

***Zimbabwean Reggae and Dancehall:  
A History of Generations (1981 to recent times)***

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August 2019**



**UNIVERSITY of the  
WESTERN CAPE**

**A mini-thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Masters of Arts in Public and Visual History**

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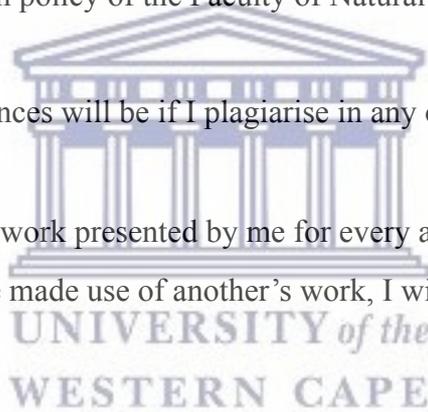
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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Paolo Israel for his unwavering support and patience throughout the writing of this research. I would also like to thank Afro-Asia project for its support through the help it granted me in terms of finance, seminars and workshops which were of immense help in the course of writing this project. I would also like to thank the entire History department as well as the Centre for Humanities research at the University of the Western Cape for their tireless week in week out seminars, workshops, retreat's together with other impeccable programs which contribute to academics such as myself and beyond.



## **Dedications**

I would like to first and foremost dedicate this research to my parents who have always stood and encouraged me through everything in life. This research is also dedicated to all the Gafa, Mabhanditi, Mahwindi and all the so called ghetto youth in the townships who are on the hustle trying to make ends meet in an economically harsh Zimbabwe. Stay resolute brothers and sisters, the time will come when the rightful shall prevail over the wrongs. I also dedicate this research to the Zimdancehall fraternity that has enabled me to have something to ponder on and eventually producing this work.

## INTRODUCTION

### Zimbabwean Popular Music and Zimdancehall

The Zimdancehall phenomenon is a growing subculture in Zimbabwe's entertainment industry and as such it is attracting scholarly attention, hence the literature around it is burgeoning. The aim of this research is to trace the beginnings of incorporating Caribbean inflections, particularly Jamaican, into local music. Its objective is to investigate how reggae has been received and used in a local context ever since Bob Marley performed on the eve of independence, until the present Zimdancehall generation.

As a keen music follower, my motivation to study Zimbabwean dancehall music is another township story located in one of the many of Zimbabwe's township spaces which I grew up in. Growing up in the dusty townships of Mkoba in Gweru, rap, hip hop and reggae were the music we grew up listening to, both at school and at home. I also frequently listened to dancehall music, which could be downloaded from the internet and shared through CDs and radio cassettes. Locally, urban grooves was the music of the time, until 2008 when I first heard the music of Winky D. He provided a different music approach focused on the downtown and Ghetto/shanty townships. Winky D's music was strictly dancehall oriented and it immediately had an impact on the youth including myself.

Going on to study history for post graduate studies, particularly the field of Popular Culture and Performance, my interest in Zimdancehall was further aroused and I considered it as an area worthy of study. During the course of this research my interest to carry on was reinforced by discovering that there is a small burgeoning academic literature that has been written about Zimdancehall. Most of the literature is found in newspaper and magazines and entertainment columns, a number of which have been written by Fred Zindi.<sup>1</sup> Fundamentally, Zimdancehall is characterized by its orality in the form of hard hitting-lyrics sung in urban lingo. It also provides a social commentary on issues such as poverty, unemployment, hustling or finding ways of getting by, the consumption of drugs as well as criticizing the maladministration of local government. Despite gaining its popularity in the 2000s, the

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<sup>1</sup> Fred Zindi is a professor at the Zimbabwe College of Music. He is also a member of one of the pioneering reggae groups called Transit Crew which started in the 1980s when reggae was still starting in Zimbabwe.

Zimdancehall genre has deep historical roots, which can be traced back to the 1970s; however, its watershed on the local market is marked by Bob Marley's independence performance of 1980 and since then this trend of Jamaican popular music which has evolved through time since its birth in the Caribbean islands has stuck on.

Prior to the independence performance by Bob Marley in 1980, there is seemingly scant literature and minute accounts about reggae production and performance in Zimbabwe. The objective of this research is to contribute to the existing literature that has been written about the beginning of reggae music in Zimbabwe since Bob Marley to the contemporary Zimdancehall. I also aim to show that the idea of incorporating Caribbean inflections in local music is a phenomenon that bypasses Zimdancehall popular music, but it has long historical trajectories which has enabled this thesis to categorise them into generations.

### **Generation and Genre**

In this thesis, I seek to establish the various reggae genres and generations that have developed since 1980, and show how each of them have distinctively varied from one another even though they stem from one source. I have referred to these stages as generations because they all characterise different stages in time as well as dynamics in the engagement with reggae music genres. Each generation is flexible with the genre of its time particularly when attracted to music that is akin to that generation and going on to consider itself to be the music of that time.<sup>2</sup> These stages are reflective to a coming into being of the various transformations of Caribbean music on the local scene each stage with a feature unique from the other. Such developments are in the form of the articulation of Zimbabwean society and its history.

Hence, instead of solely focusing on the notion of time having to define these genres, the research observes and categorises them into generations. This is achieved by examining the essential sonic features in terms of how sound has been produced in different stages as the reggae trend develops. To distinguish the generations, I analyse the key themes in the songs through time since 1980 in relation to Zimbabwean society. Hence I would argue that since

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<sup>2</sup> Tom. W. Smith, "Generational differences in Music Preferences," *G.S.S Social Change Report* (National Opinion Research Center, University of Chicago, April 1994), 1.

independence in 1980, reggae generations can be established into first, second and Zimdancehall generations respectively.

The first generation was characterised by the enthusiasm around independence; it had a strong Pan-African rhetoric in its lyrics, as well as other matters pertaining to the family and the initial problems of corruption. This generation performed using bands with various instruments such as guitars, drums, saxophones, keyboards and other instruments for sound production. The second generation unfolds almost in the same year Bob Marley comes to perform at independence, however this is distinctly different from the reggae genre of bands. This generation starts off with sound systems which were pioneered by the late William Sinclair, who was popularly known as Jah B. Sound systems were electronic, digital and apart from studio productions which begin later on in the 1990s, they were central to sound clashes. Clashes occurred mostly at clubs or events where sound systems who come and play the latest reggae dancehall music from Jamaica. Second generation studio productions from the music of Innocent Utsiwegota, Major E, Booker T, Potato and Fortune Mparutsa addressed problems related mostly to urbanisation.

The Zimdancehall phenomenon, which I would categorize as the contemporary third generation in local reggae production, is also ultimately digital. It is characterised by the prevalence of backyard studios which arose as a result of the Zimbabwean crisis that erupted in the turn of the century. In the process it subverts Urban Grooves music which did little to address the dire urban township situation. Among its other features, Zimdancehall music uses a variety of expressive idioms such as metaphors, imagery and township slang to bring its message forward. Hence the following dissertation is an attempt to discuss the development of Jamaican popular music in the Zimbabwean context since Bob Marley's historical independence performance in 1980 to the contemporary Zimdancehall times.

### **Research Aims**

My aim in this project is to distinguish the various reggae generations that have been precursors to contemporary Zimdancehall music, as well as to provide a deeper genealogy to the latter. The Zimdancehall phenomenon is a music trend that has deep roots in the initial development of reggae music in Zimbabwe since the independence performance by Bob Marley in 1980. Hence in this project I have developed a set of criteria to determine the

various reggae eras that have characterised local Zimbabwean reggae music. In order to achieve this, I focus on the various themes in the lyrics that have been prevalent in each reggae generation. I also focus on the various sonic features that have characterised these generations, such as the production of sound, and how it is also determinant to the generations. This research also questions the extent to which the lyrics in the various generations interpret Zimbabwe's society and history, and address the various problems from a sociological perspective and how the artists have managed to reflect these in their music.

I have therefore selected musicians according to the generations in which they fit, as well as the various themes which they address. Hence in the first generation I have selected four musicians: Thomas Mapfumo, Oliver Mtukudzi, Solomon Skuza as well as John Chibadura. These musicians have been selected with their music to be first generation reggae because they were characterised by bands in sound making, similar to the bands of Jamaican musicians such as Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, Bunny wailer among others.

The Zimbabwean first generation musicians, particularly Thomas Mapfumo and Oliver Mtukudzi had strong Pan-African messages in their music due to the context in which reggae music was introduced. Bob Marley's performance was on the eve of independence hence the independence rhetoric as well as call for African unity was a main theme. Solomon Skuza's "Love and Scandals" in the late 1980s addressed the problem of corruption within the government, while John Chibadura addressed problems related to the family and how family is a fundamental aspect in one's life especially in the Shona traditional society. However most of these pioneering artists to experiment with the reggae genre were not fulltime reggae musicians as compared to their successors.

In terms of the soundscape, or the making of sound which is one of the key criteria that I have used to categorise these generations, I have observed that both the second and Zimdancehall generations have the same "soundness" distinctly electronic and digital. This is due to the absence of bands and in place of them the use of technology such as computers on which sound was produced. However, the second generation starts off as sound systems which were characterised by sound clashes with DJ's and MC's contesting over who had the latest Jamaican ragga dancehall music. In the early 1990s studio production emerge with artists such as Fortune Mparutsa, Innocent Utsiwegota, Major E, Booker T and Potato among others. The dominant themes that characterise this generation are related to urbanisation.

Whereas the Zimdancehall generation arises due to the Zimbabwean crisis with artists such as Winky D, Soul Jah Love and Killer T, among others, being the central figures of this contemporary generation.

Hence in consideration to all these generational dynamics, this research has achieved a few objectives such as observing, tracing and identifying the deeper dancehall genealogies that have emerged in Zimbabwe since the independence performance by Bob Marley in 1980. The intention here being to categorise these generations and to identify their peculiarities. The research has also managed to critically examine the sonic productions that I have identified to be one of the key determinant features of these generations. Hence sound production, as well as its various elements in the production of reggae music in Zimbabwe is observed to be a significant defining aspect of these generations. In addition, I have also critically examined the lyrics of these generations and how they reflect on the history, social and political situation of the society and how they have been appropriated in the context of the songs. The analysis of lyrics also assists in understanding the sensibilities of the time in these various generations, hence they mirror the situation.

### **Methodology**

This research in popular music was carried out mostly based on interviews. It was reliant on oral histories as well as ethnographies in the process of data gathering. In the process an analysis of songs was carried out, from reggae music in the 1980s to the contemporary Zimdancehall popular music. A basic analysis was used to institute the relationship as well as the correspondence of the main stream reggae genre that emanates from Jamaica in relation to the Zimbabwean local reggae and dancehall music productions. This has aided me in identifying the sonic features that I have used to distinguish and structure the various reggae generations that have emerged in Zimbabwe since 1980.

In the process of identifying the sonic features as well as the themes that have characterised these generations, I have selected a set of songs from each generation and sampled them for analysis. Hence I have selected a set of four songs for each generation and their respective artists that I viewed to tease out the relevant themes. In order to achieve this, I visited two radio stations which are Power FM and Radio Zimbabwe. The former airs popular songs that are mostly youth oriented such as Rhythmn and Blues, Hip Hop, reggae,

dancehall among other forms of urban music. The former is one of the oldest radio stations hence, I found it suitable to inquire about the first generation reggae music's of Thomas Mapfumo. Oliver Mtukudzi, Solomon Skuza, John Chibadura, Zig Zag band among other pioneers. I also discovered that all these pioneering musicians operated with bands which comprised of a whole crew of musicians each with a role to play in sound making. At Power FM studios I discovered that even second generation reggae music starts off almost on the same year Bob Marley comes to perform in Zimbabwe, except that instead of bands, the sound medium was predominantly through sound systems which were electronic and digital. Hence visiting these two stations helped me to articulate the reggae generations using sonic and thematic approaches as opposed to time.

To gather further information on the generations, particularly the first and the second, I interviewed different informants of different age groups. One of my informants, Innocent Mtetwa who is also a musician and an instrument craftsman, helped me with a lot of detail concerning the advent of reggae as well as the coming of sound systems. This helped to analyse the information that I had gathered at the Radio stations and what I had read in the available literature particularly from Zindi. The other interviews that I conducted in mostly in Mbare based studios namely Chillspot records, Givarnchy Records, as well as Gunhill records further enlightened me about the beginnings of the reggae trend. Mbare is the oldest township in Harare and is where Bob Marley performed the historical independence show. Ever since Mbare has been a fortress of reggae music in Zimbabwe.

The interviews were recorded on a digital camera, primarily using Shona as well as bits of English depending with whom I were interviewing. For example, at Power FM, ZBC Highlands studios my interview with DJ Squila was predominantly in English whereas at the various studios I visited in Mbare where mostly in Shona. The interviews were conducted mostly in Glen Nora, Mbare and Highlands in the city of Harare where I interviewed Radio DJs, Studio producers, musical critics and analysts. Each interview was carried out over a period of forty-five minutes and beyond. Most of the time spent was however in Mbare which acts as the hub of dancehall music as it houses a number of studios both radio and backyard dancehall studios. I visited Chillspot records, Givarnchy records, Gunhill records and Radio Zimbabwe where I interviewed and interacted with producers and artists alike.

Social media, particularly Facebook as well as WhatsApp, also aided me in compiling information for this research. On Facebook I was added to the Zimdancehall music page and on one of the posts was a historical narration of the sound systems which I found to be useful and informative as it tallied what other informants or what the literature available states. On the WhatsApp platform, I have been added to groups that are dancehall-oriented such as DKT records from Glen Nora. Roger Kadzimwe, popularly known as Levels a producer from Chillspot records, kept me informed on new songs, events, artists and other dancehall news. Everyday there are various posts which range from newly freestyles, recorded songs, historical information, events, shows, clashes and opportunities on the Zimdancehall subject via social media

The next step I took for this research was to select songs from YouTube, which I deemed to be appropriate for each generation, and to analyse the different lyrics and their themes. Hence of the songs chosen from each generation, despite the varying themes.

### **Literature Review**

The sections that follow are dedicated to three bodies of literature. The first body of literature that I discuss concerns itself with scholarly work on Zimdancehall music. This body of literature is still burgeoning because the genre itself is still fairly new on the local scene. The second body of literature focusses on reggae dancehall on other parts on the African continent. Here, I seek to investigate how else reggae music from the Caribbean has been adopted and used in other parts and if it has been used in the same contexts and ways it has in Zimbabwe. The third body of literature that I will review are theories that I aim to use to explain the adaptation of music abroad to local contexts, especially a theoretical discussion of the concepts of world beat and local beat.

#### *Dancehall in Zimbabwe*

Due to its appearance a few years ago, the Zimdancehall phenomena is only still attracting scholarly attention and hence the literature that has been written about it is still growing. The articles that are found online is literature mostly from entertainment forums in magazines and newspapers. Manase, Mate, Viriri and a few others highlight on the dancehall subject, however their work mostly focuses on Urban Grooves music which the Zimdancehall genre

stems from. Makwambeni, Tembo, Goremusandu, Dube and Mugari also appear among those who have made their contributions to the Zimdancehall cause as they have all written on various themes generated by Zimdancehall.

Dube views dancehall music as emancipatory music from the black Atlantic that has evolved from Jamaican music traditions.<sup>3</sup> Hence he argues this to be where Zimdancehall borrows its style to articulate the struggles of the subaltern youth in Zimbabwe's township spaces in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>4</sup> Tembo argues that Zimdancehall is the resultant of the Broadcast Act of 2000-2001 that stipulated the initially 75% broadcast of local music and then later 100%.<sup>5</sup> According to Goremusandu, Zimdancehall music did not come soon after the stipulation but a decade later. Hence he argues that it is only a ripple of the stipulation.<sup>6</sup> According to Manase, who has written on the aesthetics of Winky D's music<sup>7</sup>, the purpose of the act was to promote local arts and music by defying western imperialism through music and culture.<sup>8</sup>

Makwambeni, Dube and Goremusandu hold similar approaches to Zimdancehall which cast aside the negative perceptions and portrayal of Zimdancehall music both by society as well as the media alike. Makwambeni looks at Zimdancehall through Fraser's notion of the "alternative public" sphere as well as Bakhtin's carnivalesque, in an effort to subvert the controversy it had attracted of promoting social ills.<sup>9</sup> Instead of viewing the moral judgments that society, the media and scholars alike ascribe on Zimdancehall, Makwambeni considers

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<sup>3</sup> Zororai Dube, "Dancehall Music and Urban Identities in Zimbabwe- A Constructive Post-Modern Perspective," *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 72 no. 4 (November, 2016), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Dube, "Dancehall Music," 2.

<sup>5</sup> Philip Mpofo and Charles Tembo, "Militarising Music and Demilitarising the Military: Making Sense of "Musoja" in Zimdancehall Music," *Muziki: Journal of Music Research in Africa*, 12 no 1 (August 2015): 104.

<sup>6</sup> Tapiwa Goremusandu, "Zimdancehall: A Rising Platform in Addressing Socio-Political Injustices Through Lyrics" (Hons diss., Midlands State University), 2017, 12.

<sup>7</sup> Manase has written on the aesthetics of Winky D's music and views him as the one who revolutionised Zimbabwean dancehall music which emanates from the township space articulating the social culture amid the time of its upshot to the present. Irکیدzayi Manase, "The Aesthetics of Winky D's Zimbabwe Urban Grooves Music and an Overview of his Social Commentary on the Post-2000 Experiences in Harare and Other Urban Centres," *Muziki: Journal of Music Research in Africa*, 8 no. 2 (January, 2012): 81-82.

<sup>8</sup> Manase, "The Aesthetics," 81-82.

<sup>9</sup> Blessing Makwambeni, "Zimdancehall Music as a Site of Resistance," (Cape Peninsula University of Technology), 2017 p. 238

the music to be an alternative public sphere.<sup>10</sup> He argues that Zimdancehall has managed to open a counter public space in which the marginalised subaltern youths can articulate their concerns, hopes and desires freely.<sup>11</sup> He also states that the music offers the youth a podium to resist state sponsored patriotic rhetorics. He argues that unemployed youths across Zimbabwe's townships challenge the ideologies of the ruling Zanu PF through cultural practices such as Zimdancehall.<sup>12</sup> Hence, apart from the understood notions of physical as well as material protests that occur in the streets as forms of resistance to dominance, Makwambeni's argument cites Zimdancehall as part of the day to day forms of resistance in the consciousness of underclass Zimbabwean youth.

Similarly, Goremusandu casts aside negative connotations that have been associated with Zimdancehall. Some of these connotations have been sampled from comments and headlines that yield negative reflections on Zimdancehall from the media which read: 'Zimdancehall artists are bad role models (The Standard: 5 March 2017),' 'Zimdancehall violent trend worrying| Celebrating Being Zimbabwean' (The Patriot: June 24 2015).<sup>13</sup> In this light the author discusses the role played by Zimdancehall to bring in conscience to society the political injustices as well as what harms the citizens which the government does.

The author achieves this by examining the trend of language use in Zimdancehall lyrics and by exploring the potential of communicative idioms by investigating how metaphors, idioms as well as satire has been employed to enlighten the audience on the problems of the government.<sup>14</sup> He explores lyrics by artists such as Winky D, Soul Jah Luv, Platinum Prince and Sniper Storm to exhibit the political undertones that characterise the in the contemporary Zimbabwean state.<sup>15</sup>

Dube's work on Zimdancehall is in connection with two other genres, Chimurenga and Gospel music discussed separately by Chitando and Vambe with both genres as

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<sup>10</sup> Makwambeni, 'Zimdancehall Music as a Site of Resistance', p. 238-239

<sup>11</sup> Ibid p. 239

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 240

<sup>13</sup> Tapiwa Goremusandu, Zimdancehall, p.14

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 5

<sup>15</sup> The names of the mentioned artists are names which they use in the Zimdancehall showbiz and fraternity and are not their real names. Winky D the most prominent of them all is called Wallace Chrimuko, Sniper Storm is known as Donald Chirisa, Platinum Prince's real name is Ian Makiwa, Soul Jah Luv's is called Soul Musaka while Hwindi President is Blessed Parewa. Ibid, p. 22

commentaries on the social realities in Zimbabwe. Dube is attentive to the conjunctive interplay between the emergence of Zimdancehall popular music and the social realities that occurred in Zimbabwe since the year 2008. According to the author, dancehall music emerged as a vehicle that conveyed the youth's character of resilience through mockery and sarcasm of political leaders for political maladministration.<sup>16</sup> He argues that when contrasted with gospel music, dancehall music does not offer direct confrontation with government but rather appeals to God to be a witness.<sup>17</sup> He argues that it focuses on the creativity of the individual whose requisites are strength and hope to triumph despite the hardships.

Mugari analyses the culture relevance in the sociology of production aesthetics, reproduction and distribution practices of Zimdancehall music. He also examines the contractual relationships of production that exist between producers and artists in the effective making of the genre.<sup>18</sup> He argues the tensions that exist between concepts of originality and authenticity as well as profiteering from the production of the music that is highly characterised by electronic production.<sup>19</sup> He notes the uneven and manipulative extraction and distribution of surplus value to resonate with the contemporary capitalist mode of production.

The literature which I have reviewed above is solely in relation to an analysis of Zimdancehall particularly in the contemporary times. It minutely discusses the genealogies or the historical development of reggae music in Zimbabwe. Hence through identifying the different stages and transitions which reggae music took locally, this research differs from the above because it attempts to trace the deeper genealogies of reggae music from 1980 to contemporary Zimdancehall. The key identifying markers are the development of the soundscape in reggae music as well as the recurring themes in each of the generations. With the latter I argue that it is a common way to analyse societies because music bears the situation of society. Hence below is a discussion of elsewhere in Africa where reggae has been used to communicate social situations.

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<sup>16</sup> Zorodzai Dube, *Dancehall Music and Urban Identities in Zimbabwe: A Constructive Post-Modern Perspective*, (*HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 72, University of Pretoria), 2016, p. 2

<sup>17</sup> Dube, *Dancehall Music*, p. 3

<sup>18</sup> Zvenyika. E Mugari, *Riding The Riddim: Rethinking the Culture Industry Thesis in the Economic Production and Aesthetic Production of Zimdancehall Music*, (*Department of Media and Society Studies*, Midlands State University, Gweru), 2017, p. 82

<sup>19</sup> Mugari, 'Riding the Riddim,' p. 82

### *Ragga/reggae Dancehall in Africa*

According to Savashinsky, by the mid-1970s reggae music had made its initial impact in the popular music scene among most Anglophone West African countries. He argues that the reasons for the popularity are multiple. They include affinities which occur between African indigenous music and reggae. They also embody religious and a socio-political appeal of Pan-African values and solidarity as well as the extent the youth in Africa identify themselves with a transnational Black pop music expression.<sup>20</sup>

Savashinsky also holds reggae music in West Africa to be a communicative idiom. He argues that West African reggae music acts as a *lingua franca* which surpasses regional, ethnic as well as national boundaries.<sup>21</sup> He argues that there have been artists who have incorporated native languages in their songs to focus on themes on national, local and regional import. The author derives an example from a song in 1988 entitled 'One Kilometre' by Evi-Edna Ogholi who then was dubbed the "Queen of Nigerian reggae."<sup>22</sup> The artist comments on the extensive amount of linguistic multiplicity that is present in her country and the need to find one accommodating language.

Oreoluwa argues that the emergence of ragga dancehall music in the shanty slums of Ajengule in Nigeria was influenced by mainstream Jamaican reggae and the possibility of the fact that Ajengule also resonates with Kingston due to the ghetto realities of poverty, marginalisation and deprivation.<sup>23</sup> Hence his argument is posited on an investigation on how ragga or dancehall music encapsulates the memories of the marginalised in the process constructing a continuous dialogue and evoking notions of solidarity amongst people sharing the same histories of marginalisation.<sup>24</sup> However, despite the borrowed influences from mainstream Jamaica, Oreoluwa notes the absence of specific commitment to Rastafarian religion itself.

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<sup>20</sup> Neil Savashinsky, *Rastafari In the Promised Land: The Spread of Jamaican Socio-Religious Movement Among the Youth in West Africa*, *African Studies Review*, Vol 37, No 3, (1994), p. 22-23

<sup>21</sup> Savashinsky, *Rastafari in the Promised Land*, p. 26

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, 25

<sup>23</sup> Ogunbowale Mopelolade Oreoluwa, "In The Ghetto Life No Easy For We": The Construction and Negotiation of Identity in Ajegunle Ragga, (University of Guelph: Ontario), 2012, p. 14

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, p. 7

In another West African case, Akinde has highlighted how reggae has been adopted and creolised in the Ivory Coast. According to Akinde, “Nouchi” which is Ivorian French is used to express the disenchantment of the out of work youths with regards to the political situation in the country.<sup>25</sup> The author views reggae music to be influential in the country’s political climate as re-localised reggae is also credited to have influenced the toppling of Bedie of the PDCI (Parti Democratique de Cote d’Ivoire) and in the process restoring multiparty politics in 1999.<sup>26</sup> Hence reggae artists such as Alpha Blondy and Fadal Dey are noted by Akinde to have their music banned for criticising Bedie’s government by using Rastafari cultural representations.<sup>27</sup>

Moyer examines the emerging popularity of the Rastafari discourse among the disenfranchised youth especially young men working in the Tanzanian metro which is referred to as Maskani.<sup>28</sup> The author focuses on how these discourses such as the reggae music of Bob Marley contributes to the binding together of the urban society of Maskani by promoting a sense of social cohesion.

*World beat to local beat, the Caribbean to Zimbabwe.*

Scholars have attempted to explain the movement of music from places that have non-western origins, or which encompass, or straddle between, two or more genres. Reggae music is an example of a form of music that has diffused from its place of origin to other spaces in this case to Zimbabwe. The “world beat” and “world music” theoretical frameworks have been brought forward by Browning, Brennan and Turino. These works can be used and are applicable to analyse the development of reggae music in Zimbabwe. I seek to discuss the concepts of “world beat” and “world music” as key components that facilitate the notion of “localbeat” which has been proposed and used by Bere to analyse the development of Urban grooves music in Zimbabwe. Although both terms (world beat/world music) have different origins, their implications are similar and they seek to shed light on forms of music that carry

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<sup>25</sup> Akinde, p. 194

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, p. 195

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 195

<sup>28</sup> Eileen Moyer, Street Corner Justice in the Name of Jah: Imperatives for Peace Among Dar Es Salaam Street Youth, *Africa Today*, (2003) p. 32

two or more genres within them.<sup>29</sup> However although the terms imply to all-inclusive meanings they have suffered criticism from ethnomusicologists. Meyers states, that in order to eradicate the notion of “othering,” in the past years the field of ethnomusicology has discouraged the use of belittling words such as “primitive,” “non-literate” or simply the “other” due to their ethnocentric undertones.<sup>30</sup>

McLane shares the same observation with Meyers and argues that it is also a consensus shared by critics in the record industry who have rallied terms such as “global beat,” “international mix,” “global pop,” “international music” and “ethno pop” as laconic phrases to the subject.<sup>31</sup> In his paper which traces the origins and definitions of the “world beat” and “world music” musical categorisations, Klump argues that the terms ironically construct what they seek to deconstruct. Despite their original implication or intention to bear an all-encompassing meaning of doing away with socio-cultural, political and musical barricades, their use has been to separate other musical styles from the so called European and American music.<sup>32</sup>

In essence, despite their varying originating American and European sources, and the seemingly contradicting nature to accommodate other music that is neither European nor American, they explain music fusions from other parts of the world with Western music particularly American Jazz and Rhythm and Blues. Turino, Browning and Brennan have viewed and interpreted world beat and world music expressions correspondingly with how they originate and also cite their shortcomings. In short Browning views world music in simple terms to be, “the industry name for non-Western music distributed in the West.”<sup>33</sup> However, in her analysis she mentions technology in the global world to be crucial components that enable it to be world music,

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<sup>29</sup> According to Klump, the term “world music” is synonymous to *Weltmusik* German. It was first used by the German musicologist George Capellen to explain the international influences on the music forms by composers Debussy and Stravinsky in 1906 especially the non-western music from Indonesia and the Far East. It has been used more recently by European Jazz critics (1963), American ethnomusicologists (1965) and British record companies (1987). Brad Klump, Origins and Distinctions of the “World Music” and “World Beat” Designations, *Canadian Perspectives in Ethnomusicology*, 19 no 2, (1999), 7-9.

<sup>30</sup> Helen Meyers, “Ethnomusicology,” in *Ethnomusicology: An Introduction*, (W. W Norton: New York), 1992, p. 11

<sup>31</sup> Daissan McLane, “The Global Beat,” in *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History of Rock & Roll*, ed. Anthony DeCurtis, James Henke and Holly George-Warren, (Random House: New York), 1992, p. 663

<sup>32</sup> Klump, “Origins and Distinctions,” p. 6

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, p. 7

The marketing of this music is based on a notion of cosmopolitanism facilitated by new technologies; digital audio tape, satellites, fiber optics, all of which are hailed as the components of the prophesized “global village.”<sup>34</sup>

Brennan also states:

What is world music - in the sense of being globally disseminated and popularly, even reverently, internalized almost everywhere - is precisely what is not "world music" [...] namely, European classicism and American jazz, blues, rock, and (now) rap.<sup>35</sup>

Both Brennan and Browning in the citations purport the exclusive connotative implications of the terms despite their inclusive intentions. They also explicitly explain the notion of technology as crucial components to the distribution of this music. More so, crucial to the upkeep of world music or world beat music categorisations is the market as well as the production values attached to it which Brennan and Browning mention. An example can be derived from how Dj Del Santo's notion of the term “world beat” grew in the record industry when his album “Strength to Strength” was promoted by Earthworks records as “world beat.”<sup>36</sup> Klump states that not only did the album feature as a new release but it also featured Zimbabwe's Thomas Mapfumo and South Africa's Mahotella Queens.<sup>37</sup> This reflects the marketability of the music to an exotic audience which is enabled by agencies such as record companies which in this case are represented by Earthworks Records who attach a form of currency or production value to the music by the use of terms such as “world beat.”

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Barbara Browning, *Infectious Rhythm: Metaphors of Contagion and the Spread of African Culture*, (New York, London: Routledge), 1998, p.36-7

<sup>34</sup> Browning, *Infectious Rhythm*, 335.

<sup>35</sup> Timothy Brennan, “World Music Does Not Exist”: *Discourse*, 32 no 1 (2001), p. 45

<sup>36</sup> Klump, “Origins and Distinctions”, p. 8

<sup>37</sup> Since its introduction as well as to use it to promote Del Santos album, the term ‘world beat’ was further used by other small labels such as Rounder Shanachie, Cathage and Nonsuch/Explorer. Klump states by 1986 the term was mostly used by Americans than the British to refer to music such as reggae, Juju, highlife among others. It only declined in the 1990s with preference to ‘world music.’ Ibid, p. 8

### *Local Beat*

In constructing the Zimbabwean dancehall genealogies, I seek to employ Bere's model of "localbeat", which he uses as an exemplary layout of the development of music forms in Zimbabwe that are fundamental to the fusion of exotic and indigenous musical elements. He proposes the theoretical framework of localbeat in which he argues that it acts "as the internalization and adaptation of worldbeat."<sup>38</sup> Bere argues that "localbeat" is the result of the exploitation of music which exists in an omni-present universal space in which it can be harnessed. Hence he dismisses the notion of 'worldbeat' as inadequate in explaining music outside America: "In this model, worldbeat ceases to be a euphemism for non-mainstream Western musics in the West, but becomes a ubiquitous space anywhere outside of its place of origin." This means even mainstream American music becomes worldbeat outside of America.<sup>39</sup> He goes on to argue, "This effectively means that in Zimbabwe hip hop music is worldbeat; localization into a Zimbabwean music genre brings about a localbeat."<sup>40</sup>

In principle Bere argues that even if local artists use an external genre to make their music, it can only be referred to as localbeat if they sing in the context of the local situation, incorporate styles of instruments that are local as well as to use vernacular languages.<sup>41</sup> However, for example once they use the hip hop genre and sing about "guns," "bitches," and "bling" then they are singing versions of American Hip Hop but in Zimbabwe, Bere claims.<sup>42</sup>

However, in as much as the frameworks account for the idea of using exotic beats to blend them with local forms, both the world beat and local beat frameworks still do little to eradicate the vulnerability of other forms of music from being separated from European and American forms. Local beat proceeds to take world beat music and deduces it into local beat, nonetheless it becomes a cyclical and recurring process because local beat can still be referred to as world beat once it is transported to an exotic audience again. Hence the process is repeated, from world beat to local beat, then local beat to world beat.

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid, p. 85

<sup>39</sup> Bere, *Urban Grooves*, p. 85

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 86

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p. 86-87

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p. 86

## **Thesis structure**

The research is composed of three chapters, each devoted to a generation. Each chapter examines how each generation emerged and the key characteristics that have determined these generations. In essence each chapter brings into discussion the idea of sound production within each generation and how it has effected a local reggae outlook. Secondly each chapter also closely examines lyrics of local reggae songs through time since its beginnings in the 80s to the contemporary Zimdancehall.

Chapter one focuses on the first intimate introduction of reggae music into the country through Bob Marley's landmark performance on the eve of independence in 1980. Hence in constructing the deeper genealogies of what has emerged as Zimdancehall in the contemporary times, the third chapter observes Bob Marley to have set the trend of local reggae production. The chapter is titled "First Generation reggae" in reference to the first local bands that engaged and experimented with local versions of reggae music. Since sound production as well as themes in the lyrics are the main standards that I am using to distinguish these generations, the chapter argues that first generation was characterised chiefly by bands. I also argue that the recurring themes in their lyrics was predominantly Pan African, the euphoria around independence and nation building as reflected in the lyrics of Thomas Mapfumo and Oliver Mtukudzi. Other themes else comment on the early problems of corruption in the new government as well as others matters pertaining to the family as reflected in the music of Solomon Skuza and John Chibadura.

The second chapter focuses on the next generation of reggae music which is characterised by digital and electronic sound outputs. Hence this generation starts off almost in the same year Bob Marley comes to perform but it starts off as sound systems and studio productions begin in the early 1990s. In the making of sound, digital technology subverts the bands that characterise the first generation in the second generation. Hence instead of artists producing their own songs for production, second generation starts off with sound clashes. It also characterised local musicians imitating Jamaican ragga dancehall artists. Studio productions from Innocent Utsiwegota, Major E, Booker T, Potato, and Fortune Mparutsa were the first from this generation and they addressed the problem of urbanisation.

The third chapter focuses on the contemporary Zimdancehall generation which also largely relies on digital technology and computers for sound production. Zimdancehall also

features backyard studios which are found across most of Harare townships such as Mbare which hosts at least four studios of this nature. In terms of sound, this generation is characterised by riddim making. The “riddim” concept emanates from Jamaica and it involves the production of an instrumental or a beat which is usually entitled to a name. This sound output is then sung on by various artists each with lyrics of his own to match the “riddim.” This generation emerges because of the Zimbabwean crisis and is mostly township oriented. Zimdancehall uses a lot of expressive idioms such as slang, metaphor and imagery among other styles.



## CHAPTER ONE

### First Generation Reggae

In tracing the deeper reggae and dancehall genealogies of Zimbabwean urban popular music, this chapter marks the year 1980 as the genesis of most of the reggae music production which has thrived over the years through to the present. I argue that from the moment Bob Marley set foot in the country to perform on the eve of independence, the historical development of this trend in urban popular culture begins not only to unfold, but to also gain recognition and escalated appreciation among local popular artists as well as a growing reception among listeners. Hence this chapter aims to explore a ground-breaking generational experience of an engagement with reggae music. The chapter also seeks to investigate why reggae music caught up among Zimbabweans and why it has its legacy continued up to the contemporary times.

Part of the answers to these questions are connected to Rastafarianism, a political and religious movement that arose in the context of colonised Jamaica. Rastafarianism is also a reflection of the political work of Marcus Garvey who wanted to break the monopoly of the British over Jamaican society.<sup>43</sup> Hence Rastafarianism carries with it very strong connotations of Pan African rhetoric, which extols the virtues of independence, not only in the Zimbabwean context but of all the African countries which were still under the yoke of colonialism. It promoted the idea of helping colonized African countries to attain their independence as well as to encourage them to observe and contribute to their plight. Hence I observe these Rastafari idiosyncrasies which had been manifested through reggae music to have been the foremost contributing factors that characterised and made the reggae trend stick. However, it is the mostly the non-religious trend that were taken up in the Zimbabwean reggae movement.

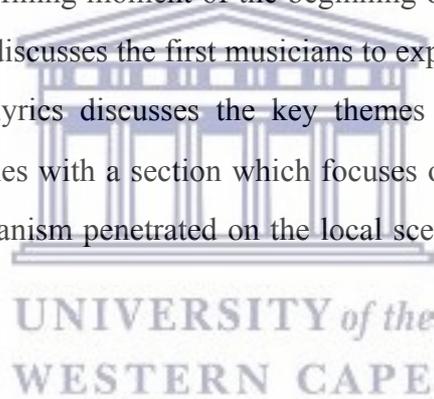
Apart from the notion of Pan Africanism and the excitement around independence, there are also other factors that contributed to the popularity of reggae music which also enabled it to thrive. These are sound connections which involve similarities in traditional instruments such as the drum and the rattle shakers which resonate both in West-African

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<sup>43</sup> Horace Campbell, *Rastafari to Resistance From Garvey to Rodney in Ethiopianism, Pan-Africanism and Garveyanism*, (Tanzania Publishing House, 1985), 100.

Jamaican traditional contexts as well as Zimbabwean traditional. For this reason, this research argues that it was specific sounds which shaped in the development of the local reggae genre. The factors that I consider to amount to development of local reggae music are sound production through music bands as well as lyrics with regards to how they were used to articulate the situation at the time.

The lyrics of first generation reggae were directed at addressing notions of solidarity, nostalgia, the initial problems in the post-independence era which related to corruption and issues related to the family. The following chapter is structured into five main sections which engage the notion of sound, the visit by Bob Marley in 1980, the emergence of local reggae artists, lyrics and sociability. In the first section I discuss reggae sound, particularly the bass-line which has been inspired by West African traditional drumming forms. The section also argues that the formation of bands was a key feature of reggae music. The visit by Bob Marley is viewed to be the defining moment of the beginning of reggae music production in Zimbabwe. This section also discusses the first musicians to experiment with reggae music in Zimbabwe. The section on lyrics discusses the key themes that these pioneering artists articulated. The chapter finishes with a section which focuses on the extent to which reggae music together with Rastafarianism penetrated on the local scene amongst both the listeners and the audiences.



## **1. Sound**

Sound is one of the determining aspects of reggae generations in Zimbabwe. In this chapter and throughout this thesis I argue that sound production should be taken as a key criterion with which to distinguish the reggae generations in Zimbabwe. Therefore, I move away from a simple chronological understanding of time and generation, for example using years or decades as neat markers for these generations. Rather, it is the shifting productions in sound as well as the dynamism in which lyrics were used in relation to the different reggae sounds that I take as the indicators of Zimbabwe's reggae generations. My use of the concept of generation is therefore closely linked to the one of genre – each of the three generations is characterised by specific genre characteristics, sound and lyrics being the most important.

Overall, the shift in sound was linked to the manner in which reggae music itself changed in the Jamaican context. Before I pursue this argument, however, I shift my focus on

another aspect of sound, which also helps to answer the question of why reggae music was adopted and adapted by Zimbabwe's first generation. I argue that this was enabled by factors such as cultural dynamism and the manner in which cultures or traditions are created and also recreated by processes such as cultural globalisation through slavery, colonialism, nationalism or Pan Africanism. I follow here Nketia's ideas of "interpretive experience" by the audiences who in this case are popular musicians to the Zimbabwean music network.<sup>44</sup> According to Nketia,

By interpretative we do not just mean the artistry evident in the performance of a given piece, but simply the concrete realization of a tradition in a way and manner acceptable to a traditional audience, and which may show the extent of the performer's correctness of memory and fidelity to tradition as well as the creative imagination he brings into it.<sup>45</sup>

To consider the questions Nketia raises above in recognition of the currency traditional music has to popular musicians, I note that the drum is a crucial sound component in the adaptation of reggae music in Zimbabwe, because of the cultural resonances it bears. Throughout most African traditional societies including Zimbabwean and West African, the drum serves as an instrument used for a variety of aspects such as spirituality, social and community gatherings based on reason and sharing despite the varying rhythmic patterns. Hence I consider the drum as a crucial sound component that has resonances in both Zimbabwean and Jamaican cultural musics. In both contexts it has been used for similar purposes something, which was transported to the West through slave ancestry. The following sections discuss West African forms of drumming as well as Zimbabwean traditional ones.

#### *West African forms of drumming in the Carribean*

The bass-line is the major distinguishing feature of reggae music and it is derived from the African drumming rhythm and patterns that have originated in West Africa. Transported to the Carribean diaspora in the forms of *Burru*, *Kumina* and some re-adapted and re-

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<sup>44</sup> Kwabena, J.H Nketia, *Music in African Cultures* (London Victor Gollancz, 1975), 94

<sup>45</sup> Nketia, *Music of Africa*, 48

contextualised as *Nyabingi*, these forms of drumming form the core of reggae music.<sup>46</sup> They symbolise spirituality and imitate the heart beat which in Rasta ideology represent and reflect on life itself. An example of how African drumming patterns such as *Kumina* have been adopted by Rastafari can be derived from one of the early influential figures and prophet of Rastafari, Leonard Percival Howell. In the 1930s, Howell decided to take Congo-based drumming patterns as well as *Kumina* ritual language to the Parish of St Thomas and incorporate them into his idea of Ethiopian divinity.<sup>47</sup> Apart from having been incorporated in a divination or religious sense which Howell did, *Kumina* and other drumming patterns have been merged with one another for other different non-spiritual or non-religious contexts. These forms of traditional African drumming patterns were used in a more urban and contemporary context for events such as gambling, celebrations on the release of prisoners or Emancipation day celebrations.<sup>48</sup> According to Bilby, not only are the patterns varying but the drums also become modified providing the early characteristics of reggae basslines and rhythm patterns born on the urban fringes.<sup>49</sup>

#### *Zimbabwean traditional forms of drumming*

The Zimbabwean drumming forms in the pre-colonial can be categorized according to the various groups such as the *Kore Kore*, *Zezeru*, *Karanga*, *Manyika* and the *Ndau* each having a distinct *ngoma*/drumming style.<sup>50</sup> From these traditional groups, various music styles such as *mbira*, *jiti*, *dandanda* and *jerusarema* are affiliated to them. Each one of the *ngoma* or

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<sup>46</sup> Peter Manuel, Keneth Bilby and Michael Largey, "Jamaica" in , *Caribbean Currents: Carribean Music from Rhumba to Reggae* ( Philadelphia: Temple University, 1995) , p166

<sup>47</sup> According to Campbell, Leonard Percival Howard was the first Rastafari to have appeared in Jamaica, preaching to Jamaican black people stating that they should pay their allegiance to the newly crowned king on Abyssinia which is also known as Ethiopia instead of the King of England. Having returned from overseas where he had migrated, Howell returned to Jamaica in 1932 and moved from parish of St Thomas and Kingston proclaiming that black people could not worship two kings, and that the only rightful true king for black people was Emperor Haile Sellasie. Horace Campbell, "Rastafari to Resistance From Garvey to Rodney" in *Ethiopianism, Pan-Africanism and Garveyanism* (Daar Es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1985) p. 103

<sup>48</sup> Manuel et al, "Jamaica," 161.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 161

<sup>50</sup> Vimbai Chamisa, "Commodified Versions of Shona Indigenous Music: (Re)- Constructing Tradition In Zimbabwe Popular Music" (M.A diss., University of the Witswatersrand, 2014), 4.

drumming styles were performed for specific social and cultural purposes or nearly every form of activity in life as scholars such as Berliner, Thram and Tracey have noted.<sup>51</sup>

The different Shona local *ngoma*/drumming genres include *muchongoyo*, *dinhe*, *dandanda* and *mbakumba* each carrying its own song repertoire and a unique drumming style.<sup>52</sup> Another traditional instrument that usually accompanied these drumming known as *hosho* in Shona, the gourd rattle or shakers, is also used as one of the instruments in reggae music. Similar to all African drumming contexts as observed by Nketia and other scholars such as Meki Nzewi in their studies of Nigerian forms of drumming, the Zimbabwean *ngoma*/drumming forms are usually associated with dance.<sup>53</sup>

As much as they were no boundaries in the pre-colonial time, similarly music was produced in a non-static environment. Scholars such as Chitando have noted that, “there was considerable movement of people and ideas or the invention of the concept of globalisation,” which all occurred within the Shona communities.<sup>54</sup> Hence Chitando’s observations reflect on the notion of boundless or fluid environments implying that movement was undeterred by any forms of boundaries, hence people moved about with their culture, including music forms in a similar way globalisation is understood in the contemporary times.

When Zimbabwe was colonised by the British in 1890, the socio-cultural and economic lives of Africans changed to adapt to the new colonial economy which was centred around urban life. As such this also influenced change in performance of traditional music as it became inevitably urban. Scholars such as Zindi, Dube and Williams state that in the 1930’s areas such as Salisbury and Bulawayo witnessed increasing rates of unemployment, cultural

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<sup>51</sup> Paul Berliner, “Music and Spirit Possession at Shona Bira” *International Library of African Music*, 5 no 4 . (1976): 135-139, Diane Thram, “Therapeutic Efficacy of Music Making: A Neglected Aspect of Human Experience Integral to Performance Process” *Year Book for Traditional Music*, no 34, (1999) :130-138, A. Tracey, “Three Tunes for ‘Mbira Dzavadzimu’”, *African Music*, 3 no 2, (1963): 24-26

<sup>52</sup> Chamisa, “Commodified,” 66

<sup>53</sup> In his observations Nketia has noted that *ngoma* music is “frequently integrated with dance and it is bound to relate its form and content to structural and dramatic requirements of the dance.” Kwabena, J.H Nketia, “Music of Africa”(London: Victor Gollancz, 1975), 206. Nzewi offers another technical approach to describe performance in Zimbabwean drumming in relation to Nigerian forms. He states that Zimbabwean traditional drumming styles are created through performance and that in the Nigerian context he describes them as a “rhythmic organisation that is melodically conceived and melodically born.” In essence it describes an African-peculiarity in tone, vocal and performance in its drumming forms of music. Meki Nzewi, “Melodic Essence and Hot Rhythm in Nigerian Folk Music,” *Black Perspective in Music* 2 no 1 (1974): 28

<sup>54</sup> Ezra Chitando, “Music in Zimbabwe, Department of Religious Studies, Classics and Philosophy,” *University of Zimbabwe, Zambesia* XXIX no 1, (2002), p. 84

performers or urban street musicians became more prominent by entertaining people at pubs, bus stops and shopping centres.<sup>55</sup> Another influencing factor was the media, through the Rhodesian Broadcasting Commission, which firstly introduced the recording of indigenous forms of music and secondly exposed local musicians to exotic music styles from South Africa, Cuba, Zaire, Zambia, Malawi and other countries.<sup>56</sup> Hence local musicians could incorporate various exotic music elements from these countries with local ones to come up with forms of music that were diverse.

As the times changed so did developments in the liberation struggle in the 1960s and 70s. Pongweni, who wrote on liberation struggle songs, describes this moment as an, “earth-shaking revival of ethnic music.”<sup>57</sup> The Zimbabwe National African Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) saw the significance of mobilising the masses through the use of song and dance, and this was usually in the form of *ngoma*/drumming or mbira traditional music forms. This time also coincided with the Pan African rhetoric which sought to bring consciousness to Africans, particularly those fighting for independence, and soon the Rastafari rhetoric caught up among freedom fighters, which at independence saw the invitation of Bob Marley to come and perform in 1980. His visit to a great extent influenced the development of reggae music in Zimbabwe and started a ground-breaking generational experience which since then it has reached new heights in local performance.

## **2. The influence of Rastafarianism and Pan-Africanism**

The dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the rise of Pan Africanism through the Rastafarian movement that was mushrooming in Jamaica. Rastafari adopts its name after Ras Tafari Makonnen, who was crowned emperor of Ethiopia and took on the name Haile Selassie I at

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<sup>55</sup> According to Williams, when the Settler government enacted excessive tax laws in the 1930s, several Africans who forced to migrate into urban areas to search for employment. This period according to the author witnessed a rise in itinerant musicians known as *omasiganda*, who travelled from place to place with their homemade guitars. In Williams description these musicians were, “responding to new realities and surroundings, many musicians drew up and transformed the traditional sounds of the past into contemporary urban tradition. Linda, F. Williams, “Straight Fashioned Melodies: The Transatlantic Interplay of American Music in Zimbabwe”, *American Music* 15 no 3, (Autumn,1997): 292

<sup>56</sup> Caleb Dube, “The Changing Context of African Music Performance in Africa,” *African e-Journals project* xxiii, noii, , (1996):112.

<sup>57</sup> Dube, “The Changing Context,” 112

his coronation in 1930 which was publicized to the world.<sup>58</sup> The implications of the coronation to the rural and poor Jamaicans and other blacks in the United states and Caribbean diaspora were of enormous significance. According to Campbell,

For the rural poor, the crowning of an African King who would claim legitimacy from the bible and from the line of Solomon led to a new deification, replacing the white King of England with a black God and black King.<sup>59</sup>

Scholars such as Campbell argue that the coronation of Tafari Makonen was of significance to the Rastafari movement because it was interpreted as a fulfilment of a prophecy that had been envisioned by Marcus Garvey who was a prominent figure in Rastafari and had biblical references furthermore.<sup>60</sup> According to the book of Psalms, “Princes come out of Egypt, Ethiopia stretches her hands unto God.”<sup>61</sup> Hence the coronation of a black king re-directed the pre-meditated idea of a white messiah. The roots of Rastafarianism are found in the class and racial movements in a colonised Jamaica. Such ideas were spearheaded by Marcus Garvey through his political work, together with other prominent figures such as Leonard E Howell, W. E. B. Du Bois and Walter Rodney to break British monopoly in Jamaica. Similar ideas that promoted notions of race consciousness, the decolonisation of Africa and negritude ideas can be found in the works of Francophone thinkers such as Leopold Segnhor and Aimé Césaire. The development of Zimbabwean reggae is connected with the same notions of resistance which are deeply rooted in the Rastafari movement, which corresponds with the country’s independence from British colonial rule.

Reggae music is embedded within the Rastafari ideology and acts as a vehicle which spreads it. According to Campbell, amidst all the Pan African developments within Rastafari, music played a significant role in inspiring the youth. He argues that despite its predominant

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<sup>58</sup> Juleen, S Burke, “The Bob Marley Effect: More than Just Words,” ( M.A diss.,Seton Hall University, 2014), 9.

<sup>59</sup> Campbell, “Rastafari as Pan Africanism,” 100.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 100

<sup>61</sup> These verses are found in the book of Psalms 68, vs 31

role of articulating the Garveyan' vision of decolonising Africa from Western Imperialism as well as contesting capitalism and excessive consumption of material things, reggae music proved to be a significant medium for Rastafari consciousness.<sup>62</sup> More so Rastafari promoted the natural practices and righteousness as opposed to “slackness” that is characteristic of dancehall culture. Hence advocates such as Bob Marley and the entire reggae network were influential in spreading Rastafari.

### **3. Bob Marley's visit**

Bob Marley's invitation to come and perform on the eve of independence played a crucial role in the development of a reggae popular culture as well as establishing a Rastafari following among the youths. Zindi states that since Zimbabwe had been familiar with reggae music before from the music of Johnny Nash, Desmond Dekker and Jimmy Cliff among others, Bob Marley's invitation to come and perform on the eve of independence was no surprise.<sup>63</sup> Hans who wrote about Bob Marley's independence performance saw Bob Marley's invitation to be an impossible dream. However it was enabled by two businessmen, Job Kadengu and Gordon Muchanyuka who took the initiative to fly to Jamaica and invite the reggae star.<sup>64</sup> In recollection the feelings towards his invitation serves to show the significance of reggae music which through Bob Marley an assortment of messages that pursued to uphold values of Pan Africanism, liberation and African Unity were the norm.

Another aspect of significance on his performance was the sound system which Bob Marley came with to use for the concert. Its significance has been mentioned in academic literature and it made the independence concert to be exceptional as well as a marvel which was worth mentioning during its time. According to Dube,

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<sup>62</sup> Campbell, “Rastafari as Pan Africanism,” 120.

<sup>63</sup> Fred Zindi, “Roots of Reggae Music” accessed June 2017 <https://www.herald.co.zw/> 2

<sup>64</sup> According to Hans in his Forbes article, Kadengu and Muchanyuka wanted a big name to entertain the masses on the eve of independence hence they flew to Jamaica weeks before independence. Marley's manager Blackwell is said to have refused the idea but to Marley who is said to have been following the events in Zimbabwe decided he would go. Thobile Hans “Remembering Bob Marley At The Birth of Independence,” accessed 27/02/18 <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesinternational/2015/04/02/>, p. 1

An estimated audience of 100 000 who watched the celebrations was exposed to reggae music that came out of a sound system, whose technology had never been seen before in the country.<sup>65</sup>

Zindi also elaborately acknowledges and describes the state of the art sound system,

By the time the band arrived, a chartered Boeing 707 was on its way from London to Salisbury with 21 tons of equipment; a full 35,000-watt PA system plus backline equipment.<sup>66</sup>

According to Dube, Marley's show particularly the sound system induced some officials in the Ministry of youth, sports and culture to purchase a system such as the one Marley used for future use for concerts of both local and international artists.<sup>67</sup> The whole tour, as well as the wonder sound system were funded by Bob Marley himself.

Marley's generosity of paying for the expenses as well as making the concerts free was accompanied by his pre-concert social interactions with the guerrilla fighters whom he chose to spend time with.<sup>68</sup> Marley is also reported to have gone to Mutoko and to have spent some time with marijuana farmers and sampled the herb (marijuana) there. The gestures that Marley did before his concert reflect the way in which Gilroy had described him as,

He was an individual that believed governments and everyday people, such as those who may not be involved in politics, needed to look out

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<sup>65</sup> Dube, *The Changing Context*, 113

<sup>66</sup> Bob Marley's arrival at the airport is described by Hans to be a significant moment. According to Hans who has also quoted Zindi, the arrival was at Salisbury airport which is now the Harare International Airport on Wednesday the 16<sup>th</sup> of April 1981. He explains that due to the sanctions that had held the country, the airport had not witnessed such a crowd which welcomed the Jamaican and police were struggling to control the crowd. According to Hans the equipment flew separately in another plane with Mick Cater from Alec Leslie entertainment and it took him six hours to put it together. Hans, "Remembering Bob Marley"

<sup>67</sup> Dube, *The Changing Context*, 113.

<sup>68</sup> According to Hans, Marley spent time with the freedom fighters in a hotel in the outskirts of Harare because all the major hotels had been fully booked by international journalists. Hans, *Remembering Bob Marley*, p. 2

for their fellow humans and treat all people equally regardless of ethnicity and income.<sup>69</sup>

Hence, far from being only a music icon, Marley's persona through the music he produced with its lyrics from songs such as 'One Love' shows him to be a compassionate person who stood for fairness and equality. His decision to come to perform in Zimbabwe despite disapproval from his manager Chris Blackwell as well as going on to perform the show for free also exemplifies his empathetic and considerate side. More so, it places him above any other international artist who came to perform before and afterwards. According to Hans, Marley enjoys a special place in third world culture due to his undeviating identification with the black African struggle.<sup>70</sup>

The famous independence show was held at Rufaro Stadium where thousands attended. The atmosphere is described to have been that of "carnival" by Hans, "There was a carnival atmosphere; people wore caps and t-shirts bearing the face of the new prime minister, Robert Mugabe."<sup>71</sup> This was a significant moment for the people of Zimbabwe.

Another moment of significance during that evening was when the Union Jack (which for the Africans stood for oppression and the representation of the British colonial order) came down in Zimbabwe for the last time.<sup>72</sup> It was replaced by the Zimbabwean flag that bears the national colours of green, gold, black and red (which also are similar to Rastafari colors) with the African fish eagle.<sup>73</sup> People were also donning regalia bearing the name and image of the new prime minister Robert Mugabe. In his article, Hans makes vivid descriptions of the events that evening,

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<sup>69</sup> Mark Haner, Bob Marley's Spiritual Rhetoric, The spread of Jamaican Culture and Rastafarianism, (Seminar presentation., Western Oregon University, 2007), 5.

<sup>70</sup> Hans, "Remembering Bob Marley"

<sup>71</sup> Hans, "Remembering Bob Marley"

<sup>72</sup> Ibid,

<sup>73</sup> The colors on the national flag are emblems which represent certain historic and symbolic meanings. Green represents the nature in the country, red symbolises the blood shed during the long history of persecution of the blacks as well as the blood shed during the struggle for independence, gold symbolises the wealth that is found in the minerals while black stands for the Zimbabwean black majority. The mighty African fish eagle symbolises the historical traditions of the Great Zimbabwe state and all the other various Shona traditions. The bird is similar and serves as a reminder of the soap stone birds (taken from the Great Zimbabwe stone wall enclosures) that were once taken to Britain and returned.

People crushed into the stadium as Marley took to the stage. The police panicked and fired teargas into the crowd. Back-up singers Marcia Griffiths and Rita Marley, the wife of the lead singer, were the first band members to get a whiff of teargas and they ran backstage.<sup>74</sup>

Amid all the proceedings and the seemingly chaotic situation which Hans describes, Marley seemed to have been in an ecstatic frenzy, absorbed in what he was doing as he is said to have stayed on stage and continued despite the teargas. According to Rita Marley in a documentary, “Bob was still in his element, he didn’t realize what was happening around him... so when we got back on stage, this is what Bob said to us: “Now I know who the true revolutionary is.”<sup>75</sup>

Hence Bob Marley’s performance appeared to be a moment of significance for this particular special occasion. It was a special moment for Zimbabwe in many ways. The show on that evening marked the birth of a new country when the old colonial order was replaced by a new self-ruling government. Gilroy and other scholars who have written about Bob Marley have described him as the utmost man in reggae music, a forerunner and advocate of the diffusion of the Rastafari religion. Scholars such as Dube have referred to this event, as a watershed in Zimbabwean music.

Prior to Bob Marley’s performance there is an absence in knowledge or indication of local artists or bands known in the existing literature to have produced any forms of reggae music except for mention of a group called Pied Pipers by Bere in his paper whom littler is known about.<sup>76</sup> According to Daniel Mararire who is a long serving librarian of music at Radio Zimbabwe FM,

If we take our music from the 1960s going onwards, we had the likes of Safirio Madzikatire and Jordan Chataika...there was no spectacle or indication that it was reggae oriented. They used to play jazz related music, kwela music..then came the time

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<sup>74</sup> Hans, “Remebering Bob Marley.”

<sup>75</sup> Ibid

<sup>76</sup> Zindi who is an author, professor at the Zimbabwe School of Music as well as a musician himself who is known to have been and still one of the only surviving reggae band known as Transit Crew in his article that appeared in the Herald in September 2013 has written that prior to independence, only Jimmy Cliff, Johnny Nash, Desmond Dekker as well as James Chambers were the only reggae stars known in Zimbabwe.

of Omasiganda..a time of guitar's, such as the music from Ngwaru Mapundu, Jackson Chinembiri in the early 70s...they were solo guitarists playing their guitar which wasn't connected to anythingthe..then there was also mbira music again in the 70's but there are no artists who had gotten involved in reggae music<sup>77</sup>

Bob Marley's invitation to come and perform on the eve of independence played a crucial role in the development of a reggae popular culture as well as establishing a Rastafarian following among the youths. Reading sources such as the newspaper article and other primary sources concerning Marley's invitation, a mixture of feelings are expressed towards the unexpected surprise.

It was a fulfilment of a wave that was already in motion with regards to listenership of reggae music. Before his concert, people had already started to follow the reggae trend despite an absence of local production. The reggae following in Zimbabwe as already been mentioned can be traced back to the 1970s. Williams states that, "...reggae music, which had briefly played on Zimbabwean radio stations during the 1970s, became one of the prevalent styles of Zimbabwean culture after independence."<sup>78</sup> Zindi addresses to this, "...radio stations in Rhodesia were awash with music of these three icons (prior to Marley's performance)... these were the beginnings of reggae music in Zimbabwe."<sup>79</sup> Zindi also mentions the influence of Bob Marley's music on the guerrilla or liberation war fighters, "...During the years of Chimurenga (chiShona for uprising), Bob Marley's music had been adopted by the guerrilla forces of the Patriotic Front,"<sup>80</sup>

Hence it is clear that reggae music had already a burgeoning impact in many spheres in Zimbabwe both on the radio as argued by Dube as well as other spaces particularly those of struggle as is articulated by Zindi and Gutto. The subsequent following of reggae music particularly the 1970s is of significance and occurs at a time of intense political unrest when the country is fighting to attain its independence from British colonial rule. Hence Marley's

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<sup>77</sup> This is an interview which I held with Radio Zimbabwe Librarian, Daniel Mararire in March 2017 at Mbare studios in Harare.

<sup>78</sup> Williams, "Transatlantic Interplay," 300.

<sup>79</sup> Zindi, "Roots."

<sup>80</sup> Hans "Remembering Bob Marley."

music with a strong Pan African rhetoric powerful messages from songs such as “One Love,” “Redemption Song” and “Buffalo soldier” presented powerful political messages to colonized masses which were desperate of self-rule. It was an indication of the inherent characteristics that were embedded in the music which was meant to emancipate all forms of oppression

#### **4. Pioneering Local Artists**

What I refer to as the first reggae generation in Zimbabwe were bands. A band usually consists of a group of various musicians, each with a role to play in terms of sound production, using whatever instrument they are accustomed to within the band. For example, there are drummers, guitarists, saxophonists, keyboard players, percussionists, and vocalists who sing the lyrics. All the instruments are played live and simultaneously, hence on the stage of performance there is a live band.

The pioneering local artists that were the first to experiment with the reggae music were also bands. However, most of these artists and their bands were not full time reggae musicians but they contributed to the development of reggae music, paving way to all the generations that followed. Bob Marley’s visit, performance and influence made reggae gain recognition. It is furthermore that his celebrated appearance on the Zimbabwean landscape contributed to the shift of social perceptions widely held by the Zimbabwean society towards popular music and performances. According to Dube, full time musicians such as Thomas Mapfumo, Dorothy Masuka, Bundu Boys, The Green Arrows Band, Lovemore Majaivana among others gained recognition and reverence as cultural workers.<sup>81</sup> Williams also views the influence of reggae music that had been played on Zimbabwe’s radio stations from as far back as the 1970s to have developed to be one of the predominant styles of culture after independence. For that reason, she considers the acquaintance to Jamaican artists to have motivated local artists to form their own reggae bands and merge their music with the Jamaican styles.<sup>82</sup>

In the 1980s, due to the consistent tours by international reggae artists, particularly after Bob Marley, local reggae groups and individuals arose on the reggae scene. Notable among these newly emerged local reggae groups were the Kwekwe based Zig Zag Band. Zig Zag

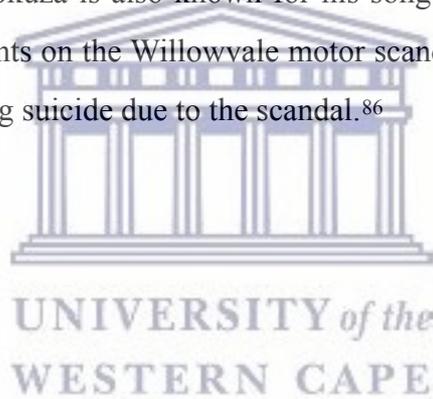
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<sup>81</sup> Dube, “The Changing Context”, 113

<sup>82</sup> Williams, “Transatlantic Interplay”, 300

Band made fame with its songs *Gomo Ramasare* and *Mudzimu Mukuru*. They were formed in 1982 with their trademark genre known as *Chigiyo* type of music, in which they produced eight albums. The band lost some of its members but regrouped in 2011 into a band of eight members with three of its original members, Steven Lunga, Madison and Isaac Phiri.<sup>83</sup>

The group Transit Crew was born in 1988 with founding members, Munyaradzi Nyemba, Fred Samaita Zindi (who has written on music, was a professor at the University of Zimbabwe and has lectured music recently at the Zimbabwe School of Music) and Antony Liba. It is arguably the oldest reggae band that has stood the test of time in Zimbabwe. They are referred to as “*Madhara eReggae*” (elders of reggae). Black saints from Mutare (They sang gospel but with reggae beats), Breeze, Solomon Skuza, Isaac Chirwa and John Chibadura among others.<sup>84</sup> Solomon Skuza, was known by the name Jah Solo, then and was prominent with his song *Banolila* and later switched to reggae and produced an album called ‘Crucial reggae.’<sup>85</sup> Solomon Skuza is also known for his song “Love and Scandals,” which according to Mararire comments on the Willowvale motor scandal in 1987 which ended with Maurice Nyagumbo committing suicide due to the scandal.<sup>86</sup>



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<sup>83</sup>. The Standard accessed 26/03/18 <https://www.thestandard.co.zw/2011/05/08/the-return-of-zig-zag-band>

<sup>84</sup> Interview with Daniel Mararire, March 2017 Harare.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> The Willowvale motor scandal is accounted for in two biographies about Robert Mugabe by Heidi Holland (*Dinner With Robert Mugabe*) and Martin Meredith (*Mugabe*).



Figure 1. Bob Marley and the late Chinx Chingaira in 1980.<sup>87</sup>

Another peculiarity that characterised the 1980s reggae in Zimbabwe was the collaboration of international artists with local ones. With the realisation of reggae enthusiasm that the Zimbabwean audience and local artists had generated, international reggae artists sang about the country and also collaborated with local artists. According to Mararire who is a music librarian at Radio Zimbabwe,

With the realisation that Zimbabweans loved reggae...Earthman connection (A Jamaican based reggae band) came up with the album Zimbabwean Dread...even Misty in Roots sang *Ishe Komborera Africa*, in Shona...Tuku collaborated in the song. Even Mapfumo...he used to sing traditional songs, but he went on to do collaborations with Misty in Roots, and he produced *Mugarandega* which became a hit...he had been backed by Misty in Roots<sup>88</sup>

Thomas Mapfumo and Oliver Mtukudzi are the most familiar popular musicians in the country. The former, other than singing reggae music like Mararire had indicated, is known

<sup>87</sup> This picture circulates in a number of social media platforms as well as newspaper and magazine articles. This particular one was taken from Pindula news. On the site the only information given says, "This shows Cde Chinx and others with Bob Marley when he came in for the Independence celebrations in April 1980." <https://news.pindula.co.zw/2017/06/18/cde-chinx-memorable-photos/>

<sup>88</sup> An Interview with Mararire, March 2017, Mbare Harare at Radio Zimbabwe. Daniel Mararire has worked at Zimbabwe's oldest radio Station as a librarian since the 1980s and he shared some crucial information with regards to reggae airing and listenership since the 80s.

for singing traditional *chimurenga* songs and is known for his genre of *Chimurenga* music which mixes mbira and jazz. Similarly, Oliver Mtukudzi is also known for singing Afro-Jazz and Afro-Pop, which he has called *Katekwe* music or Tuku music. Hence their participation and collaboration in reggae sounds is a reflection of the extent to which the reggae influence has penetrated in Zimbabwe's popular music. Transit crew performed alongside a few Jamaican artists such as Joseph Hill (Culture), Eric Donaldson and Ijahman Levi among others.<sup>89</sup> As such it is also of significance that international reggae had managed to invade the popular entertainment business by creating a vacuum that local artists also needed to fill. After Bob Marley's performance as well as other foreign reggae artists, there was a need for reggae music to be familiarized on the local scene. As such there sprouted a number of local reggae artists which include the ones I have mentioned.

Sociologically, the impact that reggae music and Rastafari had in the country was significant not only to popular music and popular artists who started to engage with the music, rather Rastafari and all its features, such as the Jamaican patois, fashion, and beliefs came to be adopted by some local audiences particularly among the youth. Zilberg makes such an observation in a survey report and states that:

Zimbabwean teenagers were deeply influenced by the style and content of such shows and foreign music, speech patterns and dress styles, just as every generation has been from vaudeville and Minstrel period, in the late nineteenth century.<sup>90</sup>

Zilberg's observations are also reflected in the literature available on the impact of reggae music ever since Bob Marley's tour and all the other Jamaicans that followed to have had a significant impact even on the social lives of youth. Dube also shares a similar view but it is direct to the notions of political messages which influenced African youths in segregated townships to search for the history and African traditional values.<sup>91</sup> Another factor that led to

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<sup>89</sup> Transit crew also went on to tour internationally to Japan, South Africa, as well as the UK abroad were they supported artists such Dennis Brown, Misty in Roots, Luciano and Mickey General. The Standard, Transit Crew Stands the test of time, 16 November 2016

<sup>90</sup> Jonathan Zilberg, "Revisiting country Music in Zimbabwe to Reflect upon the History of the Study of African Popular Culture," Popular Cultures in Africa Conference. March 30 - April 1, 2007. University of Texas at Austin, Austin, 2007.

<sup>91</sup> Dube, "The Changing Context," 113

the reggae trend to catch up among the youth was the escalated visits after Bob Marley by other reggae groups from Jamaica and from Britain some which I have mentioned in the previous sections such as UB 40, Misty in roots and others. Not only did these artists come to perform but some including Bob Marley himself stayed for long periods of time in the country touring around. Misty in Roots are said to have purchased a big car for touring purposes.<sup>92</sup>

### **5. Sociability: social significance of reggae music and Rastafari**

Bob Marley started the reggae trend which coincides with one of the theories mentioned by Sibanda (in an attempt to explain when and how Rastafari started) of the “spirit of Rastafari” that is said to have “found fertile ground” among the youth. Zimbabweans became exposed to this Caribbean reggae and Rastafari culture by experimenting with the music, adopting the fashion, ways of talk as well as establishing Rastafari cults and worship centres. The Rastafari communities that have emerged in Zimbabwe are evidence of how the Rastafari culture and reggae music became a part of the youth in Zimbabwe. Sibanda accounts for eight Rastafari communities in Zimbabwe,

The Rastafari community in Zimbabwe consists of eight Houses, namely, the Chaminuka Rastafari House in Chitungwiza, Dzimbabwe Rastafari House of Glen Norah; the Marcus Garvey Rastafari House in Epworth, Murahwa Rastafari House in Mutare; Chirorodziva Rastafari House in Chinhoyi; the Joshua Nkomo Rastafari House in Bulawayo; the Mwenemutapa Rastafari House in Kwekwe; and the Cherutombo Rastafari House in Marondera.<sup>93</sup>

This first phase of reggae music in Zimbabwe as well as in Jamaica where it originates observed and practiced what is referred to by Rastafari as levity which is a righteous way of

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<sup>92</sup> According to Dube, after Bob Marley, Misty in Roots and UB 40, performed between the years 1981 and 1984. He further states that Misty in Roots during their five-month tour proceeded to buy musical equipment, a big car for touring purposes as well as a farm from all the money they earned from their concerts. Dube, “The Changing Context”, 114.

<sup>93</sup> Fortune Sibanda, “The Impact of Rastafari Ecological Ethic in Zimbabwe: A Contemporary Discourse,” *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 5, no 3, (June 2012): 67

living based on naturalness, authenticity and preference of organic products.<sup>94</sup> Ital is also a part of levity but it concerns itself mostly with food intake by avoiding chemically enhanced type of foods. The development of the eight Rastafarian communities which have been mentioned above is based on this ideology. In essence Bob Marley's show set a motion of that up to this day still thrives in the form that it has assumed, that of Zimdancehall music. According to Zindi, after Marley's show, reggae music reached a stage of ubiquity in the country and people, the youth in particular adopted the Rastafarian culture.<sup>95</sup> He states,

The Zimbabwean youths began to spot dreadlocks and dressed in red, gold and green (Rastafarian colours) outfits. Some even stopped eating meat because Rastafari do not believe in killing. They also began speaking Jamaican patois. Everywhere you went, one would hear, "Are you feeling irie?," "One Love," "Jah Love," "Blessed Love" and "Cool Runnings brederen"<sup>96</sup>

As much as the reggae and Rastafari trend of "livity" and the "ital." way of living was growing in the social spheres among the youths, Jamaican popular music was also happening on two fronts on the local scene. Dancehall music also emerged in the same year's reggae was gaining its momentum. In the following chapter this is what I will refer to as the second generation of reggae music in Zimbabwe where there is a transformation on the notion of sound production, lyrics and a completely different approach to the concept of "levity" and "ital." Rather it is characterised by slackness, which is the radical side of dancehall music.

## 6. Lyrics

This section seeks to analyse the lyrics which the above-mentioned pioneering artists articulated to reflect on societies sensibilities of the time. As I have already mentioned, reggae music caught up particularly during a time when the war of liberation/*Chimurenga* was rife in the 1970s until independence when Bob Marley came to perform. The Rastafari message embedded in reggae music was strongly Pan-Africanist with strong liberation

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<sup>94</sup> Sibanda, "The Impact of Rastafari," 68

<sup>95</sup> Fred Zindi, Roots of Zim Reggae Music, *The Herald*, 10 September 2013

<sup>96</sup> Zindi, Roots, p.1

Implications, hence the first generations also produced songs that carried elements of solidarity among Africans to unite and promote elements of unity, black consciousness and the virtues of liberation from colonial rule. Pertinent examples are Oliver Mtukudzi's *Ishe Komborera Africa/God Bless Africa* and Thomas Mapfumo's *Mugarandega/ I am now a loner*. Some of the lyrics reflect on elements of nostalgia of the African past and the promotion of African traditional values and upholding them. Other themes in later bands which arose commented on the initial problems of corruption from the government in the 1980s such as *Love and Scandals* by Solomona Skuza. John Chibandura sang on family related issues in songs such as *Mudiwa Janet/ Darling Janet* and *Zuva Rekufa Kwangu/The day when I die*. Hence this section to analyse these lyrics and shed light on what pioneering reggae musicians sang about.

#### *Pan African and Chimurenga-oriented reggae songs*

The word *Chimurenga* predates the Zimbabwean liberation struggle which it has been mostly associated with. In a historical context, the name *Chimurenga* is associated with the Shona ancestor called Murenga Sororenzou, who was a conqueror.<sup>97</sup> However *Chimurenga* has been contextualised as a political philosophy which is expressed on a combative and revolutionary level in a Shona African nationalism context. Artists such as Thomas Mapfumo have used the word to refer to their genre of music particularly during the liberation struggle. Hence the African nationalism rhetoric, or the *Chimurenga* rhetoric has also been experimented with Thomas Mapfumo in the music which he experiments on a reggae sound. *Mugarandega* is an example of such songs.

#### *Mugarandega/The one who lives alone.*

The following song by Thomas Mapfumo is a call and response song where the lead singer calls and the backing vocalists respond. The style is typical to most Zimbabwean traditional songs, however in this particular song it has been used in a nationalist context. The song also carries within it multiple histories which can be traced back to ancient hunting songs in the

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<sup>97</sup> Vambe provides a short history on the context of the term *chimurenga*, its origins and its context. He argues that it is a traditional name of a Shona ancestor. Hence the term predates the liberation struggle in which it had become famous and dates from the times of Munhumutapa struggles against the Portuguese if one is to apply its manifestation of the ideology of African liberation. Maurice T Vambe, "Rethinking the Notion of Chimurenga in the Context of Political change in Zimbabwe" *Journal of Music Research in Africa*, 8 no 2, (April 2016): 3.

precolonial era to the colonial *Chimurenga* times when it was used to motivate the fight against colonialism.

Lead: Ndiudzeiwo Kwakaenda Vamwe	Tell me where the others went
Response: Ndoita mugara ndega	I am living alone
Response: Murombo sekuru vemwana	He is poor, grandfather
Response: Ndoita mugara ndega	I am living alone
Lead: Honawo ndoenda kwakaenda vamwe	Look I am going where the others went
Response: Ndoita mugara ndega	I am living alone
Lead: Ndoendawo kwakaenda vamwe	I am going where the others went
Response: Ndoita mugara ndega	I am living alone

Misty in Roots: We clap you know for Thomas Mapfumo, The Blacks Unlimited.

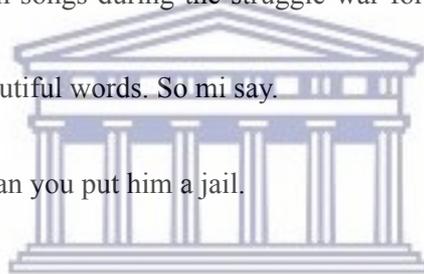
The only man to sing of freedom songs during the struggle war for Zimbabwe, our motherland you know.

Some talk of the man and his beautiful words. So mi say.

He is a true man African

I say the man Mr Thomas How can you put him a jail.

He was singing culture.



Mapfumo's song is a reinterpretation of a traditional mbira Shona hunting song, which has been metaphorically used in a *chimurenga* context to articulate on the young people going to the liberation war similar to the way they went to hunt for game in old days. The song elaborates on three factors that associate with the term *chimurenga*. First is the aforementioned Shona ancestor *Murenga Sororenzou*, the hunter the conqueror and the nation builder<sup>98</sup>, second it is used metaphorically to refer to young men and women going to join the liberation struggle and third, it falls under the *chimurenga* genre which Thomas Mapfumo labelled his music.

Thomas Mapfumo's *chimurenga* music is characterized by metaphor and figurative expressions which require a critical listening to understand its political undertones. Backed by Misty in Roots, a British reggae band, its context becomes clear as they give a brief

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<sup>98</sup> Vambe, "Rethinking the Notion of Chimurenga", p. 3

English political background of Thomas Mapfumo to have been the only man to sing struggle songs during the liberation war.

*Oliver Mtukudzi: Ishe Komborera Africa/ God Bless Africa*

Originally Oliver Mutukudzi's genre of music, known as *Katekwe*, is distinctively recognised by incorporating *ngoma*/ dance-drumming elements. Scholars such as Chamisa have argued that styles of traditional drumming patterns that are incorporated within certain traditional songs are influential in in redefining Zimbabwean music popular culture.<sup>99</sup>

Ishe Komborera Africa	God Bless Africa
Ngaisimudzirwe zita rayo	Let its name be raised
Inzwai miteuro yedu baba	Hear our praises father
Isu mhuri yayo, honai	Us its family, look
Muti komborere	Bless us
Huya mweya	Come spirit
Huya mweya komborera	Come and bless
Ishe Komborera, ishe komborera	God Bless, God Bless
Usakanganwa Zimbabwe	Don't forget Zimbabwe
Ungakohlwa Azania	Don't forget Azania
Nkosi sikelela Mozambique	God Bless Mozambique
Nkosi sikelela Malawi	God Bless Malawi
Ungakohlwa Tanzania	God Bless Tanzania
Usakanganwe Kenya	Don't forget Kenya
Kuzoti Botswana	What about Botswana
Ishe komborera iAfrica	God bless Africa
Nksoi sikelea Africa	God Bless Africa.

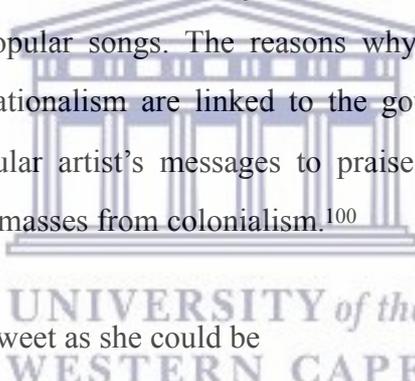
Oliver Mtukudzi's song is another example of a first generation reggae song that articulates on Pan African values of the unity and oneness of African countries. The song was formerly sung as Zimbabwe's national anthem before '*Simudzai Mureza*'/Raise the Flag. The song has remained as South Africa's national anthem called *Nkosi Sikelela/ God Bless*. Unlike Mapfumo or other songs pertaining *chimurenga*, Mtukudzi in *Ishe Komborera* alleviates from the militancy of struggle music but his message arouses mass appeal and exhibits excitement on the independence and unity of African states.

<sup>99</sup> Chamisa, *Commodified Versions*, p 67

The lyrics of the song call upon God to bless all African states as one African family. There is the mention of Azania, a Pan-African name used to refer to Africa. His song appeals for harmony as opposed to conflict. *Ishe Komborera* is a jubilant song, it expresses excitement and the anticipation of a new beginning for independent states through a call for divine interception and blessing of not only Zimbabwe but the entire Africa. Hence this first generation reggae song, similar to Mapfumo is idyllically Pan-African as it suggests communally constructive power models within African contextual frameworks, however in a harmonious way.

*Love and Scandals: Solomon Skuza*

The late historical events of the 1980s, inspired popular artists to move from a euphoric independence approach to an all-encompassing critical stance through protest songs. Responses towards changing times to difficulty which were aggravated by government incompetence increased in popular songs. The reasons why artists sang about unity, the virtues of the struggle and nationalism are linked to the government's infiltration and its determination to control popular artist's messages to praise them of their liberation war heroics and deliverance of the masses from colonialism.<sup>100</sup>



She looked as sweet as she could be  
But when she said she will marry me  
But now she is gone x2  
She is gone x3  
She broke my heart for another guy  
And she broke my heart for another guy  
For another guy, for another guy  
A guy who owned a Cressida  
The information has been leaking so fast  
Leaking x4  
She said listen until I buy a Cressida, she will never come back to me

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<sup>100</sup> Maurice, T Vambe, "Popular Songs and Social Realities in Post-Independence Zimbabwe", *African Studies Review*, 43, no 2,, (September 2000):75

If that is the case, I would rather be alone x2  
If she wants to buy that Cressida, I saw in the papers  
She mustn't include me, I would stay without love  
Did you hear the news, but did you hear the news?  
How can you buy a car and sell it again?  
Everybody wants to know x2

“Love and scandals” is another example of a first generation reggae song; however, unlike Mapfumo or Mtukudzi’s, which carry Pan-African discourses, Skuza’s song touches on corruption, specifically on the Willowvale motor scandal which saw officials buying and re-selling cars at black market prices.<sup>101</sup> The 80s were characterised by the government’s failure in fulfilling the independence virtues such as redistributing the land, abuse of funds and the diversion of funds into personal bank accounts by high ranking officials.<sup>102</sup> The Willowvale motor scandal is an example, and scholars such as Vambe, describe it as “a measure of social decay and betrayal.”<sup>103</sup>

Skuza’s song laments on the scandal using metaphor using an imaginative woman who abandons the persona for another man who owns a Toyota Cressida. The mention of the Cressida alludes to the scandal as it was one of the cars that were sold at black market prices by officials. The song also shows the rift that exists between those who have and those who do not, and how material possessions determines one’s status. The use of rhetoric questions asking if one had heard it in the news, how one can sell and resell a car and how everyone wants to know shifts the matter from being a personal affair between two people to something that includes the public. Hence the song questions corruption on the scandal however indirectly using the song to question the

*Zuva rekufa kwangu/ The day I will die: John Chibadura*

Apart from the excitement of independence or addressing the growing notions of corruption and miss governance as reflected in Mapfumo, Mtukudzi and Skuza’s songs, personal and

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<sup>101</sup> Vambe, Popular Songs and Social Realities, 79

<sup>102</sup> Ibid, 79

<sup>103</sup> Ibid, 79

family issues were also some of the subjects in reggae popular songs by artists. John Chibadura is an example and he produced a reggae album entitled Reggae Hits. Most of the songs sing about family and love.

Lead: Vadzimu woye, Inzwai mwana wenyu ndishaurewo sing	My ancestors listen to your child as I
Lead: Mwari mambo imi inzwai mwana wenyu nditaurewo	God listen to your child as I speak
Response: Zvinondinetsa mumoyo	What troubles me in my heart
Lead: Mwari mambo imi inzwai mwana wenyu nditaurewo	God listen to your child as I speak
Response: Zvinondinetsa mumoyo	What troubles me in my heart
Lead: Zvinondinetsa zvikurukru kuru pasi pano world	What troubles me is deep in this
Response: Zvinondinetsa mumoyo	What troubles me in my heart
Lead Zvinonditambudza zvikurukru kuru pasi pano world	What troubles me is deep in this
Response: Zvinondinetsa mumoyo	What troubles me in my heart
Lead: Mwana handinawo, zuva rekufa ndichachemwa naniko ? me?	I don't have a child, who will weep
Lead: Hama handinawo, zuva rekufa ndichavigwa naniko? me the day I die	I don't have relatives, who will bury
Lead: Vadzimu woye ndoroteseiwo zuva riye day	My ancestors, help me dream of that
Response: Zuva rekufa kwangu	The day that I will die
Lead: Mwari mambo imi, ndirotese iwo zuva riye	God, help me dream of that day
Response: Zuva rekufa kwangu	The day that I will die
Lead: Ndimbowana nguvawo, yekutengawo madzisahwira. friends	So that I will find time, to buy some
Lead: Ndimbowana nguvawo yekushandisa hupfumi hwangu wealth	So that I will find time to use my

*Zuva rekufa kwangu/ The day I will die* is a call and response funeral song in which the singer sings about the day he will die. He is troubled as he is alone. Regardless of his wealth, he lacks friends, children or family to bury him when he dies. Hence he calls upon God and his ancestors to inform him of the day he dies so that he finds friends and uses his wealth in view of that. The song raises questions on the importance of family in the

Zimbabwean society as it gives one identity and companionship. Material accomplishments do very little especially at one's death. The song also sheds light on reality of illness and death to be issues which people deal with hence the need for close ones to be at one's aid when they occur.

The above songs are examples of what I refer to as first generation reggae songs. They were produced by bands and were all done on reggae beats but raising issues which are pertinent to Zimbabwe. Despite being recognised as reggae songs the audience who listen to them and understand the contexts or meanings they implore; the songs can be regarded as Zimbabwean. Hence I argue that the songs are local beat. An exception of what I would refer to as world beat would be Solomon Skuza's "Love and scandals," because of his use of English lyrics on a reggae beat.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, it is evident that despite having a reggae engagement from undocumented groups such as the Pied Pipers in the 70s, the hallmark of reggae following, production and the growth of admirers and supporters unfolds in 1980 when Bob Marley comes to perform at independence. When Bob Marley came to perform, the historical development of reggae and Rastafari in urban popular culture begins to develop and gain recognition among local popular artists and listeners alike. It is evident from the chapter that the excitement towards independence, the sound connections particularly through traditional instruments such as the drum and the rattle shakers, which are also found in traditional Jamaican instruments also helped Zimbabweans to adapt to reggae music. To a large extent Pan-Africanism contributed to consciousness of African liberation at a time when Zimbabwe was attaining its independence and it was contextualized and diffused within reggae music. Hence the first artists to experiment with reggae music were composed of groups or bands who were not fulltime reggae artists but had their own local genres such as *chimurenga* by Thomas Mapfumo or Oliver Mtukudzi's *katekwe*. However due to the reggae trend that had caught these artists experimented with the reggae genre and came up with their own songs. In the chapter I referred to these artists and their reggae music as the first generation reggae producers.

## CHAPTER TWO

### The Second Generation of reggae music in Zimbabwe

In this chapter I keep focusing on sound as a key distinguishing feature of genre, among other characteristics pertaining to generational experiences. Primarily, second generation reggae in Zimbabwe was influenced by the transformation of reggae music on the Jamaican scene itself. It also witnessed a transition in the way reggae music had been thought about, produced and listened to, especially by the youth, through sound system mediums. Another area of significance of this generation was orality, through a skill called “toasting,” which involves the exciting of the crowd by a DJ or an MC, which I will discuss in this chapter.

This era of ragamuffins and ragga music – which is different from the roots or first generation reggae of Gregory Isaacs, Bunny Wailer, Bob Marley, Peter Tosh and all the other pioneering roots reggae artists – begun in the mid-1980s, extending to the 1990s and beyond. There was a shift in the production of sound, in the themes of songs, as well as in the manner in which the tempo of the sound was faster, as compared to its predecessors. Previously, music instruments such as guitars, drums, keyboards, saxophones and drums were used in the production of sound. This changed to digital sound forms that were enabled by the use of computers and advanced sound systems.

On the local scene, this generation starts almost in the same year Bob Marley comes to perform on independence. Therefore, this stream of involvement in the local dancehall genre spans a longer time frame. It begins almost in the same year as the first generation and it extends to contemporary Zimdancehall phase of engagement with dancehall music. This is because it first culminates as sound systems pioneered by William Sinclair and Power Chitemere in the early 1980s, which dominated in spaces such as the townships, night clubs and at events such as sound system clashes. Then in the 1990s it extended from the aforementioned events and clubs to studio productions, where young artists such as Major E, Booker T, Potato, and Innocent Utsiwegota, among others, gain prominence. Hence it is through these pioneering local dancehall artists that issues on urbanization as well as other issues such as love and the N.G.O discourse on the H.I.V and AIDS pandemic are raised.

This chapter is organised into six sections, which endeavor to elaborate what characterizes the second generation or phase in reggae music in Zimbabwe. The sections focus on sound, particularly the shift from reggae to dancehall with specific reference to sound systems; they account for the shift from reggae (bands) to dancehall (digital sound systems) as well as the emergence of local dancehall artists. The chapter also analyses the lyrics of pioneering dancehall artists, which focus mainly on urbanisation and contemporary problems and social issues in Zimbabwe. The final section of the chapter describes how dancehall and its culture had been received and integrated amongst Zimbabwe's youth of the late 1980s to the early 1990s.

### **1. A brief history of Dancehall in Jamaica**

Dancehall music is a version of a revolutionised form of Jamaican music that has deep roots in reggae music. It carries within it various components of soul music that originate from Africa and the Afro-Caribbean. It originates from the slums of West Kingston in Jamaica and it is as manifestation of the experiences of ostracised ghetto youths of Jamaica. Common themes in dancehall lyrics are African heritage, sexuality, fashion, promotion of the use of marijuana, homophobia and homosexuality.<sup>104</sup>

As already mentioned in the previous chapter, Jamaican popular music has been born out of multi-composite West African drumming rhythms which have been blended into reggae music. At the same time, reggae carries within it various genres such as *ska*, *mento* and *rocksteady* and that it has been referred to as “an umbrella term that went on to encompass a wide variety of styles.”<sup>105</sup> Dancehall is also born out of this tradition, however with a distinct soundscape. According to Henriques, Jamaican music has evolved and been designed through time to “be felt as much as it is heard,” to produce what he refers to as “sonic dominance” where in effect “the bassline beats on our chest, vibrating the flesh, playing on the bone and resonating the genitals.”<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Marlon, E. Douglas, “The Power of Stories: A Communicative Investigation of Dancehall Narratives and Caribbean Culture” (M.A diss., Boise State University, 2012), 16

<sup>105</sup> David, V. Moskowitz, “Caribbean Popular Music” in *An Encyclopaedia of Reggae, Mento, Ska, Rocksteady and Dancehall*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2006), 8.

<sup>106</sup> Julian Henriques, *Sonic Bodies: Reggae Sound Systems, Performance Techniques and Ways of Knowing*, (Continuum International Publishing: London, 2011), 452.

These developments in sound experiments which were being done by Jamaican audio engineers who modified audio equipment led to the production of new sound effects. A reference point of these early engineers was King Tubby who among Lee Perry, Errol Thompson, Scientist as well as Augustus Pablo was one of the first pioneer dub artists in the early 1970s.<sup>107</sup> Hence King Tubby managed to produce dub music, another dimension of reggae music which came to dominate in the 1970s and eventually developed into dancehall music through the aid of sound systems. He is regarded as the creator of the dub version and also given credited for fashioning the sound system method in the recording studio.<sup>108</sup>

Tubby created customised reverb machines, makeshift equalisers and homemade delay units. His most important enhancement involved replacing the board's four worn-out sliding volume faders with newer, more resilient sliders that afforded him far greater command and control of the mixing levels. By improving flexibility of the faders, Tubby was given a clear advantage over competing engineers.<sup>109</sup>

These developments in digital sound replace the bands that had previously been an integral part of reggae music. Instead of having Bob Marley and the Wailers as a reggae band or group, the advent of sound systems required an individual or an audio engineer such as the above described King Tubby to create or recreate sound. Hence dancehall music, through an arrangement of sound components, enabled the production of a wide range of sonic detail which led to the development of "riddims," which I shall discuss in the next chapter.

This era of prominence in this new version of reggae music was called "Dancehall Deejay Music" and it was characterized by prominent sound engineering such that it escalated the tempo as well as loudness of the sonic output.<sup>110</sup> The idea of "dancehall deejaying" however was an already existing phenomenon in the Jamaican music popular culture. According to Manuel et al, this trend can be traced back to the late 1950s to the

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<sup>107</sup> Thomas Vendryes, "Versions, Dubs and Riddims: Dub and the Transient Dynamics of Jamaican Music," *Dancecult: Journal of Electronic Dance Music Culture*, 7 no. 2 (2015): 6

<sup>108</sup> Henriques, *Sonic Bodies*, 137

<sup>109</sup> David, N. Howard, *Sonic Alchemy: Visionary Music Producers and Their Maverick Recordings* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard Corporation, 2004), 221

<sup>110</sup> Henriques, *Sonic Bodies*, 172

1960s, when it was characterised by the art of lyrically introducing new records “with a flourish of verbal theatrics intended to whip up crowd excitement.”<sup>111</sup> Orality is a significant aspect not only of the dancehall space but within the entire Jamaican culture. Henriques states that storytelling, poetry, proverbs and folktales are all key characteristics of popular Caribbean culture where art, music, and literature is central.<sup>112</sup>

This culture joins and is implemented in the music culture through the art of “Deejaying” or “MC’ing.” A Deejay or an MC, as Manuel and others have stated is to “whip up crowd excitement,” but through words by an art referred to as “toasting” or “voicing” on the contemporary dancehall scene.<sup>113</sup> According to DJ Squeeze,

You can tell them to jump, lie down on the ground, put your hands in the air, clap your hands, everybody scream now. You tell them say “I am the king” and everyone say “I am the king.” Say “I am the wickedest DJ” and they say “Squeeze is the wickedest DJ.” In other words, it’s almost like mass hysteria.<sup>114</sup>

DJ Squeeze’s description of the role of the DJ or MC not only demonstrates the supposed lyrical prowess a DJ should have; it also reflects the power and level of responsibility particularly for the crowd, that comes with the role of “Deejaying” or being an MC. Thus this idea not only had mainstream musicians articulating their music, but it can be thought of as a form of brokerage which involved introducing songs lyrically. Hence the MC or DJ is key in a triangulation of three spheres which is the MC himself with his collection of music which he selects to play, the crowd and the sound system on which he spins and selects the music. The MC also acts as a cultural negotiator or an agent whose brokerage facilitates a

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<sup>111</sup> This trend of musical alteration and adjustment took place in the domestic spaces where ‘in-house’ deejays or disc spinners would get hold of the microphone and introduce the sounds that were new and prominent. Ibid, p. 172

<sup>112</sup> Popular art is noted to be significant in Caribbean spaces, painting is noted to dominate in Haiti, while Martinique is recognized for its literature, Jamaica also is also known for its rich oral culture which has been implemented in music by dub poets such as Mutabaruka, Linton Kwesi Johnson as well as Jean Binta Breeze. Julian Henriques, *Sonic Bodies*, 8-9

<sup>113</sup> According to Henriques, an MC or MCing refers to the one who does the talking particularly to the crowd on a Jamaican sound system, whereas in the UK the name is referred to as the DJ (Disc Jockey). On the Jamaican scene the term is also relevant to artists who ‘speak’ or ‘chat’ instead of articulating their lyrics through singing. Henriques, *Sonic Bodies*, p. 177

<sup>114</sup> Ibid, p. 178

socio-musical participation between the songs and the audience through the sound system by his own oral skills done by the means of “toasting” or “voicing”.

Although the term “dancehall” is usually associated with music, scholars have thought of it as a social space that has been used to socialise with music and other cultural performances such as poetry and storytelling as its core. According to Niaah, the dancehall is a space in which adults meet for the purpose of consumption, entertainment, celebration and affirmation of a group identity on commonly held lawns, yards and halls, whence its name derives from.<sup>115</sup> According to Manuel et al, the term “raggamuffin”, similar to the term “dread” before it, is a derogatory term that had been adopted by socially-ostracised youth who had been defined as aggressive and defiant.<sup>116</sup> Bunny Goodison states that the people from the low classes of society went to the dancehalls.<sup>117</sup> Therefore Ragga or dancehall embodies composite characteristics. It gave the underclass Jamaican urban youth an identity as well as a status in which prestige could be acclaimed through the music. It is an inflection of the old reggae traditions which have been orally transmitted and revitalised in the modern age by technological innovations to enable the art of “Deejaying” as well as “toasting,” which are key parts of the contemporary ragga genre.

## **2. Sociability: Adoption of Dancehall in Zimbabwe**

The advent of dancehall music brought a different perspective, feel and reception of Jamaican popular music, different from reggae music. This illustrates how sensibilities of the West and the Caribbean had infiltrated in the local youth and the extent to which international culture particularly its sounds and idioms had been internalised and contextualised. This can be seen from the two generations that I have discussed so far. The majority, if not all, second generation artists used a localised version of Jamaican patois in their songs, whereas first generation artists sang in straightforward vernacular or formal English, such as Skuza’s “Love and Scandals.”

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<sup>115</sup> Sonjah. S Niaah, “A common Space,*Dancehall, Kwaito and the Mapping of New World Music and Performance*,” *The World of Music*, no50, (November, 2009): 36,

<sup>116</sup> Peter Manuel, Kenneth Bilby and Michael Largey, *Caribbean Currents: Caribbean Music From Rhumba to Reggae* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), 174.

<sup>117</sup> Niaah, “A Common Space,” 36.

Another factor which helped to popularise dancehall music was the media. Since the 1980s local radio stations, particularly radio 3, which was renamed 3FM and then Power FM, had mostly been known for airing international songs. It was the main platform among other stations, such as radio one and two, on which the youth could tune into and access international music, including reggae dancehall Jamaican music. Hence through exposure to these popular cultures, local youth audiences and artists adopted such trend. Bere recalls,

My record- and tape-playing habits were augmented by listening to radio in contributing to my awareness and participation in the unfolding urban youth culture. Reggae programs on Radios One, Two and Three deserve special mention. Dennis Wilson's Radio Three reggae and dancehall program helped popularize dancehall.<sup>118</sup>

Bere's account illustrates a typical unfolding of a post-independence urban youth culture in Zimbabwe when reggae and dancehall music becomes more popular particularly after Bob Marley. This could be witnessed in some of the pioneering DJs on radio who had also aptly named themselves to suit the trend. Davies Mugadza was known as "The Kool Moe Dee," Innocent Chuma was "Chu Man" and Josiah Sengende was known as "The Hitman."<sup>119</sup> Other than radio personalities this trend was also common among the audience. Bere, mentions his nickname, "I even gave myself a cool reggae/dancehall/dub name, which I wrote on my school books: Ras Goddie Dread."<sup>120</sup>

When the sound systems arrived in the early 1980s, there was an absence of studio productions by local artists and the way they got involved with dancehall music was through sound where they learned to be MC's and the skill of toasting. Hence before producing their own dancehall songs, local youths used to sing over mainstream dancehall songs from artists such as Buju Banton, Shabba Ranks, Charlie Chaplin among other pioneering artists. Mtetwa references one youth called Shane Dumbuchena:

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<sup>118</sup> Wonderful G. Bere, "Urban Grooves: The Performance of Politics in Zimbabwe's Hip Hop Music" (PhD diss., New York University, 2008), 105-106

<sup>119</sup> Bere, "Urban Grooves," 107

<sup>120</sup> Ibid, 104

If you go back then locally, there was a guy Shane Dumbuchena... Shane Could actually imitate Buju to an extent that you would feel it was Buju live on stage. Shane was part of the group called Tuber Tribe. It was a mix of Dancehall and Hip Hop... Shane would come and do the toast now, man had a deep voice, he was lyrically gifted, style and pattern hard core as well. His signature tune was “Murder” by Buju.<sup>121</sup>

The above description of Shane by Mtetwa demonstrates the adoption of Western and Jamaican sensibilities. Through exposure to mainstream dancehall, local youth started off by toasting and went on by imitating mainstream dancehall artists. They would form entertainment groups such as sound systems as well as performance groups like the above mentioned Tuber Tribe. Hence the arrival of dancehall brought in a version of Jamaican popular music, which the local youths adopted starting from sound systems such as Stereo One International, to performance groups such as Tuber Tribe, to studio productions from Innocent Utsiwegota, Major E, Booker T, Fortune Mparutsa among others. The growing popularity of international music such as hip-hop, jazz, rap and dancehall music on the local scene contributed to the development of localized patterns of these genres. However, on the dancehall scene as already mentioned studio productions only started later in the 1980s with Transit Crew recording their debut songs. DJ Squila shares a similar view:

There was a time when it was called maDhiji...digital music. With reggae, pure reggae it's all about, you have your bass system, then someone playing his saxophone...and then maDhiji came from the fact that as time went on, things had gone digital. There were computers.<sup>122</sup>

The advent of sound systems characterised youths singing over Jamaican dancehall songs, as well as sound clashes between sound systems. Studio productions started later with a new crop of dancehall artists, namely Innocent Utsiwegota, Major E, Booker T in the early 1990s. Transit Crew is an exception because apart from the above mentioned individuals,

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<sup>121</sup> Interview with Innocent Mtetwa in Glen Nora, Harare, 15 March 2017.

<sup>122</sup> Personal Interview with Dj Squila, Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation Studios, Highlands Harare, 6 March 2017.

they were known as a reggae band, but also produced dancehall oriented sounds and music using digital technology.

There is scant academic literature which accounts for the development of dancehall music in Zimbabwe. Scholarly sources, particularly from Bere and Zindi, together with sources such as newspaper articles and social media platforms, reveal that the development of dancehall music in Zimbabwe was threefold. There was first the era of sound systems in the early 1980s, which was dominated by sound systems and sound clashes as well as a following of Jamaican dancehall icons especially among the youth. The second era in the early 1990s witnessed pioneering studio productions of dancehall music by local artists such as Innocent Utsiwegota, Major E, Booker T and Potato among others.

Unlike in the previous chapter, where singers such as Thomas Mapfumo, Oliver Mtukudzi or Solomon Skuza and the bands experimented part time with the reggae sounds, artists in the local dancehall scene appeared to have a full time engagement with the dancehall world. In an effort to investigate the foundations of early artists, I toured around studios such as Power FM and ChillSpot records as well as to interview individuals who followed dancehall during these times. I intended to investigate how dancehall managed to get such an intimate response among the youth as well as to why this phase seems to have survived longer than the reggae bands. The information that I gathered revealed that three main factors influenced this: the introduction of sound systems, the imitation of Jamaican mainstream ragga artists, and recording of the first artists using digital equipment. These shall be elaborated in the following subsections.

### *2.1 The advent of sound systems*

In the early 1980s the local scene was still dominated by reggae music such as of Gregory Isaacs, Eric Donaldson, among other elderly Jamaican artists. However, as much as reggae was transforming into dancehall in Jamaica, the local scene was also catching up with the music of prominent ragga dancehall artists. They did so by getting involved into the trend of sound systems, like their Jamaican counterparts were doing. However, when Jamaicans were producing their own songs, Zimbabweans were largely following Jamaican dancehall artists and their songs as well as experimenting with sound systems. Sound systems was a way to

get acquitted with the latest ragga dancehall songs from Jamaica because they clashed in competitions to play the latest songs.

Initially, this era of sound systems and its forerunners on the local dancehall scene was characterised by the art of Deejaying, MC'ing, toasting as well as imitation more than the involvement in singing per se Innocent Mtetwa, mentioned in an interview that imitation was a local dancehall trend in the early days and it was inspired by mainstream ragga artists such as Buju Banton and Shabba ranks. As already discussed in the first chapter, first generation reggae musicians in Zimbabwe such as the likes of Zig Zag band, Transit Crew, John Chibadura, Solomon Skuza, Thomas Mapfumo and Oliver Mutukudzi were characterised by bands, whereas sound systems systematically relied on DJ's and MC's. Mtetwa explains:

If we look, it's a situation that exactly the same way toasters came up with Jamaica, it was a matter of them being MC's and DJ's. They would then do chats over dubs and staff like that, like maybe in the introduction of songs.<sup>123</sup>

Despite the rise to prominence of ragga or dancehall music, roots reggae music managed to maintain its foothold in the music market and continued to be an integral part of dancehall music; but it was the former that had taken centre-stage, particularly among the youth. Manuel and others, portray this transformation to be subversive, due to the way Jamaican popular music in the 1980s witnessed a transition in the manner it presented youth consciousness to the forefront of music.<sup>124</sup> Ragga Music and ragamuffins, is the reggae side (the former) of music and its participants (the latter) that emerged in the mid-1980s among the ghetto youths of Jamaica. Roots reggae music themes promoted the Rastafari ideology of promoting "livity" standards of living which embodied the essence of spirituality and righteousness as opposed to the "slackness" ragga and ragamuffin disoriented Jamaican

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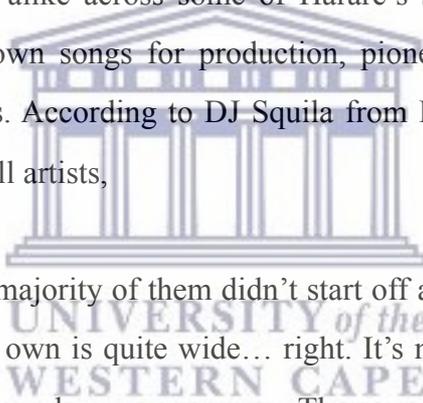
<sup>123</sup> Personal Interview with Innocent Mtetwa in Glen Nora, Harare, 15 March 2017.

<sup>124</sup> Manuel, Bilby and Largey, *Caribbean Currents*, 174.

ghetto youth began to use in rallying forward their music.<sup>125</sup> In essence, Ragga or dancehall music is a form of protest music which attacks Babylon (the capitalist system) through “slackness”, whereas reggae music did it through religion, by practicing Rastafari through observing and living as natural as one can possibly can through an ideology referred to as “livity.”

## 2.2 Pioneering dancehall artists

Local digital dancehall production started only later in the 1990s, after sound systems had already been introduced Zimbabwean township youth to mainstream dancehall. The integration of local artists into the dancehall culture was influenced by the integration of these artists into the sound systems. Secondly, the continued visits by Jamaican artists to Zimbabwe further exposed them to dancehall music. The information that I obtained from DJs, followers and producers alike across some of Harare’s studios shows that instead of writing and producing their own songs for production, pioneering artists started off with participating in sound systems. According to DJ Squila from Power FM in reference to the early pioneering local dancehall artists,



You would find that the majority of them didn’t start off as artists, they started off as... because dancehall on its own is quite wide... right. It’s not only about someone being on stage. You have got sounds... you see now. The sound system is an integral part of the dancehall culture... you see now. Like Silverstone, Smallex, Stereo One it’s a integral part of the dancehall culture. So you will find out that the likes of Malvin S, Booker T, the majority of them came through that system of sound systems and then they developed to become musicians later on. Initially they started off with sound systems.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Slackness and slack lyrics are opposed to what Jamaicans refer to Jah Livity. Slackness and slack lyrics are pompous of sexuality, references to the consumption of drugs as well as masculine dominance. On the other hand Jah livity rallies for purity, consciousness as well as sustenance of the natural environment. Manuel, Bilby and Largey, *Caribbean Currents*, 173.

<sup>126</sup> Personal Interview with Dj Squila, Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation Studios, Highlands Harare, 6 March 2017.

This is where the shift from reggae to ragga dancehall in Zimbabwe can be located. Instead of bands, which were a collective of a variety of sound brokers, digital dancehall music was centred around the sound system, which acted as its core. It is through sound systems that pioneering artists learnt the dancehall skills. All these three processes that have been mentioned by DJ Squila involve hosting the crowd at a clash (MC'ing), selecting songs for the clash (DJ'ing) and the singing part (toasting). The local transformation from reggae (bands) to dancehall (sound systems) parallels the advent of dancehall music in Jamaica itself when reggae evolved to dub and then dancehall.

Locally, these shifts imitated Jamaican music transformations and local artists borrowed Jamaican style and patterns, of which they produced localised versions. An example is Fortune Mparutsa's *Wangu ndega*, which shall be analysed in the sections below in which the singer toasts in a typical Shabba Ranks fashion. Another factor that further contributed to the cementing of dancehall music is linked to the visits by Jamaicans to Zimbabwe.

The mid and late 1980s into the 1990s witnessed the emergence of the toasters side by side with icons such as Shabba Ranks, Buju Banton, Charlie Chaplin, Yellow man, among others who were also referred to as ragga muffins. Toasting is the equivalent of rapping in rap or hip hop music. In terms of ragga dancehall music, to "toast" or a toaster refers to a technique or a manner of singing with a faster tempo. It is also referred to "voicing" or singing over a dancehall instrumental particularly in the described manner. Buju Banton and Shabba Ranks cemented the toasting and ragga dancehall digital side of music in the early 1990s when they toured Zimbabwe. According to Mtetwa,

Two major toasters they came in...Shabba Ranks he came in, then also came in the Gargamel...that's Buju..1991. So those are the two major artists from back in the day on the digital ragga side who came in. From there it solidified now the idea of toasting among the boys.<sup>127</sup>

The touring of Jamaican dancehall popular musicians set the foundation for local artists to produce their own versions of dancehall music and notable among the first crop of local dancehall artists were the group Transit Crew who were "a reggae group with a dancehall

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<sup>127</sup> A personal interview with Innocent Mtetwa in Glen Nora, Harare, 18 March 2017.

flair” according to Bere <sup>128</sup> As much as William Sinclair had set the pace for sound systems, Transit crew pioneered the recording of dancehall songs and in 1988 released a dancehall single entitled ‘Zimbabwean Girl and later on albums called “The Message” and “Money.”<sup>129</sup>

Transit crew went on to tour Japan and their success became a point of mention for other aspiring local dancehall artists in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The 1990s witnessed the emergence of dancehall artists notably Innocent Utsiwegota, Yappy Banton, Major E, Potato and Booker T among others doing their own studio productions. As much as the first generation reggae artists such as Mapfumo, Mtukudzi, Skuza had made the first attempts of their localised versions of reggae music, the above mentioned dancehall artists emerged as another generation to localise Jamaican dancehall music.

### 3. Lyrical analysis

In the late 1980s to the early 1990s, the local scene begins to witness a shift from imitation of mainstream Jamaican artists to the initial local studio productions from Zimbabwean artists. The essence of this section is to discuss what these pioneering dancehall artists articulated on. First generation reggae music of Thomas Mapfumo, Oliver Mtukudzi, Solomon Skuza and John Chibadura dwelt on the virtues of independence, Pan African and African traditional values, the first problems of corruption as well as the family.

Second Generation reggae, particularly in the beginning of the 1990s, touched upon matters affecting people in the urban areas as well as matters pertaining to love and relationships. This is partly because of rapid urbanisation, as well as early problems affecting the state such as corruption as well as unemployment. Awareness on the H.I.V and A.I.D.S pandemic. There are also references to the pioneering events when dancehall emanated locally in conjunction with mainstream dancehall especially from the song ‘Memories’ by Transit crew.

Below is a reading and analysis of lyrics of this second phase of reggae music in Zimbabwe. The section analyses songs from Innocent Utsiwegota, Fortune Mparutsa and Nelson Chibwana. I have selected these two songs because of the varying themes they

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<sup>128</sup> Transit Crew band members were former Misty in Roots drummer Munya Brown, Culture T, Antony Liba , Samaita Zindi and Emanuel Frank. Bere, “*Urban Grooves*,” 109.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid, 109.

present which range from urbanization, the pandemic, as well as love and relationships. Hence they give us an insight on the dynamics of the 1990s. “Country boy” is a song which also featured Major E and Potato who are among the pioneering recording artists of this generation. The song articulates the problems associated with urbanisation through juxtaposing rural life and city life. Although *Wangu Ndega* is a seemingly a playful love song<sup>130</sup>, it also raises the crucial problem of the HIV and AIDS pandemic which is also associated with conjugal relationships and the need for one to be faithful with their partners. The theme of love and relationships is also recurrent in local dancehall songs from the 1990s in songs such as “*Mamoyo lean on me*” by Nelson Chibwana.

### *Innocent Utsiwegota/ Country Boy*

Country boy is sung in a first person narrative. It is the story of a young youth coming from the rural area to seek for employment in the urban areas, but whose efforts are futile as he cannot find employment. It references problems associated with urbanisation in the 1990s, such as the effects of rural to urban migration. Hence the song contrasts urban and rural life:

#### Verse 1: Innocent

Lived in the country all my life, oh mama  
 I came to the city hoping to find work oh mama  
 Now I am so lonely, nobody knows me oh mama  
 I got to go back go where I belong oh mama  
 Baby I, wanna see the mountains once more I  
 Wanna hear the birds sing by I  
 Wanna see the rivers once more I  
 I am a country Boy,  
 I belong in the mountains  
 I belong in the valley

#### Verse 2: Potato

Inzwa, Chekutanga ini ndapinda muHarare ha	Listen first I get into Harare
Kutsvaga basa ini ndarishaiwa	I look for a job, and I can't find it
Chechipiri ini ndasvika muHarare ha	Second I get into Harare
Kutsvaga imba ini ndaishaiwa	I look for a house, and I can't find it

<sup>130</sup> Bere, “*Urban Grooves*,” 108.

Ndafunga mbuya vachitaura ngano	I reminisce grandmother telling folktales
Vazukuru vachikanga mhandire	Grandchildren roasting corn
Vana baba kurova ndareeee	Men drinking traditional beer
Ngoma yorira inzwa makomo kudavira	The drums play and echo through the mountains.
Musikana wangu akanaka ariko kumusha	My beautiful girl is there in the village
Hupenyu hweHarare hwanga hwandiomera	Life had become unbearable for me
Ndosaka ndati ini ndava kudzokera	That's why am saying am going back
Ndoenda hama dzangu dzose ndaguta.	I am going my friends, I am done
Ndoenda hama dzangu ndakaona motoooo	I am going; I have suffered

### Verse 3: Major E

In di country where mi gon see mi granny  
 And they all live there on the fire der sitting  
 And in di ghetto we always been longing  
 And in di country is always good looking  
 With lots of melons and lots of pumpkin,  
 Fruits of the tree and the mountain climbing  
 Mi should go back to di country where mi belong  
 Major E mi Love di country living  
 And fortune you love di country  
 So mi reaching out to di city with mi education  
 Mi looking for a job and dat is occupation  
 And to my surprise der is a different situation  
 Mi wonder in di city why tings a gwaan so  
 The rich get richer and the poor get poorer  
 You must have some money to live in di city  
 There is no mercy and there is no pity

The song is structured into three verses, all which are sung in different styles by Innocent Utsiwegota, Potato, and Major E. The song bears deep nostalgic connotations of the rural area where the youth are coming from, when life becomes unendurable in the city of Harare. The first verse by Utsiwegota gives insight of the depicted persona's strong rural identity background, contrasted with the city, which he has very little if anything to relate with. The protagonist describes nothing more than the fact he has come to Harare to find

work as compared to everything that he has ever known that is in the rural area where he grew up.

The second verse by Potato sheds more light on the protagonist's motives, expectations and experience in the city. He first objective is to find work and the second to find accommodation, at which all efforts are futile. At the end of it he begins to think of where has come from. Again there is a contrast between urban and rural life where in the former life is governed by having to go to work in order to survive. All this is not easy as reflected by the persona who describes his experience to be hell like because of the diction he uses in the last line of the verse. The word *moto* in the vernacular refers to fire, which the persona describes his experience to have been fire like. Juxtaposed with the urban, rural life is portrayed to be a society where life is communal and there is a limited sense of ownership where most things are collective.

The third verse by Major E is sung in a localised patois and is rich with rhyme. In the verse the artist also contrasts the rural and the urban and indicates how manageable life is in the former as compared to the latter. The mention of his grandmother as well as mention of the men and children in Potato's verse indicates the close and intimate relationships and the communal aspects people in the rural have. Lines three and four again juxtaposes the rural space and the urban in the sense that due to hardships, the "ghetto" makes him long for the country lifestyle where food is bountiful.

The last eight lines of the verse are reflective of the capitalist set up of urban life where one's social position or status is determined by the quality of education ones has. The persona in the song comes to the town with a rural education but it is too low to secure him a good job. More so, it is to his surprise that life in the city is governed by money and material possessions that in the social hierarchy, the person at the top tends to have more than everyone else.

#### *Wangu Ndega/ Fortune Mparutsa*

The late Fortune Mparutsa's *Kana matombo* is primarily a courting song where the artist eventually finds a partner. The lyrics of the song are entirely in Shona, but the artist's uses sentimental phrases with bits of Jamaican patois. The song is about the artist telling his story about eventually finding a partner from Mutare which is located in the Eastern side of



UNIVERSITY *of the*  
WESTERN CAPE

This is called

This is we should prevent I

Condom, condom, condom

Shandisa condom condom condom

Use a condom condom condom

Natsa kwawabva mwanasikana kwaunoenda husiku x5 Humble where you come from, its dark where you go

Sarura wako, dzidzira maruva enyika haaperi

Choose yours, and learn girls will always be around

Yamiro kune avo vanowanza

Warning to those who womanise

Mukondombera mukondombera!

AIDS AIDS!

Although the song is about the protagonist courting and eventually finding a partner, it also raises issues on urbanisation and its problems such as the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Hence the singer through his personal love story gives advice to people involved in relationships to take measures that will ultimately help them prevent themselves from falling into the danger of contracting the HIV and AIDS.

The advice the artist gives is based on moral principles such as having to choose one partner, committing to the same partner and staying faithful to that one partner. In the first verse he expresses how love is unconditional and that even if girls leave you (like what Belinda, Lyn and Delia did) one can always find another one. The second verse goes on to explain how love has escalated and how he should arrange for marriage, settle down with his partner from Manyika. He also heeds warning to those who provoke him in his relationship to be careful because he will deal with them

The entire third verse explores the core message of the song. The first four lines emphasise on being careful as it warns the audience to choose one partner, get married to that one partner and refrain from lust or adultery as it brings promiscuity hence the spread of sexually transmitted infections such as HIV and AIDS. The song also makes reference to traditional medicine (line three) particularly of a man called Burombo who claimed to cure HIV/AIDS. It also advocates the HIV/AIDS NGO discourse in the mid-1990s to warn and educate people on the reality of the pandemic and instead of being misled by people such as Burombo, they should rather opt for prevention methods such as the use of condoms.

*Mamoyo* Lean on me

This song by Nelson Chibwana and his group called the Tradition is ultimately a love song like Fortune Mparutsa's *Wangu Ndega*. However, unlike the latter who is proclaiming that he has found his love already, Chibwana is on a courting journey and is still pursuing her despite

the financial challenges or the lack of adequate wealth he has to be chasing her. The song is sung in English but with some Jamaican Shabba Ranks or Buju Banton toasting style in some parts which reflects the influence the two mainstream artists have.

First Verse

Mamoyo lean on me  
Follow me if you love me oh no no  
Mamoyo lean on me  
Follow me wherever I go  
Love me for whatever I am  
You will eat what I eat  
You will drink what I drink  
You will eat what I eat  
Sharing and caring together  
Mamoyo lean on me  
I have no money but follow me  
Mamoyo please lean on me  
I have no money but I love you  
Oh yeah



Chorus

Follow me if you love me  
If you love me, Mamoyo follow me  
Follow me if you love me

Second Verse

Mamoyo lean on me  
Mamoyo I love you  
You got know that I love you  
You got to know that I think about you  
You got to know that I care about you  
I wanna tell you that I need you  
I wanna tell you that I miss you  
I wanna tell you that I think about you  
O yeah

Chorus

Follow me if you love me

If you love me, Mamoyo follow me  
Follow me if you love me

Third Verse

Woman woman, woman I love you eh eh  
Woman woman, woman I need you  
Mi love your big , big sexy eyes  
Mi love your big, big fat lips  
Mi love your big, big fat body eh eh x2  
Woman woman, woman I love you  
Woman woman , woman I need you eh eh  
Woman woman, woman I love you.  
Give in to me, give in to mee x2

Although the song is about the artist courting or pursuing someone he loves, the language and the tone which he uses is more of demand than appeal. In the opening verse of the song, the diction which the persona uses resembles a degree of force as opposed to charm in the courting process. In the first verse, the second line, phrases such as “Follow me if you love me” does little to show the essence of pursuit in love; rather, it offers the lady little or no choice to make her own decision. This is further complimented by the following lines which the singer says, “love me for whatever I am”. It further connotes her love to him to be obligatory such that even if he does not have money then she still has to love him without compromise. This is accompanied by the two lines which follow which he uses words such as “will” which in turn deprives the lady of her will to choose if she can love him.

In the second verse of the song the singer continues with his style of courting, but this time he is articulate with how he feels about her by telling her that he loves her. However, although he manages to say it straight instead of the impositions he starts off with in the first verse, he takes them on on another dimension. This time he imposes his feelings for her acknowledgment when he in three consecutive lines demands her to know that he ‘loves’ her, he “thinks” about her and that he “cares” about her. When one closely ponders on the implications of the words, they can sense the conflicting contexts in which the singer uses them. The words “love,” “think” and “care” are indicative to heartfelt feelings, one’s conscience as well as the ability to care for someone.

The style in which the last verse of the song is sung bears some strong mainstream Jamaican overtones and singing styles of artists such as Buju Banton, Shabba Ranks and Yellowman. The singer deepens his voice and sings in a distinct toasting style at the same time effecting a localised Jamaican accent or patois. The song also warrants a strong gender reading and analysis due to the artists use of words in description of his position and expectations from the female counterpart. Most of the lines are repetitive and descriptive of the lady which he is wooing.

In a sense one would argue that his love for her is associated with her looks and sexuality since what he has described about her is the size of her “big sexy eyes,” her “big fat lips” and her “big fat body.” There is relatively nothing related to character in terms of how mannered or cultured the lady is, which is something society conceives to be the epitome of a genuine and loveable person in the Zimbabwean traditional cultures.

### *Memories*

This song by Transit crew is nostalgic. It is about remembering the tradition of dancehall music in Zimbabwe in respect to mainstream Jamaican influence of the likes of Yellowman Man and Shabba Ranks who are mentioned in the song. The song is sung in a strong localised patois, hence it is extremely difficult to decipher at times. It is exemplary to linguistic appropriation in the adoption of Jamaican music and its styles not only for Transit crew but for many of the artists who experiment with dancehall music in this era. In other songs which I have analysed above Nelson Chibwana as well as Major E also sing in a similar fashion Transit Crew does to effect the Jamaican patois in their lyrics

Say Lord of Mercy, people happy ina di country  
Follow me,  
Memories ah don't live like people do  
You never know how you remember you  
So every DJ mi respect you  
And mi name out dis DJ too  
Follow me culture.  
Rock it you Yellow man Shabba Ranks and stitch it  
Big up, di teacher Jah B.

In the song, the group makes specific reference to pioneering Jamaican dancehall artists as well as pioneering Zimbabwean artists particularly Jah B, which reflects the decade long social engagement of digital dancehall music. The earliest person known to have started with sound systems in Zimbabwe was the late William Sinclair, who is well known in the Zimdancehall fraternity by the name “Jah B”, the “Godfather.” The last line in the song “Big Up di teacher Jah B” places him on top of the local dancehall hierarchy as he is the founder of the sound systems in Zimbabwe. In the sources available there are ambiguities about the exact year when the first dancehall sound system was established in Zimbabwe. According to the Herald, a newspaper source, “Jah B was part of the popular Stereo One International, which became Zimbabwe’s number one dancehall sound at the Tube Night Club and was part of Power Chitemere’s Africa One Sound System which was one of the first reggae sound systems in Zimbabwe having been formed in 1981.”<sup>131</sup> Whereas according to Shatta, of the Dancehall shots social media platform, it was Power Chitemere who owned the first sound system known as Africa A1 Outernational which he states to be the first sound system in Zimbabwe in 1982 and states Stereo One International to have only been born in 1989 as its new name to what was Africa A1 Outernational, then Stereo Graph.<sup>132</sup>

Despite the divergences, both the newspaper article and Shatta’s accounts share some major parallels. They consider that Power Chitemere and his friend William ‘Jah B’ Sinclair as the pioneers of dancehall sound system on the Zimbabwean landscape in the early 1980s, especially between the years 1981 and 1982. In addition, both sources reveal sound systems as the first indicators for the development of this era in dancehall music. Day to day oral stories in the townships of Harare such as Mbare and other townships around Zimbabwe’s major towns reflect on the popularity of sound systems. Mtetwa mentions sound systems of the time to have been a lot in and around the township space,

The whole idea was after Bob Marley coming in there was need now for the propagation of reggae music and one of the things that had to be there was like through these sound systems that is how reggae continued to be played, there were no

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<sup>131</sup> The Herald, 27 March 2015 <https://www.herald.co.zw/jah-b-tribute-show-at-the-basement/>

<sup>132</sup> According to Shatta <https://web.facebook.com/groups/577038449024700/>

live bands and stuff like that...there were sound systems like Stereo one International, Silverstone, Startime, Alkabuline...there were a whole lot of systems.<sup>133</sup>

Jah B's involvement in the development of dancehall on the local scene was of significance because not only did he introduce the first sound system, but also worked closely with other mushrooming sound systems such as Dandaro Rockers, Mighty Ducks, Startime Supa Powa, Delta Force and Ruff Neck among others.<sup>134</sup> Hence the song takes one back to the roots of local dancehall in Zimbabwe.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, the second generation of reggae music in Zimbabwe is digital as compared to its predecessor which was characterised by bands. This second generation of reggae—or rather dancehall, as it has been discussed—was influenced by the transformation of reggae music on the Jamaican scene itself. It started off with Jah B and the introduction of sound systems, which were characterised by sonic dominance, an art of singing referred to as toasting, and the art of hosting a crowd called “DJ’ing” or “MC’ing.” However, the recording of songs in studios begin in the late 1980s to early 1990’s with Transit Crew, Innocent Utsiwegota, Fortune Mparutsa, Major E, Booker T and Potato among others. There is also a transition in the themes of the songs in the lyrics from first generation reggae, which mostly expressed the excitement around independence and the upholding of African unity and Pan-African values. Second generation reggae voices issues related to urbanisation such as the songs I have discussed in the chapter. This generation paves way to third generation reggae or the Zimdancehall generation which has an intensified out look of second generation reggae in terms of the digital aspects, studio production, the use of metaphor, slang and conditions on the dire urban situation which had been brought about by the Zimbabwean crisis in the turn of the twenty first century, which I will discuss in the following chapter.

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<sup>133</sup> A Personal Interview with Innocent Mtetwa, Glen Nora Harare, 18 March 2017.

<sup>134</sup> The Herald, 27 March 2015 <https://www.herald.co.zw/jah-b-tribute-show-at-the-basement/>

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **The Zimdancehall Generation**

Based on the sources that I have examined such as journal articles, newspapers, magazines, the internet as well as from the fieldwork that I conducted during the course of this project, the accounts around the birth of Zimdancehall as a genre, and hence of the arrival of what I have called the third generation of Zimbabwean reggae, are inconsistent and often contradictory. However, despite the ambiguities surrounding its beginnings, Zimdancehall is a continuance of what its predecessors had already initiated in terms of localized reggae or dancehall sound as well as the themes. It is computerised, highly vernacularized, uses a lot of imagery, metaphor, slang and has served as the voice of marginalised Zimbabwean urban youths. Zimdancehall emerged as a result of the Zimbabwean crisis. It has been used to articulate the devalued voices and opinions of the socially-ostracised in the Zimbabwean public sphere.

Since I have used sound as a key marker to distinguish these generations, I argue that Zimdancehall parallels second generation reggae in the sense that it is also digital and it thrives in the township spaces where a number of backyard studios have emerged. However, Zimdancehall triangulates three phenomena which account for its distinctive make-up. The first attribute to Zimdancehall is the township space or the ghetto in which it emanates and where most if not all of the Zimdancehall artists come from. The second identifying factor is the notion of the “riddim”, which in Jamaican terms is the equivalent of a digital beat or a track instrumental which is entitled to a name. Thirdly, Zimdancehall makes extensive use of the vernacular by using expressive idioms such as the ones I have mentioned above.

I seek to investigate the local essentials as well as the subcultures that are characteristic to Zimdancehall and whether or not they complement the Jamaican dancehall traditions which act as its ancestry. These three features shall be elaborated in the following sections explaining how they constitute to the Zimdancehall generation.

## 1. The Third Chimurenga, the rise of Urban Grooves music and Zimdancehall

The turn of the millennium in Zimbabwe witnessed the dawn of a movement called the “Third *Chimurenga*.” The term represents liberation of the Shona from their struggles which can be traced back to the seventeenth century when they fought the Portuguese and the Ndebele later in the early 1800s.<sup>135</sup> At the turn of the century, when Zimbabwe was colonized by the British, two wars which came to be known as the first and second *chimurenga* were fought in an attempt to drive the settlers out. According to Vambe,

*Chimurenga* as political ideology that is articulated on a military level is distinctly Shona, and therefore sui generis and an expression of African nationalism in Zimbabwe... This sensibility of struggle that the term “chimurenga” denotes was carried over during the colonial and post-colonial periods by African masses fighting both colonialism and the post-independence black leadership.<sup>136</sup>

Following the above citation, *chimurenga* symbolises ideological political modes of resistance be it against oppressive colonial governments or maladministration from post-colonial African leaderships. The land question is rooted in all the three *Chimurengas*. Both the first and the second *Chimurenga* were bygone but they had left the land question unresolved.

The third *chimurenga* in post-colonial Zimbabwe was carried out in 2000 as an attempt to fulfill what the two preceding wars had started, which is to reclaim the land.<sup>137</sup> In the process it led to the politicisation of many sectors including the media which the government through the Ministry of Information and Publicity stipulated the initially 75% broadcast of local content which was escalated to 100% in the years 2000 and 2001 respectively. This saw the rise of Urban Grooves music, which was dominated mostly by the youths. When the Ministry of Information and Publicity enacted measures to promote local content in 2000, it set the developments of Zimdancehall in motion.

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<sup>135</sup> Vambe, “Rethinking”, 3

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid*, 3

<sup>137</sup> Bere, “Urban Grooves,” 29-30.

Before the stipulation, Urban Music in Zimbabwe was a fluid space that did not carry a name such as “Urban Grooves” or “Zimdancehall”. Music, particularly “local beats” imitative to world beats, had always been referred to in terms of its main genres. For example, Fortune Mparutsa’s *Garandichauya* is a dancehall song of the 1990s; Thomas Mapfumo’s *Mugarandega* is a reggae song of the 1980s; and Conrad Nduna’s remake of Oliver Mtukudzi’s song called “Neria” would be referred to as an R and B song in the late 90s.

Keche and Manatsa argue that, despite gaining prominence after being rebranded ‘Urban Grooves’ at the turn of the millennium, the genre began to evolve in the 1980s.<sup>138</sup> Bere argues the same but his genealogy is deeper. He argues that contemporary “urban groovers” “were simply carrying on what their predecessors in the 1930s had started.<sup>139</sup> The terms, “Urban grooves” and “Zimdancehall” have been used to define the musical traditions that had always been practiced by the generations before the turn of the millennium since the first contact with music elements from abroad. Manase, Thram and Bere share the view that the government localized popular music with the intention of reinforcing as well as controlling the country’s social memory trajectories and historical consciousness.<sup>140</sup> Bere contends that this was enabled by the participation of ministers in the musical discourse, and mentions the music group Pax Afro, which was sponsored by the minister of Information and Publicity professor Jonathan Moyo as an example.<sup>141</sup> Another example can be taken from the late and then minister of National Affairs Eliot Manyika who also produced his own album called “Zimbabwe 2005” which articulated a nationalist discourse.<sup>142</sup>

### 1.1 *The youth question*

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<sup>138</sup> Kudakwashe Keche and Proceed Manatsa, “A Critical Manifestation of Patriarchal Power Relations in Zimbabwe’s Urban Grooves Music,” *IOSR Journal of Humanities Research and Social Science*, 20 no. 4, (April, 2015): 73.

<sup>139</sup> Bere, “*Urban Grooves*,” 102.

<sup>140</sup> Apart for the localization of music, the government also introduced other regulatory measures and stipulations such as P.O.S.A (Public Order and Security Act) as well as the A.I.P.P.A (Access to Information and Protection of Privacy) these were all meant to control the public as well as the media. Irikidzayi Manase, “Zimbabwean Urban Grooves and their Subversive Performance Practices,” *Social Dynamics* 35 no.1 (February, 2009): 57

<sup>141</sup> Bere, “*Urban Grooves*,” 131.

<sup>142</sup> Manase, “Zimbabwean Urban Grooves,” 57.

Another line of thought has seen the localisation of music airplay as one of the ways implemented by the government to address the youth question of rapidly shooting levels of unemployment by giving them the opportunity to use the music space. This is also another bone of contention which is discussed by Mate, who argues that officials saw the youth to be vulnerable to Western hegemonies due to their lack of experience and perceived understanding of the liberation struggle and its virtues.<sup>143</sup> For that matter the derogatory term ‘born-free’ was used as a belittling expression by officials to refer to people born after 1980, when the country attained its independence in reference to their pre-supposed lack of appreciation their heroic efforts. The term was offensive and belittling because the officials blamed the youth to have little or no value towards the liberation war that brought independence. Rather, officials saw the youth as liabilities vulnerable to western ideologies, which they thought it was detrimental to the state and the virtues of independence. These views are shared by Ranger who argues that the introduction of nationalist programs such as the National Youth Service which was dubbed ‘boarder to boarder’ by its founder, the late minister of Youth Boarder Gezi were attempts to curb the youth problem using these politicized methods.<sup>144</sup> More so paying allegiance to the MDC opposition party which was criticised of being pro-Western was also condemned by the officials because they considered it to be supported by the West which at this time was the governments ultimate enemy.<sup>145</sup>

The emergence of the opposition movement, the MDC, triggered an immediate need to revisit the land question. In the music and media scene, particularly radio airplay there had already been controversies over the lack of enough airplay for local music even before the 75/100% stipulation in the Third *Chimurenga*. Despite witnessing the localisation of music on the media platforms, I argue that the aspect of lack of adequate airplay for local music is a problem that was already existing. Scanell cites Zindi who castigated the local stations for

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<sup>143</sup> Rekopantswe Mate, “Youth Lyrics, Street Language and the Politics of Age: Contextualising the Youth Question in the Third Chimurenga,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 38 no 1, (January, 2012): 109.

<sup>144</sup> Terrence Ranger, “Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History and The History of the National: The struggle over the Past in Zimbabwe,” *Journal of Southern Africa Studies*, 10, (2004): 220-234.

<sup>145</sup> Mate, “Youth Lyrics,” 107.

jeopardising the plight of local musicians by relegating them in favor of international music particularly from the West (U.S.A and Britain).<sup>146</sup>

From the year 2000, as the country's economy continued to plunge, the music spaces witnessed the rise of local youth as a result of the localisation of music. "Home defender" and "Permanent Home Defender" (PHD) are examples of the street lingo that became popular stereotypes of unemployed urban township dwellers, particularly the youth. The words in the acronym literally implied to what the unemployed people would be subjected to do, which was to stay at home because there was no employment. Hence they would be seen to be "defending" the homes for those employed or those who would be out and involved in informal activities that served as alternative ways of employment.

Not only had the localisation policy infiltrated the music scene, but it had also extended to the media. The Third *Chimurenga* theme had increased in much of the radio and television broadcasts. There were programs such as *Murimi Wanhasi* "New Farmer," and "National Ethos" by Historians Evans Dzvoza and Herbert Mupepereki, Media Watch by Tarzen Mandizvidza, among other programs that meant to emphasise on the nationalist discourse. Studio 263 was also a local soap/drama which emerged and so was the hilarious street theatre aesthetics of Kapfupi and aPhiri. On radio Tambaoga's *Rambai makashinga* "Stay resolute" was played after every thirty minutes or before the hourly news bulletin on radio.

These were also the years of the indigenisation, and entrepreneurship rhetoric which was rallied forward by the government that people should establish their own business to sustain themselves. The localisation of music created a musical void because international music particularly from the West was banned and in turn it created a local music entrepreneurship opportunity. This led to the inevitable rise of local musicians, who were to be known as "Urban Groovers," after their genre Urban Grooves.

Groups and individual youths started producing their own songs and among them were songs from the albums 'The Future' from Shamiso Entertainment Records and "Urban Grooves Volume 1" from Galaxy Records. The Future featured *Amai* "mother" by Guess, David Chinyise's *Tauya Naye* "We Have Come With Her," among others. From 'Urban

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<sup>146</sup> According to Scanell, Zindi's debate started off in a newspaper article and weeks later he was invited to the radio 2 for a live debate over the matter. He was supported by Tendai Mupfurutsa who also contended that on a good day the radio station (Radio 3 which became Power FM) would play. Scanell, Music, Radio and the Record Business. Paddy Scanell, "Radio and the Record Business Today," *Popular Music*, 20 no 1 (January, 2001): 19.

Grooves Volume 1, there was Plaxedes Wenyika, Sanii Makalima, Roqui, Leonard Mapfumo and it was headed by Delani Makalima. Then came other albums and music records in the later years such as Chigutiro, Chamhembe, TBA, Take 5 and True Vine.

Urban Grooves was not an outright genre which can be differentiated from Rn B, Hip Hop, reggae or dancehall. Rather it was one collective which contained all the other music genres produced by young people especially after the localisation of music in the post 2000 era. Hence Roy and Royce's song *Handirege!* "I will", has an r n b flavour and it was referred to as an urban groove song. Innocent Utsiwegota, Major E and Malvin S had "In My Dreams" and *Amai!* "Mother" dancehall beats which were also referred to as urban grooves and so was *Uhamba lobani!* "Who are you with?" by Sku and POZee which carried a distinct kwaito/house inspired beat.

Out of the entire Urban grooves genre, which housed many genres, one, Zimdancehall, survived to thrive. The evolution of Zimbabwean reggae music from its progenitor Bob Marley, to first generations, pioneer dancehall systems, second generations and the contemporary Zimdancehall are components of a movement that promotes Rastafarian ideology, which seeks to emancipate and deliver from suppressive systems by both black and white. I argue that it inspired the prominence of Zimdancehall music because from the hard hit township spaces came voices that articulated real and imagined experiences of the subaltern township space which many could identify with more than what Urban grooves music was expressing.

### *1.2 Exit Urban Grooves: Enter Zimdancehall*

Ever since it appeared, Urban grooves music has received its share of criticism especially from academic, scholarly canons and mostly the media, despite the 75/100% localisation intended agenda of doing away with Western influenced patterns, Urban grooves music found itself in a contradictory situation as it expressed the same notions the government sought to discourage—those of western values, in this case the music. Such views are shared by Manase, who views Urban Grooves to be subversive in the sense that despite showing resistance to the Western imperialist culture, musicians also managed to challenge the government's control of censorship, control of social memory as well as other notions of

freedom in the country.<sup>147</sup> He argues that this was achieved by the incorporation of regional and global trends from South African Kwaito to American Hip Hop and Jamaican dancehall despite the anti-Western rhetoric reiterated by the government.

In the same years in which Urban grooves music was thriving, there also came the Dancehall sounds from Jamaica on another level. There were electrifying sounds of Elephant Man, T.O.K, Capleton, Sizzla Kalonji, Sean Paul, Beenie Man, among many other dancehall gurus, which I argue to a great extent paved the way for the localization of this version of dancehall music on the local scene. What was unique about this Jamaican dancehall was that there would be a beat or instrumental which was referred to as the “riddim,” from the word “rhythm”. On the riddim various artists would sing on. For example, there was the “Buzz riddim,” “Buy out riddim,” “Diwalli riddim,” “Upclose and Personal riddim” among many. “Riddims” were mostly digital; soon the trend caught up among our local musicians. This was of course something that had already been taking place among the Jamaicans from as far back as the 1980s. On the local scene, a few years after the turn of the millennium, dancehall sounds of Wallace Chirimuko also known as Winky D, who in my opinion revolutionised local dancehall youth urban music, opened up local dancehall music. These years also witnessed the decline in popularity of Urban Grooves music with local dancehall taking the center stage.

The growing unpopularity of urban grooves music might also be due to the fact that Urban Grooves derived mostly from Western urban music, which was mostly dominated by youths who came from well to do middle-class backgrounds. Ndlela accounts for this to be problematic from the start, because such youths had access to satellite television and internet privileges which only a handful of the township youth could access.<sup>148</sup> As a result the recurring themes in their music was little or no relevance to the local youth situation, the majority of whom lived in the townships. Bere argues that part of the discontent towards Urban Grooves music was associated with the fact that the music was often seen to be frivolous and housing irrelevant and useless topics and less on the topical issues.<sup>149</sup> As a

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<sup>147</sup> Manase, “Zimbabwean Urban Grooves,” 58.

<sup>148</sup> N Ndlela, “Alternative Media and the Global Popular: Youth and Popular Culture in Zimbabwe,” *Glocal times* (online), <http://www.glocaltimes.k3.mah.se/viewarticle.aspx?articleID=0> (accessed 9 September 2017)

<sup>149</sup> Bere, “*Urban Grooves*,” 122-123.

result it slowly declined and made way for the new crop of local dancehall hybrids that emanated from the township crucibles of years of assimilating Jamaican reggae sounds.

Other factors that led to the demise of the genre is that as the economy deteriorated, the youth and the economic situation in Zimbabwe also got worse. There were endless queues for various services from banks to petrol or any basic commodities. The supermarkets were empty on the shelves. The youth, particularly in the townships, were out of work and backyard studios such as the ones in Mbare where this research was mostly conducted began to rise.

In terms of sound production, which is the criteria that I have used to distinguish between first and second reggae generation, Zimdancehall music sound is distinctly digital and is manufactured on the computer system. Within its digital soundness, Zimdancehall is also characterised by the notion of the “riddim something which was absent prior to its era. Zimdancehall sound production is distinctly digital and is manufactured on the computer system, mostly in backyard studios across Harare’s ghettos.

Apart from its distinctive digital “soundness”, the Zimdancehall generation and its music bears other features and characteristics that sets it apart from its predecessors. Zimdancehall is an articulation of what the township youth sees, experiences and imagines to reflect on youth experience. It provides a social commentary that reflects on the dire urban youth experience in the townships that has been characterised by unemployment, the consumption of alcohol and other intoxicating substances—such as marijuana; bronclear, commonly known as *bronco*; *chibhodhoro* or *mushonga*, a mixture or cough syrup which the youth gulp and finish it all in one go and more recently *musombodhiya*, a potent colorless fluid a small dosage of which can get someone senselessly intoxicated—to escape the day to day social realities.<sup>150</sup> All these substances including marijuana are cheaply available and are used by the township youth.

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<sup>150</sup> The issue of the consumption of the substances which I have mentioned is one of Zimdancehall criticism points. Numerous critics such as the media, parents and other society members have blamed the genre for promoting the use of substances. Bronclear, bronco or chibhodhoro/mushonga as they are better known in Zimbabwean townships.

## 2. Sound: Riddim

As already mentioned in the first chapter, the term *ngoma* refers to a drum. When Zimbabwean township youths add the prefix *ma-*, its meaning would change to something different. It would imply to either a number of songs, music pertaining to a dancehall genre or dancehall instrumentals which are also popularly known as riddims. As sound production is the criteria used to distinguish between first and second reggae generations, I argue that Zimdancehall generation falls into the same category as the latter. In this section I will discuss the “riddim” soundscape and share part my experience during the course of my fieldwork in Mbare as well as Glen Nora in Harare

From an ontological point of view, dancehall music is a version of reggae music that has been revolutionised. For this reason, the same notions and conditions that gives reggae music its D.N.A such as the above discussed notion of expressing lived ghetto realities are the same that dancehall music builds up on. Similarly, the concept of sound engineering such as “riddims” is also derived from old reggae traditions such as dub. According to Manuel and Marshall, reggae music from the early 70s to the 80s that has been characteristic to its reliance on a phenomenon called the “riddim” is known as dancehall.<sup>151</sup> Manuel et al state that the “Sleng Teng riddim” was the first to be produced 1985 and it went on to pave the way for new varieties of computerised digital music which still dominates up to this day.<sup>152</sup>

A “riddim” is an autonomous instrumental that is characteristically reliant on a melodic composition and drumming.<sup>153</sup> When a deejay<sup>154</sup> sings or applies lyrics on a “riddim” the combination becomes a dancehall song. However, despite its autonomy a “riddim” is not exclusive to one particular song or lyrics, but it can be used repeatedly on other songs and yet at the same time different lyrics can also be used on different “riddims.”<sup>155</sup> Consequently,

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<sup>151</sup> Peter Manuel and Wayne Marshall, “The Riddim Method: *Aesthetics Practice, and Ownership in Jamaican Dancehall*,” *Popular Music* 25 no. 3 (2006): 447.

<sup>152</sup> Manuel et al, “Caribbean Currents,” 173.

<sup>153</sup> Manuel and Marshall, “The Riddim Method,” 448.

<sup>154</sup> In the Jamaican context, unlike the American, a deejay refers to a singer instead of a mobile disc jockey operator who selects songs behind a sound system at parties, or events. Hence in Jamaica the deejay sings over riddims improvising lyrics to a riddim. In some instances, he is seen as a messenger, prophet or an agent for social change. Melanie Newell, “Dancehall Culture and its World: In Synthesising Competing Discourses and Interpretations of Jamaica's Controversial Ghetto Youth Culture,” (M.A diss., International Institute of Social Studies, 2009), vii.

<sup>155</sup> Manuel and Marshall, “The Riddim Method,” 448

“riddims” have got their owners or producers who entitle them with names for example the first “riddim” that was produced was the “Sleng Teng riddim” in 1985 by Wayne Marshall.<sup>156</sup>

The same phenomenon of “riddims” characterises Zimdancehall music decades later. In the year 2008, Winky D in the song *Godol* “Jelaous” sings on a Jamaican “riddim” called the “SilverScreen Riddim.” However, during these years no local artists or Deejay’s or any studio in particular had been known to have produced any “riddims.” The first crop of Zimdancehall artists such as D Flexx, King Shaddy, Sniper Storm and Winky D among others indeed in their songs such as the mentioned ones used “riddims” which were Jamaican in origin. Manase also shares a similar view and argues, “Winky D, however, achieves this, firstly on a sonic level, by drawing on the Shona rhythms and harmonies and fusing them with Jamaican reggae beats, voicing styles (riddim) as well as with hip hop and rhythm and blues melodies.”<sup>157</sup> Ever since then, this trend became popular and caught up among the urban township youth and it has thrived to this day. The Jamaican “riddim” method caught on among local DJ’s and they too began to produce local “riddims.”

During the course of my fieldwork in Harare, Jamaican reggae, dancehall or Zimdancehall music were a common hearing in cars, public transport, houses, vending places, clubs and pubs. I got invited to a dancehall rehearsal session to get insight on the “riddim” producing and recording method in the township of Glen Nora where I was staying at a friend’s house during research. As I arrived with Tom at the house where we went to we were received by loud old school reggae music. As we got inside the gate the whole sound system was set outside at the front of the house on the veranda. I had expected to see a place which resembles a studio with audio equipment inside since I had been told it was a rehearsal and recording session. There were two big speakers, an amplifier, a sound mixer, microphone as well as a laptop which were all set up outside on the verandah. One person was selecting, mixing and playing the music. They called him Shangovybz and he turned out to be the producer and Dj. I was also introduced to the other person whose name was Springwater. As time commenced, Shango started playing instrumentals and Tom got hold of the microphone

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<sup>156</sup> Thomas Vendryes, “Versions Dubs and Riddims: *Dub and the Transient Dynamics of Jamaican Music, Dancecult.*” *Journal of Electronic Dance Music Culture*, 7 no. 2(2015): 16.

<sup>157</sup>Irikidzayi Manase, “The Aesthetics of Winky D’s Urban Grooves Music And An Overview of His Social Commentary On The Post-2000 experiences In Harare And Other Urban Centres.” *Muziki* 8 no. 2 (January 2012): 88.

and started to sing in Jamaican style reggae-dancehall. He was code-mixing both English and the vernacular but mostly in English. What he was singing was dancehall and as he sang he was also toasting.

Toasting is also similar to what Springwater was doing at first, and this time Tom was doing the same but to his own music especially at the end and the beginning of any instrumental. So when doing so he would chant about Shango as a producer, himself as a singer, as an artists and the same for Springwater. He sang for about half an hour before he called Springwater to the microphone to also come and sing, to offer what he had. Springwater also had a similar approach, dancehall oriented type of singing. By then the two would sing one after another on the same “riddim” (sound mix) taking turns on the microphone in contest fashion. It started to rain but the music equipment was safe under the shelter of the veranda and the two continued to sing until the session was over.





Figure 2. Tom (in a white shirt) and Springwater (with the microphone) taking turns to sing while Shango Vybz (sitting) records and mixes the audios. I took this picture on the third of February 2017, in the township of Glen Nora in Harare with the permission of the people in the picture. It started raining that day and we all had to seek shelter on the veranda.

From this dancehall recording session I made note of a few significant things that constituted this contemporary localized version of dancehall music. Firstly, instead of using proper studios, Zimdancehall music can be done even at houses. Secondly it is technically produced using simple equipment such as a computer, mostly laptops, as long as it is installed with a

program or software which enables one to compose beats such as “Virtual DJ.” The third aspect is a sound mixer which is used for the fine tuning of the final sound output and to integrate the vocals and the different sound syllables such as bass, treble and other sonic features to be distinct.

This setup at this house in Glen Nora resembled three other studios I visited in the township of Mbare. Mbare can be described as the hub of Zimdancehall music due to its long renowned history of hosting the icon Bob Marley and other Jamaican reggae artists throughout the 80s, 90s and the 2000s. Chillspot Records is the most renowned, and other studios include Givarnchy and Gunhill records. Although I visited Givarnchy records and Gunhill, most of the time spent was at Chillspot records because of its distinction. It is situated on the second floor of one of the flats in Matapi, Mbare. Unlike the house we went to in Glen Nora, Chillspot records is indoors. Inside the studio, Roger Kadzimwe also popularly known as Levels would be in the studio most of the time sitting at a desk with a laptop, a sound mixer creating riddims or recording an artist. Inside the studio is a long couch which is usually occupied mostly by upcoming artists who come to record. Across Levels’ working desk is a glass which separates this side of the studio with the booth where the microphone and a set of headphones are for the artists to use. Public transport operators come in sometimes with flash drives to load them with new Zimdancehall songs. Levels informed me that it is also a good way to popularise the music to the public because some people may request the song on radio which in turn helps because it can reach audiences beyond the public transport where it had started.



Figure 3 During an Interview at Chillspot Records flanked with Fantan on the right and Levels on the left. This picture was taken by Charles Zikalii who during the course of my fieldwork acted as an assistant. The picture was taken on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February, at Mbare a township in Harare.

The popularity of a “riddim” largely depends on who produces it and who rides or sings on it.<sup>158</sup> Chillspot record has over the years produced “riddims” that have attracted artists and a decent fan base. Artists such as Winky D, Soul Jah Luv, Seh Calaz, Hwindi President, Guspny Warrior, Ras Caleb among others have recorded there. Upcoming artists who come to record have to be competitive enough to earn the privilege of entering the booth and having their songs recorded. Figure 4 below shows a typical cover page of a Zimdancehall “riddim” which was produced by Levels from Chillspot records and the list of artists who have sung on it. His “riddims” carry a distinct digitalised trademark voice at the beginning of his “riddims” which pronounces “Levels production.”

<sup>158</sup> Zvenyika Eckson Mugari, “Riding The Riddim: Re-Thinking The Culture Industry Thesis In The Economic and Aesthetic Production Of Zimdancehall,” *The Dyke*, Special Edition 2016, 12.



Figure 4. A cover page of the Great Zimbabwe riddim and a list of artists who have sung on it.

The Zimbo Flavour which was produced by Chillspot records in Mbare in the year 2013 which is run by Levels, DJ Fantan and Rhibe was the hallmark of “riddim” production in Zimbabwe.<sup>159</sup> According to DJ Fantan in an interview at Chillspot Studio in Mbare, Harare,

When the 100% local content stipulation ends, everything is finished, there is no more 100% stipulation on radio, you understand? We have also grown up, from there on we start producing riddims. That’s when it started to be called Zimdancehall. Then the likes of Sniper Storm, Winky D and others come from Urban Grooves to Zimdancehall.<sup>160</sup>

The Zimbo Flavour riddim was a thirteen-minute track and it had sixteen artists who collaborated on it and ended up attracting as many as one hundred and fifty more by the end of the year.<sup>161</sup> The production of riddims also precipitated the emergence of backyard studios such as the already mentioned Chillspot, Givarnchy records, Gunhill records which are all in

<sup>159</sup> Mugari, “Riding the Riddim,” 12.

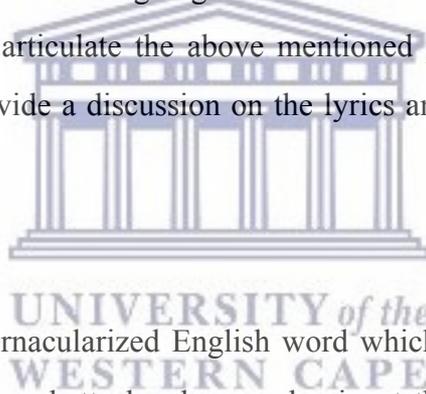
<sup>160</sup> A Personal Interview with DJ Fantan at Chillspot Records in Mbare, Harare, 6 February 2017

<sup>161</sup> Tapiwa Goremusandu, “Zimdancehall: A Rising Platform in Addressing Socio-Political Injustices Through Lyrics,” (Hons., Midlands State University, 2017), 4.

Mbare and others across Harare’s ghetto’s in Chitungwiza and Highfields.<sup>162</sup> More “riddims” have been produced ever since the Zimbo Flavour and they include “The Chillspot Strings Medley riddim,” “Boss Ndiyani riddim,” “One Clan riddim,” “The Great Zimbabwe riddim,” “Stage Riddim” among many.

### 3. Lyrical analysis

When first generation articulated matters on Pan Africanism and expressed the excitement around independence, second generation reggae began expressing matters on the effects of urbanisation. The Zimdancehall generation addressed matters pertaining to poverty, corruption and the township space from where most of the artists came from. Zimdancehall lyrics are rich with metaphor, imagery as well as township slang; hence the township or the ghetto becomes a hub in which the on goings within and around it are articulated through various expressive idioms to articulate the above mentioned problems and other township sensibilities. Below I will provide a discussion on the lyrics and explore the various themes which they articulate



#### *Rokesheni/ Location*

The word “*rokesheni*” is a vernacularized English word which refers to “the location”, the township or ghetto spaces. The ghetto has been a dominant theme in Zimdancehall music. One of the biggest Zimdancehall icons, Winky D, who started becoming popular in 2008, entitled his song “*Rokesheni*” (from the album *Vanhu Vakuru/ Elderly People*) where he sings about leaving those who come from the “*rokesheni*” alone or choosing to face the consequences if you dare provoke them. He sings:

Siyana nesu vekuRokesheni	Leave us we come from the Location
Hatinonoke tinobva takupa quotation	We are quick to give you a quotation
Yemabhutsu plus zvibhakeru on rotation	Of kicks and fists/blows on rotation
Izvozvo tinozviita tiri muRokesheni	That we do in the Location

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<sup>162</sup> Mugari, “Riding the Riddim,” 11.

One can clearly sense the attitude the song has. The song expresses anxiety over the characters that inhabit each ghetto as they have various violent ways of dealing with their enemies. The song epitomises violence and depicts the township people across all townships in Harare such as Mbare, Tafara, Kambuzuma, Highfields to be better left alone.

Manase, who has written solely about the aesthetics of Winky D's music, notes that the song invites the listener on a multi-dimensional journey through a channel of critical observations in which he captures inimitable experiences, images and a variety of expressions in the Harare's ghetto spaces.<sup>163</sup> Furthermore, apart from the vivid violent images he produces, Winky D also "focuses on a multiplicity of issues and the general instability of city life" especially the ghetto at large.<sup>164</sup>

This is reflected in his song paGhetto:

*PaGhetto/ In The Ghetto*

PaGhetto parikupisa fanika heater	In the ghetto, it's hot like a heater
Zuva nezuva pane mayouths akunzi akita	Day to day there are youths who die
Otarisa zera kana twenty five haasati asvika twenty five	You look at the age, they haven't reached twenty five
Tozvisimbisa tiri maguy tichitorasika	We act like we are clever but we are losing our ways
Mhandara primary neSecondary vaenda neNyika lost it	Girls in primary and secondary schools have lost it
ChiBig Brother life ichi chamunoda imika	This big brother life you wish for
Vana vangwarisa mhosva ndeyani havachina tsika their manners	The children are naughty they have lost their manners
Vabereki votarisa misodzi pamatama ichidzika cheeks Horaiti paGehtto handisi kuramba tirikutambudzika in the ghetto but,	Parents look on with tears running down their cheeks Alright I am not denying we suffer in the ghetto but,
Lets organise and centralise saSellasie tosvika	Lets organize, centralise like Selassie w'l make it
Pane kugara paBridge everyday tichi sticker high	Instead of wiling up time at bridges getting high
Toti tine nhamo but imwe yacho inobudika figured out.	We say we have poverty, but it can be figured out.

<sup>163</sup> Manase, "The Aesthetics," 89.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid. 90

The song uses vivid imagery and metaphor to lament the problems faced in the ghetto by youths, young girls as well as the parents who do not know what to do with their children except to watch in awe and hopelessness. Instead of the violent images which he uses in “*Rokesheni*,” the artist addresses the problems ghetto societies face. It raises pressing issues such as school girls risking teenage pregnancy or alluring situations by sugar daddies or other activities that would eventually get them out of school. He also addresses drug related problems especially encountered by the youth who hang around the ghetto aimlessly intoxicating themselves with drugs and alcohol. However, amid the ills and the hopelessness the society faces, Winky D offers a glimmer of hope and assurance that things can be better because most of the problems he addresses can be dealt with.

### *Ghetto*

Apart from the violence or the pertinent issues Winky D sings about in relation to the ghetto, other Zimdancehall artists have also sung differently about the ghetto. The song “Ghetto” by another influential and popular Zimdancehall artist Soul Jah Luv is in appraisal of the Ghetto that it has the potential of producing prominent people in life by mentioning the ones that have already made it that come from such spaces.

Zvakatangira mughetto ghetto	It started in the ghetto ghetto
Takabudirira mughetto	We made it in the ghetto
Mangoma aputikira mughetto ghetto	Danchehall has boomed in the ghetto
Saka ndichibigger ghetto maghetto youth	That’s why I respect the ghetto, ghetto youth
Ku DZ havadi zheti	In DZ they rebuke conning
Kune mastraight hapadiwe debate	Its straight, no debate
Mfombi hakuna mabhambi	In Mfombi (Mufakose) they are not stupid
Saka uchiona vane zvitambi	That’s why you see they have licences
KuKuwadzana vachaudzana	In Kuwadzana they will be informed
Kana vaungana pese pamuchasangana	If they meet, whenever you will meet
KuBudiriro vanoziva angu	In Budiriro they know
Maimbiro nemafambiro	How I sing and go on about my business
Kuri KuKambuzuma havafi vaguma	In Kambuzuma they will never stop
Nekuti Winky mudhara ini ndabvuma	Because Winky is the undisputed
Kuri KuChitungwiza parikupisa	In Chitungwiza its hot
Nekuti kunaDhadza D	Because there is Dhadza D
Iwe unopatiza	You will flee

Bulawayo Makokoba  
KuGweru Kune Mkoba  
KuSouth Africa Kune Soweto  
America Kune Brooklyn  
Hakuna Kusina Ghetto,  
Nyanzvi Dzinobva muGhetto,  
President vanga vari resident Ghetto

Bulawayo Makokoba  
In Gweru there is Mkoba  
In South Africa, there is Soweto  
In America there is Brooklyn  
There is nowhere without a ghetto  
All the superstars come from the ghetto  
The president was a ghetto resident

The song is ultimately about the ghetto and its potential. In the song the persona begins by praising the Ghetto informing the audience that it is where the business of dancehall music in Zimbabwe started and flourished. For this reason, he attributes it to be a point of reference for success to the deprived ghetto youth hence he presents his honor towards it. He achieves this by making a lot of emphasis on the Ghetto space through the use of repetition. The word “Ghetto” is used consecutively in the first lines of the song to inform the audience about where dancehall in Zimbabwe started, how he himself and other artists from the ghetto have made it and how he in the end appreciates the ghetto and the youth in particular who make this music.

According to Soul Jah Love, every ghetto space in Zimbabwe has got its characteristics and its personalities which are reflective to honesty, intelligence and resilience. This is shown in the song, through the people from the township of Dzirarasekwa who are known to rebuke dishonesty while those in Mufakose are not to be fooled as they are not stupid. The people in Kuwadzana and Budiro are always informed however the latter more with Soul Jah Luv’s business. He allocates each notable Zimdancehall artist to the ghetto they come from.

Not only is his respect confined to the ghetto spaces in Zimbabwe alone but it transcends to other similar spaces elsewhere across the globe from Soweto in South Africa to Brooklyn in New York. Apart from success regarding musical production, the song also credits the ghetto to have potential of even shaping personalities of higher status such as presidency as the former president of Zimbabwe is also known to have resided in the township of Highfields. Hence for Soul Jah Luv, despite its state of deprivation, the ghetto spaces are places of brilliance which have the potential to produce distinguished individuals.

*Takangodaro / That’s how we are*

Killer T, is another prominent Zimdancehall artist who has also sung about the ghetto space in relation to how the youth in the ghetto go on about life in it. The song is characterised by sentiments of belonging and notions of identity that there are certain behaviors that the ghetto youths are accustomed to and will probably will not change.

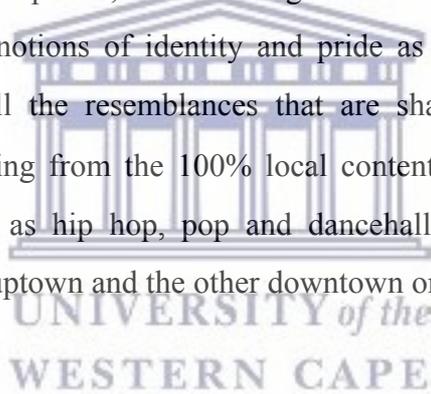
Kana wakazvarwa neskiri rako iroro	If you were born with a certain skill
Itongo famba neskiri rako	Go on about your talent
Kunyangwe uchifayisa madhiri ako iyayo	Whatever business you are involved in,
Itongofayisa neskiri rako	do it using your talent
Nekuti	Because,
Takangodaro takazvarwa takangodaro	That's how we are, we were born that way,
hatiregere kuti hunhu weghetto	We will never change our ghetto ways
Tinodzirova ngoma, kunyangwe tirisa paden	We take bronclear, even at home
Pavanorara nasix, isusu tinorara naten	When they sleep at six, We sleep at ten
Pavanotsvagwa kumba, Isusu hatirare paden	When they are needed at home, we don't sleep there
Pavanofamba nepfuti, Isusu tinofamba naJesus	When they carry guns around, we go along with Jesus
VeGhetto rangu dairai, ahoo oo	Those from my ghetto respond, ahoo
MaGhetto yuti dairai, ahoo oo	Ghetto youths respond ahoo oo
Hatife takasiyaaaa kwedu kwatinoziyaaa	We will never abandon where we come from
Tinongomira mira tichingodaidziraaa	We will always be resolute and shout
Takangodaro takazvarwa takangodaro	That's how we are, we were born that way
Hatiregere kuti hunhu weghetto,	We will never change our ghetto ways

Like Soul Jah Luv and Winky D, Killer T gives his side of the ghetto but in emphasis of the behavior that characterize the ghetto youth who inhabit these spaces. Instead of rejecting the informal economy that prevails in the ghetto, Killer T acknowledges it and states that if its one's way of making a living, then they should go on about it. The word “*madhiri*”/ “deals” in the second line of his song is suggestive to the notion of hustling which resonates with the “*kukiya kiy*a” economy or “zig zag” deals which Jeremy Johns argues to characterise

the informal economy in Zimbabwe between the years 2000 and 2008 due to economic chaos.<sup>165</sup>

Killer T also mentions the limitless behaviour of the youth in the ghetto such as the consumption of intoxicating substances such as “*ngoma/mushonga*” or bronclear. The word “*ngoma*” carries different meanings in different contexts in the ghetto. In the Shona vocabulary it refers to a drum. When the youth are using it especially in the ghetto, its meaning changes and it mostly refers to a cough syrup called bronclear which is used as an intoxicant. This is the context which Killer T uses it is the song. More so, the youth are unbounded by time and only go home late contrary to being early.

As seen from the three songs, the ghetto is a fertile ground for Zimdancehall musicians which enables them to see, decode information and echo it back to the society via the dancehall popular culture medium. In the process these songs play various significant roles in the expression of collective viewpoints, diffusion of generational meanings, language use and reuse as well as reinforcing notions of identity and pride as ghetto inhabitants. It is also interesting to note that in all the resemblances that are shared by Urban Grooves and Zimdancehall such as stemming from the 100% local content stipulation, borrowing from other global discourses such as hip hop, pop and dancehall music, the notion of space antagonises the two as one is uptown and the other downtown or ghetto.



#### **4. Proud Zimbabwean: The aesthetics of street lingo**

Another aspect that gives Zimdancehall music its outlook is the use of street language and expressive idioms which are reflective of urban youth lingos. Customary Shona and English terminologies are co-joined, re-worded, subverted with slang and re-used in other contexts. Expressions from South Africa, Jamaican lexicons and many other inter-media references are also adopted, manipulated and re-used in Zimdancehall music.<sup>166</sup> As such is the case most of

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<sup>165</sup> In his article, Jones argues that amid all the problems that Zimbabwe was facing between the years 2000 and 2008 even going beyond, people got involved in heterogonous activities such as vending, illegal foreign currency trade as well eliciting bribes. All these forms of activities were informal ways to obtain money and are referred to Zimbabwean people as kukiya kiya. Jeremy, L. Jones, “‘Nothing is straight in Zimbabwe’: The Rise of the of the Kukiya-Kiya Economy 2000-2008,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 36 no. 2, (June 2010): 285.

<sup>166</sup> Manase, “The Aesthetics,” 85.

the urban/ghetto lingo that is used by the youth and sometimes older generations emanates from Zimdancehall music.

At times such word inventions occur randomly and rapidly such that meanings would be multiple and would refer to something completely different from the intended due to fluidity and mobility in the subaltern urban culture. Linguistic research has stressed on the impurity and instability of urban culture itself that there are always contests and recreations of identity which in turn enables language dynamism.<sup>167</sup>

The song “Gafa life” is an example:

### *Gafa Life*

Ndo Gafa Life	That’s Gafa Life
Takai jagula jagula tikai kicker suffer life	We juggled it and kicked it suffer life
Ndiri kurarama senge ndirikudenga after life	I am living like I am in heaven after life
Zvinongoda kudhabhura dhabhura	You just need to double it up and make it
Ndokuti Gafa Life	That’s Gafa Life
Itake take nemagreen ari kubank	It’s a chasing game for the greens in the bank
Mafuta andinotenga ndeemutank	The oil I buy is for the tank
Kana uchida ekubikisa kune marestaurant	If you want some for cooking there are restaurants
Anotengesa BBQ steak	Which sell BBQ steak
But sa Rasta ini handizodye	But as a Rastman I wont eat
Kanda fish pasticken usadhibhe	Throw a fish on the grill, don’t forget
Ndinongoda zvinhu zvine ka chlorophyll	I only eat things with chlorophyll

Winky D’s song is his personal journey of triumph through hustling in the ghetto to get by difficult times and eventually making it to success. He does this by code-switching through mixing Shona, Standard and vernacularized English which in turn facilitates rhyme at the end of his lines. The lines “I take take nemagreen ari kubank/It’s a chasing game for the greens at the bank” shows co-joined Shona and English words which reflects of how the ghetto youths speak. The greens that are referred to implies to American currency which has been adopted by the government that is greenish in colour. The words “bank,” “tank,” “steak” have been enabled to rhyme in the manner the sentences have been code-mixed and vernacularized. More so, rhyme is also a new phenomenon that has come with Jamaican

<sup>167</sup> Flora Weit Wild, “‘Zimboicious,’ –The Creative Potential of Linguistic Innovation: The Case of Shona English in Zimbabwe,” *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 35 no 3 (September 2009): 684.

music and ways of singing, it is something that is uncommon in Zimbabwean traditional music.

Winky D also shows how his life has changed such that the only type of oil he buys is for his tank but for those who want cooking oil, they can go look at restaurants which sell BBQ steak. The statement is humorous and metaphoric as the word “*mafuta*”/oil” in this context refers to petrol and yet he places it side by side with cooking oil for contrast. The artist also makes references of Rastafari vegetarian ideology of eating fish and vegetables as opposed to and in rejection of the BBQ steak sold in the restaurants. Again the author expresses his bilingualism and creative abilities in playing around with words, rearranging them and reselecting the meanings that can be attached to them to come up with a song understood in a ghetto context. In the title of the song “Gafa life,” the term “gafa is synonymous to the word ghetto youth. Hence it is reflective of a typical ghetto youth’s life of hustling, struggling and triumphing in the ghetto.

The virtues of hustling and hard work are rewarding, according to Winky D, “Takai jagula jagula tikai kicker suffer life, nhasi ndirikurarama senge ndirikudenga after life/ We juggled it and kicked it suffer lifer/I am living like I am in heaven after life.” The lyrics again are reflective of code-switching as well as vernacularizing English words into Shona which can be said, a phenomenon known by Zimbabwean urban dwellers as “Sho-english.” “Juggle” which implies to hustling becomes “*jagula*”, to “kick” becomes “*kika*”

### *Proud Zimbabwean*

The artist Hindi President, in a different song set in a different context, uses the same code-mixing, vernacularizing of English words into Shona as well as slang to articulate his message in the song Proud Zimbabwean. The song is nationalist and describes the coming of the colonialists, their racist attitudes, the mistreatment they gave Africans. He also mentions what the country means to him with its richness in resources and how it has led to conflicts arising which in the end has led the current leaders to lose it all through corruption and mismanagement.

Hanzi muri maBlack

Ndosaka vaitibata Kak

Munyika medu iri take take

They say you are black

That’s why they treated us badly

In our own country, always on our case

Kunyepera kufarira fake	Pretending to like us
Vachida zvicherwa vachizama luck	Wanting minerals, trying their luck
Vaisarova hembe but steak	They didn't beat (us) on clothes but on our flesh
Zveshuwa mabhunu aiva mucheak	Truly whites meant business
Vamwe vachibvurwa kunge nyama yepork	Some were grilled like pork

**Chorus**

I am proud to be Zimbabwean	
Ndakabarirwa dzimba dzemabwe	I was born in the houses of stone
Hukoshwa maminerals dozen	All that is precious to us, dozens of minerals
So munyika mangu handibve	So I won't leave my country

Veko vanga vatibata kanonaka	They had gotten all the nice parts
Vaona tine uchi nemukaka	Realising we have honey and milk
Ndozvakonzera zvi bhakera kuzobaka	Which is what has caused conflicts to arise
Vana baba vedu vakutanga kubuka	Our fathers have lost it in the process

In the first verse of his song, the artists code-mixes Shona and English to enable the last words in each line to rhyme. Hence the words, “Black,” “Kak,” “take,” “fake,” “luck,” “steak,” “cheak” and “pork” have all been embedded in Shona sentences for the effect of rhyme at the same time maintaining a coherent meaning of the message despite the dissimilarities the words bear. The artist also borrows one vulgar word from Afrikaans, “Kak”, to describe the way Africans were treated.

In the process such vernacular emblems lead to the hybridity of languages such that they inter-link ethnicities, escalate their metaphoric connotations and as such have the potential to elude their intended meanings, exclude certain audiences and distinguish generation gaps. Hence as Zimdancehall music is its own generation, it certainly targets a certain type of audience hence the use of expressions that can be understood by that particular audience which can be able to contextualise and relate the music.

**5. Sociability: *Straight Outa Ghetto***

Dancehall music and the subaltern spaces of the ghetto have through time closely tied together. The foundations that have led to the birth and the thriving of reggae-dancehall from its native Jamaica to spaces where it has diffused such as Zimbabwe which is the focus of this

study are parallel and situated in the ghetto. The ghetto is characteristic to poverty and marginalisation in terms of status, space, resources, living conditions, the scarcity of the availability of basic human needs which in turn nourishes the dancehall musicians with issues and themes to address.

The historicity of the birth of dancehall music in Jamaica can be traced to the phenomenon of “rude boys” which emerged in the 1960s, when Jamaica attained its independence. The term “rude boys” refers to young black males from the ghetto spaces of Kingston in the early 1960s who migrated from the rural and were characterised by insubordinate behaviour due to the embitterment of feeling let down by the system.<sup>168</sup> From the problems which they faced such as unemployment and its inevitable consequences of lack of money and abject poverty, “rude boys” or “rude bwoy’s” settled in the ghetto and resorted to delinquent behaviour.<sup>169</sup>

More so, “rude boys” gradually grew dissatisfied with the pacific and diplomatic activism of Rastafarianism and reggae music. They still acknowledged the roots of reggae music, its Trans-Atlantic foundations and its Pan-African rhetoric.<sup>170</sup> However, they believed that Bob Marley’s music was commercialised and as a result his message died as it became illustrative to the domineering culture it sought to challenge.<sup>171</sup> Hence out of the challenges, and in order to counter the authoritative Jamaican society, “rude boys” embodied “slackness” as opposed to “livity” and they also merged lyrics with “riddims” to produce dancehall music.<sup>172</sup>

Such foundations in mainstream dancehall of the ghetto being the hallmark of dancehall music are noted to have proliferated to other spaces elsewhere dancehall music emerged. The

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<sup>168</sup> Newell, “Dancehall Culture,” 14.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>170</sup> Sonjah. S, Niaah, “A Common Space: Dancehall *Dancehall*, *Kwaito* and the Mapping of New World Music and Performance,” *The World Of Music*, 50, no (2008): 35

<sup>171</sup> This view of reggae music and Bob Marley is shared by prominent dancehall artist Anthony B who comments, “Bob Marley naa hurt them no more (won’t hurt them anymore)...[My music] an Bob Marley music. Is di same music, is just dat Bob Marley can’t hurt them no more. Bob Marley can’t say nothing new. Bob Marley can’t see wa a go on [what’s going on now] now a she [say] wa im woulda like fi she [what he would like to say]. But I am here now, who can see it [I can see it]. J, W Scott, 2007, *The Politics of the Veil*, (Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J, 2007), 100.

<sup>172</sup> As slackness is part of the dancehall culture, ‘rude boys’ turned to youth gangs pivoted around a sound system from the neighborhood with activities focused on dance moves, fashion and music. C Cooper, *Sound Clash: Jamaican Dancehall Culture at Large*, MacMillan, New York, 2004, p. 19

ghetto has operated as a space where the subaltern youth exploits its features, on-goings and uses dancehall music, street language, imagery and metaphor to articulate them. An example can be derived from the Nigerian case study which I have already mentioned of Ajegunle ragga in Nigeria.<sup>173</sup>

On its own Zimdancehall originates from Mbare, one of Zimbabwe's oldest ghetto if not the oldest. Zimdancehall music has been used by the artists as well as the audience alike to express the life of the subaltern, particularly the youth age groups. It has also given a voice and opportunity for the ghetto youth who had been side-lined by the 100 percent local stipulation, which had yielded preferential treatment to uptown and youth from well to do backgrounds. This is reiterated by DJ Fantan from Chillspot records in Mbare:

But now there is Zimdancehall. It is the one that is on heat, it's not because of our intelligence, we are the chosen ones maybe Jah Jah has decided that ghetto youths its now your time...because Urban Grooves has always been an uptown thing. So maybe Jah Jah has opened up the road for ghetto youths.<sup>174</sup>

The above statement by Dj Fantan shows the notion of space and how Zimdancehall has subverted Urban Grooves music which was central to and emanated from affluent and well to do backgrounds by placing the subaltern ghetto into the limelight. These sentiments are also shared by Zimdancehall artists as has been discussed above.

Another aspect that has characterised Zimdancehall is the consistency of the use of slang, metaphor and imagery. Mate has written on the use of street language in youth lyrics as well as the politics of age in the dubbed Third Chimurenga era.<sup>175</sup> She argues that street Shona used by the artists disobeys the linguistic rules and in turn it conjures new meanings through its proverbial use which to the older generations, cultural specialists and officials could be perplexing. Veit Wild also reiterates the same argument of street language by

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<sup>173</sup> The author states that by all standards, Ajegunle characterises a slum because of its ethnic conflicts, violent crimes, prostitution, juvenile delinquencies and drug abuse among other social ills. Oreoluwa, "In The Ghetto Life No Easy For We: The Construction and Negotiation Of Identity In Ajedunle Ragga" (M.A diss., The University of Guelph, 2012), 14.

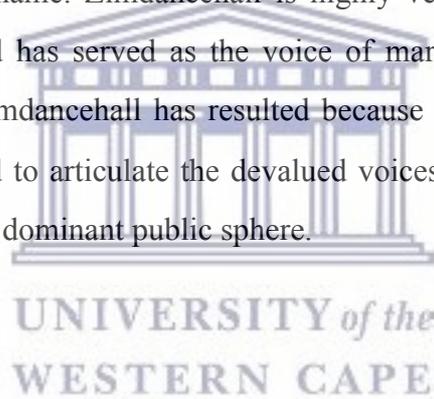
<sup>174</sup> A Personal Interview with DJ Fantan at Chillspot Records, Mbare, Harare, 6 February 2017

<sup>175</sup> Ibid, p. 1

identifying the notion of code-switching among Urban musicians. She borrows a term, “Zimbolicious” (which is normally used to describe the beauty of Zimbabwean ladies) to explore the creativity of young people whose urban culture is influenced by globalised consumer culture which is diffused by technology.<sup>176</sup>

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, Zimdancehall music generation shares the same ancestry with its forerunners, first and second generations. However, Zimdancehall appears as a hybrid or an amalgam of local reggae developments. It is dominant in the township space and addresses problems that arose as a result of the Zimbabwean crisis in the turn of the century. Through its production dynamics, the local essentials Zimdancehall complements the Jamaican dancehall traditions which it borrows from. This is evident through its sonic features such as the riddim which in Jamaican terms is the equivalent of a digital beat or an instrumental which is usually given to a name. Zimdancehall is highly vernacularized, it uses a lot of imagery, metaphor, slang and has served as the voice of marginalised Zimbabwean urban youths. The emergence of Zimdancehall has resulted because of the Zimbabwean crisis, as such, It has been largely used to articulate the devalued voices and opinions of the socially ostracised in the Zimbabwean dominant public sphere.



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<sup>176</sup> Veit- Wild, “Zimbolicious,”- 683-685

## Conclusion

### The present and the future

The Zimdancehall era, genre and generation is still thriving up to this day. When I started this research the amount of work that had been done around the subject was few as compared to when I am finishing it. The genre has also reached other heights as it has drawn artists from other genres to either collaborate or also contribute with their own dancehall songs. Not only has the genre developed, with more artists participating but it has also developed other features such as dances, the hybridisation of the standard language which is in different ways similar to their mainstream counterparts. However, these have also been localised. Hence as a result it has left more areas that are worthy of academic exploration.

It is not only the Zimdancehall popular culture that has attracted academic research in the past few years but other genres as well, however it is the latter that has taken much of the attention and centre stage. For example, “Performing Zimbabwe” is a book that was published last year. It was edited by one of Zimbabwe’s academics authors on Zimbabwean music, Maurice Vambe and Luis G. Amoros. The book is categorised into three parts each with chapters on Zimbabwean music across time. The last part of the book includes chapters all concerning themselves with Zimdancehall music making it the most written about genre in the entire book.

Hence having written this research, mostly tracing the deeper genealogies of reggae and dancehall music in Zimbabwe, which have manifested into Zimdancehall today, I argue that the genre is still to reach greater heights as it has a strong underground base full of upcoming artists. When I was doing fieldwork for this research the number of underground artists I interacted with was impressive and notable among them was Enzo Ishall, who has now become the figure of the moment in the genre.<sup>177</sup> He walked away with prestigious awards at the recent 2018 Zimdancehall Awards. Therefore because of the huge numbers of aspiring dancehall artists who are still in the fringes, the genre has the potential to surpass what it has become in the present.

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<sup>177</sup> When I was conducting interviews at Chillspot records as well as other areas in Mbare, Glen Nora and Gweru, the number of underground artists was immense. At one interview on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February at Chillspot records, I had to interview at least five participants all at once due to the high number of these underground artists. It was during this session that interviewed Enzo Ishall, together with Maad Gorrilla, Bad Killer, Liquor and Fire B.

Dancehall plays a pivotal role in the lives of the subaltern youth in Zimbabwe as they can relate to it a number of ways. To mention a few Zimdancehall music mirrors the township dire youth situation. It is produced in the same spaces which it expresses the social situation, hence it has become something which the youth can relate to. More so, Zimdancehall has provided a form of occupation to some of the aspiring youths who have managed to reach the spotlight. Even more important it has given a form of identity to the huge numbers of the unemployed township youth as they identify themselves or call themselves with names which are referral to mainstream artists. For example, Winky Ds fans refer to themselves as maGafa or maNinja (the latter translates to Ninjas) after the artist. Seh Calaz's followers refer to themselves as "mabhanditi" (which translates to bandits). While Sniper Storms fans are "masoja" (which translates to soldiers). These names are used in reference to the hustling township youth in the hard economic conditions. They give an impression of resilience and determination to make something out of the meagre economic situation. Hence the Zimdancehall genre presents a variety of themes and dimensions to the music researcher as it is still developing.



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- Dj Squila, Highlands Harare, March 6 March 2017
- Enzo Ishall Mbare, Harare on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2017

Fire B, Mbare Harare on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2017

Mararire D, Radio Zimbabwe, 5 March 2017

Mtewa I, Glen Nora, Harare, 18 March 2017

Maad Gorilla, Mbare Harare on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2017

Liqor, Mbare Harare on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2017

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Fortune Mparutsa- Wangu Ndega

Nelson Chibwana- Mamoyo Lean on Me

Transit Crew- Memories

Winky D- Rokesheni

Winky D-Paghetto

Winky D- Gafa Life

Soul Jah Luv-Ghetto

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