

Nigerian Popular Music is Everywhere: Proliferation or Development?

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Abstract

Nigerian popular music is big. This means it has grown or that it has increased numerically. Does the growth amount to development? The paper premised within the migration theory measures points of departure between what Nigerian audience wants, what the musicians can provide and what the music climate allows. The study relies on data collected between 2011 and 2018 fieldwork on the spread of popular music in Nigeria. It is assumed here that the stages of the development/proliferation of popular music in Nigeria are as a result of repression, diffusion and migration of music and musician. The paper argues that while identity repression deprived significant musical development, the mass oriented identity facilitates growth- increase in number. The paper concludes that the implications of repressive identity notwithstanding, the proliferation of Nigerian popular music has enhanced a better economic and musical life in Nigeria.

Keywords: Proliferation, Development, identity, repression.

Introduction

Omojola (2006) defines what Nigerian popular music is. He gives historical and cultural background and explains its style and aesthetic issues of popular music in Western Nigeria. In another study, Onyeji (2002) discusses facts about popular music and musicians in Nigeria with emphasis on types and performance practice. Yet in another study, Adeola(2011) examines the Nigerian popular music as a tool for national development. The present study differs in scope from the three authors as this work examines the level of musical and non-musical growth in relation to the development of popular music in Nigeria.

Nigerian popular music is big. This means it has grown or that it has increased numerically. Does the growth amount to development? Has it grown into maturity considering the status of the musicians, the musical content, internal structure of the music and body politics? If Nigerian popular music has developed, does this improve our economy or our social life? How does one interpret the music to measure development as different from growth or proliferation?

For both Popper and Eccles (1977) music is that which has the possibility of being interpreted in a performance. Steve Jones (1995) however notes that they (Popper and Eccles) do not make claim as to the site of interpretation. The author (Jones) raises the following question: is the interpretative subject the audience or the musicians or both? Within this territory, this paper raises a question: who facilitates the development of a musical genre; the consumer (audience) or the musician? The paper dwelling on this premise measures the level of development of popular music in Nigeria using a relevant theory to measure points of departure between what the audience wants and what the musicians can provide. It equally measures what the music politic in Nigeria proposes and what the music climate allows. The study relies on data collected between 2011 and 15 fieldworks on the spread of popular music in Nigeria premised within the migration theory rather than social evolution theory to determine the spread. It is assumed here that the stages of the development of popular music in Nigeria are as a result of diffusion and migration of music and musician. This spread depends heavily on media and social network which is presently 'abused' in Nigeria. No wonder the Nigeria National Houses of Senate and Representative plan recently to formulate a law to prevent the abuse of social network.

Popular Music Spread in Nigeria

Unlike in the past, literature on history and development of popular music all over the world is available now even though; the documentation of many popular music genres in different parts of the world is still begging for attention. Popular music scholars all over the world have explored many areas of the popular music. This includes: Ghanaian Highlife (Collins, 1976) Popular Bands of Sierra-Leone (Horton, 1984) Re-examining the proverb in the child Ballad (Sweterlitsch, 1985). Akan Highlife in Ghana (Breempong, 1985), Proverbs in American popular songs (Mieder, 1988), The musical practices in South Africa (Allen, 1995). Signifying power of the voices in Norway (Augestad, 1995) Hip-Hop in Africa edited by (Charry, 2012) and back in Nigeria; Juju music: A study of its social history and style (Alaja-

Browne, 1985) Jujù: A social history and ethnography of an African popular music. (Waterman,1990) Popular music in Nigeria (Bode Omojola, 2006) Popular music: facts about the music and musician (Christian Onyeji, 2002)The spread of Nigerian popular music: A survey (Abiodun,2011) and many more. Omojola (2006,23) identified three factors that are responsible for the growth of popular music:

- I. The emergence of a western educated and African elites
- II. The eventual frustration of the western African elite who had hoped to gain more political and economic power.
- III. A spirit of cultural awakening.

The three factors founded and sharpened popular music and its history can be traced through these factors. The present form of the Nigerian popular music was also a result of different inputs of early Nigerian popular musicians who were influenced by one culture or the other, by one musical form or style or by one musician or the other. Adegbite (1995, 3) also identified Islamic culture, Christianity and western culture as the principal external influences that re-shaped Nigerian popular music. It is assumed that the growth and development of popular music were a result of the efforts of the early musicians who were influenced by the factors identified by Omojola and Adegbite.

This can better be explained within two migration theories:

1. The Lee's theory of migration which is based on three elements:
 - a) Place of origin
 - b) Place of destination
 - c) Intervening obstacles

The first element is linked to the effort of the early musicians who were assumed the owners of the melodies and the styles. The place of origin of the music is therefore traced to this first set of musicians in their own right. The music gradually slipped away from the hand of the first set to the second generation of popular musicians in Nigeria which is the place of destination at the end of 20th century in Nigeria's case. The circle continues as the music moves around to come around. Intervening 'obstacles' were identified to include the intervention of Afro American music, technology, social network, media and repressions here and there. This theory is also used to explain the interaction between the musicians, location of the music (urban and rural) and the society.

2. Push and Pull theory of migration

Correlation is drawn between the pull and push factors aggregate of what determines the growth or development of popular music in Nigeria. It is argued in this paper that the external and internal influences can be located as the pull and push factors that construct and deconstruct the history, growth and development of popular music. The external and internal factors are reviewed within the framework of the Push-Pull theory of migration which states that Push factors at a place of origin compel migrants to emigrate (creation of new musical styles) and Pull factors at the place of destination are attractive to immigrants (recreation of musical styles). It is assumed therefore that the creation and recreation process determines growth and development and a times proliferation.

Popular music is indeed in everywhere all over the world. From a preliminary survey, the early popular musicians in Nigeria include the pre-war palm-wine and highlife groups in Nigeria: Bobby Benson, Victor Olaiya, Rex Lawson, Victor Uwaifo and so on. In the early juju we have Ayinde Bakare, Tunde King, I.K. Dairo, Daniel Ojoge, Sunny Ade and Ebenezer Obey while the old Fuji music featured Barrister Ayinde and Kollington Ayinla. The Apala scene was dominated by Alh. Dauda Epo Akara and HarunaIshola and Waka (female popular music) was dominated by Salawa Abeni.Fela Anikulapo Kuti dominated Afro beat. These were the first set of Musicians who created the musical styles.

The new popular music scene has very few highlife bands, Juju and Apala music. The musical scene is now dominated by many Fuji singers, R & B, gospel singers, rap music, hip-hop, Nigerian reggae, afro beat, jazz music, Afropop and very few *were* and *waka* musicians. Many local or rural popular musicians are numerous. A survey of rural-urban popular music in Ilorin Kwara State in Nigeria is used as the data base for this study. Below is the outcome of the survey.

Table 1: A Survey of Urban and Rural Pop Music

S/N	Musical Genre	Urban	Rural	Male/Female
1.	Juju	15	3	Male
2.	Fuji	74	5	Male
3.	Dadakuada	6	5	Male
4.	Balu	27	11	Female
5.	Senwele	9	8	Female
6.	DundunSekere	3	15	Male
7.	Ekiti	3	-	Male
8.	Highlife	12	3	Male
9.	Hip Hop	13	2	Male
10.	Gospel Music	23	5	Male/Female
11.	Waka/Were	2	7	Female
12.	Ajisari	1	-	Male
	TOTAL	188	64	
	PERCENTAGE	74.6	25.4	

Male - 180
Female- 72

The scope of this study is Ilorin emirate. This comprised five local government areas. It is an emirate because it is under an Emir, which is the Emir of Ilorin in this case. In Ilorin emirate alone, the researcher found out that there were two hundred and fifty two (252) musicians. The data gathered showed that there were seventy nine (79) fuji musicians, eighteen (18) juju musicians, eleven (11) dadakuada musicians, thirty eight (38) Baluu musicians, seventeen (17) sewenle musicians, eighteen (18) dundunsekere, three (3) Ekiti musicians, fifteen (15) highlife, Fifteen (15) hip-pop, twenty eight (28) gospel Musicians, nine (9) were/waka musicians and one (1) ajisari. There are severalajisaris (those that wake Muslims up during Ramadan) but they only perform during Ramadan. SaliuKuntun (Ajisari) sings throughout the

year. Muslims who fast outside Ramadan period usually employ him to wake them up while they go on private fasting. In all, there are two hundred and fifty two musicians, in Ilorin emirate; one hundred and eighty (180) male musicians and seventy two (72) female musicians. Male musicians formed 71.4 percent of the total number of musicians in Ilorin while female musicians are 28.6 percent.

This survey confirms that there is more rural popular music that has not been explored. This table also shows that male musicians dominated Nigerian popular music scene. It also shows that the geographical distribution is different from one location to another. Ilorin is in the North Central geo-political zone in Nigeria where Islam is the main religion. Ilorin, the state capital, was designated urban area while other towns and villages numbering over one hundred are designated as rural. There were more towns and villages in rural areas than the designated urban; yet there were more popular music genres in the urban than the rural area. From the table, Fuji, dadakuada, baluu, senwele, dundun-sekere, were, waka and ajiwere are Islamized music (8); while only 4 are closely related to Christianity. From 252 musicians identified in this research area, 173 (68.7 percent) were Muslims while 79 (31.3 percent) are Christians. This confirms the early research by Omibiyi(1979: 45) where she asserted that there were more Muslim Musicians in the Nigerian musical scene. From the table, R & B, rap music, Nigeria reggae, afro beat, jazz music and Afrofunk musical genres are not on the list. This means those musical genres were not practiced in Ilorin Emirate.

Discussion of Findings

Repression in the Growth and Development of Nigerian Popular Music.

While South African music was struggling with white authority over performance space and time; and the content of such performance, (Ballantime, 1995) Nigerian music scene was struggling with unidentified internal tension affecting the growth and development of popular music. The internal tension developed into two broad areas – identity repression and mass oriented identity. While the former deprived significant musical development, the latter allowed growth-increase in number. While repressive identity does not really create musical styles, the mass oriented identity is creative and performance driven.

Repression by Oppression

By repression we mean, suppressing one's musical feelings and desires. The repressed in this case are the young musicians who could not stand the musical class and status of the old musicians. For instance, the juju music class where Sunny Ade and Ebenezer Obey remained "on top" and no other juju musicians were striving even while they tried to survive. Shina Peter and his Afro-juju did not last. The combination of Shina Peters and Adewale could not triumph. The growth in this case is unidirectional and could be measured only by class. Other juju musicians could not meet the musical standard of the two, so they died naturally. The question here is where are the old juju musicians like Idowu Animasaun, Micro Ade (the famous Ibadan Juju exponent) Dele Abiodun and so on that Waterman,(1990) mentioned in his analysis of Juju and social history in Nigeria?

False Identity Repression

This is defined within the context of Nigerian musicians performing like popular musicians in American or United Kingdom. The audience of such music is small and usually the style is new to Nigeria. One of such popular music is Tera-kota's reggae style who after the first album died a natural death because he could not sustain the style he was copying.

Incipient Class Identity Repression

These are musicians who created a special class or identified a group of people or targeted a class of people they wanted to perform for. When the class goes into extinction, the music dies. The class is referred to as an institution which Akin Euba (1971) believes that as long as those institutions are alive, the music may not go into extinction.

Government Identity Repression

This group depends on government sponsorship. When the government 'dies' the music dies with it. Some popular musicians were sponsored to 'praise' the government, sell their propaganda and hidden agenda. Onyeka Nwenu is such a musician who stays around the national capital Abuja to win such "contracts" In Ilorin emirate, Kwara State Nigeria, AlhajiIgi Jegeddedundun-sekere band was also a government-music-band which when the Saraki government quitted the stage, the music also quitted the musical scene in Ilorin.

Multi-Style Repression

Many pop musicians in Nigeria have tried their hands on different styles trying to locate their "musical best" and to find their footing within the Nigerian musical scene. This group of musicians structured their identity around multiple style regression which caused multiple repressions. One of such is Shina Peters who left juju scene for Afro-juju beat.

From Excitement to Incitement – Violence Repression

Some music have incited Nigerians to react violently to a burning issue and this has landed the musicians into trouble that brought the music to abrupt end. One of such music that stirred up violence or encouraged or persuaded people to act and react in an unlawful way is Kollington's Album 'Ibo to nbolona' (the forthcoming election) which eventually caused violence in the Western State of Nigeria. Fela Anikulapo was jailed for singing against corruption. For the time he was in prison, the music was imprisoned too. Not many musicians survived that.

Vituperative Language Identity

A notable internal tension is the war of words among Nigerian musicians when they exchange abusive words to react to their differences. This vituperative attitude was very rampant in musical scene in Nigeria. At first, it was a strategy to promote sales. Consumers

will always wait for a reply to a vituperative album. Those days, it was popular between Sunny Ade and Ebenezer Obey, Sunday Ade and Dele Abiodun, Adewale and Shina Peter (juju music scene), SalawaAbeni and KollingtonAyinla, Barrister Ayinde and KollingtonAyinla(fuji music scene) and so on.Of note was when Dele Abiodun claimed to be omo Ode (the son of a hunter) and Sunday Ade in an album sang '*Ekilo f'omode*' ("warn the hunter's son not to walk in the forest of the lions") Adegbite(2002) studied this when studying proverbs and conflicts among Yoruba popular musicians.

Nigerian Popular Music: Developmental Process Assessed

There is a cultural standard that measures the growth, progress and development of popular music in Nigeria. The standard measure is located between what is good (aesthetic principles) and what the culture allows. While there was a notable proliferation (rapid production or increase in number) there was a progressive development which is here measured based on mass oriented identity; where the audience is the basis of measurement (Jones, 1995).When a popular music is targeted at the masses where mass value is built-in into the music performance, the audience then becomes basis for measuring the standard of the music. Our argument here is that the audience's reaction and response to a popular music can be used as tools for assessment. This is in line with our definition of popular music as the music of the people, for the people and by the people. Because the musicians are Nigerians; (by the people), the music of the people and for the people;the rate of acceptability may be high. When a popular music becomes software that needed to be installed into human system before it makes meaning, such popular music has lost its cultural potentials. The following criteria are set as measuring instrument in determining the level of improvement as a measure of development:

- ❖ How often is the music played on radio and television?
- ❖ Any improvement on instruments and instrumentation?
- ❖ Is the music produced by analog or digital?
- ❖ What is the sales, distribution and economic output?
- ❖ What is social media output?
- ❖ Any improvement on rhythmic essence – introduction of new dance steps?
- ❖ How well is the text interpreted within the context of the ethnic languages?

Cultural values Assessed

Cultural value analysis of the content of popular music in Nigeria shows that the music has cultural messages that place the music at the door-step of the people. The music tells a story that is didactic-teaching morals and imparting knowledge about life activities. Orlando Owohand Ebenezer Obey's juju music is rated high in this category of music.

The music was found to be entertaining and catching. Sunday Ade, Lagbaja, Shina Peters and a host of others were representative of this category. Africa music is entertaining and this a standard measuring tool in determining the social value of the music. At another level, entertaining music could be therapeutic-providing succor or relief to distress after a work's day. It aids and sustains a tiring soul during work and at a time for leisure and game,

popular music in Nigeria has improved tremendously in the entertainment it provides on the media station and the internet.

Text manipulation and interpretation Assessed

Popular music is attractive and impressive through its colourful and sumptuous sounds. Its power of resplendence is catching and wins the ‘souls’ of the youth all over the world. One of such devices of winning souls is the manipulation of the text. The ploy of the musicians to turn a musical event to their own advantage started with the use of words. While some words win the attention of the youth, these words may put off the adults. The musicians therefore use this divide and rule tactics to polarize the audience into two sharp contrasting groups: the old and new schools.

Interpretation of text when polarized gives different meaning, cultural premise and ethnic connotation. There is often the tendency to interpret the text of popular music through cluster of adjectives which articulate pornography, abuses, sexuality, drug abuse, and politics. These adjectives come with titles of albums, track titles or the lyrics of the songs. In an analysis of sexuality, style and image of Mick Jagger music, Whitely (1995) notes that such adjectives may have described Mick Jagger as “the King bitch of rock’. Nigerian pop singers also bear such stage names that portray their character, identities and exploits. The effect according to Whitely is to provide a version of identity, a constructed reality in which (they) assume an iconic embodiment of power. This in Nigeria has formed or developed a musical relationship between public behaviour and musical output and in a way created a particular image for the signers. ‘Kon-kon bi lo’ is synonymous with Lagbaja, ‘fujiropopo’ with Kollin Ayinla, ‘Syncho system’ with Sunny Ade, ‘Miliki system’ with Ebenezer Obey and ‘Afro Juju’ with Shina Peters. These titles have cultural implications which we analyzed in another paper.

Attention and Identity Value Assessed

Popular music has been able to capture the attention of Nigerians. As soon as you hear that sound, you think of that song and that musician. Theberge (1995) notes that “the musician’s effort in creating a unique sound identified by the listening audience can carry the same commercial and aesthetic weight that traditional elements of music language carry.” The creation of sound through the use of electronic instruments which is a new musical development in Nigeria is a plus to pop music in Nigeria because that too has allowed the pop musicians to create new sound. Use of digital equipment in Nigerian studios has facilitated this.

Musical Ability Value Assessed.

There is no doubt that Nigerian pop musicians have developed greatly in their musical skills built over the years on talents. Many of them relied on talent as the fundamental foundation at the early career in singing. Evidences of musical development are abound as many have improved on voice quality (Barrister Ayinde and Kollington Ayinla), playing technique (Sunny Ade on guitar(1980 and 2000 compared). Even though some Ethnomusicologists

detest musical skills as a yardstick in measuring development, the comparative study of Nigerian popular music in the last 20 years has shown a great improvement in display of skills.

Skill is a veritable musical variable in determining musical capacity in Nigeria since the musical entry behaviour of most popular musicians (in Nigeria) is the talent to sing or play musical instrument on which skill is developed later. This does not set conflict over musical value in Nigeria as argued by Frith (1986) and other critics of musical value.

Listening as a skill has generally evolved in Nigeria as a result of media technology. Reviewing the issue about skill, Theberge (1995) reiterates that listening is yet a variable set of capacities that are mobilized by musicians and audiences. Nigerians have learnt to listen, which is a departure from the participatory audience that is natural to Africans. Many Nigerians especially the youth go about with earpiece listening to music. Many listen to music on radio while in office, workshop, business stores, in their cars and everywhere. This is another skill developed recently.

Dance Value Assessed

Another viable tool in measuring the development of popular music is the assessment of dance as a skill in testing musical competence and 'popularity' of a popular music. Blacking (1976) notes that the specific ability to perform on musical instrument is largely irrelevant as a measure of musical competence. He defines musical competence as 'the phenomenon of creativity. Standing on the definition of Blacking, the ability to create a dance style out of musical styles by Nigerian popular musicians is a musical competence. Many musicians like Sunny Ade created 'synchro' dance from his album "syncho feelings" (1983) 'Palongo' dance from I.K Dairo's album (1969) and the following dances were attributed to the following popular musicians:

Chief Commander Ebenezer Obey, juju music.....('Miliki' dance 1972).

Chief Commander Ebenezer Obey, juju music ('Miliki' Plus 1983).

Sunday Adeniyi Adegeye KSA, juju music ('Synchro' System dance 1983).

Sunday Adeniyi Adegeye KSA, juju music ('Apala' synchro dance 1975).

Adewale Ayuba Fuji music ('Bubble' dance 1994).

Olu Fajemirokun, juju music ('Olomori' dance 1985).

Kollington Ayinla fuji music ('Fuji Ropopo' dance 1990).

Kollington Ayinla, fuji music ('Fuji yoyo' dance 1990).

Kollington Ayinla, fuji music ('Lakukulala' dance 1991).

- KollingtonAyinla, fuji music ('Fuji Ragga' dance 2001).
- FelaAnikulapoKuti, afro-beat ('open and close' dance 1971).
- John Asiem- Daddy Skowkeyhip-hop music ('Galala' dance1994).
- JimohOlotu and OmeofaOghene- Danfo driver hip-hop music ('Suo' dance 2003).
- Olumide Edwards Adegbolu- OluMaintain, hip-hop music('Yahooze' dance2006).
- AdegbiteAdeniran and TomomewoOlakunle Art-quake, hip-hop music('Alanta' dance 2008).
- Innocent UdemeUdofot- Mc Galaxy,hip-hop music('Sekem' dance, 2015).
- OnoyomMbuk- Iyanya, hip-hop music ('Kukere' dance, 2011).
- David AdedejiAdeleke- Davido, hip-hop music ('Skelewu' dance, 2013).
- AdedejiOlamide hip-hop music ('Bobo' dance, 2015).
- KeshinroOlolade- Lil Kesh hip-hop music ('Shoki' dance, 2014).
- Peter and Paul Okoye- Psquare hip-hop music ('Alingo' dance, 2012).
- Oyindamola Johnson Emmanuel- DammyKrane hip-hop music('Gbetiti' dance, 2013).
- DareyIjiwole. - Omo-akin hip-hop music(IjoOloti, ('oloti' dance), 2014).
- Ayodeji Ibrahim Balogun- Wizkid hip-hop music ('Azonto' dance, 2012).
- AwiloLongomba hip-hop music ('Makossa' dance, 2008).

My submission complements Blacking's (1976) position that dance constitutes an index of musical competence in Nigeria as it did in the Venda of South Africa. Ability to conceptualize a dance pattern, actualize it, interpret it within a cultural premise and locate it within a context is a great musical skill. This is a great musical contribution to Nigerian popular music scene in Nigeria.

Language Value Assessed

Some texts are rhetoric, proverbial, philosophical and metaphorical in nature that they teach and enrich the vocabulary of Nigerians. Three languages are common: the Pidgin English, English and a dialect (Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa, Efik, Esan, Okpe, Urhobo).Language identity within the popular music development is a great achievement in this regard. (Rotimi, 1991).

Rhythmic Pattern Value Assessed

Popular music has been able to set a rhythmic pattern that gives Nigerian music a worthwhile identity. Nigerian hip pop for instance can be differentiated from other hip hop in the world because of its unique rhythmic characteristic. The complex rhythmic pattern attributed to African music has been made simple, at least less complex within the rhythmic structure of Nigerian popular music. While rhythmic pattern is emphasized, harmony in the context of western classical music is played down. Harmonic accompaniment is not negotiated as appropriate chords are sounded to harmonize the melody.

Conclusion

Musical growth as discussed in this paper points to the increase in size (Nigerian pop music is big). Proliferation addresses the issue of rapid production and increase in numbers (Nigerian popular music is everywhere). Development points to growth with notable change, new outlook, new product and new musical ideas (improvement on the past). Implications of the repressive identity may be enormous causing war of words and ideas, false identity and multiple styles repression, yet the repressed, the oppressed and suppressed are re-branding and re-pricing their products as a relief to musical shocks on the one hand and as an opportunity to re-strategize, rebuild, re-construct, restructure and regenerate their musical products on the other. Its development or proliferation has equally enhanced a better economic and social life in Nigeria.

From the musical and non-musical discourse of Nigerian popular music status, can one say that Nigerian popular music is gritty or of poor quality? No! The music is congenial and the quality has improved over the years displaying well arranged melody, danceable rhythm, and well structured forms. No significant deviation from the melodic standard of such songs except that the rhythmic pattern has been reworked into new musical ideas. For instance, the highlife songs especially have been reworked to Hip hop rhythmic patterns. In general, Nigerian popular music has grown to become a new product with a new musical idea that is Nigerian.

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