Music as a Tool for Political Propaganda

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Abstract

The paper attempts a survey of music as a 'Language, Arts and Culture in an evolving Democracy'. It focuses on the use of music as a tool for political propaganda. Finding from the research reveal, the usefulness of Music as a tool for Propaganda, as it relate to Language, Arts and culture especially by politicians during campaign and its articulation and expression of emotions are tactfully itemized. There is no culture in the World that does not make use of music in one way or the other in their event; cultural, social or political as the case may be. Music is visually present in almost every activities of man in the World all over.

KEYWORDS: Music, Political Propaganda, Language, Arts and Culture.

Introduction

In the 5th Century B.C, the "Greek sophists" questioned the possibility of a reliable and objective knowledge. Thus, a leading sophist, Gorgias argued that nothing really exists; that if anything did exist, it could not be known and that if knowledge were possible it could not be communicated. Another prominent sophist, Protagoras, maintained that no person's opinion can be said to be more correct than another because each is the sole judge of his or her own experience. Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia (2002).

Though literature abounds on political propaganda in a democratic government in Nigeria, literature on music in politics is scanty. Although

some distinct authorities have given meaningful contributions to political propaganda, they have not been viewed from a musicological perspective, despite the fact that political parties all over use music as one of the major tools for propagating their ambitions. Omowale (2008) quoting Uduke (1987) submits that in the second republic, the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) - controlled ten federal television stations under the auspices of National Television Authority (NTA) in the states which it controlled. While eleven other stations were established by states controlled by the Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP), Nigeria Peoples Party (NPP), Peoples Republican Party (PRP), were the other registered political parties. Omowale explains further on how some of the private broadcast stations were preoccupied with projecting the personalities of candidates through political advertising involving music which is always discernible during elections periods. The press is free only when the media practitioners have the freedom to carry out their constitutional responsibility of watching the government, its functionaries, mirroring the society and informing the general public of happenings without interference from any quarters. Adeyemi, (2006).

In the same vein, Udeajah (2004) observes that Chief Mike Ajaegbo used his Minaj media outfit to influence people's opinion, especially during the 1999 elections to his advantage thereby ending up as an elected senator of Nigeria and this is not void of Music for its Propaganda. He equally made references to Independent Television Station, Benin, owned and Controlled by Chief Gabriel Igbinedion, who used it to promote the image of his son Chief Lucky Igbinedion through diverse Musical adverts. Eventually, he emerged as the elected Governor of Edo State in 1999 and 2003. According to Udeajah, Slogans were constructed and jingles introduced. Qualities were highlighted and defects downplayed. Candidates were often endowed with exaggerated attributes, which were presented with excessive repetition to the broadcast audience.

Music is only second to speech as preferred medium of communication at all times irrespective of occasion and time. All types of emotions are better articulated and expressed through musical sound. This is seen in the Igbo woman who mourns the death of her husband as she chants his praise and laments her great loss. In the same vein, the recipient of good fortune on getting the glad tidings, chant in ecstatic abandonment Ijeoma (2007).

Among various Nigeria tribes and cultures, the power of music was fully recognized… they never failed to utilized music effectively. There existed a strong belief in the use of music and songs to achieve control of power. Agu, (2006). For this reason, any political broadcast about an aspirant by the media house is believed to be the rightful information.

In Idamoyibo's view, the performing MUSICIAN is always trusted for saying things as he sees them- his own perspective of the truth is most often found to be reliable. He is seen as the conscience of the society, because he would not accept bribe to falsify issues that concern the development of his community or nation (Idamoyibo, 2006).

In line with Idamoyibo's views, Agbese (1999) also commented that music has always been the most visible attempt employed by ourselves to listen to ourselves in the society. Thus, the musicians' voice has no limitation in reporting indubitable truth. Upon this fact has culture given the musician immunity to enable him/her report events truthfully without fear or favour. Ipere (2002) quoting Confucius affirmed that Confucius assigned an important place to music in the service of a well ordered Universe. He saw Music and government as reflecting one another and believed that only the superior man who can understand music is equipped to govern. Again, Idamoyibo (2006) also observed that it is strictly against the ethics of the music profession to find a musician singing the praise of an evil man or leader without reflecting on his evil deeds at least in a moment. Citing Osayomore's album 'Injury Time' as an example he stated that Osayomore

tries to sensitize and enlightened the public as to the type of persons they should elect as governors in the 2003 elections. Accordingly, they should elect someone that would have the feelings of the people in heart. He/she is likely to understand their difficulties and possibly try to solve their problems rather than a man from a wealthy background. Danladi (2008) also suggested that the struggle for political power among Nigerians, especially in a democratic set up, the political leaders always use the mass media as ready tools of molding and shaping public opinion and mobilization of electorates for electoral support and possibly victory.

Influence of Musical Political Propaganda

By political propaganda through music, we mean those issues that concern political media broadcast generally, which are discussed either in the broadcasting or print media communication.

As Gurevith and Blumer (1997) observes that,

> *Political communication is the process by which politically relevant information is transmitted from one point of the political system to another and between the social and political system….*
> *Is a process that touches all aspect of society's life and therefore takes place in a communication that produces massages at the boundary between politics and the media.*

In the same development, Nord (2001) opines that:

> *The most important element of this process are election campaigns, focused on political personality and characters; frequent use of opinion polls, a central role for public relation consultants; and political professionalization of the roles of communication actors where politicians and journalist exchange views and publicity.*

"Politicians believe and there have been empirical support for this, that if they advertise their programme widely, they would be able to appeal to, and convince more voters". Idowu (2008:267). This is not void of musical jingles for its propagation. Ideally, there is no advert either on radio or television without some elements of music. Political advertisement in most cases cannot be void of music. Music is employed alongside songs to disseminate political stance to the population of voters that would make them victorious in election, especially those minority that could not make up their decisions to support such a candidate on the day of election. Messages are put across, through musical advertisement in the form of jingles, in order to seek entry and reorganization in the political decision making during election and thereafter.

The application of propaganda music in political broadcast therefore, is in order to create political awareness before election. Accordingly, Okoro (2008. 101) averred that: "…man, from the very outset, has been expressing his emotions-optimism, melancholy, deep pleasure and painful feelings through rhythmic motions and sound".

Essence of Propaganda Music

Musical sounds from the viewpoint of every academic discipline, are pronounced in every broadcast media and all walks of life, especially in the African situation where almost all activities go with music. Most often, traders advertise and Market their products with songs that could attract customers' attention. Likewise, occupational groups such as farmers, fishermen, hunters, involve music in their vocation. Also, in the political and socio-cultural aspect of life, music is equally not left out. It is used either single-handedly or as communication aid for the creation of public awareness and spiritual motivation (Okoro, 2010).

Ujo (1989) equally notes that; "Songs were also used for propaganda purposes and in this respect, sometimes exceeded the limits of acceptable Standards". According to him, such was the case with "One Nation" a song

by the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) supporters which contained abusive languages. During the early stage of the campaign the (NPP) in Benue State introduced a song in praise of Mr. Paul Unongo the (NPP) gubernatorial Candidate. The central theme of the song expressed sympathy with the suffering workers of the State, and the song went further to say that workers problem would end when he was elected. The song text is as follows:

The Anthem of the Nigerian People's Party.

NPP!	Power!
NPP!	Chanji! (change)
NPP!	Power!
NPP!	Chanji!
NPP!	Power to the People!
NPP!	Nigerian People's Party!
NPP!	We belong to the masses!
NPP!	We lead and others follow!
NPP!	We are people's Choice!

The NPN group in the state replied with its highly abusive song, entitled "One Nation" which led to Sporadic fighting in many areas of Tivland…." Ujo (1989:119).

Conclusion and Recommendation

With this research findings, one can see vividly the usefulness of music as a tool for propaganda, as it relates to Language, Arts and Culture especially by politicians during campaign. Children, women, traders, farmers, all living things inclusive hum song in one way or the other as they go about their daily routine.

In order to achieve a better result in the area of music propaganda, and to ensure meaningful and effective songs for political campaign, knowledgeable scholarly musicians should be given the opportunity as the outright composers of these songs and lyrics. As Ekwueme (1985: 331) averred, "musicians" who cannot even discriminate properly in hearing music, are "Superstar" of our musical scene today. Also, academic musicians should be allowed to set the agenda in creative manners, in order to achieve a better result in the area of music in political propaganda. This put in place would allow accurate keeping of authentic recorded data for research purpose.

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