

More flava, less bongo?

Commercialization and Identity in Youth Discourses on Bongo Flava Music

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Executive Summary

In many African countries, cultural expressions through dance and music have frequently been used to comment on processes of transformation during times of disruption. One such example is Tanzania, where Bongo Flava has emerged as Swahili music, a blend of musical genres such as rap, hip-hop, reggae, and R&B. Since its beginnings in the early 1990s, Bongo Flava has undergone numerous changes, many of which are reflective of broader changes in Tanzania as a whole.

Because ‘bongo’ translates to ‘mind’ and ‘flava’ specifies the many different flavors of the music, Bongo Flava can be seen quite literally as a musical expression of the Tanzanian mind. While it can be viewed as having carried a weight of social and political messages in the past, the increased popularity of Bongo Flava in recent years has broadened its scope and led to a greater diversity of messages. For many, this has led to more “mainstream” music which caters more specifically to the aspirations of young people.

We consider these changes in Bongo Flava and examine the ways in which the genre functions as a form of social commentary for young Tanzanians. The field site for our research was Morogoro, a medium-sized city in Tanzania about 200 kilometers west of Dar es Salaam. By focusing on Morogoro, we have sought to capture the ways in which music is discussed in relation to everyday urban life, but on the periphery of the Bongo Flava music industry, away from the center of Dar es Salaam.

Our investigation is rooted in a wider literature on music, national identity, neoliberalism, and Bongo Flava more generally. In framing our analysis of youth discourses within this broader critique, we consider the changes in the Bongo Flava industry and how these are reflected in people’s lived experiences. This broader literature on Bongo Flava reflects the many discourses in which the meaning of Bongo Flava is interpreted and reified, and also what that means for Tanzania as a whole.

As with many other music genres that experienced a quick rise in popularity, our research in Morogoro suggests a widespread belief that Bongo Flava has become more commercial over the last decade. The increased role of technology and money seems to have led to higher competition among artists and corporations, with capital increasingly dominating the market. In

Morogoro, this became apparent through the wide array of producers, DJs and radio stations engaged in the Bongo Flava music scene. The formalization has affected the ways people think about and critique the industry as a whole. Many of our informants see commercialization and market pressures as having led to the music being about more broadly-appealing themes like love, money, and fame. The manner in which young people respond to these changes underscore the many ways they negotiate their individuality, but their optimism is challenged by many discussions about the nature of “traditional” morals and values in Tanzania.

For many informants, the commercialization of Bongo Flava has “mainstreamed” the aspirations of young people by nurturing self-interest, encouraging material values, and promoting music as employment. Since the liberalization of the market in the 1980s under structural adjustment, the role of the individual versus society in Tanzania has come into focus. As in many market economies, the commercialization of the music industry has created an individualized idea of responsibility for young people and for young Tanzanians in particular. Bongo Flava has an impact on how the values of Tanzanian society are perceived and lived, which is especially reflected in tensions over traditional values and the role of men and women. These divisions over the changing nature of Bongo Flava increasingly mirror broader changes in Tanzanian culture and identity.

It is apparent from the wide diversity of responses from people in Morogoro that different forms of morality and aspiration can coexist but also challenge one another. We conclude that while Bongo Flava is used as social commentary, it is in different and more diverse ways than previously identified in the existing literature. While the social and political overtones of the genre are less noticeable today, Bongo Flava can still be a way for young people to speak up and negotiate their own identities as Tanzanians, thereby challenging values and beliefs previously taken for granted.

Introduction

“Music does not exist autonomously of other social, economic and political institutions. Music may still be able to change the world as well as reflecting it, but, when we talk of music’s politics, we are not just talking of the way in which it articulates ideas and emotion. We are also talking of the politics that shape it.” (Street, 2001)

Since the late 1980s, the Tanzanian music genre Bongo Flava has grown in size, today even reaching to an emerging international audience. As *bongo* means “brain” and *flava* is slang for “flavor,” the name of the genre hints at two of the most important aspects of the music: to provide insight to everyday Tanzanians on social and political matters and to allow for the expression of that special Tanzanian flavor, most importantly by using the Swahili language.

The political and educational nature of the genre has made Bongo Flava not only popular on the radio, but also cleared the roads for many of its “Founding Fathers” to move from musical messages into the established political arena. Bongo Flava’s influence on society since its emergence in the late 1980s and up until its political peaks in the early 2000s has been a popular topic for scholars.¹ However, despite the many changes since the early 2000s, a small amount of the literature surrounding it deals with contemporary Bongo Flava and the processes which have driven the changes within it.

As researchers before us, we too found the relationship between Bongo Flava and the political engagement among young people fascinating, while at the same time wondering why academic literature seemed to have left the scene during the mid-2000s. We therefore attempted to figure out; *To what extent Bongo Flava functions as a form of social commentary for the youth of present-day Morogoro?* However, as our research developed in the field, we found that Bongo Flava was never a static form of political expression. Instead, we found it to be driven by complex global processes such as commercialization and technological development, which in return has affected the industry of Bongo Flava. Our initial research question on the extent of youth engagement with politics suddenly proved too narrow to grasp the societal changes and negotiations of identity found within Bongo Flava. Since these global and local processes are interlinked and date all the way back to end of *ujamaa* (Tanzanian socialism) we found it wiser to explore these further by combining a historical approach with an analytical framework of neoliberalism.

¹ See: Englert, Stroeken, Reuster-Jahn, Clark, Perullo

Methodology

Many scholars have pointed towards the value of including different methodologies when conducting research in order to get a more comprehensive understanding of the topic at hand (Pearce, 2015). Therefore, rather than planning sequential or binary qualitative-quantitative research, we moved beyond the ‘Q-boxes’ approach formulated by Pearce (2015) and applied varied mixed-methods throughout our research. As our research focus relied more on qualitative methodology, our data collection naturally reflects this approach. This led us to stay open to reject and reformulate our initial assumptions, and thereafter zoom in on our newly found results. Based on the rationale for mixed-methods, this research combined in-depth interviews, focus groups, participant observation, a survey, and secondary data.

Field site

Our main site of research was a medium-sized city called Morogoro, 200 kilometers west of Dar es Salaam. The town hosts a large university called the Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA), as well as plenty of other educational institutions, many shops, restaurants, bars, and public spaces.

Due to Bongo Flava having its roots in Dar es Salaam, most of the existing research has focused on that region of Tanzania (Suriano, 2007; Clark 2012; Perullo 2012), while little information is to be found on the social and political life of Bongo Flava. By moving our research site away from the national center of Bongo Flava, we were able to explore local meanings of Bongo Flava in an urban community setting, thereby shifting our focus from exclusively looking at artists (e.g. Englert, 2008; Clark, 2013, 2014; Reuster-Jahn, 2008, 2014) to considering the role of consumers and the interactions between consumers and producers. As a university city with many young inhabitants, Morogoro provided an active music scene and industry despite its size and location.

Participant Observation

We used observations and, when possible, participant observation, throughout the whole research. This required being attentive to the surroundings and social dynamics of Morogoro. We did (participant) observations around music and party venues, public spaces, a music studio, a secondary school, a university, and the home of an artist. The method enabled us to observe how

Bongo Flava unfolds in society and the social relations surrounding it. The writing of field notes on the events, made sure that we turned our observations into data.

Interviews

Interviews were designed to give us insights into various actors' views and roles within Bongo Flava. As we decided to emphasize the historical dimension in our research, in-depth interviews became important to collect different insights on this. We facilitated six focus group discussions, which consisted of four different groups of secondary school students and two groups of university students. The focus groups allowed us as researchers to take a step back and learn from a less steered conversation, and in that way we obtained a more realistic balance on political emphasis in our research. Lastly, a secondary school debate gave us a better understanding of how students view the positive and negative aspects of Bongo Flava. We used the software program NVivo to analyze our transcription.

Survey

In order to broaden our research and exploring the *extent* of which Bongo Flava's importance to youth, we conducted a questionnaire survey of students in Morogoro Secondary School. We designed the questionnaire to inform us about variables such as age, gender, living situation, socioeconomic background, and interest in Bongo Flava. We also ask their attitudes to some statements about Bongo Flava. After our pilot survey, which counted approximately 20 answers, we reformulated several questions to statements in order to get a more precise estimation of how those variables affected their attitudes towards Bongo Flava and social issues. Targeting our survey to a secondary school was both a result of purposive and convenience sampling and it allowed us a sample of 102 respondents.

Secondary Data

In combination with our primary data, we have used secondary data such as statistics on Morogoro Secondary School and the lyrics of Bongo Flava artists.

Sampling

Because of our initial focus on political engagement, capturing the views of young Tanzanians at a time of emerging political awareness seemed to be a natural fit. It was also an approach that corresponded to an emerging focus on youth and Bongo Flava in the literature (Stroeken, 2003; Ntarangwi, 2010). As our research evolved to concentrate more on social commentary in Bongo Flava, our focus on youth culture was maintained to narrow our research in a way that complemented our initial findings about changes in the Bongo Flava industry.

We used a combination of snowball, purposive, and convenience sampling, leading us to a very broad variety of informants. These informants ranged from people representing the producer side - such as artists, music producers, and employees in a major radio station - to people representing the consumer side - such as secondary school students, university students and DJs. The broad representation is strength for the validity of our data, though our information was mainly provided by male informants, apart from an interview with a female DJ and two focus group interviews with the same four female secondary school students.

Access

Field access was most often managed by our research assistant Denis, who led us to a variety of sites people, otherwise not easily accessible. Denis is a Master student at SUA, specializing in Agricultural Business, while also being a Bongo Flava artist having released an album of his own. He also worked as a translator during our research, and his direction is reflected in our data.

History and Current Debates

Tanzania has undergone two main transformations in the last thirty years. Firstly, it has moved from an economy of state ownership and control to a more market-based economy, and secondly, it has transformed from a constitutional single-party system to an openly competitive multiparty system (Lofchie, 2014). A key figure in the transitional period is former president, Julius Nyerere, who garnered global admiration for his visionary socialist policies, leading Tanzania into a post-independence era. While Nyerere succeeded in unifying the nation, his policies failed to promote economic growth and did not narrow the gap between rich and poor. Ultimately, the

bad economic conditions pushed Tanzania into an economic reform program in 1986, which is considered as the beginning of Tanzania's transition to a market economy (Ibid. 2014).

However, the market liberalizations paved the way for private enterprises to establish themselves in spaces formerly exclusive to the state. In the 1990s, Dar es Salaam saw new radio stations opening that catered to people's wants rather than maintaining the former top-down educational broadcasting approach (Suriano, 2007). New international music was introduced to listeners, with especially Jamaican reggae and U.S. hip-hop gaining popularity. Tanzanian DJs and musicians performed direct translations of English lyrics into Swahili, and eventually moved on to write original content themselves. The simplicity of this new type of music removed former financial and creative obstacles to becoming a musician, as there was no need to own, let alone be able to play, an instrument. All that was required to make music was beats and spoken Swahili, effectively democratizing access to becoming an artist. This new genre of music was referred to as "Bongo Flava." with *bongo* (meaning both Tanzania and "mind") and *flava* (meaning "flavor"). Literally translating to the musical flavor of Tanzania, this name was able to capture how people require a strong mind in order to survive the hardship of life in Dar es Salaam.

Music being reflective interpretations of challenges faced in society is not a novel idea. Scholars such as Kelly Askew (2002), Maria Suriano (2007) and Sean Hilhorst (2009) have argued for music in Africa as a venue where national identity can be deconstructed and reconstructed as a means of negotiating identity. Askew identifies three chief musical genres of Swahili society to demonstrate her point: *ngoma*, *dansi*, and *taarab*. Through dance and music, she argues that the genres constitute forms of cultural expression and where social and political identities can be constructed, contested, reshaped, and manipulated (Askew, 2002). Askew points out those colonial authorities proscribed certain forms of *ngoma*, traditional dances, to counteract their political potential as an organizing force. After the colonial rule, Tanzania was reconstructing its national identity, and culture was taken as a primary tool to create a socialist society founded on egalitarian values.

With Bongo Flava emerging during a time of political and economic transformation, Suriano (2007) and Stroeken (2005) consider Bongo Flava as a vehicle for ideas and a form of cultural expression necessary to understanding Tanzanian urban youth. Issues such as generational and class divide as well as gender issues are put forward in the songs which

represent contradictions experienced by Tanzanian youth. In this way, the music has created a forum allowing youth to critically participate in ideological processes, where resistance and contestation can be exercised (Ntarangwi, 2009). Julius Nyerere's usage of cultural performance serves as an example of embedded ideology. He led a cultural embrace of more traditional values, as colonialism was perceived to have made Tanzanians ashamed of their own culture. In the mid-1970s, there were visible signs in Tanzanian music and dance reinforcing socialist ideas of uniformity, conformity, synchronization, and standardization (Askew, 2002). The musical traditions that followed in Tanzania shaped the Bongo Flava genre as it grew throughout the 1980s and 1990s.

As Bongo Flava moved into the 2000s, though, its popularity had grown to such an extent that politicians began to use artists to gather large crowds for their political rallies. Reuster-Jahn (2008) points out that it blurred the lines of entertainment and politics, as Bongo Flava songs were composed to address political issues related to voting and rallying. Other scholars have conflated the growing popularity of Bongo Flava with increased commercial interests, which have led to an "authenticity crisis" within the academic literature on Bongo Flava. Clark (2013) and Perullo (2011) claim that a liberalized market in Tanzania prioritized profit margins above the social and political commentary seen in early Bongo Flava, effectively marginalizing controversial songs and playing audience-friendly ones instead. To Clark (2013), this should raise a question of authenticity, and she proposes a definitional divorce between hip-hop and Bongo Flava, which is seen by many as having become more of a pop genre. Reuster-Jahn (2014) echoes the point, claiming that since the mid-2000s, love, money, and fame seem to have become prevailing themes in Bongo Flava, while its *flava* and its "message" have proportionally diminished.

Though market liberalizations might have commercialized the strategies in producing Bongo Flava music, there have been recent issues that challenge the assumed loss of social and political commentary. For example, since John Magufuli was elected President in 2015, there has been an increased restriction on freedoms of expression, where alleged "non-constructive" critique is penalized when publicly voiced. In March of 2017, rapper Nay wa Mitego² was arrested and held for a day following the release of a song voicing concern about the diminishing freedom of expression in Tanzania. In the same vein, Nikki Mbishi's politically charged song

² See: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-39404366>

“I’m Sorry JK” was recently accused of leveling non-constructive critique at the current regime. In broad strokes, Mbishi’s song was an apology to the previous president Jakaya Kikwete (JK) for disregarding him as president. Mbishi critiques the current president and his policies, as he is rapping: *“They are no plans they just acting/ Democracy confusion with the police forces/ Most fear to tell them the truth but am not scared/ Banks are bankrupted the debts are overflowing/ The situation is hard even visitors feel sorry for us/”*³

By virtue of apologizing to JK, the song implied that the previous president was to be preferred, which was enough for the song to be banned. Similarly, a music video by Snura called “Chura” was banned. It was deemed inappropriate because of its provocative display of twerking women wearing tight-fitted *kangas*. Though debates of authenticity and increased commercialization have been raised in the academic research concerning Bongo Flava, its music and dancing still has the potential to challenge the established political elite and traditional Tanzanian values.

“Bongo Means Brain”: Personal Definitions and Meaning in Bongo Flava

The historical progression and transformation of Tanzanian society since the 90s is mimicked in Bongo Flava. As such, Bongo Flava appears to have different definitions depending on who is describing it, and scholars have disagreed on which genres Bongo Flava encompasses. Perullo (2007) defined Bongo Flava as, *“... a category of music that encompasses several genres, including rap, R&B, zouk, and ragga* (Perullo, 2007: 187), whereas Clark (2014) defines modern Bongo Flava as a pop music genre mixed with rap and R&B influences, mainly sung in Swahili.

During our research, we found our informants had some contradictory ideas on the definition of Bongo Flava. Some thought that Bongo Flava can be any genre of music, as long as it is in Swahili. In a focus group with girls at the Morogoro Secondary School, some identified Bongo Flava as *“... music sung in Swahili, like hip-hop and R&B and pop.”* When we interviewed Denis, himself a Bongo Flava artist, about what kind of music types Bongo Flava includes, he answered: *“There is all other kind of music, because it just depends on the artist. You know if you do blues and you sing in Swahili and it comes from Tanzania, we call it Bongo Flava.”* Meanwhile, some people think Bongo Flava is not only about Swahili language but also

³ See appendix, “I’m Sorry JK” - Nikki Mbishi

Tanzanian culture generally. A radio presenter we interviewed described Bongo Flava by saying that,

Bongo represents brain... At the same time, Bongo represents Dar es Salaam/Tanzania... It's a flavor from Tanzania. It's a normal music, you've heard somewhere else, but with some things Tanzanian. [...] It's the mixture... When people started to bring the traditional music into the real music. It was R&B but has the Tanzanian traditional music in it. It has some things from the traditionally Tanzanian sounds.

Today, the term Bongo Flava is also sometimes used to specifically refer to the “mainstream” music in Tanzania, a formula including dance tunes and songs about love, money, and fame (Clark 2014). However, the idea that Bongo Flava can be any music genre is generally accepted by many people, as long as it's unique to Tanzania. Famous Morogoro Bongo Flava artist Afande Sele thinks Bongo Flava in Tanzania is unique compared to Uganda and Kenya, saying that, “... *in Tanzania – that's why they call it Bongo Flava – because it uses a lot of brains. It had a lot of rap and a lot of rhymes, compared to Kenya and Uganda there's a lot of rap.*” This view is held by many, portraying the unique ways in which Bongo Flava speaks to many aspects of Tanzanian identity.

For the purposes of this report, we understand the definition of Bongo Flava to vary from person to person, leaving no single definition to separate the genre from other types of music. Rather Bongo Flava's all-encompassing nature seems to be part of the music's appeal. The “umbrella” nature of the genre allows it to be many different things at once, making it open to both commercial and non-commercial interests.

‘Quick Music’: The Growth and Commercialization of the Bongo Flava Industry

One of the main themes that emerged through our research in Morogoro was the concept of *commercialization*. Most of our interviews touched upon a transition where Bongo Flava increasingly shed its social and political commentary in favor of more commercially viable themes, such as love.

The commercial transition of the Bongo Flava is partially enabled and shaped by Tanzania's departure from a socialist era into a market based economy. Historically being used as a vehicle for social and political commentary after Tanzania entered the global market, Bongo

Flava's increased popularity coincided with the market liberalizations in Tanzania. Material ideals are reflected in songs, whereas technological advances led to a music industry increasingly motivated by financial gains. As the DJ of a local radio station in Morogoro puts it: “. . . *that's the problem with the market nowadays. People really want to make money. They don't really think what do I have to do. Just marketing, producing, purchasing and all that. Man it's the flavor nowadays, we just party and all that!*”⁴. This commercial transition becomes readily apparent when people contrast more recent Bongo Flava music to older material. Afande Sele, a Bongo Flava at his career-peak in the mid-2000s, emphasized in one of our interviews how,

The most influential artists are the old, legendary, artists [...] – because, the messages they used to write before was about the people. In Bongo Flava we correlate everything in society. We represent the society. One example is the song “My Relatives”- it's speaking to the government, telling them that there are things that needs to be changed. The new music today is just quick music, it's just about getting played. The music that was produced earlier was not about money.⁵

This divide between new and old Bongo Flava is echoed in our interviews with artists, DJs, university students, and music experts. Even the survey we conducted at a secondary school, a total of 75 percent of the students agreed or slightly agreed with the statement that “*Bongo Flava has become less about social issues and more about getting rich.*” This development in appears to be co-created by producers and consumers of Bongo Flava. A manager at one of the biggest clubs in Morogoro pointed out that his clientele is more interested in entertainment than sharing messages. The venue had big screens, showing Bongo Flava music videos that displayed unprecedented material wealth with artists surrounded by expensive clothing, cars and houses seem to underline the commercial direction within Bongo Flava.⁶

Our informants identified three main reasons as to why Bongo Flava has become more commercial: *technology*, *corporate power* and *popular interest*. With the introduction of the internet, streaming services, and flash drives, the production and dissemination of Bongo Flava has become easier, quicker, and more widespread. This is evidenced by the growing number of production studios Morogoro. A local producer told us how the number of music producers has gone from almost none to ten in the last 15 years, and that almost all are self-taught through free and easily accessible online courses⁷. Some of our informants related the increased music production to lower requirements for lyrical and musical quality, rather favoring high-quality

⁴ See Appendix, Quote 1

⁵ See Appendix, Quote 2

⁶ From fieldnotes at the Motown Nightclub in Morogoro

⁷ Interview with Chane, Music Producer

production and promotion which were inherently easier creative processes. One DJ stated that, “. . . before, when artists released a new song it could take even four months to produce one song. Nowadays it’s a new song every week which has no meaning and no message.”⁸ In the same vein, a radio host observed how, “Nowadays artists are not kind of serious about the music, because it’s easy to do it, you know? I don’t have a talent maybe, but I can do it. It’s kind of easy to do it. It doesn’t have life, because it has no like big contents. It has the melody, it has the dancing style over there. That’s all.”⁹

A consequence of streaming services and poor protection of intellectual property in Tanzania is that artists cannot rely on album sales alone to generate revenue, making radio air-time and sponsorships key marketing tools and sources of income for artists. This allocates power to corporations in determining who makes it into the mainstream, as radio stations and producers can single out particular artists for sponsorships and promotion, while charging high fees for others (Kahindi 2015). Making it into the mainstream can be very profitable, however, and has increased the number of people aspiring to become Bongo Flava artists, effectively contributing towards the commercialization process of Bongo Flava. One volunteer at the Morogoro Youth Talent (MYT), a local youth organization, stated: “It’s hard because in Tanzania there is a lot of media like [the radio station] CloudsFM who want to play you, but the problem is that they also want to create you, any way they like. This is a big problem, people want to be who they like, perhaps emulate, but not be created.”¹⁰ This supports Clark’s findings on her Bongo Flava research and her argument that a handful of big media outlets are controlling the market and promoting artists fitting certain commercial formula. According to her, this “. . . effectively stifles creativity while blocking the market from artists that do not adhere to the formula (Clark, 2014: 1117).”

Actors in the music industry seem hesitant to promote politically- and socially-sensitive music, as it is neither viable with the mainstream audience nor advisable with the current government enforcing restrictions on freedoms of expression. When asked about the importance of the music’s content, one producer said that, “... as long as the message is good that’s alright, but you also consider the melody and the reason of the songs, but I cannot allow someone with a

⁸ See Appendix, Quote 3

⁹ See Appendix, Quote 4

¹⁰ See Appendix, Quote 5

controversial message to record, because it won't be played. So I consider the lyrics too."¹¹ In a sense, the government restrictions and market strategies have become established criteria at the production studio, molding and dictating the behavior of aspiring artists.

In addition to technology and corporate powers interfering with musical content in Bongo Flava, our informants spoke indicated that there simply was not an audience for music loaded with social commentary. One informant stated that, *"... now it is more about entertainment than sending a message – because life is hard, and everyone needs entertainment and needs to be happy, and people have had some lessons already so they know – you don't need to tell them again"*¹² Some expressed the view that music should be form of a simple pleasure, as Tanzanians can get information about current issues through other channels. As Denis puts it: *"My comment is, everything has its time. There is this time for everything. At that time people really needed awareness, you know, compared to this time. [...] So I think also artists consider what the listeners want. Because you cannot stand right now and sing a song about HIV, because people now have the awareness already. They know HIV and HIV is not a big issue."*¹³ In other words, music seems to play a less important role in providing political or social commentary in today's Tanzania.

Taken as a whole, our data suggests that the nature of Bongo Flava music has changed and that the most popular music in Tanzania today inhabits less controversial messaging. This change is not intrinsically negative, and does not imply that there is no music on social and political issues anymore, but that the scope of Bongo Flava has become more diverse. An interesting aspect to investigate further is how young people's aspirations and identities are being affected by this change, and the subsequent implications this has on Tanzanian society, which will be discussed in the following sections.

"The Tanzanian Dream": Aspirations and Identity in Bongo Flava

Market liberalization and privatization has led to a process of commercialization and, with it, disentangled the idea of a unified identity in Tanzania. Young people in particular reproduce new emerging forms of expression and adapts to changes easily. The youth's

¹¹ See Appendix, Quote 6

¹² See Appendix, Quote 8

¹³ See Appendix, Quote 9

perception of Bongo Flava reflects the increasing commercial trends in Tanzanian society. A crucial focus of our analysis is therefore to unveil the patterns behind the phenomenon of commercialization and to see the extent to which it affects youth aspirations and identity formation. As Reuster-Jahn puts it: “*The future will show whether political expression in Tanzanian popular music will follow the commercial trends as found in Kenya, or whether it will develop other lines.* (2008: 67).”, and Clark describes how, “... *the new Bongo Flava culture takes consumers towards a new hybrid culture.* (2013: 8).” Here, we primarily investigate the consumers’ perspective, whereas the ones of the producers are taken into account as a way of analyzing the content and presentation of the music

During our in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, young people expressed different forms of aspiration, from global aspirations (international recognition) to economic aspirations (employment) to social aspirations (shaping one's own identity). Commercialization leads to the transformation of aspirations among youth and the uprooting of traditional identity structures. In a way, the reinvention of identity can be seen as a reflection of commercialization, where Bongo Flava has an impact on how traditional and new values within Tanzanian society are perceived and lived. Currently, Bongo Flava music videos portray a life of the rich and famous, admired by the audience. By that, the music videos reflect the imagination that everyone can attain a ‘fake life’, financial success, status, fame, and entrepreneurship of the self. For instance, in superstar Bongo Flava artist Diamond Platnumz’s music video for his hit song “Marry You” (ft. Ne-Yo), images of cars and houses are intercut with images of attractive women and Diamond and his friends rapping towards the camera¹⁴. The lyrics are simple and catchy, only involving love messages, as Diamond sings: “... *I see the ever very air I breathe, I see the sun girl how you shine on me, I am complete because of only you ...*”¹⁵ In this way, it is implied that everyone can reach the “Tanzanian Dream,” and that that dream necessarily involves women, fame, and material wealth.

Speaking to MYT, one volunteer said that, “... *most people, they do not have a social conscious and they do not deal with it because we have an industry. They are talking about stuff like... fake life. Money, women, status.*”¹⁶ This theme was repeated throughout the interview and aligned with that of many other informants. However, when focusing on the informants’

¹⁴ Marry You (ft. Ne-Yo): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QdOaBtUvH80>

¹⁵ See Appendix, Marry You - Diamond Platnumz feat. Ne-Yo

¹⁶ See Appendix, Quote 10

statements, it became apparent that the young generation is aware of the values discourse in Tanzanian society. It did not seem to have much influence on the lifestyle or abusive language that some Bongo Flava artists like Vanessa Mdee or Nay wa Mitego portray. This was especially expressed by a female DJ from Morogoro and female students, who would not imitate the revealing clothing style of these artists because it conflicts with their cultural and moral values.

Despite female informants rejecting the ‘provocative’ style of female Bongo Flava artists, they looked up to them for other forms of inspiration and for pushing boundaries for women’s roles in Tanzanian society. Our survey findings also established a slightly statistically significant relationship between being female and the belief that young women can become more independent through Bongo Flava.¹⁷ This relationship underscores power relations and moral issues in the consumption and production of Bongo Flava music, as well as the greater importance of positive female role models in the lives of young women rather than young men. When Lady Jaydee in her hit song “Ndi Ndi Ndi”, sings about leaving her boyfriend, she is breaking with cultural norms. During the first focus group discussion at Morogoro Secondary School, the female students expressed admiration of the song, one student. When Lady Jaydee in her hit song “Ndi Ndi Ndi”, sings about leaving her boyfriend, she is breaking with cultural norms. During the first focus group discussion at Morogoro Secondary School, the female students expressed admiration of the song, one student explained why: “... *it is a song you know, you don’t have to depend on man. (..) so you have to stand up for yourself. And say that you can live your life and I can live mine. You can only depend on myself, you are not my guard, you are not my father. So I can do it on my own. Get out and I can move on with my life! So it is encouraging.*”¹⁸

During the second focus group discussion with the same girls, we asked them to write a short essay on the aspects of Bongo Flava they consider most relevant to themselves. Most students referred to the aspect of increased internationalization among Bongo Flava and their national pride resulting from this. They mentioned the cooperation of Diamond with the U.S. singer Ne-Yo in the song “Marry You”, which has contributed to Bongo Flava’s degree of fame; in Nigeria, South Africa and the United States of America. Though in reality, Bongo Flava is rarely known on an international level¹⁹. Apart from Diamond, there is no internationally known

¹⁷ See Appendix, Background Information About Morogoro Secondary School

¹⁸ See Appendix, Quote 11

¹⁹ See Appendix Quote 11

Bongo Flava artist; and those artists performing in the United States attract mostly an East African audience (Clark 2013: 8, 19).

The exaggeration of Bongo Flava as being “internationalized” might be an expression of national pride, indicated by most of our informants. Instead of the increasing amount of “non-meaningful” messages within Bongo Flava lyrics, some informants prefer songs that represent Tanzanian identity, as one student from SUA university expressed during a focus group discussion:

We also can announce good things about our country. You know, when an artist goes outside our country, they say good things about it. We can use different things as representations of Tanzania in our national identity – for example our flag, or pictures of our many elephants or rhinos. Normally, when someone represents Tanzania abroad, we give them these things to announce us.²⁰

The discussion is extended by an opposing opinion claiming that,

... [i]t’s not only about praising Tanzania. As I can say now, love is running the world. Each and everything has to be about ‘don’t leave me baby – what what what.’ There are only a few traditional songs about our beautiful mountains. [...] In YouTube, the views would just be 10.000 but love would be more. The popularity of the song, most of the time... If there are not dancing, it will be difficult for the song to become a hit.²¹

The focus group further discussed the song “Mwana” by Ali Kiba, first arguing that it is exclusively about love. However, when listening to it a second time more diverse opinions developed, saying that it entails a more in-depth meaning about prostitution and AIDS. Our research assistant added to this point by saying that “... *love songs were loved since before. Even the old songs there are songs which are love songs and our parents used to love them...*”²² In this way, it becomes clear that love songs from Bongo Flava are not only appreciated across borders but across generations.

Another aspect mentioned by informants is that Bongo Flava acts as a means of encouragement for young people to overcome the everyday struggles. One student emphasizes the one-hit wonder “Muziki” by Darasa (featuring Ben Pol), which “... *makes [her] maintain [her] courage and strength that no one can stop you from doing what you want to because you are the one holding your own decision.*”²³ The same student understood Lady Jaydee’s song “Siku Hazigandi” to carry the message: “*Don’t be disappointed when people mock you down,*

²⁰ See Appendix, Quote 12

²¹ See Appendix, Quote 13

²² See Appendix, Quote 14

²³ See Appendix, Quote 15

just carry on with your life and keep your faith in God!”²⁴, introducing religion as another way for young girls and boys to overcome everyday struggles. Although Tanzania is a multi-religious country, there is a clear link between religiousness and national unity. Songs about *mungu* (“God”) and songs about political leaders like Nyerere are an expression of national identity. “... *conventionally accepted values in society are neither denied nor challenged, but reaffirmed, even if alternated with new aspects which belong to a certain kind of youth culture* (Suriano, 2007: 215).” Despite its increasing commercialization and aspirations towards an unattainable wealthy lifestyle, Bongo Flava seems to maintain characteristics of Tanzanian culture. Thereby, a contradiction becomes apparent: Bongo Flava leads to a debate on traditional values in Tanzania.

As many informants considered recent Bongo Flava songs as less political than in the past, we had to reevaluate our assumption about a large political dimension to Bongo Flava. An artist embodying the transition, is Professor Jay. He is recognized as one of the “Founding Fathers” of Bongo Flava, and gained fame for politically-loaded lyrics with some of his songs taking up topics such as HIV/AIDS, corruption, and inequality. A radio presenter in Morogoro said of Professor Jay’s early song “Chesma Bongo” that: “... *there is a song called "Chemsha Bongo", bongo is brain. It means activate your brain. So it was all about life, struggle, how to break through life and all that back in the days.*”²⁵ Contrastingly, Clark argues that Professor Jay nowadays is being criticized for talking more about love in his songs and shifting away from, “... *his reputation as a hip hop lyricist and towards pop music* (Clark, 2013: 13).” Nevertheless, when considering Professor Jay’s political activism and him being a *mbungu* (‘member of Parliament’) for the oppositional party of CHADEMA since 2015, the lines between being political and non-political have become blurred. In this way, political activism can take place by presenting own values, which is a form of expressing social aspiration.

However, political activism is not exclusively related to Bongo Flava artists. The survey conducted at the Morogoro Secondary School indicates that the more a student listens to rap and hip-hop in addition to Bongo Flava, the more likely the student believes that “*young people can make real changes to politics by voting.*”(Graph 1.1). It could suggest that individuals listening to rap and hip-hop in addition to Bongo Flava have stronger beliefs about the duty of citizens because of greater political awareness. Furthermore, we find that there is a statistically

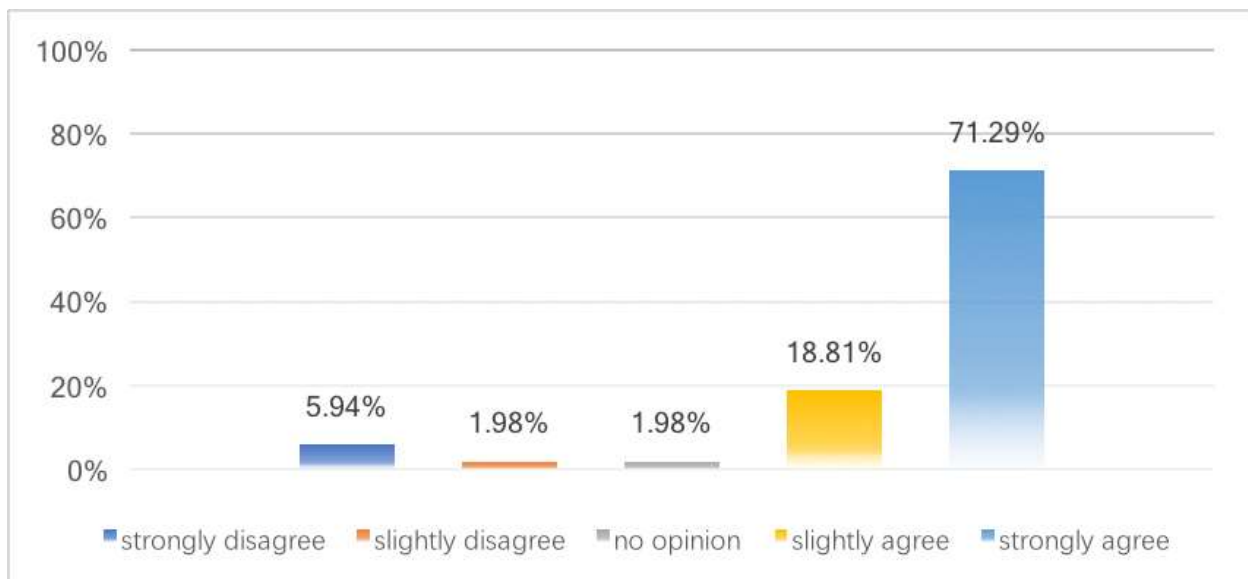
²⁴ See Appendix, Quote 16

²⁵ See Appendix, Quote 17

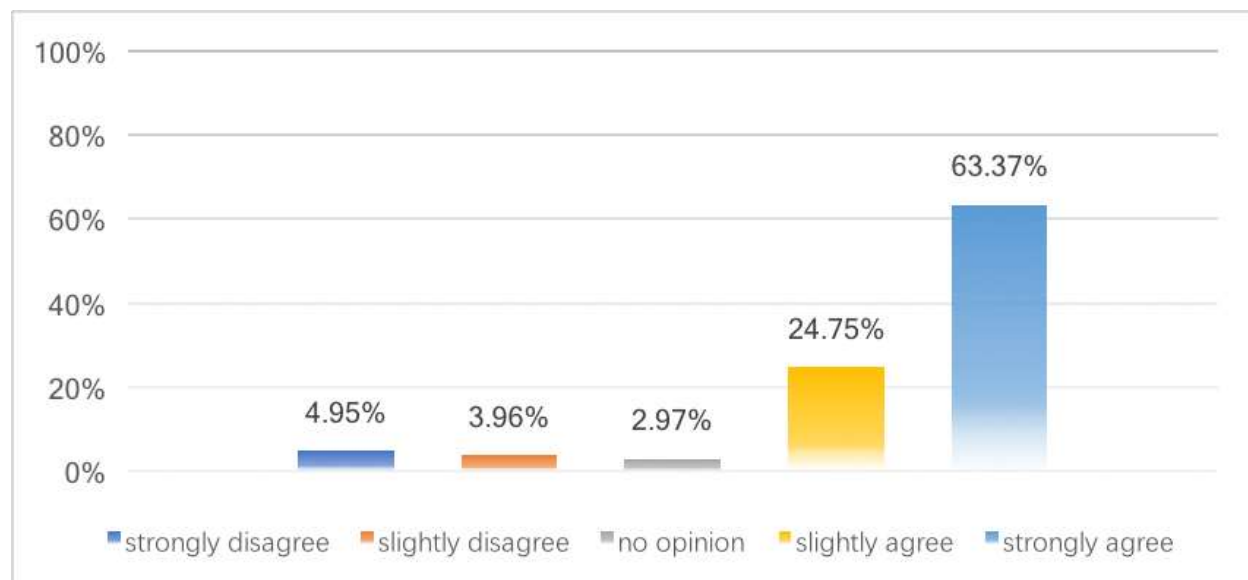
significant relationship between the frequency of people listening to Bongo Flava music and the belief that “*Bongo Flava is an important way for young people to express concerns about Tanzania.*” This could suggest that the more one listens to Bongo Flava, the more likely they are to ascribe importance to it as a vehicle for their messages and concerns. Both statements show that students regard themselves as political human beings and that Bongo Flava is a vehicle for their ideas.

Our research further shows that young Bongo Flava consumers are aware of the low likelihood of becoming a successful Bongo Flava artist, and act with caution. Many informants mention that they would rather follow a career outside music while leaving the possibility open to become engaged in the music business. If they would become successful musicians, many of the informants express an intention to adhere to moral values, as national identity and pride still play a big part in Tanzanian society, though not necessarily being political. Nevertheless, “... [t]he songs on their part contribute to tightening the national cohesion and identity, confirming that the commercial popular culture plays an important role in nation-building (Reuster-Jahn 2008: 67).”

Graph 1. 1 Attitudes to the statement: “By voting, young people can make real changes to politics”



Graph 1. 2 Attitudes to the statement: “Bongo Flava is an important way for young people to express concerns about Tanzania”



The “new” Bongo Flava is marked by the coexistence of aspirations and adaption to an international lifestyle, as well as the maintenance of one’s own culture, necessarily including the expression of own ideas and ideals. Interestingly, one of our younger informants mentioned the recent controversy surrounding the detainment of Bongo Flava artists and banning of songs. This could reflect that young people are aware of “old school” Bongo Flava expressing political critique, but that they do not relate the current happenings in “new” Bongo Flava as a form of social commentary. Because of this widespread debate over “new” versus “old” Bongo Flava, young people are increasingly forced to debate new value-related questions about the direction of their society, as raised by the new music.

‘Give Them What They Want’: Generational Differences and Morality in the Mainstreaming of Bongo Flava

One of the key processes to understand commercialization and aspiration is the process by which music “mainstreams” certain values and ideas. We call this process *mainstreaming*, and understand it to be the ways in which the commercialization of Bongo Flava intersects with the aspirations of Tanzanian youth. The question then is, *Do aspirations and beliefs shape the ways in which young Tanzanians view commercialization in Bongo Flava? Or, conversely, Does*

commercialization shape the ways in which young Tanzanians understand Bongo Flava music and their relationship to it?

It is of course impossible to establish causality, but it is clear from our data that, in many ways, both are true. Informants describe Bongo Flava in ways that are deeply personal and shaped by their beliefs about the direction of the industry. Some of our informants think of that trajectory *positively* and others think of it *negatively*, but the vast majority describe Bongo Flava in ways that mirror other aspects of the society. It is also clear from these responses that the mainstreaming of youth aspirations through commercialization has caused a renewed debate over values and music in Tanzania.

Generational difference, morality, and apathy are a few of the many areas in which the mainstreaming of youth aspiration through Bongo Flava has sparked a debate about values in Tanzanian society. Just as many informants think of Bongo Flava as in decline, many others do not. This is a reflection of people's varied perceptions of how the messaging of the music has changed over time. Many informants both young and old spoke to morality in their reflections on the impact of Bongo Flava, and in particular morality as it is related to the younger generation. In many cases, this exposed generational differences that were informed by people's narratives of "new" and "old" Bongo Flava. For the older generation, Bongo Flava was frequently seen as more political, and their perception of the decline in the social relevance of its messaging was frequently expressed in those terms. One informant – a 51-year-old man with experience researching the impact of Bongo Flava – said that,

. . . the new Bongo Flava artist, they only sing because they want money. But the old wanted to change people's mind. They use music to educate people. If you listen to that music, it is very different from what it is today. Even if you listen to *singeli*, like Professor Jay, it's a little bit of politics in the songs – the songs explain more about social behavior and so and so.²⁶

However, while the terms of this generational debate and the diverging history of Bongo Flava were frequently expressed in relation to politics, this was not the only way in which changes to the music were viewed as negative.

Many informants had very different associations with particular topics based on their individual histories and values, and this often had to do with age. While young people had more positive or

²⁶ See Appendix, Quote 18

neutral associations with the change in Bongo Flava’s messaging, it was not always the case. Nevertheless, they were optimistic, not just about the changes in music but that the future was not predetermined. They seemed to imply that even if one was to grant that these changes were “negative,” that fact did not preclude the messaging from changing once again. Some of our informants expressed the idea that what is important today might not have been what was important yesterday. Similarly, what is important today might not be important in the future. Denis noted on this point that, “*Music will always be there, but issues like malaria and social issues, they come time after time. So I think young artists right now, they have also influenced a lot of other things, but not all the time. Because not all the time people want to hear that. And they want to survive on the market, on the music market.*”²⁷ This conviction that youth affection for social issues was cyclical and could come back, or perhaps never even went away, was similarly expressed by many university students and young people. Many of them thought that the change in messaging was purposeful, and did not necessarily represent the moral decline or decline in character of young people.

These conversations came up many times over in our discussions with young people, but informants over the age of 25 were already less optimistic about the “predetermined” nature of Bongo Flava than their younger counterparts. As Afande Sele stated, “*The young generations is just interested in the business of the music; the money. In rap, the most delicate thing is the message – but nowadays the younger generation don’t [consider] any messages. They just care about the melody – they just rap about things that doesn’t mean anything.*”²⁸ A general perception existed among our older informants that this was also true of the market for Bongo Flava. As a local radio DJ in Morogoro said: “*I release a song today, people will stop listening to my song and listen to a new song.*”²⁹ Similar to this, many informants talked about the decline of young people’s attention span and the success of the single over the album. One marketing manager for the radio station in Morogoro stated on this point that people’s attention for information was so low that it always needed to be framed with respect to its entertainment value, saying that, “*... we came to realize young people need more entertainment. Problems now are based on infotainment – information and entertainment. So now, you can get people. Now, if you just go straight to information or education, people will not react. Even if we do education,*

²⁷ See Appendix, Quote 19

²⁸ See Appendix, Quote 20

²⁹ See Appendix, Quote 21

*we call it edutainment.*³⁰ This implies that these processes were associated with a general decline in the values and messaging of “new” Bongo Flava.

These discussions were especially common in moral terms, not just among older informants but among younger informants as well. Young Tanzanians are in a unique position of living during a time when the Bongo Flava industry is rapidly expanding and diversifying. Therefore, while it was not surprising that the previous generation of Tanzanians had largely negative associations of how this new music was spoiling the youth, it was surprising that some of the most critical respondents on the topic of morality were young girls. A young woman from the Morogoro Secondary School spoke to the importance of education over messages like love from Bongo Flava by saying that,

... there are some other things that are more important right now. You know for our age [...] it is more important with education, concentrating in relations is bad because you miss two things, you can't have them both you know, one will have to be up and the other have to be down. And you can see us girls we are thinking about a lot of things, and we should not sit and think about love when [we] should be studying.³¹

Another informant – a volunteer from the Morogoro Youth Talent – identified a possible reason for this reaction, stating that, “[I]t is very hard for a girl to come there, because back home if they are like “I was at Morogoro Youth Talent” the parents will disapprove. It will be a bad thing to her family. Many girls do anyway, but they do fear. Many Tanzanian girls, they have an inferiority complex, that “I am a woman, I cannot sing hip-hop.”³² These young women might be more critical of the music as a result of the influence of traditional and conservative Tanzanian beliefs regarding women in music. While young women at the school were critical of Bongo Flava, many did admire it as a musical form and acknowledged positive aspects to the music. It was also very clear that the reasons for their critical takes were first and foremost a reflection of their values as socially-conscious and self-aware young adults trying to assert their independence. Their criticisms seemed to be only secondarily about Bongo Flava itself and its messaging.

³⁰ See Appendix, Quote 22

³¹ See Appendix, Quote 23

³² See Appendix, Quote 24



Debate on Bongo Flava at a Secondary School in Morogoro, 7.03.2017

In this way, gender is one of the crucial ways in which morality shows itself in the debate surrounding Bongo Flava. But, while the views expressed by many of our young, female respondents were critical, it was a view expressed by both boys *and* girls. In a debate at the Morogoro Secondary School over the proposition that “*Bongo Flava deals with topics and issues that are relevant to you,*” both male and female students (aged 17 to 23) made arguments for and against Bongo Flava. On the opposition side, students argued that consumption of Bongo Flava promotes bad social behavior and self-interest; they further expressed the idea that it can lead to “comfort” and “bad social realities.” The proposition side countered by making the argument that young people have agency and can make their own choices, while also making the argument that Bongo Flava can be educational (even about love) and expose young people to bad social realities they might otherwise not encounter. Even as an exercise, the debate made clear the dueling perspectives on Bongo Flava music within young people.

Because of the influence of their parents and the media, the commercialization of Bongo Flava reinforces the history of “old” versus “new”. A lot of this understanding is shaped by historical memory and narratives surrounding the Bongo Flava industry, but it is also shaped by stories told by their parents’ generation. Denis observes about his father that, “. . . *my Dad, he has been listening a bit to Bongo Flava, but just a bit. [...] He really loves music, but just not these new*

*kinds of songs, this new Bongo Flava music.*³³ In this way, Denis' understanding that the music of his generation of Bongo Flava has been labelled as "commercial" is formed by the beliefs of a previous generation. This showed that while the morality of many young Tanzanians was being forged in the fires of modern Bongo Flava, their morality was always framed by deference to their parents and respect for authority, an acknowledgment that their new morality was not counter to that of their parents but simply more inclusive.

As a result of this very conscious pushback against the association between success and the idea of *mainstream*, we can observe that morality is a key issue through which people negotiate values in society. This is especially reflected in differences between "young" and "old" and "old" and "new," as well as with respect to gender. While not all informants were willing to talk about morality, they were willing to talk about it when prompted. Many of the young people in support of this trend in Bongo Flava music expressed respect for their parents' generation, but their morality seemed to be more inclusive. For them, morality could be something that bridged the gap between deference to the authority figures in their lives and the desire to pursue money and status as a retreat from the conditions of 'life as normal' in Tanzania.

Further Discussion

Our research on the role of Bongo Flava in the lives of young Tanzanians in Morogoro fits into many different strands of literature. These include the production of culture, the internationalization of music, the growth of Tanzania, the role of Bongo Flava in Tanzanian life, and Bongo Flava as a form of social and political critique. While all of these literatures are relevant, some are more appropriate for our research than others given our focus.

Our data suggests that Bongo Flava serves an important role for social critique, but that this critique is lacking in many of the political overtones of its past. The influence of politics is reflected in the works of scholars such as Englert (2008) and Reuster-Jahn (2008), but this is not given strong support by our research. Other scholars, such as Clark (2014), support our work by reflecting on this commercialization of the Bongo Flava industry and the effect of "mainstreaming" on the messaging of the music. Clark makes the point that Bongo Flava has evolved into a sort of "pop music," thereby lacking in refinement or complexity and not worthy of being taken seriously (Clark, 2014: 6). Our research supports the former assertion, but we

³³ See Appendix, Quote 25

would question the latter one. The optimism of our informants speaks to the potential of Bongo Flava to mean many different things to many different people, and the repercussions of the genre as an “umbrella” form of national identity means that it should always be taken seriously.

Unfortunately, while neoliberalism and globalization in the post-socialist period serve as the foundation for our critique of commercialization, a lack of secondary data on the Bongo Flava industry itself makes the relationship hard to clarify. Scholars like Hilhorst (2011) have made the connection between capitalist transition and social critique, which our data hints at but does not explicitly suggest. Therefore, while it is impossible to make a direct line between the liberalization of Tanzania in the late-1980s and early-1990s and the emergence of Bongo Flava in its current “mainstream” form, the links are indirectly suggested by our research. Furthermore, many informants’ responses fit into the same timeline, as does much of the literature on the liberalization of Tanzania. If we follow our informants’ responses, then changes in the Bongo Flava industry, as suggested by scholars like Clark (2013) and Perullo (2011), could indeed be the result of liberalization. The influence of market liberalization in an international context further suggests that neoliberal processes are reifying themselves in regional markets such as Tanzania (Stroeken, 2005).

Since the definitions of Bongo Flava vary so widely – both in the literature and in our responses – Bongo Flava in its modern form needs to have a more inclusive definition. A number of responses touched on the fact that Bongo Flava is uniquely Tanzanian, but that other nations in Africa have started to reproduce their own regional variations of the genre. Clark (2012) suggests that similar processes are underway in Ghana. In Kenya, Nyairo and Ogude (2005) make a similar point, identifying Bongo Flava as a part of neoliberal and cultural hegemonic processes, but differently than in Tanzania because of the less explicit connections to Kenyan identity. Nyairo and Ogude find that the industry in Kenya works to undermine creativity and independence of artists, mirroring the political system because of commodification, which we observe in our research as well. Ntarangwi (2010) provides a useful overview of these processes, clarifying the many ways in which music industries in Tanzania are evolving in more “commercial” and “mainstream” directions as negotiated through globalization, a process we observe in the discourses of young people in Tanzania.

Our informants were reticent to make these international connections unless prompted but were more emphatic about expressing identity in national terms. They spoke to the

importance of the Swahili language in Bongo Flava, which allows the genre to assert itself on the international stage. Reuster-Jahn (2014) suggests that this decline in the use of Swahili because of international influences is leading it to appeal to a smaller segment of Tanzanian society. Instead of simply challenging their beliefs and reproducing Western values, this implication gives depth to our research by showing that many Tanzanians are fearing English as a challenge to the Tanzanian nature of their music.

While our research does a lot to address the role of young people in listening to and disseminating messages from Bongo Flava, there are some limitations to its scope that can be addressed through research. Our research does not accurately capture the many ways in which young people use social spaces like social media (Clark, 2014) or clubs and radio stations (Perullo, 2011) to share their critique and inhabit spaces that merge personal and shared experiences. We were also only able to scratch the surface of these many broader debates in the literature, which was part of the analytical framework of our argument but not a focus because of the limited timeframe and peripheral location of our field site.

Limitations

Despite being a group of six researchers working fulltime in the field, having only 10 days in the field affected our research in various ways. One of these ways was not having enough time to build trust with our informants. Since interviews were often conducted the first time we met with the informants, this affected the depth of our data by not allowing us to form strong social connections with them. This was especially important when coming as a group of foreign outsiders. However, we developed a good and trustful relationship with our research assistant, as we spent most of our research time with him. Being a Bongo Flava artist himself, he was very knowledgeable on the music scene in Morogoro, and this led to our research being (to some extent) guided by his directions, connections, and opinions. Throughout this research, we have focused on youth and this is to a wide extent reflected in our data. However, our sample is not representing an equal gender balance and is at some points missing the voice of women, especially on the producer side.

Conclusion

Our research on Bongo Flava shaped our understanding of Tanzanian history and the role of Bongo Flava within it. The ten-day field work in Morogoro allowed us to get an insight into the current Bongo Flava scene and how it is perceived by young people. Nevertheless, a clear transition within Bongo Flava is visible: the change from politically-loaded “old school” Bongo Flava in the 1990s and early 2000s to a diverse and more commercial form of music reflecting the youth of today. In some ways, Bongo Flava can be seen as a microcosm of how the young generation is reacting to socio-economic progress and development in Tanzania. The music industry of Bongo Flava can therefore be seen as a reflection of Tanzania as a market economy, and its messages and expression of youth aspiration as a response to the increasing commercialization. Conversely, these youth voices, as brought out through discourses on values and generational differences in Tanzanian society, highlight the changing nature of Bongo Flava in the modern era.

Further research on Bongo Flava would benefit by looking at the “formalization” of the Bongo Flava industry. A lack of secondary data on the industry has made it difficult to make more concrete linkages between the liberalization of the market in Tanzania and the commercialization of Bongo Flava, which would have bolstered our research. This suggests that while Bongo Flava has primarily been the domain of sociology, anthropology, and cultural studies, that a more explicit look at the economics of Bongo Flava could be an important counterpoint. Furthermore, scholars would do well to re-engage with the literature on Bongo Flava and political engagement (especially among young people), which our data suggests less optimism for today given the commercialization and mainstreaming processes. Finally, scholars should continue to look at the many varied ways in which Bongo Flava music distills and reifies other aspects of Tanzanian culture, as well as the links between Bongo Flava and other aspects of Tanzanian society. As Afande Sele puts it in his song “Darubini Kali”:² “Mimi ni Msanii, kioo cha jamii”, meaning in Swahili “*I am an artist, a mirror of society.*”

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Appendices

Table of Interviews

Name	Occupation	Date
Philip	Volunteer at Morogoro Youth Talent	27.02.2017
Chane	Music Producer	28.07.2017
Christopher	Secondary School Student	28.07.2017
Ashur	Restaurant Manager	01.03.2017
Babu	Radio Station Manager	01.03.2017
Issa	Artist in Morogoro	02.03.2017
Afande Sele	Nationally-Famous Artist	04.03.2017
Kifenda	DJ, Local Radio Station	04.03.2017
Amani	DJ, Local Radio Station	04.03.2017
Jahi	Mountain Guide, Researcher	07.03.2017
Daniel and John	Volunteers at Morogoro Youth Talent	09.03.2017
Shani	Female DJ	9.03.2017
Denis	Student at SUA	10.03.2017

Other Data Collection

Type	Informants	Place	Date
Focus Group (1)	Five Female Students	Secondary School	01.03.2017
Participant Observation	Conversation with Staff	Motown Nightclub	02.03.2017
Focus Group (2)	Five Female Students	Secondary School	03.03.2017

Focus Group (3)	Three Male Students	Secondary School	03.03.2017
Focus Group (4)	Five Male Students	Khionda	04.03.2017
Participant Observation	DJ, General Audience	Samaki Samaki Nightclub	04.03.2017
Focus Group (5)	Five male student	Sokoine University of Agriculture	06.03.2017
Debate	Two secondary school classes	Secondary school	07.03.2017

Interview Transcripts

Quote 1 - Amani – 4.03.2017

M: What do you say what happens to those if someone still produces like sit down and think songs, they spend three days and do songs that are more like the Old School Bongo Flava.

A: It's not up to market that much. [...] Instead of doing good music, people wanna do business. So this is good music, right? We sit down and write, this is good music, right? But it is not up to business what is good music. So there is two different stuff. We have so many popular musicians, but we have good music and we have popular music. So there is good music and popular music. Popular music doesn't need to be good, cause sometimes people doesn't know that this is good music.

This are the Flavours, they know the artists. What I said earlier Diamond Platnumz. Diamond releases a new song. I'm sure it's gonna be good without even heard it. I'm sure it's gonna be good. So people like "Have you heard that Diamond Platnumz has a new song?" They just take their time and listen to what he says instead of judging it knowing that they can't do that because it's Diamond. His song is going to be top.

M: So he is mainly like a brand and a guarantee.

A: Yeah, that's the cause that other artists doesn't get the exposure so much. Because people wanna know Diamond. What does Diamond do. So if you release a song people will compare it to Diamond. If you don't reach to Diamond, then you don't know how to sing, because you don't know how to sing. You are not like Diamond. So *that's the problem with the market nowadays. People really want to make money. They don't really think what do I have to do. Just marketing, producing, purchasing and all that.* Man It's the flavour nowadays, we just party and all that. But there are a few artists that they sit down and write.

Quote 2 - Afande Sele – 4.03.2017

N: Do you think Bongo Flava has a direct influence on politics in Tanzania? Or is its power to create new ideas and attitudes?

A: It has a lot of influence – but, *the most influential artists on politics are the old, legendary, artists*; like Professor Jay, Afande, Zugu – *because, the messages they used to write before was about the people*. The music today is just quick music, it’s just about getting played. The music that was produced earlier was not about money.

S: You use the word “the message” – could you clarify what you mean about the message of the music?

A: The message that he was writing is not just something that was new and that he created – it’s things that are happening in society. You might have been told by politicians and leaders that malaria exists and all, but they don’t give it that much attention, compared to Bongo Flava you tell them what it’s really about.

S: So, is it about teaching people about how to live a better life, or is it about talking about what the government is doing? Criticizing what the government is doing, or criticizing what the West is doing for example?

A: All of them, all of them. Sometimes we teach the people how to live, or sometimes we criticize the government. *In Bongo Flava we correlate everything in society. We represent the society. One example is the song “My Relatives” - it’s speaking to the government, telling them that there are things that needs to be changed.* He also talked about mining, and criticizing it.

S: What reaction do you have on music that is critical to the government? Do they accept it? Do they respond?

A: He says that he was once arrested, for four days, but they didn’t file a case – but they basically said that he had an influence on the people and that what he wanted to mobilize the opposition for a protest, and this was something they were threatened by. He talked to both the regional commissioner for Morogoro, and the vice president for Tanzania, and they told him that they didn’t have problems with what he was doing – he just shouldn’t do it too much. It’s the new government, and if they have corruption they will be fighting against it and he doesn’t need to point out these early flaws in society.

Quote 3 – Kifenda - 4.03.2017

N: Do you think that even if music lacks that political edge, it can still be critical and still be important and that the younger generation perhaps are a bit less interested in politics because the music has become less critical?

A: The young generations is just interested in the business of the music; the money. In rap, the most delicate thing is the message – but nowadays the younger generation don’t considerate any

messages. They just care about the melody – they just rap about things that doesn't mean anything.

K: Speaking as a DJ - *before, when artists released a new song it could take even four months to produce one song. It would take time because they had to prepare the message they wanted to give to the people. Nowadays it's a new song every week which has no meaning and no message.*

Quote 4 – Amani – 4.03.2017

M: Do you think it is mainly because there are so many artists now and it is easy to produce, that it lives for such a short period of time like one week gone OR do you think that back in the day instead of them being few artists and they could live for six months that the texts were more relevant.

A: Of course so many artists that is one of the reasons, but contents of the song. Nowadays ask somebody like if you wanna do a good song sing about love or some simple stuff, you know. Back in the days if you gonna write a song, you take your time, maybe two, three, four days to write a song. But today I can just go to the studio right now and I can write a song while I'm in the studio, then I can sing and I can finish for one day recording and design. You see that? Being serious about the game. *Nowadays artists are not kind of serious about the music, because it's easy to do it, you know? I don't have a talent maybe, but I can do it. It's kind of easy to do it. It doesn't have life, because it has no like big contents. It's conscious. You got none of those. It has the melody, it has the dancing style over there. That's all.* But back in the days people thought about what am I gonna write about. Okay, let's [?] and go to sleep. Tomorrow I can gonna write go to sleep. The coming day you go to the studio now "hey producer man I got my work. We have like two weeks to produce a single song, right? Okay, let's work on it." Erase it, record it again. Nowadays you record it a day, two days, done. That's why it's short lives. But at the same time we have so many musicians, so many songs.

Quote 5 – Daniel – 9.03.2017

N: How big is Bongo Flava in Tanzania?

I: Is it big business?

D: It is very, very big business. But, the problem is underground – the artists who are underground, from the streets, have a very difficult way. To reach the mainstream and become a mainstream artist is very hard.

I: In what ways is it hard?

D: *It's hard because in Tanzania there is a lot of media like [the radio station] CloudsFM who want to play you, but the problem is that they also want to create you, any way they like. This is a big problem, people want to be who they like, perhaps emulate, but not be created.*

Quote 6 – Chane – 28.07.2017

I: What do you like the most about Bongo Flava? What's the best part about Bongo Flava?

C: He says he likes different things – but basically all good music. As long as it's good music it's good.

I: So, do you care what the music is about, or is it just good rhythm and good sound and it's ok?

C: He's basically saying that as long as the message is good that's alright, but you also consider the melody and the reason of the songs, but he cannot allow someone with a controversial message to record, because it won't be played. So he considers the lyrics too.

I: Is a lot of Bongo Flava today controversial? Or is it a mix?

V: There is a problem – because he cannot produce the music that's controversial because it will not be played.

Cam: Does it happen a lot that you have to reject someone in the studio because they have too controversial music?

C: Yes.

I: What would that be about? Politics, or other sensitive topics that people just don't want to know about?

C: It is politics.

Cam: What kind of political messages do they have in the music?

C: Things about the president.

Quote 7 – Denis – 10.03.2017

N: Do you think that difficulty in say album sales actually affects the industry in that sense that a few people rise to the top and have a lot of the power like Diamond or Ali Kiba and that there is a lot of young or under-presented musicians who are unable to break through?

D: No, *I think the problem is the structure of the music under professional music labels. Because you might find these artists who are roaming around looking for studios to record. They have very nice talents, big talents, but there is no this big record labels to hold this guys hands. And because the record label has to record for artists, for the video and promote his music and take care of the artists' well-being while they are working with him. It should be a two-way, but all*

the burden lies to the artist in Tanzania. Unless you make it, unless you are lucky and find a record label and if you find it will it be a real record label or just someone who wants to exploit you.

N: How do you see your future with music especially with respect to Bongo Flava and Rap and Hip-Hop?

F: Because you once mentioned that you first want to complete university and then it is open...

D: I see myself in the Bongo Flava music not as an artist only, but I see myself as a figure in a industry that has influence in different perspectives, because I ... I see myself making changes in Bongo Flava in a way that I wanna do music in a very professional way. In the future I want people to take it as a work. Artists should be serious when they do their music.

N: Whether it's about love or it's about politics or whether it's about ...

D: Yeah, they shouldn't just take things for granted. From the writing to the way they present themselves to the society. Because you know it's not only the music. Even yourself as a person you have influence. You don't need to do music to influence people. Even you have [?] to the society, what you do brings changes to the society. Maybe you sing about a very good education song, but yourself you live in a way that is very opposite to what you are singing, that's the problem. I'll have some influence through what I'm planning to do, because if I manage to start that studio and record label maybe later I'll have some influence to the artists. Not as an artist only, but as a professional business man. I'll have them make their music as work and have an honest living from the music.

N: You said there is changes that need to be made. What are some of the most important changes that need to be made in the Bongo Flava in the music industry in Tanzania in your opinion?

D: I think first of all, Bongo Flava music is very modest from the production. Producers are trying to cope with the Western changes, so that's to change. What I'll like to change is that they should not imitate from the Western music. They should stick to our nature, to our own kind or music, to our origin. So that to have a difference between our music and other music, so that you [?] in the market. And big changes need to be made to artists. Artists they should do their work more professional.

Quote 8 – Chane – 28.07.2017

I: Is Bongo Flava still about social issues, or is it more about women, money and so on, now?

C: *Now it is more about entertainment than sending a message – because life is hard, and everyone needs entertainment and needs to be happy, and people have had some lessons already so they know – you don't need to tell them again.* Compared to before, it is now more for entertainment.

Cam: Was it more political than today when you did music in the studio?

C: It depends on the season. During the election time, it was a lot of politics – but after that people go back to the entertainment music.

Quote 9 – Denis – 10.03.2017

F: What do you think about if I suppose that the Old School Bongo Flava came up because people have been angry and they wanted to sing about it so that other people got to know about it. And nowadays those who sing about non-political issues more jumped into the business or the Bongo Flava scene, because they knew oh it is popular among youth and we can make profit out of it. Or do you think that they still do it because they love the music so much? We talked about it that Diamond was promoting CCM campaigns and that some other artists are connected to Vodacom and so on and that this is a form to earn a living. What do you think about it? That was a long question, sorry.

D: That was a long question yeah. You are saying that the old Bongo Flava artists were much angry, they had this hunger to give people awareness they didn't have. *My comment is, in everything everything has its time. There is this time for everything. At that time people really needed awareness, you know, compared to this time. I think sometimes some artists just do other kind of music, because they know that this things are not relevant right now. But you might find times, election time, young artists, every artist, they write about politics, about giving people motivation to go to vote, telling people to make changes, telling people to vote. Because of his ideas, not because of who he is or what he gives people, if he bribes or what. So I think also artists consider what the listeners want. Because you cannot stand right now and sing a song about HIV, because people now have the awareness already. They know HIV and HIV is not a big issue.* Now it's corruption. You know the artists also locks into what is happening currently. Music will always be there, but issues like malaria and social issues, they come time after time. So I think young artists right now, they have also influence to a lot of other things, but not all the time. Because not all the time people want to hear that. And they want to survive on the market, on the music market. And there are Tanzanians who also listen to Western music, so they also need to give them the flavors from there. That's where the coping styles begin. That's where you find some Tanzanian artists start to imitate the Western music. So if the Western music talks about businesses and money and women, now they copy and bring it hear, because they want to go with their fans, they don't wanna lose their fans.

Quote 10 – Daniel – 9.03.2017

I: Do you focus on social issues or is it mostly about the students themselves?

J: Mostly about the students, but about the social issues too. Hip-hop, it can teach the students how to speak the truth, that's how we are doing.

I: Do you think it is hard today to be an artist singing about social issues?

D: Yes, that is a very big problem. *Because most people, they do not have a social conscious and they do not deal with it because we have an industry. They are talking about stuff like... fake life. Money, women, status.* But the people, the ones coming from Morogoro, they are often coming from the slums. They are talking like they live in Atlanta, but they do not have a social conscious, it is a fake life.

N: Do you find that a lot of people want to leave Morogoro and go to, say, Dar es Salaam to pursue this musical dream.

J: Yeah, because in Dar es Salaam it is a big industry. There is a big industry there, and most believe that when they go there they can make their dreams come true.

Quote 11 - Focus Group (1) Morogoro Secondary School - 1.03.2017

G: They are the good songs and the songs that can inspire one. For example, the song of Lady Jay Dee ‘Ndi Ndi Ndi’, (girls agree and Glory starts singing with the girls...). It is the best song which encourage someone you know! You just have to go for it.

H: ... *it is a song you know, you don't have to depend on man. (girls: yeah...) You know, he is beating you, he is taking you for the advantage and then you are just sitting and saying 'okay I love you, I love you', when you are being beaten up all day and you are saying why? Does he love you back? NO. so you have to stand up for yourself. And say that you can live your life and I can live mine. You can only depend on myself, you are not my guard, you are not my father (girls: yeah!). so I can do it on my own. Get out and I can move on with my life! So it is encouraging. Especially for us girls, that have a very high capacity of thinking, that you don't have to depend on a man, we have to work on our own and we can manage. (girls: yeah!)*

Quote 12 & 13 – Focus group (5) SUA – 6.03.2017

M: “Do you think that it’s an accurate observation – that when music goes across borders it can improve a country’s reputation?”

S: “Yes”

B: “*We also can announce good things about our country. You know, when an artist goes outside our country, they say good things about it. We can use different things as representations of Tanzania in our national identity – for example our flag, or pictures of our many elephants or rhinos. Normally, when someone represents Tanzania abroad, we give them these things to announce us.*”

[Some more, but not novel points are made on the same matter.]

M: “What are the Bongo Flava songs usually about?”

B: “Normally, it’s just about love. Often, it’s about whatever songs are about in other countries. Now I’m not a musician myself, but I like it when music is about praising the country. I would like to encourage many tourists to come to Tanzania.”

M: “So music should be about praising Tanzania?”

O: “It’s not only about praising Tanzania. As I can say now, love is running the world. Each and everything has to be about “don’t leave me baby – what what what.” There are only a few traditional songs about our beautiful mountains. But not Bongo Flava. They can tell the whole relationship story, after going through a break-up, and come up with an idea to sing about life in general.”

M: “Do you think they could have addressed something else than love in their songs?”

O: “Yeah, they could. But it won’t hit. *In YouTube, the views would just be 10.000 but love would be more. The popularity of the song, most of the time... if there are not dancing, it will be difficult for the song to become a hit.* If at a club, when a song comes on, and everyone is just sitting down, it’s not going to be a hit. It has to have a beat to make people jump and dance.”

Quote 14 – Denis – 10.03.2017

F: In accordance to what did the Bongo Flava content of the songs change? How did the Tanzanian society change that they rather hear now more popish love songs opposed to Rap/ Hip-Hop songs with critique.

D: I get you point, but *the love songs where loved since before. Even the old songs there are songs which are love songs and our parents used to love them.* Yeah, it has been there before. I think love songs and love themes have been there before and... You know, I don't think it's bad if someone sings about love, because love is one of the things in life and people love each other and they get hurt from love. So what I think it’s just how you present your messages, because there are love songs which from the beginning to the end they sing about love, but you can sit with your parents and listen to a song very comfortable, but there are some other songs which they sing about love and you cannot even sit with your brother and listen. Also there are songs which educate you, but they use this language, the language you cannot also listen to your parents, I could say. Nay wa Mitego, sometimes he criticizes the society, but the language he uses is not ethical, is not you can tell someone to... in Africa we have this word you wear your trouser below the waist, it is a problem. You can tell someone to pull up his trouser in a good way. It’s a nice thing to tell someone, but you can also tell him in a hash way that he might find it offended. So I think it’s just the way they present their messages to the society.

N: So would you say that music in Tanzania has become less moral [Denis strongly agrees with yeah yeah] and if so if the Tanzanian society as a whole has become less moral [Denis disagrees strongly by a definite NO]

D: No, not the society. It's just the music. It's not the music, it's the artists.

Quote 15 & 16 – Focus Group (2) Morogoro Secondary School – 3.03.2017

(1)
Best artist: DARASA

Best song quote from his song that it keeps me up most is "WATCH YOURSELF USE USE UKAJI ON FUSE"

More details about MUZIKA by DARASA
i) It entertains me alot by listening to its beat to the extent that it makes me to make a dance.

ii) It also makes me to maintain my courage and strength that no one can stop you from doing what you want to because you are the one holding your own decision

Reference from the verse "Sia simba, sia chui, sia mamba ngozi yangu inatosta kujigamba"
sitishwi na maneno ya kwenda kwanza ---"

(2) LADY JAY DEE,
SONG: SIKU HARIBANDI

Message: "Don't be disappointed when people mock you down just carry on with your life and keep your faith in God!"

NB Bongo Flava ⇒ are songs sung by in Africa especially in Tanzania which use Kiswahili language; sometimes collaboration with musicians from other nation
Ommy Dimpoz, J4 Igili, Vanessa Mdee, Christian Bella-Hern
Parents

Quote 17 – Amani – 4.03.2017

F: What did they sing about? What were the topics. You mentioned Diamond and that other artists mostly sing about love.

A: Back in the days it was about life hassle, no love but it was about life hassle. We believe Hip-Hop is all about hassle, you know streets and all those. So back in the days they used, Hip-Hop was all about hassle, hassle man. *There is a song called "Chemchabongo", bongo is brain. It means activate your brain. So it was all about life, struggle, how to break through life and all that back in the days.*

F: Do you think that it changed? It was more about hassle in the 1990s and now it is more about love?

A: Yeah, it has changed. Nowadays if you really sing about hassles, I don't think you get a lot of people gonna like this songs. As I said people listen to love a lot nowadays. If you have a song about hassle you gonna sing it in a style that you attract people, you gonna work hard on that song. People wanna listen some soft, some good, some to chill up, some to dance. It means when you sing about hassle man, ok life is hard, but we keep hassling yeah, we don't want to hear hassle, because we always hassle. People want to hear something to dance. Like that.

F: You think that it changed, because people were sick of those songs and wanted something more to relax.

A: You know it's music. Music is for refreshment. If you are talking about hassles, yes we hassle. We want to do something else, we want to hear something else. We gotta forget some stuffs. When we listen to music, we party, we are going to forget some things. You need to forget.

Quote 18 - Jahi – 7.03.2017

M: Do you think there's a difference between old Bongo Flava artists and new Bongo Flava artists?

J: *the new Bongo Flava artist they only sing because they want money. But the old wanted to change people's mind. They use music to educate people. If you listen to that music, it is very different from what it is today. Even if you listen to Singeli, like professor Jay, it's a little bit of politics in the songs – the songs explain more about social behaviour and so and so. Politics is risk.*

Quote 19 – Denis – 10.03.2017

F: What do you think about if I suppose that the Old School Bongo Flava came up because people have been angry and they wanted to sing about it so that other people got to know about it. And nowadays those who sing about non-political issues more jumped into the business or the Bongo Flava scene, because they knew oh it is popular among youth and we can make profit out of it. Or do you think that they still do it because they love the music so much? We talked about it that Diamond was promoting CCM campaigns and that some other artists are connected to Vodacom and so on and that this is a form to earn a living. What do you think about it? That was a long question, sorry.

D: That was a long question yeah. You are saying that the old Bongo Flava artists were much angry, they had this hunger to give people awareness they didn't have. My comment is, in everything everything has its time. There is this time for everything. At that time people really needed awareness, you know, compared to this time. I think sometimes some artists just do other kind of music, because they know that this things are not relevant right now. But you might find times, election time, young artists, every artist, they write about politics, about giving people motivation to go to vote, telling people to make changes, telling people to vote. Because of his ideas, not because of who he is or what he gives people, if he bribes or what. So I think also artists consider what the listeners want. Because you cannot stand right now and sing a song about HIV, because people now have the awareness already. They know HIV and HIV is not a big issue. Now it's corruption. You know the artists also locks into what is happening currently. *Music will always be there, but issues like malaria and social issues, they come time after time. So I think young artists right now, they have also influence to a lot of other things, but not all the time. Because not all the time people want to hear that. And they want to survive on the market, on the music market. And there are Tanzanians who also listen to Western music, so they also need to give them the flavours from there. That's where the coping styles begin. That's where you find some Tanzanian artists start to imitate the Western music. So if the Western music talks about businesses and money and women, now they copy and bring it here, because they want to go with their fans, they don't wanna lose their fans.*

Quote 20 – Afande Sele – 4.03.2017

N: Would you say that your experience with politics has made you more cynical? That you have become more pessimistic about how music can influence politics?

A: Yes, of course. He agrees that politics has destroyed his way of producing music – it has ruined his creative thinking. It's not that he's regretting it, he had to do it, because he wrote a lot of music and had to take a step further.

N: Do you think that even if music lacks that political edge, it can still be critical and still be important and that the younger generation perhaps are a bit less interested in politics because the music has become less critical?

A: *The young generations is just interested in the business of the music; the money. In rap, the most delicate thing is the message – but nowadays the younger generation don't considerate any*

messages. They just care about the melody – they just rap about things that doesn't mean anything.

Quote 21 – Amani – 4.03.2017

F: It seems like this is more Hip-Hop, more rap and now it's more pop. What is old School Bongo Flava? What does it consist of?

A: We started from Hip-Hop. This is Old School. The one with the oldier songs. It's basically hip-hop. It's Bongo Flava Hip-Hop. If you ask people what they prefer, nowadays songs or Old School songs. They love Old School, because when Mr. II released the song "Motochini" or any kind of song, it can last for six months a song. But nowadays, one weeks, two weeks - gone. They gotta release another one to be up to date. Nowadays music it's a simple thing and it fades away rather quickly. You release a song it becomes big everyday, it begins getting tied of it in a week. Everyone is playing a song if it's popular. So after a week or two weeks, it fades away. You gotta move somewhere else. Back in the days we had few artists. If I am an artist I release a song, nobody will release a song, I can just chill for six five months. Nobody will release a song, so mine is still playing. But nowadays me becoming an artist so *I gotta be more active all the time. I release a song today, people will stop listening to my song and listen to a new song. In the first coming days the new songs drops, people will stop listening to the song that came yesterday and listen to the song that came today.*

Quote 22 – Babu - 1.03.2017

N: How has radio changed in the time you've done it?

B: Big changes, because before we were... After the introduction of the FM station, big changes came. So, before we were extra serious, but this time it is more entertainment, and we are not quite so serious. Before it was Kidogo Entertainment, and most of the time it was education, and, uh, something like this.

M: How did it change? And why?

B: The world has changed, yes. The world needs entertainment, more entertainment. Because even if you go to the field and they want to introduce cultivations, if there is no entertainment nobody will come to you. So *we came to realize people need more entertainment. Problems now are based on infotainment – information and entertainment. So now, you can get people. Now, if you just go straight to information or education, people will not react. Even if we do education we call it edutainment.*

Quote 23 – Focus group (1) Morogoro Secondary School – 1.03.2017

C: So do you like this kind of songs and the message? What do you think about it?

J: Yeah! so for example that song. It is very entertaining and within that song there is a message that you should not hurry up doing things that are not in their age. (starts singing). It is not good to depend yourself on what you body want, do engage in love and relation. There...

H: *There are some other things that are more important right now. You know for our age right now it is more important with education, concentrating in relations is bad because you miss two things, you can't have them both you know, one will have to be up and the other have to be down. And you can see us girls we are thinking about a lot of things, and we should not sit and think about love when you should be studying. And you have to prove yourself in this world of globalization you know what you have to do you know. And you are just thinking about love, love, love and they are educating us that we have to wait until the right time has come. So it is good.*

Quote 24 – Daniel - 9.03.2017

N: Do you find any young girls coming through or is it mostly young boys?

D: No. You know, that is very challenging to our organization of course. Most of the girls, they think that just maybe they do some bad things there. They do not commit to come there, but a few of them do come there. But for real, those who are there, most of them are boys. Most of them are male youth, young boys who are there.

C: Is it because the girls are not allowed to?

D: The reason behind that is our African customs. *You know, if you are suffering psychologically, it is better instead you suffer from HIV/AIDS. More than psychological ill. So, it is very hard for a girl to come there, because back home if they are like "I was at Morogoro Youth Talent" the parents will disapprove. It will be a bad thing to her family. Many girls do anyway, but they do fear. Many Tanzanian girls, they have an inferiority complex, that "I am a woman, I cannot sing hip-hop."* And even if you sing hip-hop, not only in Tanzania but at international level as a woman, they are few who sing hip-hop. In Tanzania, we have even fewer. But we do have a few. They are underrepresented, that is a challenge.

Quote 25 – Denis – 10.03.2017

N: And what types of music did you listen to?

D: You know, I come from a religious family. So, there's this gospel music, and a bit of Bongo Flava and some Western musicians that I start with. I just loved them, but I don't really follow up on them.

N: Were your musical interest different than that of your family?

D: Yeah, yeah, I guess so. Cause, uh, my brother, he likes much hip-hop than my cousin, who likes a lot of reggae. He likes reggae a lot. And, yeah, but my Mom doesn't listen to music that much.

F: Even to gospel?

D: Yes, gospel. But just to gospel. And *my Dad, he has been listening a bit to Bongo Flava, but just a bit. He loves music, all kinds of music, all song. He really loves music, but just not these new kinds of songs, this new Bongo Flava music.* So he listens, but he's not that big a fan, especially these days.

Background Information About the Morogoro Secondary School

- Since its foundation in 1954 it has been a mixed school
- All girls who are going to the school live in the school hostel, boys are staying with their families
- level 1-6 → knowledge/ skill level of the students, 6 is the most advanced level

<u>Kidato (Form)</u>	<u>Wasichana (Girls)</u>	<u>Wavulana (Boys)</u>	<u>Jumia</u>
I	<u>171</u>	<u>148</u>	<u>319</u>
II	<u>180</u>	<u>139</u>	<u>319</u>
III	<u>173</u>	<u>169</u>	<u>342</u>
IV	<u>198</u>	<u>139</u>	<u>337</u>
V	<u>207</u>	<u>86</u>	<u>293</u>
VI	<u>209</u>	<u>77</u>	<u>286</u>
<u>Jumia</u>	<u>1138</u>	<u>758</u>	<u>1896</u>

Courses - Form V and VI

<u>Kidato</u>	<u>Wasichana</u>	<u>Wavulana</u>	<u>Jumia</u>
<u>V EGH</u>	<u>53</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>70</u>
<u>VI EGH</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>42</u>
<u>V HGE</u>	<u>58</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>80</u>
<u>VI HGE</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>50</u>
<u>V HKL</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>47</u>

VI HKL	50	17	67
V HGK	31	18	49
VI HGK	26	15	41
V HGL	35	17	52
VI HGL	71	15	86
			504

We later choose the yellow marked classes for our survey due to extreme gender difference (VI HKL) and relatively small gender difference (V HGL).

Questionnaire

We are a group of university students from Copenhagen, interested in learning more about the youth's relationship with Bongo Flava in Morogoro.

The information you provided to us will not be shared with anyone, and will strictly be used for our own academic work. Please answer the questions by circling the relevant answer(s).

1. What is your gender?

- a. Male
- b. Female

2. How old are you?

- a. Under 18
- b. 18 to 25
- c. 26 to 35
- d. Above 35

3. What is your living condition? (Select one)

- a. I live on my own
- b. I live with my parents
- c. I live with my relatives
- d. I live in the school hostel
- e. Other

4. Which of the following do you have in the home where you grew up? (Select all that apply)

- a. TV
- b. Washing Machine
- c. Air Conditioner
- d. Refrigerator
- e. Microwave
- f. Computer

- g. Smartphone
- h. Bicycle
- i. Motorcycle
- j. Car

5. What types of music do you typically listen to? (Select all that apply)

- a. Bongo Flava
- b. Rap/Hip-Hop
- c. Reggae
- d. R&B
- e. Jazz
- f. Gosepl
- g. Classical
- h. Other: _____

6. How often do you listen to Bongo Flava? (Select one)

- a. Daily
- b. Weekly
- c. Monthly
- d. Yearly
- e. Never

7. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “By voting, young people can make real changes to politics”?

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Slightly agree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Strongly disagree
- e. No opinion

8. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “There is an active ‘scene’ for Bongo Flava artists and producers in Morogoro”?

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Slightly agree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Strongly disagree
- e. No opinion

9. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Female Bongo Flava stars are good role models for young women”?

- a. Strongly agree
- b. Slightly agree
- c. Slightly disagree
- d. Strongly disagree
- e. No opinion

- 10. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Bongo Flava is an important way for young people to express concerns about Tanzania”?**
- Strongly agree
 - Slightly agree
 - Slightly disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - No opinion
- 11. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Bongo Flava has become less about social issues and more about getting rich”?**
- Strongly agree
 - Slightly agree
 - Slightly disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - No opinion
- 12. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Bongo Flava has more social and political messages than other forms of Swahili entertainment (e.g. books, television, movies)”?**
- Strongly agree
 - Slightly agree
 - Slightly disagree
 - Strongly disagree
 - No opinion

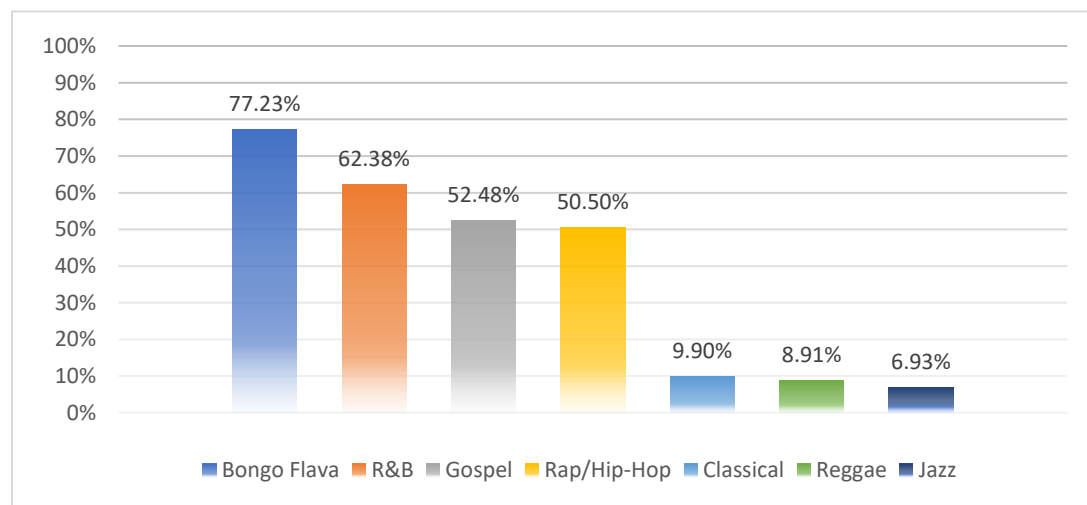
Tables and Graphs

Table 1

VARIABLES	(1) Bfemale-BR	(2) Bfemale -bf	(3) Bfemale -idt	(4) Bfemale -nei
gender	0.566 (0.345)	0.593* (0.343)	0.561 (0.342)	0.680* (0.343)
ses	0.124 (0.0942)	0.0856 (0.0893)	0.126 (0.0872)	0.0434 (0.0913)
frequency	0.205 (0.128)	0.128 (0.148)	0.159 (0.127)	0.0666 (0.141)
BR	-0.153 (0.341)			
bf		0.343 (0.441)		
idt			0.352 (0.337)	
nei				-0.867* (0.489)
Constant	-0.238 (0.509)	-0.338 (0.511)	-0.269 (0.502)	0.212 (0.565)
Observations	98	98	98	98
R-squared	0.083	0.087	0.092	0.111

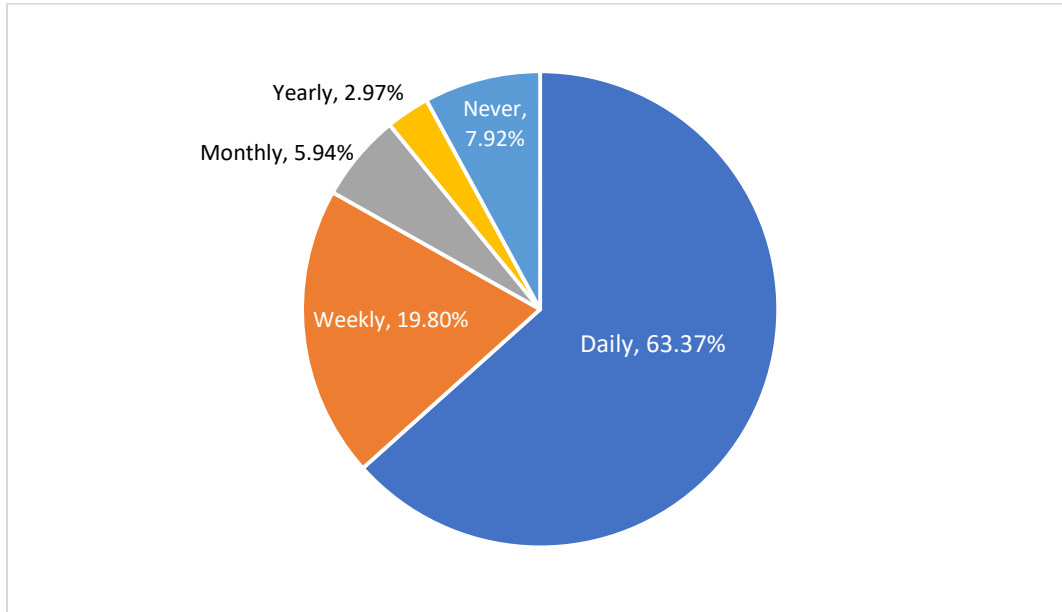
Graph 1

What types of music do you typically listen to? (Question 5)



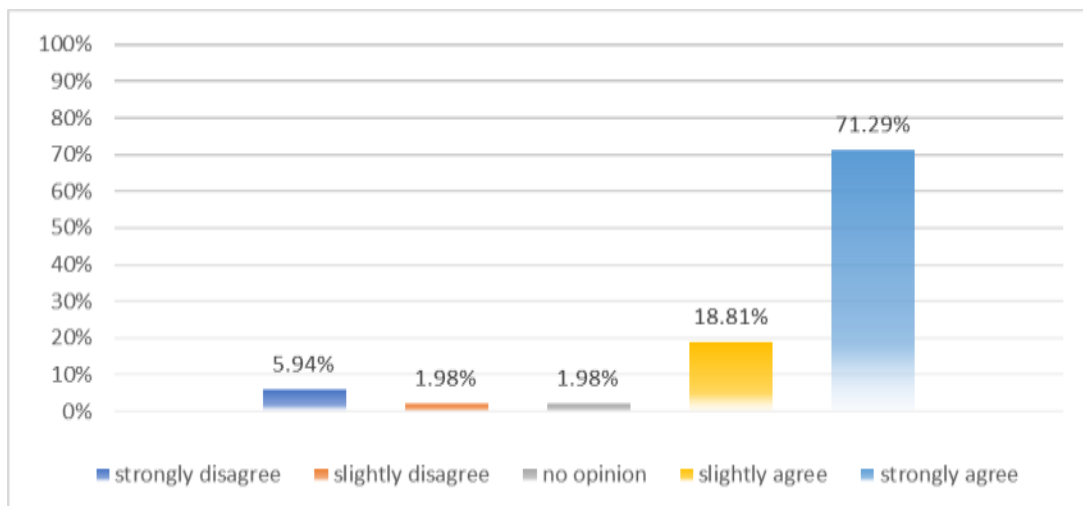
Graph 2

How often do you listen to Bongo Flava? (Question 6)

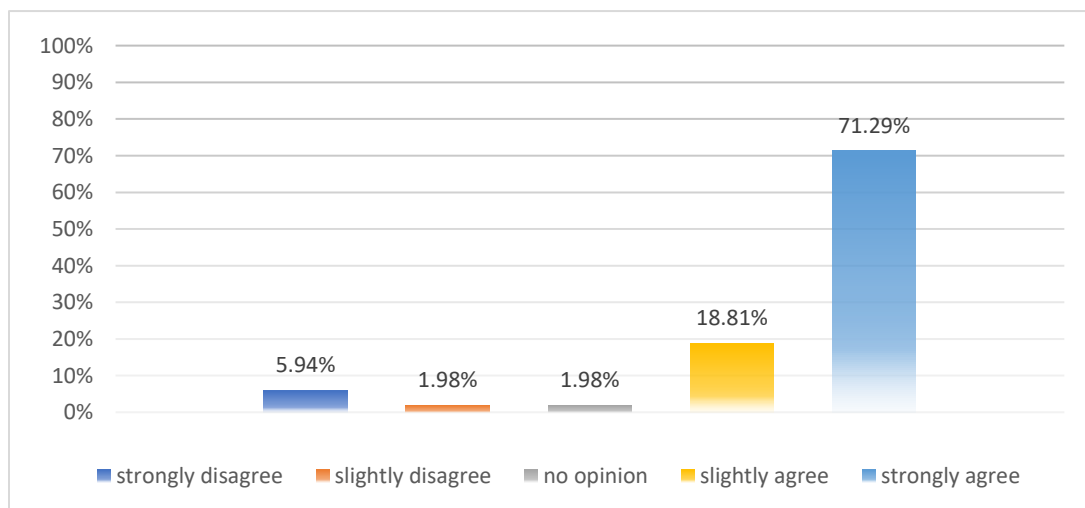


Graph 3

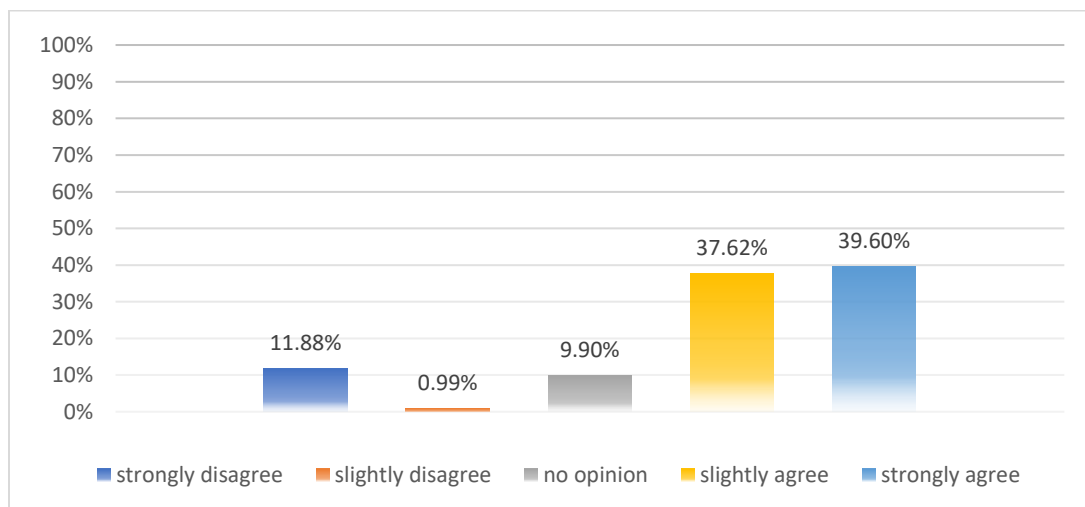
Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “By voting, young people can make real changes to politics”? (Question 7)



Graph 4

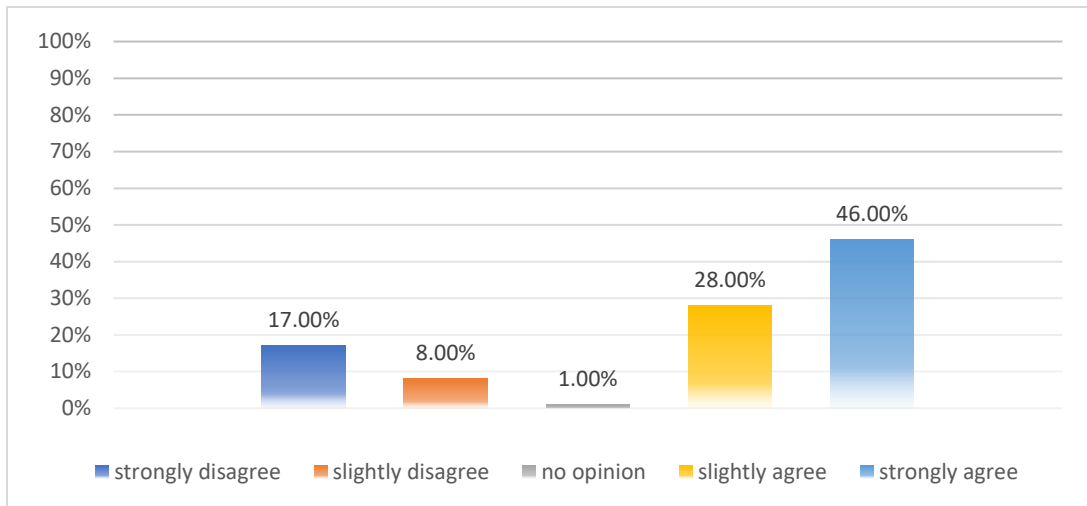


Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “There is an active ‘scene’ for Bongo Flava artists in Morogoro?”



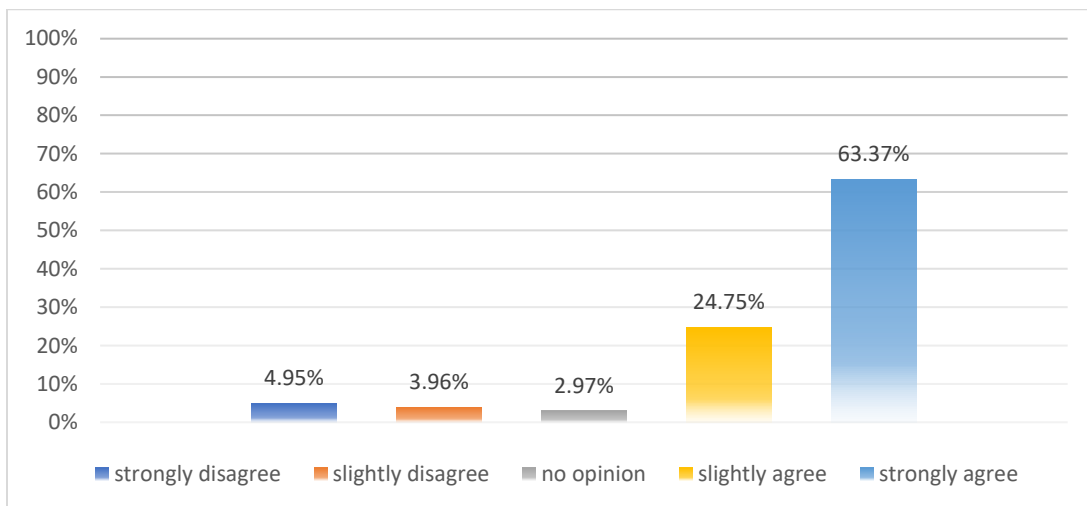
Graph 5

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Female Bongo Flava stars are good role models for young women”? (Question 9)



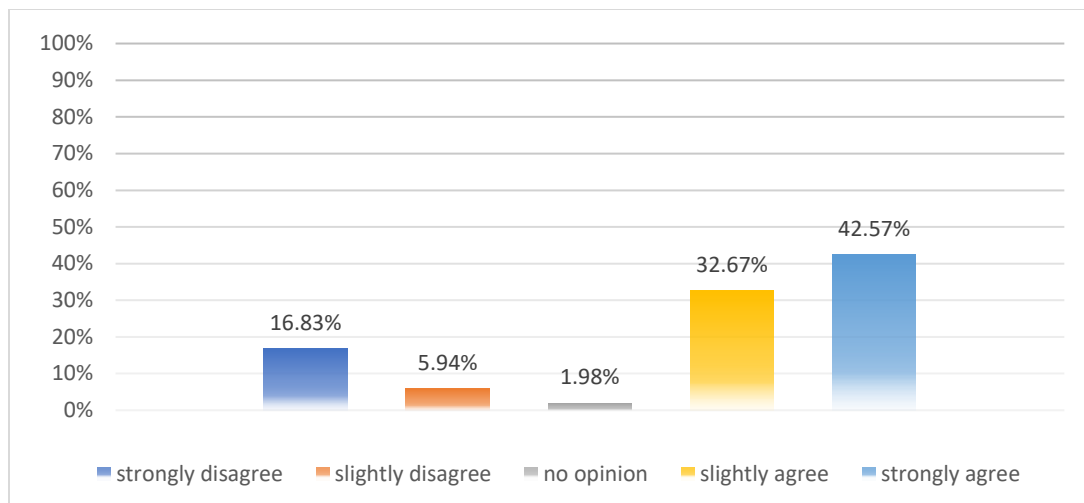
Graph 6

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Bongo Flava is an important way for young people to express concerns about Tanzania”? (Question 10)



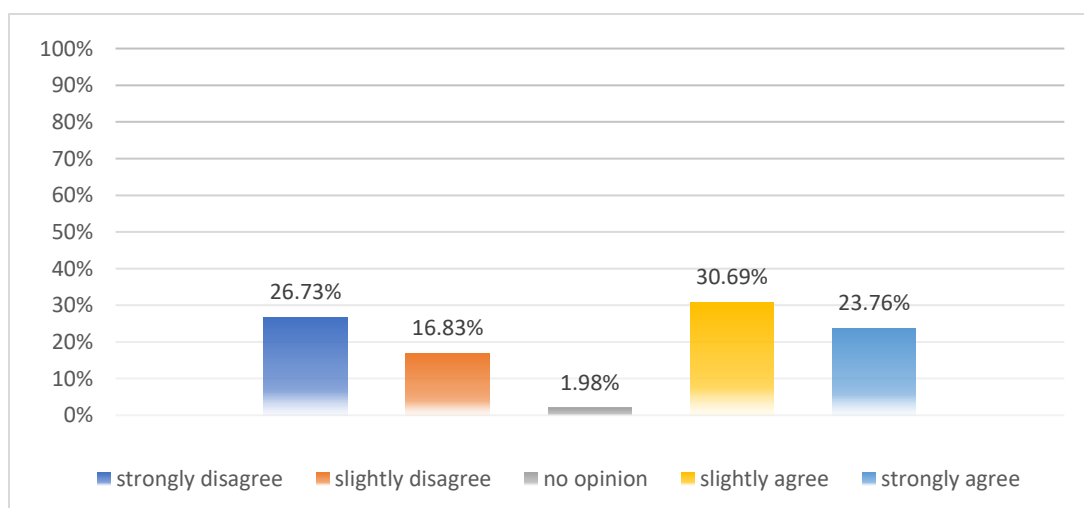
Graph 7

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Bongo Flava has become less about social issues and more about getting rich”? (Question 11)



Graph 8

Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: “Bongo Flava has more social and political messages than other forms of Swahili entertainment (e.g. books, television, movies)”? (Question 12)



Selected Translated Bongo Flava Lyrics

“I’m Sorry JK” - Nikki Mbishi

It will one day make sence/when I say there is no president like JK
Tanzania misses you like daily/on behalf of the Tanzanian I say im sorry JK

I’m sorry JK I just have to say this/
I got this idea when I was at “kijenge”/

There no more college loans you can't jus easily go to college/
 In the parliament they are drunk jus talking nonsense/
 I no longer see jay since he meet sugu/
 Scorpion turned to be a nice ghostface /
 The one who dreamt that the president will die is called Godbless Lema/
 RC with "Wasafi" police cars in the streets/
 We just work in the street the hunger is real its not a movie/
 We real have learned a lesson/ '
 If you would have contested in the third phase/

They are used to mock you and say laugh at you/
 They didn't know that times come and go/
 You chilled when they said you're a party guy/
 Makonda on the spotlight with wasafi/
 Tanzanians will remember you in the sport sector/
 The national team showed its abilities/
 You improved the standards and skills/
 Today samatta on the lead and he's on the big leagues/
 Lets talk the magazines they edit the parliament broadcasting/
 They are no plans they just acting/
 Democracy confusion with the police forces/
 Most fear to tell them the truth but am not scared/
 Banks are bankrupted the debts are overflowing/
 The situation is hard even visitors feel sorry for us/
 No sheesha no more its cool its horrible/
 Bars close at 6:00am no watchfulness no more/

Every news on news station today is about JPM(john pombe magufuli) Money lost miraculously
 David Blaine/
 The victims don't understand about "bukoba" plans/
 The earth quake vandalizing the funds/
 We made a mistake don't curse us correct us/
 Put aside political parties lets be buddies lets connect/
 Visit "sogodo" and see Tanzania of hats/
 And how policeman mess up/
 The streets with burglars plus cannabis arouma/
 There was a time that I dissed you jk/
 Now am calling for the peace, Damn! We miss JK/

"Marry Me" - Diamond Platnumz feat. Ne-Yo

When I look at you
 I see the ever very air I breathe
 I see the sun girl how you shine on me
 I am complete because of only you

And when you talk to me
 I hear the angels I can hear them sing
 I hear the sound of our eternity
 I am blessed to be your man this much is true
 And nothing will ever will happen
 Give to you baby if you'll take me, you girl
 See forever something I just can't do
 No, Not without you

I want to marry you (ooh lalalala)
 I want to marry you (ooh lalalala)
 I want to marry you (ooh lalalala)
 Aah lets go to my mama and papaa
 I want to marry you (ooh lalalala)
 I want to marry you (ooh lalalala)
 I want to marry you (ooh lalalala)
 Aah lets go to my mama and papaa

Ooh baby stories, stories increasing the sweetness
 Ooh baby today I feel like talking,
 Ooh baby whats in my heart,
 Let you know, how i feel
 Mmh love,my heartaches,who should I love,
 With the bones while toothless,you'll torture me honey,
 For the way they adore you,
 Daily chassing after you,
 Its just bloop pressure and dizziness,

Eeeh when you smile (that's what I love)
 Eeeh when you smile (that's what I love)
 Eeeh when you smile (that's what I love)
 I want to marry you (ooh lalalala)
 I want to marry you (ooh lalalala)
 I want to marry you (ooh lalalala)
 Aah lets go to my mama and papaa
 I want to marry you (ooh lalalala)
 I want to marry you (ooh lalalala)
 I want to marry you (ooh lalalala)
 Aah lets go to my mama and papaa

Now and forever we'll be together
 I want you only holy matrimony
 say you'll be with me, all eternity
 say I do
 spoil me...

Ingrid Ernø, Chang Liu, Nicholas Gates, Franziska Luig, Camilla Bratsbjerg and Mortan Østerø are graduate students of the MSc in Global Development at the University of Copenhagen. They're academic backgrounds range from economy, anthropology, political science, journalism and development studies – and their nationalities are just as varied; Norway, China, The United States, Germany, Denmark and the Faroe Islands respectively.