SINGING DUNUNA REVERSE¹: INTERROGATING THE SYMBOLIC, POLITICAL, CULTURAL AND PATRIOTIC PERSPECTIVES IN A ZAMBIAN POLITICAL CAMPAIGN SONG

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Abstract

Zambia’s social, cultural political and landscape can be revealed through the gaze of musical arts renditions. Hence, the focus of this article is on interrogating inherent perspectives on symbolism, culture, politics and patriotism inherent in the campaign song ‘Dununa Reverse.’ This article draws ideas from an ethnographic study which involved the utilisation of qualitative approaches of data collection and analysis. The article reveals that the campaign song ‘Dununa Reverse’ portrays that musical arts in the Zambian sense include singing, dancing and dramatisation and have been dynamic and continue to transform, over time. The article also notes that musical arts still remain a strong channel through which ethnic, socioeconomic, musical arts, cultural and political identities have been portrayed, preserved and transmitted from one generation to the next.

Keywords: Symbolism, Culture, Politics, Patriotism

Introduction

This paper explores the role and significance of musical arts in shaping Zambia’s social, political, cultural and landscape. In trying to do so, the differences among ethnic identities and national identity are foregrounded through the examination of relations among groups having these identities, and how they were constructed and reconstructed over time. Musical arts² in the Zambian sense, include singing, dancing and dramatisation and have continued to serve as a conduit through which ethnic, socioeconomic, cultural and political identities have been portrayed, preserved and transmitted from one generation to the next. From a historical standpoint, these musical arts have been strongly influenced by religion, Western colonialism, local, intercultural, political and economic interactions among African people and the rest of the world – through the emergence of the global village concept.

¹ Dununa Reverse is a political song that was composed for and used by the Patriotic Front Party in their 2016 Presidential elections.
² The term ‘art’ has been challenged by prominent African musicians Manu Dibango, Youssou N’Dour, Mory Konte, Mirriam Makeba and Hugh Masekela, who assert that: ‘art’ is something which functions differently from Western ideas of artistic function. An African’s spiritual home is the village. In the village, music is invisible from life. There is no art. Art is a Western concept (Makeba, 2009).
The emergence of new trends in ideas of a global village and the level of integration among peoples of the world have increased with the ease of communication, technological advancements and travel means, resulting in the weakening of national identities in many developing countries such as Zambia. However, sub-national identities and group affiliations are relatively stronger. Group affiliations promote conflict, competition, and cooperation within, as well as outside the group or country and at different points in time. Most recently, different groupings in the country have realised the growing drift between ethnic, political and civic groups, and have continuously been advocating for and engaged in various nation-building activities, hence, the reigniting of the national motto: ‘One Zambia, One Nation.’ For many who experienced the birth of Zambia through to the early eighties, the motto makes a lot of sense and carries its meaning. Unfortunately, for those coming in the later years, the meaning is rather blurry and thus requires redefinition and new ways of applying it at the same time utilising current language and symbols to suit the new trends in the lifestyles that have developed over time.

Data for this article was collected for the most part in the course of a social ethnomusicological study carried out in Lusaka, and the Copperbelt Provinces of Zambia from the year 2015 to date. During that period, which involved doing extensive fieldwork and literature review, it became interesting and necessary to delve into the religious, musical, social and political complexities of human behaviour and musical influences from within Africa and from other parts of the world. When embarking on this study, challenges encountered were in the usage of the Bemba and Nyanja languages by the research subjects, as they often mixed linguistic practices and literacies, which were often characterised by code-switching and slang. This is the case because these languages are commonly used even by other ethnic groups in the country, resulting in the inclusion of borrowed words from other languages within the country, within Africa, and other parts of the world (Central Statistical Office, 2011:13). However, after consulting linguists such as Mubanga Kashoki, a retired professor from the University of Zambia, and interacting with several musicians as an insider and participant observer, a platform was developed for investigating in-depth information and knowledge that warranted ease of interrogating and eliciting interpretations and meanings of the music, dance and dramatisation. It also became necessary to adopt the research stance of the ‘observer as a participant,’ as described by Merriam and Tisdell (2009) who argue that, using this method, the researcher may have access to many people and a wide range of information, since the researcher’s observer activities are known to the group and participation in the group is a secondary information-gathering process.
Merriam and Tisdell (2009) add that the researcher might begin as a spectator and gradually become involved in the activities being observed. In this dual researcher role, to open-ended interviews and focus group discussions were held and sample drawn from the research area described above.

**Dununa Reverse**: the Music

The word ‘music’ in this article should not be understood as having the same implications as its Western sense, as the Bemba or other Zambian languages equivalent may also mean ‘song’ (Lumbwe, 2011). According to Mapoma (1980:36), among the Bemba, the terms *ulwimbo* (song) and *ing’oma* (drum) are used to indicate music, although the term *ing’oma* is used more often in that wherever drumming is heard, there would be singing and dancing. In addition, some songs do not carry a melody but are sung rhythmically, sounding almost monotonous, following the tonal inflexions (natural contours) of the Bantu language (Bemba, Tumbuka, Nyanja, Lamba etc). Such songs could be described by some Western music-oriented persons as ‘chanting rhythmic recitation’ (Lumbwe, 2005: 2009).

**Song Text**

**Verse**

*Adada munalembo Edigar Chagwa, Lungu,*  
*Apitilize ulangulili wamu Zambia.*

**Chorus**

*Dununa, dununa iye;*  
*Aa ee! dununa iye;*  
*Dununa reverse;*  
*Aba bambi;*  
*Bali muchibe.*

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3 The word reverse herein is pronounced as ‘rivesi’ and the name Edgar is pronounced as ‘Edigar’ that is why it is spelled as such in this paper. However, the spelling of the word reverse is maintained as is because that is how it appears on the CD inlay cover.

4 Some songs do not carry a melody, but are sung rhythmically sounding almost monotonously, following the tonal inflexions (natural contours) of the Bantu language. Such songs could be described by some Western music-oriented persons as ‘chanting rhythmic recitation’ (Lumbwe, 2004). With regard to the description of sub-Saharan African music in general, Rhodes (1959:6) warns against evaluating and interpreting African music in terms and concepts that are European rather than African. In his warning, Rhodes states that in trying to study African music, researchers have tended to make general statements disregarding the views of the indigenous people who own the music being discussed. This is evident in claims such as ‘[the] African is rarely articulate in explaining the theory and aesthetic of his music’ (Rhodes, 1959:6). Statements such as these ignore the fact that people on the continent of Africa have their own way of describing the nature and beauty of their music, expressed in their own languages. Recently Agawu, among others, also touched on this issue (Agawu, 2003). Direct translations into any language should, therefore, be handled with great care.
Aba bambi;
Bola naikosa.
Lolo;
Lolo;

Nakwela basi;
Zina lake, double decker.
Kalusa;
Si anga ikwele;
A Lungu baikwela kale;
Lolo lolo lolo;
Lolo lolo lolo.

Commentary

Aikona kulechita amasangalatoni
Webo nobo nalikumwene nefi
Nongisa nefingi ifya kukweba webo.
Batila ichidunu chilalisha,
Abanike tabasangwapo,
Ilyashi lyamutulo, webo under faivi politikisi nebo nshichita ifyamusango uyu,
Webo chimo chine no mwana wandi Saulosi webo,
Wapona grade seven seventini times per hour,
Faivi times ulepona chabe,
Chita litayamenti wala ngonawila ama ....... nshi chita ifyamusango uyu.

Rap:

I say ndayi cleaner, I say ndayi pukuta, I say ndayi wamya.

For one to understand the meaning inherent in the song Dununa Reverse, one has to be mindful that with the growing use of the urban variants of Zambian languages, such as ichikopabeluti, there have been limitations in the knowledge of the indigenous Bemba language referred to as Ichibemba nkonko. In relation to this discussion on language, Giovanni (cited in Kirszner and Mandell, 2004: 768) points out that a song is a poem and describes poetry as being between the mind of the poet and the ear of the [listener] or the reader. If it does not sing, discard the ear, for poetry is song.

5 Ichikopabeluti is the common Bemba variant used most especially in the urban areas of Zambia. Ichikopabeluti is derived from the incorporation of foreign words from African languages, English, French, Swahili, and other Zambian languages (Kashoki, 2009; Kabinga, 2010).
According to Sichinga (2008), beyond this, familiar songs or poetic forms may depend on literary aspects such as imagery, figures of speech, irony, allusions or symbols or repeated sounds. Furthermore, a song just like a poem can always be seen to possess those extra-linguistic qualities that differentiate it from the common talk. For instance, emotive sounds (Mnemonic sounds) can be drawn from the structure of the song lyrics. These are sounds that make musical sense and meaning but linguistically may be meaningless as seen in the following part of Dununa Reverse:

_Lolo lolo lolo, Lolo lolo lo_

_Aa ee and Iye_ from the line: _Aa ee! dununa iye_

Onomatopoeia includes words whose sounds suggest their sense. Onomatopoeia is semantically important in the creation of poetry, for instance, the word _dununa_. Other forms of creating poetry include anaphoric repetition, a case where repetition is depicted through the use of the same word or phrase at the beginning of several successive clauses, sentences, lines or verses to give a text the necessary emphasis or rhetorical effect. For the aesthetic part, repetition helps in the filling of the song into the group dialogue singing. For example:

_Dununa dununa iye_ (repetition of the same word)

_Nakwela basi, Zina lake double decker_ (repetition of a whole phrase)

_Aba bambi, Balimuthibe. Aba bambi, Bola naikosa_ (repetition of a whole phrase, but including extrapolation of a word or two in the repetition part)

Euphony occurs when there is an alteration in the pattern of normal speech. This can be a musical requirement which demands the elision of a vowel or a complete syllable. As can be deduced, this is a special verbalisation pattern which may require special knowledge in which the device is used. For instance:

_Si anga ikwele_ pronounced as _sangaikwele_

_Ifyamusango uyu_ pronounced as _ifyamusangoyu_

Another linguistic aspect employed in the song involves language borrowing. With the understanding that composers of the song _Dununa Reverse_ are inspired by the cosmopolitan world, social mobility and high degree of conscience; all these factors point to the experience of some foreign words and expressions being infused in the local vocabulary. The words appear so well-integrated into the local language that one can hardly think of them as foreign. For example, _I say ndayi cleaner, I say ndayi_
pukuta (the act of wiping yourself with a cloth), I say ndayi wamya (the act of cleaning yourself), Double decker from English meaning something with two levels or layers, here referring to a bus, Kalusa coming from the word ‘loser’ and Aikona from Xhosa/Zulu.

The general meaning of the song can be drawn from its figurative title Dununa Reverse. Reverse, in the context it is sung can be equated to that of the dance phrases that signalled the change in the dance routine during the performance of Kalela dance\(^6\) in the colonial times during the struggle for independence. The signalling phrases were: fowadi\(^7\) mama fowadi; and revesi, mama revesi. During Kalela dance, which was and is still performed as a circle line dance comprising two lines, when the dance leader chanted the phrase: fowadi mama fowadi, it means that the dancers had to start moving in the opposite direction from which they were heading. However, when the signal phrase was: revesi mama revesi, it meant that the dancers had to advance and proceed forward. The idea of performing the opposite of the instructions given by the group leader was mainly because during the colonial times around the 1950s, indigenous dances ceased being performed purely for entertainment, but also included social commentaries that reflected the African’s displeasure with white colonial domination and denial of basic human rights (Matongo, 1992). Therefore, the dancers had to create an illusion on the minds of the colonial masters who could not make sense of the signalling phrases and the corresponding dance movements. By implication, it became very difficult for colonial observers to decode and understand the struggles for freedom which were communicated through singing and dancing. As a result, the latent meaning of the phrase Dununa Reverse refers to kicking the ball forward.

The word Dununa is a short form of the name of the game chidunune/chidunule, which was derived from the act of kicking a ball very hard with the intention of letting it land as far away as possible. Chidunu is a very popular hide and seek game among children (both boys and girls) from the urban townships. In this game, there are no restrictions as far as the number of participants is concerned. However, there should be a minimum of three players. To play the game, firstly, there should be a reasonably large area with natural objects to enable the players to hide. Secondly, ichimpombwa

\(^6\) Kalela originated from Northern Zambia in the Chishi Island on Lake Bangweulu. Initiated around 1930 by a man called Kalulu, of the Ngumbo ethnic group, Kalela was exported to the Copperbelt after the Second World War by some Ngumbo migrant labourers. On the Copperbelt Kalela was first introduced to the Roan Antelope Mine (now called Luanshya). Kalela first appeared in 1945 (Mitchell 1956). In 1939 Kalulu was enlisted in the army, but still managed to play his drums and continued with Kalela dance while he was in the armed forces. Upon his discharge from the army in 1946, he renamed the dance Luwelela. However, the name Luwelela was not used when the dance was introduced to the Copperbelt; instead the initial name Kalela was retained (Mitchell, 1956; Matongo, 1992; Mapoma, 2010).

\(^7\) The word forward although written as fowadi is commonly pronounced by the Bemba speaking people, as fowati. Therefore, in this paper, the word has been presented as fowadi to aid all those who are not familiar with the Zambian linguistic mechanisms.
(ball made from various materials such as old strips of cloth, plastic and rope) or a commercial ball (with a diameter of at least 20 centimetres) must be available. Before the game starts, one player would either volunteer or be randomly selected to be the one searching for those hiding. Afterwards, another player would be appointed in the same way as above, but his or her role would be to kick the ball (ukudumuna). Once the ball has been kicked far away, the player in charge of searching has to run and collect the ball, and as he or she does that, the rest of the players run in all directions to find a suitable spot to hide. Upon collecting the ball, the player who has to do the searching runs back to the centre spot and then counts up to 10 and announces the beginning of the search. When one player is discovered, the one searching has to announce his or her catch, and then both of them (the one who was searching and the one who was found) would run to the centre spot where the ball was left. Upon arrival at the centre spot, the first to arrive would kick the ball and then the other player would assume the responsibility of going to collect the ball and conduct the search. The game would continue in the same way until all the players are tired or just decide otherwise.

At the end of chidunu, the players would sing the following song (usually because in many cases, the one who conducts the search a couple of times would end up crying as a result of frustration):

Chorus: **Ichidunu chilalisha**  **Chidunu** game makes people cry

**Abaice tababako**  Children do not take part

Although this song is part of the game, the composers of the song *Dununa Reverse* did not use the same or similar tune. However, the song was used as a basis for their foundation and meaning of the song on the principle that children’s games play an integral role in the handing down of social-cultural values, traditions and customs. Through participation in different games, a person develops psychomotor and psychosocial values which include:

(a) Well-coordinated basic motor skills of movement of different body parts including:

   (i) Intellectual development in relation to critical thinking, developing sound judgment, making informed decisions, development of leadership skills, development of a sense of self-esteem and confidence, development of good sense of teamwork and spirit to share with other people and so on; and

   (ii) Learning to accept defeat and control anger after losing a game (emotional stability) (Lumbwe, 2009: 328).
Musical Instrumentation

The musical accompaniment of the song *Dununa Reverse* provides a very interesting development of the musical landscape in Zambia. Through the use of multiple technologies including both acoustic and electronic musical instruments, as well as digital recording facilities, one realises how sophisticated and advanced the music industry is today. What we see in history is that the instrumentation in *Dununa Reverse* is a product of music that has developed due to the development of urban centres, around agricultural activities, along the railway lines and in the copper mines. This began in the early 1900s, and shaped the economic and cultural destiny of the country. The increased demands for labour for the mines led to the men migrating to towns and being introduced to the cash economy, a development which led to the weakening of indigenous ethnic ties, and the development of new social relationships, which involved the coming together of various peoples with different traditions and cultures. This development also resulted in the appearance of new musical instruments and musical cultures (Etienne, 1937; Richards, 1956; Blacking, 1973; Chanda, 1989; Graham, 1992:205). Graham, (1992:206) observes that:

During this period, Zambia consisted of two distinctive societies – the white (*muzungu*) society, relaxing in expensive hotels and exclusive clubs and listening to ‘*muzungu*’ music, and the black society congregating in urban beer halls run by city and town councils […] which] revolved around Saturday evening village dances featuring local instruments and a few acoustic guitars.

The development of social amenities for the *bazungu* settlers resulted in a few of the Zambian musicians seeking employment in hotels and nightclubs.

The late 1970s saw a twist in making and performing of music in Zambia when the then President, Kenneth Kaunda, issued a decree that no less than ninety-five per cent (95%) of music on the radio was to be of Zambian origin (Kaunda himself is an amateur guitarist). Through personal communication, Kaunda (2011) points out that the presidential decree was intended to revive cultural roots and at the same time create a musical identity that would be unique to Zambia. Kaunda continues that this idea of a unique Zambian identity was something akin to Mobutu’s call for *authenticité* in the then Zaire, now Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Mwesa Mapoma (2012) a retired ethnomusicologist, observes that unlike the positive results that Mobutu’s *authenticité* yielded, Kaunda’s appeal only resulted in the growth of *kalindula* and its variance.

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8 *Muzungu* is a Nyanja word meaning ‘white person’ (*muzungu* singular and *bazungu* plural). In Bemba, the word meaning ‘white person’ is *umusungu* (*umusungu* singular and *basungu* plural). The word is commonly used in conversation and is not derogatory.

9 *Kalindula* music traces its origins in the mid-1960s in Luapula Province. The name stemmed from the sound and action of causing a string to vibrate on a string bass musical instrument known as *chilimbwi* or *babaton*. Within extended ethnomusicological discourse, *kalindula* music has been described as music peculiar to Luapula although variants have developed due to the shift in musical instrumentation from locally made string instruments such as the *banjo* and *babaton* to the use of electronic guitars and digital drums (Mpundu, 2010).
Due to the ease of procuring musical instruments in the 1990s, a new generation of musicians emerged, whose younger age and urge to experiment with other outside musical genres such as R&B, rap, reggae, and hip-hop meant that its interest led, firstly, to solo performances, duets and trios rather than forming bands.

Secondly, most of these musicians could not play any musical instruments, but could only sing or rap over backtracks created from programmed recordings using computer software. The point here is really not about whether or not musicians can play instruments; rather it is the idea of technological advancements that have made it easy for talented singers to create musical accompaniments for their compositions. However, the subject of discussion is that musicians have been able to produce renditions of fusion of different genres from all over the world. Admittedly, there is nothing wrong with this kind of ‘musiking,’ but it just becomes rather difficult for the general public to draw the actual meanings of the materials they hear. In fact, it is also difficult for professionally trained musicians to place their figure on what sort of music they hear.

A typical example is the new version of *kalindula* as described by one of the Zambian local musicians, Afunika, popularly known as the King of the new version of *kalindula*. When one listens to his music, it is nothing close to *kalindula*, but the similarity is mostly on the functional properties that include: topical song texts that convey their messages effectively due to their linguistic characteristics; and also for being outstanding in delivering the intended message to audiences such as the Zambian society, religious leaders and the government.

**The Dance**

Watching the dance that is part of the total performance of the song *Dununa Reverse*, one is inclined to think that it is merely a response to the musical instrumentation. One may also be inclined to think that it is simply a children’s dance style following the origins of the song. However, the dance is part of a large corpus of Zambian dances which Brelsford (1948: 729) categorises as: fertility and ‘erotic’ or initiation dances; war dances; hunting dances; mask and pole dances; and festivity and ritual dances.\(^\text{10}\)

Drawing from the ethnomusicological as well as the Zambian musical arts landscape, the accompanying dance for *Dununa Reverse* depicts a posture involving forward bent torso, flexed knees, various positions of the pelvis and arched spine. The dance movement involves a freestyle forward movement, as the song verse is being sung, and then as the phrase *Dununa Reverse* is being sung, the dancer hopes backwards on both feet. From the context of children’s game dance, the backward

\(^{10}\) Details of the dance categories described here are not provided as they are not the main focus of this discussion.
movement is expected to be performed in such a way that the dancer bends extremely forward with his or her torso, to an extent that his or her buttocks stick out in a pronounced manner to allow for the full view of the audience. This dance movement and its posture demonstrate, on one hand, a celebration of victory over opponents, and on the other hand, mockery of opponents. According to Kapotwe (2016), besides mocking the opponents, the dance also announces the end of the competition and game.

**Culture, Politics and Patriotism**

This discussion requires the definition of various terms and concepts used in common Zambian cultural, economic, social and political interactions. These definitions will help in developing our understanding of the inherent concepts in the song *Dununa Reverse*. According to Pujari (2015), culture means:

> The cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religion, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, and material objects and possessions acquired by a group of people in the course of generations through individual and group striving.

This definition is not exhaustive and is also subject to interpretations that may vary from place to place among different people. That is why Pujari, 2015 summarises the definition when he points out that:

> Culture in its broadest sense is cultivated behaviour; that is the totality of a person’s learned, an accumulated experience which is socially transmitted, or more briefly, behaviour through social learning.

Other scholars such as Hofstede (1997) and Li and Karakowsky (2001) point out that culture is communication and communication is culture. Furthermore, culture is symbolic communication and some of its symbols include a group’s skills, knowledge, attitudes, values, and motives. The meanings of the symbols are learned and deliberately perpetuated in a society through its institutions. These definitions all point towards the idea that culture is not biological or inherited, but it is just learned. Much of the learning of culture is unconscious, and people learn culture from families, peers, institutions, and media. Thus, the process of learning culture is known as enculturation. The process of enculturation also involves sharing among group members and through this, group members are able to act in socially appropriate ways as well as predict how others will act (Li and Karakowsky, 2001).

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11 Other meanings derived from interpretations of the accompanying dance suggest that *Dununa Reverse* dance carries sexual connotations. However, the nature of artistic works allows for individual interpretations, but what is important is the intention of the creator of the art work.
Culture learning and sharing are based on symbols, and a symbol is something that stands for something else; it may vary cross-culturally, and is arbitrary (Pujari, 2015). Pujari (2018) continues that symbols only have meaning when people in a culture agree on their use. Language, money and art are all symbols. Language is the most important symbolic component of culture. In the performance of the song *Dununa Reverse*, the combination of the languages Tumbuka, Bemba, Nyanja and Lamba to form its lyrics, the outfits worn by the artists, and the basic body movements embedded in the accompanying dance symbolise the current trends in the lifestyle of the younger generation of Zambians. This is vivid and portrayed in the hoodies worn by the performers, which are associated with gang-star and hip-hop culture common to American and European youths. However, the raising and waving of the fists are symbolic of the affiliation to the Patriotic Front (PF) party.

Whilst people want to hold on to culture, it is important to also realise that culture is dynamic in that cultures interact and, therefore, are susceptible to change. Because most cultures are in contact with other cultures, they exchange ideas and symbols. Without exceptions, all cultures change, otherwise, they would have problems adapting to changing environments. And because cultures are integrated, if one component in the system changes, it is likely that the entire system will adjust.

Within the mix of definitions of terms, the extension is made to language or linguistic groups and emanates from a lack of understanding and civic education. To illustrate this point, the following table is provided:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Grouping</th>
<th>Linguistic Classification</th>
<th>Geographical Location(Province)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bemba</td>
<td>Bemba Speaking</td>
<td>Northern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisa</td>
<td>Bemba Speaking</td>
<td>Muchinga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tabwa</td>
<td>Bemba Speaking</td>
<td>Northern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lala</td>
<td>Bemba Speaking</td>
<td>Central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lamba</td>
<td>Bemba Speaking</td>
<td>Copperbelt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ushi</td>
<td>Bemba Speaking</td>
<td>Luapula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ng’umbo</td>
<td>Bemba Speaking</td>
<td>Luapula</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chishinga</td>
<td>Bemba Speaking</td>
<td>Luapula</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Adopted by author*

Within this group, each tribe identifies itself as different from the others although they are related through the linguistic categorisation. It is very common for people without in-depth knowledge to make generalisations about other people. However, these generalisations are only tendencies rather than universally accepted relationships. These generalisations can also stem from the reverse causal effects of other cleavages, civil society, or even political party views (Scarrit, 2008).
Rather than dwell on the controversies about what the right definitions of these terms are, it is important to assume that the differences that emerge are due to the group quest for dominance, advantage and gain of influence over others. According to Scarritt (2008: 128):

Ethnic identities are constructed when some people self-consciously distinguish themselves from others on the basis of perceived common descent (perhaps mythical), shared culture (including values, norms, goals, beliefs, and language), or, most commonly, both.

Drawing from Scarritt’s (2018) description, it would be interesting to isolate the idea of common descent as a means of constructing ethnic identities, as most, Zambian ethnic groups trace their origins from the Luba-Lunda Empire in the Congo.12

Besides common descent, these ethnic groupings share close ties in their linguistic groupings, structure and cultural practices. In addition, Eriksen (1993) and Horowitz (1985) point out that common characteristics of these identities are sufficient to justify broad generalisation about the close ties between the groups with common descent and also sufficient to separate such identities from other forms, for instance, religious identities.

Although it has earlier been noted that tribalism is a politicised idea in Zambia, it is important to point out that ethnicity or ethnic identities are really not, but as Chandra and Wilkinson (2008) observed, these are likely to be activated in political activities. However, to neutralise political influence, religious identities have taken lead in shaping the views of Zambian people generally. The declaration of Zambia as a ‘Christian Nation’ by President Frederick Chiluba, in 1991, and the re-affirmation of this declaration in 2015 by President Edgar Lungu, has given rise to great potential in uniting the people of Zambia and thus forming a starting point for the reformation of a common national identity.

Although, to some people, this may not be easily accepted, in Zambia, sport, and precisely soccer, is one activity that unites nationals, transcending political affiliations, ethnicity, cultural inclinations, economic status, language differences and so on. At this point, it would be helpful to acknowledge one idea closely related to national unity, and this is the idea of a civil society. The idea of civil society as commonly used in Zambian political discussion also contains ambiguities, particularly, as it is applied loosely to include all nationals in the country. What would be good is to try and define it or even redefine it as Hegel (1942) and Ottaway (2008) did when they stated that civil society comprises the realm of organisations that lie between the family at one

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12 According to studies done by Brelsford (1956), Mainga (1966), Roberts (1966) and Wotela (2007), ethnic groups in Zambia have been categorised into three groups according to origin and period of arrival in the country. These studies indicate that Bantu groups started arriving in present-day Zambia as early as the 12th century (groups from the Great Lakes Region), between the 16th and 18th Centuries (groups from the Luba-Lunda Kingdoms) and the 19th century (groups from South Africa).
extreme end and the state at the other. Bearing in mind that this definition carries a lot of theoretical assumptions, its application in the Zambian sense remains superficially clear and logical as it raises a lot of conceptual and political confusion.

Nonetheless, our national concern should not be so much on what we define socially, culturally and politically, but on how we conceptualise them and transform them into meaningful contributors to national cohesion and development. To further this discussion, it seems apparent, that there is also a need to revisit the issue of patriotism. Questions have often been raised, from different walks of life, such as: What is patriotism? Are Zambians really patriotic? The quest to provide responses to these questions may raise contentious debate. However, there is need to examine our way of life as a nation and gauge it to our social, cultural and political achievements. Maybe we may also draw from our indigenous way of life and setting in order to be able to provide meaningful and relevant conclusions. According to Kambafwile (2015) and Wotela (2015), by and large, Zambians are generally patriotic, however, the tendency of being obsessed with ideas coming from Europe or America causes them to be too critical of themselves to an extent that they appear unpatriotic.

**Conclusion**

In a nutshell, this paper explored the role and significance of musical arts in shaping Zambia’s social, cultural and political landscape. What seems to come out vividly is that besides bearing strong artistic and entertainment characteristics, the campaign song *Dununa Reverse* also reveals a national political and social-cultural landscape through the gaze of musical arts renditions. Furthermore, the reactions to the performance of the song, and interpretations of its meaning, also reveal differences among ethnic and national identities, and how these have been constructed and reconstructed over time. Together with ethnic, socioeconomic, cultural and political identities, all these have been transmitted through musical arts in the form of singing, dancing and dramatisation.

The song *Dununa Reverse* carries qualities such as singing, dancing and dramatisation in its total performance structure. However, besides being a catchy rendition, the song possesses latent meanings within its holistic performance structure. In order to draw the meaning of the song *Dununa Reverse*, one has to understand the poetic constructions and permutations inherent in origins of the song, instrumentation and dance. Meaning could also be drawn from the historical perspectives of the political landscape of Zambia. With its inherent characteristics, the song *Dununa Reverse* is a very striking and entertaining piece of artwork to an average listener, but because of the political inclinations underlying its meanings, its interpretations have been mixed. It is these mixed or rather debatable interpretations that render *Dununa Reverse* a musical piece worth studying, and hence, the importance that has been attached to it in this article.
References


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