Sounds of Life

Sounds of Life:

Music, Identity and Politics in Zimbabwe

Edited by

Fainos Mangena, Ezra Chitando and Itai Muwati

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In Memory of Kudakwashe Shane Sambo,

a friend and fellow academic who also made a contribution in this volume but could not wait to see the fruits of his sweat, as God, the almighty, had called him. Friend, we miss you. May your soul rest in eternal peace. Our thoughts are with you and your family. We value the contribution you made to this volume.

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INTRODUCTION

NAVIGATING THE INTERSTICES OF MUSIC, IDENTITY AND POLITICS IN ZIMBABWE

FAINOS MANGENA, EZRA CHITANDO AND ITAI MUWATI

Music is as old as humanity. It is one of the many creative undertakings that provide humanity with a 'second handle to reality.' It permeates every aspect of human existence and, in the process, reveals connections with the abiding search for meaning in life. The deathless incantatory submission by Milton Obote, the first Ugandan President, that 'the soul of a nation is to be found in the temple of its literature and arts' (cited in p'Bitek, 1986:vi) expresses this profound truth. In the Zimbabwean experiential matrix where there have been protracted contestations of nation, identity and politics, music has furnished an important discursive thread, and a platform for illuminating national realities.

The numerous struggles for identity, nation and politics have found articulation through music. Zimbabwe's political history, for instance, is infested with impeccable operationalisations of music in contouring and re-contouring, configuring and reconfiguring nation, politics, and identity. Remarkably, the Zimbabwean experience bears testimony to increasing predilections for top-down renditions of music in a context that is largely epitomised by subaltern compositions. This polarised landscape creates a scenario in which the composition, production, dissemination and ownership of music becomes a highly contested terrain.

From about 2000, when the economy witnessed major convulsions, the state, led by the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF), intensified its commitment to produce and control music. This was part of the many control mechanisms intended to construct and foster a state-centred discourse. Similarly, the opposition, represented by the Movement for Democratic Change - Tsvangirai (MDC-T) party invested in music as part of popularising its own brand of politics. On the other

hand, some of the artists representing the voice of the majority also raised public concerns through music.

The contestations over the control and production of music make this volume quite ground breaking. It is redolent of the numerous possibilities and positionalities that music offers and assumes in Zimbabwean polity. For instance, in the run up to the 2008 harmonised elections in Zimbabwe, the late Elliot Manyika of ZANU PF used his music to drum up support for his party, and Paul Madzore of the MDC-T also used his music to criticise the policies of ZANU PF, while at the same time trying to improve the political fortunes of his MDC-T party.

In the period leading up to the 2013 harmonised elections, many other musicians and musical groups who sympathised with ZANU PF, as well as those who sang in support of the party's Indigenisation and Empowerment and Land Reform policies, while musicians and musical groups sympathetic to the MDC-T sang in support of MDC-T's economic policies, which were summarised under what the party called **J**obs, **U**pliftment, **I**nvestment, **C**apital and the **E**nvironment (JUICE). Some of the musical groups that quickly come to mind are *Mbare Chimurenga* choir and the youthful *Born Free Crew*, among others.

While musicians with a political inclination have made the most noise, it is important to acknowledge that the period between 2000 and 2013 – which is the period under review – has also seen many musicians and musical groups without any political inclination coming to the fore to sing about the daily struggles of Zimbabwe. The unique figuration of this book resides not only in the intersection between music and politics, but more significantly, it interrogates the various ways in which music changed identity discourse in Zimbabwe. As we sample musicians and musical groups in this volume, we are very much aware that every musical genre can be used to disseminate political and identity messages to its listeners; hence the inclusion of secular music known in Zimbabwe as *Museve* and Gospel music, as well as the Urban Grooves genre of music.

The Chapters in this Volume

The first set of chapters focus on gender constructions in Zimbabwean music. It privileges gender and devotes considerable space to this key theme, for the simple reason that gender has become a topical issue in contemporary Zimbabwean society. Chapter one by Ezra Chitando probes the often narrowly conceived subject of gender. It vectors the discussion in a manner that allots discursive space to the man. One can try to label it as some kind of reverse discourse on mainstream perspectives on gender.

Focusing on what he calls the "patriarchal burden", as opposed to the "patriarchal dividend", Chitando demonstrates the vulnerable state of patriarchy in performance zones that are often associated with "winning" masculinities. In highlighting the burdens that men face in their day-to-day lives, Chitando cites Silberschmidt (2005: 195), who argues that: "Patriarchy does not mean that men only have privileges, patriarchy also means that men have many responsibilities."

Charity Manyeruke, in chapter two, observes that apart from gender stereotyping orchestrated by patriarchy in Zimbabwe, women cannot make it in music because of social, economic and biological obstacles. Such obstacles include societal attitudes that promote anything male and discourage anything female, a view of marriage which restricts a woman to the kitchen, as well as the natural processes of childbearing and care. The few women who escape from this yoke of patriarchy and pursue music find it difficult as, in most cases, they fail to procure music equipment because of gender stereotypes.

In chapter three, Tapiwa Praise Mapuranga builds on the theme of women in Zimbabwean music as she offers a critical discussion of the positive imaging of women in Zimbabwe's gospel music. Like Manyeruke, she argues that patriarchy has inhibited women's ability to participate in public spaces as musicians or dancers in Zimbabwe. Those women who have braved the storm have oftentimes been labeled as "stray", "loose", and "dangerous", among other negative labels. Despite this challenge, Mapuranga argues that female gospel musicians have managed to navigate these constricting spaces and have contributed immensely to the liberation of women in Zimbabwe.

Anna Chitando's contribution, "Towards Loving Gender Relations: The Case of Oliver Mtukudzi's *Wagona Fani,"* is the volume's fourth chapter. The chapter critically looks at music as a site of gender struggles, with a particular focus on the music of Mtukudzi, an internationally renowned musician. The chapter gives a vibrant demonstration of the way in which music has exposed the everyday struggles of married women of African descent in their fight for gender emancipation. In the search for workable solutions, Chitando appeals to both feminism and Africana womanism. It is clear in Chitando's mind that while feminism is a Western-based gender theory, Africana womanism is an African-centred gender theory. With particular reference to Africana womanism and Mtukudzi's *Wagona fani* (You have done so well), Chitando argues that the song reveals Mtukudzi's unwavering commitment to the birth of a society where both men and women lead a mutual and complementary existence.

In chapter five, Fred Zindi, a long time researcher and critic of Zimbabwean music, concurs with the views expressed in the earlier chapters by highlighting the impact of patriarchal ideologies on the marginalisation of women. He describes how women occupy peripheral positions in the music industry. Relying, to a larger extent, on personal experience, Zindi proffers a very penetrating and informative account into the careers of some women who have risen to prominence in the music sector. He creatively manipulates his personal experience and thorough knowledge of the sector to capture the multiple struggles that women continue to undergo in order for them to be accepted as legitimate cultural workers in Zimbabwe.

The next set of chapters focuses on the appropriation of secular music in national politics.

Chapter six by Fainos Mangena is a philosophical discussion of Leonard Zhakata's music and its implications on the theme of distributive justice. The chapter draws parallels between Zhakata's music and renowned British philosopher John Rawls' theory of justice (1971), which is premised on the idea that national resources must be shared in a manner that benefits the least advantaged group of the citizenry. The chapter samples four albums from Zhakata. The sampled albums, which are *Maruva enyika* (Flowers of the World), *Pakuyambuka* (When Crossing the River), *Mubikira* (Catalyst) and *Gotwe* (Last Born), demonstrate Zhakata's commitment to the theme of justice, particularly distributive justice. Thus, the chapter argues that Zhakata's music is profoundly philosophical.

Chapter seven by Ngonidzashe Muwonwa focuses on "singing" the nation, and it looks at how Zimbabweans began to use music to "imagine" the configurations of the nation in the period from 1999 to 2008. The chapter defends the argument that, during the period under review, the production, consumption, and distribution of music – in its various genres – carried symbolic weight and reflected different conceptions of nationhood and national identity. This symbolic weight reflected specific historical and political circumstances of its actors. The chapter also exposes the intersection between the public and official portrayal of the nation.

In chapter eight, Godfrey Museka, Darmarris Kaguda and Onias Matumbu examine the deployment of traditional music, drums, and dance by ZANU PF in its quest to lure people to vote for its candidates from 2002 to 2008. The authors argue that ZANU PF adopted and adapted tradition in the form of *Madzviti-Muchongoyo* as cultural resources for political mobilisation in a context beset by vigorous and violent political

contestations. In order not to overgeneralise, they confine their findings to Manicaland province.

Chapter nine, by the late Kudakwashe Shane Sambo, Nehemiah Chivandikwa, and Kelvin Chikonzo, is an interrogation of the *Third Chimurenga* musical genre, and how it has been used as propaganda to defend the status quo. The chapter begins by tracing the history of Chimurenga music in Zimbabwe, showing how this type of music has undergone various changes in response to the political and economic dynamics of the country. The chapter is well thought-out and thoroughly critical.

In chapter ten, Oswell Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru interrogates the historical role of music in the political and social development of the nation of Zimbabwe. For Hapanyengwi-Chemhuru, both those in leadership positions, and those who are governed to advance their interest, use music in Zimbabwe as a vehicle.

Chapter eleven by Samuel Ravengai uses postcolonial theory to discuss the *Chimurenga* musical genre. In so doing, the chapter discusses the interconnection of indigenous cultural texts with occidental cultural forms, showing how these texts have resisted a specific form of colonial discourse, herein called Rhodesian discourse. Ravengai argues that while *Chimurenga* songs and dances have responded to Rhodesian discourse by appropriating occidental cultural forms, they have refused to be wholly assimilated, as seen by the keying in of indigenous cultural texts and forms through the agency of guerrillas and the masses, in both training camps and operational war zones.

In chapter twelve, Kelvin Chikonzo, Joel Nyimai, and the late Kudakwashe Shane Sambo, delineate the borders of *Chimurenga* music with a view to ascertain whether recent offerings of this brand of music by the *Mbare Chimurenga* choir confirm or disrupt this generic regime. The chapter compares previous versions of *Chimurenga* music with the songs of the *Mbare Chimurenga* choir. In doing this, the chapter is alive to the fact that attempts to discern the generic regime of *Chimurenga* music are bedevilled by a number of problems that are inherent in any classification system.

In chapter thirteen, Pedzisai Mashiri and Zvinashe Mamvura focus on the nomenclatural dynamics of gospel music groups in Zimbabwe. They trace the use of nomenclature as the *modus operandi* for expressing particular views about the world. They argue that names have been operationalised as symbolic expressions and articulations of social, spiritual, economic, and political dynamics. Similarly, names provide an

effective way to better comprehend the mission and thought system of gospel music groups in Zimbabwe.

Bridget Chinouriri, in chapter fourteen, portrays gospel music as the fastest growing musical genre in Zimbabwe, as well as an important aspect of Zimbabwe's social and political furniture. Chinouriri argues that gospel music, just like other musical genres in Zimbabwe, has undergone a paradigm shift by assuming a dual character. The dual character manifests itself in the manner in which it at once addresses spiritual and secular matters. For instance, apart from addressing spiritual matters, gospel musicians became major voices relating to the socio-political dynamics of Zimbabwe's Fast Track Land Reform Programme of 2000.

While most of the musicians and musical groups discussed so far in this volume belong to the *Chimurenga*, Gospel, and *Museve* genres, there is a certain kind of musical genre by Zimbabwean youths that emerged in the new millennium called the Urban Grooves, which was, and still remains, a fusion of *Museve* and R'n'B music. In chapter fifteen, Francis Machingura helps us to discuss this type of musical genre in detail. In particular, he looks at the manner in which this fledgling genre, which is mainly popular among the youth, contributes to identity-making and identity-formation dynamics in Zimbabwe. His argument is that identity making is not unrelated to music and various narratives. For him, the Urban Grooves music has contributed immensely to the shaping of youth identity in the post-2000 era.

In chapter sixteen, Zifikile Gambahaya and Itai Muwati focus on Lovemore Majaivana, a prominent musician of Ndebele origin. In their discussion, they reveal ethnicity as a critical existential code in identity formation and politics in Zimbabwe. They argue that despite his burgeoning popularity in and outside Zimbabwe, Majaivana remains largely marginalised due to his ethnic identity. Majaivana sings about this marginalisation in most of his albums. Commenting on the marginalisation of the Ndebele people, Hadebe (2001: 16) remarks that:

> "The Ndebele people's history, philosophy and world-view have been neglected in mainstream history."

Gambahaya and Muwati argue that this marginalisation finds unalloyed revelation in an album titled, "*Isono Sami*", which the authors operationalise as a revelation of the skewed ethnic terrain in contemporary Zimbabwe.

Chapter seventeen by Fainos Mangena provides an exploration into the notions of *hunhu/ubuntu* and identity, as portrayed in the music of two legendary Zimbabwean musicians: Leonard Zhakata and Oliver Mtukudzi.

Thus, through listening to Zhakata and Mtukudzi's messages, one gets to know that community needs are more important than individual needs, and that the benefits and burdens of society must be shared. Commenting on the importance of *ubuntu* in identity constructions, E.K Yamamoto (1997) remarks that:

> "Ubuntu is the idea that no one can be healthy when the community is sick. Ubuntu says 'I am human only because you are human. If I undermine your humanity, I dehumanize myself.'"

Chapter eighteen by Lickel Ndebele and Progress Dube discusses the role of Ndebele music in the construction of the Ndebele identity. The discussion unravels through the analyses of Ndebele wedding songs, which are cast as a repository of Ndebele identity. The argument is that Ndebele songs provide a window into the Ndebele philosophy of life. Ndebele and Dube begin their discussion by defining ethnicity and primitive society in order to foreground their thesis. The chapter relies on the work of prominent historian Sabelo-Gatsheni Ndlovu (2003) to define Ndebele ethnic constructions.

Conclusion

Music accompanies individuals from the cradle to the grave (and, in the case of traditional spirituality, back to life in ancestral form). It is because of its importance in the lives of the people that music plays a critical role in identity formation. For this reason, the chapters in this volume have examined the deployment of music during a significant phase in Zimbabwe's history. The volume has argued that as the political and economic situation in Zimbabwe has worsened, music was used to accomplish multiple roles. It was deployed to placate citizens who had become tired of queuing up for basic commodities. It was appropriated to celebrate ruling party politicians inasmuch as it was an instrument of generating hope and excitement among opposition activists. Music was used to galvanise men who had become weary of working for little pay, and to motivate women who had continued to pray for the salvation of the nation. Thus, the chapters in this volume confirmed the centrality of music in understanding the highly complex construction called "Zimbabwe."

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PART I:

MUSIC AND GENDER

CHAPTER ONE

ZVAKAOMA KUVA MUNHU WEMURUME (IT IS TOUGH TO BE A MAN): SELECTED ZIMBABWEAN MUSICIANS ON THE BURDENS OF MASCULINITY

EZRA CHITANDO

Introduction

The notion of the *patriarchal dividend* (Connell 1995) has received considerable attention in scholarly discourses on masculinity. This concept refers to the benefits that men enjoy by virtue of being men. These benefits include the tendency to identify men with leadership positions in the home, family, institutions, and nations. This has led to the cliché: "It's a man's world." However, there has been less focus on the *patriarchal burden.* Whereas the "patriarchal dividend" refers to the advantages that men enjoy, I am employing the concept of the "patriarchal burden" in this chapter to refer to the weight of expectations that men have under patriarchy. Being a man is not always about enjoying the privileges that come with masculinity, it is also about the burden that men carry by virtue of being men.

Selected male Zimbabwean musicians have brought out the challenges of being men in their songs. In this chapter, I concentrate on music by James Chimombe, Leonard Dembo, and Oliver Mtukudzi. These artists have lamented the burdens that men have to carry simply because they are men. While patriarchy certainly bestows favours upon men, the same men are expected to live up to the ideals of "real men." This is not easy, as the expectations surrounding a "real man" are burdensome. In this sense, then, men are as much victims of patriarchy as women are. In this chapter, I suggest that in order to ensure gender justice, men too must be liberated from patriarchy. I agree fully with Eunice Kamaara (2012: 301) when she

recommends that "men and women have to work together as complementary agents for effective gender reconstruction and consequently for development."

In Search of *Hwitakwi* (Big Men): An Overview of Shona Constructions of Masculinity

In order to appreciate the lamentations of male Zimbabwean musicians, it is critical to understand the social construction of men in indigenous cultures. While this constitutes a broad area of study on its own, some salient features may be noted. First, a "real man" is associated with having the ability to defend his family and dependants. To a very large extent, this is associated with having an impressive physique. Having the appropriate physical stature marks off one as having the ability to defend one's family and territory. The musician Kapfupi captures this vividly when the wife's persona in the song, "*Mai Nga*" makes a distinction between a physically imposing "real man", and a weakling. She retorts, "*ava ndivo vanonzi varume ava! Kwete vakanyorwa pamatoireti*" (This is a real man! Not the stick man painted on toilets).

A physically imposing man is called *hwitakwi* in Karanga, a dialect of Shona. This concept conjures the image of a tough, fearless, and impressive man. A *hwitakwi* accomplishes manly tasks effortlessly. In sharp contrast to a *hwitakwi* is a *siri* (weakling). A *siri* is a man devoid of the critical masculine trait of physical strength. A *siri* is weak, effeminate, and soft (*kuvota/kuwota*). As Williams (2010: 140) argues in relation to Roman homosexuality, "*softness* is the antithesis of *masculinity*" (italics in original). A *siri,* therefore, represents all that is lacking in a "real man." In fact, a *siri* remains a boy, as he does not graduate into manhood on the basis of his failure to embody the traits associated with manhood.

As well as being able to defend one's family from physical danger, a "real man" is expected to provide for his family, and others who may be in need. This is why traditionally successful farmers *(hurudza)* and outstanding hunters (*hombarume*) were celebrated members of the community. They were rated highly as they were able to support their families and other vulnerable members of the community. A man who could not provide for his household was not a "real man." Such a man is "only a man in the absence of other real men" (*murume pasina vamwe varume*). Thus, "African cultures tell boys that their way to becoming men is by providing, protecting, and owning property" (MEW, 2008: xviii).

A man confirms his manhood by getting married and having children. He must be heterosexual and contribute towards the growth of his lineage. Consequently, homosexuality is taboo, although some men do engage in

homosexuality. Having children certifies one as a "real man." On the other hand, childlessness is understood as a tragedy of immense proportions. Consequently, extreme measures, including the ritual of *kupindira,* where a male relative would clandestinely impregnate the wife of the infertile man, have been resorted to. According to Barker and Ricardo (2005: 3), "The cultural imperatives of achieving manhood in sub-Saharan Africa (and much of the world) include getting married or forming a family (or being sexually active), and becoming a provider or working."

Competence in the realm of sexuality is another distinguishing feature of masculinity. Boys grow up preoccupied with the size of their male organs. They use herbs, sympathetic magic – for example inserting the penis into a *mumveve,* which is a wild fruit with the shape of a human penis – and other strategies to try and elongate their penises. "Fertility tests," such as detecting whether one's semen floats or sinks, are undertaken in an effort to guarantee early detection of fertility challenges. Men are scared of infertility (Shoko, 2012: 99). Crucially, a "real man" is expected to provide maximum sexual satisfaction to his female partner/s. While missionary religions have introduced the "one man, one woman" concept, the phenomenon of "small houses" (mistresses) confirms the persistence of multiple concurrent sexual liaisons (see for example PACANet 2011). However, this is not unique to Zimbabwe, it is in keeping with the influence of patriarchy across the world. Thus:

> "…The powerful form of heterosexual manhood in many societies of the world is defined by men's sexual prowess, as shown by the number of women with whom they have sex, the sexual attractiveness of their female partners, the claims about the number of 'sexual rounds' they can have with women, among other sexual games and concerns (Ratele 2011: 416)."

The trend in indigenous cultures has been to construct the man as the provider. Although women can assist him in this process, ultimately the task of ensuring the survival and thriving of the family unit is his responsibility. He is charged with leading and accomplishing administrative and religious duties at the family level.

While colonialism and the attendant Western influences have had a notable impact on the construction of masculinity, the notion that the man has to have the capacity to provide for his family has remained firmly in place. "*Baba*" (father) is a concept that conjures images of authority, power, and provision. However, as I shall argue in this chapter, "*hubaba*" (fatherhood) also confers a lot of pressure on men. Thus, most men fail to live up to the expectations of their families and of society. This becomes more pronounced in times of severe socio-economic difficulties, such as

those that Zimbabweans experienced from the late 1990s. The following passage identifies the core factors at play when men struggle with fatherhood:

> "One reason why many fathers don't take up their fatherhood role is lack of resources. Poverty is the most important factor undermining the role of fatherhood and the involvement of fathers… Fathers who are unable to meet what they consider to be a father's responsibility, to provide for their family, are more likely to deny or flee from the fatherhood role." (Morrell 2006: 20)

Overall, Shona society respects men who are fit/strong in the holistic sense of being "strong" *(varume vakasimba).* Small boys and young men aspire to graduate into this category of men. Although they are few, they are taken as role models, as they meet the cultural expectations associated with manhood. On the other hand, society detests *siri* or "incomplete men." The capacity to provide and lead is thus critical to the achievement of manhood. Paul Dover provides a detailed analysis of the fit/strong man *(murume akasimba)* among the *Korekore* in the Northeast of the Zimbabwean plateau (but also found on the Zambian side of the border). I cite him at considerable length below:

> "…The man of power is self-reliant, hardworking, and successful. He provides for all his family's needs, and helps his kin. He does not show fear; he is always calm and decisive, slow to anger... He does not complain in hard times or show pain. He is generous, and people come to him for advice. The opposites of the man of power are the lazy man, the one who fears, fails, and falls, and the drunkard. Women can also be given the epithet *akasimba*, but this denotes a woman who, admirably, exhibits manly virtues." (Dover 2005: 178)

Music: An Avenue for Crying Out

Having outlined the characteristics associated with masculinity in Shona culture, in this section I proceed to summarise the role of music in enabling men to cry out when they struggle to live up to the ideals of masculinity. Music provides an opportunity for those who wish to communicate their struggles. Whereas men have been socially constructed as strong, creative, and effective, the reality is that they struggle to live up to the image that society has constructed.

Men are not always able to provide for their families. The situation becomes more complicated in contexts of rapid social change and economic implosion. From the 1990s, Zimbabwe has been experiencing

serious social and economic problems. Musicians such as Thomas Mapfumo, Leonard Zhakata, Andy Brown, Simon Chimbetu, and others have voiced their concerns by exploiting the artistic license that cultural workers enjoy. They have recorded protest music that has challenged political elites to become more sensitive to the plight of the majority.

Alongside facilitating the expression of direct political sentiments, music is also strategic for communicating social struggles. Unfortunately, most music critics tend to focus on direct political commentaries by artists, at the expense of analysing the social dimension (see, for example, Palmberg 2004). Music provides a valuable opportunity for individuals and social groups to express their feelings. Zimbabwean female musicians, for example, have utilised music to protest against gender-based violence and the oppression of women (Makore, 2004 and Magosvongwe, 2008). However, concentrating on women's struggles runs the risk of overlooking the serious challenges that men are experiencing.

Men are supposed to be strong, fearless, resourceful, and always in control of matters. A "real man" is, therefore, expected to overcome all the challenges that come his way. To reinforce this, a number of proverbs and sayings are deployed. For example, a man only dies when his intestines come out (*kufa kwemurume kubuda vura*) and a man does not die because of one blow *(murume haafi netsvimbo imwe)* are sayings that are used to promote courage and determination in men. It is important to pay attention to such proverbs as they play an important role in the socialisation of the boy child. Observations made by Abasi Kiyimba in relation to the Baganda in Uganda are applicable to the Shona in Zimbabwe:

> "The proverb, like the narrative, is a key medium of expression among the Baganda and these two genres interact closely in dialogue with sociocultural processes that produce the gendered identities under discussion. In both genres, the portraits of the powerful male as husband, father, and political leader are cumulative social constructs that have absorbed many factors, and are part of the various mechanisms that the system of patriarchy uses to sustain notions of masculine superiority." (Kiyimba 2010: 36)

Whereas the proverbs noted above encourage men to suffer and persevere in silence, music provides an outlet for men. Through music, men verbalise their challenges, and cry out for help. Music allows men to speak out and not die in silence. As the proverb 'the child that does not cry out might die strapped to the mother's back' (*Mwana asingachemi anofira mumbereko*) suggests, it is crucial for those who feel burdened to cry out. Music allows men to lament when they are forced to carry heavy burdens. Although this brings masculinity into question, I argue that it is

therapeutic. It is vital for men to cry, as this will enhance their sensitivity, especially in the face of HIV and AIDS (Chitando and Chirongoma 2012).

Through music, men challenge the dominant idea that they are enjoying life. Music allows men to question gender activists who portray them exclusively as beneficiaries of patriarchy. As they sing about their struggles, male musicians are asking society to pause and take stock of the heavy burdens that they carry. It takes a lot of courage for a man to indicate that he is in fact struggling badly. Music in which men express their vulnerability is therefore important, as it lays bare the challenges that men face.

Male musicians who have come out to openly admit that they are struggling to live up to social expectations are speaking on behalf of millions of men. Embodying values associated with a "real man" puts a lot of men under pressure. The situation becomes worse in contexts of complex socio-economic challenges. How does one become or remain a fit/strong man *(murume akasimba)* when one's financial resources are non-existent due to hyperinflation? How does one remain the breadwinner when one's wife brings in more resources through cross-border trading? Indeed, how does one meet sexual demands when the most important sexual organ, the brain, is overstretched by schemes to eke out a living? Faced with a Zimbabwean crisis that has multiple dimensions, Chiumbu and Musemwa (2012) ask this existential question: How does one retain one's fatherhood *(hubaba)*?

Lamenting the Patriarchal Burden: The Case of James Chimombe

James Chimombe brings out the challenges associated with masculinity in Zimbabwe in his song, *Zvakaoma kuva munhu womurume* (It is tough to be a man). The late Chimombe was a versatile social commentator who addressed pressing social issues such as disability and marital relations. Blessed with a rich, crispy voice, Chimombe challenged his audience to overcome injustice. While in the first section I outlined the construction of masculinity among the Shona, Chimombe feels that the framing of a "real man" as a provider is burdensome. At the end of the day, the man is obliged to address all the issues arising in a household. Thus:

Zvakaoma kuva munhu wemurume (x 2)
Rent yakamirira ini
Fees dzakamirira ini
Hembe dzakamirira ini
Zvikwereti zvakamirira ini

It is tough to be a man (x 2)
Rent waits for me
School fees wait for me
Clothing waits for me
Debts wait for me

The persona in Chimombe's song is clearly a man in an urban context. Space considerations prevent us from examining the impact of urbanisation on Shona culture. Many novels in English and Shona have addressed this issue. The trend has been to identify the city as the deathbed of African culture. Within the context of the discourse on masculinity, it is instructive to note that the urban context raises new questions about what it means to be a "real man." The transition from an agrarian to a cash economy makes new demands on masculinity. The need to land and hold on to a well-paying job becomes critical to the definition of masculinity. A "real man" in an urban context must have money and other material possessions in abundance. The persona in Chimombe's song is struggling with the basics and has therefore failed to "man up."

Chimombe's song forcefully brings out the challenges that men face in an urban context. The burden of patriarchy in this particular instance is predominantly economic. The man is crushed by the expectation that he has to meet all major financial demands. This is what indigenous culture and missionary religions such as Christianity are prescribing. However, they seem to do so without empowering the man to access the resources that would enable him to meet all these obligations. Suffocating under these expectations, he can only lament, *zvakaoma kuva munhu womurume* (it is tough to be a man).

Chimombe's song captures the struggles that men undertake as they seek to attain and retain *hubaba* (fatherhood) in the broader sense. Whereas a man is expected to carry his burdens heroically, the persona in his song cries out. This suggests that the burden has become too heavy for him. Global and national financial systems have robbed the man of his breadwinning capacities and have left him unable to pay for rentals. Worse still, there are debts to be met. Observations by Margrethe Silberschmidt in East Africa are applicable to the Zimbabwean context. Thus:

> "While men do have relative freedom compared to women, particularly in sexual and reproductive behaviours, lack of access to income earning opportunities has made men's role as heads of household and breadwinners precarious. With a majority of men reduced to "figure-heads" of households, men's authority has come under threat, and so has their identity and self-esteem. Patriarchy does not mean that men have

> only privileges. A patriarch also has many responsibilities." (Silberschmidt 2005: 195)

By repeating that it is tough to be a man, Chimombe challenges the conventional wisdom that men have it all easy. While women are indeed struggling and are definitely facing greater challenges than men, it is critical to hear men's voices. Failure to do so results in interventions that do not promote gender justice as they overlook men's challenges. Chimombe shows how financial demands leave men feeling sapped. They experience masculinity as oppressive. Leonard Dembo reinforces this feeling, as I shall illustrate in the following section.

Iwe Wotosevenza Mukoma (Brother, You Have to Work): Leonard Dembo and the Demands of Masculinity

By the time of his death in 1996, Leonard Dembo was the leading musician in the country, outselling Mtukudzi and Mapfumo. A reclusive individual, Dembo was another perceptive social commentator. His music addressed social strife, poverty, and the struggle to overcome the odds. While the song *Chitekete* brought him international recognition when it was adopted as the theme song for the Miss Universe contest in Namibia in 1994, most of Dembo's songs radiated a rich cultural heritage.

In *Kushanda Nesimba* (To work hard) Dembo addresses the challenges that a young man, addressed as *mukoma* (brother), has to face. The young man has to contend with a multiplicity of challenges because of his gender and age. He has no choice but to face them head on, since he is a man. Critically, he has to *sevenza* (work) in order to overcome these challenges. Thus:

Iwe wotosevenza mukoma;
Vakuru vakaenda;
Kumakupiro mukoma;
Mhuri yose iyi;
Yatomira neweka mukoma;
Hona kanorwara ndiwe;
Kari apo ndiwe;
Kari pano ndiwe;
Kanochema ndiwe;
Kanotamba ndiwe;
Kari kuchikoro ndiwe;
Kanoda kupfeka ndiwe iwe;

Brother, you have to work;
Our elders have gone
To the other world;
The whole family
Depends on you;
Look, you have responsibility for the sick one;
You are responsible for the one over there;
You are responsible for this one here;
You are responsible for the one crying;
You are responsible for the one playing;
You are responsible for the one at school;
You are responsible for the one that needs clothes.

Masculinity and responsibility are constantly conjoined in Dembo's song. The young man has to take responsibility for the family because he is a man. In the absence of the deceased elders/parents, the young man has to step in and provide for the family. The itemising of spheres of responsibility is overwhelming. The sphere of responsibility is not defined narrowly: it is so broad that it is paralysing. The young man is not only responsible for this *one here*: he is equally responsible for *all those, over there*! Dembo achieves the desired effect by rolling out the multifarious individuals that need the young man's attention.

Dembo's song addresses the challenges that a young man faces as he takes over the responsibility of looking after the family. It becomes clear that the young man faces a daunting task and that the odds are heavily stacked against him. He has no one to turn to. He has to find resources (financial but also emotional) to enable him to shoulder all the responsibilities. Unfortunately, the advice that he has to work is not enough in the face of growing unemployment in the country. One feels sorry for the young man who has to become the provider overnight. He has to muster all the courage that he can gather in order to cope with the demands that will come from numerous fronts. The Marxist Brothers had called for courage and determination in the song, *Shinga Mwana WeDangwe* (Be Courageous, First Born Child). The song challenges the first born to be strong as *nhamo yepasi yakanangana newe* (problems of the world face you directly).

One of the most poignant aspects of Dembo's song is that the young man who is being counselled to work hard in order to support the family comes across as a "lone ranger." Essentially, the young man experiences the world as a very lonely place. He is out on his own. In particular, he may not rely on women (for example, his sisters) to assist him to face the intimidating challenges. Although Shona wisdom suggests that men must support each other (*kutsva kwendebvu varume vanodzimurana*), there is an

underlying thread that maintains that a "real man" is self-sufficient. This is in keeping with global trends relating to masculinity. Thus:

> "An image common to masculine consciousness is one of man-as-solitary-hero. Whether on the athletic field, in the corporate boardroom, or within the family, men are socialised toward individual achievement and away from communitarian commitment." (James 1996: 101)

The brother *(mukoma)* in Dembo's song is set to struggle to meet expectations, as the economy in which he operates does not give space for his multiple responsibilities. It is surprising that even fellow African employers have adopted an atomistic approach when relating to their employees. They take the employee in isolation, overlooking the multitudes that depend on the salary/wage that the employee takes home. Indeed, the brother *(mukoma)* may work hard, but the odds that are stacked against him are intimidating. Mtukudzi, who wonders whether being born male is in fact a sin, amplifies this.

Dai Ndakaziva… (If Only I Had Known…): Oliver Mtukudzi and the Burdens of Masculinity

Oliver "Tuku" Mtukudzi has emerged as one of Zimbabwe's truly global superstars. His creativity, consistency, humility, and analytical depth have seen him receiving countless awards. Mtukudzi is undoubtedly one of the leading African musicians. It requires several narratives to do justice to the complexity of his music (see for example Chikowero 2006 and Chirere and Mukandatsama 2008). However, in this chapter, I seek to draw attention to how Mtukudzi laments his being a man. Like Chimombe and Dembo, Mtukudzi thinks of the demands made on men as being suffocating. In one song, he laments:

Dai ndakaziva; haitungamire x2;
Ndingadai ndakaramba ndiri pwere yepamakumbo
Zenze tuku, zenze tuku ndayaruka
Zenze tuku, zenze tuku ndakura
Hooo, dai ndakaziva haitungamire,
Ndingadai ndakaramba ndiri pwere yepamakumbo
Nyararai henyu samanyanga inga ndimi mhuka huru wani x2.
Zvikanzi "uri wedangwe chitonga tione, uriwedangwe chitonga tione"
Uri wedange chitonga tione;
Nyararai henyu samanyanga inga ndimi mhuka huru wani x2.
Dai ndakaziva haitungamire

Ndingadai ndakaramba ndiri pwere yepamakumbo
Dai ndakaziva haitungamire
Ndingadai ndakaramba ndiri pwere yepamakumbo
Zvepamusha uno zvondiremera, aiwa zvandiwandira
Vakati, "uri wedangwe, chipedza tione"
Uri wedangwe chitonga tione;
Nyararai henyu Samanyanga inga ndimi mhuka huru wani x2
Makuva masere, ashaya neakomba
Ndotangira poi
Makuva masere, ashaya neakomba
Ndotangira poi
Hooo, dai ndakaziva haitungamire,
Ndingadai ndakaramba ndiri pwere yepamakumbo

If only I had known, hindsight is not beneficial;
If only I had known, hindsight is not beneficial;
I would have remained a baby on my mother's lap;
I bragged, saying I had grown up;
They said, "Since you are the first born, make the decisions;"
"You are the first born, make the decisions;"
Do not cry long-tusked one, you are the great animal
If only I had known, hindsight is not beneficial;
Do not cry long-tusked one, you are the great animal;
I would have remained a baby on my mother's lap;
Matters relating to this family are becoming too difficult for me; I can't deal with the matters alone;
They said, "Since you are the first born, make the decisions;"
"You are the first born, make the decisions;"
Do not cry long-tusked one, you are the great animal
Eight graves, with none having received ritual attention;
From where do I start?
Eight graves, with none having received ritual attention;
From where do I start?
If only I had known, hindsight is not beneficial;
I would have remained a baby on my mother's lap

In this song, the persona in Mtukudzi's song yearns for the childhood years when he had no responsibilities. This captures the extent to which he is experiencing the challenges of masculinity in his adult years. A child on his mother's lap might experience love and security, but he has no autonomy. To yearn for this blissful but oppressive period indicates that the person is feeling burdened by the new demands. In fact, he realises that he was wrong to boast that he had grown up. Once he announced this, he had to face the challenges associated with his new status of being a grown-up man.