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Zimdancehall: A rising platform in addressing socio-political injustices through lyrics.

## **Declaration of Originality**

I declare that this research is my original work that has never been written before by any other student for any purpose whatsoever within or outside the confines of Midlands State University.

Date.....

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher

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## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to YOU

## **Abstract**

Present day Zimbabwe though being deemed by the government as a free country embedding the concept of freedom of speech it is still plagued with massive music censorship amongst the predominant genres. Since the late 1800s music has been a major influencing player in indoctrinating people. Music is an essential tool use in public discourse to promote, affirm and subvert political hegemonies. Musicians play a pivotal role in society of exposing the injustices perpetuated by governments and those in power. This research explores the role played by Zimdancehall music in the conscientisation of society about political injustices and questioning of government actions that harm citizens. An investigation of the recent rising trend of the Zimdancehall music genre speaking out on the socio-political injustices occurring in Zimbabwe is the basis of this research. A thorough analysis of the lyrics and literary devices, is used to identify the mention of socio-political chaos in Zimbabwe and its effect.

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# **Chapter 1**

## **1.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this research is to investigate a recent arising trend of the Zimdancehall music genre speaking out on the socio-political injustices occurring in Zimbabwe. Through a microscopic view of the lyrics and literary devices, this research identifies the references to the socio-political chaos in Zimbabwe. For so many decades if not centuries, music in general has served a major purpose of uniting people during struggles especially in Africa. Various genres have played their critical part in the toppling of tyrant governments. Since the late 1800s music has been a major influencing player in indoctrinating people. Present day Zimbabwe though being deemed by the government as a free country embedding the concept of freedom of speech is still plagued with massive music censorship amongst the predominant genres. This has paved way for the previously ignored Zimdancehall genre, to evolve and also much recently, take its part as a platform for addressing the Zimbabwean struggle through its lyrical composition.

## **1.2 Background of the study**

The origins of Zimdancehall are in the high density area of Mbare in Harare in the late 90's. As the name indicates, it is a combination of two terms namely Zimbabwe and Dancehall. It is a spin off from the Jamaican dancehall genre and to get a clear picture of it is critical to look at its generic sire, Dancehall music. Dancehall music emanated from Jamaica during the mid 1900. Dancehall music is named after Jamaican dance halls in which popular Jamaican recordings were played by local sound systems. They began in the late 1940s among people from the inner city of Kingston, who were not able to participate in uptown dances (Cooper 2004). The genre carries with it greatly the values of the Rastafari movement. The Rastafari movement has always had a very appealing nature to Zimbabwe since colonial times. This is

due to its anti oppression stance that it holds firmly and which applied greatly to colonial Zimbabwe then known as Rhodesia. Both Rhodesia and Jamaica shared the plight of poverty in the ghettos and so it was only natural that a number of people in Rhodesia adopted this music as it was a bringer of hope. Zimdancehall like its Jamaican counterpart dancehall involves the composition of instrumentals known as “riddims” then various artists add lyrics to these riddims. In recent times these riddims have been given titles according to trending issues at time of release. Apart from the lyrical composition on riddims, it also encompasses dancing and emceeing as well. Over the years it has grown into more than just music but a way of life, borrowing the trait of drug use from Dancehall. It has become associated with bronchleer and marijuana among other drugs. This shows indeed how it is a powerful genre with the ability to sway minds.

Zimdancehall in its present form started gaining its popularity around 2005 with the chief patron being ‘Winky D’. It is critical to note that this around the same time that the country was hard pressed by economic sanctions. “Winky D” , born Wallace Chimuriko, he is one of the of the pioneers of the genre and so when it took off and gained much prominence his name was imbedded in its history. MusicinAfrica dubs him “the king of Zimdancehall”. With chart topping singles like “Ndirirasta” (2006) and “Dead ina war” (2006) his music was purely for entertainment. The same can be said for the artists that ensued .The year 2010 saw a number of new artists grace the genre including “D flex” famed for his hit track “Tsaona” (2010) King Shaddy with his song “Sister Gire” (2010).Zimdancehall was clearly a genre that focused on entertainment rather than anything else evident from the lyrics. An example is D Flexx’s song Tsaona (2010):

*Paitikatsaona mumain road*

There was an accident in the main road

*Yakonzera kuparara kwezvinhu forty*

*That resulted in the destruction of 40 things*

*I was there available on the spoti*

*I was there to witness this*

*Zvakonzera zvakonzeraai can tell you both*

*What caused the accident I can tell you both*

*Papfura vamwe sister vaneka sexy body*

*There passed a girl with a sexy body*

*Vachifamba kunge hameno sezvinonzi*

*She had an amazing cat walk*

*Varikuenda mudenga varimuhochikochi*

*Its as if she was going to heaven in a hochkoch*

*Vakapfeka mini yejira repitikoti*

*She was wearing a mini-skirt made of under garment material*

*Zvapofumadza hwindina driver we combi*

*This blinded the driver of the omnibus*

The above lyrics show that the genre was mainly focused on entertaining through comedy and rhyme. It had no political intentions nor did it seem to be interested in correcting any moral injustices. It was purely for fun. At this time the genre was also quite small in terms of following. It was a few years away from growing into a culture. As the economic conditions worsened in the years following 2011, there was an acute rise in unemployment amongst the

youths. The rate of youth unemployment with regard to both formal and informal sectors of the Zimbabwe economy stood at 19 percent for females, 11 percent for males (Chakanya, 2008). It is around this time that Zimdancehall boomed as a genre. There were a number of backyard studios that also came into existence during this period. Of note is Gunhill Records in Mbare which produced most of the trending artists of this musical era. There was as well an introduction of female artists such as Lady Squanda and Lady B. The Zimbo flavour riddim (2013) a 13minute collaboration of sixteen new artists produced by Chillspot records was the first of its kind in the Zimdancehall history. By the end of 2013 there were over fifty new Zimdancehall artists and a ceremony known as the Zimdancehall Awards honouring artists who had achieved in various facets of the genre. It is from this point going forward that Zimdancehall exponentially manifested into a powerful culture within a very short space of time. It still maintained the use of rhyme and rhythm to entertain. In a sense it became hardcore in its lyrics and graduated to encompass satire, allusion. It was now a powerful movement embraced by a huge population of the youth. With the country in full blown economic turmoil it became somewhat of a refuge for the youths. Unfortunately there has always been a conclusive relationship between music and drugs in any genre and any country. The relationship is just more pronounced in certain genres. Ranard (2016) strongly suggests that there is a link between creative types (artists) and drug abuse. She goes on to state that musicians are extremely creative, and they keep their experiences, thoughts, and feelings on the surface to utilize while creating music. Not only that, but many artists have been known to utilize substances to enhance their creativity while under the influence. And by virtue of its borrowing a number of concepts from its parent body dancehall, inevitably the plague of drug use was in Zimdancehall. A number of songs embraced drug use in their lyrics and as a powerful movement the followers practiced what was preached. This was the first milestone in showing that through lyrics and literary devices the genre could sway the minds

of listeners in a negative way. On the other hand to blame drug use on Zimdancehall singularly would be unfair. Unemployment rates had been rising long before Zimdancehall was popular. Poverty was also rising over the years and with nothing to do the youths turned to drug abuse. Zimdancehall was a merely a mirror that reflected all the ills that the youths of the population were succumbing to, from drug use to violence. The unfortunate part is that the genre did not only reflect the ills but also promoted them as it is a powerful platform.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

Past critics of the Zimdancehall genre have portrayed it as horrible and destructive. It is the purpose of this research to outline how it has over the years evolved to come out as a whistle blower for the masses, conscientising its listeners on the socio-political injustices as well as unifying them. Just in the way it used to negatively impact the youths, it has began transforming toward the opposite direction and it is the purpose of this study to show how and why.

### **Objectives of the study**

- To investigate the use metaphors, satire and idioms used in Zimdancehall music to point out Political injustices
- To analyze Zimdancehall lyrics from a political point of view.
- To contextualize Zimdancehall lyrics in the present Zimbabwean situation

### **1.4 Significance of study**

The research discloses how lyrics and literary devices are used in a positive way in the Zimdancehall genre to conscientize listeners on the ills of the government. Most critics have been mainly interested in demeaning Zimdancehall by showing its chaotic history. This study

focuses on the rising trend of the use of language by the previously notorious genre to bring awareness and engage people on their political plight as citizens of Zimbabwe.

To achieve this certain Zimdancehall lyrics will be analysed.

### **1.5 Provisional Chapter layout**

This dissertation will be divided into five chapters. The first chapter has introduced the research, the problems, aims and the significance of the study. The second chapter will explore the literature review, theoretical framework and the methodology. Chapter three and four will look at the analysis of the songs chosen for this research. Lastly chapter five will provide conclusions and recommendations.

## Chapter 2

### 2.1 Literature review

The literature review will explore scholarly work on music with particular focus on the effects and impact of music on socio political issues. The review will show how different genres in music have been working as a tool for social activism. It will be segmented into three parts. The first part being a review of literature on music in general then the second part will look at Zimdancehall.

Gerdy (2017) asserts that music is the universal language and further states that it has been a long a tool used to expose political injustice and spur community activism. He is justifiable in saying this as music provides a terrace to discuss issues occurring in society at whatever level. It is easily accessible as it is performed in the layman's language of the street, the place where many people are in the case of Zimbabwe. It sparks up conversation on trending issues and calls for reflection and action among the listeners. Gerdy(2017) refers to music as society's conscience and by being so it is particularly important in times of social, economical and political disdain. He further suggests that musicians are uniquely positioned through their fan bases to criticize and expose social injustices and comment on issues on the national forefront.

Kofsky (1970) also supports the notion of music being a tool of socio political activism. He believes that music and socio-political issues go hand in hand using jazz an example of a genre that was used to contest racial injustices in 1960's America. He states that jazz was used to reiterate the values of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King of anti imperialistic rule. He further asserts that jazz musicians took political stances that were anti-war, anti-slavery. They used their lyrics to promote pan Africanism.

A great many examples that show the power of music have been written about by a number of scholars but the review can never be complete with the exclusion of the “Apartheid South Africa” example. In 1954 the Apartheid government imposed the Group Areas Act and Bantu Resettlement Act which moved forcefully, millions of South Africans into townships. One of the most devastating relocations was of the residents of Sophiatown in Johannesburg to Meadowlands, a township. Over 60,000 people were moved and Sophiatown was destroyed and rebuilt as a sign of “cleansing”. Meadowlands (1956) composed by Strive Mafikazi, was a song in response to these forced movements. The lyrics and translation of the song acquired from Wordpress.com below reveal the sentiment of the relocated people

**Lyrics:**

*Otlautlwamakgowaarei*

*Are yengko Meadowlands*

*Meadowland Meadowlands*

*Meadowlands sithandosam*

*Otlwautlwabotsotsi bare*

*Onsdaknionspolahier*

*Polahierpolahier*

*Polahiersithandosam*

**Translation:**

You'll hear the whites say

Let's move to Meadowlands

Meadowlands Meadowlands

Meadowlands, my love



You'll hear the tsotsis say

We're not moving, we're staying here

Stay here, stay here

Stay here, my love

Vershow (2010) supports the notion of music being powerful through how the international performances of this song gave the international world a clear picture of what was going on in Apartheid South Africa and by doing so exposing the racial injustices brought upon the oppressed groups. He further describes anti-apartheid music as "a weapon of the struggle" citing Sobashiy'abazali another anti-apartheid song that he believes evoked the sadness of leaving home as well as the persistence of the freedom fighters.

Music as evident from the above literature is indeed a powerful entity with the potential to influence positive change. Nonetheless it has the capability of negatively influencing masses. A good example can be drawn from Rap Music. Rap lyrics are chanted and accompanied by rhythmic music. The lyrics of rap songs are usually easy to comprehend. Rap lyrics, which sometimes contain objectionable language, often expound on the problems of urban life (Simpson, 1990), sometimes including themes of sex, drug use, misogyny, or violence (Epstein, Pratto, & Skipper, 1990). Like heavy metal, rap lyrics often express themes of alienation and powerlessness among youth (Epstein et al.). Cobb and Boettcher (2007) are of the perspective that Rap music praises the abuse of women through the genres misogynistic lyrics

Music has been an essential part of human existence playing various roles from entertainment to safeguarding tradition among other things. Washaya and Ureke (2016) note an intertwined relationship between music, art and culture further believing that it does not only play the part of cultural identity but more. They believed that music is pivotal in describing and expressing

political processes across all countries. They give examples of national anthems, protest songs, police bands, as political events characterised by music.

Hirsch (2002) further postulates that across the world the revolutions that have ensued have turned to music at some point in their cycle to vent their grievances and air their hopes. Such political Movements of note include the Apartheid and Fees Must Fall (2015) in South Africa and the Arab Spring (2015) uprising in Egypt, Civil Rights movements in America (1954-68), he states that music was used a critical tool for mobilizing masses to protest against ideologies and regimes. In line with the same notion Street (2001) states that politics and music are conjoined he further states that when music influences group efforts and action it is a political act.

In prehistoric times Africa music has always been part of every individual's life from song in celebration of birth, harvest and death even with Magak et al (2015) asserting that the life of a native African is culturally sung and danced from cradle to grave.

Odhiambo (2008) argues that Africa declares its antiquity, celebrates its identity and creates its legacy through music. In Africa music is used from issues as unimportant as community slander to grave social issues demanding attention.

The climate and history of Zimbabwean music has been greatly and widely documented but none other than Professor Musa Zimunya in a report on music censorship in Zimbabwe by Eyre (2001) he had this to say:

“A lot of historians, all the way back to the earliest white historians in the 1890s, writing about the Africans of this country completely forgot a very vital dimension of the African spirit. And that is music. That is song. You will find that when people are under stress, colonial stress, as labourers on the farms, in the mines, in the

domestic industry, or as peasants suffering the brunt of colonial oppression—colonial laws, such as the taxes, forced resettlement, so many things that peasants reeled under during colonial days—at every turn, Africans had recourse to one artistic medium. That is music. That is song. They sought to express their anxieties, their joys, their fears and hopes through music. For their satire against the colonial era, their mockery of the system, they used music, going all the way back to the first chimurenga war. As they were going into war, they played this music... These matters cannot be forgotten whatsoever. And it is a glaring gap in the entire history of this country that no one has sought to establish the role of music in the lives of the common people outside the colonial influence, in urban areas, in rural areas, and what this music is doing all the time.” (Zimunya 2001:29)

This is a very important and critical observation. It shows the relationship that spans back in time between Zimbabweans and music. A relationship that has so far seen trial and tribulation, from colonization to independence. Music has returned again to play that role that it played of mobilizing people against their oppressors.

Gakahu is in line with the notion by Zimunya (2001) that music was used as satire against the colonial era stating that the message disseminated by song is important. The messages maybe disguised in metaphors and euphuisms with the motive of portraying, rejecting and protesting injustices.

## **2.2 Zimdancehall**

Contemporary Zimbabwe has witnessed the rise of a new and powerful genre over the years. Its true origins though are not Zimbabwe but Jamaica. Zimdancehall is a spinoff from Jamaican Dancehall. Bakare-Yusuf 2006 refer to Dancehall as a culture that is in essence “at

large” ,multifaceted and in a constant space of re-invention.This makes it difficult to translate the culture into the academic world, (Cooper 2004).Cooper (2004) associates dancehall with ragga, which according to Stolzoff (2000) finds its beginnings in the 1970s.Washaya (2001) postulates that Dancehall emanates from a family of Jamaican music that was used as a means of defiance by slaves to their oppressors.She further on argues that the genre has over the years evolved to find itself embedded in defining black history and Jamaican identity.

Washaya (2001) typifies dancehall as using direct confrontational lyrics but in the process dealing with social,political and economic affairs affecting the masses.Cooper (2004) insists that dancehall culture is a mix of complexities created by the subaltern masses with their own dress,language,ethics and movements.They seek no approval from what are termed the upper class in their society.Unfortunately some of the word play that has been created for entertainment has been taken from the stage to the streets and enacted into actual violence. Violent identities have been created through this genre evident in Stolzoff (2002) documentation of the term “rudeboy”, which refers to black males black males residing “ghettos”. According to Washaya (2001) the negative side of dancehall music can be seen from the actions of some of the prominent artists popular examples being Vybez Kartell (AdijaPalmer, 2001)) who was incarcerated for murder and Buju Banton for drug possession. Dancehall is commonly associated with smoking of marijuana, dreadlocks and speaking of patois. Despite this negative image the genre has gained popularity world over and spread its influence on other genres including Zimdancehall.

## **Zimdancehall**

According to Tembo (2015) Zimdancehall is the result of a ripple effect of the Broadcast Services Act of 2002 which demanded that 75% of content being broadcasted in Zimbabwe be locally produced content. Manase (2011) further explains the purpose of this act as being a counter to western imperialism through access to their music and culture. The whole idea behind this act was to breed a form of nationalism to subvert western influences. It should be noted though that Zimdancehall did not immediately come into existence upon the passing of the act. It is a ripple effect because it did not emerge only until the turn of the decade. Washaya (2011) suggests that Zimdancehall took off in backyard studios as opposed to “Museve” and Gospel that had major distributors such as Zimbabwe Music Cooperation and Gramma Records and Tape Promotions (RTP). This depicts the persistence of the genre, having survived without using the established platforms. The genre developed at an exponential rate from the late 2000s to present time. Chari (2009) asserts that since its inception Zimdancehall has gained unrivaled fame and acceptance among the youths of the country. Mhiripiri (2012) suggests that when it came on the scene Zimdancehall occupied the peripheral spaces but it has developed greatly to gain recognition. This is evident from the sold out concerts hosted by the artists. The genre now boasts of over 300 artists. A more recent “Birthday Bash” for one of the artists, Kinnah, featured over 110 Zimdancehall acts in one night. An astonishing figure indeed.

Since its inception Zimdancehall has been on the firing front of the media. It has been criticized time and again for being a negative influence on the youth of Zimbabwe, who constitute the core listeners of the genre. Most of the criticism on Zimdancehall emanates

from the media, politicians, religious groups and academics. Here is a sampling of newspaper headlines involving the criticism of the genre:

*Zim-Dancehall violent trend worrying | Celebrating Being Zimbabwean* (The Patriot June 24 2015)

*Zim dancehall: Drugs, lyrics and violence* ( The Chronicle 22 November 2014)

*'Zimdancehall artists are bad role models '* (The Standard March 5 2017)

*Zimdancehall artistes full of "Busyness" but they lack "Business* (Zimonline news March 20 2015)

*The Age of Zimdancehall: Zimdancehall: bad content*

*Mwari havatambe ZimDancehall - Kwayedza* (KwayedzaFebruary 17 2017)

*Taso slams Zimdancehall artistes* (The Daily News March 3 2016)

*Police storm Zimdancehall gig arrest 60 revellers* (The Daily News December 8 2016)

According to Makwambeni (2012) the genre is under fire largely for its vulgar, violence inciting and misogynist lyrics. In addition to that it is seen as promoting drug abuse in its fans. In all fairness some of these allegations are true and in the spirit of objectiveness some of these accusations put forward by the media are valid. Zimdancehall has had a number of negative stints from scuffles with the law and a number of misogynist songs but a quote from John Lennon may help reveal why it is so.

“I think the music reflects the state that the society is in. It doesn't suggest the state. I think the poets and musicians and artists are of the age - not only do they lead the age on, but they also reflect that age. [...] Like The Beatles. We came out of Liverpool and we reflected our background and we reflected our thoughts in what we sang, and that's all people are doing.”

Lennon (1966)

From Lennon's quote he suggests that music can be regarded as a reflection of the society it emanates from. Makwambeni (2012) in the same line of thinking asserts that the vulgar, violence and other adverse characteristics of Zimdancehall should never be taken at face value, instead they should be considered as attempts to mock and subvert the social order (Jackson (1988)).

### **2.3 Music Censorship in Zimbabwe**

The notion of censorship plays a critical part in understanding the argument put forward by this dissertation. The Collins dictionary defines it as “ If someone in authority censors a book,

play or film, they officially examine and cut out any parts that are considered to be immoral or inappropriate”. Censorship is the censoring of books, plays, films or reports, especially by government officials, because they are considered immoral or secret in some way. Nyathi (2005) defines it as is the restriction of the creative mind, putting limits to limitlessness. He further calls it an attempt to restrict the mind from exploring the very essence of nature, of the mind, of humanity. It is an attempt to contain the creative minds and control them.

The state of music broadcast in Zimbabwe is far from fair with the state run broadcasters doing their best to deny politically controversial songs airwaves. According to Musavengana (2005) the guiding principles concerning music censorship seem to have stayed the same. Basically, the business units of Radio Zimbabwe, National FM, Power FM, Spot FM and ZTV purport to uphold the nation’s values whilst educating and entertaining the nation. He further goes on to scrutinise this saying there have never been any consultations between the various radio and television stations in the country as to what is considered undesirable. Decisions are made by the station’s individual supervisors and CEO’s.

This paints a picture of a loosely hanging censorship policy that favours those in power and extends the right of censorship to their fingertips. Many a time songs have been banned in Zimbabwe due their political nature. Musavengana (2005) states that Oliver Mutukudzi's Jojo was banned outright from the airwaves because it was deemed to be sympathetic to the opposition Zimbabwe Unity Movement and it spoke to an attempted assassination attempt on a ZUM prominent personality indirectly. He further says it was a clear case if where the ruling party saw an obvious political threat to its power, it would not tolerate any music that would hint at the need for fairness on the political playing field, Musavengana (2005).



Using the mainstream means of music distribution has proven in Zimbabwe to be futile when one is discussing issues that seem to portray the government as failing. It is therefore important to note that in the Zimbabwean context when music is censored it is removed off any of the mainstream mass media. Vori (2005) had this to say:

Solomon Skuza on JSCI sang about what was later referred to as the Willowgate scandal which exposed a lot of high ranking officials in a car buying scandal – only they and their mates had access to new locally assembled cars which they bought and sold to desperate car seekers at exorbitant prices. Leonard Zhakata on one of his many protest songs sang about how justice seemed to favour the chosen few. How there seemed to be different laws for different groups of people and how those same laws seemed to favour those aligned to the ruling party and their associates.

Oliver Mtukudzi sang about one having to accept that they are indeed old and tired. That was interpreted by the powers that be to mean that the President and most of his colleagues were old and should go.

In all of the above cases, the record labels did not interfere with the lyrical content though naturally they were worried about what Government's reaction would be. These works were never played on radio and television.

Eyre (2001) tells the story of censorship from a different angle. He says " censorship laws and the mechanisms to enforce them have always existed in Zimbabwe, official censorship of music occurs rarely if ever. Such direct measures are simply not needed. A climate of fear

affects composers, singers, DJs, journalists and writers alike, muting and even silencing many artistic voices.

Eyre (2001) further states

“Today, many musicians feel strongly motivated to address political realities in their music. Those who dare to do so take enormous risks. Musicians have been interrogated and threatened”.

Thomas Mapfumo, consistently the bravest popular singer in the country's history, has had songs restricted from radio play in the aftermath of the 2000 elections, which went badly for the government. Worse, he has now moved his family to the United States, citing concerns for their security and his own, and he does not feel that he can safely return to Zimbabwe under present circumstances. A recent report of yet another DJ being intimidated for playing a controversial Mapfumo song indicates that even in absentia, Mapfumo is viewed as a threat by some within the government. Another veteran singer, Oliver Mtukudzi, took substantial heat over the past year when one of his songs, "Wasakara," was interpreted as a call for aging President Robert Mugabe to resign. Mtukudzi has fervently denied this interpretation, but he's been forced to do a lot of explaining, and his fans have been victimized, sometimes brutally.

Random violence, often carried out by so-called liberation “war veterans,” is rampant in the townships of Harare, the nation’s capital, and in the rural areas. Similar tactics were used in Zimbabwe’s hard-fought independence war, in which villagers were routinely terrorized by both guerrillas and government troops. Southern Rhodesia was, of course, famous for its repression and censorship. Sadly, the leaders of “liberated” Zimbabwe have learned many bad habits from their predecessors, and now seem determined to stay in power through generating fear of dissent and change. Property destruction, farm seizures, beatings, and

killings are reported daily in the nation's opposition newspapers. Meanwhile, the government appears more concerned with curtailing the power of the judiciary and parliament to intervene in these matters than with halting the growing violence and lawlessness. In addition, incidents involving musicians continue to arise.

As this report was being prepared, a singer named Bekithemba Khumalo made international news when Zimbabwean producers refused to record his album because it contained a song called "The President is a Thief." Khumalo eventually made his recording, but then shops in his hometown of Bulawayo refused to sell it. It is critical to understand how despite all this censorship Zimdancehall still reaches the crowds.

## **2.4 Theoretical Framework**

According to Makwambeni (2012), communicative space in Zimbabwe has diminished due to mainstream media excluding content offensive to the ruling party and this has opened an avenue for Zimdancehall to play the part of an alternative public sphere.

The ideology of alternative public sphere is derived from a critique of Habermas's public sphere which is defined as a space separate from the state and official economy where social meanings are generated, circulated, contested and reconstructed (Fraser, 1990). Fraser (1990) goes on to declare the alternative public sphere or subaltern counter publics refers to parallel discursive arenas which spring up in stratified societies whose basic institutional frameworks generate unequal relations of dominance and subordination, where full parity of participation in public debate and deliberation is not within the reach of possibility.

Makwambeni (2012) further notes that Counter publics emerge where societal inequality persists and deliberative processes tend to operate to the advantage of dominant groups and to the disadvantage of subordinates. When the public sphere is inaccessible, subordinated groups in society will have no arenas for deliberation amongst themselves about their needs, objectives and aspirations. As a result, members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses through the alternative public spheres. He further argues that the strength of subaltern counter publics is that they invigorate democratic discourse by allowing issues and assumptions that were previously exempt from contestation to be argued out publicly. In that light, counter publics have a subversive and contestatory function. They emerge in response to exclusion and marginalisation from the dominant publics and help to expand discursive space.

This paper views Zimbabwe as a country with uneven resource distribution, repressive media laws Eyre (2001) and as such Zimdancehall rises as an alternative public sphere.

## **2.5 Methodology**

The paper specifically selected songs released after the year 2010 that comprise of subversive lyrics that challenge the state of affairs socially economically and politically. This was done because the Zimdancehall genre is vast and it is not all tracks within this genre that have a political bearing. Most of these songs were pulled of state manipulated radio stations due to their subversive and anti ruling party nature. The songs were viewed on Youtube and afterwards interpreted into English as most of the songs are sang in Shona. Three other Shona speakers were present to verify the accuracy of the translations. The chosen songs were evaluated applying Norman Fairclough's theory of Critical Discourse Analysis. CDA has been

selected because of its particular capacity to explain the correlation between the linguistic and semiotic characteristics of the Zimdancehall songs and youths daily experiences.

The first stage of the analysis entailed studying the lyrics as text revealing what the artists hold important. This approach is used on the basis that songs are created intentionally by artists. The last stage shows the interrelation between the lyrics and social context as the belief is that Zimdancehall as a genre is produced under the conditions prevailing in Zimbabwe.

## Chapter 3

### 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the grounds of the dissertation and the channels used to conduct the research. The present chapter explores and analyses the lyrics of selected Zimdancehall songs with particular focus on the content with regard to the political context.

The selected songs reflect the social injustices practiced by the government and act as whistle-blowers. The songs analyzed in this chapter are as follows:

“Survivor “ (2015) by Winky D (Wallace Chirumiko) , “Sei Ukuti Tsvagai Mabasa” (2016) Hwindi President (Blessed Parewa) , [Dzimba Idzo Pazai](#) (2016) Soul Jah Love (Soul Musaka) , “Ndeipi President “ by Platinum Prince (2015) (Ian Makiwa) , [Tirikuvaona Neziso raBob Marley](#) (2013) Sniper Storm (Donald Chirisa)

### 3.2 Economic Injustice

The above term can hold numerous definitions but for the purpose of this study we will use a definition that better fits the topic in discussion. Maise (2003) posits that economic injustice involves the state's failure to provide individuals with basic necessities of life, such as access to adequate food and housing, and its maintenance of huge discrepancies in wealth. In the most extreme cases of misdistribution, some individuals suffer from poverty while the elite of that society live in relative luxury. Maise (2003) goes on to say such injustice can stem from unfair hiring procedures, lack of available jobs and education, and insufficient health care. All of these conditions may lead individuals to believe that they have not received a "fair share" of the benefits and resources available in that society. The above definition cannot be doubted to describe clearly present day Zimbabwe.

### 3.3 Analysis

The first song to be analysed is “Survivor” (2015) by Winky D .The song in summary talks of the economic plights faced by the youths of this country. Like most Zimdancehall songs that point out economic injustices, the song does not point fingers at specific people but rather sticks to telling the situation as it is in streets.

*Kuma ghetto youth mikana ishoma*  
*The youth have very few opprotunities*  
*Hakuna ghetto youth risina zvarinogona*  
*Each and every youth has a particular talent*

*Saka shinso ndopamhiko*  
*Shinso I give a promise*  
*Kusapporta ghetto asi hakunairiko*  
*To support the ghetto but its beyond my control*  
*Takumiririra vanhu kunge Steve Biko*  
*We are now standing for peoples rights like Steve Biko*  
*Ukaona Bigman ukaona Shinso*  
*If you look at Big man And Shinso*  
*Pane hobho vanenge isusu vane zvipa*  
*There are many like us with talents*  
*Maghetto youth gozha*  
*Vanomhanya mic, anotamba bhora*  
*Good singers and good football players*  
*But hapana zviripo*  
*But nothing has been done to help hem*

The opening verse tells so much before much of the song is even sung. Through the use of rhyme, Winky D in a catchy way puts it across that there too few opportunities for the youths in the country taking into consideration that everyone is good at something. He is essence addressing the fact that opportunities should not only be created in the formal sector

but in the informal areas as well. He uses himself as an example, saying that he is talented as are many other youths out there. He states that some are musicians and others are football players but they have amounted to nothing. It is paramount to understand that in his lyrics he is positing that the situation of the youth is beyond their control and making. He blames it on the faculty of the country that is responsible for providing opportunities to the youth. He does this metaphorically as he does not point the blame at any particular person but instead just puts it out there. His last statement “But hapana zviripo” simply means that those responsible have failed. The power of Zimdancehall as a communicative space arises from how its lyrics can be easily understood by the youth who constitute 36% of the population according to Zimbabwe Population Census National Report (2012). Winky D states in the lyrics that he is now standing for the people’s rights like Steve Biko. And surely with the number of fans he has it is his social duty to speak out on issues that affect a lot of the population. Steve Biko was an anti-apartheid revolutionary who selflessly fought against the oppression of blacks. By mentioning Steve Biko he is alluding to the fact that there is some kind of oppression being imposed upon the youths of Zimbabwe. He goes on further to say

*Ndatindizame chiconductor porisi ririkurova nemboma apa*  
*I have tried to be a ticket attendant, but the police is beating me up*  
*Ndironge musika panacharter demon rekanzuru rabva rabata*  
*I have tried to be a vendor ,but the City Council harasses me*  
*Shinsoman the dancehall father ndabatwa/*  
*Biggy mucentral police ndavata*  
*I have been caught several times, I have slept at the police station several times*  
*Zvakaoma kudaro, tirima survivor isu tiri masurvivor*  
*Nonetheless we are survivors*



It is in this part of the song that Winky D sort of points out who the culprit is. He says that he has tried vending and being a tickets attendant but the City Council harasses him and the police arrest him. These lyrics are not fictional but actual events that occurred in. Battles between Combi drivers and the police ensued from 2013 for various reasons. The police stated the Combi drivers were operating unlawfully while the Combi drivers accused the police of being corrupt and blamed the city fathers for poor planning of city routes. As stated in *The Standard* (5 May 2015, p 4)

In an effort to decongest the central business district, the City of Harare has ordered commuter omnibus operators to use designated ranks, but the drivers insist that these are too small to accommodate Harare's growing kombi population. "City fathers always speak of constructing new ranks for us, but this has not happened. They have never used public transport, as they drive so they cannot understand the congestion that these ranks are experiencing" said Kasambwa. The drivers also accused the police of smashing their windscreens, saying this was why they fled each time they were stopped by officers.

Both City Council and the ZRP, in different capacities, are arms of the Government. Throughout his song these are the people he accuses of blocking his attempts at breadwinning. Thus in simpler terms he is accusing the Government. One can validate the claims that the Government is creating its own problems through misgovernance which then leads to poverty. In any one party authoritarian state it is not advisable to attack the Government hence the metaphors and indirectness used in the lyrics. In the case of Zimbabwe this is even worse. According to Makwambeni (2017) the government has absolute control over the electronic media (radio and television broadcasting). In terms of Section 27 of the 1973 Broadcasting Act only the Zimbabwe

Broadcasting Corporation can carry out broadcasting in Zimbabwe. The result of this of this is that any music that explicitly implicates the Government or the ruling party will be taken of air. Through the example of this song we see lyrics that expose the economic injustices being enacted on the citizens. In overall in his song Winky D tells the populace of Zimbabwe to be strong as the title is survivor.

### **Twenty Five**

This track by Winky D can undoubtedly be dubbed one of his greatest works of art yet. In summary he laments of how when he was a child he thought that by the age of 25 he would have attained it all, a job, house, cars, and a wife, hence the title 25. Now that he is grown he realises that life is not what he thought it would be. The song applies to the majority of the youth even those after 25. They still have not achieved a sustainable life despite having passed the age of 25. He states that nonetheless he will keep striving. A close analysis of these lyrics shows “the Gafa” exposing a lot of elements of mis-governance in the song. In the previously analysed song “Survivor” Winky D places emphasis on the informal sector being disorganised. He specifically refers to ticket attendants and vendors being abused by the “system”. In the present song under analysis he is looking at the formal sector and how it has failed direly.

*Kuchikorondakaenda degree ndakasenganda-ndavakuzvibvunzakutichiinhaiichi?*

*I went to school, I attained my degree but what is going on?*

*Zvinondapfuura thirty, zvaingovazvirotobasa can't get*

*Now I am over 30, getting a job clearly was just a dream*

The artist explicitly states that he went to school and got his degree but he has nowhere to use it. He employs a rhetorical question. A rhetorical question is a device used to persuade or subtly influence the audience. It's a question asked not for the answer, but for the effect. Oftentimes, a rhetorical question is used to emphasize a point or just to get the audience thinking. The desired effect in this case is to scrutinize those responsible for making sure that jobs are available to youths once they finish their tertiary education. This rhetorical question is aimed at the Ministry of Labour which is part of the Government of Zimbabwe. An article in the Independent clearly states that, "indeed, Zimbabwe is now a wasteland of opportunity for anybody below the age of 35 years".

Consider Thomas Ruvete, who asked for his name not to be published in order to protect his identity. He did everything right, but still has no idea what the future holds for him. Twenty six years of age, Tom, as he likes to be called, studied economics at the prestigious University of Cape Town, and then spent another year studying for a masters degree at Sussex University in the United Kingdom. He then completed an internship with a local British bank before his visa expired. Reluctantly, he had to return home. "Had it not been for the visa thing, I wasn't going to return," he sighs. Unemployed for two years, Tom is now looking for anything that can occupy him. He asserts that,

*"I have just signed up with the Civil Service Commission (formerly the Public Service Commission). Even a teaching job will do." Frustrating as it is though, this is quite normal in Zimbabwe. In times of hardships, our expectations of what is a good job tends to diminish. Tom's anger is also normal, and he blames the government for what he sees as poor policies and a lack of concern for youths.*

*“None of my friends believe that we have a future or will be able to live a normal life.”*

The Independent (31 August 2015 ,p 7)

Clearly Winky D is very well informed in his lyrics. His lyrics are a reflection of society as it is. Thomas Ruvete is just one example of the millions of youth graduates out there who are struggling to attain employment. Zimdancehall as an activist movement shows how prevalent situations are, informing everyone across the country that the predicament is nationwide. Personally when i first heard the song it immediately became sentimental as it applied to several people i know including family and friends.

Further on in his song, Winky D uses satire in the form of humour to expose the Government’s failure to provide food and its corrupt practices.

*Hakuna nyangwe chikafu kana zvimoko zvidhafu ukaona kaslender usati idiet*

*There is no food, Girls cant even get chubby anymore*

*If you see a slender girl do not mistake her for a person on a diet, she is hungry*

The first line is quite humorous one has to admit ,but the artist is touching on a very serious issue plaguing the country.

“The current inability of the economy to address people’s basic needs is leading to hunger in most urban households, with almost none of urban residents in Zimbabwe being able to afford three meals a day nowadays” – Philip Bohwasi, chairperson of Zimbabwe’s Council of Social Workers .

As economic injustice was defined earlier on the chapter it encompasses failure to succeed in food security. This is a serious issue as it is goal number one of the World Health Organization's Millennium Development Goals. The state owned and controlled media in Zimbabwe does not give the populace such facts. They choose rather to mellow the statistics so that hunger is described as going for days without eating when it is in actual fact the failure to consume three meals a day due to economic reasons. Winky D goes full on and says it in such an exaggerated way through satire to achieve humour but at the same time alert the general populace on what is actually going on.

The song also addresses one of the most pressing issues Zimbabwe has faced for decades, corruption. According to Transparency International Corruption is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. It can be classified as grand, petty and political, depending on the amounts of money lost and the sector where it occurs. Winky D puts this across in the line below :

*Kune maguta hakuendeke because vane mari vakatenga zicheni ndokulocka gate*

Poverty is the order of the day since those with the money have bought a big chain and locked the gate. Certain elements within the government are abusing resources meant for the general populace. Winky D iterates this when he emphasises how they have “locked up the gate to the resources. This is typical of Zimbabwe. Transparency International cites that the levels of corruption are so alarming with an estimated loss of \$1 billion annually. Corruption is one of the major causes of this country's decay. This is no secret, with the government itself stating that it is initiating anti-corruption crack downs. In his lyrics Winky D does not just complain that some individuals are pocketing resources for themselves, but he stresses that the result is the remaining majority are suffering.

## **Dzimba idzo pazai**

“Dzimba idzo pazai” (2015) by Soul Jah Love is a track from the artist’s second studio album “Dai Hupenyu Hwaitengwa”. This artist is famous for his intimate lyrics that build a relationship between him and his listeners. The champion of the ghetto he is known as “Chibaba”. His lyrics mostly talk of his personal experiences and being from the high density areas, these are the same experiences encountered by people from the ghetto. The song under analysis is an emotional recount of how his own house was demolished by Harare City Council. According to the Herald (December 11 2015) Harare City Council destroyed 200 houses in the Kambuzuma- High Glen area on the basis that they were illegal structures facilitated by bogus housing cooperatives. In any circumstance if the process was done accordingly we would not sympathize with the residents, but there was a special circumstance that warranted serious scrutiny of the situation. The Herald (11 August 2015) quotes the Minister of Local government, Public Works and National Housing explicitly saying, “Municipalities must not demolish houses built by home seekers duped by land barons. The residents should be compensated by the barons and we should make sure they are accountable for what they did.” This clearly depicts poor governance, local and central government are not cohesive and the result is the citizens suffer. This instance is not the first when it comes to improper conduct by the Government as a whole. In 2005 the Government through what was known as Operation Murambatsvina, demolished houses with little or no caution whatsoever. According to the fact finding mission by the United Nations 700,000 people in cities across the country have lost their homes, their source of livelihood or both. Indirectly, a further 2.4 million people have been affected in varying degrees. Hundreds of thousands of women, men and children were made homeless, without access to food, water

and sanitation, or health care. Education for thousands of school age children has been disrupted.

It was implemented in a highly polarized political climate characterized by mistrust, fear and a lack of dialogue between Government and local authorities, and between the former and civil society. For a peaceful country that is a very drastic measure. Soul Jah Love questions the government's morality in his song where he says:

*Asi imba idzo ndati pazai pazai*  
*Go ahead and demolish those houses*

*Simba rangu muchipwanya kunge mazai*  
*Demolish my hard efforts as if you are just breaking eggs*  
*Mwari varikuona havasi hwai*  
*But God is watching*

The lyrics the artist chooses to employ are powerful in their own right. They are simple and understandable but also very powerful. Newspapers will tell stories based upon which side they support and they always have an effect they are aspiring to feed in people. This is known as the agenda setting theory. Music is similar but it is more effective. As he is singing in line with his own personal experience, he accuses the Government of undermining his hard effort to erect his house. Only for the Government to come and demolish it like they are breaking eggs. The way he says it spells how effortless it is for the government to ruin one's life, it's as if they do it without trying. Someone who might have had something smaller than a house demolished may have not had as much despair, but upon hearing these lyrics he starts to consider the gravity of his situation. More than anyone the Government should understand the times we are living in. Housing is one of the greatest challenges faced in this country but they find themselves evicting people into the streets. He is in so much awe and shock such that he questions their mortality not as politicians but as humans. His allusion

to God not being a sheep is particular interest. In biblical terms a sheep is considered to be a fragile animal that needs care hence we as humans have been termed sheep and God our shepherd. But this was not the meaning the artist was pushing for. In Zimbabwean urban language used by the youths a sheep is seen to be a dumb and stupid animal from how it can just go astray and how its eyes are of sleepy nature. The artist says God is not dumb and he is noting what you have done to me.

**Pamwe pachotiri kushanda tichibuda dikita**

**At times I'm working hard sweating**

**Mangoma nguva dzese ndichingorikita**

**My songs are always hits**

**Harare ndabuda kunobata Bikita**

**From Harare to Bikita**

**Ndichigaira ndichingo ekita**

**Asi vandisiya ndaneta**

**But they have weakened me**

**Asi handisiye ndatsveta**

**I will not stop singing**

**Vandi vandi bata asi ndachema**

**But they have really made me cry**

He places emphasis on how he is working hard, travelling around the country so that he can earn a living through his music and build a home. His emphasis on him sweating shows that his work is not easy he has to strive. This is a general sentiment shared by most Zimbabweans. They are a hardworking people who do not deserve to be treated as such. He even goes on to say that he is in so much pain h has cried. Soul Jah Love is a very popular public figure and him admitting publicly that his experience with the government has cornered him so much he has just surrendered and cried garners so much empathy from his fans. This is because they do not have to imagine being in his shoes, they already are by



virtue of them being Zimbabweans. In essence this song is not just about Soul Jah Love's demolished house, it is for each and every Zimbabwean who has had his house demolished be it in 2005 ,in 2011 and even on those so many undocumented instances. When the lyrics of this song were posted on Facebook we see the emotional reaction of fans on the Chillspot Records Facebook page. With comments like

**“Soul Jah Love... This is too deep... my heart is bleeding... my soul is crying.... unscathed raw pain... God but why”**

**“Big up Chibaba.....big up general**

**...pakutaurachokwadikwenyuchibabandokwandinoshevedzerachigunwemudenga”**  
**you guys as artists munofanira kubuka chi bablon system chatoitirwane Gvt thru music asiku nyarara henyu**

We see the impact of Zimdancehall on stirring up public debates as the artists sing about issues encountered by people belonging to the lower class.it gives the people courage to talk about issues they would never have attempted to mention on a public platform.

The turn of the century has brought about with it so many technological advantages, the internet being among them. In ten years' time the Zimdancehall that we have been listening to now will be “old school” in the sense that it will be from the past. And with lyrics such as Soul Jah Luvs it will serve as a reminder of where we have come from. Every time an individual in the future logs on to YouTube and plays the song in question, it will be a remind them of these infamous demolitions. Zimdancehall is more than just a genre, it is slowly documenting the history of Zimbabwe. Because these songs are quite entertaining, they will be played over and over again and so the injustices enacted by the Government by the people will never be lost again. Zimdancehall is like a newspaper article, but not one that will be filed somewhere in a storeroom for individual reference, but instead one that will be read everything there is a gathering be it in public transport ,on radio, nightclubs parties, for the people to remember where we came from.

## Chapter 4

### TsvagaiMabasa

“Tsvagai Mabasa” (2016) by Hwindi President is one of 35 songs on the Tsvagai Mabasa riddim. In this song the artist address the riddim title that means “Look for employment”.the chorus tells the story of Zimbabwean unemployment.

*Zvauri kutitsvaga mabasa iwe urikufunga tomawanepi mabasa*

*When you tell us to look for jobs where do you expect us to get them*

*Uriku funga ukationa tichidedzera hatina kupasa*

*When you see us being touting do not assume that we are not educated*

*Marovha ese aurikuona akazara haanakupusa*

*All the unemployed people you see are not dumb*

*Uchenjere kuzotaura pakazaravanhu shamwari yangu vanokukrarisa*

*Be careful not say this in public my friend they will end your life*

Hwindi President clearly is just stating the situation as it is. As much as we are educated there are no jobs present. He says it in a way that shows that the situation is beyond them. He has to resort to being rank touts because there is nothing else to do. In the last line Hwindi touches on a sensitive issue also present in the country, censorship. He says “Be careful not say this in public my friend they will end your life.” Several people have disappeared after speaking ill of the Government. This though has never really been proved to be connected to the Government. Cases like Itai Dzamara are among these disappearances. Hwindi President reflects how the citizens are living in fear in their own country, fear of speaking out. Several years ago uttering such a statement would have been close to

impossible but now we find Zimdancehall artists singing in their lyrics that they are aware of the disappearances. It has now become the voice of the voiceless.

### **Zisora Bob Marley**

Zisora Bob Marley (201) is a song by Sniper Storm and Guspy Warrior. Before analysing the lyrics of this song it is critical that we understand the essence of the title “the eye of Bob Marley”. Bob Marley is of great significance to the Zimbabwean context. Being the first international artist to perform in the country after attaining independence, he stood for pan Africanism. His lyrics were famous for advocating for justices and fighting against oppression. So in essence the lyrics of the song in question have an intertextual bearing on the work of Bob Marley as an activist. This song in summary shows the epitome of Zimbabwean misgovernance touching on issues of corruption, abuse and poor governance.

Tirikuvaona ne zisora Bob marley  
We are watching them with Bob Marleys eye  
Vachivakamamansiontichifa ne nzara  
While they build mansions we are dying of hunger  
Tirikuvaona ne zisora Bob marley  
Vachitengamazimotatichipusha ma bhara

They are buying expensive cars while we are pushing wheelbarrows. The most important thing to understand in this track is to grasp who the artists are referring to as “they”. In fear of “disappearing” the artists have not mentioned specific names but rather resorted to using the third person plural pronoun. In any society there is nothing wrong with building yourself a mansion or buying an expensive car. The lyrics hint issues to do with politics so they implicitly refers to the Government. Hence it becomes problematic when one buys himself a mansion or an expensive cart at the expense of the masses.

Totembaanitotembaaniko  
Angatichinjira ghetto life  
Takungomukatiripa bridge tesetama zero boys  
11% ndoyegairi employed  
89 tirikuwhiler time suffering day and night

We see the artists in the above lyrics giving statistics of the unemployment rate stating that 89% are unemployed. This large percentage spends its time on bridges because they have nothing to do. They pose a rhetorical question, who shall we trust? the Government has clearly failed them.

The nation as a whole is facing number of major issues. Many of these issues do not directly affect the citizens directly but rather they feel the ripple effect. Trade sanctions, recent droughts and slow crumbling world economy are among these challenges. Zimdancehall artists find themselves emanating from the lower class of society, rather than talk about these issues they sing about things they encounter on a daily basis, because it is what they know and what needs immediate addressing amongst the people of their class. A look at the song in question reveals this through the following lyrics:

Kubhadharamagtesititengakendurufuti  
We pay our electricity bills but we still have to buy candles  
Kubhadharamvuratotengayekunwafuti  
We pay our water bills but we still have to buy water to drink  
Tavapambomavotirovanadzofuti  
We buy the police button sticks but they beat us with them still  
Oi chain votisunganadzofuti  
We buy them handcuffs but they arrest us  
Ngavaszdhibhekutipovotisumashefu  
They should not forget that they as the government are here to serve us

Vasatikandiremabhionzovapedzamunyepfu  
And not throw us meatless bones  
Tirikutamburamhanitavakudakutorabefu  
We are suffering we need a rest  
Tapedzachikoropakutsvagabasahapanazororo  
And after all this we still suffer searching for jobs, there is no rest.

In one verse the artist summarizes all the problems the people of the lower class face. The citizens of Zimbabwe have been paying their electricity bills but they are living in “dark cities”. Most cities in Zimbabwe have been experiencing electricity outages, at times lasting up to 24 hours in recent days, plunging entire suburbs into darkness as the power utility battles to conserve scarce supplies. Daily Monitor 15 September 2015.

Power cuts are not uncommon in Africa with South Africa, one of the most developed countries on the continent turning to load shedding to save electricity. It is the rates at which they occur in Zimbabwe that is alarming. Several communities go for days without electricity and this is unruly. It is a huge sign of misgovernance. Time and again the relevant authorities blame outages on water levels at Kariba dam but the truth is the Government has lacked foresight into a problem that the whole world had anticipated.

While there is nothing we can do about rainfall patterns, ZESA’s inability to mitigate the power shortages reveals a startling lack of planning on both their and government’s side.

It is an indictment on the government that since 1980, it has not invested meaningfully in the energy sector, leading to electricity shortages that have been a hallmark for the past 15 years. It boggles the mind why after 35 years of independence, we still rely on infrastructure set up by former colonialists in the 1960s and 1970s.

If the government had any foresight, it would have anticipated that this infrastructure would not meet the needs of a growing population and a more sophisticated industry, and should have started working on augmenting power supplies as far back as possible.

Newsday 7September 2015

The above article unveils how the current government since 1980, has failed to plan accordingly. The crisis is not only limited to electricity but spans to water shortages too. Over the years acute water shortages have led to outbreaks of diseases such as typhoid. According to the Human Rights Watch report (2013) the same conditions that allowed the 2008-09 cholera epidemic to flourish—poor sanitation, high-density living conditions, lack of access to potable water, official denial of the magnitude of the problem, and lack of information about the safety of the public water supply—persist. Corruption, which has a negative impact on water governance globally, appears on the rise in Zimbabwe. In 2012, Transparency International ranked Zimbabwe the 13th most corrupt country in the world, a slip from its 2008 rank as 24th. According to the group, “When corruption leads to contaminated drinking water and destroyed ecosystems, the detrimental consequences are often irreversible.”

The lyrics portray one thing in essence. The government is raping its citizens. The masses are not asking for free water and electricity, despite the tough economic conditions they are making ends meet and paying for these amenities but are not being efficiently dispensed. It is one thing to fail to supply water and electricity but it is another thing to make people who are already suffering pay for a service they are not getting. It is daylight robbery. Sniper storm insinuates that the corrupt officials are pocketing that money paid by the citizens hence the lyrics “they shouldn’t throw us meatless bones once they are

done eating”. He further goes on to expose the abuse the government subjects its citizens to when he says the beat us with the button sticks and arrest us with the handcuffs that have been bought using our money. Not only does the government pocket the money paid by citizens, it punishes them each time they complain. Sniper Storm pleads with the Government not to forget that the masses are the taxpayers and the government is here to serve them. This song stands opposed to all the corruption going on in the government, calling for service delivery to be sorted out.

### **Ndeip President**

Ndeipi President (2015) by Platinum Prince is an open letter to the president in the form of song. Employing satire, the artist comments and questions the artist at the same time. In actual fact the song is more of a mockery on the presidency and the state of affairs in the country. In some parts of the song he commends the President for his attempts while in others he outlines his failures. It is one of the most direct attacks on the Government and probably the only one specifically addressed to the president.

Ndeipi Baba Va Bona ndakanzwanahuvachisikakutimakadonha  
How are you Bonas Father ihera people laughing that you fell  
Havana kukwana hapana chinosekesa tikatarisa pavaka donha penyu pashoma

Nothing is amusing about falling everyone has their moments

Ndinenyayanezvichemo  
I have stories and complaints  
Makatibatabhokubva 1920 Izvezvindakurandavakuma 20  
You have taken care of us since 1980, Now i am 20 years old  
Asihonai economy president Basa hakuna  
But look at the economy, There are no jobs

Handina kana cent

I have no money whatsoever

The above lyrics show the artist addressing the president in an open letter and speaking freely with him. Platinum Prince initially seems to have no bone to chew with the president evident in how he ridicules all those laughing at how he fell off a staircase after addressing supporters. But a close look at this comment reflects some satire. The President's falling was viewed widely by critics as a sign of the President's aging. After commending the President for taking care of the country Platinum Prince then delves straight into one of the most pressing issues faced by the country, unemployment. He is sort of mocking the President by saying you have been in power since 1980 but what have you done to the economy? I cannot find a job and I have no money. He is pleading with the President.

Imbondipai tipi

Munomwirabhawaripi

Mozoaendanenihandichadekunwahwahwahuri cheap

Kanzuruhaisikushandayakaiza

Makamboenda here kuchitungwiza

Masuwagiakazarakwesevanhuvakufambavachijambakungehwiza

Platinum Prince asks the President where he goes to drink beer and asks him to take him there too as he is tired of cheap alcohol. This insinuates that the President is drunk from judging from the state of affairs in the country and somewhat abuses funds as he engages in "expensive" lifestyle evident in his choice of alcohol. He does this in a comic way. He talks of the poor conditions in Chitungwiza saying that people are jumping over sewerage as if they are locusts. The song achieves the effect of laughter but at the same time drives across cut-throat issues. One noticeable trait about Zimdancehall artist is that they sing about their daily problems in life. Which in actual fact are the problems of the masses. They do not sing about plummeting market rates or sanctions that deter foreign investments.



The sing about the unemployment that has plagued them, the poor sanitary conditions they succumb to every day, abuse they face from police, failure to access electricity and water. As isolated incidences these problems seem quite minor, but it is important to note that these artists come from the subaltern which represents the largest per cent of the population. What each artist sings about is almost the exact same thing faced by the millions that belong to his class.

## **CHAPTER 5 : SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **Summary**

The research revealed how Zimdancehall is packed with lyrics that address prominent issues dealing with society once we overlook the its violent and drug related side. Focus was placed on Zimdancehall songs that address day to day struggles of the subaltern in Zimbabwe. The researcher analysed the songs in terms of their lyrical content and use of stylistics devices such as satire .Insight was drawn from the alternative public sphere theory as articulated by Fraser (1993).The researcher exposed socio political issues faced by the subaltern as the lyrics depict. These issues include lack of employment, corruption and poor service delivery by the government.

### **Conclusions**

Zimdancehall gives an insight into the lives of the subaltern especially the youths. It highlights the day to day struggles of the subaltern youths. Many of these issues are considered minor on an individual scale but the fact that most of the youths can relate to them shows how they are actually major issues. This is something really not done by the other genres existent in Zimbabwe as they mostly use the dominant communicative sphere in the form of state run radio and television.

Zimdancehall as a contemporary genre takes the prevalent issues on a day to day scale and converts them to lyrics and song in language that is familiar with the subaltern that face these issues. The analysis of the means of dissemination and the nature of the lyrics reveals how Zimbabwe, though an independent and free state according to the constitution, seems to have its subjects living under a type of colonialism from the ruling party. The constitution claims there is freedom of speech but we see the state using indirect methods of censoring musical

material that has the potential to harm the government. The research shows incidences of this sort. Zimdancehall as alternative media evades these censorship methods through its distribution channels. Zimdancehall fits Fraser (1993)'s profile of an alternative public sphere due to the fact that most of the songs find their way to people through channels other than the dominant state owned TV and Radio. Social media has played a pivotal role in transmitting

The research also exposes how the drug related side of the genre may have attained its trait from existing conditions in the country. In addition to that it shows the genre coming into existence as there was need for a platform that could address issues that all other genres were restricted from doing. The lyrics are an outcry of the poor condition of the country and are aimed at those who hold the reigns of the nation. The songs analysed mention no names but clearly show who is responsible and pleads with them to restore order. The lyrics attempt to deconstruct all notions of state run media that show a road to recovery and paint Zimbabwe as a democratic and stable country.

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