

Popular Songs and Legal Justice in Tanzania: Case of ‘Jumba Bovu’ [Bad House/Luck] and ‘Jela’ [In Prison] Bongo Flava Injustice Exposés

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Abstract

This article applies John Rawls’ theory of ‘justice as fairness’ to analyse the evocation of complaints in popular songs¹, songs as one among different efforts against injustice. Later, interviews with composers of the songs followed to prove the interpreted meaning from the content of text data in the analysed songs. Two specific *bongo flava* songs: ‘Jumba Bovu’ by Mac Dizzo and ‘Jela’ by LWP, were analysed to find how they address the issue. Findings show that generally, the two songs condemn the weakness of justice system, that it is biased against the poor/those with low socio-economic status.

Keywords:

Legal Injustice, Human Rights, Songs for Justice, Songs for Positive Social Change <https://dx.doi.org/10.56279/ummaj.v10i1.3>

Introduction

Tanzania’s National Human Rights Action Plan (2013-2017) emphasises on universal equality, respect for humanity, the right to justice, and the equality before the law. Yet, some complaints from different individuals and institutions pertaining to cases of injustice associated with the legal system persist (Joseph 2021; Msuya 2010; Khalfan 2018; Ngitu 2018). Activists have expressed these complaints in the streets and on activist stages. Similarly, musicians have done so through their songs in the fight for human rights. This article focuses on how Tanzanian musicians have used pop songs in exposing legal injustices in Tanzania.

¹ A popular song here means a song that has a wide appeal in a certain area and time, after being exposed to the public through the media.

Conceptualizing the Terms 'In/Justice' and 'Legal in/Justice'

Generally, justice is a broad and complex term with multiple meanings (Johnston 2011). Webster (2011) defines justice as the process or result of applying laws to judge fairly and punish criminals. It may also refer to the maintenance or administration of what is fair especially the impartial adjustment of conflicting claims or assignment of merited rewards. It may also refer to the administration of law, establishment or determination of rights in accordance with the rules of law or equity (Webster 2011). Furthermore, justice can mean the quality of conforming to the law, truth, fact, or reason (Robinson 2003). The current article treats the term 'justice' as an act of being fair when giving or treating people based on what is legally right. In this regard, fairness does not only refer to ensuring that everyone gets equal treatment, but also logically and reasonably in accordance with the law. Implicitly, justice is akin to attaining goodness in the sense of encouraging more people to obey the law on their own volition (Raphael 2001).

Generally, there is justice for animals in some areas (Garner 2013) but not in others (Ilea 2008). In some cases, justice applies exclusively to citizens of the same state, who are required both to comply with and accept responsibility for the laws governing their lives; in other cases, the scope of justice application may go beyond a country's boundary (Miklosi 2016). In Tanzania, justice is applicable to human beings and its access is a right that originates from human rights standards that require for there to be equality for all before the law, the right to be treated fairly by any court (Rashid 2018). The Tanzania constitution guarantees equality and equal protection before the law as provided for under Article 13(1) (Rashid 2018).

Specifically, there is distributive, retributive, compensatory, and restorative justice (Velasquez et al. 2014). Distributive justice refers to the extent to which institutions ensure the fair and just distribution of benefits and burdens among societal members. Retributive or corrective justice refers to the extent to which punishments for wrongdoings are fair and just. As for compensatory justice, it refers to the extent to which people get fair compensation for their injuries from those who injure them. Meanwhile, restorative or reparative justice focuses on the needs of

victims and offenders instead of pandering to legal principles. Finally, procedural justice refers to implementing legal decisions based on fair and impartial processes (Bloomfield 2018).

Legal justice is a notion of moral rightness based on ethics, equity and fairness in relation to the law. This kind of justice provides the universal right to equal protection before the law, without discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, ethnicity, religion, disability, age, wealth, or other characteristics (William 2011). Legal justice may also occur in the restoration of fairness to those who have been mistreated based on the law. In this case, the law can have a common set of rules viewed as an objective measure of wrongful, illegal actions deserving punishment in line with the degree of illegality. Concretely, legal justice in this case refers to the 'rule of law'. This argument is twofold: All the people are equal before law; and that law is equally applicable and provides legal security to all (Jalilvand 2020). In the context of the current study, legal justice refers to the condition of conforming to law based on equality of rights, morality, and logical fairness. In this conformation, legal institutions exist to deliver justice.

On the other hand, injustice is a condition of meting out unfair treatment (Velasquez 2014; Heinze 2013). Legal injustice may occur when legal procedures are unfair, hence denying people their inalienable rights (Fricker 2007). As a result, criminals may walk scott free or get trivial penalties incomparable to their heinous crimes or get punishment disproportional to their wrong. Also, innocent people may be punished for the crimes they have not committed. In this regard, 'distributive justice' can guarantee who gets what, and 'procedural justice' can decide how fairly people get treated (Demirtas 2020).

Causes of injustice within provisions of the law include the corruptibility of the legal system run by imperfect human beings. Injustice may also result from the selfishness of those responsible for ensuring justice stemming from discrimination, social stigma, and racism. Such injustice may also arise because of 'legal errors' or 'judicial misconducts.' Whereas legal error is a mistake in court proceedings regarding a matter of law or fact (Stith 1990), judicial misconduct can occur when a judge acts unethically, hence violating legal obligations, including 'falsification of facts' by abusing the judge's office for special treatment of friends or

relatives (Evan 2009). Corruption constitutes another serious cause of unfair legal judgements, but legal injustice may also arise when a person lacks access to the law or knowledge regarding their rights (Sandel 2008).

Measures for punishing and/or repairing injustice include deterrence, which refers to a realistic threat of punishment, particularly making punishment proportional to the crime. Rehabilitation is another measure whose punishment focuses on transforming 'bad people' capable of causing unwanted things (like suffering or crime) into 'better' ones. Security or incapacitation of unalterable causers of bad things is another option to prevent them from further committing more crimes by limiting their opportunities to cause damage through detention or imprisonment. Whereas reparation measure restores justice by repaying victim(s) of injustice, denunciation involves the society/individuals expressing disapprovals against injustice (Sandel 2008). Unlike the other measures dependent on authorities' actions, individuals such as musicians can be powerful intermediaries of justice through their songs.

Legal Injustice Experiences in Tanzania

Cases of supposed legal injustices in Tanzania include stem from legal errors, judicial misconduct, and condemning innocence. To a large extent, reported legal injustices complaints in Tanzania have include 'fake' or fabricated cases called '*kesi za bandia*' or '*kesi za kubambikiwa*' in Kiswahili. In 2021, the Minister for Home Affairs Simba Chawene warned some police officers who fabricate legal cases against individuals following several complaints from different individuals about legal injustices by some disloyal police officers (Joseph, 2021). In another 2018 incidence, the late Augustino Mrema, then chairman of the opposition Tanzania Labour Party, and chairman of the Parole Board and former Minister for Home Affairs, complained about a concocted case in 1996 against him (Ayo, 2018). Regardless of his high political profile, Mrema still suffered from injustice and so would many other Tanzanians with less political clout, hence the problem of congestions in the country's prisons. Furthermore, in 2019, the then Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, the late

Augustine Mahiga, also decried that several people had been mistakenly jailed for fabricated cases with victims oblivious of their legal rights².

In May 2021, President Samia Hassan denounced and scrapped 147 wrong cases of different individuals (Bitomwa 2021) based on a Prevention and Combating of Corruption Bureau (PCCB) report that had exposed the invalidity of those cases. In another incidence, in 2021, a Tanzanian girl in 2021 publicly admitted to have committed perjury in the court claiming to have been raped further claiming to have been impregnated by the same man, who was convicted based on her testimony and sentenced to 60 years in prison (Ayo 2021). Weaknesses in societal equality due to patriarchal norms and values have also led to oppression specifically against women and children. As a result, the rights of widows and female children to inherit land of their deceased husbands or parents' land, respectively, have taken a hit (Msuya 2010).

Also, complaints of suspects being apprehended and taken to the police station on Fridays and not getting a legal bond until the next Monday (the next working day) unless they bribe the police officers were prevalent (Ngitu 2018). Also, suspects on remand may be held in custody for too long awaiting investigations that they 'do not get completed' (Ngitu 2018)³. The then Minister of Home Affairs, Kangi Lugola, clarified about these occasions that it is injustice for officers not to offer service to inmates on weekends and he also added that legal bond is offered for free in accordance with the law. These few cases illustrate weaknesses in the legal system that can result into injustice to different individuals. To help expose such weaknesses and achieve justices, institutions and individuals should be fair and honest to express them for responsible authorities to effect positive changes (Bloomfield 2018).

Popular Songs and the Quest for Legal Justice

Legal justice has been integrated in songs since the Ancient Greece when oral culture established the tendency to highlight what was acceptable or not in society (Newman 2018). Since then, songs have continued to possess

² This information is found on Muungwana blog.

³Delayed prosecutions have been caused by judgements being written by hand and a shortage of judges especially in primary courts (Legal and Human Rights Centre [LHRC] explanations offered on East African Television on 28 April 2021).

the potential of informing legal issues; how they are applied in society can challenge or enhance political and legal authorities on this matter (Mittica 2015). Parker (2011) coined a term 'soundscape of justice' to capture some of the rich potentials that inherent in songs hold for legal scholarship. 'Soundscape of justice' refers to songs in which justice may be reimaged. Newman (2018) further contend that songs have also been useful in expressing legal (in)justice through their powerful language of emotions which can penetrate deep feelings into the people's souls.

Specifically, popular songs have for many years covered matters of relevance to legal scholars (Newman 2018). These matters include copyright or intellectual property rights generally (Sylva 2000; Perullo 2012); lyrics serving as evidence of criminality (Lutes et al. 2019; Swann 2021); and lyrics exposing injustice in the legal system (Grossfield & Hiller 2008). In fact, several music genres and specific songs have discussed legal issues in their lyrics. Music genres such as murder ballads, blues and, recently, hip-hop, serve as good examples. Murder ballads are a sub-genre of traditional ballad expressing crimes, specifically horrible deaths including men violently killing women because of creed or sexual jealousy⁴ (Fernandes 2012). Their lyrics describe events of a murder, often including a preface and consequence told as a story. Usually at the end of the song, the killing characters are remorseful or even kill themselves because of the disappointment of murdering others, or relatives of the murder victim kill them in the song, or the state chastises them (Fernandes 2012). Thus, the music genre warns about murder and teaches the value of human life.

On the other hand, blues music has been instrumental in expressing the enslavement of Africans in the Americas. White America did not only dehumanize African slaves but also forced them to work in harsh conditions in addition to negatively stereotyping them because of their race. As a result, African-Americans developed this music to influence consciousness against injustices they faced. Free jazz of the 1960s and the black-nationalist movement it supported enjoyed a similar symbiotic relationship (Newman 2018). The Civil Rights Movement and anti-

⁴Apparently, there are few cases featuring women as central killing characters.

Vietnam War movement songs in the US contest the political culture of the United States, particularly in those historical movements (Newman 2018). Several musicians in Vietnam have also sang songs complaining the conservative systems of state suppressions (Norton 2017).

As for hip-hop, the genre from the US developed to represent the reality of life in the US inner-city areas of US cities, particularly to reflect African-American experience of the criminal justice system in which most members are predominantly white (Morgan & Bennett 2011). The African-American experience bemoans the oppressive as interpreted by police whose discrimination and racial profiling disproportionately target African-Americans. Butler (2010) argues that the experience of justice outlined in hip-hop teaches those in the judicial system to bridge the gap between African-American urban youth and white middle class, with music having a potential of serving as a means for improving channels of communication between the two races.

Other songs from different music genres condemn injustices. 'This Side of the Law' is a 1970 country hit by Johnny Cash that describes how perception in a judicial scenario depends on which side of the law of someone: "[E]verything' [in this case justice] depends on the eye of the beholder [the judge]'. Similarly, 'Hurricane' is a folk-rock song, which was written by Bob Dylan and Jacques Levy in 1975, that protests against legal injustice that boxer Rubin "Hurricane" Carter suffered after being convicted of a murder that he did not commit. The song offers a commentary on the circumstances that led to Carter's false and biased trial. And the heavy metal song '...And Justice for All', which was released in 1988 by Metallica, offers commentary on the influence of money in circumventing the course of justice, something that usually result in false justice in a legal system (Jara 2021). The song 'The Night That the Lights Went Out in Georgia', originally sang by Vicky Lawrence and later by Reba McEntire in 1991, is a murder ballad country song that describes a series of events during a murder trial and explains accusations of a local criminal justice system being rigged, something that causes an innocent man to be hung. The song condemns the lawyer who decided the verdict and calls for mistrusting him because of the 'bloodstains on his hands'.

Rapper Common from the US released the song 'Testify' in 2005. The song utilises vocal samples from another song 'Innocent till Proven Guilty' by Honey Cone. Common's song's story is about a woman who manipulates a court judge over a crime she has committed. Childish Gambino's song 'This is America' presents some critical charges targeting racism in law enforcement in US (Alford 2018). The song 'Children of The Rainbow' is responsive to the shocking mass murder committed in 2011 by right-wing extremist Anders Behring Breivik of 77 people, with 200 more wounded in attacks on government buildings in Oslo, Norway. The killer was motivated by hatred of multiculturalism in Norway and by a belief that immigration—Muslim immigration in particular—has had a contaminating effect on society (Melle 2013). Musician YG from Compton US has a song 'Police Get Away with Murder', which he dedicated to police brutality in his home-town. Musician Lil Baby also has a song 'The Bigger Picture', and Anderson Paak has a song 'Lockdown'; both of which explain the musicians' respective experiences with police brutality (Legaspi 2020). In similar vein, Musician T Pain's song 'Get Up' discourages racial oppression and exploitation in the US.

In South Africa, several songs were composed to oppose the then apartheid policy, which segregated and discriminated black South Africans on grounds of race (Vershbow 2010). Some Nigerian musicians have also used images and iconographies in their songs and albums covers to condemn apartheid in South Africa (Emielu 2016). Overall, these songs from the international scene abroad and Africa illustrate the diversity of musical styles and songs around the world that are 'speaking' against injustice.

Specifically in Tanzania, several songs such as 'Haki' by Mr. II, 'Trafiki' by Wagosi wa Kaya, 'Jela' by Husein Machozi, 'Nipe Ripoti' by Spack, 'Msela Jela' by Bushoke, 'Jumba Bovu' by Jack Simela, and 'Sizonje' by Mrisho Mpoti address legal injustice issues. In the song 'Haki', Mr. II describes different kinds of injustices that some Tanzanians experience. In the song 'Trafiki', Wagosi complains about the traffic police who set up bribes for public transport drivers. In 'Jela', machozi complains about a fictitious nine-year sentence to prison for a crime he has not even committed. The song 'Nipe Ripoti' describes a situation of a poor person being framed for a case of a rich person due to stinking bribery among legal officers. 'Msela

Jela' describes how an innocent man is imprisoned because he does not have enough evidence to prove his innocence. In a song 'Sizonje', Mpototo uses a parable to question the general injustice in Tanzania's legal system. His parable asks: "If you [the government] do not throw trash in the garbage pit, what is the use of the pit and why did you dig it?"⁵ These critical lyrics address corruption problem prevailing in the legal system. Mpototo uses garbage pit figuratively to represent judgement organ, which in this case is the court, and trash to represent criminals. Hence, the song laments that there are some criminals, mostly political figures, who are super-moneyed and 'powerful' to the extent that they cannot be brought under the law and, thus, this makes the court 'useless' (Mwakibete 2021).

Despite some of the songs and music genres have wide audience coverage and express the critical messages against injustice, they have encountered various obstacles from several reasons: First, some songs were convicted with criminal elements by the State authorities in different ways, thus faced censorship. Some hip hop songs being the case, there are several criminal court cases which implement one of hip-hop culture's primary features, rap music, as evidence of criminality from its gang association, drug abuse, and lyrical threat. Likewise, apartheid songs and other socio-political movement songs have been threatened by political authorities, hence censorship. Other songs against injustice have used offensive language in their lyrics, thus the deterioration depicted in their message. For example, Musician YG has a song 'Fuck the Police' (FTP) and music group N.W.A. has a song entitled 'Fuck tha Police', both of which are crude and advocate for violence against law enforcement. In consequence, several police departments refuse to provide security for their concerts, hence resulting into several cancelled performances by the musicians in various areas (Walker 2020). Moreover, music group *vinega* in Tanzania also faced similar allegations when they used offensive language in their music album, which expresses injustices in the music industry (Clark 2013). In addition to failure in these songs to reach wider audience, the media also dread playing songs with socio-political critical messages against the authorities (Mwakibete 2019). These songs have been excluded from this analysis: Haki by Mr. II does not discuss in detail but notes the existence of different kinds of injustices; 'Msela Jela' concentrates on describing one specific person. Other Tanzanian songs slightly focus on

⁵ I translated the lyrics into English

legal injustice and not as their main theme.

The song 'Jumba Bovu' by Jack Simela could also be the case study song, but it does not address the problem in detail. In addition, I was unable to get inspirations and meaning of the song since the musician who composed it died many years ago. This song narrates how a young man was arrested by the police simply by being in a crime suspected area, hence a case of mistaken identity. On the contrary, the songs 'Jumba Bovu' by Mack Dizzo and 'Jela' by LWP address the legal injustice problem in its broad sense. In addition, the musicians happen to have faced the legal injustice problem, hence their personal experiences. Besides, the two songs are devoid of abusive language and did not face censorship for exposing legal injustice, thus successfully criticising political and judicial institutions, as well as the police.

Theoretical Underpinning

John Rawls' (1999) theory of 'justice as fairness' informed the analysis of injustice complaints in the songs. This theory is premised on avoiding biasness in justice dispensation among the people. Regardless of their socio-economic differences, people have the same values, and thus should be equal under the law and get equal treatment. The theory also insists on responsibility on the part of justice authorities in addition to avoiding emotionality in dispensing justice. This theory illuminates on injustice issues in the contemporary world because of several weaknesses inherent in the justice system as cases reviewed also illustrate. The system appears too slow, complicated for ordinary people to understand, costly, and socio-economically biased, that is, biased against the poor/those with low socio-economic status. The following section analyses two case study songs on complaints against injustice in the legal system in Tanzania.

'Jumba Bovu' Song Generates Sympathy for Legal Injustice Incidence

This song, whose name means old roof, addresses legal injustice in different scenarios including improper police arrest and unjust court decisions. The lyrics⁶ of the song are as follows:

⁶Authorial translation of these music lyrics from KiSwahili into English. This applies to both songs reviewed in this article.

Verse 1

*I am getting out of home going to the hood, I look my wallet it is full of money.
So I go to the supermarket, to buy a soda and cake. I have money so I must enjoy myself
On the counter there is a beautiful girl, I give her ten thousand and tell her to keep change, then our phone numbers we exchanged
Suddenly, robbers enter the supermarket. They threaten everyone and take all the money
They disappear and no one recognizes them, unfortunately I was the last to enter the supermarket before they robbed*

Verse 2

*At twelve I hear my phone ringing; it was the beautiful girl from the supermarket
She asked me to meet her, I agreed I thought she has fallen in love with me
I never knew it was a police trap to catch me. As soon as we met, police officers invaded us
What have I done to be caught by the police?, the police tell me to sit on the ground
They started to search my wallet. They started to beat me despite obeying their orders.
They put me in their car up to Selander, I stayed at the police station seven weeks
I haven't yet seen my relatives, dear God help me; bad people have pushed me into a big trouble
When we reached in the court it was just like a joke, the investigation was complete that I robbed the supermarket. I was sentenced twenty years in prison. Peace to all innocent prisoners.
My message is 'leave the guiltless suspects, don't imprison innocent people'.*

Chorus

*Old roof has fallen on my head, I am crying alone in prison
Old roof has fallen on my head, I did not do the crime, the case was 'passed on to me'*

When observing the lyrics, one can see 'epistemic injustice' in it, that

someone is arrested without being legally aware of the need to be proven guilty and later they are misjudged from not being trusted (Fricker 2007). In this song, Mac Dizzo uses a famous KiSwahili expression word 'jumba bovu', which in common Kiswahili means 'old roof' but figuratively here means 'bad luck', to show how the character in the song is accidentally implicated in the crime scene. Here the musician applies a blend of artistic and literal creativity to deliver his controversial message through imagery. In fact, one can note the use of the famous KiSwahili phrase 'Jumba Bovu' not only simply as bad luck but also in a deep sense as a painful individual tragedy. In the song, context has been set to be a key determinant in shaping court decisions (Terrill & Reisig 2003). From the lyrics, it appears that the musician was the last to enter the supermarket before the robbery. At another level, the musician exposes the 'poor policing' of the police (Kamaludeen 2018) by searching the suspect's wallet and by beating him up despite the suspect being co-operative. By 'poor policing', Kamaludeen refers to officers flouting laid-down procedures. Following John Rawls' theory of 'justice as fairness' the proper procedure suggests that the accused people, even the guilty ones, have the right to a fair trial and to have their personal rights respected during the trial (Rawls 1999). Even though police actions are 'uncertain' in conditions of violence (Sun et al. 2008), the officers' beating the character up who is just a suspect and who obeys their orders, displays police use of force, which is against their procedures (Nouri 2021). Nouri proposes that police can legally apply a variety of measures to ensure community safety and suspect's obedience. However, the application of brute force may be driven by a combination of factors such as an individual's age or gender, situational factors such as the suspect's resistance, or by community characteristics such as structural disadvantages (Nouri 2021). In this song, the character's age or gender do not justify the police use of force. The crime area also is not disadvantageous as it is a supermarket where people buy commodities in an organized manner. Also, the character obeyed the police orders when he was arrested thus, as is expressed in the song, the song suggests no need for police to use force and beat the suspect up.

In addition, criminal justice literature suggests that police decision-making should follow proper procedures during detection to determine whether the arrested people are guilty or not and then later bring them in to the court (Sun et al. 2008). Moreover, the procedure falls short as the suspect

stayed at the police station for several weeks before innocence was condemned in the court. This song displays a chain of legal injustice from arresting the character to the final judgement in the court. Furthermore, the song does not show appeal process of the injustice mentioned and plays a continuation of the legal injustice, possibly from a stereotype created after violence act at the supermarket (Klinger et al. 2019). The song also suggests that legal justice may be inaccessible for some people, implying that justice is 'privileged' for some people (Buvik 2016). Generally, legal injustice is denounced in this song (Sandel 2008) as the musician complains against it. Mac Dizzo said:

When I wrote this song, there was a 'bad wave' of the police force fabricating cases for many people. Some crimes you cannot even imagine that a person can do. How can you accuse a man rapping different people at once? I had my close friend called Mingo Sly who was accused of stealing, and later he was imprisoned for another, drug trafficking. I was with him; I never see him travelling anywhere apart from transporting drugs. I think it is not wise to imprison innocent people. Recently, some innocent prisoners have been released but some not yet. Sometimes polices do not do proper investigations, sometimes there is conflict of interest, sometimes corruption is the key factor for 'fake cases'. (Interview, on 15th October 2021).

This statement validates the song as one about exposing injustice. Indeed, the song provides a vivid example of the injustices that prompted the musician to sing about what he had personally witnessed.

The Song 'Jela' unveiling Legal Injustice in Tanzania

This song, whose title means prison, laments about there being people who have been wrongly convicted and imprisoned. Its lyrics (in translation from Kiswahili to English) are as follows:

Verse 1

*Not all who are in jail are criminals, some have been there
accidentally.
Police officers took oaths to deal with crime, so if they
suspect you, you may suffer. If a crime happens, the police
may arrest all the people who are present at the scene;*

regardless of whether they were party to the crime or not. They say even if you are innocent, you will help the police to get the real criminals through your evidence. Sometimes, you have to give them 'something' to get released.

Verse 2

*You must know that not all who are in jail are criminals, robbers, etc.
If someone is released from jail, people fear him, thinking he may rob them.
People do not know that there are innocent people in jail, they do not know that there are people in jail who believe in God
So if you have a relative in jail, please visit them, take with you at least a bar of soap
Life in [Tanzanian] jail[s] is too harsh, you cannot imagine*

Verse 3

*Not all who are in jail have committed a crime; some have been 'given' others' cases
The officers do pass on cases to innocent people; the law is a little bit out of track these days. And if you do not have 'something' to offer, you may rot in jail for the rest of your life.
People always have negative attitudes to those in jail, they should know that some of those are not guilty.*

The Chorus

Not all who are in jail are criminals, some are there because of convicted innocence

In this song, one can see the lyrics lamenting over 'poor policing' (Kamaludeen 2018) as police officers get blamed for framing innocent people for the crimes they never committed. The song suggests that police organisation is more ambiguous in crime neighbourhoods as the lyrics claim that whenever a crime occurs, the officers would arrest everyone present at the crime scene. Nouri (2021) explains that the indiscriminate apprehending of people present in a crime area is common in police

operations as 'crime-place evidence'. However, such arrests can be subject to abuse and can be used as a blanket licence for arresting and accusing innocent people.

Questionable police operations are also evident in the misdeeds police officers passing on cases from one person (or group of people) to another. The song is sympathetic to innocent people who are behind bars. In this regard, the lyrics caution that people needlessly fear ex-convicts when those people could be innocent. Lyrics imply that there are incarcerated God-fearing law-abiding; as such, the song is an attempt to remove the generalised negative attitude against people in jail and former inmates.

The song also uses a parable to address corruption in the legal system: 'If you do not have 'something' to offer, you may rot in jail for the rest of your life'. Here corruption is not directly mentioned but certainly it is represented by the word 'something', a tactic of avoiding risks of criticising the authority (Mwakibete 2021) since these signs are meant for public consumption, requiring the artists to factor in ethical considerations. Implicitly, the song highlights how the legal justice may be too 'expensive to get' for some people (Buvik 2016).

This song complains generally without specifying or exemplifying cases of legal injustices. What is certain based on media evidence there numerous legal injustices that prompted the musicians to sing the song. Indeed, this song also denounces the legal injustice as the previous one (Sandel 2008). Musician Slota, the leader of LWP group of two musicians, on 26 September 2021, explained the meaning of the song during an interview thusly:

What inspired the song 'Jela' is the environment in which we live. We live ghetto lifestyle at Temeke, where we usually see police arresting people and give them 'head cases' [murder cases], sometimes rape cases, ... Even myself I have once been arrested for no reason but I was released after they realised that I am a famous person. Typically, when Temeke youths see police officers, they usually run away from them even when they do not have done anything wrong. And when the police see them running, they usually chase them without

considering why they are running; they just suspect that they have committed a crime.

Then he added;

Temeke faces this negative stereotyping because in the past, there were many criminals in this poor neighbourhood. Now there is not much crime as before; may be now some youths still smoke weed [marijuana], however peacefully. But the police have not changed the previous perception of violent Temeke. Sometimes, arrested criminals get released after providing 'something' to police officers [in return for a favour], so in that case, their cases are passed on to other people. When I released this song, many people were giving me offers since they were excited after hearing me singing about what has happened to them.

In other words, police do not only apply force but also indiscriminately arrest people based on the notoriety associated with an area, particularly poor neighbourhoods (Nouri 2021). In this case, poverty and violence in Temeke usually prompts the police to act the way they do, almost in an unjust way. Weisburd et al. (2016) contend that streets are micro-communities where individuals shape their routine activities. Thus, ghetto lifestyle including smoking weed have constructed a negative identity for Temeke youths, which makes them easy targets of the police. In addition, Temeke youths have less faith in the police and often scamper away from them, something that increases police suspicion and negativity towards them (Wu et al. 2009). Based on Rawls' (1999) theory of 'justice as fairness', it suffices that even though Temeke is treated as 'unsafe poor area' (Marenin 2016) or crime-prone area, this fact does not warrant the unfair acts of the police against youths residing there (Riksheim &Chermak 1993; Sun et al. 2008).

Conclusion

The two songs illustrate how popular oral forms can serve as a means for raising awareness about justice system and cases of injustice. Specifically, they help to expose some injustices prevailing in Tanzania including

highlighting circumstances occasioning such injustices. The songs also suggest different scenarios of legal injustice; that it may happen as a mistake, on purpose, or as a bad luck. The singers of the two songs have also indubitably used their artistic creativity to challenge the legal system in the country for the benefit of the whole community. Thus, society can ignore such songs at their own peril since they expose the social malaise that poses a danger to the whole society and help to raise community and country awareness on legal injustices with a view to bringing about the desired change, including enhanced quality of legal service in the country.

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