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Introduction

- 1 Music as a performing art and cultural production is a fundamental feature of life in Africa. Biko (1979: 42) affirms that “music in African culture features in all emotional states” and remains an essential companion to the people as they “share the burden and pleasures of work.” Viewed in this light, music becomes relevant in most activities of everyday life. It is on this account that the richness and diversity of any particular type of music can be assessed. According to Wafula (2001: 4), the significance of a particular music or song as a form of speech utterance arises not only from stylistic considerations but also from what it communicates. In other words, music is not only about structural forms and rhythmic styles, but also about what it tells us about society and about ourselves: music is a mode of self-writing capable of revealing the complex layers of our being and of society (Nyairo and Ogude 2003). Moreover, Black African music shares a common heritage but the music of each local community or ethnic group has its own independence and is part of the ingredients that give each form its uniqueness. In view of this, this paper looks at music production as popular culture in Kenya and how it has been used in the construction of national or subnational identity and power politics. It specifically explores the use of riddles in songs during the 2017 electoral campaign to gain support in politics. The National Super Alliance (NASA) presidential candidate, Raila Odinga, consistently used riddles and music either to criticize his opponents, notably Uhuru Kenyatta from the Jubilee party, but also as a tool to identify with a certain group of people from Western Kenya, the Luo. This paper

will thus examine the effects of music and riddles before and during Kenya's last general election.

Music and Popular Culture

- 2 In the last two decades or so, popular culture has gained prominence as a major site of political and social contestation in Africa. With the direct control of mainstream cultural production by both government and cultural industry, and particularly through heavy censorship by repressive regimes, popular culture often expresses disavowal of the nation-state. Music in Africa in general, and Kenya in particular (a country notorious for its lack of tolerance for dissenting cultural activities), has provided an alternative site for contesting and subverting some of the repressive institutions put in place by the ruling elite. The power of music lies in the fact that music has a captive audience situated in locales outside the regulated zones of the national leadership (Nyairo and Ogude 2003). If some songs in a music album may enable different affiliations and multiple identities to be expressed, others may enhance "the terrible singularity that is often striven for and sometimes realized" by those seeking to "transform mere categories into unitary and exclusive groups" (Brubaker and Cooper 2000: 1)
- 3 Njogu and Maupeu (2007) observe that during Kenya's run-up to the 2002 general elections, in which the then ruling party KANU was removed from power, the national desire for change in Kenya was brought forth by artists. Two musicians, Joseph Ogidi and Jahd Adonija, under the name Gidi Gidi Maji Maji, performed *Ting Badi Malo* and *I am Unbwogable* to the great delight of voters. *Unbwogable* became the song used to mobilize voters in support of the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC). Since then, members of the political class have consistently hired artists to sing their praises and support their political platforms. It was the case, for instance, during the November 2005 National Referendum on the Draft Constitution of Kenya when the government and opposition hired artists so they disseminate their political agendas.
- 4 Grassy et al (2013) argue that the history of popular music cannot be divorced from that of social, cultural and political movements, and yet the question remains: if music is politically efficient, how can we measure its impact? It is not clear what role music plays in the struggle for political, ideological and social change. While musical practices and the writing of songs can undeniably strengthen existing activist groups, can it also truly change minds or upset the established order and destabilize it? If there are such things as soundtracks for rebellions and revolutions, do they merely accompany fights or can they quicken the pace and bring about change themselves?
- 5 Popular music has a hand in the building and solidification of (sub) cultural communities. Songs have expressed the emergence of new group identities in the fall of Communism, the breakup of Yugoslavia and during other political schisms in Latin American countries more recently. People sing and play the old regimes away, or they use music to connect with fellow migrants or refugees in an upset political landscape. Songs serve as a bridge between past and present by pairing traditional patterns to new instruments, new technology, and new media—sometimes associating nostalgia with expectations for change. They can also smooth out the transition to a new life and a new identity as individuals and groups assimilate into another culture. Reversely, they can reflect new cultural antagonisms and class conflicts and follow the radicalization of

group identities (Grassy et al. 2013). In the case under study in this paper, popular music is used to explore how Kenyan popular songs' idioms of praise and protest were used as a tool of political mobilization and identity construction in Kenya's 2017 presidential campaigns.

Raila Odinga and the Proverbs

- 6 In Africa, proverbs are the most widely and commonly used oral arts. They are regarded as a significant rhetorical force in various modes of communication, from family and clan transmission of knowledge to friendly chats, political speeches, religious sermons, lyrical poetry and, increasingly today, in the mass media (Wolfgang 2014). According to oral literature scholar Finnegan (1970), "in many African cultures, a feeling for language, for imagery, and for the expression of abstract ideas through compressed and allusive phraseology comes out particularly clearly in proverbs." Omollo (2017) extends this argument by stating that doubtlessly proverbs—as tested wisdom with considerable authority—play a part in the ongoing struggle toward progress on many social and political fronts in an interconnected world. As traditional and also newly coined wisdom, to wit "Act locally, think globally," proverbs contribute to connect local and national issues to the global sphere of politics. Although proverbs provide the much-needed entertainment in political discourse and make it possible for politicians to avoid plain language, which could be boring, they are at times so versatile and devoid of any inherent meaning that, depending on the circumstances and context of use and the skillfulness of those who use them, they can mean almost anything (Orwenjo 2009). This characteristic makes them an easily available means of driving a point home and convincing the audience but, in some contexts, also a tool for manifesting propaganda.
- 7 In his many years in politics, Raila Odinga undoubtedly learned much from the sermonic and proverbial rhetoric of his late father and skillful politician Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, as one could observe during the 2017 presidential election, as well as in previous presidential elections as far back as 1997, 2007 and 2013. With proverbs—some in Dholuo and others in Kiswahili—, Raila Odinga managed to score a solid balance between intellectual formulations and traditional folk language (Wolfgang 2014).
- 8 At a 2017 campaign rally in Luo Nyanza province, Raila invoked the following proverb:
Kuot Ogwal ok mon dhiang' modho pi (Luo)
"The grumbling of the frog does not prevent a cow from drinking water."
- 9 This proverb meant that regardless of the power of the state and its agencies, Raila and his followers could execute their political objectives. It sold Raila to his followers as a brave leader who can successfully confront the ruling government, thereby attracting those who feel oppressed by the system and hope for a change of rule or ruler. Orwenjo (2009) supports this argument, indicating that this proverb means that the mighty will always have their way, even though the weak are allowed to have their say. This is a proverb that points to the nature of politics in Kenya today; it effectively indicates the uncompromising, winner-takes-it-all attitudes that permeate the Kenyan political space.
- 10 In many of his 2007 campaign rallies, Raila used the proverb *Mbiu ya Mgambo ikilia ina jambo* (When the buffalo-horn sounds, there is something of importance). This was the case in his speech in Bomet, a county formerly under the governorship of Mr Isaac

Ruto, a Kalenjin who fell out with Jubilee government. Mr Issac Ruto had also formed his own political party known as the Chama Cha Mashinani (CCM), a party whose ideology was aimed at bringing resources to the grassroots. This proverb connects Raila Odinga to the CCM people. The party symbol of CCM is a trumpet and in most of its rallies, the CCM supporters would carry and blow horns. Traditionally, a horn was blown when people gathered for a communication. The horn was not just blown anyhow but only purposefully. In the Bomet rally, Raila justified his reason to visit the region. He told the audience that it was purposeful and planned that his team would go to Bomet and invite Isaac Ruto to join the NASA team. Besides, he had things to share with the audience, saying:

Na tumekuja kupiga mbiu ya mgambo. Na kuambia nyinyi ya kwamba kuna maneno. Mbiu la mgambo ikilia? (Crowd: kuna jambo!). Si kuna jambo?

"And we have come to blow the buffalo horn. And to tell you that we have a problem. When the buffalo-horn sounds? (Crowd: There is a problem!). There's a problem, isn't it?" (see Omollo 2017).

- 11 It can thus be argued that Raila rhetoric and use of proverbs in political rallies was informed by practical wisdom and pragmatic judgment. The use of a proverbial language gives his speeches a colloquial and metaphorical expressiveness that enables him to communicate effectively with people of different ethnic, social, and linguistic backgrounds with the main objective of drawing them behind him. On the political stage, Raila stressed and used a number of proverbs to bring his message of hope and moral values across within a highly competitive, polarised and contested political space of Kenya (Wolfgang 2014).
- 12 Raila does not only use riddles and proverbs but also songs or football commentaries with rhetoric strategies such as allegory, allusion, analogy, anaphora or onomatopoeia to call his supporters to take action. This manner of delivery conveys his message clearly to the audience. Sometimes, the public is provoked or encouraged to argue on an aspect or two. For example, Biblical names such as Canaan, Misri, Joshua, Caleb have raised numerous comments from both his competitors and supporters (Omollo 2017). For his supporters, Canaan is likened to a Kenyan state or country where all their problems (unemployment, poor health care, water shortages amongst others) shall be a thing of the past or taken care of by Raila's government. Unlike Canaan, Egypt (Jubilee government and state) is likened to problems and tribulations the way Israelites suffered while under slavery in Egypt.
- 13 Raila frequently uses the proverb "*Ahadi ni deni*" (A promise is a debt) to reprimand the Jubilee government led by Uhuru Kenyatta for its unfulfilled promises to Kenyans. For instance, during the 2017 campaign, the Jubilee alliance pledged to put up stadiums in all the counties. In his campaign rally in Busia, on 25 June 2017, Raila brought forward that the Jubilee promises (*ahadi*) were empty promises. Similarly, the Jubilee government promised to provide laptops to all pupils in lower primary schools in Kenya, a promise which was never honoured. He told the crowd that:
Waliongea juu ya laptop... mumeona? Walisema watajenga stadium, mumeona?. Basi ahadi ya Jubilee ni kama kunyamba kwa punda.
"They talked about laptops... Have you seen (them)? They said they will build stadiums... have you seen (them)? So the promises of Jubilee are like a donkey's fart {which is so rare}."
- 14 Equating Jubilee's failure to deliver on its promise with the fart of a donkey is like saying that Jubilee's promises will never be fulfilled. In other words, the Jubilee

government has not respected the principle of the “social contract” as defined by Rousseau as a way of moral governance that involves moral and political obligations from those who rule towards those who are ruled (Hampton 1986). The image of the donkey is very symbolic since Raila's staunch supporters also use it to depict the mighty nature of Raila. For instance, on one occasion when Jubilee supporters attacked Raila during campaign periods, one of Raila's supporters was captured on NTV exclaiming that:

Kutukana Raila ni kama kuchuna matako ya punda.

“Insulting Raila is like pinching the buttocks of a donkey (which elicits instant back kicks).”

- 15 And such people should come and kneel before Raila as they ask for forgiveness saying Raila *mwana* (Raila the son), Raila *baba* (Raila the father), Raila *Roho mtakatifu* (Raila the Holy spirit) three times.
- 16 Raila used the same proverbs and riddles from one rally to another. For instance, on 23 October 2017, in Kisii, he said:

Dalili ya mvua ni nini? Mawingu yametanda!

“Clouds are the sign of what? (rain), It is about to rain heavily.) This proverb glorified Raila as the clouds and his becoming president as the much-needed heavy rain over ‘a very arid’ Kenya.”

Mjinga akierevuka, mwerevu yu mashakani

“When a fool becomes enlightened, the wise person is in trouble.”

- 17 In other words, Raila was bringing forth the failures of the current “wise” rulers and therefore encouraging (*enlightening*) the people (*fools*) to stand up and protest against such (by voting out the current manipulative regime). He had used a short version of this proverb during a rally in Kisii and Kisumu on 20 October 2017. On both cases, these words referred to the bungled election of August 2018, which the Supreme Court annulled in favour of the National Super Alliance (NASA). It was on this basis that the NASA leader decided to come up with a policy of “Adopt a polling station” and an amorphous parallel tallying centre which he disclosed was in the ‘clouds’.¹ This was to ensure that whatever results sent to the IEBC central tallying centre at Bomas of Kenya matched with NASA's figures to ensure a transparent and accountable election process free from electoral malpractices leading to the popular phrase to NASA supporters:

Wakihesabu, tunahesabu; wakijumulisha, tunajumulisha; wakipeperusha, tunapeperusha; wakitangaza, tunatangaza.

“When they {IEBC} count, we {NASA} count; when they tally, we tally; when they relay {results}, we relay; when they announce results, we announce.”

- 18 However, after the nullification of the presidential elections by the Supreme Court, Raila and his team added another phrasethay says: *Wakiiba, tunawanasa* (if they steal [election], we nab them). As tools for political action, much of the purposes of proverbs appeal to traditional values, identity formation and evokes proximity to everyday life experience of common people (Tholani 2000).

The Riddle Technique

- 19 On many occasions, Raila reinforced proverbs through riddles (*kitendawili*), like in Busia on the 25 June 2017:

Kitendawili... Tega! Alikimbia usiku uchi akachoka akalala fo fo fo. Alipoamka asubuhi alipata aibu kubwa. Yeye ni nani? Yeye ni nani? Yeye ni nani?... Mmeshindwa. Mnipatie

mji... Busia... Huyo ni mchawi, huyo ni Jubilee. Miaka nne wamelala fofofu.

"Riddle! He ran naked, got tired and deeply fell asleep. When he woke up he got so ashamed. Who is this? Who is this? Who is this?... You have not gotten the right answer. Give me a town... Busia... That person is a witch, that person is Jubilee. For four years they were sound asleep."

- 20 In Kisumu on 20 October 2017, Raila brought in another riddle:

Kitendawili... Tega! Akibadilika kuwa mnyama, tunamwua... Na kuna njia mingi wa kumwua. Ni nani huyo... Mmeshindwa, mnipatie mji... Kisumu. Sawa huyo ni paka mnajua paka saa ingine anakwa kama paka mwitu, anakula vifaranga, siyo? Si anauliwa... Unaweza kushika yeye unamweka kamba unamfunga juu ya mti, siyo? Unaweza kuchukua kisu, siyo? Unaweza kuchukua mawe, unaweza kuweka yeye ndani ya gunia, unafunga gunia unapeleka kwa mto unarusha huko, siyo? Nitatoa ujumbe kwenu vile kumwua huyo paka.

"Riddle! When it changes into an animal, we kill it... and we have so many ways of killing it... what is it referring to? You can't get the answer... okay, it is a cat. Give me a town... Kisumu., you know sometimes cats change their nature, become wild and eat the chicken, isn't that true? When that happens, it must be completely destroyed, not so? You can do so by tying a rope around its neck and hanging it on a tree or you can slaughter it or you can stone it or even tie it inside a gunny bag and drown it in a river! Later, I will share with you how I will kill that cat (Jubilee party)."

- 21 In this riddle, Raila argues that sometimes a cat can become a wild cat and when that happens, there are so many ways of killing such a cat since it can change and start feeding on the chicken. He leaves his audience hanging by telling them that he will release a statement on how to kill the cat (Jubilee). Perhaps this meant his idea of boycotting the election. Nevertheless, there is a gleeful expression whenever Raila utters the word *kitendawili*. The call and response chorus became a hallmark of his public speaking. The extent to which this *kitendawili* was entrenched in the collective psyche of the masses is unbelievable. This is the mass that fanatically identifies with Raila who is able to (re)construct identities in different political times and space.
- 22 A riddle is a statement or question that necessitates the audience's inventiveness to realize its intended meaning since it is crafted and told figuratively. Riddles are effective tools of communication owing to their ability to provoke and engage the audience. They are both puzzling and entertaining. Raila uses riddles to introduce stories. This enhances mental alertness and makes the audience ready for a story. It also improves on the concentration of the listeners (Omollo 2017). Yet, Orwenjo (2009) believes otherwise and argues that political campaigns in Kenya and Africa at large usually involve seeking support and votes from a largely illiterate or semi-literate mass. The politicians, aware of this, exploit it by avoiding talking about real issues affecting the electorate and which they could end up being unable to tackle effectively, and instead resorting to populist proverbial clichés and riddles in a vain display of their oratory prowess.
- 23 Lastly, Raila also uses proverbs or riddles to talk about himself. For instance, he uses *Raila ni mweupe kama pamba* (Raila is as white as a cotton wool) to highlight the fact that he has not been tainted by corruption cases like his opponents. These words are aimed to construct the identity of Raila as a corruption free person who can be entrusted with the leadership of the state, and as one who is able to lead a government of people who are not greedy and who are not thieves unlike government officials who are portrayed as people who loot the national coffers. As politics and political discourse require of the speaker to have extraordinary abilities to convince the interlocutors, it is important

that they express themselves clearly, coherently and with little effort, ambiguities or tautology. Especially in campaign meetings, politicians need not only to be effective salesmen of their party's ideologies and viewpoints, but also to discredit and belittle opposing ideologies and ideas. In most cases, this invariably calls for some dose of influence: this is where proverbs and riddles come in handy.

The Power of Music

- 24 Music facilitates interaction between community members and represents an arena where the populace can voice their support or disapproval for leaders, air grievances, and join in a communal activity. It is on this basis that music can be considered a heuristic research object to gain insight into the history and present-day concerns of Kenyan society (Wanjala and Kebaya 2016). In critical studies that engage with actual songs, such as Haugerud (1995), Gecau (1997), and Masolo (2000), the relationship between popular music and politics is clearly underlined. These studies affirm that in Kenya, protest music provides an alternative space within which to explore political intrigues. For instance, Haugerud (1995) argues that subversive music plays a key part in exposing the political inconsistencies of the state's official discourse. While focusing on popular musicians such as Daniel Owino Misiiani, Masolo (2000) illustrates how popular music exists in opposition to the state's version of national culture, thereby forcing popular musicians to resort to allegories and allusions to pass on their political messages. According to Frith (1996), different people interpret music differently and music can convey several meanings simultaneously. Thus, music is not a mere monolithic reflection of a society at a given time, nor is it a static marker of identity. It is also an integral part of the daily activities that constitute individual subjectivity.
- 25 Wanjala and Kebaya (2016) observe that music's relationship to identity is usually understood in terms of processes of reflection, symbolization, homology, and expression. MacDonald et al. (2002: 5) capture this situation more precisely in pointing out how "[i]n today's world, deciding what music to listen to is a significant part of deciding and announcing to people not just who you want to be but who you are." Noteworthy is the notion that identity is always constructed from the cultural resources available at any given moment. Rather than durable and stable, identities are contingent, fragile, unstable, and changeable. The point has been made that the construction of identity as a form of self-understanding through music is brought into play when identities need to be or are being changed. Music helps that process by changing itself, or better by being changed by the musicians who want to participate in the construction of new identities and the symbolic representations of these identities to others, so that others' understandings of the group can change as well. Therefore, music as a performance and as a context provides a particularly fruitful arena for the expression of multiple identities (Wanjala and Kebaya 2016). Identity and ethnicity are relative and fluid concepts that vary according to the social situation, the comparison group, or the historical period. Moreover, a person may have "shifting multiple identities" (Mazrui and Shariff 1994: 8; Willis 1993).

Raila in Music

- 26 This is very characteristic of Raila Odinga whose identity becomes fluid and dynamic depending on the political space he is occupying during a particular period of time. The issue of identity construction and popular music has been captured well in Raila's presidential campaigns of 2017. This is evident in the way he evoked memories of people in time and space and makes them identify with the situations he put forth. Most of these memories are associated with historical developments, which would make his supporters endeared to him, and feel part and parcel of his political cause.
- 27 During a rally in Kisumu, Raila chanted the popular song "Kisumu dalawa" to evoke the memory of the people, thus taking them back to the days when they were being raised up in Kaloleni (a low-class estate) and playing football:
- Raila:** *Kisumu, Kisumu dala waaa...* ("Kisumu, Kisumu, our home")
All: *Kisumu dalawa, Kisumu Kisumu dalawa, Kisumu dalawa* ("Kisumu our home, Kisumu, Kisumu our home, Kisumu our home")
Raila: *Kisumu gi Nyong'o dalawa* ("Kisumu, the home of Prof. Nyong'o our home"
 [Prof. Nyong'o has been a long-time member of parliament for Kisumu Rural Constituency and a close confidant of Raila]).
- 28 The song contributes to local or regional identity construction as it helps Raila identify himself with not only the Kisumu people but also with the ordinary citizens of Kaloleni. By intentionally mentioning the name of Prof. Nyong'o, Raila is passing a message to his supporters that he identifies with Nyong'o and they should elect Anyang Nyong'o in the forthcoming gubernatorial elections. On this basis, it can be argued that the treatment of particular music or more precisely song as a form of speech utterance in political rallies arises not only from stylistic considerations, but also its importance as an avenue to communicate a message and influence people (Wafula 2001).
- 29 In Vihiga's rally on 24 June 2017, Raila identified with members of the Luhya nation. He started by greeting them in their mother tongue, saying:
- Vandu va Vihiga, mirembee!* ("People of Vihiga, hello!")
Mirembe andi! ("Hello again!")
Ulimwoyoo? ("Are you okay?")
- 30 The matter of language, especially a first language, has been cited as an important factor in the attribution of identity. Makoe (2007) observes that it is through social interaction that humans construct their identities and realities; and language, including symbolic behaviour (other ways in which meanings are communicated), plays a major part in the construction of meanings associated with messages from certain people using a particular language. The role of language and the social conditions in which it is used are important both in defining social, political and economic spaces and the practices and activities that take place therein. The context is, therefore, created by the sort of talk and symbolic expressions produced in the political spaces by both the politician and his followers. Raila thus used the local language in Vihiga as a marker of identity to make him easily identify with the locals. This is in line with Burke's (1995) observation that one can persuade the others only if one is able to speak their language.
- 31 This approach to identity construction was evident during a NASA rally on 10 January 2017 in Mumias where Raila argued as follows:

Mimi nikiwa Mumias niko nyumbani ("When I am in Mumias, I am at home").

Mimi ni mjukuu wa Nabongo Wanga ("I am the grandson of Nabongo Wanga").

Uhuru akicheza naitisha ile spirit ya Nabongo Wanga tunaonana na yeye munda kumundu ("If Uhuru jokes around I invoke the spirits of Nabongo Wanga and I square with him man to man").

- 32 In Bungoma rally on 23 June 2017, he evoked the cultural memory of the people of Bungoma who are predominantly Bukusu. He reminded them of their legendary prophet Elijah Masinde and of the spiritual, cultural and political importance of Mount Elgon in the political aspirations of Bungoma region. The attention of the people in the rally was arrested by the vivid description of the past events of their place. He also took his Bukusu supporters down the memory lane by reminding them of his father's political connection with the Bukusu community as a possible way of identifying with their aspirations. He started by saying that:

Tuko hapa Bungoma, tunaangalia mlima Elgon, Sigulu Masawa... Hapa ndio Elija Masinde wa Nameme alikuwa anaangalia huko alafu anaomba kwa mungu. Na yeye ndio alitabiri vile mambo yatakuwa eneo hii. Mimi nilitumwa na Jaramogi kwenda kuchukua yeye kuleta yeye Kisumu. Gari ikawa na shida na karibu mimi na Masinde karibu tukufe. Wa Nameme ndio aliambia Jaramogi eti utawala wa eneo hii ya Kenya itatoka ziwa ya Victoria. Wa Nameme alikuwa anajua kutabiri.

"We are here in Bungoma facing Mount Elgon, Sigulu Masawa... Here is the place where Elija Masinde, the son of Nameme, would come and face the mountain as he prayed to god. He is the one who prophesied the way things would be in this region. I was sent by my father Jaramogi Oginga Odinga to come and pick him from Bungoma and take him to Kisumu... on the way our vehicle developed some mechanical problems and Masinde and I almost died. The son of Nameme is the one who told Jaramogi that political leadership of this region {Bungoma} would come through Lake Victoria. The son of Nameme knew how to prophesy."

- 33 He talked about the inter-ethnic relations between the Luo and the Luyia community through football encounters. He argued that in the colonial period the Luyia and Luo communities were playing football, which was a marker of their identity. He reminded his audience about the Remington Cup, an inter-district annual football competition that pitted the Luo of Central Nyanza against the Bantu Kavirondo of North Nyanza in the 1950s and 60s (Cohen and Atieno-Odhiambo 1989). Time and space thus become an important factor in persuasion for political support. In his address, Raila specifically explained that the Remington Cup:

Ilikuwa mchuano kali kama FA Cup. Team ya North Nyanza walikuwa wakichuana na team ya Central Nyanza. Team ya North Nyanza walikuwa wakiimba na supporters wao:

"It was highly competitive like the English Premier League. The team from North Nyanza would meet with their arch rival from Central Nyanza. The North Nyanza team together with their supporters would sing the following song":

Ulihelwa, eing'ombe

"You will be given a cow" (meaning that the players would each be given a cow if they won the game)

Ulihelwa eing'ombe

"You will be given a cow"

Ulihelwa, eing'ombe mulahi wa mama eing'ombe

"You will be given a cow, mama's favourite, a cow."

Team ya central Nyanza walikuwa wanaaimba:

"Team from Central Nyanza were singing":

Kamanene kamanene kamanene

"Just like before, just like before" (meaning that the Central Nyanza team would still defeat the North Nyanza just like they have always done in their previous

encounters.)

Kamanene, kamanene Kamanene

"Just like before, just like before"

Kamanene kamanene, kamanene

"Just like before, just like before"

Wololo wololo wololo wololo

Wololo wololo wololo wololo

Wololo wololo wololo wololo

- 34 These memories help Raila pass his ideologies to his supporters and infuse a sense of belonging. In Bungoma rally, the fact that Raila identified with Masinde Muliro, an anti-colonial rule activist, and sang a song of cheer used during football matches among the Luhya was enough to win him support. Shobe (2008) affirms that football is one of the many cultural institutions inextricably wrapped up in the economic and political processes that shape places and societies worldwide. Cohen and Atieno-Odhiambo (1989) argue that, in a crucial sense, the colonial period in Kenya was a six-decade long colloquy among all sorts of people about culture, identity markers, boundaries, core values and ethnicities. These core values resonated through the football clubs, the clan associations and notably the Luo Union branches. During the 1950s and 1960s, John Cosmas Owade Bala Korguok, broadcasting on the Luo programmes of the state radio, did more than any other person to reiterate these core values among the Luo (Cohen and Atieno-Odhiambo 1989). In view of this, it is no surprise that Raila uses football and popular music as a vehicle of reimagining and creating both national and ethnic identities for political reasons while at the same time articulating his particular political interests and those of his party.
- 35 Specific campaign songs can set the tone and reflect the message of modern campaigns. It can give candidates an opportunity to assert their celebrity status and even to challenge party traditions. Using pop songs for politics is nothing new—Bill Clinton used Fleetwood Mac's *Don't Stop* and Barack Obama used William's *Yes We Can*, for instance. Candidates consider music a key element for establishing their personality and inspiring followers. In Kenya, whenever general elections are held, local entertainment scene becomes abuzz with politically inspired songs. These would be performed to hype up political parties, or presidential contenders making use of live shows to headline or stir up campaign gatherings. Besides spicing up the pre-election rallies, numerous original hit songs have spawned off the back of heated presidential polls pitying proponents affiliated to the two main political parties (The Standard Newspaper, 19 December 2008). The aim of producing campaign songs is primarily driven by the need to use popular art as a tool to communicate to the masses. "Music is the only language that transcends barriers between people from different communities. As a vehicle for campaigns, it serves an effective role as a powerful unifying factor" (The Standard Newspaper, 19 December 2008: 18). Yet, it is difficult to pinpoint whether the popularity of most campaign songs translate into additional votes, since there is no specific statistical data to prove it. However, the power of music, especially in the subliminal mind is indisputable. For instance, the two songs by Onyi Jalamo and Amos Barasa used by NASA are catchy, popular and appealed to a wider NASA (and to some extent Jubilee) audience. The two songs also represented a new wave of change, which the masses identified with.

Raila Odinga and Genealogy

- 36 One specific aspect of Raila's political speeches is tied to his use of genealogy. Tracing his roots to one of the Luhya tribes undeniably endears him to the Luhya community. Belonging to the Luhya and the Luo communities makes it possible for him to enjoy the advantages of tribal politics. To be more specific, Raila Odinga traces his roots to the Wanga Kingdom. He argues that the Wanga Kingdom is the present Mumias/Matungu region. To him, "Luo traditional oral history says that the Wanga were of Luo origin" (Odinga 2016). The form of political autobiography is extended narrative. Raila Odinga is skilled in rhetorical narrative technique and thus he is more likely to reveal the persuasive potential of the form than someone who is not (Omollo 2017).
- 37 One of the popular songs which became NASA's signature tune and the official campaign song was *Tibim*, composed by artist Onyi Jalamo. This song provided a revolutionary space for the NASA supporters to express themselves and pass their revolutionary message to Jubilee opponents while at the same time constructing diverse identities that characterize NASA supporters based on their age, gender, ethnic background. *Tibim* is popular and relevant to the "Ohangla" audience, that is, to a category of people who identify with a form of a fast-moving music from the lakeside region of Kenya. "Ohangla" music is also very popular with the youth. It is mostly done in Luo language, another marker of identity. Onyi Jalamo sung about his anticipation of a Kenya finally united because of Raila's victory. The song is celebratory and rooted in the Luo culture of *pakruok* (praise giving). Its lyrics is as follows:
- Kenya duto oramo Raila kawo telo
("Kenyans have vowed that Raila is bound to take power")
Kenya duto oramo Raila kawo telo
("Kenyans have vowed that Raila is bound to take power")
Nairobi oramo Raila kawo telo
("Nairobi{ans} have vowed that Raila is bound to take power")
Kisumu oramo Raila kawo telo
("Kisumu {Kisumu people} have vowed that Raila is bound to take power")
Pwani Mombasa oramo Raila Kawo telo
("Mombasa (the people of Mombasa) have vowed that Raila is bound to take power")
- 38 In Dholuo, "*tibim*" means a thunderous sound coming out after hitting something hard; it is thus onomatopoeic. It may be suggested that "*tibim*" was used in reference to a sounding defeat against Jubilee party. The bulk of the song is made up of lyrics that name a politician and request the replies "*tibim*" and "*tialala*" from the audience.
- 39 Affiliation with a particular subculture is not random. Songs, sounds, and styles are important features in any subculture because they embody certain values and attitudes that the group members share. The immediacy of songs like NASA's "*Tibim*," however, does not lie in the lyrics alone. The power of music to embody imagined worlds is crucial in the production of feelings (Simonett 2000). Onyi Jalamo's music creates a feeling of Kenyanness. Moreover, the song enumerates Raila's great achievements. He mentions Raila's struggle for democracy in Kenya and his role in the realization of a devolved system of government through the 2010 Constitutions, notably saying:
- Seche oromo we aywanie ngolo
"Time is up, let me sing for you"
Wuo nya Alego... NASA, NASA
"The son of a woman from Alego... NASA, NASA"

Onyi jalamo an awacho kendo anwoyo

"Onyi Jalamo, I am saying and repeating this"

Wang'ni to wololo, wang'ni to wololo

"This time round it is no joke"

Amolo Odinga gik maitimo dongo... ikelo democracy

"Amolo Odinga, you have done great things... You have brought democracy"

Ichaki ikelo devolution, ichaki ikelo devolution

"You have brought devolution, you have brought devolution."

- 40 Most fascinating is the imaginative component of this song. The singer argues that power is not given on a silver platter but rather taken ("*telo ikawo*"). This idea is revolutionary, as it does not recognize the electoral process of voting. There, imagination is not simply a daydream or idle escapism, but rather an empowering force. Because music offers strong images of characteristic identities, it is a source for identity and pride (Simonnete 2000). The lyrics point to the difficulty to dislodge from power the incumbent president through election. Thus, "*Tilim*" revisits the outcome of the 2007 and 2013 general election: Raila consistently asserted that he won these elections but that his victory was "stolen" through rigged election. In the lyrics below, "*Tilim*" call for people to take their spears and shields (voting cards). The singer states that NASA principle leaders, such as Kalonzo, Wetangula and Mudavadi, have vowed that they are taking power in the same vein as their supporters in Nairobi and Siaya. The singer's sentiment is that if power cannot come through the ballot then it must come through unorthodox means, saying: "*Wangi onge gima iweyo makata kochuno to wadonjo gi balangewa*" (This time round we are leaving nothing to chance and, if possible, we shall get into power through the backdoor). He portrays a society fed up with the regime in power. This is the joyful climax of the song. The pleasure which this song produces relates to the cultural enjoyment of identity. It is, as Frith (1992) puts it, "a pleasure of identification" with the music, with the performers of that music, and with the people mentioned and praised in the song.

Agwambo telo ikawo, tinga ok mi ng'ato

"Agwambo leadership is taken and not given"

Donge seche oromo chieng rieny gokiny

"The time is now when the early morning sun is shining"

Seche oromo kaw odunga gi tong

"The time is now to carry your shield and spear"

Kalonzo oramo ni telo ikawo

"Kalonzo has vowed that leadership is taken"

Wetangula donge oramo ni telo ikawo

"Wetangula has vowed that leadership is taken"

Mudavadi bende oramo ni telo ikawo

"Mudavadi has also vowed that leadership is taken"

Nairobi, wangni onge gima iweyo

"Nairobi people we are not leaving anything to chance"

Siaya wang'ni onge gima iweyo makata kochuno to wadonjo gi balangewa

"Siaya people this time there is nothing we are leaving to chance and if it is not possible we shall use other means to get power."

Wuo nyalego, Agwambo tinga, Agwambo tinga, Raila nyundo, in e ruathwa

"Son of the lady from Alego, Agwambo tractor, Agwambo tractor, Raila hammer, you are our hero."

- 41 The song is inclusive as it mentions leaders from the different parts of Kenya that NASA has secured alliances within. All the NASA principals are "*tibim*":

Raila igwe, Kenya tibim
 "Raila King, Kenya tibim"
Kalonzo igwe, Ukambani tibim
 "Kalonzo King, Kamba land tibim"
Wetangula igwe, Western tibim
 "Wetangula King, Western tibim"
Mudavadi igwe, Waluyia tibim
 "Mudavadi king, Luyia nation tibim"
Kidero igwe, Nairobi tibim
 "Kidero King, Nairobi tibim"
Joho igwe, Mombasa tibim
 "Joho Igwe, Mombasa tibim"
Rasanga igwe, Siaya tibim
 "Rasanga King, Siaya tibim"
Ranguma igwe, Kisumu tibim
 "Ranguma King, Kisumu tibim"
Obado igwe, Migori tibim
 "Obado King, Migori tibim"
Awiti igwe, Homabay tibim
 "Awiti King, Homabay tibim"

- 42 In his revised NASA "*Tibim*" song, Jalamo decries the sufferings of Kenyan workers and of ethnic communities. He also brings to the fore several corruption cases that Raila had exposed, like the Eurobond and the NYS scandal where millions of shillings were lost. The singer also explores the status of Kenyan workers, mentioning the doctors' and teachers' strikes, with a call to Raila to save Kenya (*Raila okoa Kenya*). He further mentions youth unemployment. Although he is dejected by the status of the country, he is optimistic when he says freedom is coming (*Wakenya tunataka ukombozi*)—We Kenyans want freedom).

Conclusion

- 43 This article explored the use of popular music and the narration of riddles, proverbs and historical facts by Raila Odinga, the 2017 NASA presidential candidate. It is evident that, from his extensive use of proverbs and riddles, Raila has been able to attract large following, which vividly sheds light on the significant rhetorical force of this mode of communication. Songs, proverbs and riddles helped convince his supporters that he was the ideal candidate for Kenya's presidency as well as a way of selling his political ideas and vision. Although riddles were also used by his opponents to ridicule him—calling him "*Yule jamaa wa vitendawili*" ("that guy of riddles"), Raila charmed his audience. Finally, the use of Onyi Jalamo's song "*Tibim*" reveals how much songs have become a discursive presence in Kenya's political space. Popular music serves popular mobilization against unpopular regimes. The generation and spread of popular forms are not as spontaneous and informal as one would sometimes wish to imagine. Popular forms can, in fact, be very deliberately engineered products. NASA's "*Tibim*" song strategically incorporated idioms of praise (for NASA leaders) and of protest (against the Jubilee regime) in multiple ways.

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NOTES

1. Adopt a Polling Station was a policy by Raila Odinga which was to ensure that NASA supporters remained at the polling station after polling in order forestall rigging of the presidential election. Similarly, the parallel tallying centre, was a NASA owned centre which was to tally and relay election results from constituency levels in order to minimize rigging of elections and to neutralize monopoly of the Independent Electoral and Boundary Commission as far as tallying of results was concerned. The results of the parallel tallying centre were to be stored in the iclouds where state operatives could not interfere with them.

ABSTRACTS

Popular art is an effective medium for expressing individual and collective representations and aspirations. It helps to share experience and captures the contradictions and dynamics prevalent in society. In Kenya, every election has been characterized by the use of popular music and other types of popular means of expression. Songs as well as riddles and proverbs are consistently being used during electoral campaigns. This was evident during the 2017 general election during which Raila Odinga, the National Super Alliance (NASA) presidential candidate, campaigned through popular music and used proverbs and riddles to draw his supporters behind him. This chapter examines some of Raila's campaign speeches to further understand the importance and efficiency of oratory style and popular culture for political mobilization and identity construction in Kenya.

INDEX

Keywords: Raila Odinga, songs, riddles, proverbs

Geographical index: Kenya

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