

Musical Forms in Songs for Political Mobilisation during 2011 General Elections in Nigeria

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Abstract

The world faces a wide variety of security and violence threats. This is evident from series of international attention it has generated over the last decades. Politic and electioneering is one of the major issues on conflict especially in Nigeria. Elections campaigns goes with songs which some time results into violence. Music is also a powerful force for political mobilization which can also result into violence due to the textual ability of the songs. This study examines the forms of music for electioneering. The scope of this paper are selected presidential and gubernatorial election songs in Nigeria. Findings revealed that music performances during the 2011 general election in Nigeria has different musical forms and really helped in mobilizing the citizens. We recommend that INEC should scrutinize some political jingles and songs before they are aired. Also politicians should know that the songs can cause harm and violence and should avoid such. Likewise musicians should compose political songs in the spirit of sportsmanship.

Introduction

African music has indeed played big role in objectifying, unifying and bringing peaceful co-existence among African communities. Nzewi (1991) opines that the knowledge of the African cultural value systems provides the understanding to interpret African songs and deduce full meanings from the communication experience. Music has always been the most visible attempt employed by ourselves to listen to ourselves. African music is a powerful medium of communication, through which human actions and reactions are expressed. It provides a forum to mirror the society so that members could understand things better and learn more about life. African music focuses on the teaching of morality, building restraints in to the psyche of the public and in settling conflicts.

Omibiyi (1975) asserts that music centers on folklore which crystallizes the history, philosophy, arts and literature of the people. music is a social organizer. It supervises the operation of established government, assists in the maintenance of the land, safeguards and perpetuates tradition. Furthermore, traditional music discourages the degeneration of personal or corporate morals, promotes social equity and fights injustice, crowns rulers, welcomes births, buries the dead, enforces rule of law and enlivens different purposes of communal get together.

The year 2011 will go down in Nigeria as a year of received struggle for democracy. Kirkpatrick (1993) writes that democracy is a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people collectively, and administered by them or by officers appointed by them. No doubt when this set of leaders take over, the entire population of Nigeria was happy to participate in the election to usher in new leaders who would protect their interest and give the succour.

The effort to democratize involves matters of constitutional choice which transcends multi-party elections or replacement of one group by another in government (Ojurode 1993).

In line with this statement, it becomes imperative to evolve governmental regime which will provide opportunity for all and sundry to contribute in the governing processes which will not destabilize the integrity and effectiveness of the political ideology in Nigeria. It is at this junction that the use of music comes to mind, to mass mobilize the populace into participating in the elections. Music has been tested and wholesomely discovered by people to have the power to educate the people on current burning issues on national policies. This study focuses on the forms in the music for political mobilization in 2011 general elections.

Musical Forms and Structure in Africa

Musical structures are of many standardized patterns that composers have used over the centuries to show the arrangement, relationship and organization of various elements in a piece of music. Structures describe the pattern of organization; departure and return, pattern of contrast, repetition, and key relationship in a piece of music. He also views that one significant feature of African music is its highly intricate rhythmic complexity achieved through lineal syncopation and juxtaposition of multiple time patterns in a piece of music. Jackson (1998) reports that:

structure in music is the traditional way in which music is constructed. It is essentially a form of principles dating back to ancient Greece. From the Greeks, we get our basic concepts of scales, tonality(the establishment of a central tone known as the keynote around which all melody, harmony, and counterpoint revolve and on which the melody and bass line usually end), and mode(one of a number of scales that can be derived from a single scale pattern). While seven modes are possible from the scale as we know it, only two modes, major and minor, are most often used (Jackson 1998:3).

Richard (1991) explains that the structures or musical forms of songs in popular music are typically sectional, repeating forms, such as strophic form. According to Richard, other common forms include thirty-two-bar form, verse-chorus form, and the twelve bar blues. Blacking (1971) also explains that the surface structures of Venda music reflect not only musical conventions of Venda culture which are transmitted from one generation to another, but also cognitive and social processes which are endemic in all aspects of their culture and particularly present in musical activity. The choice of scales, modes, instruments and vocal ensembles, and the recruitment of performers in Africa, has been generated by the social function and / or history of the people.

Nketia (1974) stresses that the structures used in African music represent usages which are learned through participation in musical events, passed on orally from one generation to generation, and applied, modified and expanded by succeeding generations. The structures according to Nketia, include melodic and rhythmic, which permit limited improvisations to be made where appropriate. Agu (1999) explains that the structures of songs in African societies are not limited to solos, call and response, call and refrain and solo/chorused refrain patterns alone. Rather, African composers create much larger forms which are referred to as the mixed structural forms. Brown (1989) Asserts that the use of call and response in African music is more of a performance style than a structural form, because a solo performance of the same piece does not show incompleteness of any sort. It only shows the complementary phrasing of the song itself, which in a group performance may be presented in complementary call and response style for aesthetic and labour distribution purposes. Arom (1991) notes that the structure of African music is also characterized by varying number of phrases determined by what the artiste intends to put across and the style of his/her presentation. Sometimes in a four-phrase song structure, the fourth line, rather than being a repetition of the first, is used as concluding statement. The instrumental structures of African music allow members of the ensemble to exhibit their dexterity individually and collectively. The output of this dexterity stimulates vigorous dance performance and audience participation.

Akpabot (1998) states clearly the interwoven nature of African musical structures, forms and functions. It is more rewarding examining cultural tradition and structure side by side to find out how a piece of music is put together and why it is so conceived. Akpabot (1998) expresses that:

Examining structure in African traditional music, we find certain factors which influence the shape of the music. One of these is the type of society from which the music evolves. The structure of music that is kinship- oriented will be different in conception from music in a headless society. The characteristics one finds in a certain society is linked with the structure of the music obtainable there. Legend, myths and symbols which are integral parts of African belief system are other factors that determine the structure of music in a particular community. (Akpabot, 1998:15)

Akpabot (1998:49) defines rhythm as the organization of music in respect of time. He further expands that it is the regular or irregular recurrences of groups and motions in relation to each other; this relation being in respect of pulse, meter, stress, duration, accent, pitch, contour and design, functioning within the architectural structure of the artistic whole. Rhythm can be free, flexible, measured or metrical. Agawu (2003) examines the nature of rhythm in African music and testifies that it is the central element in the structure of traditional music. Jones (1994) remarks that a highly developed rhythm is the outstanding characteristic of African music.

Nketia (1979) observes that since African music is predisposed towards percussion and percussive texture, there is an understanding emphasis on rhythm, for rhythmic interest often compensates for the lack of melodic sophistication. Nketia (1979:128) writes that divisive rhythms are those that articulate the regular division of the time span, rhythms that follow the scheme of pulse structure in the grouping of notes. They may follow the duple, triple or hemiola scheme. Agawu (2003) writes that additive rhythm describes a pattern of organization in which non-identical or irregular durational groups follow one another and operates at two levels: within the bar and between bars or groups of bars. Chernoff (1979:47) elaborates on cross rhythm by adopting the term “staggered entries” to describe independent rhythmic patterns of different instruments resulting from layers of entry points. However, Nzewi (1997) argues that, in communal African team relationship, there exist no cross purposes, but inter-dependence for the collective achievement of success. He thus sees the relationship between two or more player who utilize triple motive against other motives playing inter-rhythm and not cross rhythm. He further asserts that rhythms, in African musical context, is not played in isolation as a musical presentation, but as an integral part of a poetic perception of motion that altogether make what he refers to as mega-rhythm. Samuel (2009), Ogli (2010), Okunade (2010) and Loko (2011) note that rhythm in African music is pivotal to the performance of any ensemble. To them it may be in *dùndún* ensemble, court music, music for funeral rite or music for religious activities .

Structure in African music would help this study to look at the structures in *Ìrègún* music in terms of its melody, harmony, tonality, phrases, rhythm, tone, language phoneme, instrumentation, and various scales that the composers uses, including the musical forms.

Music in Election Campaign in Nigeria

Music performance are central to artistic expression and experience in African tradition. Nketia (1974) defined music performance as the act of playing musical instrument, singing with the voice, dancing with the body, or acting in a music drama. Musical performance in Africa maintains an integral relationship with other aspects of life. A notable feature of this interaction, as we have stressed, is the fact that music is often performed in a multi – media context in which dance, elaborate costume, mime, poetry and drama are featured in a total theatre spectacle . The location of this total theatre spectacle within the context of religious, social and political activities underlines the indigenous perception of music. As an expressive idiom combines musical and are characterized by an engaging interaction between professional musicians. Okafor (2002) observes that 'we forsake the conscious, constructive use and power of music to our loss' In interpreting this fully, it means the product of music in the electioneering campaign must be able to function at the best and highest levels of the country's political development.

In the traditional Yoruba society, songs and music occupied a unique place in the preparation, mobilization and prosecution of war. The importance of songs in instigating conflict is aptly captured by a Yoruba proverb that says “*orin ni isaaju ote*”, meaning songs herald hostilities (Olawaju,2011). Scholars such as Olutoye and Olapade (1998) and Ilesanmi (1998) examine the importance of drums, chants and songs among the Yoruba and aver that more than their entertainment roles, they perform religious, social and military purposes. As a communicative device, songs are employed for inspiring warriors and for launching verbal assault in inter-personal conflicts. In many instances verbal assaults often result in physical assaults such that thought is provoked about the linguistic process that accentuates a conflict. Song of assaults are almost always accompanied by cheering, laughing and savouring of the exchanges, until the conflict intensifies into brawl. What this imply is that the metaphors or linguistic devices employed in songs are not innocent and should be taken seriously. Songs of assault have a long history, and can function not only on a personal level but also as politically effective weapons. Campaign and post election pretest song in Hausa language songs are situated within this frame, and like war songs. This communication through artistic medium open up danger and provocation against the person the artist sing about.

Just like the elections during the colonial rule, first, second and third republics, songs have continued to play a key and dominant role in Nigeria Fourth Republic post election protest songs.

One time foremost afrobeat exponent, Late Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, used his music to preach against political domination, oppression, economic hardship, unemployment and nepotism. It is the view of this paper that music plays a highly important function in creating awareness in the framework of mass-mobilizing the populace towards the next general election. If music is used as a cross-fertilization of ideas through the medium of television or radio, then the electioneering campaign will be made easy to reach the teeming population who are willing to hear what each political party need to deliver to electorate. What the people hear or listen must have a communicative power and this is one of the reasons politicians had used music to their advantages. Only through music can political parties and politicians get their information to the grassroots. It is like advertisement which is used to reach out to the public. Whatever message to be set into music must have common objectives of attracting positive reaction and which will work with the people for the upliftment and good of the citizenry. Servae (1985) agreed that information must be of relevance to the genuine, development and also involve social participation. This implies that music as Emeka (1992) considers it "is a useful tool in dissemination of information". It is only through it that the electioneering campaign can reach the grass root.

In attempt to educate the people, music should be used to get something done and equally used in controlling behavior, thought and character. Its Communicative role is a two-way traffic, a dialogue when used realistically; and also, it provides adjustment and redirection for political enlightenment. Sometimes, slogans in form of music are used in political rallies and campaign.

Songs like “ come out and vote it is your right, come out and choose your leaders for the future of your children” were played by INEC. Sunny Ade was also used to sing *Nigeria yi ti gbogbo wani* (this Nigeria is for all of us) during the 2011 post election violence in some part of the country.

Musical Forms in the Election Mobilization Songs

Different musical forms were observed in the songs for political mobilizations for elections in 2011. Selected songs below are examples of songs in different forms:

Olarun opolo Olarun opolo Gomina to d’agbale oja Olarun opolo	Meaning He is mentally deranged He is mentally deranged The Governor who turns a market sweeper He is mentally deranged
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O laarun Opolo

O - la - run o - po - lo, O' - la - run O - po - lo Go - mi - na to da - gba - le o - ja o - la - run o - po - lo

The song above is a song against Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) with the broom as the party’s symbol. The song is also a simple tune in through-composed form.

Another song also in through-composed asserts that the party will win the election. See the song below:

Egbe wa ni o wole Egbe wa ni o wole E ba na’wo na’wo ke d’onigbese Egbe wa ni o wole	Meaning The victory of our party is certain The victory of our party is certain You can overspend and go bankrupt The victory of our party is sure
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Egbe Wa Niyio Wole

E-gbe wa ni yio wo-le, e-gbe wa ni yio wo-le, be - na-wo na-wo be do ni gbe se.

7
e-gbe wa ni yio wo-le.

The form of the song above is through-composed. It uses a simple folk tune in its composition. Another campaign song for President Goodluck Jonathan is written below:

*Goodluck to you, goodluck to me
goodluck to every body, goodluck Nigeria o*

Goodluck To You

Good-luck to you, good-luck to me, good-luck to eve-ry bo-dy good-luck Ni-ge-ria o.

The song above is part of the campaign song composed and performed for Goodluck Jonathan. The song promises goodluck to Nigerians, as an individual and as a nation. It promises better living condition of Nigerians, which includes; better education for Nigerian youths, good governance and better economic growth. The song is through composed musical form.

The PDP gubernatorial candidate in Oyo state Alao Akala Christopher had a team of singers that campaigned for him one of the songs is written below:

*All- A egbe mi ewa sia PDP lonfe tele, Alao Akala eni Olorun yan kose lekeji,
Egbe olomburela egbe PDP, egbe onire tide kire wole wa,
Solo-Efibo gbe debe kowole, Chorus-Alao Akala leni Olorun yan o,
Solo-Eni olorun yan lawanfe, Chorus-Alao Akala leni Olorun yan o,
Solo-PDP, Chorus- power to the people.*

Meaning
Oh my comrades see the flag of PDP flying, Alao Akala is the person God has chosen to go for second term, Its umbrella party, it Peoples Democratic Party, A party with a good will, Please use your vote and let him win, Alao Akala is God’s anointed.

Alao Akala Lo'lorun yan

A egbe mi, e wa si - a P D P lon-fe le - le A-la-o A-ka-la le-ni O-lo-run yan

7
ki o se le ke ji e - gbe o-lom-bu-re - la e - gbe P D P e - gbe

14
o-ni re ti de ki re ma wo - le. Fi-bogbe de - be ko-wo le, A - la-o A-ka-la le ni O-lo-run yan o

The song employ a religious song tune. It elucidates PDP as a party with its flag of victory flying in Oyo state. It also postulates the divine candidacy of the PDP gubernatorial candidate for the 2011 gubernatorial election in Oyo state. That God’s anointed to govern Oyo state is Alao Akala. It also call on the good people of Oyo state to allow him to win the 2011 gubernatorial election by voting massively for him. call and response antiphonal form, the through-composed form

The song below is by rival party of Governor Alao Akala. The song form is through-composed.

<i>Gbo ohun awon Akala toun korin</i>	Hear the sounds of Governor Akala singing
<i>Gbo ohun awon Akala toun korin</i>	Hear the sounds of Governor Akala singing
<i>Won korin tibon tibon</i>	They campaigning with guns and cutlass
<i>Won korin tobe tobe</i>	They campaigning with guns and cutlass
<i>Gbo ohun awon Akala toun korin</i>	Hear the sounds of Governor Akala singing

Gbo Ohun Awon Akala

Gbo o - hun a-won A-ka-la toun ko-rin, gbo o - hun a-won A-ka-la toun ko-rin won

9
ko-rin ti-bon ti - bon won ko-rin to-be to - be gbo o - hun a-won A-ka-la toun ko-rin.

One of the chieftains of PDP also sang during one of the campaign rally that it is a must for PDP to win in Southwestern part of Nigeria. See one of the song below:

<p><i>Lau erebe erebe lau,</i> <i>Lau erebe erebe lau</i> <i>Obasanjo onigba kadibo</i> <i>Kamawoleo lau erebe erebe lau</i></p> <p>Meaning Lau erebe erebe lau Lau erebe erebe lau Obasanjo will not agree For election to be rigged Lau erebe erebe lau</p>
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Lau Erebe

Lau - e-re- be___ e -re-be lau, lau - e-re- be___ e -re-be lau O-ba - san-jo o-ni gba ka-di bo ka ma

9
wo le o lau - e-re-be e-re-be lau

Lau erebe is Yoruba folk tune. The song emphasizes that Obasanjo will not agree for 2011 elections to be rigged. This is an irony considering the do or die election campaign slogan or chant that he choruses during the 2007 general elections. The song is through compose musical form.

Conclusion

This paper examined the forms of selected campaign songs of 2011 general elections. The content and context analysis of the songs reveal some findings about the roles of campaign songs for political mobilization. Campaign songs are evidential of non-elite's capacity for political communication. Lyrics of campaign songs are quite entertaining and most of them are easy to memorize. The songs are modification of popular, religious or traditional music and as such are reflected in different structures and forms. But most campaign songs have one thing in common-they disseminate the candidate.

Recommendation

Elections require a deep knowledge of the contribution and understanding of the important role of politicians. They should deliver the responsibility and accountability of governance to the people. Democracy exists when the relationship between the governed and the government abides by the principle that the state is at the service of the citizens and not the citizens at the service of the state, that the government exists for the people. For a successful transformation of the electioneering campaign, music plays a prominent role in our lives; it is also very functional in enlightening the people. Whatever the future holds for us, Nigeria has come a long way. Each and every citizen must rise up to the challenges of our national responsibilities without considering first, the gains and benefit to be reaped for participating in national programmes. Music and its forms as a veritable tool for mass mobilization and should be used to reach out to rural areas and hinterlands to create awareness and enlightenment campaign about the forthcoming by-elections in year 2012 and 2015 general elections.

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