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## **“Tunataka Nchi Yetu” (We Want Our Country) Campaign Rallies, Music and Songs as Stages for Performing Zanzibari Nationalism**

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## Introduction

I arrived in Zanzibar a week before the elections of 28 October 2020. From the airport to my booked residence, campaign billboards and posters of the ruling party, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) (the Revolutionary Party), and of its presidential candidate, Hussein Mwinyi, painted the archipelago green and yellow (the party official colors). From the look of things, this was not going to be an ordinary election. I had observed the previous elections—the October 2015 general elections and the March 2016 rerun elections<sup>1</sup>—but the stakes for the 2020 elections were much higher, especially for the dominant ruling party Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM). While there were perceptions of dwindling fortunes for the CCM party and fears that its candidate Hussein Mwinyi was unpopular in the isles, CCM’s intention was a win at all cost. Indeed, people describe Hussein Mwinyi—whose father, Ali Hassan Mwinyi, was a mainlander and the third president of Tanzania between 1985-1995—as foreign to the Isles: he was the “*Kijana kutoka Mkuranga*,”<sup>2</sup> that is, “the boy from Mkuranga” (Mkurunga being a district in Pwani Region of Tanzania where Hussein

<sup>1</sup> The Zanzibar Electoral Commission (ZEC) announced that there would be a rerun election on 20 March, 2016 after it annulled the 25 October 2015 general elections. ZEC Chairman Jecha Salim Jecha unilaterally annulled the elections after 31 of 54 constituencies had been tallied and their results announced, citing ‘serious irregularities and gross violations of laws and election regulations (see Minde, Roop and Tronvoll, 2018).

<sup>2</sup> Observations at a rally in Mtoni, Zanzibar, 26 October 2020.

Mwinyi's father was born) and a "*Mtalii*" (Tourist). He was also cast as the "*Kifaranga wa Magufuli*", that is, Magufuli's chick or protégée, as the then President of Tanzania, John Pombe Magufuli, had been instrumental in choosing him as the CCM candidate for Zanzibar's presidency. These disparaging names pointing to Mwinyi's mainland origin and networks connoted that he was not 'Zanzibari' enough to be president. Mwinyi had served in the Union government as Minister in various ministries.

The annulment of the October 2015 elections after what looked like an apparent opposition victory meant that CCM approached this 2020 election with great fear. There was a visible financial imbalance between CCM and its closest challenger, the Alliance for Change and Transparency—Wazalendo (ACT-Wazalendo) party. Just like in the previous election in 2015, CCM's campaign was well financed and coordinated. It was evident that the well-oiled campaign was a statement of intent to its erstwhile longtime challenger Seif Sharif Hamad of ACT-Wazalendo party, a popular, historic and well-liked leader who was vying for the presidency for the sixth time and had closely challenged the CCM in all of the previous polls.

In the first multiparty elections in 1995, CCM's Salmin Amour controversially won by 50.2% with Seif Sharif Hamad (then with the Civic United Front (CUF) opposition party) garnering 49.8% of the vote. In the 2000 and 2005, Seif Sharif Hamad faced Amani Karume and controversially lost on both occasions. A historic agreement, the 'Maridhiano' Agreement, was reached between Amani Karume and Seif Sharif Hamad in 2009 paving way for a Government of National Unity (GNU) after the 2010 general elections. Seif Sharif Hamad narrowly lost to CCM's Ali Mohamed Shein. He got 49.1% of the vote while Shein garnered 50.1% of the vote. The 2010 results were also controversial but due to the reconciliatory spirit of the power-sharing 'Maridhiano' Agreement, Hamad became Zanzibar's First Vice President (see Roop, Tronvoll and Minde, 2018). When the elections were nullified in 2015, the CUF boycotted the rerun election that was held in March 2016. CCM therefore won the March 2016 repeat elections with a landslide. Ali Mohamed Shein, the incumbent, got 91% of the votes. CCM also won all the House of Representatives seats. For five years, Zanzibar remained without a First Vice President, a position that was created after the constitutional changes in 2010 with the creation of a GNU.

Apart from the CCM financial muscle, the 2020 elections in Zanzibar were characterized by "brutal intimidation of voters by law enforcement forces, physical violence against the opposition, and blatant (electoral) fraud." (Fouéré and Gruca 2020). Despite these financial imbalances and difficult political conditions, the opposition ACT-Wazalendo party went to the campaigns and elections with an air of optimism.<sup>3</sup>

I observed a deep sense of Zanzibari nationalism in the ACT-Wazalendo rallies I attended. Nationalism stems from identity and the politics of belonging. Gellner (2006) for example defines nationalism as a political principle, which holds that the political and the national

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<sup>3</sup> At an ACT-Wazalendo rally in Mtoni, Zanzibar, on 23 October 2020, Ismail Jussa, an ACT-Wazalendo key member of the Central Committee of the party told me that the party was broke and they had to rely on contributions from its supporters. Despite this, he said, the party was hoping for a victory. For a long time, Ismail Jussa served as the Director of Foreign Affairs and International Relations of the Civic United Front (CUF) and played a key role in the transition from CUF to ACT-Wazalendo in 2019.

unit should be congruent. According to Smith (1995), nationalism is an ideology and a movement. Further to nationalism being a movement and ideology, some scholars add that nationalism is a *sentiment* and a feeling of anger aroused by the violation of political principle. Nationalism has also been described as a theory of political legitimacy which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones (Gellner, 2006). In recent years, Zanzibari nationalism has been accentuated by the perceived Tanganyikan imperialism against the Isles (see for example, Fouéré, 2014).

This essay aims to show how Zanzibari nationalism was expressed through music performances during the 2020 campaign rallies. It does so by sampling one famous song within the opposition, *Tunataka Nchi Yetu* (We want our country), which was played in all the three major opposition rallies I observed in Zanzibar, in both Unguja and Pemba islands. The song was composed by the group *Vijana wa Umoja wa Kitaifa Zanzibar* (Youth of National Unity in Zanzibar). This group was associated with the CUF party and active in pushing 'Maridhiano' in Zanzibar in 2010.

## Performance at Rallies

Two events caught my attention during the ACT-Wazalendo rallies I attended. The first was during a rally in Mtoni, Zanzibar on 23 October, 2020. There were doubts whether this rally was going to take place. Rumors went around that the rally had been cancelled, as an attempt to discourage supporters from attending. Normally, a schedule of campaign rallies is issued by the party and shared by the electoral commission. The information is further shared by party leaders on WhatsApp messages. Jaws Corner, a popular social meeting place for opposition supporters located in the middle of Stone Town, Zanzibar's historical centre, also has a slate notice board which relays information on party activities. I went to Jaws Corner to check whether the Mtoni rally was going to take place. Indeed, the notice board had information on the forthcoming rally to take place at Mtoni and members of Jaws Corner were preparing themselves to go to the same rally. This I took as confirmation that the rally was actually going to take place. When I arrived at the rally, there was a sense of excitement and celebration as popular party campaign songs were being played. The Master of Ceremonies (MC) directed the ACT-Wazalendo supporters where they should sit and how they should welcome Seif Sharif Hamad, the presidential candidate. The ACT-Wazalendo official campaign song for the 2020 elections in Zanzibar was *Maalim Seif Tena*, a *Singeli*,<sup>4</sup> sung by Baba Levo.<sup>5</sup> Despite this being the main campaign song, the song *Tunataka Nchi Yetu* which had been associated with the Civic United Front (CUF) party during the 2010 and 2015 general elections was still very popular among the ACT-Wazalendo supporters—as this party had inherited the CUF political base. During the rally

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<sup>4</sup> Singeli music has been described as frenetic and provocative electronic music popular in Dar es Salaam ghettos (Uswahilini). The music has very fast beats and according to Kate Hutchinson (2018), it fuses vernacular styles such as taarab, vanga, mchiriku, sebene and segere together with the South-African kwaito hip-hop.

<sup>5</sup> See song, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uin-N3RM5-s>.

in Mtoni, I observed how the song *Tunataka Nchi Yetu* provoked nationalistic sentiments among the crowd.

The second event was on Sunday 25 October 2020. Nassor Ahmed Mazrui, ACT-Wazalendo Deputy Secretary General, who had allegedly been abducted by security forces made a heroic entry into the ACT-Wazalendo rally at Mnazi Mmoja grounds after his 'release'. As his vehicle entered the grounds, the crowd burst into jubilation and elation as the song *Tunataka Nchi Yetu* was played. Seif Sharif Hamad and the entire ACT-Wazalendo leadership joined in the celebration. Seif Sharif Hamad and a majority of ACT-Wazalendo leaders indeed climbed on the stage and began singing along and dancing.

Political rallies require careful planning. The performance of rallies includes among other things, careful attention to organization, attendance, songs, dance, colors, flags, speeches, choice of language, seating arrangement, the choice of political figures invited to speak and the order of speeches. Anthropologists have studied many forms of performance, what Schieffelin (1998) describes as "genres of performance" such as cultural events, rituals, religious practices and the display of beliefs. But, of course, political performances also take place at rallies. In the case of Tanzania, Askew (2002) observes that performances such as musical shows at the political level contributes to understanding how power is exercised and accepted—or contested—but also how they shape new modes of cultural production. In a similar vein, campaign rallies in Zanzibar are political events that integrate the use of religious and cultural performances. Every rally includes readings of the Quran, opening prayers, poetry recitations and cultural dances of various sorts.<sup>6</sup> Political emblems can also be used and associated to more ordinary cultural signs. Thus, I observed at the ACT-Wazalendo rallies how women dressed in party colors and waved party flags and placards while dancing and singing. I spoke to one young lady, who was part of an organized choir group that performed at the rally. I asked her if the ACT-Wazalendo party had planned for them to perform at the rally.

We are part of a local social group. We are here to support our candidate Maalim Seif [Seif Sharif Hamad] and our party ACT-Wazalendo. Our work here is to sing along, cheer and enjoy ourselves. We have *mashairi* (poems) in praise of our leader Maalim Seif and the party. Our leader prepares these poems and we perform them at the rallies. But I also want to hear what the party is going to promise us.<sup>7</sup>

The performance of poems, ululations and cheers when leaders arrive and speak as well as choreographed dances make the rallies festive and joyful. Tanzania, according to Paget (2019), is the most campaign rally-intensive country in Africa where rallies include varied types of performances from celebrated hip-hop artists, dances and poetry. But politics is on the horizon of this festive atmosphere, as we shall see now.

## Chanting and Singing Nationalism

For a long time now, there have been discomforts in Zanzibar about its withering sovereignty in the Union. People openly say that 'Zanzibar has become a colony of

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<sup>6</sup> Personal field notes, October 19–November 1, 2020, Zanzibar and Pemba.

<sup>7</sup> Interview, Huraina Said, a young female rally attendant in Mtoni Zanzibar, 23 October, 2021.

Tanganyika'. Ali Muhsin Al-Barwani (1997) has for example documented Nyerere's haughtiness and disdain over Zanzibar and the superiority of Tanganyika (Tanzania Mainland) (see also Ghassany, 2010). Since its inception in 1964, there have been dissatisfaction in the nature and operations of the Union (see for example Othman, 1993; Othman, 2006; Shivji, 2008). In 1991, Aboud Jumbe, the former president of Zanzibar published the book *The Partner-ship: Tanganyika-Zanzibar Union: 30 Turbulent Years*. In this treatise, Jumbe details the intricacies of the Union, which cost him his presidency. The structure of the Union has always been an object of contention, together with the status of Zanzibar in the Union and the withering away of its autonomy. After the transition to a multi-party system in 1992, the rise of CUF as an opposition party saw renewed agitations of Zanzibari nationalism. As a political party, CUF always drove the agenda for greater Zanzibar autonomy (Hamad, 2013).

During the 2011 constitutional review process, CUF's proposal was for a treaty-based Union, similar to that of the European Union (see for example, Hamad, 2013; Saalfeld, 2019). During the 2015 elections for example, the CUF party manifesto ran with the title "*Zanzibar yenye Mamlaka Kamili na Neema kwa Wote*", which translates as "A new Zanzibar: Full Sovereignty, Prosperity for all." The full-sovereignty, or full authority symbolized renewed Zanzibari nationalism. Even with the transition from CUF to ACT-Wazalendo, the constituency that Seif Sharif Hamad represented remained intact. For example, during my 2020 fieldwork in Zanzibar, at ACT-Wazalendo rallies, the slogan "*Zanzibar Kwanza*" ("Zanzibar First") was repeatedly chanted by the ACT-Wazalendo leaders. The slogan "*Shusha tanga, Pandisha tanga*" was used to demonstrate that nothing had really changed with their transition from CUF to ACT-Wazalendo. According to Zitto Kabwe, the ACT-Wazalendo party leader, the slogan symbolizes continuity. "*Tanga*" means sail, that is, the cloth or draping that is used to steer boats or dhows. Zitto said that when the sail tears, you take it down (*shusha*) and then replace and hoist it (*pandisha*).<sup>8</sup> At another rally in Tibirinzi, Pemba, I observed how ACT-Wazalendo leaders used nationalist rhetoric. For example, when ACT-Wazalendo Deputy Secretary General Nassor Ahmed Mazrui took to the stage, he began with the slogan "ACT-Wazalendo" and people would respond "*Taifa Kwanza, Leo na Kesho*" meaning "Nation First, Now and Tomorrow."

## *Tunataka Nchi Yetu* (We want our country)

Allen (2004) observes that there is an increasing interest in the scholarship of reading politics through culture, notably through popular music in Africa. The heartbeat of a nation can be felt through musical expression by artists and performers who will either criticize or praise the government of the day. Edmondson (2008) and Askew (2002) for example studied the intersection between popular theatre and music groups in Tanzania and how they expressed social values, politics and gender. Music is also a form of representing the power

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<sup>8</sup> See, Zitto aelezea maana ya 'Shusha tanga, pandisha tanga' Mwananchi Newspaper, <https://www.mwananchi.co.tz/mw/habari/kitaifa/zitto-aelezea-maana-ya-shusha-tanga-pandisha-tanga-2959952>

dynamics between the ruler and the ruled. In Mobutu Sese Seko's Zaire for example, White (2008) shows how the practice of *libanga* (commercialized praise singing) was used to promote political patronage.

In all the ACT-Wazalendo rallies I attended, the song *Tunataka Nchi Yetu* was played much to the excitement and thrill of the supporters. The song is full of symbolisms and conveys nationalistic sentiments in Zanzibar and especially among the supporters of the opposition. The song starts with poetic rendition and is narrated as a grievance soliloquy.

<i>Tutasikitika hivi mpaka lini</i>	How long will we remain sad
<i>Wazanzibari tulitoe hili jini</i>	Zanzibaris let us bury this genie
<i>Tutabaki masikini mpaka lini</i>	How long will we remain in poverty
<i>Na huu ndio muda wa kujiamini</i>	This is the right time to step up
<i>Kumbukeni katika ya Zanzibar Ibara ya tisa</i>	Remember Zanzibar constitution, Section 9
<i>Inasema kwamba mamlaka yote ya nchi ni ya wananchi</i>	It says, all authority to govern is for the people
<i>Wenyewe ndio sisi</i>	And we are the people (We are Zanzibaris)
<i>Ibara ya 80 (1-4) kutoa maoni ni haki yetu sisi</i>	Section 80(1-4) freedom of expression is our right
<i>Wazanzibari ndio sisi</i>	We are Zanzibaris
<i>Na tukumbuke tuna majukumu</i>	We should remember we have responsibilities
<i>Siye viongozi mpaka rais</i>	Leaders to the president
<i>Hadi leo maendeleo tunayamiss</i>	Until today, we lack any development
<i>Tunataka mwangaza</i>	We want light
<i>Tushachoka kupapasa</i>	We are tired of begging
<i>Maslahi ya Zanzibar</i>	Zanzibar interests
<i>Ni makubwa kuliko vyama vya siasa</i>	Are more important than political parties
<i>Tunataka mwangaza, tushachoka kupapasa</i>	We want light, we are tired of begging
<i>Maslahi ya Zanzibar</i>	Zanzibar interests
<i>Ni makubwa kuliko vyama vya siasa</i>	Are more important than political parties
<i>Tunataka kurudisha jamhuri ya watu wa Zanzibar</i>	We want to return the People's Republic of Zanzibar
<i>Kama Ibara ya kwanza ya Katiba</i>	Just like First Section of the constitution says <sup>9</sup>

The song is rallying Zanzibaris to remember their rights and to put the interests of Zanzibar first, that is, before both internal conflicts and the Union. A close reading of this verse points to the reminder that Zanzibar was once a sovereign nation—when it gained independence from Britain on 10 December 1963—and calls for the “return of the People's Republic of Zanzibar”.<sup>10</sup>

During the rallies, I asked several attendees how they understood the song. A middle-aged male ACT-Wazalendo supporter during the rally in Mtoni, made the following observation:

“Yaani wimbo huu unaamsha ari na raha ya kuwa Mzanzibari. Hakika, ipo siku tutapata nchi yetu, inshallah”<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Translated by the author.

<sup>10</sup> The People's Republic of Zanzibar was founded after the Revolution of 12 January 1964 but only lasted for three months when it joined with the Republic of Tanganyika on 26 April 1964 to form the United Republic of Tanzania.

<sup>11</sup> Interview, Issa Pavu, Mtoni, Zanzibar, 23 October, 2020.

[“This song raises my mood and it makes me feel good being Zanzibari. One day, we shall get our country, God willing”]

This observation exemplifies the emotive connection of the song. I made a similar observation at another rally in Mnazi Mmoja grounds during the ACT-Wazalendo closing rally on 25 October 2020. I was seated close to a group of young women dressed in ACT-Wazalendo party colors. Several ACT-Wazalendo party flags could be spotted in the crowd. I saw one elderly lady, who identified herself as Bi Zuhura with a placard with a picture of Seif Sharif Hamad, with inscriptions “ACT-Ulipo Tupo, Chaguo la Wazanzibari” (ACT-Wherever you go, we follow you, The Choice of Zanzibaris). I asked her what the song *Tunataka Nchi Yetu* which was then playing meant for her.

*“Sisi ni Wazanzibari. Ninajivunia Uzanzibari na Maalim (Seif Sharif Hamad) ndio kipenzi chetu. Yeye anasema tunataka Zanzibar yenye mamlaka kamili. Sote tunataka Zanzibar yenye mamlaka kamili.”*<sup>12</sup>

[We are Zanzibaris. I am a proud Zanzibari and Maalim (Seif Sharif Hamad) is our hero. He wants Zanzibar with full authority. We all want Zanzibar with full authority].

During the ACT-Wazalendo closing rally at Mnazi Mmoja on 25 October 2020, I observed how the *Tunataka Nchi Yetu* song brought delight to the crowd. As Nassor Ahmed Mazrui—after his release from the security forces, as seen above—made his way into the rally, the song was played much to the delight of the crowd and the leaders. There is a general belief and talk especially from the Zanzibar opposition that during elections, additional soldiers and para-military officers are shipped from the mainland to intimidate and influence the elections. Having been allegedly abducted by these supposed ‘mainland’ security forces, the release of Mazrui and his grand entry into the rally in Mnazi Mmoja was symbolic.

The interference of Zanzibar by the Union government has been interpreted as a type of colonialism. For example, during an ACT-Wazalendo rally in Zanzibar on 7 September 2020, Tundu Lissu, the CHADEMA party Union presidential candidate highlighted that Zanzibar was “a colony of Tanganyika.”

*“Kwanini CCM imeendelea kutawala hapa Zanzibar? Ni kwasababu moja tu. Na tusipo ielewa hii, hatailewa shida ya muungano. Miaka yote hii mnaishinda CCM. Anayeibakisha madarakani CCM Zanzibar ni Tanganyika. Uamuzi wa siasa za Zanzibar sio Wazanzibari ni Watanganyika. Uamuzi wa nani awe kiongozi wa Zanzibar sio nyie, sio CCM Kiswandi, ni CCM Dodoma, ni Tanganyika. Kila mwaka wa uchaguzi (Tanganyika) tunaamisha majeshi yetu Zanzibar ili tuhakikishe vibaraka wenu wanaendelea kuwakalieni.”*<sup>13</sup>

[Why has CCM continued to rule here in Zanzibar? There is only one reason for that. If we do not understand this, we shall not understand the problem of the Union. All this years, you (the opposition) beat CCM. It is Tanganyika that makes sure that CCM Zanzibar remains in power. The political decisions of Zanzibar are not made by Zanzibaris, its done by Tanganyikans. The decision of who becomes the leader of Zanzibar is not done by you, it’s not done by CCM Kiswandi (CCM headquarters in Zanzibar), it’s done by CCM in Dodoma, it’s done by Tanganyika. Every election year, Tanganyika sends its soldiers to Zanzibar so as to make sure it’s (political) stooges remain in office].

At the night of the election on 28 October, Mazrui was again abducted, tortured and transferred to the mainland. He was charged with terrorism charges, which are unbailable.

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<sup>12</sup> Interview, Bi Zuhura, Mnazi Mmoja, 25 October, 2020.

<sup>13</sup> See, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zk98B6MXN2E&t=394s>



The transfer of political prisoners from Zanzibar to the mainland further reinforced among Zanzibaris, the colonizer versus the colonized narrative, as argued by the above remarks by Lissu.

Another and last example of the reframing of the predicament of Zanzibar within the Union as the result of Tanzania's colonialism is the incarceration of the leaders of the *Jumuiya ya Uamsho na Mihadhara ya Kiislam* (Organization for Islamic Awareness and Propagation – JUMIKI) popularly known as the UAMSHO since 2012 in the mainland. This reinforces the argument that Zanzibar is a colony of Tanganyika. Indeed, the UAMSHO group was associated with Zanzibari secessionist activism between 2011 and 2012 at the height of the constitutional review process (Fouéré, 2012). UAMSHO is an Islamic NGO that worked on various social and religious issues in Zanzibar since its formal registration in 2001. The group emphasizes that its *raison d'être* was to help the poor and work to ensure that Islamic values are reflected in society (UAMSHO Zanzibar, 2009). UAMSHO's official blogsite states that the group was formed for the purpose of preaching peace and development among the believers of Islam, by promoting respect, Islamic history and heritage, and Islamic culture in general. It is also aimed at protecting human rights which are accepted in Islam, promoting Islamic culture, and assisting in solving societal problems such as HIV/AIDS, drug abuse amongst others. (Ibid). UAMSHO also played a practical role in politics in Zanzibar for years, by serving as election observers.

Another section of the song lyrics that has received much attention in its performance value is the call for all Zanzibaris, both from Pemba and Unguja, to stand up and demand for 'their country' (*nchi yetu* in Swahili):

*Wanzabari nyanyukeni, Pemba na Unguja*  
*Tunataka nchi yetu, hii haina hoja*

Zanzibaris stand up, Pemba and Unguja  
We want our country, there is no debate about this

When this section of the song was played, I observed in the three rallies I attended in both Unguja and Pemba how the crowd stood up and danced as they were singing along. As Askew (2002: 122) contends, musical performance is important in laying claim to specific social labels and political objectives. The label 'Wanzabari' (Zanzibaris)—which does not connote citizenship in international law terms as Zanzibar does not have the status of nation-state—has been used locally to identify a proud political, social and geographical representation of Zanzibaris. Drawing from the lyrical rendition '*Wanzabari nyanyukeni, Pemba na Unguja*' [Zanzibaris stand up, Pemba and Unguja], one can only adduce the desire and call for solidarity and cohesion among Zanzibaris. Evidently, there is a romanticism and imagining of the *nation* of Zanzibar, as we shall see below.

## Imagining the Nation of Zanzibar: Decrypting the Song Video

The video of the song *Tunataka Nchi Yetu* can also be found on YouTube. There are two unofficial videos of the song.<sup>14</sup> Music artists tend to not only put a lot of thought into the

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<sup>14</sup> Link 1 of the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ij4V0ovN74E> Link 2 of the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0HLLIKFkS0Uc&t=76s>

lyrics of their songs, but also into the videos. As a form of art, artists, including composers use various artistic styles in delivering their message. Most songs use a rhyming poetic style. My further observations show that some artists and composers adopt the 'dialogue' technique, while others use a vocalist/ instrumentalist approach.

Music videos mix pictures, sounds and words to convey a message. The two videos of the song, uploaded in 2012 and 2015, both use symbols and pictures to express nationalism. In the video uploaded in 2012 for example, in the introductory verse, the song uses the images (See image #1 and #2) of the UAMSHO incarcerated Islamic Sheikhs. The UAMSHO group embodies Zanzibari nationalism and defended Zanzibar's demands for 'nchi yetu'.



Tunataka nchi yetu.

13,663 views • 11 Jun 2012

48 9 SHARE SAVE ...

Image #1: The images of UAMSHO Sheikhs that feature in the 'Tunataka Nchi Yetu' video.



Tunataka nchi yetu.

13,663 views • 11 Jun 2012

👍 48 🗨️ 9 ➦ SHARE 📌 SAVE ...

Image #2: Another image of the UAMSHO leaders used by the video. This was during the UAMSHO peaceful march in May 2012 before they were arrested.



Tunataka nchi yetu.

13,663 views • 11 Jun 2012

👍 48 🗨️ 9 ➦ SHARE 📌 SAVE ...

Image #3: The video used the image of the Maridhiano Agreement between Amani Karume (left) and Seif Sharif Hamad (right) on 9 November 2009.

The song also uses images of the reconciliation (Maridhiano) between the CCM and CUF political parties (Image #3). The video also repeatedly uses the images of Seif Sharif Hamad of CUF and Amani Karume of CCM shaking hands in 2009, the culmination of the peace talks that gave birth to the Government of National Unity (GNU) in 2010. These famous images in Zanzibar that have been seen multiple times on TV, in the newspaper and in social media represent the imagining of a united Zanzibar that would idealize the vision of a sovereign nation. Another visual is that of chained hands with the words 'Uhuru' (freedom) and a dove—an international symbol of peace (Image #4). These images reinforce the idealization and imagining of a peaceful nation of Zanzibar.



Tunataka nchi yetu.

13,663 views • 11 Jun 2012

👍 48 🗨️ 9 ➦ SHARE ⚙️ SAVE ...

Image #4: Towards the end, the video uses the image of chained hands with a dove with the words 'Uhuru' (freedom).

I have sampled the lyrics of the song and analyzed how they reinforce the concept of Zanzibari nationalism. I have also attempted to decrypt the video to see how the composers used images to rally the demands for 'nchi yetu'. The lyrics and images used in the song 'Tunataka Nchi Yetu' reinforce the argument of Zanzibari growing nationalism

## Conclusion

Music has aesthetic and entertaining value but is also an important channel to read society and politics. When performed, either through dance, poetry renditions or soliloquy as seen by the *Tunataka Nchi Yetu* song, musical renditions tell us about what matters and what is contested in society, but also about hopes for the future (Njogu, 2007). This essay has sampled one song used by the opposition campaign to draw out the performance of nationalism in Zanzibar. It drew from fieldwork observations and interviews conducted in

Zanzibar during the October 2020 general elections. Drawing from the tapestry of the musical performances on the *Tunataka Nchi Yetu* song in three campaign rallies, this essay showed how symbolism, imageries and words were used to imagine Zanzibar as a nation, both culturally and politically. The imagining and idealization of the nation of Zanzibar was captured in the performance and rendition of the *Tunataka Nchi Yetu* song. In the three opposition rallies I sampled, the sentiments of Zanzibari identity and nationalism were clearly visible in the performance of the song. I also decrypted the song's video and demonstrated how words, text and images used sought to enhance the performativity of Zanzibari nationalism.

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