



Use of Song as a Communication Tool for Political Elections and Party Campaigns in Nigeria

Sariet Ali *

Associate Professor, Department of Mass Communication, University of Lagos, Akoka-Yaba, Nigeria

Abstract

Democratic governance is one of the legacies of colonial administration in Nigeria. Hitherto, the traditional system of government held sway in Nigeria. Different ethnic groups had (and still have) traditional means of recruiting leaders devoid of political campaigns. The King had total authority over his subjects before the advent of democracy. Having accepted democracy, songs have been used as major components of party politics and campaigns. This paper traced the history of party politics in Nigeria and content analysed how songs have been used during campaigns by different parties from the first republic till date. Without traditional songs, campaigns become dull, unattractive and uninteresting. They are used for mobilization by politicians. The study found that traditional songs can be used to hold the government accountable to electorate; point out the expectations of the electorate; indicate areas where development is lacking; indicate direction of voting; praise, support and confer legitimacy on political leaders. However, songs with connotative meanings that tend to portray violence during campaigns should be avoided. The study recommended that traditional songs should continuously be used to either express the feelings of the electorate to approve or condemn the wrong doings of elected political leaders.

*Corresponding author:

Sariet Ali

✉ salabi@unilag.edu.ng;
olasoji_alabi@yahoo.com

Tel: 2348028939712

Associate Professor, Department of Mass Communication, University of Lagos, Akoka-Yaba, Nigeria

Citation: Alabi S (2023) Use of Song as a Communication Tool for Political Elections and Party Campaigns in Nigeria. Global Media Journal, 21:63.

Received: 29-May-2023, Manuscript No. Gmj-23-100519; **Editor assigned:** 31-May-2023, Preqc No. 100519; **Reviewed:** 14-June-2023, QC No.Q-100519; **Revised:** 19-June-2023, Manuscript No. Gmj-23-100519 (R); **Published:** 26-June-2023, DOI: 10.36648/1550-7521.21.63.376

Introduction

Political election, politics and party campaigns were alien to Africa. These were brought to Africa by colonial masters that colonised and ruled Africa between the 18th and 20th century. Before the partition of Africa in 1884, the continent had her own indigenous means of governance which was rooted in African customs and traditions [1].

Each African ethnic group had (and still has) means of recruiting traditional rulers who exercised supreme authority and control over their subjects. The emergence of traditional rulers was devoid of political elections or campaigns. Members of the community were not required to vote for any candidate as king in Africa. Each ethnic group had devised traditional means of recruiting kings who would rule over them. As the custom and tradition demand in Africa, only a few people (kingmakers) are involved in the selection of traditional rulers in Africa. The choice of the kingmakers is usually accepted by the people in line with their tradition. Hence, the emergence of traditional rulers is at

variance with today's democratic demand of popular suffrage.

In Nigeria's Yoruba ethnic group, the choice of an Oba (king) is usually made by the kingmakers after consultation with the 'ifa' oracle. The Process involves asking the 'chief priest' of the community concerned to consult the oracle from the ruling house to select the Oba. It is the 'ifa' oracle that has the final say in the selection of the Oba in accordance with Yoruba tradition. And once a king emerges, all must pay obeisance to him.

Besides, not everyone can aspire to be king in many African societies. Each community has its ruling house/houses who by right will rule. The princes of the ruling houses are 'born to rule' traditionally and where there is more than one ruling houses, the emergence of the King is usually by rotation.

Before the advent of democracy in Africa, the traditional ruler/king has total authority and control over his subjects. He is accorded complete obedience. The king has power of 'life and death' over the people in the olden days in Africa. Even now, some traditional rulers in Africa exercise so much influence, control and

power like the kings of old [2].

Unlike in modern democratic dispensation where the opposition is recognized and allowed, there can be no opposition to an African traditional ruler. In fact, the supremacy of the African king is expressed in the way of greetings. For instance, in Yoruba land, the King is referred to as 'kabiesi' (meaning nobody dares ask him question). In Hausa land (Northern Nigeria), the King (Emir or Sarki) is never addressed directly; he is referred to as Ran Saki Dede. In Nigeria's Igbo land, a king (Obi) is referred to as 'Eze lga di' (king you will live Long)

The lordship of the King in Africa is often expressed in songs to praise him. Music/song is a major component of the African tradition. Hence, songs are used to express loyalty and obedience to traditional rulers in Africa. An example will suffice. In Yoruba land, these songs are popular and common

Oba o Oba alase Oba

Ki la f'oba Pe

Oba o Oba alase Oba

(The Oba is the supreme authority

What do you take him to be?

Oba is the supreme authority)

Another song says:

T'oba ni mo wa (2ce)

Emi o yaju S'oba, emi o dite s'oba

T'oba ni mo wa.

(I am for the king/ I am loyal to the King,

I cannot disrespect the king or plan against the King

I am for the king/ I am loyal to the king)

These types of songs exist in other ethnic groups in Africa. This is a demonstration of the esteem at which kings are held in Africa. It also shows the non-tolerance of opposition to traditional rulers in Africa.

However, with the coming of the colonial masters and the consequent introduction of modern government through democracy, the powers of the traditional rulers have whittled down drastically. They have little relevance in governance other than being custodians of the culture and traditions of the people.

Emergence of Political Elections/Parties in Africa: The Nigerian Experience

As earlier pointed out, political elections or party politics were alien to Africa. Formation of political parties and conduct of elections were legacies of colonial rule. The British colonial masters amalgamated Nigeria in 1914. No attempt was made at party formation until the next decade. Herbert Macaulay (who was the father of Nigerian nationalism) was the first to form a political party in Nigeria- Nigerian National Democratic party (NNDP). This Party contested the first election into the Legislative Council of Nigeria in 1922. There were only four legislative seats contested for in that election. NNDP operated mainly in Lagos

at the onset. According to Oyediran(1979, P.3), "it was not until another decade and formation of the Nigerian Youth Movement (NYM) that other parts of the Nigeria felt the wind of this change in the struggle against colonialism [3].

The Nigerian Youth movement split in 1941 thereby paving the way for the formation of other political parties in Nigeria. One major outcome of the split of the NYM was the formation of groups and political associations on ethnic basis. NYM had hitherto operated as a pan-Nigeria group. The NYM had branches in major cities in Nigeria then. According to Oyediran (1979,p3), by the 1930s, it was the "most important national organisation politically in Nigeria". The split in the NYM was occasioned by the disagreement over the nomination of a replacement for Kofu Abayomi in the Legislative Council. Consequently, by the 1950s, political parties have been formed in Nigeria based mainly on ethnic considerations. The major political parties were the Action group led by late Chief Obafemi Awolowo which was mainly a Western Nigerian party which included present day Edo and Delta states; National Council for Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) which was mostly an Eastern Nigerian party and the Northern People's Congress which was a Northern Nigerian party as the name clearly implied. According to Adeleye (Vanguard 2013), it was Macaulay's NNDP that dissolved into NCNC. The motto of the NPC was "one north one people". There was also the United Middle Belt Congress. This party came on board because of the fear of domination of the minority of the north. Lastly, there was the Northern Elements People Union (NEPU). This party was mainly for the Talakawas (poor) and was led by the radical Aminu Kano who championed the cause of the poor in the North.

These were the parties that contested the federal elections before independence. The first federal Elections were held in 1954. But the most important and most decisive election was the 1959 federal elections. This election ushered in independent rule in Nigeria. The election was a test of true supremacy of the three dominant parties (NPC, AG and NCNC) in their respective regions. The results of the elections showed NPC winning 142 seats; NCNC/NEPU alliance won 142 seats and AG 73 seats in the House of Representatives comprising 312 members. Late Alhaji Tafawa Balewa later emerged the Prime Minister after his party, NPC went into Alliance with the Azikiwe led NCNC. Azikiwe was rewarded with the position of Governor-General and later President upon attainment of Republican status in 1963 [4].

The federal elections of 1964 proved most critical for the new Nigerian republic. The parties went into alliances to contest the elections. They were the Nigerian National Alliance comprising the NPC and NNDP as the dominant parties. The smaller parties in the alliance were the Mid-West Democratic Front and Chike Obi's Dynamic party. On the other hand, there was the United Peoples Grand Alliance (UPGA) comprising the NCNC, AG, NEPU and United Middle-belt Congress.

The election was the beginning of electoral crisis in Nigeria. It was described by Kirk-Greene (1971, p 21) as the most perilous display of brink-man ship. The UPGA had called for the boycott of the elections to protest the arrest and detention of its members who were contestants in the North and West. According to Oyediran, (1979, p 18), "the boycott was totally successfully in the East,

relatively successful in the West and a complete failure in the North where it is most needed". At the end of the elections, the NNA's NPC won 162 seats of the 167 seats in the North while NNDP won 26 seats in the West [5].

The result of the election was the beginning of the first major crisis at the centre. The Prime Minister, Tafawa Balewa had rejected the advice of the President Azikiwe to cancel the results of the election. Consequently, Azikiwe refused to call on Balewa to form the Government. Hence, there was no government at the centre for three days (Oyediran). However, there were negotiations to resolve the crisis, and on January 4, 1965, Balewa was re-appointed as Prime Minister by Azikiwe. It was also resolved that elections be held where there was total boycott. The elections were held in March 1965 and at the end, NPC won 162, NNDP won 36, AG 21, Independents 5 and NPF 4.

The UPGA boycott of the elections had been mostly 'injurious' to the AG. Before the elections, AG had been engulfed by the internal party crisis which had its origin in the disagreement between Awolowo and his deputy, Ladoke Akintola. Akintola was seen as 'rebellious' to the party leader – Awolowo. Majority of the party members and Yoruba race were solidly behind Awolowo. The crisis degenerated to the extent that Akintola was removed from office but he stubbornly refused to quit. That was when the parlance 'AKINTOLA TAKU' (meaning Akintola remained adamant) gained prominence.

Akintola as premier of Western Region went ahead to form a new party- Nigerian National Democratic party. The party took over power in the Western Region with the active support of the NPC federal controlled Government. Though the party had little followership and support in Western Nigeria, it ruled with iron hand. Akintola's Government arrested and detained opponents of his regime mostly AG members and UPGA supporters. According to Anifowose, (1985, P 229), both before and immediately after the election "a war-time atmosphere prevailed throughout the west". Hence, hell was let loose when Akintola's NNDP was declared winner of the Western Region's elections. According to Anifowose, when the NNDP was declared winner "the aggrieved electorate in all parts of the region reacted violently".

The violence that greeted the election was unprecedented in the history of Nigeria. There was wanton destruction of lives and property with members of Akintola's NNDP being the main target. That was the time of the popular slogan "Operation wetie" (spraying of petrol and burning of human being). The violence was seen as a reaction against Akintola's government's intimidation, and mostly against perceived rigging of the elections of his government with the active connivance and support of the NCP controlled federal government.

Explaining the violence in Western Region, Anderson (1967, p 142) stated that "if the government does not accept and allow for the possibility of the opposition taking its place, demand for violent change will tend to follow". Majority of the Yoruba people were aggrieved with the conduct of the western parliamentary elections. The NNDP wanted to continue in power against the popular will of the people. Ake (cited by Anifowose) explained this as political anxiety that is the "fear of the consequence of not

being in control of the government, associated with a profound distrust of its political opponents". Anifowose reasoned that "the widespread disturbances were also a response to perceptions of oppression and victimization which prevailed during Akintola regime and were symbolized by the return to power of the Akintola's NNDP". On the magnitude of the violence, Anifowose (1982, p277) said that "felt injustices, frustration and general disillusionment with the NNDP and its agents contributed to the intensity and magnitude of the violence" Writing on the violence, the West African Pilot newspaper wrote: "History has shown that no party which rigs an election will long survive the indignation of the people. By the same token, if the NNDP imposes itself on the people of the West, it will be piling on the head the very tinder by which its memory will be burnt to ashes [6].

It is instructive to note that the Western Region Crisis was one of the factors that led to the military coup of January 15, 1966. The coup was a welcome relief to the Western Region. The consequent military regime that took over ruled the country for 13 years.

The military regime conducted the 1979 general elections which ushered in the second republic. The elections were contested by five political parties namely, Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN), National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Nigerian Peoples Party (NPP), Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP) and Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) and the elections were devoid of violence. But there was a legal battle to determine the eventual winner as Chief Obafemi Awolowo of the UPN challenged Alhaji Shehu Shagari's declaration as winner by the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO). The Supreme Court eventually decided in favour of Alhaji Shehu Shagari as the first democratically elected President of Nigeria.

The 1983 general elections conducted by the NPN controlled government were heavily rigged in favour of the ruling party. Before the elections, top officials of the ruling party had boasted of 'landslide' victory and it happened as predicted. Worse still, some states where opposing parties were in control were taken over by ruling party through electoral fraud. But the people of Ondo State resisted violently the attempt to rig late Chief Adegunle Ajasin, then Governor, out of office. FEDECO had announced late chief Akin Omoboriowo as the winner of the gubernatorial election of August 1983. Omoboriowo was Ajasin's deputy but decamped to the NPN which was the ruling party at centre. There was widespread violence and killings in Ondo state upon the announcement of Omoboriowo as the winner of the election. The UPN went to court and the Supreme Court declared Chief Adegunle Ajasin as the winner [7].

The outcome of the elections coupled with the worsening economic conditions were too much for the Shagari led administration to handle. The military again took over power on 31st December, 1983. The military was in the saddle till 1999 when it handed over power again to civilians.

However, before the transfer of power, the Babangida administration organised the most expensive transition programme in Nigeria. It culminated in the June 12 presidential election. The election was adjudged the freest and fairest election in the history of Nigeria. It was won by Chief M.K.O Abiola of

the Social Democratic Party (SDP). But Babaginda annulled the election. The annulment threw the country into crisis, protests, demonstrations and avoidable violence.

The 1999 general elections conducted by the military produced Olusegun Obasanjo as the President. His only challenger, Olu Falae of the AD/APP (Alliance for Democracy/All Peoples party) alliance contested the elections but Supreme Court ruled in favour of Obasanjo.

The 2003 elections conducted by the PDP controlled federal government were marred with irregularities. There were allegations of rigging in the elections. The PDP controlled government 'captured' five of the six states controlled by the AD.

The 2007 general elections were worse than the previous ones. In fact, the then president Obasanjo described it as "Do or Die". The election was flawed. In fact, President Umaru Musa Yar'adua's election was narrowly saved by a split decision (four-three) by the Supreme Court. Some gubernatorial election disputes were not resolved till after three years when the wrong persons had been in the saddle of some states. Such states include Osun and Ekiti. According to News watch magazine's Yemi Adurotoye (2015), the 2007 elections conducted by Prof. Maurice Iwu as the most controversial and disputed in Nigeria's political history.

The 2011 general elections conducted by INEC (Independent National Election Commission) under the leadership of Atthairu Jega were better than the previous elections. It produced Dr Good luck Jonathan of PDP as President.

The 2015 general elections witnessed the introduction of electronic card reader into the electoral system. This obviously checked the incidences of over-voting which were witnessed in the previous elections. It produced Mohammad Buhari of the opposition APC (All Progressives Congress) as the winner of the presidential election. This is the first time an incumbent president will lose election in Nigeria. However, the elections produced the worst form of negative/ hate campaign in the annals of Nigerian history.

Use of songs for political campaign

For the African man, song accompanies him from birth till death. Singing of different kinds of songs for different purposes is a way of life. The type of song sung at a gathering is a function of the nature of the gathering/event. According to Nwafor and Obuka (2014), social activities/ceremonies where music/songs are freely used comprise birth, marriage, naming and funeral. Other ceremonies comprise chieftaincy, new yam festival, sporting activities and moonlight plays. They also identified religious activities as events attracting music making.

A song, according to Bassey (2016) is a "piece of music with words; you can sing to communicate thoughts, feelings and attitudes towards life". Song is very critical to the life of an African man. It is used to teach moral lessons, praise, entertain, protest, express approval and support, condemn, communicate, establish relationship between people, welcome, express hostility and mobilize, express victory, calm frayed nerves, and so on.

From the foregoing, it can be seen that song can be used

for different purposes in Africa. Hence, using songs for party campaign is natural in Africa. In fact, without songs, party campaigns become dull, unattractive and uninteresting. Song is a major means of mobilization by politicians who are seeking elective positions.

It is interesting to note that it is not only individuals or parties that use songs for mobilization in Africa. The state (government) also does the same. According to Olukotun (2003, p 121), "the state, it should be noted also sought to use the same artistic resources to bolster its legitimacy". He cited that the case of late General Sanni Abacha of Nigeria who assembled musicians and comedians from Yoruba land and beyond (during his so called two-million-man march) to sing and entertain the audience of his self-succession campaign.

For the purpose of this study, we shall draw extensively from the Nigerian experience in using songs for political campaigns. And the use of songs will be narrowed down to the Western part of Nigeria which is inhabited mainly by the Yoruba. Our emphasis will be more on the first republic through to the present 4th republic [8].

First Republic

Party campaigns were interesting, glamorous and robust during the first republic. The major political parties were mainly ethnic based with each region being controlled by each of the three major parties. The Northern Region was controlled by NPC, Eastern region by the NCNC and Western Region by the AG.

Party campaigns were particularly colourful in the Western Region. Chief Obafemi Awolowo, leader of AG, was highly referred by Yoruba people because of his outstanding performance as Premier of the region. He had an amazingly large followership in the region. His deputy, Ladoke Akintola was an orator and a poet. Hence, it was a combination of knowledge as symbolized by Awolowo and oratory /poetry as epitomized by Akintola in the campaign of the AG. Better still, Yorubas are skilled in using the 'Iya Ilu' (talking drum) in music and leading / introducing any song to be sung at any occasion. They are also noted in using proverbs in singing either in praise or condemnation. All these were displayed during campaigns.

Though the AG was in control of the region, the NCNC was making inroads into the enclave of the AG. The NCNC particularly won elections in Ibadan through its alliance with Mobolaji. It began to spread further in the region. Late Adegoke Adelabu of Ibadan was also instrumental to NCNC's 'successes before independence. The AG considered this as an 'affront' and did everything to checkmate the NCNC. The battleground shifted to the party campaigns where songs were used to mobilize and instil confidence in the supporters. We shall examine some of the songs sung at the campaign.

The political campaign rallies of the AG in particular were colourful. Shouts of 'AWO, AWO' always rent the air at campaigns. This was usually followed by songs in his praise:

"Awolowo baba Olayinka

Ma da gojogojo

Nkan o ni se”

Translation: Awolowo, Olayinka’s father,

Do as you like

Nothing can happen to you”

The implication of this song is to express total support and loyalty to Awolowo. The followers were ready to defend and ‘protect’ him. The song was used to express their implicit confidence in him.

As stated earlier, the NCNC had continued to make inroads into the Western Region. The members intensified their efforts through mobilization at campaigns rallies. Like the AG, songs were used. The leader of the party, Nnamdi Azikwe, was well versed in one major song which he always used. The song goes like this:

“Kole Kole Kole sori apata

Ile yanrin a ba yanri lo

Kole sori apata”

Translation: “Build, build, build on a solid rock

House built on sand will go with sand

Build on a solid rock”

This song is pregnant with meaning in Yoruba land. By it, the NCNC was referring to the AG as a party that will crumble as a house without sound foundation. It portrayed the NCNC as the party founded on a solid rock.

The AG will not allow this without a challenge. Her response was proverbial and poetic. Her supporters quickly responded by composing a song thus:

“Awolowo, Iwo la ri bawi (2ce)

Iwo to lobe dani t’ole pakuko

Iwo, la ri bawi”

Translation: Awolowo, we should censure you (2ce)

You hold the knife and you cannot kill the cockerel

You should be censured”

This song was very instructive. It would be recalled that the symbol of the NCNC was a cockerel. Hence, it was a call for action on the part of Awolowo. It was an attack and a call on Awolowo to do the needful. It proverbially told him to kill the cockerel (referring to NCNC) since he had the knife. The song was indirectly saying that the NCNC should be routed out of the Region.

Songs were not only used between or among parties but even within the same party. When there was a crisis within the AG and Akintola refused to quit office after being sacked as Premier of the Western Region, the AG and their supporters resorted to singing new songs.

The first song went thus:

Awolowo, Ekun baba Akintola

Meaning: Awolowo, the tiger, Akintola’s ‘father’

This song not only expressed solidarity and support for Awolowo but portrayed Awolowo as a tiger and ‘father’ to Akintola. It showed Awolowo as superior to Akintola.

The AG supporters went further to sing another song at campaign rallies thus:

‘Aiisi nile ologini, ile dile ekute

Ekute ile paramo

Awolowo tide, Akintola Paramo,

Translation: When the cat is not at home

The rat takes control

Rat disappears

Awolowo has come, Akintola disappear’

This song portrayed Awolowo as the cat and Akintola as rat. This is symbolic and implication is obvious. It expressed solidarity for Awolowo and disdain for Akintola by referring to him as rat.

The rivalry in the use of songs for campaigns did not end there. It continued the more when Akintola left AG and formed NNDP which the Yorubas popularly referred to as ‘Demo’. His government was oppressive and intimidating. Out of fear of persecution, many AG supporters pretended to be NNDP supporters and deceived him in songs. One of the songs went thus:

Demo ni mo wa (2ce)

Bo rowo mi, o rokan mi

Demo ni mo wa

Translation: I am a member of Demo (NNDP)

If you see my hand, you don’t see my heart

I am a member of ‘Demo’ (NNDP)

This song was purely a deceit. It was meant to deceive Akintola that he had supporters whereas those singing the song were AG supporters. Another variant of the songs says;

Demo ni mo wa (2ce)

Bo roju mi, o rokan mi

Demo ni mo wa

Translation; I am a member of ‘Demo’(NNDP)

If you see my eyes, you don’t see my heart

I am a member of ‘Demo’(NNDP).

Furthermore, Akintola’s NNDP also composed a song which was used at campaign rallies to attack the AG. The song went thus:

Inu Igbo lope ngbe (2ce)

A kii Kole adete si’gboro

Inu Igbo lope ngbe

Translation: Palm trees ‘lives’ in the bush

Leper’s house is not built in town

Palm trees ‘lives’ in the bush

With the song, NNDP seemed to have gone for AG's jugular. The song was a direct attack on the symbol of the AG. It was an imitation of the AG's earlier attack on the NCNC. The song likened the AG to a leper who should not live in town.

While the NNDP was in power, its members were 'untouchable' while members of the opposition (AG) were constantly arrested and detained on trump-up charges. Supporters of the NNDP at campaign rallies and other fora then usually sang thus:

'Demo' ni mo wa

Oo gbodo na mi

Oo Gbodo Gbami leti

'Demo' ni mo wa"

Translation: I am a member of 'Demo' (NNDP)

You must not nbeat me

You must not slap me

I am a member of 'Demo' (NNDP)

This song tended to confer 'immunity' from punishment or arrest on the members of the NNDP. This was the state of affairs among the parties in the first republic until the military took over in January 1966 [9].

Second Republic till date

Political party campaigns at the onset of the second republic were calm and devoid of acrimonious songs by politicians. The fact that the military organised the elections could be responsible for this. But later towards the 1983 general elections, campaigns became fierce and tended towards violence particularly between the two major parties UPN and NPN. The UPN controlled Western Nigeria (including present Edo and Delta state) just like in the first republic. The NPN was desperate to take over some of the western states and consequently met with resistance from the ruling party –UPN.

It is interesting to consider a few of the songs sung at then. The performance of the then Governor of Lagos state, Alhaji Lateef Kayode Jakande was outstanding. His supporters and that of UPN composed a song thus:

E ki Lateef oo (2ce)

Oyinbo alawo dudu

E ki Lateef, Oyinbo alawo dudu.

Translation; Greet Lateef, great Lateef

A black man with a white skin

Greet Lateef, greet Lateef.

This song likened Governor Lateef Jakande to a white man. They were praising him because they believed only a white man could have done what he did.

However, we witnessed an attack song when the late Akin Omoboriowo, former Deputy Governor of old ondo state decamped from the UPN to the NPN. At the declaration campaign rally in Akure in January 1983 (which I witnessed) the NPN sang

thus:

Omo bori Ajasin

Boriowo bori Ajasin

Omo bori Ajasin

Translation: Omo has overshadowed Ajasin

Boriowo has over-shadowed Ajasin

Omo has overshadowed Ajasin

Omoboriowo had earlier contested governorship party primaries against his boss, Adekunle Ajasin, who was the incumbent governor. The song was meant to portray Omoboriowo as having more supporters and electoral strength than Ajasin and consequently overshadowed him.

The current 4th republic had also witnessed the continuous use of songs for political party campaigns. Let us consider the example of Ayo Fayose's campaign in 2003 when he was contesting against the then Governor of Ekiti state, Niyi Adebayo. A popular song in Ekiti dialect during his campaign went thus:

Eruku lele lari o, amo roda

Fayose tete de o

Ko ya doda.

Translation: We have not seen the dust

We have not seen the asphalt

Fayose quicky come and lay asphalt

It is necessary to explain the background of this song. During the tenure of Adebayo as Ekiti state governor, he embarked on reconstruction of roads. The contractors had graded the roads (earthwork) but the government did not complete the roads before the electioneering campaign. Fayose capitalised on this by drawing the attention of the electorate to the inability of the government to complete the roads.

From the fore-going, it can be seen that songs can be used to point out failure of government policies, put government functionaries on their toes and serve as warning signal to those waiting to take over power. Moreover, the use of songs for political campaigns today has gone beyond mere singing at rallies. In this dispensation, politicians have embraced technology by putting those songs composed in their praises by musicians or poets in compact discs and distributing them to the electorate. Ashiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, former Governor of Lagos state, seemed to have pioneered this when he was campaigning for a second term. He employed the services of an ace Fuji musician, Wasiu Ayinde Marshall, to produce a record in his praise. The same thing was done by the late Lam Adeshina, Governor of Oyo state when he used the late prominent comedian/presenter, Gbenga Adeboye, to sing his praises preparatory to the 2003 general elections.

However, in the case of Faroese's election campaign of 2014, he produced a record to disseminate various allegations against the then incumbent Governor Kayode Fayemi of Ekiti state. Worse still, the PDP in Lagos state during the 2015 election produced a record which was malicious and slanderous to the person of

former Governor Tinubu. In the record, shouts of ‘Tinubu, ole, Tinubu, ole’ (Tinubu, thief, Tinubu, thief) was prominent. A similar broadcast by the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) and African Independent television (AIT) is currently a subject of litigation.

However, the case of Northern central Nigerian state of Kwara was particularly interesting and intriguing. The usage of indigenous political songs tended to have effectively put an end to the political domination of the state by the Olusola Saraki dynasty. Before the 2019 general elections, the Saraki family had dominated and controlled the political affairs of the state since the second republic in 1979. Then, he was the senate majority leader. He decided who gets what in Kwara state. His family members and loyalists occupied most elective positions in the state. Before the 2003 general elections, Olusola Saraki decamped from the All Nigeria Peoples Party to the ruling People’s Democratic Party (PDP). He fielded his son (Bukola) as the governorship candidate of the PDP. With the state under his grip, his son won the election. His other children and loyalists were also elected into various offices under the PDP.

After the completion of two terms of Bukola Saraki as Governor of Kwara state, he was elected into the Nigeria’s senate. His younger sister, Gbemisola, was at various times member of both the House of Representatives (1999- 2003) and Senate (2003- 2011). The death of the patriarch of the Saraki dynasty (Olusola) did not stop the political domination of the state by the Saraki dynasty as his son, Bukola, took over the political leadership of the state.

In 2014, Bukola Saraki decamped along with others from the ruling PDP to the newly formed All Progressive Congress (APC). In the 2015 general elections, he won the election back into the Senate under the APC. He later emerged as the Senate President in June 2015. As the 2019 general elections approached, Bukola Saraki defected from the ruling APC to the main opposition PDP. His loyalists followed him. However, the ordinary people of Kwara state seemed to be tired of following the Saraki. Thereafter, the ‘O TO GE’ (enough is enough) campaign slogan started. The three-word campaign slogan spread like fire and was generally accepted by most people [10].

The theme of the O TO GE campaign slogan among others includes

O to ge (4ce)

Ka wa loju kan, o to ge (3ce)

Ka wa loju kan, o to ge

Gbogbo wa ni kwara, o ya o

E teti e gbo labari orin wa (2ce)

E gbo labari orin ya

E sa ti mo bo se nlo

Egbe: A ti mo o

Ni Kwara Nile wa

Egbe: Eee

O to ge oo

Gaba te je lori wa to

Ibo ote yi la o fi Soro fun o

O to ge ni Kwara nwi

Ibo are, Buhari la o dibo fun

Kwara Abdulrahaman Rasaki ni

Ki o do Governor wa

Amin olorun

Ninu egbe olorire

APC egbe olosusu owo

Eee

Yio se bo ti wi

Walahi

Ko ni Jawa ni tan moo

Eee

Ka ti ibo wa gbe wole, ki Kwara o

Le te siwaju

Egbe: Eee

Idagbasoke leleka jeka

Eee, Awon omo ipanle gbogbo

Eee O to ge, e wa bi jokosi

Ke ma ba fimu kaasa ofin

Alafia la fe ko joba

Eee, kire gbogbo o wolu wa

Translation

Enough is enough (4ce)

Enough of stagnation (3ce)

Everybody in Kwara, it’s time

Listen to our song (3ce)

You know what is happening,

Refrain: We have known

In Kwara, our land,

Refrain: Oh yes

Enough is enough

Enough of your domination

We will speak through our vote this time

Kwara people are saying enough is enough

We will vote for Buhari for President

Abdulrahaman Rasaki will be voted as

Governor, Amen God.

In the fortunate party, APC with broom logo
 He will fulfill his promise, we trust
 He will not deceive us, oh yes
 Let us vote for him, so that Kwara
 Can make progress, oh yes
 Development in every sector, oh yes
 All the thugs, oh yes, enough is enough
 Stop thuggery so that the law will not
 catch up with up, we want peace to reign
 Oh yes, so that there will be blessing
 and progress everywhere.

This song became the refrain in the mouths of the ordinary Kwara people. It spurred them into action and became very impactful. It was therefore not surprising that the electorate voted massively against the incumbent Senate President, Bukola Saraki and all his loyalists in the 2019 general elections. This was an electoral political revolution in the Nigeria's north central state of Kwara. It tended to have put an end to the political control and domination of the Saraki dynasty (at least for now). It would be recalled that political domination was one of the grievances of the people as contained in the 'O TO GE' political slogan.

With regard to the gubernatorial election of March 2019, the political slogan equally worked as the candidate of the APC, Abdurrahman Rasaki won the election against the Saraki sponsored PDP candidate. In addition to the 'O TO GE' political slogan, there was also the song, "Bi e fe, bi e ko, Rahamani ni o se joba literally meaning whether you like it or not, Rahaman will rule. This song tended to threaten the opposition into accepting willy-nilly that the APC candidate 'must' win the election.

But in a democracy, voters have the right to elect any candidate of their choice without threat or intimidation. However, in the case of the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria, songs can be used to communicate the direction or pattern of voting desired. Songs can be used to intimidate or warn people of dire consequences [6].

For instance, in a contest, when you hear such songs as 'olomo kilo fomo re, oni aro' meaning everyone warn your children, today will be tough. This song has connotative meaning in that it is very intimidating and may serve as an invitation to violence. This warning song also occurred in the June 2022 governorship election in Ekiti state, Nigeria. The song 'alagbara ma lero, baba ole, a o gbudo gbo BAO lenu re mo' meaning "powerful but senseless, father of laziness, we must not hear BAO in your mouth again". This was the song before the June 18, 2022 election. BAO (Biodun Abayomi Oyebanji) was the governorship candidate of the APC. This song had threatened that no one should mention his name. This is a case of verbal intimidation which is against the freedom of choice of the voters to elect a candidate of their

choice. But against all odds, the same APC candidate won the election.

The trend has continued even with the coming 2023 general elections. On January 1, 2023, former President Olusegun Obasanjo publicly wrote a letter endorsing the candidate of the Labour Party, Peter Obi. 'Hell' was let loose with this endorsement. Hitherto, the Presidential candidate of All Progressive Congress (APC) Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu, had paid a courtesy visit to him (Obasanjo) to solicit his support for his presidential ambition. It is instructive to state that both Tinubu and Obasanjo are of the same ethnic region.

The APC quickly responded to the endorsement of Obi by describing it as worthless. Characteristically of the Yoruba people who are good with composing songs to either praise or mock people, a new campaign song was composed based on the endorsement. The song went thus "Ipade dojo ibo, letter ti ekoko, ti e sun loru, ipade dojo ibo". The song literally means we shall meet on Election Day; letter that you wrote and didn't sleep at night, we shall meet on election day.

This song is pregnant with meaning. It was meant to mock the former president and serve as a reminder of his past political activities. It will be recalled that he had endorsed his former Vice, Atiku Abubakar, who was the Presidential candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2019 presidential election. When the results of the election were declared, Atiku lost terribly in Obasanjo's polling both. Besides, when Obasanjo was contesting in the 1999 presidential election, he lost woefully in his polling unit. Hence, the song tended to portray him as having little or no electoral value. The supporters of the presidential candidate of the APC, through that song, believe that Obasanjo's endorsement of Peter Obi will be rendered 'useless' at the polls [10].

Conclusion

Party politics have come to stay in Africa. Political campaign is a major component and forerunner to political election. Campaigns through rallies are major means of mobilization, creation of party manifestoes, policies and unveiling of candidates/contestants. In doing so, songs have become veritable tools to bring 'life' to campaign. Songs can be creatively devised and used to enlist support of the electorate for the parties and candidates. They can also be used to guide the electorate to vote right. They can also be used to assess, criticize and bring the attention of those in power to their failures.

Songs can be used to hold those in power to accountability. This will engender positive changes in governance to the benefits of the electorate. However, the use of songs to attack or promote violence should be eradicated. The production of music/record for political campaign with the intent to malign or injure the personality of opposing candidates should be avoided. Songs should be put to positive use in elections/party campaign.

References

- 1 Adeleye Adisa (2013) Nigeria's political system and the people, Vanguard Online.
- 2 Adurotoye Yemi (2015) Rating Jega and His predecessors, News watches Magazine 26-27.
- 3 Anderson Charles (1982) Issues of political development, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, Prentice Hall Inc.
- 4 Anifowose Remi (1982) Violence and politics in Nigeria, New York: Nok Publishers International.
- 5 Bassey Bernice (2006) the importance of song in African oral literature.
- 6 Kirk-Greene AHM (1971) Crisis and conflict in Nigeria, 1966-1970, London: Oxford University Press.
- 7 Nwafor HC, Obuka C Obuka (2014) Fundamentals of Music and drama for junior secondary schools, Onitsha: Elite Publishers.
- 8 Olukotun Ayo (2003) Traditional protest Media and anti-military struggle in Nigeria: 1988-1999, In Akinfeleye, Ralph and Okoye, Innocent (Ed), Issues in Nigeria media history: 1900-2000 AD 120-139.
- 9 Oyediran Oyeleye (1984) Background to military rule In Oyediran Oyeleye (Ed), Nigerian Government and Politics Under Military Rule 1966-1979 London/Basingstoke: Macmillan Publishers 1-24.
- 10 West African Pilot (1965) 12th.