

Music and Messaging in the African Political Arena

Uche T. Onyebadi
Texas Christian University, USA

A volume in the Advances in Religious and
Cultural Studies (ARCS) Book Series



Published in the United States of America by
IGI Global
Information Science Reference (an imprint of IGI Global)
701 E. Chocolate Avenue
Hershey PA, USA 17033
Tel: 717-533-8845
Fax: 717-533-8661
E-mail: cust@igi-global.com
Web site: <http://www.igi-global.com>

Copyright © 2019 by IGI Global. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored or distributed in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, without written permission from the publisher. Product or company names used in this set are for identification purposes only. Inclusion of the names of the products or companies does not indicate a claim of ownership by IGI Global of the trademark or registered trademark.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Onyebadi, Uche, editor.

Title: Music and messaging in the African political arena / Uche T. Onyebadi, editor.

Description: Hershey, PA : Information Science Reference, [2019]

Identifiers: LCCN 2018022066 | ISBN 9781522572954 (h/c) | ISBN 9781522572961 (eISBN)

Subjects: LCSH: Music--Political aspects--Africa.

Classification: LCC ML3917.A4 M84 2019 | DDC 306.4/842096--dc23 LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2018022066>

This book is published in the IGI Global book series Advances in Religious and Cultural Studies (ARCS) (ISSN: 2475-675X; eISSN: 2475-6768)

British Cataloguing in Publication Data

A Cataloguing in Publication record for this book is available from the British Library.

All work contributed to this book is new, previously-unpublished material. The views expressed in this book are those of the authors, but not necessarily of the publisher.

For electronic access to this publication, please contact: eresources@igi-global.com.

Chapter 14

Music, Political Messaging, and Nigeria's 2015 Presidential Election

Stella Amara Aririguzoh
Covenant University, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

Music and songs command public attention and generally appeal to a large number of people. During the 2015 Nigerian presidential election, some politicians and their parties virtually took over the musical space to woo voters. The message creators for incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan and his challenger, Muhammadu Buhari, crafted music-laden television commercials to convey their manifestos. This chapter used a content analytical method to investigate how various pieces of musical compositions were used as communication tools in the television adverts used in the elections. Specifically, it examined the musical genre, words, context, message, and discourse. Overall, most of the political advertisements used in the election were built around music and songs in praise of the candidates or used to tarnish their image.

INTRODUCTION

Music is an art form that uses harmonious sound or acoustic signals to communicate its messages. Different cultures have different types of music to serve different occasions. Nigeria is the largest multi-ethnic country in Africa, but irrespective of language differences, music plays a big part in the cultures of the different ethnicities that make up the country. During celebrations, people sing and dance.

We may listen to music as individuals or as members of a group while we engage in our daily work. Spender (1972, p. 32) acclaims that “music is the most powerful of idealist drugs except religion.” This probably explains the wide acceptance of music as a universal language and as a popular means of expression. Throughout history, people have used music to send messages that may be difficult to convey by words of mouth or through other means. Chandra (2010) acknowledges that music is a form of entertainment for people’s relaxation and amusement. Nevertheless, Ligeti (1978, p.24) points out that “it is equally true that music in itself does not oppress; neither is it democratic nor anti-democratic. To be

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-7295-4.ch014

sure, certain definite injustices are subject to political criticism in their relation to musical society.” In other words, music on its own is neutral until people apply it to achieve democratic or non-democratic purposes.

Every piece of music is composed within a socio-political and cultural context. Consequently, what may be acceptable in one political context may be rejected in another. More specifically, political music is used to address urgent issues facing a society. It appeals to citizens as well as to people in power and authority. Musicians have used it to stir people to action over the years. But what is in music that makes it a potent channel of communication? Rousseau (1959) proffers an answer. He calls it “music’s energy and the force of its expressions.”

It is this *energy* that appeals widely to people and has attracted some politicians to package messages about themselves or against their opponents in music and songs. Garofalo (1992, p.65) observes that messages embedded in songs can reach places far beyond spaces defined by politics. Music’s direct effect on the political processes may be subtle and very difficult to measure. Yet, various politicians and their supporters have used it to galvanize the electorate to vote for them or at least discourage them from voting for their competitors.

Music and politics are often associated. Street, Hague and Savigny (2008) support this view with their observation that music and politics have long been connected. Onyebadi (2017) affirms that music is a platform for political communication. Political music can be commentaries on political subjects, music appealing to factional sentiments or even those advocating for particular political actions. Some may explicitly address specific political subjects. In their study, Weglarz and Pedelty (2013) found that political activists write lyrics, speak up in public and support political movements, for the purpose of political activism using what they termed *political rock* as opposed to *mindless party rock* music.

Although some authors like Goehr (1994, p.101) has queried the relationship between music and society, yet it cannot be denied that music can be used to attain political goals as music in politics has entrenched the democratic trend towards pluralism and tolerance where the foci is not on sameness but on paying constructive attention to differences. Political music may be a parody of a popular song with new lyrics or simple substitution of names and variations of text; an old song assuming new meanings based on current realities that are different from the time it was first composed or changing the tunes of an already existing song. Popular political music allows voters to be involved in the political process, and offers them the platform to appreciate the things happening around them.

Street (2003, p.114) opines in this regard that:

At the simplest level, the music chosen to accompany election campaigns acts as a form of propaganda. It serves to evoke particular images and associations, much in the same way that politicians’ photo-opportunities with pop or film or soaps stars are supposed do. If anything, songs and sounds are more powerful weapons in this armoury because of the way music works directly on our emotions. Just as the soundtrack to films or advertisements generates moods and feelings, so too do campaign songs.

Since the contestants cannot carry their messages to all voters in whatever locations they may be, they take their campaign messages, packaged as music, to television. Television is an audio-visual mass medium that simultaneously offers the audience sound and visual experiences. These provide the voters the opportunities to see and form impressions about these candidates running for public offices. Aririguzoh (2012, 2014 and 2015) observes that what is broadcast on television influences voters in their choice of presidential candidates, the parties they vote for and even their participation in a presidential election.

Music, Political Messaging, and Nigeria's 2015 Presidential Election

Nigerian presidential electoral campaigns are full of fun, yet the entertainment does not dilute the seriousness of the occasions. To add to the excitement are musical messages composed to either praise the contesting presidential candidates and their parties or to ridicule and bring to public notice the follies of the opposition candidates and their different political platforms. Either way, political pundits use music, especially those with popular tunes, to tell their stories. Thus, music continues to have a great impact on politics in Nigeria.

Rationale

In Nigeria, it is not uncommon to see the intermingling of politics and music during political electioneering seasons. Apart from using musical troupes and composing campaign songs, Nigerian politicians effectively employ music in presidential election campaigns. Messages are packaged as songs, musical videos and dance as the contestants for office strive to outdo one another in effectively and musically communicating their message to the voters.

This study was therefore conceptualized to examine how the two major political parties in Nigeria - the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressive Congress (APC) - and their candidates, then incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan and retired General Muhammadu Buhari respectively, used music as a tool to communicate their messages to the Nigerian electorate during the country's 2015 Nigerian presidential election. More specifically, this study analysed the political messages conveyed through different types of music used in televised commercials during the 2015 presidential campaigns.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Democracies and Political Communication Styles

How many types of democracies exist? Some existing literature point to three – the aggregative, deliberative and agonistic. Young (2000) explains the aggregative and deliberative types. He writes that the aggregative democrats see politics as an instrument to maintain institutional power and private interests through competitive elections. Deliberative democrats are representatives of their constituencies. Their communication is basically verbal. Verba, Scholzman and Brady (1995) and Flammang (1997) say that the “voice” of the people is expressed by the number of *ayes* or *nays*.

Deliberative democracy involves citizens engaging in public discourses on political issues to produce consensual decisions. Ideally, their discourses are expected to broaden their view points. In this system, politicians develop more inclusive communication within existing political institutions such as elections, juries, and legislatures. The vehicles for political participation include new social movements, interest groups and political parties that influence and sustain civil society. Deliberative democrats make rational arguments, and deliberative theorists like Cohen (1989), Dryzek (1990) and Fishkin (1991) claim that aggregative politics is more common in modern Western states.

Coles (1997), Dumm (1996), White (1991) and Connolly (1999) write about agonistic democracy. Connolly (1999, p. 10) calls it the “politics of becoming” or “that conflictual process by which new identities are propelled into being by moving the preexisting shape of diversity, justice, and legitimacy.” Connolly (1991, p.143) also adds that social movements introduce subjective interpretations to issues; use established identities to engage political institutions to form what he (p.7) describes as “fugitive

currents of energies and possibility exceeding the cultural fund of identities and differences.” Agonistic democracy celebrates combinations and differences in identities, for example, political coalitions.

What is common to these forms of democracies is the use of music for political communication. Each uses music as a form of discourse, where political messaging is integrated in songs, some of which have lyrics with clear meanings and others with cryptic messages that are subject to various interpretations by listeners.

Music may evoke contentment, satisfaction and pride in the minds of the listener. It may be an assumption that music has the power to sway listeners to do either good or bad. Nevertheless, it offers a channel for political communication. The desire to share political beliefs through music is not new. Political music includes campaign songs. According to Dunn and Jones (1994, p.1), “human vocality encompasses all the voice’s manifestations (for example, speaking, singing, crying, and laughing), each of which is invested with social meanings not wholly determined by linguistic content.” It may also be true that music has the power to inspire and stimulate a campaign. As Dunaway (1987, p. 269) remarks, “music may be said to be political when its lyrics or melody evoke or reflect a political judgement by the listener,” adding that “the politics of a piece of music depend upon its time, performer, and audience. Thus, the most comprehensive definition of political music incorporates a specific context: the function of a particular work in a particular setting at a particular place in time.”

With political messaging in music, what may be seen as too sensitive in one era, even in the same given society, may be seen as routine and mundane in another. The late Nigerian musician, Fela Anikulapo-Kuti’s *Zombie, Coffin for Head of State and International Thief Thief (ITT)*, sounded very radical in the 1970s when Nigeria was still under dictatorial military rule. Today, Nigeria’s context has changed because the country is under a democratic dispensation, hence the songs may not make the same impact as they once did. Fela’s songs were overtly political and it was not unexpected that he had regular brushes with the government security agencies.

African Politics and Music

Africans are no strangers to political messaging through music. Africans use songs to articulate their thoughts and feelings about politics. Nyamnjoh and Fokwang (2005, p. 252) point out that “Africans have shaped and been shaped by their music.” Longwe and Clark (1998) and Brusila (2001) observe that politics, culture and gender determine who produces and uses music. Asse (1995, p.126) remark that some musicians from Cameroun sang the praises of their then president, Ahmadou Babatoura Ahidjo. Tala Andre Marie sang *20 years of peace and progress under Ahidjo*. Manu Dibango hailed his policy of “national unity” in an album titled *Ahmadou Ahidjo* while Medzo Me Nsom invited Cameroonians to turn out en masse and vote for the same man who was their president from 1960 to 1982.

In Kenya, some musicians also sang the praises of the government and its officials. According to Wekesa (2004) some artists from regions and political classes in Kenya used their trade to support the ruling elites and the party in power, the Kenya National African Union (KANU) under Kenya’s first president, Jomo Kenyatta as well as his successor, Daniel Arap Moi. These artists produced songs to support the existing political status quo, the party’s candidates and policies. In turn, the party and her officers directly and indirectly supported these artists. For example, at the climax of the Kenyan multi-party elections in 1992, Joseph Kamaru, a musical artiste appeared in all KANU rallies in the Central Province. His presence attracted thousands of people who would probably have had no other opportunity

Music, Political Messaging, and Nigeria's 2015 Presidential Election

to watch him perform live. Probably as part of the pay off, his songs were constantly played on Kenya Broadcasting Corporation's (KBC) radio and television stations with nation-wide reach.

However, the situation was different in the 2002 presidential election in the country, as two young hip hop musicians who went by the stage name, *GidiGidi MajiMaji*, came out with the popular hit, *Unbwogable*, to criticize KANU (Wekesa, 2004). Their song became the opposition's campaign theme song in the presidential election which the opposition eventually won.

Nevertheless, Tumolo (2016, p.38) observes that in some instances in Africa, musicians faced the wrath of the government and its security agencies. According to him:

Musicians may also find themselves unwittingly thrown into the political realm when their music is appropriated by campaigns that contravene their own political beliefs. Even when the connections are precarious, political campaigns invoke popular music to generate interest and energy, establish emotional bonds with prospective voters, and to communicate aspects of their candidate's character or politics.

Other researchers have tried to establish the impact of music on politics in Africa. Abdullah's (2009) study found that the informal opposition against the existing political class was championed by musical artists during the 2007 national elections in Sierra Leone. Wai (2008) found that popular music created new spaces, introduced political conversations and drew attention to the different problems besieging the country during the same election. Most importantly, he found that "perhaps the most significant way in which the youths contributed to democratic awakening in Sierra Leone was through music" (Wai, 2008, p. 57).

Shepler (2010, p. 627) found that the young people in Sierra Leone deployed West African hip hop music, local idioms and election themed lyrics during the country's 2007 general elections. This researcher found "an explosion of popular music by young people addressing some of the central issues of the election: corruption and lack of opportunities for youth advancement." Their music urged the voters not to allow corrupt politicians to rule again. Christensen and Utas (2008, p. 536) remark that the lyrics of the political songs referred to these types of politicians as "hypocrites," "wicked men" and "educated fools."

Muturi (2005) studied the role of songs and music as communication tools in Kenya's 2002 general elections. His major finding is that most of the voters were not too overtly influenced by music in deciding on the candidates they voted for. Okigbo (1990) studied the 1979 Nigerian elections and found that most residents in rural communities in Eastern Nigeria used the radio as their primary channel of getting political messages. Those radio stations routinely played political songs.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

McQuail's (1987) democratization or democratic participant theory demands that the press should be pluralistic and decentralized. Since the media play key roles in the society, they should not be left in the hands of a few professionals. To encourage grassroots democracy, Usaini (2009) shares the opinion that the media are to support citizens' participation in the democratic processes including reporting political activities for national development. According to Folarin (2002, p. 34), the democratic participant theory reflects the public disillusionment of the earlier libertarian and social responsibility theories due to their failure to deliver the expected social benefits to the society. Also, the public was reacting against the commercialization, monopolization and bureaucracy of media institutions.

McQuail laid emphasis on the receivers of media messages. The theory helps to preserve and revive local cultures by promoting the right of the receivers to information, provide feedback, and use new communication technologies as well as take part in social actions. Voting and participating in elections are social actions that support democracy. The broad participation of voters in elections help to maintain democracy. McQuail (2005, p. 523) emphasises that “there has always been an intimate connection between mass communication and the conduct of politics, in whatever regime.”

This theory limits the role of the government to licensing and providing basic guidelines to the media. Receivers of media messages experience equality, inclusion and equal access to the media because the media outlets are out to serve the needs of the community. Because this is so, marginalization is eliminated.

It appears that there is a strong correlation between the use of music in political campaigns and the democratic participant media theory. In Nigeria, music reaches a majority of voters. Music and singing are part of the culture of the various ethnic groups in Nigeria. More specifically, political music provides some Nigerians with something to listen to while they are still engaged in other activities. Music in politics provides the voters the opportunities to enjoy the feeling of bonding with politicians while assessing and assimilating their messages, especially if the songs are presented in the local languages of the voters. Where the voters meet as members of small groups, for example, as members of families and or local communities, music promotes the feeling of group identity.

In Nigeria, both ruling and opposition political parties and their candidates sponsor political songs to communicate their messages. And, given the unique nature of the Nigerian society, riddles, parables and proverbs are woven into such political songs. Nonetheless, the presentation of good songs with attractive political messages does not mean that voters will automatically vote for the candidate who released them.

METHOD

The content analysis method was adopted for this study. This method allows a researcher to examine variables by systematically and objectively quantifying them. Sobowale (2008, p. 18) calls such variables the “manifest content” of communication. A published content, for example, a television commercial, was divided into various categories of interest to the researcher. Every content category was assigned a code fed into the coding sheet. From this coding sheet, a summary of the data was made and then interpreted. Each variable was assigned a numerical value (See Appendix 1).

Sample

Two major parties, the ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP) and the coalition of opposition, All Progressive Congress (APC), contested the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria. Other political parties also participated in the polls. However, this analysis is about the campaign songs and videos used by the two main parties, the PDP and APC. During the election, hundreds of political commercials sponsored by political parties, interest groups, individuals and political sympathisers were produced and aired to woo voters. The large number of these commercials necessitated this researcher doing a purposive sampling of the commercials for analysis, under the following guidelines:

1. Official campaign videos sponsored by political parties in support of their flag bearers.
2. Official television advertisements sponsored by political parties in support of their candidates.

Music, Political Messaging, and Nigeria's 2015 Presidential Election

3. Official videos sponsored by presidential candidates to advertise themselves and canvass for votes.
4. Official television commercials sponsored by presidential campaign teams in support of their candidates.

Based on these, there were four commercials for each candidate from either party.

DATA INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

The discussions below examine both overt and latent messages in the presidential television campaign advertisements and songs produced and released to promote the two major political parties that contested the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria, as well as their candidates.

ALL PROGRESSIVE CONGRESS (APC)

Official Campaign Video

This commercial used a blues musical tone to introduce itself to the viewers before the music faded into the background. Blues music is relatively soft when compared to the rather loud traditional *Highlife* and *Afrobeat* rhythms Nigerians are associated with. The beating of the instruments appears most minimal when compared to the loud sound that usually come from the talking drums and rattles. Apparently, this was to appeal to voters' emotions and make them see reasons why APC should win.

The video shows as a short documentary where terrorism, kidnapping and fear competed for attention. The images used in producing this video depict the atrocities and carnage perpetrated by the *Boko Haram* terrorists in north eastern Nigeria. While the indistinct music played in the background, the dead pan voice continued reeling the "atrocities" of the incumbent president of the PDP. The covert message presented to viewers and by extension the voters is that President Goodluck Jonathan's government was incapable of handling the security situation in Nigeria. With the soft music lispig through, the voice over reminded viewers that President Jonathan was "dancing at a political rally less than 24 hours after over 200 girls were abducted" by *Boko Haram* militants. And, by using this sentence allegedly made by

Table 1. The APC/Buhari presidential television commercials

ADVERT	MUSIC TYPE	CONTEXT	MESSAGE
APC Campaign Video	Blues Background	Terrorism Insecurity	Uncaring, incapable Jonathan
APC Advert	Instrumental Background	Terrorism Insecurity	Impunity from terrorists because the government could not handle them. Therefore, vote out this incapable government
Buhari's campaign Song	Song	Waste Corruption	Buhari is the one man to lead Nigeria to the promised land
APC Presidential Advert	Instrumental	Poor Economy	Vote for the change agent to positively boost the economy

the president, “I don’t know if Shekau (leader of *Boko Haram*) is dead or alive,” the producers of the video introduced a discourse that suggested that the president was weak and out of touch with the security situation in the country or incapable of handling it. The blues music at the background provided the cushion for the harsh language the narrator used in painting President Jonathan as irresponsible, uncaring and unfeeling and could not be trusted to guarantee the safety of lives and property in the country.

Pro-Buhari Television Advertisement

Retired Major General Muhammadu Buhari was APC’s presidential candidate. A piece of soulful instrumental music used throughout this campaign advertisement showed him as the more credible candidate for the presidency. The music was played against the background of a cast of three, acting as terrorists spreading fear with impunity.

To underscore the seriousness of their fear mongering, the terrorists tried to mock the electoral processes because of their belief in the strength of their guns, with one of them saying: “If you think this election can save you, then you’re only joking. We will continue to kidnap your wives and daughters. We will steal your properties until you give us our right.”

The instrumental music which sounded more like martial tunes associated with the military where candidate Buhari retired from, was used to heighten the sense of insecurity in the country caused by *Boko Haram* insurgents. Then came the political message from the voice over which announced that voters should vote for Buhari who, as Nigeria’s military leader in the 1980s, captured Mohammed Marwa. Marwa, was the leader of the dreaded Islamic sect, *Maitasine*, whose militant members also terrorised Nigerians in the northern part of the country.

By reminding listeners and viewers about how Buhari dealt a mortal blow to Marwa and his group of religious fanatics, the commercial insinuated that Buhari was better experienced and positioned to offer effective protection, security and better life to Nigerians if they voted for him. On the other hand, the instrumental music which almost sounded like martial music, may have also been used as an unmistakable warning signal to *Boko Haram* militants that they would be crushed with devastating military might if Buhari was elected president.

Buhari’s Campaign Songs

This political advertising song presented Buhari as the *one man* ready to lead Nigerians to the proverbial promised land. The message is delivered in a long song against piano music background by an accomplished Nigerian vocalist, singer, songwriter, composer and producer, Peter Linus (popularly known by his stage name PITA, an acronym for Praise In This Age). Peter is a Christian gospel artiste. By publicly singing this *One Man* song, he is seen as endorsing the Buhari-Osinbajo team (Yemi Osinbajo was Buhari’s running mate):

*Shey na dem, na we or who
No one wants to take the blame
For what we’ve become
See the land God gave us
A gift to us
How did we turn our blessing into a curse?*

Music, Political Messaging, and Nigeria's 2015 Presidential Election

*The world used to envy us
Back when we had a voice
But now we have failed
Now they ignore us
Our lives is like a circus
When we speak, they won't hear us
We all turn religious
Praying God to help us
Cos the system has failed us
Corruption surrounds us
And everybody is crying
Who can save us
All we need is one man,
One man
All we need is one man
Who's ready to fight
And fight for what's right
A man with foresight
All we need is one man
Who's ready to lead us
Lead us to the promise land
Who is that man?
It will take you and me
And we can do
All it takes to raise us from this dust
No matter the cost
We'll save the land God gave us
Save her from destruction
Everyone who hears my voice
Make a choice
We'll walk with our heads high
The world will be watching
We'll make a stand
And they won't ignore us
We all must remember
The strength in our number, eh
If we all reach out
We can reach out for that
One man eh, one man eh eh
All we need is one man
Who's ready to lead us
Who's ready to
Lead us to the promise land
All we need is one man*

*Who's not afraid to say Yes
Who's not afraid to dream
And paint a picture for the future
One man who's not afraid eh eh
To lead us, just like Moses did
One man, eh eh eh eh eh, One man oh oh
We calling out for 'One man'
Who's not afraid
Who's not afraid
One man
To lead again
All we need is One man
Shebi shebi shebi shebi shebi na, One man
All we need is one man
Shebi shebi shebi shebi shebi na, One man
All we need is one man
Shebi shebi shebi shebi shebi na, One man*

Although this song does not mention the incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan who was running for re-election by name, it is obvious that he is the reason for the lamentation that Nigeria had lost her days of glory. The message in the lyrics is that of President Jonathan Goodluck being an inefficient leader at the helm of a failed government that moved Nigeria backwards from a place of greatness to the position of a beggar nation.

In the song, the musician wondered how Nigeria's blessings had turned into a curse. While the song does not attribute all of Nigeria's woes to President Jonathan, it remarkably notes that under him, Nigeria not only ceased to be the envy of the world but had become a country whose voice the world could afford to ignore without consequences.

The singer's repeated refrain about the "one man" who was ready to rejuvenate a decaying country and lead it to greater glory is a pointer that Nigeria needed a change; and that change could only come from Muhammadu Buhari. Buhari is presented as the fearless leader who was ready to lead again, and the "one man" who, although a Muslim by religion, was described as a modern-day Moses "Who's ready to lead us to the promise land."

Olamide Adedeji alias *Badoo* is a Nigerian hip hop musician who is very popular among young people. In his campaign song for Buhari and his running mate, Osinbajo, he presents the duo as the change agents to revitalize Nigeria and make her citizens enjoy guaranteed security, electricity and rewarding employment. He sang as follows (English translation in brackets):

APC! Change!

Chorus 1:

*Enjoyment for the people
Igbadun for the nation,
[Enjoyment for the entire nation]
Every day jollification, na the change we they want,
[Happiness and enjoyment every day, that's the change we want]*

Music, Political Messaging, and Nigeria's 2015 Presidential Election

Maximum security, too much electricity, job opportunity

Na the change we dey want.

[That's the change we want]

Chorus 2:

APC ehn ehn APC ehn ehn APC ehn ehn (x4)

Buhari and Osibanjo na the change we dey want

[Buhari and Osibanjo, they are the change we want]

APC ehn ehn APC ehn ehn APC ehn ehn (x4)

Buhari and Osibanjo na the change we dey want

[Buhari and Osibanjo, they are the change we want]

E don tey we dey wait, na today, we go take the change

[We've been waiting for too long, but we'll take the change]

Na the change we dey want

[It is the change we want]

As we they talk, them they feel, we dey do them they see

[As we talk, they will feel, as we do, they will see our work]

Action is louder than voice o!

Na the change we dey want

[That's the change we want]

People for road o don know the thing e o, no need to scope o

[Everyone knows the thing, no need to explain]

chololo cholio, jalala jalii o,

Choboooo chobiooo, wetin you talk ooo, I say my people no para

[What are talking about? I say my people no more hardship]

My people no vex, my people no stress,

[My people, no more anger, no more stress]

We go give you the best oo...

[We shall give you the best]

(Repeat Chorus 1 and 2)

APC hmm hmm, na wire o, na elelele, everything go coole, elele

[With APC, no worry, its joyful time, everything will be cool]

Market woman go enjoy, elele hmm hmm o, all the workers go enjoy elele,

[Market woman will enjoy, all workers will enjoy]

My people nagode gode my people dalu dalu e rora ma gbese ese

[My people, thank you, thank you, thank you, thank you]

No more sorrows and pain o for our nation o: chakom

[No more sorrows and pain in our nation; no more]

We go shine after the rain our nation o chakom

[We shall shine after the rain, our nation will be great]

(Repeat Chorus 1 and 2)

APC ehn ehn APC ehn ehn APC ehn ehn (x4)

Buhari and Osibanjo na the change we dey want

[Buhari and Osibanjo are the changes we want]

APC ehn ehn APC ehn ehn APC ehn ehn (x4)

Buhari and Osibanjo na the change we dey want
 [Buhari and Osibanjo are the changes we want]
 APC! CHANGE!

APC's Presidential Advertisement for Buhari

In this political campaign advertisement, the message is primarily presented as instrumental music playing all through. No voice is heard. Moving texts of what Buhari had achieved earlier as Nigeria's military leader, changing colours and the chimes of falling lapels are added to complete the demand that Nigerians should vote in Buhari as the right person for the presidency.

Music in Buhari's Campaign Songs and Advertisements

Both political advertisements in support of candidate Buhari underscore the centrality of music in contemporary political campaigns. This supports Cloonan and Street's (1997, p. 223) argument that present-day public cynicism about politics and politicians has forced politicians to turn to popular music more frequently "in a desperate attempt to make themselves appear interesting, relevant, and credible."

This was exactly what Buhari and the APC did. His campaign team used music as part of the tactics to get voters to see him as worthy of their votes. The lyrics of songs were crafted to demonstrate how Nigerians were dissatisfied with how their country appeared to be moving backward. They also expressed the people's desire for a better life. Overall, the campaign songs urged voters to shun President Jonathan and vote for Buhari.

One crucial campaign message in the songs and advertisements for candidate Buhari is that of hyping up the poor security situation in the country. They producers of the messages seized upon the terrorism unleashed by the *Boko Haram* militants to demonstrate that the country was no longer secure under President Jonathan. And, above all, they hinted that as a former Nigerian leader who had confronted and exterminated the *Maitasine* religious group that once wreaked havoc, also in the northern part of the country, Buhari had the necessary military experience and wherewithal to silence the *Boko Haram* sect.

Table 2. The PDP/Goodluck presidential television commercials

ADVERT	MUSIC TYPE	CONTEXT	MESSAGE
PDP Campaign Video	Combination (Instrumental/ Original <i>Sit Down</i> song)	Economic Transformation	Re-election for continuity of tenure
PDP Advert	Song (<i>Jonathan Na You Win</i>)	Economic transformation	Vivacious demand for the re- election of Jonathan
Goodluck's Campaign Song	Original Song	A call from the fatherland for his service	Continuity of tenure
PDP Presidential Advert	Instrumental background	Self-praise for an better improved economy under hardship	Continuity for further national economic transformation

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PDP)

Official Campaign Video

The *Sit Down* song in the People's Democratic Party's campaign video is an original composition by veteran Nigerian singer, songwriter, and producer, Emeka Onusiruika, a.k.a. *Mekoyo*. *The video and song are* conceptualized as President Goodluck Jonathan *sitting down* to complete another four-year tenure in order to accomplish the economic changes he initiated.

The words *sit down* are repeated several times against the backdrop of a compelling and danceable Nigerian rhythm used to attract and pull potential voters into the video, music and its message. In addition, the content creator used English and all the major languages in Nigeria to send the same message. To make the content even more appealing, some versions of the song were presented in the distinctive and identifiable linguistic accents of the major language and ethnic groups in Nigeria.

The producers of the video engaged one of Nigeria's popular comedian, Godwin Komone (stage name, Gordons) who is seen dancing away merrily to the tunes. The trade mark voice of another famous female comedian is also heard asking Goodluck to *sit down* on the presidential seat because the seat belongs to him.

PDP Advert and Song

The presidential campaign team came out with this political advertisement as a song (translations in brackets):

Goodluck Na You Win [Goodluck, you are a winner]
Listen up everybody, everybody [Listen up everybody, everybody]
It's Goodluck again o [It's Goodluck again]
Goodluck for 2015 o o [Goodluck for 2015]
Jona, Jona eh Jonathan na you win [Jona, Jona, Jonathan, you are a winner]
Jonathan, Jonathan na you win [Jonathan you are a winner]
From 2015 to 2019 [From 2015 to 2019]
Jona eh, Jonathan na you win [Jona eh, Jonathan you are winner]
Oya make we dey celebrate o [Let's celebrate]
Because Goodluck Jonathan [Because Goodluck Jonathan]
na the right candidate o [Is the right candidate]
With Goodluck Jonathan [With Goodluck Jonathan]
Nigeria go dey elevate o [Nigeria will rise and rise o]
And all our enemies all of them [And all of our enemies, all of them]
go dey prostrate o [Will prostrate before us]
Common everybody sing [Come on, everyone sing]
Goodluck is coming back o [Goodluck is coming back]
He is coming back [He is coming back]
Ebele Jonathan is coming back e e e [Ebele Jonathan is coming back]
He is coming back [He is coming back.....]
Jonathan is coming back o [Jonathan is coming back]

Music, Political Messaging, and Nigeria's 2015 Presidential Election

Jonathan is coming back [Jonathan is coming back]
Jonathan is coming back again [Jonathan is coming back again]
Eh eh eh
(Hausa, Urhobo, Yoruba languages Interlude)
The only man wey go make this country better [The only man who can make this country better]
You say, na Jona [You say: He is Jona]
Make we vote am again o [Let's vote for him once more]
Na Jona [He is Jona]
Eeye, Jonathan carry lamp agade Nigeria [Jonathan is our flagbearer]
Jona eh, Jonathan na you win [Jonathan you are a winner]
Goodluck Jona [Goodluck Jona]
Goodluck Jona [Goodluck Jona]
Goodluck Jona na you we want [Goodluck Jona, you are the person we want]
Goodluck Jona [Goodluck Jona]
Jona eh, Jonathan na you win [Jonathan you are a winner]
Everybody sing Goodluck is coming back oo [Everybody sing Jonathan is coming back]
Oh yes he is coming back oo [Oh yes he is coming back]
(Hausa, Urhobo, Yoruba, Igbo languages Interlude)
For agriculture, Jonathan work!
And education, Jonathan work!
Road and entertainment, Jonathan work!
The Sure P project, Jonathan work!
You Win project, Jonathan work!
Oil and gas
Women empowerment
Our train sure de work, Jonathan work oo
Oya, everybody say Jona
Shoki shoki for Jona
Wellu wellu for Jona
Limpopo for Jona
Etigi for Jona
Well rere for Jona
Alanta for Jona
Who we go vote for
Jona!

The song was framed around the names of the ex-president, the idea being to make them easy for voters to recall. In some lines, “Jonathan” was shortened to “Jona,” to spice up the song. However, it is noticeable that the song did not focus on developing any new, substantive position or projects except the refrain that Jonathan had already won an election that was yet to be conducted. The producers also invoked the names of prominent Nigerian musicians as a form of celebrity endorsement of the candidate, Jonathan. This explains mentioning names like *Limpopo* (Kingsley Chinweike Okonkwo) and Daddy Shokey (John Asiemo). Quite remarkably, these musicians and their colleagues including Chris Mba (a

Music, Political Messaging, and Nigeria's 2015 Presidential Election

former president of the Performing Musicians Association of Nigeria - PMAN), came together to sing another refrain in the video:

*Goodluck to you
Goodluck to me
Goodluck to everybody
Goodluck Nigeria*

The use of these popular artists was to grab viewers' attention, as candidate Jonathan needed access to the colossal fan base these musicians had built over the years. In *I believe in Goodluck*, another song, a number of Nigerian movie (Nollywood) enthusiastically sang in praise of Jonathan, stressing that he was the man to restore Nigerian to its former pride and glory.

Goodluck Jonathan's Campaign Song

The campaign message in this song is accompanied by an almost indistinct but solemn background instrumental music. It says:

*From the North
To the South
From the East
To the West
There is a sound all around
A mighty voice to be heard
Everybody is crying
Goodluck
Can you hear the mighty shout?
Goodluck
It is a call from the fatherland
For the man that is right
Goodluck Jonathan*

This song basically assumes that Goodluck, who was running again for the presidency, was the only person fit for the office. This message is reinforced by the claim that the clamour for Jonathan to win had no geographical boundary as it came from the North, South, East and West of Nigeria. The listener is thus invited to listen to the "mighty shout" and "call from the fatherland" that were reverberating across Nigeria, and join the movement to re-elect Jonathan.

PDP Presidential Advert

The commercial mostly made use of instrumental background music to draw attention to President Jonathan's achievements while in office. The list of those achievements included an improvement in power generation and privatization of the power sector, transportation, increase in local participation in the oil and gas sector, provision of portable water, and access to education.

The campaign songs used by the PDP were rendered in various Nigerian languages and were quite simple to comprehend. They were also sing-along songs that readily attracted a huge audience. But, more unique about these songs was their producers' adherence to Schwender's (2013) suggestion that music and celebrity endorsements affect voter behaviour, especially first-time voters.

Primary Comparisons

Overall, the APC/Buhari camp tended to produce more negative advertisements aimed at tarnishing the competitor than the ones that enhanced the image of their own flagbearer. Their central message was that President Jonathan's administration was so inept, corrupt and unworthy of being given another opportunity to rule the country. They pegged their campaign messages on terrorism and deep insecurity in the country as a result of the activities of the *Boko Haram* terrorist organization which was literally dropping bombs everywhere, especially in the north eastern part of the country, leaving a trail of death, destruction and waste. To add to their mayhem, *Boko Haram* leaders made and released videos where they appeared invincible and arrogantly mocked government efforts to curtail their activities. The APC/Buhari political campaign capitalized on this environment of insecurity and made defeating *Boko Haram* their primary campaign policy.

The PDP/Goodluck campaign advertisements were couched as self praises of President Jonathan and a rehash of what his government achieved in agriculture, education, oil and gas, women empowerment and with the *Sure P* and the *You Win* projects. They drew attention to the economic transformation programmes and requested that Nigerians should give them another chance to complete the good work of building up the economy. It is important to note that they cleverly avoided the three major issues the opposition hurled at them: insecurity, terrorism and corruption. Rather they engaged in self-praise and showing off the achievements of their flagbearer as evidence that he deserved a second term in office.

The outcome of the campaign was that Buhari won the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria, although it will be an assumption to attribute his victory solely to the negative political messaging in his campaign songs and music.

CONCLUSION

Presidential contestants and their sponsoring parties find it suitable to use music and songs during electioneering campaigns, primarily because they appeal to a large number of people. In the Nigerian political arena, television commercial messages are passed to the electorate mainly as songs.

During the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria, the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) and its flagbearer, incumbent President Goodluck Johnathan, sponsored more songs than the All Progressives Congress (APC) and its candidate, Muhammadu Buhari. While the APC mostly used blues songs, the PDP opted for more lively and danceable African hip hop rhythm.

Most of the PDP political messages were composed as songs in praise of President Goodluck Jonathan and what was presented as his laudable economic achievements. Unfortunately, the election took place at a time when *Boko Haram* terrorists were spreading fear by raiding, abducting, kidnapping and killing people, especially in the north eastern part of Nigeria. It therefore became expedient for the APC to highlight these security lapses in its campaign messages.

Music, Political Messaging, and Nigeria's 2015 Presidential Election

Future research on the use of songs and music for political messaging during elections should investigate and quantify the impact of these platforms on the voting behaviour of the Nigerian electorate. Closely related to this is to study and determine the music genre that appeals more to the electorate. Such studies would be vital to political parties and their candidates in determining the most effective way to use music and songs in framing and disseminating their political messages.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

REFERENCES

- Abdullah, I. (2009). Popular culture, subaltern agency, and people's parliamentary elections and democracy in Sierra Leone. *CODESRIA Bulletin*, 1-2, 14-16.
- Aririguzoh, S. (2012). Influence of television broadcasts on voters' choice of parties: A study of 2007 Nigerian presidential election. *Journal of International Politics and Development Studies*, 6(1), 40-73.
- Aririguzoh, S. A. (2014). *Television broadcasts' influence on voters in a presidential election*. Saarbrücken, Germany: Lap Lambert Academic Publishing/OmniScriptum GmbH & Co. KG.
- Aririguzoh, S. A. (2015). The role of television broadcasts on voters' participation in Nigeria's presidential election. *KSU Journal of Mass Communication*, 4, 53-73.
- Asse, M. (1995). La chanson dans la communication politique au Cameroun. (The song in political communication in Cameroon). *Friquence Sud*, 13, 121-131.
- Brusila, J. (2001). Jungle drums striking the world beat: Africa as an image factor in popular music. In M. Palmberg (Ed.), *Encounter images in the meetings between Africa and Europe* (pp. 146-161). Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.
- Chandra, A. V. S. (2010). LSD, Ecstasy and the music of politics. *Indian Journal of Poultry Science*, 71(2), 459-468.
- Christensen, M. M., & Utas, M. (2008). Mercenaries of democracy: The 'politricks' of remobilized combatants in the 2007 general elections, Sierra Leone. *African Affairs*, 107(429), 515-539. doi:10.1093/afraf/adn057
- Cloonan, M., & Street, J. (1997). Politics and popular music: From policing to packaging. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 50(2), 223-234. doi:10.1093/oxfordjournals.pa.a028722
- Cohen, J. (1989). Deliberation and democratic legitimacy. In A. Hamlin & J. Pettit (Eds.), *The good polity: Normative analysis of the state* (pp. 67-92). Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell.
- Coles, R. (1997). *Rethinking generosity: Critical theory and the politics of caritas*. New York: Cornell University Press.

- Connolly, W. E. (1991). *Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Connolly, W. E. (1999). *Why I am not a secularist*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Dryzek, J. (1990). *Discursive democracy, politics, policy, and political science*. New York: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/9781139173810
- Dumm, T. L. (1996). *Michel Foucault and the politics of freedom*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Dunaway, D. K. (1987). Music and politics in the United States. *Folk Music Journal*, 5(3), 268–294.
- Dunn, L. C., & Jones, N. A. (Eds.). (1994). *Embodied voices: Representing female vocality in western culture*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Fishkin, J. (1991). *Democracy and deliberation: New directions for democratic reform*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Flammang, J. (1997). *Women's political voice: How women are transforming the practice and study of politics*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Folarin, B. (2002). *Theories of mass communication: An introductory text (2nd ed.)*. Abeokuta: Link Publication.
- Garofalo, R. (1992). *Introduction. Rockin' the boat: Mass music and mass movements*. Boston: South End Press.
- Goehr, L. (1994). Political music and the politics of music. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 52(1), 99–112. doi:10.2307/431589
- Ligeti, G. (1978). On music and politics. *Perspectives of New Music*, 16(2), 19–24. doi:10.2307/832674
- Longwe, S., & Clark, R. (1998). *Woman know your place: The patriarchal message in Zambian popular song*. Lusaka: Zard.
- McQuail, D. (1987). *Mass communication theory: An introduction (2nd ed.)*. London: Sage.
- McQuail, D. (2005). *McQuail's mass communication theory (5th ed.)*. London: Sage.
- Muturi, P. M. (2005). *Music as a tool of communication in Electoral campaigns: Case study of Gatanga constituency, Thika district (Master's Thesis)*. The University of Nairobi. Retrieved from <http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/18413>
- Nyamnjoh, F. B., & Fokwang, J. (2005). Entertaining repression: Music and politics in postcolonial Cameroon. *African Affairs*, 104(415), 251–274. doi:10.1093/afraf/adi007
- Okigbo, C. (1990). Sources of political information in a rural Nigerian community. *Africa Media Review*, 4(3).
- Onyebadi, U. (2017). *Music as a platform for political communication*. Hershey, PA: IGI Global. doi:10.4018/978-1-5225-1986-7

Music, Political Messaging, and Nigeria's 2015 Presidential Election

- Pate, U. (Ed.). (2009). Role of the press in reporting political activities for national development: Appraisal of Nigerian newspaper coverage of the national political reform conference (NPRC). In L. Oso., D. Soola., & U. Pate (Eds.), *Media, governance and development: Issues and trends. Proceedings of the Idowu Sobowale Conference on Media, Governance and Development in Africa* (pp. 40-50). Olabisi Onabanjo University.
- Rousseau, J. (1959). *Oeuvres complètes: Edition publiée sous la direction de Bernard Cagnebin et Marcel Raymond* [Complete works: Edition published under the direction of Bernard Cagnebin and Marcel Raymond]. Paris: Gallimard.
- Schwender, D. D. (2013). If Reagan played disco: Rocking out and selling out with the talking heads of political campaigns and their unauthorized use of music. In M. Deflem (Ed.), *Music and Law: Sociology of Crime, Law and Deviance* (Vol. 18, pp. 3–36). West Yorkshire, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited. doi:10.1108/S1521-6136(2013)0000018004
- Shepler, S. (2010). Youth music and politics in post-war Sierra Leone. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 48(4), 627–642. doi:10.1017/S0022278X10000509
- Sobowale, I. (2008). *Scientific journalism* (2nd ed.). Lagos: School of Communication & Information Science, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago Iwoye/Idosa Konsult.
- Spender, S. (1972). *Poetry and revolution in the thirties and after*. New York: Vintage.
- Street, J. (2003). Fight the power: The politics of music and the music of politics. *Government and Opposition*, 38(1), 113–130. doi:10.1111/1477-7053.00007
- Street, J., Hague, S., & Savigny, H. (2008). Playing to the crowd: The role of music and musicians in political participation. *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, 10(2), 269–285. doi:10.1111/j.1467-856x.2007.00299.x
- Tumolo, M. W. (2016). Audible optics: Popular music as a public relations resource in political campaigns. *Journal of Contemporary Rhetoric*, 6(1/2), 36–49.
- Verba, S., Schlozman, K. L., & Brady, H. E. (1995). *Voice and equality: Civic voluntarism in American politics*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Wai, Z. (2008). The role of youths and the Sierra Leone diaspora in democratic awakening. In A. B. Zack-Williams (Ed.), *The Quest for Sustainable Democracy, Development and Peace* (pp. 37-63). Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute.
- Weglarz, K., & Pedelty, M. (2013). Political rock. In M. Pedelty & K. Weglarz (Eds.), *Political rock: Ashgate popular and Folk Music Series*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.
- Wekesa, P. W. (2004). The politics of marginal forms: Popular music, cultural identity and political opposition in Kenya. *Africa Development. Afrique et Développement*, 29(4), 92–112.
- White, S. K. (1991). *Political theory and postmodernism*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Young, I. M. (2000). *Inclusion and democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

African Pop: A type of music that people sing along as well as dance to.

Boko Haram: The terrorist sect that has invaded North Eastern Nigeria since 2009 seeking to establish an Islamic caliphate.

Igbadun: A Yoruba word meaning good enjoyment.

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC): The body in charge of conducting general elections in Nigeria.

APPENDIX 1: CODING SHEET

The Units of Analyses

Television Adverts

APC Campaign Video: 1
APC Advert: 2
Buhari's campaign song: 3
APC Presidential Advert: 4
PDP Campaign Video: 5
PDP Advert: 6
Goodluck's campaign song: 7
PDP Presidential Advert: 8

Type of Music

Song: 1
Instrumental: 2
Hip Hop: 3
African highlife: 4
Classical: 5
Combination: 6
Blues: 7

Context

Terrorism/Insecurity: 1
Waste: 2
Corruption: 3
Poor Economy: 4

Message

Anti-terrorism: 1
Change: 2
Continuity: 3
Corruption: 4
Hopelessness: 5
Unthoughtful: 6
Uncaring: 7

APPENDIX 2: SOURCES OF SONGS/MUSIC

APC Campaign Video

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FrhZWQdewFY>

APC Advert

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOr5a1md80g>

Buhari's Campaign Song by PITA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Llpyt9-1Q5s>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FKGGHeklu-c>

APC Presidential Advert for Buhari

www.youtube.com/watch?v=s4WJGSNh9bY

Buhari - Osinbajo Campaign Song by Olamide 'Badoo

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D57li8wyvMQ>

PDP Campaign Video

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4E9HDFipJ0Y>

PDP Advert

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w5JJA9a4V8Q>

Goodluck's Campaign Song

Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=idd_pKip5cw
Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=44P8IKXZdg0>

PDP Presidential Advert

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EuC-s02oY-Q>