

## **Tanzanian Popular Songs Disapprove Modern Harmful Masculinities: Analysing Mwana FA's Dume Suruali**

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### **Abstract**

*Worldwide, harmful masculinities have been liable for men's depression and other health issues, violence, or even deaths. This study explored what masculinities are accountable for in Tanzania. Some popular Tanzanian songs that provide discourses about modern harmful masculinities have been studied. The findings show that in Tanzania, the masculinities have mainly been accountable for gender problems and moral degradation mainly through social beliefs and popular songs. Also, while various popular Tanzanian songs have been promoting the masculinities, some including the song "Dume Suruali" by Mwana FA, address them critically and by observing Tanzanian cultural morals. The study uses R. W. Connell's gender order theory to analyze the songs.*

**Keywords:** Masculine Values, Harmful Masculinity, Gender Norms in Tanzania, Modern Male Gender Identities

### **Conceptualizing the Term 'Masculinity'**

Masculinity is a social-cultural construct that contains features believed to make someone being referred to as a man. Such features may be found in the thinking, behaviour, aspirations, and appearance of a person. For example, features that men in different societies are generally expected to possess include differentiation from womanhood, toughness, power, control, independence, and physical and sexual competence (Davis & Greenstein, 2009). Masculinity may also be seen in gender-role norms where men's roles differ from women's (Thompson & Bennet, 2015). For instance, in division of gender roles in many societies, men are generally expected to be breadwinners unlike women who are expected to be homemakers and caregivers (*ibid*). Likewise, in their behaviour, men are expected to be more rational and mathematical unlike women who are expected to be more nurturing and verbal (Jacobs et al., 2002). Although these ideal qualities may not be held by all men, they are culturally constructed to inform how men should be (Spector-Mersel, 2006). Such masculine features have always been

exclusively allocated to a male biological sex (Haywood & Macan, 2003), but in some cases, several women have also been associated with them<sup>8</sup> (Halberstam, 2019).

Historical positioning of masculinity ideals in the Western world has been sorted in several classifications. For example there is epic classification (800 – 100 BC), where masculinity is based on strength, courage, and loyalty. There is spiritual classification (400 – 1000 AD), where masculinity is based on self-renunciation, control from sexual activity, anti-feminine and anti-homosexual attitudes, and a strong patriarchal system. Another is chivalric classification (12<sup>th</sup> century - social system), where masculinity is based on self-sacrifice, courage, physical strength, honour and service to the lady and primogeniture (a system of inheritance in which people's properties, upon their death, pass to their firstborn/ legitimate child [eldest son in this case]). Another is renaissance classification (16<sup>th</sup> century - social system<sup>9</sup>), where masculine features comprise rationality, intellectual endeavour, and self-exploration. Another is bourgeois classification (18<sup>th</sup> century - social system), which is associated with success in business, social status, and worldly manners (Breines et al., 2000). Generally, masculinity ideals in African societies may be divided into traditional ones (before culture interaction with the western world), and modern ones (after culture interaction with the western world) (Ammann & Staudacher, 2021). Specifically, traditional African masculine ideologies describe men as brave, noble, emotionally intelligent, and strong. Generally, modern African masculine ideologies require men to possess traits like integrity, authenticity, and bravery, and to care for themselves and those around them(*ibid*).

History shows that in the past years, scholars have viewed masculinity as a single notion ‘traditional masculinity’ (Thompson et al., 1992). The features of this kind of masculinity include someone’s ability to marry, father, and protect and provide for his family. In recent years, on the other hand, varieties of masculinities have been discovered (Jefferson, 2002). These varieties of masculinities or as Wedgwood (2009) calls them ‘non-hegemonic forms of masculinity’ include: complicit, subordinated, marginalized, and hegemonic masculinities (Lusher & Robin, 2009). Hegemonic masculinity is the dominant form of masculinity generally characterized by heterosexuality, physical strength and subordination of women. ‘Complicit masculinity’ is a

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<sup>8</sup>In Tanzania, these women are referred as *jike dume* or *jike shupa* (listen to song Jike Shupa by Nuh Mziwanda or watch the film Jike Dume or Tom Boy directed by [Ismail Zingo](#)).

<sup>9</sup> Social system here means the network of relationships between individuals or groups that makes up a complete and stable social union.

form of masculinity where men admire and do not challenge the dominant masculinity; even if they do not fit within the category. 'Subordinate masculinity' is a form of masculinity in which a person lacks many of the qualities of hegemonic masculinity while also expressing qualities opposite to hegemonic masculinity. 'Marginalized masculinities are masculinities that categorize men on the basis of race, class, ethnicity, status, social group, background, social order, etc. hence, such men are disadvantaged in terms of being viewed psychologically 'insecure' in experiencing their masculinities; despite the fact that those men may display and enjoy such masculinities (*ibid*). Due to complex existence of masculinities [and gender identities in general], a measurement known as 'the Traditional Masculinity-Femininity (TMF)' has been designed to assess fundamental features of recognized masculinity or femininity that are constructed within a society (Kachel et al., 2016).

Diversity of masculinities came about from the fact that men perform and manifest masculinities in varied ways (Cameron & Bernardes, 1998). In addition, men have different opportunities and capabilities in performing masculinities depending on their socioeconomic classes, historical backgrounds, religion, physical bodies, social abilities, age, and living contexts or environment. Thus, these positions of opportunity interconnect in self-motivated ways to create unique and contextually specific masculinities. Research also shows that within a single culture and across various cultures and environments, there are different perceptions on what constitutes masculinity (Schofield et al., 2000). Age, social group, class position, ethnicity, and even disability status are explained to contribute to the different experiences and expressions of masculinity among men (Connell et al., 2005). Masculinities are also not fixed identities but multiple, complex, and intersectional social practices and experiences that are fluid and sometimes contradictory. For instance, in the past years, ideals of masculinity mainly included ability to provide for one's family, marry, father, and build a house. After neoliberal structural reforms in the late 1980s and early 1990s, which 'removed men's edge' and increased women's access to the labour market, previous dominant features of masculinity changed due to changes in gender roles and rights (Ammann & Staudacher, 2021). This has also led to hybrid masculinities where men selectively incorporate different performances and identity elements of masculinities as they wish (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014).

Some masculinities are displayed through smartness in men while others through roughness. In Tanzania, for example, the smart ones are referred as *watanashati* and in recent years, they have been variously referred to through

Swahili slang as *matozi*, *masharobaro* etc. The rough ones, who are referred as *wagumu* (the hard ones), are perceived and ridiculed as the ones who do not need be smart. Such men prefer to wear big boots, oversized dresses, and sometimes draw natural tattoos<sup>10</sup> made from cashew nut oil, irritating leaves, or fire match in order to distinguish themselves from other 'normal [less masculine] men'. In recent years, the classification of men in Tanzania in these two groups generally categorizes that the soft men are those from Dar es Salaam (the business capital city and the former capital of the country) while the hard ones are those men from other regions. The soft men are referred to as 'chips eaters' (chips here is regarded as soft food) and the hard ones are referred as 'cassava eaters' (cassava here is regarded as hard food).

For many years, masculinity has also been seen in the formal education subjects in African and western countries. For instance mathematics and science subjects are perceived more masculine while subjects like history and language perceived more feminine (van der Vleuten et al., 2016). This is also reflected in the labour market where science-oriented jobs such as engineering, medicine, and aviation, among others, are perceived more masculine against jobs such as historian, dancer, linguist etc. which are perceived less masculine (*ibid*).

### **Harmful Masculinities and their Instances**

Harmful masculinities refer to masculine practices and beliefs that are difficult to be achieved and maintained by men, and attempts to achieve and maintain them may lead to negative effects on men and the society at large (Spector-Mersel, 2006). Generally, harmful masculinities involve cultural pressures for men to behave in certain manners which are dangerous and unhealthy, but yet are considered representing 'real manliness'. Good examples of such characters include those which are responsible for man's unessential domination, physical/sexual aggression or violence, absolute unnecessary physical toughness, careless risks taking habits, never showing weakness habits, emotional insensitivity, etc. (Thompson & Bennett, 2015).

Alvert (2014) explains that usually, harmful masculinities are elevated by cultural demands - pressures from men to fellow men or from the whole society to men. Pope et al. (2000) and Spector-Mersel (2006) provide an example of such situations, that some boys/men have been bullied from not possessing large muscles on their bodies, hence claimed not appearing masculine enough i.e. appearing more feminine. In Tanzania, the term *mtoto*

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<sup>10</sup> However, sometimes even smart men draw tattoos from heena, stickers or some special paintings.

*wa mama* (mother's child) has been used in the bullying. Research also shows that such belief is elevated by the fact that men are expected to be 30 pounds (of muscle) heavier than women (Spector-Mersel, 2006). This is responsible for the belief that the stronger a man is, the more masculine he is. This belief makes several men to use supplements to build their muscles more while some others attend gym in order to expand different muscles on their bodies to attain such body feature for evading bullies, attract girls and for other uses such as sexual objectification of men – where men are viewed as sex objects to be watched by women in advertisements, music videos, films, television shows, and in sex magazines (Mulgrew et al., 2014). For men who fail to attain this feature, develop a body-image dissatisfaction concern from perceiving themselves as having a 'poor body image'. This may lead to anxiety, depression, shame, and low self-esteem where some may search different drugs to reshape their bodies (Leit et al., 2001).

In another case, facial masculinity has been a concern to men. In this case, men are headed for possessing a 'masculine face' which most of the times is perceived to be the one which is 'well bearded'. This fact is explained by Dixson (2019) and Spector-Mersel (2006) who explain that men, especially young ones in urban areas, are tempted to possess the feature, which is also liked by most women in those areas. Such a facial look is regarded in Tanzania as *sura ngumu* [hard face] or *sura ya kiume* [male face]; face look which is praised against *sura laini* [soft face] or *sura ya kitoto* [baby face]. Some young men in Tanzania who do not possess this feature, draw black colour on parts of their faces to be perceived as possessing a beard. Some other men use a mixture of hair growth products such as *kuza*, *nyonyo* or castor oil, among others, to grow beard. However, these men may face negative effects on their health due to application of chemicals on body. In the above cases, one can note that some men do particular things to respond to masculinity forces; an act that is known as 'perceptual sensitivity'/'decisional bias' on masculinity (*ibid*). Some other young Tanzanian men eat spicy foods in large quantities, believing that those food stuffs stimulate growth of hair in different parts of the body. Such belief is heightened by the observation that Indian boys are known for eating spicy foods, and their bodies are covered with a lot of hair.

In another case, harmful masculinities have been associated with food. In this case, some men consume such 'masculine food' in large quantities, while ignoring some other foods which are associated with femininity. For instance, research shows that across continents and cultures, men eat substantially much meat to prove their masculinity (Murphy, 2020; Garel, 2019), something

that has resulted in some men becoming scurvy (Murti, 2020). Besides, some men ridicule vegetarianism and the drinking of juices, and eating of fruits; especially cucumbers, bananas, and carrots, associating the fruits' shape with male sexual organs thus, men eating them related to effeminacy and homosexuality, while associating salads and juices with femininity. Thus men who drink juice or eat those fruits suffer from homophobia. Specifically in Tanzania, men who eat such food, juice, or fruits, are called '*wanaume wa Dar*'<sup>11</sup> [men from Dar es Salaam] (listen to song '*Wanaume wa Dar*' by Mudy Msanii and song '*Wanaume wa Dar*' by Mkali Wenu). These men are mocked from drinking different kinds of juice; especially cane juice, from the perceived ridicule that they do not have strong teeth enough to chew cane. Even with alcohol drinking, hard liquors (which are referred to in Kiswahili as '*ngumu kumeza*' – hard to swallow) are considered more masculine drinks than low alcohol content drinks such as light beers; which are considered feminine. In the same case, some Tanzanians, who drink raw blood are considered masculine and healthier without considering potential health dangers from diseases. This act of food consumption being linked to gender identity is referred to as 'gendering of food' (Alvert, 2014).

Toughness is another aspect that brings harmful masculinities into vision. In this aspect, men have been encouraged not to care for themselves in order to emphasize their toughness (Fowler & Andrew, 2017). In my observations, I have noted that some Tanzanian young men who live in the outskirts of Arusha and Dar es Salaam cities feel proud and feel more masculine for having been jailed. Such men use to label some signs in jails so that they can prove to their fellows about their presence in jail. Some men who smoke weed also bully others who do not smoke such substance by identifying them as less masculine. Toughness as harmful masculinity has also been seen when men avoid wearing protective working tools, when men avoid being afraid, when express insensitiveness to loneliness. A man who fails to achieve these features is referred as *mtoto wa mama*, 'flower boy' etc.(listen to song *Mtoto wa Kiume* by Geez Mabovu; Chambers et al, 2016; Spector-Mersel, 2006).Chambers et al (2016) show the concern of masculinity in the contexts of diseases outside Tanzania, while Nyamhanga (2011) addresses that harmful masculine attitudes (of superiority) discourage some Tanzanian HIV positive men from accessing antiretroviral therapy. Englar-Carlson and Kiselica (2013) discuss about toughness blocking most men to reach out for help, dissimilar the situation to women. This has been seen in the Tanzanian popular music industry where male artists such as the late Langa and the late

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<sup>11</sup>It is perceived that such men cannot do difficult jobs; unlike those from other regions.

Albert Mangwea were reported to have passed away while struggling with various difficulties in their lives, including use of illegal drugs; of which they never expressed out to sick help. This is unlike their female counterparts such as Hawa Nitarejea, Ray C, and Recho Kizunguzungu, who admitted to suffer from different problems including drug use. The female counterparts asked for help, which helped them survive and recover from the effects of the drugs. Following these effects, some efforts have been made. For example, in 2021, the Kinondoni District Commissioner, Gowin Gondwe, launched 'Extraordinary Men Network Kinondoni' which is a platform for enabling men to discharge their psychological problems to psychologists to rescue them from health risks.

In another occasion, it has been a norm in different societies that men restrict themselves to show their emotions (Spector-Mersel, 2006; Kupers, 2005). Men are also encouraged into risk-taking practices which is known as *kujitoa kafara* (Schrock & Schwalbe, 2009; listen to album *Kufa Kiume* [die hard/manly] by Kikosi cha Mizinga). However, suppression of emotion usually leads to aggression and violence, and psychological problems such as depression, increased stress, and substance abuse (Ross et al, 2020).

In another case, modern Tanzanian masculine beliefs demand men having extra sex stamina<sup>12</sup> from the normal natural one<sup>13</sup>. Such belief makes some Tanzanian men to use different products for increasing their lasting time during sexual intercourse, and for ejaculating many times when having sex. The boosting of sexual abilities is referred in Kiswahili as '*kuweka bando la mahaba*' – adding a sex bundle. This process involves procedures such as eating coconut, uncooked cassava, groundnuts, octopus' soup, *mkuyati* (traditional plant), pork, roots of *mkongoraa* plant, or drinking *Konyagi* spirit. Also modern pills such as Viagra and use of traditional medicines such as *Vumbi la Kongo* and *al kasusu* (also known as *al kasusi* or *al kasus*) are used by some Tanzanian men to achieve maximum sex stamina. However, men do not consider potential health risks of using such ingredients. Some of such stuffs, like *al kasusu*, have been blamed for causing high blood pressure, while men with heart conditions are advised to avoid Viagra for its side effects. Besides, if at all those products can boost sexual ability, they can be a supportive agent for the transmission of STDs and HIV.

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<sup>12</sup> Listen to the song *Unaibiwa* by Rayvanny; which mocks men who do not have 'extra' sexual stamina and those who have 'small' male sexual organs.

<sup>13</sup> Listen to the song *Roho Yangu* by Rich Mavoko; which emphasizes men to drink octopus soup to increases sex stamina.

In other cases, there has been a tendency of some Tanzanian men struggling to have large male sexual organs. This, on the one hand, comes from the masculine belief that ‘real men’ should possess large male sexual organs’. Incidentally, this tendency is a result of mockery to men who are perceived to possess small sexual organs. In modern Tanzania, small male sexual organs are figuratively referred as *kibamia* (okra) while the bigger ones as *tango*<sup>14</sup> (cucumber). In the song *Kata* by Ommy Dimpos and Nandi for instance, Nandi praises and sings that she wants big sized male organs while ridiculing small ones. Her verses in my translation are: “I want a ‘cucumber’ [big male sexual organ], bring to me a cucumber I am tired of ‘okra’ [small sized ones]”. These kinds of incidences make several Tanzanian men using products such as *myegeya* for increasing the size of their sexual organs in order to be perceived ‘real men’ to evade disrespect in the society without considering the risks from using those products (Amani, 2019).

In another case, low voice is considered as one feature of masculinity. In this case, some boys struggle hard to talk and sing in a very deep voice which is beyond their capability and which may affect their throats, in order to achieve masculine status (Spector-Mersel, 2006). Some men proud themselves to have a male voice from a belief that ‘a man should roar like a lion’ (Freer, 2011). In my observations, I have found some boys in Kilimanjaro and Dar es Salaam secondary school choirs force themselves to sing in the bass voice and avoid the third voice/ tenor (mid-range male singing voice) for fearing to be regarded less masculine. Really, this is a psychological discomfort.

Harmful masculinities have also been seen on musical genres. For example, heavy metal music in England has been associated with strength and power. Thus, its performers display various masculinities on the stage performance such as the use of strength in singing [very loud], in playing drums, and in dancing. Musicians of this genre have also developed styles such as moshing and stage diving which are dangerous for both the musicians and their audience when they throw themselves offstage. Specifically in Tanzania, taarab music has been perceived as female music despite the fact that in the countries of its origin it is performed by men (Mwakibete, 2019). The perception came after the development of *rusha roho* taarab style in which musicians [primarily females] mock each other through the music lyrics. Such incidence has made several men to call their fellows ‘taarab singers’ to mean that they behave like women<sup>15</sup>. Likewise, in the *bongo flava* industry,

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<sup>14</sup> Listen to the song *Kibamia* by Rostam and the song *Kata* by OmmyDimpoz, among others.

<sup>15</sup> Listen to the song *SitakiDemu* by Juma Nature.



musicians have categorized themselves into those who sing [*wanaoimba*]; who are perceived less masculine and less respected (these are ridiculed as *wabanapua* – nose squeezers) against those who rap [*wanaochana*] (who are perceived as *wagumu* – the hard ones)<sup>16</sup> (*ibid*). This division has grown hatred among musicians and among fans (Mwangi, 2004).

Some Tanzanian musicians have given themselves pseudonyms which resemble violence. These pseudonyms include East Coast Army, Nigger Jay, Bad Gear, NakoToNako Soldiers, among others. Some Tanzanian rappers have also created a form of masculine identity by using Swahili terms *msela* and *mchizi* to refer to each other. These terms, which indicate marginalized youth, are equated with English terms - gangster or thug (Reuster-Jahn & Hacke, 2011). Similarly, in other countries some musicians refer to themselves as Nigga, Mafia, Soulja, or gangster. For example, Panamanian Singer Félix Bosquez uses ‘nigga’ as his artistic name, American rapper De Andre Way calls himself Soulja Boy, several US artists such as Bone Thugs-n-Harmony, Nate Dogg etc. identify themselves doing gangster rap music, while there is an American hip hop group that calls itself Junior MAFIA (Mwakibete, 2019). In Congo, some musicians refer to themselves as *bills*, *yankee* and *bakumbusu* [names that imitate gorilla fighting strength] (Pype, 2007; Gondola, 2009).

Generally, due to harmful masculinities, men face psychological problems from their experiences in struggling with who they are and the men they are ‘supposed’ to be. This model identifies three different strains: ‘discrepancy injure’: when men feel they fail to live up to their internalized idea of what masculinity is; ‘dysfunction injure’: when men who live their traditional masculinity experience inner turmoil because those masculine characteristics are viewed undesirable; and ‘trauma injure’: when men face traumatic consequences of trying to live up to masculinity standards (Ross et al., 2020). Harmful masculinities also challenge men to express two psychological situations: be ‘good men’, and be ‘good at being men’ (Ammann & Staudacher, 2021). To be ‘good at being a man’ means to follow what is perceived masculine at a time. To be a ‘good man’ here means healthy masculinity. Healthy masculinity means as a man, not using your size, strength, or power unwisely. It also means man to be honest with yourself about your own feelings, needs and desires. It also means treating others with the kindness and respect that you as a man want to be treated with (*ibid*).

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<sup>16</sup> Listen to the song *MuzikiGani* by Nay wa Mitego.

### **Representations of Harmful Masculinities in Popular Songs**

Several scholars such as Minna Salami (2016), Pieterse (2019), Ayodabo and Amaefula (2021), to mention a few, discuss how masculinity is portrayed in the arts. Salami discusses ways that African masculinity is shaped in art forms, Pieterse discusses masculine violence and identity in South African Films, Ayodabo and Amaefula discuss continuity and discontinuity of masculinity in African Cinema. Specifically, in songs, masculinity has always been expressed variously (Haider 2019; Ammann & Staudacher, 2021). Different representations of masculinities in popular songs are a result of complex existence of masculinities in societies (Ammann & Staudacher, 2021). Martens (2018) notes that through their messages, songs can be used to determine masculinity position in societies. Hence, there are songs which restrict men to behave in certain ways while others praise men for behaving those ways. Toni Braxton from the U.S. for example, sang the song 'He wasn't Man Enough for Me'. The song proposes that men are expected to do and behave some things to their partners in order to be 'real men' (or 'men enough' in Toni Braxton's terms). Another song - 'Toxic Masculinity' by Filipino musician Eyedress, addresses how men mask up their emotions, hide pain, and avoid crying because that is not manly. In a similar vein, in the song 'Samaritans' by an English rock band - Idles, the musicians sing that men resist dropping their tears in favour of showing 'real manhood'. Another song 'The Stigma' by British-American rock band addresses how various behaviour manifestations such as appearing pretty, liking cute things, being 'soft' by crying or displaying other 'weak' emotions are incompatible with masculinity.

While that is in song lyrics, music videos also display harmful masculinities variously. In such videos, there is a tendency of promoting men dominance over women. This dominance, however, is usually engineered without violent contents but mostly in 'callous disdain' – (insensitive disrespect), mostly through men being surrounded by several half-naked women in the videos (Roberts, 2019). The image one may get from these kinds of music videos is the idea that wealth attracts women. When some ordinary people watch such videos, showing male musicians surrounded by women, they try to apply that in real life, and that leads to sexual harassment.

According to gender socialization theories (Fagot et al, 2000), men and boys internalize gender role expectations because doing so confirms their identity (Jacobs et al., 2002). Similarly, not conforming to that, leads to uncertainty and guilt, which most men try to avoid. Because male adolescents and mid male adults are still shaping their gender identity, they are very likely to

conform to gender roles (*ibid*). The more boys and men internalize harmful masculinities displayed in songs, the more they increase the chances that the masculinities may affect them.

In Tanzania, there are various examples of songs that represent masculinities and harmful masculinities. The song '*Wanaume Kama Mabinti*' (men who are like girls) by Lady Jay Dee who criticizes men who get financial support from women. This song does that on the basis that according to traditional gender norms in Tanzania, it is women who are expected to depend on men for financial assistance. The lyrics of this song for example, criticize men who want to get things for free; men should not drive cars that are not theirs, men should not drink alcohol that is bought by other people; men should not have romantic relationships with women who are older and wealthier than themselves. Thus, the song ridicules men who do these things and compares them to girls (Ntarangwi, 2007). On the contrary, this song suggests that all these things that it restricts men to do, can be done by women. Although anyone can agree that most men are usually the owners of property in Tanzania, and that most women depend on men for their financial needs, those facts cannot restrict a few men who do not own property, to receive assistance from their women, especially when those men are in need and women are in a position to provide some help.

In another song '*Mume Bwege*' (Stupid Husband) by Bushoke, a husband is pictured in the songs as being stupid from being mistreated by his wife. Such mistreats include the husband performing household chores such as washing up, cleaning the house, cooking and washing clothes. The song criticizes the man by being 'dominated' by his wife. Since according to gender norms in Tanzania, these house chores are considered to be designated for women, the song ridicules this man by calling him a stupid husband (Sanga, 2011), thus gender order theory<sup>17</sup> is reflected to validate the musician's belief (Connell, 1995). Gender order in masculinity means what men are expected, allowed, and encouraged to do (*ibid*). Although anyone can agree that those mentioned domestic duties are usually performed by women according to the established gender roles in Tanzania, it will be unwise for a man to stay hungry waiting for a woman to cook, or to stay in a dirty house or wear dirty clothes because a woman is not willing or not able to clean them. It is obvious that if a woman is not willing or not in a position to perform these duties, a man can do them.

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<sup>17</sup>Gender order systematizes society's gender beliefs and practices by making and remaking them meaningful (Connell, 1995).

The song, 'Akipendacho Binti' by O Ten promotes harmful masculinities in another angle. It signifies that men should be responsible for everything that women want. Its lyrics are:

### **The chorus**

What a woman wants a man must buy. That is why commodities for women never stay long on the market shelves. In that case, men should struggle hard day and night to get money to buy women things

### **Verse one**

[a girl asks] Buy me shoes, buy me clothes, take me to a night club, take me to the beach [a man replies] I will buy you everything you want

I will buy you a nice phone, I really need to get money to buy you things before I get embarrassed. I am a man, I suffer day and night, I take risks without fearing death, I can do anything whether it is legal or illegal. How can it be strange for me to buy a woman a car, there are others who buy women houses and others buy them ships.

Relatives and friends fight because of women. So men should have a 'giving hand'<sup>18</sup>. If a man does not 'care' for his woman, the couple's relationship will just end there even if they started their relationship yesterday.

### **Verse two**

Every time I leave my house I ask my woman what I should buy her. I do this so that *Fataki*<sup>19</sup> do not steal her. I supply her with all domestic needs, a car outside and some pocket money. Everyone agrees that a man should buy something for a woman. Even in bars, men buy drinks for women that they do not know. And letter they pay for taxi and lodge to sleep with them. So my fellow men do not hesitate to spend for women, this norm has

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<sup>18</sup> Giving hand here is a figure of speech which means ascetic behaviour.

<sup>19</sup>*Fataki* is a nickname for rich men who like to spend their money with young girls expecting sex from the girls in return.

been established. Even Osama<sup>20</sup> takes care of women. We men, we struggle hard to get money, but we spend it easily on women. We have to do that, otherwise we are called *mume bwege*, and other men will steal our women.

This song and others which have similar themes are liked by women because they adore them. However, they make men suffer to fulfill this role.

Another song, '*Mwanaume Mashine*' by Msaga Sumu, sustains harmful masculinity messages through its lyrics:

Get to know the parameters of a 'real man'. It is not about having a good face, to struggle hard, or to supply the needs of your family. A real man is not about money but a 'machine'.

If you love me just love me. I am poor, I really have nothing.

Do not ignore me because I am poor. One day I will get something.

But remember that a man is a 'machine'. If you want money, go to Manji<sup>21</sup>. I say if you want money, go to Bakhresa<sup>22</sup>. Do not expect money from me because I have nothing. But remember a man is a 'machine'.

This song opposes harmful masculinity belief that a man should have 'enough' to spend with women, as seen in the previous song above. But surprisingly, it promotes another harmful masculine belief that a man should possess a big male sexual organ ['a machine']. This contradiction shows how harmful masculinity beliefs are complex in the society. Gender order theory is reflected in this song as gender beliefs are remade in different contexts (Connell, 1995).

While the previously discussed songs promote harmful masculinities, other songs defy them. The song *Kibamia* by Rostam for instance, criticizes harmful masculinity beliefs such as men suffering from possessing a small size sexual organ, among others. In this song, Rostam, a group of two male

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<sup>20</sup>Certainly, the musician legitimize this argument by using Osama as an example; that during his lifetime, Osama was perceived as a dangerous terrorist, but he too, as a man, 'cared' for women.

<sup>21</sup>Yusuph Manji is a well-known Tanzanian business man.

<sup>22</sup> Said Bakhresa is a well-known rich Tanzanian business man.

musicians: Roma and Stamina, feature a female musician, Maua Sama, to discuss harmful masculinities in the form of a debate between two men, rivaling over a female's love. Roma is set in the song to display harmful masculinities in order to win Sama's love, while Stamina is set to be honest with his manhood. Some of the lyrics of the song go:

### **The Chorus by Maua Sama**

Who should I love between you? I need a man to give me the real pleasure on bed. I do not want a man with a small sized one; I want the one with a 'machine'.

### **Verse One**

#### **Roma - as the one having a 'machine'**

Come to me I am a real man. You may ask other girls how I satisfied them. I will sacrifice anything in order to 'get' you.

#### **Stamina – as the one having 'a small sized one'**

I am mad over you please give me a chance. I will strive hard to make you happy. I do not need erection boosting pills 'to play the match' well. I will give you real love and every other things that you want. But to be honest, I cannot give you a house or car. And I am a human being I cannot 'function'<sup>23</sup> like a machine.

The gender order theory can be reflected in this song since gender ideologies and practices are debated (Connell, 1995). This song could be a case study on how songs defy harmful masculinities in Tanzania. However, it contains abusive words (for ethical reasons I have not written them here) in its lyrics. The concerned lyrics discuss sex practice and mentions sexual organs openly. The abusive language in the song led to its being censored by the Government. The song is considered unethical because in Tanzania, it is a taboo to discuss sexuality or to mention sexual organs in public (Mwakibete, 2019).

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<sup>23</sup> The term function here is figuratively used to mean to last long during sexual intercourse.

## **The Song *Dume Suruali* offers Critical Dialogues against Harmful Masculinities**

In this song, whose title means ‘trousers man’ – a man who has no money to cater for the needs of his woman, Mwana F.A. generally disapproves of the tradition of men being set as the ‘money supplier machine’ to women in modern life cultures. Two genders are arguing and debating this men’s role in the song: female gender – represented by musician Vanessa Mdee and male gender represented by Mwana FA. The lyrics of the song go:

### **Chorus by Vanessa Mdee**

If you are a ‘trousers man’, stay far away from me, you are not my type. I want that Gucci, find it; then spend all on a girl like me. My name is Vee Money, spend all on a girl like me.

### **Verse 1 by Mwana FA**

These are my greetings to you, if you sell love, I am not going to buy it. If you call me ‘trouser-man’, or ‘shorts-man’ I do not care, as long as I am not losing anything from that. You cannot turn me into a fool. I cannot make a mistake spending all my money on you. You can just call me a miser but I cannot buy love.

### **Verse 2 by Mwana FA**

Why should I be the one who is supposed to seduce you with gifts and not vice versa? What is so special on your body? Do not expect gifts from me all the time. Do not love money like trousers’ pockets. If you do, find your own. Remember money can lead to loss of humanity.

They call me controversial rich guy. I am very rich but I cannot spend much on you. I know you love my money but I love it too. If you ask me for money, I am done with you.

**Vanessa Mdee** – Wanna see you bring me to Paris today.

**Mwana FA** – that cannot happen during Magufuli's time<sup>24</sup>. If I spend on you and then after that you leave me, what will happen? I think I will spiritually attack you during night dreams. If I were not a miser, I would now be broke. And all the girls that I have spent on would have been my enemies. I avoid such circumstances by not spending much on you.

(The lyrics have been translated from Swahili into English by the researcher.)

In this song, Mwana FA shows his stance against modern women who lead luxurious lives through men's money. In recent years, such women have been called *wadangaji* (singular - *mdangaji*), a softer name for the term prostitute, which means women who sell sex but do not line up in the streets at night. *Wadangaji* usually find their men (*madanga* – singular *danga* [sponsor]) to cater their needs. What Mwana FA criticizes in this song has existed in Tanzania for a long time. Earlier, such women have been called *wachunaji* (singular *mchunaji*) and their men *mabuzi* (singular *buzi*). The women have also been called *milupo*, *dada poa*, *sister du* etc. and their men have been called *mapedeshee*, *vibopa*, *mapapaa*, among other names.

Sanga (2011) discusses the involvement of music in shaping people's gendered behaviour in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Following his work, the song *Dume Suruali* seems to be a gender regulatory regime song which challenges established harmful gender norms in the society. These norms are that men always spend their money on women as a way of adoring them and to get love/sex in return. Mwana FA argues that he does not see a reason for the woman in the song to demand him to spend his money intensively on her. What the musician criticizes about this norm is relevant in the current situation because women's participation in the paid-labour market has substantively increased worldwide (Evans, 2016). This situation proposes that there is a possibility that women may have equal opportunities of earning income as men or they may even possess more money/wealth than men.

The critical dialogues in this song prove that songs discourage harmful popular thinking on a large scale (Haider, 2019). More to that, one can note that apart from being a man and a rapper, Mwana FA challenges masculinities that he sees are unsuitable. One would expect a male rapper not to challenge

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<sup>24</sup> By 'Magufuli time' he means, the time during the presidency of the late John Magufuli, who was strict in reducing unnecessary spending of public wealth.



masculinities but this musician criticizes harmful masculine mainstreams norms. This song has played a role in defying harmful masculinities while at the same time observing Tanzanian acceptable norms in that task, unlike the previously discussed songs which ignored such norms, which led them to be censored.

In this song, Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC) applies in the communicated criticisms. This is the strategic use of communication approaches to promote changes in knowledge, attitudes, norms, beliefs and behaviour in the society so as to achieve desirable beliefs, behaviour, and practices (Michie & Johnston, 2012). This approach appears in *Dume Suruali* when undesirable masculine behaviour is discouraged.

Vicarious reinforcement approach can be seen when the musician proposes new behaviour from observing punishments resulted from undesired old ones (McLeod, 2016). Through this process, the musician threatens the effects of harmful masculinities, when he alerts that a man can spend all his money to a woman and the woman may later leave him. This punishment of losing the money and being left by a woman is expressed here as a reward for a man who spends unwisely. The gender order theory is also reflected when established female gender regime is challenged (Connell, 1995). Thus here, a gender order in masculinity establishes what is expected and encouraged in relation to what men should do in the context of this song (*ibid*).

## **Conclusion**

Through this study, one can see how songs manifest the complexity of harmful masculine beliefs and practices in Tanzania. Through the songs, one can learn that masculine beliefs and practices change from time to time; as some songs praise masculine features which are different from those praised in other songs. It can be seen that musicians who criticize the masculinities used a debate style in their songs. Certainly, they know that there are places, societies, or times that what they praise in the songs is not celebrated. Lastly, songs used in this study show that in Tanzania, authorities mirror harmful masculinities in songs more on moral basis than on men's health risks. This can be reflected as songs, for example, 'Machine' was not censored from misleading boys and men into using substances to increase the size of their sexual organs but because they mentioned those organs openly. Since effects of harmful masculinities are evident in Tanzania, political and art authorities should also think of restricting songs that praise the masculinities without violating Tanzanian morals. They should also educate the society about the effects of such practices and encourage musicians to compose songs that are

beneficial to the Tanzanian community for lessening sexual abuse, gender-based violence and other anti-social behaviour, and men's emotional abuse from invisible hurts.

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