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**Sounds of Power: Nigerian Popular Music and
the Political Settlement**

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Abstract

This study combines insights from Nigerian popular music and anthropology to extend the understanding of political settlement analysis. While recognising the importance of the political and economic focus in political settlements analysis, it is limited by its conceptualisation of culture and marginalised groups. Through the case study of corruption and social movements in Nigeria, popular music and anthropological ideas are used to reveal how the political settlement is deeply imbricated in culture as a third fundamental feature alongside political and economic factors. Developing the idea of culture as a source of power, the analysis shows how popular music helps social movements of marginalised groups conceptualise and influence the political settlement in ways standard analysis does not capture.

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List of Abbreviations

ACE: Anti-Corruption Evidence

PDP: People’s Democratic Party

APC: All Progressives Alliance

Chapter 1

Introduction: ‘Movement of the People’¹

As Fela Anikulapo-Kuti entered the grounds of Obasanjo’s military residence in 1979, he came face to face with the soldiers of the same army that had raided and burned down his compound, beat his followers, and killed his mother in a brutal reprisal for his 1976 song *Zombie*, which dared to criticise their leaders. Kuti was delivering his mother’s coffin to publicly shame Nigeria’s military ruler for the violence and subsequent cover-up, blaming ‘unknown soldiers’. It was an act of defiance which would see him beaten again. In 1981, he released the 22-minute album *Coffin for Head of State*, attacking that government for the suffering they exacted on the population and expounding the protests against military rule (Labinjoh 1982; Schnabel 2011; Barrett 2011; Fela 2019; Ngazolo 2019; Terich 2020).

It is impossible to argue that Kuti did not live his music. His songs detail his and Nigerians’ experiences in the vivid emotional detail of a life bordering on the mythic. His representations are clear attempts to articulate the words of otherwise voiceless people. Yet his and other musicians’ lives and works are underappreciated by the development community. Music, as an arguably universal art form, can represent not just a vast repository of information but genuine attempts to rearticulate top-down narratives, often from the perspective of those marginalised by discourses of the more powerful (Lewis et al. 2021). It is a potent tool of communication that, by depicting the lived realities of people, can shape even distant individuals’ and groups’ dominant perception of those experiences and, by extension, development itself (Lewis et al. 2021). As such, music, when used appropriately, can complement or challenge development claims in unexpected ways. It can reveal different ways of thinking about an issue or reframe the debate entirely (Okuyade 2011a). In this sense, it epitomises the interdisciplinary call of Morson and Schapiro, not just to explain our models better but to make better models (2017).

¹ Fela Anikulapo-Kuti. (1981) *Coffin for Head of State*. *Coffin for Head of State EP*. FAK Ltd: Kalakuta Sunrise / Knitting Factory Records

In contrast to the culturally rich nature of popular music and its study, political settlements analysis explicitly seeks to put aside questions of culture to examine ‘the combination of power and institutions that is mutually compatible and also sustainable in terms of economic and political viability’ (Khan 2010). This is used to provide macro-level, political economy explanations for institutions such as clientelism or corruption and understand how goals such as stability or growth-enhancing institutions can be feasibly achieved. This analysis has been particularly applied to corruption in Nigeria through the Anti-Corruption Evidence (ACE) campaign.

While their analysis is extremely robust in terms of the political and economic structures, drivers, and interests shaping political corruption (Roy 2017), Smith’s (2006) exploration of the culture of corruption suggests that it fails to capture the diversity of the issue. Dynamic anthropological approaches to culture and corruption show there is potential for culture to be reintegrated into political settlements analysis under new terms of recognition (also Pierce 2016). Furthermore, the role given to marginalised groups in ACE’s political settlements analysis is essentially that of reactive groups which are connected to elites through patron-client networks and either accept or contest material distributions of rents (Roy 2017). Smith’s (2006) study illuminates the range of experiences and interpretations of corruption by these marginalised groups, challenging their reduction in ACE’s analysis.

If music is understood as a culturally potent site of meaning and message for marginalised actors (Lewis et al. 2021.), and anthropological approaches suggest that culture and marginalised actors understand and influence corruption in ways that standard political settlements analysis does not recognise, then there is room to make better models with music as a source of knowledge.

Following these assertions, this study asks the research question: Can popular music, in conjunction with anthropological approaches, extend the understanding of political settlements analysis? While answering this question will involve studying popular music, corruption and the political settlement in Nigeria, the main aim is to build political settlements theory through the case study.

As such, this dissertation will first conduct a literature review of political settlements and anthropological theories and debates to explore how their insights may be usefully integrated. Literature on music will also be reviewed to make the case for its importance as both a source of knowledge and as a part of how culture and marginalised actors may unexpectedly come together to influence political settlements. In Chapter 2, this will be built on by combining a critical examination of literature on music with anthropological insights, to engage with ACE analysis of the political settlement and corruption in Nigeria. The analysis and discussion draws on themes such as the moral economy of corruption (Pierce 2016), identities and politics of recognition (Labinjoh 1982; Fraser 2003), and cultural imagination and resistance (Lewis et al. 2021) to reveal how popular music, in conjunction with anthropological approaches, can extend the understanding of political settlements analysis.

Literature Review: ‘Tell me something I don’t know’²

Political Settlements

It is important to understand the political settlement framework, both in terms of its theoretical foundations and how it has been applied to Nigerian contexts. This is because they engender different critiques and opportunities for expansion, despite the fragility of the distinction (Gardner & Lewis 1996).

The political settlement framework arose out of Mushtaq Khan’s (1995) critique of new institutional economics (NIE) and the good governance approach. Khan and others accuse NIE of an overfocus on elites, a failure to extend analysis beyond institutional efficiency, missing the importance of distributional consequences, and converging formal institutions to power distribution. Conversely, political settlement frameworks analyse the distribution of power, income, and rents historically across formal and informal institutions and throughout society to provide a more convincing explanation for the driving factors of socioeconomic change (Khan 1995, 2000, 2010, 2018; Behuria et al. 2017).

However, as a relatively novel approach, there is considerable disagreement and confusion over what the term political settlement means. The importance of elite bargains, the role of ideas and ideology, the place for gendered analysis, and whether it is a power arrangement, the reproduced distribution of organisational power or a peace agreement are all contested. (Behuria et al. 2017; Bell 2015; Kelsall 2018; Khan 2010, 2018; O’Rourke 2017; Putzel & Di John 2012; Putzel 2023; Usman 2017). Some have argued that this limits the usefulness of the framework (Moore 2012 in Mallet 2012), but the existence of multiple versions does not necessarily equate to a problem as long as there are certain core principles (Mallet 2012). Following this, Behuria et al.’s (2017) guide to political settlements in Africa provides the solid theoretical foundation needed

² African China. (2000). Mr President. Grind Time In Da Hood, Vol, 2. IROKING

to both engage with its Khan-inspired use in Nigerian contexts (see Roy 2017) and suggest how to expand its scope.

This guide draws attention to several key features in the political settlement. First, it acknowledges that capitalism, as a global phenomenon, has impacted Nigeria's institutions and distribution of power through the colonial state. This historical study provides structural explanations for the forms of politics in Nigeria, including clientelism (Behuria et al. 2017).

This focus on power leads to the second key area of political settlements: the horizontal and vertical distribution of power (Behuria et al. 2017). Horizontal distribution refers to the relative power of excluded factions compared to the ruling coalition, while vertical distribution details the relative power of higher and lower factions within the ruling coalition. These factors are exceptionally important as they orient ruling coalitions' time horizons and the strength of their enforcement capabilities (Behuria et al. 2017). Significantly, they are more important in terms of their outcomes than specific institutional forms (Putzel & Di John 2012), which allows for the distribution of power, income, and rents outside of formal institutions to change without corresponding formal institutional transformation (Behuria et al. 2017). This makes them powerful tools, alongside the financing of the political settlement, for understanding the potential impact of policies or institutional reforms, providing a satisfying explanation for their differing impact across political settlement contexts.

The final core aspect of political settlement theory, which needs defining, is holding power. This seeks to explain the ability of coalitions to inflict and absorb costs in the changing and enforcement of rules. It crucially requires not just material wealth but also the capacity to mobilise support (Behuria et al. 2017). While the capacity for violence and allocation of violence rights is key to holding power (Putzel 2023; Mann 1984; Behuria et al. 2017), there is a second area that requires more exploration. Mobilisation requires factors such as legitimacy, ideas, ideology, emotion, and the social to influence support for political settlements or violence (Cramer 2006; Behuria et al. 2017). However, Behuria et al. (2017, 518) note that political settlement frameworks struggle to define or incorporate these issues, and their Marxian stance is somewhat unsatisfactory. O'Rourke (2017) declared the political settlements approach myopic in this aspect as it

narrowed humanity to the political and economic. Hickey et al. (2015) attempt to integrate ideas, showing how they can drive political struggles and be used to win them, as well as explain why elites may act against their interests. However, O'Rourke (2017) criticises this as another marginal and partial use of ideas that fails to account for wider ideological movements and how ideas underpin political settlements. While Putzel (2023), inspired by Mann (1984, 2012), includes ideology as a source of power in their political settlement analysis, it is still a fundamentally instrumentalist approach that focuses on how elites use it to mobilise support. An ethnographic exploration of these factors may be able to ascertain how ideas gain meaning through peoples' experiences and popular representations. This could not only provide more convincing explanations of how these issues affect political settlements but encourage the expansion of analysis to consider more widely the importance of how a political settlement is experienced, especially by groups somewhat marginalised in practice under the term 'non-elite'.

Having reviewed the theoretical basis of political settlement's explanatory strengths regarding the distribution of power, income, and rents in society and their relation to change, it is necessary to explore how this has been used in the Nigerian context through two examples. If political settlements analysis seeks to explain the distribution of power and rents, as well as institutional change, it must be asked what it can illuminate about these issues and what it may cloud.

The major area of focus for political settlements analysis in Nigeria that is relevant for this study is corruption. The Anti-Corruption Evidence programme is a SOAS-led research consortium which features Mushtaq Khan as an executive-director. Political settlements analysis has featured heavily in their task to make feasible anti-corruption programmes. Their approach in Nigeria will be analysed in the second chapter, asking whether the already highly robust examination of the interaction between structural features and the political economy can be extended to better understand how corruption is re/produced and challenged. The major questions follow those regarding the role of ideas and wider society. These would be fruitful areas to examine, as Roy's (2017) analysis of the varied economic and political incentives for different types of corruption from the perspective of elites and their developmental impact is well-developed.

Despite claiming to be concerned with the distribution of power and processes of conflict and bargaining across society (Khan 2000; Putzel & Di John 2012), political settlements analysis largely approaches those distributions in terms of their organisational capacity to influence the political settlement. Thus, while it may be adept at studying socioeconomic change from the macro-perspective of elites and even non-elite coalitions, it struggles to portray the day-to-day realities of the political settlement outside of political economy logic. However, it is in these social contexts that the vast majority of Nigerians will experience, understand, and represent it.

An opportunity for the integration of political settlements analysis and anthropological approaches emerges from these preliminary assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of the political settlements framework.

The blind spots of political settlements can be engaged with through ethnographic work with those groups deemed non-elite by political settlements analysis. This may not only expand understanding of the political settlement but challenge the foundational assumptions of its analysis. For example, it may draw attention to how ideas are constituted around issues of access, control, and benefit, which internalise and legitimise the political settlement. It is vitally important to listen to different stories of development and its meaning, acquired through experience and representation, to mitigate the pitfall of constructing development problems to justify particular interventions (Ferguson 1990; Escobar 2011[1995])

Anthropology and Development

The exploration of opportunities to extend the understanding of the political settlement in Nigeria suggests that anthropological ideas could be useful in grounding the examination of music. Anthropology has had a decidedly difficult relationship with its allegedly 'evil twin', development (Ferguson 1997), and key questions arise from the post-development critiques and efforts of re-engagement. Examining the similarities and differences between anthropological and political settlements approaches will reveal the tensions in their understanding of the distribution of power. These differentiations

can then provide insight into how music can extend the understanding of the political settlements analysis.

Escobar (2011[1995]) and Ferguson (1990) led the post-development critiques of the 1990s with work rooted in Foucauldian power and discourse. They argue that through an expert knowledge-power nexus, development institutions objectify an undifferentiated and passive third world onto which they could lay the blueprints for building a mirror to Western modernity (Escobar 2011[1995]; Ferguson 1990; Venkatesan & Yarrow 2012). This post-structural approach emphasises the role of discourse in constituting reality and treats development as a subject of anthropological study (Escobar 1997). By problematising the base assumptions of development, post-development questions the basis for the ordering of knowledge and the structure of institutions around knowledge regimes (Escobar 1997). This resulted in highly pertinent critiques of development interventions functioning as part of an anti-politics machine (Ferguson 1990).

Venugopal (2022) extends this to political settlement, arguing that rather than achieving its goal of bringing politics back to development, it has instead rendered the political, technical. In this sense, political settlement frameworks mostly identify elite-led coalitions as the vector through which solutions should be analysed. This drives the extensive mapping of these 'communities' (see Li 2007), removing the politics from their power so they can be treated as another technical component of development. Thus, while in some senses, political settlements allows for a more complex and nuanced understanding of politics than orthodox theories, it still expands the techno-managerial logic of the anti-politics machine (Venugopal 2022).

Post-development further questions the focus of political settlements analysis on stability, growth and corruption, which mirrors wider development trends associated with its modernising roots (Gardner & Lewis 2015). Understanding how these discourses affect political settlement analyses - what types of knowledge are deemed of value, what happens when different knowledges and representations meet, and what interventions are justified – is extremely important. It fundamentally questions the extent to which political settlements analysis can explain the causes and consequences of the distribution of power outside of a Western, modernising logic.

However, while these critiques are insightful and important, the post-development mode of anthropological engagement can result in an impasse where neither discipline can learn from the other (Gardner & Lewis 1996). Indeed, Escobar (1997) concedes that post-development can obfuscate the political economy chapters of the story that underpins real experiences of poverty. Venugopal (2022) also acknowledges that whether or not the anti-politics machine can be dismantled, it may not be desirable to do so completely as it does contain undeniable benefits. As Lewis and Mosse note, the interaction between development and people is far more nuanced than allowed for by post-development critiques (2006). Instead, an ethnographic approach can tease out these contested meanings and the messy reality of how development is encountered.

Plenty of anthropologists have thus directed their studies towards 'big D' development (Hart 2009; Lewis 2019) and exploring interventions through ethnographies of actors 'doing' development (Mosse 2005, 2011; Fechter & Hindman 2011; Venkatesan & Yarrow 2012). However, as Gardner and Lewis contend (2015), some of the most pressing issues of development in a world marked by growing inequality, poverty, and violence require studies outside of this narrower field. A fruitful approach may also be to examine the 'little d' processes of uneven societal change (Hart 2009), challenging orthodoxies and revealing the day-to-day experiences and representations through which people negotiate development as unfolding capitalism (Gardner & Lewis 2015). Both anthropological and political settlement analyses ask questions of who wins and who loses in the distribution of power as 'little d' development unfolds. However, while political settlement frameworks are well-equipped to explain how actors attempt to secure access to resources in line with the distribution of power, an anthropological perspective might highlight the contestations of meaning through which inequality of access is experienced and represented. In this way, both disciplines in conversation can challenge and complement each other's insights on the distribution of power in Nigeria.

Following this, Gardner and Lewis (2015) raise further issues of access, effects, and control for anthropologists working in planned change and policy. Here again, there are numerous opportunities for productive dialogue between anthropology and political settlements approaches. Gardner and Lewis (2015) outline several anthropological questions; however, they are central to both disciplines' conceptualisation of change.

These include asking: which resources are most important and how access to them is organised; ‘do some groups monopolise political power and resources?’; ‘what is the relationship between production, distribution and control?’ (2015, 134,137,140). This is not to suggest that they are actually asking the same questions or looking for the same answers – quite the opposite. However, it is through the different meanings attached to these seemingly similar questions that useful entry points can be found to extend the understanding of political settlements analysis.

It is important to include some anthropological insights on corruption in Nigeria. This will help compare their approach to political settlements analysis, maintaining an interdisciplinary tension in which music could extend the understanding of the political settlements framework.

Regarding corruption, both anthropological and political settlements approaches share a critical perspective against good governance-inspired, universalising, yet narrow, definitions of corruption that condemn it in all contexts. The historical discursive roots of technocratic corruption as a persistent primitivism in the imperial imaginary are highlighted by Pierce (2016). Their assessment of economic and political explanations of corruption is largely compatible with political settlement in that both seek to transcend the culturalist narratives of neo-patrimonialism while recognising the benefits of analysing rent-seeking behaviour. However, while Roy’s definition of corruption appears to follow orthodox notions of state functioning and public/private divides (Onyema et al. 2019, 7-8), Pierce (2016) articulates an alternative view. Here, corruption is polyvalent, encountered through a multiplicity of interpretations across material, discursive, and legal registers and at the intertwined local and international levels.

Developing a moral economy of corruption, Pierce (2016) makes the particularly relevant argument that a newspaper article’s representation of corrupt acts was not driven by desires to explicate neo-patrimonialism but instead to assert the morality of officials and position the writer in relation to this. Pierce explains that through a vivid polemic on Nigerian politics and corruption, Ofiemun attempts to transform Nigeria’s moral politics so that the good of the nation is the end goal (2016). Ofiemun declares that the morality of corruption can only be judged through a system of norms,

dependent on the metric of 'taking Nigeria seriously' and thus locates corrupt acts in a moral terrain (2016, 185).

However, as corruption discourse is used to fight political battles, it obfuscates the very material problems of material corruption (Pierce 2016). This provides an area of conversation with political settlements. Political settlement's strengths lie in its understanding of material issues and the political economy of corruption. However, its interventions, based on interest and coalition-building, could be improved through an engagement with the moral economy which seeks to define the il/legitimacy of corrupt acts.

If a moral economy exists in newspaper articles, then why should it not be in popular music? Building on political settlements' exemplary approach to patron-client networks and informal institutions, might an analysis of music reveal further moral economies of corruption that extend the understanding of the distribution of power? If music shows that corruption is encountered not just materially but in a discursive moral economy, then what implications might this have for humanising development knowledge?

Smith (2006) further complicates the issue of corruption. They reveal how it is differently interpreted by Nigerians who locate it throughout society in acts that do not necessarily cross the public/private divide of orthodox Western definitions. By not using an *a priori* definition of corruption, Smith's ethnographic method can reveal the 'social action, collective imagination, and cultural production' of it (2006, 5). An interesting approach could be to examine how music is involved in these processes and what it may reveal about how corruption is legitimised and challenged in the political settlement that are obfuscated by political and economic reductions.

Indeed, the integration of anthropological ideas to extend political settlements analysis could be progressed through an examination of music as 'reflective of social values and as a site of cultural resistance' (Lewis et al. 2021, 1401). Music could locate corruption in broader issues of the negotiation of post-colonial identities, relationships with the state, and development. These subjects could be addressed through popular music's representations of the lived realities of people in the political settlement. This can introduce the voices of the marginalised, contextualising their experience of the

distribution of power in their own terms – an important inclusion against the backdrop of academic research (Lewis et al. 2021).

Music

Popular music in Nigeria is intimately connected to the political and social lives of Nigerians as a space for engaging the government and negotiating postcolonial identities (Okuyade 2011a; Olorunjoba-Oju 2019; Osiebe 2021; Sylvanus & Ezeugwu 2024). As such, it represents a unique opportunity for insight on the experience of the distribution of power in Nigeria that can complement and challenge its representation in political settlement frameworks.

Before exploring the usefulness of music, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. Like development, music is the contingent product and process of a host of other processes (Lewis et al. 2021). This is precisely why there is value in their cross-pollination (see Titus 2022), but it is also why it requires cautious use. Music is not the exclusive domain of expression for marginalised groups but is open to appropriation and commodification by a host of actors and organisations. Indeed, politicians in Nigeria are quick to patronise musicians for elections (Ihejirika 2023), while British American Tobacco capitalised on the commercial potential of music to successfully market their brand of cigarettes through festivals (Patel et al. 2009). Artists themselves may also respond to the pressures of commercialisation in ways that cast doubt on the authenticity of their critiques, leading to accusations of convenient activism (Osiebe 2016; Nelson 2023; Harman 2022). Notably, these commercial imperatives often fall along colonial trade networks, demanding fetishised Western notions of authenticity (Lewis et al. 2021). Despite these issues, music can be used appropriately as a form of development knowledge to expand the understanding of the political settlement in Nigeria. While these cases undoubtedly reveal important information about the distribution of power, their use is beyond the focus of this dissertation. Instead, the aim is to explore how representations of the political settlement in music may shed light on how it is encountered by Nigerians in ways the political settlements approach is not attuned to see.

The argument for recognising the arts as a form of knowledge, which cannot replace, but potentially widen other social science knowledge, has been eloquently put forward by Lewis et al. (2008, 2013, 2014, 2021). Their works on fiction and music, in particular, form the foundational principles for questioning to what extent popular music can extend the understanding of the political settlement in Nigeria. These principles are excellently captured in Donna Haraway's (2016, 12) proclamation, 'it matters what thoughts think thoughts', 'what stories tell stories', and 'what worlds make worlds'. It represents a call to acknowledge that not only do stories change depending on who tells them, but that we are richer for learning together. As such, it rhymes with Lewis et al.'s (2008, 2021) assertion that music can shed light on the stories of development, marginalised in academic and policy writing.

Three core arguments for including music knowledge emerge from Lewis et al.'s (2008, 2021) papers and other studies of popular music in Nigeria. The first is that music has an ethnographic quality of 'being there' (Geertz 1988, 4 in Lewis et al. 2008, 207). This is not to say that popular music is ethnographic in terms of its rich and thick description as recognised in academic text. However, through the narrative and sonic structure of their songs and albums, artists like Fela Kuti, African China, or Eedris Abdulkareem craft deeply personal and emotionally affective stories of the social and political experience in Nigeria (Labinjoh 1982; Okuyade 2011a; Titus 2017; Omobowale et al. 2023). From detailing daily struggles in the face of infrastructure problems and a militant state to the deaths of friends in religious conflict, they extoll a people-oriented and counter-hegemonic representation of the lived realities of Nigerians. The resulting picture and feeling that one is left with could perhaps only be expressed through music (Lewis et al. 2021). This ability to convey the human experience means it is well suited to provide academically unexplored insights into social processes as a well of 'sociologically relevant material' (Coser 1963, xvi).

Secondly, in seeking to reveal these issues, music in Nigeria also represents the lived realities of Nigerians in their terms. This is emphasised by their use of code-switching. Nigerian artists, from Fela Kuti to Burna Boy, make extensive use of Nigerian Pidgin alongside Yoruba, Igbo, and Hausa languages (Okuyade 2011a; Titus 2017; Omobowale et al. 2023). Language can speak to the artists' roots, but perhaps more importantly,

their attempts to negotiate their experiences in ways that their audience understands and connects with. In particular, Pidgin is seen as a universal language within Nigeria, but one associated more with the marginalised, reflecting its own history in relation to English and the Nigerian colonial experience (Titus 2017). As such, using these mixes of language can be seen on the one hand as similar to ‘rotten English’, where it represents the disorder, disjunction, and dislocation of post-colonial Nigeria (Saro-Wiwa 1996; Lincoln 2010). However, it can also allow the artist and those they represent to ‘organise their thoughts and conceptualise the realness of the situation’ they find themselves in (Omobowale et al. 2023, 4). Therefore, music is both experience and representation.

Music as a communicative medium is central to this process in Nigeria, as evidenced by the dissemination of the protest song *January Money* in Ogoniland. The song was recorded by a local artist and actively disseminated by locals, largely through Bluetooth, because it resonated with their experiences (Eyre 2017). It highlights the injustice of compensation payments for oil-extraction damage and was the only way to spread a message that the government was ignoring, allowing people to hear it collectively (Eyre 2017). The song’s representations, distribution, and consumption thus helped locals form a counter-narrative to the Anglophone-dominated, academic, legal, and policy discourse. It represents issues and contests meaning in ways that reflect their experience and ‘local economy of signs’ (Titus 2017, 124). This connects back to Lewis et al.’s argument that taking seriously marginalised groups’ ‘terms of recognition’ (Appadurai 2004 in Lewis et al. 2021, 1408) is central to inclusive development, as a complement to ‘conventional scientific evidence’ (Lewis et al. 2021, 1408).

The third argument is that through its ethnographic qualities and representation of Nigerians’ experiences, popular music engages with development and conveys development truths (following Lewis et al. 2021). Labinjoh (1982) strikingly argues that Fela Kuti made visible the deleterious effects of rapid economic growth for many Nigerians. Against the backdrop of social dislocation and a rise in communitarian living (Labinjoh 1982), Kuti’s musical protests and critiques arguably uncover a Polanyian double movement (Polanyi 2001 [1944]). In this sense, Kuti’s music speaks to the contradictions of development as a modernising impulse founded on economic growth through the lived reality of those that experience it. He challenges the myth of development and bemoans the post-colonial structures of power and inequality it has

helped re/produce. In so doing, he connects Nigeria to the broader social, political, and economic questions of development, making a strong case for music's inclusion as a valid form of knowledge.

An interesting example of popular music in Nigeria revealing the disjuncture in development discourse is the song *This is Nigeria* by Falz (2018). Inspired by and responding to *This is America* by Childish Gambino (2018), Falz compares the social problems of the United States and Nigeria. Akingbe and Onanuga (2018) argue that through their critiques of youth marginalisation and degradation at the hands of the elite, the songs in concert reveal that bifurcations of the world into developed or developing are shot through with fallacies. Thus, by giving voice to these excluded groups, Falz and Gambino illuminate one of the core dilemmas of development and complement arguments that its study should not be restricted to developing countries (e.g. Lewis et al. 2021).

Expanding on the notion of bifurcations, the music of Naira Marley questions the divide between the formal economy and informal and illicit activities. Sylvanus and Eze (2022) argue that the song *Am I a Yahoo Boy?* (2019) draws attention to the fact that many Nigerians are involved in internet scams as a direct result of development and government corruption. When the logics of the formal/informal and licit/illicit are intertwined and co-constituting, then it makes little sense to treat them as distinct and reified categories of analysis. While music like Marley's provides a counter-narrative for the disaffected and marginalised (Sylvanus & Eze 2022), it also serves to complement social science understanding of these development concepts.

Taken together, these three arguments embody the sentiments of Haraway (2016) and Lewis et al. (2008, 2021). They do not seek to replace conventional academic or policy texts with lyrics and a beat, but they do demand that music is taken seriously as a source of knowledge for and an influence on development. As post-development critiques argue, the political settlement framework and its policy use will necessarily construct development issues in ways that justify particular interventions (Ferguson 1990). Similarly, Lewis et al. (2021) note that music is not value-free but a specific representation of reality. As such, holding these sources of knowledge in tension with each other should broaden the understanding of the political settlement in Nigeria.

Popular music in Nigeria is a spectacularly rich source of information. Through representations of the everyday realities of people, corruption, and countless other issues, music can help complement and challenge the understanding of the distribution of power in political settlement analysis.

Methodology: ‘Let’s save Nigeria so Nigeria won’t die’³

Research Question

Can popular music, in conjunction with anthropological approaches, extend the understanding of political settlements analysis?

Interdisciplinary

Following calls for interdisciplinarity (Harriss 2002) and widening the scope of knowledge (Lewis et al. 2008, 2021), corruption and political settlements analysis will be examined through popular music and anthropological critiques. Guided by anthropological insights, peer-reviewed papers on popular music will be critically examined to discern what they reveal about issues of identity, morality, culture, resistance, and corruption. These will be compared to the political settlements theory and Anti-Corruption Evidence literature on Nigeria. This will allow an evaluation of the extent to which they complement, challenge, and extend the understanding of political settlements analysis. Integrating these positions to gain a more complete understanding of the political settlement requires holding constructivist anthropological and structuralist political settlement ideas in interdisciplinary tension with each other.

Considerations and Limitations

An interdisciplinary framework can be highly beneficial as the integration of perspectives can transcend disciplinary boundaries and explore issues from new vantage points (Pedersen 2016). Anthropological and political settlements approaches both

³ Sonny Okosun. (1984) Which Way Nigeria?. Legends. Jive

study power and social action, inclusive of the economic and political, but from different roots and with different emphases. Integrating their analyses has the potential to save the disciplines from themselves (Harriss 2002). However, integration must also avoid overly reducing perspectives or exaggerated spoofing (Morson & Schapiro 2017) – even as it seeks to transgress disciplinary boundaries.

As Sonny Okosun's call to save Nigeria exemplifies, Nigeria was chosen as the explanatory case study due to the widely accessible, vibrant, and politically active nature of much of its music. This also allowed issues concerning language barriers and cultural distance to be somewhat mitigated as there is a wealth of literature that has translated, interpreted, and discussed Nigerian popular music. Language did prevent further research into music, especially songs disseminated non-commercially, through personal networks, as they generally lacked translations, transcripts, or online availability. This somewhat restricts the types of music which can be analysed; however, the sheer availability of literature on a variety of artists and issues means valid arguments can still be made.

While language barriers did necessitate the use of secondary data analysis this does not preclude new interpretations and insight – especially when applied to a novel research question (Irwin & Winterton 2011). One major issue to note is the imbalance of gender representation. This analysis was beyond the scope of possibility in this dissertation but should be noted as a potentially significant limitation in understanding the range of encounters with the political settlement in Nigeria.

Further to this, while popular music was not strictly defined, genres such as religious music, folk music, or music from the Global North were not explored as they would over-complicate the analysis. Alongside female artists, they would make fruitful areas of further research.

Chapter 2

Analysis and Discussion: ‘And Governor go dey chop, And President go dey chop’⁴

This section combines an analysis and discussion of the available literature on corruption to extend the understanding of political settlements analysis.

Through an exploration of corruption, it first argues that the political economy emphasis of political settlements analysis is insufficient because it fails to understand the cultural dimension. This will be achieved by integrating insights on corruption and violence in Nigeria from popular music and anthropology to provide a richer understanding of political settlements analysis. This will reveal that alongside political and economic factors, sociocultural power relations across society are key to the political settlement.

Secondly, from this vantage point, the role of music will be expanded to a space where dominant narratives and institutions can be discursively challenged in ways that impact the political settlement. Arguing that political settlements analysis fails to satisfactorily appreciate the capacity of society to shape political settlements, this approach shows that music has a crucial, sociocultural role, in allowing marginalised groups to reinterpret and influence the political settlement.

Reintegrating Culture

Anti-Corruption Evidence (ACE) is a research consortium led by SOAS, which has conducted multiple political settlements analyses of corruption in Nigeria. Their approach is intimately linked to Khan’s, as he is an executive director. Its examination of corruption in Nigeria is an incredibly powerful corrective to those frameworks which

⁴ Burna Boy. (2019) Collateral Damage. African Giant. Atlantic / Bad Habit / Spaceship Records

mistake the evolutionary ‘institutional, organisational, and political characteristics of a country’ (Khan et al. 2019, 9) for policy variables that can be immediately changed.

Roy’s (2017) political settlements analysis of political corruption in Nigeria argues that in the context of an economy with low productive capabilities and a need to distribute rents to critical constituencies, informal distribution from unproductive sources of income must occur. They define political corruption as ‘rent creation and distribution through informal client networks, with the help of which powerful patrons maintain power and stability’ (2017, 6). As such, political settlements analysis is necessary as the distribution of organisational power determines the policies and institutions that develop, their implementation, and thus the nature of informal rent capture (Roy 2017).

Using ideal typologies of the distribution of political power, Roy (2017) provides a compelling argument for informal rent capture during different political settlements in Nigeria. The various military regimes oversaw a distribution of power where the excluded coalitions were relatively strong, but the leadership of the ruling coalition was also powerful compared to its internal factions. This created a ‘vulnerable authoritarian regime’ (2017, 20), characterised by repressive violence and unproductive rent capture to maintain fragile stability. Under the shift to democracy, the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) operated more closely to a ‘weak dominant party’ (2017, 20). This meant the ruling coalition was too weak internally to prevent rent capture within its networks, and doing so would have alienated its constituents, threatening its stability. Finally, Roy explores how the 2015 rise to power of the All Progressives Congress (APC), combined with the relative strength of the PDP and internal factions, has resulted in ‘competitive clientelism’ (2017, 20). Under this distribution of organisational power, democratic processes are often violently contested, and coalitions require a large network of support to gain power. This implies large amounts of informal rent capture to maintain political power.

Roy (2017) expands on this to detail various forms of corruption, from political to policy distorting and predatory, and how various policies and the federal structure of Nigeria further enable networks and flows of informal resources. While this is important, the key point is that political settlements analysis emphasises that informal institutions of corruption exist because they are crucial for actors to achieve their political and

economic aims within the evolving distribution of power and institutions. This is a necessary corrective to good governance interventions, which remove political power from the equation of institutional change or conceive of corruption solely as anti-developmental (Roy 2017). As such, political settlements analysis provides a compelling, systematic case for the persistence of corruption, contestation over its distribution, and its outcomes.

However, the emphasis on the political and economic facets of corruption by political settlements analysis has discounted both culture and marginalised groups. Political settlements analysis is keen to de-emphasise the role of culture in African societies (Roy 2017). This is likely due to political settlements critiques of neopatrimonial and institutional approaches that portray culture as static, a barrier to development, and justify the treatment of Africa as a 'special case' (Lewis 1975[1959]; Behuria 2017; Roy 2017). However, as a result, they also tend toward an inert interpretation of culture that is only of instrumental or descriptive relevance (see Roy 2017). This informs a reduction of interests and structures to their political and economic dimensions. Furthermore, it only focusses on political forms of corruption, aligned with Western normative definitions (Roy 2017; See Pierce 2016), thus failing to recognise the plurality of understandings of corruption in Nigeria (Smith 2006). While the factors ACE identifies are crucial in driving political settlements, analysing them without an appreciation of culture in anthropological terms limits not just understanding of the processes of institutional and distributional continuity and change but the sources of it.

The anthropological understanding of culture differs greatly from political settlements analysis. Rather than static, it is dynamic and intertwined with politics and economics, such that they both shape and are shaped by each other (Gardner & Lewis 2015). The application of culture to political settlements analysis follows Smith's (2006) assertion that the anthropological study of corruption can reveal 'social action, collective imagination, and cultural production' (2006, 5). Integrating this approach allows space for individuals and groups to make sense of corruption and violence in a variety of different ways, which can, in turn, produce social responses. Popular music necessitates moving the mode of analysis away from ACE's focus on elites, however, it is done so with the recognition that it is important to understand how marginalised groups interpret corruption.

Smith (2006) asserts that almost everyone in Nigeria is intimately involved in the social reproduction of corruption through patron-client networks. Furthermore, Smith highlights how Nigerians ascribe diverse meanings to corruption, identifying it in a host of further activities beyond Western political definitions and associating it with ideas from development to the occult. Music can support this analysis as it recognises both the experience of political corruption as well as the myriad ways people understand and make claims through it. It can thus illustrate that not only are reasons for participating in corruption deeply cultural, political, and economic, but that cultural and social meanings are also key to reproducing corruption.

Songs about internet fraud, or '*yahoo*', are fantastic examples of how music points towards the cultural imbrication of corruption. While Smith (2006) makes clear that Nigerians view this and fraud, or '419', in general as a form of corruption pervasive in everyday life, it is not considered in Roy's (2017) political settlements analysis. While Roy does explore this issue, it has significant implications for their approach. Lazarus et al. (2023) place SuccessMuch's song, *YahooSweet*, within a moral framework where internet fraud is a 'wholesome' activity that actually reduces 'criminality' and 'violence' (2023, 11). By making moral claims, whether they are genuine or not, songs like this locate corruption within moral economies (see Pierce 2016). These are, in turn, necessarily embedded in the cultural norms that define the boundaries of acceptable behaviour, such as what is considered criminal (see Smith 2006).

Further to this, by seeking to legitimise an activity occupied by marginalised individuals, artists are making claims for recognition alongside tolerated forms of corruption. This implicitly acknowledges that normative ideas about the criminality of corruption are intimately linked to the status of social groups. If the rights to access resources and engage in corruption are morally and culturally negotiated, then culture must be elevated to the fundamental level in political settlements analysis. Corruption, therefore, exists materially and discursively simultaneously, encompassing not just practice but the ideas and values to which it becomes attached. While popular music can illuminate these issues from the perspective of marginalised groups, it cannot unveil beliefs such as expectations of the state from specific elites or coalition members.

It is important to note, as Lazarus et al.'s (2023) study does, that songs such as Seyi Vibe's song, *Better Days Freestyle* and Bella Shmurda's record, *Vision 2020*, both locate *yahoo* activity within the structures of a state that has promised developmental visions but failed to deliver livelihood security. The artist Naira Marley expands on this, claiming international *yahoo* is a legitimate repatriation of funds stolen by Europe and a response to the unequal distribution of economic power (Eze & Sylvanus 2022). These examples clearly acknowledge the structural political and economic factors that make the issue of corruption salient. However, they further emphasise that discourses of corruption entail expectations of the state and ideas about development that are morally embedded into culturally and socially specific ideas about corruption. This, in turn, influences corrupt behaviour, showing that cultural, political, and economic relations of power are fundamentally inseparable from each other in their legitimisation and production of corruption.

Returning to specifically engage with political settlement theory, this exploration of popular music suggests that Hickey et al.'s (2015) political settlements adjustments could be usefully reworked. Their notion of ideas can be usefully extended by an anthropological take on culture. This would allow a move beyond simply shaping interests to understanding how socially and culturally embedded power relations work to legitimise and internalise the norms that help underpin a political settlement. This framework encompasses not just the 'ideas' approach to interests but illuminates how sociocultural power leads to the coproduction of the political settlement throughout society. By revealing the moral and cultural implications when marginalised groups talk about corruption, popular music highlights that alongside political and economic structures and interests, political settlements hinge on sociocultural power relations and their attendant legitimisation of differences in access to resources and recognition.

Imagining Resistance

Having shown that corruption is both imbricated across the cultural, political, and economic, this section argues that popular music allows people to criticise and resist corruption in ways that ACE analysis cannot explain.

Integrating social and cultural power relations into political settlements analysis allows popular music to draw on social and cultural imaginations that challenge the legitimacy of corruption. This, in turn, draws powerful connections between discourses of corruption and other commanding ideas such as ‘taking Nigeria seriously’ (see Pierce 2016, 185). As popular music is so pervasive as a communicative medium, these songs become a source of cultural resistance that allows Nigerians to more clearly articulate visions of alternative political settlements. As a result, music is critical to social mobilisation from below in Nigeria. It contributes to organisational power as otherwise disparate groups form social movements by virtue of shared ideas about corruption and the nation, for example. This argument does not seek to suggest that social movements are the most powerful group in a political settlement nor that popular music is the sole cause of social mobilisation. It does, however, propose that as a communicative site of cultural resistance, music augments the cultural power of social movements, and this means it can influence the political settlement in ways that Khan’s approach does not predict.

The first step in explaining this position is to revisit the ethnographic qualities of popular music and its use of language in the ‘terms of recognition’ (Appadurai 2004 in Lewis et al. 2021, 1408) of marginalised people. Labinjoh argues that as it became apparent development was only a metaphor of change and a subaltern identity was beginning to emerge, Fela Kuti’s music, with ‘lower-class language and toughness’ (1982, 131), helped them to cultivate and assert that collective identity on the public stage. Oloruntoba-Oju reinforces the importance of language to identity and resistance, describing how Fela Kuti’s songs in Nigerian Pidgin were used by youths to express their rejection of ‘global political and linguistic domination’ (2019, 56). Oloruntoba-Oju extends this analysis to Bourdieu’s habitus, explaining how vulgar language in music can be used to mark social difference. However, it is perhaps more relevant here to highlight Ortner’s assertion that Bourdieu’s ‘practice’ can create change rather than reproduce structures (2016).

Following this, the second area to explore is how popular music acts as a site of cultural resistance for these fluid and intersecting identities, entwining critiques of corruption with visions of alternative worlds. An excellent example of this is provided by Mr Raw’s

song, *Obodo*. Osiebe (2021) reveals the song simultaneously draws on a call to honour the legacy of King Jaja of Opobo and recognise Nigeria's place as the giant of Africa, to criticise corruption. *Obodo* contrasts visions of Nigeria as a lawful, constitutional state, with the reality of corruption and exploitation, especially through the police (Osiebe 2021). Through this mixture of cultural symbolism, imagined nations, and the violently corrupt reality, *Obodo* provides space for marginalised groups to reinterpret their material and discursive surroundings and begin to think of an alternative Nigeria. Connecting these issues, ideas, and identities through the creative medium of music as a site of cultural resistance, emphasises their malleability. This allows varied and unpredictable reinterpretations to develop and gain salience. These rearticulations do not escape the context of material concerns and structural power; instead, they must be acknowledged as equally intertwined in understandings of the political settlement.

A particularly powerful image of resistance is created by Burna Boy's *Collateral Damage* and *Monster You Made*. The songs criticise state corruption, implicating it in the failure to fulfil development promises (Omobowale et al. 2023). They address issues of marginalisation and injustice, lamenting that while state corruption forces many Nigerians into crime and violence, it is those marginalised Nigerians who end up in chains. The songs, delivered in Nigerian Pidgin, attack the norms that reproduce corruption and violence throughout Nigerian society and call for a 'revolution of the mind' (2023, 13). This is particularly pertinent to subaltern identities and the politics of recognition in seeking social legitimacy and access to resources (Fraser 2003). The song validates the experience of marginalisation, articulating a Labinjoh-like (1982) relationship of 'us' (the marginalised) and 'them' (the rich), which transcends ethno-religious boundaries.

As is often the case, the most radical articulation of cultural resistance was by Fela Kuti. He is arguably unique in the sense that his imagination transcended lyrics and was made material in the Kalakuta Republic – the compound that was raided by the military in 1977 (Barrett 2011). This commune was a physical and discursive space built on the values of individualism and freedom, which were greatly threatened by the military rule of the period (Labinjoh 1982).

Following this, the third point explains how music may contribute to social mobilisation from below more directly. This will be achieved by exploring the 2012 Occupy Nigeria social movement and the role of music in it.

The Occupy Nigeria fuel subsidy protest of 2012 was a collective civil engagement to challenge a fuel subsidy reduction, with the common, international slogan, 'We are the 99 percent' (Titus 2017). Schultze-Kraft (2017) explains that the fuel subsidy forms part of a provisioning pact, linked to oil extraction in Nigeria. While crude oil is extracted in high volumes in Nigeria, it is not refined there. Instead, international companies export crude oil and then import refined fuels at higher costs to Nigerians. The state monopoly on oil extraction meant they were able to capture the sector's rents at the expense of most Nigerians, and the fuel subsidy is thus designed to redistribute some of these rents to maintain stability (Schultze-Kraft 2017; Usman 2019). Titus (2017) argues that protests erupted against the fuel subsidy reduction amid the backdrop of international social movements, uncontrolled inflation, poor healthcare, and various social problems.

A key feature of these protests was music and musical performances. Fela and Femi Kuti, Eedris Abdulkareem, African China, and many others performed or had their music played. Titus (2017) provides a selection of the songs played, revealing many issues. Fela Kuti's *Original Suffer Head* explicates the daily difficulties of Nigerians' lives despite the supposed economic gains of oil, while *No Agreement* demands action from marginalised groups. Similarly, Eedris Abdulkareem's *Jaga Jaga* bemoans the poverty and chaos of life in Nigeria as corrupt politicians raid the national treasury and abandon the 'common man' (2017, 121). Femi Kuti adds to these voices, calling for Nigerians to recognise the politicians as morally corrupt, greedy criminals. Songs such as these galvanised protests, with many disparate groups playing them across the country (Titus 2017).

The protests resulted in the reversal of the subsidy reduction, showing the capacity of social movements to influence the political settlement. Subsequent reductions and removals of the subsidy show the limits of this power. However, its implications mean it must still be recognised as important to political settlements analysis.

A standard political settlements analysis places the fuel subsidy as part of the political settlement as a form of rent redistribution that is also deeply embedded in informal rent allocation and appropriation (Roy 2017, 2019; Schultze-Kraft 2017). As such, changes to it mark a shift in the political settlement as accesses to rents are reconfigured. However, this is only part of the story. In this political economy conceptualisation, wider society is narrowly conceived and largely reactive, as either accepting or contesting the material distribution from elite coalition leaders and patron-client networks.

To expand this story, it must be recognised that Nigerians perceive the fuel subsidy as a 'kind of national birthright... one of the few benefits that an otherwise corrupt and ineffectual government should be able to deliver to the masses' (Smith 2006, 20). This ethnographically based representation locates the subsidy within a moral economy and politics of recognition. Thus, it is not only a negotiation of political power and material interest but also deeply embedded in the moral and cultural ways that people interpret the world. Within this conceptualisation, people have agency to reinterpret their experiences in conversation with material and structural issues.

Music, as a communicative medium and site of cultural resistance, is part of this process of rearticulation. Songs help draw links between ideas about the fuel subsidy, corruption, the nation, social marginalisation and inclusion, justice, development, and progress (Titus 2017; Sylvanus & Ezeugwu 2024; Akingbe & Onanuga 2020; Osiebe 2016). This underlines a key argument that interests in the political settlement are not just shaped in the context of political or economic concerns but also sociocultural. Reflecting this fact, these ideas, which are often a mix of transnational and local discourses, are understood differently across scales and contexts. Indeed, there is a key dynamic process of meaning-making here, as international discourses on issues such as social justice interact with local ideas, cultures, power relations, and lived realities (see Labinjoh 1982; Akingbe & Onanuga 2020; Osiebe 2021; Omobowale 2023). These processes support the reflexivity of marginalised individuals and groups as they reinterpret these ideas in their own terms – terms missed in standard political settlements analysis.

This marks marginalised groups as active and agentic participants in the political settlement, able to reimagine and challenge it on these sociocultural grounds. As such,

when issues like the fuel subsidy arise, social movements can develop from below in a broad-based manner. This is because different ideas are amalgamated and disseminated in ways diverse actors can understand within their 'terms of recognition' (Appadurai, 2004 in Lewis et al. 2012, 1408), shared identities, and sociocultural salience. This explains how a multiplicity of groups and ideas could form a social movement around the fuel subsidy as they have developed organisational power through the binding impact of cultural resistance – itself implicated in power relations. The sociocultural resonance of the ideas represented in music played during the protests emphasises that people are not just challenging the distribution of rents. Rather, they are resisting the social and cultural values and norms that inform those rights of access, effects, and control, and underpin the political settlement.

While standard political settlement analysis allows for non-elite influence in the political settlement (Putzel and di John 2012), it fails to appreciate the complexity of beliefs and mechanisms that are involved in these challenges or the importance of culture as a source of power for marginalised groups. When culture is understood as not just a tool for mobilisation, but a dynamic way to understand the world and a fundamental feature of the political settlement, it can become a source of power. Music reveals one way that marginalised groups can reinterpret their experiences through the representation of ideas that are culturally and locally resonant. This shows that actors within the political settlement can imagine alternative worlds based on more than material interests. In turn, this reveals capacities to mobilise around ideas to influence the political settlement in ways that standard analysis cannot capture. While music may not necessarily reveal the minutiae of every dynamic through which this occurs, it certainly illuminates the process. The addition of culture does not undermine political and economic analysis. Rather, it widens the scope for interactions in the political settlements framework, providing a richer understanding of how a political settlement and issues such as corruption may be challenged and sustained. It provides a much-needed counterweight to the 'myopic' focus on the political and economic in much political settlements analysis (O'Rourke 2017, 602). In turn, it also extends approaches which have sought to integrate ideas, grounding them in the sociocultural representations and power relations that reproduce and challenge them.

Conclusion: ‘Music follows us from the womb to the tomb’⁵

As Nigerians marched through the streets of Lagos towards the Lekki toll gate on the 20th of October 2020, many voices joined in, singing songs like Fela Kuti’s *Zombie (Ilo 2020)*. They were taking part in the #EndSARS protests against the brutal Special Anti-Robbery Squad, implicated in countless acts of extreme violence and corruption. After the peaceful march reached the gate, the Nigerian army opened fire on the protestors. Amnesty International declared 12 people were killed; however, in an echo of the military’s protection of the ‘unknown soldiers’ that raided the Kalakuta Republic, the army claimed its soldiers were firing blanks.

Music was at the beating heart of this protest, which resulted in SARS disbanding, uniting a social movement through the cultural power of ideas, language, and rhythm (Ilo 2020). By reflecting and representing the sociocultural processes by which Nigerians re/interpret the world around them, music can undoubtedly extend the understanding of political settlements analysis.

Firstly, combined with anthropological approaches to culture and the moral economy, music illuminates the cultural values, norms, and power relations that underpin a political settlement. Elevating culture to the fundamental level alongside the political and economic, widens and deepens the scope of understanding and analysis. It reveals a fuller complexity of ideas, values, and power relations, and demands more attention is paid to wider society as active participants in coproducing the political settlement at the cultural level.

This is of crucial importance as it then allows these norms and values to be reflexively reappraised and challenged by wider society – in ways and for reasons that a standard

⁵ Onwuegbuna, I. In: Ilo, I. (2020) End SARS: The exhilarating songs of street protests. BBC. Accessed 20.08.2024.

<https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20201208-how-music-is-intertwined-with-social-justice-in-nigeria>

political economy approach cannot encompass. Music, again, highlights this process as a uniquely pervasive, communicative medium (Lewis et al. 2021) and site of cultural resistance. Its production, dissemination, and consumption are deeply involved in 'variable and contingent' (Lewis et al. 2021) processes of constituting identities, making claims of recognition, and imagining alternative worlds. The use of music in social movements emphasises how culturally, politically, and economically informed ideas become salient. These ideas, embedded in power relations and expanding beyond, but not escaping material concerns, give otherwise disparate groups the organisational power and moral and cultural authority to challenge the political settlement in ways that standard analysis cannot fully appreciate. Music is knowledge, meaning and message, revealing information about the political settlement as it plays a role in shaping it. In this sense, it has helped answer questions in the political settlements literature. Perhaps ironically, given the lack of gender consideration, it aligns best with O'Rourke's (2017) call to examine in depth how contingent ideas become salient to a political settlement.

To be clear, this does not overturn political settlements analysis but extends it. Culture is not a substitute for political and economic concerns but is entwined with them. While this study has emphasised what music and an integration of anthropological ideas can show together; there are aspects of the political settlement that require macro-level political economy to reveal, including much of the power relations and interests involved in corruption and the oil industry in Nigeria. Music is unable to reveal all the specific ways people reinterpret their surroundings even as it illuminates the process. Its explanatory power is also arguably more limited to an emphasis on the cultural as well as social movements, and so while this is its great strength, it also points to the limits of its applicability. Anthropologically inspired ethnographic studies could work to expand on these limitations, exploring more dynamics of re/interpretation and even examining the role of cultural power, ideas, and values in how elites and patron-client networks make sense of the world in their terms.

The case study was by no means comprehensive. Further studies could give more attention to the impact of international flows of ideas, power, and culture. A gendered analysis would also provide welcome insights not explored here, while other genres of music and aspects of the political settlement could be considered to examine the

potential for an integrated approach to extend the understanding of political settlements analysis in these areas.

Returning to Venugopal's (2022) critique that political settlements analysis makes politics technical, there is a level of anxiety in exposing culture to this depoliticising, 'mapping' (Li 2007) imperative by directing academic and policy attention toward it. It is only slightly comforting that these encounters are less predictable than post-development claims (Lewis & Mosse 2006).

While we should not be naïve about the potential or the pitfalls of music, it must be recognised as a useful source of development knowledge and understanding to extend not only political settlements analysis but approaches across the social sciences.

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