

# UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

An Ethnography on the uses of *chinyambara* traditional dance as a coping mechanism by marginalised communities in Gweru Zimbabwe: The case of Tavirima Traditional Dance Group.

A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

of

Master of Arts (Applied Ethnomusicology).

College of Humanities, School of Arts

By

**Innocent Tinashe Mutero**

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**Supervisor: Dr. Patricia Achieng Opondo**





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Mr Innocent T Mutero (213568171)  
School of Arts  
Howard College Campus

Protocol reference number: HSS/1013/013M

Project title: An ethnography of subversive performances of *Chinyambera* traditional music and dance in Gweru Zimbabwe: The case of Tavirima traditional dance group

Dear Mr Mutero,

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Yours faithfully

.....  
Dr Shamila Naidoo (Deputy Chair)

/ms

cc Supervisor: Dr PA Opondo  
cc School Administrator: Ms Alice Palan

---

**Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee**

**Dr Shenuka Singh (Acting Chair)**

**Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building**

**Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000**

**Telephone: +27 (0) 31 260 3587/8350/4557 Facsimile: +27 (0) 31 260 4609 Email: [ximbap@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:ximbap@ukzn.ac.za) / [snymam@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:snymam@ukzn.ac.za) / [mohung@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:mohung@ukzn.ac.za)**

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	i
Abstract.....	v
Acknowledgements.....	viii
CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 The Social and Political Context in Zimbabwe .....	4
1.2 Brief Overview of Zimbabwean Traditional Dances.....	8
1.2.1 Origins and Characteristics of <i>Chinyambara</i> .....	10
1.3 Organisational Background of Tavirima Traditional Dance Group.....	11
1.3.1 Membership Selection Criterion.....	12
1.3.2 Tavirima’s Aims and Objectives.....	13
1.3.3 Situating Tavirima in Criticism Performances of Chinyambara Traditional Dance .....	13
1.4 Research Questions and Objectives .....	15
1.4.1 Research Objectives .....	15
1.4.2 Key Questions .....	15
1.5 Research Methodology.....	15
1.5.1 Study Design .....	16
1.5.2 Sampling Technique.....	16
1.5.3 Data Collection Instruments.....	18
1.5.4 Data Analysis .....	22
1.6 Validity and Reliability of the Study findings .....	23
1.6.1 The researcher as an Artist.....	23
1.7 Significance of the Study.....	25
1.8 Location of the Study.....	25
1.9 Chapter Summary .....	27
CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	29
2.1 Performing Subversion in Zimbabwe: What is it?.....	29
2.2 Music and Society Variance and Parallelism.....	36
2.3 Music and Other Performing Arts as Agents for Social Change .....	38
2.4 Theoretical Framework.....	41
2.4.1 African Popular Culture Theory.....	42
2.4.2 Alternative Culture Theory .....	45

2.4.3 Positive Deviance Approach.....	49
2.5 Rationale for Choosing Three Theories.....	50
2.6 Chapter Summary.....	51
CHAPTER 3 SUBVERSION AS A PREMEDITATED AGENCY.....	52
3.1 Paradoxes and Controversies of Zimbabwean Law.....	52
3.1.1 Supremacy of the Constitution over Acts of Parliament.....	53
3.2 Strategies of Evading Arrest.....	55
3.2.1 Evading Arrest through Upholding Cultural Legacy.....	57
3.2.2 Use of Axioms as a Strategy to evade Arrest.....	63
3.2.3 Political Prostitution as a Strategy to Evade Arrest.....	64
3.2.4 Evading Arrest through Upholding Nationalism and the Mbuya Nehanda Legacy.....	71
3.3 The Place of Audience in Driving Subversion.....	72
3.4 Performance Venue as a Catalyst of Criticism Performance.....	76
3.5 Community’s Appreciation of Tavirima’s work.....	79
3.6 Chapter Summary.....	81
CHAPTER FOUR CONTENT ANALYSIS OF TAVIRIMA’S PERFORMANCES.....	83
4.1 Song as a Site of Struggle.....	83
4.1.1 Songs for Hope in the Inclusive Government.....	85
4.1.2 Songs of Dismay at the Ineffectiveness of the Inclusive Government.....	90
4.1.3 Songs calling a for Political Change.....	98
4.2 Why <i>Chinyambera</i> .....	106
4.2.1 <i>Chinyambera</i> Identifies with the Culture of the Majority.....	106
4.2.2 <i>Chinyambera</i> as an Expressive Dance.....	107
4.2.3. Tapping into <i>Chinyambera</i> ’s Energies.....	109
4.3 The Effectiveness of Tavirima’s <i>Chinyambera</i> Performances.....	110
4.4 Chapter Summary.....	111
CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	114
5.1 Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations.....	114
References.....	118
Legal instruments.....	124

APPENDICES .....	125
Appendix 1 Film Paper Edit Tavirima’s Diary: <i>Good Hope in Subversion</i> .....	125
Appendix 111 Interview Schedule.....	129



## **Abstract**

This dissertation is an ethnographic expository of how Tavirima Traditional Dance Group uses *chinyambera* traditional dance as a copying mechanism for marginalised communities in Gweru, Zimbabwe. This study contextualises and analyses how Tavirima's performances of *chinyambera* reflect the socio-political environment in Zimbabwe and how the music works to bring about social change. It gives further insight into and analysis of how traditional songs metaphorically speak out against the authoritarian government of Zimbabwe led by Robert Gabriel Mugabe, and how dance embodies dissent against the same. The dissertation provides transcriptions and contextual interpretations of *chinyambera* songs which Tavirima uses as agents for social change focusing on how the songs reflect, contest, resist and mediate in the prevailing socio-political crisis in Zimbabwe. The research also discusses how *chinyambera's* roots, expressiveness and energies influence Tavirima to choose the dance over a myriad of other Zimbabwean traditional dances. The theoretical framework for this study is underlined by the African Popular Culture Theory, Alternative Cultural Theory and Positive Deviance Approach creating a vantage point through which the study is framed to analyse the ability of popular arts in bringing about social change and how subalterns take charge of their destiny by defying restrictive and oppressing systems through a metamorphosis of traditional music and dance.



## List of maps, tables, figures and transcriptions

### Maps

Map 1.1 Performance sites in Mkoba	24
Map 1.2 Ndebele and Shona regions influencing Gweru Culture	25
Map 1.3 Provincial map of Zimbabwe	25

### Tables

Table 1 Data Analysis Frame	21
Table 1.2 Researcher's Artistic Profile	22

### Figures

Figure 1.1 Amos Chibaya	15
Figure 1.2 Almon Moyo	15
Figure 1.3 Champagne Nyengera	16
Figure 1.4 Gilbert Zhou	18
Figure 1.5 Joe Razor	18
Figure 1.6 Faith Matongo	19
Figure 1.7 Linda Masarira	19
Figure 1.8 Malvin Dube	20
Figure 3.1 Police Response to Protestors	55
Figure 3.2 Members of Tavirima with ZANU PF Caps	55
Figure 3.3 Members of Tavirima performing at an MDC rally	59
Figure 3.4 Amos Chibaya singing with Tavirima	62
Figure 3.5 Audience join in the dance arena	76
Figure 3.6 Tavirima performing at Mkoba 6	73
Figure 3.7 Tavirima Performing at Takwirira Primary School	77
Figure 4.1 Albert dancing to <i>chirombo</i> as if he is flying	89
Figure 4.2 Tavirima dancing showing open palms in supporting of MDC	102

## **Song Transcriptions**

Kurauone	62
Tavaona ndibaba	69
Muroyi wehama	85
Chidembo ndipe muswe	89
Gondo guru	92
Wandigumburisa	94
Samatenga baba	98
Kumandega	101
Kumakura kwaita moto	104
Gudo rakwira mawere kongonya	106

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**COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES**

Declaration - Plagiarism

I, Innocent Tinashe Mutero declare that

1. The research reported in this thesis, except where otherwise indicated, is my original research.
2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.
3. This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.
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Signed

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**Dedication**

To Farie, with love

## **CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION**

In despotic environments such as Zimbabwe music is usually used by the government to spruce up their image and indoctrinate the people with their one party state philosophy. Wiseman Chirwa maintains that tyrannical governments manipulate popular musical performances to create and entrench an oppressive political culture in the country (2001). The ruling party ZANU PF has been accused of subverting the people and often using repressive media laws to mute divergent political views. Writing on the media monitoring legislation in Zimbabwe, Maurice Vambe and Beauty Vambe posit that “The control of television and radio helps the government to censor those singers whose visions of Zimbabwe do not agree with that of ZANU PF” (2007:48).

However, regardless of the repressive environment in their nation some Zimbabwean artists have conquered the fear of the consequences often associated with asking pertinent questions on unaccountable governance and the torn socio-political fabric. These Zimbabweans artists have remained optimistic that their situation will improve, and they have cascaded their hope to the society through song and dance in which they question the conscience of the political leaders. The use of music for either gaining political mileage or questioning political decisions is captured by Murenga Chikowero who posits that:

The praise song, even as it hails the extraordinary feats of great social and political figures, is also a vehicle that carries the freight of the populace’s expectations from the very same important personage being praised. In this sense, praise singing in itself becomes a platform to renew the social, if unwritten, contract between the ruler and the ruled in order to maintain a balanced and harmonious atmosphere critical for the society’s development (2006:37).

Music is firmly grounded in the Zimbabwean culture where it is used to communicate about any matter realistically or imagined to be affecting the society. The members of the Tavirima Traditional Dance Group based in the high density suburb of Mkoba in Gweru has taken it upon themselves to voice the concerns, hopes and aspirations of the people through art. In their performances they use *chinyambera*<sup>1</sup> traditional dance to speak out against the socio-political challenges faced by Zimbabweans as well as proffer their hopes and aspirations.

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<sup>1</sup> *Chinyambera* is a Zimbabwean traditional dance of the Karanga people found in Masvingo and Midlands Provinces. In the past it was performed by warriors before or after hunting to instil confidence or celebrate the hunt. It was also performed for motivation after an unsuccessful hunting expedition

## **1.1 The Social and Political Context in Zimbabwe**

Zimbabweans grapple with a myriad of formidable burdens which include poverty, disease, unemployment and hostility. The country is going through economic hardships in all sectors of its economy. The country's economy is also being crippled by the HIV and AIDS scourge whose prevalence rate among adults aged between 15 and 49 is said to be at 14.7% of the population by the UNAIDS<sup>2</sup>. The HIV AIDS pandemic has not only been a cause for concern in the health sector as it has also caused social distress. HIV has led to the death of many people due to AIDS related illness, and these deaths have led to the increase of child headed families.

Statistics on unemployment in Zimbabwe point to the fact that most Zimbabweans are either unemployed or informally employed. Unemployment in Zimbabwe stands at above 95% and the majority of the people are living below the poverty datum line, on less than one United States Dollar per day<sup>3</sup>. The high levels of unemployment contribute to the political mess in Zimbabwe. The former Prime Minister of Zimbabwe and President of the main opposition political party, the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), Mr Morgan Richard Tsvangirai forwards that "The issue of jobs is no longer just an economic issue. It has become an issue of political stability and social cohesion"(2013:5).

From the year 2000 to date there has been eruption of politically motivated violence which further compounds the adversities facing Zimbabweans. Joseph Mupuva observes that Zimbabwe has been dogged by politically motivated violence over a number of years and the violence has poured doubts over the credibility of key democratic exercises such as elections (2010:54). At times this violence is state sanctioned by the ruling party ZANU PF and condoned by the Zimbabwe Republic Police. Michael Bratton and Eldred Masunungure posit that "The ZANU PF regime is a militarized form of electoral authoritarianism and has come to rest on the interpenetration of two key organs of authority: the ruling party and the security forces" (2008:42).

The political crisis in Zimbabwe has been coupled to social rot. Zimbabweans are living in a tumultuous society where drug abuse has become an integral part of the lives of youth and

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<sup>2</sup> HIV prevalence rate accessed from <http://www.unaids.org/en/regionscountries/countries/zimbabwe/> on 07/11/13

<sup>3</sup> Unemployment rate of Zimbabwe accessed from [www.indexmundi.com>Factbook>Countries>Zimbabwe>Economy](http://www.indexmundi.com/Factbook/Countries/Zimbabwe/Economy) on 03/09/13



old people alike. In this political madness, politicians have also used drugs as an effective mechanism to control the actions and minds of the young electorate. Commenting on the spate of political violence in Zimbabwe, the then Minister of Public Service who is also a victim of political violence Lucia Matibenga, said “the perpetrators are young, they are poor and unemployed and they perpetrate for just a little amount of money or even drugs”<sup>4</sup>. The deliberate manipulation of young people by politicians to mete violence is further emphasized by Lindsay Hilker and Erika Fraser (2009:32) who argues that “in Zimbabwe, party elites recruited excluded youth into their youth wing and often used them to intimidate and brutalise the population”.

Political violence rose to unprecedented levels such that at the peak of the disturbances in 2008, during the harmonized elections many were beaten regardless of their level of submission to the demands of their assailants. Bratton and Masunungure posit that during “The 2008 election violence more than a hundred MDC officials and supporters were killed, thousands were injured in politically motivated beatings, and up to 200,000 people were displaced” (*ibid*:41). The year 2009 marked political reform in Zimbabwe and a Government of National Unity<sup>5</sup> was formed. Under the newly established Government of National Unity, the vision was to bring democracy, peace and cooperation in revamping Zimbabwe’s economy and social services. The coming of the inclusive government in Zimbabwe managed to quell the degree of politically inclined clashes. Elin Berstad Mortense posits that “Zimbabwe’s ruling party and opposition formed a joint Government of National Unity in 2009. While this has not led to radical political change, the economy has been stabilized and violence has subsided” (2013:1).

It is, however, unfortunate that the relative peace that was ushered in by the inclusive government was not augmented by sincere national healing and reconciliation activities. Policies formulated by the inclusive government speak politically correct language, but in reality the subsequent activities emanating from the policies have done little in helping ordinary citizens deal with their situation. Terence Mashingaidze argues that “The major

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<sup>4</sup> Lucia Matibenga’s comment on the use of drugs by politicians to manipulate youth retrieved from <http://akcampaign.wordpress.com/2011/10/11/victim-of-political-violence-becomes-minister-in-zimbabwe/> on 07/11/13

<sup>5</sup> Government of National Unity was a coalition government in Zimbabwe which reigned in Zimbabwe after the disputed 2008 June presidential elections. This government was provisioned by a Global Political Agreement agreed upon by three main political parties in Zimbabwe which are the MDC-T, MDC-M and ZANU PF.

deficiency in the contemporary conciliatory political milieu is the lack of clear and binding instruments for achieving national healing and reconciliation” (2010:20).

The majority of the Zimbabwean population are young people aged under thirty five constituting over 60% of the total population<sup>6</sup>. These young people and many other ordinary Zimbabweans have much at stake, yet they have little say in the policies and activities that concern their lives. Obvious Mutizwa notes that despite the coming of the Government of National Unity there was political instability and social distress stifling citizens’ participation on key national issues (2011:4). Moreover, the violence which was experienced by Zimbabweans was very severe, and it is still etched in people’s memories and the constant subjugation of people’s rights as well as the current sporadic incidences of violence serve as a constant reminder of the horrific experiences they went through.

Over the years ZANU PF has used music to mould youth with pugnacious tendencies who mete out violence to people with divergent political views. An anonymous source cited by Jairos Gonye notes that “leaders let beer flow down the throats of, and music and song drown the ears of the youth. When the youth begin to dance *kongonya* with abandonment, the ZANU PF politicians know the youth are ready to commit political crime for them, intimidate the opposition” (2013:71). They also used the music to perpetuate hate speech and denigrate the opposition political parties and Western nations who were against ZANU PF’s authoritarian rule. Moyses 2009 cited in Gonye, argues that “The government hijacked the national public broadcasting corporation (ZBC) and used it relentlessly to disseminate propaganda discrediting the opposition and enhancing the image of the ruling party” (73).

The Zimbabwean government went into a drive of recruiting musicians who sang in praise of their policies. The music was cosmetic, concealing the evils that the government was doing. Irikidzayi Manase observes the overdrive in recruiting praise singers by the government of Zimbabwe and commented “this nationalist rhetoric sought to counter growing local and international criticism of the government’s repressive policies and their effects on the quality of ordinary Zimbabweans’ social lives. The media and arts sectors in Zimbabwe were roped into this anti-Euro-American propaganda which became synonymous with an ideology of anti-imperialism in the spheres of culture and the media” (2009:56). In doing this the

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<sup>6</sup> Data on Zimbabwe’s population accessed from <http://www.zimstat.co.zw/dmdocuments/CensusPreliminary2012.pdf> on 29/08/13

government intended to manipulate the country's social memory and national history under the pretext of responding to Western cultural, media and political imperialism (Thram 2006, Bere 2008).

Over and above propagating the ZANU PF mantra, the government gazetted repressive laws which silenced 'anti-government' musicians and other artists. These new laws included the Broadcasting Services Act (BSA) in 2001 (Government of Zimbabwe 2001), which gave authority to the Minister of Information to control programming on radio and television, and the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (AIPPA) in 2002 (Government of Zimbabwe 2002) which monitored journalists and media organisations. The 2002 Public Order and Security Act (Government of Zimbabwe 2002b), which censored the political and human freedoms of Zimbabweans, was also enacted. These laws have heavily censored music forcing artists to confine their music to subjects which do not speak to the evil that the government is doing. Musicians have been stripped of their role of being political commentators as long as their commentary is against the ruling party. Banning Eyre observes that;

Long depended upon to express the suffering, hopes, fears and aspirations of their people, Zimbabwean musicians have now endured years of government scrutiny, intimidation, unofficial censorship and, most recently pressure - both carrot and stick - to distort and transform their art from free expression to outright state propaganda (2004:94).

The prevailing situation in Zimbabwe has been very hostile to artists who speak out on issues bedevilling the ordinary people of Zimbabwe to such an extent that some have faced been hauled to the Supreme Court of Zimbabwe to answer to charges levelled against them. Owen Maseko, a Bulawayo based installation artist whose exhibition was deemed sensitive and banned by the government, was subsequently brought before the Supreme Court which is the highest court in Zimbabwe. Raisedon Baya reports that "Owen Maseko is not on trial for contravening the censorship act but a higher crime of undermining the President's authority under the Public Order and Security Act"<sup>7</sup>. However in the midst of this obnoxious repression and nebulous machinations by the government some popular musicians and community artists such as Tavirima Traditional Dance Group have risen to speak out against

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Raisedon Baya's report retrieved from [http://arterialnetwork2011.blogspot.com/2012\\_04\\_01\\_archive.html](http://arterialnetwork2011.blogspot.com/2012_04_01_archive.html) on 07/08/13

the gross human rights violations and poor services delivery. Tavirima Traditional Dance Group have managed to defy the government censorship orders and they have continued producing work deemed politically inappropriate by the ZANU PF government. Hence this thesis focuses on giving further insight into and analysis of how Tavirima Traditional Dance Group responds to political and social challenges which include repressive laws and poor social services delivery through *chinyambera* traditional music and dance.

## **1.2 Brief Overview of Zimbabwean Traditional Dances**

Zimbabwe is a multi-cultural country whose dances are just as varied as the ethnic groupings inhabiting the country. Kariamu Asante argues that “One cannot discuss Zimbabwean dance as an entity when Zimbabwe contains so many different ethnic groups, each with their own particular history and subculture” (2000: 6). There is consensus that the Shona and Ndebele are the two major ethnic groups of Zimbabwe with the Shona making 82% of the population while the Ndebele make up 14% of the total population<sup>8</sup>. Even though the Shona and the Ndebele bracket all the other ethnic groups, these other small ethnic groups continue to practice their own culture and traditions (Clayton Ndlovu, 2010:17-18).

This dissertation maintains that an in-depth discussion of the various Zimbabwean traditional dances is subject to another study as it does not fall within the parameters of this study. However, in cognisance of the varied menu of Zimbabwean traditional dances, this report will give an appreciation of the Zimbabwean traditional dances through discussing six dances. By virtue of location Gweru provides good ground for the practise of Shona and Ndebele traditional dances. Gweru is surrounded by Lower Gweru, Silobela and Vungu rural areas. The first two make up Gweru rural parliamentary constituency while Vungu is a party of Vungu constituency. Practice of dance in Gweru is therefore partly influenced by her close rural neighbours. Traditional dance groups in Gweru, which include the Midlands State University Traditional Dance Ensemble, Hwahwa Prison Dance Group, Chikumbiro Primary School and Mkoba 3 High School, have varied traditional dance repertoires. However, there are some dances which are common in their repertoires which I have chosen to briefly describe, showing the utilitarian role that these dances play within the cultural context. *Mbakumba, jerusarema and shangara* are usually identified as Shona traditional dances whereas *amabhiza, amantshomane and isitshikitsha* are associated with the Ndebele people.

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<sup>8</sup> Data on Zimbabwe ethnic distribution retrieved from [http://www.indexmundi.com/zimbabwe/demographics\\_profile.html](http://www.indexmundi.com/zimbabwe/demographics_profile.html) on 07/11/13

- Mbakumba*** It is a highly stylised and structured dance performed by the Karanga people of Masvingo province near the Great Zimbabwe monument. *Mbakumba* is performed at social functions especially at celebrations to mark the successful completion of communal work such as the *humwe* where communities worked together in weeding one field and to celebrate harvest.
- Jerusarema*** Is a culturally rich and symbolic fertility dance that is mostly performed at weddings, parties, funerals and installation of traditional leaders. Jerusarema is also known as *mbende*, though it is now performed across Zimbabwe the dance is originally from Murehwa and places lying in the vicinity, in Mashonaland East province.
- Shangara*** This is a social traditional dance performed by the Zezuru People found in Mashonaland Central province. *Shangara* is performed at beer parties, wedding ceremonies and birthday parties. Legend has it that the dance came about after an old man who had bought new shoes got drunk at a beer drinking part and started to dance showing off his shoes. To substantiate the claim oral tradition says the name *shangara* is hence derived from *shangu* which is Shona for shoes.
- Amabhiza*** It is a Kalanga people's rain making dance used to appeal to the ancestors for rain. The dance movements are an imitation of the footsteps of a horse. The name *amabhiza* means horses.
- Isitshikitsha*** It is a sacred traditional dance found among the Ndebele people who are found mostly in Bulawayo, Matebeleland North, South and some parts of Midlands province of Zimbabwe. *Isitshikitsha* is performed at both ritual and social gatherings where during the former it has graceful stately movements and a lazy rhythm while during social events it is usually energetic.
- Amantshomane*** It is an ancestral veneration dance of the Tshangana people of Matabeleland North province of Zimbabwe, The dance is characterised with high leaps into air as well as quick and rapid energetic steps. *Amantshomane* is also said to be therapeutic

Most of the Zimbabwean traditional dances are linked with the cosmology of her people as alluded to by Kariamu Asante who forwards that “most of the Zimbabwean dances are religious or spiritual dances” (2000:5). Most studies that have been carried on Zimbabwean traditional music and dance also point to the fact that most Shona and Ndebele dances have a relationship with the religious and spiritual life of their people. Jerry Rutsate (2011) researched the practise of *mhande* traditional by the Karanga people during the *mutoro*, a rain making ritual. The Ndebele culture’s rainmaking dance is called *iHosana* (Clayton Ndlovu 2010:25). Diane Thram (2002) also studied the therapeutic role played by *dandanda* traditional dance which is a dance originated from the Korekore people of Zimbabwe. Paul Nyathi (2001) purports that the Ndebele practise *isitshikitsha seZangoma*, a sacred traditional dance, and it is for those who are traditional healers and those who are apprentices in traditional healing. According to a CHIPAWO<sup>9</sup> module, the Kalanga people of Matebeland Province of Zimbabwe use *Amabhiza* traditional dance during their rainmaking ceremonies.

Even though *chinyambera* exists within a myriad of traditional dances in Zimbabwe, the general performance of traditional dances in Zimbabwe has been waning in popularity. Robert McLaren observes that most Zimbabwean youth today shun traditional music and dance performance, due to the society’s negative attitude (2001; 13-14). However, paradoxically at the time when the performance of Zimbabwe traditional dances is waning popularity in her communities, Tavirima Traditional Dance Group practises *chinyambera* traditional dance to speak Zimbabwe’s socio political challenges. This contradiction raises a need to find out why Tavirima uses traditional, particularly *chinyambera*, in their performances.

### **1.2.1 Origins and Characteristics of *Chinyambera***

Proceeding from the brief ritual dances discussion I turn to discuss the practice of traditional dances in the social entertainment milieu, zeroing in on the practice of *chinyambera* traditional dance by Tavirima Traditional Dance Group. *Chinyambera* traditional dance is a Zimbabwean traditional dance of the Karanga people found in Masvingo and Midlands Provinces. Angela Impey and Barbara Nussbaum (1996) credit its origins to the Duma people

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<sup>9</sup> CHIPAWO is an acronym standing for Children Performing Arts Workshop. CHIPAWO is one of Zimbabwe’s leading performing arts organisations engaged in research and teaching of Zimbabwean traditional music and dance as well as theatre to young people.

of the Moyo totem<sup>10</sup> who inhabit Masvingo Province. Impey and Nussbaum also classify *chinyambera* as a preventive dance which “contribute to maintaining psychological health and social harmony”(10). Their classification augurs well with Tavirima traditional dance group’s practise of *chinyambera* in which they use the dance to peacefully confront a repressive and violent political environment. In the past *chinyambera* was performed by hunters before or after hunting to instil confidence or celebrate the hunt. It was also performed for motivation after an unsuccessful hunting expedition.

It is important to note that in Zimbabwe’s contemporary social realm particularly in urban areas most of these dances cease to be identified and practised by specific ethnic groups. The dances become Zimbabwean traditional dances taking a national outlook due to cross-cultural pollination. The rationale behind describing and discussing *chinyambera* traditional dance is therefore premised on trying to figure out why Tavirima chooses *chinyambera* over all the other dances which also carry a national face.

### **1.3 Organisational Background of Tavirima Traditional Dance Group**

Tavirima traditional dance group is a Gweru based performing arts entity established in 2007 by Gilbert Zhou to support and promote the best interests of Gweru’s young musicians, dancers, actors and poets. Tavirima Traditional Dance Group has since outgrown its founding mission of giving space and imparting technical skills to young artists. Tavirima Traditional Dance Group now provides employment to its members. Often in their performances Tavirima Traditional Dance Group uses traditional dance to speak to their community’s social and political fears and aspirations.

Tavirima has become a household name in Mkoba, a high density neighborhood in Gweru where they are resident. They have established themselves to be the flagship of traditional dance performance in Gweru, having performed at prestigious events such as the Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competition<sup>11</sup>, Midlands Arts and Culture Festival<sup>12</sup>,

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<sup>10</sup> Totem is an object which serves to unite a clan or tribe, reminding them of their ancestry. This object can be in form of an animal or plant, and serves as an emblem or symbol through which the clan or tribe has connection with a spirit being. Explanation retrieved from <http://www.thezimbabwean.co/comment/opinion/60049/totems-do-they-control-our.html> on 07/11/13

<sup>11</sup> Chibuku Neshamwari Traditional Dance Competition is a contest run by the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe and bankrolled by Delta Beverages. It is the only traditional dance competition in Zimbabwe which caters for out-of school people and it is a national competition.

Zimbabwe Culture week Celebrations<sup>13</sup> and at shopping centres and schools dotted around Gweru.

The group was christened “Tavirima” at its formation, a name which literally describes the group’s call for equality in provision of opportunities in Zimbabwe’s performing arts arena which is centralized in Harare. However as discussed earlier in later stages the group responded to the political instability in Zimbabwe and transformed itself to speak to the provision of a fair social space and political recognition of Zimbabwean citizens. Therefore, in the context of speaking out about socio-political vices the group’s name can be explained as a derivative of the Shona verb “virima” which means voice out your dissent. The group’s name is however used in its plural form through the use of honorific prefix “Ta” an indication that the group is a voice of many people.

### **1.3.1 Membership Selection Criterion**

Membership into Tavirima is open to every Gweru resident with a passion, ambition and talent that they wish to explore in the arts regardless of sex, sexuality, religious and political affiliations. Artistic abilities are however not a prime priority rather Tavirima insists more on discipline and pluralism as key to anyone being a part of the group. Prospective members of Tavirima Traditional dance Group are not auditioned to join the group. However, over the years the members have never been less than ten. Membership to the group is open throughout the year and the total membership always range between ten and fifteen people.

From its inception the group has maintained ten people to be optimum number for no particular management or production reason. However, their number gives them the flexibility to stage theatre in education plays which usually require bigger casts than any other activity they engage in. Currently the group has ten members comprised of four women and six men who they consider permanent since they have served in the group for two years or more. Tavirima is governed by democratic principles which give every member an equal opportunity to determine the course of the group. Their productions are usually informed by

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<sup>12</sup> Midlands Arts and Culture Festival is the provincial festival for the Midlands Province funded by the Culture Fund of Zimbabwe. The festival provides a platform for artists from all the eight districts of the Midlands province and some artists from other provinces in a tightly packed program

<sup>13</sup> Zimbabwe Culture Week Celebrations, is a week-long event coordinated by the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe held around the 21<sup>st</sup> of May every year in recognition of the The Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity by UNESCO in 2001 which set aside 21<sup>st</sup> May as the World Day of Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development



the members' real experience which they share with their subordinates to form stage productions.

### **1.3.2 Tavirima's Aims and Objectives<sup>14</sup>**

1. To provide gainful employment in the arts as well as a platform for Gweru artistes to establish themselves in the arts industry
2. To use the arts as a tool to achieve sustainable development in communities
3. To produce edutainment material on Gender and Sexual Reproductive Health Rights and Human Rights.
4. To develop capacities of artists in effectively using arts for development.

### **1.3.3 Situating Tavirima in Criticism Performances of Chinyamvera Traditional Dance**

The poor economy in the city of Gweru from where Tavirima hails makes it almost inevitable that the group speaks out for justice and better living conditions. The city of Gweru has always held a lot of potential for industrial growth because of its diversified industrial base which include mining, shoe manufacturing, tourism and cattle ranching. However, the economic instability in Zimbabwe took its toll on most of the companies some of which have since ceased operations.

Some of the leading companies include Bata Shoe Company established 1939, Anchor Yeast established 1952, Zimbabwe Alloys as well as ZIMCAST founded in 1949, ZimGlass, Sino-Zimbabwe Cement Company established in 2001 and Cold Storage Commission set up in 1963. Most of the above-mentioned companies used to be the sources of livelihood for most of the Gweru residents. According to a report in the government sponsored weekly newspaper, *The Sunday Mail* written by Christopher Takunda Mugaga "those companies that are still operating are in a sorry state with most of them operating at an average of 30 percent capacity utilisation after having to retrench staff" (June 22, 2011).

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<sup>14</sup> Tavirima Traditional Dance Group's Objectives as articulated in their constitution established in August 2007

Gweru has also been faced by major political problems during different times in independent Zimbabwe. The city witnessed the Gukurahundi<sup>15</sup> disturbances of 1982-1987 which targeted people of the Matabeleland and Midlands Provinces of Zimbabwe. Gweru also witnessed the worst violence perpetuated against opposition political parties in the 1990 elections. According to Masipula Sithole and John Makumbe “The violence perpetrated against the opposition during the 1990 election was the worst in an election year since independence, culminating in the shooting of Patrick Kombayi who dared to challenge Vice-President, Simon Muzenda in the Midlands city of Gweru” (1997:135). The city also witnessed politically oriented violation of human rights when the government embarked on operation Murambatsvina<sup>16</sup> an operation which was meant to restore order in the Zimbabwe’s cities. Hilker and Fraser posit that “many people harboured feelings of hatred and revenge due to past violence and persecution of certain groups, in particular Operation Restore Order (Murambatsvina) in 2005 when the homes and livelihoods of some 700,000 people were destroyed and the massacre of some 2000 people during the Gukurahundi massacres”. (ibid: 41).

The political preferences of Gweru as shown by the voting and election results trends show that Gweru is a stronghold of the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). The party’s candidate, Mr Amos Chibaya, has won the Mkoba constituency parliamentary seat ever since the first time he participated in a parliamentary by-election in 2005 after the death of Bethel Makwembere who was also a member of Movement for Democratic Change. The reign of the Movement for Democratic Change in Gweru has opened up spaces for Gweru residents to openly raise their concerns and seek to redress and address the challenges they are facing through different platforms. Mr Amos Chibaya at times performs with Tavirima as well as hiring their services.

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<sup>15</sup> Gukurahundi a term referring to civil war which broke in Zimbabwe after the notorious North Korean trained 5 Brigade murdered thousands of people in Zimbabwean province of Matabeleland and parts Midlands Province. The war is largely taunted as an effort by Robert Mugabe to politically exterminate the Ndebele people

<sup>16</sup> Operation Murambatsvina is an ill-conceived exercise which was meant to destabilise the Movement for Democratic Change in cities and towns stronghold under the guise of restoring order in Zimbabwe’s cities.

## **1.4 Research Questions and Objectives**

In view of the hostile political environment prevailing in Zimbabwe, and Tavirima's bravery in challenging the dominant and repressive forces which stifle democracy and adequate services delivery in Zimbabwe, this research is guided by the following research objectives and questions.

### **1.4.1 Research Objectives**

1. To investigate how Tavirima Traditional Dance Group uses *chinyambera* traditional dance to negotiate political space and recognition.
2. To investigate the complexities associated with criticism performances and how Tavirima navigates political domineering and repressive laws in Zimbabwe.
3. To describe the characteristics of *chinyambera* that makes it susceptible to manipulation in criticism performances.
4. To evaluate the effectiveness of *chinyambera* traditional dance as an alternative tool in bringing about social change.

### **1.4.2 Key Questions**

1. How has Tavirima dance group used *chinyambera* music and dance to reflect their experiences, fears and aspirations in a hostile environment?
2. Which strategies does Tavirima use to navigate the challenges posed by staging criticism performances in a hostile environment?
3. Why does Tavirima opt for *chinyambera* traditional dance in its criticism performances?
4. How effective is using *chinyambera* traditional dance to speak out against repression?

## **1.5 Research Methodology**

This dissertation embraces a qualitative research paradigm in order to offer an in-depth account of the processes and activities that happen as Tavirima Traditional Dance Group makes and performs *chinyambera* traditional dance in a repressive locale. This research which is principally based on the African Popular Culture Theory, The Alternative Culture Theory and Positive Deviance Approach, requires that the research report be weaved from empirical experiences of Tavirima as they seek to bring about social change through traditional dance. Therefore the research report is a product of interviews, participant-observations and interpretations of data collected by the researcher during fieldwork.

### 1.5.1 Study Design

This empirical research structured as a case study is carried out in Gweru, Midlands Province focusing on Tavirima dance group's experiences. The study gives further insight into and analysis of how Tavirima Traditional Dance Group responds to political and social challenges which include repressive laws and poor social services delivery through *chinyambera*. This study design is compatible with this study considering that it investigates performances held in a potentially tumultuous environment which needs particular and careful conduct from the researcher and study respondents in search of contextual depth.

### 1.5.2 Sampling Technique

The researcher conducted fieldwork for two months gathering data, selecting participants using purposive sampling methods. Tavirima Traditional Dance Group, which was chosen for this study, practised criticism performances of *chinyambera*. To that end they are well positioned to speak to the research objectives. Tavirima traditional dance group is also one of the very few dance groups still practising traditional dance outside learning institutions in Gweru.

I also sought views on Tavirima's performances of *chinyambera* from Mr Amos Chibaya captured in the image below. Mr Amos Chibaya is the sitting Member of Parliament for Mkoba Constituency who at times performs with Tavirima's at some of their performances. Mr Chibaya was also a member of the Parliamentary Select Committee which was mandated to spearhead the making of the new constitution in Zimbabwe. He is a member of the Portfolio Committee on Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare and also a member of Youth, Gender and Women's Affairs Committee. He has served in these committees since 2005<sup>17</sup>.



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<sup>17</sup> Amos Chibaya profile retrieved from [http://www.copac.org.zw/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=26&Itemid=130](http://www.copac.org.zw/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=26&Itemid=130) on 08/11/13

Figure 1.1 Photo Honourable Amos Chibaya captured during an interview held by the author on 15 September 2013. Photo by Innocent Tinashe Mutero

In addition I interviewed Mr Almon Moyo, Director of Transition Arts a musical instruments construction, and performance company. Mr Moyo who holds a Bachelor of Social Science Honours degree in Music and Musicology from the Midlands State University is also the Director of Transition Arts. Mr Moyo, once worked with the researcher under Inkabazwe Rukuvhute Arts where they manipulated various traditional dances to openly speak out on different social issues addressed in their plays<sup>18</sup>.



Figure 1.2 Picture of Mr Almon Moyo snapshot captured from the video of an interview conducted at the Midlands Academy of Music on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2013. Photo by Innocent Tinashe Mutero

Through snowballing methods I made contact with Mr Champagne Nyengera the founding Director of Perfect Works Theatre Organisation. Mr Nyengera is a performing artist who has vast experience in championing for social change through the arts<sup>19</sup>. Mr Nyengera's career in the arts started when he was still in school in 2001. He was part of the trailblazing Option Arts Ensemble, a theatre production house initiated by Midlands State University in 2004. With Option Arts Ensemble they managed to tour around all provinces in Zimbabwe doing

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<sup>18</sup> Information on Mr Almon Moyo's education and experience was obtained from an interview he had with the researcher at the Midlands Academy of Music on 06/09/13

<sup>19</sup> Information of Mr Champagne Nyengera's career obtained from an interview held with him at Midlands State University Hellenics Hall in Gweru on 03/09/13

theatre in education plays, a feat which is yet to be repeated by any youth arts organisation in Gweru. Mr Nyengera went on to start Perfect Works Theatre Company in 2005. It is with Perfect Works that he has carved his niche as a protest artist as he has worked with various organisations which champion for social change. Mr Nyengera has worked with leading civic organisations which include the Zimbabwe Congress Trade Unions, Youth Initiative for Democracy Existence in Zimbabwe, National Volcano of Hope, National Association for Non-Governmental Organisations and Zimbabwe National Students Union. He is also one the pioneering team who use traditional dance to speak to present challenges. These respondents gave insight on how Tavirima uses *chinyambera* to speak to political and social challenges and aided in evaluating the merits and demerits of such.



Figure 1.3 Picture of Mr Champagne Nyengera captured on 3<sup>rd</sup> of September 2013 during an interview at the Midlands Academy of Music. Photo by Innocent Tinashe Mutero

### 1.5.3 Data Collection Instruments

The author participated in some of Tavirima's rehearsals playing the lead drum in most instances. Playing the lead drum allowed me to multi task as I also observed activities happening on the dance arena. I also rehearsed the basic *chinyambera* dance moves with new members who joined the group around the time I started my fieldwork. I also had the opportunity to perform with Tavirima Traditional Dance Group at performance held outside Mkoba Poly Clinic in Mkoba 13. At the Mkoba Poly Clinic show we were joined by Mr Amos Chibaya who played the drum as well as led in singing.

In making their *chinyambera* performances Tavirima Traditional Dance Group makes uses of their personal existential realities. They share their experiences of the societal and political vices through the use of narrative inquiry. The rehearsal process is an emotional and critical

event narration activity which demanded that I observe and listen to the research subjects' stories and how they made them into *chinyambera* song and dance.

I had informal conversational interviews on what they do, why they do it, and how they do it. I used field notes to record data during these rehearsals and performances. Being a participant observer in Tavirima's rehearsals and performances also provided me with an understanding of the language, gestures and other considerations they made when creating ensemble repertoire. I also got Tavirima's recently archived performance videos and pictures from their library and I wrote notes on recurring messages and behaviours which will help in reaching a reliable and valid conclusions.

I conducted semi structured in-depth interviews with the six members of Tavirima as well as Mr Chibaya, Mr Moyo and Nyengera basing on their experience and relationship to Tavirima traditional dance. In my selection of respondents, I strove to have a gender balanced representation. An interview schedule was used as a guideline during the interviews the author had with the research participants. (See appendix 1 for interview guide).

Below I give the profiles of the profiles and photos of the research subjects who participated in interviews and agreed to be filmed. All the photos which appear in this chapter and other chapters to follow were extracted from the filmed interviews of this research.

**Gilbert Zhou**, who was born in 1977, is the brains behind Tavirima traditional dance group. His experience with the performing arts dates from 1997 when he was part of his school drama club as an Ordinary Level student. After completing Ordinary Level studies in 1998, Zhou joined a theatre group of school leavers in Masvingo for a brief stint. Zhou moved to Gweru where he switched trade from the performing arts to metal fabrication, a trade he still pursues to date. With some proceeds from his metal fabrication business Zhou congregated young people to form Tavirima Traditional Dance Group in 2007. Zhou is a firm believer in results and leads by example. He also believes in action and the power of basics



Figure 1.4 Picture of Mr Gilbert Zhou captured on the 7<sup>th</sup> of September 2013 during the interview in Mkoba 16. Photo by Innocent Tinashe Mutero

**Joe Razor** was born and bred in the notorious Gweru high density of Mutapa. The environment in Mutapa groomed him to be the artist he is today as he was exposed to various cultural activities which used to take place at Mutapa Hall and the Gafa Community grounds. His artistic childhood provides him with an array of songs from where he borrows a lot of songs he has introduced to Tavirima. In most of Tavirima's performances Joe doubles as a lead vocalist and a drummer. Joe has been part of Tavirima since its inception.



Figure 1. 5 Picture of Mr Joe Razor captured on the 15<sup>th</sup> of September 2013 during the interview in Mkoba 16. Photo by Innocent Tinashe Mutero

**Faith Matongo** dropped out of the Midlands State University where she was studying towards obtaining a Bachelor of Social Science Honours Degree in Music and Musicology because of financial problems. After dropping out of college, Faith joined the Zimbabwe National Army where she also deserted for reasons not known to the author. She has been a member of Tavirima since 2010. In the group she is a dancer and a singer.





Figure 1.6 Picture of Miss Faith Matongo captured on the 13<sup>th</sup> of September 2013 during an interview in Mkoba 20. Photo by Innocent Tinashe Mutero

**Linda Masarira** joined Tavirima in 2009. She is a divorced single mother aged 30. Linda Masarira only form of employment has been Tavirima Traditional Dance Group. She doubles as a singer as well as a dancer in the group. Linda is the oldest of all the female dancers in the group and she naturally commands respect from her subordinates



Figure 1.7 Picture of Ms Linda Masarira captured on the 28<sup>th</sup> of September 2013 during the interview in Mkoba 16. Photo by Innocent Tinashe Mutero

**Malvin Dube** is the youngest member of Tavirima Traditional Dance Group. He is aged seventeen and he is still in school doing his form 2. Ordinarily at 17 one is supposed to have completed their Ordinary Level or at least be in form four, which is the last year for Ordinary Level. However Malvin's academic journey is always delayed by lack of finances. He joined Tavirima at the age of 14 when he had stopped going to school after failing to raise school fees



Figure 1.8 Picture of Mr Malvin Dube captured on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September 2013 during the interview in Mkoba 16. Photo by Innocent Tinashe Mutero

**Mitchel Matingwina** is an effervescent artist who has intensive experience as community development practitioner, experience she acquired through years she worked for Perfect Works Theatre and Inkabazwe Rukuvhute Arts. Her time with Inkabazwe Rukuvhute Arts, Perfect Works and Tavirima has exposed her to the use of arts for social change. Matingwina has been with Tavirima traditional dance from its formative years though she occasionally works with other groups resident in Mkoba. Mitchel is a singer and a dancer.

#### **1.5.4 Data Analysis**

In forthcoming chapters I analyse the song lyrics using textual analysis, so as to provide insight into how the socio-political crisis in Gweru influences their making and performances of *chinyambera*. My analysis and presentation of the findings of this study will be arranged into thematic frames. It is pinned on the understanding that “data analysis involves discovering patterns among the collected data, so as to identify trends that point to theoretical understanding”(Babbie, 2004: 284). All data from the interviews were either voice or motion picture recorded and then transcribed in verbatim and coded. The coding involves interweaving the responses obtained from interviews and the observations in order to come up with a narrative of how and why Tavirima uses *chinyambera* traditional music and dance to openly speak out against social and political challenges in Zimbabwe. The processes involve categorizing the pieces of data by relating concepts after which data will be analysed and interpreted descriptively (Seale, 2004).

The dance analysis will look at how facial expressions, gestures and the dance routines re-enact and model social and political values and structures. I will also use still photographs and an ethnographic film to present findings. I also sifted through Tavirima’s archive

materials to identify similar phrases, relations and common consequences, isolating patterns and processes, commonalities and differences with their present work.

The study also utilised Hill (2003)'s design presented below in an effort to fully give answers to the research problem.

TASK	QUESTIONS TO GUIDE THE ANALYSIS PROCESS
<b>Prepare data for analysis</b>	What data has been collected for each research question or objective?
<b>Go back to research questions</b>	What did the study aim to do? What are the issues involved?
<b>Go back to literature review</b>	Who said what about your research focus? Whose work seems most important? Does your data seem to match/contradict the work of others?

Table 1.1 Data Analysis Frame adapted from Hills (2003:1)

## 1.6 Validity and Reliability of the Study findings

Validity will be ensured through using purposive sampling to select respondents who are in a strong position to speak to how Tavirima uses *chinyambera* traditional dance to respond to social and political challenges. Additionally, the results will be solidified by juxtaposing findings from interviews, archival records, video recordings and observations and interpretations as a participant observer. The researcher's experiences as a performing artist will also come to aid in achieving validity and reliability of this study as he naturally fitted in Tavirima Traditional Dance Group and related well with all the members.

The researcher has experience working with community artists and established artists on various community development projects and that experience helped him in creating rapport with the group members of Tavirima. The following passages briefly describe the researcher's experiences as a performing artist.

### 1.6.1 The researcher as an Artist

The author is a multi-talented performing artist who has skills in acting, scriptwriting, filming and Zimbabwean traditional dance. He is also a youthful artist who has been a performing artist for a period spanning for well over a decade. This background has made it possible for me to fit smoothly in the operations of Tavirima without disturbing the rhythm of their

operations. It also strengthened the chances of avoiding false responses from the members of Tavirima as they related with him as an ordinary artist who was at the same level with them.

In the different artistic works that the author has immersed himself in there has been one similarity underlying on all the work. All the work seeks to see positive change on different problems bedevilling the society. Some of the prominent projects which aim to bring social change which he has worked on can be substantiated by online links provided on the brief resume below.

<b>Title</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Project Synopsis</b>	<b>Website Reference</b>
<b>Let's circumcise</b>	2012	A musical video featuring Oliver Mtukudzi, Winky D and Vee encouraging medical male circumcision as a way to prevent and mitigate the spread of HIV	<a href="http://youtu.be/ijDR2PsHm_A">http://youtu.be/ijDR2PsHm_A</a>
<b>Inkabazwe Rukuvhute Arts</b>	2011	This a community arts group that I helped initiate as part of my honours degree research at the Midlands State University in 2011. The research sought to empower marginalised youths through imparting traditional dance skills to them so that they can perform as a commercial entity. Some of the youths who participated in the project have crossed the floor and joined Tavirima.	N/A
<b>Vimbai's Diary</b>		This is a film project which was a follow up to my honours dissertation project. In this project I imparted film making skills to marginalised youth	<a href="#">Link follow footnote<sup>20</sup></a>

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<sup>20</sup> Vimbai's Diary <http://zimbeatnews.blogspot.com/2011/11/awarding-winning-filmmaker-launches.html>

		so that they could use the skills to voice their concerns and also make a living through disc sales.
<b>Paradzai</b>	2010	A Shona short film in which I was the scriptwriter and lead actor. The film speaks about the importance of writing wills in Zimbabwean communities. The film was produced by Patsimeredu Edutainment Trust. <a href="http://youtu.be/p_WpepThS7k">http://youtu.be/p_WpepThS7k</a>

Table 1.2 Projects that the researcher has worked on

### 1.7 Significance of the Study

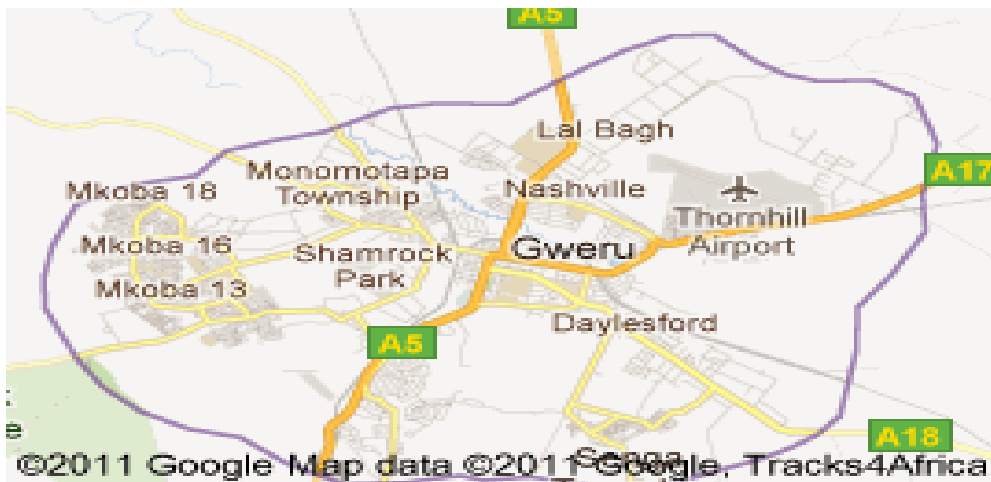
This study is carried out in background where the practise of traditional dance in Zimbabwe's contemporary societies is waning due to the association of some of the dances with the African traditional religion and backwardness. The resentment of traditional dance is acutely captured by McLaren when he shares the CHIPAWO experience of the "stigma and status" associated with performing traditional dance in Zimbabwe (2001:13-14).

Therefore, showing the utilitarian role of traditional dance in contemporary societies this study contributes to current debate about reverting to using indigenous knowledge systems, where African research is autonomous in cultural expansion and other aspects of present-day experience (Mawere, 2010). The study will also assist in amplifying Tavirima's voice in addressing and redressing unjust socio-political practises as well as drawing attention to traditional dance as an alternative voice. Timothy Rice opines that "... music is made and understood by people in society; every performance of music is also a performance of social structures or social relations" (2001:24). It is hoped that this study will make the repressive authorities to identify the suffering they are causing to the ordinary citizen and stimulate them into making compromise solutions to alleviate the plight and status of the citizens. The photographs, videos and notes gathered from the study will also work towards preserving the traditional dance and music under study.

### 1.8 Location of the Study

The study was conducted in the city of Gweru, a district of Midlands Province in Zimbabwe. Gweru has a total population nearing two hundred and fifty thousand people, and it is in the

centre of Zimbabwe<sup>21</sup>. The biggest high density suburb in Gweru is Mkoba it is divided into sections from village 1, village 2 up to village 20.



Map 1.1 Showing Gweru residential suburbs<sup>22</sup>

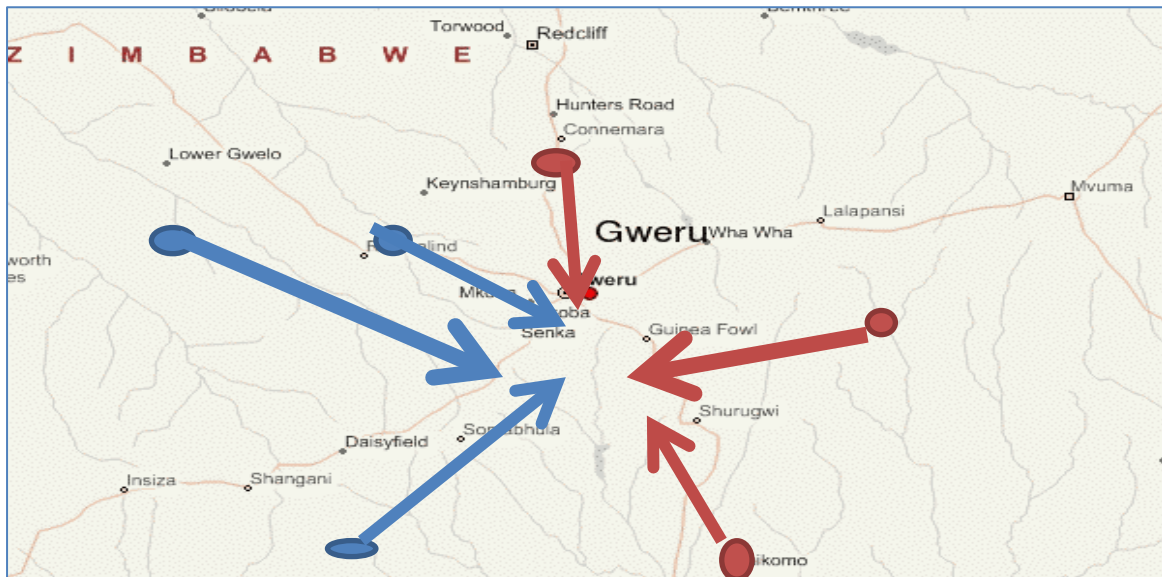
Some of the high density suburbs around Gweru are Mtapá, Senga, Shamrock Park, Nehosho, Mambo and Ascot. The Middle class residential suburbs include Southdowns, Northlea, Lundi Park, Riverside among others and Harben park, St Annes drive, Kopje, Brackenhurst, Windsor Park are some of the "elite" residential areas of Gweru.

Gweru is surrounded by Ndebele speaking communal lands from her West and South while the North and East are predominantly Shona speaking lands. The Ndebele and Shona have different dances which influence the traditional dance culture in Gweru. However, Shona is spoken by the majority, and the most of the Shona people in Gweru speak the Karanga dialect.

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<sup>21</sup> Data on Gweru population accessed from <http://www.zimstat.co.zw/dmdocuments/CensusPreliminary2012.pdf> on 08/11/13

<sup>22</sup> Gweru map accessed from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Gweru\\_map.gif](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Gweru_map.gif) on 22/11/13



Map 1.2 Showing the Ndebele and Shona regions influencing Gweru Culture<sup>23</sup>

The City is 275 kilometres south west of Harare the capital city of Zimbabwe and it the provincial capital for the Midlands Province.



Map 1.3 Provincial Boundaries Map of Zimbabwe<sup>24</sup>

## 1.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter reveals the factors which contribute to Tavirima’s criticism performance of *chinyambara*. It gives insight into the hostile political and social environment prevalent in Zimbabwe, discussing how the major political players and the law enforcement agents have failed the artists. It also discusses the discord between the aspirations of the citizens and the

<sup>23</sup> Gweru map accessed from [www.maplandia.com/zimbabwe/midlands/gweru-urban/](http://www.maplandia.com/zimbabwe/midlands/gweru-urban/) 13/11/13

<sup>24</sup> Provincial boundaries map of Zimbabwe accessed from <http://www.mapsofworld.com/zimbabwe/zimbabwe-political-map.html> on 13/11/13

law and the law enforcement agents. The chapter mentions some studies that have been done on Zimbabwean traditional dance as well as briefly describes some Zimbabwean traditional dances and the contexts in which the dances are often practised. The research methods and data analysis procedures employed in this dissertation are also explained and justified in this chapter. The researcher also draws attention of the reader to his experiences as a performing artist.



## **CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

This study is focused on establishing out how Tavirima Traditional Dance Group uses *chinyamvera* traditional dance to speak out on socio political challenges faced in Gweru, Zimbabwe. This chapter reviews existing literature on the role played by traditional music and dance and other performing arts genres in bringing about social change in Zimbabwe and abroad with a view to distinguishing the focus of my own study from previous studies. This chapter also discuss three theories upon which the study is framed. The study borrows the lenses and perspectives of The African Popular Culture Theory (Barber, 1987), Alternative Culture Theory (Siziba, 2009) and the Positive Deviance Approach (Dodge, 1985).

### **2.1 Performing Subversion in Zimbabwe: What is it?**

The chapter defines the term subversion with a view to understand what criticism performance entails. As the discussion develops it is equally important to note that in modern days the arts can be used for destruction in as much as they are used for positive social change. Michael Shank and Lisa Schirch posit that “the arts, like any other tool, can be used for destructive purposes, such as inspiring hatred and division and the arts are also powerful tools to be used wisely, non-violently, and strategically” (2008: 11). Therefore defining a criticism performance is an arduous task as the understanding of such is hinged on subjectivities.

The dictionary meaning as well as contextual definitions of subversion will be consulted. The Collins Dictionary online<sup>25</sup> refers to subversion as “something that brings about an overthrow or the act of subverting or overthrowing a legally constituted government, institution etc.” The Merriam Webster dictionary online<sup>26</sup> concurs with the meaning given by the Collins Dictionary by forwarding that the act of subversion is “a systematic attempt to overthrow or undermine a government or political system”. The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary<sup>27</sup> defines subversion as an act “trying or likely to destroy or damage a government or political system by attacking or it secretly or indirectly”. In view of the repressive socio-political environment in Zimbabwe, discussed in detail in chapter one apportioning the label “criticism

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<sup>25</sup> Definition of Subversion according to Collins dictionary online accessed from <http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/subversion> on 07/10/13

<sup>26</sup> The Merriam Webster dictionary online accessed from <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/subversion> on 07/10/13

<sup>27</sup> Oxford Advanced Learners dictionary definition of subversion retrieved from <http://oald8.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/dictionary/subvert> on 28/10/13

performances” to any Zimbabwean performing arts presentations is close to criminalising the act, which might lead to suppression of the cultural activities.

The brief definitions given by the consulted dictionaries do not do justice to explaining criticism performances as they fail to capture the Zimbabwean context in which the term is coined. The study now focuses on giving a contextual definition of the term by discussing scholarly views of similar performances. Jasmael Mataga and Farai Chabata posit that “The political agenda for art was to present an alternative space or platform for the self-critique of a country undergoing difficult circumstances”<sup>28</sup>(2011). In addition the aggrieved people whose voices are amplified by Tavirima’s performances do not see Tavirima’s *chinyambera* performances as subversion rather they view the performances as an alternative communication medium.

Criticism performances can be categorised as work whose scope is outside the confines of the laws governing the parameters within which they make and hold performances. In that regard performances by Tavirima in Gweru are referred to as criticism performances as they usually contravene Section 16, subsection 1 of the Censorship and Control Act (2001), which stipulates that “no person shall perform or permit any public performance unless it has been approved by the Censorship Board” and Section 25, Subsection 1 of the Public Order and Security Act (2002) which regulates the holding of public meetings, processions and demonstrations. In addition the Zimbabwean government which is often vilified in Tavirima’s performances’ is bound to take their performances as an attempt at discrediting them. From the preceding discussion appropriating the label criticism performance is therefore subjective.

Communities use music for communication, and unavoidably some of the messages speak against the bad leadership. Therefore, performance of criticism has always been part of African culture in general and the Zimbabwean culture in particular. In communal areas of Zimbabwe people use *bembera* which is either in the form of poetry or song to speak out objectively and subjectively on subjugation of people. *bembera* is aptly defined by Murenga Joseph Chikowore in the following excerpt:

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<sup>28</sup> Online journal, Heritage in Stone: A decade of Zimbabwean Stone Sculpture, 2000-2010 retrieved from [http://www.globalartmuseum.de/site/guest\\_author/234](http://www.globalartmuseum.de/site/guest_author/234) on 13/11/13

Among the Shona, *bembera* is a recognised mode of correcting a wayward member of society by denouncing his/her aberrations or shortcomings at a public platform without naming their precise identities. Usually, this person's discomfited response gives him/her away during this public shaming. A *bembera* could be delivered in the form of a work song by a wife frustrated by a husband's uncaring attitude or by villagers against a thief at communal work parties. *Bembera* thus serves as a mode of dispensing shotgun justice but with corrective intent. The target is expected to reform (2006:47).

Following from the above passage it is quite clear that protest songs and music for social change have always been part of the Zimbabwean culture. Like Tavirima's *chinyambera* performances, *bembera* is a form of protest music style usually used by the subaltern or any disadvantage individual to challenge master narratives or to chide authorities who they cannot confront directly or make suggestions about how certain sensitive issues can be solved. Such performances ensure that despite acrimony and tensions which naturally exist in society people are in a position to be outspoken about any crisis without leading to physical confrontations.

Zimbabweans have always used music to speak out against unpopular political decisions and tyranny. The Zimbabwean government (s) has been subject of scrutiny by artists in their work. During colonial Zimbabwe indigenous musicians used *chimurenga* music to show their disapproval of the white settler regime in the same manner they went on to sing against unjust indigenous majority rule during the early post-colonial Zimbabwe era. Maurice Vambe observes that:

Some critics of *chimurenga* music think that there is only one version of *chimurenga*, and have mistakenly reported its demise in 1980. After Zimbabwean independence, *chimurenga* continued as a vehicle for criticizing corruption, poor governance by new leaders, and delays in redistributing land to the African masses (2004:167).

The *chimurenga* musicians performed subversion in that they created music which spoke out against the newly established by the indigenous government. Tavirima's performances of *chinyambera* are thus a continuation of *chimurenga* music speaking out against a Black government which in most cases is touted for subverting the people's will during elections. However Tavirima's performances and *chimurenga* are categorically different in that *chimurenga* music relies on the electronic and mass media to reach out to people across

Zimbabwe whereas Tavirima's performances are confined to a smaller radius of Gweru. The differences in the media used and area reached by these two traditional music styles propels this dissertation to find out how community artists and indigenous art bring about social change.

Tavirima's criticism *chinyambera* performances also differs with *chimurenga* in that while *chinyambera* is being used to speak out against an unjust socio-political government of Robert Mugabe, *chimurenga* speaks to both the good and the bad the ZANU PF government does. Vambe describes *chimurenga* as a:

...cultural space marked by the double movement of containment and resistance with respect to cultural and ideological elements that emerge in relation to the different types of singer, as well as in relation to the diverse audience for whom they sing, and those whom they sing about (177).

Performing subversion is a culture deeply rooted in Zimbabwe's arts sector and it manifests regardless of repressive laws and the absence of a clear cut enabling environment. There are some Zimbabwean artists who have been arrested for performing or exhibiting art which speaks out against injustice. According to Eric Mazango "The monopoly state broadcaster has continued to clandestinely blacklist or ban the airing of music by musicians like Thomas Mapfumo, Leonard Zhakata, Raymond Majongwe, Oliver Mtukudzi, Chirikure Chirikure, Albert Nyathi, Cde Fatso and Chabvondoka" (2012:42). The listed artists are all popular commercial artists whose work is created for not only the Zimbabwean audience but a global audience. Their work easily attracts the attention of the security agencies. Tavirima's performances are confined to the Gweru community and they use an indigenous dance which is highly likely to identify with the locales. Such a difference thus calls for a research into the effectiveness of traditional music in speaking out against oppression as well as looking into how small and culturally related audiences aid in the sustenance of freedom of expression through the arts.

Since the year 1999 when the Movement for Democratic Change was formed there has been an increase in the number of artists who have been brave and openly spoken out against the ZANU PF government. The mess Zimbabwe social and political environment led to an increase of her artists who contribute to social change. Chikowore observes that:

Issues relating to electoral processes in 2000, 2002 and 2005, for example, were dogged by charges of violations of the rule of law, suggesting a failure or unwillingness on the part of the leadership to strike a working relationship with those they govern. On their part, some musical artists have assumed the role of society's conscience, often asking difficult questions, exposing double standards, commenting on leadership failures and suggesting the way forward. The twin themes of governance and leadership loom large in the discourses of leading artists such as the self-exiled Thomas Mapfumo, Oliver Mtukudzi, Leonard Karikoga Zhakata, Hosiah Chipanga, dub poet Albert Nyathi, and the late Simon Chimbetu, among others (2007:37).

Zimbabwean *chimurenga* musician Thomas Mapfumo who has been in self-imposed exile for more than a decade has not been drawn back by censorship. He continues to sing about the injustices of the ZANU PF government from abroad. Thomas Mapfumo contends that the Zimbabwean government could possibly stop younger musicians from speaking against them but they cannot stop him from recording his music (BBC Entertainment News, 2004). However, regardless of the increase of popular musicians' working on protest music there has been a gap about how community artists have taken up protest art in Zimbabwe. Indeed, there is a wide corpus of literature on *chimurenga* music which includes contributions from (Turino: 2000, Vambe: 2004, Pfukwa: 2008, Gonye: 2013) but none has been an ethnography of how community musicians work to bring about social change. This dissertation strives to fill that and gap.

On the other hand the Zimbabwean government has been caught off guard by some key legislation that they forcefully implemented in an effort to safeguard their interest as the Acts increased criticism musical performances. For instance, the government of Zimbabwe increased participation of locals in the music industry through the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Services Act Chapter 12.06 (2001) as it made compulsory 75% local content on Zimbabwean radios and televisions. Musicians, especially youth Urban Groovers<sup>29</sup> embraced the legislation. However, they went on to produce music which pointed at government's weaknesses. Irikidzayi Manase recounts that despite of this initiative by the government to uplift the Urban Grooves music and musicians they went on to critique and expose the evils of the government (2009:57). The above case is just one example of the legislative shortfalls

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<sup>29</sup> Urban Groovers refers to musicians who sing Urban Grooves music which is highly Westernised music developed by Zimbabwe's young musicians

which have led Zimbabwean artists to successfully avoid arrest and continue singing against the oppressive Government of Zimbabwe even in the face of draconian laws.

Through the Censorship and Entertainment Control Act (Chapter 10:4) the Zimbabwean government moves away from the spirit of the Broadcasting Services Act (2001) which seeks to increase the coverage of local artists in the electronic media. Using the Censorship and Entertainment Control Act (Chapter 10:4) the Zimbabwean Government silences artists whose work criticise them. Eric Mazango posits that:

The state's unceasing motivation to apply the arbitrary system of a priori censorship as a bulwark to silence artists who are considered political critics, shows that in its current form and spirit the Act is essentially a discretionary statute with a significant political ingredients (2012:37).

This dissertation thus intends to investigate how musicians, in this case Tavirima managed to reach out to people with performances which speak out against social and political strife in Zimbabwe without getting arrested or banned from performing.

Zimbabwean musicians who dared to produce music which critiqued the activities of the government have gone through untold suffering in the hands of ZANU PF. Instead of just having their music banned, musicians have faced arbitrary arrests. Stanley Kwenda reports "several artists have tried through their work to stand up to the system and promote these vital goals, but their attempts have ended in arrests and detentions"(2011:93). The fate of these musicians was sealed by being denied airtime on national radio therefore effectively muting their voices in favour of those musicians who praised and amplified government activities Gonye posits that "The national television actively promoted the *kongonya* music of charlatans whose only credit was that they blamed whites and the British for Zimbabwe's woe" (2013: 73). This dissertation is aware that getting music to the people is not confined to be done through the electronic media. It thus seeks to find out other alternative avenues or media that Tavirima has used to get the music to the people without having confrontations with the police.

Despite the concerted efforts by the Zimbabwean government to silence divergent views and realign all public opinion to the master narrative, performance of subversion continues unabated. This further raises questions on the strategies used when staging performances

which critique the government under repressive laws. Thus this dissertation will also critically analyse the dances and music as well as venues role as potent agency of subversion.

The tendency of the Robert Mugabe led government to use repressive legislation in limiting the artist's freedom of expression is not peculiar to Zimbabwe. The South African government during Apartheid era used the same censorship measures to trample upon Black Consciousness and Nationalism. Like in Zimbabwe the apartheid South African experience failed to totally thwart the voices of change. Anne Schumann posits:

South Africa presents a striking example of state use of music to further political ends, considering that apartheid regime went beyond simple propaganda in the use of music to advance their policies. The apartheid philosophy of 'separate development' was not confined to the political sphere, but extended to cultural matters, thereby contributing to the infusion of the arts with political meanings. The Publications Act of 1974 provided for the establishment of Directorate of Publications, which decided whether or not to ban the material submitted to it" (2008:19).

The apartheid South African case and the present Zimbabwean scenario leads to a conclusion that despotic governments disguise their unashamed disrespect of freedom of artistic expression through repressive legislation masquerading as anarchy stopping measures. However, subsequently the people will always manipulate their culture to speak out against any such injustice. The continued and widespread usage of popular arts in restrictive environments draws this study to inquire how Tavirima traditional dance group uses *chinyambera* to negotiate for political space and recognition as well as investigate the complexities associated with criticism performances and how Tavirima navigates political domineering and repressive laws in Zimbabwe.

The brief discussion on the different types of criticism performances in Zimbabwe attempted to bring close the contextual meaning and usage of the term criticism performance in this dissertation.

## **2.2 Music and Society Variance and Parallelism**

There are various studies which have been carried out on musical performances as well as other artistic performances which show how performance itself sheds light on socio-cultural issues like gender, behaviour, ethnicity, identity as well as political issues. These studies show that musical performances present a ladder parallel to social and political developments of communities the music and dance is made. The relationship that exists between African music and the community within which it was produced is captured by Ruth Opara who posits that “African music and dance accompany each other to mark all aspects of human life and existence (2012:19)”. The reflective role played by music in the community in which it is performed has to essentially be discussed within the discourse of criticism performances as the debate will give a clear understanding of the fact that African music is not just meant for mere entertainment, or that dance is not just a show of how flexible and rhythmic people can move in response to the sound of music.

Performance of music which mirrors the society is not restricted to reflecting political life only. Zimbabweans, and all Africans alike, use music to mark important occasions in their lives as well. Investigating Tsonga musical behaviour in the context of social institutions in Western Mozambique and the Northern Transvaal South Africa, Thomas Johnston revealed that Tsonga music formed a musical ladder paralleling the society (1973:109). In his study Johnston analysed music as 'cultural sound', thus bringing out the musical behaviour in the context of social institutions such as initiation schools, exorcism ceremonies, and social beer-drinks. Additionally, the study gave a description of Tsonga music in terms of the people's own musical concepts and the music's relationship with their social life. Drawing from Johnston's study, this study seeks to draw parallels between Tavirima's performances of *chinyambera* and the socio-political environment they live in with specific reference to the unjust rule by the totalitarian government in Zimbabwe. The study will find out how the prevailing socio-political reality in Zimbabwe has made it a necessity for Tavirima to champion for social and political change.

John Kaemmer argues that “A major interest in ethnomusicology has been the nature of possible causal relationships between music and the society in which it is produced” (1989:31). In his research he reveals that “power arrangements in a society strongly influenced decisions concerning the kinds of musical events that occur, and the developing regularities in these decisions constitute a major process in determining the nature of the resulting musical culture”(31). Kaemmer's study forwards that power relations have an effect



on musical culture. It thus becomes critical to find out how music manages to work towards bringing about social change in an environment where freedom of speech is not guaranteed. Conversely, the study also investigates how Tavorima is influenced and affected by ZANU PF's repressive powers in the making and performance of *chinyambera* traditional dance.

Kaemmer also developed the idea that music reflected and influenced the political struggles in Zimbabwe from the pre-colonial era to the early post-colonial era. However, his main thrust was on explaining the musical change, not the social change brought about by music. The study realises that Tavorima's performances are much against the dictates of those in power and they "...contrast with the popular African conception of political rulers as 'fathers of the nation', a concept that elevates them above reproach or censure" (Murenga Joseph Chikowero, 2006:36). Being cognisant of the link between music and society, this study investigates how Tavorima Traditional Dance Group uses *chinyambera* traditional dance to bring about social change to the torn and fragile Zimbabwean political environment.

Thomas Turino (2000) describes various traditional dances performed in Mbare<sup>30</sup>, Harare and how they fostered nationalism and upheld local identities in colonial Zimbabwe. However, he does not state how urbanites responded to the unjust colonial environment through traditional dances. Although Turino speaks on the benefits of the performance to the nationalist cause he is silent on the motivations behind these traditional music performances. Thus leaving a gap on what considerations are made when people select a musical style they will use to identify with the masses as well effectively communicate messages on positive social change through traditional music. This study, which is framed under the Alternative Culture Theory, will investigate the motivations why a down trodden people chooses to manipulate culture in the way they do as they seek for social and political recognition. It is, however, worth noting that the ability of these dance performances and meetings to conjure nationalism was subtle subversion even though the author is not explicit about the performers' political interest during their performances. As a departure point from Turino's work this study is aware that performers can team up to stimulate socio-political change regardless of how oppressive and hostile the environment they are operating in. As such it seeks to find out how Tavorima uses *chinyambera* traditional dance to negotiate for socio-political recognition.

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<sup>30</sup> Mbare is an old high density suburb in Harare some 275 kilometres away from Gweru

This study also takes notes from Opara (2012) who investigates the form and content of African music specifically Bongo music as a way of resisting cultural hegemony and communicating African philosophical reflections of life. Bongo music is traditional music which is still practised in contemporary Igbo society of south-eastern Nigeria to speak to present social and political happenings. Similarly, my study investigates how *chinyambera* traditional dance is used in contemporary a society in Gweru thereby running away from the usual preservationist studies which investigate the ceremonial and ritual uses of traditional dances. This study together with Opara (2012) resonate with Ronnie Graham assertion that;

Traditional African music has always functioned as a community unifier, the cement which holds society together a hidden form of consciousness which is at once both more pervasive and more important than the overt forms of resistance to the exigencies of everyday life. In short, music constitutes the bed-rock, the grass roots of popular consciousness... (1988:76).

An ethnographic study of Tavirima's criticism performance of *chinyambera* traditional dance also draws parallels with Opara in that both studies investigate how contemporary artists use traditional music and dance as a platform through which they speak out on contemporary politics and culture; how they serve as social critics, and offer critical insights into socio-cultural currents, in a none offensive and lucid approach.

### **2.3 Music and Other Performing Arts as Agents for Social Change**

In order to have a better understanding of Tavirima's objectives in using traditional dance to speak out against socio-political challenges faced by Zimbabwean citizens living in Gweru the dissertation embraces the African Popular Culture by Karin Barber (1987) which brings to light the creativity of popular cultural forms and their significance to the discourse about and interpretation of contemporary life. She argues that popular art/performance provides a mirror through which people identify problems and propose solutions to their challenges. It is against this backdrop that the dissertation investigates how Tavirima dance group uses *chinyambera* traditional music and dance to advocate for political and social change in a politically hostile environment.

This dissertation hypothesises that, far from using dance as a transient mode of exuding emotions while the music lasts, Tavirima's performances of *chinyambera* traditional dance

are targeted at leaving lasting impressions on audiences thereby canvassing for social change. Tavirima's aim of bringing about social change through their performances of *chinyambera* traditional dance is concretised by Kwabena Nketia in Albert Oikelome who asserts that "the importance attached to dance does not lie only in the scope it provides for the release of emotion stimulated by music, the dance is also a social and artistic medium of communication" (2013:85). However this research does not downplay either the aesthetic beauty of the dance or its communicative ability. It thrives on that understanding and goes on to inquire if there are ties between a dance's emotional engagement and its ability to communicate. Simply put, the dissertation will find out those elements which have led Tavirima to settle for *chinyambera* ahead of all the other dances.

Zimbabwe's socio-political crisis has made most of her citizens to keenly follow political development, such that many have been made political activist by design instead of by desire. Likewise, members of Tavirima Traditional Dance Group are involved in political and social activism where they use art as a communication tool which reflects the public's will as well as their personal will. Commenting on his ethnographic experiences with African music and dance, John Blacking cited by Angela Impey and Barbra Nussbaum posits:

African societies treat music and dance as foundations of social life, which enable people to discover and develop their human potential, reaffirm their relationships with each other, to sharpen their sensitivities and educate their emotions. In such societies music helps people to remain politically conscious, intellectually alive and creative, constantly adapting to the changes that are required as people relate to their environment and make decisions about the future (1996:3).

This study seeks to affirm people's need to be political subjects rather than objects through their performance of *chinyambera* song and dance in Gweru, Zimbabwe. As a result the study inevitably looks at people's subjectivities under the ZANU PF government led by President Robert Mugabe.

It is important to note that music is not the only cultural activity that has been used by Zimbabweans to negotiate for social space and political recognition (Mazango, 2012:29-44). They have also effectively used a plethora of other art forms which include protest theatre to champion for social change. Some Zimbabwean poets who work under the banner of Zimbabwe Poets for Human Rights use poetry to speak out against human rights abuses in

Zimbabwe<sup>31</sup>. Sculptors have also weighed in with their stone work in the call for social change. Jesmael Mataga and Farai Chabata posit that “although the sculptors made and still make sculpture that deals with traditional spiritual values, they have also addressed other pertinent social issues such as poverty, violence, gender, Christianity (especially at the Serima Mission), and HIV/AIDS, all of which affect the sculptors directly” (2011).

Protest theatre has also been used to speak out against the social and political ills presented by the repressive government in Zimbabwe. Ngonidzashe Muwonwa highlighted the risky and diverging contributions of young people to the democratic processes of Zimbabwean politics through protest theatre after the year 2000 (2012:1). The continued performance of criticism acts in Zimbabwe where the laws are hugely repressive has prompted this researcher to find out the complexities associated with criticism performances and use Tavirima as a case to find how they navigate political domineering and repressive laws in Zimbabwe. Tavirima traditional dance group uses *chinyambera* traditional dance to speak out against an oligarchy type of government in Zimbabwe.

It is critical to pursue a discussion the discourse of popular art since the use of the arts as a vehicle for social change has been on the increase. In recent years non-governmental organizations and musicians in Africa are using the performing arts as a tool for transformation. Kathleen Buren (2007) explains the role of music in shaping the society, and the efficacy of collaborative efforts by musicians and non-governmental organisations in promoting social change in Kenya. In Dar es Salaam youth use hip hop music as a tool for discussing socio-political issues, joblessness corruption and other problems (Shank and Schirch: 2008). Likewise in Zimbabwean organisations such as Jibilika Dance Trust<sup>32</sup> who are in partnership with The United States Embassy’s Presidential Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) use the performing arts to raise awareness on HIV among youth in Harare.

Muwonwa posits that civic rights organisations and young Zimbabwean Thespians have entered into partnerships “...which strengthened civic duties of holding authorities accountable for their actions through processes of “corrective” campaigning against abuses of

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<sup>31</sup> Poets give voice to human rights <http://www.thezimbabwean.co/entertainment/music-and-dance/68878/poets-give-voice-to-human.html>

<sup>32</sup> Jibilika Dance Trust is a Harare based Non-Governmental Organisation which uses popular youth culture for civic engagement. They raise awareness on Sexual Reproductive Health through Hip- retrieved from <http://www.hivaidzimbabwe.org/2013/06/25/pepfar-supports-step-up-2-hiv-initiative/> on 18/10/13

power and for the protection and promotion of human rights” (2010:5). In the same manner with the discussed pacts Tavirima’s performance of *chinyambera* traditional dance voices narratives of silenced people from the Gweru community and their hope for social change. However, unlike the other organisations mentioned here who use contemporary art forms, Tavirima taps into the past to get *chinyambera* traditional dance, to help sail through times of uncertainty and concern, in the Zimbabwean socio-political realm today.

*Chinyambera* is a Zimbabwean traditional dance which was used in the past for hunting purposes (Impey and Nussbaum 1996:10). However Tavirima has summoned their imagination and creativity to use the dance to speak to present day challenges. Inevitably their music and dance making and performances have been shaped by the Zimbabwean social and political landscape marked by social and political instability<sup>33</sup>. Tavirima’s performances studied here take place within the context of Zimbabwe’s political and economic calamity characterised by a rotten social fabric and a protracted political struggle between the ZANU-PF government and the main opposition Movement for Democratic Change. The study will also reveal the subtle and brazen political discourse carried in Tavirima’s *chinyambera* performances.

## **2.4 Theoretical Framework**

There are three theories that underline this study which aims at finding out how and why Tavirima traditional dance group negotiates for political space and recognition through their performances of *chinyambera* traditional dance in Gweru. These theories include the African Popular Culture Theory, Alternative Culture Theory and Positive Deviance Approach. The three theories create a vantage point, through which the study seeks for answers to the research questions.

I use the lenses of the African cultural theory and the alternative cultural theory to investigate how Tavirima traditional dance group uses *chinyambera* to respond to socio-political challenges faced in Zimbabwe. The two theories have different vantage points their combined use was done in cognisance of the slippery context in which the term criticism performance

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<sup>33</sup> Data gathered during the preliminary fieldwork for this dissertation

is coined in Zimbabwe. Tavirima's performances of *chinyambera* traditional dance are expressive realities of the socio-political challenges faced by Zimbabweans and their *chinyambera* performances done in an unpredictable and turbulent context where the government does not take lightly critique of its actions.

African Popular Culture theory is of the view that popular art is present-day art for and of the layman which is a result of a fusion of people's traditional art and exotic external cultural forms and it is used to bring about social change (Barber:1997). On the other hand alternative cultural theory portrays artists as rebels who are pushed to the limits by the repressive situation to become significantly active in challenging forces subduing them to the periphery of cultural production. Subsequently, the main findings of this study reveal that Tavirima traditional dance group's criticism performances can be better explained through the combined lenses of the African Popular Culture theory and the Alternative Culture theory.

#### **2.4.1 African Popular Culture Theory**

The research embraces the theory of African popular culture outlined by Barber (1987). The model presents that popular art is contemporary art for and of the layman which is a result of a mix of people's indigenous or traditional art and exotic or external cultural forms and it is used to proffer social change (Barber, 1987:11). This theory will thus contribute in discussing how the socio-political challenges in Gweru have influenced Tavirima's *chinyambera* performances and why Tavirima has chosen to use *chinyambera* in their performances.

In defining African popular art Johannes Fabian posits that "it signifies, potentially at least, processes occurring behind the back of established powers and accepted interpretations and thus, offers a better conceptual approach to decolonisation of which it is undoubtedly an important element" (1978:315).

The African Popular Culture Theory will also help frame the research to investigate why traditional performances like *chinyambera* are flexibly used to respond to socio-political challenges. The practice of traditional dance is against a backdrop where Zimbabwean indigenous culture is under threat from globalisation. Robert McLaren posits that most Zimbabwean youth today shun traditional music and dance performance, due to the society's negative attitude (2001:13-14). However, Zimbabwe still has some arts organisations such as

Children Performing Arts Workshop (CHIPAWO), Inkululeko Yabatsha School of Arts IYASA and Siyaya who still practise traditional dance<sup>34</sup>.

The performances of Tavirima in particular challenge the dominant master narrative, gerontocratic and hegemonic scheme of reality in Zimbabwe preferred by ZANU PF, offering alternative voices which imagine a democratic, free and autonomous environment. Barber posits that popular arts “are free to operate between established cultural systems without conforming to their conventions”, and they are determined to bring social change (ibid: 11).

African Popular Culture Theory takes into cognisance that traditional music and dance genres “are not repositories of some archaic ‘authenticity’; they make use of every relevant material to speak of contemporary struggles” (Barber, 1997:2). In the same vein this study realises that Tavirima traditional dance group appreciates the utilitarian importance of *chinyambera* traditional dance in contemporary Zimbabwe and poses to ask why Tavirima chose *chinyambera* traditional dance in particular. Tavirima uses *chinyambera* to speak to present day socio-political challenges faced in Zimbabwe. These performances therefore put into perspective the underpinning characteristic of African popular arts. “They are the work of the local cultural producers speaking to local audiences about the pressing concerns, experiences and struggles that they share” (Barber:2). Their performances speak of the suffering of Zimbabweans under the authoritarian rule of Robert Gabriel Mugabe, the President of Zimbabwe.

Artists have a tendency of exaggerating their art in order for it to leave lasting impressions on the audience, as well as instilling hope even in hopeless situations which is against the tenets of African popular culture. This researcher acknowledges that the beauty of Zimbabwean traditional dances has been discussed by other scholars who include Asante (1985,2000), Turino (2000) and Mataga (2008). To that end this dissertation does not seek delve into the aesthetics of *chinyambera* traditional dance; rather, it dwells on the utilitarian value of the Tavirima’s performances of *chinyambera* in Gweru from the year 2009 to 2013 after the harmonized general elections.

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<sup>34</sup> CHIPAWO, IYASA and Siyaya are leading and well managed performing arts organisations in Zimbabwe. These organisations tour around the world with musical and theatre productions which showcase Zimbabwean traditional dances

The study borrows Johannes Fabian ideas on how to extract and sift through meaning in African popular art. Fabian propounds that:

...any living culture must be viewed as a communicative process in which a society not only expresses but also generates and forms its world view. One way to deal with the enormous complexity of all culture is to concentrate on some carefully chosen diagnostic expressions and take these to be answers to specific problems or questions (1978: 324).

Implied by Fabian is that detailed attention should be given to cultural expressions and practices that are used to solve problems. This dissertation investigates how Tavirima's performances work towards bringing about social change and why the group chose *chinyambera* in particular.

Tavirima Traditional Dance Group performs in a socially and politically repressed environment and they are susceptible to the populist temptations of magnifying the condition in their quest to bring social change. Barber observes that African popular art are populist in nature but they retain their objective of bringing social change. In reference to African popular arts she posits:

Of course, this kind of text usually says only the things that the people want to hear. But while it is true that people want to hear that justice will prevail and that the good will be rewarded, they do not apparently want to hear escapist fantasies(2).

The research processes therefore proceeded as guided by the African popular culture theory paying attention to the objectivity and ability of Tavirima traditional dance group's performances of *chinyambera* in bringing about social change. The study's focus on investigating the utilitarian role of Tavirima's *chinyambera* performances resonates with the social enhancement model of music forwarded by Steven Brown (2006) which considers not only music's effects and meanings but the uses to which music is put in order to convey these effects and meanings, all within the context of the motivations that underlie them.

Traditional dances practised in the social entertainment milieu usually shape ideas as well as give meaning to economic, social and political activities thereby stimulating action for social change. For instance Minette Mans contends that in the past traditional music and dances were used to instruct the younger generation on social and religious issues (1997). This



research intended to find out the lessons that traditional dance performers from Tavirima get from their performance of *chinyambera* traditional dance.

In evaluating the role played by Tavirima's performance of *chinyambera* in bringing about social change this dissertation takes the view forwarded by Fabian (1978). He posits that cultural expression, "...are not evidence for how a culture 'works' (or 'functions', or 'determines action'); they only show how perceptions, experiences and problems, are being 'worked out' in an open, never-ending process" (329). The evaluation is therefore not an impact evaluation but a process evaluation framed with an understanding that Tavirima's performances are in themselves not an end to the problems bedeviling Zimbabwe but they are just a means to an end. As such the effectiveness of Tavirima's performances will not be evaluated against the group's ability to change in the socio-political situation but the processes of bringing about social change.

The practice of traditional dances is often said to be important in reflecting social, economic and political structures. In other words, the traditional dances are shaped by, or are a reflection of, the economic and socio-political realities. In cognisance of Clifford Geertz's opinion that man is an "animal suspended in webs of significance which he himself has spun. The structure and form of the web is constantly changing in relationship to new circumstances and, in response man is constantly rearranging his position (often unconsciously) within that construction to find meaning" (1973:5). I also view Tavirima's performances of *chinyambera* as form of expression which comes as a mirror image of the ills compounding the Zimbabwean social, economic and political strata. The thrust of the dissertation therefore is not just to debunk cultural expressions or unpack the semiotics of Tavirima's *chinyambera* traditional dance, but to also analyse the music as a catalyst to social change.

#### **2.4.2 Alternative Culture Theory**

The government of Zimbabwe has been blamed for not upholding the needs of her people. Often the Zimbabwean government is said to not be sincere to implementing its policies which address the real issues troubling Zimbabwean citizens. Sabelo Gatsheni posits that "Zimbabwe's nationalism has now lost its noble emancipatory ideals and has become impervious to the human rights and democratic demands of the people" (2003:101). In most cases the ruling elite are the ones who benefit from government programmes such as the

Land Reform Programme and the Indigenisation Programme. According to Lionel Cliffe , Jocelyn Alexander , Ben Cousins & Rudo Gaidzanwa “A significant number of farms have been acquired by prominent elite figures either by getting whole or large parts of pre-existing farms through FTLRP or by informal and often strong-arm methods, and this is an on-going process” (2011:16) Most Zimbabweans are unemployed while 85% of the employed are informal traders<sup>35</sup>. In recent years, during election periods the government through its populist tendencies made promises to the masses only to renege from their promises after elections (Gatsheni, 2003:127).

This particular government’s behaviour has not gone unnoticed by the people who have engaged in different activities to show their reservations on the way that the government was operating. It is therefore of great importance that Tavirima’s performance which reflect people’s worries and realities as well champion for social change in an environment where the government’s directives are usually incontestable be afforded close attention. This study is framed under the Alternative Culture to pursue a critical inquiry of Tavirima’s criticism performances.

The social and political differences inevitably lead to the emergence of a culture within a culture usually practised by the subaltern. The group’s *chinyambera* performances are in a way an emblematic communication media as *chinyambera* traditional dance speaks for unspoken ideas as well as amplifies narratives on the suffering of the masses. The study used Alternative Cultural Theory by Gugulethu Siziba (2009) to support the African popular culture theory in explaining Tavirima dance group’s criticism tendencies. This theory forwards a relationship between repression and culturally informed subversion (Siziba, 2009).

I use the theory to focus on how members of Tavirima dance group negate political and social constraints and move from the periphery of the making of culture to become significant actors in culture formation thus challenging gerontocracy and patriarchy which forces them to be passive imbibers of culture. The Alternative Culture Theory allows this study to explore the widely spread view that the Zimbabwe government oppresses the fundamental rights to

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<sup>35</sup> Data on unemployment retrieved from <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/bureau/program/dwcp/download/zimbabwe2.pdf> 14/11/13

expression and association of her artist's. The theory also provided an opportunity to analyse Tavirima's use of facial expressions, gestures and the dance routines as they re-enact and model social and political values and structures through *chinyambera* traditional dance.

As discussed in Chapter One under issues of censorship and control of arts (Subsection 1.1), the production and reproduction of culture in Zimbabwe is deliberately monitored and controlled by the Government through legislative instruments which safeguard the interests of the ruling elite. Furthermore in Zimbabwe like many other African states, culture production and reproduction is largely dominated by the adult population and gerontocracy which honours history or tradition at the expense of other diverging or new cultural views. Siziba posits "Culture and its production to date has been informed by patriarchy and gerontocracy and this has disadvantaged young people. The emphasis on age and wisdom simply dismisses the aspirations of young people"(2009:12). In such communities where there is cultural production monitoring there is a tendency to expect homogeneous cultures or similar behaviours from most people as they learn their culture from one source, which is their particular community. According to Foucault (2003) in Siziba:

Society is constantly engaged in surveillance of individual behaviour and sets sanctions to independent 'in-appropriate' behaviour. Society seeks to generate uniformity and acquiescence to standardized behaviour (2009:10).

Consequently aggrieved members of the society are faced with the daunting task of fighting a system opposed to change through alternative cultural strategies.

Indeed culture is a people's way of life as implied by Tylor, in Naomi Kipuri who defines culture as "...that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs, and all other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" (2004:1). The complexity of culture is embedded in a plurality of factors the most obvious being that the many people who make up a culture bring in an assortment of traits and attitudes whose sum has a bearing on production and reproduction of culture. As such, the frame of this dissertation in finding out how disgruntlement with the social and political environment in Zimbabwe influences Tavirima in making and practising *chinyambera* traditional dance is guided by the Alternative Culture Theory. Humanity always purposefully engages in cultural production and reproduction for its own use. By nature human beings are not passive imbibers of cultural knowledge, people internalise schemas, or cultural models

which have influence on their decision making and behaviour (Scupin, 2012:43). As communities live and produce culture, differences in expressions and preferences are bound to happen. Issues of contestations and control always come into play whenever culture bearers or opinion leaders, and the subaltern differ in imagining their worldview.

The Alternative Culture Theory's awareness of the emergency of other cultures in hostile environments lays a foundation from which to ask questions on the implications of staging criticism acts, and how the local authorities take the performances of *chinyambera*. As well as finding out which strategies are used to avoid offensive confrontation with the authorities and getting arrested. Tavirima has been staging their *chinyambera* performances at a time when Zimbabwe has been highly politicized and polarised between the ZANU PF and MDC. *Chinyambera* traditional dance has been used by Tavirima traditional dance group as a way to voice worries of the residents of the Gweru community who are suffering at the hands of their oppressive government<sup>36</sup>. The alternative culture theory therefore provides lenses and an awareness of the repressive environment prevailing in Zimbabwe.

This researcher realises that Tavirima traditional dance is undertaking performances in a fluid environment where their work is received by a section of the society as an agent for social change while the other section of the society will take their performance as an effort to discredit and dislodge the government. Therefore there are twin processes in Tavirima performances which work concurrently. In their performances they have to openly stand for social change yet at the same time they have to avoid getting arrested. To that end they have to find innovative ways to work around structural stumbling blocks voicing out their social and political aspirations through *chinyambera* performances. Commenting on the experiences of youth in producing subversion Siziba posits that "While structures are viewed as constraining they are simultaneously viewed as in essence imbued with agency thus they are both constraining and enabling" (2009:10). This dissertation is framed under the Alternative Culture Theory to find out the complexities associated with criticism performances and how Tavirima navigates political domineering and repressive laws in Zimbabwe.

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<sup>36</sup> Insight from a discussions with Tavirima members during preliminary research for this study in July 2013

### 2.4.3 Positive Deviance Approach

I evaluate how Tavirima's performances of *chinyambera* have managed to bring about social change through the lenses of 'Positive Deviance Approach' (Dodge 1985). This is a model used in solving community problems using locally available resources. The theory forwards that bringing about social change is not dependent on huge numbers of the people acting as change agents but on their willingness to bring about change. I used the model to appraise Tavirima's efforts of bringing about social change through the local dance *chinyambera*.

Bringing social change through the positive deviance approach is not an "expert" driven exercise. Arvind Singhal propounds that "Positive deviance (PD) is an approach to social change that enables communities to discover the wisdom they already have and then to act on it" (2010:4). The positive deviance approach emphasises that people who are faced by a challenge are better placed to prescribe solutions which will solve their problem. Singhal, alludes "...often the wisdom to solve intractable social problems lies within the community as local wisdom trumps outside expertise when it comes to solving the most intractable problems"(1). The study is thus framed under the Positive Deviance Approach to evaluate Tavirima's capacity in bringing about social change in Gweru as insiders.

The members of Tavirima are also faced with the social and political challenges bedevilling their compatriots. Viewing Tavirima members as burdened people makes it possible to ask them questions on the effect that their *chinyambera* performances on their lives. This dissertation sets it as a key objective to get their views on the messages Tavirima members get from their performances and the transformations that these messages and performances bring to their lived experiences. As practitioners and troubled beings Tavirima members are able to elucidate their goals for change and their reason for choosing *chinyambera* as a medium for their transformative message. This therefore brings awareness on the need to bring to fore Tavirima's perceptions of the success rate of using *chinyambera* traditional dance to question the social-political challenges facing the Gweru community since they are the intervention strategist.

This dissertation also sets out to evaluate the effectiveness of Tavirima's *chinyambera* performances in bringing about social change through the Positive Deviance Approach because Tavirima's performances are an indigenous intervention set by locals to address

challenges they face without external assistance. Under the Positive Deviance Approach this study is framed to evaluate the efficacy of local knowledge and resources to solve local problems. According to the Positive Deviance Initiative<sup>37</sup> “the PD process promotes behaviour and social change because it is embedded in the culture (language & medium appropriate) and it is based on the strengths and assets of the culture”. The utilitarian role of music and dance in African societies has been explicated in detail in this text as well as many other texts from different scholars. Hence this study is reliably guided to measure the level of successes of Tavirima’s use of *chinyambera* traditional dance to negotiate for social and political justice.

## **2.5 Rationale for Choosing Three Theories**

African Popular Arts Theory and Alternative Culture Theory concur that people or communities have the power to produce and reproduce culture for the benefit of their society. Therefore, the two theories find common ground with Tavirima’s objective “using the arts as a tool to achieve sustainable development in communities<sup>38</sup>”. The African Popular Arts Theory can be framed to analyse the ability of popular arts in bringing about social change, whereas, the Alternative Culture Theory is particularly concerned with how the subaltern takes charge of their destiny through defying restrictive and oppressing systems, concerned with rebellious cultural practitioners. The Alternative Culture Theory is used to explore why Tavirima makes certain decisions, for example why they use *chinyambera* and not any other Zimbabwean dance.

In defining African popular art Fabian posits that “it signifies, potentially at least, processes occurring behind the back of established powers and accepted interpretations and thus, offers a better conceptual approach to decolonisation of which it is undoubtedly an important element” (1978:315). The definition offered by Fabian subtly confirms that African popular art is a product of criticism activities as it shows processes happening in the back of authorities. Likewise, the Alternative Culture makes it categorically clear that it is a cultural product of oppressed people.

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<sup>37</sup> The Positive Deviance Initiative retrieved from [http://www.positivedeviance.org/about\\_pd/Finalrevised2006-03-09Basic\\_PD\\_Steps\\_2.pdf](http://www.positivedeviance.org/about_pd/Finalrevised2006-03-09Basic_PD_Steps_2.pdf) on 28/10/13

<sup>38</sup> Tavirima’s objective as outlined in their constitution

These viewpoints offered by the African Popular Arts Theory and the Alternative Culture Theory as such complement each other and allow this study to give further insight into and analysis of how Tavirima traditional dance group responds to political and social challenges which include repressive laws and poor social services delivery through *chinyambera*. The positive deviance approach comes in to offer lenses for evaluation. After the how and why questions of the study have been answered the positive deviance questions the success or failure rate of the use of *chinyambera* traditional dance in bringing about social change.

## **2.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter attempts to set out as its objective to ground Tavirima's criticism performance as African popular art by framing it within the context of African Popular Arts Theory. The dissertation refers to studies by Barber (1997) and Fabian (1978) among others who have written on how art is used for communication purposes as well as for community development. Most of the literature referred to in this chapter show that there is a symbiotic relationship between the social activities and artistic cultural production and reproduction. The chapter brings attention to finding out how *chinyambera* traditional dance is used to negotiate for social and political recognition in an authoritarian country. The need to find out the intrinsic motivations underlying choices of particular dance or art style when communicating is raised. The dissertation is thus poised to discuss factors underlying Tavirima's choice of *chinyambera*. The chapter also discuss the plasticity of the term subversion. It brings out how one piece of art can be viewed as subversion by one end of the community while the other end views the same work of art as constructive. I also discuss about the three theories used in this study and how they have offered vantage points through which this study reliably meets its set objectives.

## CHAPTER 3 SUBVERSION AS A PREMEDITATED AGENCY

### 3.1 Paradoxes and Controversies of Zimbabwean Law

Zimbabwe is constitutionally a republic and a sovereign state where the constitution is the supreme law of the land<sup>39</sup>. However, events on the political front have been suggesting otherwise. The prevailing situation in Zimbabwe where ZANU PF is accused of holding ceremonial elections undermines the principle of the country being a sovereign republic. Gatsheni posits that “the popular explanation of why ZANU-PF and President Robert Mugabe have continued to win elections is that they have long experience in rigging them” (2007:1). In essence ZANU PF has supremacy over the constitution of Zimbabwe. Mitchell Orenstein observes that “ostensibly, Zimbabwe has democratic institutions: a constitution, multiple political parties, executive, judiciary, and legislative branches. However, Mugabe and the ZANU-PF generally overwhelm and manipulate these institutions” (2009:9). In addition, Zimbabwe’s 1979 Lancaster House constitution which was replaced by a new constitution on 23 May 2013 had 19 amendments<sup>40</sup>. It thus provides an avalanche of loopholes whence suppression of freedoms emanates.

Zimbabwe has oppressive instruments of censorship which throttle the creativity of artists as well as put artists in perpetual fear of being arraigned before courts (Banning Eyre 2001). The Censorship and Entertainments Control Act (*Chapter 10:04*) is incongruous with not only the tenets of Constitution of Zimbabwe but it is also in disharmony with the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights. It is against this background of operating with a perforated and multi- patched Lancaster House constitution<sup>41</sup> and lack of constitutionalism that this dissertation discusses the paradoxes and controversies of the Zimbabwean law and how Tavirima has manipulated the inconsistency of the law in performing subversion.

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<sup>39</sup> Status of Zimbabwe as set by Chapter 1 section (1)(2)(3) of the Zimbabwean constitution

<sup>40</sup> Report on the amendments of the old constitution and signing of Zimbabwe’s constitution availed by the NEWSDAY a Zimbabwean daily newspaper retrieved from <https://www.newsday.co.zw/2013/05/23/president-mugabe-signs-the-new-constitution/> on 10/11/13

<sup>41</sup> Lancaster House constitution is a ceasefire agreement constitution drafted in 1979  
<https://www.solidaritypeacetrust.org/the-constitution-and-the-constitutional-process-in-zimbabwe>



### 3.1.1 Supremacy of the Constitution over Acts of Parliament

Zimbabwe acceded to The African Charter on Human and People's Rights on 30 May 1985<sup>42</sup>. The African Charter on Human and People's Rights is essential in discussing the suppression of the freedom of expression in Zimbabwe as it provides the guidelines which Zimbabwe and every other African state party to the Charter should follow in implementing the right to freedom of expression. Freedom of expression is provided for in the Charter through Article 2 which states that,

- “1. Every individual shall have the right to receive information.
2. Every individual shall have the right to express and disseminate his opinions within the law” (2).

Zimbabwe's constitution indeed provides the freedom of expression. However, the provision is a manner of mere conformity with the Charter as Zimbabwe's Constitutional Law<sup>43</sup> and Acts of Parliament<sup>44</sup> which include Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act and Censorship and Entertainments Control Act (Chapter 10:04) as well as the Public Order and Protection of Privacy Act are not in sync when it comes to full provision of rights. Nonetheless, the discord between the Zimbabwe's supreme law and the Acts of Parliament has provided fertile ground on which the continuation of criticism performances by Tavarima and other like-minded groups are done. This discord of the Law has rendered it ineffective in methodically muting voices. The contrasts on the provisions is summed by Chibaya who comments that,

There is nobody who has been convicted in this country because of this law because it is vague. AIPPA and POSA are Acts of Parliament, the Constitution under the Bill of Rights provides for freedom of speech, Assembly, Association and so-forth. So that Act cannot supersede the Constitution which is the supreme law. Therefore if you go to court let's say you say something that is not supposed to be said according to AIPPA, you obviously refer to the Bill of Rights which protects every Zimbabwean from such unlawful arrests<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> List of countries who have acceded to the Charter accessed from <http://www.au.int/ent/en/sites/default/files/AfricanCharteronHumanandPeoplesRights.pdf> on 11/11/13

<sup>43</sup> Constitutional Law is the supreme law of the country which ensures democratic government by the people under the constitution. It also defines the relationship of different entities within the state such as the executive, the legislature and the judiciary

<sup>44</sup> Act of Parliament is a statute enacted as primary legislation by Members of Parliament.

<sup>45</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Amos Chibaya held by author on 15/09/13

The freedom of expression which Chibaya alludes to is provided for in Zimbabwe's Constitution as enunciated in section 20 Subsection (1) of the Republic of Zimbabwe's constitution as follows:

Except with his own consent or by way of parental discipline, no person shall be hindered in the enjoyment of his freedom of expression, that is to say, freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference, and freedom from interference with his correspondence.

When asked why he joins Tavirima Traditional Dance Group in staging unlawful performances, Mkoba constituency Member of Parliament, Mr Amos Chibaya, maintained that the provisions of some of the repressive Acts of Parliament cannot do much to legally foil Tavirima from exercising their right to freedom of speech but they can just intimidate them. Chibaya said that:

AIIPA is only meant to intimidate people from exercising, what I can safely say is their constitutional right, to say whatever they want to say because the constitution of the land provides for freedom of speech and when we talk of freedom of speech you cannot limit that freedom. It has got no full stop, maybe a comma can be there but a comma means a statement can continue<sup>46</sup>.

The freedom of expression offered by Zimbabwe's constitution under the Bill of Rights is a right legally to be fully enjoyed by her citizens without restraint from anyone. Bharat Patel posits that "freedom, so it is postulated, is universal and therefore indivisible"(1997:51). However, regardless of the universality and indivisibility of freedoms the smooth flow of Tavirima's performances which speak out against the socio-political environment in Zimbabwe is usually disturbed through an array of measures. The founder of Tavirima Gilbert Zhou<sup>47</sup> mentions that there are times that they have been stopped in the midst of a performance by security agents. The ban on these performances is usually done in order to effectively thwart any mouth piece raising awareness to the public on the wrong that the ZANU PF government is doing. Champagne Nyengera who also stages criticism performances said:

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<sup>46</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Amos Chibaya, held by the author on 15/09/13

<sup>47</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Gilbert Zhou held by author on 07/09/13

We don't get fair treatment because we are a threat to the strong political parties. So they [*the government*] will be saying these guys [*artists*] are exposing our weaknesses and they don't like that. We become a threat by creating awareness to the ordinary people. We alert people that what the police are doing according to the law is an abuse of human rights<sup>48</sup>.

These performances are banned in accordance with section 16 Subsection (6) of the Censorship and Entertainment and Control Act which gives the Censorship board the power to disapprove performance they think will disturb peace and instigate public disorder and immoral behaviour. The Act is vague as it does not qualify or set parameters of what is to be defined as an unlawful performance. It leaves the qualification to the discretion of the Censorship Board. This restrictive provision of the Censorship and Entertainment Control Act breaches constitutional principles that establish a right to freedom of expression. Performances by Tavirima or any other group which speaks out on the socio-political rot in Zimbabwe are susceptible to ban under the Censorship and Entertainment Control Act.

Restriction on non-commercial and communally owned performances such as Tavirima's performances is also done through the Public Order and Security Act (POSA) 2001<sup>49</sup>. What the Act implies is that the community cannot arbitrarily meet to share and experience cultural music without getting consent from the police. Tavirima is supposed to be cleared by the police who can either approve or disapprove their meeting citing Public Order and Security Act (2002) Section 26 (1). Regulating when and where people should meet is tantamount to oppressing their constitutionally given freedom of association. In the midst of the restrictive laws Tavirima has developed ways through which they continue to hold performance with the police having few successes of apprehending them.

### **3.2 Strategies of Evading Arrest**

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<sup>48</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Champagne Nyengera held by the author on 03/0913

<sup>49</sup> Section 25, subsection 1 of the Public Order and Security Act regulates the holding of public meetings, processions and demonstrations.

Although the Constitution of Zimbabwe reigns supreme over Acts of Parliament the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) continues to unlawfully arrest people whose political views are divergent to ZANU PF ideology. David Makwerere, Tafadzwa Chinzete and Collen Musorowegomo posit that “The ZRP has gained notoriety over the hounding of opposition politicians and other people or organizations with divergent ideas from those of government” (2012:134). The Zimbabwe Republic Police is susceptible to manipulation by the ZANU PF government in violating human rights because the Lancaster House Constitution which was used in Zimbabwe until May 2013 did not provide for separation of powers. Makwerere, Chinzete and Musorowegomo opine:

The complicity of the ZRP in the violation of human rights in Zimbabwe is not accidental. One of the most important axioms of government rule in a democracy is that of separation of powers. Government must not only make and interpret laws but also have the ability to enforce them. The police make up part of the executive branch of the government, operate as part of the criminal justice system and operate at all levels of the government (2012:130).

The relationship which exists between ZANU PF and the Zimbabwe Republic Police has led the police force to fail to professionally execute its duties as it works as an extension of ZANU PF.

As the author went into the field to gather data on how Tavirima Traditional Dance Group used *chinyambera* traditional dance he was fully aware of the risks associated with the task. The author’s family home is in Village 16, a high suburb in Mkoba just a stone throw away from Nehanda Zimbabwe Republic Police Post. He grew up staying in vicinity of the police base and therefore he has witnessed the brutalities of the police. Their houses including the police base are semi-detached and heavily clustered such that his family could hear their neighbour’s night prayers without stretching their hearing threshold. The closeness meant that the author heard suspects crying from brutal beatings they received from police.

The author also worked in the Zimbabwe Republic Police at Nehanda Camp in 2006, as a cleaner witnessing the police beat suspects on a daily basis. In 2011 again he had another dance with Zimbabwe Republic Police after he was falsely arrested for assaulting a police

officer. He had to spend Christmas in a police cell as he was detained from 24 December to 27 December where he was severely beaten at every prisoner's parade<sup>50</sup>.



Figure 3.1 The Zimbabwe Republic Police response to protesters – Photo by Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum<sup>51</sup>

However such experiences did not deter him from undertaking the study even during a heavily contested election period. He knew of Tavirima's existence and he felt there could be no better time to have in-depth study of their critical performances than this period.

### 3.2.1 Evading Arrest through Upholding Cultural Legacy

Despite continued arrests of other performing artists across Zimbabwe Tavirima Traditional Dance Group has adopted measures to avoid arrest and continue with their work. Tavirima Traditional dance group has benefitted from using a traditional dance style in their performances since their acts are viewed as efforts to uphold and preserve Zimbabwean traditional cultures which are facing threat from globalisation. In reference to how they have evaded arrest through the guise of preserving culture Faith Matongo points out that:

The nature of your production can put you at a safe place when you are faced with the wrath of the law. We stage cultural performances, therefore in a way we uphold our and values morals. There are some lame cases for example when one

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<sup>50</sup> Prisoner's parade is a term used by the Nehanda Zimbabwe Republic Police Staff to refer to the time they hand over and take over duties at the end of their shifts.

<sup>51</sup> The Zimbabwe Human Rights NGO Forum, 'Photos of violence' retrieved from [http://www.hrforumzim.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/zimbabwe\\_violence.jpg](http://www.hrforumzim.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/zimbabwe_violence.jpg) on 12/11/13

records their music or run an unapproved modelling agency and expect not to get nabbed by the Censorship Board. We are a different case because our performance also uphold our culture therefore we believe I believe we will always find a soft landing when faced with the law.

*Production yako inogona kukupa advantage kana uchinge wasvika pasiripo nemutemo nekuti isusu tinonyanya kucover culture saka toumbiridza hunhu hwedu. Zviripo zvimwe zvekuti unogona kurecorder music yako usina kuiendesa kucensorhip board kana kugadzira modelling agency yangu isiri approved asi nekuda kwekuti iculture yedu yatiri kuzama kusimudzira handifungi kuti vangazoniyanya kukuomesera<sup>52</sup>.*

Almon Moyo also reasons that it will be practically impossible for the police to arrest Tavirima because of the musical style they use in their performance. Moyo says:

Since *chinyambera* is our cultural dance where we really know that this is our culture so when they approach the police and they say we want to do traditional dance, they are just taken as traditional dances. *Chinyambera* is a cultural dance so by arresting them not to use *chinyambera* they will be saying do not practise your culture. At the moment given the prevailing situation there is the Censorship Board and the National Arts Council which gives clearances to almost every group and the Police Forces. I think these three groups think that when a person is playing *chinyambera* it's just cultural. What matters most to these three organisations are the organisations attached to the performance and the organisations attached to the performance for example NGOs are scrutinised<sup>53</sup>.

In Zimbabwe the government has a bad relationship with most non-state actors who critique the government's actions. The government accuses these non-governmental organisations of clandestinely working towards effecting regime change. A report from the International Centre for Not for Profit Law notes that:

With the increased demand for democratic space and reforms in Zimbabwe, CSOs became targets of state harassment through increased legislative and administrative interference as they were perceived as extensions of political opposition. The ruling party at that time (President Mugabe's ZANU-PF) routinely declared that CSOs and even churches, or anyone who is not a politician, have no place in the politics of the country. These sentiments have continued to be echoed in the July 2013 elections<sup>54</sup>.

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<sup>52</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Faith Matongo held by author on 13/09/13

<sup>53</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Almon Moyo held by author on 06/09/13

<sup>54</sup> International Law Monitor Report on State/NGO relationship in Zimbabwe retrieved from <http://www.icnl.org/research/monitor/zimbabwe.html> on 18/11/13

Tavirima Traditional Dance Group also uses folk songs, which belong to the public domain to avoid having open confrontation with the Police. According to the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act (Chapter 26:05) Section 80, no one in particular has rights to the folk songs and therefore the Censorship Board cannot censor the songs and anyone who is Zimbabwean can use these songs. However Section 81 preserves special rights to the President of Zimbabwe to restrict use of the songs, which has never happened. The ultimate effect of the restriction which can be made by the President is enshrined in Section 82 of the same law which reads:

“82 Effect of reservation

(I) Subject to this

(a) no person who is not a public institution or a citizen of Zimbabwe shall do anything or cause anything to be done in Zimbabwe in relation to a reserved work of folklore, where the right to do that thing has been reserved to the President;

(b) no person who is not a public institution or a member of the community concerned shall do anything or cause anything to be done in Zimbabwe in relation to a reserved work of folklore, where the right to do that thing has been reserved to an appropriate local authority”

In addition, Tavirima’s position as custodians of culture is amplified by the fact that they are currently the only community based group in Mkoba Gweru which has not been tempted to venture in contemporary dance performance. Some community arts groups of Mkoba Gweru such as Kumuzi, Umzabalazo, Snipers with the exception of Perfect Works, are now strictly into contemporary dance performance. Perfect Works occasionally includes traditional dance in their theatre performances in which they always turn to Tavirima where they hire Mitchel Matingwina for her expertise. The presence of Matingwina in Perfect Works productions maintains Tavirima’s visibility on the traditional dance arena in Mkoba. Therefore the group is firmly positioned to get support from the community for their loyalty and sterling effort in preserving traditional dance a task which is now almost a preserve of learning institutions such as Midlands State University, Mkoba 3 High School and Chikumbiro Primary School as well as Hwahwa Prison, who all get funding from the government.

Research has established that Zimbabwean youth shun traditional dance performance (McLaren, 2001; 13-14). To that end Tavirima’s performances are viewed as an effort to

uphold the Zimbabwean traditional culture thus they are held in high esteem by authorities. The status and importance that they are accorded by the community shields them from being arrested. To that end the group deliberately addresses youth behaviour in their performances thus their performances resonate with the elderly community's vision. Matongo forwards that:

Our target is the younger generation as you will realise these young people are no longer respectful to the elders even in the way that they greet them. Naturally we target them so that we also teach our children of our mores and values. The older generation of our community like us for that.

*Isusu tinowanzokuda younger generation saka ndiyo group target yatinoda kuti tiise pedyo nesu tivadzidzise nekuti iyezvino izvi unongoona kuti vechidiki vacho tsika nevanhu vakuru hapachisina vangova kungopesana munzira. Saka isusu tinozama kutora culture kuti tiisebedzere padhuze nevana vedu vari kukura kuti vazive tsika dzavo dzekare, nokudaro vakuru vedu vanotifarira nekuda kwaiizvozvo<sup>55</sup>*

As I spoke with Matongo during the interview and other group members in subsequent meetings of my study I realised that it was possible that the community vests their trust in Tavirima as custodians of culture. Matongo who aged twenty six spoke as if she was an old woman who has given birth to grown-ups yet she is just a youth. She refers to fellow youth who they target with their performance as “*vana vedu*” meaning ‘our children’ assuming a parental role or guardianship to her peers in a show of a sense of community responsibility and community belonging.

Likewise, speaking on how their *chinyambera performances* shape youth Dube, who is barely seventeen years old<sup>56</sup> and the youngest member of the group said:

I will try to sing for you the song *vana vaya vakura kurera haisi nyore*. In the song we will be trying to highlight that parents go through a lot in taking care of their children who unfortunately at times misbehave.

*Ndichati ndizame kukuimbirai nziyo inoti iyo vana vaya vakura kurera haisi nyore. Apo tinenge tichiimba tichizama kuti tiratidze kuti pakurera vana vabereki*

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<sup>55</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Faith Matongo held by author on 13/09/13

<sup>56</sup> Zimbabwe sets 18 years to be the legal age of majority through the Legal Age of Majority (1982). At this age one can register to vote and can make decisions independent of their parents or guardian



*vanoshingirira zvakasiyana siyana vachibata zvakasiyanana siyana kuti vana vakure asi zvavanozoita dzimwe hazvifadzi*<sup>57</sup>

The song *vana venyu vakura* is a popular Zimbabwean folk song widely known as *Kurauone* sung in call and response as shown by the translation presented below.

### Meaning of the Song

As I have already mentioned the song is structured as a call and response. My analysis of the contextual meaning of the text will follow the lead and response division provided for the by the song structure. In analysing *Kurauone* I treat the Lead and Response as a conversation, therefore I will find out the intention of the lead as well as find out the meaning of the response. Finally, I will give an analysis of the song as a complete conversation. All songs to be analysed in this dissertation will be analysed in that manner. Where the songs refer to a subject whose name is not given I take the gender of the person to be a male just for discussion purposes.

Lead:	<i>Kurauone</i>	Get old and you will realise
Response:	<i>Mwana wenyu akura</i>	Your child is all grown
Lead:	<i>Akurauone</i>	You've grown and you will realise
Response:	<i>Kurera haizi nyore</i>	It's not easy to take care of a child
Lead:	<i>Haizi nyore kurauone</i>	It's not easy, you will when you are old
Response:	<i>Mwana wenyu akura</i>	Your child is all grown

Explaining the song in the context given by Dube in an interview excerpt provided above, the lead voice belongs to a parent or guardian who went through a torrid time raising their child, only to be failed by the child's bad behaviour. The parent is telling the child that now he is grown he is bound to be a parent and he will see for himself that it is not easy to raise a child. The response is affirming that indeed the child is grown and he will realise how hard it is to take care of a child. I also noticed that the way that these young performers carry themselves is ample reason why they are viewed in high esteem in society such that their performances are rarely scrutinised. The group members of Tavorima dance group respect each other and their actions are always cognisant of the fact that they do not live in vacuum as enunciated by the values of Ubuntu<sup>58</sup>. Dube, a teenager who is also the youngest member of the group and the perhaps the most vulnerable to peer pressure pointed out that his involvement in Tavorima

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<sup>57</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Malvin Dube held by author on 06/09/13

<sup>58</sup> Ubuntu refers to African philosophy of humanness which spells how people should relate harmoniously


has helped him to realise that his actions in society are not only important to him but the other people as well.


## KURAUONE


Transcribed by Innocent T. Mutero

Chinyamvera Traditional Song



Ku-ra - u - o - ne                      A - ku - ra - ku-ra-u - o - ne

Call 


Response 1                       Tsva - ngi - ra - i - a - ku - ra                      Ku -

Response 2 

7                      Ha - i - si - nyo - re - ku-ra-u - o - ne                      A - ku - ra

re - ra - ha - yi - si-nyo - re                      Tsva - ngi - ra - i - a - ku - ra -



13                      ku-ra-u - o - ne                      Ha - i - si - nyo - re - ku-ra-u - o - ne




Ku - re - ra - ha - yi - si-nyo - re



### 3.2.2 Use of Axioms as a Strategy to evade Arrest

Tavirima also taps idioms from the rich Shona language. They avoid being arrested for impersonating the President and other crimes associated with criticism performances in Zimbabwe through taking advantage of the ambiguity of meaning which some Shona idioms have. Responding to a question on how they avoid confrontations with political leaders and law enforcement agents Matongo said:

In such instances we use axioms. For example if I say *sabhuku vane nharo* ‘the kraal head is hot headed we know the leaders understand what we will be implying with these axioms. We are not even supposed to be afraid of doing that because we elect these people to represent us. If we fear them no one will take the risk to confront them therefore we will live in constant fear. These axioms help us to avoid embarrassing the leaders at public forums. We also dance to our music bringing a lot of entertainment to our act.

*Ipapo manje tinoshandisa madimikira kana kudimikira. Nekuti vakuru vanotoziva saka patinozoti sabhuku vane nharo kundipa kugwenga ivo vakuru vanotoziva kuti tinenge tichireva chii. Apa hatitofaniri kunge tichivatya nekuti tisu tovasarudza to represent us. Tokavatya zvichemo zvedu hazvingasviki saka tinovaudza in a way yekuti kunenge kusiri kuvafumura. Chatisingadi kuudza vakuru zvinhu zvinovafamura pachaunga zvisinei kuti nde ve bato saka chatinoita kungoita setiri kufada vanhu. Saka kutamba kwatinozoita zvinogona kutivharidzirawo ukazongoita music chete zvinozoita senge uri kuudza vanhu asi ukatamba unoita seuri kufadza vanhu. Tingangoti kuimba nekutambe madimikira nekudimikira<sup>59</sup>*

Zhou adds that they use idioms when criticising political parties as well as to address issues which are taboo to discuss openly in public. In his words he said:

We use idioms if we want to criticise a political party, cultural activity or our leaders. We use idioms because they cushion us from harassment by whoever is subject of the criticism or their supporters. For instance I can speak about the cork in my songs fully knowing that the cork<sup>60</sup> in my music refers to a person but when I am confronted about it I argue basing on the literal meaning of the song.

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<sup>59</sup> Excerpt from an inter with Faith Matongo, held by author on 13/09/13

<sup>60</sup> The cork is ZANU PF party symbol

*“Madimikira tinomashandisa kana pane bato kana chimwe chinhu chinonyadzisa kutaura chatiri kuda kutsoropodza. Tinogona kumashandisazve kan atichitaura vakuru vanotyisa kuti titaura nezvake direct. Tinozviitira kuti kana ajkda kundivhunza kana kuti pakava ve side rake vanoda kundivhunza ndowana mavhikiro kuti aiwa ini ndaireva direct sezvazviri. Kana ndichiti jongwe ndichireva munhu ndogona kungoti aiwa ini ndaingoreva sezvazviri ini ndichiziva zvangu kuti ndaireva munhu”<sup>61</sup>*

The ambiguity of meaning that the idioms provides thus provides ground upon which Tavirima traditional dance group can perform subversion without being arrested as the security agencies will fail to find solid ground to effect arrest since such songs do not call anybody by name.

### **3.2.3 Political Prostitution as a Strategy to Evade Arrest**

I conducted fieldwork for this study during a time period Zimbabwe was gearing for her 7<sup>th</sup> harmonised general elections which eventually took place on 31 July 2013. The political field was abuzz with activity, and as I had anticipated, Tavirima was staging their politically toned performances. I was however surprised to note that Tavirima performed at both ZANU PF and MDC rallies. On 21 September 2013, the group performed at Morgan Tsvangirai’s star rally at Mkoba Stadium in Gweru and in a week’s time on 27 September 2013 they were performing at Robert Mugabe’s Star Rally at an open space lying opposite Midlands AIDS Services Organisation. I managed to film their performance at the MDC rally. It is however unfortunate that I could not manage to film the proceedings at the ZANU PF rally because of the high security details involved at Robert Mugabe’s rallies. Even though the group lacked motivation and their usual high energy during the ZANU PF they were brave enough to address their worries to ZANU PF audience.

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<sup>61</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Gilbert Zhou, held by author on 07/09/13



Figure 3.2 Members of Tavirima wearing ZANU PF caps during a rehearsal on 26/07/13 photo by Innocent Tinashe Mutero



Figure 3.3 Members of Tavirima Traditional Dance Group performing at MDC star rally on 21/07/13, Photo by Innocent Tinashe Mutero

“Political prostitution” is loosely put to use in this dissertation to mean showing support for more than one of the contesting parties. However, during an interview Joe Razor refuted the allegation that they are political “flip floppers” who wander from party to party preferring to say that they are an objective watchdog which scrutinises the activities of both the Movement for Democratic Change and ZANU PF. When asked to explain their relationship with the two rival parties Razor said:

The packaging of messages for our show is dependent on the party we will be performing for. Our performance whether we are performing at a ZANU (PF) or MDC will be speaking about our challenges and the torment we go through. The message in our performance will be a plea to the political parties to fulfil the promises they make. For instance, if MDC promises us jobs, we will ask for those jobs at when we perform at their meetings, in the same vein if ZANU PF promises us jobs will ask for that at their rallies

*Tinozviburitsa maererano nemusangano watinenge tasvikira tinenge tichiita zvinenge zvichienderana nemusangano iwoyo tichivaratidza kutambudzika kwedu nekushungurudzika kwatinenge tichiita ringava bato reZANU kana bato reMDC. Tinenge tichingovaratidza zvinenge zvichienderana maereranop nezvavari kuita ivo sekuti MDC inouya ichiti tokupai mabasa imi vechidiki tinoita saizvozvo tiri muchinyambera chedu tichivachemera mabasa. ZANU inouyawo ichiti tinoda kuti tikupei mabasa imi vechidiki tinoita futi saizvozvo tichiita chinyambera chedu tichivaratidza kuda basa<sup>62</sup>*

Commenting on their performance at both ZANU PF and MDC rallies Faith Matongo had this to say:

Music in general and traditional dance in particular is helpful in addressing challenges posed by Zimbabwe's politics. Our country has two rival parties, the MDC and ZANU PF, however as a group we are not affiliated to any political party. Our duty is to teach Zimbabweans through our cultural dances. We perform at all functions regardless of the hosting political party. What we intend to get there of is remuneration and satisfaction that we have managed get to audience with Zimbabweans.

*Panyaya dzematongerwo enyika isu tingataura tichiti isu music kana traditional dance inobatsira zvakanyanya. Tikatarisa muno munyika medu tine mapato maviri anokwikwidzana reMDC nereZANU PF asi isu hatizotarisi manje kuti ibato ripi kana tichiperformer tiri kutarisira kuti tiri kudzidzisa vana veZimbabwe muculture yedu, hatitarisi kuti uyo ibato ripi uyo ibato ripi. Saka you would find kuti kumapato kwese isusu we are there to teach. Kana ndikadeedzwa kune ripi bato ndinoenda and theme yangu kudzidzisa culture, apo tinenge tichitarisa kuti mapato ayo atipewo zveuviri<sup>63</sup>*

Even though in above interviews excerpts both Matongo and Razor assert that they are politically neutral facts point them aligning with the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). I take their participation at the ZANU PF rally as one of the strategies which they use to avoid being arrested. At the Movement for Democratic Change Star Rally which was addressed by Morgan Tsvangirai on 21 September 2013 they openly sang exalting Morgan Tsvangirai in a song titled *Tavaona*. The song was adapted from a *Mhande* song of the same title.

Lead *Tsvangirai ndiye baba*

Response: *Tavaona havo ndibaba vedu tavaona*

Lead: *Tavaona nekuguta*

Tsvangirai is the father

We have noticed he is the father.

There he is we have noted

We have noted he brings wealth

<sup>62</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Joe Razor held by author on 15/09/13

<sup>63</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Faith Matongo held by author on 13/09/13

Response: *Tavaona havo ndibaba vedu tavaona*

We have noticed he is the father.

Lead: *Tavaona nehembe tsvuku*

There he is we have noted

We have distinguished him with his red clothes

Response: *Tavaona havo ndibaba vedu tavaona*

We have noticed he is the father.

There he is we have noted

Lead: *Amos ndiye baba*

Amos is the father

Response: *Tavaona havo ndibaba vedu tavaona*

We have noticed he is the father.

There he is we have noted

The lead singer begins by calling *Tsvangirai ndibaba*, literally meaning Tsvangirai is the father, Zimbabwe being a patriarchal society the father is the head of the house. Therefore, in the song Tavirima sees Tsvangirai as the leader of Zimbabwe. The response answers *Tavaona havo ndibaba vedu*, loosely translated ‘we have seen him he is our father’ In the context of campaigning this is not just an affirmation that indeed people have seen that Tsvangirai is their leader, the response drums up support for Morgan Tsvangirai, their vociferous response which was amplified by the audience who joined in the singing intensified the deeper meaning that Tsvangirai is a leader through popular consent.

The lead singer has the liberty to change lyrics of the call, where at the message in his call is the anticipated happiness that Morgan Tsvangirai’s ascendance to be President of Zimbabwe will bring. For example he calls *Tavaona nekuguta*, translated above. He also sings reminding people of the Movement for Democratic Change symbols. Case in point being *tavaona nehembe tsvuku*, meaning we have identified him with his red gear. During the 2013 July 31 election it was critically important that the MDC distinguishes itself from the other splinter group of the Movement for Democratic Change led by Professor Welshman Ncube which used green as its party colour. It therefore becomes difficult to agree with Matongo and Razor that they are politically neutral individuals. At times he substitutes Tsvangirai’s name with Amos Chibaya’s name who is the MDC Member of Parliament for Mkoba constituency.



Figure 3.4 Amos Chibaya singing with Tavirima at Mkoba Poly. Photo by Innocent Tinashe Mutero on 14/07/13

In my observation of the Tavirima's rehearsals for and performances at both ZANU PF and MDC rallies I concluded that the group also uses the strategy of faking support so that they evade arrest and they continue performing with little or no interference from the police. During the rehearsals leading to, and on the day of the actual MDC rally they performed with gaiety. Whereas at the ZANU PF rally their rehearsals and the subsequent performance was rather luke-warm. When I asked Zhou why they did not show their usual enthusiasm during their rehearsals he did not give a tangible answer to the question but he was quick to say that they are an apolitical entity which serves Zimbabweans whether they are from MDC or ZANU PF.

In reaching the conclusion that Tavirima flip flops between parties to safeguard their safety, I also took a look at how other Zimbabweans from various walks of life are managing. Zimbabwe has a history of violent elections which has led her people to be extra carefully when showing their political affiliation. Most Zimbabweans have realised that they live in a politically unsafe environment where citizens are often terrorised for having diverging political views from ZANU PF. Therefore, one of the strategies that Zimbabweans now use to avoid beatings is to attend political rallies for both parties and fake their support for either one or both parties. Tawanda Makusha reports that people attend ZANU PF rallies to get free T-shirts and avoiding repossession of benefits that they would have accrued by showing support for the party.



# TAVAONA NDIBABA

Transcribed by Innocent T. Mutero

Chinyamvera Traditional Song

Tsva ngi ra - i ndi-ye - ba - ba

Call

Response 1

Response 2

Ta - va - o - na - A - vo - ndi - ba - ba -

7 Tsva ngi ra - i ndi-ye - ba - ba - - -

ve - du - ta - va - o - na. Ta - va - o - na - A - vo -

14 - - - - Ta - va - o - na - ne - ku - gu - ta - -

- ndi - ba - ba - ve - du - ta - va - o - na. Ta - va - o - na -

21 - - - - Ta - va - o - na - ne - he - mbe - dza vo

A - vo - ndi - ba - ba - ve - du - ta - va - o - na. Ta -

28 Ta-va-o - na -ne - he-mbe

va - o - na - A - vo - ndi-ba-ba - ve-du-ta - va - o - na.

35 tsvu-ku Tsva ngi ra - i

Ta - va - o - na - A - vo - ndi-ba-ba - ve-du-ta - va - o - na.

42 ndi-ye - ba - ba - - - - -

Ta - va - o - na - A - vo - ndi-ba - ba -

47 - - - - A - mo - s - - - - ndi-ye - che - te

ve - du - ta - va - o - na.

### 3.2.4 Evading Arrest through Upholding Nationalism and the Mbuya Nehanda Legacy

The dictatorial ZANU PF government has tendencies for conservatism. They hold on to traditional culture as much as they hold on to power. Gonye observes that the ZANU PF “seeks to clandestinely connect the First, Second, and Third *chimurenga*<sup>64</sup> by making *kongonya* a dance for land, the gala a site for the nation’s reorientation, and the *kongonya* jingle a provocative reminder to forgetful citizens” (2013:76). Tavirima also realised ZANU PF’s proclivity with traditional dance and they have embraced the dances to speak out against the injustices and oppressive ZANU PF regime, knowing that they will not be victimised by the party. Speaking on how their performances speak to political challenges, Matongo had this to say:

You will realise that in using traditional dance we identify with ZANU PF. We looked into history and gathered that ZANU PF upholds that people live according to African mores and values whether it’s in the country or in their respective communities. Therefore in our performances we would be aiming at teaching young people and some adults that cultural values we had during the colonial regime should not change because we now have a Black government. I can safely say ZANU PF encourages us not to forget our culture and remain resolute to our culture. To that end we are invited to perform at functions which are attended by national leaders we would be eager to show them respect through the dances. We also show them that we respect and value the contributions made to this country by heroes and heroines such as Mbuya Nehanda and we as well carry on with their legacy.

*Isu tikatarisa kunyanyanya tinodondana nebato reZANU PF kukura kwedu kwatakaita kubva tichirerwa isusu takaziva kutracer history yedu. Tikatarisa bato reZANU PF tinoona kuti ibato rinonyanyokurudzira hunhu mararamiro edu atinoita mungava munyika kana musociety saka isusu tinenge tichida kudzidzisa vana even vamwe vanhu vakuru hunhu huya hwataka adopter kare nyika ichiri kutongwa nevarungu kuti hazvifaniri kuchinja nekuti nyika yakutongwa nesu mabhoyi. Saka ndingangoti bato redu reZANU PF kazhinji rinotidzidzisa kuti tisakanganwa culture zvataingova tichiita varungu vasati vauya munyika medu even varungu vauya ngatiregei kuadopter maWestern cultures tingoramba takazendamira kutsika. Naizvozvo tikainvitwa panouya mukuru kuti tizotamba tinenge tichida kuti tivaratidze tsika dzedu sevanhu vakuru vanenge vasvika panzvimbo, tivaratidze chiremerera chekurespector magamba edu vana mbuya Nehanda kufa kwavakaita vachitisiira nyika ino tienderere mberi nehunhu hwavakatisiira<sup>65</sup>*

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<sup>64</sup> Third chimurenga refers to the land invasions and subsequent land reform programme which happened in Zimbabwe from the year 2000

<sup>65</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Faith Matongo held by author on 13/09/13

Even though Amos Chibaya belongs to the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), he also believes that the traditional dance connects people to ancestors and revered national heroes.

It reminds the society about our traditional dance, it is part of culture our history it is also part of our ideology as Zimbabwe. It is also a way of thanks giving to the ancestors. You can go as far as the days of your Sekuru Kaguvi and Mbuya Nehanda praying to them. So it reminds us that whenever we pray we should not forget about our ancestors<sup>66</sup>

Their performances therefore are considered important not only by ZANU PF but by MDC as well. The two main parties seek to be champions of democracy and independence through identifying themselves with Zimbabwe's symbols of nationhood such as the iconic Mbuya Nehanda and the various traditional music and dance styles as well as other artefacts. Carlos Fuentes in Verhelst and Tydale posits Culture is like a seashell wherein we can hear whom we have been and listen to what we can become (2002: 11). Weaving through cultures of the past and the present in determining the future has thus far helped Tavirima to remain resolute in their quest for social change, with few clashes with the police.

Over and above ZANU PF's fondness with traditional cultural activities, traditional dances are still considered important by the Zimbabwean community, especially the elderly, therefore Tavirima finds cover in that. Mataga posits that "Zimbabwe, traditional dances and performances such as *Jerusarema* are still important living traditions practiced in many contexts and still revered by the local communities" (2008:96). The reverence given to traditional dance across the political breadth and by the adult members of the community has helped Tavirima to continue performing subversion with very few altercations with state security agents.

### **3.3 The Place of Audience in Driving Subversion**

As an artist who started dabbling with the music and drama during my time in high school, the audience response has always been dear to me. We were not paid to perform at school and the situation continued like that years after I had completed my high school I performed in Mkoba and at the Midlands State University on a good number of times for sheer audience

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<sup>66</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Amos Chibaya held by author on 15/09/13

approval. Well, it started with as a need to be famous at high school till the need for public glare disappeared as I grew older. I began to perform to put a smile on people's faces and to help them solve some critical social problems through my performances.

My evolution from young chap who needed fame to a responsible citizen who wanted to see change was largely shaped by the audience. As time went by, during post performance discussions I realised the audience believed in what we said in the numerous performances and they would encourage us to keep on with our good work. As such, central to Tavirima's performances to Tavirima's aim of achieving social change through performances of *chinyambera* traditional dance are the audience. Their ultimate aim when performing is to get the message to the audience so that they can action for development. Mitchel Matingwina explained the position of the audience in their work, she said:

First and foremost we get the material we use to make our plays from people's experiences they share with us. We don't get it from dreams or guess work. People tell us their problems even though we already know them. At times we also meet audiences who advise us on how to improve on content of songs and the dance routines. That is the reason why you see us speaking with the audience after a performance.

*“Kutanga zvatinoumba nazvo mitambo yedu tinozviwana kuvanhu, naizvozvo isu hatirotswi kana kufembera. Tinowana ruzivo kubva muvanhu ndivo vanotiudza matambudziko avo chero zvavo nesu tichimaziva. Dzimwe nguva tinotombowana vanotinyeurira about our performance kuti tagona papi uye tinofanira kugadzirisa papi. Ndosaka muchiona tichitaura nevanhu kana tapedza, tinoimbira vanhu and ndovanotipa mashoko<sup>67</sup>.*

By premising their performance on what the people want rather than what they want the people to be, Tavirima uses the bottom-up approach to development which is usually used in theatre for development. The bottom-up approach demands that the content of the performance be informed by the existential realities of the target audience. According to Kennedy Chinyowa:

When Tfd<sup>68</sup> practitioners have come to realise that a more effective development strategy is the endogenous approach, also called bottom-up or inside out approach. The indigenous model involves active participation of the target

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<sup>67</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Mitchel Matingwina held by author on 20/09/13

<sup>68</sup> Tfd is theatre for development a form of theatre used as a development communication strategy.

community in development. It recognises that processes of transformation are internal to the mechanisms of social systems and cannot necessarily be determined by external agents. In so far as it constitutes an internal process of action, reflection and praxis, the endogenous model has come to be characterised to make people's own local resources (2002:47).

Implied is that Tavirima are the voice of the voiceless, they speak on behalf of the masses of their community. Tavirima plays their role using *chinyambera* a cultural dance indigenous to their community making their performance a communally owned practise which people can claim ownership and responsibility. It is analogous to Augusto Boal's concept of Theatre of the Oppressed in which he says his approach stresses and is explanatory of a theatrical experience where the audience are no more ordinary audiences, but are part and parcel of the creative process (1993:24).

When we perform especially at political gatherings we will be intending to alert our leader that people are suffering, so in this case we are the voice of Zimbabwe. Our performances are informed by our experience in the community

*Patinenge tichiimba especially kana pari pagathering pane vakuru tinenge tisinga tarisi kuti ndeve bato ripi apo vanenge vachida kupinda pazvigaro vazive kuti vana vavo vari kuchema, saka apa we are the voice of Zimbabwe. Nokuti musociety tinenge tichinzwa zvichemo zvevanhu saka tinozwiisa kuvakuru through music and dance*<sup>69</sup>

The importance given to audience by Tavirima cannot be overemphasized. Through gathering people's views to inform them of the production of their song and dance repertoire Tavirima discards the conventional trickle-down approach to development which positions people at the receiving end of development communication without taking part in the making of interventions meant to benefit them. The trickle-down approach defies its intention as it can lead to prescribing solutions which the audiences do not identify with. The ineffectiveness of the trickle-down approach, which Tavirima runs away from through engaging audiences from the initial stages is explicated by Paulo Freire's who posits that:

The teacher talks about reality as if it were motionless, static, compartmentalised and predictable, or else he expounds on a topic completely alien to the existential realities of the students. His task is to "fill" the students with contents of his narration-contents which are detached from reality, disconnected from the totality engendered them and could give them significance. Words are emptied of their concreteness and become hollow, alienated and alienating verbosity. The

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<sup>69</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Faith Matongo on 13/09/13

outstanding characteristic of this narrative education, then, is the sonority of words not their transformative power (1970:1)

The audience also plays a part in Tavirima's performances through active participation during their show. Since most *chinyambera* songs that are used by Tavirima ride on known melodies of the *chinyambera* folk songs it is easy for the audience to join in the singing. Also, as alluded to earlier, the songs are responsorial and cyclic. The response phrase is usually very short such that if one is hearing the song for the first time they can easily join in the singing. Commenting on the participation of audiences in the performances Moyo said "since *chinyambera* is a cultural dance when Tavirima is performing people end up joining. They are not told what to do, but it just comes naturally. At times you hear chants from the audience which for example speak out against whoever is doing bad<sup>70</sup>,"

The audience also joins in the dancing creating an electric atmosphere where everyone is involved in the music performance in one way or the other. Such a phenomena means that the message is ingrained in people as they have not only witnessed and enjoyed Tavirima's performance but they actively took part in it as well. The audience participation makes it almost impossible for the law enforcement agents to arraign Tavirima Dance Group members for wrong doing. They might just need to hold everyone who sings and dances during the performances some of which have songs being led by the audience.

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<sup>70</sup> Excerpt from interview with Almon Moyo held by author on 06/09/13



Figure 3.5 Audience join in the dance arena at a performance held at Mkoba 16 Shopping Centre photo by Innocent Tinashe Mutero on 15/07/13

### **3.4 Performance Venue as a Catalyst of Criticism Performance**

As discussed earlier on, in this chapter, space for discussion and contesting ZANU PF's ideologies was reduced through oppressive legislation at the formation of the MDC in 1999. The arts arena was heavily monitored by state security agents leading to the ban of many songs and plays. However, Tavirima has managed to keep on staging performances which speak out against socio-political unrest in Zimbabwe. One of the strategies that Tavirima has used effectively is venue choice.

In Zimbabwe all artists and groups are required to affiliate with arts associations which are registered with the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe for them to be cleared to perform wherever they want. The National Arts Council does not regulate where one has to perform or themes which art should freely cover. In a press statement responding to allegation of oppressing the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe states "NACZ is keen to promote creativity and free expression and therefore does not interfere with the content of any works of art but endeavors to create a good environment for the consumption of the same<sup>71</sup>".

Zhou and Matongo, said that Tavirima as a group has managed to register with the National Arts Council and uses their clearance to get shows as well as to avoid getting arrested.

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<sup>71</sup> Press Statement by National Arts Council of Zimbabwe retrieved from <http://www.shout-africa.com/news/press-statement-issued-by-the-national-arts-council-of-zimbabwe/> on 17/11/13



However they acknowledge that the National Arts Council clearance is just permission to operate as an arts organisation, it is not a censorship certificate. Matongo said:

As performers what is of importance to us is to get a clearance from the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe. It's true we will be going against the censorship laws but our registration with the National Arts Council conceals that. Our registration with the National Arts Council gives us permission to go around performing wherever we want as long as we agree with venue proprietors.

*Isusu sevatambi chatinonyanyokoshesa ndechekuti tinenge tine mvumo here yevakuru veArts and Culture. Hongu tinenge tine mhosva kucensorship asi vanoti covernekuti mhosva dzacho hadzizonyanyokuonekwa sezvo tinenge tine mvumo yekufamba tichiita mashows edu kubva kuNational Arts Council of Zimbabwe. Chiripo ndechekuti kuti uwane mutero we National Arts Council panodiwa kamari kaunobhadhara kutanga kwegore wowana mvumo yekuperformer kwese kwaunoda mushure mekunge wawirirana nevaridzi venzvimbo<sup>72</sup>*

Zhou added that they produced the National Arts Council letter affirming that they are artists who are allowed to perform everywhere and it even helped them from getting arrested.

Some of the venues at which Tavirima performs are manned by people whose socio-political challenges are reflected in Tavirima songs and dances. For instance, they perform at schools through alliances they have had with teachers who are said to be lowly paid and a disgruntled lot. They also perform in beer halls where venue proprietors allow them since they will be giving free entertainment.

Their most attended performances are at rallies where they take advantage of people gathered for political parties. Chibaya also notes that at political gatherings Tavirima is not harassed by the police since he would have notified them of his intention of holding a rally as enunciated by the Public Order and Security Act (2001). Therefore the group is not scathed by the repressive laws as all proceedings will under the meeting's convener's responsibility. Chibaya said the following of Tavirima's performances at his rallies and other public gatherings:

When we hold our meetings we seek permission from the police. Of course legally we are supposed to simply notify them not seeking permission because those are two different things. So when they come to perform at our gatherings, they would be coming to perform at sanctioned gatherings. Furthermore when

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<sup>72</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Faith Matongo on 13/09/13

there is something wrong legally the person to face is the convener of the meeting, so I can safely say they will be performing at sanctioned meetings<sup>73</sup>.

Nyengera also confirmed that performing arts group twin themselves with other organisations to so as to find space to reach out to the people. He added that at times they even lie to the police about the intention of their performances when need arises.

Sometimes we work with community based organisations as our agents. We have a network of community based organisations who work to bring social change. We don't bother ourselves with putting posters or putting adverts in the television or the radio we have partners who do that for us. Sometimes before we go out for our performance we request a clearance from the police as if it's not a political performance<sup>74</sup>

Indeed the Public Order and Security Act demands that when one wants to convene a public meeting they should notify the police about the meeting. Section (25) subsection (5), of the Act stipulates that the “organiser of a public gathering shall give at least four clear days’ written notice of the holding of the gathering to the regulating authority for the area in which the gathering is to be held”. The Act thus gives Tavirima to work in cahoots with meeting conveners and venue owners in advocating for socio-political space and recognition.



Figure 3.6 Tavirima performing at Mkoba 6 Shopping Centre Photo by Innocent Tinashe Mutero

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<sup>73</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Amos Chibaya held by author on 15/09/13

<sup>74</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Champagne Nyengera held by author on 03/09/13



Figure 3.7 Tavirima performing at Takwirira Primary School. Photo by Innocent Tinashe Mutero

### 3.5 Community's Appreciation of Tavirima's work

For the period that I conducted fieldwork for this dissertation, I became one with Tavirima, and I would spend most of my time with them during and after rehearsals as well as at their shows. I noted that the group had quite a large fan base in Mkoba, such that when I was walking around with most of them in Mkoba, they would be greeted everywhere. They had become more recognisable than I used to be recognised when I was still performing in Mkoba before moving to Harare. It was only sufficient for me to find out how people received the *chinyamvera* performances from the Tavirima members themselves. Matongo had this to say on the community's reception of their work:

From the shows we have held to date we have never had an unappreciative audience. We are always warmly received everywhere we go, include by young people. At times some will come to us asking to be members of our group.

*Pamashows atakaita hatisati tambosangana nematambudziko ekuti vanhu havatitambiri. Kwese kwatinoenda even neyoung generation tinotambirwa zvakana. At times unotozoona veyoung generation vouya vachiti toda kudzidziswa ngona kana kutamba<sup>75</sup>.*

It is indeed naïve to take Matongo's assertion and conclude that Tavirima has been effective enough to warrant them of a warm reception from the society. To validate her claims I sought the views of non-members of Tavirima and Nyengera had this say:

The audience are really appreciative, they are overwhelmed by the performances by Tavirima Traditional Dance Group. I haven't heard of any negative responses.

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<sup>75</sup> Excerpt from an interview with faith Matongo held by author on 113/09/13

In fact there are some people who want to join them. They are inspiring other young people<sup>76</sup>.

Both Nyengera and Matongo's responses indicated that Tavirima was effectively getting the message to people, an assertion which was further confirmed by Chibaya who referred me to a performance that Tavirima did at Mkoba Poly Clinic where the gathered people jostled to watch Tavirima perform, while some actually joined in the dancing arena. Chibaya said the people's joy with seeing Tavirima perform shows that not only did they like them but they were starved for such performances. He went on to suggest that Tavirima's performance filled in the gap that has been created by repressive laws which limited spheres of public discussion on political issues.

Tavirima's performances have also been well received by some members of the police force, a situation which Masarira suggests has aided them to continue working with little interference from the police. Linda observes that:

In our community people appreciate our work as a result we have been called to perform at a number of occasions. I think even the police like our work because they are also facing the same challenges with us and we sing about such challenges

*Munharaunda matigere ndinoona sekuti vanhu vanotitambira nekuti takadeedzwa kwakawanda muzvikoro. Kana naivo vanosungawo vanotifarira nekuti vanenge vachiona matambudziko mamwe chete nesu, saka vanozviona imomo*<sup>77</sup>

Commenting on their relationship with the police Dube concurred with Masarira that the police did not see much fault in their work since the work objectively mirrored the prevailing situation in Zimbabwe. The government workers in Zimbabwe are underpaid. Nyika Gwanyowa posits that "the majority of the civil servants in Zimbabwe are earning well below the poverty datum line with the lowest paid civil servant earning close to \$180 a month<sup>78</sup>". As such government workers are susceptible to identify with the message in Tavirima's performance. An in-depth analysis of Tavirima's songs and dances is presented in the following chapter.

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<sup>76</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Champagne Nyengera on 03/09/13

<sup>77</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Linda Masarira held by author on 28/09/13

<sup>78</sup> Wage negotiations in Zimbabwe Civil Service retrieved from <http://column.global-labour-university.org/2012/07/wage-negotiations-for-public-service-in.html> on 18/11/2013

### **3.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter discussed the inconsistencies of the Zimbabwean law explaining how on one hand it gives freedom of expression and freedom of association and on the other hand it represses the same freedoms. The chapter analysed the law as well as gathered views from other scholars on the issue of the illegality of some statutes. It also gathered the legal view of Amos Chibaya the Honourable Member of Parliament for Mkoba constituency on how effective the law is at curtailing ‘criticism performance’. Furthermore, the Chapter discussed other strategies and roles of audiences and venues used by Tavirima Traditional Dance Group in fuelling criticism performance as well avoiding arrest. The chapter also discussed how Tavirima has taken advantage of aligning themselves to Mbuya Nehanda whose political and cultural legacy is endowed by Zimbabweans from across the political breadth. Tavirima also weaves their criticism performances in the Shona language.



## CHAPTER FOUR CONTENT ANALYSIS OF TAVIRIMA'S PERFORMANCES

### 4.1 Song as a Site of Struggle

In addressing song as an agent for social change my focus is on how songs reflect, challenge, resist and mediate power in the prevailing socio-political crisis in Zimbabwe. I follow the Subject Centred Ethnography Model which has three constructs namely, time, metaphor and place. It upholds that observing the interaction of people occupying slightly different subject positions but interacting in time and place, can help to establish how that specific time and place influences the ways in which people make and experience music (Timothy Rice, 2003:157). However, this dissertation makes use of two of the three constructs of the model which are, time and metaphor.

The study uses the metaphor, 'music as a social behaviour' to establish how Tavirima's *chinyambera* performances enact present day social and political structures, as well as how it models alternatives to existing structures. Rice posits "musical performances may enact past or present social structures, they may model alternatives to existing structures, or they may help to imagine future structures" (2003:164). Therefore, the analysis will bring closer the realities of the Zimbabwean crisis as it is experienced by members of Tavirima in their everyday life and how they address their challenges and aspirations in *chinyambera* song and dance. Tavirima uses narrative inquiry to come up with material for their performances thereby mirroring the existential realities of Zimbabweans in song and dance. The members share their life experiences and they create some of their songs based on individual lived experiences. When asked about how they come up with their songs and dance routines Zhou had this to say:

...our performances are inspired by our observations of paining social ills which we feel they need to be corrected. As a result, when we meet as a group we look for ways to effectively package the messages such that it reaches its intended recipients for them to identify the wrong or good that they will be doing. We also get motivation from our personal experiences, and these are very important because they are factual.

...*kazhinji zvinhu zvakaita saizvozvo tinenge tazviona zvichiitika munyika zivotigwadza mumoyo, toshaiwa kuti tingaizviita sei. Takaungana sechikwata*

*totsvaga nzira dzekuti tozwiisa kuvanhu kuti zvikwanise kungofamba kusvika iko kuvaridzi vazvo kuti vakwanisewo kuona kuti zvavari kuita zvakashata kana kuti zvakana. Zvatinenge takambosangana nazvowo pakati pedu tinotombozvitsvaka tombozvidramatiser. Ipapo zvakatikoshera zvikuru nekuti tinenge tichitova nemafacts chaiwo chaiwo ezvokwadi kuti hama dzedu pasazowanikwa hama dzedu dzinowira futi mudambudziko iri<sup>79</sup>*

Razor, commented on the same subject and was in agreement with Zhou that their performances are not inspired by sheer imagination, rather they factor real life experiences. According to Razor, they consider ideas and input from everyone when making the *chinyambera* performances.

“We welcome input from anyone who knows something about *chinyambera* so that we learn from each and every person we meet. We do not have much of bureaucracy in the group anyone’s input can shape our productions”.

*“Mafambisiro atinoita ndeekuti umwe neumwe ane zvake zvaanoziva mukati memutambo wakaita seuyu tinenge tichida kuti tinge tichijoinana naye achitidzidzisa zvake zvainazvo izvozvo isu tozviratidza vanhu tazvibanidza nezvedu zvatinenge tinazvo. Hatina watinege tichiti uyu ndiye mukuru wemutambo nekuti umwe neumwe anenge ane chekuita mumutambo iwoyo”<sup>80</sup>.*

The analysis and interpretation of songs in Tavirima’s repertoire will not only look at the texts and the meanings of the musical communication but will also look at the motivations which inspire the message in the music, as it seeks to find out the circumstances through which their performances have become a tool to speak out against the authoritarian rule and poor social services delivery in Zimbabwe. Brown and Volgsten postulates that when considering the underlying motivation of a message in music, one has to “...offer the benefit of considering the full gamut of processes from production to reception, permitting consideration of both intended outcomes and actual effect” (2006:6).

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<sup>79</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Gilbert Zhou held by author on 07/09/13

<sup>80</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Joe Razor held by author on 15/09/13



The study looks into Tavirima's *chinyambera* songs and dances created and performed between the year 2009 when the Government of National Unity was established to the post July 31 2013 election period. Members of Tavirima have faced political, social and economic woes emanating from both ZANU PF's long repressive rule and the poignant and stagnant Government of National Unity. This time period provides a three layered phase in Zimbabwe's politics as such the music will be analysed in cognisance of the time strata which includes the pre-election, election period and finally the post election period. First, the Inclusive Government brought hope and Zimbabweans rejoiced about it through song and dance. The Government then failed to deliver to the expectations of the people as ZANU PF was accused of derailing the progress of the Government of National Unity. Percyslage Chigora and Tobias Guzura posit that "Mugabe's ZANU- PF shows no interest in living to the letter of the Global Political Agreement (GPA) reached on Sept 15, 2008" (2011:24). ZANU PF's machinations in making the unity government dysfunctional also attracted criticism from artist and the third phase of the Zimbabwe's 5 year period of electioneering ended with elections on 31 July 2013.

#### **4.1.1 Songs for Hope in the Inclusive Government**

In 2009 Robert Gabriel Mugabe, Morgan Tsvangirai and Arthur Mutambara signed the Global Political Agreement which gave birth to an Inclusive government anticipated by many Zimbabweans to bring to an end the abysmal social, political and economic woes. Chigora and Guzura posit that "the unity government brought hope not only to Zimbabweans but also to the international community for many view it as a purveyor of better moves for the country and its overall standing in the region and beyond" (2011:20). Tavirima was not to be left out in celebrating the Government of National Unity; they also have songs reminiscing about the 2008 era which preceded the Government of National Unity. The year 2008 was marred with politically motivated violence Bratton and Masunungure (2008). According to Razor, *Muroyi wehama* is one of such songs, whose subject is the inter-party violence. Razor posits that:

The song '*Muroyi wehama*' reminds me of what happens in our country on the political front. We betray and hate each other because of diverging political views. Therefore, when sing the song I see a stark similarity with what happened in 2008

*Kasong kanonzi ini ndainge ndoroiwa nemuroyi wehama. Mhaiwe ndainge ndaurawa nemuroyi wepamba. Rwuyo urwu rwunondifungisa zvinoitika muno munyika medu maerarerano nematongerwo enyika. Tinopandukirana paukama*

*hwedu maererano nokuti umwe nemwe anenge ane bato rake raanoda, saka ndinoto ndikarwuimba ndinoona zvichinyatsoenderana nezvakaitika kunyanya mugore ra2008<sup>81</sup>.*

The song speaks about how Zimbabweans as a people were fighting and killing one another over differences in political preferences.

#### Translation Textual Analysis and Transcription of *Muroyi wehama*

Lead: <i>Ini ndaingwe ndouraiwa, Hona nemuroyi wehama</i>	I was almost killed buy my witching relative.
Response: <i>Heya siyana naye</i>	Just leave him!
Lead: <i>Ini ndaingwe ndouraiwa</i>	I was almost killed
Response: <i>Heya siyana naye</i>	Just leave him!
Lead: <i>Hona Muroyi wepamba</i>	See, he is a witch from my home
Response: <i>Heya siyana naye</i>	Just leave him!
Lead: <i>Hona Muroyi wehama</i>	See, the witch is family
Response: <i>Heya siyana naye</i>	Just leave him!

Razor adds that though the song recollects the violent 2008 era, it does not condone violence as it emphatically propagates for peace through the response. In essence the song is a dialogue between the lead and the response where the lead singer carries the voice of a surviving violence victim. The perpetrator of violence is referred as *muroyi*. According to Gordon Chavhunduka, “*muroyi* means a witch, a sorcerer, a poisoner, a person who fails to carry out the necessary rituals for his dead relatives, a person who commits an anti-social act or even just a troublemaker” (1980:132). The lead phrase sings *Ini ndaingwe ndouraiwa, Hona nemuroyi wehama* loosely translated I was almost killed buy my witching relative. Implied in the phrase is that the *muroyi* and his victim are related. Therefore, the song manages to capture the political polarity that was in Zimbabwe in 2008 where the country was at the verge of slipping into a civil war as there was increased political intolerance. In the context of years coming after 2008 the song serves to discourage violent behaviour by labelling one who perpetrates violence *muroyi*. A person labelled as *muroyi* in Zimbabwe is a pariah.

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<sup>81</sup>Excerpt from an interview with Joe Razor held by author on 15/09/13

# MUROYI WEHAMA

Transcribed by Innocent T. Mutero

Chinyamvera Traditional Song

1 - ni nda - nge ndo royi wa Ho-na - nem' - ro - yi-we-ha - ma

He ha - si ya na na - ye He ha - si -

5 I - ni nda - nge ndo - royi wa Ho-na nem' ro-yi-we - ha - ma

ya - na na - ye He ha si-ya - na - na - ye He ha

9 Ho - mu ro-yi-nhai ba ba Ho - mu-ro - yi-we-nha - mo

— si ya na na ye He ha si-ya-na-na - ye

To emphasise that people should refrain from violence the response phrase of the song does not change it continuously goes ‘*heya siyana naye*’ literally meaning ‘Just leave him!’ Contextually the response recognises that indeed there was violence and the perpetrators are known and it urges the victims of violence not to fight back as that will lead to continued violence. The need to reconcile and forgive each other after the dreadful 2008 violence was also echoed by the Government of Zimbabwe through the formation of the Ministry of National Healing and Reconciliation which was co-headed by Sekai Holland from the MDC and John Nkomo from ZANU PF.

Zimbabweans also celebrated the spirit of inclusivity shown by ZANU PF and MDC when they agreed to the Global Political Agreement<sup>82</sup>. Tavirima captured Zimbabwe’s moment of happiness and renewed hope through song. When asked how governance and politics of Zimbabwe influences their making of *chinyambera* Masararira had this to say:

Let me say the going was tough in the past years but I remember in 2009, we had a song which we sang called *vakuru tinotenda mukasunga munosunungura*. We did this song because things were getting better, so we would sing and celebrate even our dance was celebratory as imitated flying.

*Ndingati zvakanga zvakaoma makore apfuura asi ndicharangarira gore ra2009 tine kambo katakamboimba kanoti vakuruwe tazotenda, mukasunga munosunungura. Izvi takazviimba tichipemberera nekuti zvinhu zvakanga zvava pari nani. Saka taitamba tichipemberera tichifara tichisimudza maoko tichiita setinobhururuka tichipemberera*<sup>83</sup>.

As Masarira has already said, the message in the song is that of thanksgiving directed to political leaders of Zimbabwe for agreeing to set up an Inclusive Government.

Translation, Textual Analysis and Transcription of Chirombo

*Lead: Vakuruwe, tinotenda*

We are grateful to you our leaders

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<sup>82</sup> Global Political Agreement is the Framework Document which details what the Government of National Unity had to achieve and the relationship of the three parties to the agreement

<sup>83</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Linda Masarira held by the author on 19/11/13

*Response: Heha Chirombo iwe*

*Lead: Mukasunga munosunungura*

*Response: Heha Chirombo iwe*

*Lead: Saka Ndazotenda*

*Response: Heha Chirombo iwe*

*Lead: Munosunga munosungura*

Oh yeah, you Chirombo

If you tighten your grip, you will eventually loosen it.

Oh yeah, you Chirombo

That's why I am thankful

Oh yeah, you Chirombo

You tighten and you loosen

The song is satirical and it achieves that by juxtaposing two actions that are accredited to political leaders. *Munosunga* means you can make things hard and the reverse is true for *munosunungura*. When the lead calls *munosunga munosunungura* he creates an oxymoron loosely translated in the context of Zimbabwe to mean an 'authoritarian democracy'. Implied by the satire is the leaders are the ones who brought in suffering and it's them again who will end the suffering. The response sings *chirombo iwe* which is Shona for carnivorous animal the song is thus a parody, likening the political leaders as flesh eating animals. Biblically, human beings were created to reign over all plant and animal life. However, carnivores can devour human flesh. Likewise, the ordinary people give politicians the mandate to lead them but the politicians can abuse the mandate and turn against people.



Figure 4.1 Albert dancing to *chirombo* stretching out his hands as if he is flying. Photo by Innocent Tinashe Mutero

The use of satire helps Tavarima to fearlessly expose the government and negotiate for a new democratic and just course. According to Michael Drewett "satire has the capacity to form part of an oppositional culture, is able to relegate aspects of the dominant culture to the margins, and at least symbolically enable the marginalised to take over the centre by means of ridicule" (2002:82). However, in the spirit of inclusivity, the song does not mention the

name of the leader or the political affiliation of the said leader. I, therefore, take the song as embracing the selfless efforts of the three opposing political parties which agreed to form an Inclusive Government with the goal of alleviating the plight of Zimbabweans.

#### 4.1.2 Songs of Dismay at the Ineffectiveness of the Inclusive Government

Zimbabwe's political agreement brought short lived joy to Zimbabweans as ZANU PF was not sincere in working towards bettering the lives of ordinary Zimbabweans. According to Dewa Mavhinga, "far from taking decisive steps to heal Zimbabwe and permanently end political conflict, it appears as if ZANU-PF only called a truce, making temporary commitment to democratic reform" (2011:9). In response to the futility of Zimbabwe's Inclusive Government and ZANU PF's unrepentant dictatorial tendencies, Tavirima has performed a lot of *chinyambera* songs which speak out against repression. Masarira points out that one of such songs is *Chidembo ndipe muswe* translated to Skunk, can you lend me your tail. Masarira said:

We did not see the change that we expected from the Inclusive Government. Life was becoming harder by the day. In response to that we did the song *chidembo chinonhuwa*. A skunk is an animal which produces bad odour as such we were suffocating from the stench of the prevailing environment. There was no change coming so we wanted the skunk to leave us and the same time we wanted to aid from other countries.

*Kubva pa2009 takazoimba chidembo chinonhuwa nekuti hapana change chichachinja zvinhu zvanga zvongoramba zvoramba zvongooma. Ehe chidembo imhuka inonhuwa zvataimbira apa ndezvekuti takanga tonhuwirawa pasina change saka taida kuti chidembo chibve matiri tiwane change, taitotsvaka rubatsiro kubva kune dzimwe nyika.*<sup>84</sup>

#### Translation, Textual Analysis and Transcription of *Chidembo ndipe Muswe*

Lead: <i>Ndipe muswe, ndipe'we ndipe muswe unonhuwa</i>	Can you lend me your tail you have messed the air
Response: <i>Chidembo ndipe muswe</i>	Skunk lend me your tail
Lead: <i>Ndipe muswe, ndipe'we ndipe muswe unonhuwa</i>	Can you lend me your tail you have messed the air
Response: <i>Chidembo ndipe muswe</i>	Skunk lend me your tail

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<sup>84</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Linda Masarira held by author on 06/09/13

# CHIDEMBO NDIPE MSWE

Transcribed by Innocent T. Mutero

Chinyamvera Traditional Song

Call      Ndi-pe - mswe      ndi - pe\_\_\_\_\_      Ndi-pe - mswe - u - no -

Response

Response

3      nhu wa      Ndi-pe - mswe - ndi-pe\_\_\_\_\_      Ndi-pe - mswe-u-no -

Chi-de-mbo - ndi-pe - mswe      Chi-de-mbo - ndi-pe - mswe

7      nhu-wa      Ndi-pe-mswe - ndi-pe\_\_\_\_\_      Ndi-pe - mswe-u-no - nhu wa

Chi-de-mbo - ndi-pe-mswe      Chi-de-mbo - ndi-pe - mswe.

The song is a plea for air freshening after the skunk has messed the air. Skunks are notorious for their anal scent glands, which they can use as a defensive weapon. Ironically the plea to freshen up the air is made to the skunk itself. The lead singer will be asking for the skunk's tail to for use as a whisker to freshen up the air. As Masarira has alluded the song was done in the background of failure by the unity government in essence Tavirima did the song asking for an end to the ill performing government as well as calling for elections

Explaining the song as a call for aid comes from the backdrop that Zimbabwean politics attributes some of its stability to the efforts of external influences that came in to negotiate the political impasse between ZANU PF and MDC. The Inclusive Government was brought about as a result of mediation efforts by Thabo Mbeki and Jacob Zuma. In addition, the country is under targeted sanctions which are meant to incentivize ZANU PF to uphold the rule of law. To that, end in relationship to pleading for external help, the skunk ceases to be the failing leaders. In this context the skunk becomes aiding nations. The lead vocalist is equating aiding nations to the asking them to lend him the stench so that he can mess the air and disturb the ruling party.

Tavirima takes most of their songs from the public domain, and they change the lyrics a bit to fit the context. However they have some songs that do not make any changes to as they feel the songs already present the message as they intend it to reach to the audience. One such song is *Gondo guru*. Matingwina shared that:

In the past the political environment was not harsh as it is today, people are being harassed in their homes and in the streets. We sing a song called *gondo guru*, in which, our subject is the ruling party whose party symbol is a bird. The eagle steals chicks from hens and flies away with chicks likewise our leaders are squandering national resources meant for the nation alone.

*Matongerwo chaiwo ekare izvi zvaisaitika kare izvi zvekuti vanhu vanhu vanoshungurudzika mudzimba, vanhu vari kushungurudzika mumigwagwa. Tine nziyo yatinoimba yatinoti gondo guru. Munziyo iyi idimikira ratinenge tichiimba nezvaro webato riri kutonga rine mucherechedzo weshiri. Gondo guru iri rinenge richitora vana vehuku. Huku dzatiri kureva apa vanhu. Munooona kuti vakuru vedu vari kutora zvavari kufanira kupa vanhu vodya sezvinoita gondo rinobhururuka rody rega.*<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup>Excerpt from an interview with Mitchel Matingwina held by author on 07/09/13



Translation, Textual Analysis and Transcription of *Gondo Guru*

Lead: <i>Mutorahuku mariona</i> ?	Have you seen the chick snatcher?
Response: <i>Gondo mutora huku</i>	The Eagle is the chick snatcher
Lead: <i>Mutora huku Gondo iro</i>	There is chick snatcher it's an eagle
Response: <i>Gondo Mutora huku</i>	The Eagle is the chick snatcher
Lead: <i>Gondo guru KwaKatsande</i>	The big eagle is at the Katsandes
Response: <i>Gondo mutora huku</i>	The Eagle is the chick snatcher
Lead: <i>Mutorahuku mariona</i>	You have seen the chick snatcher
Response: <i>Gondo mutora huku</i>	The Eagle is the chick snatcher
Lead: <i>Gondo guru mariona</i>	You have seen the big eagle
Response: <i>Gondo mutora huku</i>	The Eagle is the chick snatcher

From its cultural context the song has the lead voice of a peasant farmer whose chick has been snatched by an eagle. Besides eagles having the notoriety of snatching chicks, the one described in this song is big therefore it can whisk away the chicks with ease. The response is a voice of affirmation that indeed the eagle is devastating.

In the political context as alluded to by Matingwina the song aptly brings out ZANU PF's penchant of amassing wealth at the expense of ordinary people. Wilf Mbanga posits that "The indigenisation legislation, whereby all foreign and white-owned companies are required to cede 51% of their shares to black Zimbabweans, has been touted as a populist move. All but the most desperate and naive know that this is just another ploy for the few self-styled 'liberators' to grab yet more wealth in the name of the people" (2012:459).


In addition the eagle as presented in the song is big therefore it uses its size to its advantage. In the same manner ZANU PF had the bullying big brother attitude, regardless of the presence of other parties in Inclusive Government. According to Norma Kriger, "The incorporation of 'opposition' parties in the government changed the political context but not ZANU PF's de facto rule through violence, intimidation, and repression against the 'opposition' in appeals"(2012:12). It is such an attitude which influences Tavirima to speak out against ZANU PF's ills through *chinyambera* song and dance with a view to bring about social change.


# GONDO GURU


Transcribed by Innocent T. Mutero

Chinyamvera Traditional Song

Go ndo gu - ru kwa Ka - tsa nde                      Go ndo gu - ru kwa Ka

Call 

Response 1 

Response 2 

Ho\_\_ na ra - pe-dza hu - ku


7                      tsa- nde                      Go ndo gu -ru wa ri - o - na






Go - ndo ra - pe dza hu - ku                      Go - ndo ra - pe dza hu -



14                      Ta ri - o na                      Ku - to -re hu - ku Go-ndo i - ro



ku                      Go\_\_ ndo                      Go\_\_ ndo

One of Tavirima's most confrontational songs is called *wandigumburisa*. literally translated the title means you have you have 'incensed me'. The song is addressed to all people in authority who fail to achieve their mandate. I have a similar interpretation of the song with

Moyo and Nyengera who both felt that the message in the song was addressed to perpetrators of human rights abuse. In explaining what he felt the song meant Nyengera said:

Normally Tavirima's songs dwell on such issues as human rights abuses. You know in this country we have the problem of oppression since we have a problem of monopoly in terms of politics. One example of a song in which they speak about human rights abuses is called *wandinyan'anyura* which simply means you have confused me. The police are confusing the people sometimes they beat people for no reason, sometimes they beat up people who are trying to exercise their rights<sup>86</sup>

Moyo picked *wandinyan'anyura* to be one such song which unequivocally addressed the people's anger towards bad governance and poor services delivery. In unpacking the criticism quality of Tavirima's performances of *chinyambera* songs and dances Moyo's explanation was that some of Tavirima's songs explicitly spoke out gains the gross human rights abuses and poor services delivery Zimbabwe are subjected to by their government. Below is what he had to say:

*Nyan'anyura* means you have provoked me. It's actually speaking that I have been provoked so Tavirima members will be releasing their anger through dancing. At times it is difficult to point fingers at a person who has provoked you and also some situations can provoke you. Such situations are being caused by maybe politics, for example there might be a health hazard people are not really comfortable with. If we were to trace the root of the problem we might find out that someone the government or the ministry of health itself might have caused the problem. It becomes difficult to point fingers since there are a lot people involved but it all comes back to the political situation. So when Tavirima sings *wandinyan'anyura* they will be speaking to the government alerting them that they are not comfortable with the life they lead<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Champagne Nyengera held by author 03/09/13

<sup>87</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Almon Moyo held by author on the 06/09/13

# WANDIGUMBURISA

Trabscribed by Innocent T. Mutero

Chinyambera Traditional Dance

Call      Wa - ndi - gu —      mbu - ri - sa                      Wa - ndi - i - ta —      mu - nhu - we -

Response      Gu - mbu - ri - sa - wa - no - ndi ta - mu - nhu - we -

7      nha - mo                                      Wa - ndi - nya —                      n'a - nu - ra

nha - mo - gu - mbu - ri - sa                      -                      -                      -                      -                      Nya -

12                                      Wa - ndi - i - ta - mu - nhu - we - nha - mo

n'a - nu - ra - wa - ndi - i - ta - mu - nhu - we - nha - mo - gu - mbu - ri - sa

## Textual Analysis

Lead: *Wandinyan'anyura*

You have provoked me

Response: *Nyan'anyura wandiita munhu wenhamo* You provoked me and you have invited poverty unto me

Lead: *Wandigumburisa*

You have incensed me

Response: *Gumburisa wandiita munhu wenhamo*

You have incensed me by impoverishing me

Another song with a similar tone of accusation to the government is titled *samatenga baba* meaning Heavenly father.

## SAMATENGA BABA

Transcribed by Innocent T. Mutero

Chinyamvera Traditional Song

Sa - ma - te nga Ba - ba, I - ni ndo-u - ra - yi - wa, He - ha

Call

Response

Response

Sa ma - te nga Ba - ba, I - ni ndo-u - ra - yi wa.

4 he - i-in do-u-ra - yi, Sa-ma-te-nga-Ba - ba, I - ni ndo-u-ra - yi - wa, He-ha

Sa-ma-te-nga Ba - ba, I - ini ndo-u ra - yi - wa

8 he - I - ni ndo - u - ra - yi Sa - ma - te - nga Ba -

10 ba, I - ni ndo - u - ra - yi - wa Sa - ma - te - nga Ba  
He - ha - he - I - ni ndo - u - ra - yi

ba I - ni - ndo - u - ra - yi - |

## Translation, Textual Analysis and Translation of *Samatenga baba*

Lead: <i>Ndouraiwa ini ndouraiwa</i>	I am being murdered
Response: <i>Samatenga baba ini ndouraiwa</i>	Heavenly father I am being murdered
Lead: <i>Hehahe ini ndouraiwa</i>	(Wailing) I am being killed
Response: <i>Samatenga baba ini ndouraiwa</i>	Heavenly father I am being murdered

The song is a prayer to God where the lead vocalist is in trouble and seeking audience and assistance to escape from torture. The response phrase is there to give the exact destination that the call for assistance is leading to as it calls “Heavenly father I am being killed which is unlike the lead phrase which is an open call for assistance.

Contextually, *Samatenga baba* is a prayer to God coming from a devastated people. It shows the amount of suffering that Zimbabweans went through under the leadership of Robert Mugabe in the Inclusive Government. The suffering is equated to being killed. People felt the brunt of ZANU PF’s policies and the party’s insincerity to commit to the word of the Global Political Agreement.

The song also resonates with the prevailing situation in Zimbabwe where the church has joined in bringing about social change as well as fighting against totalitarianism. Francisca Chimhanda posits that “the church has attempted to initiate a nation-wide debate in articulating the dream and vision for a new democratic Zimbabwe” (2009:41). The song shows that the people of Zimbabwe have lost hope in elections as democratic processes which can usher in a new government. Zimbabweans now put their hope in God as elections have failed to bring change.

### **4.1.3 Songs calling a for Political Change**

Though Zimbabweans have lost hope in elections during the period running to 31 July 2013, Tavirima was involved in the thick of things raising an awareness of the possibilities of a better future which could be brought through votes. Even though Matongo and Zhou indicated that as an organisation they did not support any party but they are guided by set organisational values and principles; during the campaign period their music was largely

routing for the MDC. At one of their performances at Mkoba Poly Clinic, they performed a song titled *kumandega*, which means ‘lonesome’. This song was adapted from another folk song called *kumatenga* or *mudzimu wangu* meaning ‘to heavens’ or ‘my ancestors’. Original *kumatenga* is a plea to for guidance to the ancestors by one who thinks they have forsaken by their ancestors. The original song’s lyrics are ‘*mudzimu yangu baba makandisiya ndiri ndega*,. *Ndoenda nani kumatenga*’ meaning my ancestors you have forsaken me and who will guide me to heaven.

#### Translation, Textual Analysis and Transcription

Lead: <i>Ndoenda nani kumandega ini ndoenda nani kumandega</i>	Who will accompany me to the land of loners
Response: <i>Nyarara mwana</i>	Shush child
Lead: <i>Sekuru vangu baba</i>	My grandfather
Response: <i>Nyarara mwana</i>	Don’t cry child
Lead: <i>Vakandisiya ndiri ndega</i>	He left me alone
Response: <i>Nyarara mwana</i>	Shush child
Lead: <i>Ndoenda nani kumandega</i>	Who do I go with to the land of loners

Dube explains that their intention in singing *kumandega* was to campaign for Morgan Tsvangirai with the hope that if he wins the elections his government will usher in a better Zimbabwe. An analysis of the text in relationship to what Dube said reveals that when the lead singer goes *ndoenda nani kumandega*, ‘who will accompany me to the land of lonely people. He is wondering who will accompany him to the promised land. He goes on singing *sekuru vangu ini vakandisiya ndiri ndega* ‘my grandfather left me alone’. One of the MDC’s trump cards during their election campaign was Mugabe’s advancing age. The octogenarian leader has been at the helm of Zimbabwe from 1980 when Zimbabwe got her independence. He has led a government which has left ordinary Zimbabweans wallowing in poverty hence Tavirima sings *sekuru vangu makandisiya ndiri ndega* ‘ grandfather you left me alone’.

The response ‘*nyarara mwana*’ is a call to the troubled lead to shush. The response is intended to work as a lullaby, tranquilizing the uneasiness in the disturbed child (Emmanuale Chiwome, 1992:3). It gives hope and assurance that things will be alright; there is no need to keep on crying.

# KUMANDENGA

Transcribed by Innocent T. Mutero

Chinyamvera Traditional Song

Ndo-e-nda na-ni - ku - ma -nde nga - nya - ra — ra Ndo e nda- na ni - ku

Call 

Response 1 

Response 2 

Nya - ra — ra Mwa na

3 ma -nde - ga Ndo-e-nda -na-ni - ku - ma -nde - ga Ho nya - ra



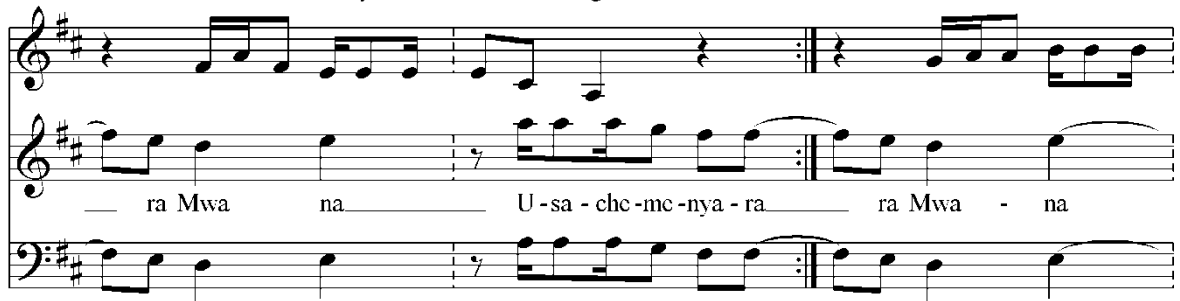
— He - he — Nya - ra — ra Mwa - na U - sa - che - me - nya - ra —

6 — ra Ndo-e-nda-na-ni ku - ma -nde - ga Ho -Se-ku-ru- wa ngu Ba ba —



— ra Mwa - na He - he — Nya - ra — ra Mwa - na He - he — Nya - ra

10 Va-ka-ndi - si - ya - ndi - ri - nde - ga Ndo-e-nda -na-ni - ku



— ra Mwa na — U - sa - che - me - nya - ra — ra Mwa - na





Figure 4.2 Tavirima members showing the open palm which is the symbol of the MDC. Photo by Innocent Tinashe Mutero

To show their resilience and resolution of never quitting on their quest for a better Zimbabwe, the group had a song titled *kumakura kwaita moto* in their repertoire. Literally translated *kumakura kwaita moto* means ‘the old fields are burning.’

#### Translation, Textual Analysis and Transcription

Lead: <i>Huya uone iwe kwaita moto</i>	Come and see there is a fire
Response: <i>Kumakura kwaita moto</i>	The deserted fields are burning
Lead: <i>Huya uwone uwe kumakura kwaita moto</i>	Come and see there is a fire the deserted fields are burning
Response: <i>Kumakura kwaita moto</i>	The deserted fields are burning
Lead: <i>Wedendera</i>	Bright as the hornbill

Through calling *kumakura kwaita moto* the song is a call for attention to the devastating state that Zimbabwe is in due to plundering of national resources and bad governance by the ruling party. *Kumakura* means deserted field implying that the place, in this case Zimbabwe is no longer a safe place to stay. Through the song it becomes an inconceivable idea to cling on to a Zimbabwe which is burning. The lead singer also makes use of a metaphor to show the ravaging effect of the fire. *Dendera* is the Shona name for hornbill which is a bird

“characterized by a long, down-curved bill which is frequently brightly colored<sup>88</sup>”. *Moto wendera* is thus used to show that the fire is illuminating bright like a hornbill.

The response *kumakura kwaita moto* is an acknowledgement that indeed the Zimbabwean situation is dire. In this song which they used in the run up to the elections Tavirima was urging the electorate not to vote for ZANU PF as it had a well-documented history of plundering national resources at the expense of poor people. ZANU PF also used its liberation war credentials to appeal to the masses (Jephias Mapuva, 2010: 247). The liberation war credits were a historical factor which did not have a say in solving the problems bedeviling Zimbabwe. Therefore, Tavirima’s music was bringing awareness to making political choices capable of bringing social change. Titus Stephen and Bello Abayomi posit that “The product of music in the electioneering campaign must be able to function at the best and highest levels of the country's political development” (2012:168).

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<sup>88</sup> Description of dendera/hornbill retrieved from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hornbill> on 21/11/13



*Mawere Kongonya* is one of the most popular traditional songs in Zimbabwe. Tavirima has also done their rendition of the same song. In doing this they argue that it speaks to their bravery and successes in speaking out against the totalitarian ZANU PF regime. Moyo and Razor gave reflective interpretations of the dance which met my interpretation of the song cognisant of the oppressed environment. Moyo had this to say:

Literally the song is saying the baboon is climbing up the mountain in daylight even when people are there. You know you can interpret these songs depending on where you are performing and the theme. To me this song is like poking, someone who tries to deprive you of doing what you want and somehow you manage to do it. Let's take for instance I want a clearance from the police and they say no we can't give you the clearance and somehow I manage to trick them and get the clearance probably by just saying I just want to do a fundraising traditional dance. *Rakacheka nyika* will then mean even when the police are there, whilst all the security forces are there, we are doing it and no one can stop us<sup>89</sup>

Razor's interpretation of the song also showed that the song spoke about the significant successes Tavirima posted in speaking out socio-political challenges in Zimbabwe in the face of brutal police force which does not tolerate objective objection to government programmes and initiatives. Razor's explanation of the song is as follows:

We sing *Gudo rakwira mawere kongonya* to show how brave we are. It also motivates us to keep on performing. Therefore in the song we are the baboons

*Rumbo rwekuti Gudo rakwira mawere Kongonya tunorwuimba kuratidza hushingi hwedu nekutipa manyawi. Murwiyo urwu tingangoti gudo tisu takwanisa kuratidzira zvakare hushingi hwedu*<sup>90</sup>

#### Translation and Transcription

Lead: *Gudo rokwira mawere kongonya*

The baboon is straddling as it climbs the mountain

Response: *Rakacheka nyika rokwira mawere kongonya*

It straddles in broad day light

Response: Haha mawere kongonya

It's straddling on the mountain

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<sup>89</sup> Interview with Alimon Moyo held by author on 15/09/13

<sup>90</sup> Interview with Joe Razor held by author on 06/09/13

# GUDO RAKWIRA MA WERE

Transcribed by Innocent T. Mutero

Chinyamvera Traditional Song

Gu - do - ra - kwi-ra - ma - we - re - ko - ngo - nya —

Call 

Ra - ka - che-ka - nyi-ka - ma -

Response 1 

Ha - ha ma -

Response 2 

4 Ho-na ro - kwi-ra - ma - we - re - ko - ngo - nya —



Ra - ka - che-ka - nyi-ka - ma -


we - re - ko - ngo - nya 

Ha - ha ma -

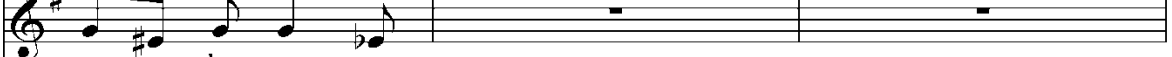
we - re - ko - ngo - nya 




8 Ro - kwi-ra - ma - we - re - ko - ngo - nya —




Ra - ka - che-ka - nyi-ka - ma -

we - re - ko - ngo - nya 

Ha - ha ma -

we - re - ko - ngo - nya 



11 —



Ra - ka - che - ka - nyi - ka - ma - we - re - ko - ngo - nya



Ha - ha ma - we - re - ko - ngo - nya



## 4.2 Why *Chinyambera*

Gweru is the Provincial capital of the Midlands Province, in Zimbabwe which is a confluence of the Ndebele and Shona culture. As a result the City's residents experience a number of dances which include *mbakumba*, *jerusarema*, *shangara amabhiza*, *amantshomane* and *isitshikitsha*. Regardless of the existence of a myriad of dances which Tavirima could choose from they only practise *chinyambera* traditional dance in their criticism performances. Their choice of *chinyambera* traditional dance is informed by three factors namely that it is expressive, energetic and it identifies with the culture of the majority.

### 4.2.1 *Chinyambera* Identifies with the Culture of the Majority

Even though the Midlands Province has a good mix of Ndebele and Shona people, the Shona people of the Karanga dialect make up the majority of Gweru residents. These Karanga people came to Gweru from nearby rural areas which include but not limited to Shurugwi, Chirumhanzu and Chiundura whereas the Ndebele people are highly populated in the Lower Gweru area. Tavirima members interviewed in this research have a consensus that their choice of *chinyambera* was motivated by the need to use a medium which most of their audience identified with so that they can easily engage with them. Here is what Matongo had to say about them targeting the *Karanga* majority:

Since we are residents of the Midlands Province we made an observation that most of the Karanga people include those who come from as far as Masvingo always migrate to Gweru. As a result we use *chinyambera* because it is a dance from the Karanga culture a lot people identify with it more than they would identify with the *jibilika*<sup>91</sup> dances.

*Sezvo isu tiri vagari vemuno muMidlands takaongorora tikaona kuti makaranga vanosanganisira vanobva kunana Masvingo tosangana tose muno saka takanyanyanya kuzviitira tsika dzedu vanhu vanokurumidza kuti tinzwisisa. Unlike kuti tikavatorerera maJibilika dance vanogona kusanzwisisa kuti chii chiri kuitika*<sup>92</sup>

Tapping from a people's culture will increase their sense of responsibility and ownership of the Tavirima' *chinyambera* traditional based interventions. Patience Munsahu argues that the use of local languages and culture makes a performance more acceptable and effective

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<sup>91</sup> Jibilika dances refers to Hip hop and Dance Hall dances promoted by Jibilika dance Trust

<sup>92</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Faith Matongo held on 21/11

(2003:45). In addition Moyo argues that the use of *chinyambera*, a dance which is indigenous to most of Tavirima's audiences ensures that the audience are engaged by the performances and they join in the performances without even a cue since the performances are part of their culture.

Tavirima's performances take an endogenous approach to development which is essential in achieving community ownership and responsibility in bringing about social change.

Chinyowa posits:

The endogenous approach realises that the processes of transformation are internal to the mechanisms of social systems and cannot necessarily be determined by external agents. In so far as it constitutes an internal process of action, reflection and praxis, the endogenous model has come to be characterised by a strong tendency to make use of people's own local resources (2002:47).

To that end, Tavirima's use of indigenous dance to speak out against social and political injustice is meant to bring closer the realities of the subject matter addressed by the dance performances through the people's culture.

#### **4.2.2 *Chinyambera* as an Expressive Dance**

Tavirima's choice of *chinyambera* is also compelled by the possibility of dramatizing events within *chinyambera* dance. The dramatization of texts effectively relays the message to the people as it adds visuals to the song texts. Nyengera pointed out that:

*Chinyambera* was used long ago by our ancestors when they went for hunting. Nowadays things have changed we use it as an advocacy tool. *Chinyambera* is a language on its own even without a song. When dancers use mime it can give you an imagination even if someone has not sung. You can see what that person is saying through dance. We use *chinyambera* as dance theatre

The mimetic action in the performance is just as equally important as the song text because both carry the same messages. Mime amplifies and ingrains the song messages into the audience as it is some form of emphasis whose importance equals every other activity of the performances. Mshengu Kavanagh in Samuel Ravengai posits that "mime is deep rooted in African Arts" (2013:4). Over and above being spectacular and able to draw audience attention the fact that mime is indigenous to Zimbabweans makes Tavirima's more appealing as locals identify with the mimetic arts.

Similarly, Dube said that their use of *chinyambera* is influenced by the opportunity to enact the song text through dance. He also adds that acts make it possible to identify themselves with the performances subsequently leading to discussions on matters raised by the performances. In his account of the similarity of their performance to drama Dube said:

Our performances are similar to drama performances. Our dances are capable of offering solutions to the problems faced by people in the same manner drama does. You will realise if a person watches a drama performance they are stimulated to think through the performances and reason why some characters behaved in a particular way, likewise our performances do the same. For instance we can have a performance where we have a dancer in a baboon attire, the audience will want to ask themselves why did it like that and the ensuing mental debate will lead to discussion among the audiences.

*Mitambo yedu yakada kurerekera kumadrama apo tinenge tichiimba tichiratidza vanhu zavtinenge tichiimba. Tinoratidza zvakasiyana siyana zvinodzoreredza vanhu, zvakafanana nezvinoitwa nemitambo yedrama, munhu akaona drama anozvibvunza kuti kobaba vanga vachidai vanoziitirei saka isu maimbiro atinoita nematambiro atinoita munhu kana ava ega anozvibvunza kuti ko murume uya anga achitamba akapfeka dehwe regudo anga achitambirei sezviya apo ndipo ndipomunohoona vanhu vachizobunzana pachavo vega<sup>93</sup>*

Through my observation and participation in some of Tavirima I found out there is some similarity as well as theatre influence in their work. Dube and Nyengera's explanation on the theatrical aspects of their work is also to parallel to Nicholas Cull's functions of theatre where he posits:

Theatre operates within cultural diplomacy in four main ways, each with a varying expectation of interactivity with the target public. At its first and most basic level it can be a prestige gift; second, it can be a way of shaping perceptions and informing; third, it can be a mechanism for generating engagement between the originating and target populations (2006:13).

Indeed besides enacting song lyrics in their performances Tavirima's performances are meant to shape people's perceptions of their political environment with the intent of garnering a common agenda of bringing about social change through deposing Zimbabwe's authoritarian government. The performances are also engaging as evidenced by audience participation in the singing and dancing when Tavirima performs.

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<sup>93</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Malvin Dube held on the 06/11/13



#### 4.2.3. Tapping into *Chinyambera*'s Energies

The 'animal energy' in *chinyambera* is particularly advantageous to the well-being of the performers as it provides an avenue through which the performers release their pent-up frustrations over the government's poor service delivery and authoritarian rule. Matingwina believes that their energetic performances are platform through which they also find peace even in the face of adversities as the dance provides for a release of emotions. In an interview Matingwina shared that:

"If you look at *chinyambera* it is a highly energetic dance. When performing the dance all my energies are drawn to the performance, creating a vent through which I release all my frustrations which emanate from the poor state of community. I cannot beat anyone to release my anger, what I can only do is dance off the frustration"

*Mukatarisa mutambo wechinyambera mukoma une samba rakawanda. Kana uchitamba seni ndiri mutambi kudai ndinonyatsonzwa simba rangu rese richibuda hasha dziye dzandinadzo dzanambokuudzai kuti ndine hasha nekuda kwezviri kuitika munharaunda yedu handikwanisi kudzipedzera pakurova munhu asi kutiti ndinokwanisa kudzipedzera mukutamba umu chinyambera ndidzo hasha dzatinenge tinadzo kunyange mukutamba kwedu<sup>94</sup>*

During performances the thudding sound of *chinyambera drums* is coupled by similarly energetic performances. The energies that drummers put in beating the drums have a direct link with how the dancers are going to perform. Impey and Nussbaum posit that "drummers and dancers will be dynamically interlocked in performance and, should dancer lack energy; the drum ensemble will similarly lose impetus. Conversely, if the drummers are highly motivated, the dancer will reflect their spirited momentum". The audience is inevitably drawn closer and sucked into the performances increasing audience engagement.

*Chinyambera* offers a platform to be really aggressive. You know when a person is provoked he is not soft. When a warrior goes to war or to hunt he is not a soft person. So I think that is the very reason why they chose *chinyambera* is very expressive in the way they dance. It uses a lot of energy and also maybe it motivates, it has that energy which can be transferred to the people from the

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<sup>94</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Mitchel Matingwina on 07/09/13

community watching the performance. *Mutambigwi gwinyawo kuti anotamba amere zenze*<sup>95</sup>

Moyo draws attention to the Shona proverb “*mutambigwi gwinyawo kuti vanotmba vamere zenze*” translated the party host should be merry so that visitors can be free on the dance floor. The proverb is a command to whomever with work which needs to be done to put much more effort in their work so that those who are helping do so in similar fashion. In the context of Tavirima’s performances the proverb implies that the performers have to be at their best if they are to get the intended outcome from the audience.

The importance of audience engagement cannot be overemphasised. It is critical for such performances which are meant to bring social change as it is a sign that the audience are getting the message and some will possibly action on the message. Alan Brown and Rebecca Ratzkin posit that “When audiences become an essential part of the process their investment of time and energy yields stronger connections with the individual artist(s), the work, and the organisation, some of which may last a lifetime” (2011:68). Implied is that the connection between the performer and the audience which is brought by an energetic performance works towards sustainability of the performance outcome and subsequently having a lasting impact.

### **4.3 The Effectiveness of Tavirima’s *Chinyambera* Performances**

Through engaging in criticism performances of *chinyambera* Tavirima seeks to contribute towards bringing about social change in Zimbabwe. Their contribution is targeted at the political front as such an evaluation of their effectiveness of their performances should look at the political environments and results of the subsequent elections that were held during the time under review. Having said this let me hasten to say that election results and the prevailing political situation is not a product of Tavirima’s performances only. There are a number of factors which come into play. This dissertation is therefore cognisant of the myriad factors which can play for or against social change but it does not seek to delve on how other factors contributed to social change as it is not within the scope of this study.

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<sup>95</sup> Excerpt from an interview with Almon Moyo on 06/09/13

One of the study respondents of this study was the incumbent Member of Parliament for Mkoba Constituency, Mr Amos Chibaya, who believes that Tavirima's performances have been instrumental not only in bringing about social change but in making him retain his seat in the Parliament of Zimbabwe. Responding to whether Tavirima has helped his cause as Member of Parliament Chibaya said:

There are so many ways of killing a cat and Tavirima is another way. Information can be disseminated through the newspapers, radio, and the television. Information can also be spread through singing and traditional dance. Their singing is not just singing its well managed singing. Let's take for example they can sing Chibaya *wenyu wakura* (Your Chibaya, is has grown up) to show that their Member of Parliament is a mature leader. They can also sing some songs which include some activities that I have actually done in my constituency. Tavirima are experts in what they do so they definitely get the message to the people.<sup>96</sup>

Tavirima's performances have also worked as a measure for restraint to the members of the group. According to Matingwina their performance has given them "purpose" unlike other young people who do not have anything to do. As has been pointed out earlier on Matingwina also believes that the dance provides a platform to peacefully release anger. In that regard the performances of *chinyambera* have aided in the reduction of incidences of politically motivated violence.

Though traditional dance performance in Gweru is certainly not a widespread cultural activity especially among young people Tavirima has successfully managed to use their culture to speak out against the prevailing social and political environment. Their sterling work invites new members throughout the course of the year as has been indicated in chapter one under the discussion of the groups background. Their performances are also oversubscribed with audiences and they are highly engaging.

#### **4.4 Chapter Summary**

This chapter discussed the agency in Tavirima's *chinyambera* performances starting from the year 2009 when the Inclusive Government was installed in Zimbabwe to the 2013 July when Zimbabwe was preparing for elections. The analysis of the songs shows that Tavirima's song and dance performance mirrored the prevailing political situation. The chapter also discussed

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<sup>96</sup>Excerpt from an interview with Amos Chibaya on 16/09/13

the factors which have led Tavirima Traditional Dance Group to use *chinyambera* in particular in their performances which seek to bring about social change.



## CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

This dissertation is an ethnographic expository of Tavirima's performances of *chinyambera* traditional dance as copying mechanism for marginalised communities in Gweru. It brings out how the group has used traditional music and dance as agency to speak out against socio-political challenges in a despotic Zimbabwe. The norm with most authoritarian regimes is that they throttle voices which pose divergent political views through censorship laws and other restrictive measures. The Global Internet Campaign posits that "the control of the information and ideas circulated within a society has been a hallmark of dictatorships throughout history"<sup>97</sup>. As such, musicians' creativity is framed to match the edicts of the reigning government, stripping them of their traditional role of being objective socio-political critics. This ethnographic account of Tavirima's traditional dance performance also details the different methods used by Tavirima to evade being arrested for performing subversion it as well discusses the enabling conditions in Zimbabwe which allow criticism performances of traditional music and dance to go unchecked by the police and the censorship board.

A selection of data from published sources and from the research subjects presented in the dissertation shows that this research has illuminated the inconsistencies of the Zimbabwe law at providing freedoms of expression and association which are vital in the work of any artist. Also discussed is the brute conduct of the Zimbabwean government in dealing with artists whose political ideologies differ from ZANU PF's thinking. Consequently the research also draws attention to strategies that are being used by Tavirima to evade arrest. The research subjects gave an account of how they have managed to continue working towards bringing about social change even in the face of a repressive laws and political persecution.

The research was framed under the lenses of the African Popular Arts Theory to investigate how Tavirima has packaged messages for social change in traditional dance. Fabian argues African popular art contains at least the potential to unseat established dictatorships through the use of subtext underlying traditional dance and songs (1978:315). African popular art is thus in part a product of hideous activities happening behind the back of authorities. It is

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<sup>97</sup> The Global Internet Campaign accessed from <http://gilc.org/speech/osistudy/censorship/> on 24/11/13

therefore the thrust of this dissertation to posit that it is through a metamorphosis of traditional music and dance that musicians can evade intimidation and arrest while adding their voices to bringing social change in hostile environments.

It is important to note that the politics in Zimbabwe is a fiery ground marred with hostilities where political parties have the audacity to maim or kill opposition members. It is against that backdrop that the researcher set to embark on fieldwork to find out more on Tavirima's criticism performances of *chinyambera*. Tavirima takes advantage of the inconsistencies of the Zimbabwean law at repressing and affording the freedom of expression. Through their association with Amos Chibaya the Honourable Member of Parliament for Mkoba constituency who has explained to the group how some laws are only meant to intimidate them from expressing themselves freely. As a result the group has gained confidence to let their art speak out their minds.

Furthermore the research found out that Tavirima uses other strategies such as nationalism, metaphor, venues and audiences to fuel their criticism performances and to avoid arrest. In addition, the study found out that a careful selection of a performance venue also works for the benefit of the artist who performs under a repressive regime. Tavirima does most of their performances at open community events and their activities are just treated as community musical activities, which do not pose any harm. However, the obtaining situation suggests that community music performances are effective in addressing and solving problems in their respective polities. Tavirima's performances at the community gatherings at places which are not designated to be venues in the manner auditoriums are designated, has helped them to avoid the glare of the police which is often very scrutinizing at known conventional music performance venues.

This qualitative ethnographic study taps data gathered from observing and participating in Tavirima Dance Group's performances of *chinyambera* under oppressive rule of Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe. The researcher has transcribed some songs from Tavirima's repertoire which speak to the three different epochs of Zimbabwe's Inclusive Government. The transcribed songs cover the period from the time when hope engulfed Zimbabwe when the government was initiated to the period of uncertainty when the parties signatory to the Inclusive government were constantly haggling without meeting the needs and wants of Zimbabweans and subsequently the researcher transcribed songs that Tavirima used as they called for political change. Generally the songs reflect the mood of the three periods, and

Tavirima has performed the songs at public events which included MDC and ZANU PF gatherings. Their approach in performing for both parties means that their message is sent across the political divide thereby increasing chances of successfully negotiating for just socio-political environment.

Tavirima traditional dance group does their performances in an environment where artistic freedoms are stifled by repressive laws and where human rights are impinged and disrespected by the ZANU PF government leading to people to find alternative means with their culture to address their socio-political woes. The Alternative Culture Theory by Siziba (2009) was handy in framing an inquiry into the innovativeness of the subaltern in brandishing cultural activities which perpetuate community development. As a result questions about choices are then raised in this case, what influences Tavirima, in choosing *chinyambera* among a menu of other Zimbabwean traditional dances in their criticism acts?

The research found out that people centred and communally owned communication methodologies can be effectively used to speak out against social and political repression. *Chinyambera* traditional dance is indigenous to the Karanga people and it's elements such as mime are also deep rooted in the people's culture hence the dance is easily embraced and understood by most people who reside in the locales Tavirima holds their performance. Its theatrical elements are not only a picturesque which attracts audience attention but the visual illusion ingrains the messages in the song texts.

The research contributes an awareness of the utilitarian role that traditional dance plays in contemporary context outside the ritual and educational practises. This study realises that despots have a penchant conservatism in which traditional music naturally finds soft spot, thereby creating room through which artists can creatively manipulate traditional music to speak out against despotic tendencies. It is thus the thrust of this dissertation to posit that it is through a metamorphosis of traditional music and dance and endogenous approach to development communication that indigenous music and dance can be effectively used to solve present day challenges. The study challenges applied ethnomusicologists not to base their encouragement of the practice of traditional music and dance on sheer posterity but on the usefulness of indigenous music and dance culture to solve pressing present day challenges. Tavirima's experience shows that traditional music is a capable medium through which oppressed people can speak against their oppressor and cascade the message of hope



and social change. It focuses on how traditional songs metaphorically speak out against oppressive authorities and how dance embodies dissent against the same.

Tavirima's performances are effective in getting messages on social change to the masses without interference and interception from the police and other state security agency. As detailed in the research report Tavirima's performances are participatory, thus they effectively make the audience identify with and own the message in their song and dance performances. Amos Chibaya as well attributes his electoral wins partly to the exploits of Tavirima while the members also confess that their political tolerance and social consciousness has been boosted by their performance of criticism *chinyambera* dances.

This research document is accompanied by an ethnographic film titled Tavirima's Diary: *Good Hope in Subversion*. The film gives a dialogical account of what influences Tavirima's members to partake in criticism performances, the performers' share their experiences with the socio-political changes in Zimbabwe and how the environment has influenced them to assist in bringing about change through *chinyambera* performances. The film also details how the group has managed to survive the wrath of the Zimbabwean law through gathering views from the group members as well as Amos Chibaya the Member of Parliament 2013 elect for Mkoba constituency. These views are juxtaposed by the views of Champagne Nyengera and Alimon Moyo's on how they used to survive arrest when they performed subversion with their respective groups. The video samples some of the songs at rehearsals and at the actual performances where audiences participate in Tavirima's performances through musiking in varying ways.

The importance of Tavirima's performances in bringing social change can never be overemphasized. However Tavirima and other like-minded performing arts entities should desist from being political party mouth pieces and offer balanced and critical messages which can bring social change. It is however unfortunate that in Zimbabwe where Tavirima was performing the ZANU PF has brought every aspect and strata of the country to its knees such that it becomes difficult for Tavirima not to sound politically biased in their songs which call for change. In countries where there is relative democracy the study suggests that artists should objectively mirror social and political happenings without prejudicing other political entities.

The study realises that traditional dance performances in the contemporary context are indeed useful in solving today's social and political challenges. It is however distressing that in Zimbabwe traditional dance is an activity that has largely been relegated to the periphery of communal activities. Most youth in Zimbabwe's urban centres shun traditional dance performance for contemporary arts such as urban grooves music and dances associated with it, which are condemned to be a bad influence to the society. Advice Viriri, Agnella Viriri and Carter Chapwanya argue that urban grooves music has "...extremely detrimental effects on the Zimbabwean youth, who tend to interpret popular music lyrics literally" (2011:93). This study recommends that future studies should look into ways through which traditional dance performances in urban communities can be expanded and sustained so as to increase their rich. The study also recommends a comprehensive impact evaluation of the effectiveness of traditional music performances in addressing contemporary challenges.

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### **Legal instruments**

African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1981)

Censorship and Entertainment Control Act (1996)

Constitution of Zimbabwe (1980)

Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act (2006)

Criminal Law and Codification Act (2004)

Legal Age of Majority Act (1982)

Public Order and Security Act (2002)



## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 Film Paper Edit Tavirima's Diary: *Good Hope in Subversion*

Scene	Time
Interview with Zhou explain the environment influences their creativity and performance	00:07-00:47
Linda Masarira speaks about music on the coming of the Government of National and <i>chirombowe</i> dance routine showcase at rehearsals	00:47-1:53
Joe Razor and Linda Masarira on political polarity and an ineffective GNU ( <i>Muroyi wehama</i> )	01:59-03:27
Malvin Dube and Joe Razor speak on 2013 Election Campaign Period (Performance of <i>Tavaona</i> at Mkoba Stadium)	03:29-05:40
Champagne Nyengera on censorship	05:41-06:09
Faith Matongo explaining how they use axioms to avoid getting arrested	06:10-06:34
Mitchel Matingwina gives a contextual explanation of Gondo guru	06:35-07:07
Gondo guru performance an <i>expressive dance</i> Tavirima performance	07:08-07:34
Gilbert Zhou and Faith Matongo explaining how they defend themselves from confrontations	07:35-08:39
Amos Chibaya on the inconsistencies of the Law	08:39-10:15
Faith Matongo on Political Prostitution	10:16-10:29
Rehearsals for ZANU PF Performance	10:30-11:19
Rehearsals for MDC Performance	11:20-12:10
Zhou speaking on Chinyambera as theatre	12:11-12:33
Tavirima Performance showing the skunk Act ( <i>Chidembo ndipe muswe</i> )	12:34-13:11
Faith Matongo on Nationalism and Mbuya Nehanda Legacy	13-12-14:05
Honourable Chibaya on Mbuya Nehanda Legacy and Effectiveness of <i>chinyambera</i> performances in bringing social change	18:30-14:52
Chindembo ndipe Muswe and Acknowledgements	

## **Appendix 2                      Informed Consent Form**

**Research Title:** An Investigation into Youth Responses to Social and Political Challenges through Chinyambera Traditional Music and Dance Performances in Gweru Zimbabwe<sup>98</sup>

### **Project Objectives**

1. To find out how youths use Chinyambera traditional dance to negotiate political space and recognition.
2. To investigate the effectiveness of Chinyambera traditional dance in ordering youth morality and gender balance.
3. To find out the implications of performing culturally informed subversion.

### **Name and contact details of researcher**

Innocent Tinashe Mutero

Masters in Applied Ethnomusicology

School of Music, College of Humanities

Howard College

University of KwaZulu Natal

Email address: [muteroinnocent@gmail.com](mailto:muteroinnocent@gmail.com)

Phone number: 00263 773 265 406 or 0027 789 220 810

### **Name and contact details Supervisor**

Dr. Patricia Achieng Opondo

School of Music,

College of Humanities

Howard College

University of KwaZulu Natal

Email address: [opondop@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:opondop@ukzn.ac.za)

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<sup>98</sup> Final Thesis Title reads: An Ethnography on the uses of *chinyambera* traditional dance as a coping mechanism by marginalised communities in Gweru, Zimbabwe: The case of Tavirima Traditional Dance Group.

**Explanation of how you were chosen for the study:**

I am a Gweru resident studying music and an arts enthusiast. I have known that you practice traditional dance and in particular you perform Chinyamvera traditional dance, thus making you appropriate for participating in this study.

**Explanation of what is required from as someone who has agreed to participate:**

As a willing participant in this study you are required to go through an interview with me and to respond to questions that you are comfortable to respond to. This interview is designed in manner that will make it highly interactive so as to make interesting. The interview will be carried out at a place of your choice and convenience thus avoiding discomfort to you. The interview will be done once, over a time not exceeding 1hr 30 minutes. Though it is highly unlikely I might come back to interview you again at a later time to seek further clarity on gray issues.

**Payments or reimbursements of financial expenses to participants**

Respondents to this study will not incur any expense as the interviews will be done at their convenience at their work place or any other place that doesn't require them to use money

**Use of any written or video recordings**

All written, audio or visual recordings generated in this study will not be used in ways that are harmful to the participant (s) or their institutions. At any time of the research process, as a participant (s) you have a right to disapprove or stop the use of any audio and video material made about you. You will also be availed with an opportunity to preview the material and raise your discomfort and suggest changes if any.

**How and when data gathered will be deposited**

Gathered data will only be deposited after the thesis has been passed by the University and the findings have been published in recognized journals. This will be done through deleting all files on the computer and other storage hardware.

**Statement of confidentiality or anonymity**

If for any reason you feel that the research might put you at risk and you do not want to be referred by your name in the thesis you are obliged to say so. I such a case your anonymity is assured as I will maintain confidentiality by using a pseudonym.

**Decision not to participate is not a disadvantage**

You maintain your right to choose not to participate in this research and that decision does not disadvantage you in any way.

**Withdrawal from Study**

It is important for you to understand that you can pull out of this research at any time you wish to do so. It is your right to stop participation at any level of the study.

I, \_\_\_\_\_(Name , Surname) hereby authorize the use of information from recordings and or notes taken in interviews of me, to **Innocent Tinashe Mutero**. I understand that the interview records will be kept by the interviewer and the project supervisor, and that the information contained in the interviews may be used in materials to be made available to the general public. I am also aware that information will be kept at UKZN library for future reference until publication in recognized journals.

.....

*By appending my signature here, I also agree to be identified by name in the project and related materials.*

*By appending my signature here, I also agree to be identified by photograph in the project and related materials.*

.....

Date:.....

Signature of Interviewee

.....

Date: .....

Signature of Interviewer

.....

## **Appendix 111 Interview Schedule**

### **Key informants Interview Guide (Tavirima member)**

Name of interviewer :

Age :

Sex :

Pseudonym or Interviewee code :

Name of Institution :

Date :

Time :

### **Questions**

1. How does the social environment influence your creativity of *chinyambera* traditional dance?
2. How does the political landscape in Zimbabwe influence your creativity of *Chinyambera* traditional dance?
3. How does the social and political landscape affect your performances?
4. Are there any implications of staging criticism acts and how do the local authorities take your performances of *Chinyambera*?
5. Which strategies do you use to avoid offensive confrontation with the authorities and arrest?
6. Does your performance of *Chinyambera* have any role in shaping the person you are?
7. What are the lessons that you get from your performance of *Chinyambera* traditional dance and how do you implement them?
8. What have been the public's responses to your performances of *Chinyambera* traditional dances?

## Interview Guide for Authorities

Name of Interviewer :

Pseudonym or Interviewee code :

Age :

Venue :

Date :

### Section 1 set for Mr Alimon Moyo and Mr Champagne Nyengera

1. What are the central themes in Tavirima's performances of *Chinyambera* song and dance?
2. Where is the criticism<sup>99</sup> quality in their performances of *chinyambera* and how is it revealed?
3. Of what benefit are Tavirima's performances of *chinyambera* to the community?
4. What do you think influences the group's choice of *Chinyambera* over other genres from the province and Zimbabwe at large?
5. What are the implications of staging criticism performances in Zimbabwe?
6. How has Tavirima circumvented arrest?
7. What do you think the community leaders think about the lyrical content and the performance? Why?

### Section 2 set for Mr Amos Chibaya

1. In what ways do Tavirima's performances reflect the society they live in?
2. Of what benefit are Tavirima's performances of *chinyambera* to the community?
3. To what extent has the community benefited from Tavirima's performances?

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<sup>99</sup> Subversive performance refers to the ability of the dances to speak out against the ills perpetrated by the feared government of Robert Gabriel Mugabe.

4. How do the current political dispensation and the law affect Tavirima's performance?
5. What are the implications of staging criticism performances in Zimbabwe?
6. What have been the community leaders and your attitude in your capacity as the Member of Parliament for Mkoba constituency towards Tavirima's criticism performances?