

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Theorising the Gaze in Cultural Tourism: The Commodification of Indigenous dance practices in the Shona Village at Great Zimbabwe Monuments

Solomon Gwerevende¹

¹Dublin City University, Dublin, Ireland. Email: sologwedza@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) drives economic growth and rural development in different provinces in Zimbabwe. The commodification of indigenous dance practices in the tourism industry has been practised since the colonial era to the present day in Zimbabwe. Cultural tourism has had positive and negative implications on indigenous communities and their cultural heritage. The performance of indigenous dances at Great Zimbabwe Monuments in the Shona Village promotes sustainability by transforming the dance and music practices into economic goods for consumption by tourists and, to some extent, sustaining the culture bearers' livelihoods. This article explores the issues of staged authenticity, commoditisation of indigenous dance, and the exploitation of cultural workers in the development and practice of cultural tourism in Zimbabwe. Furthermore, the article also examines the opportunities and challenges of exchanging indigenous dances for money at Great Zimbabwe Shona Village. It also provides perceptions on how the Karanga dance and music practitioners re-enact and reclaim their perceived authentic cultural legacy of "Karanga-ness" through performances that attempt to contest European cultural imperialism and the long history of mythologising the indigenous people such as the Karanga people.

KEYWORDS: Authenticity, Commodification, Dance heritage, Karanga people, Shona Village

HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Gwerevende, S. 2022. Theorising the Gaze in Cultural Tourism: The Commodification of Indigenous dance practices in the Shona Village at Great Zimbabwe Monument. *Journal of African Cultural Heritage Studies*, 3 (1), pp.96-117. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22599/jachs.88>

Introduction

The Great Zimbabwe Monument was declared a National and World Heritage site in 1937 and 1986 respectively. According to Ndoro and Pwiti (1997), Great Zimbabwe was built by the ancestors of the Shona people, and it is famous for its extensive dry-stone walls and remains of earthen house structures dating back to the period between 1100 and 1450 AD. Ndoro (2001) suggests that the people who are believed to be the builders of Great Zimbabwe are Karanga, a sub-ethnic group of the indigenous population in Zimbabwe. It is a well-known worldwide cultural and heritage tourist centre that attracts and hosts both local and foreign visitors. The monuments have various sections of great interest to the tourists, such as the Museum, The Hill Complex, Valley Enclosure, Great Enclosure, and the Shona Village, as shown in figure 1.

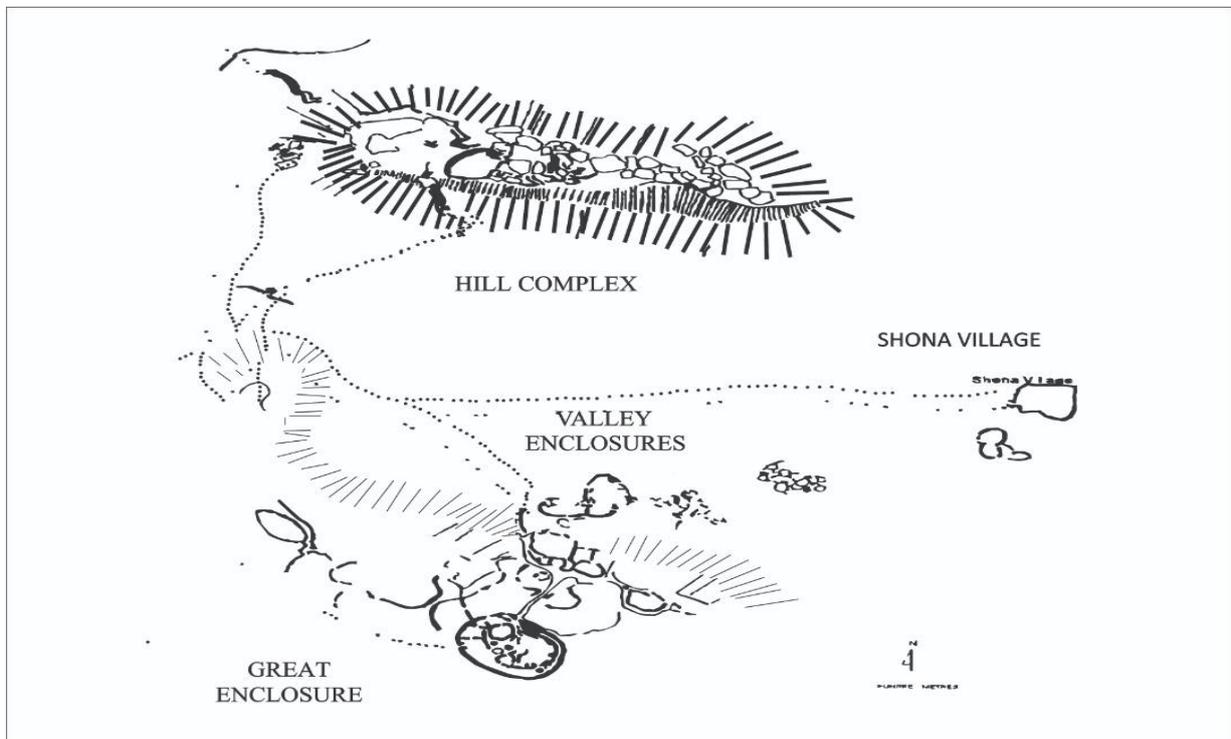


Fig.1. Map of Great Zimbabwe and the location of the Shona Village

The Shona Village is the focus of the present discussion. It was constructed as a living museum to create a supplementary fascination for the tourists who visit the monuments. The Village is also known as the “theme park” or “living museum”, a place where visitors are assumed to experience typical indigenous Karanga structures and cultural activities (Collet, 1992). The Karanga indigenous dances such as *mbakumba*, *mhande* and *mbira* constitute some of the cultural activities performed in the Village.

Tourists who visit the monument are also guided to pass through the Shona Village to watch the dances staged in the settlement. The Karanga people perform indigenous dances for the tourists, who, in turn, dance with the local communities and record the performances in videos and pictures. The performers share their cultural memories, histories and values enacted through dance. The indigenous people welcome tourists into their clan and family life and offer them a taste of their cultural heritage and traditions. The tourists will also have a glimpse of what it means to be *Mushona*¹ in general and *Mukaranga*² in particular. Does the tourist experience of the Shona Village performances symbolise what MacCannell (1976) viewed as the search for “staged authenticity”, where the tourists request access to the “backstage” of the Karanga worldview? Do the performances seek to present the authentic enacted Karanga indigenous knowledge and spirituality or satisfy tourists for commercial gains? With these questions in mind, one would argue that the reproduction of indigenous dances in the context of tourism is very multifaceted and complex.

New dance research trends since 1995 proffer insight into our understanding of the politics of culture and theories of reception and spectatorship (Reed 1998: 504). Chakravorty (2009) illustrates how postcolonial theories influence the analysis of the body concerning the discourses of power may be enriched by taking into consideration indigenous dance practices by adopting the notion of embodiment. The present discussion aims to demonstrate how an explication of indigenous Karanga dance and music practices, knowledge systems and spiritualities using the concept of tourist gaze can contribute to the understanding of the place of ICH in the broader context of tourism. The article illustrates that the Shona Village provides a platform for the recreation, revival and continuity of indigenous songs and dance traditions, histories and memories connected to the Shona ancestors and the Great Zimbabwe State during the pre-colonial era. The discussion contributes to the efforts being made in exemplifying indigenous agency in indigenous cultural heritage as the performers adopt the tourist gaze features to transact interactions and practices in the tourist encounter and underscore the reproduction and re-enactment of Karanga knowledge systems through staged performances.

¹ *Mushona*- a native or one of the *Shona* speaking language groups that constitute the largest population in Zimbabwe.

² *Mukaranga*- a native or one of the *Shona*-speaking people belonging to the *Karanga* ethnic group.

It still seems that there is no single and universally applicable definition of cultural tourism. Silberberg (1995: 361) defines cultural tourism in broader terms as: “visits by persons from outside the host community motivated wholly or in part by interest in historical, artistic, scientific or heritage offerings of a community, region or institution”. According to this delineation, cultural attractions at Great Zimbabwe could be the monuments, museum, Shona Village, artistic works, food, and local cloths. Cultural tourism is related to visiting art galleries, historical sites, artistic performances, festivals, and heritage centres (Hughes 1996). For this article, a cultural tourist is regarded as any individual, both locals and foreigners, who visit Great Zimbabwe for a cultural and historical experience.

Research Methods

Participant observation [“being-in-the field”] as echoed by Tison (2008: 25), interviewing, fieldnotes writing and filming were extensively used in the gathering of data for this study. The informants are the Karanga people, who perform indigenous dance and music traditions at Great Zimbabwe Monuments. Participant observation helped me observe the performers and their cultural performances in situ, at Great Zimbabwe Shona village, dancing and singing. I interviewed the performers and explored their views on the implications of performing marketing their cultural heritage for tourists. To access their opinions about the implications of the commodification of their dance practices, I asked structured interview questions that probed the participants' stance on cultural tourism issues and the commodification of their cultural heritage. The research informants involved the performers of Karanga dances at Great Zimbabwe, from Charumbira, Nemamwa and Mugabe villages. These villages are in the vicinity of the monuments and are dominated by the Karanga people. To ease the participants into the process of providing answers to my research questions, no interview, observation, and filming was conducted without prior informed consent from the informants.

Theoretical framework and literature review

Urry (1990) suggests that the tourist gaze is motivated by the French philosopher Michel Foucault's notion of the medic gaze. Foucault (1976), as cited in Urry (1990: 1), suggests that the clinic was probably the first attempt to order a science on the exercise and decisions of the gaze. The tourist gaze is fundamentally about how tourism as an industry and a leisure activity is characterised by the decisions and experiences of the gaze. According to Urry (1990), this means that tourism is mainly a visual practice.

In the Shona Village, tourism is a way of seeing staged performances of local dance traditions, and the spectators consume the experiences visually. From the gaze perspective, the sense in tourism is visual, reflecting the role of the eye in the history of Western communities and the relationship between the gazers and gazes. Concerning the gaze theory, Foucault had this to say:

The clinic was probably the first attempt to order a science on the exercise and decisions of the gaze--- the medical gaze was also organised in a new way. First, it was no longer the gaze of an observer, but that of a doctor supported and justified by an institution.... Moreover, it was a gaze that was not bound by the narrow grid of structure...but could and should grasp colours, variations, tiny anomalies... (Foucault 1976: 89).

This discussion would seem to have nothing to do with Foucault's theorising of the gaze in the medical fraternity. However, his concepts of objectification and gaze as well as control and surveillance have been adopted and extended to examining social interactions in cultural tourism by theorists (MacCannell 1973; Urry 1990, Urry and Larsen 2011). Tourism mainly involves objectifying people and their cultural heritage; it also privileges the visual aspect or gazing. Urry and Larson (2011) suggest that gazing refers to the "discursive determinations" of socially constructed seeing or "scopic" regimes. According to Urry (1992), gazing is about how we can see, be allowed, or made to see and how we see this seeing or the unseen herein. Urry and Larsen (2011) view gazing as a performance that classifies, shapes and orders rather than reflects the world. Jenks (1995: 10) suggests that "the world is not pre-formed, waiting to be seen by the extrospection of the naked eye. As our dominant cultural outlook would suggest, there is nothing out-there intrinsically formed interesting, useful, or beautiful".

Vision is a skilled cultural practice and gazing at sights is conditioned by personal experiences and memories, framed by styles and rules, and circulating images and texts of this and other places (Urry and Larsen, 2011). Such frames are important methods, materials, resources, and cultural perspectives that possibly empower tourists who come to Great Zimbabwe to watch indigenous dance practices and other artistic products of the Karanga that appear to them as eye-catching, beautiful, and fascinating. The tourist gaze is not a matter of individual psychology but of socially patterned and learnt 'ways of seeing' (Berger, 1972). Urry and Larsen (2011) argue that the power of the visual gaze within modern tourism is tied into, and enabled by, various technologies, including camcorders, films, cameras, and digital images.

Urry (1990: 2) highlights that the tourism gaze is diverse and contextual and has changed historically. For instance, Urry pinpoints various styles of oppositional tourist gazes: “authentic/inauthentic, historical/modern, and romantic/collective” (1990: 135). Other research on tourism and dance has illustrated that the human body is mostly produced as a primitive “other” or an exotic (at times sensual) body to gaze upon (Chakravorty, 2004; Kole, 2010). Kole describes the connection between dance and tourism in Hawaii, illustrating and promoting the opportunity to look upon the sensual, exotic, and primitive “other” in hula performances. Chakravorty and Kole’s studies demonstrate that the gaze is multidimensional, colonial, and complicated, with different lenses and probably various interpretations derived from different gazes; besides, the gaze itself is flexible.

The tourists who come to Great Zimbabwe do not experience “reality” directly but thrive on ‘pseudo-performances’ of the indigenous dances. Isolated from the communal and original contexts of these dances, the tourists are provided with an opportunity to watch decontextualised dance and music performances. They find joy in decontextualised aesthetics, naively consuming pseudo-performances and disregarding the real contexts, relationships and spiritualities, which can only be experienced when the dances are performed in the natural and cultural milieu such as *kurova guva* (funerary) and *mutoro/mukweerera* (rainmaking) ceremonies. Mhande dance and music are crucial components of these ceremonies. *Kurova guva* and *mutoro* are not part of the performances for tourists in the Shona Village at Great Zimbabwe. As a result, the performers are prompted to produce extravagant performances for susceptible consumers who are removed from the natural and original cultural products.

Conversely, continuous surveillance is distinctive from Foucault's panopticonism and prison gaze because the performers can confirm the constant scrutiny of the cultural tourist. Urry (1990: 1) insists that, like the doctor-patient relationship, “the tourist gaze [is] as socially organised and systematised as is the gaze of the medic”. Therefore, while the encounter is not disciplinary by its very nature, the Karanga cultural performers may feel restricted in performing the authentic indigenous dances to meet tourists' expectations. MacCannell (1999: 107) is much more concerned with the inauthenticity and

superficiality of modern life. For MacCannell, to enact a desire for authenticity is a recent version of the universal human concern with the sacred.

MacCannell (1973) notes that such “authentic lives” can only be found backstage and are not immediately evident to outsiders. As a result, the gaze of tourists in the Shona Village involves an apparent quest into the Karanga people’s worldview, which would be generally denied because of the staging of the indigenous cultural practices for commercial purposes. Therefore, the local communities, as observed and cultural entrepreneurs, are prompted to create backstage in an engineered and artificialised style. Therefore, the Shona village as a tourist space was designed around a concept MacCannell (1973) referred to as “staged authenticity”. For a more nuanced conceptualisation and understanding of the indigenous performances as “staged authenticity”, the nature of the Shona Village and its artistic activities need to be underscored.

An understanding of the Shona village

The Shona Village is a cultural section within the Great Zimbabwe monuments. The monuments are situated approximately 25 km southeast of Masvingo urban area, a modern town in South Central Zimbabwe. Great Zimbabwe is possibly the biggest prehistoric human-originated structure in South Central Africa, depicting significant cultural achievements in the region's history. It has, therefore, become an important national cultural heritage symbol in postcolonial Zimbabwe (Pwiti, 1996). Inside this well-known and celebrated ancient Zimbabwean settlement, a typical sample of old indigenous “Shona Village” was built to strategically depict the ethnographic life of the Shona people, provide entertainment, and educate local and foreign tourists who thronged this National and World Heritage Centre.

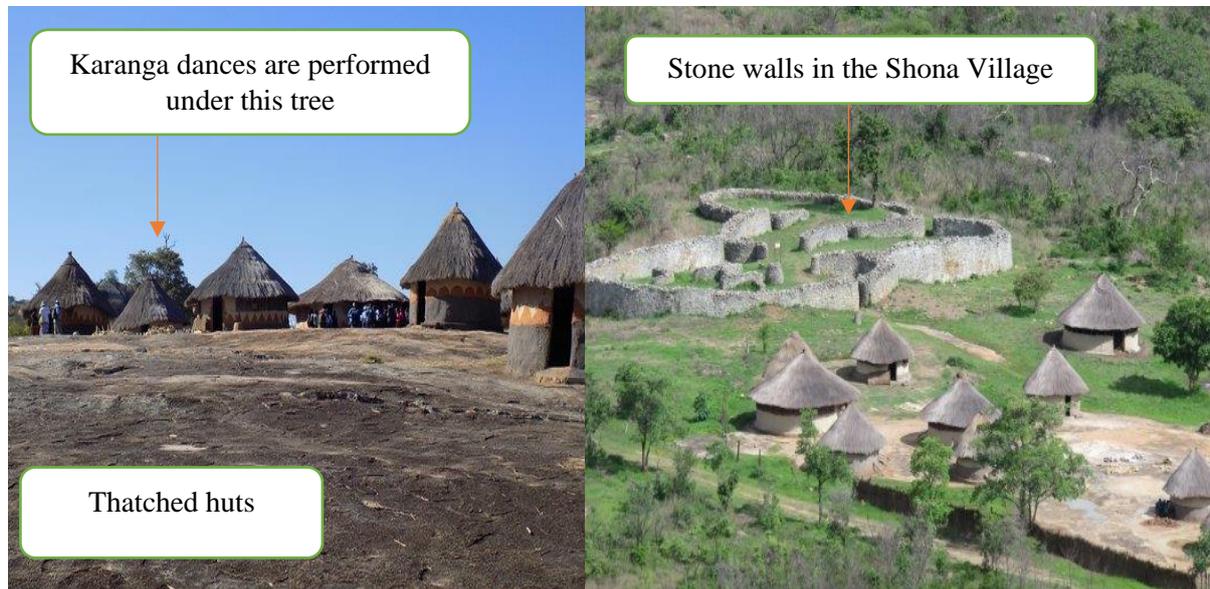


Figure 2: Shona Village settlement (Source: author (2019))

Lilian Hodges established the first cultural village at Great Zimbabwe monuments in 1964, and it was known as the Karanga Village. It was near the museum site, and the main attraction in this village was the traditional healer. The Karanga Village was destroyed at the height of the Second Chimurenga War of liberation in the 1970s. The idea of the cultural village was revived at a new location in 1986, between the Eastern Enclosures and the Valley Enclosures, which is now the Shona Village. In 2007, the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe received funds from the United States of America Ambassador's Culture Fund through the Culture Fund of Zimbabwe Trust (CFZT) to construct the relocated cultural village (Mutingwende, 2018). However, the Village could not be completed due to economic instability characterised by hyperinflation. Mutingwende further suggests that in 2013 the CFZT received funds from the Swedish government to complete the project. In 2015, through CFZT, the European Union availed a grant for a fully operational Shona Village. According to Ndoro and Pwiti (1997: 4), the Shona Village was built as a living museum to show visitors how the Shona people, whose ancestors constructed Great Zimbabwe, lived during the nineteenth century. The Village is where the Karanga cultural groups perform indigenous dances such as mhande, mbakumba and mbira. It was invented to be much more than an open-air museum showcase: to foster the impression that the people who work in the village

stay and live there and the inhabitants re-enact the nineteenth-century way of life of the Shona in general and the Karanga in particular. The cultural activities include dance and music performances, sculpture, crafts, traditional medicines, and healing.

The cultural performances in the Shona Village present the indigenous dances and other artistic productions to sustain the livelihoods of the cultural practitioners through the commodification of the dances, which was not usually the case. There are no historical sources to support the commercialisation of these dance practices during the nineteenth century. Recorded information and observations made during the nineteenth century indicate that there was no usage of indigenous dance traditions for commercial purposes nor entertainment on a decontextualised stage like what is happening now at Great Zimbabwe. These indigenous dances were and are still performed in the indigenous communities of the Karanga people for ritual purposes. This means that the socio-cultural goals of Karanga dances are for ritual activities and, sometimes, entertainment in socio-cultural events such as indigenous marriage ceremonies, bumper harvest celebrations and traditional beer-drinking gatherings. The representation of this cultural heritage in the Shona Village is, to some extent, commercial and is far too perfectionistic. The Village portrays the commercialisation of indigenous dances as a typical model way of life of the nineteenth century Shona communities. As summarised in the concept of the appellation, "Shona Village" was the advancement of the national cultural identity for the unity of various and diverse ethnic groups.

The dances in the Shona Village are meant to reflect the cultural identity and way of life of the Karanga people. The performances provide the tourists with a taste of the Karanga indigenous dances and not the contextualised cultural experiences. The performances are not based on any of the religious and socio-cultural contexts of the dances. Instead, they represent new productions for artistic impression. The postcolonial performance of the indigenous dances in the Shona Village is meant to serve the interests of tourists and not for the sake of 'Chikaranga'. Chikaranga is the experienced reality of spirit beings' existence as enshrined in Karanga indigenous knowledge system and it is articulated through mhande performance (2011:105) and other cultural practices such as mbakumba and mbira. Chikaranga is an umbrella term used to describe the totality of the Karanga people's way of life. For example, their

rituals, symbols, values, and myths constitute embodied and enacted systems for making sense of their whole lives.

A survey of the indigenous dances performed in the Shona Village

The Karanga people have several indigenous dances performed for various purposes and in different cultural contexts, both sacred and secular. Three main Karanga dances are performed in the Shona Village for cultural tourism. These dances are mhande, mbakumba and mbira. According to Rutsate (2010:103), mhande is a term that refers to the religious dance and music genre of the Karanga people. When presented in the sacred context of the ritual context, such as the mutoro rain-making ceremony, mhande reflects the mixture of culture and behaviour through the adepts' symbolic acts, which communicate Karanga reality about the existence and services of invisible or spiritual beings among human beings (Rutsate, 2010). It is characterised by drumming, dancing, singing, ululation, and other artistic expressions. Rutsate further suggests that more than being symbolic, mhande is powerful enough to draw the spiritual being to intervene and provide solutions to the Karanga people's challenges. The dance is also performed to avert drought and give solace to actors correspondingly. This is in line with Tracy (1967:49), who suggests that among the Shona people, "music is not looked upon as a thing but rather as a means of force. If it has enough force of the right kind, then it should produce the right effect". As a result of changes in the way of life of the Karanga people due to modernity, mhande is now also performed outside its religious context, for example, in recreational competitions such as the Jikinya Dance Festival, Chibuku Neshamwari Dance Festival as well as state functions and at Great Zimbabwe for tourists.

The term mbira is popularly known for the music, instrument, and choreographic movements that constitute mbira performance. Mbira dance is one of the most religious performances of the Shona people. In most cases, it is performed by community elders at crucial bira (pl. mapira³) ceremonies. Bira is an all-night ceremony performed for the Shona ancestors. Like mhande dance, the performance of mbira involves singing, bodily movements, expressive gestures, ululation and playing of musical instruments such as ngoma (drums) and mbira. The dance is used as a medium to call upon the ancestral

³ *Mapira* is the plural form of *bira*, an all-night ceremony performed for the *Shona* ancestors.

spirits (*vadzimu*) into the clan for security and protection against all forms of evil acts such as witchcraft. In the Shona Karanga culture, mbira dance is considered distinctive because of its intricate foot movements and high-energy and graceful jump bursts. However, in academia, the dance aspect of mbira performance has not been seriously dealt with even by scholars who wrote extensively about mbira music, such as Matiure (2012) and Dutiro and Keith (2007). Mbira is the music and the movements and gestures in response to music and the cultural values attached to the tradition. Mbira dance and music are a mystical enactment of the indigenous epistemologies and spiritualities which have been performed since time immemorial by the tribes of the Shona people. Mbira performance permeates all sectors of Shona life, such as religion, politics, and agriculture, meaning that mbira dance is performed in both secular and sacred contexts. In the sacred context, the most crucial function of mbira dance and music is to communicate and invite the ancestral spirits who are believed to be living in the spiritual world (*vari kumhepo*). At the bira ceremony, *vadzimu* (ancestral spirits), or the most potent guardian spirits of the Shona, give guidance on community and family issues.

As mentioned earlier, mbakumba is another dance performed for tourists in the Shona Village. It is a dance performed in *chirimo*⁴ (after the rain season) in celebration of a bumper harvest and to invoke ancestral blessings for the coming season. The primary purpose of mbakumba is thanksgiving to the ancestors for a good season and bumper harvest. It celebrates hard work and working together in (*nhimbe*⁷) fields during the planting and tending season. Outside the harvest celebration ceremony, mbakumba is also performed to provide entertainment in secular events such as traditional marriage ceremonies, traditional beer-drinking parties, and state functions.

Mbakumba performance is famous for the *jeketera*, the central dance motif of the tradition maintained throughout its performance. Like mbira and mhande cultural performances, mbakumba is characterised by drumming, singing, ululation, and dancing. The performance of mbakumba involves using indigenous agricultural objects such as hoes, *tswanda* (basket) and *zvikari* (clay pots), which are used during the growing season. The movements and gestures of mbakumba are accompanied by drumming from a master drummer. Most mbakumba songs educate the Karanga and other ethnic groups of the Shona

⁴*Chirimo* is characterised by low temperatures and little or no rainfall.

people on suitable farming methods, especially the production of crops for family consumption. Mbakumba dance songs reflect the indigenous agricultural life of the Karanga people. Its props and objects exhibit the crop husbandry themes such as reflected in the song, “kusarima woye-woye” (failing to plough) “torai mapadza muchirima” (take the hoes to plough). The song is intended to encourage every member of society to work hard to produce enough food to feed their families, hence instilling a sense of responsibility among community members. Although the mbakumba is not as religious as mhande, it also has some religious connotations because the thanksgiving ceremony is dedicated to the vadzimu (ancestral spirits), who are believed to be the providers of good rains for farming.

Karanga heritage tourism: Interviewee reflections and perceptions

In this section, the article dealt with the research question: how do the local dance and music performers at Great Zimbabwe perceive the marketing of their cultural heritage? The applicability of the concept of “authenticity” to the performance of indigenous dances in the Shona Village is subjective and problematic since culture is dynamic and changes with time due to external forces such as globalisation, urbanisation, and modernity. Drawing on a series of ethnographic trips to the Shona Village, the article shows how authenticity influences indigenous cultural tourism enterprise. One of the participants commented that the Karanga indigenous cultural heritage is modified when it is taken out of its social contexts and performed for money inside and outside the Shona Village. The participant had this to say:

I think the only way to see and experience the authentic cultural features of our heritage is to come when we are performing these dances in events such as kurova guva and mutoro. Here in the Shona Village, we perform the dance for money, and we mix a lot of things, and the mixing will destroy some of the features of the dances. So, I think what we do here is to please the visitors.⁵

The statement above indicates that authentic indigenous dance traditions are performed in the original social and cultural contexts, not for tourists or money in the Shona Village. The participant’s view suggests the context and purpose of Karanga dances determine whether a performance is authentic or inauthentic. The importance of cultural contexts in determining authenticity of dance and music practices is supported by Bank (2013) who insinuates that authenticity is context dependent. The participants confirmed that indigenous dances performed in the Shona Village are out of the original

⁵ Interviews compiled from participant A 10/06/2019

context and do not serve the socio-cultural purpose. The purpose and context of dance contribute to what the practitioners regard as authentic dances. For example, the same dance performed in the Shona Village for tourists and ceremonial purposes in the communities differs in terms of purpose, contexts, and characteristic features such as attire. Consequently, the Karanga people regard the dances formed for ritual purposes as authentic and those for tourists as inauthentic.

Perkins and Thorns (2001) replace the tourist gaze with a new paradigm of performing, which suggests that the doings of tourism are physical or corporeal and not merely visual. The applicability of the tourist gaze tends to have some loopholes by reducing Karanga dances to visual experiences only. What about other senses? Bodily experiences can only be experienced when the dances are performed in *kurova guva* and *mutoro* ceremonies. The tourist gazing of local dances at Great Zimbabwe includes negotiations about what and how to see and the duration of seeing and not the context-based emotional and spiritual experiences. For example, one day, I visited Shona Village as a tourist and researcher. The Karanga dancers wore uniforms when performing in dance competitions and other events outside the original context. I had spent the whole day with them in the Village, watching their performance and talking to them about their cultural heritage. Later that day, I recorded the notes in my diary as follows:

These dances and all the activities done here in the Village attempt to showcase the lifestyle of the Karanga people from the past to the present day, but they are not enough to represent everything. Although there are differences between the past and the current cultural performance and changes, I think we are trying our best to showcase our way of life through dance, sculpture, crafts, and medicine though it's not enough.⁶

The participant indicated that it is essential that the tourists understood and got a taste of how their ancestors had lived, from the dances they performed, to how they used to heal the sick, how they used to practice agriculture and their way of life in general. The participants believed that the performance of the indigenous dance traditions in the Shona Village offered an incomplete experience of the cultural heritage to the visitors. However, when giving the descriptions and meanings of the performances as far as they are concerned, they provide the visitors with an inauthentic interpretation of the performances.

⁶ Interviews compiled from participant B on 11/06/2019

In this case, we are made aware of the relational aspect of authenticity in that the participants view the relationship between their translation of the cultural heritage. One of the dance and music practitioners had this to say on the commodification of dance and indigenous cultural tourism:

Since these dances are being performed outside their social contexts, such as kurova guva and mukweerera, I do not think you can get more original elements than this. For example, the performance of mhande for the rain-making ceremony (mukweerera) and bringing back home the spirit of the deceased (kurova guva), mbakumba for a celebrating bumper harvest, and mbira for bira ceremonies are some of the events in which you can experience more authentic performances of our dance heritage. These dances will be more authentic if someone is directly involved in the cultural context rather than watching and participating in the Shona Village.⁷

With this statement from one of the performers of the local dances at Great Zimbabwe, one would conclude that the authenticity of these dance traditions had a strong connection with the context, purpose of the dances, and the Karanga people's ancestors. The performances in the Shona village provide the tourist with a sense of Karanga heritage, values, and histories but not a holistic experience.

Most of the musicians and dancers in the groups which perform in the Shona Village have been cautiously and strategically selected by the cultural officers from the National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe (NMMZ) for their skills in the dances in question. These performers are not workers of the NMMZ but are supposed to come to the Village to perform for money, given as tokens of appreciation to sustain their livelihoods and earn a living through their indigenous dance and music heritage. A participant said that:

We do not work for NMMZ, but we rely on well-wishers who give us money as tokens of appreciation, and we are not allowed to charge the tourist for our services. The NMMZ said it would be double since the tourists pay the NMMZ at the entrance gate. The government refused to collect entrance fees at the Shona Village gate like the NMMZ do when tourists enter the Great Zimbabwe main gate. Another important thing is that we do not stay here.⁸

⁷ Interviews compiled from participant C 10/06/2019

⁸ Interviews compiled from participant D 10/06/2019

The performers and other artists do not stay and live in the Shona Village; they come to the Village on a rotational timetable basis of two weeks per month for each group; that is, the mbira, mbakumba mhande dance groups. Sometimes they come to perform in the Village whenever they are free from other domestic responsibilities and duties at home, mainly on public holidays and weekends when more tourists visit the National and World Heritage centre.

Karanga-ness, change and adaptation of dance heritage

The dances of the Karanga and their various expressions, such as singing, bodily movements, ululating and handclapping, are regarded as living heritage with several conceptual pillars such as identity, tradition and memory, values, and beliefs. According to the UNESCO Convention of 2003 for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, ICH is “the practices, representations, expressions, as well as the knowledge and skills, that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognise as part of their cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2008). Gore and Grau (2014) suggest that “heritage” and “legacy” are, of course, ideologically loaded notions intertwined with issues of identity, power, and property rights.

The performance of local dances at Great Zimbabwe enunciates the symbolic economy of the indigenous ethnic cultures, cultural integrity, and the act of being brought together and united through cultural traditions distinctive from those of other cultures. According to Kidd (2010), ethnic and cultural integrity also defines cultural heritage activities linked to authentic selfhood and ethnic and cultural identification. Although cultural syncretism, acculturation, and modernity features are evident in the dance traditions performed in the Shona Village, the dances still reflect distinctive Karanga identity features such as dance performance paraphernalia (pros such as tswanda⁹ hoes, spears, and clay pots). These unique features and characteristics underscore imaginings of indigenous and ethnic self-determination. The performances are also meant to depict the political, religious, cultural, and social life of the Karanga people and safeguard their history and conserve their cultural legacy. They also elaborate theories of enacted and embodied systems and the transmission of culture, histories, memory, aesthetics, and economic experiences (Taylor, 2003). The props, customs and objects for these dances are used as

⁹ *Tswanda* is an indigenous *Shona* container of different sizes, and it is used for various domestic purposes, for example, carrying the agricultural product from the field.

artefacts because they are used in the Shona Village to authenticate Karanga cultural heritage. The performers in the Shona Village are cultural ambassadors who play an essential role in representing and revitalise the indigenous cultural heritage.

When dance groups are performing for money, they modify the dances, for example, the context, costumes, entrance, exit and purpose of the dance to suit the new context and please the intended cultural consumers. From a commercial perspective, this modification of dance is known as beneficiation or value addition. Value addition affects the authenticity of the dance or culture being traded. The local dance groups put on attractive uniforms to give a new appearance to the performance. They create a new identity accepted by the dance groups representing the culture of the consumers and not by the community being represented. The alterations that occur in the process of representation are because of various factors such as value addition, acculturation, migration, and commodification. Schauert (2006:174) suggests that the changes in indigenous dance include reducing the length of the performance, increasing the tempo, or removing the spiritual aspects of the dance. Mhande is a sacred dance performed for a ritual purpose, but the sacredness is removed when performed in the Shona Village. Therefore, Karanga dance groups at Great Zimbabwe face the dilemma of balancing selling out and cashing in, representing Chikaranga and performing it in a modified way to appeal to the intended audiences. Henry (2002) insists that tourism and globalisation are two of the main reasons why indigenous performances such as music, dance and theatre have often been created or recreated or arranged or re-arranged to provide a place for cultural representation.

Adaptation is another concept central to this discussion on the commodification of Karanga dance heritage in the Shona Village. Zinhuku (2013) defines adaptation as adjusting or changing indigenous musical practices' nature, form, and structure to suit different performance contexts. The adaptation of Karanga dance and music traditions is mainly promoted and caused by the changes in performance contexts. In postcolonial Zimbabwe, Western education, cultural exchange, acculturation, and globalisation are also fuelling the decontextualisation of Karanga indigenous dances, which accelerates the idea of adaptation. Asante (2000) also states that indigenous dances continuously adapt to political, economic, religious, and social changes.

Strategic cultural enterprise

The indigenous dances staged in the Shona Village tend to agree and disagree with cultural heritage susceptibilities and conceptions surrounding the notion of authentic cultural dance heritage. On the one hand, the dance performers cash in on indigenous dance traditions when they perform for money at Great Zimbabwe and other events outside the national monuments. On the other hand, the performers sell out by modifying the dances to make them marketable to tourists and other intended consumers. The relationship between the commodification of indigenous dance and authenticity necessitates further cross-examination of the particular importance of the gaze theory.

In the Shona Village as a cultural revitalisation initiative, authenticity is illustrated by embodied collective memories and histories engraved in indigenous dances of the Karanga people's past. The cultural performances offer a participatory tourist experience. Tourists become “reflexive dancers or performers” (Perkins and Thorns, 2001: 192) or spec-actors (Boal 1995: 13) in the sense that they are actively invited to take part in performances physically through singing, clapping, ululating, clapping, gazing and other artistic expressions. What is crucial is active participation in the performances, watching and communicating remembered ethnicities or traditions. The selling of indigenous dances promoted by dance performances in the Shona Village, in comparison, showcases Zimbabweans dancing to the world. The metaphor of the gaze is the pre-modern, exotic “other” as they re-enact perceived Karanga authenticity. Chhbra et al. (2003) suggest that perceived authenticity generates revenue, which I think is used to support the livelihoods of the local communities, particularly artists working in the Shona Village. Cultural heritage entrepreneurship done through tourism presents and represents staged indigenous dances that are intentionally and strategically recreated and performed to sell in to navigate the actual landscape of precariousness.

The Shona Village illustrates the dialectic of the economies of cultural recreation and consumption of appropriation and sale and famous indigenous dance creations versus mass media entertainment. Through cultural revitalisation and revival programs initiated by the National Arts Council of Zimbabwe and non-governmental organisations, the indigenous performers wrestle control of the international cultural production and entertainment space to represent Zimbabwe. Zimbabwean indigenous dance

revitalisation initiatives attempt to re-address these stereotypical issues and orthodox essentialised by media cultural enterprise by emphasising ubuntu/unhu. Unhu is a Shona term known as Ubuntu in the Nguni language, and the concept of Unhu/Ubuntu is shared among many African traditions. According to Mandova and Chingombe (2013:100), Unhu is a socio-cultural philosophy that embodies virtues that celebrate mutual social responsibility, mutual assistance, sharing, self-reliance, caring and respect for others, among other ethical values. As such, unhu/ubuntu should occupy the centre stage in the performance and exhibition of Zimbabwean indigenous dances since it is a necessary framework in which Zimbabweans can engage their way of life in existential activities indispensable for the development and continuity of the Zimbabwean society (Gwerevende, 2019).

Moreover, Karanga dance traditions strengthen the value of the indigenous knowledge system, innovations, and aesthetics to mitigate problems in postcolonial Zimbabwe. For instance, the performances in the Shona village are meant for entertainment, safeguarding, and preserving the cultural heritage and the generation of economic value to sustain the livelihoods of the cultural workers. Indigenous dances should act as carriers of cultural values and should also guide and inform cultural policymaking on the development and cultural entrepreneurship for sustaining the livelihoods of the local people. Therefore, indigenous dance traditions as components of ICH could intentionally and strategically become commercial products that should benefit the people who produce and own them. The economic dimension of ICH, as indicated in the cultural policy of Zimbabwe, should play a critical role in making Zimbabwe a sustainable economy by supporting the livelihoods of its people. In the context of indigenous dances performed at Great Zimbabwe, Shona Village presented in this article, the marketability, and paybacks to the community of cultural workers are misappropriated. Finally, the indigenous dance and music practice should be used to demonstrate and validate the advancement and development of postcolonial Zimbabwe's creative cultural industry.

The tourist gaze: Its risk to the Karanga community

Is gazing good or bad for the indigenous communities and their cultural heritage? This section provides answers to this question. As a result of the tourist gaze culture, the Karanga dance heritage becomes valueless when performed outside its social contexts. Besides, the gazing of Karanga dance and music heritage has led to the exploitation of the practitioners by both the tourists and the NMMZ. Rutsate and

Rutsate (2021: 8) note that the Shona village is a province of exploitation whereby tourists, including those who use video cameras to capture the artistry, sometimes do not appreciate what is happening as they consume. The commercial benefits derived from cultural tourism are giving birth to the exploitation of the practitioners, the abuse of cultural rights, and the perpetuation of capitalist values. Sometimes, the dancers and musicians perform, and if tourists are happy, they pay and sometimes they do not pay. There is a high chance that the performers can perform the dances without being paid. The tourist gaze stresses that the gazers exercised much power over the gazes; the gazes become the mad ones behind bars, relentlessly gazed upon and photographed (Urry, 1992). The performers in the Shona Village are subjected to the demands of the tourists and the rules of the NMMZ. The cultural officers of the NMMZ acted as tour guides to tourists and bosses of all the activities at Great Zimbabwe, including performances in the Shona Village. Since the tourist pays more money to the NMMZ and little or no money to the performers, they exercise some powers and objectify them. There is no mutual understanding between the gazers and gazes, a type of relationship that Maoz (2006) termed “mutual gaze” that brings out the resistance and power of hosts when interacting face to face with tourists. There is a need for a “mutual gaze” relationship where tourists and local performers in the Shona Village affect and feed each other.

Conclusion

The performance of indigenous dances at Great Zimbabwe in the Shona Village by the members of the Karanga community has been employed to support and exemplify the arguments raised in this article. The study established that the indigenous dances are performed to showcase Karanga cultural identity and heritage to tourists. The enactment and embodiment of Karanga norms, values, histories, and cultural memories are regarded in this paper as practices of strategic cultural entrepreneurship. The indigenous dances performed in the Shona Village illustrate how local communities can support their livelihoods financially through their cultural heritage. Furthermore, cultural heritage performances at Great Zimbabwe are also, to some extent benefiting the practitioners through income generation. However, the performers are not allowed to price their cultural goods by the NMMZ. Despite the monetary benefits of the tourist gaze regime, the article also considers the damages caused by the tourist gaze to the Karanga cultural ecosystem, such as exploitation of the performers and misappropriation of their cultural heritage. The Zimbabwean tourist industry and tourists thrive on the

experiences of poorly paid Karanga heritage experts and practitioners in the Shona Village. The exploitation of the local gaze requires that policymakers and researchers contest the ills generated by the tourist gaze in the Shona Village through cultural policy advocacy. Besides, the article also recommends that a further study be conducted to find ways to promote sustainable cultural tourism in the Shona Village.

REFERENCES

- Asante, K. W. 2000. *Zimbabwe Dance: Rhythmic Forces, Ancestral voices: An Aesthetic Analysis* Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.
- Banks, M. 2013. Post-Authenticity: Dilemmas of Identity in the 20th and 21st century. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 86 (2): 481-500.
- Bergers, J. 1972. *Way of Seeing*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Boal, A. 1995. *A rainbow of Desire*. London: Routledge.
- Chakravorty, P. 2004. Dance Pleasure and Indian Women as Multisensorial Subjects. *Visual Anthropology*, 17(1): 1-17.
- Chakravorty, P. 2009. Moved to Dance: Remix, Rasa, and a New India. *Visual Anthropology* 22(2): 211-28.
- Chhabra, D., Healy, R., and Sills, E. 2003. Staged Authenticity and Heritage Tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 30 (3): 702-1719.
- Chingombe, A. and Mandova, E. 2013. The Shona proverb as an Expression of Unhu/Ubuntu". *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education and Development*, 2(1): 100-108.
- Collet, D. P. (1992). *The Archaeological Heritage of Zimbabwe: A Master Plan for Resource Conservation and Development*. Harare: National Museums and Monuments of Zimbabwe.
- Dutiro, C. and Keith, H. 2007. *Zimbabwean Mbira Music on an International Stage: Chartwell Dutiro's Life in Music*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate.
- Foucault, M. 1976. *The Birth of the Clinic*. London: Tavistock.
- Gore, G. and Grau, A. 2014. Dance Cultural heritage, and the training of future heritage "managers": Anthropological Reflections. In Fiskvik, A, M. and Marit, S. eds. *(Re)Searching the Field: Festschrift in Honour of Egil Bakka*. Pp.117-138. Bergen: Fagbokforlaget.
- Gwerevende, S. 2019. Zimbabwe Indigenous Dance Research: A Reflection on the Past and Present Approaches. *International Journal of Music and Performing Arts*, 7(2):2-12.

-
- Henry, J. 2002. Balinese Music, Tourism and Globalisation: Inventing and Across Cultures. *Journal of Tourism and Heritage Studies*, 7(2): 110-122.
- Hughes, H. L. 1996. Redefining cultural tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 23(3): 707–709.
- Jenks, C. 1995. The Centrality of the eye in Western Culture: an introduction. In Jenks, C. ed. *Visual Culture*. Pp.25-37. London: Routledge.
- Kidd, J. 2010. Performing the knowing Archive: Heritage Performance and Authenticity. *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 17(1): 22-35.
- Kole, S. K. 2010. Dance Representation and Politics of Bodies: Thick Description of Tahitian Dance in Hawai'ian Tourism. *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change*, 8(3): 183-205.
- Kringelbach, H.N and Skinner, J. 2014. *Dancing Cultures: Globalisation, Tourism, and Identity in the Anthropology of Dance*. New York: Berghahn.
- MacCannell, D. 1973. Stage authenticity: arrangements of social space in tourists setting. *American Sociological Review*, 79: 589-603.
- MacCannell, D. 1999. *The Tourist*. New York: Schocken Books.
- MacCannell, D. 1998. *The Tourist: A New Theory of Leisure Class*. New York: Schocken Books.
- MacCannell, D. 2001. Tourist agency. *Tourism Studies*, 2(1): 23-38.
- Maoz, D. 2006. The mutual gaze. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 33 (1): 221-239.
- Matiure, P. 2012. Mbira Dzavadzimu and its space within the Shona Cosmology: Tracing mbira from Bira to the Spiritual World. *Journal of Music Research in Africa*, 8(2): 29-49.
- Mutingwende, B. 2018. Shona Village depicts Zimbabwean culture and heritage. Web3 Solutions: Harare. Available at <http://web3.co.zw/> (Accessed: 17/06/2019).
- Ndoro, W. and Pwiti, G. 1997. Marketing the past: the Shona Village at Great Zimbabwe. *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Cities*, 12 (10):3-8.
- Ndoro, W. 2001. The preservation of Great Zimbabwe: your monuments, our Shrine. Doctoral thesis., Uppsala University.
- Perkins, H. C. and Thorns, D. C. 2001. Gazing or performing? Reflections on Urry's Tourism Gaze in the Context of Contemporary experience in the Antipodes. *International Sociology*, 16 (2): 185-204.
- Pwiti, G. 1996. Let the ancestors rest in peace? New challenges for cultural heritage management in Zimbabwe. *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites*, 1(3): 151-160.
- Reeds, S. 1998. The Politics of Dance. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 5(27): 503-32.

-
- Rutsate, J. 2010. Mhande dance in the Kurova guva Ceremony: An enactment of the Karanga Spirituality. *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, 42: 181-199.
- Rutsate, J., & Rutsate, S.H. 2021. A Restructuring (in)tangible cultural heritage of rural Zimbabweans: Sustaining and fulfilling livelihoods. *Journal of Advanced Research in Social Science and Humanities*, 7(4), 08–22. <https://doi.org/10.53555/nssh.v7i4.942>
- Silberberg, T. 1995. Cultural tourism and business opportunities for museums and heritage sites. *Tourism Management*, 16(5):361-365.
- Schauert, P. 2006. A Performing national archive: Power and preservation in the Ghana ensemble. *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana*, 10: 171-181.
- Taylor, D. 2003. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Titon, J. T. 2008. Knowing Fieldwork. In Barz, G, F. and Cooley, T, J. eds. *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology*. Pp.66-86. Oxford: University Press.
- Tracy, H. 1967. Music appreciation in Central and Southern Africa. *African Music Society Journal*, 4(1): 47-55.
- Urry, J. 1990. *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Urry, J. 1992. The tourist gaze revisited. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 36 (2): 172-186.
- Urry, J. and Larsen, J. 2011. *The Tourist Gaze 3.0*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- UNESCO 2008. What is Intangible Cultural Heritage? Available from <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ICH/index>. Accessed on 16 May 2020.
- Zinhuku, P. 2013. Adaption and Recontextualisation of Muchongoyo by Community Art Groups in Zimbabwe. Masters Dissertation., University of KwaZulu-Natal.