Wageningen University - Department of Social Sciences
MSc. Thesis Chair Group: Rural and Environmental History (RHI)

Arts, Propaganda and Politics in Contemporary Africa:

The role of Music and Musicians in Entrenching Dictatorship in The Gambia during the Jammeh's Regime (1994-2016)

October, 2020

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Abstract

The art of music permeates many aspects of human societies including the politics and governance arena. One of the most important aspects of music in politics is that it serves as a popular means to express societal issues and communicate political messages. Musicians use the art to produce political songs praising or opposing political authorities or political climate. A number of political songs involve propaganda geared toward propagating and entrenching political rulers thus placing music and musicians at the core of politics and governance systems of our societies. The influence of music makes numerous African politicians including dictators use the domain for their political objectives. This thesis explores how musicians help in building and entrenching dictators by using the regime of Yahya Jammeh in The Gambia (1994 to 2016) as a case. This research relies on related scholarly works and in-depth semi-structured interviews with eleven respondents (six influential musicians, two DJs (TV/radio presenters) and three top (former) government officials) as primary sources of data. Five political hit songs were also selected and analyzed to understand the discourses they propagated. The interview results and propaganda song lyrics praising Jammeh are analyzed using Maarten Hajer's (2006) discourse analysis. The results show that a large number of musicians, especially in The Gambia, were instrumental in supporting and entrenching the dictatorial regime of Jammeh.

Keywords: music, politics, dictatorship, propaganda, media, discourse analyses, Gambia, Africa

Contents

1. Introduction

The art of music permeates many aspects of human societies including the politics and governance arena. The fields of music and politics are often associated and interact more complexly and fluidly (Garratt, 2008, p.5). The dynamic relationship between the two is experienced in different ways in every society across different historical times. Music serves different purposes in the society including communication of political messages. Onyebadi (2019) notes that "different cultures have different types of music to serve different occasions" (p. 261). As a popular art, music is a popular means of expressing societal issues. Ruth Finnegan (2012) observes that songs are now accepted as a vehicle for communication, propaganda, political pressure, and political education (p. 276).

Musicians use the art to express their political affiliations and serve as disseminators of political communication (Onyebadi, 2019). Some have used music to produce political songs praising or opposing political authorities or political climate. A number of political songs involve propaganda geared toward propagating and entrenching political rulers. This places music and musicians at the core of politics and governance systems of our societies. A handful of works have exemplified how music and politics interact by highlighting how politicians use music as a propaganda tool (Onyebadi, 2019; Falola & Fleming, 2012; Garratt 2008; Fosu-Mensah et al. 1987; Englert, 2008; Allen 2008; Maina Mutonya, 2008).

In Africa, music and musicians play a central historical role. The pervasive influence of music permeated every aspect of the African societies and "remain at the heart of socio-cultural life" across the continent (Onyebadi, 2019, p. XV; Falola & Fleming, 2012, p. 1). Almost every individual or communal activity in African societies is accompanied by music and dancing, an indication of the different instrumental roles of music in African societies. For instance, it is common to experience music accompanying religious, festive and ceremonial occasions or among farmers, weavers and other artisans in African societies. Politics and governance are one of the most important aspects which have been permeated by music in modern Africa. Onyebadi (2019) argues that "perhaps, no one area of human interaction and activity in Africa has music become so pervasive, even obtrusive and vibrant, than the political arena" (p. XV).

Music has become an indispensable asset appropriated for (individual) political goals. A number of musicians produce political songs praising presidents, officials and governments; for

'edutainment' and influencing the masses by highlighting achievements and/or policies of individuals. Many African dictators have a great taste for music and musicians both nationally and internationally. The works of Onyebadi (2019), Englert (2008) and Fosu-Mensah et. al (1987) exemplify how African politicians including dictators such as Daniel Arap Moy, Mugabe, Nyerere among others used music for their political gains. The former president of The Gambia, Yahya Jammeh is not an exception to this. He used the influence of music and musicians both within and outside The Gambia to propel and elongate his reign as the president of The Gambia. Buch et al. (2016) hold that "no regime has ever rejected the use of aesthetic forms of communication as a tool for consolidating its control over the State and the individual" (p.3). The influence of music makes numerous African politicians including dictators to use the domain for their political objectives.

Few scholarly works have analyzed the interwoven relationship between the fields of music and politics especially in an African context. The focus of this study is to explore how musicians help in building and entrenching dictators. To explore this relationship, this study focuses on the regime of President Yahya Jammeh in The Gambia (1994-2016). Jammeh came to power in 1994 through a military coup that ended the three-decade rule of Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara. Until his defeat in 2016, Jammeh used a plethora of options to flex his presidential muscles to entrench himself onto power. He maximized the strategic impact of music and musicians as a propaganda tool for his political gains while he continued ruling with an iron fist. As such, this thesis intends to explore how music and musicians helped to entrench Jammeh's dictatorship in The Gambia from 1994 to 2016.

1.1 Problem Statement

Since coming to power, Jammeh steadily transformed himself into a dictator with wild powers. His rule has left behind a "legacy of institutional dysfunction" (AfDB-World Bank Report, 2017, p.4). In an effort to consolidate his base of support, he deliberately made use of music and musicians to become famous and most importantly, to establish himself as the supreme and all-powerful person in The Gambia. He invited musicians from The Gambia, Senegal, Mali, Nigeria, Jamaica, among other countries to sing for him. A number of these songs were often politically charged and repeatedly featured widely on state-controlled national television and radio stations. What is interesting about these songs is that they were pivotal to the effective dissemination of Jammeh's political activities. He warped the music industry to suit his dictatorial purposes. He

invested in the industry by purchasing a state-of-the-art musical instruments in order to be praised by musicians during his events in which he dished out a lot of money.

The industry became one of his mainstays during his regime, which ended in 2016. He was aware of the pivotal importance of the musicians in garnering and influencing supporters. They were instrumental in supporting the survival of his regime. To benefit from his fortune or mercy, some of the musicians, to a greater extent, tried to justify how Jammeh's dictatorship was good for the country. The lyrics of the songs are highly propagandist in theme and intended to propel Jammeh's reputation and competence. There is strong evidence to suggest that the songs of these musicians who sang for Jammeh attracted a wider audience to attend events organized by him; Jaliba and Yousou Ndour are examples of influential musicians that usually attract wide audience when they perform at an event organized by Jammeh . Such songs bolstered his political goals and gave him an opportunity to establish his popularity and dominance in the political life of The Gambia.

In their book: *Composing for the State*, Buch et al. (2016: 3) observe that artists in dictatorial regimes although "not really committed to these regimes often had no choice but to work under the State's hegemony if they wanted to remain in their countries." Essentially, it can be argued that a large number of musicians especially in The Gambia were instrumental for elongating the political regime of Jammeh. Conversely, there were some music and musicians with encrypted lyrical songs against Jammeh. An example of such is, if not the only during his regime, a song by Kila Ace in 2015. The musician went into self-exile to avoid the wrath of Jammeh (see The Guardian, 2015).

Since his departure, the subsequent government has set up numerous commissions of inquiry to investigate the financial mismanagement of Jammeh's dictatorship and the role institutions and social units such as security forces and religious leaders played in building and entrenching the dictatorship of Jammeh. Such established commissions exposed the magnitude of corruption, mismanagement and tactics used by Jammeh. Despite his huge investment in the music industry, no attempt has been made to investigate such investments. His total contribution to music and musicians has not been addressed. Moreover, the commissions, the Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations Commission (TRRC) for instance, is yet to have any session on the role of music and musicians in building dictatorship and this is less likely. In its interim report 2018-2019, the commission indicates that it will instead devote the rest of its upcoming investigations themes on

other areas such as Jammeh's HIV/AIDS treatment program and other murder cases (TRRC interim report, 2020). Therefore, the role of music and musicians in the Jammeh regime and their interaction has not been studied.

Studies on dictatorship have largely focused on institutional supports exploited by the dictators to wield absolute power. For instance, branches of the government, state parastatals and private sectors are structured in favor of the dictator. Military and other security sectors, courts and parliaments were mainstays for dictators to elongate their stay in power in Africa. The Gambia is not an exception to such studies. However, with the rise of human rights and other international norms opposing violence and outright use of coercive power, dictators entrench their powers through other subtle ways. Music therefore plays an important role in controlling the minds of the people. Nonetheless, studies on music and politics interaction in Africa focus more on music as a form of resistance by analyzing critical musicians especially those subjected to harassment or human rights violation for opposing dictatorship. There is scanty study on how dictators use music to stay in power in Africa and The Gambia in particular. This research therefore intends to fill this gap by providing empirical evidence in the case of The Gambia.

1.2 Research Questions

The central research question in this thesis is: *How did music and musicians support the building and entrenchment of dictatorship in The Gambia?* This question will help us to explore, through rigorous analysis, the role music and musicians played in building and entrenching the Jammeh's regime. In that regard, the research will give us insightful information into how dictatorship was built and entrenched through music and musicians in The Gambia. This could also help us to investigate if there were other motivations or mechanisms beyond fear of repression or monetary benefits that may explain how Jammeh managed to hoodwink musicians from all walks of life.

In order to find answers to the central research question, the following sub-questions will be addressed:

1. How did the Jammeh regime organize its propaganda campaign?
2. Who were involved in the planning and coordination of musicians for Jammeh?
3. To what extent were all of the praise songs for Jammeh planned?
4. Who were the specific target of the Jammeh-praise songs?

Hypothesis

I hypothesize that Jammeh's provision of incentives and the climate of fear to a great extent enabled his regime to actively organize music as a form of propaganda. This hypothesis is based on the expectation that Jammeh's investment in the music industry – incentives and exercise of coercive power – earned him the support and praise of musicians. Generally, dictators employ the carrot and stick or the divide and rule tactics to build a patronage system that entrenches their rule (Ezrow and Frantz, 2011; Olson, 1993). From this understanding, I expect that such tactics would also be applied in the music industry. Therefore, the provision of incentives and the exercise of power and threat could be used in the music industry as a propaganda tool and a rent-seeking venture for the Jammeh regime.

1.3 Method and Methodology

This research is developed from a qualitative research methodology. This methodology is chosen because the approach enables the researcher to develop an in-depth picture of the phenomena in question (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). This research relies on related scholarly works and in-depth semi-structured interviews as primary sources of data. The research also relies on song lyrics by examining and interpreting related hit songs and speeches/statements, newspaper reports on this topic to collect data and make analysis. These tools helped me in answering the central research question and sub questions raised in this research.

A total of eleven in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted. Ten of these respondents are Gambians and one international musician from Jamaica. All of them were, in one way or the other, directly involved in music and politics in The Gambia. A set of questionnaires were developed for the interviews. The questionnaires were in three parts: questions for musicians, (former) government officials and DJs (Radio/Television presenters). For the musicians, I developed twenty-three questions. However, half of them were for reserve and only used depending on the person and flow of the interview. The flow of the interview slightly directed the type of questions asked. I however, tried to make sure that there was not much digression on the side of the respondent.

All the interview questions were set in such a way that they are linked to the main research question and the sub-research questions. The interview questions were structured in a form of chronological order. First, beginning with general questions as their motivations to venture into

the music industry to specific questions such as their songs for Jammeh, performances and encounters with Jammeh. However, the structure was not rigid to allow the flow of the interview sometimes. Such structuring helped to get the respondents respond to the questions with interest as they narrate their experiences and roles without digressing. Starting with questions on their songs, performances and encounters with Jammeh could put off the interview as most of them no longer want to be associated with Jammeh's legacy and claim to be "neutral" now.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the interviews were conducted using online platforms, namely, Whatsapp and Zoom. Some interviews were conducted in English and somewhere in Mandinka and Wollof (Gambian local languages). Some were mixture of English and Mandinka or Wollof. The respondents permissions were asked to record the interviews. The recordings eased the transcription of all the interviews. A total of six influential musicians; five of them sang praise songs for Jammeh and the other one was widely seen as an anti-Jammeh who fled the country after releasing an anti-oppressive song against Jammeh in 2015 (BBC, 2018). One of the musicians interviewed is an international artist and the other five are all Gambian musicians. Three former top government officials and aides to Jammeh were also interviewed. The other interviews were with two prominent DJs and radio/television presenter. Several efforts were made to reach out to others but some declined, and others did not respond to our efforts.

Journal articles and book publications were also key sources of data for this research. Numerous journals or publications on music and politics mostly elaborate on how music and musician were instrumental in political changes especially across the African continent. A number of scholarly works were also used to write on the history of The Gambia and the Jammeh regime.

In order to 'track' and 'trace' the meaning of song lyrics and language usages, this research uses discourse analysis as a research methodology. Maarten Hajer (2006) defines discourse analysis as "an ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categories through which meaning is given to phenomena, and which is produced and reproduced through an identifiable set of practices" (p.70). It enables "the examination of argumentative structure in documents and other written or spoken statements as well as the practices through which these utterances are made" (p.66). He holds that discourse analysis starts from language as it is "through language that man, groups and institutions portray an identity of themselves, …express their values, beliefs and ideas [and] their actions are also understood" (p.67).

As influential communicators in societies, the musicians established a discourse that facilitated the understanding and *constructs* of power and conceptualize the "God given" symbolic role of Jammeh. The metaphors used in their song lyrics facilitated these constructs. Hajer (2006) notes that language (here songs) has the capacity to make politics, to create signs and symbols that can shift power balances and that can impact on institutions and policy-making (p.67). The praise songs as a practice could influence the interpretation of Jammeh's power and thus enabling shifting of absolute power towards him, making him the dominant discourse. Using discourse analysis would enable the exploration of the songs and practices of the musicians and the meanings and effects they had on entrenching Jammeh in power.

1.4 Outline of the thesis

This thesis has five chapters. Chapter one contains the introduction and problem statement, research questions and the methodology. Chapter two offers an exploration into the historical background of The Gambia and the Jammeh regime. This gives an insight of the political environment that existed before and during Jammeh reign. Therein, Jammeh's coming to power and how he transformed himself to stay for twenty-two years as the president is discussed. The next chapter discusses the theoretical framework with a focus on dictatorship, propaganda and media and music interactions. Chapter four provides the overall findings and analysis of the data. The crux of this thesis lies in this chapter. Finally, the conclusion chapter follows as the last chapter.

2. Setting the Scene: The Political History of The Gambia

This chapter tries to capture the political history of The Gambia. The country went through different historical phases and writing all these could run into volumes. The chapter focuses on some key political events that shaped the history of The Gambia especially in the post-colonial era. In this way, the chapter seeks to offer an understanding of the political context of The Gambia.

The Republic of The Gambia, located on the west coast of Africa, is the smallest country in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is enclaved by its only neighbor, Senegal from northern, western and southern borders. The North Atlantic Ocean coastline lies 80 kilometers (km) wide in the western side. The estimated total land area of the country is around 11,295 square kilometers (km); 50 km wide and 470 km in length. The borders of The Gambia were first drawn after a meeting between the colonial French and British delegates in Paris in 1889. It is a culturally diverse and multi-ethnic country with an estimated population of two million people (Gambia Bureau of Statistics (GBoS) 2013).

There are nine ethnic groups in The Gambia and these are: Mandinka (34%), Fula (22%), Wolof (13%), Jola (10%), Serahule (7%) and the other ethnic groups account for 8% of the population ((GBOS 2013; AfDB-World Bank Report, 2017, p. 10). Other nationals mostly from African countries such as Senegal, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Liberia and Nigeria account for 6% of the population (AfDB-World Bank Report, 2017, p. 10; Saine 2009). Interethnic marriages, religious coexistence and a tradition of institutionalized “joking” (bantering) relationships between ethnic groups have helped to assuage social and ethnic conflicts and build a unified sense of national identity (Saine 2009, p.3). Islam (90%) is the dominant religion in the country while Christianity accounts for 9% and others 1%.

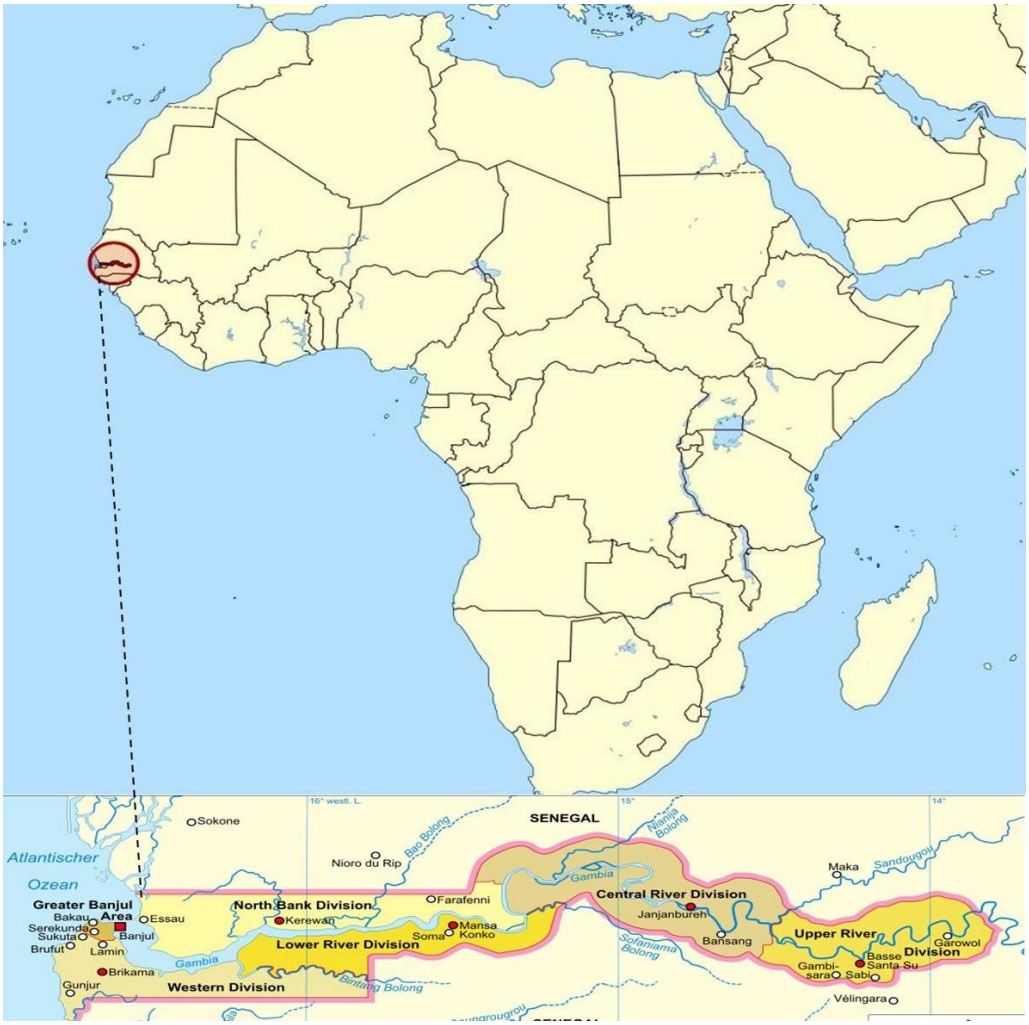

Figure 1: Map of The Gambia and its location in Africa

Source: mapsland (2020)

2.1 Political Developments before Independence

In the pre-colonial era, the Mandinka, Wolof and Fulas ethnic groups had already begun the state-building process as they created territorial polities including kingdoms. These political establishments continue to evolve in different customs and polities. A major commonality among these polities, especially the Mandinkas, is the caste system: Mansa (King, ruler), praise singers (griots) and the artisans. The griots especially, played different important roles in those societies. They served as historians, praise singers, advisers and ambassadors of kings and nobles (Hale, 1998). In later centuries, a number of European colonial powers such as Portugal, Britain, France and Holland came into contact with the people living in what would become The Gambia. By the 17th century, some European countries such as Britain, France and Holland started establishing trading posts in the Senegambia region (Hughes and Perfect 2008, p.33). Some of these trading

posts were James Island (for the British) and Goree and St Louis (for the French). Britain, however, maintained its colonial grip over the territory of The Gambia. From 1821 to 1888, The Gambia was a Crown Colony administered by a governor in Sierra Leone. Hughes and Perfect (2008) hold that because of the less economic value generated from subsequent forms of trades from Banjul, it became less valuable to the British. The authors argue that the small and underdeveloped economy of the colony was one of the reasons why little attempt was made by the British to develop Bathurst or to improve the quality of life of its inhabitants (p. 35). The revenue for running the country, mainly generated from export of groundnuts and taxes, was not enough to keep their administration running.

The serpentine shape and size of the country is a reflection of territorial compromises between the British and French in the 19th century. The Portuguese, led by Alvise Cadamosto, were the first Europeans to come into contact with The Gambia since 1455. They had maritime trading monopoly along the west coast before other Europeans. However, by the 17th century, other European countries such as Britain, France and Holland started establishing trading posts in the Senegambia region. By 18th century, the Portuguese decided to concentrate their trading efforts elsewhere along the west coast before their trading monopoly was attacked by other European states (Hughes and Perfect 2008, p. 33). In the later years, these trading posts became centers of the Atlantic slave trade dotted by the footholds of the European powers. Some of these trading posts were James Island (for the British) and Gorée and St Louis (for the French). There were conflicts of interest between the French and British over the territory. Also, there had been confrontations between the British, French and Dutch around the Senegambia region over some trading posts like Gorée (an initial base for The Dutch West India Company founded in 1621), St. Louis (a French base founded in 1659), James Island (a British base in 1651 previously called St. Andrew's Island (Hughes and Perfect 2008, p. 33).

A couple of treaties such as the Treaty of Versailles in 1783 lessened such territorial hostilities and each traded on their forts without danger. This enabled the British to retain a foothold in The Gambia and procure slaves (Rawley & Behrendt, 2005, p. 179). Further, the abolition of slave trade in 1807 by the British House of Commons led to less conflict as the British gradually deserted their slave trade post. In 1816, the British established a naval base led by Alexander Grant in Bathurst Island (later renamed St. Mary's Island) to intercept and suppress slave ships along The Gambia River. The king of Kombo, Tomani Bojang, allocated the island to the British (Hughes and Perfect 2008, p. 34). Within a few years, the new town of Bathurst (later renamed

Banjul in 1973) was growing in population as the other liberated Africans from Freetown, Sierra Leone, also increased the population.

Towards the 1950s, there was a steady rise in political awakening in the few decades before independence. Organized political activities began to take shape in the Bathurst and other parts of the country. The stimulus for this could be attributed to the establishment of the National Congress of British West Africa at the Accra Conference of 1920 and the impact of World War II. Some of prominent Gambian figures that were involved in the political activities and awakening include Edward Francis Small, Rev. J. C. Faye, I. M. Garba-Jahumpa, P. S. N'Jie. In 1959, a group of educated provincial politicians led by Dawda Kairaba Jawara formed the Protectorate People's Party (PPP), later renamed People's Progressive Party (PPP). In addition, the independence of some British colonies for instance, Ghana (1957), Nigeria (1960) and Sierra Leone (1961) further increased demand for political reforms and independence. The PPP dominated other political parties in the 1960 Executive and Legislative councils. By October 1963, Britain granted The Gambia a full self-government in October 1963 and Dawda Jawara, the head of the PPP party, became the Prime Minister (Hughes and Perfect 2008, p. l). The Prime Minister, Jawara attended a constitutional conference in London in July 1964 to discuss the ways and day for independence.

Throughout The Gambia's history, musicians played an important role in politics dating back to when communities were ruled by Chiefs and Kings. For instance, Saine (2012) accounts that praise songs from musicians served as a source of encouragement and cheering of kings and warlords during warfare in the Senegambia region. Musicians also provided entertainment during different royal ceremonies including functions such as adjudications, meetings with other chiefs or colonial administrators (Saine 2012, p. 169). In addition, musicians in those days were acknowledged as 'living legends' of their times. They were transmitters of historical events by words of mouth from generation to generations.

Musicians were also at the forefront of politics in the pre-colonial era. Towards the struggle for independence, the role of musicians shifted from only praise singing to a direct role in the struggle. They made songs geared toward instilling patriotism to support revolutionary movements and representing nationalists especially in the urban areas (Charry, 2000). Upon independence, musicians were also instrumental in communicating the ideologies of the politicians. Some prominent musical bands such as the Guelewar Band of Banjul, Ifang Bondi,

Super Eagles and some musicians such as Lalo kebba and and Jalli Nyima Susso were all voices that sang about societal issues and/or praises for individual leaders. The work of McConnell (2020) also accounts for the role musicians play as health communicators in The Gambia. In chapter three, I discuss more on the historical relationship between music and politics especially in post-independence era.

2.2 Post-Independence and the Jawara Government (1965-1994)

The British were very skeptical about the survival of The Gambia as an independent country because the resources they envisaged to administer an independent country were significantly minimal in The Gambia. Nonetheless, on 18 February 1965, the country gained its independence. Hughes and Perfect (2008) write that people feared that the executive presidency would enable Jawara to become an authoritarian president like in other African countries. However, as the authors argue, this did not happen because of two principal reasons: (1) that Jawara was personally committed to multiparty democracy and (2) PPP was restructured to avoid abuse of power (Hughes and Perfect 2008, p.3).

President Jawara greatly changed the political dynamics of The Gambia. His party transcended political and administrative governance that was once centered in the Crown Colony (Banjul) to the Protectorates (hinterland). He won elections conducted in 1972, 1977, 1982, 1987, and 1992. It can be argued that Jawara's success was due to his figure as the "bringer of independence", leader of the biggest political party and the economic progress achieved by his government. However, in the 1980s, the economy was poorly performing and political patronage, corruption and ineptitude were rampant during his reign (Saine, 2009:1; Hughes and Perfect 2006). Political grievances against his regime began to be apparent especially in the early 1980s. The first political explosion against his regime took place in 1981 in an attempted coup led by Kukoi Samba. This coup was foiled with the help of the Senegalese forces. The aftermath of the coup facilitated the Treaty of Senegambia Confederation from 1982 to 1989. The confederation's purpose was to integrate the security, economic and foreign policies of both countries before it fell apart in 1989.

During the three decades of his reign as the president, "Gambians enjoyed constitutionally protected rights to free speech, freedom of religion, and freedom of the press" and Gambia was also one of the only four functioning democracies in the region (AfDB-World Bank Report , 2017, p. 10). President Jawara's adherence in principle to political democracy, human rights and

a free-market economy had won him much respect within The Gambia and internationally (Saine, 2009 p.1). However, there was a slow economic growth and the continuous economic mismanagement flared up grievances against the Jawara administration. During his reign, he relied on the primary sectors of the economy such as agriculture, tourism, forestry and fishing as well as international aid for the development of the country. The first decade of the Jawara administration experienced economic growth of an average of 7 percent and the primary sectors accounted for around 35 percent of nominal output during this period (Saine, 2009; Radelet,1992;). There were some economic shocks because of low world market prices for the main export crop (groundnut) and decline in donor aid and inappropriate fiscal and monetary policies. The failed coup in 1981 also exacerbated the economic challenges of his regime. Austerity measures introduced by the Bretton Woods institutions could not do much to save the economic meltdown (Radelet,1992).

In the final decade of his rule, Jawara registered some economic progress by reducing financial imbalances, liberalizing the economy, and strengthening the basis for sustainable economic growth. However, the economic mismanagement, inflation and corruption especially among the elites of the regime ignited public disgruntlement and subsequent military overthrow of his administration in 1994 (Saine, 2009). In July 1994, disgruntled military officers, led by Lieutenant Yahya Jammeh, staged a military coup. This ended Jawara's regime as Jammeh-led Armed Forces Provisional Ruling Council (AFPRC), later renamed Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC) took over.

2.3 Military Coup and Jammeh's Government (1994-2016)

This work is particularly concerned with President Yahya Jammeh's regime. After toppling the Jawara administration, the Jammeh-led military junta suspended the constitution, banned political parties and abolished the Parliament (Perfect, 2010, p.54). The Junta promised reforms and to put an end to corruption. With such initial promises, one could argue that the Jammeh-led coup fell under the "guardian coup" in Huntington's typology of military coups. In this type of military coup, the military chooses to intervene in the political arena to uplift and protect the country from the "mismanagement" of the ruling regime and return the purified polity to the hands of the civilian leaders (Huntington, 1968, p. 225). The junta initiated a two-year transition period to a civilian regime. However, Jammeh instead resigned from the army, turned himself and the regime to a civilian government, and subsequently won the 1996 presidential election with 56%.

He dominated the political landscape of the country and won all the subsequent presidential elections in 1996, 2001, 2006 and 2011. During his time, he was one of the longest serving presidents in Africa. For the 22 years of his reign as the president of The Gambia, he used all state apparatus to his own advantage, gradually transforming himself into one of the fiercest dictators in Africa. From the reasons advanced for the coup, were in themselves ideological agendas that concealed Jammeh's greed and dictatorial tendencies only revealed as he gradually stayed in power. His promises and some development undertakens after the coup in 1994 earned him numerous political and electoral success.

Jammeh came to power on the back of a disgruntled military institution that was headed by Nigerian military personnel. His policies to revamp the structure and leadership of the military–to be headed by Gambians–earned him a support base in the resentful military (Saine, 2019, p.26). His ideologies of accountability and end to corruption were also mechanisms that garnered popular support for him. Due to national and international pressure, Jammeh had established some basic framework such as to transition the country to a civilian regime within two years and a new constitution (albeit its flows). Towards the end of the transition period and September 1996 elections, Jammeh had already established some muscle to vie for election as a "civilian" candidate. He banned numerous strong political parties and politicians that could potentially challenge his bid for presidency (Perfect, 2010, p.55; Saine, 2009, p.29).

Jammeh campaigned on the promise to continue his development work and his popular rhetoric of uprooting corruption and mismanagement brought by the Jawara regime. Jammeh's victory in the 1996 election marked the beginning of his perpetual capture of the state and its resources and how they are distributed (Saine, 2009). In the subsequent (re)elections Jammeh used state resources to his full advantage. He had undertaken infrastructural development projects and designed economic programs and policies that were, although economically unsustainable, appealing to the electorates as well as international institutions/donors–whom he significantly relied on for support (Saine, 2009). His ideological policy for socioeconomic development was enshrined in "*VISION 2020*" blueprint crafted for the period of 1996-2020 (UNDP, 2014).

Other medium term plans encapsulated in documents such as the Programme for Accelerated Growth and Employment (PAGE) (2012-2015) and "*Vision 2016*" were designed under his regime to transform The Gambia into a middle income country, "food self-sufficient" and an African "Singapore". In addition to these "lucid" but "ambitious" documents, Jammeh's

empowerment policies such as the employment of women in civil service jobs (His Vice President, a lady, was one of the longest women in such position in Africa), construction of schools, roads, hospitals and the University of The Gambia were effective political strategies that lured electorates to vote for him in 1996 and subsequent elections (Saine, 2009). Jammeh's ideologies, framed in the discourse of anti-corruption, accountability, infrastructural development and economic growth were paradoxical towards the end of his reign as his development record and reputation deteriorated.

Most importantly, the security sector was one of the crucial apparatus he used to permeate into all aspects of the society (Saine 2009). His regime was vastly shrouded with enormous and systemic human rights violations, intimidations, tortures, arrests, disappearance of journalists, political opponents, musicians, political persecutions and crackdown on dissent as reported by Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International (HRW 2015; Amnesty International 2016). He used a plethora of options to flex his presidential muscles to entrench himself onto power. He had long been under the watch of the international community and human rights organizations for his endless dictatorial tendencies. Jammeh's human rights record was a sharp contrast to his predecessor, president Jawara. He was intolerant to the opposition political parties and anyone he perceived as threat to his rule. In fact, he ended up arresting, torturing, deserting and exiling ring members of the coup he led (Perfect 2010, Saine, 2009:1). His brutality also extended to some members of the security sector, civilians and the media. He was also intolerant towards any media outlet criticizing his regime hence he harassed and closed many critical media houses.. For instance, some prominent media personalities such as the editor of The Point, Deyda Hydara and 'Chief' Ebrima Manneh of the Daily Observer were murdered by his government in 2004 and 2006 respectively (Saine 2009; Perfect 2010).

In 2016, Jammeh was voted out of office in an epoch-making election. Towards the December 2016 elections, his domestic and international reputation and support had massively dwindled. In the 2016 presidential elections, a coalition of seven opposition political parties dislodged Jammeh from power. The flagbearer or candidate of the coalition, Adama Barrow, emerged victorious in the 2016 contested presidential elections with 43%, Yahya Jammeh 40% and Mama Kandeh had 17% (Independent Electoral Commission, 2016). Jammeh was reluctant to cede power to the newly elected president. His reluctance was met with swift internal and global condemnation and a subsequent military intervention threat by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). These efforts pressured him to relinquish power (Connolly & He, 2018). From the

tumultuous 2016 presidential elections, Adama Barrow became the third and current president of The Gambia since the country's independence in 1965. This defeat has given way for the first democratic transfer of power in The Gambia.

3. Theoretical Framework

This chapter introduces the theoretical framework that will be used in this research. The first section focuses on the theories used in this research. The research is anchored in the theories of dictatorship, state propaganda, and media. These concepts will be central in this research as it will help us explore the symbiosis between music and dictatorship and propaganda. The second section of this chapter discusses literature on the interaction between music and politics especially in Africa.

3.1 Dictatorship: Coercive Powers and Incentives in Music Industry

Dictators have shrouded the African political landscape since independence in the late 1950s. Almost all African nations have had individual rulers who outrageously wield absolute power for their personalized gains. One of the fundamental assumptions underlying the prevalence of dictatorship is weak institutional environment in the African continent. Olson (1993) described dictators as "bandits" with "rational self-interest". He theorizes dictators as "stationary bandits who monopolize and rationalize theft in the form of taxes" and "other exactions" (p.567). Dictators are wielders of coercive powers and monopoly over such powers give them way to 'seize a given domain', for instance music or trade, by providing a "peaceful order and other public goods." In the context of the music industry, a dictator could provide public goods in the form of musical instruments or platforms like TVs and radios. To project their powers, they are also greatly involved in the "distribution of rents" among "patronage network" aimed at generating support and loyalty from their subjects (Ezrow and Frantz, 2011, p. 12). In other words, these goods do not come for free; the provider reaps direct and substantial benefits. Olson (1993) states that such public goods are provided by autocrats as "incentives to charge a monopoly rent" for their own personal objectives (p.569). Therefore, dictators provide incentives as well as exercise coercive power in the different domains of the society to enhance their image making and to sustain their encompassing political objectives.

In addition to Olson's (1993) theorization, when analyzing music and dictatorship it is helpful to understand dictators as they can possess different characteristics. According to Ezrow and Frantz (2011), dictators are "eccentric" individuals who exercise 'ill-defined' power in a regime that is "brutally repressive" (p.1). Heywood (2013) conceptualizes dictatorship as "a form of rule in which absolute power is vested in one individual, seen as being above the law and as acting

beyond constitutional constraints…[and] characterized by the arbitrary and unchecked exercise of power" (p.281). Scholars have used authoritarian regime, non-democracy, autocracy, and dictatorship interchangeably in their work as well as totalitarian, autocrat and dictator (Olson, 1993; Ezrow and Frantz, 2011; Heywood, 2013). Some scholars interchangeably use these concepts by highlighting some distinct differences based on the presence of ideological assumptions and mentality of the leaders. Nonetheless, commonalities for these type of regimes include, but not limited to, exertion of total control over the political, economic and social spaces. In dictatorial regimes, media outlets are often censored, government propaganda is widespread, and details of government administration are concealed (Ezrow and Frantz, 2011, p. XIV).

Music is one of those common domains that dictators invest in and use as a political tool for their survival. Propaganda, media censorship and fomenting terror are outstanding strategies used by dictators to wield power without restraints. Moreover, Ezrow and Frantz (2011) emphasize that "dictators need the cooperation of other actors to maintain their power" (p.19). This thesis therefore seeks to contribute to this literature by understanding how Jammeh used musicians and music to entrench his powers. Moreover, by interviewing the musicians themselves, the thesis will shed light onto how musicians are recruited and lured to the propaganda machine that entrenches dictatorship.

3.2 Propaganda – How States Articulate Power

Street (2017) observes that music is one of the domains that forms part of the "repertoire of devices that governments use to communicate with their citizens" (p.4). The music domain serves as a political communication tool exploited by dictators in the form of propaganda to evoke, arouse and shape people's views on different political issues in the interest of the dictator. Dictatorial regimes create ideal space to rule by "stress[ing] on propaganda and mass mobilization, combined with coercion and terror" to fully occupy the political space in their territories (Ezrow and Frantz 2011, p. 3). Jowett and O'Donnell (2012) state that the term propaganda has become 'associated with control and is regarded as a deliberate attempt to alter or maintain a balance of power that is advantageous to the propagandist (p.3). Besides, as Garratt (2018) observes, propaganda is one of the most commonly invoked terms in music and politics relations (p. 107). Music is a perpetual propaganda technique and a quintessential strategy that dictators and dictatorial regimes use to propagate and project their powers. Herein, it is therefore important to look into the term *propaganda* as an analytical tool that links music and politics.

The term, however, has different meanings to different scholars. Garratt (2018) states that there are several attempts to redefine propaganda but its ultimate purpose is "to attract public attention to certain facts, actions, imperatives" (p.109). Harold Lasswell (1927) describes propaganda as the "management of collective attitudes by the manipulation of significant symbols" (p. 627). Manipulation could be achieved by dissemination or promotion of special self-interested ideas or images in an 'organized mass persuasion' way. In their book, Propaganda and Persuasion, Jowett and O'Donnell (2012) define propaganda as the "deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist" (p.7). With selfish motives, propaganda messages are intended to arouse and evoke positive public perceptions of the propagandist. Further, the authors write that the "audience may think the propagandist has their interest at heart, but in fact, the propagandist's motives are selfish ones" (p.13). By this, people's imaginations are awakened through an appeal to their feelings, gripping their attention and hearts. The art of propaganda involve closely related but different methods.

Jowett and O'Donnell (2012) categorize propaganda into three different forms: "white", "black" and "gray" propaganda. White propaganda "attempts to convince the audience that the sender is the "good guy" with the best ideas and political ideology" (p.17). Such propaganda is intended to build the credibility of the propagandist among the intended audience. This type of propaganda "comes from a source that is identified correctly, and the information in the message tends to be accurate" (p.17). The people behind such messages are deliberately identified and revealed to the audience. The other form of propaganda is black propaganda and is the "big lie" that is targeted to deceive the audience. In this form of propaganda, the source is "concealed or credited to a false authority and spreads lies, fabrications, and deceptions" (p.18). The final form of propaganda by Jowett and O'Donnell (2012) is gray propaganda and it lies between white and black propaganda. It is used to "embarrass an enemy or competitor". For this form, as Jowett and O'Donnell (2012) put, the source of the propaganda "may or may not be correctly identified, and the accuracy of the information is uncertain" (p.20).

The music industry, especially the praise songs, could be associated with white propaganda. White propaganda romanticizes national symbols and music as a propaganda technique romanticizes and portrays national leaders as saviors, super humans intended to ignite intense and unquestioning loyalty to the leader. Songs intended to fuse the leader and state together is thus a white propaganda to disseminate or promote special self-interested ideas or images in an

'organized mass persuasion' way. This research adopts Jowett and O'Donnell (2012) definition of propaganda as a working definition to guide the analysis and discussion. The authors provide a clear and succinct definition of the concept and also state how the concept is stratified. This can be extended to the study of music and politics as their categorization of propaganda helps us to identify and analyze the propaganda strategies employed by Jammeh in terms of ideology and purpose, structure and target audience.

3.3 Media: the most essential propaganda machine

In order to explore the influence of music on dictatorship it will be fundamental to study the relationship between media and politics. All musical activities pass through media platforms such as televisions and radios in order to be widely heard by the masses. Traditionally, media freedom provides a fertile ground for democratic governance to strive. Thinking along this line, Heywood (2013) underscores that media facilitates democratic governance "by fostering public debate and political engagement, and by acting as a 'public watchdog' to check abuses of power" (p.182). The media is thus a very significant propeller of political education. However, Heywood (2013) argues that "the media can only perform this role effectively if they are properly independent, and not dominated by government" (p.183). Media freedom in most African countries are suppressed and government's dominance of it overshadow its role to foster democratic governance. Thomson observes that "Almost all state newspapers, radios and televisions on the continent provide a pro-government outlook" (p.240).

The dictatorial regimes are media-orientated and use the media as the most essential propaganda machine. Media houses are flooded with information or messages about everything good about the dictator for the consumption of the masses. Any media house that is not in line with the propagandist messages are usually targeted. This is for the fact that, as Heywood (2013) observes, "Politicians are concerned primarily with winning and retaining power, and are thus ever sensitive to the need to maintain public support. The desire to accentuate the positive and conceal the negative is therefore irresistible" (p.193). To achieve this, propaganda songs are widely played on the various media outlets influenced by the regime. State controlled media platforms are generally obsessed with 'image rather than issues, and with personality rather than policies'. Moreover, songs that praise the dictator are played on every media in the state and this allows political messages to be spread among people. This in turn could affect the political culture of the people in favor of the dictator. The public is bombarded with the 'good' image of the dictator

especially during election period. For instance, Thomson notes that "One study of the 1996 election in The Gambia, for example, found that President Yaya Jammeh commanded 83 per cent of radio and television airtime dedicated to the campaign, leaving the opposition parties at a distinct disadvantage" (p.257).

Mass media propaganda was an important tool of the Jammeh regime. A classic example of propaganda machine constructed by Jammeh is purchasing a massive sound and musical instrument system, the organization of International Roots Festival amongst others to get national and international musicians play for him. He had also established a national television station – the only existing TV station during his time – that mirrored his policies of the state and allowed the operation of radio stations that were less or not critical of him. Therefore, to reason along Foucault concept of "governmentality", Jammeh used music, musicians and the media to shape the conduct and the life of people for his political gain. The concept of "governmentality", as Foucault puts it, is a "broad sense of techniques and procedures for directing human behavior" (Foucault 1997, p. 82). Jammeh's involvement in the music industry could be seen as an act of governing that was geared toward controlling the conduct of individuals as political songs in his favor feature more prominently in multimedia environment reaching wide audience and potentially shaping people's view of him.

3.4 Early Interaction of Music and Politics

This section extends the understanding of the relationship between the theories discussed above. The relationship between musicians (traditional singers) and leaders has existed for centuries. In the West African region, musicians are commonly referred to as *jallis* or griots especially in the Manding societies in Mali, Senegal and Gambia. The practice of the *jallis is a "*highly skilled tradition of praise song and instrumental music dating back at least to the time of Sunjata Keita in the 13th century" (Fosu-Mensah et al. 1987, p233). They were usually associated with the nobility class composed of Kings and Warriors in the pre-colonial era. In the colonial and post-colonial times, the patrons of the *Jallis* included colonial chiefs and governors as well as presidents, high government officials and affluent individuals. This closeness to the ruling class has long made *Jallis* to enjoy a relationship of 'intimacy and mutual understanding' with ruling class and a degree of popularity. The *jalli* uses these opportunities to praise sing and popularize the deeds of the noble class. Fosu-Mensah et al. (1987) refer to this as "mutual dependency" existing between the musicians and leaders (p235). The *Jallis* also play other instrumental roles in African societies

as transmitters of oral history. Fosu-Mensah et al. (1987) contend that the art of *Jalliya* has survived over the centuries and has also been shaped by sponsorship of individuals–usuallyrulers–a economic, social and political factors (p233). As the African societies transforms, the art of music changes with the times to reflect changes in social structures and other modern factors.

The transformation of the relationship between musicians and rulers also changed the style of music. The style has changed to suit contemporary economic, social and political realities. In addition, in the present-day situation, musicians do not necessarily come from the *jalli* clan. Individuals from different families not previously associated with the *Jalli* clan have also ventured into music. There are several factors associated with this trend of changes and prominent among them is the increasing change of role of musicians overtime and the economic benefits that accompanies it. Thus, these changes have also opened up space for individual musicians especially those who had not previously enjoyed the privilege and access to political leaders. As the patronages expand, the music and politics relationship get stronger (Fosu-Mensah et al. 1987, p235). People, especially politicians, continue to have close associations with some musicians who are especially famous and appealing to the wider public. This is for the fact that, as Lara Allen (2004) observes, "Music functions as a trenchant political site in Africa primarily because it is the most widely appreciated form of art on the continent" (p.1). On the other hand, the benefits and successes attached to praise singing for politicians encouraged and elevated many into the music industry. Music in such context has done much to praise, promote, glorify and *godify* political leaders.

3.5 Late interaction of Music and Politics

African political leaders have exploited music's propaganda powers and relied on it as a device to gain popular support. This point is brought home in the works of John Street (2003) and Martin Meredith (2005). Street (2003), in his work *'Fight the Power': The Politics of Music and the Music of Politics'* documented how politicians appropriate music to have political advantage. Dictators have funded musical bands in a bid to get songs that evoke, commit and maintain the popularity of their regimes. Street (2003) discusses examples in which the Soviet Union with the State Jazz Orchestra, Nazi regime with the Horst-Wessel Song, the British with ENSA and the US with the Glenn Miller Orchestra as regimes that exploited music as a political device. Street (2003) also reminds us that African dictators such as President Mobuto of Zaire "made extensive

use of bands such as OK Jazz" and Daniel Arap Moy of Kenya "sponsored musicians who celebrated him in songs that became national hits" (p. 116). Meredith (2005) in his book, *The State of Africa: A History Of Fifty Years Of Independence*, provides a study of the history of some African politicians and the role music played in their political oppressions and general wellbeing. Some of these politicians include Houphouët-Boigny of Ivory Coast, Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Nyerere of Tanzania.

Eric Charry (2000) also discussed how the *Authenticité* policy of Sékou Touré of Guinea enabled him to incorporate his philosophies into the nation's cultural activities. For instance, he funded orchestras such as Bembeya, who promoted his revolutionary ideologies during their tours around the African continent (Charry, 2000). Such examples abound. Music was a cornerstone in their existence as leaders and also an indication of top-down (politician-musician) attempt to control the music industry. That said, music has served political leaders in Africa as a potent political force to entrench themselves into power. Leyshon et al. (1995) hold that "music at once defines and reinforces the disposition of power within those spaces and the authority represented by that space" (p.426). These examples demonstrate the extent to which political leaders harness music and musicians as a source of power for their political gains.

Music is also used by some artist to express their political criticism and help in building counter-hegemonic forces. Birgit Englert (2008) observes in reference to a Kenyan case where the song *Unbwogable* played a crucial role in the election campaign for the opposition in the 2002 elections (p.8). She notes that such songs play a crucial role to shape a county's politics and political discourse. Similar anti-oppressive regimes songs could be heard in South Africa during the Apartheid era and recently in Uganda. The musician-cum-politician Bobi Wine (Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu) in Uganda has used the music to reveal and condemn the dictatorship of Yewori Museveni (Al Jazeera, 2020). Hobsbawm (1995), considers this category of musicians as providing a functional lens with a "sense of being needed by their public" as "in the absence of real politics and a free press, practitioners of the arts were the only ones who spoke for what their people, or at least the educated among them, thought and felt" (Hobsbawm 1995, p.506). However, it is also observed that popular songs with political contents that are critical of political situations are rather rare as such musicians usually venture into political content songs when they are outside their countries of origin (Englert, 2008:9; Nyamnjoh and Fokwang, 2005:264). This number of musicians are few and also rare in numerous African countries grappled with dictatorships.

It can be argued that African dictators were repressive of music that are–or they thought–against their leadership. Englert (2008) reminds us that "many political regimes throughout Africa have responded with repression to pieces of popular music which they perceived as containing criticism, fearing that the music would otherwise become a site for resistance" (p.11). Such songs are censored by repressive regimes for the fear of its effects that could ignite resistance against the political leadership. John Street (2003) states that "The potential of music to promote approved causes is linked to its potential to fuel rebellion" (p.117). Hence, songs that do not 'articulate officially endorsed sentiments and identities' often incur political persecution. The political leadership polices such songs and musicians.

4. Analysis and Discussion

In this chapter, I provide the results of the interviews and discussion. I first put forward the interview results by analyzing the incentives that motivated musicians to sing praise songs for Jammeh. I also discuss the challenges the musicians (interview respondents) encountered by being part of, and in some cases resisting or attempting to withdraw their services from Jammeh's propaganda machine. This chapter also sheds light on the 'behind the scenes' of Jammeh's praise songs in terms of planning, coordination as well as the organization of Jammeh's propaganda campaign. This is very important because, as Englert (2008) notes, the analysis of the political dimension of music remains necessarily incomplete when one neglects the arrangement of the songs and other behind-the-scenes activities (p.10). Upon this, I also present and discuss some lines from songs that popularized discourses on Jammeh's regime. The target audience for this propaganda songs is also discussed. The interview respondents will be abbreviated as following: Respondent Musician (RM) for interviewees who are musicians or in the music industry and Respondent Politicians (RP) for (former) government officials.

4.1. Planning and coordination of Musicians and songs for Jammeh

4.1.1 Incentives: a trigger for the praise songs

Jammeh, like other African dictators, had great interest in the music industry in order to increase his popularity. He used the cooperation of musicians to create a patronage network as a tool for political survival that elongated his rule. I wanted to know the incentives that were given to musicians as a motivational factor to sing for Jammeh and some possible challenges they had in their relations with Jammeh. The results of the interviews indicate that Jammeh lured musicians into his political arena through various incentives and display (exercise) of his presidential power muscle.

4.1.1.1.Financial returns and gifts incentives

Musicians were rewarded with cash–many a times dished out on stage–for performing and praising Jammeh. RP5 five, a former top government official, describes the relationship that existed between Jammeh and Musicians as "a two-way street" where both sides benefited. The respondent said Jammeh "gave them (musicians) direct cash support! Direct cash support in the

millions and millions." Giving an example, the respondent recalled that Jammeh gave him an amount of "250000" [Gambian Dalasi, around US$5,000] to handover to a musician that was launching his album." In another encounter, the respondent said he handed over "half a million dalasi [around US$10,000] from Jammeh to a particular musician." In another instance, a musician called Egalitarian, was reportedly given a cash amount of half a million dalasi for his song titled "Dinkendo" meaning a Great Son (see Janko, 2012, The Daily Observer). This report from *The Daily Observer*, a pro-government newspaper, confirms the respondent's revelations. Also, in 2007, Mam Tamsir Njie received 165,000 dalasis (approximately US$3500) from Jammeh to produce his album entitled "Jarama Jammeh" (Thank you Jammeh) (Dibba, 2007). However, it is not known how much of taxpayers' money Jammeh invested in musicians and the music industry.

Jammeh also organized competitions among musicians rewarding the best praise song and performance. The winners of these competitions earned huge amount of money as RP5 recalled "it was the 22nd anniversary of July 22nd revolution, Jammeh did a competition for them, and Samba Bah [a musician] won with a million dalasis. Before that, there was another competition, the 10th anniversary [of July 22], where Jaliba won with his song title "President Jammeh Jilanka". RM11 claimed that artists usually wrote to Jammeh requesting his support for their album launching. The RM11 stated that when he was preparing to launch his album, Jammeh promised to give him "all the money I needed for the launching". Unfortunately, Jammeh was out of office before the album launching.

Gambian artists generally did not charge Jammeh for their performance. Instead, Jammeh himself would determine what to give them. RM1's deliberation supports this by stating that "we just performed whatever he intended to give us was up to him." The payments were not official and/or contractual as Jammeh retained the prerogative of rewarding musicians who pleased him, even to the extent of doing it spontaneously after live performances. For instance, one participant indicated that after a live performance, Jammeh would reward the musicians with cash saying "here's a token for you and your band because you sang very well, and I enjoyed your music" (RM3). Jammeh's financial assistance was instrumental for the careers of some musicians. RM11 recognized that "music is expensive, it is money that produces it. Without money, music cannot be produced. So Jammeh is someone who tried to uplift musicians and we could say that he did that for Gambians." International artists, mostly from Senegal, enjoyed the lucrative incentives that Jammeh and his regime provided to them. The award-winning Senegalese artist Yousou

Ndour was paid an estimated amount of three million dalasi (approximately US$60000) by the Jammeh regime to perform at a three-day event (Jammeh, B., 2014). He was one of the international artists that was commonly invited to perform at Jammeh's events. He however saw these performances as "cultural exchange" instead of financial gains (Jammeh, B., 2014).

4.1.1.2. Platforms and recognition incentives

Some musicians thought that performing for Jammeh was a way to become fame and rich. The artists wanted to get his attention for a potential "huge breakthrough". Participant three puts that it was an opportunity "to be seen and recognized by the [president] and the country and beyond; something that every musician wants". Jammeh gave the platform for some musicians to achieve this by playing at his events. Some of them got the chance to perform among other locally and internationally renowned artists. These incentives patronized musicians to sing praise songs for Jammeh. RP5 said "The role of music and politics was amplified under Jammeh's administration because Jammeh gave us our first TV and brought the best and the greatest musical stage ever to land in this country and perhaps in the Senegambia sub-region." Consequently, those musicians who praised Jammeh had "more place [airtime/featured] on TV and radio than those who didn't sing for him." Privileged access to such platforms motivated some musicians to praise him in their songs.

4.1.1.3.Traveling and career development incentives

In addition, other musicians were enticed with travelling opportunities and packages as they got a rare chance to tour the country and the world with Jammeh. RP7 puts that "he took musical groups to anywhere he went outside the country as he used music to promote his image outside The Gambia, especially within the West African region.." For instance, in one of his state visits to Taiwan, Jammeh flew with the whole Kabakel musical group to provide entertainment throughout the journey (RP5 and 7). This in itself was a huge promotion for that group. The tokens he gave to some musicians had earned them some fortune to travel around the world. Without Jammeh's support, the individual work of these artists was meager to earn them resources to travel and support their families. RM11 retorted that:

> *"Those who are now in the Diaspora, ask them how they got the money to go abroad. It is not their programs. You are paid 10000 or 15000 [dalasis] during a programme, that can't bill your trip. Your problems are uncountable. Your family's problems are*

uncountable! But what happened is that the 'Kebbama' [Big Man]used to give you money to travel. Some [musicians] used to go and tell him I want to travel and study music and he would give them money to travel."

Jammeh's 'support' was therefore indispensable to the career development of musicians in the music industry. Some of these musicians came from poor family backgrounds and desperately needed Jammeh's support. Musicians that benefited from such support reciprocated by composing praise songs for him.

4.1.1.4.Voluntary participation

During the Jammeh regime, there were some artists that were inspired by the "bravery" and ideologies of Jammeh. Some of these artists sang songs for Jammeh before having an encounter with him. The incentive for praising was not necessarily coming from Jammeh but the artists were motivated towards him because of his ideologies. Samba Bah, whose songs were later constantly played on the national airwaves was an example of such. In one of his praise songs for Jammeh titled "Keke Nooleya Foni Kanilai" (Take me to the Land of the Brave), Samba sang that he admired Jammeh's "bravery, Islamic religion, and knowledge." Although these artists voluntarily sang for Jammeh, they ended up gaining his attention and many were eventually recruited into his system.

In addition, Jammeh's love for cultural rhetoric was admired by a large number of artists. Jammeh celebrated his love for culture in a bi-annual event called the the Kanilai Cultural Festival. The festival was a two weeks event that occurred bi-annualy since 2001 and was held in his hometown of Kanilai. The festival was centered around his birthday celebrations and attracted national and international artists across the world (Esri, 2020). The festival brought global attention to Jammeh as artist from all over the world gather to perform at the event. A large number of these artists voluntarily participated in this event due to their acceptance and appreciation of Jammeh as an African cultural icon. For instance, an American artist, Chaz Guest attended the event in 2010 and was quoted saying:

"I came to attend the President's birthday and the Kanilai International Festival. This is because he is a man of his words, a lover of the truth, a promoter of culture and peace in Africa. The more I read about him, the more I thought about him. I am always moved with his diligent personalities. He [Jammeh] only needs support and encouragement to

succeed in his development plans. Let us all as Africans or black people join him for the good of the continent." (The Point Newspaper, 2010).

Jammeh used his rhetoric of Pan-Africanism and cooperation through culture to stage the festival. The festival provided an "accessible and available" platform for Gambian and internationals to perform (Ceesay, 2011, p.35). Such artists believed that they were contributing to a good course. The event contributed to boost his international reputation and acceptance as renowned artist perform at the event. For instance, in 2010, Jermaine Jackson, a celebrated American singer was one of the famous international musicians that performed at the event and attracted thirty thousand fans (see Culturaldiplomacy.org, 2010).

4.1.2 Challenges and fears

Musicians and those in the music industry did not always have it smooth in their encounters with Jammeh. The combination of incentives and fear made some musicians to praise Jammeh in their songs. Jammeh could easily lavish huge amount of incentives on musicians as well as instill fear of him in the musicians through harassments. This strategy cornered some musicians to sing for him. He also used 'divide and rule' tactics to keep musicians under control by playing the local musicians against international musicians. The artists I interviewed all expressed their dislike for the privilege, honor and financial bounties accorded to foreign artists compared to the "small token" that Jammeh gave to The Gambian artists. They expressed this as a challenge that undermined their reputation and efforts as Gambian musicians. Displeased, some attempted to "step aside" from performing for Jammeh. However, this was meted out with "maltreatment" –in the form of verbal abuse, total neglect and possible "imprisonment". People in the music industry were often arrested and detained during Jammeh's regime. For instance, in 2015, DJ Lamin Cham, a prominent music promoter was arbitrarily detained (Human Rights Watch, 2015, p. 32; Foroyaa, 2015). Another prominent artist, Killa Ace, went into self-exile for fear of his life (see The Guardian, 2015). Once in the system, it became difficult for many musicians to escape the manipulative radar.

As indispensable members of his entourage, musicians also had some other difficult moments. The artists were usually part of his entourage during political campaigns and other meetings and were sometimes performing under scorching sun and at times very late at night at every stopping

point during these campaigns around the country. RM3 describes this as an ordeal in which they were “not given good food and place to sleep. You were not guaranteed that this was your breakfast, lunch or dinner.” There was a “climate of fear” for the artist to boycott any of his events. Any musician that did not show up to his events was labeled as an “enemy of the president”, and “standing up to death”. These were constraints that limited or threatened the agency of musicians and the music industry. Therefore, to “satisfy him” and to avoid his wrath, musicians endured to be present and perform at his events whenever called for.

As musicians, participation at Jammeh’s events was based on a “blanket invitation”, an invitation sent to musicians through an open letter or national broadcasting channels (RM9). The invitations usually came “just a few days before the event”. This was challenging for some musicians as they were “forced” to reschedule or shun their other engagements in order to be at Jammeh’s events. Therefore, they “dared not stay away” from such an invitation. However, there were certain events in which Jammeh himself would “choose and make the entertainment list” of musicians he wanted at his event (RP8, a top government official). The National Center for Arts and Culture (NCAC) worked on his commands and sent those letters to the various musicians. State parastatals were also inviting musicians, for instance to raise fund, albeit upon the approval of Jammeh.

Jammeh also used the disguise his propaganda as music competitions to lure the support of musicians and those in the industry. The competitions were based on his own likes and whims – handpicked. No public or proper protocols were used in awarding prices to those that best praised him. Moreover, the organization of such competitions was seen as an effort to undermine some musicians. RM9 narrates that “Some of his events were just meant to humiliate me as he will give huge incentives to other musicians ignoring me. That was to tell the crowd that ‘you thought [name of the musician] is the biggest musician, but he is not’”. This way, Jammeh kept musicians close to him by making them compete against each other for his favors as he sowed a seed of “enmity” and unhealthy competition among the musicians. Arguably, this was also a strategy of ‘divide and rule’ tactics employed by Jammeh on the musicians. The musicians were accorded differential treatment in relation to the incentives they got.

4.2. Jammeh's propaganda campaign organization, the place of musicians

Jammeh was a very "sophisticated man" that utilized all sectors of the country to propel his dominance. He tapped into every potential resource that could enhance his dominance. He determined what and how his propaganda campaigns were managed. From the interviews conducted, it appears Jammeh was a sophisticated man who paid close attention to the organization of his propaganda machine. For the musicians, Jammeh to a great extent dictated which musician should play and also even influenced the type and timing of songs for his praise. RM3 recalled that "at some point he had sermon that anywhere he was the band should be there to perform". One of Youssou Ndour's famous songs titled "Alsamaday" was adapted from a famous word/phrase used by Jammeh during his political events. This is a "white propaganda" tactics as the person behind arrangement of propaganda songs is deliberately identified and revealed (Jowett and O'Donnell, 2012, p. 17). This is essentially what happened when one of the respondent's initial song was reworked and remixed into a praise song for the Jammeh family (RM3). Jammeh's sponsorship of the band, it can be argued, made it to produce songs of praise in order to appeal to Jammeh. An example of this was discussed in the previous chapters where other African dictators fund musicians in order to be praised.

Also, a respondent recalled that after a performance in 2014, Jammeh once asked him "everybody is singing for me when are you going to sing for me?" (RM1). The musician went on to release a very famous praise song for Jammeh and "he paid for the studio bill" and that song "never stopped playing on the GRTS TV." This was a display of what Allen (2008) observes about prominent powerful African figures who "patronize music, paying musicians both to provide entertainment and to celebrate and affirm their importance" (p. 8). Arguably, through such actions, Jammeh was able to set a dominant discourse of his leadership, built on the back of the musicians. He shrouded the media by harassing and even closing radio stations that were critical of him. He closely monitored and determined the activities of the only TV station in The Gambia. For instance, a song by Killa Ace that was perceived as an anti-Jammeh song never made it on the airwaves of TVs and radio stations during his regime.

4.3. The Targets for Jammeh's praise songs

Music and musicians in The Gambia target different age and gender groups of the society to send their musical messages. However, a large number of them, if not all, target the general public especially the youth (All Musician Respondents). RM11 narrates that "my music is for the people of the world, either young or old, either white or black. My music is for the whole world." Songs by prominent musicians like Jaliba Kuyateh are generally appreciated by all folks. Some musicians, because they are youth, target young people and women–who are a very important part of The Gambian electorates. Jammeh relied on this to solidify his youth-based support through music. Music and Musicians in The Gambia have never been more political than during Jammeh's regime. The industry was infiltrated for political gains during the regime of Jammeh. It was used as an important tool for him to dominate the political arena of the country. Gambians respond to musicians by attending their events especially open and free events like musical jamborees are "filled up by people, to dance and feel happy" (RM3). Jammeh enhanced and appropriated this opportunity to organize events in which musicians were invited and this had drawn the attention of many fans of those musicians thus showing up at his events.

4.3.1. Choice of Language

The musicians' choice of language plays an important role in expressing themselves and communicating their song lyrics to a wider audience. It is also the choice of language in itself that one can decipher the intentions of the musician. The Gambia is a multi-ethnic language country and music plays a big role in the cultures of these ethnic groups. Most of the musicians in the Gambia sing in multiple local languages to reach many of their fans as songs that are sung in different languages appeal to a wider audience (McConnell, 2020, p.8). Mandinka and Wollof are the common language used by musicians because they are dominant spoken languages. However, this is sometimes not political but for commercial purposes.

The language choices of the musicians help in directly speaking to a specific audience. Music, in itself, is a popular means of expression and people have used music to send messages that may be difficult to convey by other means. Also, politically charged songs, as Onyebadi (2019) observes, provide voters the opportunities to enjoy the feeling of bonding with politicians while assessing and assimilating their messages, especially if the songs are presented in the local languages of the

voters (Onyebadi, 2019, p.266). Hajer (2006) holds that language has the capacity to profoundly shape our view of the world and reality. Jammeh-praise songs were usually framed in the local languages and usually very easy to understand the metaphors and slangs in the lyrics. Opposition musicians also use metaphors, slangs and ironies in music language to indirectly refer to rulers. In The Gambian case, it was Killa Ace that is well known for this.

4.4. Songs of Praise and Propaganda, samples

A number of musicians sang songs of praise for Jammeh. These songs played a significant role in communicating the political messages of Jammeh during his tenure. Metaphors and other figurative forms of expression were incorporated into the songs to laud the achievements of Jammeh. They created and reinforced discourses that elevated Jammeh as a "supreme leader", "freedom fighter", "bridge builder", "King" among others. The songs always aimed to adopt a theme that outwardly projected the status of Jammeh as a divine gift to The Gambia. Essentially, they popularized discourses used by Jammeh himself; the songs are a reflection of his self-exhibition as the president. The musicians exploited imageries that depicted and glorified the (supernatural) powers of Jammeh as the best gift that The Gambia ever had compared to the regime before him. Many of these songs became recurrent themes in the political and social spheres of the country thus creating popular discourse and imagination of him. They were played on national TV and radio stations. The songs and/or musicians became an indispensable part of Jammeh's activities such as political campaigns and rallies. These songs bolstered his political goals and gave him an opportunity to establish his dominance in the political life of The Gambia. Below are examples of praise songs for Jammeh from some famous local and international musicians. I provide transcriptions of some lines from the songs and translate them to English. Following this, I analyze every song.

4.4.1 Jaliba Kuyateh: "President Jammeh" (2004)

Jaliba Kuyateh, a kora maestro player, is one of the most famous musicians in The Gambia. His songs are widely listened to among all age groups in the country. Jaliba performed and sang praises for Jammeh on numerous occasions. The lines below are from one of his best praise songs for Jammeh, titled "President Jammeh Jilanka". 'Jilanka' is a family praise name for Jammeh's surname and it is widely used in songs for President Jammeh to depict his heritage. The lines in

this song portrayed Jammeh as Allah's gift to the People of Gambia. With his kora and unique melody, Jaliba has a specialized mode of praise singing that is very appealing to the public. Through such praise songs for Jammeh, he garnered a large support and popular constructions of Jammeh's image. The lines became a discourse that depicted Jammeh as a "peacemaker", "supreme head", "a God's gift" in the political and social sphere of The Gambia. Jaliba melodiously sang as follows:

Allah ye Gambia harajehleh Yahya'la, President Jammeh Jilanka	Allah, God, has gifted Gambia with President Jammeh Jilanka
Yiriwa jaama lehnata jang, yahya' a President Jammeh Jilanka	Many developments have come (since) President Jammeh Jilanka's
Tonya kummo diyaatayeh, Yahya'ye President Jammeh Jilanka	Yahya adores truth, President Jammeh Jilanka
Essalamalayka eningwulaara jalliyala	Greetings to you, musical greetings to you
Allah'tala yeh duniyada amang molou kaanyandi, wolomu Junkung dinmaati	Allah (God) has created the world and people within it in differences, that's the son of Junkung
Keh kafolu moli terimalehmu, musu kafolu moli terimalehmu	A friend of men's groups, a friend of women's groups
Bojang muso leh dimma mu, yahya wo	president Jammeh Jilanka President Jammeh Jilanka the son of lady Bojang
APRC kafo laa kuntibaa	APRC party's supreme head
Kairo dehdaalaa	Peacemaker!
Tonya kummo diyaatayeh manso yeh yahya President Jammeh Jilanka	Yahya adores truth, President Jammeh Jilanka
Allah ye Gambia harajehleh Yahya'la, President Jammeh Jilanka	Allah, God, has gifted Gambia with President Jammeh Jilanka
Yiriwa jaama lehnata jang, yahya' a President Jammeh Jilanka	Many developments have come (since) President Jammeh Jilanka
Tonya kummo diyaatayeh, Yahya'ye President Jammeh Jilanka	Yahya adores truth, President Jammeh Jilanka
Essalamalayka eningwulaara jalliyala	Greetings to you, musical greetings to you
Allah'tala yeh duniyada amang molou kaanyandi, wolomu Junkung dinmaati	Allah (God) has created the world and people within it in differences, that's the son of Junkung
Keh kafolu moli terimalehmu, musu kafolu moli terimalehmu	A friend of men's groups, a friend of women's groups
Bojang muso leh dimma mu, yahya wo president Jammeh Jilanka	President Jammeh Jilanka the son of lady Bojang
APRC kafo laa kuntibaa	APRC party's supreme head
Kairo dehdaalaa	Peacemaker!
Tonya kummo diyaatayeh manso yeh yahya President Jammeh Jilanka	Yahya adores truth, President Jammeh Jilanka

4.4.2 Singhateh: "Mansa Kay" (2014)

Through this song "Mansa Kay" or Kingman, Singhateh praised and glorified the efforts of Jammeh by using the metaphor of "Babili Mansa" or a Bridge Builder. This built into a discourse of presenting Jammeh as a development-oriented leader. As the name implies, Jammeh was referred to as a Bridge Builder for the construction of bridges over rivers 'impounded' by Jinns or

demons, a myth. The name “Babili Mansa" was at some point part of his long official names. Singhateh incorporated praising idioms such as ‘a sun in the night’ and praises such as ‘conqueror of hunger’ as discourses to portray Jammeh. This evokes and portrayed Jammeh as a light of The Gambia (a visionary leader), provider of electricity and a savior of the nation for ending hunger. He also tried to compare the development progress under Jammeh and previous periods. Through its title, the song depicts Jammeh as a King, a role “given to him by Allah and not by anyone”. Singhateh says:

Allah’lehye mansaya dilla, jong mang mansaya dilla	It is Allah (God) that gives you Kingship (presidency) not anyone
Ni yaamoi baabili mansa Jammeh Jilanka eningbara	If you hear Bridge Builder (it is you) Jammeh Jilanka, thank you
Manso minglaata alaa bankolla	The president that believes in his country
Manso minggikiitta alaa bankolla	The president that (has) hope in his country
Manso minglaata dokuwola	The president that believes in work(ing)
Baba, Jammeh Jilanka eningbara	Father Jammeh Jilanka thank you
Gambia bitilo laa mbey ngajehleh mingbeh kehring	Gambia, today we all see what is happening
Gambia bitilo laa aning tili kotengolou faatata	Gambia today is different from other (previous) periods
Suuta tillo lehbotaa, dibbo fehleh ataata	A night sun has arisen, darkness has disappeared
Konkolou woli burukaata, nyayaa jeh sillo faanuta	Mountains demolished, I see roads have gotten wide
Babilimansa naata, jinna jaawoli boritta, bolongto saloli lota	The Bridge Builder came, demons ran away, (and) bridges were built
Babilimansa naata, naata kunkoli woli bilita	The Bridge Builder came, lands were cultivated
Babilimansa naata, naata konko woli boritta	The Bridge Builder came, hunger disappeared

4.4.3 Nyancho: “22 July” (2014)

The song “22 July” by Nyancho is an elaborative portrayal of the Jammeh-led coup in 1994. President Jammeh himself branded the coup as a “revolution” to end corruption and public mismanagement (Saine, 2009). The main objective theme of the song was to convince the people that The Gambia had greatly developed since Jammeh came to power. Nyancho praised the 22 July revolution as a solution to the developmental challenges faced by The Gambia. It is the same discourse that Jammeh had been portraying throughout his regime. Nyancho praised Jammeh as a “patriot” that “sacrificed his soul” to bring more development to The Gambia. The intended purposes of the 22 July Revolution was the recurrent theme in every line of the song. Nyancho also masterfully used the pronoun “we” to place everyone as a direct beneficiary of the revolution. Nyancho’s song also depicted Jammeh as a father figure –patriarchal African society

– that took the whole Gambia as a "family" under the custody of Jammeh,a capable 'father.' The presence of such a discursive style is effective in creating popular imagination and acceptance of the regime. Nyancho energetically sang:

22 July revolution is the solution	22 July revolution is the solution
Nabankunding siyo diyaata, Gambia dubengbaa	A nice small country to reside in, Gambia a big shelter.
July 22 '94 Arjummo somanda	On July 22 '94 Friday morning,
Banko dinkendo yeh lahido lehta	The lands patriotic son made a promise
Munnanko ayaa niyolehlaa	He sacrificed his soul, I say
dankodorong mbehsen nyiwjaa	So that we can all smile wide
Nkaa mingmbeh kumbo ayeh nyaagiyo jaa	He dried our tears off from whatever we're crying of
July 22 natamuna wolehmu nyin niing nyingti:	July 22 has come for the following:
Kairo yeh sabbati, ayeh sabbati, nka ayeh pachaki	For peace to prevail, to prevail and spread in abundance
Nga mingfii nga wo ngabatti	To What we grow is what we eat
Toubaboulo kana laakaatti	To avoid the misery of Westerners
Nkoyeh Karangbunbalou lotto ntela jaamani londo laa sonoyaa	Many high schools built to ease our generation knowledge seeking
Lopitatonolou bey janjanding purung mbeh la jattakendeya	Hospitals are widespread for the health of us all
July 22 lotaa munna?:	Why was July 22 undertaken?
No corruption,	No corruption,
More development,	More development,
Women empowerment	Women empowerment
July 22 nsajuraa nko nsajuraa fo faow	We will celebrate July 22, celebrate forever
Sanggi jamaa feleh komanto Gambia bimma muna abeh dee?	For many years ago, how's The Gambia today?
Yahya yeh mindo baayi	Yahya driver away thirstiness
Yiriwa bunda lou beh jehletta	All doors of development have opened
Silolou dokuta, lampolou beh maalatta	Roads were constructed, (street) lights switched on bright
Manni farrolou beh mota pota	All rice farms are ripe
Nkoyea kattaatolou beh yehmanta	All criminals disappeared
Ntellou teh nyi nalehla, nkoyea mansatAllah lehbey jolla	We cannot forget you, only God the Greatest can pay you
Lunfolo ming yeh bankotta yengmeh muttako ela dimbaya	The first day you took over you take all of us as part of your family
Jammeh ley yeh dimbaya marrono, dimbaya	Jammeh is great at family up keeping
July 22 revolution sabu nyimma	July 22 is a great coincidence

4.4.4 Fafadi: "Jammeh Jilanka" (2009)

In their songs, Fafadi and Warrior King lauded the developmental achievements of President Jammeh and glorified and referred to him as one of the unparalleled Great Leaders of Africa. As

international musicians, Fafadi and Warrior King sought to expand Jammeh's appeal outside The Gambia's borders and therefore their songs tapped on broader rhetoric like Pan-Africanism (self-determination and independence) meant to elevate Jammeh's leadership within Africa and beyond. Metaphorical praising lines were used in these songs to convey his achievements and sentiments that elevated his Pan-African rhetoric. These songs reflect the populist rhetoric of Jammeh as a true "Pan-Africanist", self-reliant leader who did not ask aid from the West. Jammeh was also presented as a healer with cures for diseases such as HIV & AIDS. Jammeh capitalised on these populist narratives to entrench his style of leadership which became a hallmark of his regime especially in later years of his reign. Fafadi lauds him as "brave:, "serious" and Warrior King on the other hand sees him as "strong", a "freedom fighter", "great farmer" with a philosophy of "grow what you eat and eat what you grow", "righteous" and "curer". Jammeh used the discourse of Pan-Africanism to disregard Western powers. His farming philosophy of "grow what you eat and eat what you grow" reiterated in the songs was a discourse that boosted his reputation and garnered "helpers" to farm on his farms in his home town and across the country.

Fafadi sang:

Jilan' mbeh duwakangyi banko samba nyaato	Jilan' I'm praying for you (to) take the country forward
Allah, Mansanyima, ngedaani duwala Mansanyima	Allah, God of goodness, I pray to you God of goodness
Dukareh adehmaa faasita nyatt	Please help him so he can prosper
Love, happiness and respect inna me land in Gambia, santa yAllah	Love, happiness and respect in the land of Gambia, Thank Allah
Jammeh Jilanka fondinkelou sewota kantaminkah	Jammeh Jilanka the youth are happy with your efforts
Musu kafu keh beh duwala Gambia'la nyaato taala	Women and men are praying for Gambia's prosperity
Alaa kehkendeyaa ning ala sobeya lenteh nyaabo	His bravery and seriousness is what I admire
Gambia, banko yiriwaa feleh atata nyato	Gambia, the country's development has moved forward
Kaatu amabullaa moyeh ako yenso	Because he hasn't stretched his hand to ask from anyone (beg)
Africa la mobalou leh, nteli ketteh juubeh wolulehla Jammeh	Where are the brave ones of Africa? We look at you as one (of them)
Dobalou ni ela darangbolou ye woli ali pareh ngaata doh Kanilai	Famers get up, prepare your hoes and we go to Kanilai for farming

4.4.5 Warrior king: "President Yahya Jammeh" (2015)

Warrior sang:

Honorable Yahya Jammeh
The president of The Gambia and a great leader of Africa
A chief commanding officer and he loves mama Africa
Twenty plus years in power
Still going stronger
He's a freedom fighter
And he loves mama Africa
He said "grow what you eat and eat what you grow"
And that's the right way to go!
He unites Muslims and Christians alike
He always stands up for what is right
He's always clothed in white.
Evil forces are spreading propaganda
Trying to tarnish his character
For he has founded the cure for HIV and all

These songs served to evoke the image of Jammeh among the masses. Street (2003) holds that songs and sounds are more powerful weapons because of the way they work on our emotions (p. 114). These were some of the most devised popular propaganda songs constant on airwaves aimed at entrenching Jammeh's leadership. In Jowett and O'Donnell (2012) categorization of propaganda, these songs are "white" propaganda that "attempts to convince the audience that the sender is the "good guy" with the best ideas and political ideology" (p.17). The lines and sentiments expressed in the songs were composed in acknowledgement and validation of Jammeh thus portraying and elevating him as the 'supreme head' and God's gift. I rather agree with Allen (2008) who notes that such acknowledgements and validations generate powerful political force that is profoundly empowering for an individual. The metaphors and idioms used were relevant in communicating the political messages and ideologies of Jammeh to the masses.

4.5. Limitations

The initial plan of this research was to conduct a field research in The Gambia. However, this could not happen because of the Coronavirus pandemic. I therefore resorted to conducting online interviews and this has its own limitations. One of them is that it minimizes (physical) interaction or rapport with the respondents. This makes it difficult to observe body language for nonverbal communication (Bernard, 2011). Also, most of the respondents were initially reluctant to grant an interview on topics related to politics and Jammeh. This is due to the fact that, as some

interviewees indicated, fear of where and how the recordings of such interviews would be used. This could also limit their 'honest' response to certain questions asked during the interview. Building trust over online interviews seems quite challenging and this could incite discrepancy in their responses to the questions asked and possibly resulting in biased results.

Despite interviewing some of the most influential musicians in The Gambia, the number of interviews conducted was not very large and diverse enough to cover all types of musicians. This was one of the main limitations of the research. Although this research concentrates more on the musicians that are often associated with Jammeh, there are other types of traditional musicians such as the "Kenyeleng" that are not covered in the research. These are influential grassroot musicians believed to possess some mystical powers and they help in communicating societal issues including politics (McConnell, 2020, p.8). They are instrumental in disseminating political messages at their various grassroots levels. Also, gender representation could also be an issue as only two of the eleven respondents were women. However, men dominate the music industry as top brass. This is likely to obscure the impact of female representation in the research and how female musicians helped in influencing the masses, many of whom are women.

Another crucial limitation linked to the number of interviews was time. Building up a contact network with the respondents could be tedious and this took a great toll on my research time. I had a very limited time frame to finish my thesis as my scholarship time frame was running out. This was however, augmented by a two months extension as a result of delays caused by Coronavirus pandemic on my studies. If not because of time constraints, I would have thought to interview many more people but I could not do this. The possibility of more interviews with different people could lead to a very rich data that can influence the results of this research.

While this thesis is on exploring the role of musicians in entrenching dictatorship, the analysis cannot establish conclusively on whether musicians affected the political culture of The Gambian population. This is because electorates were not engaged/interviewed in this research. Also the interpretation of the songs could vary from person to person and the way I interpreted them may not be the necessary intension of the musicians.

5. Conclusion

This study provides a fresh and deeper understanding of the relationship between music and politics. The two have, over the years, significantly interacted and influenced one another. The music industry serves as a "trenchant political site in Africa primarily because it is the most widely appreciated form of art" (Allen, 2004, p.1). Political leaders such as the former president of The Gambia, Yahya Jammeh (1994-2016), used the music industry as the most formidable tools for his propaganda. This research explored the significant role musicians played in entrenching Jammeh's regime from 1994 to 2016. The musicians were an indispensable vehicle for communicating propaganda messages. Jammeh used the cooperation of musicians to create a patronage network as a tool for political survival that elongated his rule.

A large number of musicians, nationally and internationally, have produced politically charged songs praising him. These musicians incorporated metaphors and imageries in their praise songs to laud the achievements of Jammeh. The songs created and popularized discourses that depicted and glorified Jammeh as a "supreme leader", "freedom fighter", "bridge builder", "King" among others. The findings of this research indicate that the production of such propaganda songs were motivated by incentives and/or fear of repression.

Firstly, Jammeh gave financial incentives, provided platforms like TV and festivals, musical instruments and travelling opportunities to have his name and achievements praised and popularized by the musicians. He also manipulated desperate musicians, especially amateurs who came from poor families and were seeking to make a breakthrough in the music industry. For such musicians, anything that Jammeh could offer was better than nothing. Also, there were some artist that voluntarily participated in praising Jammeh because of their inclination to his ideologies and beliefs.

Secondly, Jammeh was also tactful in using divide and rule strategy by according differential treatment to the musicians, especially by making international and local musicians to compete against each other. He used these tactics to hoodwink musicians from The Gambia and abroad. The musicians, like other instruments such as the security forces and religious leaders, were at the core for elongating the dictatorial regime of Jammeh. Like previous African dictators, Jammeh influenced and exploited the music industry as a propaganda tool for his personal praises and gains.

The research also contributes to the scholarly works on the relationship between the fields of music and politics especially in an African context. Studies on music and politics interaction in Africa focus more on music as a form of resistance by analyzing critical musicians especially those subjected to harassment or human rights violation for opposing dictatorship. This research provides an alternative understanding to such studies. It provides an understanding of how dictators wield absolute power and entrench themselves into power by subtle but powerful means such as music to control the minds of the people rather than common institutional supports such as military and other security sectors, courts and parliaments. The research also digs deeper into the planning and organization of propaganda songs. It augments the scanty literature on the role of music and musicians in building dictatorship and not just as a tool used for showcasing resistance to a political leader or political climate.

Implications for future research

This research was more exploratory than a full-fledged assessment of the interaction between music and politics and the role musicians played in entrenching Jammeh's dictatorship. A deeper research and nuanced analysis and discussion is required to fully establish this interaction and role of music in (and) politics. Essentially, the assessment of dictators, for instance their financial mismanagement and their exertion of power, is challenging. One will need a lot of evidence for rigorous analysis. For future research, it is therefore important to engage a large number of respondents in conducting such a research. It is also important to involve the general public in order to be able to gauge the influence of Jammeh's musical propaganda on their political culture and political decision makings such as voting. Moreover, deeper scientific research will be needed to assess the role of music industry in socio-political history of the Gambia.

Theoretically, this research suggests that the concept of dictatorship and propaganda are essential in analyzing the topic. The concepts provide evidence and insights in relation to the research questions and analysis, In addition, incorporating different structures or agencies of the state (e.g the security agencies, traditional and religious institutions, and education) could help to fully understand the role of music in grooming and propagating dictators. This will help us to find more about the relationship between music, propaganda and dictatorship.

Finally, since the departure of Jammeh in 2017, The Gambia is going through numerous political and governance reforms. Commissions have been established to investigate a number of things

about his regime. Therefore, more scientific research is needed to disentangle the effects of his dictatorship and the role of music industry in its entrenchment.

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The cover image is retrieved from: https://medium.com/@maxmykhlyk/top-7-protest-songs-7dfd5fcb55fe

Appendix

The People Interviewed

Date of interview	Respondent No.	Category	Medium	Info about the respondent
12/07/2020	1	Musician	WhatsApp	He is one of the most famous musicians from The Gambia. He sang one of the most hit praise songs for Jammeh in 2014. This song is widely played on national TV and radios. In addition, he had performed at numerous events organized by the Jammeh regime.
15/07/2020	2	DJ, radio presenter	WhatsApp	He was a famous DJ and radio presenter in the provinces, Basse to be precise. Basse is also known as the second capital of The Gambia because of its market and proximity to other satellite villages. He had a lot of connection with musicians and politicians during his time as a DJ in one of the biggest radio station in The Gambia.
16/07/2020	3	Musician	Zoom	She was one of the most famous musicians in The Gambia. She was very young (high school age) when she became a member of a particular band. She is no longer in the industry and "no longer likes talking about music" because she "wants to focus" on something. However, she granted me interview because it is for my thesis and it is her desire to contribute to knowledge production.
22/07/2020	4	Musician	WhatsApp	He is one of the only musician that sang against Jammeh and his regime during his reign as the president of The Gambia. After the release of his famous song, he self-exiled to Senegal for fear of his life. He is a strong advocate for human rights and justice.
22/07/2020	5	Government official (former)	WhatsApp	Mr.— was one of the most important close aides and ministers of Jammeh's regime. He served in different significant portfolios including as head of Jammeh's most important machine, GRTS TV.

10/08/2020	6	DJ, radio/TV presenter	WhatsApp	Mr. — also known as DJ — is a DJ and radio/TV presenter at a private radio and TV. In the past, he he was interviewed by Al Jazeera on issues of press freedom and his work. He has a vast connection with musicians and hosted many of them on his shows.
10/08/2020	7	Government official	WhatsApp	Mr. — is part of the top echelon of the Director General of National Centre for Arts and Culture (NCAC), Gambia. He is a well-known Gambian historian and an author with numerous published materials including books and articles.
22/08/2020	8	Government official (former)	WhatsApp	She is an experienced individual in the area of media and communications. She worked with the then nation's only television station GRTS as a news presenter and TV host for more than a decade. She served as one of the top members of the Press & Communication, Office of the President, during the regime of Yayha Jammeh.
23/08/2020	9	Musician	WhatsApp	He is the most decorated renowned musician in The Gambia. His musical career took him to numerous countries around the world. Because of his reputation and famousness, he has long been part of the musicians that performs at events organised by Jammeh.
26/08/2020	10	Musician	WhatsApp	He is an international award winning reggae singer from Jamaica. He was one of the many international artist that performed and sang praise songs for Jammeh.
26/08/2020	11	Musician	Mr. Lenn administered it	This person is a very famous Afromanding rapper in The Gambia. He also sang a very widely-listened-to praise song for Jammeh.

Questionnaires

Questions to musicians:

1. What motivated you to venture into the music industry
2. How long have you been in the music industry?
    a. When and why did you get into music?
3. What kind of messages do you like sending through your music?
    a. How do you use music to interact with your community?
    b. Do you have a specific group you are targetting/aiming to reach with your music? If yes, why do you target this group?
4. How important do you think music is to Gambians?
5. How would you describe the development of Gambian music over time?
6. What kind of role do you think you play as a musician in the society?
7. Do you think there is any relationship between music and politics?
8. Do you use your songs to express your political views?
    a. can you give an example of a song/part of a song lyrics?
9. What is your opinion on the music industry during the Jammeh regime?
10. How important do you think music (and musicians) was (were) to Jammeh?
11. How was the situation for you as musician during Jammeh's regime?
12. Did you ever perform at any event organised by Jammeh or his government?
    a. For example political rallies, nationwide tours, and other celebrations
13. If yes, why did you perform at events organised by jammeh or his government?
14. What incentives did musicians receive for performing for Jammeh?
    a. Did you ever receive any benefits for performing for Jammeh?
15. If yes, what are the main benefits you got for singing for or performing at events organised by Jammeh and his government?
    a. Could you give examples?
16. Do you think that Jammeh would have been more popular without the support of the muscians? Or
    a. What impact do you think the support of musicians had on Jammeh's popularity?
17. How did your music (name the song) become part of Jammeh's political campaign songs?
18. This is your song about Jammeh [quote a popular song title]. Why this song?
    a. Was any government official involved in the release of this song?
    b. Do you think the song was intended to spread a political message?
        i. If yes, what political message(s) did you want to share in that song?
    c. Do you think that that the song had any impact for Jammeh's popularity?
19. What did you do to promote Jammeh as a president?
20. Did you have any challenging experience for not singing or performing at Jammeh's events?
21. What do you think about other musicians that sang praising songs for Jammeh?
22. Do you experience any obstacles or limitations in expressing your views in your songs?

a. If yes; can you elaborate on this by giving examples?

23. Could you give some examples of metaphors, slangs and ironies you used to express your political views/opinions during the Jammeh regime?

a. Hidden meanings in your songs…

24. Is there anything which we have not yet talked about but which you think is important to share regarding music and politics in The Gambia?

Questions to radio stations (DJs)

1. Did you ever receive any instructions from the political leadership to play or not to play certain music during Jammeh's regime?
    a. How did these instructions look like?
    b. Where did they come from?
2. Did you ever felt limited in your freedom to play songs?
3. To what extent would you say music is political or used for political purposes in The Gambia?
4. How often were you playing songs that praise Jammeh during his regime?

***Questions to (former) g*overnment officials and promoters:**

1. Can you describe the organisation of Jammeh's propaganda campaigns?
2. What kind of role do you think musicians play in this organisation?
3. Do you think there is any relationship between music and politics?
4. What is your opinion on the music industry during the Jammeh regime?
5. How important do you think music (and musicians) was (were) to Jammeh?
6. Who were involved in the planning and coordination of musicians for Jammeh?
7. Was any government official involved in the production of songs for Jammeh?
8. Do you think that Jammeh would have been more popular without the support of the muscians? Or
    a. What impact do you think the support of musicians had on Jammeh's popularity?
    b. Do you think that that the songs (give example of popular songs: Jaliba, Sighateh, Samba Bah) had any impact for Jammeh's popularity?
    c. What and who were the specific target of the Jammeh-praise songs?
9. What did you do to promote Jammeh as a president?
10. What do you think about other musicians that sang praising songs for Jammeh?