com was set up in 2011, two years after Vijana FM, and in many ways its aims mirror the developmental concerns of Vijana FM. Those who helped develop and contribute to Tzhiphop are young men who grew up listening to rapped music from Tanzania, rapped in Swahili. Tanzanian hip hop, and its discussion of socio-political issues,

assumed an important place in their imagination and is an important part of their reference for contemporary Tanzanian subjectivity. Tzhiphop is framed as a space within which to reappraise the development and content of Tanzanian hip hop. It seeks to operate as a space which critically engages with the lyrics of Tanzanian rapped music. As the name of the website suggests, Tzhiphop has concerned itself with Tanzanian hip hop rather than Bongo Flava. Hip hop is, then, appraised as a form which is serious and worthy of study; as a medium with a message and a form which displays literary merit. Tanzanian hip hop is cast by the website as a 'lost' form which is recovered through the website. Among the topics which the website has covered, typically, are discussions of 'classic' Tanzanian hip hop lyrics. This has included an appraisal and an online DJ mix of some of the available recordings of Hashim's rapped lyrics. Reappraising Hashim's work represents an excellent example of one of the website's key aims, that of bringing attention to some of the less familiar 'classics' of Tanzanian rap music. The site seeks to highlight contemporary and older Tanzanian hip hop which, it was felt, did not get sufficient attention in the media. The website seeks to counterbalance a perceived media bias towards music with a less serious message, and a bias towards Bongo Flava. It offers a counter-narrative to that of the major media players, and a space for works which it believes do not receive sufficient attention in the mainstream media. Contemporary rappers' work is also discussed on the website, new videos are posted and albums reviewed. In particular, the website has close links to the MLab studio and the rapper FidQ, who are both closely associated with the hip hop genre. Through its inclusion and exclusion of artists and their work, the site defines what constitutes Tanzanian rap music. The site seeks to establish a canon of rap music. Lyrics are engaged with as texts which can provide an understanding of Tanzanian society. The texts of Tanzanian hip hop are seen as an educational resource.

A regular source of material for the Tzhiphop website is videos posted on the Cheusi Dawa (Black Magic) YouTube channel. The Cheusi Dawa channel features a series of videos, entitled Fidstyle Fridays, which are hosted by rapper FidQ and feature freestyle rap performance and interviews with rappers. Started in 2011, the channel had shot 38 different episodes of Fidstyle Friday up until January 2013. Each episode is typically between 15 and 25 minutes long and features a short question and answer session with the rapper for a quarter of the video and a series of improvised, freestyle performances. Each episode is hosted by FidQ, who interviews the guest rapper. Episodes are filmed in different locations, which seem to reflect the character of the guest. AY is filmed in a swimming pool, reflecting his success and artistic identity as “*MC we commercial*” (the commercial MC). Other rappers, such as One the Incredible and ZAiID, are filmed against the backdrop of walls covered in graffiti, an image associated with hip hop. Invited guest rappers have varied, from very well established artists such as AY, Roma, Godzilla and Kalapina from Kikosi cha Mzinga, to less well established recording artists such as Nikki Mbishi, One Incredible, Ujamaa Hip Hop Darasa. The ability to freestyle, to come up with improvised lyrics on the spot (Lee 2009, 306), is a sought-after skill for rappers. Being able to exhibit lyrical ingenuity without the benefit of studio technology is an important aspect of a rapper demonstrating their credentials as a rapper and part of a global hip hop genre. Of the 38 episodes available on the YouTube channel as of December 2013 there are four in which female rappers are the guests (Tifah, Stosh, Toni Blackman and Karen Mukupa). Although this may indicate that only a little more than 10% of the episodes focus on female rappers, it should be noted that women are usually all but completely absent from the recording and

performance of rapped music. Two of the female rappers interviewed are not Tanzanian (Toni Blackman and Karen Mukupa) and they perform in English.

Fidstyle Friday's videos, as with Tzhiphop.com, occupy a space within which the 'art' of rapping is represented as an intellectual and artistic endeavour worthy of being taken seriously. While the shows are hosted by FidQ, the focus is overwhelmingly on the guest artist; their lyrics, and the ingenuity with which they are created, are presented as worthy of the audience's serious consideration. Fidstyle Fridays represents a new form through which artists are able to present themselves. Services such as YouTube, which allow videos to be stored on servers and viewed from anywhere around the globe, have enabled artists to create new forms of visual texts. Fidstyle Fridays are longer than music videos; more focused on the craft of the rapper, and containing short interviews alongside the rapper's lyrics. This new form places emphasis on the lyrics and skill of the rapper. FidQ uses the social capital and networks that he has to be able to present the work of less well established artists. Networks of individuals with means to publicise the videos are significant. To gain views for each episode of Fidstyle Friday it is important that websites such as Tzhiphop.com draw attention to them by writing about them and making the clips viewable from their website.

YouTube channels provide a medium for disseminating Tanzanian music to a global audience. Music videos are uploaded by fans of Tanzanian popular music. New videos, as well as 'classic' and less readily available songs, are uploaded onto YouTube. Channels may be established by fans, or artists themselves, and typically each channel contains a few videos. Channels, with accompanying websites, have been established which seek to act as

a space for disseminating Bongo Flava and Tanzanian hip hop videos. Sauti za Bongo (The Sound of Tanzania) has been running since 2009 as a YouTube channel, and recently established a website. While the vast majority of the videos posted onto the YouTube channel are music videos produced by artists which are simply further disseminated through the channel, Sauti za Bongo have produced a number of interviews with rappers and principally with producers. Pancho, Amani Joachim Lyimo, Lemar, and rappers One Incredible, Nikki Mbishi and Wakazi have all been interviewed by Sauti za Bongo. Through both the YouTube channel and website, Sauti za Bongo seeks to provide a virtual space through which news and information on new Tanzanian popular music can be discovered. The website and channel are run from the United States.

Changes in technology have made it increasingly possible for people to develop their own means of communicating with an undifferentiated audience on the internet. Free programmes enable anyone with sufficient familiarity with a computer to develop a blog or website, and social media such as Facebook and Twitter have enabled communication with a large global audience.⁸⁵ Developments in mobile phone technology have also meant that those without access to a permanent internet connection are able to use Facebook from a mobile phone. This potential to communicate with a global audience has been embraced by many Tanzanian artists (Kibona Clark 2012, 27). Several artists, among them AY, have established websites for themselves, in which they are able to showcase their videos, tours and awards. This is initially expensive and time-consuming, requiring the hiring of a web designer, the organising, and paying for, hosting on a server, for example. The time-consuming, and costly, nature of setting up websites deterred many artists from doing this,

⁸⁵ Facebook is now the second most visited website on the planet after Google (Al Omoush, Yaseen, and Alma'aitah, 2012, 2387)

and when I departed Tanzania from my fieldwork trip in 2011 there were few studios or artists with websites. More recently, however, free services, such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, have been readily embraced, not only by artists themselves but by interested groups who wish to write about and promote music. As a huge number of people use Facebook on a daily basis, for many artists and interested groups it represents an ideal way to communicate with fans and interested parties.

An entrepreneur from Morogoro, Michael Carter Mlingwa, has developed a business which offers to manage the social media pages for artists and to assist them with promotion for their music and videos. Michael Carter came to Dar es Salaam to study web design in 2006, and in 2008 began to write about popular music in Tanzania for the UK based blog Bab Kubwa. At the same time, Michael began to explore the possibility of using social networks, such as Facebook, to establish networks of people interested in Bongo Flava. Having worked with Bab Kubwa, Michael has established Gonga Mx, a company offering promotion on social networks to artists. He manages the Facebook and Twitter pages for a variety of different artists including FidQ, AY, Mwana FA and Benjamin from Mambo Jambo.

In 2008, when I initially became interested in exploring the development of online content related to rapped music in Dar es Salaam, there were a small number of web pages with information about Bongo Flava and Hip Hop in Tanzania. Very few artists had web pages, and those web pages that did exist were rarely updated. The last few years has seen a growth in online activity by Tanzanian artists. Many artists now have their own Facebook pages and Twitter accounts, with thousands of followers. These operate as a medium for communicating with fans. This reflects the increasing ease with which audiences in

Tanzania have access to social media, in particular Facebook, through mobile phones.

Websites, Facebook pages and Twitter have also enabled the Tanzanian diaspora to stay in touch with musical development in Tanzania. Web pages, YouTube channels and Facebook pages are frequently run from outside Tanzania with the aim of linking the diaspora with developments back at home. The increased popularity of social media as a means of communication is reflected in the professionalization of online activity. Online platforms represent a means for artists of maintaining direct communication with their fans and, to some degree, of circumnavigating the control of the more established media of radio and television.

While there has clearly been an expansion of online activity related to popular music in Tanzania, it is important to recognise that access to the internet for the majority of Tanzanians is still limited. Many of the representations of Tanzanian popular music described above rely on having both access to the internet in spare time and sufficiently strong internet connection to watch video footage.⁸⁶ While online activity may have been democratised, with Twitter, Facebook and blogs offering the ability to disseminate information for free, this is still mediated by knowledge of, and access to, computers. Within Tanzania, radio remains the main means through which songs can be broadcast to their audience. Webpages, Facebook pages and Twitter are, in fact, used by artists and radio DJs as a way of spreading information. Online media, as Chiumbu and Ligaga (2013, 245-247) have shown in South Africa, are used by radio stations to do this. In Tanzania, particularly, radio stations have used Facebook and Twitter as a source of stories on the lives of musicians (interview with DJ Fetty).

⁸⁶ Access to a computer at home with internet access remains the preserve of the well off (Yonazi 2012, 5 and Yonazi 2010, 14)

Websites, YouTube and Facebook pages offer those with an interest in Tanzanian popular music spaces to curate their own view of Tanzanian popular music. Those managing online spaces are able to frame contemporary Tanzanian music through their particular ideological precepts. A focus of online activity in relation to rapped music has been to concentrate on music which is seen as marginalised in the mainstream media. In the case of Ethiopian music, websites which feature music clips act as a third space - neither of the diaspora nor of home (Webster-Kogen 2013, 193). Online activity of Turkish migrants is seen by Christensen as a means for “moral recentring and for re-shaping” (Christensen 2012, 898). In contrast, much of the Tanzanian diasporic musical discourse seeks to reaffirm moral positions in relation to the role of popular music. In Tanzania, and among the Tanzanian diaspora, websites such as Tzhiphop and the Bongo Boom Bap are embedded in a discourse of reclaiming Tanzanian popular musical heritage. Websites here appear as a space through which to reclaim Tanzania’s musical past, and to use this as a means of influencing the future popular music production of Tanzania. Websites established by those in the diaspora seek to affect the production and reception of music on the ground in Tanzania.

Websites offer artists new spaces within which they can perform their identities. In particular, the logics of Facebook groups and Twitter offer a means of establishing connection. The very act of having a Twitter account, Facebook page and website is a display of communicating with a global audience.⁸⁷ These online spaces offer not only a means of creating new connections, but of performing the very act of being connected. Diasporic artists, such as Solo Thang, seek to maintain their networks and audience in

⁸⁷ See Thompson 2008 article on the portrayal of Maasai identity on the Arusha based X-Plasterz website.

Tanzania, using collaborations with popular artists as a means of maintaining their relevance. Collaborations with both 'home' and 'international' artists are a means through which artists display a "transnational virtual network" (Wilson 2011, 51). Facebook pages and Twitter feeds offer spaces for artists to perform their connectivity. These online spaces also allow those in the diaspora to display their connectivity, both with international music figures and with 'back home'. Connectivity, here, is not simply a means of displaying international connections, or of appearing modern. The web of connections displayed online affirms both a commitment to home and participation in global exchange.

CHAPTER 10 – CONCLUSION

Introduction

In this thesis, I have set out to describe the principal dynamics which have shaped, and continue to shape, the development of rapped music in Dar es Salaam. This has included looking at the spaces and institutions which have influenced the form and content of rapped music. I have sought to explore the ways in which rapped music is used as a medium for articulating divergent ideas about contemporary reality. Rapped music has acted as a space for the enactment of masculinities, for the contestation of ideas about wealth and consumption, and as a vehicle for changing discourses about the role of artists themselves. Fabian described popular culture as “spaces of freedom and creativity” (Fabian 1998, 2). I have sought to explore rapping in Dar es Salaam as a both a creative and an intellectual space; as a space within which it is possible for the young men who form the majority of rappers to engage creatively and intellectually with the world in which they live. I have investigated the ways in which rapping has been a space for the enactment of new forms of identity and sociality. In this, I hope to have placed a focus on the creative output of young people, not only for what it might tell us about contemporary Tanzania, but as something of interest in and of itself.

In this thesis I have sought to situate underground and recorded rap in relation to one another. I have explored the aesthetic, performance and relational commonalities and differences between the two genres. Commoditised recorded rap music and underground are not opposites but part of a continuity in form and practice. They are forms which

engage with, and influence, each other. This thesis has focused on the intersecting debates about youth, popular culture and globalisation. Rapping is a space within which contrasting and competing ideas about contemporary reality are expressed. Contemporary anxieties about changing gendered, social and political realities are expressed through rapped music. It has provided a space for expressing both consumerist fantasies and socio-political critique. Popular music is a means through which young people engage with, imagine and construct the world around them.

Rappers, through their performance, act as agents in shaping new forms of sociality and new identities for themselves. Rappers embody a transnational practice, but one which is understood within a local order of meaning. Debates about genre boundaries, about appropriate behaviour and about the role of the artist in society, all make reference to national and global discourses about authenticity and the real. The discursive legacies of ideas about African familyhood are referenced by artists, both underground and recorded, as they employ strategies of legitimisation. It is this local order of meaning which is principally embodied, and contested, by rappers.

This thesis, I hope, has contributed to a number of ongoing scholarly debates about youth, popular culture and globalisation. Much of the work on youth has centred on the very real difficulties faced by young people across the continent and, as such, on notions of marginality, exclusion and crisis (Abbink and van Kessel 2005, Honwana and de Boeck 2005). A further area of focus for researchers has been the relationship between youth in Africa and the global order of signs. The exclusion of youth from the global order of signs has characterised much of the research on youth (Jean and John Comaroff 2000, 307, Jean

and John Comaroff 2005, 27, Weiss 2009, 2005). While recognising the great difficulties and challenges faced by young people in Dar es Salaam, in this thesis I hope to have shifted the focus to rapping as a productive, creative and intellectual practice.

Since the late 1980s, hip hop has become a subject of scholarly inquiry. As hip hop popularity has grown globally, so it has been appropriated as a form, from Morocco to Mongolia (Almeida 2013, Marsh 2010). Hip hop, and various local forms of popular music with some influence on hip hop, have become popular across Africa. Some common trajectories and characteristics can be drawn between these various forms, such as the early adoption of hip hop by elites and the importance of private media to their success (Weaver Shipley 2009, 632, Charry 2012, 12). While it is important to recognise these commonalities, where broader understandings of popular music practice in Africa may be gained, I hope to have contributed to this literature through an in depth study of particularities of popular music practice in a single space. The history and spatiality of Dar es Salaam, as well as the political and social history of Tanzania, have created specific forms of rapped music practice.

Perhaps the most fundamental social and political dynamics enabling the development of rapped music in Dar es Salaam has been the liberalisation of the economy and the media. The liberalisation of the media profoundly altered the relationships between the principal actors in the music industry in Tanzania. State and para-state organisational support for musical groups was largely withdrawn, and musicians then earned their income principally from performing concerts. Private institutions, including recording studios, distributors and

FM radio and TV stations, became central to the production and dissemination of rapped music.

Liberalisation reforms moved control of the music industry from state officials into the hands of various non-state actors, most significantly the media. Radio stations, in particular, play a crucial role in enabling an artist to become popular. Without regular radio play, artists are unlikely to receive bookings for concerts, or contracts for the production of their albums from distributors. Liberalisation both enabled and constrained musical production in Dar es Salaam. New relationships of payment and patronage have developed between private media and artist. Individual managers, TV hosts and radio DJs have power to decide what songs are aired on the media, and there are widespread allegations of a payola system operating, particularly with radio DJs. The private media enact their own broadcasting choices, and the editorial choices of the media are frequently questioned by artists. Ideological tensions exist about the role played by private individuals and media in the broadcasting and dissemination of culture. This tension exists not only on the level of an individual's career, but in terms of the socio-political content of the songs which are broadcast. Private media, in particular, has become a space for contestations over the role of popular culture in the Tanzanian public sphere.

Rather than viewing the power over which music is broadcast via the media as solely in the hands of musical institutions, I have sought to chart the relations of power between different actors in the field of music production and dissemination. In practice, all actors in the field are in some sense dependent upon each other. Radio stations require music, rappers require studios. As the example I give in chapter 3 of a rapper who moved studio

when unhappy with the control over the text exerted by the studio illustrates, power exists at the level of the relation between the actors. Power exists not only at the level of institutions, but is exercised by individuals in their relations with institutions. Several of the most famous Tanzanian rappers said that they resist conforming to the payment of payola to radio DJs, as audiences would demand to hear their songs. Their popularity is such that if DJ's did not play their songs because they had received no payola payment the public would call and request their song. The power of audiences is mobilised by rappers for their own ends. Some rappers, notably Sugu, have also adopted positions of resistance to the power of the radio, in particular, and sought to circumnavigate its control over the popularity of popular music.

Underground Rap

A form of rapped music, underground rap, characterised by its exclusion from these private circuits of production and dissemination, has developed. While I do not want to overstate the case for the invisibility of underground rappers in Dar es Salaam, or set this genre in opposition to recorded rapping, there are some key differences between the forms. Recordings of rapped music in Tanzania are commodities, bought and sold in various digital or physical formats. These commodities circulate widely as MP3s, cassettes and CDs, as well as through being broadcast on the radio, TV and from bars, buses and restaurant stereo systems. Recorded media have been open to appropriation by political parties and the media.⁸⁸ The popularity of recorded rapping is mediated through institutions such as studios and the media. Underground rapping does not become a commodity in such ways,

⁸⁸ The musical accompaniment to Dully Sykes song Bongo Flava was used by the mobile phone network Tigo in 2011 and could be heard across Dar es Salaam.

as it is unrecorded. It acts, rather, as a medium for performance to a “community of sentiment” (Appadurai 1996, 8).

Underground rappers are defined through their inability to record and broadcast their music; by not becoming famous. It is an ambiguous category, as rappers may record but receive no airplay, or have a brief career as a recorded rapper and then cease to record. How famous one can be and still be considered underground is a subjective judgement. Being underground is not set in opposition to recorded rapped music. Underground rappers often, though not universally, aspire to recording and broadcasting music. Some rappers have embraced their exclusion from the commodification of music and do not seek to participate in the music economy. There is a dialogical relationship between underground rappers and recorded rap stars. Underground rappers are inspired and influenced by rapped music broadcast on the radio. In turn, some recorded rappers, such as Fid Q in Fidstyle Fridays, have worked with underground rappers. Underground rap does not exist in isolation from recorded rap but is a part of the same dynamic development of popular culture.

Contesting and Imagining the Nation

The liberalisation of Tanzanian economic and political life has had an impact upon the production of culture in Dar es Salaam. In Tanzania, rapped music has been a medium through which young people have contested visions of themselves and of the nation. While in the United States and UK rap music or hip hop can be considered a sub-culture, in Tanzania rappers seek to speak to the whole of society. While their lyrics and videos have

sought to contest societal norms, rappers are keen not to alienate a wider audience.

Sexuality has been an important theme through the history of rapped music in Tanzania.

Public discourse in Tanzania has questioned the propriety of music videos and, in particular, the display of female bodies. The videos of rapped music songs have contested the norms of what are acceptable forms of public dress. Verbal texts have also explored sexual themes in a variety of different ways. Numerous songs have dealt with cautionary tales of the figure of 'the good time girl', and (in Playboy by Nikki Mbishi) of a 'good time boy', a figure who uses wealth to access sexuality. The theme of love and sexuality is also common in underground rappers' lyrics. In particular, underground rappers' texts display an anxiety about the role of money in access to 'love'.

Closely allied to the topic of sexuality are songs which, directly or indirectly, explore wealth and consumption. Displays of conspicuous consumption are a common feature of rapped music videos. Many songs which focus on partying have consumption as their theme, partying entailing the consumption of music, food and alcohol. Rapped music is one space within which contesting visions of Tanzanian society, and its relationship with wealth, are articulated. Rapped music songs express a variety of different sentiments about wealth and consumption, from a celebration of consumption to unease about the corrupting influence of money. The celebration of money is perhaps best characterised in AY's song, simply called Money, which features, as a regular refrain, 'Take money money, Make money money, I love my money'.

Another much contested area of rapped music production in Tanzania is the ongoing discourse about whether music has, or should have, a social function. During the period of

African socialism, music was used as a tool for spreading social, educational and political messages by TANU/CCM and the Tanzanian state. A critique frequently levelled at contemporary music is that it is 'bubble gum', and has no message for Tanzanian society. Many contemporary songs have been critiqued as offering empty lyrics which simply celebrate enjoyment. This tendency within contemporary Tanzanian music might best be illustrated by Dully Sykes, whose songs largely focus on love or enjoyment. The texts of rapped music songs, however, since the very early recordings, have raised social and political issues. Songs such as *Ndio Mzee* (Yes Sir) by Professor Jay have offered a thorough critique of the entire political class, and also of Tanzanian voters, in its description of a leader's ridiculous promises to the electorate and their reply of *ndio mzee*. A relationship reminiscent of Mbembe's description of the "conviviality" of relations between the commandment and its subjects leading to "mutual zombification" (Mbembe 2001, 104) between ruler and ruled in the post-colony. More recently, the songs of Roma have taken a more stridently critical stance towards the political class. In his song Tanzania he accuses religious leaders of using churches for sin, wealthy people of being *mapusha* (drug dealers) and the political class of using *nguvu za giza*, the powers of darkness. Rapped music is a space within which very contesting visions of contemporary Tanzanian society are expressed.

However, I have argued that it would be wrong to view this as a total break with the past. While the newly liberalised media has opened up new spaces for addressing topics, in particular sexuality, consumption and politics, the legacies of Ujamaa ideology in relation to cultural production continue to be influential. Songs which address contemporary social and political concerns continue to be popular in Tanzania, as the rise to popularity of the

rapper Roma, with his strident political critique, attests. Divergent roles for popular musicians have been expressed. Many rappers continue to see their role as that of the *kioo kwa jamii*, or 'mirror to society'. Much public discourse continues to see an important role for artists as educators and conveyors of moral messages. As a number of studies of post-socialism, in a variety of different countries, have suggested, the discursive legacies of socialism continue to be salient in public discourse even after the regime has ceased to follow a socialist ideology (Askew 2006, Pitcher and Askew 2006, Velikonja 2009, Buyandelgeriyn, 2007). Socio-political commentary remains a prominent feature of Tanzanian rapped music. Indeed many rappers, producers and fans I encountered in Tanzania regarded this as an essential element to a successful career as a popular musician. Music with a message is an essential ingredient to commercial success. The songs of artists like Dully Sykes, with their focus on consumption, partying and romantic possibilities, may be a more radical break with Tanzania's musical past.

Another of the dynamics central to the development of rapped music has been the access of rappers to recordings and style from the United States. Access to imported hip hop recordings, and the broadcasting of films about hip hop in Dar es Salaam, undoubtedly played an important role in the development of a local, Tanzanian rapped genre. Rapped music from Tanzania can, in some sense, be conceived of as part of the cultural exchange between Africa and African Americans. Cultural exchange between populations of African descent in Latin America, the Caribbean and the United States of America have been theorised as part of what Gilroy has termed the Black Atlantic (Gilroy 1996). Much work has been done on the influence of Afro-Cuban, Latin music styles, and James Brown in particular, on the development of African music in the twentieth century (Salter 2007, 257,

Veal 2000, 57, Shain 2002, 101). There has been a great deal of scholarly work on hip hop, and on various hip hop communities of practice, around the world. A common theme in these studies is the conception of hip hop as a culture containing particular elements of practice (break dancing, emceeing) as well as beliefs (Bynoe 2002, Morgan and Bennett 2011). Hip Hop has been seen to act, globally, as a community with shared beliefs acting through what Osumare terms “connective marginalities” (Osumare 2001, 172). Hip hop has been conceived as a tool for the marginalised, in societies across the globe. This description of hip hop as a global form places too great a focus on the universality of the practice and beliefs of hip hop. Instead, I would view hip hop as a set of practices, signs and symbols which are appropriated and put to use in a diverse range of settings across the globe. While rappers, recorded and underground, in Dar es Salaam make reference to hip hop culture, rather than a fixed set of beliefs, I would argue this is done situationally, as a means of situating themselves with reference to local discourses. We should not view hip hop as a universal form of practice but rather as an open medium that needs to be interrogated in its local specificity.

An important feature of rapped music in Tanzania is the way in which it is used as a space for rappers to construct themselves as social actors. Recorded and underground rappers use rapping as a space within which both the creation and performance of rappers’ identities occurs.

Rapping and Masculinity

Rapping is a practice overwhelmingly associated with men. While there have been, and still are, some notable female rappers, Witness, Zay B and Sista P for example, they are the exception rather than the rule. The very act of *kuchana* (to rap) is seen as hard and masculine in opposition to *kuimba* (to sing) which is perceived as feminine. As the rapper D-Knob said:

Rappers were respected more than singers, singers looked like, people were like aah, like a woman you know. To be a man you are supposed to rap.

Women are thus largely excluded from the practice and production of rapped music. The texts of rapped music songs are a space in which men are able to articulate hegemonic masculinities (Mwangi 2004, 20). Rapped music texts present models of masculinity, with rappers frequently turning, in their songs, to unease with female behaviour and, in particular, with female sexuality. In songs such as “Kings and Queens” by AY, and “Wife” by Daz Baba, the male artists set out a vision of the behaviour appropriate for a future wife. Both songs make reference to the sexual qualities of the desired wife, in the case of Daz Baba to know how to:

Awe ana kata viuno kama amefunzwa unyagoni

To be able to move her waist like she was taught unyagoni

(a dance performed at coming of age ceremonies for women)

Two common, and in some ways contradictory, themes emerge from many of the songs about women. Access to women, having a wife, is an important part of performing

masculinity. Equally prevalent in these songs is a distrust of, and desire for, control over women and, in particular, of female sexuality. Women are portrayed as possible dangers to men and male productivity, female sexuality as posing a risk to the social order.

Rappers in Dar es Salaam have forged forms of masculine identity through embodying the persona of rapper. These aesthetic and social constructions of masculinity are also contested. Underground and recorded rappers used the terms *msela* and *mchizi* to refer to each other and their social group⁸⁹. While difficult to pin down, these terms are both street Swahili and not to be used when addressing 'respectable' citizens. Both equated with the English meanings of gangster or thug (Reuster-Jahn and Hacke 2011, 5). It is through the embodiment of the persona of the rapper that rappers situate themselves as *msela* or *mchizi*. In contrast to other forms of masculine identity embedded in mediatised images, notable the *bills*, *yankee* and *sapeur* in Kinshasa (Pype 2007, 264-265, Gondola 2009 a), rappers in Dar es Salaam construct forms of masculinity based on notions of hard work and struggle. It is an inner mental strength, the ability to endure and survive, which characterises the masculinity of these rappers. The local figure of the rapper, with its focus on self-sufficiency and hard work, is embedded in the discursive legacies left by *Ujamaa*. Alternative masculinities, perhaps more in line with the *sapeur* (Bredeloup 2013, 172-173, Gondola 2009 b, 25-26), are performed by rappers such as Dully Sykes. In this performance of masculinity it is not defined by hard work but by access to consumer goods, the good life and women. Dully Sykes describes himself as Brotherman, a category related to the displaying of fine clothing and wealth.

⁸⁹ A well known rapper is called Mchizi Mox, the group Nako 2 Nako have recorded a song called Mchizi Wangu (My Mchizi) and numerous songs have made reference to the name *msela* including Oyaa msela oyaa by Sugu.

The relation of young Africans to the global order of signs, such as the figure of the rapper, has been theorised as a relation of exclusion and subjugation (Weiss 2005, 116). In this research strand, the distance between the signs appropriated and their attainment by young Africans, is experienced as pain or loss, as the distance “between dream and fulfilment, between desire and impossibility” (Comaroff 2005, 27). Rappers in Dar es Salaam appropriate elements of style and posture from the global circulation of signs. I have focussed on the ways in which these appropriated signs are imbued with meanings derived from discourses in Dar es Salaam. I have argued that underground rappers, for example, appropriate the notion of Thug Life to construct themselves as social and masculine subjects. Thug Life is imbued with meaning from discourses of African familyhood, such as self-sufficiency and survival. The principal focus of the act of rapping is not on rappers’ exclusion from the global order of signs, but on acting on a local order of social relations. Rapping is not principally concerned with the global order of signs but with expressing local fears, ideas and hopes.

Much of the work on hip hop and rapping as a practice has focused on notions of the interaction of the global and the local. Ideas of both the global and the local remain important within discourses in Tanzania about musical practice. As such, these categories are interesting inasmuch as they have salience to local discourse. They do not, I think, provide particularly useful categories for interrogating the practice of rapping itself. In both its style and texts, rapped music plays with the order of signs and seeks to reconfigure these; making use of both local and global signs to constitute themselves. Global signs are filled with meanings from local discourses, and so the global becomes intensely local. The

local is constituted through the global and vice versa. It is important that we are attuned to the various discourses, from local to global, that rappers draw upon in their construction of self.

Rapping as Intellectual Engagement with the World

Rapping provides a space not only to represent the world as it is, but to invent it. Through their texts and performances, rappers are able to perform multiple identities as educators, as thugs and as successful entrepreneurs. These different identities sometimes exhibit seemingly contradictory characteristics. Rappers shape the world around them, and their relation to others, through being rappers. Their texts seek to intercede in the world and shape how they, and wider society, are seen. Being a rapper influences an individual's subjectivity. I have argued that rapping acts as a medium for underground rappers' intellectual engagement with the world, as well as for their construction of their social selves. As envisaged by Fabian (1998), then, rapping is a creative engagement with the world and with various different forms of knowledge about the world. The texts of underground rappers' lyrics not only draw on their own experience, but on a variety of secondary texts which they incorporate. Underground rappers' lyrics are not simply a description of their lived reality, but are texts which seek to engage with, and shape, the world.

An important feature of Tanzanian hip hop, and in particular of underground rap, is a focus by rappers on the real and the authentic. 'Keeping it real' is a well established trope in hip hop discourse (Harkness 2012, 285, Hess 2005, 299). Being 'real' in hip hop terms often has

to do with representing the 'hood'; speaking on behalf of your place of origin, or where you live. Rappers in Dar es Salaam borrow from the lexicon of terms associated with hip hop practice. I would argue that notions of 'the real' are embedded in local discourses about authenticity. Among rappers in Dar es Salaam, being real was opposed not only to the notion of the fake but to that of being 'a snitch'. Dependent on the position of the speaker, Bongo Flava or hip hop were cast as a real Tanzanian genre. Rappers sought to display their realness through a mastery of lyrical and performative skill, most thoroughly exhibited in the performance of freestyles. For underground rappers, the real was associated with belonging to a community which adheres to certain principles, including sharing and supporting one another. Weiss argues that, in Arusha, the practice of representing the real in popular culture entails a form of ontological, intellectual work (Weiss 2009, 207-208).

I agree with Weiss that the notion of realness, as used, in particular, by underground rappers in Dar es Salaam, attempts to do ontological work. The conception of realness is connected with the very nature of reality. Being real is fundamental to the rapper's being in the world. As the rapper O-Key described his music:

This is the kind of music we call gangster music because it tells about reality,
real reality of life in our country.

Underground rapped music texts in Dar es Salaam do not represent only a reflection of the rappers' circumstances but seek to intervene and shape that world. The texts of underground rappers display artistic artifice. Rapping is a form of performance and so acts

not only as a reflection of reality, but as a representation of the identities, dreams and aspirations of rappers.

There is a long history within Tanzania of the overt contestation of what constitutes authentic national culture. In the 1960s and 70s, state policies of banning mini-skirts and soul music were part of a cultural policy which attempted to regulate what was authentically Tanzanian, and African, artistic expression. Discourses around authenticity have remained significant in Tanzanian cultural production. Rapped music in Tanzania has appropriated the medium of rapping, and some elements of style, from the global circulation of signs. This said, notions of authentically Tanzanian culture remain significant for rappers. Being authentically Tanzanian in form and content are part of what constitutes a Tanzanian artist as real. Realness is cast by rappers as representing authentically Tanzanian or African values. Music is a vehicle for expressing ideological positions about what an authentically Tanzanian music form should be. These claims to authenticity are also part of a strategy of asserting legitimacy. This referencing of ideas still salient in Tanzanian political discourse could be regarded as what Puig has called “strategies of legitimation” (Puig 2006, 533). Situating the genre of Bongo Flava and hip hop as authentically Tanzanian, allows rappers to legitimise the practice of rapping within national discourses, and provides them with a space from which to speak as real, and authentically national, artists.

Future Research

While there has been a body of work published on Bongo Flava and hip hop in Tanzania, I am yet to read of a study with a focus on underground performance. During the course of

many hours of interviews and ‘hanging out’ with underground rappers, I became aware of a number of different cultural phenomena occurring principally in *uswahilini* neighbourhoods. Mchiriku, a genre which borrows from Zaramo Ngoma and is characterised by the use of high pitched Casio keyboards, originates in *uswahilini*.⁹⁰ Somewhat like *kampu* performances, mchiriku occur almost exclusively in *uswahilini*. These alternative economies of cultural production are, I feel, under-researched and would provide valuable insight into the ways that young people in these areas make meaning in their lives. It would be valuable to look at production across genres which are performed in *uswahilini*, and to look at the mobility of individuals spatially but also with reference to the idea of fame. This current study will, I hope, provide a basis for further exploration.

The body of work on Bongo Flava and hip hop in Tanzania has largely focused on a single site as the basis for its study. Music is a mobile medium. There are increasingly interesting collaborations between artists in different countries across Africa. Pan-African media and the internet have enabled new continent wide audiences to be convened. The most commercially successful Tanzanian popular music is increasingly being produced and consumed across national borders. Rappers such as AY are able to perform to expatriate East African audiences in India, Russia and the United States. While there have been notable studies (Salter 2007, Weaver-Shipley 2013, Klein 2007) which focus on the mobility of music and its producers, this is still an under-researched area. Much of the focus on mobility has been on collaborations between African artists and others in London, Germany and New York (Weaver-Shipley 2013, Klein 2007). Emerging networks of inter-African

⁹⁰ While mchiriku is closely associated with *uswahilini*, cassettes and CDs are popular in Dar es Salaam and Jagwa Music, a mchiriku group from Dar es Salaam, have now gone on to become somewhat globally famous.

collaboration which enable the production, broadcasting and distribution of music would, I think, provide a fascinating subject for further research.

APPENDICES

List of Interviews Quoted in the Thesis

While I conducted a large number of interviews on my numerous research trips to Dar es Salaam I have not been able to include data from all of these in this thesis. Below are brief biographies and dates of some of the interviews I conducted.

Abubakari Amini (Soul Jezzy): male, 25 years old, is an underground rapper from Arusha who moved to Dar es Salaam in order to attend a seminary. As well as studying at the seminary he was attempting to establish a business painting designs onto t-shirts. 15 June 2011

Afande Sele: male, in his 30s, rapper and singer originally from, and currently living in, Morogoro. He has been recording and releasing music since the late 1990s and is an established figure in the Tanzanian popular music scene. 11 November 2006.

Al-Amin Kheraj: male, in his 20s, he graduated with a degree in International Affairs and Economics from the Lafayette College in the United States, then studied for a masters at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. Since returning to Tanzania he has worked for an NGO liaising with local media, in particular radio, and established the vijanafm and tzhiphop websites. 6 December 2013

Ally Mohammedi (Gang Star): male, 25 years old, underground rap artist. He was born and grew up in Msasani Dar es Salaam and has worked as a taxi driver, *dala dala* driver and various other types of day work. 9th July 2011

Ambwene Yessayah (AY): male, in his 20s, is a male rapper and singer. Initially starting singing at his secondary school in Morogoro, AY then became part of the East Coast Team with GK, and Mwanan FA. From 2006 he has pursued a solo career, which has led him to perform in Russia, India and Malaysia, and to make numerous collaborations with artists from Kenya, Uganda, Trinidad, Nigeria and the United States. 19 November 2006 and 26th June 2009

Bkhari Mahadhara (Gazar B): male, in his 20s, is an underground rapper from Mtwara in southern Tanzania. He moved to Dar es Salaam and currently lives in Kinondoni Hanna Nasifu and is employed as a carpenter in Kawe. 10 July 2011

Carola Kinasha: female, traditional fusion singer who has been part of Dar es Salaam's music scene since the 1990s. 11 November 2006

Evans Venance (Evans MC): male, 22years old, is a currently unemployed rapper who lives with relatives at the Oyster Bay Police Station in Msasani. Though he has recorded 6 songs at local studios, Evans does not have sufficient capital to release these. 7th November 2009.

Fanuel Sinzo (Sizoh Wamichano): male, 27 years old, rapper from the Dodoma region who lives in Mikocheni Dar es Salaam. He had earlier recorded and released a song as part of a group called Squad Boys Mob but due to lack of financial support they have since disbanded. He is unemployed. 14th September 2009

Francis Stephen Nehata (Mad Brain or Che Mkweli): male, in his 30s, underground rapper from Dar es Salaam, working as a civil engineer on the building of Dodoma University. 13 November 2009

Hashim Rubanza (Dogo Hashim): male, in his 30s, who has retired from the music industry. Born in Bukoba, Hashim was raised partly in the United States before returning to Dar es Salaam. He is currently working for an advertising agency in Dar es Salaam. 26 November 2006. 21 November 2009. 01 September 2013.

Innocent Sahani (D-Knob): male, in his 30s, recorded rapper who grew up in both Dar es Salaam and Mtwara. He is currently studying Development Studies at Kampala International University in Dar es Salaam, has released a single album and continues to release songs and videos. 26 June 2011.

Joseph Mbilinyi (Mr II or Sugu): male, in his 30s, rapper from Mbeya he has released ten albums and is one of the founding figures of Bongo Flava in Tanzania. Since 2010 he has been the CHEDEMA Member of Parliament for Mbeya. 3 November 2006.

Kibacha Singo (KBC): male, in his 30s, rapper and producer from Kinondoni, Dar es Salaam who has been based in London since 2007. He was part of Kwanza Unit, one of the first hip hop groups in Tanzania. Since leaving Tanzania he has developed an interest in music production and runs the Bongo Boom Bap Blog. 26 August 2013.

Gwamaka Kaihura (King Crazy GK): male, in his 30s, is a rapper from Upanga in Dar es Salaam. In the early 2000s he released three albums and formed the East Coast Team. In 2006 East Coast team members AY and Mwana FA pursued solo careers and East Coast team ceased to record. Recently GK has made a return to recording. 8 November 2006. 16 November 2006.

Richard Joseph Kizito (Kizito): male, 18 year old, underground rapper from Keko in Dar es Salaam. He is studying journalism in Dar es Salaam. 19 June 2011.

Lunya: male, 16 year old, underground rapper from Kiwalani who is unemployed. 20 July 2011.

Maduka: male, in his 30s, working for FEMA magazine and radio station. 22 November 2006.

Man Go Tree, or Mma Njaa: male, in his 20s, is an underground rapper from Kijitonyama Dar es Salaam. 5 July 2011.

Miikka Mwamba: male, in his 30s, is a Finnish music producer who spent many years in the early 2000s producing music in Dar es Salaam. He has notably worked with the groups Mambo Jambo and rappers Benjamin and D-Knob. Though no longer based in Dar es Salaam he continues to produce music for artists in the city. 25 November 2006.

Mwinjaka ally Mwinjaka (Mbaya Wao): male, in his 20s, is a underground rapper from Dar es Salaam. In the early 2000s Mbaya Wao was part of the Kikosi cha Mizinga collective. He works as a supervisor at the Shop Right supermarket in Mikocheni. 07 November 2009. 28 July 2011.

Octavian Thomas (O-Key Ghettochild): male, 19 year old, rapper from Keko. Since my last visit to Dar es Salaam O-Key has recorded two songs with Mesen Selecta at De Fatality Studio and featured on a number of other tracks. 19 June 2011.

Omari Muba: male, in his 20s, rapper from Kiwalani in Dar es Salaam who first recorded songs in 2001. Since then he has gone on to release 10 songs. He is currently doing day work and still managing to record songs. 11 July 2011.

Salim Muba: male, 26 years old, underground rapper from Kiwalani in Dar es Salaam. He is currently unemployed and on occasion working as a day worker. 1 July 2011.

Memed Osmay (Sokwe): male, 31 years old, underground rapper from Dar es Salaam currently employed as a mechanic. 15 June 2011

Uthman Issa (O-Money): male, 20 years old, underground rapper who had recently returned to Dar es Salaam from secondary school in Arusha. 24 June 2011. 19 July 2011.

Witness Mwaijaga (Witness): female, in her 20s, rapper who successfully competed in the 2005 Coca Cola Pop Stars competition. Since then she has released a number of solo tracks as well as working as a radio presenter for FEMA. She is still recording and releasing music. 27 July 2009. 29 June 2011.

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