



The Religio-Philosophical Analysis of Political Parties' Campaign Slogans in Osun State, Nigeria (2018 and 2022)

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Abstract

This study delves into the religio-philosophical dimensions of political slogans, specifically "IleriOluwa" ("God's Promise") and "Imole De" ("Lightness has Come"), within the context of Osun State's diverse religious landscape. The research explores how these slogans resonate with different religious communities, revealing varying religious symbolism and connotations. It investigates how the slogans are perceived within the Christian, Muslim, and indigenous religious frameworks, shedding light on their spiritual and philosophical implications. By delving into these complex dynamics, this study contributes to a nuanced understanding of the interplay between religion, politics, and culture in a multicultural Nigerian state.

Keywords: Ilerioluwa, Imole De, Political Campaign Slogans, Osun State

INTRODUCTION

Political campaign slogans are short, catchy phrases that summarise the main message or goal of a candidate or party (Anyanwu and Onuoha, 2022). They often attract voters' attention, create a memorable impression, and persuade them to support a certain cause or candidate. Political campaign slogans can have different functions and effects depending on the context, audience, and tone. Some slogans may appeal to emotions, such as hope, fear, or anger. Some slogans may emphasise values, such as patriotism, justice, or equality, while others may highlight achievements, challenges, or solutions. In the same vein, some slogans may use rhetorical devices, such as repetition, rhyme, or alliteration, while some can also vary in their originality, clarity, and specificity (Benoit and Benoit-Bryan, 2009). They are an important part of political communication and discourse analysis, that can reveal the strategies, ideologies, and identities of political actors and groups. They can also influence the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours of voters and the public (Charteris-Black, 2011).

Political campaigns in Nigeria, as in many parts of the world, often employ slogans as powerful tools of persuasion and communication. These slogans are carefully crafted to resonate with the electorate, and they draw from a wide range of cultural, religious, and philosophical symbols to convey messages of hope, change, and transformation. Political parties in Nigeria are known to forge clientelist rather than programmatic ties to voters (Demarest, 2021:939). Nigerian politicians understand that a catchy slogan can propel them to victory (Ahmad, 2023). In recent years, political parties in Nigeria have increasingly turned to religio-philosophical slogans in their election campaigns. These slogans often

incorporate religious terminologies, cultural symbols, and philosophical concepts to appeal to the values and beliefs of the electorate. In Osun State, where religion and culture are deeply intertwined, such slogans hold particular significance. The 2018 and 2022 elections in Osun State were highly competitive and closely watched both within the state and nationally. The campaigns leading up to these elections were marked by intense political rivalries, diverse demographic and religious constituencies, and pressing socio-economic challenges, especially among the two leading political parties, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC). In this context, political parties sought to craft slogans that would resonate with the diverse and religiously inclined population of Osun State.

While there has been scholarly attention to the role of slogans in Nigerian politics (Sharndama, and Mohammed, 2013; Adeola & Muhyideen, 2020; Ahmed, 2021; Oparinde, Rapeane-Mathonsi and Mheta, 2021; Anyanwu and Onuoha, 2022), there is a notable gap in the religio-philosophical analysis of campaign slogans, particularly in the context of Osun State. Understanding the deeper religious and philosophical meanings embedded in slogans like "IleriOluwa" and "Imole De" can provide insights into the complex interplay between politics, culture, religion, and philosophy in Osun State's electoral landscape. Also, it contributes to the broader discourse on political messaging and symbolism in Nigeria's vibrant democracy. This study aims to conduct a rigorous religio-philosophical analysis of the political campaign slogans "IleriOluwa" and "Imole De" as used in the 2018 and 2022 elections in Osun State, Nigeria. Specifically, it seeks to explore the religious symbolism and connotations of these slogans within the context of Osun State's diverse

religious landscape; examine the philosophical implications of these slogans, including their connections to concepts such as destiny, renewal, and ethical responsibility; assess how these slogans resonate with the electorate and their potential impact on voter perception and decision-making; and contribute to a deeper understanding of the intersection of religion, culture, philosophy, and politics in the electoral processes of Nigeria.

METHOD

The research employed a qualitative method including in-depth exploration, the interpretation of meaning, contextual understanding, flexible and iterative process, and subjectivity and reflexivity. The in-depth exploration involves analysis that delves deeply into the subject matter, examining various dimensions of the intersection between religion and politics and considering diverse perspectives. Interpretation of meaning focuses on understanding the meanings attributed to political slogans within the context of religious beliefs, cultural practices, and philosophical frameworks. The researchers consider the broader social, cultural, and historical context in which political slogans are used, recognising the significance of context in shaping interpretations and responses. Also, the researchers' subjectivity and reflexivity are acknowledged as integral parts of the research process, with efforts made to critically reflect on biases and assumptions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Slogans are recognised as simplification tools in political communication. They distil complex policy positions, ideologies, and political agendas into concise and easily digestible phrases. This simplification aids in reaching a broader audience, including those who may not be deeply engaged in politics. In *The Political Brain: The Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of the Nation*, Westen (2008) discusses how slogans resonate with voters by simplifying complex issues into emotionally charged phrases. He argues that people often make decisions based on emotions, and slogans have the power to tap into these emotions effectively (Westen, 2008). Also, slogans often rely on emotional appeals, as discussed in the works of Lakoff and Wehling (2012). They argue that slogans work by triggering emotional responses in voters. Slogans that evoke strong emotions can have a more significant impact on voter behaviour. Emotional appeal can be compelling when addressing issues that resonate with people's values, fears, or aspirations. Slogans that tap into these emotional triggers are more likely to sway opinions. While on identity and branding, political slogans contribute to branding political parties and candidates (Lakoff and Wehling, 2012). A study by Jamieson and Waldman (2003) explores how slogans are used to build and reinforce political identities. Slogans can help parties and candidates establish a distinctive brand in the minds of voters. Effective branding through slogans creates a sense of cohesion among supporters and helps differentiate one political entity from

another. It can also attract swing voters or those who may not have strong party affiliations.

In looking at slogans from the point of view of repetition, repetition is seen as a key element in the effectiveness of slogans. Research by Krugman (1965) suggests that repeated exposure to slogans increases their impact on voter attitudes and behaviour. Repetition helps reinforce the message and make it more salient in the minds of voters. In diverse societies like Nigeria, the cultural and linguistic context plays a crucial role in the effectiveness of slogans. Research by Cameron and Kulick (2003) emphasises the importance of understanding cultural nuances and linguistic choices in crafting slogans that resonate with specific audiences. With the advent of digital communication and social media, the role of slogans in political campaigns has evolved. Bimber and Davis (2003) highlight how slogans are disseminated through online platforms and how they can quickly become viral, reaching a global audience.

According to Benoit et al (2016), political campaign slogans can be classified into three types based on their content: policy, character, and hybrid. Policy slogans focus on the issues or policies that the candidate or the party advocates or opposes, such as "Make America Great Again" (Donald Trump in 2016) or "Yes We Can" (Barack Obama in 2008). Character slogans emphasise the personal qualities or traits of the candidate or the party, such as "Honest Abe" (Abraham Lincoln in 1860) or "Stronger Together" (Hillary Clinton in 2016). Hybrid slogans combine both policy and character elements, such as "A Time for Greatness" (John F. Kennedy in 1960) or "Change We Need" (Barack Obama in 2008). Benoit et al (2016) analysed the slogans of the presidential candidates in the United States of America from 1948 to 2012 and found that policy slogans were the most common type, followed by hybrid slogans and character slogans.

Bhatia (2017) proposes a framework for analysing political campaign slogans from a critical discourse analysis perspective. He argues that political campaign slogans are not merely linguistic expressions, but also discursive practices that construct and communicate ideologies, identities, and power relations. He identifies four dimensions of political campaign slogans: intertextuality, interdiscursivity, multimodality, and contextuality. Intertextuality refers to the relationship between a slogan and other texts or discourses that it draws on or refers to, such as historical events, cultural symbols, or popular culture. For example, "Make America Great Again" invokes the nostalgia for a past era of American greatness and contrasts it with the present situation. Interdiscursivity refers to the relationship between a slogan and other genres or discourses that it incorporates or adapts, such as advertising, journalism, or religion. For example, "Yes We Can" borrows from the motivational genre of self-help books and speeches. Multimodality refers to the relationship between a slogan and other modes or media that it uses or appears in, such as images, sounds, colours, or gestures.

For example, "Stronger Together" is accompanied by a logo that depicts an arrow pointing to the right and forming an H shape with a blue background. Contextuality refers to the relationship between a slogan and the social, political, and cultural context that it responds to or shapes. For example, "Change We Need" reflects the dissatisfaction with the status quo and the desire for a new direction (Bhatia, 2017).

Kaid and Holtz-Bacha (2006) edited a collection of essays that examine the role and impact of political campaign slogans in various countries and regions around the world. They observe that political campaign slogans are influenced by different factors, such as the electoral system, the media system, the political culture, and the linguistic diversity of each country or region. They also note that political campaign slogans can have different effects on different audiences, such as voters, supporters, opponents, journalists, or scholars. They suggest that political campaign slogans can be evaluated based on several criteria: clarity, consistency, credibility, creativity, and memorability.

Brief Historical Use of Political Campaign Slogans in Nigeria

During Nigeria's colonial period and in the early years of independence (1960s), political campaigning was relatively limited in terms of slogans. Many of the slogans during this time were centred on the themes of unity, nation-building, and decolonisation. The focus was on achieving political independence and forging a unified nation from diverse ethnic and religious groups. The First Republic saw the emergence of political parties such as the Northern People's Congress (NPC), the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC), and the Action Group (AG). Slogans during this era often reflected regional and party identities. For instance, the NPC's slogan emphasised its commitment to the development of Northern Nigeria, while the NCNC focused on pan-Nigerian unity (see Saka-Olokungboye and Fapetu, 2019).

The era of military rule brought a suspension of political activities and the suppression of political slogans. The military governments that ruled Nigeria during this time were characterised by authoritarianism, and political parties were banned. However, with the return to civilian rule in the late 1990s, political campaigns and slogans resurfaced. Slogans began to play a more prominent role in electoral politics as political parties sought to distinguish themselves and appeal to voters.

Some of the notable political campaign slogans in Nigeria's history include: "One nation, one destiny" of the late Shehu Shagari-led National Party of Nigeria (NPN) in the Second Republic, which emphasised national unity and development; "Hope '93" of the late Moshood Kasimawo Olawale (MKO) Abiola of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) in the annulled June 12, 1993 presidential election, which appealed to the masses' desire for democracy and economic prosperity; "Gbasibe" (take it there) of Olusegun Mimiko of Ondo State

in the 2007 governorship election, which challenged the status quo and promised good governance; "Change" of Muhammadu Buhari-led All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 2015 general election, which capitalised on the public dissatisfaction with the previous administration and pledged to fight corruption, insecurity and unemployment; and "Change the change" of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2019 general elections, which countered the APC's slogan and claimed to represent the interests of the ordinary Nigerians (Oasdom, 2020; Saka-Olokungboye and Fapetu, 2019; Premium Times, 2019).

Evolving Role of Political Campaign Slogans

In more recent years, political slogans have diversified to address a wide range of issues. While unity and national identity remain important themes, slogans have also delved into topics like economic development, education, healthcare, and social justice. Slogans are used to signal a party's stance on these issues. In a country as diverse as Nigeria, religious and ethno-religious slogans have played a significant role. Political parties often employ slogans that resonate with specific religious or ethnic groups. For example, slogans may incorporate Islamic or Christian references to appeal to those religious communities. Also, the desire for change has been a recurring theme in Nigerian politics. Slogans that promise transformative change or reform are common, reflecting voter frustrations with issues such as corruption and governance.

In another vein, Nigeria's linguistic diversity is reflected in campaign slogans. Parties often use local languages to connect with voters at the grassroots level. This reflects an understanding of the importance of linguistic and cultural diversity in Nigerian politics. Nevertheless, with the advent of social media and digital communication, political parties now extend their slogans to online platforms. This has amplified the reach and impact of slogans, especially among younger and urban populations. The effectiveness of slogans in influencing electoral outcomes is a subject of ongoing research and debate. Scholars analyse how slogans impact voter perceptions, choices, and party identification. Most importantly, it must be noted that political campaign slogans in Nigeria have evolved, reflecting the country's changing political, social, and technological landscape. They are powerful tools for parties to convey their messages, connect with voters, and shape political discourse in a diverse and dynamic political environment.

One of the most influential slogans in the 2019 elections was "O to ge", meaning "Enough is Enough" in the Yoruba language. This slogan was adopted by the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Kwara State, as a rallying cry against the perceived dominance and oppression of the Saraki political dynasty, which had ruled the state for over four decades. The slogan resonated with the masses who were dissatisfied with the status quo and yearned for change. The slogan was

also accompanied by another phrase, “Lilo le e lo”, meaning “We will ensure you are chased away” (Oasdom, 2020). The slogan was so powerful that it led to the defeat of the Senate President, Bukola Saraki, and his allies in the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), who lost all the seats in the state (Premium Times, 2019).

Another catchy political campaign slogan used during the build-up to the 2019 general elections in Nigeria was “Obi-diently Atikulated”, coined from the names of the PDP presidential candidate, Atiku Abubakar, and his running mate, Peter Obi. The slogan was a pun on the words “obediently” and “articulated”, implying that the supporters of Atiku and Obi were loyal, coherent and well-informed. The slogan also suggested that Atiku and Obi had the qualities of good leadership, such as obedience, articulation and vision. The slogan was widely used on social media platforms, especially Twitter, where it trended as a hashtag (#Atikulated) (Saka-Olokungboye and Fapetu, 2019).

A third example of a political campaign slogan used in Nigeria was “Take it Back”, popularised by Omoyele Sowore, the presidential candidate of the African Action Congress (AAC). The slogan was a call for Nigerians to reclaim their country from the corrupt and incompetent political elite who had mismanaged its resources and potential. The slogan also reflected Sowore’s activist background and his promise to bring radical change and transformation to Nigeria. The slogan appealed to many young Nigerians who were disillusioned with the existing political system and wanted a new direction for their country (Premium Times, 2019).

Osun State: Its Political, Cultural and Religious Dynamics

Osun State is known for its cultural and ethnic diversity. It is home to several ethnic groups, including the Ijesa, Ife, Igbomina, and others. This diversity influences the region’s cultural practices, languages, and traditions. The Yoruba people are the dominant ethnic group in Osun State, and their cultural heritage plays a significant role in shaping the state’s identity. Indigenous Yoruba religious practices coexist alongside Islam and Christianity. Religious diversity is a defining feature of Osun State. While Islam and Christianity are the predominant religions, traditional African religious practices also have a strong presence, particularly in rural areas. The Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a testament to the significance of indigenous religious practices in the state. It is a sacred forest dedicated to the Yoruba goddess Osun and is a site of annual religious festivals.

Osun State is known for its rich cultural heritage and diversity, especially in terms of religious beliefs and practices. The state is home to various indigenous religions, such as Osun, Ifa, and Sango, as well as Christianity and Islam. According to the 2006 census, about 46% of the population are Muslims, 35% are Christians, and 19% are adherents of traditional

religions (National Population Commission, 2006). However, these figures do not capture the complexity and fluidity of religious identity and affiliation in Osun State, as many people practice a form of religious syncretism or pluralism that combines elements from different faiths (Adesoji, 2010). For instance, some Christians and Muslims also consult Ifa divination or worship Orisa deities, while some indigenous religious worshippers also attend church or mosque services. This religious diversity and hybridity have implications for the political landscape and dynamics in Osun State, as political parties and candidates have to appeal to a heterogeneous electorate with diverse religious preferences and expectations.

In line with political dynamism, Osun State has a vibrant political landscape with a history of competitive elections and active political participation. The state has experienced transitions between different political parties, contributing to a dynamic political environment. The state’s political dynamics are influenced by factors such as urban-rural divides, socioeconomic disparities, and regional variations in voting behaviour. The state like many regions in Nigeria, faces socioeconomic challenges, including issues related to education, healthcare, and infrastructure. These challenges often become central themes in political campaigns and slogans.

The state is home to several educational institutions, including universities, colleges, and secondary schools. These institutions shape the educational landscape and play a role in political discourse, particularly concerning youth engagement. The state features a mix of urban centres, such as Osogbo (the state capital), and rural areas. This urban-rural mix influences the political and cultural dynamics of the state, with varying priorities and needs in different areas. It boasts historical and religious landmarks, including ancient towns, shrines, and mosques, which contribute to its cultural and religious richness. These landmarks often serve as symbols and focal points in political campaigns and slogans.

Given this multifaceted context, political slogans in Osun State have the potential to draw from a wide range of cultural, religious, and historical symbols. Campaign messages are crafted to resonate with the diverse and religiously inclined population, making the state a unique setting for the analysis of how religio-philosophical themes are employed in political slogans during elections. The religious and cultural nuances of Osun State play a significant role in shaping the political discourse and electoral outcomes in the region.

Osun State Governorship Elections' Political Campaign Slogans (2018 & 2022)

The 2018 and 2022 governorship elections in Osun State were highly contested and controversial, resulting in legal battles between the two leading contenders. The main contenders were Adegboyega Oyetola of the All Progressives Congress

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(APC) and Ademola Adeleke of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Oyetola's campaign slogan was "IleriOluwa", which means "God's Promise" in the Yoruba language. Adeleke's campaign slogan was "Imole De", which means "Lightness

has Come" or "The Light has Arrived" in the Yoruba language. Both slogans have religious and philosophical connotations that can be traced to the historical and cultural context of Osun State and Nigeria at large.



Pictures showing the slogans of the APC and PDP candidates

Religious Symbolism and Connotations of these Slogans

The religious symbolism and connotations of slogans like "IleriOluwa" (God's Promise) and "Imole De" (Lightness has Come) take on particular significance within the diverse religious landscape of Osun State, Nigeria. Osun State is known for its rich religious diversity, where indigenous religious practices coexist with Islam and Christianity. In this context, these slogans resonate with various religious communities in distinct ways.

For practitioners of the indigenous Yoruba religion, "IleriOluwa" taps into the deep spiritual connection the Yoruba people have with their deities and divinities. It signifies a promise or covenant between the candidate or party and the divine forces. This slogan resonates with those who practice the indigenous Yoruba religion, as it invokes the presence of the Yoruba pantheon of gods, or *Orisas*, who are believed to guide human affairs. Also, among the Muslim community in Osun State, "IleriOluwa" resonates with the monotheistic beliefs of Islam. While the Yoruba phrase includes "Oluwa" (a Yoruba term for God), Muslims may interpret it as a promise rooted in the Islamic concept of divine providence. It can appeal to voters of the Islamic faith who seek leadership guided by principles aligned with their religious beliefs. In the same vein, within the Christian community in Osun State, "IleriOluwa" aligns with the concept of divine promises found

in the Bible. This resonates with the belief in God's covenant and the fulfilment of divine pledges. More reason Oyetola himself claimed to have received the slogan itself from God (Musa, 2020).

Also, Christian voters may perceive it as a commitment to uphold Christian values and ethics in governance. In other words, it is safe to say that the idea of divine promises and providence is a common thread across these various faiths. Moreso, the slogan's reference to God implies a moral and ethical commitment, which suggests that the candidate or party is invoking divine guidance to uphold values such as honesty, justice, and integrity in governance. Moreso, the term "God's Promise" in the slogan carries a sense of commitment and accountability. It implies that the candidate or party is making promises that are not taken lightly and are made with a sense of moral obligation to fulfil. In Yoruba culture, making promises is often accompanied by a strong sense of honour and integrity (see Idowu, 1962; Awolalu, 1979; Ogunleye, 2013; Oladosu & Ajayi, 2021).

On the other hand, "Imole De" can be interpreted through the lens of Yoruba cosmology, where "light" symbolises wisdom, knowledge, and divine intervention. It carries connotations of hope for a new era guided by spiritual principles, appealing to the rich cultural and religious heritage of the Yoruba people. No wonder light is a symbol of divine guidance and enlightenment in Islam. In the Qur'an, light is mentioned

numerous times as a metaphor for guidance and spiritual illumination. For instance, in Surah An-Nur (The Light), verse 35, states:

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp is within a glass, the glass as if it were a pearly [white] star, lit from [the oil of] a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. Allah guides to His light whom He wills. And Allah presents parables for the people, and Allah is Knowing of all things.

The slogan "Imole De" may be seen as a reference to the divine light that leads individuals on the right path. Muslims may interpret it as a promise of leadership that upholds Islamic values and principles, emphasising transparency, integrity, and moral clarity. In the same vein, light holds immense symbolic importance in Christianity as a representation of Christ, who is often referred to as the "Light of the World" (John 8:12). Also, Christian voters may interpret "Imole De" as a promise of moral and spiritual renewal, suggesting that under the endorsed leadership, the state will experience a spiritual awakening.

Notwithstanding, it must be noted here that Osun State just like other parts of the country has a significant number of individuals who practice syncretic or blended religious traditions, incorporating elements of indigenous religion, Islam, and Christianity. For these individuals, these slogans may hold diverse and personalised religious connotations, reflecting their unique belief systems and practices. In addition, these slogans are deeply embedded in Yoruba culture. They are viewed through a cultural lens as symbols of Yoruba heritage and values, which are often intertwined with religious beliefs. Thus, by tapping into the spiritual and cultural identities of various religious communities, these slogans are being made potent tools for political messaging that resonate with voters on a deeply religious and symbolic level.

Philosophical Implications of these Slogans

Examining the philosophical implications of slogans like "IleriOluwa" ("God's Promise") and "Imole De" ("Lightness has Come") in the context of Osun State involves delving into their connections to key philosophical concepts such as destiny, renewal, and ethical responsibility. In this case, "IleriOluwa" carries profound philosophical implications regarding destiny. It suggests a belief in divine providence and guidance. Philosophically, it aligns with the idea that individuals, communities, or even nations have a predetermined destiny or purpose ordained by a higher power. It emphasises the importance of trust in God's plan and promises, underlining a sense of destiny as a guiding force. Also, the notion of "God's Promise" implies a commitment to renewal and transformation. This suggests that individuals or a community can experience a rejuvenation of purpose and values, by aligning with the idea that ethical and moral

renewal can lead to positive change. Moreso, "IleriOluwa" underscores the ethical responsibility of political leaders. It implies a moral duty to fulfil promises and act following divine guidance. Leaders using this slogan are expected to uphold ethical standards, rooted in their belief in God's promises.

Similarly, "Imole De" ("Lightness has Come") connects with destiny in a philosophical sense by implying the arrival of a preordained period of enlightenment and positivity. It suggests that destiny is not a static concept but an evolving journey marked by periods of darkness and light. Philosophically, it underscores the idea that destiny can be influenced and shaped through enlightened choices and leadership. Also, "Lightness has Come" signifies a philosophical theme of renewal and rebirth by implying the end of a challenging phase and the beginning of a new, enlightened one. This renewal can extend to ethical responsibilities, emphasising the importance of ethical governance and leadership. Moreso, the concept of "Imole De" carries a philosophical message of transparency and ethical responsibility that suggests the arrival of light, which signifies an era of openness and clarity in governance. It implies that leaders have an ethical responsibility to govern with transparency and integrity, aligning with the enlightenment that light symbolises.

Scholars like Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus offer insights into the human condition and the search for meaning amidst uncertainty. Within the context of political slogans, these existentialist themes resonate with the slogans' emphasis on destiny and renewal. Sartre's concept of radical freedom suggests that individuals, including voters, have the autonomy to shape their destiny through political action (Sartre, 2007). Meanwhile, Camus' notion of the absurd highlights the paradoxical nature of human existence, where individuals seek purpose in a seemingly indifferent universe (Camus, 1991). Applied to political discourse, these existentialist insights provoke reflection on the role of agency and choice in shaping electoral outcomes and societal progress.

From an ethical perspective, scholars like Immanuel Kant and John Stuart Mill provide frameworks for assessing the ethical implications of political slogans and rhetoric. Kant's categorical imperative emphasises the importance of acting from a sense of duty and universalizable principles (Kant, 1998). From this perspective, political actors, including candidates using slogans, are morally obligated to uphold truthfulness, integrity, and respect for human dignity in their communication and governance. Mill's utilitarianism, on the other hand, evaluates actions based on their consequences and their contribution to overall happiness or well-being (Mill, 2002). Applied to political slogans, utilitarian ethics prompt consideration of how these slogans impact societal welfare and the promotion of justice and equality.

Nonetheless, it must be noted that both slogans, from a philosophical standpoint, invoke hope and aspiration. They encourage individuals and communities to aspire to higher ideals and a better future. Philosophically, they emphasise the

role of hope in motivating positive action and ethical choices. These slogans are not only political but also philosophical statements. They connect with deep-seated philosophical ideas about destiny, renewal, ethical responsibility, and the human aspiration for a better future. By incorporating these themes into political communication, the purveyors aim to inspire voters and convey a vision of leadership that aligns with these philosophical values.

Drawing from the work of scholars such as Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce, a semiotic analysis of political slogans elucidates the role of language and symbolism in shaping collective consciousness and identity. Saussure's theory of the sign highlights the arbitrary nature of linguistic symbols and their social construction of meaning (Saussure, 2011). Peirce's semiotic triad further explores the relationship between signs, their referents, and their interpretants (Peirce, 1998). Applied to political slogans, this perspective underscores how slogans function as signs that evoke specific cultural, religious, and emotional associations within the electorate, influencing voter perceptions and decision-making.

Scholars like Herbert Marcuse and Jurgen Habermas offer critical perspectives on the intersection of politics, culture, and ideology. Marcuse's concept of "repressive tolerance" highlights how dominant ideologies and discourses shape political communication and limit dissenting voices (Marcuse, 1991). Habermas' theory of the public sphere examines how communication practices mediate democratic participation and public deliberation (Habermas, 1991). From a critical theory perspective, the analysis of political slogans in Osun State reveals underlying power dynamics, ideological hegemony, and the potential for emancipatory or oppressive effects on marginalised groups within society.

Slogans' Resonance with the Electorate and their Potential Impact

The resonance of slogans like "IleriOluwa" and "Imole De" with the electorate and their potential impact on voter perception and decision-making is of significant importance in understanding their role in political campaigns. These slogans carry strong emotional connotations, tapping into deep-seated cultural and religious sentiments. They evoke feelings of hope, optimism, and spiritual connection. Osun State's electorate, like many other voters, often seek candidates who offer a sense of reassurance and promise of a better future. "IleriOluwa" implies a sense of trust in divine intervention. Voters who resonate with this slogan may perceive the candidate or party as being chosen or blessed by God, which can positively impact their trust in the leadership's ability to fulfil promises and govern ethically. This raises concerns about how politicians are exploiting religious sentiments to garner support, potentially undermining the autonomy and integrity of religious beliefs.

Nevertheless, Osun State's diverse population practices various religions, including Christianity, Islam, and indigenous religions. These slogans are carefully crafted to

resonate with the cultural and religious diversity of the state. As a result, they can appeal to a broad spectrum of voters, fostering a sense of inclusivity. Both slogans convey positive messages of renewal and enlightenment. They suggest that under the leadership promoted by these slogans, there will be positive change and progress. Such positive messaging can uplift voter spirits and lead them to perceive the candidate or party as a beacon of hope. "IleriOluwa" and "Imole De" both promise positive change and a better future. In a political context where voters often seek change and improvement, such slogans can resonate strongly. Voters may view the candidates using these slogans as agents of change and progress.

In the same vein, these slogans may influence voter decision-making by framing the candidate or party as agents of positive change and divine guidance. Voters who believe in the message of "Imole De" or "IleriOluwa" may be more inclined to cast their votes in favour of the associated candidate or party, driven by the hope for a better future. These slogans can mobilise religious communities. They may encourage voters from various religious backgrounds to rally behind a candidate or party they perceive as aligned with their religious values. This mobilisation can impact electoral outcomes, especially in a diverse state like Osun.

In addition, voters may associate these slogans with ethical governance, transparency, and integrity. The philosophical implications of the slogans, such as renewal and ethical responsibility, can lead voters to believe that the candidate or party will govern with these principles in mind. The emotional and aspirational elements of these slogans can also impact voter turnout. Voters who believe in the message of hope and renewal may be more motivated to participate in the electoral process, which can influence the overall outcome.

However, despite all these, the first tenure of Oyetola as governor of the State left much to be desired as many of the citizens of the state complained bitterly due to the failed promises. This is seen in the turnout of voters willing to vote massively against the APC in the 2022 election, even with a renewed IleriOluwa mantra of 4+4=8 (meaning vote Oyetola for another 4 years to make up 8 years in office as governor). Little wonder he lost the election to the other person who was willing to bring light to the state. There is no gainsaying that there are concerns about the authenticity conveyed through political slogans. We may question whether politicians genuinely embody the religious values they espouse in their slogans or whether these slogans are merely superficial attempts to appeal to religious voters.

The intersection of religion, culture, philosophy, and politics in the electoral processes

Analysing slogans like "IleriOluwa" and "Imole De" contributes significantly to a deeper understanding of the intricate intersection of religion, culture, philosophy, and politics in the electoral processes of Nigeria. These slogans demonstrate the influential role of religion in Nigerian

politics. Nigeria's diverse religious landscape, including Christianity, Islam, and indigenous religions, is a major factor in shaping political discourse. Understanding how religious themes are strategically used in slogans sheds light on the power of religion as a political force. Also, the slogans are crafted with an awareness of Nigeria's cultural and religious diversity, serving as examples of how political actors must navigate this diversity to create inclusive messages that resonate with a broad electorate. This understanding is essential for fostering unity and avoiding divisive politics.

There is no gainsaying the slogans emphasise philosophical concepts such as destiny, renewal, and ethical responsibility. They highlight the philosophical underpinnings of political campaigns and how candidates use philosophical ideas to connect with voters. This insight deepens our understanding of the ethical foundations of political leadership. Thus, it could be said that these slogans rely on emotional appeal to engage voters. They demonstrate the importance of emotions, aspirations, and shared values in political communication. This understanding helps us grasp the emotional undercurrents that drive voter behaviour.

Moreso, the slogans underscore the importance of ethical governance and transparency. They reflect the expectations of voters for leaders who govern with integrity and openness. Studying these slogans sheds light on the ethical dimensions of politics in Nigeria. The use of religious and philosophical themes in slogans has broader societal implications. It prompts discussions about the relationship between religion and politics, cultural identity, and the evolving role of tradition in contemporary governance. Political actors can draw lessons from the success or failure of these slogans. Understanding how such slogans resonate with the electorate informs campaign strategies, helping candidates better connect with voters.

CONCLUSION

The tremendous influence of religion, culture, philosophy, and politics on Nigeria's democratic landscape is revealed by the religio-philosophical examination of political slogans like "IleriOluwa" and "Imole De" in the context of Osun State's electoral procedures. These slogans act as potent channels for the manifestation of these interacting forces. They have religious meaning that powerfully connects with Osun State's varied population, which includes followers of traditional religions as well as Christianity and Islam. They tap into the state's cultural and spiritual foundation to generate feelings, hope, and optimism. Voters are drawn to politicians or parties that are linked with these slogans due to the resonance that affects their perception and decision-making. Philosophically, the slogans signify profound concepts such as destiny, renewal, and ethical responsibility. They speak to the aspirations of the electorate, conveying promises of positive change, ethical governance, and transparency.

By examining the impact of these slogans, we gain a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between religion, culture, philosophy, and politics in Nigeria's electoral

processes. It underscores the importance of cultural sensitivity, inclusivity, and ethical governance in political campaigns. Moreover, this analysis contributes to academic research, enhancing our knowledge of how political communication navigates the intricate tapestry of Nigeria's diverse society. It also provides practical insights for political actors seeking to connect with voters on a deeper level. In a broader context, this study highlights the significance of religion and culture in shaping political discourse not only in Osun State but across Nigeria. It underscores the enduring importance of these elements in the nation's democratic journey. Understanding this intersection deepens our comprehension of the complexities and nuances inherent in Nigeria's vibrant democracy.

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