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THE ROLE OF FÚJÌ MUSIC IN SOCIOPOLITICAL ACTIVISM: AN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ANALYSIS OF SIKIRU AYINDE BARRISTER'S CURRENT AFFAIRS AND DEMOCRACY

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the pivotal role of Fújì music as a medium for sociopolitical activism. This is with focus on Sikiru Ayinde Barrister's influential works, Current Affairs (1989) and Democracy (1992). Utilising an artificial intelligence analysis, the research examines how Barrister's lyrics reflect the socio-economic challenges and political disillusionment faced by Nigerians during the late 20th century. Through a critical lens, the analysis reveals themes of corruption, leadership, and collective responsibility, situating Barrister's music within the broader context of post-colonial discourse. The findings reveal that Fújì music not only serves as a form of entertainment but also acts as a powerful vehicle for social critique and community mobilisation. By addressing pressing issues such as poverty, unemployment, and governmental failure, Barrister's songs resonate with the struggles of ordinary citizens, advocating for transformative change. This study underscores the significance of Fújì music in shaping political consciousness and fostering activism, emphasizing its enduring impact on Nigerian society and culture.

Keywords: Role, Fuji music, Sociopolitical Activism, Current Affairs, Democracy.

INTRODUCTION

According to Ayorinde, Fújì music is a genre that blends traditional Yoruba sounds with contemporary rhythms (2). This has emerged as a powerful medium for expressing social concerns, cultural identity, and political dissent. This analysis focuses on two of Barrister's pivotal works: *Current Affairs* and *Democracy.* Both of the songs encapsulate the sociopolitical landscape of Nigeria during critical periods in the late 20th century. Hence, this study aims to explore the significant role that Fújì music plays through the works of Sikiru Ayinde Barrister in sociopolitical activism within Nigeria.

The political backdrop of Nigeria in the 1980s and 1990s was marked by economic hardship, political instability, and widespread corruption (Adamaagashi et al., 6). Barrister's music serves not only as entertainment but also as a vehicle for social commentary and critique. This study therefore seeks to understand how Barrister's music reflects the realities faced by the populace during times of political turmoil. Through a close reading of the lyrics, the study aims to uncover the underlying narratives that highlight the need for social change and civic responsibility. Moreover, this research will contextualize Barrister's work within the broader

framework of post-colonial theory, which examines the lingering effects of colonialism on contemporary societies.

Fújì Music

According to Odetade and Olusegun (6), any performance of a popular art form in the Yoruba public realm needs to take place inside a specific social context. In a vacuum, no performance is possible. A literary work must have "relevance, explicitly or implicitly, to the social milieu in which it is set" in order to be considered relevant, just as art is never produced in a vacuum (Kehinde 87). This is consistent with Euba's view that popular music is typically connected to nightclubs, private parties, or other social settings (àríyá), where drinking, having fun, and relaxing are the main goals (5). According to Euba, popular music has a big role in providing entertainment. Commercialisation enters this entertainment process.

Fújì music, however, is not meant for entertainment. Olaniyan notes that because Fújì is heavily influenced by Islam, it is often recognised as Muslim Yoruba music (23). He emphasises further that it was clear that Islam only permitted the reciting of the Quran as a form of worship and did not approve of the use of music or dance (Olaniyan 87). Regarding the legality and illegality of Islamic music, Raji observes that while songs are generally acceptable, depending on the situation, time, location, motivation, and type of song, they can become illegal (Haram), abominable (Makruh), or commendable (Mustahab) (240). Odetade and Olusegun (11) note that Individuals can see that Islamic music have been used to spread the religion's values in the modern day.

Activism

The intentional attempt to steer, obstruct, or encourage social, political, economic, or environmental change is known as activism (Müllenmeister, 377). Throughout history, it has brought about a number of beneficial societal developments and continues to play a key role in promoting further advancement. Activism is defined differently. But they all share the goal of bringing about change, whether it is in the areas of politics, economics, technology, the environment, society, or the individual (Alsop & Bencze, 177). "Collective action of like-minded people (i.e., polarised people) to change a society, a policy, or an organisation in relation to contentious issues" is how Chon and Park (74) describe activism. In the context of Fújì music, it involves using the art form to highlight societal injustices, advocate for marginalized voices, and mobilize communities towards social change. Activism in music can take various forms, including protest songs, social commentary, and calls for political engagement.

Biography of Sikiru Ayinde Barrister

Lagos, Nigeria, was the birthplace of Sikiru Ayinde Barrister in 1948. He is among the most important people in Fújì music. He is recognised as one of the primary forces behind the development of Wéré and Fuji music (Ayorinde, 6). His career started in the 1970s, and he immediately became well-known for his distinctive style, which combined modern elements with traditional Yoruba music. More than 70 studio albums were released by Ayinde Barrister since his initial musical breakthrough in 1965. Ayinde Barrister's debut LP was issued in 1966. At the period, he frequently performed with his band for predominantly Muslim patrons at

gatherings in Lagos and Ebute Meta. Before launching his own label, Siky-Oluyole, he released several albums under the African Songs Ltd. label. Among the LP's released under African songs is *Bisimilahi* (1977) and *Ile Aiye Dun Pupo/Love in Tokyo* (India Sound) (1976). By the early 1980s, Ayinde Barrister and Fuji music had become accepted by all religions in the country. He went on to record various albums including *Iwa* (1982), *Nigeria* (1983), *Fuji Garbage* (1988) and *New Fuji Garbage* (1993) under his imprint. He had a popular record titled *Reality* (2004). He had a bitter feud with another Fuji singer, Kollington Ayinla in 1982.

Sociopolitical Activism in *Current Affairs*

Current Affairs is a poignant reflection of the socioeconomic challenges facing Nigeria in the late 1980s. The song opens with Barrister expressing his deep concern for the state of hunger in the land, poignantly noting:

No early morning tea
No lunch for afternoon
No *kúlíkúlí* for Bida
No *fúrá* for Kano
No *àmàlà dúdú* for Ibadan
No *láfún* for Lisabi
No yam for Ibo land
No *warankachi* for Ilorin
No rice for *Ofada*

This vivid imagery underscores the widespread deprivation experienced by Nigerians, highlighting the failure of the state to provide basic necessities. The reference to various regional foods serves not only to illustrate the diversity of Nigerian culture but also to evoke a sense of collective suffering that transcends ethnic boundaries. In a post-colonial context, this communal experience can be interpreted as a critique of the government's inability to fulfill its responsibilities to its citizens, a legacy rooted in the exploitative practices of colonial rule.

Furthermore, Barrister identifies six major challenges that plague the Nigerian society:

Nínú ohun tópọ̀ tí mo mọ̀	From among the problems
Tó ń dàwá láàmú	which confront us
Mo ní mẹ́fà tó se kókó:	I have six pressing issues:
Ìmọ̀ tara ẹni nìkan	First is selfishness
Àì ní ìbèrù Olórun lókàn	Lack of the fear of God
Àì ní ìfé arawa dénú dénú	Absence of love among us
Àì le ní sùúrù	Lack of patience
Òhun pèlú àtowó fà	Self destruction
Àmòjù tún ń dàwá láàmú	And Over-confidence

These challenges are indicative of a society grappling with internal turmoil. The artist asserts. This enumeration not only highlights the moral decay within society but also calls for introspection among listeners. By framing these issues as collective failings, Barrister shifts the focus from individual blame to a shared responsibility for the state of the nation. This is a

crucial aspect of post-colonial discourse, which emphasizes the need for collective action and solidarity in confronting the legacy of colonial oppression.

Furthermore, the artist's lamentation over the inability of children to afford basic school materials illustrates the broader implications of economic hardship. He states that:

Ọmọ ilé ìwé ò rí nkan wọ̀ (Students do not have what to wear)
No uniform,
No book
No shoe, No socks
Don't come to school with your dirty uniform

This observation points to the failure of the educational system and the economic structures that underpin it, exacerbated by political corruption and mismanagement. In a post-colonial society, education is a critical factor in achieving empowerment and autonomy. Barrister's critique serves as a rallying cry for reform, urging listeners to advocate for systemic change.

Sociopolitical Activism in Democracy

Democracy, produced against the sociopolitical backdrop of the early 1990s, further explores the complexities of governance and leadership in Nigeria. Barrister contextualizes the struggles of contemporary Nigeria within its historical framework, referencing the amalgamation of Nigeria by colonial powers. He notes the series of political transitions from independence in 1960 through various republics and military coups. This historical perspective is crucial for understanding the persistent challenges faced by the nation. By rooting his commentary in historical events, Barrister emphasizes that the issues confronting Nigeria are not merely recent developments but are deeply entrenched in the country's colonial past.

The Fuji music opens with a hopeful yet cautious welcome to democracy:
Democracy welcome to Nigeria,
Democracy welcome to Nigeria
We are happy
Democracy welcome to Nigeria

Yet, this optimism is tempered by skepticism. This became obvious as Barrister questions the sincerity of political leaders. Thus, expressing uncertainty about whether they will genuinely fight for the people's liberty:

Olórí tó ma kọ̀yà fún wa lójọ́ kójọ́	A leader that will fight for our liberty always
Bóyá ó ti dé	Maybe he has arrived
Bóyá ó n bọ̀ lọ́nà	Maybe he is on his way
Ọlọ̀run ló yé	Only God understands

This ambivalence reflects the disillusionment felt by many Nigerians during a period marked by political upheaval and promises of reform that often went unfulfilled. The lyrics encapsulate the tension between hope and despair that characterises the post-colonial experience, where the promise of independence has frequently been undermined by the realities of governance.

Barrister's acknowledgment of Nigeria as an "oil producing company" is significant in understanding the nation's economic context. The line "Nigeria El*é*po *rọ̀bì*" points to the wealth generated from oil resources, yet it simultaneously critiques the mismanagement and corruption that have plagued the industry. The juxtaposition of Nigeria's potential wealth against the backdrop of widespread poverty and inequality underscores the disconnect between the nation's resources and the lived experiences of its citizens. This disparity is a recurring theme in post-colonial discourse, where the promises of independence and prosperity often clash with the realities of governance.

Barrister also critiques the persistent "dirty politics" that plague Nigeria. This acknowledgment of corruption and political betrayal is a central theme in post-colonial discourse. This often highlights the ways in which newly independent nations have been marred by the same exploitative practices that characterised colonial rule. By drawing attention to these issues, Barrister embodies the role of the artist as a social commentator, using his platform to challenge the status quo.

In a significant moment of reflection, Barrister praises leaders like Muritala Mohammed, who he believes contributed positively to Nigeria's economic growth. However, he also expresses doubt about the viability of any leader being a "Messiah" for the nation, invoking the biblical narrative of Jesus:

"Hossana today...crucify Him tomorrow."
This allusion underscores the cyclical nature of political loyalty and betrayal, highlighting the fragility of hope in the face of systemic corruption. The reference to the biblical story serves to illustrate the complexities of leadership in a post-colonial context, where the expectations of the populace often clash with the realities of governance.

The song takes a darker turn as Barrister addresses the oppressive regime of General Sani Abacha, delineating the violence and repression that characterised his rule. Gen. Sani Abacha was a tyrant. He killed activists with bombs, imprisonment, and other means. This stark portrayal of tyranny underscores the dangers faced by those who dare to speak out against the government. Barrister's acknowledgment of needing to flee Nigeria for safety illustrates the personal risks associated with political dissent. This fear resonates deeply within the Nigerian context, where many activists have faced severe repercussions for their opposition to the state.

Conclusion
The analysis of Barrister's works reveals that Fuji music serves as a crucial vehicle for sociopolitical activism. By addressing the economic and political challenges faced by Nigerians, Barrister's songs resonate with the collective consciousness of a people grappling with the legacy of colonialism and the ongoing struggles for autonomy and justice. Through his artistry, Barrister engages in a dialogue with his audience, fostering a sense of community and shared responsibility. His critiques of societal issues compel listeners to reflect on their roles as active participants in the pursuit of change. This aligns with post-colonial theory's

emphasis on collective action and the importance of cultural expression in challenging dominant narratives and power structures.

Moreover, the use of indigenous language and cultural references in Barrister's music reinforces the significance of cultural identity in post-colonial discourse. By drawing on Yoruba traditions, Barrister asserts the value of local knowledge and experiences in shaping the narrative of a post-colonial society. This reclamation of cultural identity is essential in countering the homogenising effects of colonialism, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of Nigerian society.

Therefore, Sikiru Ayinde Barrister's contributions to Fújì music exemplify the genre's role as a powerful medium for sociopolitical activism. Through his works *Current Affairs* and *Democracy*, Barrister addresses the pressing issues faced by Nigerians. Thus, critiquing the failures of leadership and governance while emphasizing the need for collective action and social responsibility. By employing the lens of post-colonial theory, this study highlights how Barrister's music not only reflects the struggles of the Nigerian people but also acts as a catalyst for social change. His ability to engage listeners and inspire action underscores the transformative power of art in advocating for justice and democracy. As Nigeria continues to navigate its complex political terrain, Barrister's music remains a vital source of inspiration and reflection for the quest for a better society.

As Nigeria continues to navigate its political landscape, the relevance of Barrister's work remains significant, serving as a reminder of the enduring power of music as a tool for activism and social critique. In this way, Fújì music, as articulated by Sikiru Ayinde Barrister, stands as a testament to the resilience of the Nigerian spirit in the face of adversity, calling for a renewed commitment to the pursuit of justice, equality and democracy.

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