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Contemporary Zimbabwean popular music in the context of adversities

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Contemporary Zimbabwean popular and urban genres of music namely, urban grooves and its variant Zimdancehall emerged and continue to exist at a time when the country is grappling with socio-economic and political adversities. The music has become part and parcel of crucial artistic forms and artistic dissent. Ordinary Zimbabweans bear the brunt of the economic hardship, and some musicians play a significant role in detailing their experiences, survival strategies as well as influencing their patterns of entertainment and daily cultural practices. This article which is informed by popular culture theorists such as Karin Barber and John Fiske focuses on Winky D's album *Gafa Life Kickstape* (2015). His songs "Disappear", "Copyrights" and "Survivor" are examined with reference to their creative potential and their referencing of the survival strategies of ordinary Zimbabweans. In addition, the paper explores his music as a source of power in fostering a response that resonates with urban youth cultural activism. It is found that Winky D's music seeks to empower the Zimbabweans to make "all the crosses to disappear," to transcend their adversities and take control of their destinies in a country where the ruling elite are failing to improve the nation's socio-economic conditions. **Keywords:** ghetto youth, popular music, popular resistance, Winky D, Zimbabwe urban grooves music

Introduction

Winky D whose real name is Wallace Chirumiko, is a renowned contemporary Zimbabwe urban grooves musician who is also one of the pioneers of Zimdancehall music. The Zimbabwe urban grooves music is an urban contemporary genre that fuses digitally local and global rhythms and beats and is popular among the urban youth. Predominantly Afro diasporic genres such as Jamaican dancehall and the Euro-American soul, rhythm and blues (R&B) and rap are appropriated by the young artists who add a local flavour by singing in Shona and Ndebele about the real life experiences of the contemporary Zimbabwean people (Bere; Chari; Vhiriri, Vhiriri and Chapwanya; Manase; Mate; Kellerer). The birth of the genre corresponds with the institution of new media laws by the government of Zimbabwe through the then Minister of Information and Publicity, Jonathan Moyo. Moyo instituted the Broadcasting Services Act (BSA) in 2001 which legislated a 75% local content which was further pushed to 100% content on Zimbabwean radio and TV (Ndlela; Bere; Chikowero; Chari; Manase; Viriri, Viriri and Chapwanya; Manase; Mate; Willems). It is this development that gave birth to young musicians such as Winky D.

However, since the inception of the urban grooves genre to the present, notable changes have been realised in the development of the genre and in the interviews that I conducted with urban grooves musicians, promoters and producers, one musician, M1, interviewed on 4 July 2016, revealed thus:

What then happened to urban grooves of late is, because there has been more participants in the industry, people are beginning to lobby to specify the genres. [...] Urban grooves has been split into proper genres, specific genres because people feel that they need to define themselves, as well as the fact that the 100% local content era brought in a lot of players into the market, so there is now need to really specify what a person is. (M1, Interview)

Another interviewee, a producer (P1) pointed out in an interview on 28 June 2016 that “[F]rom that community [of urban grooves artists] people grow and some grew and found their identity, some found their identity as R&B artists, for example Trevor Dongo; Sniper Storm, Winky D and Soul Jah Love are now dancehall artists and the likes of Stunner and Tehn Diamond are now hip-hop artists.” (P1, Interview)

It is this growth and development that has seen the Zimdancehall genre dominating the Zimbabwe urban grooves and urban contemporary music scene with Winky D being one of the most popular Zimdancehall musicians. What is particular about Zimdancehall is that it is anchored on the Jamaican reggae and /or dancehall beats, music tradition and sensitivities. Lipsitz (34) associates reggae with political struggles and movements opposed to different forms of postcolonial oppression. Reggae is closely identified with Jamaica, yet its power as a form of protest has spread much more widely and has been reworked to address specific local concerns elsewhere (De Block and Buckingham 178). Winky D’s music exhibits such characteristics and sensibilities as he immerses himself in the struggles of the ordinary Zimbabweans and identifies with them. He says his inspiration is the Jamaican reggae dancehall icon Beenie Man and comments thus, about his songs and his role as a musician: “every day I record a song because every day I see things. I am a social commentator. The things I see, I put into song” (Showbiz Reporter). Thus, considering all this and the daily life experiences of ordinary Zimbabweans who have been pauperised by the socio-economic and political crisis in contemporary Zimbabwe, Winky D’s music has become part of significant Zimbabwean artistic forms and influences entertainment and daily cultural practices of ordinary Zimbabweans, especially the youth from high-density residential townships popularly known as ghettos in Zimdancehall music.

This paper analyses three songs on Winky D’s *Gafa Life Kickstape* (2015) album. The songs “Copyrights”, “Survivor” and “Disappear” are purposively sampled for analysis as they typically detail the contemporary socio-economic and political experiences faced by Zimbabweans. Therefore, the songs are examined in relation to the contemporary socio-economic and political experiences of ordinary Zimbabweans.

weans especially the ghetto youth and the role that Winky D plays as an artist. The analysis is informed by popular culture theories for an in-depth understanding of the popularity of Winky D songs and people's reaction and discernment of their day to day experiences.

Representations of contemporary Zimbabwean adversities

Since the year 2000 to the present, Zimbabwe has been grappling with a severe economic crisis that has seen the closures of a number of industries, hence a huge decline in employment opportunities. This has pushed a greater number of people into both regional and international migrant spaces in search of employment opportunities and a burgeoning of the informal sector that has been sustaining many livelihoods in the country (Chagonda; Njaya). The songs "Copyrights" and "Survivor" by Winky D are both responses to this impasse and the impact thereof. "Copyrights" is a satiric commentary of the economic failures of the state that have pauperised ordinary Zimbabweans especially the youth living in the ghetto. Winky D introduces the song by indicating that the situation in the ghetto has gone out of hand ("*paghetto zvinhu hazvina kumira mushe*") to the extent that tenants are unable to pay rent on time and spend some days dodging the landlord: "*landlord ndamutiza nhasi date ndi5*" ("I have dodged the landlord today is the 5th"). The song also shows how the informal sector has thrived and references the famous informal carpentry in Glenview, a high density residential township in the capital, Harare. Informal carpentry has thrived as many people including business people, due to the exorbitant prices in departmental stores prefer to buy where the prices are affordable and negotiable (on informal carpentry, see Moyo). The song "Survivor" expresses lack of employment opportunities for ghetto youth. These youth are often stereotyped and associated with idling at street corners and bridges and illicit behaviours such as smoking *mbanje* (marijuana). Winky D corrects such stereotypes as he sings (here, and elsewhere the translations are mine):

Vakationa takalazer pacorner
Vanoti hatina zvatinogona
Kumaghetto youth mikana mishoma
Hakuna ghetto youth risina zvarinogona

When they see us relaxed at street corners
They say we are incompetent
ghetto youth lack opportunities
There is no ghetto youth who is untalented.

The above lyrics show how Winky D attempts to correct some of the stereotypes associated with youth who loiter on street corners and suggests that the state of the

economy has deprived them of opportunities to use their talents to sustain themselves, hence their activities are often regarded with suspicion. Therefore, the songs “Copyrights” and “Survivor” are both representations of socio-economic hardships experienced by ordinary Zimbabweans especially the ghetto youth.

In addition to informal carpentry, the Zimbabwean economic impasse and growth of the informal sector has seen the proliferation of street vending in the cities and towns in the country as well as in high density residential townships. Vendors sell anything including vegetables, confectionaries, pirated CDs and DVDs, new and secondhand clothing, pesticides, cosmetics and a variety of other goods. The lyrical persona in “Copyrights” attempts to sell his wares in Charter Street, a street in the Central Business District in the Capital Harare while in “Survivor,” the persona’s parents managed to raise his school fees through vending. However, people’s livelihoods are threatened by government ‘vendorphobia’ as street vendors are often involved in running battles with the police ordering them to vacate the street and even confiscating their wares, a purported attempt by the state to bring back sanity into the city streets. This attitude of the police is captured vividly in the dilemma faced by the unemployed lyrical persona in “Copyrights”:

*Ndati ndizame chiconductor
Porisi ririkurova nemboma apa
Ndironge musika panacharter
Dhimoni rekanzuru rabva rabata*

I try being a conductor
The police is whipping with baton sticks
I try selling my wares in Charter Street
The City Council gets possessed by its demon.

The above lyrics express the dilemma faced by the lyrical persona by first alluding to how the police apprehend commuter omnibus operators who are often accused of carrying passengers from undesignated sites often referred to as *pamushika mushika* in street lingo. Therefore, the persona has tried being a commuter omnibus conductor as well as street vending but both his efforts are thwarted by the ‘repressive state apparatuses’.

The attempt to clear the city streets of vendors saw the historical June 2015 directive by the government for vendors to vacate the streets for designated sites initially giving them the 8th of June 2015 as the deadline but later extended it to 26 June. The directive was met with resistance and protests from the vendors who vowed that they would not leave the streets and argued that the designated sites were controlled by space barons who were siphoning money from vendors daily. The Movement for Democratic Change (MDC-T) Member of Parliament for Bulawayo East Thabitha

Khumalo scoffed at this directive arguing that the government should give people jobs and protect them instead of constantly victimising vendors (see Kunambura for the vendor's protests). To date, violent victimisations, beatings, arbitrary arrests and abductions of vendors especially the leaders in the National Vendors Union of Zimbabwe (NAVUZ) have become the order of day (see Human Rights Watch; Correspondent).

Such arrests are alluded to in "Survivor" by the two lyrical personae who are archetypal characters representing the plight of the informal traders in Zimbabwe as they share their experiences in the lyrics "*Biggy kuCentral Police ndavata*" ("Biggy I have slept at the central police") and "*ini ndabatwa ndakandwa mukati asi tariro handife ndakarasa,*" explaining how he was caught by the police and locked in prison cells. Thus, the song "Survivor" is influenced by the real life experiences and persistent struggles ordinary Zimbabweans encounter as they try to come up with alternative livelihoods.

Another historical threat on the livelihoods of the ordinary people is exposed in "Copyrights" in the lyrics "*vanongoti higher pavonodira votifire*" (they higher us when they like and fire us when they like). This is an allusion to the historical and shocking ruling by the Supreme Court of Zimbabwe on job terminations. The Supreme Court on the 17th of July 2015 ruled that companies can terminate workers' contracts at any time without giving them packages provided they are given three months' notice basing on the common law position where employers were said to have the right to give notice and terminate employment in as much as workers can do the same. This was viewed as a cheaper way of firing workers as firms did not have to give any explanation, conduct disciplinary hearing or follow the expensive retrenchment routes. This saw many companies who were struggling to pay their workers capitalising on the Supreme Court ruling and up to six thousand people lost their jobs (Felex Share Harare Bureau). This ran contrary to the promises of the creation of 2.2 million jobs within five years made by President Robert Mugabe when he launched his party's manifesto in July 2013, prior to the 31st July 2013 harmonised elections (see *Financial Gazette* of 11 July 2013). Thus the government of Zimbabwe's failure to solve the country's economic woes has witnessed the ordinary citizens bearing the brunt of these economic failures as they are often victimised and their attempts to eke out a living are criminalised. Hence, for Winky D, this is an indication that the sole right that the people have is the right to poverty; he playfully suggests that poverty has become the ordinary citizens' 'copyright' and thus expresses his social criticism to the existing bleak social, economic and political conditions in the country.

Winky D as the voice of the voiceless: resistance and hope

After the passing of Chenjerai Hove, the renowned Zimbabwean poet and novelist, Trevor Grundy described Hove as the "voice of the voiceless" taking his cue from

Flora Veit-Wild who describes the African writer as the conscience of the powerless ordinary people who suffers together with them and has a duty to give them a voice and hope. In the history of Zimbabwean music, musicians such as Thomas Mapfumo have also been hailed as the conscience of the people who position themselves within their struggles and voice their concerns. Thomas Mapfumo is well known in association with the chimurenga music, a type of music that was associated with the liberation struggle in Zimbabwe's war of independence, was a tool and act of resistance (Bere; Chikowero) or "songs that won the liberation struggle" (Pongweni). However, chimurenga music continued to influence postcolonial Zimbabwe with Mapfumo again being an icon and composing songs that voiced the people's disillusionment with the postcolonial leadership. Similarly, Winky D is a significant social and cultural icon who voices the real life struggles of the ordinary Zimbabweans, especially the youth who hail from the high density residential townships and mourns together with them yet at the same time shows their resilience, empowers and gives them hope as epitomised in his songs "Copyrights", "Survivor" and "Disappear".

Winky D presents himself as the 'voice of the voiceless' people in contemporary Zimbabwe by positioning himself within the people's struggles and identifying with them. This is demonstrated in the manner in which he presents the societal experiences in a communal or collective voice throughout the songs "Copyrights" and "Survivor". The use of the first person plural pronoun 'we', as represented by the Shona prefix *ti-* as in "*tisu tine macopyrights enhamo*" ("we have poverty copyrights") in the song "Copyrights" and "*tine nharo*" ("we are defiant") in the song "Survivor", shows how Winky D identifies himself with the ordinary people. Moreover, it is apparent in the song "Copyrights" that, the artist who qualifies as the 'voice of the ghetto people' must be one who identifies with their plight, hence the lyrical persona in the song proclaims that "*takuda ghetto voice*" ("we now want a ghetto voice"). Olson and Shobe (1001) note that, part of the success of rappers lie in their ability to prove to their audience that they have personally experienced the subject matter of their music. Similarly, most urban grooves artists have first-hand experiences of the ghetto life that they sing about as they have their roots in these ghettos, commonly known as high density residential townships in Zimbabwe, thus making it easier for their audiences to identify with them and their messages. In the song "Survivor" Winky D and Shinsoman (Tinashe Romeo Antony) who is featured in the song clearly declare themselves as the 'voice of the voiceless' by comparing themselves to the late South African anti-apartheid activist, Steve Biko in the lyrics "*Takumiririra vanhu kunge Steve Biko*" ("We are now representing people like Steve Biko.") Thus, Lipsitz's (36) comments on how hip-hop "blends music and life into an integrated totality, uniting performers, dancers and listeners in a collaborative endeavour" is also true about Winky D's music. It is through his perfect choice of the communal "we," and his ability to give a first-hand account of

the ghetto experience that Winky D positions himself as 'the voice of the voiceless'.

Winky D also identifies with the plight of the ghetto people through how he empathises with the subjects of his songs, "Survivor" and "Copyrights", as typified in the lyrics "*misodzi yochuruka arikudzingwa mavendor...*" ("my tears flow as the vendors are being evicted..."). However, Winky D does not wallow in the tears but demonstrates a defiant spirit by calling on the people to be masters of their destinies. Through intertextual reference to Tocky Vibes's (real name Obey Makamure) song "*Toti-toti*" ("Tip-toe") (2015) which hails prayer and fasting as the remedy to life's adversities, the lyrical persona in "Copyrights" protests:

Toda kupukunyuka nhamo, Tocky vibes
Handichada zviya zvekuti unondiunzira bhaibheri
wobva wanditi nditsanye forty nights

We want to escape from poverty, Tocky Vibes
I want you to stop bringing me the bible
and telling me to fast for forty nights.

The lyrical persona believes that the people possess the power to map and change their own destinies instead of waiting for a divine being to do that for them. This alludes to how most Zimbabweans' lives are dominated by charismatic churches' offering of religion as an escape route from poverty, noted in the popularity of controversial religious leaders such as Prophet Walter Magaya and Emmanuel Makandiwa. The title of the album itself *Gafa Life Kickstep* spells out the people's power. Winky D calls himself a *Gafa*, with his fans being *Gafas*, and explains the meaning of the term as follows: "a *Gafa* is someone who is always controlling the situation, someone who is always in control" (see Mtonzi). Thus, there is an element of control in the term and a desire for societal empowerment and agency. The lyrical personae in "Survivor" even declare that the people in the ghetto will never run out of plans for survival (*paghetto hatishayiwe plan*). Thus, no matter how much the people suffer, they will come out as 'survivors' of the adversities that they face as declared through the title of the song "Survivor."

Winky D's praising of informal carpenters and vendors subverts the government rule that has declared street vending illegal and this subversion resonates with the vendors' actual defiance of the government directive that they vacate the streets. Therefore, postcolonial cultural expressions are situated within the experiences of people rather than the master narrative of the nation state (Lipsitz 32). This echoes Fiske's (2) observation that popular culture artefacts are often appropriated to make social meanings that are in the interests of the people and resistant to dominant ideologies. The hard core lyrics, husky voices, fast beat, high tempo, fast paced and hard hitting rhymes, rhythm and sonics in "Copyrights" and "Survivor" resonate with the resistance and refusal to be defeated by societal hardships.

The song “Disappear” which is a party song as expressed in the introductory part, “when we say party / we want all the crosses to disappear / when we say party we are party” became the most popular of the songs on Winky D’s *Gafa Life Kickstape* album both locally and internationally. The song won both the Zimbabwe Music Award (ZIMA) and the Zimdancehall award for 2016 and reached number one on the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Extra Destination Africa top five in February 2016 (“Winky D”). “Disappear” became an entertainment anthem for the young and old alike. The central phrase, “*maproblem ose Disappear*” (“all problems disappear”) became a catchy phrase as people circulated a variety of skits on social media platforms whilst other artists, such as Tariro Negitare and a group called Us 2 made their own renditions of “Disappear” (Entertainment writer). Therefore, the song and the refrain “*maproblem ose disappear*” became popular culture texts which circulated rapidly and underwent many phases of innovations and elaborations whilst they were in vogue (Barber 3). Barber (1) also observes that popular arts in Africa are penetrated by and penetrate political, economic as well as religious institutions. Consequently, as the song circulated on the social media, the phrase “*maproblem ose Disappear*” was deployed to comment on the political and economic situation in the country and express the people’s concerns and hopes for ‘problem free lives.’ In addition, the song made inroads into the religious practices of the Zimbabwean people as the social media also circulated a Catholic version of the song by an unidentified group as well as several Independent African Apostolic Church versions. However, “Disappear” also sparked controversy as it was alleged that the United Family International Church (UFIC) instructed its members not to listen to it labelling it as “satanic”, allegations that Winky D himself scoffed (see Mugugunyeki). This shows the impact that “Disappear” made as a popular musical text, as a party and hopeful song released around the festive season “when most people enjoyed themselves after a long and hard year saying to themselves (ma)problems of 2015 should disappear in 2016” (see Ndlovu).

As ‘the voice of the voiceless’, Winky D attempts to give the people solutions to their problems and cheer them up by giving them hope. Hence, “Disappear” is a cheerful song that also conveys hope in that it is conveyed through the correlation between the carefree lyrical content, light-hearted rhymes and dance form. The trope of merry making is anchored on the use of the chorus “Happy happy” and choice of other happy words such as the Shona “*kafariro kacho*” (“the way I am happy”), the slang form “sparky” (“happiness”) and the adaptive “*purezha*” (“pleasure”); while the happy dance form is reflected in the Shona lyrics “*Maoko mudenga, maoko mudenga*” echoing the “put your hands in the air” lyrics popular in many party and dance songs. The song also mentions popular entertainment practices, such as drinking alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages, with the persona singing that if one takes a sip of any of these, one’s problems will disappear. He also adds the aspect of spending

money in the pursuit of pleasure as expressed in the slang expression “*kudya mula*” (“to spend money”). One may critique this solution to life’s problems as escapist as it offers just temporary relief from the problems.

However, Winky D goes beyond just encouraging people to party and be happy. There is some form of empowerment in “Disappear” as the song insinuates resistance and the need for people to reclaim the happiness that they have been robbed of. This is demonstrated through Winky D’s borrowing of the ancient and magical refrain, “abracadabra” that he infuses in the introductory part, the middle and ending of his song. The term is understood to be an incantation by magician which has the power to heal and is understood to mean ‘let the thing be destroyed or disappear’ and it is evident that the title of the song itself is borrowed from this ancient term (Thanatos). Ironically, the song draws on the magical to suggest that the ordinary people themselves are the magicians who have the power and solution to their problems. This evokes the anti-apartheid slogan “*amandla awethu*” (“power to the people”) which is still actively used to date to express people’s grievances in post-apartheid South Africa (Wenzel). Furthermore, the lyrical persona in “Disappear” proclaims, “when we say party we want all the crosses to disappear,” and this can be viewed as a subversion of the biblical symbol of the cross which believers who are troubled have to carry diligently waiting for divine intervention. Thus, this biblical allusion is made here to emphasise that the people have the power to map their destinies and change their situation instead of waiting in the comfort of docility for an outside force or divine being to give them happiness. The idea of happiness is personified in the following lyrics:

*Handina kumbenge ndaziya
Kuti Happy unotondiziwa
Ndaiona uchifara nevamwe
ndoshushikana sei uchingondisiya
But nhasi wandipinza mugear
Tarisa zvoita Gafa riya
Ndava kuvhara mawindow
hakuna kwaunoenda magonhi ndakiya*

I never knew
That Happy you know me
I would see you experiencing joy with others
and get worried why you ignore me
But today you have geared me
Look at what that Gafa is now doing
I am now closing windows
and you are going nowhere I have locked the doors.

In the personification of happiness above, the notion ceases to be an abstract and remote concept when the lyrical persona claims it. It is treated as concrete, thus giving all those who are despairing the hope that happiness is attainable. Moreover, when the lyrical persona finds "Happiness," he declares that he will not let "him / her" loose. This signifies that people should never give in to those who want to deprive them of their happiness. Therefore, the significance of the songs "Survivor," "Copyrights" and "Disappear" lie in Winky D's ability to position himself as the "voice of the voiceless" in the ordinary people's struggles and to show their ability to resist and survive the adversities that they face, thus giving them hope.

Singing in the language of the people

Besides the powerful lyrical content of his songs, Winky D's prowess as a musician lies in the language that he uses. Just as he positions himself within the people's struggles through the issues that he sings about, he also identifies himself with them through the language that he uses, it is the people's language. The 'language of the people' here refers to the daily language used by the people Winky represents in his songs. I also show how Winky D uses figurative expressions and figures of speech that are accessible to his audiences. They are drawn from people's everyday experiences and concept that his audiences are familiar with even in cases where global concepts or popular figures make in-roads into his music. This is reminiscent of Barber's (43) observation that popular style encompasses vocabulary and language forms that are fresh, simple, unsophisticated, full of life and should be accessible to a wider range of people as well as appeal to the lowest denominator of comprehension. In addition, the language used typically represents the people's grievances, hopes and aspirations and is evocative of the resistance encompassed in the songs.

As pointed out earlier, Winky D's concerns lie with the ordinary people of Zimbabwe, especially the youth who hail from the ghetto or the poor high density residential townships. He even references these ghetto youth in the songs "Copyrights" and "Survivor". As a result, ghetto lingo dominates his songs as it is the language that is synonymous with youth culture and originates from the ghetto or the streets such that it is so popular in contemporary Zimbabwean urban musical genres. Some of these slang words include "*kugwazhi*" ("school") used in "Copyrights" and *Chimoko* in "Disappear," a word associated with girls especially female lovers as in "*chimoko changu*" ("my girlfriend"). It is apparent that the formation of slang words is anchored on the common activities and styles that are associated with youth as argued by Paveda. The slang word "*kuwachisa*" used in "Disappear" is often used in youth conversations to mean outdoing one's enemies, and in the song it is used in relation to how the lyrical persona says he has decided to conquer his problems ("*kuwachisa maproblem*"). "*Kugarisa mudish*" used in "Copyrights" is a common slang phrase used to mean to make someone surrender and the lyrical persona says "*han-*

dina anondigarisa mudish ("nobody will make me surrender"). The two, "*kuwachisa*" and "*kugarisa mudish*" are related as they are both centred on the idea of resistance, thus the formation of slang words in such instances is seen to resemble 'resistance vernaculars' (Potter) or 'antilanguages' (Veit-Wild) containing subversive elements appropriate in the representation of the people's struggles.

Winky D's music is also dominated by code switching. He constantly shifts from using English to Shona and slang, a phenomenon that is also common in most urban grooves songs. Again, this reflects how Winky D uses the language that is accessible to his youth audiences as well as identify with them as observed by Mugari. Code-switching is most common among Zimbabwean youth who are exposed to the English language as a medium of instruction at institutions of learning and mainly speak in their own first languages at home or during informal school situations. Similarly, employed youth use English as the official language at work. As a result, youth often practice code switching in informal conversations because of this exposure to two separate languages. Although Winky D's code switching mainly involves Shona, English and slang, there is influence from Ndebele which is the second majority vernacular language in Zimbabwe after Shona. The word "*chigulani*" used in "Disappear" is an adaptive word borrowed from the Ndebele "*isigulani*" used to refer to a sick person. The word is used in a simile to emphasise on the idea of intense happiness as the lyrical persona says "*ndoda kufara kusvika ndaadmitiwa pamubhedha kunge chigulani*" ("I want to enjoy myself till I get admitted in hospital like a sick person"). Another Ndebele word that the song uses is "*zikuphani*" which is slang for 'how are you?' The borrowing of these Ndebele words portrays how Winky D wants to reach out to a wider audience and since he is Shona, the implication here is that the struggle for better lives in Zimbabwe surpasses ethnic and linguistic backgrounds. Therefore, Winky D, as the voice of the voiceless, speaks in the language that the people he represents use and thus identifies with them and their struggles.

In addition, the three songs analysed here use unsophisticated figurative expressions that are drawn from daily life experiences and activities that the audience is familiar with. In "Copyrights," Winky D alludes to intergenerational relationships in, "*madhara oda tvechidiki achisiya yavo size*" ("old men are falling in love with young girls instead of their age mates"), an issue that is discussed in detail in Mate's analysis of urban grooves. "Copyrights" uses an unsophisticated metaphoric expression "*dzatinoti hanzvadzi kwavari ndomatoyo*" ("our sisters are toys to them") which everybody can understand to reflect the abusive nature of such sexual relationship. Moreover, though he is male, Winky D speaks for female youth who are economically disempowered and are often sexually exploited by older men for material gains. Another simple figurative expression is the simile "*usatsvage nhamo pandiri hauivani semukwande wangu uri muwoolani*" where Winky D makes reference to his own dreadlocks which are always invisible and hidden in the woollen hats that he always puts on. Thus, he is

saying he has destroyed all his problems and none is visible just as his dreadlocks are invisible and such is a simple simile that anyone who knows this popular artist can comprehend. Reference is also made to global activities familiar to Winky D's audiences. The slang formation "*kugarisa mudish*" discussed earlier is used where the song makes a pun on the phrase satellite dish as follows: "*this time ndakasvinura handina anondigarisa mudish nekuti handisi satellite*" ("this time I am vigilant there is no one who will make me sit in the dish because I am not a satellite") referring to refusal to yield to defeat as discussed before. However, although the original "*kugarisa mudish*" ("sit in the dish") referenced a simple dish for holding water, Winky D comes up with his own pun on the phrase satellite dish borrowing from people's access to global media through satellite dishes, which has become a common activity in Zimbabwe. Similar reference to a global activity is in the simile "*ndodawo kalife kemudenga kunge Emirates*" ("I also want to live a high life like the Emirates") as expressed in the lyrical persona's wish for a high life in "Copyrights". The use of Emirates Airlines evokes travels to Dubai, a common destination for informal traders who go there to buy clothes and other goods to sell at the informal market. This is evidence that Winky D's language is also influenced by the common global activities that ordinary Zimbabweans engage in. Thus, his audiences find it easier to identify with his messages and understand them because of the way he uses language drawing on the common everyday practices that his audiences engage in and are familiar with.

Winky D's music is also satirical. The singer speaks on behalf of the ordinary and lampoons the failures of the leadership and their excesses, which are responsible for the society's impoverishment. One of the lyrical personae in "Survivor" presents a crude caricature of the City Council's excesses and 'vendorphobia.' He draws on the imagery of demons where he presents the City Council as demon possessed and imagines the eviction of the helpless vendors from the city streets as demonic for the government has not come up with viable solutions to the lack of employment opportunities for the people. Thus, Winky D uses the imagery to show the ugliness of governance in a manner that is reminiscent of Mbembe's (103) presentation of the grotesque as one of the essential characteristics that identify postcolonial regimes of domination. "Copyrights" satirises the government's economic failures and lack of solutions yet it threatens the alternative sources of livelihoods the people have innovatively come up with mainly through informal trading. Thus, ordinary people are treated as if they have no right to own anything except their poverty; poverty has become their "copyright". In addition, people mock their impoverishment through a defiant spirit that they possess as shown in how they laugh off their problems: "*tisu tine macopyrights enhamo asi tinongoseka sengano*" ("we have poverty copyrights but we laugh as if it's not real"). This laughter is medicine for the cure of the pains of life (Bere 169), hence creation and sharing of comic skits on social media platforms has become a common activity for Zimbabweans both at 'home' and in the 'diaspora,'

who laugh off their problems and satirise leadership failures through humour. The appropriation of the term “copyright” in this instance also fits in with the common contemporary consumption of music and other popular cultural artefacts such as films as selling of pirated music and films has become widespread in Zimbabwe through the informal market. Many poor Zimbabweans make use of computer technologies to access such (pirated) artefacts at low prices. Therefore, satire is relevantly used by Winky D as part of the language that is centred on the needs and sensibilities of ordinary Zimbabweans.

Conclusion

The songs “Copyrights”, “Survivor” and “Disappear” by Winky D emerged in the context of contemporary adversities that Zimbabwean people grapple with. Through the songs, the artist details the experiences of the ordinary people especially the poor in the ghetto who have been plunged into the country’s economic woes. Focus is on the most recent experiences such as the 2015 Supreme Court ruling on job terminations as well as the ongoing victimisation of street vendors who attempt to eke a living through the slim opportunities they find in the country. In detailing such experiences, Winky D positions himself within the plight of these poor people and mourns together with them. However, he goes beyond just mourning as the music itself is a source of power that fosters a response resonating with a postcolonial urban youth cultural activism seeking to empower the ordinary Zimbabweans. Winky D uses ‘the language of the people’ which they can understand and identify with. Code-switching is mainly representatives of the day to day languages of the ghetto youth that form the greater part of Winky D’s audiences and are referenced in the songs “Copyrights” and “Survivor” whilst satire is appropriated to ridicule the government’s failures and excesses in dealing with the socio-economic crisis that has gripped the country. All this shows how Winky D and other young contemporary musicians who anchor their musical lyrics and styles on the contemporary experiences of the ordinary people are important cultural icons.

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