

“O To Gee” (Enough Is Enough), An Exploratory Sociological Analysis of a Political Campaign Slogan in Nigeria

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Abstract

All over the world, politicians fancy up their language in a special way to give extract effect and force to their message to the electorate in order to achieve their objective of winning more votes. This language can be embodied in rhetoric, propaganda, promise, colloquialism, word coinages, pidginized and figurative expressions. Attractive political slogans are used by political leaders to inspire and set the mood of public about a particular issues. It is argued that a specific characteristic of political slogans make them the prime instrument for government communication, but at the same time the same characteristic make them the most vulnerable instrument as well. Political campaign slogan has continued to play an important roles in voter's education and enlightenment in Nigeria. The electorates have witnessed many political campaign slogans such as "one nation, one destiny" of late Shehu Shagari led National Party of Nigeria (NPN), "Hope" of the Late MKO Abiola of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), Gbais bee (take it there) of the "Olusegun Mimiko of Ondo State, "change" of Mohammadu Buhari led All Progressives Congress (APC) and Power to the Peoples of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). However, none of these political slogans have a more devastating effect in capturing the mood of the electorates as the "O to gee" (Enough is enough) in Kwara State. Thus, this paper utilized secondary sources of data to interrogate the effect of political campaign slogan in Nigeria with specific reference to Kwara state gubernatorial election conducted in 2019, as evident in the dismantling of the twenty-eight (28)years old famous and powerful Saraki's political dynasty in the state. It was observed that man as a political and social animals engages in the practice of politics as a social and noble activity to express his political agenda either positively or negatively. Therefore, the paper concluded with some recommendations that if political campaign slogan is well-structured, it is capable of being an effective tool for driving government policies, ensuring mass participation of citizenry in political activities, electioneering process and aiding an election of popular candidates with attractive manifestoes at the poll.

Keywords: Electioneering, Enough Is Enough Dynasty, Political Campaign Slogan, Politics.

Introduction

Slogans are an essential part of corporate advertising and political campaigning. As attention-getting phrases, they are often invoked by political groups or other social groups to champion a cause. Sharkansky (2002 p.75), posited that political campaign slogan when used in political communication, "they simply the task of communication and audiences in a situation where there are many ideas competing for a place in the political agenda and a great deal of noise from competing messages".

In modern democracies, most political figures use political campaign slogan as an enticing and alluring aphorisms to articulate ideological stand prints, to convince their audience, to deepen ideology in public consciousness, and to drive political action. Political campaign slogan has certain characteristics features which differentiate it from other varieties of language use in our day-to-day interaction. They remain very unique with politicians and Politic. Political campaign slogan embodied in propaganda and rhetoric, is persuasive and politicians adopt these slogans as a device to cajole the electorate to vote for them and their parties by presenting themselves as the only credible and capable for the position. Man by creation is a social and political animal. This suggest that man is both sociable and solitary. Peck (1955), explained that a higher standard of a

man depends partly on philosophical contemplation which can be demonstrated or expressed through employment of social virtues exercised in the company or association of others. Politics is premised on 'who gets what, when and how. According to Lasswell 1960, 1977, Danziger 1998, politics determines the process through which power and influence are used in the promotion of certain values and interest. The concept of politics revolves around some fundamental questions among others: who governs? For what ends? And by what means? These fundamental questions played out through discussion, disagreement, consensus, lobbying, campaigning and voting.

The ultimate ends of politics is to captures/gets power. Though power is an elusive concept, it is the capacity to pursue and achieve goals effectively. It is the ability in any human relationship to control behaviour and influence thought for the attainment of political goal (Moregenthau, 1985; Padelford, 1976). One of the ways to get power through politics is to design a political campaign slogan as a mean to effectively capture the mood of the public into buying into their manifesto and agenda. Political campaign slogans are an organized effort which seek to influence the decision-making process within a specific group or environment. It can be viewed as the mobilization of forces either by political parties or individuals to influence and capture the mood of others in order to effect an identified and desired political change. It shows people and particularly, political candidates' ability to sensitize the electorates in relation to making the electorates see them as potentials and better representatives of the people.

Every political campaign slogan is unique, and the ultimate goal of every political parties or campaign slogan is to win election. Lynn (2009), opined that although there is no single 'best' campaign slogan/strategy but the right slogan/strategy may differ from one candidate to another and for each election.

What seems to be very important in any political campaigns slogan is the 'message' that is sent to the electorates. A political campaign slogan is an important and potent tool in Nigeria that politicians use to express views and feelings to the public with an intention of remoulding and redirecting the electorates' opinions to align with their. The message therein in slogans are simple statement that are easily be repeated severally throughout the campaign period to persuade the target audience or influence voter's act in the candidate's favour. Political campaign slogan contains salient ingredients that candidates wish to share with the voters and these are repeated often in order to create a lasting impression on the voters.

The ability of politician to use campaign slogan as a language to interact with the electorates is one of the unique characteristic a man possess, which by extension makes him distinctively higher than other animals. Sociologically, without language, man (Homo sapiens) will find it difficult, if not impossible, to exist as one may have it easy to communicate with another person in the absence of language. Therefore, the concept of political slogan as a language is a critical resource especially in political campaign. The slogan of political campaign is a variety of language use is intended to pass the needed information to the electorate with a view to convincing or appealing to them. It is usually laden with emotion and has the effect of causing the electorate to have a change of mind on an important issue or about a particular party or candidate. Szanto (1998:7) argues that language of politics are lexicon of conflict and drama, of ridicules, and reproach, pleading and persuasion, colour and bit permeated. As language designed to valour men, destroy some and change the mind of others.

In Nigeria, political campaign slogans are not necessarily meant to deceive the average Nigerian or destroy political opponents in entirety, but to sway electorates away from the actions of those in authority to their own side and for the purpose of winning votes.

Political Campaign Slogan in Nigeria

Nigerians have been bamboozled often with political campaign slogans and new grammatical coinages. Often, political campaign slogans were not necessarily meant to deceive the average electorates but they are being used to sway the masses away from the unjustifiable and condemnable action of those in power. Such slogans and coinages are unique, eye catching, mindboggling and strongly persuasive.

In the 1950s and early 1960s, political campaign slogans played an effective role in mobilizing average Nigerians to partake greatly in politics. Zikism then meant a mass movement of people of similar ideological inclinations and persuasions integrated together to form a formidable political front. Zikism was characterized by five principles for African liberation: spiritual balance, social regeneration, economic determinism, mental emancipation and political resurgence.

In Northern Nigeria, the two dominant parties, the Northern people's congress (NPC) and Northern Elements progressive Union (NEPU) were known for their strong political campaign slogans of "Salama" and "Sabawa" respectively. While Salama stood for freedom. The Emirs and chiefs as well as the emerging ruling elites in North preferred Northern People's Congress (NPC) with its appeal to peace and continuity, the talakawa (the poor and the downtrodden) preferred the sabawa slogan of the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) because of their desire for freedom from colonial and local oppression.

At another stage in our national life, Nigeria were fed with one Nation, one destiny political slogan by the then, ruling party in the second republic; the National party of Nigeria (NPN) led by late Alhaji Shehu Shagari. The party is political campaign slogan of 'one nation, one Destiny' was seen as the rally point of Nigeria's diversity but in reality the slogan was a realm rhetoric considering the facts that all federal government contracts only went into the hands of NPN members and federal allocations to opposition state like Bendel state (now Edo and Delta states) under the late Mr. Ambrose Ali were withheld even after court judgment. Take off funds for the then Ondo State (now Ekiti and Ondo State) were similarly withheld by the NPN controlled federal government, despite the ringing of the slogan 'one nation, one Destiny'. In the build up to the General election of 1993 organized by the Military junta of General Ibrahim Babangida, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) fielded the Late Business Mogul, Chief Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola who campaigned on the political slogan of Hope'93. Smarting from the Structural Adjustment Policy, SAP of the Ibrahim Babangida military junta which had snapped many Nigerians economically, and the memorable jingle of "Hope'93" was generally accepted by Nigerians, leading to the resounding vote for the Social Democratic Party (SDP) candidates. But unfortunately, the result of the election adjudged to be the most freest and fairest in the political history of Nigeria was eventually annulled by the military junta led by General Ibrahim Babangida, leading to political chaos that toppled the military regime and the setting up of interim Government headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan. After a prolonged military rule, Nigeria returned to democracy in 1999 and two political parties contested for the General Election in 1999. The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) campaign slogan of 'power to the people' captured the mood of the average Nigerians who had been calling for the return of government to the civilian/politicians. The aftermath of the chaos that followed the annulment of the June 12, 1993 Presidential Election and the subsequent brutal reign of the Late General Sanni Abacha, propelled people to connect with the campaign slogan of "power to the people" of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in 1999, leading to the resounding vote for the party's candidates. Following of the disagreement and failure of the leading political opposition on the modalities to be adopted in their merger proposal to challenge the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in 2011 general election, the merger was eventually actualized in 2015 and the All Progressive Congress (APC) party was formed with the merger of Action Congress of Nigeria (CAN), congress for progressives change (CPC), All Nigerians Peoples Party (ANPP) and a faction of All Progressive grand Alliance (APGA). The party adopted "change" as its political campaign slogan. The gospel of change swept across the country and the perfect one-liner captured the yearnings of the populace whowere against the wide scale deeply entranced corruption under the sixteen (16) years administration of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). For some parts in the North, the political slogan of "change" of the All Progressive Congress (APC), the progressing cult-hero status of the Presidential Candidates of the party Muhammadu Buhari, the slow and ineffective fight against the Boko Haram insurgents ravaging the North-east part of the country were spell binding enough to defeat the Peoples

Democratic Party (PDP). The “change” slogan effectively produced the first democratic election in Nigeria where the incumbent lost.

The 2019 general elections in Nigeria was characterized with a lot of intrigues, name calling, propaganda, networking and alliance formation across party lines. Politicians on their part adopted different slogans, street lingo and campaign slogan to connect with the people and canvass support. These electioneering activities have informed as much as they have entertained Nigerians. Oladeinde (2019) highlighted some of the dominant campaign slogans during the 2019 general election which includes; 4 plus 4- “Next level” sign of a non-verbal use of sign language. Its essentially meant to convey the desire to support president Muhammadu Buhari’s re-election bid in 2019. The sign is done by spreading one’s two hand apart, with all of one’s fingers but the thumb raised while displaying both hands. The two separate four fingers displayed conspicuously are representative of each of the four-year periods of the two terms the Nigeria constitution stipulates for the president. “Take it back” was popularized by the publisher of Sahara Reporters, Omoyele Sowore and it was extremely popular especially among the younger generation.

“Atikulated” was projected to campaign for the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) flagbearer in the 2019 general election, Atiku Abubakar the former vice president of Nigeria and a subtle campaign message was also launched to show that Mr. Abubakar was more articulate and has better grasp of the issues plaguing Nigerian than his major challengers, especially Mr. Buhari of the All Progressive Congress (APC). It was not surprising to hear average Nigerians say that they are Atiku-lated, in reference to throwing their support for Mr. Abubakar, widely known among Nigerians as “Atiku”. Another catchy political campaign slogan used during the build up to the 2019 general election in Nigeria was Obi-diently. Mr Peter Obi was a former governor of Anambra state and the running mate of Mr. Atiku Abubakar Obi-diently was a campaign catchphrase coined from his name; peter Obi used alongside the atikulated slogan. When paired together, it was said as “Obidiently Atikulated” to encourage voters to come out and cast their votes.

Ortomatic, was popularized by the supporters of Benue State Governor, Samuel Ortom. Mr. Ortom had defected from the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in 2018. This was at the height of the herdsmen-farmers’ clash that claimed numerous lives in Benue and other part of the country. Upon his defection, some old-time PDP members ruled out the possibility of the party granting the governor an automatic ticket. His supporters promptly adopted the ortomatic mantra, perhaps to affirms that the governor’s re-election bid would be seamless.

“O Penkele” was a political slogan coined by the supporters of Mr. Bayo Adelabu of the All Progressive Congress (APC) in Oyo State during the gubernatorial election of 2019. Adegoke Adelabu, the late Ibadan Politician, popularized the catchphrase “peculiar mess” which his supporters in Ibadan corrupted as “Penkelemesi”. Decades after his death, Bayo Adelabu, a Scion of the Adelabu family, resurrected the catchphrase, adopting it as campaign slogan. The All Progressives Congress (APC) flagbearer in Lagos state, Mr. Sanwo-Olu adopted a political slogan coined from his name Sanwo-Olu to Sanwo-Eko (Pay Lagos) to popularize his messages to Lagosian.

Purpose of Political Campaign Slogan

Political campaigns slogans are efforts which seeks to influence the decision-making process within a specific group or environment. It can also be viewed as the mobilization of forces with by an organization or individuals to influence others in order to effect an indented and desired political charge. It shows people and particularly, political candidates, ability to sensitize the political community in relation to making the community see them as potentials and better representatives of the people. At any rate, every campaign slogan is unique, and the ultimate goal of every political campaign slogan is to capture the mood of the electorates so as to win their votes and ultimately win the election.

What seems to be very important in any political campaign slogan is the 'message' that is sent to the electorates. A political campaign slogan is an important and potent tool that politicians use to express views and feelings to the public with the intention of reshaping and re-directing the electorates' opinions to align with theirs. The slogan should be a simple word that can be repeated severally throughout the campaign period to persuade the target audience or influence voter's act in the candidates' favour. Political campaign slogan should be a simple catchy phrase accompanying a logo or brand that encapsulates the aim and objectives of political candidate.

Assessment of O to gee (Enough is enough) as a political campaign slogan in the Kwara State, General Election

When the results started trickling in and it became apparent that the ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) is on the losing side and that the Senate President of Nigeria, Dr. Bukola Saraki, a Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) Senatorial candidate for the Kwara central senatorial district was not going to return to the senate, there was a tidal wave of satisfaction that flooded Ilorin, Kwara state, Nigeria. The dismantling of the Saraki political dynasty that has stood for more than four decades was a triumph to the defaulters and opponents of the Senator perceived as a part of a dynasty that has stifted the North-central state for decades and was the reward of their collective revolt.

During the build-up to the general election of 2019 in Ilorin, the state capital of Kwara state, Nigeria, the chant of "o to gee" (Enough is enough) is often followed by "Lilo lee lo", meaning "we will ensure you are chased away". The "O to gee" campaign slogan was so effective that it led to the fall of Mr. Bukola Saraki, the scion of the Saraki dynasty, it also swept away all Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) aspirants across Kwara state.

In a show of frustration, chanting the "O to gee" political slogan, the people of Kwara State, Nigeria mobilized massively to vote against the Saraki Dynasty, the machinery that had held to state to ransom, producing every Governor since 1979. Galadima (2019), observed that the late Olusola Saraki, the father of Bukola Saraki, the former senate president of Nigeria was popular across the state. He was loved, admired, feared and supported. He understood the people's pains and did not interfere much in the process of choosing party candidates at various level. He allowed party to choose their flag bearers at the local level and this made it easy for him to always deliver Kwara state at the polls, only interfering occasionally.

The Saraki political dynasty was so powerful and formidable that it produces Adamu Attah, the Egbira prince, as Governor of the former North-central state in the first Republic. Late Olusola Saraki later produced other Governors namely Cornelius Adebayo, Mohammed Shaba Lafiagi, Mohammed Lawal and Bukola, his son in 2003. For four decades, the Saraki family of Ilorin dominated the politics of Kwara state (Omotoso, 2019). The patriarch of the family, Dr. Abubakar Olusola Saraki, a medical doctor turned politician, was the prime mover of Kwara state, Nigeria politics. He first entered politics in 1964 when he contested for the parliamentary election for Ilorin as an independent candidate, but lost. After the election he returned to his medical practice in Lagos, only returning to party politics in 1978.

Earlier in 1977, Olusola Saraki had been elected as a member of the constituency Assembly that produced the Nigeria 1979 constitution. He won election into the senate in 1979 and was re-elected in 1983 on the platform of the National party of Nigeria (NPA) and became the senate header. In 1998, Olusola Saraki became a National leader of the Board of Trustees of the All People's Party (APP), a position that gave him the power to install the Governors of Kwara and Kogi States under the banner of All people's party (APP) in 1999 general election. In 2001, Oloye as he was fondly called by his admirers, defected to the People's Democracy Party (PDP); and in the April 2003 elections, the kingmaker supported his son Bukola Saraki as candidate for Governor of Kwara State and his daughter, Gbemisola as senator for Kwara central senatorial district.

Once his political tentacles were firmly entrenched in Kwara State, Nigeria Olusola Saraki wasted no time to launch the Saraki family dynasty, a powerful, influential platform that decide who gets what (Oluwasanmi, 2015).

The Saraki dynasty became polluted and degenerated. The family became a center of licentiousness and depravity of corruption and influence peddling. Like many complicated systems, the Saraki dynasty grew brittle and inflexible. It could not adjust to new realities. Addicted greed, out sized fraud, outlandish personality, pride, unrestrained appetite for graft and corruption and power ultimately eclipse the dynasty.

"O to gee" (Enough is enough) went from a mere words birthed by Alhaji LAK Jimoh in 2010 to enhanced movement that swore to stop at nothing to uproot the strangle hold of sarakis on Kwara state, Nigeria. It caught on like wildfire and filled the air. The opposition All Progressives Congress in Kwara State, Nigeria latched into the frosty resentment for the dynasty, created an avenue for a release of the pent-up rage against Kwara's overlords. "O to gee" (Enough is enough) slogan was printed on shirts, tooted by cabbies and motorcyclists, debated on radio programmes, trumpeted and sung in local bars.

The "O to gee" political slogan word effective was probably an understatement while reacting to the success of slogan. People feel very strongly that anyone can be replaced when the generality of the populace decides that is what they want to do. The political slogan captured the determined of the people to vote out those who have held them down for decades. It bore fruits in hundreds of thousands of votes as All Progressives Congress (APC) had a clean sweep of the February 23 presidential and National Assembly elections.

"O to gee" was a doozy in the manner which All Progressives Congress (APC) "charge" in the 2015 election was. The biggest casualties of "O to gee" political campaign slogan in Kwara state, Nigeria was the Saraki political dynasty. The dynasty held sway for almost four decades in the state producing five (5) Governors, countless senators, House of Representatives members, House of assemblies members, local government chairman, councilors and other political appointees both within Kwara state and the federal across different political lines. "O to gee" (Enough is enough) had a bit of fighback from Saraki's political camp, a counter-chant of "O tun ya" (Let's continue) but it did not catch on. "O tun ya" was a limp attempt that failed to match the fiery revolt of "O to gee" political slogan against the establishment.

Recommendations

Political campaign slogans are viewed as a capable tool for mobilizing of forces by political parties in order to effect an identified and desired political change. It is an important and potent tool that politicians use to express views and feelings to the public with the intention of reshaping and re-directing electorates' opinions. If political campaign slogans are well structured, it is capable of being an effective tool for driving government policies like "Operation feeds the Nation's slogan of the military junta of 1976.

Slogan when structured to meet the expectation of the electorates, political can be an effective and potent weapon that can be used to mobilize mass participation of citizens in political activities and electioneering processes. The Federal Government of Nigeria adopted the campaign slogan of "One man, one vote" as a tool to assure electorates that their votes would count thereby increase their participation in electioneering processes. Political campaign slogan is capable of aiding the election of a candidate with an attractive and sellable manifestoes at the poll, if it is properly coined and the message therein is persuasive. Political parties should strive to coin a campaign slogan that will encourage electorates to participate in politics without violence by making frantic efforts to inform or persuade them rather can device them with enticing and inciting words. They should adopt simple expressions to communicate their political agenda without the use of force, violence and unhealthy rivalry. As much as possible, politicians should avoid negative expressions that can promote conflict during political campaign.

Conclusion

This paper reveals that Nigerian politicians, like their counterparts in other parts of the world use political campaign slogan during political campaign to give extra effect and force to their message. This is aimed at achieving their main objectives of persuading the electorates and winning more votes. The paper concluded

political campaign slogans are essential tool for mobilizing electorates to participate in electioneering processes, thus political parties and politicians should strive to coin a slogan that could inform or persuade electorates to vote for credible candidates rather than deceive them with enticing and inciting words. This study is by no means exhaustive. It is expected that further studies based on the usefulness of political campaign slogan during electioneering processes in Nigerian context and elsewhere be carried out so that Nigerians/electorates will better appreciate the importance of the use of a campaign slogan in politicking.

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