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FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

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A STUDY OF KARANGA BRIDE WELCOMING CEREMONY SONGS

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Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement of the Bachelor of Science Honours Degree in Music and Musicology Studies.

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DEDICATION

I would like to sincerely dedicate this dissertation to my one year old grandson, Joshua Junior who was introduced to the family when we most expected him. It is my greatest ambition for him to take after me in the field of music, especially in a family where almost everyone wants to join the legal profession. It is therefore my wish for “Big Josh”, as he is popularly known, to grow up and endeavour to take up music studies right from primary school and will eventually take up a musical career.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to study some of the Karanga Bride Welcoming Ceremony Songs which are performed in Chimombe Village. This was mainly motivated by the need to find out the effects of the songs on the Shona traditional women in general and Karanga traditional women in particular. There was also need to establish reasons why songs are used to transmit traditional cultural conceptions. The research question that guided the research was: “What are the main themes contained in the bride welcoming ceremony songs? A small group of women was interviewed so as to solicit their views about the derogatory lyrics of some of the songs sung during the welcoming ceremony. Purposive Sampling was used to choose these participants on the grounds of their knowledge about what happens during the ceremony. The group had to be reasonably small so that the data could be manageable. The reason is also that the Qualitative research design I adopted is not concerned about numbers but rather feelings and perceptions of individuals. I also had to observe as an insider, a number of ceremonies and recorded the songs. This I did for triangulation purposes. All the interviews and observations were recorded on paper for subsequent analysis. The songs were then transcribed in staff notation as well as tonic sol-fa. I chose an Ethnographic research design because it win line with the nature of the, design an type of data I intended to collect.. During the data collecting exercise, I seriously considered ethical issues because I was working with human beings with ethical codes to uphold. The findings showed that the lyrics of most of the songs relegate the women to the position of servitude and subservience. The respondents also blamed socialization, culture and religion as superstructures which perpetuate this kind of social inequality among men and women. Finally, I strongly recommended that such practice should be abolished if ever our society dreams of achieving social equality, economic liberalization and gender equity.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to the study

Bride welcoming ceremony songs are an indispensable component of the traditional marriage ceremony among the Shona in general and Karanga in particular. These are traditional folk songs which are sung during the ceremony when the bride is brought to the husband's home for the first time. The songs are part of the Shona people's folk musical cultural performances (Maguraushe and Mukuhlani 2014). The main focus of this research is therefore to carry out an intensive study of the songs in the traditional context in which they are performed. The reasons for the studying of these songs are centred basically on finding out the effects these songs have on the brides. Studies by other scholars (Maguraushe and Mukuhlani 2014), have postulated a very interesting discussion on the effects of the songs on the brides. There is an implication that these songs affect the bride's status and personality. Through studying the songs, the themes and messages portrayed in them will be identified. The exposure will establish the extent to which the themes affect the brides. It is with this in mind that I have deliberately decided to carry out the research as a way of validating the claims. I also wanted to find out if it was true of Karanga women in Chimombe village. The relationship of these songs and the marriage concept will also be considered. This is because the ceremony is part of the marriage rites. Marriage is viewed as a fundamental institution of Shona culture to such an extent that those who do not marry are said to have rejected society (Mbiti 1999). Although marriage is such an important institution in Shona culture, women subsequently suffer and are often abused by men in this institution. There has been a call from the international community to bring an end to this evil which Radical Feminists regard as universal (Haralambos and Holborn 2000, Thomas 2000)). Since marriage has been used by men to oppress women, it shows that there are rituals within it which are responsible for the

achievement of the motive of oppression. It is with this in mind that the songs sung during the ceremony have to be studied and analysed. This is because music has the power to reach the innermost feelings of the individual (Mbiti 1999). This is why it has been used as a tool to impart aggressive attacks on women (Nettl 1990). Finally, the research will help the reader understand the power dynamics behind the traditional folk music in as far as the transmission of cultural norms and values to the newly married brides is concerned.

Background

The United Nations Charter of 1948 encouraged member states to uphold The Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Charter placed much emphasis on vulnerable groups such as the children, disabled and women. It had been noted that the abuse of women and violation of their rights was almost universal. Women were exploited by men both at work places and in the home. When then the call to end that exploitation did not come, it prompted groups and movements to stand up and start to fight for the rights of women. The Beijing Conference which was held in China was just an example.

The Feminist theory was also propounded to redress the anomaly. Mugodzwa et al (2014) assert that the theory of Feminism argues that women are oppressed by men and society seems to perpetuate that. This has resulted in women suffering from this oppression for a long period of time. The woman's status in society has been relegated to that of servitude and subservience. However, one would want to trace the root cause of the rise of feminism. According to Kolmer and Bartkowski (2005:2) "The feminist theory is a body of writing that attempts to describe, explain and analyse the condition of women's lives." This seems to have risen in an attempt to find the solution to social inequality between men and women. According to the theory, men dominate women in all aspects of life to such an extent that "even the weakest man has a woman to oppress." That is why the radical feminists blame the exploitation of women on men. Culture, as a superstructure of society has empowered men to

be dominant while women are docile and surrender their will and desire to that of men. Ortner (1974) argues that women are universally oppressed and devalued and this is to a greater extent due to cultural influence. Therefore, because culture is influential, the cultural activities such as bride welcoming ceremonies, sacred rituals, rain making ceremonies, to name a few, are used to reinforce and consolidate the beliefs, norms and values. Men therefore base their exploitation of women on culture. Feminism therefore blames men as the main proponents of women's devaluation and degradation. There is a tendency among some African societies to look down upon women in some aspects of life. In such societies, the woman is viewed as having no significant contribution to societal growth and development apart from bearing children. Her role is consummated ultimately in marriage which every woman is expected to take part in. The marriage ceremony among the Shona people of Zimbabwe is a process that may take several months to finalize. *Roora*, (Bride price or dowry) is paid in a similar fashion among the different ethnic groups.

The bride however, decides when to go to her husband. She usually goes at night, with her female relatives escorting her.

This is referred to as *kutiza mukumbo* (to run the leg); having the same significance as eloping. The day she chooses is a surprise to the groom. She is covered in a cloth from head to toe so that no one can see her. As she walks into the village, the groom's family starts dancing and ululating as soon as news of the bride's arrival has been announced. They also begin to prepare for a party. The groom is found and told that his bride has arrived. The main purpose of this surprise is to see how the groom's family reacts to an emergency. The bride, covered, walks through the whole village, taking her time. The villagers, who are the groom's kins, encourage her to keep on walking. They throw money at her feet and they sing songs ululate with joy. She is eventually escorted into her mother in law's home where she is encouraged to take off her veil with gifts and pleadings (*kushonongora*). That is when the

family gets to see their daughter in law for the first time. A big party of dancing and drinking begins all night long into the morning. This is known in Shona culture as kupururudzira muroora (welcoming the bride). This shows how marriage is valued in the Shona culture.

Some months after the ceremony, the couple is expected to bear children. Society takes this so seriously to such an extent that when the man cannot father a child, a closer male relative can be asked to go into the wife and impregnate the woman (kupindira). However, if the woman is the one who is barren, she can be sent packing back home and all what would have been paid is in most cases reimbursed. That shows how the some African traditional cultures violate the rights of women.

From the books I read, (Mbiti 1999, Kolmar and Bartkowski (2005), Maguraushe and Mukuhlani (2014), I found out that most African societies place a great deal of importance on marriage and its associated rites. African marriages are a spiritual and social family affair and involve the combining of two lives, two families, and even two communities (www.africanmarriage)

According to Mbiti, (1999), marriage is a complex affair which has social, economic and religious aspects which overlap. Greater importance is placed on marriage such that it is regarded as the “focus of existence.” Everyone takes part in it and those who do not are viewed as having rejected society. Imbued in this concept is the notion that marriage perpetuates the chain of humanity because it is closely linked with procreation. In other words from the African perspective, a married couple is expected to have children.

In this case the wife is seen as a breeding machine. Therefore during the marriage ceremony the bride is reminded of this through the songs that are sung. Mbiti (1999:120) asserts that, “Marriage is a duty and a requirement from the corporate society. He who does not participate in it is a curse to the community.” Despite having organizations such as Women of

Zimbabwe Arise and Musasa Project, which fight for the rights of women gender inequalities are still rife. Like has been discussed above the cultural ceremonies seem to perpetuate such inequalities. During ceremonies songs are sung and they are an integral part of the whole occasion. The songs are mostly sung for the newly married women (brides) by women other).

At this point it is also important to highlight the influence of folk music during the ceremony. Nettl (1990) argues that folk music is closely associated with a people, nation or a culture. Therefore the folk music reflects the inner characteristics of the nation's culture including beliefs ideologies and philosophy. The music is communally owned and therefore is used during community functions. The songs are an expression of the thinking and perception of the people. There are songs for the various social gatherings such as beer drinking, chief installation, and so on. Each of the four stages of life; birth, puberty, marriage and death has different songs to mark the rites of passage therein. The titles and lyrics of the songs communicate the message that is intended to be transmitted by the society to the newly married woman as well as other women who have been married. Women are the main composers of the bride welcoming ceremony songs but sometimes there are men who also take part in the composing and performance of the songs. It should be noted however that the women who take part in the singing and dancing are those from the bridegroom's family. These are the aunts and sisters of the groom. Under such circumstances one would wonder why other women would take part in singing songs which tend to have an effect the other woman.

What is therefore important here is the fact that traditional songs can be used to transmit societal norms and values as well as perpetuating the existing status-quo. It is deemed morally and socially acceptable for women to regard their position as inferior to that of man therefore it is not surprising when other women sing such songs which affect the new bride during the welcoming ceremony. Therefore, what I found out from authors such as Mbiti

(1999), Mugodzwa et al (2014), Haralambos and Holborn (2000) just to mention a few, coupled with personal constructs, motivated me to engage in this research. I therefore wanted to carry out a study of the songs sung during bride welcoming ceremonies so to find out if they have any cultural significance or effect on the future life of the bride in her new family. Furthermore, I felt I was qualified enough to carry out the research due to several reasons. Having studied ethnomusicology, ethnography and research methods, I found myself being qualified to do the research. Also as a student of the honours degree program I am expected to undertake such an endeavour in partial fulfilment to the requirements of the Department of Music and Musicology under the Faculty of Social Sciences offered at Midlands State University. This means I have entered the field of academic research and my findings may contribute to the body of literary works by professional writers.

Statement of the Problem

Studies have shown that traditional songs sung during bride welcoming ceremonies have an effect on the status of women in a number of ways. This is made possible by the messages disseminated through the lyrics of the songs. This research will focus on the study of some Karanga bride welcoming songs performed in Chimombe village, Buhera district in order to determine the extent to which the lyrical content can affect the brides.

Research Questions:

The research questions for his study are:

- What are the main themes/messages portrayed within the songs sung during the bride welcoming ceremonies among the Karanga of Chimombe village?
- Why does the Karanga society use songs to transmit cultural norms and values?
- What feelings do the songs evoke in the bride?

- To what extent does Karanga traditional culture contribute towards the degradation and creation of subservient position of women?

Objectives of the Study

The research aims to:

- Identify and state the major themes and messages contained within some Karanga bride welcoming ceremony songs.
- Find out and explain reasons behind the use of songs in transmitting Karanga traditional cultural norms and values.
- Identify the feelings evoked in the bride by the songs.
- Explore the extent to which Karanga traditional culture contribute towards the degradation and creation of subservient position of women

Significance of the study

This research might foster community awareness of gender imbalances that may be perpetuated through songs sung during social gatherings such as bride welcoming ceremonies. Negative impacts emanating from such songs will also be addressed. An awareness of the imbalances may enable society to do away with the negative impacts. I also hope that the research may change society's perception of the bride's position and role in the Karanga community of Chimombe village. The information contained in the research may have the potential to equip anyone who reads this research as well as the general public with knowledge on the exact cause of women's oppression in the home. This could serve as a solution to the problem of gender stereotypes which have resulted in a lot of acts of domestic violence for a long time. The married women are the major beneficiaries of this research. This would serve as a tool for deconstructing gender stereotypes. The women will be empowered socially hence will be able to discern those practices which violate their rights

hence, deconstructing gender stereotypes. Feminist Movement groups have the potential to benefit from the findings of the research. Ever since the rise of Feminism, there has been an attempt to “wage a total onslaught on men by radical feminist groups.” The groups have tried to achieve affirmative action but ended up with little or no success. This could have been due to lack of such information contained in the research. Therefore the information presented may help spearhead the campaign against gender stereotypes.

The findings may also provide more information to the Ministry Gender and Women Affairs, Gender and Community Development regarding the cause of exploitation and abuse of women by men. Once such information has been availed, there will be the need to act so as to redress the problems that have haunted society since time immemorial. Most of the religions which practice inequality and abuse of women may also learn a lot from this document. This is due to the fact that the information contained is purely academic hence void of bias and propaganda. The interpretation of the issues at stake has been so convincingly stated such that the information is authentic and reliable. This is quite significant in that cultural misconceptions have been examined and possible corrections suggested. The suggestions were drawn from the views and perceptions of the affected group, (women).

It is however a matter of subjectivity rather than objectivity. People have a tendency of hearing what they want to hear. Hence, critiques may still argue against the suggestions outlined in this research. Future research may also be conducted to fill in the gaps that may have been created by this research. This is because research produces a theory; hence other people may want to critique or further develop the theory emanating from it.

The research on the other hand can empower women who have been marginalized in terms of participation in the economic development of the country. Understanding the information availed through the recommendations can be a useful tool in the hand of the woman to use it

to break through the repressive laws that have allowed patriarchy to dominate all aspects of power dynamics in society. Thus the main strength of the research regarding the issue of gender imbalances is that, it concertizes women on the need to stand up and speak for themselves so that they can be heard. Organizations such as WOZA can also find this document quite useful. The document may therefore serve as the Blueprint of the manifesto of various movements which fight for equal rights. According to the constitution of Zimbabwe, men and women are equal. However lack of knowledge and too much respect of culture have influenced the women to be submissive. (Nembs 2014).In a recent setback for women's rights, in April 1999, the Supreme Court, in an inheritance dispute, ruled that women cannot be considered equal to men before the law because of African cultural norms.(Nembs 2014).Therefore, the research may go a long way in trying to correct what has not been done right in society.

1.6 Definition of Terms

Bride Welcoming Ceremony Songs: folk and traditional songs sung by the community to receive and welcome a new bride for the first time she comes to the husband's home.

Chauvinism: an attitude that members of one's own sex are always better than those of the opposite sex.

Culture: the beliefs, values, behaviour and material objects shared by a particular group.

Gender: the social meanings given to being either a man or a woman in a given society and the expectations held as to the character, attitude and likely behaviour of men and women.

Hawthorn Effect: the stimulation to output or accomplishment that results from the mere fact of being under observation.

Human Rights: basic rights or legal claims to which all humans are entitled by virtue of them being human.

Kupururudzira muroora: ceremony held to welcome a new bride.

Kushonongora: paying something to the bride in order to give her permission to do something. (For her to uncover her head money has to be paid)

Marginalized: relegated to an unimportant or powerless position within society or a group.

Marxism: the political, economic and social principles of Karl Marx including the belief that the struggle between social classes is a major force in history and that there should eventually be a society in which there are no classes and oppression of one class by another.

Musasa Project Centre: an organization which offers free socio-political support to the males and females through offering gender education, gender empowerment and free counselling to the affected individuals especially when it concerns domestic violence and other forms of domestic violence.

Patriarchy: 1. an ideology of male supremacy that results from social construction of gender which in turn justifies the social, economic and political distinction between men and women.
2. A system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women.

Radical Feminism: a violent, fast, uncompromising theory opposed to patriarchy which manifested as a movement in the 1960s-1980s as a breakaway of Marxists who were frustrated by the inability to apply social class on analysing gender oppression.

Servitude: the condition in which one lacks liberty especially to determine one's course of action or way of life.

Subaltern: inferior or lower position

Subservience: useful in an inferior capacity or subordinate function

Superstructure: a set of ideologies that monitor, maintain, reproduce and legitimize the status quo (e.g. patriarchy, religion and cultural beliefs)

Vamwene: the mother to one's husband

1.7 Limitations

The number of questions to be asked was rather too many. That almost delayed my data collection exercise. Again the targeted number of respondents was too much. That also had an impact on time allocated for collection of data.

In some cases the respondents withdrew in the last minute due to family commitment. Further probing showed that although the husband had granted me permission previously, he later changed his mind due some suspicion. At one point, I had to call off the interview in the middle because the respondent had received a funeral message.

1.8 Delimitation

I had to reduce the questions and asked only a few. Sometimes when I noted some kind of reluctance to continue on the part of the respondent, I would pretend the interview is over then moved on. The sample size and the geographical area covered were limited in order to cut on travel expenses when visiting respondents, as interviews were carried out. I had to reduce the number of respondents from the previously intended ten to only six. In the case where respondents changed their minds, I would simply make an appointment with someone else. This time I would target those people whom I was sure that under normal circumstances they would cooperate. At one occasion, I had to interview both the man and the wife.

This means that the greatest admonition is that the researcher should refrain from malpractices to get data from respondents simply because it is considered to be ethically

wrong. The second one will be the Ethical Scepticism. This is the approach which says that ethics are the individual's conscience; (Johnson and Christensen 2004).

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the most important aspects of the research process. The topic was well explained and the focus and scope was elaborated. The background to the research highlighted the reasons and ideas which motivated the researcher to engage in this type of research. The need to create a bank of knowledge on African marriage customs was emphasized as the major contributor. The statement of the problem was broken down into research questions which will guide the research. The set objectives would guide the researcher into looking at specific tasks with the aim of finding solutions to the research problems. The significance of the study was elaborated and featured among many other things empowering women with knowledge and understanding of the fundamental issues regarding social inequality. The research also highlighted its potential to generate information needed by society to promote social harmony and peace in the marriage institution. As a matter of convenience, key words were defined in the context of the research topic. This can enable the reader to draw clear meanings because sometimes words have various meanings. The definition of terms therefore provided contextual meanings of the words used in the research paper.

The limitations encountered by the researcher were discussed. However, these limitations should not mean that the findings were not reliable. They have been presented not as obstacles which limited obtaining of authentic data but rather to show that every researcher faces challenges in the field. The conceptual and geographical delimitations however nullified the limitations and therefore whatever was found should be regarded as authentic and reliable.

The research topic is therefore an essential one as it aims to expose some of the oldest cultural practices which are regarded as natural and inevitable, yet contribute to the widening of the inequality gap between men and women.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2. 0. Introduction

Taylor (2003 :136), says, “A literature review is an account of what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers...As a piece of writing, the literature review must be defined by a guiding concept (e.g., your research objective, the problem or issue you are discussing, or your argumentative thesis).”

Thomas (2009:39) asserts that, “When writing your literature review, try to make links between different areas of your work and make those links explicit with the words that you use at the beginning of sentences.” Various literatures concerning the global view on gender inequality, significance of marriage in Shona culture, the role of folk music during the marriage ceremony and the significance of bride welcoming ceremony songs in Shona culture were reviewed in preparation for this study. However, it should be noted that there is not much available literature directly related to the bride welcoming ceremonies as well as the songs during other Shona traditional ceremonies. Most of the information pertaining to the ceremonies was obtained through oral tradition from the oldest surviving members of the village. This therefore means that it is difficult to rule out aspects such as bias and propaganda, deliberately perpetrated by old folks under the influence of ethnic egocentrism and cultural prestige.

2.1 Global view of gender inequality

I read books by different authors (Haralambos and Holborn, Kolmar and Bartkowski, Mbiti, Mugodzwa, Nettle, Rodney, Stock); to mention just a few, in order to obtain information about my topic. The views I got were so overwhelming that I feel indebted for a life time to acknowledge the immense contribution by the various scholars to the success of my research. All the authors seemed to concur with one another on the existence of inequality between

men and women in society. In cases where they differed in opinion, the difference was rather of degree rather than absolute. It seems the fate of newly married women was the subject of discussion.

However, it seems they all had the same shortfalls; they could not account for the tools used for the subordination of women both by men and other fellow women. It was this gap that I would like to explore and try to fill up through the studying of Karanga bride welcoming ceremony songs. Ndlovu and Gatsheni (2003) found that women are subordinated by other women depending on age, position of power and relationships. It seems the problems of women oppression are universal. The New York Manifesto of 1969 was quoted thus;

“Women are an oppressed class. Our oppression is total, affecting every facet of our lives. We are exploited as sex objects, breeders, domestic servants and cheap labour. We are considered inferior beings whose only purpose is to enhance men’s lives (Bryson 1992:183).

Radical Feminists cited in Mugodzwa and Matsa (2014) seem to concur with Bryson when they assert that economic and social constraints make it difficult for women to be totally independent of man and hence find it difficult to escape from the patriarchal family resulting in their oppression and influence. However, there is a problem which these feminists do not address. Women’s dependence on men does not emanate from the fact that the women will not be having the material resources to support themselves. Some women have better paying jobs than most of the men but still those women will need a man, though poor and incapacitated to marry and take care of them (Thomas 2005). The women cannot do away with the men and that could be the main reason why they are degraded through songs sung during the bride welcoming ceremonies (Maguraushe and Mukuhlani 2014). According to the feminists, it appears as though, the women are in desperate need of a man to take care of

them (Mugodzwa and Mawere 2014). What is clear here is that men will take advantage of the situation to oppress and exploit the women. However, the theory does not explain how the women come to accept that inferior position. Again the theory does not explain why and how men exercise total control over women in most cases.

Marxist Theory cited in Mugodzwa et al (2014) propounded that culture, patriarchy and religion, are societal ideologies which legitimize inequalities making them appear normal, natural and unchangeable.. Therefore when community members take part in singing and dancing during the bride welcoming ceremony they affirm the beliefs and ideologies.

Kolmar and Bartkowski (2005) found out that generally women throughout the world are regarded as ignorant, vicious and foolish. Such information in the case of African women may be communicated through traditional songs sung at appropriate occasions where men want to prove that they are more powerful, well informed and intelligent. Such occasions may presumably include bride welcoming ceremonies.

Kolmar and Bartkowski (2005:72) further argue that “The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her.” Man has thus always dominated the woman and has created superstructures in society which perpetuate this notion. The superstructures exert a greater degree of insurmountable pressure on the woman. This is achieved through the socialization process which women undergo as they grow up. The perceptions they develop are further reinforced by the older female folks when they get married. There is a possibility that there is an informal way of imparting this cultural conception in the woman. By taking part in Bride welcoming ceremonies, the woman’s perspective is affected. This practice has been happening since time immemorial.

This is why Chafetz (2006:69) propounded that “In the distant past, the legislation of the time defined wives as the property of their husbands. They were so marginalized to such an extent that the husbands withheld from their wives even those rights which were accorded to the most ignorant and degraded men.” Still the basic question would be centred on what would influence women to accept such forms of humiliation and degradation. Man’s self -concept is developed and shaped by the society. Through their belief system in relation to the power dynamics and patriarchal hegemony, men are able to enforce that perception on women.

Parsons, cited in Haralambos and Holborn (2000) propounded that the mother’s role is expressive; provides warmth, security and emotional support for the husband. This is also supported by the Holy Bible when it says that the woman was a suitable companion made (not created) for the sole purpose of providing love, care and comfort to the man. When society welcomes the bride with such songs it is not surprising. It seems the songs will serve the purpose of reminding the bride of her expected roles.

The imposing of sanctions such as returning home for a short period of time to be equipped with manners shows that the woman obeys not from her free-will but out of fear.

Of course there are gender roles that have been constructed by society which both men and women ought to adhere to. These roles are sometimes misconstrued as division of labour. There is work for the mother and there is work for the father (Mugodzwa and Mawere2014). According to Oakley, cited in Haralambos and Holborn (2000:123), “The gender roles are culturally determined.”

However, Murdock (Ibid) argued that the sexual division of labour between men and women is attributed to the biological differences between the two sexes. In other words a woman has to breast feed because she has the breasts while the man has to impregnate because he has the penis. Murdock concurs with Oakley on the biologically determined roles. Nevertheless, that

being the case the basic question of why the woman has to be reminded through song has not been addressed by both Murdock and Oakley. They have both ignored cultural issues which tend to dictate biologically determined roles. Therefore, culture plays a very significant role in the shaping of people's lives and determining their destiny.

Ortner (1974), cited in Haralambos and Holborn (2000) thus argues that in every society, culture is accorded a higher status than nature. Human beings have used culture to control and regulate nature. Therefore the universal evaluation of culture as being more superior to nature is the main reason that has led to society's devaluation of women. Culture has taken precedence over nature. This means that cultural beliefs about the status of women can override what is natural and has existed since time immemorial. This confirms why child bearing which is biological has to be dictated by norms and values which are constructed culturally. All the cultural activities including songs and folklore must strive to perpetuate societal norms and values.

2.2 Marriage in African Context

Maguraushe and Mukuhlanani (2014:4) found out that, "The institution of marriage is a place where Shona women have often suffered oppression instead of fulfilment. Women have lamented Shona cultural practices that are not cognizant of human rights despite Zimbabwe being a signatory to the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development..."

Kolmar and Bartkowski (2005:80) assert that, "Marriage is the destination appointed by society for every woman." The statement implies that every normal woman has to get married. However it is quite surprising how society appoints the duty of marriage to the woman without the mention of the man to marry the woman. It seems as if the woman from society's point of view is the one who should desperately look for someone to marry. In a way, she can live without being married as long as she likes. Society therefore places the

greater part of the responsibility of marriage on the woman. The challenge however is the absence of the explanation on the means used by society to appoint the destination of marriage on the woman.

Mbiti (1999:120) offers a comprehensive explanation and highlight about the Africans' concept of the role of marriage when he argues that, "Marriage is a duty and a requirement from the corporate society. He who does not participate in it is a curse to the community." Mbiti here argues for marriage from its somehow positive aspect. The fact that marriage is enforced proves the basic fact that all the associated rituals are experienced by all who get married and that they should be enforced. Therefore, all the women who get into marriage are expected to go through the same experience; that of being welcomed during the ceremony. There is need to observe why such ceremonies are important especially in the Karanga traditional culture.

Mbiti (1999) also found that marriage and procreation are a unity; without procreation, marriage is incomplete, marriage keeps society going, everybody must get married and bear children, the key moments during the ceremony are marked by rituals and the singing and dancing are an indispensable aspect of the wedding ceremony. In his findings, Mbiti places greater importance on marriage in the African context. The rituals performed during the ceremony are an integral part of the whole ceremony. This means that singing and dancing are imperative for everyone.

Mbiti (ibid: 47) further asserts that in marriage, "Girls are taught how to prepare food, how to behave towards men, how to care for children, how to look for the husband and other domestic affairs." This is somehow done through the initiation schools. Again during the marriage ceremony the same values are reinforced through song and dance. This shows how songs are used to perpetuate cultural norms and values as well as beliefs and attitudes

Kolmar and Bartkowski (2005) found that the married woman was almost enslaved by her husband to such an extent that she had to surrender all her basic human rights to him. She had to be reminded upon arrival either through folklore or ritual songs about that teaching which is quite fundamental in moulding a woman who conforms to the societal expectations. Because of the cultural knowledge gained through initiation as well as socialization, she was supposed to accept this without a question; otherwise she would be sent back packing.

Machionis (2005: 479) seems to share the same point of view regarding the status of married women when he asserts, "Historically, law defined women as property of their husbands." The mention of historically indicates that that the concept women's exploitation dates back a long time. It seems that such perceptions are social constructs hence are viewed as permanent and irreversible. The challenge lies on the failure by the author to highlight as to origin of the plight of women. There is also no evidence to suggest how society achieved this enslaving of the wife. Whether or not the women accepted the subordinate position out of fear or were coerced into submission, is not clear. It is therefore the main thrust of my research to find out how society managed and still manages to indoctrinate as it were the women into submission (Rodney 1984).

The study of The Karanga wedding ceremony songs may provide the solution. Music reflects the cultural essentials of a group (Nettl 1990). Some of the cultural concepts and philosophies may be explained better through the music of the people hence studying the music of a group may give some insights regarding some cultural phenomena.

According to Coontz and Henderson (1986) the roots of women's oppression today are found in social causes. This assertion seems to provide an explanation regarding the causes the oppression of women. In an effort to offer a comprehensive explanation, they sort of take-off

from where Machionis has left. They suggest the root of women's oppression as being rooted in social causes. This suggests that the oppression is a social construct. The problem is that the social causes have not been mentioned. The mention of social causes suggests that whatever the causes of the oppression are; they should be embedded and influenced by the superstructures within the larger society. Such superstructure may include religion and cultural beliefs.

These superstructures control the way of life of the social organization to greater extent. Therefore cultural elements such as the folklore, music dances, riddles, customs and traditions are dictated by the beliefs, politics and philosophical ideologies of the society. When the society takes part in a ceremony for example, all their cultural are reflected. It therefore possible that music sung during the bride welcoming ceremonies can also portray the society's cultural beliefs about power dynamics and patriarchal hierarchs. This part of what my study of the songs would like to examine.

According to Machionis (2005:470) "Culture gives the young an idealized 'happily ever after' picture of marriage. Such optimism can lead to disappointment especially for women who are taught to view marriage as the key to happiness" The disappointment comes upon the realization that the very welcoming ceremony that is supposed to be a culmination of the happiness turns to be otherwise. However, it still has to be proved by research, whether it is true of the ceremony songs. Rodney (1981:134) argues that, "Culture and religion serve the same purpose in society, that of indoctrination, mental colonization and the creation of a docile, passive and loyal member of society. This docile member is none other than the woman who has to surrender everything into the hands of the new owners. In fact, the Shona word for mother in-law is *vamwene* (owner). The woman is not for the husband alone but for the rest of the community. Therefore the marriage institution offers a platform where men would want to demonstrate their control over women arguing that cultural practices are

natural hence cannot be challenged. Still there is need to elaborate and substantiate on the instruments used by society in marriage to initiate the woman into submission without a question. This is why there is need to study the songs sung during the ceremony to affirm the claim.

2.3 Folk Songs in Marriage Rites (Bride Welcoming Songs)

Songs are an important tool used by humans to define their behaviour. “One of the most obvious sources in connection with music is the song text”, (Merriam 1980:187). Merriam goes on to say that song texts are language behaviour rather than music the sound; this is why one can say something publicly in song what cannot be said even private in words, (Merriam 1980).

Here the scholar argues strongly for the power that music has in society. The songs sung by the people, (folk songs) are part and parcel of the people themselves. In this section, I will review what other scholars have said about the functions of music in human society. Perhaps the most important function of music is that, as an entity in itself, it has characteristics which seem to make it potentially of particular value in the reconstruction of the culture contact (Merriam 1980). The scholar further argues that music may be used in a given society in a certain way, and this may be expressed directly as part of folk evaluation. Music is used in certain situations and hence becomes part of them, (Ibid).

There is much emphasis on the function and use of songs in the Shona cultural traditional practices. This is because;

“Songs contribute to the function of contribution to the continuity and stability of culture. If music allows emotional expression, gives aesthetic pleasure, entertains, communicates, elicits physical response, enforces conformity to social norms, and validates social

institutions and religious rituals, it is clear that it contributes to the continuity of culture,” (Merriam 1980:225).

This brings to mind bride welcoming ceremonies where singing and dancing forms an integral part of the whole performance. This therefore means that the songs sung and performed at any social cultural gathering, are meant to serve a particular purpose. The question that arises from the above study is to try and explain why songs and not any other medium are used. There is also need to look at what other writers have said about the role and influence of songs in Shona traditional culture.

However there is not much literature on songs used during ceremonies such as bride welcoming and others. This is one of the challenges that the research tries to do away with. The study is aiming at broadening the literature base on such important cultural practices. The analysis of bride welcoming ceremony songs done by Maguraushe and Mukuhlani (2014) reveals that the songs have a negative effect on the women who are being introduced to the bridegroom’s family for the first time. The songs are pregnant with a lot of meaning and that the interpretation can be based on individual listeners. It is through studying the songs that I wish to extract those various meanings. The fact that the songs are embedded with meaning, may suggest why songs are given a prominent role during the ceremony.

Merriam, (1980) asserts that songs were and are still used as the prime carriers of history. He further asserts that music brings a renewal of tribal solidarity among the community members. “Music then provides a rallying point around which the members of society gather to engage in activities which require the maximum cooperation and coordination of the group” (Ibid: 227). Langer, (1953:32), further argues thus;

“... music is ‘significant form’, and its significance is that of a symbol, a highly articulated, sensuous object, which by virtue of its dynamic structure can express the forms of vital experience which language is peculiarly unfit to convey.... this means that the song texts themselves make certain statements which have specific and direct meanings.”

Titon, cited in Stock (2015: 124) has insights on why songs are given prominence during the bride welcoming ceremonies when he says, “Music reflects the people’s culture and portrays the culture of the group.” The music is like a mirror which reflects the way of life of a particular group. The songs sung during the bride welcoming ceremonies are no doubt purposed to reflect the society’s beliefs about women and their role and status in society.

The songs do this effectively but the extent to which that is done is the main focus of discussion in my research. Of course, Titon talks of music being a reflection of the society’s culture, but he does not mention occasions where the music is performed.

It is therefore important to try and find out the various cultural traditional ceremonies where singing and dancing takes place. The nature of the songs sung also depends on the purpose of the gathering.

Thus, talking about a gathering to welcome a new bride would offer the family and wider community members an opportunity to affirm the rites and impart the societal norms and values that reinforce the most important aspects of the gathering which predominantly emanate from the philosophical perspective of the wider community. My task in this regard is therefore to find out the nature of songs and their general and specific meanings. The main thrust is the lyrics and their meanings; whether explicit or implicit.

Nettl (1990) seems to share the same sentiments with Titon when he asserts that music has a greater role in the African society. Any important messages can be effectively conveyed through the use of music. There is greater emphasis placed on the importance of music, especially the singing and dancing part.

Apart from communicating messages, people may just sing for enjoyment and exalting their spirits. However, such singing can be seen to reinforce unity. Merriam, (1980:227) highlights the importance of song and dance when he says, "...in this way, the dance produces a condition in which the unity, harmony and concord of the community are at a maximum and in which they are intensely felt by each member." The concern of my study is not about such music but rather, that music which serves a particular purpose. The purpose is contained in the ideologies and philosophies of the people. It is also important at this point to discuss the concept of marriage, from an African/s point of view, since it is the context in which bride welcoming ceremonies are performed.

Maguraushe and Mukuhlani (2014) noted that the impact of patriarchy and the vulnerability of females have been perpetuated in Shona culture through the performance of traditional bride welcoming ceremony songs. Thus, the songs serve a very crucial purpose in the Shona culture. The songs are also used in issuing marriage instructions to young brides. This would enable them to gain access into the ways in which brides are welcomed into the home. The influence of these songs is therefore quite exerting. It shows that culturally constructed ideologies such as patriarchy thrive on the reinforcement provided by the various superstructures such as the family and religion.

It is not possible to separate religion from any cultural practices because it forms the basis of the people's concept about life and the related issues. Therefore the use of songs to perpetuate patriarchal hierarchy is seen to be deeply rooted in their religion.

Mbiti (1999:67) stresses thus, “Many of the religious gatherings and ceremonies are accompanied by singing which not only helps to pass on religious and cultural knowledge from one person to another but also helps create and strengthen corporate feeling and solidarity.” Mbiti also further argues on the basis for using folk music during such ceremonies. He found that music, singing and dancing reach the innermost parts of African peoples and that many things come to the surface under the inspiration of music. Therefore this provides the rationale while folk music is used during the ceremony. This is quite befitting as he argues that music is so powerful that its influence on transmitting cultural norms and values should not be under-estimated.

Folk songs are closely associated with the people (Nettl 1990). This explains why they are an indispensable component of all the cultural ceremonies. During the bride welcoming ceremonies, everyone takes part in the singing as a way of demonstrating solidarity. The most important aspect of the songs is the messages that are conveyed. In other words, the songs are a way of imparting knowledge to the newly married woman. However, the knowledge that is being imparted has to be explored through studying the music. Empirical research should ascertain the type of themes and messages contained within the songs. This is why I have to study the songs as way of verification. The methodology used will also help authenticate and validate the findings of my research.

Nettl (1990:7) further asserts that “There is some validity to the notion that the folk music of a nation or tribe has a special relationship to its culture.” Therefore, the Karanga songs, which are the focus of my study, are an indispensable form of non-material culture of the people. The songs are found in all cultural aspects of the people. This is also confirmed by Mbiti (1999) when he says that, among the African people, the marriage ceremony and its associated rites reflects the ethnic identity of the group. Thus the songs sung are an

expression of the people's beliefs. Even the way the performance is organized can also shed light on the social organization of the society.

According to Warren (2013), marriage rites in the Shona context are punctuated by the singing and dancing to some ecstatic folk and traditional songs.

The songs, as Warren notes, are full of messages and sometimes can evoke some form of emotional reaction by the bride. However, Warren does not make mention of the causes of the emotional reactions. The type of emotional reactions is also not explained. It is therefore the gap that this research would like to explore and fill up.

According to Titon, (2009:366), "...singing played an integral role in many events or situations, including courting, funerals and child care." Titon is here advancing reasons to justify the use of songs at gatherings. He however, mentions that they played an integral role although the roles are not mentioned.

Jacobus and Martin, (2004:270) have this to say, "Music apparently not only evokes feeling in the listener but also reveals the structures of those feelings."

"Music is clearly indispensable to the proper promulgation of the activities that constitute a society; it is a universal human behaviour –without it, it is questionable that man could truly be called man, with all that implies (Merriam 1980:227)

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In an attempt to carry out an extensive study of Karanga bride welcoming ceremony songs, I conducted a single sited ethnography in Chimombe Village, Buhera district. I was born and grew up in the area and am well versed with the customs and practices of the people. The research was meant to provide information on the lyrical content of the songs sung during the ceremony. I sampled twelve songs for this purpose. The songs were audio tapped and transcribed in text format for subsequent analysis. The songs were purposively sampled from a large list of those commonly sung at most if not all of the ceremonies in the village. These songs will be discussed and analysed separately. The order in which this will be done is not of any significance. Views were solicited from both the newly married brides and those women who have been married already. The population consisted of all the married women but for the convenience of obtaining manageable volumes of data, I purposively sampled five married women and three brides. These represented the wider group. My intention was to solicit their views on the themes, lyrics and messages disseminated through the songs. The brides were interviewed a few days after the ceremony. I had to seek permission from the women's husbands before interviewing them. That was a way of upholding ethical issues.

The views of the respondents were recorded in verbatim on the interview guide sheets which I had prepared. I also observed and participated in some ceremonies and I recorded the data on the observation guide sheets which I had prepared. I also solicited the views of three elderly men who were present on two of the ceremonies which I attended. I wanted to find out their opinions about the implications of the lyrics in relation to patriarchal power dynamics and hegemony. It was a challenging task but exciting at the same time. I was quite impressed to see how the people of Chimombe still uphold some of their norms and cultural

values even during the era when Christianity and modernity seem to have had a great impact on culture. The ethnographic research was indeed an eye opener and the interviews unearthed some ‘gold mines’ of undocumented cultural beliefs. I also realized that there are some custodians of the almost forgotten Shona cultural beliefs and philosophies but strong ethical considerations have to be borne in mind. This is because certain issues cannot be divulged for public consumption without prior approval of the ancestors

3.2 Research Design

In this qualitative study, I carried out an ethnographic research in Chimombe village during the month of December 2015. That was when most of the ceremonies were held. According to one of the brides I interviewed, she was married in October but due to financial constraints the husband had to wait until December when they would go for Christmas holidays. This explains why most of the ceremonies were held in this month although in the past it used to be done in September and October before the rains. I had to carry out an ethnographic research because I stay with the people and I understand very well their culture.

According to Johnson and Christensen (2004:275) research design refers to the “Outline, plan or strategy that is used to answer a research question.” In my research, I employed the Qualitative research design because the type of data I intended to gather had to do with feelings, emotions, perceptions, beliefs and attitudes which cannot be quantified but can only be qualified. Qualitative research provides a holistic way of approaching reality, bounded by time and context rather than a set of strict rules (Bresler, 1995). Various data collecting methodologies fit under the umbrella of qualitative research; they share an emphasis on participant observations, open-ended and formal interviews, and dealing personal experiences.

Phenomenology is one approach to qualitative research and focuses on describing the ways people understand and perceive their experiences of the particular phenomenon being studied (Glesne, 1999). Because the purpose of this study was to examine the effect of bride welcoming ceremonies, through the lived experiences of married women, I determined that phenomenology would be a good fit for this study. Qualitative research also gives the researcher the opportunity to interpret the respondents' views (Riesman, 1993). I used this design to investigate the effects of the lyrics of some of the bride welcoming ceremony songs on the brides and the women in general. In this study, a qualitative design was adopted because of its ability to fairly engage the participants, for example, through interviews and spending time on site. Best and Khan (2006) posit that qualitative research is a type of inquiry in which the researcher carries out an investigation using a variety of techniques and reporting the findings mainly in words.

Qualitative research is carried out in natural settings where the phenomenon takes place and involves how the participants interpret it, (Lincoln, 2000:3).

In addition, qualitative research is particularly effective where one seeks to draw the perspectives and personal opinions of a particular population on an issue involving them.

Mack, Woodson, Macqueen, Guest and Namey (2005:1) note that "Additionally, it seeks to understand a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves..." In this context, my main aim was to get the women's perception of the themes conveyed through the ceremony songs. In this study, the qualitative design sought to determine the effects of bride welcoming songs on the women folk by soliciting the views of both newly married brides, old women and even some men.

The qualitative research design was therefore chosen because it provided me, as the researcher, the opportunity to collect rich, reliable, descriptive and credible data, obtained from a real-life, natural setting (Wellington 2004, 133). This approach also enabled me to

interact with the brides as well as women who have been married for a long time and I managed to record their true views, as “spoken and written records of human experiences” (Denzin and Lincoln 1998, 42).

3.3. Population and Sampling

In the case of my research, the population involved all the married women in Chimombe village. I considered all the women who went through the traditional bride welcoming ceremonies. However, there were some women who were married according to the modern ways but when they went to the home village, the ceremony was held. Such were also considered. The choosing of the women was quite significant to my study.

The main thrust was to study Karanga bride welcoming ceremony songs used to welcome women when they come to their newly found homes. This means that the women were the target population of my research. Since the number was overwhelming, I purposively sampled only a few. This enabled me to come up with manageable volume of data. These few were those women who possess in depth knowledge about the ceremonies. They got that knowledge because they went through the ceremony and now they were singing the same songs for the other women. According to Ball (1990) purposive sampling is used in order to gain access to data from knowledgeable people. Only Purposive sampling was used because I was looking for ‘information rich’ cases (Bieger and Gerlach, 1996).

Therefore when I sampled the women I managed to get a group that was satisfactory to specific needs. That was necessitated by the need to generate reliable data that is coming from the people who have the necessary experience. The group also included those women who were married in the modern and religious way but at one point during the wedding ceremony some, traditional singing and dancing was done. This helped to validate the claim that “even modern marriage ceremonies include aspects of the traditional bride welcoming ceremonies”. As a matter of convenience, I also included three males who are involved in the

composing and performance of the songs. Although the men do not take a leading role, it was important to get their views in relation to the power dynamics implied in the songs. In addition to this, the men I interviewed were said to be active during their days when it came to the performances at the ceremonies. That was indeed quite interesting.

Location of study

The study was conducted in Chimombe village in Buhera district, in Manicaland Province. Manicaland province in the east of Zimbabwe has eight districts which include Buhera, Mutare Rural as well as urban (Fig 1). Buhera district is about 130 kilometres from Mutare. I had to choose this geographical location because I was born and bred there (1963-present). This area is located in the eastern part of Buhera district and one of the thirty-five villages in the confederacy of Chief Chimombe. Both the village and chiefdom is Chimombe of the Rozvi who migrated from Great Zimbabwe. The majority of the populace belongs to the Karanga ethnic group. It is bordered by two great rivers, Save and Murove which are both tributaries of the great Zambezi. Culturally, the village has a rich heritage of sacred hills such as Chemusorowembudzi, (The head of the goat), Mavangwe mountain range featuring the highest peak Munwewamwari, which means the finger of God since it has a single rock pointing towards the skies. The main dialect spoken in the village is Karanga, one of the dialects of the Shona language. The village is one of those few where traditional rituals such as *kurova guva*, *mukwererera* and *bira* are still being regarded highly. It is therefore not surprising that the bride welcoming ceremonies are still common because of the villagers' desire to uphold their culture and tradition. There is greater unity among the villagers because almost everyone is related to each other. The community comes together when a young man marries a wife and the ceremony is organized by the elderly relatives of the young man. There are songs sung to welcome the bride. (*Kupururudzira muroora*). Most of the bride welcoming ceremonies are now done during the day unlike during the past when they were

held during the evenings. Now that parents are afraid of promiscuity of the youths who will take advantage of night ceremonies, the village head has admonished these ceremonies to be held during the day. When there is a modern white wedding in Chimombe village, there is a time especially when the church proceedings are over as people are gathered at the homestead, when the spirit of the traditional welcoming songs is rekindled. This is done especially when the kinsfolk will be spoiling the couple with gifts. The actual *mapururudzo* however, when done in the traditional way takes place at the bridegroom's homestead. People gather next to the hut and the bride, covered in white cloth will be seated by the door way (entrance to the hut). The hut is significant in that it is a symbol for womanhood. In every home the number of huts will tell you the number of wives in the home. The white cloth is usually a sign of purity and confirmation of virginity. The covering means that the relatives of the bridegroom can only see the face after paying some money. However, these days the practice is being abused as substantial amounts of money are demanded for the bride to open the covering veil.

As soon as she is uncovered songs of mocking are sung usually stating how ugly the bride is. A semi- circle is formed and people will sing and dance. Gifts ranging from money, fowls, kitchen utensils and many more will be donated. Sometimes a mini drama is done during the singing and dancing. In fact the drama is more of simulation of the actual sexual intercourse act. One woman rolls a piece of cloth in the shape of a penis then simulates the act in front of another woman who will be in front of her. Sometimes two women cover themselves under a blanket and simulate the act right in front of the bride. Such is the treat that one experiences when you happen to attend one of the finest and well organized bride welcoming ceremonies in Chimombe village.

3.4. Research Instruments

When I set out to collect data in the field, I opted to use some of the most effective instruments of data collection. That I did to make sure that the data I collected would be reliable, authentic and credible. However, I had to pilot test the instruments to make sure of their functionality and effectiveness. Pilot-testing the instrument helps to clean the tool of any errors. It removes any ambiguities and even re-affirms the researcher of the direction and the appropriateness of the research. In fact it is a trial-run that allows the researcher to identify potential problems in the proposed research. Interview questions for the study were tested on a sub-population similar to the population to be studied, to check for content, ambiguity, clarity, data quality and time needed for the assignment before being used for the main study. It was crucial to ensure that the sub population in the pilot-test was similar to that being studied in order to get an accurate feel of whether the instrument would produce the required outcome.

The Adolphus website (April 2012) notes that pre-tests should be conducted systematically with potential respondents and using the same method of administration. The interview guide was one of the instruments I used. Harrell and Bradley (2009) concur with this when they observed that when interviewing, a guide is used, with questions and topics that must be covered. The interviewer has the discretion about the order in which questions are asked. The questions are standardized, and probes may be made to ensure that the researcher covers all what is useful to address the demands of the research. This kind of interview collects detailed information in a style that is somewhat conversational while at the same time coded and guided. The guide that I used consisted of ten questions which I asked my respondents. The questions were open ended so as to allow the respondent to express their personal opinions on the issues at stake. The respondents were free to avoid certain questions if at all they felt a threat related to intrusion of their privacy. All the views of respondents were recorded in

verbatim. I decided to use an interview guide so that I would avoid the risk of diverting or being diverted by the respondents. The guide also helped me to keep in time and avoid long discussions that would result in irrelevant data being obtained as a result of digression. Apart from the interview guide, I also used the observation guide.

I used this to capture data each time I observed the proceedings either as a mere observer or participant observer. Again, I used the guide so as to avoid taking note of irrelevant details and data. Each time I visited a venue for the bride welcoming ceremony, I knew what I wanted to collect because of the guide. The guide proved to be such a useful instrument of data collection. Because I had to collect songs, I record them on audio and also transcribed the lyrics on a song sheet. That enabled me to analyse the songs later. Writing the lyrics down aided me in preserving the exact words to avoid misrepresentation of facts and lyrics which would lead to misinterpretation. Thus, all in all, the instruments used assisted me in collecting the data which I felt was adequate, reliable and primary.

3.5. Data Collection Procedures

Because bride welcoming ceremonies occur unpredictably, it was not possible to plan the procedure of collecting data related to the function. It was more of an impromptu scenario. Each time I learnt that there was a bride welcoming ceremony, I would go to observe. As a result, all the observations were unplanned. However, the interviews of already married women were systematically planned. During the first two weeks of December I did my pre-visits and made the necessary appointments with the five women I intended to interview. I had to seek the permission from their husbands first. I clearly made them aware of the purpose of my interview. I also made it quite clear to them should they wish to change their minds and decide not to be interviewed, they were free to do so. From the beginning of the third week, I set out on my data collection exercise. I did not face any constraints regarding time since there were no rains so the people could work in their fields. After interviewing the

married women, I set out to interview the three old men. I had an advantage of the fact that they are close relatives hence they were more than willing to say out their views. Their responses were recorded on the interview guide, which had been prepared beforehand. When I had finished the interviewed I began inquiring about the welcoming ceremonies wherever they were conducted. I visited the venues and captured the data which I wanted.

Again, I had to first make my presence and intentions known by the responsible people as a way of upholding ethical issues. I did not meet any challenging situations during the exercises therefore I was absolutely grateful to all the people who assisted me during my time in the field. It was quite obvious that I could not have managed without the unprecedented support and co-operation that I got.

3.6 Ethical Issues

Ethical considerations which go along with data collection in the field were adhered to. Research ethics are principles and guidelines that help the researcher to uphold certain values; (Johnson and Christensen (2004)). Assurance of confidentiality to the respondents involved was given as it was indicated that names of the women interviewed were not to be indicated in my write up. In the case where the use of names would validate a point, I assured my respondents that I would make use of pseudo names. Research deals with people who must be respected as well as treated with dignity and assured that the information they entrust to the researcher will be treated with confidentiality (Mills, 2003) hence the need to seek their consent first (Cozby, 2001) With this in mind, I explained to all participants the aims as well as the purpose of the study and indicated that there were no apparent risks involved. The participants were informed that participation in the study was voluntary, and that they could withdraw from participating at any time without any prejudice. It was further indicated to them that there was no payment for participation. I made it quite clear to them that the

research was conducted on an absolutely academic aspect. They were further assured that I had no intention of publishing my findings in the media for any financial gains.

3.7 Data Analysis

Poggenpoel (2000: 336) sees data analysis as a “reasoning strategy with the objective of taking a complex whole and resolving it into parts”. The collected data will have to be critically analysed in a systematic manner so as to bring out the desired outcomes. There are well defined stages to follow during the data analysis process (Kitwood 1977).

The stages are as follows:

- Generate natural units of meaning
- Classify, categorise and order these units of meaning
- Structure narratives to describe interview contents
- Interpret the data to bring out meaning

By considering the stages proposed by Kitwood, I will first explore the literal meanings of the songs then go on to analyse and discuss the deeper meanings and connotations contained in the lyrics of the songs. There may be need to group the songs according to similarities in the themes but the order of presentation will not be of any significance. I will also explore the extent to which the songs can affect the women being addressed. The views solicited from the women during the interviews will be analysed in the context of the meanings of the song messages. There will be need to evaluate the overall impact of what the respondents say with regards to the lyrics of the songs. Conclusions will be drawn based on a reconciliation of the various perceptions as well as the interpreted meanings of the songs. The analysis results must therefore provide adequate answers and explanations to the research questions and objectives of the study.

Therefore the data analysis process should subsequently culminate in the satisfaction of a need previously outlined in the statement of the problem. The outcomes must substantiate whatever speculations which had been hitherto superimposed. Thus, the discussions and evaluations made must bring out clearly what had to be discovered. That can only be achieved if a systematic and objective analysis has been done to the data.

3.8 Conclusion

The qualitative research design in this ethnography of the bride welcoming ceremony songs, was employed in an attempt to find the effects those songs had on the women. The few women who were purposively sampled offered comprehensive and meaningful perceptions and personal opinions as regards to the effect of the songs. The methods used for data collection were quite effective because even the innermost feelings of the respondents could be depicted especially during the interviews. It would have been different had a different method been used. The data collected using both the interview and observation guides proved quite handy. The findings showed that there is a lot of research that has to be done concerning most social practices. The respondents cooperated quite well as their confidentiality had been assured as way of upholding ethical issues. The fieldwork was indeed an eye opener to me.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Findings from Interviews and Observations: Introduction

In this chapter, I will present and analyse the data that I collected from the respondents when I went into the field. According to Agawu (2003:173), “Analysis, the act of taking apart to see how the thing works, is a vital and potentially empowering practice...no one who has extended our understanding of African musical language has managed without analysis.” Analyses of the songs will also be done in an effort to bring out the underlying meanings of the songs as well as the main themes contained.

4.1.1 Marriage in the African context

From what I observed, and collected through interviews, the Karanga people have their own views about the concept of how Africans behave; their customs, beliefs, values and everything identified with the African people. The extent to which Karanga traditional culture contributed towards the degradation and creation of subservient position of the married women was exposed. The Karanga, a sub cultural group within the Shona has a peculiar perception about marriage. From my research, I found out that marriage is viewed as an essential institution within the society and it leads to the establishment of a family. The family has the prime responsibility to produce children for societal continuity’s sake (Mbiti 1999). When I asked one old man about his views on the importance of marriage (Appendix 3.1), he said;

“Mutsika dzedu dzechitema, mukadzi mumwe nemumwe anofanirwa kuwanikwa obva abara vana. Kana asingabari anowanzo nyombwa nekarwiyo kanoti; Asina mwana bereka shamba. Kushaikwa kwembereko kunoita kuti mukadzi adzorerwe kumusha kwake nokuti anenge atadzisa dzinza remurume kukura.” (In our African culture, every woman is supposed to get married and then produce children. Failure to produce children can lead to the woman being sent back to her home.)(Mr Mandina, interview, February 2016)

That perception has a lot of implications which seem to perpetuate social inequality within the family. The role of the family being that of child bearing results in a situation where the woman's status is almost reduced to that of the breeding machine

The man of the house is the boss and has the liberty to make autonomous and unilateral decisions concerning the number of children to have. Thus the man regards sexual access as a right (Epstein 2007). Apart from bearing children, the mother is also expected to do all the household chores with the help of the daughters. Cooking, fetching water and firewood, weeding in the fields are some of the tedious tasks that the married woman is expected to do.

When she comes home tired, the husband expects to be given warm water for bathing as well as a well prepared meal. Worse still, he demands sex when they go to bed no matter how tired the woman may be. The low status accorded to the wife in the African marriage is next to that of a slave. There are songs sung during the bride welcoming ceremony to remind the woman of this predicament. The father, being the head of the family also has control over the economic resources of the family and uses them the way he wants. Engels cited in Haralambos and Holborn (2000:109) says; "... the man seized the reigns in the house also, the woman was degraded, enthralled, the slave of the man's lust, a mere instrument for breeding children." The three old men I interviewed all concurred with one another saying that:

"Murume ane kodzero dzukuita zvaanoda uye kutonga mukadzi nekuti pfuma yakadyiwa nevabereki vomukadzi inotaura kuti murume ndiye anotonga nokuti wakabhadhara. Kana vakadzi vachida kutongawo vanofanira kuva ivo vanobvisa pfuma. Asi patsika dzedu hakuna izvozvo. Tsika ndidzo dzinofanira kutitungamirira kwete ma "rights" amunotiudza iyemi vakarasha Tsika nekuda chirungu."(The man has the right to rule over the woman because the bride price taken by the woman's parents gives the husband the right to rule over the woman. If the women want to rule they must pay

lobola. In our culture, we don't have anything like that. Culture should guide the people not these rights that you talk of.)(Mr Mazhangara interview, February 2016)

The men's argument is that the cultural practices give them exclusive rights in marriage because they paid lobola. They also argued that whatever happens in the family is natural because the first man to be created was given the power to rule over the woman (Genesis 2v16). The men also argued from a patriarchal point of view which affirmed that societal perceptions regarded men's hegemony and chauvinism as natural and inevitable. The two old women I interviewed to solicit their views expressed the view that they had no choice because that is what society demands. They said that it is expected of a woman to be totally submissive to her husband because she is the one who came to join the husband's family. They quoted the Shona proverb, "*Mwana washe muranda kumwe*, (The chief's child is a servant in a foreign land).

One of the old women had this to say:

"Tsika dzechirungu ndidzo dzakakonzera kuparara kwedzimba zhinji. Mutsika dzedu dzechivanhu, mukadzi anofanira kuva pasi pemurume wake. Kunyange mushoko ramwari zvakanyorwa. Ma'rights' akaunzwa nevarungu ndiwo anoita kuti vakadzi vechiduku vafunge kuti vari kudzvinyirirwa."(The culture for the whites caused families to break up. In our traditional culture the woman must be under her husband. Even in the word of God it is written. The rights that were brought by whites make the young women think that they are oppressed)(Mbuya Mutete,interview, February 2016)

My findings indicate that the old women have been socialized to accept their subservient and inferior social status. They in turn impart this knowledge to the young women when they get married. They do this through singing songs which contain such themes. The young women are also socialized by their paternal aunts to be submissive. They are made to believe that a dignified woman as well as a woman of virtue, is recognized by her loyalty and submissiveness. One of the paternal aunts had this to say:

“Ini satete ndinofanira kudzidzisa mwana wehanzvadzi yangu Tsika dzakanaka kuitira kuti ndisashorwe. Vanhu vanetsika yekushora tete kana mwanasikana akaita benzi kwaakaroorwa.” (As the aunt I have a responsibility to teach my niece good manners so that I will not be blamed. People have a tendency to blame the aunt if the niece misbehaves where she has been married.)

According to (Maluleke 1997), in Maguraushe and Mukuhlani (2014), it is possible that Shona men do not intentionally and directly subordinate their wives but the socialization and welcoming brides go through sets them up for an inferior role in their marriages and men are the supposed beneficiaries. It should also be noted that what the woman goes through during socialization may be reinforced during the ceremony through the songs. This was reiterated by some of the women whom I interviewed:

“Izvi hazvishamisi nekuti tichikura taingoudzwa naana tete kuti kuroorwa harisi dambe. Uyezve tinoziva kuti zvakagara zvakadaro kuti mukadzi anofanira kuva pasi pemurume wake. Kana ukada kuita manyemwe unoisiya imba yacho wee. (This is not surprising because we grew up being told that the husband is the head. If you are not careful, you will leave the house/marriage.)

They all concurred that for them, it is natural for the men to dominate and control all the aspects of their lives. They attributed this patriarchal hegemony to natural and cultural factors. They stressed the influence of customs such as bride price, feminine value and the need to uphold tradition. However, that was more of a contradiction to what Oakley (1983) refers to as a cultural construction. The women consented that their subservient position can be alluded to culture:

“Tsika dzagara dzakasiyana. Chivanhu chedu chinodzidzisa kuti murume ndiye baba. Nokudaro ini mai nevana tiri vana vababa. Ndiko kusakaka ndichidaira kuti ‘baba’ kana murume wangu akandishevedza. (One culture is always different from the other. In our Shona culture, the husband is the father. Therefore I as the wife and children are father’s children. That is why I will say father, when my husband calls me.)”

I found through the interviews that the majority of the women were always occupied with household chores and they did not have time to do any other activities that can contribute directly to the economy of the family. One woman said:

“Ini saamai vemba ndinofanira kushingaira kuitira kuti mhuri idye. Bhaibheri rinotaura kuna Zvirevo kuti ‘ndiyanyiko ungawane mukadzi akanaka?’ Izvi zvinotaura kuti mukadzi anofanira kuona kuti mhuri yaka shambidzika uye murume anofanira kuyemurwa pane vamwe. Ibaso ramai rokuona kuti murume adya asati aenda kundari. Ukasabikira murume anobikirwa nevamwe akazotorwa wozochema. (Myself as the mother, I must work hard to make the family eat. The bible says in the book of Proverbs, ‘who can find a good woman’. This shows that the woman must see to it that the family is smart and the husband must be admired by others. It is the mother’s duty to see to it that the husband has eaten before he goes for beer drinking. If you don’t cook some women will do and you will cry afterwards.)

The findings proved that the majority of the women are primarily still responsible for domestic tasks and they have less power than their husbands and they are quite comfortable it seems (Ortner 1974). One woman said she had to submit to her husband because as she grew up, she was taught that by her paternal aunts

4.1.2 The role of songs during the ceremony

Singing, dancing and ululation are not mere activities done during the ceremony but are indispensable components. The success of the ceremony largely depends on how many of these activities have been performed.

This is because African traditional songs are not just sung anyhow; they are predominantly functional and are part of the community’s daily life (Karolyi 1998). The whole community comes together to perform the songs during the ceremonial gathering. Unlike the music of the west where music is played for an audience who pay to be entertained, African music is informed by the purpose of the gathering. The music is largely performed by the whole community at various significant events such as weddings, funerals and rites of passage and its importance is made manifest within the context of its successful impact on the social occasion (Karolyi 1998).

When I asked the participants' view about the importance of music, the elderly told me that their music had the power to integrate them as members of society. The fact that everyone took part showed that they were all equal. I was also informed that music is the most effective vehicle for transmitting important cultural norms and values. It was made clear that there are certain things that cannot be said through speech because of the degree of sensitivity of the issues. However, music can communicate in public what cannot be said privately to a man's face (Merriam 1980). The songs sung during the ceremony are pregnant with meaning and they have the capacity to convey those meanings effectively.

The songs are also used by the Karanga people for didactic purposes. The old women I interviewed told me that they used the songs in order to teach the young brides what to expect in marriage, how to behave towards the husband and how to manage pressure and negative emotions. There was the general feeling among the participants that there were no other ways of expressing their joy and pleasure on such an occasion apart from song. Although the lyrics in the songs are somehow derogative, the community members sing with much happiness as a demonstration of their appreciation of what 'the young man has done'; *jaya rabuda mugota* (the young man has moved out of the bachelor's quarters).

That was the sentiments from a close relative of the groom.

Songs are therefore an essential component of the whole ceremony. The fact is summed up by Merriam in Karolyi (1998:5) when he says, "The fact of the matter is that without music, a village is incomplete; people want to sing and dance and a number of important village activities simply cannot be carried out without music."

Bride Welcoming Ceremony Songs Analyses

Singing, dancing and ululation are not mere activities done during the ceremony but as it were, indispensable components. The success of the ceremony largely depends on how many of these activities have been performed. In this section I present and analyse some of the songs that are used during the bride welcoming ceremony in Karanga tradition. The twelve songs which I collected may be grouped depending on their roles and functionality.

The first category is about songs which welcome, introduce and remind the bride the duties and responsibilities which the bride is expected to perform. The second category deals with songs whose lyrics attack the character of the bride. Usually when they are sung, the bride would sob quietly whilst she is under the veil covering her. The third section comprises songs which portray the status of the woman and the current state of affairs. The fourth category shows the woman that she has made a good and wise decision. Finally, she is admonished on how to behave and treat the relatives of the bridegroom.

The focus of this section is therefore on the interpretation of the twelve songs which are sung during the ceremony. However, according to the theory of deconstructionism, meanings may depend on the individual's own perspective and constructs hence are not rigid.

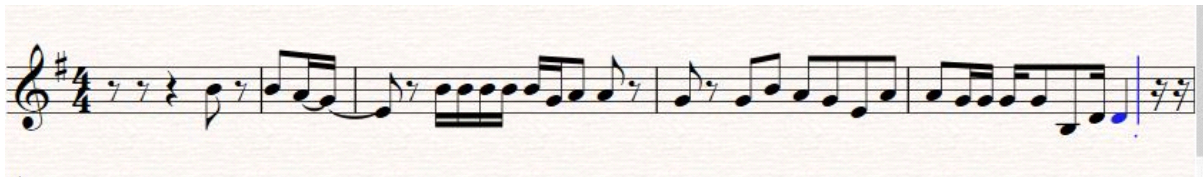
It is also important to mention that some of these songs may carry both an explicit and an implicit meaning. The bride's paternal aunt assumes the responsibility of explaining some of the songs so that the bride gets the intended meaning being put across by the lyrics of the songs. The songs are generally short and binary in form with leader and response in most cases. It has to be noted that the order in which I have presented the songs below is not necessarily the order in which they are performed during the ceremony.

Moreover, all the songs may not be sung during one ceremony and some other songs different from these may also be sung. I have sampled these because they happen to top the list. The

songs seem to possess an unforeseen force and exert influence on the woman and subsequently, the women tend to be highly subordinated under their husbands not by force but by voluntary consent.

At the start of the ceremony, a group of women and girls sing the song;

Bhoyi redu rauya: Transcribed by: J. Chikura



.m : m., r : .d: l, :-m, m : m, m, m : d. r : r : .d : d. m : r. d : l., r : r, d : d. d. d : m. s
: s

Bhoyi-redu rauya reku- tsime- ne kuhu- ni mhi-no fengu-fengu renga de-nde risina mvura

Bhoyi redu rauya, reku tsime nekuhuni, mhino fengu- fengu renga dende risina mvura.(Our slave has come to fetch water and the firewood, the nostrils appear like a calabash without water). The use of *Bhoyi* (slave), in the Shona language depicts a serious insult.

This shows that the main reason for the bride’s coming is to do the tedious domestic chores. The water and firewood are collected from an invariably long distance especially during the dry season. This song therefore is a reminder to the bride of her tasks. One of the brides I interviewed expressed concern and a great deal of dissatisfaction upon such lyrics which she said were meant to denigrate her status next to nothing. However, the older women who sang defended the position basing on the fact that it was normal and expected of any married woman. This showed me the extent to which these songs have influenced the perception of women who have been married for a long time.

The woman's subordination, then, arose out of "... a complex process..." (Coontz and Henderson in Haralambos and Holborn, 2000: 110).

One of the songs has lyrics which attack the character of the bride. She is portrayed as an old someone who almost missed the chance of getting married.

Wanga wachembera: Transcribed by J. Chikura



d. d. r :m., r : d. d. d : t. l. s : r. r. d : r., t : t. t .t : t. l. s
iweMa- ri a wangawa-chembera, iweMa-ria Wanga wa-chembera,

Iwe Maria..... wanga wachembera, iwe Maria....., wanga wachembera. (You,..... had grown too old, you had grown too old.

The song creates an impression of desperation on the part of the woman. The lyrics suggest that she had gone beyond the age of marriage. However, when I interviewed the bride after the ceremony, it was shocking to note that the bride was only twenty-four years old. She lamented over such abuse and derogation transmitted through song. When I interviewed the singing party, they only reiterated the fact that it is a way of joking rather than mockery. In Shona culture it is normal for the aunts to joke with the brother's wife (*kutamba chiramu*). The older men and women said that it is a way of showing the bride that she is free to play and joke with her husband's brothers and sisters

The next song is also a form of mockery, not only to the bride but also to her mother; like mother like daughter;

Une rimwero namai vako: Transcribed by J. Chikura



.m, s : .m, m : m .r .d : r, d : d. m, s : .m, s : .m, m : m. r .d : m ,r : r. m, s : .m, m : m. r.d
:r .d

Iwe unerimwero-na mai vako, iwe, unerimwero namai vako, iwe unerimwero na mai
va-

:d. f. f : m. m, m, m : d. m. r : d :

ko,vanotengesa mbudzi dzababa

Iwe, une rimwero namai vako, iwe, une rimwero namai vako, iwe, une rimwero namai vako vanotengesa mbudzi dzababa (You have the same with your mother, you have the same with your mother, you have the same with your mother, who sells father’s goats). This song does not only show disrespect on the mother in-law but treats her in an unacceptably contemptuous manner.

Of course the argument is the mother of the bride will not be present but still that act of disrespect should not be allowed simply because the situation calls for such remarks. In Shona culture, the mother in-law commands such great respect that the son in-law cannot even eat food in the same room with her. It is not surprising when one frustrated bride I interviewed said angrily, “*Vakatuka havo ini zviru nani, ko mai vangu vaiwanira papi?*” (It is better for them to mock me but I wonder how my mother got involved). This shows that some of the lyrics have the potential of straining relationships even after the ceremony is over. Such way of relating to each other sometimes has an effect in the future. That explains how sometimes the husband’s family can be haunted by the avenging spirit of the woman if she dies when there is such a broken relationship. The Shona strongly believe that the spirit of a dead person continues to wander at her home long after death (Mbiti 1999).

There is a song which goes;

Chitototo: Transcribed by: J. Chikura



`d , r , r : d, d, d, s : s , t , :-

Ndati –ndiperekedze iwe, f, d, d, d : d, d, t, l: s, s, d : -m, m, m : s. s. s (lead)

(Response) *handina-ngu-va yokukuperekedza, iwe chi- to-
to-to*

Ndati ndiperekedze iwe, handina nguva yekukuperekedza iwe chitototo (You are a grasshopper, therefore I don't have time to go with you, you grasshopper).

This song portrays the bride as a useless person. She does not have any value therefore even when she has to go and fetch water at night; she has to go alone because no one can harm such a useless creature. It is quite surprising to realize how a normal society can allow such form of abuse to take place. However, the challenge lies with the women who have been married for some time. They regard that as normal and they do not see anything wrong.

One of the respondents even had this to say, "*Iyemi vana vemazuva ano ndimi mave kuita kuti mvura isanaye nokuti mave kutora tsika dzechirungu. Mutsika dzedu hapana nyaya dzekushungurudzwa dzamunongonyora mumapepanhau.*"(You children of today are the ones who cause rain not to fall because you are taking the white man's culture. In our culture there is nothing like abuse which you are always writing in the newspapers). This shows how the women folk have been socialized to accept the status of subservience and is quite happy

to belong to the subaltern. It seems the songs are deliberately composed to perpetuate the existing status- quo of patriarchal dominance and hegemony.

There is another song which portrays the bride as a promiscuous and unfaithful person;

Mujinga Regomo. Transcribed by: J. Chikura



.m, m, f : f, m : -.r : - : : : :

Mujinga rego- mo

(Response) : : : : : .f, f : f, d , m ,m : m. m. d : m, m, r, d : r

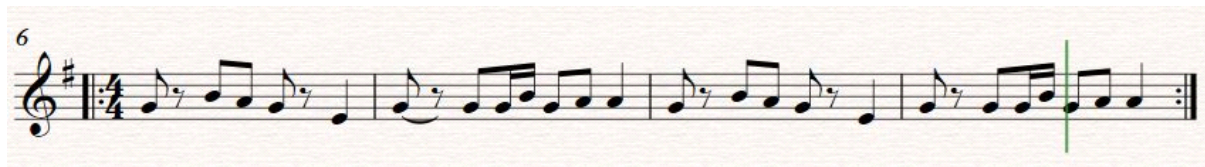
Wairara mujinga-re-gomo nava-komana

Mujinga regomo, wairara mujinga regomo nevakomana (At the foot of the mountain, she used to sleep at the foot of a mountain with boys). The literal meaning of the songs confirms the bride is not a steady and faithful person. One bride said that it is quite unfair and disturbing for such a song to be sung for her. This is because she confessed that she has kept her virginity only for her husband. In the Shona culture there is nothing embarrassing to the bride’s family than losing virginity before marriage. Virginity was highly regarded and the aunt of a bride who was found a virgin was given a cow as a token of appreciation (Mbiti 1999). Therefore, by suggesting through song that the bride slept with other men was more or less undressing her in public. The song was sung as a mockery which is typical of such ceremonies. In that case the paternal aunt who would have accompanied the bride would often comfort her by telling her to never take such issues seriously. That was how possibly the songs would achieve their desired effect. The way the songs were sung was so dramatic

that it would take one with a strong heart and powerful emotions to regard it as water under the bridge. Even though the bride is worried, the participants sing without any signs of remorse and will be enjoying every bit of it.

The next song portrays the bride as a greedy person who is capable of eating and finishing all the chickens:

Muroora ihovo: Transcribed by: J. Chikura.



.d : m., r : .d: l, :-d : d, d, m, d: -r : r : .d : m., r : .d: l, :-d : d, d, m, d: -r : r

Mwana wenyu ihovo, hovo yapedza huku. Gire wenyu ihovo, hovo yapedza huku.

Muroora ihovo, hovo yapedza huku. (Bride is a red squirrel, a red squirrel which has finished our chickens.). The singers sing these lyrics to tease the bride and show her greediness. They do not even consider the fact that she has to do all the hard work that awaits her. They view her as a potential predator yet, they do not even know about her character since they are seeing her for the first time. One bride said when asked to comment on this song, “*Handitombodyi nyama yacho*” (I am a vegetarian). This reflects that in most cases the songs are just sung as a way of denigration and mockery.

The other song that I sampled depicts the bride as having been desperate and hence should be grateful for having been married;

Dai pasina hanzvadzi yedu: Transcribed by: J. Chikura



m. m: f . f : f . f : m : m. r : d : d : .m : m. m : r. r : r. m : r. r : m. r : d : d

Dai pasinawo ha-nzvadzi ye-du, waitowanikwa negudo remu- go-mo

Dai pasina hanzvadzi yedu waitoorwa negudo remugomo (Had it not been for our brother, you could have been married by a baboon from the mountain). This song is sung as a way of teasing and mocking the bride. The song is meant to leave her wondering what sort of desperation she must have experienced.

This would make her appreciate the fact that she has been married at last. The welcoming party tries to show her that the man who came into her life has not only given her better hope of living a normal life but has also emancipated her from the chains of social bondage and destitution. This notion brings out the idea that women can only find hope of living when there is a man in their life.(Machionis 2005).

As a society, there is need to fight against the notion that women are lower in dignity than men and that they need the presence of even the most stupid man to live a complete and normal life. This song illustrates that in Shona culture in general and Karanga society in particular, a woman only gains value when a man chooses to marry her. That is a dangerous as well as dehumanizing social vice that must be totally eradicated so as to promote social harmony.

Another song which portrays the bride as desperate goes;

Mwana Wedu Waidei: Transcribed by: J. Chikura



.m, r : m, d : m, r, d, l : : .m, r : m, d : d. d .t. d : r

Wai - dei, wai-dei, wai dei, kurekure-ko

: : :.r, r : r, r, d, t : d, s : .t, t : t, r, r : d, s :

Mwana wenyu waidei, kuteerera bhuru mango.

Waidei waidei, mwana wenyu waidei kure kureko, kuteerera bhuru mango. (What did she want, what did she want, what did your daughter want from that far, she was following a big mango). The song shows that the bride travelled a very long distance from her place to the bride's home. The basic question which makes the singers wonder is what exactly she was looking for.

Their answer is suggested in the response (*bhuru mango*; a symbolism for the penis).

Thus the bride was so desperate that she could never mind the distance. However, the brides expressed a different point of view concerning the song. They said that it was the man who travelled a long distance to court the young girl therefore they were very much affected by the song. Asked for comment, the singing party maintained that desperation made the bride to agree to come with their brother.

“Kubva kurekure kwakadaro zvinoreva kuti akanga ashaiwa varume. Akazoita rombo rakanaka kuti akawana hanzvadzi yedu. (Coming from that far means she could not find a husband. She was fortunate to meet our brother who proposed her for marriage.)”

Had she not been desperate, they argue, she could have declined the offer of marriage. The argument here shows how deconstructionism can affect meanings of utterances and songs.

The interpretation may be guided by personal construct, culture as well social background. However, from my own interpretation, I feel both meanings attached to the song can be correct depending on which camp one belongs to.

There are the other two songs which portray the bride as a fortunate lady that others can envy her. The first song goes;

Vagoni Zvavo. Transcribed by: J. Chikura



.m. s, s :s, s, s :l. l:d.r,r :d, d, d, f :s. s: m. s, s:s,s,s,f :l. r, r: d, d, d, t:

Hondiye ndiye kuzambela, hondiye ndiye, vagoni zvavo vakaroorwa kwa...,kunosungwa huni nemidzonga yenyama

Hondiye ndiye kuzambela hondiendiye, vagoni zvavo vakaroorwa kwa, kunosungwa huni nemidzonga wenyama (Hello, hello kuzambela hello, hello, how fortunate are those who were married at....., where meat is used to tie a bunch of firewood). The song shows that the family of the groom is prosperous because they can afford to play with meat which other people cannot afford to get. There is however a degree of sarcasm in the song because the singers pretend to envy the bride yet in a way they are suggesting that she is the lucky one. This therefore implies that the family of the bride is poor and cannot afford basic needs such as food (meat).

The second song goes;

Kunogaiwa mari. Transcribed by J. Chikura



.s ,s: s . f, m : m. d .d : d. l. d: .r, r : d. l, m: m, d, d, d :r
Kuno kwedu kunogaiwa mari veduwe, kunogaiwa mari.
Kwawakabva kunogaiwa inda veduwe, kunogaiwa inda.

Kuno kwedu kunogaiwa mari veduwee, kunogaiwa mari. Kwawakabva kunogaiwa inda veduwee, kunogaiwa inda (Here in our family we grind money good people, there is grinding of money. Where you came from, they grind lice poor girl, they grind lice). This song actually looks down upon the bride’s family thus treating them with great contempt and degradation. There is a superiority- inferiority complex which is being implied by the song. The bride’s family is of a lower socio- economic class as compared to that of the groom. It therefore gives the impression that the bride’s family should look up to the groom’s family which postulates itself as the economic liberator. The general implication is that the bride made a decision to be married by this young man so that her family would benefit financially. This notion is reiterated by Mugodzwa and Matsa (2014) when they argue that when parents give birth to a baby girl, they see her as it were as their future ‘**Reserve Bank**’. That is why when it is announced that a baby girl has been born, people pass such comments as, “*Motowedzera danga*” (Extend the cattle kraal).

It is such conception that leads the woman to being treated as a purchased commodity and can be considered as part of the husband's possessions together with other property. Unfortunately society seems to be in support of such malpractices which tend to relegate the woman to the status of servitude and subservience. This means that she must be contented with her predicament and continue to live as a happy and satisfied slave (Mugodzwa and Matsa, 2014). The cultural context in which these songs are sung views *varooro* (brides) as owned and acquired assets of the *vamwene* (owner, referring to the mother-in-law).

In my own opinion, I think such cultural practices which denigrate women should be stopped so as to promote unity and harmony which is a prerequisite for societal growth and development. The society in which we live can be a better one if we treat each other with respect regardless of biological differences of male and female which seem to be abused in the form of gender roles.

The last song is an admonition or rather a warning to the bride as to how she should receive the husband's kins when they visit the new home. The song is more of a chant (***hence cannot not be transcribed in notation form***); *Kuona hama dzemurume, yuwi ndine musoro ndine manyoka. Kuona hama dzomukadzi, ndibatire mwana ndione kushanda, ndibatire mwana ndione kushanda* (When you see the relatives of the husband, oh, a have a headache, I have diarrhoea. To see the relatives of the wife, hold the baby so that I can work/cook). This song clearly indicates the kind of behaviour that is not expected of the bride when she starts cooking in her own hut. In most cases women tend to be stingy when they are supposed to help the husband's relatives. They are however liberal givers when their relatives visit them. Such were the sentiments expressed by the three old men I interviewed.

However, from the way the brides are treated when they first come there is a possibility that a few would develop bad relations owing to the mockery during the ceremony.

This explains why there are more serious rifts between brides and the mothers in-law as compared to those between brides and the fathers in-law. This is because the women, who usually take part in mocking and denigrating her, will later expect to be highly respected by her. She will then decide to revenge by not giving them water to drink when they visit the new home. However, this is not expected of a bride *akabva kuvanhu* (who came from where there are people). The themes conveyed through the use of songs are reaffirmed the following day after the wedding. I observed and noted that the bride and her aunt would wake up early in the morning and take warm water round the village to all the relatives of the husband. They give warm water for bathing to all the relatives of the husband.

The young children are bathed and either vaseline or lotion is smeared excessively on the face and limbs as a sign that there is a new *muroora* in the family.

In return, the bride is given tokens of appreciation ranging from money to chickens and turkeys. The exercise takes roughly two days especially when the relatives are many. The bride I interviewed during this exercise said that it was indeed a tedious task. The process takes longer if the water point is some distance from the homestead. The bride and the aunt have to fetch their own water from the family well, boil it and then distribute to the whole family except in the case where the relationship would be prohibitive. For example, the *muroora* cannot give water to the brother in-law of her husband. That exercise according to one of my respondents, is meant to affirm that the *muroora* indeed belongs to the whole family if not community (Mbiti 1999).

When the bathing ceremony is over, the *muroora* and her aunt are given a chicken to slaughter and share together with the immediate family members. At this point the meaning of such songs as *Muroora ihovo*, are confirmed, depending on how she dishes out the meat to the relatives.

The following day the bride and aunt wake up early in the morning to sweep the yard. They leave the rubbish in small heaps which they will only remove and throw into the pit after some money has been paid. At sunrise, all the dirty clothes and blankets of the family members are taken out and given to *muroora* to wash. The washing usually takes a very long time and the bride looks tired after the exercise. She then is able to understand the meanings of songs such as *Bhoyi redu rauya*. Sometimes it is at this point that the bride would show signs of regretting why she ever decided to be married. However, as one old woman puts it, “*Zvinoenderana nemurererwo wako. Kana usina kudzidziswa basa uchikura, unotambura asi kana wakakura uchishanda hapana chinorema* (It depends on how you were brought up. If you were not trained to do household chores you will really suffer but if you were well trained, there is problem). From the comment made by this elderly woman it is quite clear that the longer the woman stays in marriage, the stronger her conviction that the inequality is natural and necessary to maintain peace and order. The older women also show that the dignity of an African woman is found in labour and it seems most women are proud of being hard working. Even those women who are highly religious (Christians), can site scripture to support male dominance over women. You often hear them saying, “*Murume ndiye akaitwa musoro wemba namwari, asi mukadzi mubatsiri akamufanira*” (The husband was made the head of the house by God but the wife is a suitable helper).

Conclusion

I have tried to bring to the attention of the reader, the various connotations contained in the lyrics of some bride welcoming ceremony songs. The connotations include abuse, derogation, mockery and denigration, just to mention a few. Both the literal and contextual meanings of the songs which were discussed have been put under serious scrutiny. Although there seems to be a number of categories of the songs, the themes portrayed in the different categories are basically the same. These songs are used as a tool for constructing the social identities which society values when it comes to determining what constitutes the virtue of proper womanhood. All the songs' lyrics impart negative feelings, emotions and perceptions on the bride and she uses the themes as point of reference in her entire marriage experience. This means that she will be constantly reminded of her marital expectations by the songs. It is therefore possible that when she is working and feels bored, she sings one of the songs whose lyrics encourage resilience though in a negative way. It has also been observed that the songs relegate the bride to an unprecedented degree of subservience and servitude (*Bhoyi redu rauya, rekutsime nekuhuni...*). While the woman is being cast down, the man will be automatically elevated to a presumably higher position almost next to the Creator.

This is done when the woman is reminded that Sarah used to call Abraham "My Lord" (Genesis 19). The women have been treated as second class citizens in society despite the establishment of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development which working around the clock to try and redress these social inequalities.

The study has shown that through the use of songs, the woman is labelled as desperate, promiscuous, greedy and useless. The study of the songs has also shown that the society has abused the institution of marriage through the construction of identities done through songs.

Even when contemporary popular music is played during these ceremonies, songs which denigrate women are selected. Examples are “*Taurai zvenyu*” by Matavire and “*Mbereko yakaramba*” by Munhumumwe. From the interviews I conducted the brides were not amused at all by the songs. I would therefore want to believe that our society needs reorientation of the mind so that songs with positive lyrics are sung during the ceremony. The occasion is a celebration of one’s passing from one stage of life to the other resulting in the formation of a union that even death may not break. Sometimes the spirit of the woman or the man continues to revisit the surviving spouse (Mbiti 1999).

There is therefore need to find ways of making the ceremony a happy and most memorable event in both the man and the woman’s entire life. Since marriage is more of a requirement than an option, the study of the songs remains important.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Summary

The ethnographic research that I carried out was aimed at studying and analysing some of the bride welcoming ceremony songs performed among the Karanga people of Chimombe village in Buhera district. The motive for this study was mainly to identify the main themes portrayed by the songs. The other motive was to explore and establish the extent to which the songs affect the brides in their future life in the new home. There was also need to justify why the Karanga people use songs other than other media to transmit cultural norms and values. There was also need to find out the feelings evoked in the brides by the bride welcoming ceremony songs. Lastly, the contribution of Karanga traditional culture towards the degradation and creation of subservient positions of women was discussed. This was done so as to find out the effects of culture and other superstructures in perpetuating inequalities which exist between men and women in today's society. The ultimate goal was then to suggest possible solutions to the problems.

Various authors were consulted in order to furnish my research with credible information. This was also done so as to find out what others had written about the topic. The various scholars concurred with one another to the point that the devaluation of married women was a universal problem (Ortner 1974). From what was read, it was noted that the institution of marriage has been abused by both society and men to oppress and devalue women. Most of the authors viewed the married woman as a slave of the man and regarded as a breeding machine (Machionis 2005). Some of the authors argued that the exploitation of women should be blamed on men (Haralambos and Holborn 2000). There was also greater concern on

the use of folk music to indoctrinate women so as to make them accept their lower social status. That was done through the use of songs sung to welcome the bride. Some scholars argued that these bride welcoming ceremony songs relegate women to the subaltern, (Maguraushe and Mukuhlani 2014). This implies that as long as the society still holds on to the belief of male chauvinism, the women may continue to suffer, despite efforts by feminist movement groups to call for the eradication of such cultural practices which unfortunately have been accepted as normal and inevitable.

The major challenge is that society has come to accept this as natural hence cannot be changed. I deliberately used the qualitative research design to carry out a detailed and analytic study of the Karanga bride welcoming ceremonies.

In this study, a qualitative design was adopted because of its ability to fairly engage the participants, for example, through interviews and observations. Best and Khan (2006) posit that qualitative research is a type of inquiry in which the researcher carries out an investigation using a variety of techniques and reporting the findings mainly in words. The data which I used was collected through two different methods; interviews and observations. I conducted interviews so as to solicit the views of the old brides as well as the women who took part in the singing of the songs.

I also interviewed three men. Mills (2003) defines interviews as a way of collecting data by verbal discussion between the researcher and the participants. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) further reiterate that interviews are important because some people can express themselves better verbally than in writing. Interviews proved to be crucial in getting the participants to give a comprehensive articulation of their thoughts on the subject at hand. The respondents were chosen through the purposive sampling technique.

According to Ball (1990) purposive sampling is used in order to gain access to data from knowledgeable people. These are the people who possess in depth knowledge about certain/specific issues. Observation was also used to collect data because of its ability to offer the researcher an opportunity to make conclusions based on empirical evidence. According to the Hawthorn Effect, participants are driven to maximum output by the mere fact that they are being observed. Therefore the presence of the researcher at the context of performance has an impact on the data obtained.

During the process of data collection, ethical considerations were taken into account. Research deals with people who must be respected as well as treated with dignity and assured that the information they entrust to the researcher will be treated with confidentiality (Mills, 2003); hence the need to seek their consent first (Cozby, 2001)

From analyses of the lyrical content of the songs, I discovered that bride welcoming ceremony songs are used by society to construct identities of the bride. The bride can in future use the songs as a point of reference and reminder about their roles and expected duties in society. That is they can sing some of the songs when faced with a challenging situation. The lyrics will remind her of the expectations. The songs also portray the woman as a useless, desperate individual who will always depend on a man. Her value can only be considered provided there is a man in her life (Ortner 1974). She is also degraded, enthralled and made to be the slave of the man's lust as well as a mere instrument for breeding children (Engels, cited in Haralambos and Holborn 2005).

The research also unearthed the fact that, through the use of bride welcoming songs, the woman is relegated to the position of servitude and subservience. She is more of a slave in

her own home because she has been socialised to endure and submit to the selfish motives of the men.

The majority of the married women on the other hand, have shown dissatisfaction over such cultural practices which oppress and make them tools for menial labour. The only challenge that the research unearthed is the fact that society regards men's dominance over women as natural and therefore ought to be perpetual throughout generations. What makes this a serious dilemma is the realization that women who have been married for a long time sing these songs for fellow women. The brides do appreciate the practice of being welcomed in the new home but the lyrics of the songs sung are a thorn in the flesh. The brides whom I interviewed felt that the practice of singing derogatory songs should be discontinued. They also argued that there may be a likelihood of strained relationships in the future between *varoora* (daughters in-law) and *vanaamwene* (mothers in-law) as well as *vanatete* (aunts).

“Ndiko kusaka varoora kazhinji tisinga wirirane naana vamwene.(That is why the daughters in law do not go well with mothers in law). That is one bride said as a comment.

5.2 Conclusions

The research has brought to surface a number of crucial issues relating to causes of gender inequality, oppression of women and the means used by society to perpetuate patriarchal hegemony as well as male chauvinism. The analysis of the bride welcoming ceremony songs has also revealed a number of issues which affect women in their marriage life. The songs are therefore generally manipulated by society to promote and maintain inequality among men and women with former enjoying this dominance. The main cause of these malpractices is culture itself. There is a general tendency in society to place a higher value on culture than in nature (Ortner 1974). Naturally, men and women are supposed to serve complimentary roles for the progress of society but cultural constructs have led to the universal evaluation of culture as being superior to nature (Chafetz 2006). With the rise of Feminism, it is more

likely that there will be chaos in society if the anomaly continues unchecked. The various organizations which fight for the rights of women (Musasa, WOZA) are advocating for an overthrow of a social regime that is dominated by men. As of now, the various governments across the globe are working around the clock to pass legislative statutory instruments which protect the rights of women, (Article 23(1) of Zimbabwe Constitution).

The launching of the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Protection of Victims of Domestic Violence Bill by the government of Zimbabwe is also likely to empower the women through affirmative action, to fight for their rights (Maruzani and Mazambani 2014).

It is therefore necessary for society to embrace the legislative changes so as to rectify the anomalies that have bedevilled our society from time immemorial. It seems as if men tend to try and defend the existing status-quo. The men, whom I interviewed, argued that there is nothing wrong with the current state of affairs:

“Unoona zvako mudzidzisi, hapana chakaipa patsika nemagariro edu. Kungoti chete imi makafunda mazuva ano mave kutora tsika dzechirungu kuita dzedu. Pane pakanakira Tsika dzechirungu asi kazhinji kacho dzinoita kuti mumba muve nemhirizhonga. (You see teacher, there is nothing wrong with our traditional Shona culture. It’s only that the educated ones are taking western culture. Sometimes the western culture is good but in most cases they cause violence.)

The men maintain that such ceremonies like the one for welcoming brides are beacons and epitaphs of their cultural heritage and serve to identify them as VaKaranga. It seems Christianity and modernization has almost wiped off the entire cultural heritage. It is during such ceremonies as these that they can participate freely as a community. However, my argument is to encourage society to refrain from the use of songs with denigrating and derogatory lyrics during the bride welcoming ceremonies as this tends to adversely affect the

innermost feelings of the brides resulting in a strained relationship in the future. It is of paramount concern from a Karanga point of view to maintain cultural identities but care should be taken to perform songs with positive connotations which embrace themes such as unity, cooperation and solidarity. These were the same values which led to the success of the war of liberation when each member of society was playing their role. Since marriage remains a duty from the corporate world and everyone is expected to participate in it, (Mbiti 1999), this study of the impact of bride welcoming songs on married women among the Karanga people remains an act of paramount importance.

5.3 Recommendations

Under this section of my research I would like to sincerely acknowledge the fact that academic research of this nature is worth undertaking. This is because research has the potential to generate information that can be useful for other future research. From the study that I carried out, I realized that a lot of our women are ignorant of the need for their empowerment in order to fight gender inequalities perpetuated by patriarchy and other social superstructures. The need to empower the majority of the Zimbabwean women has been long overdue.

According to Homelink (1994:33) “Empowerment can be the outcome of an intentional strategy which is either initiated externally by empowerment agents or solicited by disempowered people.”

If women are empowered, they will be in a position to shun the cultural practices that lead to their oppression. I also recommend that gender imbalances should be corrected by society working in collaboration with government legislation and human rights movement groups.

Redressing gender imbalances should however be conceptualized as a process and not an end in itself (Mawere, Matsa and Chauraya 2014). Redressing can be done in a number of ways.

Mawere, Matsa and Chauraya (2014) outline a number of points as a way forward in relation to legal redress of gender imbalances. Some of the most important steps include:

- Enactment of Gender equality act
- Gender audit and review of all legislation to make it gender sensitive and responsive
- Community gender and human rights training,

(Mawere, Matsa and Chauraya (2014:195)

There is a need for more empirical studies on factors that contribute to the denigration of Shona

married women (Maguraushe and Mukuhlani 2014). There is also need to deconstruct societal perceptions about marriage, the family perception as well as power dynamics as dictated by patriarchal hierarchs.

The experience I got from the field has taught me a number of lessons which I ought to recommend to other researchers who may want to engage in a research of a similar nature. There are limitations which may be beyond one's control. There is great need to limit the number of interview questions so as to optimize opportunities for accessing data. The respondents may be too busy to attend to a long list of questions. Again the husbands of the women can be suspicious if you spend a longer time with the wife despite you having sought his consent first. There is also need to understand the culture of the people so as to exonerate you from violating the taboos and other ethnic secrets.

On this issue it may be proper to seek permission from the local traditional authorities such as chiefs and headmen who happen to be the custodians of the culture. They will guide you on all ethical issues. I noted that a newly married woman may be ignorant of the society's ethical codes of conduct. One point is also worth noting. There is need to avoid engaging an interview with a population that is dominated by religious fanatics. Their views may not be

objective since they have been indoctrinated to regard highly the authority of men as coming from the Almighty.

This will expose the data to the danger of bias and religious propaganda.

I would like to challenge future researchers to carry out an exclusive research on the African people's culture so as to explore the influence of culture on the Shona people. There is an obvious need for further study in this area. While scholars like Mbiti (1999) have taken an initiative and devoted a whole book on African Religions and Philosophy, the marriage institution and its related concepts have been inadequately mentioned in passing. Exposure to more information related to the influence of culture on social inequality will enhance our understanding of the need to redress the situation by means of a concerted effort. Possible areas of further study may include:

- How can cultural practices be used to promote social harmony, equality and solidarity among the different sexes in the Shona societies?
- How might bride welcoming ceremony songs be used to foster the development of positivity in the brides?

It is therefore my desire to have a comprehensive book on African Culture published. Normally, culture is studied under Social Sciences such as Anthropology, Sociology and Ethnography just to mention a few. This has obvious limitations in that more crucial issues are not covered in depth. Future research can also be conducted with focus on collecting, documenting and transcribing all the Shona folk traditional songs. The songs can be categorized according to their genres. This could preserve our cultural heritage in its pure and original form.

During my study, I noted that some of the bride welcoming songs are sung with some slight variations.

This may be due to the fact that the original versions have been forgotten (Miller and Shahriari 2009). Although brides are lamenting over songs with derogatory lyrics, documenting them would provide a source for analysis of African music in future. The aspects that can be researched on are indeed an endless list. It seems there is a “gold mine” of information pertaining to the indigenous cultures of Zimbabwe and this information is harbored in the wisdom of the few grey haired old men who may unfortunately pass away one day leaving us with no original and tangible evidence of a once vibrant and powerful culture. Many a times, we lament over lack of literature on African cultural practices. It is therefore appropriate for academic scholars to think seriously about it before our culture becomes extinct leaving us as people without a future (Khama 1980).

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APPENDICES

Appendix One

Interview Guide (For women and brides)

- In your own opinion, what do you think about the messages contained in the bride welcoming songs:

.....
.....
.....
.....

2(a) Do you think the songs are necessary/desirable?

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.....
.....
.....
.....

(b) Give reasons for your answer:

-
.....
.....
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.....

.....
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.....
.....
.....

3. Some songs are believed to express the society's traditional belief system. To what extent do you agree with the statement?.....
.....

4. What feelings do these songs evoke in you as a woman?
.....
.....
.....

5. Which songs didn't you like and why?
.....
.....

6. What are your views about how men and women positions/status are perceived by society from a traditional cultural point of view?
.....

.....
.....

7. How do men in your society use traditional cultural practices, beliefs, norms and values to dominate and gain control over women?

.....
.....

(b) What could be the reason for your response?

.....
.....
.....

10. Besides singing for the bride, can you suggest other ways of relaying the same messages.....

.....

Appendix Two:

Observation Guide

Listen to the songs sung during the ceremony and write down the title and the lyrics.

Observe the people participating during the ceremony and look for, among other things:

How the ceremony is organized and performed

How the women behave as they sing

Comment on the bride will be behaving:

Take note of the meaning and implication of the lyrics and main themes of each song.

(The meaning is influenced by personal construct.) Eg:

SONG TITLE	LYRICS OF THE SONG	MEANING	EFFECT

Appendix Three

Interview Guide. (The men who participate in the composing and performing of the songs.)

- What is the importance of marriage in Your African culture?

.....
.....
.....
.....

- Do you think the songs are necessary or they are sung because society has been doing that since time immemorial?

.....
.....
.....
.....

- Which songs do you like most and why?

-

-

-

- What effect do you think the songs have on the bride?

.....

.....
.....
.....

- How do you expect your daughter in law to behave when she comes?

.....
.....

- What aspects of culture and tradition are reinforced by the lyrics of bride welcoming songs?

.....
.....
.....
.....

- Even during a modern marriage ceremony, I have often observed that there is a time when traditional songs are sung. Why do you think it is like that and why are the songs given much consideration even during a modern white wedding?

.....
.....
.....
.....

- Do think it is proper as well as natural for (you) the man to exercise control over women in almost all aspects of life?

.....

.....

.....

- Why are songs given such a prominent role during the ceremony?

.....

- What do you think about organizations which fight and advocate for the restoration of social equality between men and women?
- 11. Do you feel it necessary to continue having bride welcoming ceremonies but change the content of the lyrics to be more positive and encourage equality between men and women?

Appendix Four

Categories of Songs Based on Purpose

CATEGORY	SONGS
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome and introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bhoyi redu rauya• Makauya mega kuzosuka ndiro
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bride's character	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mujinga Regomo• Chitototo• Mwana wenyu ihovo
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Status of bride	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wanga wachembera• Unerimwero namai vako• Dai pasina hanzvadzi yedu• Kunogaiwa mari• Mwana wenyu waidei• Vagoni zvavo
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Admonition and advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kuona hama

