

***Bongo Flava* and the Electoral Campaign 2005 in Tanzania**

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Abstract

This article examines how *Bongo Flava* artists in Tanzania commented with their songs on the General Elections of the year 2005. The study is mainly based on the lyrics which are presented in full length in the appendix which is accessible online¹. The artists voiced criticism of politicians as well as voters, in a direct as well as in an indirect, humorous way. Some praised the presidential candidate of the dominating party CCM. The diversity of style as well as the range of positions taken, show, that *Bongo Flava* is a multifaceted cultural phenomenon which has assumed a role in public political discourse. However, it also becomes evident that some *Bongo Flava* artists with their support for the ruling party were aiming at enhancing recognition and acceptance by political leaders. This article suggests that their expressed concern for the nation as well as religion was supportive to that endeavour.

1. The electoral campaign 2005 in Tanzania

In 2005, general elections took place in Tanzania for the third time since multi-party rule was introduced in 1992. During all those years the once single political party CCM (*Chama cha Mapinduzi* – ‘Revolutionary Party’) was able to maintain a clear majority in parliament. This was not likely to be changed through the parliamentary and presidential elections of the year 2005, as the party was (and still is) widely accepted in the country, despite partial dissatisfaction with the government, especially concerning persisting poverty and corruption. However, opposition parties have not been able to seriously challenge the CCM, with the exception of Zanzibar, where the Civic United Front (CUF) is a significant rival. The weakness of opposition

¹ http://www.univie.ac.at/ecco/stichproben/Nr14_Reuster-Jahn_Appendix.pdf

parties lies partly in their strong focus on a single leader and their regional restrictedness. Nevertheless, eighteen parties registered for the 2005 election (EISA [Electoral Institute of Southern Africa] 2006: 14). The election campaign for Mainland Tanzania was officially launched on 21st August 2005 and the election was originally scheduled for 30th October. However, due to the sudden death of an oppositional vice-presidential candidate², Election Day had to be postponed to the 14th of December (EISA 2006: 25). According to the EISA election monitoring group, campaign rhetoric was mainly based on election manifestos. As a campaign strategy, CCM particularly centred on past achievements and praised itself for maintaining peace and stability, while the opposition parties attacked the CCM for lack of economic progress and corruption (EISA 2005: 14). Party campaigns have followed a similar format:

“Most parties have held public rallies and meetings during which party dignitaries amidst robust chanting of slogans make introductory speeches. Most rallies would organise some entertainment for their supporters in the form of traditional dancing groups, cultural performances, and even theatrical plays” (EISA 2005: 13-4).

Entertainment and cultural performance, it seems, have been of major importance in the parties' efforts to win voters during their rallies. Music was involved in the election campaign in various ways. There were campaign songs that plainly praised the CCM and appealed to the people to vote for its candidates. Songs of this kind were produced by Captain John Komba with his governmental cultural troupe “Tanzania One Theatre” (T.O.T). As he himself was a CCM candidate for Songea, this was not surprising. Another musical group who supported CCM with songs was the Upendo Group, a well-known gospel choir based in Kijitonyama, Dar es Salaam.³ The songs of both T.O.T and Upendo Group were released on audio cassettes and distributed all over the country. Other stars of popular music also produced songs relating to the elections, mostly in favour of

² Rajab Jumbe of CHADEMA (Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo – ‘Party for Democracy and Progress’) died unexpectedly on 26th October 2005, shortly before the original Election Day.

³ However, when asked about their reasons, this group denied that they had produced the cassette, suggesting a case of false use of their name (pers. comm. 12-04-2008).

CCM, like for example *Taarab* singer Hadija Kopa (Suriano 2007: 212). However, musical political expression in the electoral context came to the most part from the *Bongo Flava* sector of popular music, with praise as well as critical songs.

2. Bongo Flava and the electoral campaign

Bongo Flava, also called “the music of the young generation” (*muziki wa kizazi kipya*) evolved in the 1990s. This music was originally derived from American HipHop music, but over time became increasingly accommodated to local tastes and conditions. Thus, it has been diversified by the artists and producers during the last years to include elements of traditional music as well as popular dance music of African, Western and Oriental origin (Raab 2006: 43 ff.). The lyrics of *Bongo Flava* are specifically determined by the use of Swahili, including youth language and slang expressions (Reuster-Jahn 2007: 225).⁴ Tanzanian youth have turned HipHop music into a critical medium of social empowerment that enabled them to create a sense of community with other urban youth, and voice their ideas and opinions to a broad listening public (Perullo 2005). By 2004, two trends in *Bongo Flava* were distinguished by the artists themselves, on the one hand a trend for social-critical and didactical lyrics, and on the other hand self-centred lyrics including elements of “boasting” and “dissing”⁵. The latter were labelled “*flava*” (‘flavour’), and the former were categorised as “message” (Roch & Hacke 2006, Raab 2006: 100 ff.). While many artists felt socially obliged to deliver “message”, most of them had a mixed repertoire. Furthermore, since approximately 2006, romance, amusement and lifestyle seem to have become prevailing in *Bongo Flava*, while “*flava*” as well as “message” have proportionally diminished. This would suggest that *Bongo Flava* has successfully established itself as a mainstream cultural phenomenon with the characteristics that initially defined it – i.e. social-consciousness - becoming shifted to the margin. It is possible that this eventually results in a split, although up to now many artists are integrating the diversity in their

⁴ For more detailed information on the history of *Bongo Flava* see Suriano in this volume.

⁵ “to diss” is a US slang verb widely used in HipHop culture, meaning to put (someone) down, or show disrespect.

musical production. The epithet “*muziki wa kizazi kipyaa*” (‘music of the new generation’) which initially was understood as “the music of youth” may gradually change its meaning to “the music of the liberalisation era”, especially as the artists with growing age will possibly lose the legitimacy to speak for the youth in the country. The Swahili HipHop artist Sugu a.k.a. Mr. II seems to have felt this when he titled his hitherto last album, which he produced in the USA in 2006 “*Ujio wa Umri/Coming of Age*”. At any rate, *Bongo Flava* is dynamic as it is still growing as well as changing, and it does not seem that it has already reached its climax. The emergence of new artists happens at an amazing speed, and this expansion of the *Bongo Flava* scene is accompanied by a debate on the role and function of the music as well as the artists in society.

The General Elections 2005 provided an opportunity for *Bongo Flava* artists to speak out and comment on a subject of social and political relevance not only to the youth but the whole nation, while at the same time negotiating their image in society. As a well defined period with special political relevance and limited duration of approximately four months the election campaign also provided a unique opportunity for research, as it allowed for a case study of political expression within *Bongo Flava*. The question which this article specifically aims to answer, is how *Bongo Flava* responded to the electoral campaign.

The preceding electoral campaign had already been marked by the appearance of rap lyrics that criticised the political situation (Perullo 2005). While these targeted the government’s lack in efforts to assist the ordinary people⁶, denounced politics in general as a dirty game, or ridiculed unrealistic promises by political leaders⁷, they did not address voting as such. Furthermore, many of these songs were produced after the election, expressing frustration and disappointment about unkept promises, and accusing the government that the election had not changed anything. Unlike then, during the 2005 electoral campaign *Bongo Flava* songs were composed in order to address political issues related to voting and rallying. This may mark a step towards *Bongo Flava* getting out of the youth sector and becoming a cultural phenomenon of wider social relevance, though it might also reflect the fact that the youth have been an important target group during the election campaign. The CCM in particular successfully presented

⁶ *Mwananchi* – Balozi Dola (2001).

⁷ *Ndiyo Mzee* – Prof. Jay (2001).

itself as a party concerned with youth issues like education and, above all, employment. A special asset in this respect was the candidacy for parliament by the 25-year-old Amina Chifupa, who had been a radio announcer at the private radio station Clouds FM.⁸ The presidential candidate Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete (born 1950) himself appeared young and dynamic compared to his predecessors, an image he cultivated for the campaign. He seemed to be open to the needs of the youth, and in addition, the motto for his presidency “*ari mpya, nguvu mpya, kasi mpya*” (‘new spirit, new strength, new speed’) appealed to the youth wanting change in society and dynamic development. Furthermore, he admitted that he personally likes *Bongo Flava*.

The corpus on which this article is based comprises *Bongo Flava* songs that were aired at a private radio station in Dar es Salaam during the electoral campaign period, and were made available to me by the radio DJ.⁹ They represent the major part of *Bongo Flava* songs addressing the elections. Only few of them have later been included on albums and thus have become long living commercial items, the others must be considered as ephemeral. Some were complemented by video clips. The attitudes expressed in them range from criticism of politicians as well as citizens, to praise of candidates. Stylistically, they are equally different. While some clearly conform to American HipHop conventions others have a more locally developed form. However, it will be shown that there are some characteristics they have in common. All texts have been transcribed and translated by myself.¹⁰ The full texts are to be found in the appendix. Space does not allow going into a detailed analysis of style and technique which would reveal many aspects of the skilful handling of language. Especially the rhyming techniques would deserve to be analysed in depth. However, as the focus here is on political expression, those characteristics were not the subject of this study.

⁸ Amina Chifupa was indeed elected the youngest ever MP in Tanzania.

⁹ For reasons of anonymity the names are not disclosed. However, it can be presumed that the songs were aired by most private radio stations.

¹⁰ Many thanks to Dr. Declare Mushi and Vicensia Shule (MA) for their help with the transcription.

2.1 Kura yangu – Dr. Levy & Sugu

Kura yangu ('my vote') by the artists Dr. Levy and Sugu¹¹ aims to raise awareness of democratic rights and responsibility among Tanzanian citizens, as well as to criticise politicians. From a first person perspective the song tells the audience about the meaning of ballot-casting and the corrupt habits of some politicians who try to win voters' support by giving them a small gift. However, it does not blame the giver alone, but also the receiver, the citizen, whom it warns not to 'sell' his vote. The song refers to the practice of *takrima* ('hospitality') used during electoral campaigns, which is legally accepted, while not clearly defined:

"According to the law (Election Act, section 98) 'traditional hospitality' is allowed during the campaigns. However, this is not defined, leaving the matter open to subjective interpretation. The difference between 'traditional hospitality' allowed by the law and 'treating' which is not permitted under the law is not at all clear. This may encourage corruptive practices." (Mørck 2006: 17)

Furthermore, section 51 (3) of the Election Act, which was inserted in the 2000 amendments, permits door-to-door canvassing by candidates, their agents and political parties, which may also be conducive to corrupt transactions (Mørck 2006: 17). The CCM, which because of its high percentage of seats in parliament received the greatest part of financial support for campaign purposes, generously distributed wrap-clothes (*vitenge*), caps, and other items during its rallies.

The song lasting 4.54 minutes is rapped at moderate speed. It consists of three verses divided by a sung chorus. The first two verses are rapped by Dr. Levy and the last one by Sugu, while the respective other adds interjections at the end of phrases. The chorus is sung by Juma Nature.¹² Right at the beginning the artists state that for them HipHop is closely connected to life and politics, thereby echoing the title of Sugu's 2001 album *Muziki na Maisha* ('music and life'). Then they outline the theme of the song: "My vote from my hands [...] shouldn't be a 'vote of eating'." In fact, the

¹¹ Sugu (meaning 'chronic') is one of the veterans of *Bongo Flava*, or Swahili HipHop. He started as II Proud, and renamed himself later as Mr. II, before he became Sugu in 2004. His civil name is Joseph Mbilinyi.

¹² Pers. comm. by Sugu, 31-01-2008.

rhyiming formula *kura ya kula* ('vote of eating') encapsulates the message of the song: citizens should use their vote responsibly and not 'sell' it for gifts distributed among them during the election campaign. The first verse goes on to tell the audience that a vote has an impact on society: "My vote should remove the burden from grandmother and grandfather", it "should alleviate the bitterness in the hearts of my brothers [...]." It even addresses the problems of musicians: "We musicians don't succeed because we lack copy right. Our MPs, you are expected to speak out in the meetings". After this the chorus joins in with the message that the answer to the question how to achieve a better life in towns and villages is to use one's vote. The second verse, after having listed some of the grievances in the lives of Tanzanians comes to the conclusion that "changes are necessary", because politicians too often are after their own profit.

<i>Uchaguzi unapokaribia wanarudi majimboni</i>	When the election comes near, they go back to
<i>kwenda kujipatia kura kwa blaablaa za mdomoni.</i>	their constituencies,
<i>Noma!</i>	to gather votes by blaablaa from their lips.
<i>Na vijisenti kidogo mfukoni kuwarubuni,</i>	A shame!
<i>waweze kuchaguliwa warudi tena bungeni,</i>	And small money in their pockets to lure
<i>kwenda kupiga soga na kuingiza mamilioni.</i>	them [the voters],
<i>Oooh!</i>	that they might be elected and go back into
<i>(verse 2)</i>	parliament,
	to chat and pouch millions.
	Oooh!

The third verse warns politicians: "I don't give you 'yes' when your commitment is 'no'". It then turns to the voters: "The corrupt politicians, we have to punish them". Democratic rights do not depend on economic or social status, and votes are exchanged for the commitment of politicians:

<i>Hata kama mimi ni mwananchi masikini</i>	Even if I'm a poor citizen,
<i>kura yangu ina thamani.</i>	my vote has a value.
<i>Sasa sitauza kura kwa pilau¹³ kwenye sahani.</i>	This time I will not sell my vote for a dish of
<i>Kha!</i>	pilau.
<i>[...]</i>	Kha!

¹³ *Pilau* is a dish made of rice, meat, potatoes and spices.

Nikikupa nataka elimu bora mashuleni

If I give it to you, I want good quality education in the schools.

[...]

Halafu sitaki rushwa kabisa serikalini.

Then I don't want any corruption in the government.

(verse 3)

At the end of this verse, it is asked: "my vote is a weapon, how can I use it well?" The suggested answer is to assess the performance of individual politicians: "maybe I should choose a person without regard to the party." All in all *Kura yangu* urges Tanzanians to take democracy seriously. It criticises politicians as well as citizens who have not yet understood the meaning of ballot-casting. It calls on citizens to scrutinise election programmes and evaluate their MPs' performance during the last election period. It is a song with a message aiming at educating and enlightening its audience. With its thought provoking text it could well have been used during voters' awareness seminars that were organised in the country by various NGOs (EISA 2005: 3-7). Sugu says: "We believed that as artists we were obliged to state our opinion regarding corruption and other bad things that obviously happened in Tanzania during the time of the elections" (pers. comm. 26-01-08). He also commented on the reception of the song:

"As we had anticipated, people's opinion on that song was favourable. We told nothing but the truth and the message went down well. However, when the people in power saw that it started becoming more famous, it suddenly disappeared from the air. Even the clip was not shown for longer than three weeks on the TVs, and then it was taken out, or it was played very late at night when the nation was sleeping" (pers. comm. 26-01-08).

Sugu suspects that the radio owners fear disadvantages because, as Perullo has put it "[S]everal radio stations in Dar es Salaam are owned by businessmen who support CCM or rely on CCM's support to advance their business concerns" (Perullo 2005 84). On the other hand, a preference of the Tanzanian audience for songs about enjoyment and pleasure could have also contributed to the disappearance of *Kura yangu* from the air (Suriano 2007: 217 f.).

Of all the songs relating to the elections *Kura Yangu* is most outspoken. This is typical for Sugu, who has been one of the pioneers of *Bongo Flava* in the 1990s and who views HipHop as a means of delivering social and political messages (Perullo 2005: 79). For this he even hazards economical drawback, like the stop of *Kura Yangu* being aired in the radio. The song was not released on audio cassette or compact disc. However, it had an impact. As late as 25th February 2007 *Kura Yangu* was discussed as an example of an audacious critical song on a chat forum in the internet.¹⁴

It should be noted that *Kura Yangu* shows concern for the well-being of the nation. Furthermore, it has a religious dimension, as the following lines show.

*Kura yangu toka mikononi mwangu,
napiga kumchagua kiongozi wangu,
atakayeiongoza nchi yangu
niliyopewa na Mungu.*

(verse 1)

Tuombe tuwe salama.

(verse 2)

Mungu ndiye mweza tunamtanguliza.

Tangulia!

(verse 2)

My vote from my hands,
I cast it to choose my leader
who will lead my country
which was given to me by God.

Let's pray to live in safety.

God who is the Almighty, we let him lead the
way.

Lead the way!

As will be seen below, *Kura Yangu* shares this characteristic with some of the other *Bongo Flava* songs. The national as well as the religious dimension are two features that may account for the acceptability of this music in all social groups in Tanzania. It should also be noted that *Kura Yangu* bears some similarities with the Kimondo verses of Mahmoud Abdul-Kadir on the bye-elections in Lamu East in 1975 that were analysed by Amidu (1993). The Kimondo is a verse tradition in the satirical genre, used as a "political, social and religious whip" (Amidu 1993: 35). Like *Kura Yangu*, Mahmoud Abdul-Kadir's Kimondo points to the power of the vote in democracy, and warns not to sell it for some money (Amidu 1993: 41). Furthermore, in the Kimondo as well as in *Kura Yangu* God is evoked as a higher power, who determines the destiny of political leaders.

¹⁴ <http://www.jamboforums.com/archive/index.php/t-1904.html> (last visited 15-01-2008).

2.2 *Tawile* 1 and 2 (Joni Woka)

Tawile by the artist Joni Woka was not released on audio cassette or compact disc, nor has there been a video clip. It was solely aired on radio and performed live on stage. The song is divided into part one and two, *Tawile 2* being the continuation of *Tawile 1*. They consist entirely of mostly spoken dialogues, in fact, they are musically performed sketches. *Tawile* presents the story of a member of parliament (MP) whose performance has been very poor, but who tries to stay in power with the help of a medicine man. The very title refers to the practice of medicine men in Dar es Salaam who do not ask their clients about their problems but claim to know those problems already (Swantz 1990: 68). They tell the clients why they have come to seek help, and as long as the medicine man is right, the client has to affirm this by saying “*tawile*”.

Tawile 1 consists of three spoken verses separated by a sung chorus. In the first verse, an MP asks his wife what he should do in order to become elected again. She advises him to consult a famous medicine man, and he immediately goes off to see him. The chorus marks the MP’s arrival at the medicine man’s compound:

“*Hodi mganga!*
Kwako mimi nimekuja mganga”
 “*Pita ndani!*”
 “*Nisaidie mganga,*
madarakani nibakie, mganga”
 “*We, pita ndani!*”

“Hallo medicine man!
 To you I have come, medicine man.”
 “Come in!”
 “Help me, medicine man,
 so that I may stay in power, medicine man.”
 “You, come in!”

The second verse renders the dialogue between the MP and the medicine man, who claims to know everything about the MP’s problems and offers him help. The MP is requested to provide him with a number of utensils needed to prepare medicine, but since he is not able to acquire those things he leaves the medicine man a large sum of money to find them himself. This dialogue exposes the MP’s manipulation which clearly shows that he is a selfish man instead of feeling responsible to the citizens in his constituency. At the same time he is mocked by being depicted in a dishonourable situation. The humorous aspect is heightened by the medicine man’s up-country pronunciation of Swahili, by which he can be identified as a man of Luo origin. The utensils that the MP has to bring add to the comic: the tears

of a crying fish, and two hairs from the beard of Osama [bin Laden].¹⁵ The chorus between the second and third verse marks the time span between the first and the second visit, when the MP comes to fetch the medicine, while the third verse renders the dialogue between the MP and the medicine man at the second visit. The medicine man hands an amulet to the MP and gives him a range of strange and uncomfortable instructions that he has to follow. However, the MP agrees to everything hoping that it will help him to stay in power, and his payment for the medicine man's service is very generous. In *Tawile 2* we meet the defeated MP after the elections. This song consists of two spoken verses and a sung chorus whose melody is different from the one in *Tawile 1*. It consists of the citizens' comment:

*"Tulikupa madaraka kumbe umeyachezea,
uchaguzi unapofika kwa mganga unaelekea,*

*Shauri yakoooo!
Oh, shauri yako, hicho kiini macho!
Na ulie baba."*

"We gave you power, but you played with it,
when the election comes close, you go to the
medicine man.

It's your own fault!
Oh, your own fault, this is a conjurer's trick!
Now just cry, father."

Again the first verse is set at the MP's home. He summons his wife and children, and then complains that he has only got one vote, which means that not even his own family-members have voted for him. He threatens to drive his wife and children out of his house, and furiously announces that he will go to the medicine man to beat him up. In the second verse he arrives at the medicine man's compound. After the exchange of some threats, the medicine man reveals himself as a patriotic citizen who has taught the MP a lesson. He says:

*Wewe uliomba wananchi kazi,
na wananchi wakakupa hiyo kazi,
ukaona kazi hukufanya kazi.*

*Ahadi zako ukawa huzitekelezi.
Tulikupa madaraka ukalala uzingizi,
hukuwajibika ukategemea hii ilizi.*

*Ukaamini mimi nitakusaidia,
wakati mimi pia ni Mtanzania,
ambaye maendeleo nayalilia.*

You asked the citizens to give you work,
and the citizens gave you that work,
then you found it too much work,
therefore you did not work.

And so you did not fulfill your promises.
We gave you power, but you slept,
you didn't act responsibly, instead you relied
on this amulet.

You believed that I would help you,
while I'm also a Tanzanian,
who is longing for progress.

¹⁵ They contain also allusion, as will be shown later.

Thus the presumed accomplice turns out to be an agent of the people. Although he has accepted a large sum of money as payment from the MP, he has preferred to betray the corrupt politician rather than his fellow citizens.

Though very different in style and technique *Tawile* conveys quite a similar message like *Kura Yangu*. Both songs make clear that times have changed and that there is a new and growing consciousness on democratic rights in Tanzania which the politicians have to cope with. However, while *Kura Yangu* is direct, *Tawile* uses humour. Thus, both ways to deliver “*ujumbe mkali*” (‘a strong message’) that were observed by Perullo in the early 2000s still exist. Perullo has pointed to the fact, that explicit critical commentary on political issues, which had marked the beginning of Swahili rap, became more difficult in the 2000s, since radio DJs would not allow it to be heard in their programmes because of fear of negative repercussions. Therefore the artists tended to criticise politics, as well as social and economic problems, through the means of humour. He argues that “[h]umour allowed artists to continue to make *ujumbe mkali*, while listeners could laugh at the absurdity of the country’s political development” (Perullo 2005: 84). Because this is an indirect way of criticism, it cannot easily be sanctioned. This humorous trend may as well stand in the tradition of *vichekesho*, short humorous plays often commenting seriously on incorrect and unacceptable behaviour (Mlamba 1983 in Lange 1999: 50). The form of dramatic presentation marked by dialogues has also been shown for Swahili rap relating to non-political subject matters, and been interpreted as a form of localisation of HipHop drawing on narrative techniques used in oral story telling (Reuster-Jahn 2007). Another way to express criticism are allusions, as for example in verse two, when the medicine man requests the MP to bring the things needed to prepare his medicine. Among others, he has to supply “the tears of a crying fish”. This alludes to the song *Kilio cha samaki* (‘the crying of a fish’) by Remmy Ongala from 1994 in which he accused the political leaders in figurative language to neglect the ordinary people’s needs and concerns. In this song popular in the 1990s, the accusations were so indirect that Remmy Ongala could perform it even in the presence of political leaders (Lange 1999: 56). The allusion to this song in *Tawile* eleven years after *Kilio cha Samaki* was released, impressively confirms that through their compositions musicians “offer Tanzanians new shared metaphors which

they may use to communicate about their lived experience” (Lange 1999: 56).

2.3 *Mrisho* - Ngwair

Mrisho is another song that was not released on audio cassette or compact disc. It presents a metaphorical rap by *Bongo Flava* artist Ngwair. Formally this track, which lasts 4:30 minutes, is divided into three verses separated by a chorus. It represents the speech of a man, ‘Benja’, directed to his younger brother, ‘Mrisho’, at the occasion of handing over to him the house which he once had inherited from their father. The text connects three political figures: 1) ‘*baba*’ (‘father’): the late first president of Tanzania, Julius Kambarage Nyerere, who commonly is referred to as *baba wa taifa* (‘father of the nation’), 2) ‘Benja’: William Benjamin Mkapa, the parting president, and 3) ‘Mrisho’: Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, the president to-be. Their political relationship as leading figures of the CCM is reinterpreted as a genealogy with Nyerere being the father of Mkapa as well as Kikwete. The house that is being handed over to the younger brother is a metaphor for Tanzania. ‘Benja’ summons his younger brother and gives him instructions on how to manage the house well. He is doing so with reference to the legacy of their father, who has already left this world:

<i>Unakumbuka baba nyumba hii aliniachia</i>	You remember that father ¹⁶ has left this house to me,
<i>na mambo mengi kuhusu nyumba kanihusia.</i>	and he gave me many instructions regarding the house.
<i>Yote hayo mie nimeyafuatilia,</i>	I have followed all of them,
<i>si umeona mafanikio tuliyojipatia?</i>	and haven’t you seen the achievements we have made?

(verse 1)

In verse two, ‘Benja’ mentions such a major achievement, namely the establishment of a national revenue authority that creates income for the government with which part of public services are financed. ‘Mrisho’ is told to further concentrate on supervising the tax collection in the future. However, three basic problems have persisted since the times of ‘father’,

¹⁶ *Baba* (‘father’) is an epithet of the first president of Tanzania, Julius Kambarage Nyerere, who died in 1999.

symbolized by the tenants living in the house: Ignorance, Diseases, and Poverty. 'Benja' urges his younger brother to clamp down on them, especially since Poverty has recently married Corruption. This image of the marriage between the two illustrates the interconnectedness of poverty and corruption in developing countries without using many words. 'Benja' views his brother capable of fighting those destructive tenants, because he has been a member of the army. 'Benja' also reminds 'Mrisho' not to forget his younger siblings symbolizing the Tanzanian youth, who "are not the nation of tomorrow, but of today".

The third verse pays special attention to the upholding of peace, regarded as a major achievement of former president Nyerere. 'Mrisho' is urged to guard peace as a sign of reverence for their late father, for whom internal and external peace had been a priority concern.

Pinga sana ubaguzi wa kabila na dini. Strongly oppose ethnic and religious discrimination.
Zingatia kuishi vizuri na majirani, Think of living well with your neighbours.
 (verse 3)

The parting 'Benja' also calls upon his brother to continue the custom of the "Uhuru Torch Race", performed every year to remind people on the achievement of freedom and independence which ended the colonial period. The Uhuru Torch, lit on top of Mount Kilimanjaro in 1961, is one of the national symbols of Tanzania. And like in the national anthem which starts with the words "*Mungu ibariki Afrika*" ('God bless Africa'), 'Benja' assures 'Mrisho' that God will help him. The song clearly imposes an obligation upon the presidential candidate:

<i>Nakukabidhi nyumba hii – Mrisho!</i>	I hand this house over to you – Mrisho!
<i>Yenye utulivu na amani – Mrisho!</i>	It is calm and peaceful – Mrisho!
<i>Isimamie kwa makini – Mrisho!</i>	Preside over it attentively – Mrisho!
<i>Na uondoe umaskini – Mrisho!</i>	And remove poverty – Mrisho!

One could argue that 'Benja' stands for the Tanzanian people, who are telling the presidential candidate in the guise of his predecessor what he, once elected, should do. However, in contrast to the song *Kura Yangu*, *Mrisho* makes no reference to the electoral process and the voting as means of political participation. Instead, it depicts the passing on of power from one president to his successor much as an act of inheritance like in a

monarchy. Legitimacy is drawn from genealogy rather than from a democratic mandate. Like in *Kura Yangu* the highest authority in *Mrisho* is God, this giving once more evidence of the religious orientation of the artists. So in the last two lines of the song 'Benja' concludes his speech by telling his brother:

*Usijali, mungu atakusaidia,
na malengo yako yote ataimia!*

Don't worry, God will help you,
and all your goals He will achieve!

2.4 Rais wa Bongo (Soggy Doggy)

Rais wa Bongo ('President of Tanzania') makes fun of the elections. In fact, it represents a kind of mockery, as it subverts the seriousness of the act of voting in democracy, by putting it into the context of the *Bongo Flava* scene. The artist Soggy Doggy imagines himself as president who has to appoint his ministers. He is thinking loudly about which *Bongo Flava* artist should be given which post, and thus many stars are being mentioned. The track of 4.15 min length consists of four verses rapped at considerable speed. A sung chorus is inserted between the verses:

*Nimchague nani?
Nimpe uongozi atawale kisanii?*

Whom should I choose?
Whom should I give the leadership to rule
artfully?

*Atoe mchango kwa jamii,
awe kinara bora wa wasanii.*

To make a contribution to society,
and be a good leader of the artists.

In the first verse Soggy Doggy says:

*Serikalini Soggy Doggy ndo kama bosi,
kama sinema jiulize itakwishaje*

Soggy Doggy, as boss of the government,
like in the cinema, you may ask yourself
"how will it end?"

Miaka yangu mitano serikali itakwendaje?

My five years – how will the government go?

Then he goes on to distribute the various ministries and other high ranking posts to his fellow *Bongo Flava* artists. Of course, some of them get better posts than others, while a few of them have to wait till the next elections to be endowed with power and benefits. He weaves into this discourse some slight social criticism when he points to the possibility of personal enrichment in some ministries, especially the ministry of finance, which

offers most (verse 2). However, for the most part the song focuses on the *Bongo Flava* scene itself. More than forty names, some of them aliases, are mentioned in the song. The humorous effect builds on the choosing of the artists for the different ministries, because this choice is motivated by the artists' characters as well as the relationship between them. A side blow is directed to the promoters, who are called "fraudsters" who exploit the artists. But there is also the call on the *Bongo Flava* artists to work together as a team. Even the "undergrounds" are considered in the song. "Underground" (*andagraundi*) is a term that denotes rappers who have not yet released an album and therefore have not yet been noticed sufficiently by the general public (Englert 2003: 73). By some patronising benevolence they are allotted minor posts as MPs or councillors. All in all, Soggy Doggy advances the demands of the younger generation, when he claims: "ranks and posts are there in abundance. It's now the turn of our generation" (verse 3). This demand represents the feeling of young people in Tanzania that sometime it should be their turn to replace the older generation in the access to posts and profits.

Rais wa Bongo was included in Soggy Doggy's album "March 11" which was released in 2006. It could be grouped into the "flava" trend within *Bongo Flava*, as it is quite preoccupied with self-display. Many of the *Bongo Flava* "superstars" are mentioned, and one has to be familiar with the scene, especially the relationship between the stars, in order to grasp the ironic nuances of the text. As has been shown for another song from the "flava" trend, these songs can still be political as they run counter to the role of youth as demanded by the established part of society (Reuster-Jahn 2007: 242-3).

2.5 *Ametukubali Tumemkubali* ('he has accepted us, we have accepted him') – *Bongo Flava* negotiating social recognition

Within the *Bongo Flava* sector of popular music there was some open support for the CCM, particularly focussing on its presidential candidate, Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete. The group TMK Wanaume praised him in their song *Anafaa* ('he fits'), Ngwair did the same in *Mtoto wa Jah-Kaya*, which is more HipHop style. *Bongo Flava* artist Mwanafalsafa had the song *Kijani na Njano* ('green and yellow', the colours of CCM), and Vicky Kamata contributed a song highlighting the campaign slogan *Ari Mpya, Nguvu Mpya*

(‘new spirit, new strength’) (Suriano 2007: 212). Some artists expressed their support by wearing clothes in the party colours and displaying its symbols (Suriano 2007: 212). Wanaume TMK, led by Juma Nature, officially supported Kikwete’s campaign, when they accompanied him to Shinyanga, Igunga and Mwanza in October (Mwinyi 2005). Furthermore, during the last ten days of the campaign, seventeen *Bongo Flava* artists (again including Wanaume TMK) launched a tour in support of Kikwete, which they called the “*Ametukubali Tumemkubali Tour*” (‘he has accepted us, we have accepted him’). The name of this tour gives an important clue for the understanding of the support, as it seems that the artists exchanged for it the recognition and acceptance by the political establishment. Obviously, they used the electoral campaign to negotiate their image in society.

2.5.1 *Anafaa* – TMK Wanaume¹⁷

The crew TMK Wanaume is part of the so-called Temeke family, a group of artists from the town quarters Temeke and Chang’ombe, who tend to represent a perspective on society “from below” (Raab 2006: 77). This group led by Juma Nature exposed itself as supporters of the presidential candidate of the CCM. Not only did they perform at Kikwete’s rallies in October, but they also composed the song *Anafaa* (‘he fits’), which is marked by persuasive language. The track is lasting 5.14 minutes. It consists of rapped passages and three different sung choruses, presenting the view and opinion of the group. By the use of “we” this view is generalised to include other musicians of the “new generation”. Taking into account that the *Bongo Flava* artists are admired role models of many youth in Tanzania, this alone gives persuasive power to the text. Even more so, as through the use of “we” the listener may feel included in the group as well. All in all the text appeals more to emotions than to critical thinking. J. M. Kikwete’s aptitude for leading the country is expressed by simply comparing him to the revered ‘*Mwalimu*’¹⁸ Nyerere, the ‘father of the nation’. Furthermore, he is depicted as the guarantor of peace and stability. Most of all, however, the

¹⁷ TMK is an abbreviation of Temeke, a town quarter in Dar es Salaam inhabited by ordinary people; *Wanaume* means ‘men’ in Swahili.

¹⁸ *Mwalimu* (‘Teacher’) is one of the epithets of the first president, Julius K. Nyerere.

song expresses a kind of bond between the artists and the future president, for example when they say:

*Sisi ndiyo watu wake kwanza kuchonga naye
tuliyo yokuwa naye mitaa ya kati katika jua*

Tukamwambia masela mtaani wamepigika,

ndiyo maana wengi wao sasa wanakaba.

We were the first to talk to him
when we were with him in the city
centre in the sun.

We told him that the youth in the
quarter have problems,
and that's why many of them now
resort to violence.

The close relationship is also expressed by the use of the presidential candidate's first name. So it does not come as a surprise when the artists conclude:

Tumempata tuliyempenda.

Tuliyempenda!

Mungu kamchagua,

hata vijana tunampenda.

We have got the one we like.

The one we like!

God has chosen him,

and even we youth like him.

Here again the person of the presidential candidate appears as being destined by higher powers to the office of president. So, when the youth like him this is in accordance with God's plans. As in some of the other *Bongo Flava* songs presented here, in *Anafaa* the artists repeatedly appeal to God, exposing their religiousness:

Mungu twamtakia Jakaya hadi amalize hili duru

nchi yetu iendelee kuwa huru.

Tunakuombea kwa mungu ahadi yote uyatekeleze

God, we hope for Jakaya to finish this
round,

so that our country may stay free.

We pray for you to God that you may
be able to fulfill all your promises.

The many repetitions of short phrases give the song a formulaic structure and help the message enter the listeners' mind. To add to its formulaic character, the song also makes use of CCM's campaign slogan *ari mpya, nguvu mpya, kasi mpya*. In this respect *Anafaa* resembles the official praise songs that were released by Captain Komba with his Tanzania One Theatre (T.O.T; one example is no. 9 in the appendix) and the Christian choir Upendo Group (one example is no. 10 in the appendix). However, the lyrics

of those consisted mostly of party slogans and appeals to the voters, and were much more repetitive than *Anafaa*.

Anafaa was live performed, aired on radio, and later included in the album *Ndio zetu* ('indeed ours', 2006). In the intro to *Anafaa* the artists discuss how to deliver the song. They say that they will not use HipHop but more Tanzanian style music in order that even elder people should understand it.¹⁹ On the back cover of this compact disc TMK Wanaume Family affirm their respect for J.M. Kikwete, their religiousness and their patriotism: "[...] our sincere thanks to the following people: The Honourable President of the United Republic of Tanzania Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete, our manager Saidi Fella, as well as our producer P. Funk a.k.a. Majani from Bongo Records. God bless TMK Wanaume, God bless Tanzania." (translated from Swahili by URJ)

2.5.2 *Mtoto wa Jah-Kaya* (Ngwair)

Although the title of this song makes fun of the first name of Jakaya Kikwete, it supports him as a presidential candidate. The title *Mtoto wa Jah-Kaya* ('Jah-Kaya's child') connects two words from the Rastafari context, i.e. *Jah*, the name of god, and *kaya*, one of the many terms in Swahili slang for marijuana.²⁰ However, the Rastafari theme is not further elaborated in the lyric. The song lasts 4.26 minutes, and consists of four verses rapped at considerable speed and with the skilful flow Ngwair²¹ is known for (Reuster-Jahn 2007). Often words are inserted to serve the flow better than the cohesion of the text as a narrative, affecting its intelligibility. The verses are separated by a sung chorus, which just says that Ngwair sends greetings to the presidential candidate. In the introductory passage of the lyric, the conversation of two old men is enacted, who tell each other that the young people are making an effort, according to CCM's slogan: 'a new spirit, new speed, new strength'. Then the song starts:

¹⁹ They say: *Tusipeleke kama hiphop, wazee watakuwa hawaelewi. Haya mambo kama kitanzania kidogo* (Don't let's convey it like HipHop, since older people will not understand. These things should be done in a Tanzanian way; translation URJ)

²⁰ *Kaya* is a transfer from Jamaican Patois.

²¹ Ngwair is also known as MaNgwair.

*Si ndio sisi-M²²,
si ndio sisi-M,
si ndio sisi-M.*

CCM – that’s us,
CCM – that’s us,
CCM – that’s us.

*Ah, pisha njia,
tunaingia.
Wote, pisha njia.
Nasema tena kwamba si ndio sisi-M.
Pisha njia, watu wazima
tuongee na Watanzania.*

Ah, let us pass,
we are entering.
You all, let us pass.
I repeat that CCM – that’s us.
Let us pass, us grown up persons
in order that we talk to the people.

Here the artists claim access to the political arena (‘we are entering’), where they want to speak to their fellow citizens as “grown-up persons”, i.e. as full members of society. After this introduction the song concentrates on praising Jakaya Kikwete, and eventually Ngwair confesses to be one of his admirers. He also explains that Kikwete is liked by the young people in the country because he is ready to listen to them.

*na mengi ya maana ongea kwa vijana.
Ndiyo maana mwana²³ nakufagilia sana.
Huna mpinzani si bara si visiwani.*

and many important things – talk to
the youth
That’s why I praise you much, man.
You don’t have a rival, not on the
mainland nor on the isles.

(verse 1)

*Mimi mwenyewe ni mmoja
wa wale wenye kura yako
Shahidi ukija geto ukutani picha yako.
Natamani kuona japo sarafu yenye sura yako.*

I myself am one
of those who vote for you.
For evidence, if you come to my ghetto
on the wall there is your portrait.
I also want to see your face on an a
coin

(verse 2)

This is of course direct propaganda and manipulation of voters. The question is, to what degree this has been a matter of business or was based on the conviction that Kikwete would change things to the advantage of the youth.

²² This is a word-play mixing the words *sisi* (‘we’) and CCM to “sisi-em”. It can be translated only approximately.

²³ *mwana* is a term of address used among youth. Literally it means “child, offspring”.

2.5.3 The *Ametukubali Tumemkubali* Tour

The following information is taken from an article by Mike Mushi that appeared on the internet website “JamboTanzania.net” on 3rd December 2005 (Mushi 2005). He reported that on 2nd December 2005, 12 days before Election Day, a number of “big names” of *Bongo Flava* had announced that they would start a tour in support of the presidential candidate Kikwete to last from 3rd to 13th December. They would tour the country divided into two groups in order to give live shows in a number of regional capitals. Eventually, they would meet up for a show in Mwanza on 12th December and then perform a huge final show in Dar es Salaam on the eve of Election Day. The seventeen artists from various crews called this tour the *Ametukubali Tumemkubali Tour* (‘he has accepted us, we have accepted him’)²⁴. Mushi reports:

“The chairman of the artists’ committee, Saidi Fella from the group Wanaume Family from Temeke said a total of 17 artists will take part, having ‘big names’ in the country in the field of the music of ‘the young generation’, or ‘Bongo Flava’. [...] These artists have said that they have decided to support the campaign of Kikwete and not of another presidential candidate, because he had acknowledged them as contributing to the field of music in the country. ‘It is not that he has asked us. In fact, he didn’t ask us, but, after having observed that he has been together with some of us in a number of his campaign-meetings, we have seen that he really needs us,’ said Dudu Baya. They said that for their tour they don’t expect money from that candidate, but they themselves have put their money together because of their eagerness to want Kikwete getting a huge victory in the general elections which will take place on 14th December” (Mushi 2005, translated from Swahili by URJ).

This support must have had a powerful impact on Tanzanian youth, who were of course the target group of the shows. The artists who took part in the tour were from different factions of the *Bongo Flava* scene in Dar es Salaam. Thus, the supportive attitude among them must have been quite general, while the critical voices of Dr. Levy, Sugu and Joni Woka did not

²⁴ The verb *-kubali* means ‘accept’ as well as ‘acknowledge’. In the given context I prefer ‘accept’ because it has a broader meaning.

represent the majority of the *Bongo Flava* stars.²⁵ Even if it is true that they did not get money for their shows, it is clear that they gained something from their public support of Kikwete and the CCM. It seems that Kikwete had indeed met some of the *Bongo Flava* artists and had listened to their problems like for example the lack of copy right regulations and their supervision. However, maybe the most important gain was that the artists used the elections for negotiating their image and role in society with the aim to become recognised more widely. This included the artists being regarded as fully-fledged members of the society, as well as their songs being acknowledged as relevant contributions to national culture and public discourse.

In the aftermath of the elections the artists were complaining that the president did not take steps towards improving their condition. They said that “JK [Jakaya Kikwete] has let them down immediately after they had promoted him in the campaign for the General Elections [...] (Darhotwire 2007, translated from Swahili by URJ). It seems however, that their complaints eventually had an effect. During an official visit to France in October 2007 President Kikwete said: “These young people have shown supreme creativity, they have very good talents which must be developed and increased. They are doing a good job, and their music is liked even more than the Congolese. It is my intention to help them in order that their music may grow and become international music” (Darhotwire 2007, translated from Swahili by URJ). According to Darhotwire, the president added that he was planning to meet leaders and representatives of *Bongo Flava* in order to look for possibilities how to cooperate and to help them with their work.

3. The wider East African context of campaign compositions

In order to place the *Bongo Flava* songs commenting on the elections in Tanzania 2005 in a wider East African context, we should look over the border to neighbouring Kenya. During the 2002 electoral campaign in Kenya, the HipHop song “*Unbwogable*” (‘invincible’) became famous for its

²⁵ According to Mushi (2005) the artists and groups who participated were Wanaume TMK, Afande Sele, O Ten, H Baba, Banana Zorro, Fid Q, Kysher, Mangwair, Noorah, Bushoke, Mad Ice, Man Dojo & Domokaya, Dudu Baya, and Dataz.

ability to express the spirit of the opposition movement which was determined to end the era of the Moi regime. Nyairo & Ogude (2005) have presented a thorough analysis of the politics of production and interpretation that led to the making of *Unbwogable* as a political song. Initially not having been intended as such, it fitted the situation and the mode of the people so well, that the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) determined to remove President Daniel arap Moi from power, adopted the song as its anthem. The lyrics were changed to include names of NARC leaders, and after the victory of the opposition the “discourse of resistance and invincibility was rewritten to include victory and it is precisely in this close association with the state that the slogan has run the danger of being colonized by a privileged few at the expense of the majority” (Nyairo & Ogude 2005: 225).

The song *Bado Mapambano* (‘the struggle still goes on’) also has quite a history as a case of a political song used for campaign purposes in Kenya as well as Tanzania. It demonstrates how a tune and song can become reused and invested with new meaning, while still banking on its original spirit. Originally, *Bado Mapambano* is a Christian hymn that calls on Christians not to slacken the fight against Satan. However, already in 1987 I have encountered this song, reduced to its chorus, in a seminar for health workers in Mtwara as a means to animate the participants. The chorus itself has no religious text, it simply says “let’s not sleep, the struggle still goes on.” Therefore, it is suitable for the use as an animation song in different contexts. During the constitutional referendum in Kenya 2005, the tune became something like an anthem of the movement which successfully opposed the adoption of a new constitution. It was the MP from Mbita, Otieno Kajwang’, who was the face of the *Mapambano* song in that context. The referendum led to the breaking up of the National Rainbow Coalition and the formation of the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), named after the symbol for “no” on the ballots, which was an orange. Probably inspired by the popularity of the song in Kenya, Benjamin wa Mambo Jambo, a *Bongo Flava* artist from Uganda converted it into a song commenting on the general elections in Tanzania which also took place in 2005.

As a Tanzanian campaign song, *Bado Mapambano* addresses the youth and urges them to wake up and become active since a new era will start with the election of the new president. The song starts with an introductory scene set

at a rally where a speech is delivered to the youth in the country. First of all, the beginning of the new era is announced by using CCM's election slogan "new spirit, new strength, new speed", which is expanded to include "a new phase, new issues, new things, a new president." Then the youth are told that they have much to be proud of and that it is their year now. However, the song essentially makes two calls on them by using proverbs. The first proverb is "*asiyekuwepo na lake halipo*", meaning that he who is not present gets no share. This proverb transports the message that the youth have to take their matters into their own hands, and not leave it to others to act for them. The second proverb is "*mtoto wa simba ni simba*" ('the child of a lion is a lion') in this context meaning that one should keep expectations realistic. The last verse expresses again the appeal to the youth to play an active role in the politics of the country. In this context reference is made to *taifa*, the nation. All Tanzanians – called by the Swahili slang term *wabongo* - should make collective efforts to develop the nation further.

Ni nani atakayeijenga Tanzania?

Who will build Tanzania?

Ni nani atakayeilinda Tanzania?

Who will watch over Tanzania?

*Oh, ni mimi na wewe tu,
ni mimi na wewe tu.*

Oh, it's only me and you,
it's only me and you.

Kiongozi imara kapatikana.

A determined leader has been available.

Wabongo endezezeni taifa iendelee.

Tanzanians, develop the nation further, so
that it may develop.

The song does not contain any rap passage. In fact, what qualifies it as *Bongo Flava* is mostly the artist himself, who is from the *Bongo Flava* scene, and the use of the term MC ('master of ceremonies'; in verse 1), which belongs to HipHop culture. Therefore, it gives evidence of the broad concept of *Bongo Flava* which even allows accommodating the tune of a church hymn. *Bado Mapambano* by Benjamini wa Mambo Jambo was not released on an audio cassette or compact disc.

The history of *Bado Mapambano* as a political rallying song did not end with the 2005 electoral campaign in Tanzania. It has again been recycled for the Kenya 2007 General Elections as a song of the ODM, this time altering the tune a little bit. The chorus has remained and the rest of the text praises

ODM in Swahili and calls on all Kenyans to vote for its candidates.²⁶ In addition, even other church songs have been used to serve as campaign songs by changing their texts (Koigi 2007). This has been met with criticism and concern about copy right issues. On a weblog site the following comment has been written:

“I do not like the idea of our politicians singing corrupted songs in their favour unless they have the authority from the musicians. However most Christian choruses are not originally from Kenya that’s why no one has come up to claim that politicians are pirating their songs” (Jamii ya Kenya 2007).

Recently, a massive commercialisation of political campaign songs has taken place. The journalist Mike Owuor summarizes this development in an article on “campaign compositions” during the 2007 elections in Kenya, which he links to the referendum campaign in 2005 (Owuor 2007). By the time of the electoral campaign 2007, the composition and production of campaign songs had multiplied, with politicians approaching musicians to compose songs in their favour. Especially the well-known musicians were wooed, while others were “literally hawking songs to presidential aspirants in the hope of getting a slice of the campaign money” (Owuor 2007). Owuor quotes a Nairobi based producer:

“There are cassettes and CDs that will be released by musicians incognito, so that such musicians are not considered partisan. This effectively means that more or less the same group or musicians can record songs praising different politicians. It is all business, nothing personal” (Owuor 2007).

According to Owuor, the desire to show loyalty to political powers in the musicians’ region seems to be another motivation for musicians to sing politicians’ praises. At any rate, the contribution of popular music to the 2007 electoral campaign in Kenya seems to have been basically opportunistic and the artists’ motivation well described as “cashing in on the election gravy train” (Owuor 2007). Whether this is the direction for

²⁶ See video of the song at <http://www.clevver.com/video/132690/latest-odm-song--bado-mapambano.phh>. (last visited 15-01-2008)

development in Tanzania as well cannot be predicted at the moment. At least the songs during the electoral campaign in 2005 had more to offer than plain praise, and money obviously did not play the biggest role among the factors motivating the artists. It must also be borne in mind that in Tanzania the CCM after independence had succeeded in forming a tight bond between itself and the nation (Lange 1999: 42), which to some extent still exists, even after the introduction of multi party democracy.

4. Conclusion

The *Bongo Flava* songs centring on the elections reflect the artists' political awareness and their role perception as educators of society. However, they did not speak in unison. While some artists' criticism targeted not only the class of politicians but also the citizens as voters, calling on them to behave responsibly and to take democracy seriously, others indulged in mockery or praise of candidates. There is the HipHop style rap *Kura Yangu* with direct criticism in the tradition of Mr. II and Wagosi wa Kaya as described by Perullo (2005: 79-84, see also Saavedra Casco 2006). In *Tawile*, criticism is expressed in a humorous way, following another tradition in *Bongo Flava* which was for example used by Professor Jay in *Ndiyo Mzee* (Perullo 2005: 84-86). *Rais wa Bongo* represents the self-centred "flava" trend. The metaphorical rap *Mrisho* stands for its own, as it does not fit in one of the above mentioned categories. Rather being an enactment than a narration, its style is similar to *Tawile's*. However, it lacks the humour, and is particularly loaded with metaphors and national symbols. *Anafaa* can be characterised as a praise song, while *Mtoto wa Jah-Kaya* combines praise with "flava", which again is dominant in *Rais wa Bongo*. *Bado Mapambano* mixes praise with a call on the youth to awake to political issues, and in addition is noteworthy for making use of a Christian church tune. Moreover, this song has become recycled for various political campaigns across the national border. Looking at the corpus as a whole it is the variety of styles, techniques, messages and tunes that is most striking. This shows that *Bongo Flava* is a multifaceted and versatile cultural phenomenon.

Most of the songs composed for the electoral campaign aimed at a more general audience beyond the Tanzanian youth. In the case of TMK Wanaume this was even stated by the artists themselves (see 2.5.1). On that account, the artists generally made only little use of slang (*Lugha ya*

*Mitaani*²⁷) in the songs and chose tunes that seemed likely to be acceptable to older people too. Moreover, their expressed positive, even affectionate relation with the nation, as well as their expressed religiousness probably facilitated the communication with the citizens. The religious dimension might also reflect the fact that “Kiswahili society is more or less theocratic in nature, and politics cannot be divorced from religion easily” (Amidu 1993: 35). All in all, the study once again shows the close relationship between popular culture and the nation in Tanzania, which is rooted in the cultural politics of the *Ujamaa* era (Askew 2002, Lange 1999, Raab 2006). The 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 (Lange 1999: 56). However, there might even be a link to older Swahili political poetry as existing in Lamu and Mombasa since the 19th century (Saavedra Casco 2006: 236).

With their songs commenting on the elections, *Bongo Flava* artists seem to have taken the opportunity not only to widen the scope and target group of their music, but also to negotiate social recognition and acceptance. While by telling Tanzanians about the meaning of ballot-casting they assumed a role as educators of society, by supporting the candidate of the dominating party they took sides with those in power. However, this is not necessarily a contradiction. *Bongo Flava* artists have tried from the beginning in the 1990s to achieve two goals. On the one hand they provided the youth with a medium to make their voices heard – their complaints, their criticism, their life experience, their problems, their needs and their desires. On the other hand they viewed *Bongo Flava* music as a way to achieve a better life and recognition for themselves. The future will show whether political expression in Tanzanian popular music will follow the commercial trend as found in Kenya, or whether it will develop along other lines.

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Artikel untersucht, in welcher Weise *Bongo Flava*-Künstler die Allgemeinen Wahlen des Jahres 2005 in Tansania kommentierten. Die Untersuchung basiert in erster Linie auf den Songtexten, die in voller Länge im Appendix präsentiert werden. Einige Künstler brachten Kritik, sowohl am Verhalten der Politiker als auch der Wähler, zum

²⁷ For the concept of *Lugha ya Mitaani* see Reuster-Jahn & Kießling 2006.

Ausdruck. Diese Kritik wurde in manchen Fällen direkt geäußert, hauptsächlich jedoch in einer indirekten, humoristischen Weise. Andere Künstler priesen mit ihren Liedern den Präsidentschaftskandidaten der dominierenden Partei CCM (Revolutionspartei). Die Unterschiedlichkeit der Aussagen sowie die Stilvielfalt der Lieder zeigen, dass *Bongo Flava* ein facettenreiches kulturelles Phänomen darstellt, das im politischen Diskurs in Tansania eine Rolle spielt. Es wird auch deutlich, dass einige Künstler die Wahlen als Gelegenheit sahen, sich beim politischen Establishment Anerkennung zu verschaffen, indem sie die dominierende Partei unterstützten. Der Artikel weist auf die in den Liedern ausgedrückte Liebe zur Nation sowie die religiöse Haltung der Künstler und argumentiert, dass diese eine Rolle für ihre gesellschaftliche Anerkennung spielen.

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