

POLITICAL SONGS AND ELECTIONS IN GHANA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC, 1992 – 2020

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ABSTRACT

The Fourth Republic marked the return of multi-party democracy in Ghana. Since 1992, multi-party elections have consolidated Ghana's democratic credentials within the global political landscape. Interestingly, the successes of these elections have described Ghana as a beacon of democracy in Africa. These success stories emanated from diverse factors such as available written constitution, independent Electoral Commission, citizenship participation, political party activism, finance, and rigorous campaign strategies. However, one major factor that has contributed tremendously to the success of Ghana's elections is the role of political songs. Songs have played quintessential roles in sustaining and consolidating Ghana's democracy. Since 1992, musicians have composed songs to support various political parties, which have been used extensively as campaign tools in Ghana's Fourth Republic. Using the qualitative approach, this study investigates the relevance of political songs in sustaining Ghana's elections. The study finds that since 1992, several political songs have been composed to support the efforts of election campaigns in Ghana, with the years 2008, 2012, 2016 and 2020 witnessing the peak of these political songs. The study also finds that political songs have played crucial roles in sustaining Ghana's elections in political education, criticising aspirants, canvassing for votes, expressing issues of party achievements, and promoting peace and unity, among others. The study concludes that political songs have taken centre stage in the three decades of democratic practice in Ghana's Fourth Republic.

Keywords: Political songs; elections; democracy; Fourth Republic; Ghana

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INTRODUCTION

Multi-party elections have played crucial roles in consolidating Ghana's democracy. In Ghana's Fourth Republic, elections have been held from 1992 to 2020 – every four years. These elections have been successfully organised in the political history of the country. Interestingly, the success of these elections placed Ghana on the pedestal as the beacon of democracy in Africa. These elections have been sustained through numerous electoral processes, available written constitutions, citizen participation, and the role of the media, among other factors. However, one crucial element that has contributed to successful elections throughout the three decades of Ghana's democratic practice in the Fourth Republic is the role of political songs. According to Amoakohene et al. (2019, p. 108), “As persuasive tools for political campaigns, songs and music are integral features of electioneering in Africa. Since Ghana's return to multi-party democracy in 1992, election cycles in the country have been heralded and accentuated by campaign songs ...” In Ghana, politically charged songs aim at rational and relational resonance with audiences, as they have been favoured for conveying political views and canvassing for electoral votes (Amoakohene et al., 2019, p. 109). Okrah (2015, p. 14) believes that for democracy to thrive, citizens must have mechanisms by which they can participate, compete and legitimise the regime under which they live. Indeed, one way Ghanaians experienced and continue to participate in democratic processes to legitimise the authority of various governments is through the composition and use of political songs during elections.

Bewiadzi (2016, p. 150) defines political songs as songs with political statements and expressions that portray specific political messages, offer a partisan opinion, raise awareness, and advocate specific political action. These songs have occupied centre stage in Ghana's journey throughout the three decades of the practice of democracy in the Fourth Republic. These songs have also shaped the political destiny of Ghana as the leading democracy in Africa. This study investigates the relevance of political songs during elections in Ghana's Fourth Republic.

This study posed two research questions: What is the landscape (state) of political songs in Ghana's Fourth Republic (1992–2020)? What are political songs' relevance (roles) in Ghana's Fourth Republic? In organising this study, the first section reviews the literature on songs and politics from the global context. Secondly, the study examines the foundations of political songs in Ghana's history. In addition, the study discusses the methodological framework. The paper further discusses the landscape (state) of political songs in Ghana's Fourth Republic, looking at the various songs composed by musicians to support

political parties from 1992 to 2020. In this direction, the paper discusses the content of two selected songs to show how they reflect politics and elections in Ghana. Finally, the paper discusses the relevance of political songs during elections. The study concludes that political songs have taken centre stage in the three decades of democratic practice in Ghana's Fourth Republic.

Songs and Politics in the Global Context: A Review of Literature

Popular culture (music/songs)'s role in politics has been widely acknowledged worldwide. Indeed John Street is one of the leading scholars who first brought together a wide range of studies on popular music and its role in politics. For instance, Johnson et al. (2021, p. 769) note that John Street (2013), in his book *Music and Politics*, indicates that music is typically considered a political expression facilitator. Street (2013, p. 8) notes that when musical pleasure spills into the public domain and exercises power, it becomes political. Again, he contends that music, apart from being a tool for entertainment, occupies a central place in the heart of political life (Street, 2013, p. 22). Street further argues that music represents political views (p. 61) and people's political values and ideas (p. 159).

Similarly, Behr (2021) interrogates the role of music in democratic elections in the United Kingdom (UK). He argues, "Political campaigns have long been about more than words alone. Music, too, is integral to political parties' attempts to 'brand themselves and to forge constituencies of support' and... to experience political values." Behr acknowledges the role of music in election campaigns as he points out that music in elections helps shed light on the relationship between popular culture and political culture (Behr, 2021, p. 31). He further indicates that music is essential in election campaigns in the UK as it tends to influence voters (Behr, 2021, p. 32) directly.

In the United States of America, Johnson et al. (2021, p. 769) state that "songs have long served political purposes, and the intertwining of music and politics has been on the American timeline since the country's origin." In the Middle East, Yavuz and Kupcuk (2018) hold similar views about the place of music in politics. In their study, they analysed how 'Dombira' songs are used to reflect political party activities during elections. They argue that "We have observed that political parties worldwide benefit from music in their election work very effectively. We have witnessed that election songs have had such a quality that they can change the choices in the eye of target crowds, especially lately" (Yavuz & Kupcuk, 2018, p. 375). This view shows that music is an essential tool in politics.

In Africa, music constitutes an integral part of the way of life of the African people as it reflects in the people's social, political, economic, and religious

activities. Omibiyi (1975) argues that music is a social organiser. In several African countries, songs have played crucial roles in the political mobilisation of various countries from the colonial era to post-colonial times. Mambwe (2019, p. 167) believes that music in the African political context has been used to express sociocultural and political contestations during the election cycle. Music communicates infinite messages and experiences in sociocultural, economic, and political spheres (Osuagwu, 2019, p. 241). In Sub-Saharan Africa, songs have been used to “shape perspectives, change attitudes, question authority, challenge human weaknesses, cajole and rebuke” (Njogu & Maupeu, 2007, p. xii).

Similarly, Omibiyi (1975) argues that music supervises the operation of established government, assists in maintaining the Land, and safeguards and perpetuates tradition. In this parameter, he argues that songs have been widely used in most Sub-Saharan African countries to promote political discourse. Geiger (1997) asserts that songs have long encouraged social movements against conflict or perceived injustices in Tanzania. Plastow (1996, p. 199) opines that the most striking feature of political songs is the direct echoing of leadership speeches and writings in Tanzania. Englert (2008, p. 1) confirms this view by arguing that the Bongo Flava music has helped to shape a generational identity of Tanzanians who grew up in the era of liberalisation and multi-party politics.

In Nigeria, Olusegun and Abayomi (2011, p. 166) argue that a campaign goes with songs, and music is a powerful force for political mobilisation. During the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria, some politicians and their parties virtually took over the musical space to woo voters (Aririguzoh, 2019, p. 261). In his work *Protest Music and Political Consciousness among Nigerian Youths*, Osuagwu (2019) demonstrates how the youth of Nigeria responded to socio-political messages embedded in the lyrics of two songs composed by musicians Eedris Abdulkareem (Jaga Jaga) and Techno (Rara). In Uganda, Njogu and Maupeu (2007, p. xi, & p. 144) argue that songs are, in addition to their aesthetic appeal, vital tools with which to explore how political and social events are shaped and understood by citizens. They cited Luo songs as songs used to articulate political beliefs and as a powerful tool for social mobilisation. The assertions by these scholars indicate clearly how essential songs are in every aspect of social organisation, especially within the modern African political landscape. Indeed across Africa, literature has shown that songs have been employed as a tool to fight injustices and oppression in some countries. For instance, the *Chimurenga* nationalistic songs mobilised Zimbabweans to gain independence; the *Mau Mau* solidarity songs also helped the Kenyans to fight colonialism; the *Soweto Blues* and *Bring Him Back Home* in South Africa against Apartheid, and the *Ablordegbadza* song of the Republic of Togo. The effectiveness of these songs makes it possible for politicians to rely

on them as a campaign strategy.

Knowing the power of songs in influencing human thoughts and behaviour, politicians and supporters of political parties have embraced the use of songs in their campaigns across Africa, and Ghana is no exception. According to Bewiadzi (2016, p. 149), songs have played essential roles in the political history of Ghana. Songs have featured prominently in the country's body politic from colonial to post-colonial times.

The literature above clearly explains the place of songs in the socio-political space across the world. The literature shows evidence of the relevance of songs in politics in the United Kingdom, the United States, the Middle East and parts of Sub-Saharan Africa. The literature indicates that songs are closely knit to politics worldwide, of which Africa is no exception. However, what is the situation in Ghana? Based on this question, looking at the foundations of political songs in Ghana's history is necessary. This is essential as it will provide the framework to understand the relevance of political songs in the three decades of Ghana's democratic practice. It will also lay the foundation upon which political songs of the Fourth Republic will rest. In other words, it will show continuity in the trajectories of political songs from the colonial, First Republic, and military regimes through to the return of multi-party democracy in 1992. The next theme engages with literature on the historical foundations of political songs in Ghana.

Foundations of Political Songs in Ghana's History

The first contemporary music that emerged in Ghana was Highlife music. It emerged around the 1920s as a modern invention and a product of urbanisation (Agovi, 1989, p. 194). Similarly, Collins (1976a) asserts that highlife music originated around the end of the 19th century when some Fante on the coast acquired European instruments. According to Van der Geest and Asante-Darko (1982, p. 27), "Highlife is a blend of traditional Akan rhythms and melodies with European musical elements, such as European instruments and harmony. It encompasses a variety of artistic expressions: music, dancing, story-telling and theatre." Nketia (1957) contends that Ghanaian highlife music began as 'street music', and its tunes and melodies were disseminated through the mass media to the general population, such as market women, bread sellers, workmen, and other professionals. Nketia (1964) further posits that highlife music was created for use in institutions of urban life such as the ballroom, the café and nightclubs. Owusu (2013) points out that by the late 1950s, highlife music had become socially institutionalised as Ghana's musical soul and a powerful medium to express political ideas. Highlife music entertained, permeated all facets of society and evoked and reflected significant political events in Ghana. These songs dealt

with problems of everyday life, such as poverty, marriage, hatred, gossip, shame, sickness and death (Bame, 1974; Ricard, 1974).

During the colonial era, Collins (1976b, p. 67) states that highlife promoted anticolonial struggle and nationalism. He notes that the people and their creative artists profoundly shared nationalist aspirations in songs, dance, and drama. There was a collaboration between the nationalists and itinerant drama troupes and guitar bands who created popular tunes and airs that created an atmosphere of euphoria, confidence, and commitment to the nationalist struggle (Agovi, 1989, pp. 195–196). Agovi mentions the songs *Ghanaman: the Land of Freedom* and *Mo ma yenbo mu, na yebedi nkunim* (let us unite, for we shall overcome) as two anti-colonialist songs composed by highlife legend E.K. Nyame (Agovi, 1989, p. 96). Collins (1976b, p. 67) also mentions the song *Kwame Nkrumah will never die*, composed by the Axim Trio in 1950 to support Nkrumah when the British imprisoned him. Similarly, E.K. Nyame composed another song titled *Onimdeefo Kukudurufo Kwame Nkrumah* (honourable and heroic Kwame Nkrumah) to reflect Nkrumah's release from prison. Collins again avers a massive collaboration between Nkrumah's Conventions People's Party (CPP) and many guitar bands. By the 1960s, Van der Geest and Asante-Darko (1982, p. 28) opined that over one hundred bands in Ghana played highlife. The most popular ones, according to these scholars, were E.T. Mensah and his Tempos Band, E.K. Nyame's Band, The Police Dance Band, The Army Dance Band, Ashanti Brothers Band, City Boys Band, Okukuseku Band and Ramblers Dance Band, among others.

The continuation of political songs also characterised post-colonial Ghana. These songs had hidden meanings, performed different functions and sometimes assumed political character (Bewiadzi, 2016, p. 153). Agovi (1989, p. 197) mentions some songs composed during this period. He mentions *Kurow mu aye diin* (there is a lull in the country) as one of the political songs composed by E.T. Mensah and his Tempos Band. Similarly, E.K. Nyame composed numerous songs such as *Nsu boto a, frama di kan* (storm always precedes rainfall), *Abrabo ye anaemia* (life is Hard) and *Oponko abo dam a, ne wura no de ombo dam bi* (if the horse is mad, it doesn't mean the owner is also mad) to reflect the prevailing socio-economic conditions in the country during the period. Van der Geest and Asante-Darko (1982) observed that such songs became a code for insiders to communicate with each other without interference from political oppressors. These songs were also used to ridicule oppressors without them noticing, and many people found psychological relief from these songs.

Interestingly, General Kutu Acheampong used highlife songs when he succeeded in overthrowing Prime Minister Busia in 1972. After his coup, Okukuseku Band composed a song *To wo bo ase* (be patient) to advise Acheampong about his

leadership style. In January 1978, highlife Musician Nana Ampadu composed a song titled *Aware bɔne* (bad marriage) to reflect Ghana's economic disaster, poverty, and political corruption under the leadership of General Kutu Acheampong. In the same parameter, Nana Ampadu released another song titled *Ebi te yie* (some people are living well) which criticised the high level of inequality that characterised the National Liberation Council (Van der Geest & Asante-Darko, 1982).

Other notable political songs composed during the military regimes included *Ka na wu* (Say it and Die) and *Nkae* (Remembrance), composed by King Pratt and his Africa Revolution Band. These two songs reflected the long-standing economic hardships of Ghanaians, corruption and mismanagement by the various military leaders, inequalities and the general poverty of Ghanaians. In the 1980s, following the military take-over by the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC), which metamorphosed into Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC), three notable political songs were composed by highlife musician A.B. Crentsil. These include *Akpeteshie Seller*, *Enye Kora a ente se payday* (it is worse at the end of the month) and *Onyame, ma no nye yie* (Oh, God, let things get better). All these songs emerged due to the economic hardships, the 1983 drought and famine, and the mass exodus of Ghanaians to Nigeria known as Agege (Agovi, 1989, p. 199).

More recently, Ayettey (2016) analysed the role of music and dance in Ghana's 2008 and 2012 general elections. Ayettey argues, "Among the factors that may influence the result of the election campaign, music and dance can play a tactical role in generating electoral excitement and getting the vote" (Ayettey, 2016, p. 8). His main argument was that, though some political analysts have argued that the role of music in Ghanaian politics had gone into decline due to the New Patriotic Party's (NPP) defeat in the 2008 elections, it is not true as the National Democratic Congress (NDC) used music and dance to retain power during the 2012 general elections. Nyonator (2020) also references the influence of political songs on the voting behaviour of electorates during the 2008, 2012, and 2016 general elections. His conclusion in the study was that music was used during these elections to invoke a peripheral persuasive tactic to help facilitate diverse strategic objectives associated with political campaigns; thus, political campaign songs influence a voter to vote for a particular candidate and recommend that it should be deployed as it has the potential to make candidates win elections (Nyonator, 2020, p. ix).

The literature above discussed the origins of political songs in Ghana's history. It provides the framework to understand that political songs have always characterised Ghanaian politics. Highlife music is the foundation of political songs in Ghana, which reflected the society's prevailing socio-political-economic conditions during the colonial and post-colonial eras. In the post-colonial era,

these songs expressed poverty, corruption, inequality, hardship, and gossip, among others. The literature discussed above does not focus on the three decades of Ghana's democratic practice. Within the context of these political songs, this current study interrogates the role of political songs in the three decades of Ghana's democratic practice. The significance of this study stems from the fact that it fills a gap by showing how critical political songs have been in shaping, sustaining, and consolidating Ghana's elections over three decades of democratic practice in the Fourth Republic. The following section focuses on the study methodology.

Research Design and Methodology

This study adopted the qualitative approach (Babbie, 2004; Creswell, 2008). Qualitative research uses interviews, documents and observations to study and interpret data in a subjective manner (Owu-Ewie, 2008, p. 111). Hlovor and Botchway (2021, p. 75) argue that this approach is rooted in constructivist ontology and interpretivist epistemology, where knowledge is socially constructed. This study, therefore, relied on both secondary and primary data. The secondary data was essential as it contributed to the literature review relating to the subject matter. Regarding primary data, the study used ideological criticism, interview guide, and textual analysis to draw data from face-to-face interviews and songs.

Barret (1991) defines ideology as the process by which meaning is produced, challenged, reproduced and transformed. Ideological criticism is therefore concerned with theorising and critiquing those processes of meaning production as social and political realities. Barret (1980) points out that ideological criticism constructs the institutional context of texts and their reception and affects readers of those texts in particular social locations. This study uses ideological criticism to ascertain the hidden meaning of political songs, their messages, and the discourses produced within these songs relating to politics, economy and elections in Ghana. Foss and Littlejohn (2009) argue that the primary goal of ideological criticism is to make the ideology visible. This method revealed ideas and messages embedded in political songs. Sellnow and Sellnow (2001) aver that musicians are reporters; they document events, present an illusion of life and amplify particular perspectives of a situation. This study aims to show the relevance of political songs in Ghana's elections from 1992 to 2020.

Secondly, the study applied textual analysis to interrogate selected songs. Frey et al. (1999) operationalise textual analysis as a method that communication researchers use to describe and interpret the characteristics of a recorded or visual message. The rationale for choosing this method was to describe the content, structure, and functions of the campaign messages in the selected

songs composed within the Fourth Republic. Secondly, the researcher desired to systematically describe, analyse, interpret and evaluate the campaign messages embedded in these songs to see how they reflect political discourses during elections.

The selection of songs focused on the period from 1992 to 2020. The reason was that the 1992 election marked the return of multi-party democracy and initiated the Fourth Republic, while 2020 marked the 8th successive election within the Fourth Republic. Secondly, selection of specific political songs was based on the following criteria: (a) songs that contained political statements that reflected governance issues; (b) the popularity, acceptability and usability of the song; (c) songs with compelling lyrics; (d) the popularity of the artiste/musician (number of songs composed, number of years in the music industry, number of awards won etc.); (e) appropriated songs; and (f) originality of the song in style and composition. With these criteria in place, the study used the desk review approach (Johnston, 2014) to conduct a systematic and rigorous internet search for political songs. This approach is also known as the documentary analysis research design (Tamanja & Pajibo, 2019, p. 7837), which relies on existing secondary literature to collect data.

Regarding this study, the method was used to search for political songs online. This approach is justified based on the assumption that understanding can also emerge meaningfully from the inductive analysis of already existing data. It is argued in this study that this approach allowed for inductive analysis of political songs. Based on this approach, songs of renowned highlife and hip-life artistes such as Nana Ampadu, Jewel Ackah, Daddy Lumba, Lucky Mensah, Kwabena Kwabena, Michael Adangba, Sarkodie, and Barima Sydney, were selected for this study; similarly, songs of renowned gospel musicians such as Cindy Thompson, Evangelist Diana Asamoah, Great Ampong, Christiana Love (Obapa Christy) and Philipa Baafi were all discussed in this study.

Finally, face-to-face interviews were conducted and analysed based on the content of responses elicited from the field. Using the purposive and simple random sampling techniques, fifty (50) samples were drawn from the Ho Technical University (HTU), University of Health and Allied Sciences (UHAS) and Evangelical Presbyterian University College (EPUC), Ho. Participants were recruited from the Department of Multidisciplinary Studies (HTU), Department of General and Liberal Studies (UHAS) and Department of Governance Studies (EPUC). With the aid of an interview guide, face-to-face interviews were conducted from January 2021 to December 2021. This period was necessary as it marked the aftermath of the 2020 elections, which kept political issues fresh on many people's minds, mainly student political activists. Ten (10) samples each were drawn from these

three institutions, and the remaining twenty (20) participants were recruited from the generality of the population. This was important to give a balanced view from young and older people who speak and understand politics.

Demographically, participants included student political activists, teachers, lecturers, politicians from the two major political parties (National Democratic Congress –NDC and New Patriotic Party–NPP) and other ordinary citizens of Ho. The reason was to collect data from divergent people to balance the findings. Finally, since social science research is laden with ethical issues, principles such as informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, privacy, harmlessness, voluntary participation and duty to inform/disclosure were observed during data collection. The consent of participants was sought, and approval was given before the commencement of data collection. In addition, the research's reporting and write-up protected the participants' privacy and identity. The following section discusses the landscape of political songs in Ghana's history.

The Landscape of Political Songs in Ghana: 1992 to 2020

Since 1992, political songs have been composed to reflect political issues during elections. However, the 1992, 1996 and 2000 elections did not witness the emergence of numerous political songs. Hence, a few songs were composed to support political party activities. Early political songs between 1992 and 1996 include NDC *Akatamanso*, *Obiara nim se Eye J.J. a ne kor* (Everybody knows that it is JJ that is going) used by the NDC and *Eshi wrado wrado* used by Prof. Adu Boahen and the NPP. During the 1996 election, a song titled *JJ beye President, Kufour beye shoeshine* (J.J. will be a president, Kufuor will be a shoeshine) was composed for the NDC. These songs did not have recognised composers or artistes and were generally used for campaign activities. Again these songs were played mainly by campaign vans belonging to the various political parties. During political rallies and campaign tours of various constituencies and regions, these vans played these songs.

Interestingly, these songs did not significantly impact the airwaves as the electronic media was less developed. There were few television and radio stations as compared to recent times. One primary reason for fewer political songs within this period was that musicians did not cash into this political terrain to support political parties with songs. Secondly, recording studios and record labels were few at the time; in addition, hip-life music was developing, with few artistes in this music genre. Finally, the music industry was gradually gaining prominence, and the attention of musicians was not drawn to making music for political parties. However, from the year 2000, some political parties composed and subsequently appropriated some gospel songs to promote their political activities.

In 2000, a gospel musician, Cindy Thompson, composed a powerful song titled *Awurade kasa* (God Speak). The NPP appropriated this all-time hit song as its campaign song, subsequently winning John Agyekum Kufuor's power. Similarly, in the year 2004, another gospel musician, Evangelist Diana Asamoah, composed a powerful song titled *Mabɔ wu din na mafre wo* (I have pronounced your name, and I called you); the NPP also appropriated this song in its bid for a second term for John Agyekum Kufuor, and he was retained as the president of Ghana. During these times, the NDC relied on its old campaign songs and strategy of political rallies from constituency to constituency and community to community.

The year 2008 witnessed an upsurge in musicians' composition of political songs. On the side of the NDC, Jewel Kofi Ackah, the legendary highlife musician, composed the song *Arise Arise for Ghana* to support the party's campaign efforts. This song subsequently became a national party anthem for the NDC, played during all party events. Similarly, highlife artiste Lucky Mensah composed the song *Come Back to NDC* to support John Evans Atta Mills and the NDC. A renowned hip-life artiste Barima Sydney composed a powerful song titled *Africa Money*. The NDC appropriated this song as its campaign song to signify how the NPP government was squandering public funds.

Regarding the NPP, popular and award-winning highlife musician Kwabena Kwabena composed a song titled *Number One* to support the campaign efforts of Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo. In addition, Christiana Love (Obaapa Christy) released the gospel song *Moving Forward*. The NPP appropriated this song as a campaign song to signify the continuation of the NPP government and the need to retain power for the third term. Another renowned gospel musician, Philipa Baafi, composed a gospel song, *Go High*, and the NPP appropriated it as its campaign song during the 2008 elections. However, the hit song of the 2008 elections for the NPP was composed by the renowned, legendary, and multiple award-winning highlife musician Daddy Lumba (Kojo Fosu). He composed the song *Nana yɛ Winner* (Nana is the winner). This song took over the entire airwaves, both radio and television stations, and significantly impacted the political mobilisation of the masses, especially in the strongholds of the NPP.

Regarding the 2012 elections, several political songs were composed during the period. First, some of these songs were composed not to support specific political parties. These songs were composed generally to highlight issues about the political economy in the country. Typical examples of such a song were: *Yekeke* (they are saying); this song was composed by Kwame A Plus to describe the nature of politics and how masses were suffering in the country; it discussed critical issues of embezzlement of public funds by politicians and corruption issues. Similarly, a highlife artiste Lucky Mensah composed the song *Nkratuo*

(The message) to signal the then president, late President John Evans Atta Mills, that there was a problem with his leadership as the masses were suffering. With specific political songs that were composed for political parties, highlife artiste Michael Adangba composed a song to support the NDC titled *Taka Tika*; similarly, the artiste Dee Aja composed the song *John Mahama dey Be* to support John Dramani Mahama's bid to become the next president of Ghana. This song became the official campaign song for the NDC during the 2012 elections. For the NPP, renowned gospel musician Great Among composed a song to support the NPP titled *Monto ma Nana Addo* (Vote for Nana Addo); similarly, the song *Woyome Woyome* was composed by an unknown musician to support the NPP campaign. This song talked about how the Atta Mills–Mahama–led government paid some monies to a businessman called Woyome, which depicted judgement debt to the country and that state funds were being shared among party cronies and apparatchiks. Lucky Mensah again composed a campaign song for the NPP titled *Monto ma Nana Addo* (Vote for Nana Addo). Daddy Lumba also produced a remix of the 2008 *Nana ye Winner* song to highlight the NPP manifesto to the general public.

Findings showed that the 2016 elections also saw the proliferation of many political songs, some of which were composed to support political parties and others discussing general political issues. Regarding those political songs that were not affiliated with any political party, *The Masses and Inflation- letter to the government* was composed by the award-winning rapper Sarkodie. This song generally discussed corruption, inflation, a lousy economy, power (electricity) problems and the general suffering of the masses. These two songs generally exposed the realities of the economy to the public. Again, Barima Sydney, featuring Shongo, released a song titled *Sika die basaa* (reckless spending of money) to highlight how corrupt government officials were about managing finance and the economy.

Regarding specific political songs, many songs were composed for the NDC. First is *JM Toaso* (JM continue), composed by MzBel, a renowned hip-life musician. Similarly, award-winning dancehall artiste Shatta Wale composed the song titled *Mahama Paper* to support the campaign efforts of the NDC. However, the most popular NDC campaign song was composed by the artiste Dee Aja titled *Onaapo*. This was the most popular campaign song used by the NDC during the 2016 elections. On the part of the NPP, Kwame A Plus composed a song *Asem Beba* (Trouble will come), to support the NPP; similarly, Lucky Mensah released a song titled *Monto ma Nana Addo* (Vote for Nana Addo) to support the NPP 2016 elections while the NPP appropriated Shatta Wale's song *Kakai*. Therefore, Shatta Wale composed two songs for the NDC and NPP during the 2016 elections.

It is argued that the reason for the upsurge of political songs between the period 2008 to 2016 stemmed from the fact that musicians have realised the need to play crucial roles in the promotion and sustenance of Ghana's elections; the reason being that music draws a crowd and the participation of artistes through their musical performances tends to attract people to participate in elections. Secondly, recording studios and record labels had increased in numbers, making it possible for musicians to compose and record their songs; similarly, the music industry in terms of highlife, hip-life, dancehall, gospel, Afro-pop, and Afro-reggae, among others, had developed tremendously with numerous artistes featuring in these diverse music genres. Interestingly, musicians have realised that elections are avenues to make money; hence, they compose songs for political parties and get paid for their services. With money in mind, these musicians openly support one political party or the other with their songs.

Finally, data revealed that the highest number of political songs in the history of the Fourth Republic was recorded during the 2020 elections. These songs were composed to support the NPP or NDC in sending campaign messages to the electorates. Some songs were composed by renowned artistes, while others were composed by young and upcoming musicians. The songs were targeted at whipping up the interest of party foot soldiers towards supporting the campaign efforts of the two political parties while also influencing the choice of floating voters. On the part of the NDC, Rex Omar, one of the famous highlife musicians in Ghana, composed a song titled *Papa Nono* (Good One) for the NDC. Kojo Bee, an up-and-coming musician, released the most popular song for the NDC titled *Mahama Afa*, which means Mahama has won.

Similarly, L Bee also composed a song for the NDC titled *Ye Bre* (We are suffering). At the same time, Kojo Fresh supported the party with a campaign song titled *Ghana Yesu Mahama* (Ghana We are crying Mahama). In addition, Christlike Nhyiraba Kojo composed the song *Nana Addo beko ama JM aba* (Nana Addo will go and JM will come) and an artiste called Muzzy composed the song *Adaa JM beba wobe te bɔbɔlibɔbɔ* (The day JM will come you will hear bɔbɔlibɔbɔ). This song was originally a gospel song composed by Evangelist Isaac K. Aning. Other songs were composed, such as *Okada*, *No Mahama*, *No Vote*, and *John Mahama*, whose artistes were unknown but gained fame and popularity, especially *Okada*.

On the side of NPP, the highlife legend Nana Ampadu composed a song for the NPP titled *4 More for Nana*. Another legendary highlife musician, Daddy Lumba, released a song titled *4 More 4 Nana*. Lucky Mensah, a reputable highlife musician, also added to the gallery with his song *Nana Toaso* (Nana Continue) and *Nana yen nye wo den ni* (Nana, what shall we do for You). Similarly, Adu Kofi, popularly known as Agya Koo, also released a song for NPP titled *Afa Ama Nana* (It is Well

for Nana). Similarly, Noble Genius, a hip-life musician, released his song captioned *four years more Nana*. Hip-life artiste Sarkodie was not left out when he released his song *Happy Day* to campaign for Nana. This song featured award-winning highlife musician Kwame Eugene. In addition, Kwame Fosu and Isaac Garshong released their songs *Agenda 2020* and *4 more 4 Nana*, respectively. In addition, a musician known as Nhyiraba added his voice with his song *Yenntu Nana* (We will not remove Nana), while Albert added his song *4 More* to support the NPP.

Interestingly, gospel musicians such as the Great Ampong and Evangelist Diana Asamoah also composed songs for the NPP christened *4 More 4 Nana* and *Meba Dofɔ* (My lovely child), respectively. Some songs were composed by unknown artistes. These included NPP Campaign Song 2020 and *Nana Bedi Nkonim* (Nana will win). Finally, one notable campaign song for the NPP was composed by award-winning dancehall artiste Samini titled *Gbo Yaka* to support Nana Addo's second term bid. All these songs were used as campaign songs for the NPP.

Critical analysis of the quantum of songs used in the 2020 elections indicated that many musicians composed songs to support the NPP compared to the NDC. While the NDC had about nine (9) songs for its campaign, the NPP had more than fifteen (15) campaign songs. This may be due to the numerous resources the NPP had as the party in power. But the fact is that both parties have continuously used songs to campaign during elections. One vital analysis of these political songs, which must be highlighted, is that three trends exist in the composition of political songs in Ghana's Fourth Republic. The first trend consists of general compositions by musicians/artistes to reflect political issues in the country; the second trend is specific or intentional songs composed for political parties, and the final trend is appropriated songs to suit the political needs of a party within a specific election era. All three categories of political songs provide the space for campaigns during elections. The following section discusses the lyrics of two selected songs.

Discussing the song texts (lyrics) of two Political Songs

This section discusses two selected political songs that NPP and NDC used during the 2020 elections. The two songs are *four more for Nana* (Daddy Lumba) and *Mahama Afa* (Kojo Bee). These two songs were selected because their lyrics reflected political statements about governance issues; the composers are famous and renowned artistes in Ghana's music industry; the songs received wider acceptability and usability through radio and television stations, and the songs had compelling lyrics and originality. These factors informed the selection of these two songs for detailed textual analysis. The first part focuses on the NPP

song, while the second section discusses the NDC song.

Four more for Nana – Daddy Lumba

This song begins by praising Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo for exhibiting good governance and promoting development in Ghana under his leadership. It states that Ghanaians appreciate the works of Nana Akufo-Addo in terms of governance and that one good term deserves another; hence, four more for him as the country moves forward. The song continues that some pertinent problems in the country have been solved under the regime of the NPP, and innovations in terms of development have been implemented to put the country on the path of development. An extract from the song is presented as follows:

Obia se Nana Addo waye adie o, four more (Everybody says Nana Addo you have done well, four more)
Wonkanfu Nana Addo waye adie o, four more (Let's praise Nana Addo, he has done well, four more)
Amanbuo die Nana Addo wuti su o, four more (You are on top of governance, four more)
One good term deserves another (One good term deserves another)
Muntu ma Nana Akufo-Addo, muntuma NPP (Vote for Nana Akufo-Addo/NPP)
Waye adie, dumsor atu adzae, Nana (You have done well, power problem is gone)
Waye adie, NABCO adwuma aba, Nana (You have done well, NABCO job has come, Nana)
Teacher allawa yi aba, Nana (Teachers allowance has come, Nana)
Nurse allawa yi aba, Nana (Nurses allowance has come, Nana)
Waye adie, Free SHS, Nana (You have done well, Free SHS, Nana)
Road infrastructure, Nana (Road infrastructure, Nana)
Railway adwuma aba biom, Nana (Railway work has returned, Nana)
Nana waye adie (Nana, you have done well).

The song further explains that some people said Nana could not do it, but the show boy (Nana) had done it, and the youth have a future in the country since they have free education. The implication is that the youth will acquire knowledge, build their capacity and contribute to the country's development. The song also notes that Nana Akufo-Addo has contributed to road infrastructure construction and the railways sector. Similarly, the song details other achievements of Nana Akufo-Addo in agriculture, industrialisation, and health. An excerpt from the song

is as follows:

Nana Addo wayɛ adie (Nana you have done well)
Planting for food and jobs, Nana (Planting for food and jobs, Nana)
Nana ma yen sika, Nana ma yen aduane, Nana (Nana has given us
 money, Nana has given us food, Nana)
1D1F Nana gusu ye paa, Nana (1D1F Nana continues to do it, Nana)
Health insurance papa, Nana (Good health insurance, Nana)
School feeding abru su ooo (School feeding has been added
 tremendously)
Nana, 4 more (Nana 4 more)
Nana, 4 more (Nana 4 more)
Muntuma Nana, muntuma NPP (Vote for Nana, Vote for NPP)

The song concludes successfully by appealing to the electorates that Nana Akufo-Addo has contributed to health, education, agriculture, and industry development. For this reason, Nana deserves four more years to continue developing the country; he must therefore be voted for.

Mahama Afa – Kojo Bee

The most popular song of the NDC during the 2020 election was titled *Mahama Afa*, which literally means Mahama has won. The song opens up by saying that, as for the 2020 elections, it was clear that Mahama had won. The song zooms in to criticise President Nana Akufo-Addo that he made a lot of promises, such as one district and one factory, but only shared the money with his family; he also promised to improve small-scale mining (galamsey) only to bring in soldiers to destroy it. The song noted that excavators and load beds were burnt, destroying the business. Thus, his only prayer was that by 2020, Ghanaians should be alive and voting, as Mahama had already won the election. Below is an extract from the song:

Mahama Afa, Mahama Afa (Mahama has won, Mahama has won)
2020 die Mahama eba (As for 2020 Mahama is coming)
Eda mu clear se ɔfa (He will win)
Akufo-Addo baye nu ɔbe hye bo (Akufo-Addo came and made
 promises)
Four years ni yenhu hwe (It is four years, and we cannot see
 anything)
Ose galamsey adwuma ɔbe hye mu kina (he said he will improve
 galamsey business)

Ɔbaye nu ɔdi soldiers ahyehye excavators, load-beds (he brought
 soldiers to burn excavators and load-beds)
Yen mpaebo ne se 2020 yebe te nkwa mu (our prayer is that 2020 we
 will be alive)
Aba nu Mahama Afa, Mahama Afa (The vote Mahama has won,
 Mahama has won)

The song further unleashes more criticisms on Nana Addo as it states that banks are collapsing in Ghana, there is high corruption, the dollar is rising and flying in the sky, people are dying, and the country is in a poor state. For this reason, the composer tells the electorates that Mahama has won the election.

In presenting a more forceful message to the electorates, the song noted that it was Mahama's E-blocks that made the free senior high school policy successful. The song concluded that because of the records of John Mahama in terms of development and comparing his works with Nana Addo, it was clear that nobody would compete with him as he (Mahama) had won the election. Below is an extract of the song:

Kotokuraba market ɔyeyɛ (Kotokuraba market, he did it)
Kejetia market ɔyeyɛ (Kejetia market, he did it)
Circle overhead ɔyeyɛ (Circle overhead, he did it)
Mahama E-blocks na ama free SHS nu aba su (Mahama's E-blocks
 made it possible for the free SHS)
Aba nu Mahama Afa, Mahama Afa (The vote Mahama has won,
 Mahama has won)

The lyrics of these two selected songs clearly indicate how political songs play crucial roles in Ghana's Fourth Republic electioneering campaigns. The song texts discussed the achievements, manifestoes, weaknesses and challenges of the two contestants and also canvassed for votes for them. Since songs could reach far, they have been valuable tools for the effective political mobilisation of the masses under the Fourth Republic. More important is how the two songs critically discuss governance issues, such as challenges of the economy, development issues, the suffering of the masses, and the achievements of the two contestants. The compelling lyrics of the two songs provided the basis for their selection in this study. The next theme takes a cursory look into the relevance of political songs in the elections of the Fourth Republic.

The Relevance of Political Songs in Ghana's Fourth Republic

Bewiadzi (2016, p.71) believes that political songs perform didactic functions as they educate electorates, enhance the dissemination of information, communicate party ideologies and measure the performance of politicians and public office holders. This section discusses the place of political songs in Ghana's Fourth Republic.

Education of electorates on political economy

Findings from the field revealed that one major role of political songs during elections is the education of the electorates. Informants argued that since 1992, political songs have been used to educate and inform citizens about the activities of governments and politicians. Data shows that political songs have been used extensively as a didactic tool during elections. Some of these songs generally discuss socio-politico-economic issues to expose the citizens to the realities on the ground. These songs often educate the masses on corruption, bad governance, parliamentary business, exploitation of the local economy, embezzlement of public funds and issues of inflation and poverty. For instance, Sarkodie's songs titled *The Masses and Inflation-letter to Government* are typical of songs that educated the electorates on the nature of the economy during the 2016 elections. Similarly, the songs *Africa Money* and *Sika Die Basaa*, composed by Barima Sydney, also bear eloquent testimony to the role of political songs in educating the masses. In an interaction with an informant, he stated:

Songs play crucial roles in our elections. When I was growing up, especially from 2004 till now, I saw the massive engagement of the people with songs during national elections. These songs generally talk about political issues of significance in the country, and many people follow the issues through these songs. (Field interview, 2021)

The extract above points to the fact that the electorates are educated on critical social, economic and political issues in the country through songs.

Preaching the achievements of political parties and their candidates

Another critical role of political songs in Ghana's Fourth Republic is their informative roles in the achievements of political parties. Generally, in some political songs discussed in this study, it has been observed that songs composed by artistes to support their candidates generally sing praises of these contenders. For instance, the content of numerous political songs composed for the NPP, especially from 2008 to 2020, generally preached the message of solid

achievements by Nana Addo. On the other hand, some selected songs for the NDC also show how they preached the achievements of John Mahama. During the 2020 election, Daddy Lumba sang Nana Akufo-Addo's praises by announcing the successful implementation of free education, one district, one factory, one village one dam, while Adu Kofi (Agya Koo) talked about free electricity, free water, NABCO, planting for food and jobs among others.

On the other hand, while Kojo Bee talked about the construction of Kotokuraba market, Kejetia Market, and E-blocks, L Bee talked about Kotoka Airport, Circle interchange and Ridge Hospital, which all took place under Mahama's first term of office as president of Ghana. All these songs informed the public about the achievements of the two contenders to canvass for votes. Below is a comment from one interviewee:

The two political parties made use of songs during the campaign. The important role played by these songs, as far as I am concerned, is that they talked extensively about the achievements of the two political parties. During the 2020 elections, artistes like Samini and Sarkodie talked about the achievements of Nana Addo, while others such as Rex Omar and Kojo Bee talked about the achievements of Mahama (Field interview, 2021).

The extract above is evidence of the roles of political songs regarding the achievements of the political parties and their candidates.

Criticising party aspirants

Data from the field indicated that political songs had been used extensively to criticise party aspirants. These songs have been used to expose the weaknesses of aspirants/contenders during elections. The songs have triggered comparative political debates about the two candidates, especially their weaknesses. It was observed through textual analysis of 2020 political songs that while the NPP songs were discrediting Mahama, the NDC songs were also unpopularising Nana Akufo-Addo. For instance, Daddy Lumba's *4 More for Nana* song directly attacked John Mahama's achievements when it compared Nana Addo's achievements to Mahama. The song notes that Nana Addo's achievements, such as creating new regions, free education etc., were visible and different from the green book, where guinea fowls flew to Burkina Faso.

Similarly, Lucky Mensah's song *Nana Toaso* described Mahama as a destooled chief who had finished his term due to poor governance. The song further argued that Mahama had been an assembly member, a member of parliament, a

deputy minister, a substantive minister, a vice president and finally president.

For this reason, he should forget as he had served his term. Based on this, Nana Addo should continue as president since Ghanaians are behind him due to free education, one district, one factory, and railway construction, among others. On the other hand, Kojo Bee's song *Mahama Afa* presents a direct attack on Nana Addo as it states that Nana's four-year leadership contributed to the destruction of calamity, collapse of banks, corruption, death of people, poor cedi-dollar exchange rate, among others. An interviewee had this to say:

The political landscape during the 2020 election was hot. Songs were used to criticise and attack candidates. Most of these musicians composed songs to support their candidates and, at the same time, attack their opponents. This is seen in the Nana Toaso song by Lucky Mensah and the Mahama Afa song by Kojo Bee (Field interview, 2021).

It is apparent from the extract above that political songs, though, were used as a campaign strategy, it was purposed to project one candidate over the other, and all the two political parties exploited this to their advantage.

Delivery of Party Manifestoes to the Public

Political songs have been found to enhance the delivery of party manifestoes to the public. Indeed political parties in the Fourth Republic, especially NPP and NDC, have always made public written declarations of principles, policies and objectives they intend to implement when given the mandate to rule the country. Apart from the oral delivery of these manifestoes during political rallies, tours of various regions and constituencies, through TV stations, radio talk shows and the various social media platforms, songs are also used to convey the manifestoes to the generality of the population. Data shows that during the 2012 elections, Daddy Lumba's *Nana ye Winner* (remix) song was used to present Nana Akufo-Addo's manifesto to the public. The song talked about the various promises that Nana Addo made in the party's manifesto, which will benefit Ghanaians if given the mandate to rule. Below is an extract of the song, which was composed in the English language:

Nana Nana Nana is the Winner
He is the Winner
Vote for Nana, Nana
For free Senior High School, Nana
For improved Health Insurance, Nana

Exercise Books for All, Nana
 From the beginning to the end, Nana
 Everyone will get Nana
 The poor and the rich, Nana
 Everyone will attend, Nana
 Vote for Nana

The extract above points clearly to the manifesto promises that Nana Akufo-Addo has made to the electorates; critical among them was the free senior high school education, improved health insurance, and free exercise books. No wonder, following Nana Addo's election in 2016, he implemented the Free Senior High School policy in 2017 to fulfil his manifesto promise to Ghanaians.

One part of NDC, the 2020 *Okada* political song, delivered the party's manifesto. The song described John Dramani Mahama as a nation builder who should come and continue his work as a developer. The song continued highlighting the manifesto promises such as school buildings, hospitals, good roads, one million jobs, a good economy, galamsey, more jobs, and youth employment. The song further pointed out that if Ghana succeeds, it is Mahama; if Ghanaians will make more money, then it is Mahama. For this reason, Ghanaians should vote for Mahama during the 7th December elections; the song also pointed out that Mahama occupied number two on the ballot paper. The lyrics of these two songs have been used to deliver the manifestoes of the two political parties and request electorates to vote for these candidates to promote the country's development. This shows how important songs can convey critical messages to the general public.

The use of songs to canvass for votes

Political songs in the Fourth Republic have been used to canvass for votes. These songs have been used to campaign to the electorates about the achievements of party aspirants or candidates and the need to vote for them. Secondly, some of these songs continue to educate the electorates about the positions of the various candidates on the ballot paper and impress on the electorates to vote for their candidates. On the part of the NDC, Michael Adangba's 2012 political song *Taka Tika* reflected the achievements of the Mills-Mahama administration when he explained that the government had contributed tremendously to the development of the country in areas of education, youth development, agriculture development, coastal sanitation and bamboo processing activities in the country. The song also talked about the payment of Tema Oil Refinery debt and the construction of numerous roads and markets in the country. Based on this, the

song requested the electorates to vote for the NDC and Mahama to continue the good works that they are doing.

On the part of the NPP, Lucky Mensah's 2020 *Nana Toaso* political song fits well into this domain. The song was used to canvass votes for Nana Addo. The song highlights Nana Addo's achievements, such as massive development in terms of free education, one district, one factory, and railway development. Based on these developments, the song requested Ghanaians to vote for Nana Addo to continue his good works, as all Ghanaians are solidly behind him. The song pointed out that Ghanaians are behind Nana Addo because of his excellent work for the country. In an interview with an informant on the role of political songs, he argued that:

Political songs since 1992 have been used to canvass for votes. Especially from 2008 till 2020, it is observed that musicians have become very important to political parties as their songs constitute part of the strategies used to canvass for votes. This is because the musicians have fans, who often vote for the candidates their musicians support. A typical example is Shatta Wale's songs *Mahama Paper* and *Kakai*, which drew much support from both NDC and NPP during the 2016 election (Field Interview, 2021).

The lyrics of the two selected songs and the above interview bear eloquent testimonies to the role of political songs in canvassing votes during elections in Ghana.

Promotion of Peace and Unity

Data from the field indicated that political songs have been handy tools in promoting peace and unity in the Fourth Republic. Informants noted that though some political songs specifically express party positions, others are neutral and promote unity, peace, stability and solidarity before, during and after elections. For instance, a notable song portraying this character is *Warrior for Peace*. This song was composed by hip-life artiste Edem during the 2012 election to express the wish of Ghanaians to witness a free and fair election, peace, unity and solidarity in the country. He, therefore, encouraged citizens and politicians to observe the rules and regulations governing elections to maintain a stable country after the election. Below is a brief extract of the song:

Be a warrior for peace.
Not a warrior for war
In this coming election

I see children crying out for peace
 Children know nothing about politics
 They want to grow up
 Having the love and care of their parents
 The children are crying out for peace
 For the children of Ghana to live and
 See their dreams fulfilled
 It is important that the country have
 Free, fair and peaceful elections
 Be a warrior for peace
 Not a warrior for war

The extract of this song bears eloquent testimony to how political songs have been used to mobilise people to ensure peace, unity and stability during elections in the Fourth Republic.

Finally, the legendary gospel musician Yaw Sarpong of Asomafo fame composed a great song featuring renowned artistes such as Joyce Blessing, ACP Kofi Sarpong, Bernice Ansah, and Kwami Eugene, among others. The song opens up with a statement in the Ewe language; this statement encourages Ghanaians to live in love, unity, and peace during the 2020 election. This same statement was also expressed in the Hausa language. The song points out the need for all Ghanaians to eschew conflict and violence during the 2020 election and instead embrace peace, unity, and love as values that will ensure a peaceful nation. The song appeals to Ghanaians not to plunge the country into conflict as occurred in neighbouring countries such as Togo, Cote d' Ivoire, Sierra Leone and Liberia, among others. A free flow of the song is presented below:

Mun hwe Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast (Look at Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast)

Wɔakum mmofra a wonnim bibia (They have killed children who don' t know anything)

Ghana momma yenkyere ɔdɔ (Ghana let us show love)

Na asomdwoe a yewɔ no mma yensee no (The peace we have let us not destroy it)

Party asem enye ntakewa asem (Party issue is not about fighting)

Party asem enye mansu (Party issue is not about conflict)

Party asem ama aman adehye akɔye akua wɔ obi ɔman su (Party issues have made people refugees in other people' s Land).

The song further indicates that due to elections and related conflicts, innocent

people have become refugees in other countries living in hardship. The song points out that if conflict or war breaks out in Ghana, where will Ghanaians seek refuge? Is it Togo or Ivory Coast, or Burkina Faso? Thus, the song admonishes Ghanaians that the existing peaceful nature of the country should be maintained and not be destroyed due to the elections. The reason is that election is about exchange and battle of ideas, not conflict. A free flow is the song is presented below:

Kabi na minka bi amambuo yi ye adwin tsire (Democracy is about sharing of ideas)

Enti se abatuo mre na dru sua (so during elections)

Fa kokromoti kasa na enye sekan (use the finger (vote) to talk not knife)

Mmerima ne mmaa, pinyin ne mmofra (men and women, elderly and children)

Wɔatwitwa wɔn nan ne wɔn nsa (their legs and hands have been amputated)

Awudi sem yi fri hen, efri oman ntokwa party asem bi de bae (where from this woe? it came from the party)

The song further points out that if Ghana wins and develops, it is hinged on unity; if unity will work for the country, it also depends on the realisation that Ghanaians, irrespective of their party affiliation, are one people with a common destiny. Hence, the song encourages Ghanaians that during the 2020 election, it should be held in love, peace, and unity and that the peace that the country is enjoying should not be destroyed.

In its concluding part, the song highlights that democracy is not about conflict but rather a battle of ideas; thus, the fact that people belong to different political parties, sharing different opinions and ideologies does not make them enemies. In effect, during the election, Ghanaians should live in love, peace, and unity so that Ghana can assume its rightful position in global politics after the election. The content (lyrics) of this song shows clearly how songs can be used to influence people to embrace peace and unity during elections; the reason being that the song makes references to countries that have suffered wars and conflicts in Africa and informs Ghanaians that it will not be a good thing to experience what these countries have experienced; hence, it is essential to maintain peace rather than initiating conflict and war. Interestingly, Ghanaian elections, including those held in 2020, have been relatively peaceful and stable; hence, the accolade is the beacon of democracy in Africa (Botchway, 2018; Botchway and Kwarteng, 2018).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has shown that in the three decades of Ghana's democratic practice, political songs have promoted and sustained elections. First, the study shows that since 1992, political songs have sprung up in the political terrain, especially during elections. The study observed that secular and gospel musicians had composed songs to support political party mobilisation in Ghana's Fourth Republic. The study also shows that the period from 2008 to 2020 has seen a massive proliferation of political songs from both secular and gospel musicians in support of the two major political parties in the country (NDC and NPP). Interestingly, these political songs have played relevant roles in sustaining Ghana's democracy, especially during elections. Political songs serve as a tool for educating the electorates on political economy, informing citizens on contestants' achievements, criticising aspirants, canvassing for votes for candidates and promoting peace and unity in the country.

Based on all these, this study concludes that political songs have taken centre stage throughout the three decades of Ghana's democratic practice in the Fourth Republic. The study recommends that political songs should continue to be deployed in the country's national elections as it is a critical stakeholder in ensuring the sustainability and consolidation of Ghana's democracy. The reason is that it draws crowds and contributes to citizenship participation in elections. Second, political songs should also be deployed during the district assembly elections to whip up the interest of electorates in participating in these elections. This recommendation stems from the fact that district assembly elections in Ghana's Fourth Republic have witnessed lower voter turn-out and participation; hence, the use of these songs can assist in ensuring that people come out to vote during these local-level elections.

Finally, this study recommends that musicians/artistes be decorum in their songs' composition in the quest to market and support their political parties. This recommendation stems from the fact that some musicians engage in 'dirty' politics by preaching false information about candidates, which has the potential to trigger conflict among the supporters of the various political parties. Based on this, songs must be decent, credible and issue-based in order to make the political atmosphere serene and pleasant for elections.

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