



A line between Hip – Hop and Traditional Dances: a Case of Youth in Tanzania

Daines Sanga

University of Bayreuth

dainesanga@yahoo.co.uk

This paper addresses the state of youth participation in cultural activities in the post colonial Tanzania by using the lens of traditional dances. It shows that the motivation of some the youth to participate in traditional culture is fading at the expense Bongo fleva. The paper situates youth in broader context and offers a critical analysis of the factors behind the moderate participation in traditional culture whereas an increase in involvement in *mziki wa kizazi kipyra*.¹ To achieve the objectives the paper analyses the state of youth in the pre-colonial and post independence era and the nature of their involvement in cultural activities. The paper unpacks procedures upon which the traditional culture was and is still handed down and how these procedures increasingly draw the line between traditional culture and emerging cultures. It shows that globalization and media offers an alternative space to the youth to redefine traditional culture through Hi-Hop, reggae and jazz, and form *mziki wa kizazi kipyra* through which not only they acquire access but also power and control over the genre. The article discloses incentives which Tanzania celebrates as a nation from youth's involvement in *mziki wa kizazi kipyra*, and the returns that youth achieve as individuals from taking part in bongo fleva. Yet, the article points out downside of the less involvement of youth in traditional dances and therefore calls for youth's participation in traditional dances for the outstanding future of Tanzania's culture.

¹ Mziki wa kizazi kipyra and bongo fleva have the same meaning. That is the music that emerged recently in Tanzania that combines both modern and traditional elements. The music is characterised by Swahili lyrics and the singers are habitually youth. In this essay I will be used the terms interchangeably.