



Performing Liberation Heritage: Kongonya and *Toyi-Toyi* as Cultural Resistance in Colonial and Postcolonial Zimbabwe*

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Abstract

Cultural activities such as dance and music can be used in strategic processes of activism, self-liberation, and social, racial, or ethnic identity formation for marginalised communities. This article presents kongonya and toyi-toyi as movements and sounds of resistance. Kongonya and toyi-toyi narrate through movement and sound, complex notions of identity that contribute to political and socio-economic empowerment and the valuation of liberation heritage. For example, kongonya and toyi-toyi dance drills, performed during the second war of liberation known as the Second Chimurenga in Zimbabwe, were invented as resistance symbols by the freedom fighters and African communities. Both contributed to the attainment of Zimbabwe's independence in 1980. This study argues that music and dance promoted ideologies of the liberation struggle. Kongonya and toyi-toyi accorded the people and freedom fighters (magandanga or vanamukoma) space

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for physical self-expression and socio-political cohesion. Therefore, this article interrogates the role of kongonya and toyi-toyi dance drills in fighting colonialism and its sustainability in postcolonial Zimbabwe.

Keywords: Chimurenga, dance, music, toyi-toyi, kongonya, pungwe, liberation struggle, liberation heritage

Kurtuluş Mirasının Gösterimi: Sömürge ve Sömürge Sonrası Zimbabwe’de Kültürel Direniş Olarak Kongonya ve Toyi-Toyi

Dans ve müzik gibi kültürel faaliyetler, ötekileştirilmiş topluluklar için stratejik aktivizm, özgürleşme ve sosyal, ırksal veya etnik kimlik oluşumu süreçlerinde kullanılabilir. Kurtuluş mirası olarak dans ve müzik uygulamaları, sosyal, politik ve ekonomik olarak marjinalize edilmiş topluluklar için değerli bir güç kaynağıdır. Bu makale kongonya ve toyi-toyi’yi direniş hareketleri ve sesleri olarak sunuyor. Ayrıca bu koreomüzik geleneklerini kurtuluş mirası olarak teorileştirdik. Sözünü ettiğimiz kültürel uygulamalar, siyasi ve sosyo-ekonomik güçlenmeye ve özgürleşme mirasının değerlendirilmesine katkıda bulunan hareket ve ses, karmaşık kimlik kavramları aracılığıyla anlatır. Örneğin, İkinci Chimurenga Kurtuluş Savaşı sırasında gerçekleştirilen kongonya dansı ve toyi-toyi dans egzersizleri, özgürlük savaşçıları ve yerli siyah topluluklar tarafından direniş sembolleri olarak icat edildi. Her ikisi de 1980’de Zimbabwe’nin bağımsızlığına kavuşmasına katkıda bulundu. Kendi kaderini tayin etme arayışında dans ve müziğin rolü geniş çapta kabul görmedi. Bu çalışma, dans ve müziğin kurtuluş mücadelesi sırasında moral destek (morari) ve propaganda aracı olarak hizmet ettiğini tartışmaktadır. Ayrıca müzik ve dansın kurtuluş mücadelesinin ideolojilerini desteklediğini de ileri sürüyoruz. Kongonya ve toyi-toyi uygulamaları, köylülere (povho) ve özgürlük savaşçılarına (magandanga veya vanamukoma) fiziksel olarak kendini ifade etme ve sosyo-politik uyum için alan sağladı. Bu nedenle, bu makale sömürgecilikle mücadelede kongonya dansı ve toyi-toyi dans uygulamalarının rolünü ve postkolonyal Zimbabwe’de sürdürülebilirliğini sorgulamaktadır.

Anabtar Kelimeler: Chimurenga, dans, müzik, toyi-toyi,
kongonya, pungwe, kurtuluş mücadelesi, kurtuluş

Introduction

Dance and music as artistic twins are used as accessible means of cultural expression that enact voices of opposition to or criticism of particular social, economic, and political injustices, and other concerning circumstances in a community. As modes of cultural resistance, dance, and music focus on raising public awareness of injustice and calls for justice do not exist for the sake of sympathy in the context of inequity. During the Second Chimurenga (the 1960s-1980), the guerrillas or freedom fighters employed kongonya and toyi-toyi to collaborate with community members and activists to fight the British colonial regime. Africans used guns in the First Chimurenga (1896-1900), which they were already manufacturing by the 1890s. The Second Chimurenga symbolised cultural more than technological rearmament. This article locates the Zimbabwean liberation agenda in transgenerational self-knowledge and heritage, not the assimilation of colonial customs into African truths (Chikowero, 2015: 214). Chimurenga refers to war or struggles against any form of tyranny, and songs that capture the sentiment of war and the longing for freedom that became music (Vambe, 2004). The guerrillas capitalised on the power of cultural and artistic expression to teach the people about potential challenges or reproductions of inequality perpetrated by the British colonial government. To bridge the gap between freedom fighters and the community, the freedom fighters emphasised the value of cultural resistance in facilitating a bottom-top approach in the process of liberation and fighting injustice. While colonial ethnomusicology co-opted “tribal dances” for ideological domination, nationalists antithetically deployed African traditions as an indigenous episteme to articulate different political ideologies and conceptions of selfhood (Chikowero, 2015: 214). In that way, the local people’s sentiments and interests during the liberation struggle were represented by the performance of kongonya and toyi-toyi as cultural resistance.

Kongonya and toyi-toyi, as an enactment of cultural resistance, contributed to a subversive identity formation that protested and sometimes mocked the constraints of an oppressive system. Kongonya and toyi-toyi embodied resistance symbolism of the struggle for liberation in the late sixties, or the Second Chimurenga (Gonye, 2013). The villagers complemented the gun through music and dance as a weapon of defiance, mobilisation, and resistance to colonialism. It is this memory of the cultures that historically resisted imperialism that constituted a powerful usable past for the oppressed, a subaltern consciousness that has often eluded scholars’ intent on restoring African agency to histories of anticolonial struggles (Chikowero 2015: 215).

These dance and music practices regarded in this article as liberation heritage emerged as expressions of new experiences shaped by the colonial state and entertainment during pungwe [a term that refers to an all-night underground political gathering]. The dances were performed alongside contemporary songs communicating Chimurenga themes, for example, Bob Marley's "Get up, Stand up and War". According to Pongweni (1982), music was a crucial component of Zimbabwe's liberation struggle. The music was created and popularised under the nomenclature of Chimurenga music accompanied by dances such as kongonya and toyi-toyi dance drills, as they are also equally important to the cause of the liberation struggle. Gonye (2013) suggests that kongonya dance and mbira music did not only motivate the masses and freedom fighters into the spirit of war but also acted as the sponsor of spiritual hypnosis attached to the ritual belief system of protection, whereby the masses and freedom fighters got protection from the ancestral spirits.

Kongonya dance was performed at pungwe, defined by Chinyowa (2000) as the social gatherings that assisted in releasing the people's tensions from the pressure of the liberation struggle. Pungwe was a typical representation of an all-night bira ritual ceremony during the liberation struggle. A bira is a celebration by various ethnic communities in Zimbabwe in which members of an extended family call for protection and security against all forms of misfortunes from the clan ancestors. Dance and activities such as singing, clapping, and drumming are essential components of the ceremonial process. In the Second Chimurenga, the masses and freedom fighters used dance and music performances to invite their ancestral spirits to protect them against the Rhodesian army and the British colonialists in general. Guerrillas from the Zimbabwe African National Union (hereafter ZANU) and the Zimbabwe African People's Union (hereafter ZAPU) who took up arms against the colonial regime in the 1960s came in the name of or, rather, came as -Murenga, Chaminuka, Mbuya Nehanda, Kaguvi, and other heroic ancestor figures from 1896-97 and even earlier (Chikowero, 2015). Mbuya Nehanda was one of the well-known spiritual leaders of the First Chimurenga (1896-1897). Her spirit was also believed to have contributed to the defeat of the Rhodesian military during the Second Chimurenga. After being captured by the British colonial army, Mbuya Nehanda refused to be turned into a Christian, as a result, she was hanged. As the executioner's noose hung over her, Nehanda told the British colonialists that her bones would rise again. She is believed to have rebelliously performed sacred dance and music to mobilise the masses against the colonialists, and she foretold that "my bones will rise" (*mapfupa angu achamuka*), referring to the Second Chimurenga, in which the British colonialists were defeated. The leaders of the war of liberation pointed to Mbuya Nehanda's sentiments as a cultural resistance reference point in the context of the liberation struggle.

Research methodology

This research employed historical and ethnographic qualitative research methods for data collection. The ethnographic study was conducted in Mutusva and Ringa villages in Mashonaland East province and Buhera district in Manicaland province of Zimbabwe. Discourse and textual analysis were used to analyse historical sources with events that involve the performance of dance and music as cultural resistance in colonial and postcolonial Zimbabwe. We also carried out a few open-ended face-to-face interviews with some of the people who participated in the liberation struggle. The idea was to solicit historical narratives from primary sources. Furthermore, choreomusical analysis was also employed in this article to construct the meaning and purpose of dance performances through videos downloaded from YouTube. We also relied on the experience of one of the authors, who happens to be a former liberation collaborator.

Liberation heritage: A holistic perspective

Heritage is a broad concept that can be used in political, social, cultural, religious, and economic spheres. We have different types of heritage shaped by and named after the domain they belong to and originate from, for example, cultural, natural, agricultural, and religious heritage. This article focuses on cultural heritage, particularly dance and music practices that won the liberation struggle. Cultural heritage is an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions, and values (ICOMOS, 2002). It is often expressed as either Intangible or Tangible Cultural Heritage. Kongonya and toyi-toyi are part of intangible cultural heritage by broad classification. Still, their purpose and origin connect them to liberation heritage as they originated and nurtured as ritualistically fused rhythmic movements and sounds of resistance during the Second Chimurenga, mainly performed at pungwe events organised by the freedom fighters and villagers.

From the mid-1990s, the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (hereafter NMMZ) had been actively involved in the institutionalisation of liberation heritage which is, however, dominated by the discourse of heroes and heroines. Mataga (2018) indicates that NMMZ encapsulated the liberation heritage project in the concept of Heroes' Acres and the rehabilitation of war graves located in neighbouring countries such as Mozambique. NMMZ's project of liberation heritage aims to identify, document, and safeguard visual and oral traces of the liberation war. In 1994, the NMMZ conducted a feasibility study on the protection of Heroes Acres and recommended the taking over of Heroes' Acres from the Ministry of Public Works to ensure

‘proper documentation, preservation and facilitating gazettement of the sites under the NMMZ Act’ (NMMZ 1995: 3). In its draft policy, NMMZ defines liberation heritage as:

An inheritance from the struggle against colonial rule from 1893 to the present. It comprises tangible, intangible, movable, and immovable vestiges of the country’s liberation struggle. The tangible movable elements include objects (weapons, machinery, vehicles, uniforms), photos, documents, diaries, films, statues, graves, etc. The tangible immovable elements include Heroes’ acres, military camps, monuments, buildings, memorials, battles, massacre sites, etc. Intangible heritage comprises tradition, oral history, performance (songs and dance), ritual, memory, legends, skills, techniques, and knowledge systems associated with the liberation struggle (Mupira 2010: 3).

From this definition, liberation heritage is a broad concept that captures a wide range of (in)tangible elements, including dance and music connected to the liberation struggle packaged as liberation heritage. The institutionalisation of this type of heritage by the country’s heritage agency, NMMZ, seems to push or champion a deliberate agenda to commemorate the liberation struggles. Identifying and inventorying the liberation battle activities and materials as part of the national heritage defined it as one of the most critical aspects of the country’s culture and history.

Although dance and music practices are included in Zimbabwe’s liberation heritage project, there is little effort to promote and safeguard such heritage by arts and culture departments and academic institutions such as universities and colleges. Mataga (2018) suggests that the Zimbabwean liberation heritage project involves identifying and rehabilitating mass graves in neighbouring countries and carrying out rituals of cleansing and commemoration. Although cleansing and commemoration revitalise dance and music as liberation heritage as they are performed as part of the initiative’s ritual ceremonies, we believe there should be specific programmes to safeguard and promote choreomusical traditions as liberation heritage.

The liberation heritage project is mainly inclined towards tangible heritage as the NMMZ has embarked on substantial rehabilitation activities targeting all sites where Zimbabwean soldiers and civilians were buried during the Second Chimurenga. According to Nkiwane (2000), the project can be divided into five phases which involve the identification of liberation war sites, traditional acknowledgement of dead heroes, physical rehabilitation of graves, erection of shrines, war memorial plaques and site interpretive centres and ultimately, the conservation, presentation, and promotion of the

heritage. Through this project, several sites were identified, rehabilitated, and protected in Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. However, it is essential to note that the liberation heritage processes such as identification, differentiation, repatriation, protection, and reburial of human remains sometimes also involve the performance of local traditional and ritual ceremonies, which include dancing with musicking. Therefore, liberation heritage is not just about physical monumentalisation but also the performance of dance and music as an enactment of the ritual and spiritual ceremonies officiated by traditional and religious authorities. For example, the second phase of the NMMZ's repatriation project focused on conducting cleansing rituals that brought together chiefs, elders, and spiritual mediums from, Mozambique, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (Nkiwane, 2000). This linking of the liberation war with rituals that involve dance and music as liberation heritage is something that would appeal to the public, whose respect for the ancestors is embedded in the indigenous religious and cultural context, in which having a good relationship with ancestors in the spirit world (*vari kumhepo*) partly depends on proper burials and funerary rituals.

Chimurenga pungwes and kongonya in the colonial era

Etymologically, the term *pungwe* is a Zimbabwean word which means spending the whole night without sleeping. The prefix /*pu-*/ denotes a long sustained awake, and the suffix /*-ngwe*/ is an ideophone which means the sun's brightness. When the two are put together, they form the word *pungwe*, which refers to an all-night gathering for a common purpose. The term *pungwe* is shared among various groups in Zimbabwe; among the Ndebele people, it is known as *kuzekuse* or *phumisalanga*, and the Venda people, call it *mulindelo*. According to Chifunyise (1994), *pungwe* events were organised by the freedom fighters to motivate and articulate the people's roles and aspirations in waging the Second Chimurenga. Apart from that, Bhebe (1999) describes *pungwe* as a compulsory all-night mass gathering or ceremony where the people connected with the freedom fighters to ask for protection and victory from the ancestors through celebration, prayers, communion, and performances. While the villagers did not wield the gun like the soldiers (freedom fighters), they wielded the guitar, *mbira*, and *ngoma* at *pungwe* gatherings to drive the revolution from inside the country (Chikowero, 2015). *Pungwe* became the fulcrum of the revolutionary struggle, and cultural performances were central to the effectiveness of these gatherings; without dance and music performances, it would be difficult to spend the whole night active.

The attendees of *pungwe* were the freedom fighters and the community members, especially men and women, boys, and girls aged twelve and above. The boys were called *mijibha* and the girls were called *chimbwido*. *Mijibha*

and chimbwido assisted in linking the community members and the freedom fighters. Their other duty was to act as informers for the freedom fighters, and they were also recruited as freedom fighters by the liberation army. Chikowero (2015) says that many youths convinced themselves of the rightness of the cause, crossed into Zambia and Mozambique, and, through song, inspired multitudes to follow suit. Dance, music, and other artistic expressions mediated social relationships at pungwe gatherings realised through ubuntu/unhu (which means “humanness”. Its essence is captured in the principle: “a person is a person through other persons”) that sponsored the spirit of unity against social injustice caused by the colonial administration. Gerald Mazarire says:

Thus, when we do inquire about the war in [Zimbabwe], we get more about its theatres, normally landscapes associated with the war of which the ‘base’, so far as most testimonies are concerned, was the main arena where the battle was defined, contemplated, fought, and ‘won’. The base was a site of all the struggles about the struggle and those struggles within it (Mazarire, 2009:311).

The performance of dance and music at pungwe during the Second Chimurenga would offer spiritual encounters, community solidarity and liberative empowerment to the Black communities oppressed by the British colonialists (Viriri, 2013). Chikowero (2015) argues that each time the people listened to the militant songs, speeches, didactic drums, and news updates, the program broadcast, they were overcome with the desire to join the action. The pungwe, as an instrument of Chimurenga, assisted in mapping out “a tradition of carnival as a liberatory insurrection... the artistic avant-garde group cum revolutionary organisation... [which] rose to prominence” (Grindon, 2011:148). Pungwe became a platform for re-engagement with popular masses by assuming political, spiritual, and military significance through dance and music performance.

For security reasons, pungwe gatherings were organised and performed in the bush or homesteads near the bush or mountains. The freedom fighters used pungwe as a cultural and political space to educate the people through speeches, kongonya and other artistic expressions about injustice and the necessity of the Chimurenga against oppression. Kongonya is performed by moving the waist forward and backwards in a bent posture. It symbolised power and domination in the struggle—the dance endowed aspects of self-expression and social cohesion, which were fundamental in the battle. Togetherness, the spirit of one voice, one people and determination were

some of the philosophies of Chimurenga. Most of the pungwe songs are in jiti style, a style characterised by a fast tempo. Examples of the songs in jiti style are “Sendekera mukoma” (Keep pushing brother), and “Hondo” (War) presented later in this article. According to Gonye (2013), in the liberation struggles, kongonya in pungwe facilitated political mobilisation, morale-boosting, psychological anchoring, and a comforting sense of the ordinary in an otherwise traumatic context. Pungwe gatherings were usually conducted at night because ancestral spirits are believed to be most active and omnipresent at night, especially during dawn. Therefore, if the pungwe requires the intervention of ancestors, then the night becomes an ideal time.

The places where pungwe dancing activities took place were open and not structured. Carlson (1984:6) refers to them as “ludic space” which he described as “a permanently or temporarily created space, a ground for the encounter of spectator and performer”. A missionary who witnessed a pungwe gathering, as cited in Ranger (1985), wrote that the pungwes were:

To educate the people, politicise the masses, and conscientise the people. This involves telling them what the struggle is about, making them aware of the evils of the present system, and creating a new system of justice where there is no exploitation. So, the guerrillas spend a lot of time addressing meetings with speeches: Their speeches are very repetitive, with lots of dancing, singing, and slogan-chanting. They do it like religious revival services; it arouses the people (Ranger 1985: 180).

Zimbabweans believe that any problem in life can be fixed by the people in consultation with their ancestors. In this case, pungwe serves as a platform to invite the ancestors through dancing, singing and theatrical performances to assist the people in the liberation struggle. Kongonya dancers and musicians invoked what Thram (2003) considers Zimbabwean dance’s ritual function of reconnecting participants with ancestors. Participants who attended the pungwe comprised young boys and girls above the age of fifteen. These were chosen because they had the energy to conduct some duties like cooking and fetching water during the pungwe and to run around inviting participants to attend the event. The rest were parents, both men and women of all age groups, except for grandparents who were unable to walk to the pungwe venue because of old age.

Zimbabwe’s liberation war has been grounded on spiritualism, particularly with the vadzimu (spirit mediums) of the 1896 First Chimurenga (Nehanda and Kaguvi), to whom kongonya has been dedicated (Chung, 2007). Chinyowa (2001:14) also hints that “the Shona people believed that a harmonious combination of melodious song, skilled instrumentation, and rhythmic

body movements would create a complete ritual experience.” The guerrillas and the people talked to the ancestors of the Zimbabwean liberation struggle through song, dance, and other cultural and artistic expressions. Pungwe gatherings were very long, and kongonya performances followed the course of a bira ceremony. According to Ravengai (2016), only the starting and ending times were pre-set; usually, they start around 7 pm and end at midnight. But sometimes, the meeting would last for the whole night. They usually started with slogan chants “Pamberi nehondo” (forward with the war), and other participants responded by saying “Pamberi” (forward) with fists lifted in the air. This would be followed by “Pasi ne mhandu” (down with the enemy). Slogan chants were followed by various mixed performance activities, propaganda speeches, singing, dancing, poetry presentation, and ululating. The performances were presented in segments with breaks marked with slogans. In this case, the people performed music and dance to contest colonial dance performance and production discourse in terms of content and purpose while manipulating pungwe performances to restore their cultural legacy and launching a scathing attack on colonialism. Therefore, the kongonya dance became another space for fighting political, cultural, religious, economic, and ideological imperialism. In addition, the dance was used to contradict and contest the colonialists and their philosophical concept of aesthetics.

One of the authors had the privilege to attend one pungwe as mujibha in Chikomba at Chirowa base next to the late General Mujuru’s village. The ideal “base” was home next to a mountain with a thick forest. Freedom fighters would spend the whole day hiding in the mountain, and during dusk, they would come down to the home to meet community members. The base had to be strategically chosen so that it did not endanger the community. In the absence of a home next to a mountain, an ideal open but hidden place would be chosen. The distance between one base to another varied from 20 to 30 kilometres. The arrangement of pungwe at a base is summarised in the diagram below, showing the distribution of roles and performance and conference area (dariro) where many carnivalesque activities unfolded.

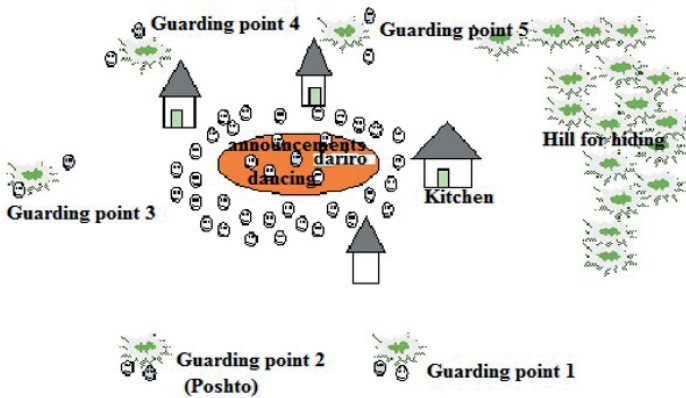


Figure 1: pungwe location and organisation

From one of the authors' personal experiences, the core element which kept the pungwe kicking was the music and dance. Music and dance entertained people the whole night. The music included songs that generated confidence and courage in the freedom fighters and the village members. Dance and music also functioned as a communication conduit between the freedom fighters and the villagers. More importantly, the music was also propagandistic in that some of the songs were used to advance socialistic ideologies favoured by ZANU or ZAPU as opposed to capitalism.

Toyi-toyi dance drill as movements of resistance

Toyi-toyi is a protest dance drill practised in South Africa, Zimbabwe, and other Southern African countries. According to Ravengai (2016), toyi-toyi is believed to have been introduced to South Africans by the African National Congress (ANC) exiles retained from military training in Zimbabwe. Evidence supports its use in protests in South Africa: "we did not have guns, we did not have all the sophisticated modern technology for war...for us, toyi-toyi was like a weapon of war" (Vena Vincent in *Amandla Documentary*, 2009). In Zimbabwe, there is no documented workers' union that employed the toyi-toyi movements in the series of general strikes from 1948 to about 1965. The drill became visible only after interaction with guerrillas from Mozambique in 1972 (Raftopoulos and Phimister, 1997). Therefore, it is believed that toyi-toyi is a dance drill that originated in Zimbabwe by the Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) forces that have long been used in the political arena for activities such as protests, demonstrations, and strikes (Ravengai, 2016). In Zimbabwe, it is believed that Zimbabwean freedom fighters originated toyi-toyi as part of military training activities in foreign lands where the Zimbabwean army trained the guerrillas or its soldiers. The

dance drill is believed to have penetrated Zimbabwe by the guerrillas returning to their home country from military camps outside Zimbabwe.

Since toyi-toyi originated as a war dance drill, it is usually accompanied mainly by chanting and used as a weapon for protests. In most cases, there is no musical instrumentation or recorded music because the drill is mainly used for war and protests. Nevertheless, it can be accompanied by thunderous chanting slogans and songs, which signify confidence, solidarity, strength, and victory. Toyi-toyi is a protestant expressive and high aesthetic dance in which participants jump or jog one foot after the other while stationary or moving. Knees must be raised to hip level, and hands may be raised in the air or front of the belly; either chanting or singing or both accompany these movements. The posture of toyi-toyi demonstrates physical strength (jogging) and ideological power (chanting), which is intimidatory and hegemonic.

Figure 2: Toyi-toyi chanting text used during the drill

| | |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|
| Lead: | Toyi-toyi (Jump jump) |
| Response: | Hayi |
| Lead: | Toyi-toyi (Jump jump) |
| Response: | Hayi |
| Lead: | Simudza gumbo (Lift your leg) |
| Response: | Hayi |
| Lead: | Harisirako (It is not yours) |
| Response: | Hayi |
| Lead: | Nderemusangano (It is for the party) |

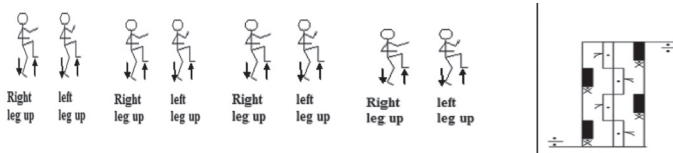
Toyi-toyi is characterised by simple jogging or cardiopulmonary exercises and matching steps involving stomping the feet onto the ground surface and chanting slogans or songs. According to Ravengai (2016) toyi-toyi dance drill, a warlike and protest performance, has revolutionary qualities; when performed by a massive crowd, it motivates them, simultaneously intimidating the opponents. Twala and Koetaan (2006:164) suggest that among the Ndebele people of Zimbabwe, the performance of rebelliousness through toyi-toyi is known as ukuzabalaza, which means to stand firm or to resist. One of the Ndebele ex-freedom fighters Mkhululi Dhaliwayo, as cited in Maluleke, suggests that:

To hear 3000 guerrillas singing, chanting, and dancing toyi-toyi in emaGojini, knees beating their chest, arms high up in the air holding

AK-47s, sweat streaming from their uniformed bodies, was a moving experience. The whole mountain range seemed to sway to this rhythm. Even animals like hyenas, lions, tigers, and elephants never strayed near the camps when soldiers roared their songs to the toyi-toyi dance. The dance instilled confidence in us (1993:33).

According to Martin and Johnson (1981:81) in (Pfukwa, 2008), the freedom fighters started their daily training activities at 4: 00 am; the warm-up exercises were followed by a sixteen-mile marathon accompanied mostly by toyi-toyi dancing, singing, slogans and chanting. The thrust of toyi-toyi dance in camps by the freedom fighters was reflexive and presentational, as opposed to the colonial dances formally introduced in the education system, especially in primary and secondary schools. Most of the songs accompanying the toyi-toyi dance performance are believed to have been composed by the Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) choral ensemble (Ravengai, 2016).

Figure 3: Toyi-toyi movements and notation



Alexander and McGregor (2020:924) describe toyi-toyi as a ‘high-stepping syncopated marching style’ associated with protests or supporting authorities in Southern African countries. As shown in Figure 3, toyi-toyi is a repeated single motif movement defined by the alternation of supports in jogging. The lower body, therefore, is the most active part of this military movement. The upper body is just carried along. Occasionally, a clenched fist is raised as a symbol of power. In this choreography, the performer in question starts by raising the left fist before switching to the right. Feet movements are direct, heavy, and bound, and the time is determined by the tempo of the music or chant accompanying the dancers. In this case, the time is moderate. In terms of shape, the sideways raised arm makes the body resemble the wall structure. In this realisation, the space utilised by the dance is high level, although in some cases, dancers will be travelling forward; in this case, the dancer is in one place. The phrasing is only marked by the music or chanting as it affects the performer’s breathing.

Songs that accompanied toyi-toyi and kongonya in Third Chimurenga

The continual performance of dance and music figuratively represents the spirit of Chimurenga as cultural resistance, which also manifests in postcolonial Zimbabwe through the Third Chimurenga. In 2000, Zimbabwe started the land reform, reclamation and redistribution programme known as Third Chimurenga. Masunungure (2009: 81) describes the Third Chimurenga as an “often violent take-over of white-owned farms” as the local people describe it as *jambanja*, which means violence. For the land revolution to appear credible and appeal to the ordinary people, the ruling political party, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (hereafter ZANU PF) revisited the old Chimurenga tactics of dance and music that made it a bottom-top approach as ordinary people led the process. It has been widely publicised how the Zimbabwean youths would arrive at a white man’s farm, singing and dancing (Gonye, 2013). Gonye further posits that during the land reclamation process, when the youth were at the farm they wanted, they would announce the farm’s take-over, turning to the psychological weapons of *kongonya* songs and dance, encircle the white colonialist farmer and violently chase away the farmer. In the Third Chimurenga, Zimbabweans used *kongonya* and *toyi-toyi* performance as an instrument of tremendously coercive power, motivating people for the roles they would perform.

The performance of *kongonya* and *toyi-toyi* was accompanied by songs that include “*Sendekera*”, which means perseverance and resistance and “*Rambai makashinga*”, which means continue with bravery or braveness. The performance of songs such as “*Sendekera*” in Third Chimurenga (land revolution) was an adaptation of the song “*Sendekera mukoma Takanyu*” (resist brother Takanyu), through which the singers refer to the conditions that caused the Second Chimurenga. The adaptation was in the structure of the songs which is a lead and response style and the text which was not altered. This implies that the songs were modified to communicate the message of land reclamation and independence. Another important aspect to note is the significance of the change in the transmission sound of these songs and others to the intended recipients. Usually, the meetings were conducted in the vicinity of the white farmers who because of their long stay and interaction with Shona speakers understood Shona. They could get the message straight from the protestors, unlike during the Second Chimurenga, when the songs and dances were performed in the absence of the opponent. The song “*Sendekera*” during the Third Chimurenga was similarly used to explain the land revolution and reclamation. “*Rambai makashinga*” was a call on Zimbabweans to continue fighting for their rights and reclaim their ancestral lands from White people. The songs also encouraged the people to continue fighting the White people despite being threatened with economic sanctions and

instability. The songs urged Zimbabweans to ignore and defy white people and their threats. These songs heralded a new revolution of land reclamation and agrarian liberation after the conclusion and consolidation of political freedom realised through the Second Chimurenga. Below are two of the songs that fall into this category:

Figure 4: The song Sendekera

| Shona | English |
|--|---|
| Lead: Vanamai vanonetswa nemabhunu Vanobunzwavanavaripi? | Women are troubled by the British They are asked where their children are? |
| Response: Sendekera mukoma Takanya | Sendekera brother Takanya |
| Lead: Mhinduro yavo inotenderera Nekuti vanoziwa zvinosungisa | Their answer meanders Because they know what makes them arrested |
| Response: Sendekera mukoma Takanya | Persevere brother Takanya |

Sendekera is a song believed to have been composed by a guerrilla from Mount Darwin (Cherere and Mhandu, 2008). The song text elucidates the concerns of the Chimurenga and narrates the horrible treatment of Africans by colonisers. The song indicates that mothers were troubled by the colonisers (mabhunu) by being asked silly questions during the war. The women were responsible for cooking for the freedom fighters. They also knew where the freedom fighters usually hid, for example in mountains with thick forests referred to as “cover”. The Rhodesian soldiers asked them questions about

the hiding places of the freedom fighters. They lied to avoid being arrested. The last part of the song is a lamentation about failure to get a decent burial after being butchered by the enemy on the battlefields. Therefore, some freedom fighters who died during the war and were either buried in shallow graves or left to be eaten by dogs and vultures are fighting for decent burial today. Although the message is a sad one, the fast beat of the song caused participants to dance kongonya or toyi-toyi in a happy mood (morari). Yet, they were indeed lamenting the treacherousness and brutality of the war. Another song which served the same purpose is presented below:

Figure 5: Song Hondo

| Shona | English |
|--|---|
| Lead: Hondo hondo hondo ku-Namibia | War, war, war in Namibia |
| Response: Haye haye, Haye ye yeHayeha Chengeta chikwama chababa chine madhora | Vocables Keep father's pace with money |
| Lead: Sabhuku chiroora mombedzingapere | Headman marry cattle are finished |
| Response: Hayehaye, Haye ye ye-Hayeha Chengeta chikwama chababa chine madhora | Vocables Keep father's pace with money |

Ho ndo ho ndo ho ndo ku Zi mba bwe Ha ye ha ye ha ye ye ye ha ye ha

4 Ha ye ha ye ha ye ye ye ha ye ha

che nge ta chi kwa ma cha ba ba chine ma dho ra

Che nge ta chi kwa ma cha ba ba chine ma dho ra.

Although the song is a serious mobilisation of people to fight, it also can be one that generates morale. It was derived from a common jiti song “Chengeta chikwama chababa chine madhora”, which, when translated directly, means “Look after father’s purse with dollars”. Nonetheless, in the context of war, the song encourages the declaration of war to repossess the ancestral

land. It even mentions other countries that also took arms to fight the oppressor, like Mozambique, Namibia, Tanzania, Angola and many more.

The force of kongonya and toyi-toyi: Protagonists' reflections

The views of Zimbabweans on the role of kongonya and toyi-toyi in the liberation struggle are presented mainly by rural participants from Mutusva and Ringa villages in Mashonaland East province, Chikomba district and Buhera district in Manicaland province of Zimbabwe. The interview data were predominantly provided by those born by the time and who witnessed the Second Chimurenga. Some of them participated in pungwe dance and music performances; as a result, they provided first-hand information on the role played by toyi-toyi dance drill and kongonya in the Second Chimurenga. A common suggestion was that, during the Second Chimurenga, toyi-toyi and kongonya entrenched cultural resistance and nationalist politics. In addition, the performances motivated and strengthened the guerrillas to conquer the white settlers. Comments provided by the interviewees reveal that war education through toyi-toyi, kongonya and other cultural expressions was easier to understand than any other methods. The interviews also reflected that the performance of toyi-toyi dance drill by the villagers and the freedom fighters represented Zimbabweans' desire for economic, social, religious, political, and cultural independence. As a result, dance and music performance was a motivating and educational mechanism for cultural protestation and nationalist refusal to accept colonialism.

Dancing kongonya during pungwe and toyi-toyi during training brought people to fight the colonialists. One of the interviewees, Makore suggests that "if you watched the performance, you would be moved into tears of joy. If you started a Chimurenga song in the village, people would join and dance to support the singing, especially in political rallies". The integration of dancing with musicking in the liberation struggle motivated people to fight for their freedom and right to their land. The performances also provided cultural and leadership skills and team spirit required during the war. According to the data provided by the interviewees, the performances were used to communicate the message of Chimurenga between the masses and the guerrillas. Thus, dance was among the strategies to attain Zimbabwe's independence in 1980.

The interviewees considered dance and music performance as the fountain of social, religious, political, and economic life, which provides space for individuals to locate and nurture their potential, foster the continuity of their relationship with each other in the community, shape their sensitivities and train their emotions. Thus, for this reason, the freedom fighters collaborated with the civilians through dance performances to push the agenda of the Second Chimurenga, bearing in mind that there was a solid and long

bond between the masses and their dance/music cultures. On the other hand, dance helped the masses and the freedom fighters to remain politically alert, psychologically alive, mentally creative, socially motivated, and persistently adjusting to the changes that transpired as people colligate with their surroundings and make decisions about the future of their surroundings. Another participant commented:

During the Second Chimurenga war, kongonya and toyi-toyi brought people and the freedom fighters together through pungwe gatherings. They were part of political mobilisation during the battle of liberation. After independence, we started seeing how dance and music were used in the struggles for power between the Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and ZANU PF. The government also use these cultural practices to commemorate national events such as Heroes Day and Independence Day. This shows the importance of dance and music politics.

In Zimbabwe and other African countries with a history of the liberation struggle, dance and music-making were fed into the socio-political system and inextricably connected with the liberation cultural performance project. Toyi-toyi and kongonya were some of the most intangible cultural expressions performed to sustain Zimbabwean values, beliefs and needs. Their performance was the most effective and excellent way of expressing social and political life's fundamental values and structures. The dances on one side indicated the loathing of the white regime: on the other hand, love, and togetherness of the self. According to Ndlovu (2016), dance and music practices could generate powerful common experiences that let people know themselves better, their responsibilities to each other, and the struggle for independence. As such, one would conclude that the toyi-toyi dance drill and kongonya dance became tools for the masses to fight, systematise, familiarise, and redesign their intangible cultural heritage to reconstruct their notions of social involvement and segregation, empathy, and ethos in the face of colonialism and oppression.

Sustainability of liberation heritage in postcolonial contexts

Cultural sustainability involves maintaining cultural beliefs, cultural practices, heritage conservation, culture as its entity, and whether any given culture will exist in the future (Soini and Birkeland, 2014). The performance of kongonya and toyi-toyi in postcolonial Zimbabwe promotes its sustainability and transmission from generation to generation. In Zimbabwe, particularly from 2000 to the present day, the government continued to capitalise on the

people's love of dance and music to continue to perform liberation heritage in contemporary postcolonial contexts. The ZANU-PF, as the ruling party connected to the liberation struggle through the Ministry of Information and Publicity, Ministry of Youth, Sports, Arts and Recreation and Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Home Affairs, exploited every opportunity to gain political advantage in the guise of safeguarding and promoting liberation heritage which involves dance and music. Therefore, toyi-toyi and kongonya as liberation heritage continued to be performed in postcolonial Zimbabwe in national events such as Heroes Day splashes, Unity Day pungwe and Independence Day galas. Kongonya and other cultural performances associated with the liberation war are also performed in commemorations of deceased senior political leaders—namely Mdhala Wethu Gala for Joshua Nkomo and Mzee Bira for Simon Muzenda (both former vice presidents). These national commemorative events created platforms for the continual performance of liberation heritage, promoting its sustainability. However, the performance of toyi-toyi and kongonya is mainly done in spaces marked as heritage sites of the liberation struggle and events organised by the ZANU-PF political party. According to Mataga (2018), the language used in talking about the liberation heritage events in which dance and music are performed is undoubtedly meant to emphasise or affirm the legitimacy of the state and the ruling party in the public sphere. For example, in his 2003 Heroes' Day commemoration speech, the late President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, stressed that the National Heroes' Acre was a reminder of the importance of the control of land and other vital resources (The Herald, 12/08/2003). The performance of dance and music is used to support the liberation and indigenisation discourse as politicians use events such as Heroes' Day and Independence Day to defend land redistribution and indigenisation policies.

The gala concept introduced in 2004 when ZANU PF was losing support became an attempt to revitalise the 1970s Chimurenga pungwe concept characterised by dance and music performance. According to Chinyowa (2001: 14), the pungwe had been "a form of a bira ceremony in disguise", with participants appealing to departed spirits of Chimurenga to direct the ongoing liberation struggle. Musicians and dancers were invited to perform dance and music connected to the liberation struggle. The gala performances resembled political gatherings and promoted the continuity of toyi-toyi and kongonya. Key politicians from ZANU-PF also attended the cultural galas, performed kongonya, and gave political slogans and speeches. They looked to liberation heritage performances to win the support of the general populace. Cultural events such as Mzee Bira (performed to commemorate the life of the late Simon Muzenda, who was the Vice President of Zimbabwe) created space for the performance of liberation heritage. The event celebrates

the accomplishments of gallant founders of the nation through kongonya and other cultural practices. On the stage, several ministers, politicians, and the general populace danced kongonya to music by a liberation fighter musician, Comrade Chinx (Dickson Chingaira), “Hondo yakura muZimbabwe, hondo yeminda” (there is a serious war in Zimbabwe, the war for the land) (Gonye, 2013). Chinx deployed the pedagogical tool of orality to “challenge the authority of the [colonizing] written word” (Chikowero 2015:223). He started singing Chimurenga songs as a local mujibha, a guerrilla helper, during mapungwes before crossing into Mozambique. These cultural galas and bira ceremonies are considered in this article as the performance of a desired political reality—that enacted or embodied the political platforms disguised as cultural activities where kongonya, toyi-toyi and other liberation performances were superimposed over and above all other dances.

The cultural galas deployed a specific language, songs and dance that emphasised the heroism of the dead heroes and ZANU-PF politicians for their contribution to the liberation struggle. The heroes and heroines are described by Zimbabweans as ‘the gallant sons and daughters who fought for freedom and independence (The Herald, 10/08/2010). ZANU-PF tried to monopolise the performance and transmission of liberation heritage. Still, parallel events that involved kongonya and toyi-toyi also emerged, contesting the hegemonic nature of national commemorative events. Alternative cultural events were conducted by local communities or called for by opposition political parties and other pressure groups who challenged exclusive state commemorations (Mataga, 2018). In some videos or performances, kongonya dance and music are adapted to exclude and include, contemptuously excludes the enemies of that party’s policies and consist of those of the revolutionary party, the custodians, and performers of kongonya (Gonye, 2013). The performance of kongonya and toyi-toyi as a cultural property of ZANU-PF obscure and compromise the cultural role and value of dance and music. Political parties such as the MDC, ZAPU and Citizens Coalition for Change (CCC) also perform liberation music and dance such as toyi-toyi and kongonya at their gatherings such as rallies as a way of challenging the ZANU-PF monopoly.

Political rallies, particularly ZANU-PF gatherings, also provided a platform for the performance of kongonya and toyi-toyi. The performance of kongonya and toyi-toyi as liberation heritage originated by ZANU-PF as the ruling party appeared well calculated to revive memories of the second chimurenga in the context of election campaigns. The media also broadcasted the dance and music in favour of ZANU-PF as the dancers and musicians shown on Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation Television (hereafter ZBC TV) wore ZANU-PF regalia. In addition, the use of kongonya, toyi-toyi and other liberation cultural practices is also demonstrated by songs on national

television that glorified President Robert Mugabe and ZANU PF as the masterminds of the Global Political Agreement, which resulted in the Government of National Unity (hereafter GNU) in 2008. The GNU was between the MDC led by the late Morgan Richard Tsvangirai, ZANU PF led by the late Robert Gabriel Mugabe and another faction of MDC led by Arthur Gutsu Mutambara. The songs praised Mugabe and wholly ignored the roles of other political leaders in promoting unity in the country by accepting the GNU. Through repeated broadcasts of kongonya dance and songs, a picture of wishful stasis is presented to most Zimbabwean viewers—that it is ZANU PF and not MDC that wields power (Gonye, 2013). Consequently, the liberation heritage has been deployed as a constant reminder of Zimbabwean politics and ZANU PF's history. Intangible liberation heritage becomes a reminisced symbol of ZANU PF's unshakeable power and relevance—a way to express defiance and culturally ridicule other political partners in the GNU who have no liberation history and heritage nationally and culturally recognised to fall back on.

The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation also promoted the continuity and sustainability of dance and music in postcolonial Zimbabwe through broadcasting kongonya and toyi-toyi. ZBC TV broadcasted the improvised bira ceremonies, which involved the performance of liberation heritage to millions of Zimbabweans and even beyond, in keeping with the former Minister of Information and Publicity, Professor Jonathan Moyo's idea of "packaging" and "exporting" kongonya (Gonye, 2013). The ceremony involved playing of indigenous musical instruments such as hosho, mbira, marimba, and a variety of ngoma revered to evoke ancestral spirits for the ritual ceremony. After the ritual proceedings, the ceremony is usually followed by the performance of western music with electric guitars, drums and other instruments accompanied by kongonya and other dances. The development of digital technologies, particularly Information Communication Technology (ICT) and internet-based platforms has also assisted in the safeguarding, transmitting, and circulating of toyi-toyi and kongonya videos. New forms of production, creation, participation, and access have changed liberation heritage as kongonya, and toyi-toyi performances are recorded by smartphones and cameras and uploaded on platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and other internet-based social media platforms for consumption in Zimbabwe and beyond. Therefore, technological changes have created opportunities for the transmission of liberation heritage, promoting the continuity and circulation of kongonya and toyi-toyi beyond Zimbabwe.

Conclusion

This article conceptualised toyi-toyi dance drill and kongonya dance as liberation heritage which played a crucial role in Zimbabwe's protracted Chimurenga in the 1960s through the 1970s. We argued that during this time, dance and music formed an essential facet in Zimbabwe's attainment of independence, where musicians and dancers augmented the Chimurenga for freedom through music and dance performance. Chimurenga music and dance advanced the liberation struggle and motivated the freedom fighters who fought for independence and the mujibas (boys) and chimbwidos (girls) who supported them. Therefore, this article explored how toyi-toyi and kongonya can be theorised as a framework for memorising, safeguarding and depicting Chimurenga liberation war heritage. It advances the argument that dance and music are symbols of national heritage and representation of Zimbabweans' memory as they can be used to describe and experience moments and feelings during the liberation struggle. Through toyi-toyi and kongonya, the masses resoundingly responded to the body's call for solidarity of the Zimbabwean people in a common agenda to contest and fight colonialism using cultural heritage as a powerful strategy to complement the gun in the attainment of independence.

The article also explores how political, national, and cultural events are platforms for the sustainability and continuity of toyi-toyi and kongonya as liberation heritage in postcolonial Zimbabwe. These dance and music practices are performed in postcolonial Zimbabwe at events such as Independence Day, Heroes' Day, and political rallies. They are transmitted through internet-based platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram. However, it seems that there is a need to perform post-independence disillusionment. Perhaps, it is no more extended colonialism that is our challenge, but a cultural intrigue by politicians and the new national elite who covertly deploy dance and music for self-interest disguised as cultural initiatives for the national interest—resulting in a dilemma more disorienting than that of colonialism.

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