

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the state-) citizen contestations in Zimbabwe and examines the role of theatre in legitimising and/or resisting state hegemonies in the context of the post 2000 Zimbabwean cultural struggle. Using the theory of hegemony, the paper argues that,after) the repossession of land by the majority of the black population in 2000 and the constitutional referendum held in February 2000, whose "No" vote challenged the hegemonic discourses and patriotic history of the ruling ZANU PF party, what followed was a largely polarised society split between the pro-hegemonic civic society such as ZNLWA on one hand, and an equally vociferous anti-hegemonic civic society that supported the ruling cultural formations (Raftopoulos and Mlambo 2009; Ravengai 2008).The pro-hegemonic(agree) civic society sought to stabilise and legitimise state authority and its discourses on sovereignty, land reform and the removal of sanctions, while counter-state hegemonic actors such as ZimRights agitated for the respect of human rights, constitutionalism and democracy. Individual theatre practitioners took a cue from these opposing civic society bodies and critically dialogued among themselves, thereby creating some form of binaries characterised by those who also sought to stabilise and maintain the prevailing status quo on one hand, and chose that resisted and questioned the legitimacy of the prevailing hegemonies on other hand. In this paper, the polarised state of the theatre is represented by two opposing agitational propaganda performances, *Madzoka Zimbabwe* and *The Coup*.