Fújì Music and Everyday Life in the Contemporary Urban Yorùbá Space

By

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A thesis submitted to the Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies (BIGSAS), University of Bayreuth, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Dr. Phil.).

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June, 2023

Dedication

To those who have preceded us to the next world: late grandmothers (Christianah Amope, Iya-Ajibaabi Ol'Lady and Iya Koko); late grandfathers (Samuel Oniyirokun, Solomon Ajibaabi); departed Uncles (Baba Oko, Uncle Akin, Uncle Lawuwo, Uncle Biola, Uncle Kolapo); departed Aunts (Mopelola Iya-Ife, Morolayo Iya-Ile-keji); and our boy whose stay was so brief before he could have a name; my childhood friend, Chuckwudi Agwaife; and my cousin, Mosebolatan Akanji. May I continue to draw lessons and positive energy from your beloved memories. May we continue to embody your wisdom, hospitality, humour, love, sacrifices, sense of duty and purpose.

To my father, Stephen Titilola Ayoade Akano Ajayi, all you did and what you could not do transformed my life forever. I am grateful. You were wise, generous and fearless, with impeccable integrity. This is your legacy too!

To Mummy, Iya Ghana, you were my father and mother, role model, super fan, and greatest source of support. Thank you for your faith in education and tireless pursuit of it, your faith in humanity, and your big open mind. Your departure at the commencement of this PhD programme was a huge blow and a life-changing moment for me. You are the story, and I am your story. Thank you so much, mummy, Awele, Iya mi!

To Olawumi Rhoda, Abake, my sister, I singled you out because you deserve it all; you encouraged and sacrificed for me through laughter, tears, uncertainties, fears, hopes, dreams, and passion. Even as you continue the fight for your life, I thank you so much.

I pray for your good health and long life, my wife, Joy Ifeoma (Amadi) Ajayi; without your steady support, strength, understanding and sacrifices, it would be all insurmountable. I pray for grace to make up for the lost years.

To Irorunoluwa and Morolaoluwa, you are the joy I live for; thank you for being the brightest spot in uncertain times. I pray that the absence and sacrifices are worthwhile for you and generations after you.

Aknowledgements

The ending phase of this project humbles me as I have the deepest sense of gratitude and appreciation for many people who have been part of the journey in various stages and diverse ways.

First and foremost, I thank the Evangelisches Studienwerk Villigst e.V for offering the PhD scholarship and the fieldwork support for this project. The Bayreuth International Graduate School of African Studies (BIGSAS) also provided me with an academic family that supported me through workshops, seminars, fieldwork, conferences and the many informal discussions that have guided my academic career. I appreciate the funding opportunities that allowed me to finish the thesis. I am thankful to the *Recalibrating Afrikanistik* (ReCAf), University of Leipzig and University of Bayreuth for the four months of research fellowship in 2022.

I am extremely grateful to my supervisor Prof. Dr. Clarissa Vierke, for her patience, incisive critique, encouragement and support. She taught me the nuance of academic writing and research. I have benefitted immensely from her intellectual advice, which challenges and inspires me to engage deeply and freely with my research material.

My mentors, Prof. Dr. Debra Klein and Prof. Dr. Ute Fendler have equally provided me with helpful criticism and questions that guided me during the research process. Apart from our mentorship meeting, Prof. Debra Klein afforded me the opportunity to meet her beloved husband “Uncle Bryce”. Prof Klein supported me all through the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic period with a monthly online meeting she initiated – these meetings ran over two years. Thank you for your immense support. Your ideas, amongst others, inspired my research and taught me how to integrate different ethnographic methods and offered me insights into the project.

In Bayreuth, I am equally thankful to the Afrikanistik department. I had the opportunity to present my work at the Afrikanistik Research Colloquium in May 2022, and I benefited from the feedback and advice of several colleagues and faculty members over the years. My colleagues in BIGSAS provided a constructive academic and social space to share ideas with other graduate students. I am thankful to the former members of the workgroup “Reading Literary Texts”, who were a sounding board for my ideas, and especially to my colleagues Dr. Mingqing Yuan (Alice) and Dr. Nikitta Dede Adjirakor, both of whom I shared my first experience of editing an issue of an academic journal with, through our edition of BIGSAS*works*. Our friendship has blossomed over the years, and I have benefitted greatly from

their generosity of advice, love, compassion, understanding and encouragement. I do not take any of those for granted.

I also want to thank the BIGSAS (current and former) administrative staff: Juliane Fendler, Frau Sabine Wagner, Frau Annete Volk, Dr. Christine Scherer, Michelle Heese. In addition, my path crossed with the following amiable people, and they are highly appreciated: Frau Kersten Winkelmann (thank you for assisting me with the final formatting of this thesis), Renate Crowe and Löwinger Daniela. I must apprciate the amiable team of the Univerisity of Bayreuth International office: Angela Rösler-Wedlich, Susan Laussman and Lea Bernt. You all played significant roles in my journey, and I am eternally grateful.

Participating in the first summer school in August 2017 and further presenting at the colloquium in October 2021 organized by the Ife Institute of Advanced African Studies under the direction of Prof. Jacob K. Olupona has also been an enriching experience, through which I have engaged with other scholars about my project on Fújì and have had many people expressing interest in my work which has been fulfilling. I am grateful for the advice and contributions of Prof. Adeleke Adeeko and Prof. Saheed Aderinto. You were both discussants of my presentation titled "Multilayeredness in Fújì and the Yorùbá Urban Experience". I am very grateful to you all. My special thanks go to Dr. Naluwembe Binaisa, you have remained a mentor, sister, and friend since our first meeting at the summer school in Ile-Ife in 2017. I also acknowledge the support of Dr. Opeyemi Anthony Iroju during my fieldwork in 2018.

I especially thank Prof. Sola Ajibade, Prof. C. J. Odhiambo, Dr. Christine Matzke, Prof. Rudiger Seseemann, Prof. Andrea Behrends, Prof. Sylvia Meyer, Prof. Shola Adenekan, Dr Chirstine Vogt-William, Dr. Kogelmann, Prof. O.B Lawuyi, Prof. Dele Layiwola, Prof. Peju Layiwola, Prof. Niyi Okunoye, Prof. Remi Raji, Prof. Dickson Ajayi and Dr. Babajide Ololajulo, Dr. Mariam Popal, Prof. Susan Arndt (My M.A Thesis supervisor), Dr. Akano, Prof. Ms. Olaleye and Pastor Olaleye (New Covenant Church, Bode, Ibadan), Dr. Gilbert Ndi Shang, Dr. Simon Nganga, Dr. Semsettin Tabur, Dr. Eyitayo Aloh, Dr. Tilman Musch, Dr. Stefanie Alisch, Mr. Lekan Oladipupo, Ms. Esther Ololajulo, Bankole Olure, Alhaji Ademola Alli (Fiditi) and Hon. Segun Olanibi, they are part of the great community of scholars and mentors across the world that held my hand and are still holding it on this journey. I thank you all for your numerous help!

I had the privilege of working closely with the following musicians during my fieldwork: Alhaji Abass Akande Obesere, Alhaji Taye Adebisi (Taye Currency), Alhaji Bola Bollington, Roliat Atunbi Aye, Alhaji Ganiyi Abefe, Alhaji Suleiman Alao Malaika and Omotoyosi Iyun Saint

Janet. My work and perspective are enriched through their collaborations, cooperation, access, understanding and support. Similarly, the following people were instrumental to my successful fieldwork and PhD completion experience: my friends and contacts at Splash and Lagelu FM: Ibadan Tunde Olawuwo, Abidemi Ebunoluwa, Bosun (Bosclef), Desmond Tony G, Oluwagbemiga Adegoke, Olawale Hamzat, Kola Olootu, Kunle Anifowose. Others are Chief Sunday Adeyemo (Sunday Igboho), Alhaji Akeem Adegoke Oluyole, Alhaji Mojeed Adebayo Morubo and Tope (Twinlight Records) Currency, Mr.Adeyemo Aakeem Ayandare (Apadola), and Prince Oyinwe of Alaafin Adeyemi. Ese pupo o!

I especially appreciate family, friends and colleagues with whom I shared my journey of the past 10 years: Fred Bosire, Tunde Olawuwo, Femi and Adeola Okeniyi, Dr. Bukola Olayiwola, Afolabi and Tomilola Olayiwola, Lekan Ogunkunle, Monisola (Oluniyi) Lawal, Bro Lekan Ladipo, Temitope and 'Bola Fagbohun, Abiola Oladimeji, Adejoke Ogundiran, Bro Ralph Oloke, Gbemisola Ibukunolu Ajagunna, Ridwan Shittu, Samira Paraschiv,Ademola Tawakalitu, Simisola Wright, Okpani Celine, Tolulope Oke, Dr. Musa Ibrahim, Valerie Gruber, Cosmina Scobeniuc, Dandara Maia and Andrea, Raymond and Felicia Frempong, Dr. Morenikeji Asaaju, Dr. Yemi Balogun, Dr. Jimam Lar, Dr. Nuno Freitas, Dr Lohna Bonkhat, Dr. Chikas Danfulani, Diana Kisakye, Dr. Timothy Bayewu, Dr. Uche Oyali, Perseverance Madhuku, Seyni Mamoudou, Dr. Saibu Ghadafi, Dr. Umar Ahmed, Usman Ahmad, Thierry Boudjekeu, Seyi Tiamiyu, Busolami Ojo, Dr. Veronica Buchumi, Glory Otung, Angel Messeng, Joyce Sango, Opeyemi and Oluwatosin Olajide, Damola Adesope, Dr. Muritala Ibrahim, Blessing Akan, Banjo Baderin, Dr. Tilman Musch, Maureeen Karanja, Margarita and Mama Papaioannou, Sylvia Weigel & Andrea Haf (my beloved neighbours), Die laus Bayreuth: Fabian, Mitja, Christine, Manuel, Daniel, Sydelle, Kavuma, Ines), Timo Gerhardt, Constanze Sindram, Brady and Kathlyn Blackburn.

Finally, I thank my big family: siblings (Rev. & Pastor Dotun &Biola Ajayi; Bro Tunde&Sis.Toyin Ajayi-Ope; Bode &Sis. Ann; Wumi, Onome, and Glory), in-laws (Amadi's): Mr. and Romanus, Peace, Cynthia and Daniel, cousins (Eeboola's: Olawuwos, Adeniyis, Bunmi & and Bisi Eeboola), nephews and nieces Ajayi's, Odelolas, S.O Layiwola's, C.N.O Oyedele, Mummy and Daddy Lakojo Adigun of Ladigbolu Oyo, Pa Rowland Folarin's dynasty, Olawoore's of Oyo, and Eluyeras of Ile-Ife. Your support always gives me the resolve and stability on this long and tedious journey.

To you all, I am deeply grateful.

Summary

This study explores how fújì shapes the contemporary Yorùbá urban space in various ways and vice versa. Fújì music forms the perceptions and experiences of the world in various ways from everyday life in the Yorùbá urban space to the construction of social persona. Particularly, I explore how the modes of interaction between fújì musicians, their fans, and the audience's activities contribute to the understanding of the contemporary Yorùbá urban milieu. In this case, this dissertation demonstrates 'how' to achieve these objectives in multiple ways. Drawing insights from the works of Karin Barber, Musila, Newell and Okome, Balogun and Gabroyes, this work approaches fújì as a popular culture text and site of encountering people's inventions. As a popular culture genre, fújì provides a window to explore alternative or counter-narratives of African contemporary stories in nuanced, unpredictable, and complex ways.

The key questions that underpin this thesis are the following: How does fújì constitute the aesthetic of lived experience in the contemporary urban Yorùbá lifeworld? In what ways can the modes of interaction between fújì musicians, their fans and the audience's activities contribute to the understanding of the contemporary Yorùbá urban milieu? How is fújì implicated in curating the performances and experiences of the social experiences 'gbajúmọ̀', i.e. the 'big man' in the context of the contemporary Yorùbá urban space?

Methodologically, the thesis is conceived as an interdisciplinary project. The analysis takes fújì lyrics as the text for close reading in the literary studies and uses ethnography-generated materials from interviews and participants' observations. I argue for acknowledging dialectic and reflexive dynamics between fújì music and the Yorùbá urban lifeworld. The thesis has paid attention to what the text and context signalled as ways of knowing the fújì world. fújì is regarded as a cultural text embodying the peculiarities of Yorùbá aesthetics.

The arguments in this thesis are submerged under two broad strands, which I call "fújì: Reading Dynamism and Complexities of the Everyday" and "Aesthetic Experience and the Agency of Music (fújì) on the Performance of Social Persona". In these cases, I argue that fújì's dynamism should be acknowledged beginning from the lens of defying simple definitions and academic classifications. It provides insight into the limits of dominant knowledge hierarchy and classification as it also opens up the debate and manifestations of plural epistemologies. I argue that this plural epistemology, which fújì affords, stresses the acknowledgement of pluralities of historical trajectories and values Barber (2007:2). It acknowledges the challenges of working with the assumption that centres on written traditions are limiting and exclusionary. Thus, the employability of notions of texts which Barber (2018) provides becomes increasingly

unavoidable as a model for cultural productions, especially in Africa. This approach, as this thesis revealed, provides a window to embrace the context and the text collectively as a product of everyday life. In essence, fújì performance offers an opportunity to experience beyond representational meaning of its text and the peculiarity that characterizes each performance space as well as an extension in constant continuum mode in the everyday urban Yorùbá space.

For the first strand, I incorporate Yorùbá concepts of "ìgboro", the street, as an analytical concept and framework to approach fújì text and context. My use of 'ìgboro' in the thesis signals a broad range of experiences, related or synonymous categories and concepts. Amongst others, it references to the discourse around the lower strata space of the contemporary urban Yorùbá space as a community of fújì audience, fans, patron, and clientele. The study of fújì not only foregrounds encounter with indigenous Yorùbá knowledge but also the process of understanding the knowledge therein. I defined Ìgboro as to reference community of affinity to the Yorùbá historically marginalized working-class people. The thesis also shows that social mobility is a recurring theme in fújì music and relevant discourse in the contemporary Yorùbá space. Ìgboro discourse is embedded in the discourse of social mobility. It is also a reference category to unique and stylized masculine performativity in the Yorùbá urban space. In this thesis, the categories of ìgboro are not presented as static in fújì space – their identity is constantly negotiated through a series of performative acts of reclamation from negative, derogatory zones of meaning to the empowering, creative, and expressive way of being.

The second thread of argument that is subsumed under **"**Aesthetic Experience and the Agency of Music (fújì) on the Performance of Social Persona" highlights the idea that music has the agency to act upon listeners. Inspired by Adorno's idea of music, I focus on music's ability to act on its listeners. The emphasis in this was on how the aesthetic approach to studying popular music helps to transcend music analysis as mere windows of reflecting societal issues. As ways of allowing fújì to manifest as a generative text, the thesis draws from Yorùbá concepts relevant to engaging with fújì through the lens of aesthetic experience. I identify oríkì as a Yorùbá oral performance and verbal practice that is of transcendental value. Oríkì is a commodity of desire that fújì audience seek during their encounter with musicians. Oríkì provides a transcendental experience in which the musicians and their audience co-create within the larger framework of the Yorùbá notion of Ènìyàn, personhood. Oríkì in fújì provides the basis for experiencing a unique cultural practice that is entrenched in the Yorùbá moral and ethical imagination of personhood, Ènìyàn. The performance of Ènìyàn social persona intersects with the Yorùbá indigenous cosmology of Orí (destiny). Thus, oríkì's trope in fújì

enables diverse possibilities of imagining, performing, and curating the Gbajúmọ̀ or the big man into public discourse and collective memory of the Yorùbá society. The big man persona is of the possibilities which fújì enables and enhances. It is a performance of a grandeur persona that is culturally connected to the generous traits of an individual. In the thesis, I have discussed the performance of Gbajúmọ̀, or the big man, not in isolation but against the backdrop of the Yorùbá economic space and dynamics. While acknowledging the culturality and the centrality of the Gbajúmọ̀ or the big man within the Yorùbá philosophy of personhood, what the fújì reveals is that the social category is also a product of wide-scale social inequalities and the everyday life of the working-class people in urban space that is marked with struggles of thriving and surviving.

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0 Introduction

Field Notes Entry 1a: A Multi-layered Performance Space of Activities, Meanings and Experience

On Sunday, 23rd September 2018, I attended the 50th birthday celebration and launch of the new sets of musical instruments by a Lagos-based fújì musician known as Abdulmojeed Omotunde Adesina alias Damendra fújì in the city of Lagos. Alhaji Akeem Adegoke alias Oluyole facilitated my attendance at the event[1]. The event of the birthday celebration and launch took place at "Badewa House", a hotel and open bar facility located in the Ketu-Alapere neighbourhood of Lagos. While approaching the hotel premises, I encountered at least three groups of men aged 20 to 40 years, numbering between 7- 15, on the road leading to the hotel. Their presence contributed to the slow pace of vehicular and commercial motorcycles, popular known in Nigeria as Okada causing inconvenience for the road users.

Standing apart in clusters, the men interacted with the arriving and departing guests by greeting and hailing them. The group sometimes extended their greetings to other road users in their cars, commercial bus drivers and passers-by as they anticipated monetary gifts from the guest, most especially the popular people known as Gbajúmọ̀ or big men - money flows during a lot at fújì events and everybody hopes to get a share. Like they do to other passing guests, the group chorused their greeting towards me, and they moved closer to hail me. Some of the group members raised their two hands above their heads. They chorused in a cacophony of voices calling: "Chairman", "fine boy", "Olori" – "leader", "Egbon" – "older brother", and "Alaye[2]". As I walked past them, I acknowledged them with a nod and smiling face. I also gestured with my hand by pointing and rolling my index finger clockwise - communicating my return to them later (suggesting that I will give them money on my way out of the event).

I arrived at the hotel gate at around 2.15 pm. Two-armed security men guarded the hotel's pedestrian gate, and five bystanders were at the entrance welcoming the guest to the venue. I met other guests interacting with the security and the team of people ushering guests into the hotel. Also standing and performing by the very side of the pedestrian gate of the hotel for the

[1] Oluyole identifies as a relative of the fújì musician Abass Akande Obesere, he is based in Ibadan, he works as a travel agent Zeenat Travels limited. Oluyole also works as as assistant to the popular fújì musician. Our first encounter was during my first meeting with Obesere at the premises of Lagelu FM, Ibadan where we exchanged mobile numbers. He was instrumental towards my ultimate interview session with Obesere, my access into events and meetings with other stakeholders in Obesere's and fújì's space.

[2] The literal translation for Alaye means the "the owner of the world". It is a slang or appellation highlighting the addressee as a sociable personality.

arriving guests was a three-person drummer group. The drummers sang and played their drums to cheer the arriving and departing guests in anticipation of monetary reward.

I informed the team at the gate that I was a guest of "Oluyole", my contact person. Some people I met at the gate were dressed in a uniform blue-brown patterned Ankara fabric. All the guests dressed in the blue-brown patterned Ankara print were allowed entry into the hotel without interrogation or identification. Behind the gate and parameter fence sat a two-storey building constructed with red brick. The building is at a distance of 30 meters from the gate. Two semi-permanent shed structures are on the right and left sides of the space between the main building and the hotel gate. The semi-permanent structures serve as an outdoor bar and open-sitting area. The building space is partly constructed with bricks and iron pillars carrying the high roof.

In between the two semi-permanent shed structures was a big white tent. Under the three shed spaces were white plastic chairs and tables covered with brown table covers. By my arrival, the chairs were partly filled while some remained empty. Two hours after my arrival, the venue was filled with an estimated number of over 300 guests. Some of the tables had square or rectangularly folded shaped cardboards with several inscriptions indicating the group(s) for whom the tables and chairs were reserved. Notably, the inscriptions on two of the tables for example, read: "MAAN's SEAT[3]" and "OBESERE FANS". On the small metal pedestrian gate leading to one of the semi-permanent sheds is a piece of cardboard saying, "High Table[4]". The general setting at the "high table" wing of the event was slightly different. The chairs and tables were lesser in quantity and were arranged to stay apart to allow more space between the guests. A big white leather chair that would be later occupied by the oldest fújì musician, Alhaji Kolawole Ayinla, alias Kollington, was placed on the first table row at the "high table section", marking his elevated social position. In the context of fújì, musicians are highly respected and respect as well as loyalty also needs to be shown to them.

[3] An acronym for Music Advertainment Association of Nigeria (MAAN)

[4] Indicating that the space is reserved for the very important personalities (the VIP's as) at the event

Fig 0.1: Sitting space arrangements under sheds reserved a. for members of MAAN. b: sitting area reserved for Obesere's fans club members. Image by author, Ketu, Lagos. Sept. 2018.

There was the presence of arm-bearing police officers, indicating the possible presence of "VIPs" (political figures[5], popular socialites, popular musicians etc)- fújì events both make but also attract celebrities. Noticeable was also sets of young men that are kitted in brown combat pants tucked with white t-shirts and military belts. The inscription on their plain white t-shirt says "PK1st Abass Akande Obesere[6]". PK 1st is one of the adopted aliases by the popular fújì musician Abass Akande alias Obesere. PK1st stands for the first Paramount King of fújì music.

Both men and women were present at the event, but the ratio of men to women can be said to be 7 to 3. While the age brackets vary, the age of the attendees fell between the 20s and mid-60 years.

Another observable activity in the space was a small group dealing with money exchange. In this situation, an old Naira or an online bank transfer is made in exchange for newly minted Naira notes for a fee. However, this model of business is illegal. In fact, under Nigerian law, it is in fact, prohibited to spray or sell Naira notes under the Nigerian Central Bank Acts[7], is listed as the abuse of Naira, and punishable under the CBN Acts section 21.

About three women were seen moving between the guests, carrying and displaying packs of new Naira notes of different denominations as an advertisement for interested guests. The guests obtaining the new naira notes would gift the money to the celebrant, friends, family, and the performing musician during the performance- money and praises are the currency exchanged in fújì.

[5] For example, a member of the Lagos state House of Assembly known as Honourable Tunji Buramo attended the event.

[6] PK 1st is one of the adopted aliases by the popular fújì musician, Abass Akande alias Obesere. PK1st stands for the first Paramount King of fújì music.

[7] https://www.cbn.gov.ng/Currency/cleanpolicy.asp

The performance stage was set on an elevated section in one of the two semi-permanent sheds. The elevated section was a few inches tall platform that were permanently constructed and were beautified with cloth decorations and string lights. Hanging between the stage decoration, the banner bears the following message "DAMENDRA FÚJÌ 50 Birthday Party & Launching of Musical Instruments".

Apart from the image of the celebrant, the images on the banner included the bold image of Alhaji Kolawole Ayinla alias Kollington. Similarly, the image of Abass Akande alias Obesere was prominent on the banner. There were also images of other musicians (fújì and jùjú and upcoming Afrobeats musicians), and stand-up comedians. Apart from cracking jokes for the audience, the MC coordinated the sequence of the events by bringing on those that needed to be on stage, like family members of the celebrants, friends, a pastor, and a group of Imams who were called to render prayers for the celebrant. Three upcoming Afrobeats singers were intermittently invited to perform (mime) a track of their works. Each performer spent an average of three to five minutes. Due to their upcoming status, the audience responses (attention, dance or singing along) were low to the performances of the upcoming Afrobeats singers.

The MC, who also cracked jokes to the audience in-between his announcement, made it a duty to announce the arrival of important personalities at the venue. The arrival of Alhaji Kolawole Ayinla alias Kollington which was amplified by the MC's announcement, invoked an atmosphere of excitement. The guests got up from their seats to catch a glimpse of the musician hailing, "Kolawole! Kollington!". Kollington was ushered into the labelled "HIGH TABLE" section and offered to sit on a special white leather chair. Several groups of people mostly men, took turns approaching Kollington's seat to greet and pay homage to the most senior fújì musician. Before they took turns taking pictures with Kollington who was seated on the white leather chair, the people approaching would prostrate, bend low before him, or bend over towards his seat before extending their handshake. In other instances, some of the men approaching Kollington would raise their two hands with the palms open above their heads while stamping also stamping their feet on the ground while hailing the revered musician as "olórí" – "the leader before proceeding with a handshake or pictures.

Another set of white plastic chairs and tables was also set inside a vast lobby space of the hotel. Although scanty, some guests were seated inside, apart from the loudspeaker's voice, and they were away from the activities outside the building. Obesere's band members ate, interacted, and greeted other arriving guests. The band member in the hall included three female dancers. Unlike the male band members, the female band members were dressed in stage

costumes, and they wore long socks with colourful stripes, short jeans knickers, football jerseys and colourful wigs. The central figure in the band group was band leader known as Adeyemo Akeem Ayandare, alias "Apadola". An excerpt of an interview response by Mr Adeyemo Akeem Ayandare popularly known as "Apa", the band manager of Obesere's group on the 6th of December 2018 in Iwo Road Ibadan will provide some insight into the inner working of a band of a popular fújì musician:

1. *"Mo ní ọmọ ẹgbẹ́ 28 ní under mi, iṣẹ́ tí onírúurú ń ṣe si yàtọ̀ sí ara wọn. Àwọn stage band wá, ara won ni saxophonist, drummers, ẹgbẹ́, dancers ati bẹ́ẹ̀ bẹ́ẹ̀ lọ. Àwọn mi náà wà tí wọ́n jẹ́ amúgbá lẹ́gbẹ̀ẹ́ ògá wa tí a bá se eré lọ́wọ́, lára wọn ni àwọn tí wọ́n máa ń sa owó tàbí àwọn tí wọn ń kọ Orúkọ fún ọ̀gá" – I oversee a team of 28 band member (under the umbrella of Obesere's band). Each band members have different roles, some of us are members of the stage band and include the saxophonists, drummers, the backup singers, dancers etc. Some other members assist our boss (Obesere) directly – they pick the money sprayed to him during the performance. At the same time, some people are responsible for compiling names of praise subjects for our boss during the performance.*

Most male band members who would later change into uniformed pairs of blue-patterned Ankara fabric wore casual attire. A band member known as Mr Majekodunmi Tokunbo, who identified as the stage manager for the Obesere band, was seen sitting alone, transferring the list of names of people he had scouted for earlier amongst the guests at the venue from different sheets of paper into a proper notebook. Based on my understanding of the practice of the Yorùbá musicians' praise performance, the booklet will be handed over to the musician (Obesere) the musician during the performance. The musicians will sing about each person on the list as a praise subject. In this case, some of their personal information, like family, the social or professional affiliation, will be highlighted, and the musician might represent their social status and aspirations during the performance. Thus, the compiled list of names and information will guide the singer in formulating his praises. Praise singing is an integral part of fújì.

Fig 0.2: a. A female attendee at the event openly displaying packs of new Naira notes for interested buyers. b. Mr Majekodunmi Tokunbo, a member of Obesere's band compiling a list of dignitaries to be praised later by his boss Obesere. Image by author, Ketu, Lagos. Sept. 2018.

Throughout the performance, the band members that were responsible for scouting and compiling personal information about the praise subjects would continuously interact with the audience and the musician. Another member of the Obesere organisation I encountered at the event is Alhaji Adebayo Morúbo; he also identifies as Obesere's booking manager[8]*. The title of a booking manager would suggest that he is one of the band members that will contacted by a client when planning to enlist the service of the fújì musicians at an evet planning stage. The booking manager will in this case, provide the cost of booking the band, the details of logistics and other associating contractual issues will be discussed and resolved by the booking manager and the relevant stakeholders.*

My contact person (Oluyole) introduced me to some of Obesere's fans club members in Ketu[9]. The neighbourhood chapter of the Obesere's fans club had come to celebrate with the celebrant and were also in solidarity and love for their favourite fújì musician. As I explained earlier, some fans had volunteered to assist with security control of the performance space. Other members of the Obesere fans club at the premises wore branded costumes suggesting their affiliations and admiration for the star fújì musician, Obesere. Wearing clothes signifying fanhood has become an important hallmark of fújì audiences.

[8] In other performances that I witnessed, Morúbo also function as a foreman compiling and transmitting namaes of praise subject to Obesere during a performance. In addition. Morúbo commenced a radio.

[9] During this occasion I had the opportunity to meet the newly elected chairman of Obesere's fans club Mr Abass alias New Era. New Era is a fashion designer by profession, he came to the event with a newly sown Ankara (the same Ankara that the celebrant and most of the other attendees wore at the occasion) for the Obesere. Obesere arrived the venue of the event in a black t-shirt and jeans, he would later change into the Ankara dress in one of the resrved rooms at the hotel.

Fig 0.3: a. A member of the Obesere fans club, is wearing a branded shirt with Obesere's image.[10] b. Volunters: members of Obesere fans club assiting with security arrangemnet. Image by author, Ketu, Lagos. Sept. 2018.

Obesere, the fújì star who was expected to perform at the birthday party of Abdulmojeed Omotunde Adesina alias Damendra arrived at the venue around 5.45 pm. He was accompanied into the venue by an impressive entourage of arm-bearing police officers, a group of male staff[11]*, and a crowd of people joining and welcoming him at the venue. The group of people were hailing him, calling him "Papa", "Alhaji", and "PK 1st". Obesere headed straight to where Kollignton, the respected fújì musician, was seated to greet him. He prostrated and later stop low and bent forward as Kollington spoke to his ears. After some rounds of pictures with the celebrant, Kollington and other interested parties, Obesere headed for his reserved room in the hotel. At this juncture, his band members were fully dressed, he was seen fraternizing with some of his friends as they all moved upstairs into the restricted area of the hotel*[12].

[10] Also written under the image of the musician on the fan's chest is the text "Obesere fans club – World Wide".

[11] one of them who identifies as kunle is the social media manager) One of them includes Kunle.

[12] I am unable to account for the main performance of the lead musician at this event due to two reasons. It was my first participant observation of fújì performance in the city of during the fieldwork. Due to safety concern in the unfamiliar neighbourhood, I left the space around 7pm (some minutes after the start of Obesere's performance)


Fig 0.4: a. Kollington's hand is placed on the back of Obesere, acknowledging the latter's greeting Kollington on arrival at the venue. b. fújì Damendra (right side of Kollington) and a group of friends taking pictures with Kollington. Image by the author, Ketu, Lagos. Sept. 2018.

Field Notes Entry 1b: A Multi-layered Performance Space of Activities, Meanings and Experience.

On the 29th of November 2018, I arrived at the historical Mapo Hall[13] *in the city of Ibadan to observe the performance of the Ibadan-based fújì musician Taye Adebisi alias Taye Currency. I had been pre-informed of the event by one of Taye Currency's staff, Mr Tope. The event is the end-of-the-year celebration by the association of shoemakers in the city of Ibadan*[14] *as trade unions and other associations typically engage fújì musicians. I was greeted with the movement of a huge crowd coming and going into Mapo Hall on arrival. Most attendees dressed in a uniform fabric of coloured grey, white and stripes patterned. It was a carnival atmosphere where several activities happen concurrently. fújì events are a time of show and festivity.*


Fig 0.5: a. large crowd (mainly) The Association of shoemakers Ibadan chapter's end-of-the-year celebration at Mapo Hall premises dressed in uniform fabric. b. large crowd (same event) and a group

[13] The famous Mapo Hall is a colonial style city hall built was commisoned in 1929 during the colonial era

[14] I was also opportuned to attend a similar event on the 13th of December 2018 at the Ifelodun Sawmill- The event was also the end of the year party for the association of plank sellers in a plan market located at Ayetooro Village, Lagos – Ibadan expressway. Taye Currency performed at both events.

of Yorùbá drummers (two members visibly seen raising their Ṣẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀). Image by author, Mapo Hall, Ibadan. Dec. 2018.

Most of the attendees were men, as the population is quite limited. In the crowd were several groups of traditional Gángan talking-drum drummers performing and singing in-between the crowd. There were also traders hawking snacks, soft drinks, alcohol beverages etc, in between the packed crowd. In the same crowd were the team of jesters cracking jokes and performing to their audience in anticipation of monetary gifts. The performance stage was set as an elevated platform at the north end of the Mapo Hall compound. On the two sides of the elevated stage were boxes of loudspeakers, and on the rear side were stands of microphones, a stand of keyboard sitting on its stand, a drum set and three sets of plastic chairs on the right side of the stage. As one approached the elevated stage, the sound of a working power-generating set was positioned a few metres behind the stage.

Fig 0.6: a. team of Jesters performing and part of fújì performance audience (Association of shoemakers Ibadan chapter's end-of-the-year celebration at Mapo Hall premises). b. Gani alias Arole Currency performing on stage with two drummers (from Taye Currency's band) and a backup singer. Image by author, Mapo Hall, Ibadan. Dec. 2018.

My arrival at the venue coincided with the performance of a fújì musician, Gani alias Arole Currency. He was seen performing on a scanty stage without the full complement of the Egbe, the backup and instrumentalist groups like keyboardist, drum sets drummer, saxophonist, guitarist, extra omele, sákárà, and dùndún drummers. His performance was aided by an omele and dùndún drummer (dressed in a uniformed blue Ankara) and a backup singer to compliment his performance. Although the keyboard stand was conspicuously empty, the keyboard produced a single note pre-mixed beat in which the drumbeats compliments as he sings. The musician performed for about fifteen minutes, and a recurring verse during the performance goes as follows:

Table 0.1: Arole Taye Currency's Live Perfomance at Mapo Hall, Ibadan.

Yorùbá	English Translation
Àrólé Currency ni mí tó ju Ọba ibòmìí lọ	*I am the heir to Currency and I am more elevated than some kings of other territories*
Èmi ọmọ Baba mi Èjìrẹ́[15] *Currency*	*I, am the son of my father, Ejire.*
Chorus: ó yá, èmi ò se mọ́ Jáá pa[16], Èmi ò se mọ́	 Now, I am so disinterested in anything Ja pa, I am not interested

Almost ten minutes into my observation of Arole Currency's performance, there was a huge surge of movement in the crowd as Taye Currency tried to make his way into the stage. Taye Currency, dressed in a white t-shirt, a pair of thick necklaces and blue jeans, headed straight for an empty white plastic seat on the side of the performance stage. The crowd standing close to the musical stage area was mostly men. Upon Taye Currency's arrival, the crowd surged towards the stage, and the initially scanty-looking stage was now filled with people. At this point, some staff of Taye Currency were seen controlling the crowd surge towards the performance platform. They served as a buffer between the people trying to mount the stage and their boss Taye Currency. The uproar associated with the arrival of Taye Currency notwithstanding did not interfere with the ongoing performance of Arole Currency on the stage. The drum rhythm and his performance delivery remained intense and caused some sections of the audience to dance and jump excitedly.

As Taye Currency settled into a sitting position on one of the white plastic chairs at the right section of the stage, he continued to acknowledge the greetings and salutations from members of the audience by waving and winking directly at individuals standing across the stage. In this context too, the style of salutation, which involves a person raising two hands above their head while stamping one of their feet on the ground, is done repeatedly by many people. Some members of the audience with a prior relationship with Taye Currency and or his band members often managed to get through the body barricade of the staff guiding the access stairs to the elevated stage. Within ten minutes of sitting on the side stage, the entire rear space of the stage was filled with the presence of the instrumentalist and his Egbe group. Everyone took a position as they spread across the stage in the form of a bird wing shape in their uniform blue Ankara

[15] The older twin child, the first to be born.

[16] an urban slang describing a situation of "running" or "escape" from a place or space.

prints[17]*. The performance commenced in earnest with fast pace beat drumbeats. Taye Currency was seen dancing energetically to the rhythm of the layered and fast-paced drumbeats popularly known as alujo beats.*

Fig 0.7: a. Taye Currency's arrival (being hailed by the crowd and a group of drummers) at the Association of Shoemakers Ibadan chapter's end-of-the-year celebration at Mapo Hall premises. b. Taye Currency and band set on stage to commence performance. Image by author, Mapo Hall, Ibadan. Dec. 2018.

Taye Currency and his Egbe sang choruses, call and response stanzas. Some sections of the audience were seen to sing along, jump or dance energetically to the dense and loud fast-paced drumbeats. Around fifteen minutes into the performance, he was handed a booklet that contained the names of the executive members of the Shoemakers Association and other members of the audience. The people approached the performance stage in groups causing the stage to be rowdy. The musician was circled with people taking turns to spray money on him and their associates.

… to continue in chapter four.

0.1 The Fújì World

In this dissertation, I study fújì and everyday life in the contemporary urban Yorùbá space. I use the vignettes I have provided above as examples of the observations I made while attending and observing fújì events during the fieldwork study I conducted between August 2018 and January 2019. These reflections opened my view on fújì as a performance space interacting with other social and material categories of a "world". As seen in the above vignette, the fújì performance space is not just an innocent space, it is a space for music and entertainment as it is a space for commerce. It is a space of class constellation, hierarchy and affiliations. It is

[17] It is the same type of dress the two drummers who assisted Arole Currency wore. It is an indication that the two drummers step-up to assist him during the performance.

a space where events and activities transgress the moment of performance. In fújì space, socio-economic reality as well as deep-rooted cultural values of personhood and the performance of the social persona. Thus, when I think of fújì, I think of it as a world-making genre. Why world-making? The answer lies in the acknowledgement of intersections of multiple identities in the fújì world on the one hand and the connoting "actions that transform the "material" world" (Kondo 2018: 28) To think of fújì is to think of religious identities, age, class, gender, musicians, audience, mobility, and social stratification. My thinking of fújì as a world is a way of operationalizing the genre and its multiple strands of constituted realities. In essence, I speak of fújì's animation of imagination in fújì performance and the Yorùbá urban world[18]." I am emphasising that the fújì performance space is not an isolated space from the lived experiences in the urban Yorùbá space. It is a space and a genre of re-enactment with a continuum effect of the performance's effect in everyday life.

To understand the place of fújì against the backdrop of the contemporary urban Yorùbá everyday life framework is to query its core constitution through the lens of popular culture. Essentially, the simplistic categorisation of "elite" or "traditional" will be defied. Rather than box fújì into an endless dichotomy of framings, Barber and Waterman have proposed an understanding acknowledging it as "a process of extension, domestication and intensification" (1995:343). While justifying the process of fújì's classification as a popular genre, Barber and Waterman (1995) remind us of the elements of apparent hybrid the genre possesses. By this, fújì is, on the one hand, "'indigenous', 'traditional' elements: the use of the Yorùbá language; the incorporation of the long-established verbal genres such as proverbs oríkì; the philosophy expressed in some of the lyrics; and the patron-client networks which are socioeconomic *raison d'être* of fújì performance" (Ibid.241). On the other hand, fújì is 'exogenous' as it draws from "the repertoires of a global, electronically disseminated mass culture"- for example, sections of its lyrics containing "English, including African American English, the bands use imported musical technology; musical style themes culled from European and American media; in videos, the visual imagery includes a continual flow of representations of imported commodities" (Ibid.241).

This multi-layered constellation of fújì's identity makes it a source of aggregating what people do, that is "the unofficial" and the canonical (Barber 2018:1). Thus, borrowing from

[18] Dorinne Kondo's work *Worldmaking* talks about how "theater artists are creating their art; they are also making and unmaking race." (Ibid.25). In the case of fújì musicians, their work is not limited to the creativity of the popular genre alone. fújì plays important role in constituting and unmaking the contemporary Yorùbá urban space experience.

Barber and Waterman, fújì is framed on the three signification levels. This lies in the knowledge that the genre "extends from a local point and traverses what lies beyond the immediate locality" (Ibid.343). As such, its style is often domesticated by fújì musicians by incorporating fragments from multiple sources into the performance. Since "the ultimate goal of any performance is to intensify" and diversify (Ibid.343), the actors of or in performance are not to consider "stable, fully constituted givens" but rather a product of consolidated personae through a" process of "an assemblage of traits, fused together by social interactions and attention" (Ibid.343). Beyond, the account for the multiplicities in meaning regards to fújì.

This thesis takes cognizance of fújì's characteristics to situate it within the discourse of "expressive forms that are constantly emergent, ephemeral, embedded in daily life, given to extraordinary burst of activities and rapid transmutation" (Barber 2018:3). As seen in the above vignette, fújì's performance space is not in isolation from the dynamics of the extraordinary burst of activities in the sense of the Yorùbá urban space economically culturally, and politically. In essence, fújì falls into the category of "the range of cultural productions, platforms and interactions between consumers and producers – which are often interchangeable- that capture the material, the affective, as inflected and refracted in different texts, contexts, and platforms (Spencer, Ligaga and Musila 2018: 3). Thus, my approach to fújì is through the aesthetic experience, especially in ways that allow me to acknowledge and interrogate the affective nature of the genre. This aspect of fújì will be seen in chapters three and five of this thesis, where I will showcase what and how fújì's use of oríkì is important in creating social imaginaries.

Summarily, fújì has its root as an offshoot of an all-male group of different age grades known as *Ajísààrì* music, traditionally performed in the early mornings of the Ramadan fast by amateur Muslim (wéré) musicians. An average fújì band has been predominantly male, and the band identity is formed on or around the image of a lead musician. from a clear-cut hierarchical dynamic between the lead musician and the band members, it embodies Yorùbá cultural attributes of hierarchy and affiliation (Waterman 1990). The overall development of this thesis will reflect this aspect of fújì, which is a genre dominated and characterized by masculine performance space and subjects.

0.2 Synopsis of the Thesis

This thesis explores fújì and everyday life in the contemporary Yorùbá urban space. Apart from this introduction chapter, the thesis has seven chapters. Chapter one of this thesis is titled "fújì 'World' Coordinates: Relevant Theories, Concepts, and Debates". The chapter has two

main parts: the first deals with theories and concepts, while the second focuses on the research methodology and my positionality as a researcher in the field.

The first chapter, therefore, commences with a discussion on aesthetic experience. Relying on Adorno, the postulations are that musical effect is not uni-direction which humans understand, but that music also understands us. I also set the tone of my approach to the meaning in and of fújì as going beyond representational meaning into the experience of it. I also discuss popular culture as a field and analytical category in the first. The chapter also delves into my reflections on lyrics, context, and literary fields. This section also leads me to think through the relevance and the debates of oral literature in the context of this research.

Since I do not see fújì as independent of its context of production, I open an inventory and brief discussion on the emerging Yorùbá analytical concepts that the subsequent chapters of the thesis will later build on. I specifically introduce ìgboro as a social category and analytical framework. I also introduce the concept of gbajúmọ̀, or the big man, as part of the emerging analysis concepts in the thesis. Also, the chapter introduces, briefly, the Yorùbá concept of Orí, Oríkì, and Èníyàn. Since the thesis straddles the fields of popular culture, literary Studies, and anthropology, the chapters' development and analyses reflect both literary methods of close-reading and anthropological methods of fieldwork and thick description. The second part of the first chapter returns to the broad discussion on the research methodology I adopt in this thesis. Specifically, the section will highlight the literary and ethnographic experience methods that are used in the course of this research.

In chapter two, I attempt to characterise fújì, in a broader conversation by highlighting the contested debates around its identity. The chapter will attempt to provide biographical information on early fújì musicians while introducing other musicians whose works are relevant to this research. The chapter also opens up a thread of historical accounts anchored on the biographical account of selected fújì musicians. This aspect will not be fully resolved in chapter two because the sociocultural background of the musicians continues to be reflected in the subsequent chapters of the thesis.

In chapter three, the thesis focuses on ‘Negotiating Status in fújì World: Mobiliy, Rivalry, and Affiliations’. In the chapter, I explore the representation of the themes of rivalry and hierarchy amongst fújì musicians through a close reading of selected fújì lyrics by Saheed Osupa. The analysis of the themes of rivalry and hierarchy in fújì is, however, set against the background of the theme of social mobility - social mobility also features prominently in fújì works, and it is considered in this thesis as part of the precursor for the emergence of the theme

of the rivalry in fújì. The chapter will also zoom in on fújì musicians' aliases and descriptive titles to further foreground the dynamics of fújì's imaginary hierarchy and performance of public persona. Analysing fújì as a performance space for understanding alliances and affiliations is the final part of my engagement in this chapter.

Chapter four, 'Fújì: Performing Street Culture (Ìgboro) in Urban Yorùbá Space,' focuses on the semiosis of the contemporary Yorùbá urban space. The chapter explores (closely) the concept of *ìgboro*, the street, as an analytical category in fújì. In this case, the concept of *ìgboro* is critically considered with the idea of re-negotiation of identity through performative acts of reclamation from negative, derogatory zones of meaning to the empowering, creative, and expressive way of being. Igbooro and its sub-categories are discussed as both social categories and analytical concepts that are relevant to the understanding of fújì as mediating the Yorùbá urban space experiences. I discuss other categories of street culture represented and performed in fújì. The chapter also explores ìgboro as a semiotic practice and the role of fújì in creating contemporary Yorùbá urban vocabularies and ways of being.

Chapter five, 'Fújì Lyrics: Gbajúmọ̀ (Big man) and its Rootedness in Praise Singing' speaks to how fújì is implicated in curating 'Gbajúmọ̀' in the Yorùbá urban space. Like chapter four, this chapter delves in-depth into the discussions on various analytical concepts of the big man, Gbajúmọ̀, ènìyàn, oríkì and orí. These concepts are discussed within the framework of self-realisation through praise singing in fújì. The analysis in the chapter relies on close reading of selected fújì lyrics.

Chapter six, 'Broader Implication: Performing Gbajúmọ̀ (Big man) Urban Yorùbá Space' is where I conclude my analysis of gbajúmọ̀ in this thesis. The analysis in this chapter is narrowed by discussing the big man outside the performance space. This chapter analyses the gbajúmọ̀, or the big man, against the backdrop of the Yorùbá informal economic space. I show how fújì serves as the backdrop to articulate a vision of grandeur for the big man in the contemporary Yorùbá space.

Chapter Seven is the concluding chapter. I bring together the diverse arguments I established in the thesis. The concluding chapter is anchored on two threads of thoughts, representing the summary of my core arguments in the thesis. The chapter thesis is concluded under the thought thread titled 'Popular Culture: Fújì as Reading Dynamism and Complexities of the Contemporary Urban Yorùbá Space' and 'Aesthetic Experience and the Agency of fújì on the Performance of Contemporary Urban Yorùbá Social Persona'. The chapter and the thesis are wrapped with my brief reflection on the future outlook of the ideas in the thesis.

CHAPTER ONE

1 The Fújì "World" Coordinates: Relevant Theories, Concepts and Debates

At the heart of this study is the argument that fújì music shapes the world in various ways in the context of everyday life experiences in the Yorùbá urban space and the construction of social persona. Furthermore, I argue that the events in the urban Yorùbá lifeworld also feed into and produce fújì aesthetics. What this, therefore, means is that there exists a dialectic and mutually reflexive dynamic between fújì music, on the one hand, and the Yorùbá urban lifeworld, on the other, which creates dialectic relations.

This research sets out to answer the following questions:

1. How does fújì constitute an aesthetic of lived experience in the contemporary urban Yorùbá lifeworld?

2. In what ways can the modes of interaction between fújì musicians, their fans and the audience's activities contribute to the understanding of the contemporary Yorùbá urban milieu?

3. How is fújì implicated in curating the performances and experiences of 'Gbajúmọ̀' and the 'Big man' in the context of the contemporary Yorùbá urban space?

This chapter foregrounds the analytical concepts I use in thinking through and analysing this dissertation. As a guiding parameter, I am interested in both text and context. The fújì context and the lyrics are equally relevant to my overall conceptualization. Thus, I read fújì as a cultural text and a product of everyday life experiences (Barber 2007). In this case, the research is located in the field of popular culture. My conceptual approach in this thesis is fluid and flexible. This is done to accommodate an analytical approach that suits the primary materials and the context that produces the knowledge it bears.

The research straddles the fields of popular culture, literary studies, and ethnography. As the title of this chapter suggests, rather than impose, I am attempting to map[19] my framework out of disciplinary conventions while also staying true to concepts and meanings peculiar to the research materials and context. Thus, this chapter flows into two parts. The first part collates theories and analytical concepts, while the second focuses on the research methodology.

[19] "In a situation a sign, any sign, would help, but most useful would be a map. The map is one of the most powerful and effective means humans have to make sense of their place in the world" (Tally 2013: 2)

1.1 PART I: Situating Fújì in Interdisciplinary Discourse

Part 1 of this chapter is further divided into three sub-parts. In the first part, I will present my understanding of two critical conceptual frameworks crucial to the thesis' overall framing: Aesthetic Experience and Popular culture in Africa. The second part presents three short sections of my reflections on relevant debates that are connected to the approaches and analytical methods I adopt in this thesis, which are lyrics, context, and literary fields; the literary and oral debate; and oral texts. The third part of the subsequent section brings forth the emerging analytical concepts from my primary materials, which I categorise as follows: first, is the 'Ìgboro' ("street") and its sub-categories, second is the 'Gbajúmọ̀' and the 'Big man' in an everyday context, and finally, the concepts of '*Orí*', '*Ènìyàn*' and '*oríkì*'.

1.1.1 Aesthetics Experience

"We don't understand music, it understands us"[20]

The quote above by the philosopher Adorno contemplates music not just as an ordinary art form that possesses a passive effect on its audience but describes it as an art form with the strong agency to act on humans. In essence, music is characterised by its agency, which best defines music as an experience of an active force. Furthermore, the notion that music understands humans is a pointer to an emotional state, interference, an effect and impact of music on the listeners. Such a perspective can broaden a view of popular music since it is a productive attempt at conceptualizing music as an agent of experience. It escapes what can be perceived as a predictable cliché of reading popular music that is limited to representational meanings. By representational meaning, I imply an idea of music as used as a vehicle to a well-defined end, for instance, music transporting the message of changing society. This thesis builds upon the critique that music not only represents society (Verne 2013). As Adorno reminds us, music does not necessarily follow predefined purposes but overwhelms its audiences and creators. It understands us in the sense of awakening forgotten fantasies and imaginations far-beyond well-calculated social aim or purpose.

It is important to clarify that I take cognizance to the potential diversity of the audience or listeners and their subjectivities in interpretation of popular music. However, the methods of close reading from literary studies in my textual analysis I will use equip me with the opportunity of thematic and language interpretation in *fújì*. It means I will analyse the thematic focus of the text and its structure (again, the meaning of the text is considered in a broad sense

[20] Adorno (1993:15) *Beethoven*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann

here), unravelling its multitude of imaginations and associations. This study also seeks to establish what *fújì* conveys to its listeners and its implication in the Yorùbá social context. What does *fújì* say about individuals and the contemporary Yorùbá social world? How does it speak to varieties of themes? This approach involves being analytically "undisciplined", or simply drawing from fields and categories beyond the conventional literary boundary. In this regard, anthropological works studying African popular music are critical: methods of participatory fieldwork and interviews complement my approach. These interdisciplinary approaches provide the pathway of engaging texts beyond a simplistic notion of representational value in which texts are then perceived as vehicles for social meanings. My entry point to discussing aesthetic experience about popular music in Africa is modelled after Marcus Verne's work on *Heavy Metal in Madagascar.* Verne challenges us to re-evaluate and rethink the aesthetics of popular music. From this point of view, music is an enabler of the sensuous experience of social processes, rather than a "tool for identity formation" (2013: 3) as eschewed by early scholarly works. In this case, I am adopting Verne's (2013) approach to popular music, which also puts an emphasis on the empirical study of popular music. Meaning making is dynamic and my approach to aesthetics is informed by the idea that responses to artworks are produced continuously. Music, as a category of artwork, is "perhaps the most experiential art form" and any approach, which affords unconventional access to have a feel of the deeper meanings and implications of the music – the real-time experiences- are considered sources of "truth" (Friedman 2018:5).

Thus, I approach *fújì* as cultural texts embodying specific and peculiar Yorùbá aesthetics. I am extending my aesthetics framing to align with Rowland Abiodun's (2001) idea of the centrality of sound, sight and soul[21] in African artistic appreciation. In fact, Adenekan (2021) extends Abiodun's argument to mean a signposting towards "how a network of people work together to determine aesthetics" (2021:37). By this, Adenekan while expanding on Rowland's idea of the centrality of sound, sight and soul argues that this approach is "grounded in the individual as it is in the community" (2021:37). I am also fascinated that the perspective supports the agency of the music itself in terms of its ability of music to speak or act on its listeners in manifold ways. What interests me in this context is the interplay of real life and fújì

[21] Abiodun helps us to understand that contemporary studies of African artistic works will benefit greatly when we "make full use of the philosophies of Afrian people" (2001:16). By this, the avoidiance of the pitfall working only with "direct representational and formal analysis to the detriment of culturally based studies in aesthetics and art criticism" (Ibid.16).

performance. My thesis intervenes in this aspect by broadly mobilising Barber[22]'s model in generativeness of text.

1.1.2 Popular Culture in Africa

> *"Popular is what people do – whether in villages or cities, whether in oral performance or global media" (Barber 2018: xvi)*

Popular culture is multi-layered as a distinctive concept or a field of inquiry. Ligaga and Musila stress that the "debate on the definition of the 'popular' remains an open one with multiple interpretations and categories" (2018:1). In a more provocative admission to the complexities of defining popular culture, Bennet describes the concept as "virtually useless, a melting pot of confused and contradictory meanings capable of misdirecting inquiry up any number of theoretical blind alleys" (1980:18). Going by Bennet's tone, there is seemingly evident frustration from scholars like him grappling with while attempting to define popular culture as either an analytical category or a disciplinary field. Currey (2008) also speaks in the direction of explaining popular culture as an empty category, which can be supposedly filled with varieties of meanings, some of which could even be conflicting and contradictory, depending on the context. In some unique ways, popular culture is often presented in the frame of the "other" – a field and a category that is often discussed in relation to or against another category, especially in the humanities[23]. It can, for instance, be the 'other' in relation to more elitist canons of arts and touches on notions of class.

As a further testament to the position of popular culture as L'Enfant terrible in relation to disciplines, like literary studies or studies of music, Spencer, Ligaga and Musila express the following:

> Despite the wide recognition of popular art forms as invaluable sources of insights into societies, these cultural productions remain haunted by scholarly anxieties about their indiscipline; their transgressiveness; their contradictory impulses and general refusal to cohere with canonized perspectives and modes of thought. (2018:3)

The scholarly hesitation towards popular arts form is not only a mere disciplinary challenge but also a reflection of the epistemology in disciplines like literature and its limitation to

[22] Barber's argument that oral performance "convene an imagined audience often exceeding the people actually present, and hail them as a particular kind of listener, offering them a standpoint with which to secure uptake of the utterance" (2017:138) already signals transcendental quality of fújì music. The ability of music to transcend its immediate performance space and catching up with new audience at the level of imagination.

[23] Barber also discusses popular culture as taking a "marginal in scholarship on the arts in sub-saharan Africa" (1997:1)

accommodate other coexisting manifestations. Barber buttresses this understanding by declaring, "Popular culture in Africa is a product of everyday life. It is unofficial, the non-canonical" (2018:1).

The first step is to overcome the sense that popular culture in Africa is a residual category or field that is vague and demarcated from what it is not. Rather than assuming the category as empty, it can be looked at as emerging from everyday and ordinary life – a people's invention that is "produced in specific historical circumstances" and is subject to "change with times" (Barber 2018:3). In that case, therefore, the adaptive, resourceful and inventive nature of the everyday reality can be acknowledged as what drives popular culture and its agents, the people.

Barber further draws attention to the perception that African popular culture is often viewed along binary lines of traditional versus modern or westernised versus local culture. These categories, although significant in some ways, are not representative of how "cultural producers in African cultures (…) describe and understand the cultural universe within which they operate" (Barber1989:1). Barber discourages a binary approach where traditional versus modern is played against each other in conceptualizing popular culture in Africa, as such a position would only imply that the latter (modern) is a direct offshoot of the former. Cultural manifestations and culture cannot be discussed in evolutionary terms. Modernity has often produced a teleological view and in terms of Europe as the benchmark of progress. Notions of modernity have been predicated on "a huge time difference between Africa and Europe" (Olaniyan 2018). This inadequate vision of modernity portrays the African continent (and by extension her people and their cultures) as backward and traditional in relation to the technologically and economically developed Europe[24]. Whereas, what is obtainable is an entangled moment of history where willingly or unwillingly Africa and her people are within the making of modernity – rather modernities.

Barber (2018) argues that popular culture in Africa does not only emerge through a historical process; it is also an active participant agent shaping the continent's experience and is a viable and "valuable platform for working through the question of everyday life[25], as well as imaginative future mapping of desires and aspirations" (Spencer, Ligaga and Musila 2018:3). On his part, Fabian (1998: 2) captures, an aspect of what popular culture signifies particularly

[24] I paraphrased the interview granted by Olaniyan (2014) titled Tejumola Olaniyan, The misconception of Modernity, a conversation with European Attraction Limited. Source: YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N0yKhmpTpG4

[25] Also Barber (2018:1) discuss popular culture as a product of everyday life.

in coercive contexts, providing "spaces of freedom and creativity in situations of oppression". Particularly in postcolonial African states, haunted by military coups and dictatorship rule, censorship of people's voices and attempts to push civil debates to the margin products of popular culture, more than the mainstream media or established fields of art production, allow for the rise of dissent voices. This makes forms of popular culture a means for survival and protest. In popular culture, African subjects[26] find the means through creative and cultural practitioners to express criticism but also the experience of joie de vivre.

My focus in this study underscores the centrality of the approach that views popular culture as a product of everyday life experiences. In addition, I am using popular culture not just only a product but also a way of making sense of everyday life. This idea goes back to the idea of fújì musicians and world-making. Newell and Okome (2014) rightly contend that popular culture should be considered an episteme, whose perspective is critical to understanding contemporary realities. The everyday African reality found in popular culture is worth exploring as "counter narratives" (Balogun, and Graboyes 2019) also to the widely subscribed single stories of Africa's misery. This shift does not deny the existence of unsavory human conditions and experiences as part of what constitutes African reality for most Africans. Rather, it provides an opportunity to engage more broadly and robustly – the one in which daily life is presented as indeed complex, dynamic, unpredictable, and sometimes surprising.

Popular music, like any other art form, "does not merely reflect an already-constituted consciousness, giving us a window into something already present" (Barber 1987:4), but also plays a powerful role in shaping people's lifeworld. I am using lifeworld in this thesis broadly by drawing on Schütz's idea of everyday life and the commonsense of the world where attention or cognitive style is shaped by the "natural attitude" (Schütz & Luckmann, 1974). The lifeworld is the "taken for granted" reality of an individual because it is considered self-evident when individuals were born into it and existed long before them. By this, the everyday reality is "socially constructed and constantly changing, which allows individuals to situate themselves without needing to question values, meanings and orientations." (Santiago-Delefosse and Del Río Carral 2015:1267). As a project which combines ethnography, I am drawing from Kondo's idea and method of querying the "theater industry" Kondo (2018:4) through participatory observation to ground my insight into the fújì world. By this, fújì musicians, their audience, and

[26] Ogola (2019) work, for example, explores an aspect of popular fiction as a genre, which is widely recognizable for its censorship role of the polity.

their performance spaces are viewed as the process of making, unmaking, and remaking[27] their world.

As outlined before, drawing on Adorno, music understands its people, before they understand it. Thus, in this thesis, I seek to transcend the mere presentation of reality or the dialectic window of reflection, to draw on Spencer, Ligaga and Musila's (2018) conceptualization of popular imaginaries which they discuss to "mean the range of cultural productions, platform, and interaction between consumers and producers". As discussed further by these scholars, the dynamic nature of consumers' and producers' interaction concerning popular imaginaries can be further explored as capturing "the material, the affective, as inflected and refracted in different texts, contexts and platforms" (3). In addition, Johannes Fabian's idea of a "moment of freedom" further expands the basis on what to think of fújì, in the context of everyday experience in the Yorùbá urban space, as the enabling arena or conveyance of access points to capture moments and situations that transcend beyond the present moments. Music, its very sound, its lyrics and energy have a powerful impact on people's lives and (be)lived experiences, which I undertake to frame further using the concept of the "aesthetic experience".

In the context of this research, I will draw from the concepts that will emerge from the texts - the lyrics and the narratives from the Yorùbá context of everyday life. However, before delving into this, I will address other relevant debates that will enrich and further justify my deliberate adoption of conceptual frameworks that are text and context informed. My quick reflections will touch on lyrics, (Yorùbá) context, and the question of the literary field.

1.1.3 Questioning the literary canon

> *"If the word "text" is understood in the broad sense – as any coherent complex of signs – then even study of art (the study of music, the theory and history of fine arts) deals with texts"*[28]

As outlined before, my thesis primarily uses methods of literary studies and therefore also adds to questioning notions of the literary canon. It unsettles it by bringing up questions about what a text is and how to draw the line between the oral and the written, which are essential for

[27] Kondo specifically speaks of how ethnography corporeal epistemologies enable her to "shift focus from the analysis of representation" which she desxcribes as " the conventional world of drama and cultural studies criticism " to spotlight" what she learnt "as a participant: back stage creative processes, the artistic labor that makes, unmakes and remakes race" (Ibid.4)

[28] Bakhtin (1986: 193)

fújì. Before turning to orality and its implications, I want to refer to current literary debates about too narrow definitions of "the literary".

A critical look at the awarding of the 2016 Nobel Prize in Literature, which saw the American singer-songwriter Bob Dylan announced as the winner will serve as an entry into the discussion on literary category and text. In its reaction, *The New York Times* publication of 13th October, 2016 reported the news under the headline "Bob Dylan Wins Nobel Prize, Redefining Boundaries of Literature". The article reads in part as follows:

> "Mr. Dylan, 75, is the first musician to win the award, and his selection on Thursday is perhaps the most radical choice in a history stretching back to 1901. In choosing a popular musician for the literary world's highest honour, the Swedish Academy, which awards the prize, dramatically redefined the boundaries of literature, setting off a debate about whether song lyrics have the same artistic value as poetry or novels."[29]

One of the central issues in the above article becomes evident when one begins to question the wording of the title, which includes the concept of redefining "boundaries of literature". The idea of "boundaries" that the writer of the article puts forward hints at an indication of an understanding and awareness of plurality of/in literature.

However, context and tradition differ, given that literature manifests differently across cultures. Indeed, it is productive to acknowledge literature as existing in its multiple forms, that is, as "value-laden and historically-specific" (Barber 2007:2) at each encounter. Thus, debate on the accrued value of literature or its derived meanings can be as relevant as the extent of consideration for contextual and historical trajectories.

Olabiyi Yai, sheds more light on how to expand the view of literature beyond the typological perspective. He argues that the typological-only method should not be solely considered "because a genre typology has little value as long as the features of the various types, have not

[29] The commentary and the debate is not only limited to the Anglophone literary community, a reaction article published in a German Newspaper, Deutschlandfunk Kultur, titled „*Bob Dylan Literaturnobelpreisträger wider Willen"* by Sieglinde Geisel. Published on 9th December 2016 (https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/bob-dylan-literaturnobelpreistraeger-wider-willen-100.html) „Der wirkmächtigste Preis für Literatur geht morgen an einen Singer-Songwriter. Seit der Bekanntgabe im Oktober wird darüber diskutiert, ob Bob Dylan ein Schriftsteller sei, und wenn ja, ein herausragender. Denn mit dem Literaturnobelpreis soll ein Autor ausgezeichnet werden, der „in der Literatur das Herausragendste in idealistischer Richtung produziert hat", so hat es der Stifter Alfred Nobel in seinem Testament formuliert.

Seit es den Literaturnobelpreis gibt, rätselt die Welt jedes Jahr aufs Neue über die Kriterien der Stockholmer Jury. Die diesjährige Wahl gab allerdings nicht wegen der Ideale zu Diskussionen Anlass, sondern wegen der Kunst, beziehungsweise der Sparte. Die Jury hat entschieden, dass Liedtexte Gedichte seien, und sie beruft sich in ihrer Begründung auf keinen Geringeren als Homer, der war schließlich auch ein fahrender Sänger. Die Latte liegt hoch: Ob die Songtexte von Bob Dylan ohne ihre Musik so gut bestehen können wie die Odyssee oder die Ilias?"

been thoroughly identified, studied and compared" Yai (1999:12). Indeed, the announcement of Dylan vis-à-vis the tradition of the Nobel Prize for Literature, and other popular literary award platforms, appears as an exceptional development that signals a new horizon on the debate of literary forms. Thus, reinforcing the hope of ultimately broadening the whole notion of literature, its boundaries and conventions.

Indeed, Emily Apter (2013) has pointed to a "Eurochronology problem[30]". Eurochronology implicates the global literary scene as an uneven terrain. In this literary arrangement, written works of literature in poetry, prose, and drama are the standard. Lorentzon (2007) traces the under-representation of certain literary works in academia as detachable from its Roman-Christian European roots. In this regard, Orsini (2015) provides a graphic image of the global literary scene to represent the skewed dynamics. In this case, non-western literary categories are considered limiting. Orsini, therefore, pushes for multilingualism as an antidote to override the absence or un-even representation of non-western categories in the world literary pool. This means pluralities, especially those that go beyond the familiar languages and conventional forms. Multilingualism is one of the possible ways of levelling up and navigating a literary topography, which means a deliberate reach for literary works outside the forms, is sourced beyond the European languages. Therefore, Lorentzon suggests looking beyond the west[31] as one of the possible ways out of the logjam of both historical and contextual inadequacies.

As it is with language, the economics of global literary flow, and the literary production and distribution network is driven by a dominant global capitalist system. The implication is that the agenda, access, and distribution of creative materials are driven largely by a dominant system. Apter explains how the "literary communities are gated according to western law and the international statute" (2013: 15). The West might be considered the centre of laws and aesthetics moderation in the literary field. For critics who operate from a rigid Western framework, Bob Dylan's Nobel Prize is a rupture from literary tradition while for others, it is a confirmation of a broader world of literature which transcends the limited forms and language.

[30] Apter builds on the idea of Pendergast? and Appadurai to alter the trajectory of narrow literature conceptualization by advocating for "a redistributed academic studies and redrawn map of language politics" (2013:7)

[31] Moretti also speaks about the how the narrative market is uneven when projecting through the European lens "*Moretti's Literary World-Systems*" in Apter's (2013) "*Against World Literature*"

1.1.4 Orality and the Notion of Text

> *"We always pay a price for theoretical knowledge: reality is infinitely rich; concepts are abstract, are poor. But it's precisely this 'poverty' that makes it possible to handle them, and therefore to know. This is why less is actually more."*[32]

I adopt the broad term 'text' in this thesis, which goes beyond the written referring to all 'textures' of signs, transgressing boundaries of the written and the oral, the audible and the visual. "Texts are constructed to be detachable from the flow of conversation so that they can be repeated, quoted and commented upon – they are forms of language, that is, which whether written or oral, are accorded a kind of independent and privileged existence. At the same time, however, all texts including written ones, are forms of action, speech acts embedded in the context of their emission and reception" (Barber 2007:3).

In considering how to analyse *fújì*, I find the context to be relevant, especially in thinking of the music genre as an integral process of textual production. In this case, any method that isolates the musical lyrics or the audio-visual aspects and from the larger performance space and the social context alienates the opportunity for a holistic framing and conceptualization of the *fújì* genre. Olabiyi Babalola Yai calls for a nuanced observation of "Yorùbá artistic traditions in time and space" (1993:34) as a precursor to engaging with artistic works. I also adopt Barber's (2007) notion of 'texts' as social produce – both written and oral. In this sense, I am interested in interrogating the notion of texts as weaving and fabricating of the word, and the process being "universal human work" (Barber 2007:1).

To think of the analysis of *fújì* is to think of a generative text. In essence, I am inspired by Yai's idea of the Yorùbá artist as an *are*, that is, the "Yorùbá transcendental sculptor". An *are* is a creator of the work of art who *a*ccording to Yai, an *are* is "an itinerant, a permanent stranger precisely because he or she can be permanent nowhere" (Ibid.34). This description reinforces the notion of fluidity, the generating aspect and boundlessness of *fújì* works. In a stricter sense, in my thesis, texts comprise *fújì* music lyrics, interview materials, personal accounts as narratives generated from the field and audio-visual materials. Bauman (1974) characterizes verbal arts[33] as a genre that reaches a broad range of disciplines and conceptual domains.

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[32] Moretti 2013: 57-88. Franco Moretti's idea is drawn from Fredric Jameson, 'In the Mirror of Alternate Modernities', in Karatani Kojin, *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*, Durham–London 1993, p. xiii.

[33] I use verbal arts as a preference over oral literature. I understand verbal arts as a broader and less methodological and disciplinary imposing. It fits ontologically to the texts (*fújì* music) I analyse. In a sense, verbal arts give my conceptualization a broader feel as it reaches for the encompassing meaning.

In this regard, I adopt verbal text as a framing category to avoid a strict regimen and allow a broader and more flexible conceptualization of the analytical materials. Language and performance are intricately connected to verbal texts and important to making sense of the literary category. As Bakhtin suggests, language has the ability to live a real life since it is a "concrete heteroglot conception of the world" (2010:292). Nandwa and Bukenya (1983) describe Africa's oral literature as utterances in any form of performance that reflects a proportionate artistic input of thoughts and appreciable language. In addition, Okpewho (1992) describes African oral literature as an old, but continuous societal practice conveyed through expression by mouth in a creative manner. These definitions put the verbal arts at the heart of social practices.

Barber describes "verbal text" as unique and argues that it has ways and the ability to "shed light, in a way nothing else can, on the inner life of societies" (2007:2). Moreover, in many African societies like the Yorùbá society, oral performances cuts across aspects of religious practices, philosophy, entertainment, education and communal ethos and knowledge coding and knowledge transfers. In this case, oral texts manifest and are used intersectionally as generic and multi-purpose in terms of knowledge production and mediation of Yorùbá lifeworlds.

1.1.5 Emerging Concepts of 'Ìgboro'

I mentioned earlier that my analysis of fújì takes context seriously because it helps me to account for contextual knowledge. In essence, I am equipped with an analytical lens that speaks to *fújì* musicians and audience lifeworlds for my analysis. Why do I care about context in my discussion of fújì? Adenekan (2021) provides insight into this idea when he argues that "artists including writers draw their inspirations from a wide range of traditions and media" (38). Indeed, fújì artists as an individual and their extended community[34] co-produce fújì from a wide range of traditions which are also articulated through a diverse medium. I acknowledge that tradition in its connotation can be stretched in multiple ways. My use of tradition in fújì discussion largely draws from the Yorùbá worldview and the contemporary Yorùbá urban space experience. In this case, "tradition emerges from the kinds of choices persons made with respect to social, political, religious, and artistic expression" (Abiodun 2001:17). More precisely, Abiodun evokes the concept "asa"[35] (style) to speak concretely to the observable "result of a creative and intelligent combination of styles from a wide range of available options within the

[34] I use community in this context to refer to generations of musicians before them, their contemporaries, emerging fújì musicians and their audience or fans.

[35] Asa in itself is two-dimensional, referring to style or tradition and it is "never static and unoriginal" (Ibid.17)

culture" (Ibid.17). Central to the context of *fújì* is the category of ìgboro (the street), referring to a space in the urban geography and a social category (of lower social class) – I will examine ìgboro more in depth in chapter four. As a social category, ìgboro speaks to the nature of social classes in contemporary Yorùbá society. It is the ìgboro context where most *fújì* fans come from, and which is also a major imaginary space of *fújì* lyrics.

According to *A Dictionary of the Yorùbá Language* by Oxford University Press (1978), Ìgboro is translated as "street" or "public through fare" (111). Similarly, Yorùbá Modern Practical Dictionary by Kayode J. Fakehinde describes ìgboro as "downtown" (561). Going by the two definitions sources, ìgboro on the basic level refers to a place, a public space, a neighbourhood's centre- space. Based on my knowledge of the Yorùbá language, the term *Ìgboro* is used in the discourse of township neighbourhoods. Ìgboro, in discourse as a place would naturally suggest a busy spot. Ìgboro speaks more of activities taking place in a neighbourhood than being an exact geographical location of centeredness. In essence, Ìgboro takes its contextual meaning from multiple activities in a locality. No matter how centrally located, a serene and quiet neighbourhood will not be called Ìgboro.

Ìgboro refers to the lower strata of society and urban space. Another layer of meaning derives from the reading of Ìgboro as a category of social stratification experience. Ìgboro, an actual place in the community constellation, is marked by activities and experiences that characterise it as the dominant presence of the working-class, low incomes, and informal economic activities. ìgboro is a space of the hustle and bustle. Thus, Ìgboro is a space for ordinary citizens, and it is pre-disposed as a site to produce popular culture texts.

Hierarchy, in which ìgboro sits on the lower end, is a feature of Yorùbá society. Adenekan argues that the existence of monarchical systems (pre-dating colonialism) is a foundational structure on which social strata are built[36]. The Yorùbá society of today still has an elaborate monarchical system, which co-exists with constitutional state structures. Indeed, the cultural social structure contributes to how class and an individual's position in society is imagined in Yorùbá society. This reality connotes that class posturing is constantly imagined and performed, for example, an individual whose family history and position connotes privilege will always mobilize such advantage towards social access and networks. In addition to this social reality there are economic aspects which come in and have increased and added on social difference. Drawing upon Guyer, Denzer, and Agbaje (2002), Klein calls attention to the social

[36] See Adenekan 2021:7

condition of most Nigerians in the nineties and how the Nigerian working class navigates the economy against the backdrop of oil wealth distribution or lack of it. Klein states the following:

> "With oil revenues in the hands of the few, the rest of the Nigeria people were left to hold onto and scavenge whatever means of employment came their way… farmers, tailors, market women and men, street hawkers, barbers, business entrepreneurs, auto parts salesmen, students, craftspeople, performing artists – all were driven to the extremes of their creativity during the increasing devaluation, inflation, and desperation of the late nineties" (Klein 2007:xix)

Through Klein's lens, the contextual reality of systemic inequalities cutting across a broad spectrum of the Yorùbá working class and professional constellations (situated in the formal and informal economic space) is established as an outcome of systemic inequalities in Nigeria. Barber (2014) also highlights the nuances in the Yorùbá class system by identifying the Yorùbá intermediate[37] class. The awareness of these class differences and social strata as part of the lived experiences in everyday Yorùbá urban space equips my identification of a social category characterised by ìgboro identity.

Fig 1.1: Informal economic activities, clustered transport, and a flyover bridge occupied by beggars, Ọmọ-Ìgboro and small-scale sellers and buyers at Mokola Roundabout, Ibadan. Image by author.

To understand Ìgboro as a concept, it is important to consider what the sub-categories signify. Derivatively, the term "*Ọmọ-ìgboro*" is a combination of the noun "*Ọmọ* + *ìgboro*" (a child/ a person + inner city/ township). Ọmọ-àdúgbò (a child or person from the neighbourhood) is also a synonym of "*Ọmọ-ìgboro*". Meanwhile, *Ọmọ-ìgboro* can connote a subtle derogatory beyond a shared spatial idea of ìgboro as an actual place. As part of a generation of Yorùbá speakers born in the mid-1980s, *Ọmọ-ìgboro* is used in everyday conversation to reference a thug. The meaning ascribed to *Ọmọ-ìgboro* is also true for another popular and well-researched

[37] The Yorùbá "intermediate claases" I refer to in this thesis are "the large stratum of Primary School leavers, with aspirations but insufficient qualifications to attain prestigious white-collars positions" (Barber 2014:xvii)

Nigerian urban lexicon known as the Area boys (*Ọmọ-adugbo*)[38]. In his study titled "*The Emergence of 'Area Boys' Phenomenom in Lagos, Nigeria*" Emordi discusses the Area Boys in Lagos as operating "mostly around overcrowded and commercial" and living in "the shadow of commercial buildings" (2005:66) of Lagos Island. He goes further to say the following:

> " The 'Area Boys' make mostly major bus stops, motor parks, under fly-over bridges and even derelict buildings, where they claim to be the 'sons of the soil' and bearing high-sounding nick-names such as 'alaye' (the controllers of the world) and 'ogbologbo' (the strong one)" (Ibid.64-65).

Rather than seeing the Area Boys through the lens of criminality or their activities as a criminal enterprise, Momoh (2000) argues that their social reality and classifications should be seen "as part of the social and ideological contradictions of class politics played out in the urban context (193). While the works of earlier scholars have provided the basis to visualize and situate the Area Boys categories within the everyday life of the urban dynamics. Most of the works study Area Boys in Lagos from a sociological point of view and its political and class implications. It is important to revisit Emordi's pointer for the nature of Area Boys as being somewhat historically specific with its unique evolutionary trajectory which amongst other things feeds into the city's status as former Nigeria's political capital and "the hub of the country's industrial and commercial activities as well as the melting pot of various cultures" Emordi (2005:61). However, in my thesis, I make use the terms *Ọmọ-Ìgboro* and *'Ẹrú ikú'* (*death-slaves*) to contextualize the phenomenon within the Yorùbá cultural framework and urban narrative experience[39]. Ọmọ-ìgboro connotes a street-smart persona; on the other hand, it references the lifestyle of thuggery. While Ẹrú ikú connotes in its discursive meaning a verdict or a self-admittance to "ready to die" and "fear of no consequence".

My use of *Ọmọ-Ìgboro* and *'Ẹrú ikú'* (*death slaves*) reference a broad range of experiences. These terms, as I know them as a Yorùbá speaker, as often used as a reference to a marginalized category in the urban constellation or the non-standard contemporary Yorùbá urban slang to reference individuals' or groups' non-conformist, disruptive, or out-of-the-box behaviour. It can be used as a derogative term but has also been proudly appropriated by inhabitants of the area,

[38] Historically the discouse of Omo- adugbo or Area Boys would evoke a sense of pride, it is a situation where youths and people self-identified and associate themselves "with their areas of residence" Emordi (2005:65-66). However, the era of pride "has been replaced with that of fear, chaos, violence and anarchy caused by another generation of Lagos boys" (Ibid.66)

[39] I acknowledge that the term Area Boys is indeed a popular phenomenon in the Lagos metropolis but restricted in its usage and meaning in the context of the fújì experience.

celebrating an anti-mainstream lifestyle and an "underground identity". The two terms in the context of the discourse of non-conformity are often ascribed to a person or group (mostly male) about lifestyle, social reputation, and modes of exhibiting or expressing their personalities.

'Ẹrú ikú' exemplifies the connotation of 'ìgboro' category. *Ẹrú ikú* literarily translates to *death-slaves*. *Ẹrú ikú* as a sub-category rarely gives much room to assume or infer positive tendencies in individuals or groups, referring to the most marginalized inhabitants, who are victims of violence and oppression with hardly any possibility to escape it. *Ẹrú ikú* also speaks of an individual's or group's capacity to endure inflicted pain or violence.

In comparison, the sub-categories *Ọmọ-ìgboro* and *Ọmọ-àdúgbò* evoke more possibilities to act and also imply more subtle terms of fear or pain in a discourse of the Yorùbá underground network. However, all three terms generally connote individual's or groups' underground and non-conformist tendencies. The degree of their imaginative effect varies. In the fújì world, the ìgboro category is not only physically present at performance spaces where they are at minimum visible at the strategic entrance spaces, sections of fújì performance backstage or surroundings at the same time constituting an exit ritualistic performance of 'hostage-taking' or haggling between the fújì musician and themselves. Ìgboro categories are key reference points in fújì lyrics, especially in the discourse and instances where the fújì musicians evoke praise of the subject within the framework of a patron, powerful, fierce and masculine.

Ọmọ-ìgboro, Ọmọ-àdúgbò, Area-boys, and Ẹrú ikú, are not static. They are performed and negotiable in different contexts. Thus, the ultimate meaning they convey is a speaker's ascription to a person or group based on their respective experience. In addition, the meanings of the sub-categories (*Ọmọ-ìgboro, Ọmọ-àdúgbò*, *Area-boys*, and *Ẹrú ikú*) can be communicated by anyone or group who self-identify as such to project the imaginative effect of terror or fear to their audience. Either way, positionality, perception, intention, and context are relevant in making sense of the sub-categories. In the fújì world, it is commonplace to see fújì musicians self-identify as part of ìgboro constituent. This narrative is partly a genuine reflection on the extent of a shared socio-economic background experience among most prominent fújì musicians and the ìgboro constituents. In this case, the ìgboro trope fújì will indicate a signifier of a narrative of shared experience mobility and still living in the margins of the urban socio-economic sphere. This reality also extends to the fújì audience with aspirations or testimonies of social mobility, especially those whose professional occupation or public persona benefits from their ability to leverage fújì 's praise experience. Thus, enacting

and sustaining a persona with viable currency, access, mass mobilisation or activation effect of the ìgboro categories.

1.1.6 'Gbajúmọ̀' (Big man) in Everyday Context

There is another key category, namely Gbajúmọ̀, man, which complement the notion of ìgboro. *fújì* lyrics are to a large extent praise poem in a new form: It is the persona of the 'big man', Gbajúmọ̀, his achievements, successes, material gains, women and positions, which are the recurrent tropes in *fújì*. Drawing on the more ancient Oríkì genre (see below), *fújì* is full of praise names. This also means that fújì essentially involves a performative notion of personhood: the status of the big man is not only communicated in *fújì*, but it is being performed and negotiated. In fact, fújì plays a major role in making Big men. A person whether alive or dead can be encountered as a big man through *fújì* through the musician's strategy of highlighting and amplifying their attributes and essence. To have a first feel of the big man's persona representation in fújì, I will present a lyric excerpt of Sikiru Ayinde alias Barrister, one of the biggest fújì stars.

Table 1.1: Sikiru Ololade Ayinde alias Barrister: Adieu M.K.O Abiola

	Yorùbá	English Translation
1	Ikú ti mú Mọ́ṣúdì lọ re lé, ọláwálé f'ayé lẹ̀ lọ̀.	Death has taken Moshood home, Olawale departed from this world.
2	Ẹ̀dá ẹmá fi kú y'ẹ̀dá l'áyé, kò sẹ́ ni tí ò ní rọ̀run.	Humans do not mock the dead, no one is exempted from death.
3	Ó ṣe ó mà mà ṣe o. ọ̀ dájú ni kú, kò m'ẹnìkan.	What a pity! What a pity! Death is heartless; he is a respecter of no one.
4	Abíọ́lá lọ o.	Abíọ́lá is gone o.
5	Ikú p'olórí ọdẹ, ìgbẹ́ dùn o, Ikú p'olórí ọdẹ, ìgbẹ́ yá.	Death snatches the chief hunter, the forest lost its savour.
6	Ikú p'olórí oko, ìgbẹ́ dùn o, Ikú p'olórí oko, ìgbẹ́ yá.	Death killed the chief farmer, the farm is deserted, death killed the chief farmer, the farm lost its savour.
7	M.K Abíólá Mọ̀ṣúdì ó dì gbà o.	Farewell M.K Abíọ́lá Moshood.
8	Ọ̀run re Ọ̀run re o Mọ̀ṣúdí M.K Abíólá ọmọ Suliya ọmọ Sàláùdeen lọ.	Rest in peace Moshood. M. K. Abiola, the son of Suliyat, the son of Salaudeen who departed.
9	M.K Ọláwálé kú.	M.K. Olawale is dead.
10	Àyìndé ò kú o,	I, Ayinde, I am hale and hearty.
11	Amẹ́ríkà ni mo wà, mo gbọ́ lórí CNN pé kú pa Bíọ́lá o.	I was in America when I learned on CNN that Abiola had died.
12	Omi nú kan mí, ẹ̀rù ayé bà mi jẹ̀jẹ̀.	I was grieved, I became fearful of this world.
13	Ìbúnú rẹ o ọmọ Ádámọ̀.	This is the world of Adam's descendants.
14	Mo ráyé mo sá fáyé.	This world scares me.
15	Mọ́nì kú	Money is dead

16	Kúdí kú	Kudi is dead
17	Owó ti kẹ́rù rẹ̀ gbọ̀nà ọ̀run lọ o.	Owo had decided to pack his belongings along and depart to heaven.
18	Mọ̀ṣúdì kú t'ọlá	Moshood died alongside his wealth,
19	t'owó,	alongside his money,
20	t'òkìkí	and fame
21	àti búrùjí.	and died with all his goodluck and aura
22	Ọláwálé tó f'ẹ̀mí ẹ̀ lélẹ̀ tó ri k'ọ́mọ Nàíjíríà májìyà mọ́.	Olawale, the one who sacrificed for Nigerians to have a better life.
23	Ọmọ Nàíjíríà l'ápapọ̀ a ò ní gbàgbé Abíọ́lá.	We Nigerians shall always remember Abiola.
24	Ikú pa babaláwo bí ẹni tí ò r'ọ́pẹ̀lẹ̀ rí.	Death which kills the priest like he never knew his Ifa verses
25	Ikú p'oníṣègùn bí ẹni o l'égbògi, ti babaláwo ò m'órúkọ ẹ wede p'oun jẹ ri.	Death which kills the herbalist like he never possessed the knowledge of herbs.

My intention in producing the above lyric excerpt is to present an example of a big man's lyrics, In the above lyric excerpt, Barrister eulogises the late businessman, philanthropist and politician Moshood Kashimawo Olawale Abiola after his death on the 7th of July 1998. While conveying a sombre and sad mood following the death of the political leader M.K.O in Nigeria, Barrister deploys praise strategies to invoke and highlight numerous qualities of the deceased persona. The audience gained insight into the family ties of the deceased as much as his achievements in the song, especially with regard to his larger-than-life persona. In essence, the string of praise culminates in the articulated image of the big man the musician is portraying to his listening audience.

Since fújì performance is primarily rendered in the Yorùbá language, I do not ignore the meaning and perspective that can be derived through interrogating the concepts in the Yorùbá language. In essence, I seek to know how the big man is articulated in the Yorùbá language, and this case, the concept of Gbajúmọ̀ becomes relevant to my overall conceptualization.

Who is a Gbajúmọ̀? *Gbajúmọ̀* is a common term often used to describe a popular person (mostly men but also women) in everyday discourse amongst Yorùbá people. The term *Gbajúmọ̀* not only connotes popularity but often echoes the idea of being a socialite and having access to a vast network of people in a social space. The *Gbajúmọ̀* persona is fluid, and rather than being restrictive, it speaks to class and social mobility. It is possible for a *Gbajúmọ̀* to be poor – a social category not per se defined by richness and class association or belonging, but rather by climbing the social ladder. Furthermore, it is possible that a person is rich and not regarded as *Gbajúmọ̀*. It is the social network which counts and is typically gained through "generosity": a big man has the duty of a patron towards "his people", typically the *Ọmọ-ìgboro*

and the death slaves, to pay back – both in concrete material terms, but also in terms of care-work as well as in terms of organizing and presenting himself in *fújì* performances. Thus, I argue that Gbajúmọ̀, as a social construct identity, is best defined by accumulated attributes regarding the sphere of influence, network, sociability, acceptability, generosity, popularity and power. These defining attributes are not mutually exclusive and are not fixed - the persona and context of reference create its peculiar *Gbajúmọ̀*.

Like *Gbajúmọ̀*, also 'the big man' is a descriptive category that connotes a person's public standing in their network or community. Klein describes the big man phenomenon in relation to attainment that is illustrated through "public displays of material wealth" (2007:97). To think of the big man is to think of primarily of performative attributes and experience of status, power dynamics, popularity, and sphere of influence. "In the Yorùbá sense", argues Klein, "the ability to achieve ultimate success, which is directly proportional to the amount of money and people one collects over time" (Ibid.xviii) characterizes the core of a big man.

The big man phenomenon can be understood from a historical point of view in the Yorùbá context. Since the big man exists as social status; Karin Barber's work, *I could Speak Until Tomorrow* (1991) explains the inner workings of the big men in "traditional" Yorùbá communities, based firstly, on the existence of a larger structure of authority and hierarchy amongst various towns. Secondly, there is an internal hierarchical structure within the town, as described by Barber's description of the 19th-century Yorùbá town Okuku town. Okuku, like other Yorùbá towns, has the *Ọba* (king) "endowed with both mystical and material attributes that set him apart from the rest of the population." (1991:187). Beneath the *Ọba* are the chiefs (male and female) in their respective hierarchies. While "the rest of the town's population were ordinary free citizens, *ìwọ̀fà*, or slaves" (Ibid.187). The categories of ordinary citizens and enslaved people are self-explanatory.

Depending on circumstances, the *ìwọ̀fà* are slaves and not considered. They are a "fluctuating, but semi-permanent category of men who served as bonded labourers in other (family) compounds as a form of interest on a loan." (Ibid.189). Besides the kings and chiefs who belong to the upper class of the Yorùbá traditional society, the ordinary citizens are seen as "*ẹrú /ìwọ̀fà/ ọmọ bíbí inú*: slaves, bondsmen, true-born children of the lineage" (Ibid.189). This historical perspective provides a context of a hierarchy in social relations between people, whether they belong to the society's upper or lower echelon in the Yorùbá space. Barber's work in Okuku town confirms that the strict social class division manifesting as either enslaved or ìwọ̀fà system persisted until around 1939 in Okuku town. Against this backdrop, I am

interrogating fújì performance space as a hierarchized community whose manifestation mirrors the Yorùbá stratified social structure of Okuku.

This historical, and cultural condition justifies the existence of class and social relations playing out as beneficiaries and clientele networks are echoed in the big man's practice in today's Yorùbá urban experience. Barber explains, "Hierarchy was animated by a dynamic, competitive struggle for self-aggrandisement" (Ibid.183). In this case, the internal order in the Yorùbá is traditionally considered competitive concerning self-aggrandisement. This dynamic, according to Barber, permeates all strata of society (lower and upper echelon) (Ibid.183). Again, this dynamic sits well and exemplifies how the Yorùbá philosophical vision of personhood (becoming Ènìyàn) plays, as I will explain further in the next section.

To think of big men as status acquired or aspirations towards a vision of self-constructed status is important for my analysis, either as lived reality or aspiration. The big man is principally driven and sustained by "public acknowledgement" (Ibid.183). Barber explains the role of public acknowledgement as entrenched in the idea of "having people". An aspiration or a status bestowed on an individual, the lived experience of "having people", which is confirmed by or through public acknowledgement, is one of the hallmarks of attaining the status of a big man.

Oríkì is an important vehicle to culturally constitute the big man and big-woman status among the Yorùbás. This is because oríkì is at "the centre of a crucial political process" (Ibid.186). However, since the political space is largely "conducted by men" (Ibid.186), it operates differently for women. The paucity of big women Oríkì is implicated in the understanding that "women were part of a man's household rather than the head of their own" (Ibid.186). For the two types of big men and big women, the similarity is that both statuses are steeped in the action of individuals motivated by personal ambition and the process of building "up a position" in a network (Ibid. 186). The big women are also described as "agents rather than the objects of the process of aggrandisement" (Ibid.186). However, the constitution and operation of public reputation building for women in the Yorùbá society differ from their male counterparts. As my thesis will also show, the performance of big men in their respective clientele networks also involves to a large extent the performance of masculinity in the Yorùbá cultural space.

Most of my argument in this thesis focuses on fújì as a masculine performance space. This also reflects in the choice of my analysis subjects at the level of musicians and their audience. fújì is a genre where women musicians are still a minority in the performance dynamics.

Notwithstanding, women fújì musicians exist. Male subjects are not just centred for no reason, male dominance in the fújì manifest against the backdrop of gendered dynamics and the continuous struggle of Yorùbá men to fit into many expected social roles[40].

As much as this research will show how fújì has become a viable space of economic mobility for generations of male fújì musicians 1960s, there is not enough evidence to support the claim that women folks have enjoyed a similar trajectory in great numbers. Klein (2020) has drawn our attention to the complexity and the burden of being a female fújì musician in her discussion of the backlash that followed Alhaja Shaidat Fatimah Al-Jafarriyah at a public event she had organized at the University of Ilorin on August 22, 2012). Klein showed that even in spaces like the university, a female fújì musician like Shaidat Fatimah is not immune to criticism and gatekeeping of the moral and religious codes. Early, scholarly works on Yorùbá music have discussed fújì and waka[41] (female version) as Islamic influence[42] (Bender 2004:97). In this case, I conceive the "absence" or limited participation of women not as a total discountenance of women musicians and clientele presence and participation in fújì. On the one hand, I argue, that, the extent of women musicians in fújì can be understood against the backdrop of foundational Islamic practices and influence on fújì. On the one hand, I argue, that women's role in fújì should be seen as part of a long-established gender dynamic that Barber (1991) refers to as the rare presence of big women personalities in the Yorùbá oral communal stories is still at play.

The ratio of women to men clientele in fújì is significantly low. Based on my observation and evaluation of my primary materials and the fújì clientele constellations, I put this hypothetically at a ratio of 2 (women) to 8 (men) clientele network. What this also means is that women appear only seldom in the fújì lyrics. I mean occurs in the case of a limited number of mentions of female subjects during the praise aspects of fújì. The approach I adopt should not be read as an attempt to downplay gender discourse or women's voices to the benefit of masculinity voices or representation. On the contrary, my observation is that masculinity is an important and defining feature[43] of fújì performance space.

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[40] I have benefitted immensely from my reading of Mbugua wa Mungai "Nairobi's Matatu Men" (Contact Zones, 2013) and my discussions with Prof. Clarissa Vierke on the subject matter.

[41] Waka, (from the Hausa word wak'a) Waka is considered the female version of fújì which only female Muslims women perform (See Klein 2020).

[42] See (Omibiyi-Obidike 1979; Waterman, Klein, 2014) Mosunmola, A. Omibiyi-Obidike. "Islam influence on Yorùbá music." *African Notes: Bulletin of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan* 8.2 (1979): 37-54.

[43] I am currently completing a paper that is tentatively titled " Women in fújì: A case of Presence in Absence"

1.1.7 Concepts of Orí, Ènìyàn and Oríkì

Fújì is intrinsically linked to the concept of Orí, literally "head". It is fújì which speaks to a "head" or a "person" through performance or oríkì (praise poetry). Since this is the part which the praises can "load". Oríkì literally means "to charge the head". Orí is embedded /in the Yorùbá philosophy of a person. From a Yorùbá perspective, one *is* not a person but *becomes* a person by struggling to align with the predestined lot, the Orí. Orí, literally, "the head", is a spiritual, predestined category: It is like a person's potential and talents, which a person, however, can fail or succeed to fulfil. Beyond the nominal meaning of Orí- the head, its other signification in the Yorùbá context is its symbolic representation of "the notion of destiny" (Barber 1991:12) as well as "cause and the essence of one's being" (Abiodun 2014: 36). Within the Yorùbá cosmology, Orí is a "spiritual and important element of a person" because it is the "bearer of human destiny and other discernible characteristics of human personality" (Balogun 2007:199).

The Yorùbá concept of Orí (the individual head) is based on distinct duality, the first aspect being "Orí-Orí-òde (the outer physical head)" and "Orí-inu (the inner spiritual head and one's lot)" (Abiodun 2014:24). The *Orí-inu* being primal in the conception of a person in the Yorùbá worldview, is sacred. It comes from the spirit world òrún and transcends life on earth.[44] On the other hand, it is the proper alignment of the spiritual *Orí* upon which everyday life depends. [45] Thus, variegated notions of success and self-realisation are predicated on the individual's Orí: the Yorùbá cosmology allows for an individual's *Orí-inu* (inner-head) to signify an understanding of "prenatal allotment" (Ibid.24) of one's potential or destiny. Abimbola emphasises Orí[46]is crucial that to understanding the dimensions of being in the Yorùbá cosmology; he states:

> … for the non-disabled person, how far they can go on the hierarchical structure depends considerably on the type of head they selected for themselves in heaven. Those who choose the best of the *Orí* made by *Ajala* would, if they combine this potentiality with hard works, become successful, whereas those who choose bad Orí are doomed to failure (1971:81).

[44] Cf. also the term 'Orísha' commonly translated as diety.

[45] In its pantheon signification, *Orí* remains sacred and almost the ultimate determinant for an individual deity and, by extension, human being – since it is the Oríginator, the dawn of a person and the ruler of the eventual outcome.) Orí-inú has a counterpart in the Yorùbá pantheon as "*Orí-Ìṣẹ̀ṣe* (*Orí*, the Oríginator), Orí-Òórò̩ (Orí at Dawn), *Orí-Àkọ́kọ́* (the first Orí), and *Orí Apèrè* (Orí-the Ruler)" (Abiodun 2001:32

[46] Rowland Abiodun (2014) extensively disucsses the concept of Orí and multiple dimensions of understanding

As captured in the above explanation by Abimbola, an individual's choice of Orí before birth is a significant factor in determining the extent of an individual's journey in life. In their daily usage, the term Oríire translates to the good head or head of a fortune and is used in everyday context to signify the status of success. An *Olóríire* refers to a person with a 'good head' or a 'fortunate person. The opposite of *Oríire* is *Oríburúkú* ('a bad head', 'a misfortune head'). One of the most provocative curse words in the Yorùbá language is *olórí burúkú* – a person with a bad head or a person with a misfortune head. When the verb *se - to do* is added to *Oríire*, it becomes *ṣe oríire* (to become successful). This phrase is commonly used in the context of prayers and wishes for an individual. What more? When the phrase *ṣe oríire* indicates is the process of becoming in the realisation of *Oríire* (one's success or fortune). Hence, even the average person, irrespective of their social class positionality, is in a constant quest to align with a destiny that is presumed as personifying "success".

Furthermore, the understanding of the centrality of Orí in the constitution of the socially acceptable human justifies the rationale behind the acknowledgement or contestation of an individual's attainment of the Ènìyàn status. Orí is also connected to the individual's fatal fate and the individual's lot of becoming a socially or culturally acceptable Ènìyàn. According to Soyinka:

> "In addition to bringing your own Orí that's in the capacity, it is within the capacity of every individual to shape his/her destiny. In fact, we have a proverb which says "Owo la fi n tun Orí ara eni se." That means, 'It is with one's own hands that one directs one's destiny." So even though, on the one hand, we say that each individual brings his or her destiny with him or her, it is that individual who shapes (their) destiny. There is no fatalism or meek surrender to destiny".[47]

Is the manifestation of an individual's Orí (inner head) ultimately fixated and inflexible? The question becomes relevant to interrogate against the backdrop of considering Orí as the primal that exists before the natal being. The entire concept of Orí is itself grounded in spirituality. However, the clue lies in how the ritual emphasises that an individual's Orí-inu (the inner spiritual head and one's lot) be frequently propitiated for the sake of "successful existence" (Ibid.33). A successful existence is not just predetermined. In this case, there is an element of continuous negotiation and the struggle for an individual to either align or derail

[47] Sourced transcribed from an interview by Wole Soyinka's reflection on Orí posted on Facebook by Afolayan social media collage titled: 'I have reshaped my ORÍ' https://fb.watch/f0xjOdzeV3/ published on Wednesday 17 August, 2022 at 11.23 am

from their pre-destined lot. Essentially, there is a sense of negotiation and flexibility with an individuals Orí-inu.

Accordingly, Orí takes center-stage in form of rituals of appeasement. According to Abiodun Orí, "like Èṣù, Ṣàngó, Ọya and Ògún become closer and more approachable to worshippers through their visual and verbal Oríkì" (Ibid.31). Again, Orí- inú does not exist in isolation. It is often revered by human deification. Such deification can only occur through symbolically encoded rituals in visual and verbal forms. The practice of appeasing one's Orí is as ìbọrí. The centrality of Orí to an individual's success, ordinary/exemplary life, and fulfilment of life's purpose through elaborate Yorùbá cultural practices. The ritual of ìborí, is a ritual where Orí is propitiated for an individual. Abiodun captures. Abiodun (2014) describes how a conical shape object is often commissioned for an individual to keep as part of the Ìbọrí rituals - so the individual can "communicate with his/her Orí-inu" (33-34). This process, amongst others, requires the Oríkì which is the verbal aspect of the Orí propitiation. As a cultural practice, Oríkì is of central importance and significantly helps to understand why praising takes such centre stage in *fújì*. It is common to analogy among Yorùbá speakers to express the following statement:

"Orí là bá bọ kí á fi Òrìṣà sílẹ"
"Òrìṣàló ni ọjọ́ kan ìpọ́njú, orí ẹni ló ni ọjọ́ gbogbo "
"It is Orí (the head) that requires propitiation, not the Orísas (deities)"
"The Orísas (deities) are for the troubled days only, but Orí stands by one every day".

These statements suggest the primacy of Orí towards the continuous manifestation of Ènìyàn. Put simply, Ènìyàn manifestation is spurred by Orí. And it is the Orí-ki, the praise poem literally, "to load the head", which is essential to bring out the fullest potential of a person. It is therefore not surprising that praise elements take a centre space in fújì performance. The comprehensive invocation of the praise trope in fújì resonates with the worldview of Yorùbá, especially its invocation of the Orí's palpitation through oríkì (praise) performance.

1.1.8 Oríkì

According to the Modern Practical Dictionary by Fakehinde, Oríkì is described as an "attributive name for a person derived from prior heroism displayed by his (or her) descendants" (2003:620). Barber describes Oríkì as "attributions or appellations: collections of epithets, pitchy or elaborated, addressed to a subject" (1991:1). Oríkì is intricately connected to the concept of Orí, and in some instances, it is part of the practices that aid Orí's potential

realisation. However, the verbal practice is adaptable and available for diverse subjects, animate and inanimate. According to Barber, "everything in existence has its own *Oríkì*" (Ibid.12). Barber explains further as follows:

> "Subjects range from Orísa and ancestors to the living men and women, from elephant to palm trees, from the railway to Orí, the notion of destiny. Abstract ideas as well as concrete objects, the dead as well as the living, the absent as well and the presence" (Ibid.12).

Oríkì can be etymologically explained as a combination of the prefix (noun) - *Orí* – the head (inner head) and the suffix (verb) ki – to load. Let us think of the image or the process of loading a gun or a cannon gun with explosive powder. Deriving from experience, the meaning of the word Oríkì suggests is to load the head – here with praise substance. What does Oríkì do on the subject it addresses? Oríkì "evokes a subject's qualities, goes to the heart of it and elicits its inner potency" (Ibid.12). It brings out in a rather figurative but as subjective experience, the individual's struggle and negotiation with the fatalism-fate of inner head in ways towards one's vision of fullest potential. Oríkì has a transcendental value often evoked or incorporated into many situations and forms of Yorùbá verbal arts. Oríkì falls into the category of the Yorùbá verbal text with the qualities to act upon its subject: it uplifts the praised above the constraints of the everyday. The practice of Oríkì as a poetic genre resonates with diverse communities of "Yorùbá speakers identify (even if sketchily) with and value greatly" (Barber and Waterman 1995: 250). To have an insight into an Oríkì text, I will provide an Oríkì of a Yorùbá lineage, an excerpt from Ajibade's (2009) as follows:

Table 1.2: Oríkì Excerpt- Ajibade (2009)

	Example of Oríkì of Egunje lineage in Omuo-Ekiti	Englishj translation by Ajibade Olusola[48]
1	Ọmọ àgbàrá Ègúnjẹ Ọ̀nà Ìlisà	Offspring of Egunje n Ilisa road
2	Tí kò bá sí Àmùnùn lósì	If not for the sake of Amunnun on the left,
3	Tí kò bá sí t'Olúwa n'Íwòrò	If not for the sake of Oluwa at Iworo
4	Àgbàrá Ègúnjẹ ní an bá fodidi ẹni a bọ	They would have to sacrifice a person to Egunje
5	Ọmọ A-gbe-nla-ade-kari	Offspring of the one-one-who puts-a-big-crown-on-his-head
6	Ọmọ Ajìwàjiwa ìlẹ̀kẹ̀	Offspring of the-one-with-many-beads.
7	Ó torí ìlẹ̀kẹ̀ dólùkù Ọ̀yọ́	He befriends an Oyo woman because of flair for beads,
8	Ọmọ Aró-pupa-lọ-sóko-bí-oódẹ	Offspring of the-one-who-uses-a-beaded-staff as a walking stick to the farm like a parrot

[48] Oríkì excerpt from Ajibade's (2009) "*Finding Female Voice: A socio-cultural Appraisal of Yorùbá Nuptial Poetry*". Ajibade's works focuses on Yorùbá Nuptial Poetry and in the context of the marriage ceremony, the house wives of Egunje lineage in Omuo-Ekiti perform the poetry of the lineage.

9	Ọmọ A-bàárin-oko-tàbàlù-tàbàlù	Offspring on the-one-who-has-a-big-hut, Offspring-of-the-one-who-has-a-large-plot-of-farmland.
11	Ìjàyè nìlú iṣu	Ijaye is the home of yam.
12	Kí wón má méwùràà débẹ̀	Water yam must not be taken to that place.
13	Ọmọ Alágbàdo-kọ̀ọ̀rùkòòrù nínú àká	Offspring of the one - who-has-big maize cobs in his barn,
14	Ọmọ A-gbé-ṣu-ńlá-fótòsì-méjì	Offspring of the-one-who-gives-a-big yam-tuber-to-two-poor-people."

The Oríkì excerpt is an exemplar of family lineage of Oríkì. It contains and provides us with information about the following:

> "the founder of lineage is called Egunje and they settled at Ilisa quarters in Omuo-Ekiti, a community in Ekiti state (…). This Oríkì show this lineage as one of the ruling houses in the town of Ọmọ-Ekiti as seen in lines five and six, as crown and beads or better put beaded crown is symbol of kingship authoríty among Yorùbá people. This family is connected to Oyo town through marriage. Their ancestress hails from Oyo. The founder of this family married her when she was selling beads (…). Lines fourteen reveal a lot of things about this lineage. They are good farmers with plenty (of) farm produce to the extent that they have big barns for yams and maize (…). The eleventh line also reveals that they are connected to Ijaye town. On top of it all, this lineage is very generous; indeed, they are philanthropists." (Ajibade 2009: 150- 152).

Adeeko explains that Oríkì, like other names given to an individual, reflect "the circumstances of birth and family aspirations" (2002:182). However, as people grow older, they:

> "accumulate more epithets that remark peculiar behaviours and deeds, significant achievements, and characteristics foibles in degrees of elaboration and poetic quality that vary with the individual's degree of social eminence and the kind of kind of artistic capabilities the celebrated status can purchase" (Ibid.182)

In essence, Oríkì is not considered fixed and definitive but expanding and adaptive poetry that can, on the one hand, archive an individual's social standing regarding achievements and character. On the other hand, the adaptive and expanding nature of Oríkì makes it subjective to reflect artistic preference, bias, and skills. When sourced from an artist, it becomes transactional and malleable to suit the creative objective or the praise subject's objective.

Since Abiodun explains that Oríkì goes to the heart of and elicits the inner potency of the praise subject" (Abiodun 2014:12), Oríkì has a transcendental value. Oríkì's value is similar to what Gregg and Seigworth (2010) explain as the aesthetics effect of "in-between-ness: in the capacities to act and be acted upon" (1). The effect of Oríkì evokes the feeling and experience of in-betweenness and acting upon its subject. A typical reaction from a praise subject after an

Oríkì performance is the saying: "Orí mi n wu – my head is lifted/enhanced". This response talks about the effects and the extent to which Oríkì acts on people.

It is therefore important to emphasise that the use of oríkì in *fújì* reinforces my idea of the genre as a transactional space: fújì draws on oríkì form and constitutes a contemporary form of praise singing. Oríkì is the commodity of desire *fújì* audience seeks during their encounter with musicians. Therefore, the music invokes a transcendental experience in which the musicians and their audience co-create.

1.2 PART II: Notes on Research Methodology and Positionality

This second part provides an overview of the methods I employ in conducting this research. The research is interdisciplinary; thus, I am combining literary methods and ethnography in my analysis. I will discuss the following in this part: the literary method, the ethnography experience, the snowballing ethnography method and its relevance to the *fújì* context. I will also reflect on my positionality and self-reflexivity in relation to the fieldwork and the overall research.

1.2.1 Literary Methods

The study combines empirical texts of transcribed and translated lyrics and interviews. In this sense, lyrics provide access to the thematic meanings and language. My analysis of the lyrics is close reading. I also use the close reading method in my analysis of the ethnographic generated materials (narratives from participants' observations, interviews, images, and in some instances, online materials).

In the analysis of fújì lyrics, I will adapt the aspect of the communication model for poetry as discussed by Nünning (2014) where speech situation and perspective are delineated. In the same vein, while extrapolating on the subject of the lyrics/narrative, I will delineate the real singer's voice and that of the fictive or lyric 'I' persona as well as the audience (when observable).

A considerable part of my work consisted in transcribing and translating fújì lyrics. fújì music does not come with accessible lyrics. Hence the lyrics used in this study are derived from my transcription of the songs. The reality of the original form of fújì lyrics produced and primarily available in oral form in the Yorùbá language leads me to the next step of translating demands that I translate the lyrics into English. The transcriptions and translations are continuous efforts towards perfecting full representation in meanings that are communicated and available in the original Yorùbá forms.

The variability of media also came as a particular challenge to me. Fújì can be produced and consumed at two levels: as a pre-recorded audio-visual studio material or live-audience performance. In both instances, the aesthetics of Fújì music can be experienced as immediate, spontaneous and transcendental. However, they are all inter-dependent or inter-linked, which further attests to the fluid conceptual approach adopted in this research.

1.2.2 Fújì Ethnography: Lagos, Ibadan, and Ilorin: The Nigerian Yorùbá Cities

> *"Popular arts are urban-focus but not exclusively urban in Africa because there is constant movement between the city and the countryside, multiplex linkages and mutual dependencies, mutual imaginings"*[49]

The above quotation from Barber is instructive for the studies of popular arts in any African context. This is particularly true for my fieldwork experience, as my initial assumption of the field and the research subject was challenged on arrival at the field. My pre-field plan indicated that I opted for multi-sited fieldwork in three Yorùbá-speaking cities of Nigeria, which are Lagos, Ibadan and Ilorin. The cities[50] of Lagos, Ibadan and Ilorin alongside other 33 cities in Nigeria as the capitals of their respective states. These capital cities are considered urban spaces – their urban status is about the socio-economic realities of towns and villages (usually less populated than the capital cities).

Notwithstanding, the following factors can be considered as markers and characteristics of the Nigerian capital cities and/or urban space: 1) commensurate level of public infrastructure 2) sizeable population 3) some degree of heterogeneity/diversity amongst the population, and 4) identifiable patterns of class distinctions in neighbourhoods and professional clusters.

Both the cities of Lagos and Ibadan are described as "the urban hubs of fújì music" in today's Nigeria according to Klein (2020:2). Lagos city and state, until 1993, was Nigeria's economic and political capital. It currently has an estimated population of over 18 million, while Ibadan has over 3 million inhabitants. A road trip between Lagos and Ibadan amounts to 129 kilometres. In the case of Lagos, many popular fújì musicians reside in Lagos. In addition, the intermediate[51] class community is expectedly large and heterogeneous in Lagos, and fújì musicians and audiences reflect these realities. The city of Ibadan is also prominent for two

[49] Barber (2014:xvi) in her Introduction of the book *Popular Culture in Africa*- The episteme of the everyday by Onookome Okome and Newell Stephanie,(eds)

[50] According to Farias, Paulo and Barber "most Africa's urban centres are commercial and administrative" (1990:4)

[51] The Yorùbá "intermediate claases" I refer to in this thesis are " the large stratum of Primary School leavers, with aspirations but insufficient qualifications to attain prestigious white-collars positions" (Barber 2014:xvii)

reasons: it is historically the political capital of the southern region of Nigeria. In this case, it is a city whose identity is entangled with the pan-Yorùbá identity. Moreover, the most revered figure in fújì music Alhaji Sikiru Ayinde alias Barrister was an indigene of Ibadan – in terms of praise-singing in fújì, this aspect often features prominently in Barrister's work. The choice of Ibadan is thus conceived to provide historical perspective, indigenous experience or discourse and a less heterogeneous Yorùbá urban space.

Within the context of the contemporary political discourse in Nigeria, Lagos and Ibadan belong south-west geo-political zone of Nigeria. Unlike Lagos and Ibadan, the city of Ilorin presents an interesting cultural dynamic. Ilorin is a multi-ethnic Yorùbá city with over one million inhabitants, its inhabitants comprise people of Yorùbá, Fulani, Hausa, Nupe and other minority groups. Scholars have described it as "a space of fusion of northern Islamic and Yorùbá Islamic cultures" (Peel 2016; Klein 2020). In addition to this, two factors made Ilorin a choice destination for my field research: 1) Ilorin is the city of origin of the second most revered figure in fújì, and the most senior successful fújì alive is Alhaji Kolawole Ayinla alias Kollington 2) The city is also the city of origin of the most prominent Waka musician – a female popular music genre produced from/by Yorùbá Muslim women is Alhaja Salawa Abeni

Ilorín is particularly peculiar for the dominance of Yorùbá Islamic culture in the city - this Islamic religion and Yorùbá Islamic community are significant in the history of fújì music. Klein (2020) describes Ilorin as the home of were – one of fújì's foundational genres (2). Ilorín is also "renowned for its institution of higher education Quranic scholarship" (Klein 2020:2). At the same time, Lagos (and Ibadan) is tangential to fújì music production, distribution and consumption, Ilorin is crucial to the foundational development of the genre.

On the 31st of July, 2018, I arrived city of Lagos from Bayreuth to commence a six-month fieldwork exercise as part of my research. As an interdisciplinary study, the research combines literary studies and ethnography methods to gather the research data and subsequent analysis. Rapport (2003) advocates a more radical conceptualisation of disciplinary borders and the limitation it breeds. This view is explicitly expressed as follows:

> I am not happy to let live a disciplinary division of labor – say, humanistic versus structuralist social science - which cuts across knowledge of my own life or that of others. I am not happy to see myself and my life, nor those of others with whom I have sought to emphasize, represented in sociological models and theories which have little room or respect for subjectivity, autonomy, agency, poiesis, and transcendence. I am not happy even with granting notions of reciprocity to a relationship and socio-cultural: because it suggests a relationship between equal things that are equally things." (Rapport 2003:58)

Unlike fields like the social sciences and natural sciences, fieldwork is not considered a first option in the humanities, such as literary studies. One must extensively justify why and how fieldwork is relevant to one's research. The internal tension the idea of fieldwork evokes among early career researchers in the field of literary studies feeds into what Castillo and Puri describe as the absence of "institutional consensus" (2015:2). As they explain further, early career researchers who choose fieldwork in literary studies might suffer some level of "institutional consequences" (2015:2). Despite the dilemma on the potential consequences of my choice of fieldwork especially as it relates to my disciplinary situatedness. I found justification in 1) the nature of my primary materials – since my research focuses on the contemporary Yorùbá popular music genre. As such, I identify and use them as cultural texts[52]. 2) the nature of one of my research questions is to explore how Fùjí music is experienced in the Yorùbá urban space of Nigeria.

While preparing for the fieldwork, I established contact with a few people I considered relevant for a successful fieldwork experience. This is because I do not have a pre-existing relation with any fújì musicians or relevant stakeholders in *fújì* space. Some of the first set of people I identified as potential leads into the network were identified through their activities on social media. Some of these people have social media engagements where they run commentaries on fújì music[53] and *fújì* musicians. In some instances, identify as fans of some of their preferred fújì musicians. These individuals echo their sentiments for and against fújì musicians and their perceived rivals. In this context, the social media space was one of my first point of call to establish a link into the fújì world. In the context of my research, observation and reflection on my fieldwork activities, *fújì* gatekeepers vary and our relationship or their roles with regards to access to the field are often specific and situational. In terms of specific, media personalities like Otunba Kola Olootu (a popular radio presenter in Ibadan was of great assistance by affording me the opportunity to meet Alhaji Akande Abass alias Obesere at the premises of Lagele FM station in Felele. Otunba Kola Olootu also enabled my meeting with the Ibadan based fújì musician, Bola Bollington. Similarly, the general manager of Lagelu and

[52] Barber discusses text as one of the things societies produce, and one of the things people do (2007:4)

[53] One of such personality is a London based Facebook commentator known as Ayo Jamiu. He also identifies as fújì promoter. He is known for his open allegiance to the popualr fújì musician Wasiu Ayinde alias Kwam1. Our physical occurred in Ibadan during my fieldwork November 2018 at Genesis hotel, Molete Challenge Road Ibadan. The dynamics of our meeting did challenge my objective because I had walked into Mr Ayo Jamiu live Facebook broadcast without a prior discussion or knowledge. This incidence is one of the challenges of the fieldwork – a situation where research partners want to me to fit into their pre-existing, pre-conceived agenda, it is often a delicate negotiation, especially in the context of my position as Yorùbá speaker where I am expected to be courteous, less non-confrontational and respectful to elders and benefactors.

Splash FM Ibadan facilitated my meeting with Kola Olootu, Obesere and Taye Currency. In this context, media personalities are part of those I consider fújì's infrastructure and gate keepers as they can exert their media influence to facilitate access with fújì musicians.

Another case of relevant gatekeepers in fújì's world is their big men or big women fans. Chief Sunday Adeyemo alias Sunday Ìgbòho is one of the examples to consider as not just a fújì fan but a stakeholder and gatekeeper. Chief Sunday Ìgbòho is an Ibadan-based businessman and politician (a big man with a large household of live-in dependents and vast network of loyalists). Chief Sunday Ìgbòho is widely known to have a close relationship with the popular *fújì* musician because his name features in many fújì albums. For observers of the fújì scene, the relationship of friendship between the duo is easily established. There are numerous video materials attesting to the close relationship between the fújì musician, Saheed Osupa and Sunday Ìgbòho [54].

Based on this public knowledge, I explored my close relationship with one of Chief Sunday Ìgbòho's cousins. My contact introduced me to the chief and I introduced my research to him. I also informed him of my intention to observe his everyday life closely while counting on his support to help me to facilitate a meeting with the popular fújì musician, Saheed Osupa. Chief Sunday Ìgbòho, granted me access to his home from our first meeting to the end of my fieldwork. During this period, I observed his everyday life, I took pictures of his living room. In his living room, most of the photographs hanging in his living room are images of Ìgbòho with many fújì musicians, other popular socialites, politicians, and law enforcement agents. Typical of a big man with a busy schedule and enormous visitors soliciting one form of assistance of the other, Sunday Ìgbòho assigned one of his "boys" to assist me in liaising with the popular fújì musician, Saheed Osupa for an interview slot and access to conduct my intended participant observation around his activities. These layers of contacts and middlemen from many ends of establishing contact with a popular fújì musician.

1.2.3 Ethnography: Snowballing Methods and Fújì

I have touched on how access to fújì musicians, especially the popular ones can be cumbersome through the above-mentioned examples. I will continue to provide more details on what exactly I did during the six months of fieldwork. During the six months of fieldwork, I interviewed five male fújì musicians, namely: Abass Akande alias Obesere, Taye Adebisi

[54] In this YouTube video, Saheed Osupa is recorded while taking a tour of a newly completed house of Sunday Ìgbòho (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JvCMEvsVSmg). In another video, the musician is seen performing at the house warming ceremony of Sunday Ìgbòho (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sIJC19CXM4U&t=807s

alias Taye Currency, Alao Suleiman Adekunle alias Malaika, Mufutau Abolaji Folahanmi alias Bola Bollington and Ganiyu Abefe and a female (fújì) musician, Roliat Atunbi Aye. The interview session took place in the cities of Ibadan (for Abass Akande alias Obesere, Mufutau Abolaji Folahanmi alias Bola Bollington and Taye Adebisi alias Taye Currency), Lagos (Alao Suleiman Adekunle alias Maliaka), and Ilorin (Roliat Atunbi Aye and Ganiyu Abefe). All the interviews with the fújì musicians and other collaborators were conducted in Yorùbá language, I transcribed all the interviews while also translating them into English language when using them as part of my primary materials.

Similarly, I also attended the performances of Saheed Akorode alias Saheed Osupa and Wasiu Ayinde alias Pasuma on two different occasions at the palace of the Alaafin of Oyo (the Oyo king)[55]. Unfortunately, my attempts to get interview sessions with Saheed Osupa, Pasuma and Kwam1 did not come to fruition during the fieldwork. Apart from the two events I attended at the palace of Alaafin of Oyo, I attended an additional total of thirteen events[56]. the musicians and the media personalities I mentioned earlier, I also worked with band members and staff of fújì musicians. In this regard, Obesere's band[57] and staff team are one of the groups I was well integrated into. I worked closely with Akeen Adegoke alias Oluyole, a relative and one of Obesere's management staff. Oluyole facilitated my introduction to members of Obesere's fans club in Ketu Alapere Lagos. We both travelled from Ibadan to Lagos to attend events organized by members of Obesere's fans club events in Ketu Lagos.

I was also well-integrated into the family and office space of the Ibadan-based popular fújì musician, Taye Currency. My meeting with Taye Currency was facilitated by the media personality, Tunde Olawuwo (the general manager of Splash and Lagelu FM, Ibadan). Apart from being welcomed at Taye Currency's home which affords me to observe his interaction

[55] Both events took place at the palace of Oyo king, the first event was the World Sango festival where Pasuma performed on August 14, 2018. Saheed Osupa performed at the same palace on 8th September 2018 at another festival tagged Oranyan festival.

[56] The events, dates and location of the events can be found at the index section of the thesis

[57] It is important for me to mention that the band leader of Obesere's band, Adeyemo Akeem Ayandare alias Apa was also a major collaborator I worked with during the fieldwork, he gave me access to observe and travel with the Obesere's band groups on two occasions. Apart from the access he allowed me into the band he is leading, he granted me audience for an interview session. Another key member of Obeesere's band that collaborated with me during the fieldwork is Alhaji Morubo, One of Obesere's booking managers, he also serves as a stage manager during performance. In November, 2018, Morubo started anchoring a late night radio show at thritytwo(32)FM station, Cocoa house Dugbe. The radio show is titled Obesere so lu d'ero – *Obesere makes life easy*. The radio show was designed to promote the image of Obesere and reach out to members of public with numerous gift and support items to alleviate their challenges. On one occasion, Morubo invited me to be a guest of the radio show to speak about my experience and impression of their boss. I was also asked to inform thE general public about my research (emphasising the fact that I came to study fújì from a University in Germany)

with his staff and everyday life up close, the musician also allowed me to join his campaign entourage where one of his sons was contesting as a member of Oyo state member of parliament in the February 2019 election. In this case, I was exposed to the political side of Taye Currency. I was also well integrated into his booking office space located at the Ring Road area of Ibadan. Taye Currency assigned a staff (Mr Tope) to me to facilitate my access to his busy schedule and support me with other logistics challenges that may arise during my research with him. I must critically add that to a large extent, I could not cultivate enough relationship with fújì fans in ways that would enable me to incorporate their perspective extensively into the research. This argument might be true for other group of informants and collaborators whose contribution would have been more elucidated through a follow-up session.

As I immersed myself in the fieldwork space, I realised that productive research on *fújì* would benefit significantly from the ethnography method of participant observation through snowballing or chain referrals. Why snowballing method? On arrival at the field, I realised that my insider position in the field has its limitation. Ethnomusicologist Tim Rice "has argued that fieldwork needs to be understood as being based on experience" (Verne 2013:5). In Rice's words:

> "We believe in fieldwork. Fieldwork for what? Not apparently as a place to test and work out theory, an experimental place in other words, but a place to become ethnomusicologist, an experiential place. … In this credo we have the privileging of ontology (being there) over epistemology (knowing that), and the beginning of a potentially fruitful turn away from fieldwork methods towards fieldwork experience." (Rice 2008:46 qtd in Verne 2013:5)

The core of Rice's idea resonates with my fieldwork experience; the entire fieldwork is indeed an experience for this thesis. Indeed "being there" dislocates the assumption of "knowing that" in the fújì context. This idea runs through the subsequent part of the chapter. I address how the assumptions shifts based on my fieldwork experience.

Despite my considerable personal network in pre-selected cities of Lagos, Ibadan and Ilorin, I am limited in the fújì space and network. The fújì network, which comprises fújì bands, fans and several layers of associating economic networks, is not easily accessible. My position as an educated German returnee researcher put me outside fújì's core network. fújì network is governed mainly by the dynamics of the Yorùbá informal economic space. In this context, the patron-clientele network is standard practice around the fújì musicians and many of their core fans.

Fújì musicians are mobile and fluid - they navigate different cities, towns and villages weekly. This is because there is always a constant influx "between the city and the country" (Barber 2018: xvi). What is obtainable are "multiplex linkages and mutual dependencies, mutual imaginings" (ibid 2018: xvi). Access to an average fújì musician's inner circle can be tedious. On or off stage, fújì musicians have a close-knit circle of associates. To overcome the access challenge, I adopted the snowballing or chain-referral method during the fieldwork as strategies to gain and sustain access with my informants. For this, I relied on chain referrals from the network of fújì musicians and the immediate network for linkages.

In addition to the chain referral experience, I observed fújì music bands and gathered that their performance destinations are fluid. In this situation, my pre-field assumptions are challenged. Although the three cities remain viable as my main research destinations, the manifestation of fújì performance and the activities of fújì musicians are connected to these cities as much as being intricately connected to other Yorùbá-speaking cities. These manifest through the frequencies of performance in events beyond the three pre-selected cities.

Fújì performances and associated activities overlap daily across cities, towns, and villages. A typical week for the fújì musicians I observed translates into performance between three to four days of the week (weekend inclusive). They are highly mobile embarking on intra-city and intercity performance trips. city across (southwest) Nigeria. Thus, the scope of my research transcends beyond the initially projected cities of Lagos, Ibadan and Ilorin.

1.2.4 Positionality and Self-Reflexivity:

> *"Scientists should embrace their humanity rather than pretending that they are a bunch of automatons who instantly reach perfectly objective conclusions. That will be more work both in terms of ensuring that science represents that humanity and in explaining how it all works to the public. But in return, society will get better and more just science, and it will allow scientists to immerse themselves in the glorious, messy process of always striving for a greater understanding of the truth."*[58]

[58] Culled from a blog article titled "It Matters Who Does Science" by Thorp H.Holden in https://www.science.org/content/blog-post/it-matters-who-does-science#.ZGCQOYW1vhd.twitter

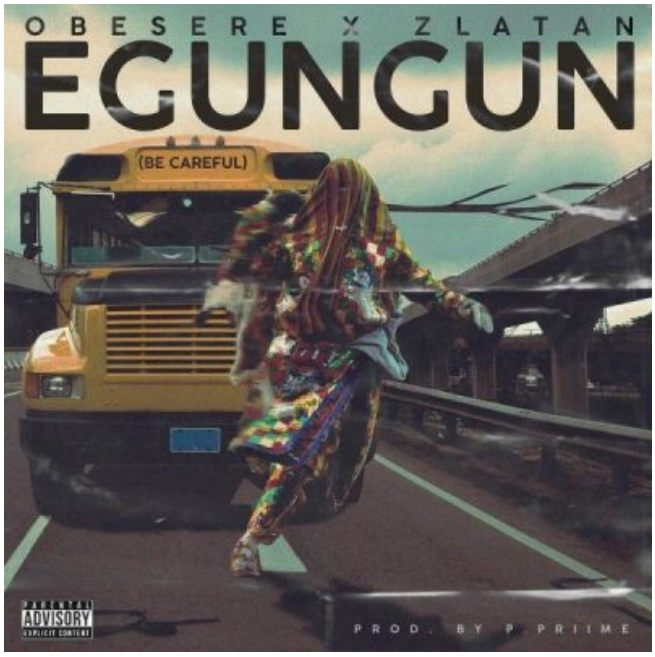

Fig 1.2: An artwork of a re-mix track titled Egungun Be Careful (2020) Track by Abass Akande alias Obesere featuring Zlatan Ibile.[59]

> Obesere: Egungun be careful na express you dey go, motor go jam you
> Chorus by Egbe: He don happen, I don tel am, he don happen, motor don jam am.
> *Obesere: Masquerade be warned, you are approaching the highway, the car will hit you*
> *Chorus: It has happened, even though I warned him, it has happened, he has been hit by a car*

I grew up listening to the above excerpt, a popular fújì chorus of a song titled *Egungun Be Careful* (2012) by Abass Akande alias Obesere as an undergraduate at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. Eighteen years after its first release, *Egungun Be Careful* resurfaced as viral music in 2020 (8 years after the original version's release) in the Nigerian (mostly Yorùbá-speaking) online communities and its diaspora. This time around, the music track inspired various memes and social media skits. Everyone was re-enacting their interpretation and imagination of the once-popular and still popular fújì track. The above image is a testament to the re-enactment of the song in the second wave of its 'virality' The image is artwork for the re-mixed version of *Egungun Be Careful*, 8 years later by Obesere and the Afrobeats musician Zlatan Ibile.

The lyric excerpt and the image indicate the symbolic muse to introduce this research on fújì music in the contemporary Yorùbá urban space. On the one hand, my reflection is anchored on the observable symbolic role of many fújì works like *Egungun Be Careful* in shaping my understanding of the contemporary urban Yorùbá experience. On the other hand, the meaning

[59] Image sourced from Notjustok.com

of the chorus itself speaks of a warning to a masquerade to be careful on the highway. In a carnivalesque imagination, the masquerade trope in the Yorùbá context will signify tradition. A traditional practice of performance that thrives better in the comfort zone of Yorùbá rural villages and towns. However, the "express" as Obesere sings about is the highway, a signifier of certain modernity, one of the fast-moving automobiles with no regard to the *laissez-faire* and playful mode of Egungun. Therefore, the chorus speaks to the idea of encountering motion, a flux of fast-moving automobiles on the highway with little or no regard for Egungun's naivety.

I am a Nigerian, and I identify as a Yorùbá. I was born in a town known as Ilora, which neighbours Oyo town in Afijio local government of Oyo state. For the Yorùbá, Ilora town, like other towns and villages in Afijio local government, are Christian population-dominated community[60]. Notwithstanding the Christian population, the Yorùbá traditional religion and practices also permeate the collective daily experience of the people living in the communities. More often, my parents and other adults around me move into Yorùbá traditional religious space as an outsider because of their Christian faith. At the same time, they are insiders because they embrace and participate in aspects of tradition, they deem fit. My town of origin is closely positioned in the western region of the prominent Yorùbá town, Oyo. Unlike the towns in Afijio local government, Oyo town, which comprises Atiba, Oyo west and Oyo East local government respectively, has more Muslim population than Afijio local government. In some implicit ways, some of which are tied to my community, I acknowledge my relative distance to the Yorùbá traditional religion and Muslim communities. I have lived in the cities of Ibadan, Ile-Ife and Lagos for a considerably long period.

The Yorùbá language is my mother tongue; I have lived and travelled in different Yorùbá-speaking towns and cities across Nigeria. On the one hand, I regard myself as an insider, part of the core constituency of *fújì* music sphere. *fújì* music contributes to some aspects of my knowledge and perception of the urban Yorùbá public experiences today. One of the ways this is evident is at the level of everyday language. Even when my Yorùbáness and *Nigerianess* somewhat qualify me as an insider in the research field, there are other factors, which reveal themselves during the fieldwork, that made me to further reflect on the implication of my

[60] The Christian communities were largely Protestant Churches, the Baptist Church, The Anglican Church, the Methodist church. There are also churches of Nigerian Pentecostal movement like Christ Apostolic Church, The Celestial Church of Christ, The eternal Sacred order of Cherubim and Seraphim and other (I did not put this list in no particular order of hierarchy .- the list is also based on my personal memory, knowledge and observation as a child and adolescent – it is likely that many things have changed since year 2005 when I gained admission into the University, my engagement and physical presence in these communities has been minimal since the period in question)

positionality concerning the research field. My background in a Yorùbá Christian home implies that my socialisation and aesthetic taste at the formative age were somewhat skewed to reflect the Yorùbá Christian community's taste and orientation. I do not mean there is a universal experience of a Yorùbá Christian home. My parents (more of my father) would consider him a liberal Christian and I rightly consider him so in the context of the time he lived and operated as a Yorùbá man of his generation. He attended one of the Baptist churches in our small town. He made friends with Christians and non-Christians and our home was open to everyone irrespective of their religion. However, his musical preferences that are not necessarily Christian are largely from Baptist hymnals books, Jùjú music, highlife and other western music like Country music, amongst others.

My reference to the Yorùbá Christian home experience speaks more to modes of identity construction and a system of acquisition of 'cultural competence[61]. In this case, I consider my parent's Christian faith and exposure to western education to be parts of the codes that informed their choices in our home.

This dynamic is relevant in the Yorùbá context, as there are strong communities of Christians, Muslims and Yorùbá traditionalists. Even though society is a multi-religious space, the sociocultural identities of worshippers, in many ways, reflect and influence their religious identity; this implies that ways of life are acquired in the form of certain 'cultural competence' or worldview. Thus, in retrospection, my Christian leanings have implicitly distanced me from *fújì* music until I became independent enough to embrace the music genre.

[61] Bourdieu in *Distinction* expresses that " a work of art have meaning and interest only for someone who possesses the cultural competence, the code, into which it is encoded" (1984:2)

CHAPTER TWO

2 Fújì: Meanings, a Brief History, Musicians, and the Fans Club

"the enthronement of a zone of Ariya (the utterly festive) and faaji (a deeply self-indulging form of relaxation), that gives fújì performance its trenchantly independent personae from both secularist and the religious homogenising ethos" – Olorunyomi (2013:6)

2.1 Introduction

The above quotation from Olorunyomi (2013) speaks to the core of this chapter in terms of the complexity and fluid and ever-evolving identity. As Olorunyomi posits, fújì is the one hand, connected to the religion (Islam) On the other hand, fújì's ethos is secular. This point of view reinforces the point of view of fújì world. In this chapter, I will discuss fújì at the level of its variegated meanings and its history (to some extent). I will also discuss the fújì musicians relevant to this research's development. On this note, I will briefly discuss fújì regarding four generations. Although my focus in this chapter will be primarily on the first generation where I will zoom in on the most revered figure in fújì, Alhaji Sikiru Ololade Ayinde alias, Barrister. My discussion of Barrister will also be in relation to another prominent fújì musician of his generation, Alhaji Kolawole Ayinla alias Kollington. The discussion will also be extended to his protége Alhaji Wasiu Ayinde alias Kwam 1 (a second-generation fújì musician). My discussion of fújì musicians will be wrapped up by a brief discussion on the sets of the third and fourth generation of fújì musicians whose works will be analysed in this thesis. Although, my discussion of the third and fourth generations of fújì musicians will not be extensive in this chapter because they are more relevant within the other analysis chapters of this thesis. The last section of this chapter will discuss the fújì fans and its role in the fújì world.

2.2 What is Fújì?

Fújì is often described as "a secularised outgrowth of Ajísàrì music, traditionally performed in the early mornings of Ramadan fast by amateur Muslim musicians[62]". An ajísàrì group is an all-male group of different age grades; the genre is highly vocalised and usually accompanied by harmonica, bells, or drums to wake up Muslims in their neighbourhoods and towns to

[62] See Waterman (1990:372) in Christopher, A. Waterman,"" Our tradition is a very modern tradition": popular music and the construction of pan-Yorùbá identity." *Ethnomusicology* (1990): 367-379.Olaoluwa (2011) traces fújì as part of the outcome of the long historical contact of Islam and Yorùbá

prepare the morning meal, known as sari in Arabic, before sunrise[63]. The ajísàrì vocal style is "influenced by Islamic cantillations" (Frischkopf 2008:290)[64].

Before the emergence of fújì music into the Yorùbá music scene in the 1960s, older music genres considered closely affiliated to the Yorùbá Muslim communities, especially in Ajísàrì tradition. The trajectory of fújì music's evolution vis-à-vis its Islamic influences is partly hinged on influences of early Yorùbá Islamic genres like Àpàlà, Were, Sákárà[65]and wákà[66]. The consistent and consistent elements that are drawn from these early genres are the "evincing Arab influence (melismatic, nasal, and embellished), accompanied by metallic idiophones (seli)" Frishkopf (2008:490; Bender 2004:97[67]) are classified by early scholarly works on Yorùbá music as genres with Islamic influence[68]. The traditional Yorùbá Islamic genres known as well as fújì are known to have emerged as an outgrowth of Ajísàrì music. Ajísàrì music is traditionally performed in the early hours of the mornings of Ramadan fast by amateur Muslim musicians."[69] An Ajísàrì group is an all-male group of different age grades; the genre is highly vocalised and usually accompanied by harmonica, bells, or drums to wake up Muslims in their neighbourhoods and towns to prepare the morning meal, known as sàrì in Arabic, before sunrise[70]. A jí sàrì translates to "we are up for sàrì". It could translate as 'the one/person who wakes up for sàrì. 'Sàrì' is the Yorùbá adaptation of the Arabic word 'Sahur', an early morning meal before sunrise during Ramadan. One of the key features of the Yorùbá Islamic-influenced genre of music and a peculiar defining character of fújì music is the unique vocal style the fújì musicians often adopt in their performance. Typical of a fújì musician's tone is melismatic and often deployed through nasal timbre[71].

Barber and Waterman provide some historical context on fújì, stating the following:

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[63] See Klein (2014:2) in Debra, Klein. "fújì: Indigenous and Islamic Popular Music Fusions in Nigeria," a chapter in *Bloomsbury Encyclopaedia of Popular Music*, Volume 6. 2017

[64] see also Adegbite 1989:39-40; Waterman 1990:31

[65] Adeniji, Abiodun. "Popular Songs as Literary Texts: An Analysis of fújì Songs." *Scholarship and Commitment: Essays in Honour of GG DARAH* (2018): 333.

[66] *Wákà (wak'a)* in itself is a female genre that is derived from Hausa language. *Wákà* is a considered the female version of fújì which only Muslims women perform

[67] See also Euba 1971:177-78; Waterman 1990:31

[68] See (Omibiyi-Obidike 1979; Waterman, Klein, 2014) Mosunmola, A. Omibiyi-Obidike. "Islam influence on Yorùbá music." *African Notes: Bulletin of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan* 8.2 (1979): 37-54.

[69] See Waterman (1990:372) in Christopher, A. Waterman,"" Our tradition is a very modern tradition": popular music and the construction of pan-Yorùbá identity." *Ethnomusicology* (1990): 367-379.

[70] See Klein (2014:2) in Debra, Klein. "fújì: Indigenous and Islamic Popular Music Fusions in Nigeria," a chapter in *Bloomsbury Encyclopaedia of Popular Music*, Volume 6. 2017

[71] Klein (2019: 147)

> "emerged as a named genre and a marketing label in the late 1960s, when former ajísàrì music singers Barrister and Kollington were released from active duty in the Nigerian Army (…). Although the genre has been partially detached from the sacred calendar of Islam, almost all fújì musicians and the majority of fans are Muslims, and the record companies are careful to release special fújì LPs on the major holy days (e.g. Id-el-Fitr, Id-el-Kabir, Ramadan)." (1995:244)

Apart from fújì's historical affiliation with Islam, the above Barber and Waterman's characterization of the genre provides hindsight into the current attendant secular image, the stakeholders in of fújì space are still largely Yorùbá Muslims. Indeed, all the six musicians whose works I analyse in this thesis are Yorùbá Muslims. Although my research is not quantitative and I did not set out to ascertain the fújì's fans population, most of the research collaborators are Muslims.

A typical fújì band is predominantly male, and band identity is formed on/around the image of a lead musician. The relationship and the dynamics between the fújì band leader and the band members have been discussed by Waterman (1990) as a way of knowing the process of "enacting and disseminating hegemonic Yorùbá identity- grounded in the iconic representation of social representations" (372). In essence, the status and the established hierarchy of the fújì bandleader project is an embodiment and "aural" that is culturally and structurally practised and represented in Yorùbá popular music (see Waterman 1990:374). The lead fújì musician is often distinguished from the rest of the band in all things. Waterman describes how typical Egbe – (band members) usually dress in uniform fabrics at a performance while the lead musician dresses differently. In addition, my observations during the fieldwork support this claim. All the fújì musicians often travel solo in a separate prestigious car while the rest of the band would travel (at least 2 hours earlier) in a separate bus. Since most of the musicians I observed are popular, a police escort pick-up van often escorts them. They often arrive at their performance spaces guarded by arm-bearing police officers. Indeed, the public appearance of popular personalities and securities details cannot be dissociated from larger security concerns. However, it is also a trope signalling power, privilege, and class performance. Largely, in this thesis, the fújì lead musicians (big man) inevitably are at the centre of my interrogations. In situations where their Egbe (backup) features, their roles are complimentary and often discussed in the framework of the bandleader's identity.

Another important access point into fújì's history is the founder's figure. Sikiru Ayinde alias Barrister is known as a first-generation fújì musician. Oyedeji (2017) refers to Barrister as "'Olusina' Ayinde" (101) – Ayinde 'the Pathfinder" because he is not only attributed to the

formation of the fújì band, but also highly revered by succeeding generations of fújì musicians. Klein states the following regarding Barrister's role in fújì formation:

> "The origin of fújì is traced to what is believed to have been Barrister's divine inspiration to transform wéré into a popular dance music that would exist alongside other forms of Yorùbá popular music… After seeing a poster of Japan's Mount fújì in an airport, Barrister is reputed to have named his new music after Japan's mountain of love and peace. (2017: 1-3)"

The above quotation highlights the role of the Barrister as a pioneer and a key figure in fújì's formation from the wéré (ajísàarì) era in the above quotation. The consensus in the literature[72] and the narrative of fújì practitioners is that Sikiru Ayinde alias Barrister founded the genre. Boluwaduro's work extends further interrogates how fújì has been adapted to resonate with the Yorùbá cultural language etymologies as ways of signalling fújì's hybridisation tendencies, and he explains as follows:

> "For instance, the coinage "fújì" is believed to have experienced certain cultural reformations from Fúrújì, Fúújì, Fàájì or Fújà to become fújì either as a result of phonetic disorder, or as a result of civilisation. Hence, coinages like fújì rọ́pọ̀pọ̀, fújì extravaganza, fújì vibration, fújì funky, fújì reggae, fújì disco, fújì garbage and others effortlessly find their ways into fújì music discourse, thereby revalidating its hybridised eccentrics" Boluwaduro (2022:319)

Indeed, fújì's variegated meaning as well as its history are part of the major talking point among musicians are significant talking points among musicians and their fans. Although, the history of fújì from the academic standpoint has coalesced into its link with the Islamic tradition of ajísàrì or were. This conversation is still relevant, especially the disunities of point of view and perspectives on the hierarchical order of musicians are important for fújì musicians and their fans.

Fújì musicians, in particular, often express these divergent views - an example of this divergence opinion can be seen in a Podcast project titled Afropop[73] in one of its editions titled "Lagos Roots: fújì, jùjú, and àpàlà" by Banning Eyre and Sean Barlow[74]. Some respondents in

[72] See Waterman (2002); Odetade & Fasinu (2021)

[73] The project description is as follows: "Afropop Worldwide is an internationally syndicated weekly radio series, online guide to African and world music, and an international music archive, that has introduced American listeners to the music cultures of Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean since 1988. Our radio program is hosted by Georges Collinet from Cameroon, the radio series is distributed by Public Radio International to 110 stations in the U.S., via XM satellite radio, in Africa via and Europe via Radio Multikulti."

[74] https://afropop.org/audio-programs/lagos-roots-fújì-jùjú-and-Àpàlà (the edition was first published online on the 28th July 2017)

the podcast edition are three popular fújì musicians: Abass Akande alias Obesere[75], Wasiu Ayinde alias Kwam1[76], and Saheed Akorede alias Saheed Osupa[77]. The three musicians express the following about fújì music:

> **Obesere**: "fújì music comes from what we call Àpàlà music. People always say the creator of fújì music is Dr Sikiru Ayinde Barrister who next to him (contemporary) is Alhaji Kollington Ayinla and fújì music is like traditional music (…)"
>
> **Kwam 1**: "At first, it (fújì) has an Islamic undertone because they use the fújì of then to celebrate people during the Muslim fasting period; call to pray; call to fast:"
>
> **Saheed Osupa**: fújì originated from a local line of music called 'Etiyeri'. 'Etiyeri' is part of the songs they sing for Egungun masquerades. So right from that, they derived another type of song called Were. They use it to wake people up during fasting; you see them moving around with drums and everything. So right from there, it generated to become fújì music."

The first speaker in the above contribution, Obesere, anchors his explanation on his understanding of fújì's meaning on the persona of the fújì founders while also situating the genre as traditional music. The traditional reference in this context is Obesere's attempt to compare fújì to the contemporary Nigerian Afrobeats genres. The second speaker, Kwam 1, discusses fújì along the history of the Yorùbá Islamic community. In addition, the third speaker, Saheed Osupa, introduces two genres that predate the fújì genre etíyerí (linked to masquerade performances) and wéré (linked to the Yorùbá Muslim community). Against this backdrop of the variegated perspectives on fújì's history as evident in the narratives by the aforementioned "fújì stars". That fact notwithstanding, a continuous attempt exists to establish a common history. The evidence of this attempt is the widespread consensus on the status of Sikiru Ayinde alias Barrister as the founder and most revered persona in fújì's world. The highlight of such progress among fújì musicians and their audience falls within the practice of constructing a common story and narratives that are essential to their shared identity of fújì. These stories, in some ways, provide the basis of representation and windows to anchor unity in their artistic forms. For that reason, I also consider stories narrated through, for, and in fújì as valuable tropes

[75] Obesere is a third generation of *fújì* musicians; he was born on 20th January 1965. Obesere has released over 25 albums and numerous collaborative singles with other musicians.

[76] Kwam1 was born on March 3rd, 1957; he is a second-generation fújì musician. Kwam1 has released over 50 albums since 1980s till date.

[77] Born on 7th August 1969, Saheed Osupa is a third generation of fújì musician, he has over 40 albums to his credit.

important enough to access underlining frameworks for preserving, enriching, and sustaining the fújì music genre across time.

2.3 Fújì musicians

While my discussion on fújì musicians in this chapter is conceived to provide a historical anchor for this research, my historical attempt is not strict and linear. Notwithstanding, I think and speak of five generations of fújì musicians[78] in a broad term. My discussions of these musicians are deliberate in ways that speak to the ensuing chapters of this thesis. For the sake of presentation and orderliness, the sequence of my presentation of fújì is not comprehensive in accounting for nuances, chronology, and hierarchical order of fújì's world[79]. Nevertheless, discussing the fújì musicians whose works are relevant to my analysis will provide the opportunity to explore some identifiable access points towards relevant debates and the objectives of this thesis.

Against this backdrop, it is important to begin this part by further elaborating on the biographical account of the pioneer of fújì, Alhaji Sikiru Ayinde alias Barrister (1948-2010). Barrister is a revered figure in the fújì world and Nigerian history. Among others, he received Nigerian National Honours as a member of the Order of the Federal Republic (MFR)[80]. Barrister's venerated status comes from his role in forming and promoting the fújì music genre. For over five decades, Barrister performed and produced numerous albums.

Sikiru Ayinde was born to Muslim parents in Iga-Salawe, Lagos City in Nigeria. He attended Muslim Mission School Lagos for his primary education from 1955 to 1958. He dropped out of secondary school at The Yaba Polytechnic College in Mushin, Lagos, in 1961 for lack of sponsorship. He lost his father at age 10; soon after, his family disintegrated[81]. Barrister credited

[78] I acknowledge that there are more several fújì musicians across cities and towns of Nigeria. In fact, they are expectedly above five generations of *fújì* musicians I discuss in this thesis. Also, I acknowledge that there professional bodies like the Performing Musicians Association of Nigeria (PMAN); the Islamic Music Association of Nigeria (ISMAN) (Klein 2020); *Fújì Musicians Association of Nigeria (FUMAN)* (see also Klein 2017) are relevant access in understanding *fújì.* This focus of this thesis is not on the association of *fújì* musicians. I think of *fújì* musicians like authors of literary texts and by this I will take account of their biographical or socio-cultural space that is relevant for my analysis and understanding of their works. In the context of this thesis and the limited period of my fieldwork vis-a-vis my activities, I do not I interrogate the role and dynamics of *fújì* associations. This aspect can be consider in the light of future research.

[79] fújì's history is sensitive debate, especially among fújì musicians and fans, it will require an extensive and deliberate studies (see: https://www.pulse.ng/entertainment/music/king-wasiu-ayinde-marshall-kwam-1-fújì-the-sound-ep-review/3wwf66l)

[80] The MFR is one of the highest honours that citizens of Nigeria can attain in recognition of their contribution towards the Nigerian state.

[81] His mother relocated to a smaller town outside Lagos known as Iwo in present day Osun state after the death of his father

a woman,[82] whom he refers to as 'the matron' of his musical group as a young boy, for taking care of him after his father's death. In an interview with Gbenga Adewusi, popularly of Bayowa Films and Records in 2009[83], Barrister had this to say regarding his childhood:

> "I started sleeping at Awolowo market at the age of 10 after I lost my father. I became a bus conductor- our bus usually uses the Ajegunle route. I was still in primary school at the time. I took the job because I did not want to become a beggar or a thief.
>
> I usually wake up around 4 am to resume my bus conductor job at Idi-Oro neighbourhood, my morning shift as bus conductor job usually ends at 7.30 am, so that I could go to school, I typically take my school uniform to work"[84]

The above excerpt from Barrister's narration about his childhood or formative years is part of the access points that can be deduced in the biographical account of fújì musicians that I mentioned earlier. In this case, the narrative of class deprivation and a disadvantaged socio-economic background of the musician is alluded. I consider the socio-economic background of the musicians I discuss in this thesis as relevant trope in their work their music persona.

According to Sikiru Ayinde Barrister, his late father (Baba Sikiru Eleran) introduced him to Yorùbá traditional music[85]. In the same interview, Barrister explained that his father was a traditional Yorùbá musician who performed in his native city of Ibadan. Barrister explained that his first album, which is titled "*E je ka gbo t'Oluwa*" (1966) - "Let us hear the Lord's Guidance" was an adaptation of the work of another musician known as Ayinla Oru and the original album by Ayinla Oru is titled "*Ile Aye Kosegbe*" (1958) – "The World is inhabitable".

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[82] Barrister in his biographical account credits a woman known as Mama Seri Ghana (who was later deported back to Ghana in 1963). Mama Seri was the matron of Barrister group at the time his father died. She also sponsored his basic education before her deportation.

[83]https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vECVDHS5J7s&list=PLOx5YGD6_KmqAoMEOk0Ej6x97O5bbdzfL&index=26&t=0s

Sikiru Ayinde Barrister (fújì Pioneer) (1-11,) YouTube. Mikky 73. Published on Jan. 2, 2010. 7mins 17 secs. See also Another interview conducted by Gbenga Adewusi (Bayowa Films and Records) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vECVDHS5J7s&list=PLOx5YGD6_KmqAoMEOk0Ej6x97O5bbdzfL&index=26&t=0s and uploaded under the title *In Loving Memory of The fújì Legend Are Dr Sikiru Ayinde Barrister in Orisa fújì*, YouTube. Yorùbá Swag TV. Published on 13 Aug. 2016. 34mins 09 secs.

[84] The interview is generated from my transcription and translation of an interview material held with Sikiru Ayinde (Barrister) in 2009 by Bayowa Films and records and uploaded in seven parts on YouTube titled:

Sikiru Ayinde Barrister (fújì Pioneer) (1-11,) YouTube. Mikky 73. Published on Jan. 2, 2010. 7mins 17 secs. See also Another interview conducted by by Gbenga Adewusi (Bayowa Films and Records) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gpq3Rd_TrAg&t=1786s and uploaded under the title *In Loving Memory of The fújì Legend Are Dr Sikiru Ayinde Barrister in Orisa fújì*, YouTube. Yorùbá Swag TV. Published on 13 Aug. 2016. 34mins 09 secs.

[85] He explained that from age five, he learnt to memorize and reproduce for his father both the lyrics and the drumbeats plus the messages the talking drums conveyed from musical records of the established musicians.

According to Klein, "Barrister released over 150 recordings and is revered for the tone of his voice and his gift for poetic text improvisation" (2017:8). Also known as, Mr. *Fújì*, Sikiru Ayinde alias Barrister's career story is often narrated vis-à-vis his contemporary and friend, Kolawole Rasaki Ilori alias Kollington Ayinla[86].

Kollington, who is the most senior *fújì* musician alive today. According to Kollington's biographical account[87], he was enlisted in the Nigerian army in 1967 and was posted into the music section of the Nigerian army, thus becoming a non-combatant soldier. Barrister (his friend) would join the army a few months after Kollington was enlisted in 1967. Barrister, in turn, convinced Kollington to exit from the military so they could both build careers as professional musicians. Klien (2017) explains Kollington trajectory into the world as follows:

> "In 1973, Kollington Àyìnlá, one of Barrister's best friends in the Nigerian army, started his own fújì band and became a prolific performer and Barrister's musical rival. The competition between Barrister and Kollington became fújì's original "big man" rivalry and helped to propel fújì into national popularity" (3)

Indeed, the rivalry theme is a recorded event that characterises the Barrister and Kollington professional relationship[88]. It is also a recurring incidence among succeeding generations of fújì musicians. I will discuss this aspect of fújì extensively in chapter three of this thesis.

The foundational generation of fújì musicians (Barrister and Kollington) works were greatly impacted by other older genres of influence on *fújì* to *àpàlà* and *sákárà* genres of music. According to Oludare, àpàlà is "socio-religious music with a prominent instrumental part, and a vocal accompaniment" (2018:2)[89]. Both àpàlà and sákárà share similarities; they are considered "non-liturgical (Yorùbá) Islamic music" (Oludare 2018:2). However, as observable in the discussion of the three prominent musicians I presented above, there are more genres of music, which are considered as *fújì*'s influence[90].

[86] He is also known as among other nicknames as 'Kebe n Kwara' – Kebe from Kwara (emphasizes his root from a town in Kwara state known as Igbonna.

[87] Their career in the army was brief, according to Barrister, he left the army in 1968 and Kollignton. Kollington in an interview state that Barrister influenced his decision to also retire in the army and became a full-fledged fújì musician. Interview titled "Sikiru *Ayinde lo da fújì sile*" - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oSBoFeJr0tQ

[88] See also Sunday (2011), I will explore this in another section of this thesis.

[89] See also Adedayo Festus (2020) work titled "Ayinla Omowura: Life and Times of an Àpàlà Legend" .

[90] For example, in the above excerpt from the Afropop interview, Saheed Osupa mentions the genre another genre called Etiyeri – an Egungun celebration music style that predates and influenced fújì's formation.

When Barrister was asked to describe what he considers fújì music during a televised interview[91], his response was as follows: "fújì is [a] combination of Afro music, Àpàlà, Sákárà, Aaro, Jùjú ati beebe lo… (and so on and forth)." The implication of Barrister's description of fújì music as an embodiment of several genres further emphasises that fújì is incorporative of the instruments and styles of the genres that were in existence before its creation[92]. Barber[93] explains this process of creating a new popular art genre as establishing new conventions where "preservation" and "innovation" are mutually constitutive.

Until the fusion of the instruments, most are conceived in the older genre to stand alone. The impact of the historic merger of the two genres of Àpàlà and Sákárà can still be witnessed through close observation of the drummer's arrangement during a fújì music performance today[94]. The fusion of once separated musical instruments into one genre also increases exponentially the number of drummers or groups required for producing fújì music sound[95]. According to Klein:

> "fújì's signature sound is dominated by vocals and percussion. In order to produce a full-bodied sound, bands include many members: several vocalists, often 15 to 20 percussionists, and since the 1980s, a keyboardist, saxophonist/s and/or electric and pedal steel guitarist/s. Barrister's first band, Alhaji Sikiru Ayinde Barrister and His fújì Group, was a 25-piece band. Many fújì bands employ percussionists who have trained within Àyàn (the spirit of the drum) lineages, extended families whose boys and young men apprentice to the profession of drumming and perform in local ensembles." (2017:3)

Evident in Klein's description is that Barrister and other musicians, by the early 1980s, had begun incorporating Western musical instruments like drum sets, electric guitars, and keyboards. The period of the 1980s also provides further nuances in our quest to understand

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[91] YouTube Reference, Interview conducted by Gbenga Adewusi.

[92] Alongside his father's influence, Barrister (so also Kollington) acknowledge *Àpàlà* and *Sákárà* musicians as their mentors and inspirations. Kollington emphasises that the popular *Àpàlà* musician, Ayinla Omowura[92], mentored him early in his career. Barrister and Kollington acknowledge *Àpàlà* and sákárà musicians whose works inspired their music production. I will produce a list of musicians whose names are seldom cited as sources of influence on their works (both Barrister and Kollington). The order of the list does not connote any form of hierarchy or order[92]:

[93] Barber, Karin. *A History of African Popular Culture*. Vol. 11. Cambridge University Press, 2018.

[94] Two to three Sákárà drummers stays together and most cases they are mostly sited during performance because the production of Sákárà beats requires the use of thumb in the inner surface of the drum while the other four fingers is used to stretch the outer layer to synchronize the expected tone out of the drum. In this case, the elbow needs to rest on the drummer's thigh.

[95]The two main genres are *Sákárà* and *Àpàlà* musicians. Ademowo explains as follows: "to talk of WÉRÉ, FAAJI, FURUJI or FÚJÌ without reference to *Àpàlà*, *Sákárà*, Dùndún and *Ṣẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀* is not complete" (1993:15). From the foregoing, one can explain that Barrister's collapsed the musical instruments of both *Àpàlà* and *Sákárà* to create the early fújì music sound *(meaning)* used the following drums and instruments and integrated them into *fújì*: *sákárà, ṣẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀* (gourd shaker), *dùndún*, *ogido* drums and *gudugudu*. Klein (2017)

successive generations of fújì musicians. The 1980s "coincided with the proliferation, marketing, and pirating of audio and video recordings" (Ibid.3). Jibrin (2004) provides more insight into the broader changes in Nigeria regarding the widespread electronic audio-visual materials because they became relatively accessible in the 1980s. Thanks to the availability of affordable and portable used electronic appliances such as tape recorders and VHS machines imported from Europe.

Olasunkanmi Ayinde, also known as Wasiu Ayinde, Kwam1 or K1 De Ultimate, is one of Nigeria's most prominent fújì musicians today. He belongs to the second generation of fújì musicians. Wasiu Ayinde alias Kwam1 plays a unique role in transforming the fújì genre. Kwam 1 is the second generation of fújì musicians (a sort of bridge between the founders and the subsequent generations of fújì musicians). Wasiu Ayinde was part of the Sikiru Ayinde Barrister band at an early age, and he is known to have adopted "Ayinde" from his mentor and benefactor, Barrister, when he set out of his musical career. His first album was "Abode Mecca" was released in 1980. By the mid-1980s, Kwam1 had begun a new wave of experimentation with fújì sound by increasing the beat tempo of this genre of music. His oeuvres are driven by the quest to 'modernise' and mainstream (crossover to high culture status or educated middle-class spaces) fújì music. From the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, Kwam 1 was instrumental in experimenting with music in which fújì sound was fused to Jazz through extensive use of saxophone. In other instances, Kwam1's fújì style evokes a sense of Makossa or Rhumba rhythms. In many of Kwam1's albums or live performances, there is an extensive play of various musical notes synonymous with church hymnals, Jùjú music, R&B, Jazz, Rhuma and Makossa beats. The description of his style of fújì as Classical fújì by Kwam1 and his fans attest to his conscious attempt to create a style of fújì reflecting Western aesthetics. The 'classical' in Kwam1's style of fújì music means incorporating jazz and soul music rhythm into the traditional Yorùbá musical instruments. Kwam1's kind of music comes across as a mid-tempo rhythm anchored on the synergy of Western and indigenous musical instruments. The 'Classical fújì' aesthetic appeals to the educated Yorùbá population, the Yorùbá middle class, and the elite and non-Yorùbá speakers in the Yorùbá urban spaces[96]. The saxophones, the keyboard, and the sometimes slow and soulful rhythm conveyed through instrumentation

[96]https://www.pulse.ng/entertainment/music/king-wasiu-ayinde-marshall-kwam-1-fújì-the-sound-ep-review/3wwf66l

incorporate choruses or verses from popular R&B rendered at the background to form part of fújì aesthetics.[97]

Kwam1, like many fújì musicians, is a storyteller. The fújì musicians often invoke fictive scenarios and invent characters in their songs. They also narrate their life experiences, like their travel experience, religious commentary, and political opinions. Generally, Kwam1's style, compared to the first generation of fújì musicians' style, is slow-paced, which means that he is also popularly known for his unusual speech-like, dialogic, and casual vocal delivery. Kwam1's style allows for a different experience for the listener to compartmentalise the beats and the lyrics. Kwam1, like, most of his counterparts, improvises on the spot during the performance[98]. These factors have significantly contributed to Kwam1's career success and wide acceptance by a large section of the middle class and educated Yorùbá speakers and urban dwellers. For the successive generation of fújì musicians like Kwam 1, incorporating drums, drumbeats, other musical instruments, and rhythm to their music from outside the immediate sound zone of fújì contribute to its unique identity and flexible and adaptable rhythm across time. This aspect of adaptability and constant incorporation in style also justifies the extent of mainstreaming and popular status fújì has in contemporary Yorùbá society.

The other musicians that are also relevant to the development of this thesis are Abass Akande alias Obesere, Wasiu Alabi alias Pasuma, Saheed Akorede alias Saheed Osupa and Sulaimon Malaika. Additionally, there is also Taye Adebisi alias Taye Currency. The first set of four musicians belongs to the third generation of fújì musicians, while Taye Currency belongs to the fourth generation. The third generation of fújì musicians emerged between the late 1980 and early 1990s[99] while the fourth generation emerged in the wake of the millennium. My discussion of their profile and musical persona is more relevant to my discussion of the rivalry theme; the performance of the "ìgboro" and the big man in chapters three, four and six of this thesis. Notwithstanding some of the access points that are relevant for my discussion in this chapter with regards to the third generation of fújì musicians can be teased in Boluwaduro's (2022) idea of fújì as "pertinently shaped in three different modes which include the speech or recitation mode (consisting of the spoken poetic forms and drum recitals), the chant mode and

[97] In the context of the debates on *fújì* aesthetic transformation especially in the mid-1980 and early 1990s, Adewale Ayuba alias Mr Johnson is also important. Ayuba's Album titled *Mr Bubble* (1991) and subsequent ones come with a different sonic experience. Ayuba uses a mid-tempo rhythm, keyboard, saxophone and a well-coordinated (not clumsy and fast-paced drum pattern). Ayuba is very popular amongst the Yorùbá middle class and the Yorùbá Christian community.

[98] See also Watermann and Barber (1995)

[99] see Ogungbemi & Bamgbose (2021).

the song mode as the three basic modes." (5). In this case, I highlight two levels of observable vocal changes with the emergence of the third generation of fújì musicians as: 1). A more forceful vocal rendition, a baritone, quaky, and negligible voice introduced in the *fújì* scene, and 2). Significant vocal ranges expansion at the level of the *Ègbè* group the backup singers). A review of *fújì* works produced in the mid-1990s compared with the earlier works from the 1970s and 1980s will establish the significant vocal disruption and the addition to the *fújì* pool. By the mid-1990s, and in the wake of the new millennium, the period of coming of age of the third and fourth generations of *fújì* musicians was witnessed. The third generations of *fújì* musicians usher in the *Tungba* drumbeats in *fújì*. The 'Tungba' or 'Alujo[100]' beat is a uniquely sustained, fast-paced, dense, jerky-layered pattern of uniform drumbeats. The 'Tungba' or 'Alujo' drumbeats had hardly played a role in *fújì* before but come in a more sustained way in the works of the third generation of *fújì* musicians.

Before the third generation of musicians emerged, the *fújì* musicians intermittently infused shorter versions of Tungba beats. However, with the third generation of *fújì* musicians, the *Tungba* drumbeat could form the base of an entire album. The Sákárà and the dùndún drummers create the *Tungba* beat pattern in *fújì*[101], and the drum set drummer often supports them. Tungba drum patterns in *fújì* evoke a sense of ecstatic dancing, a sort of call and response where the dancing audience's waist and body movements harmonise with the beat pattern. Tungba drumbeats are often the high point of *fújì* performance and a culmination of an expressive atmosphere.

The works of the third generation of fújì musicians is also noteworthy at the level of vocal expansion. There has been an inclusion of a jester-like persona in the *fújì* band since the early 1990s. I refer to this persona as *fújì* musician's alter ego. The role of the alter ego persona is to cause a deliberate vocal disharmony between the *fújì* musicians and a section of the backup group. One or two backup singers with distinctly audible and unique tenor voices in the backup groups embody the alter-ego persona. The presence of the alter-ego persona alters the classical call-and-response experience from the backup groups of early *fújì* musicians, especially during the chorus rounds. The alter-ego persona often stands out by creating another vocal experience

[100] I would attempt to translate the word 'Alujo' as – a drum pattern calling for ecstatic dance response. 'Tungba' is a synonym slang for 'Alujo'.

[101] Yorùbá drummers are historically known as mischievous personae, they enjoy the liberty of subversion in the framework of performance. In fact, there is a long-established concept known as iyi-ilu-pada –literal translation means "to change over the drumbeats" signifying their moment of subversive freedom. Thus, the Tungba drummers benefit from such established practices in their tune composition.

in the *fújì* band. The role of this unique character in *fújì* is not alien to Yorùbá oral practices, and there is a tradition known as *Àjásà* – a type of interjection during performances. However, the uniqueness of the type of *Alájàásà* character ('interjector') in *fújì* music is felt not only in the tone and content but also enacts aspects of *fújì* aesthetic that Klein signal as "vapid lyrics of *fújì* music" – the type of *fújì* genre which provoke the older generations of Yorùbá to ask, "what kind of music are kids listening to anyway – and worse, reproducing?" (Klein 2007:100). Raji-Oyelade (2012) stirs the discussion about the genre of *fújì* music in question by labelling it the period and genre of "nonsense lyrics" (24). The vapid and nonsense lyrics of *fújì* lead to a new level of inventiveness which is embodied and conveyed through a series of "inventive and invented proverbs" (Raji-Oyelade 2012: 24) by the alter-ego persona in the Egbe (back-up singers' group). The tenor-voiced alter-ego persona in the back-up group functions at multiple but overlapping levels during *fújì* music performance. At the first level, he choruses alongside the rest of the Egbe group during the chorus rounds or any call made to the group by the lead musician. On another level, the alter-ego persona voices out the encoded drum speeches (more often-in parts). While voicing the drumbeats, the persona deliberately distorts parts of the drum speech. More often, banal metaphors, illustrations, side comments and hyperbolic statements introduced by the alter-ego persona alter the original message from the drumbeats. During *fújì* performance, the alter ego is the most consistent human voice at liberty to echo drum patterns/ speeches in the Egbe group. The alter-ego persona interjects, humour, innuendoes, converse, and veer-off or even contradicts the direction of the lyrical persona/lead musician. The effect of adding the alter-ego persona curates' additional moments of humour during *fújì* performance. In this case, the lead musician has an additional or complimentary persona rendering humour and spontaneously inventing or communicating drumbeats to the audience.

Conclusively, the 'Alujo', 'Tungba', and the male alter-ego character/persona are significant transformative elements that are observable to be part of the unique identifier of the works of third and the subsequent generations of *fújì* musicians like Wasiu Alabi alias Pasuma, Saheed Osupa and Abass Akande alias Obesere. These aesthetic experiences, which come to fruition in the early 1990s, are still relevant in the characterisation of the contemporary *fújì* experience.

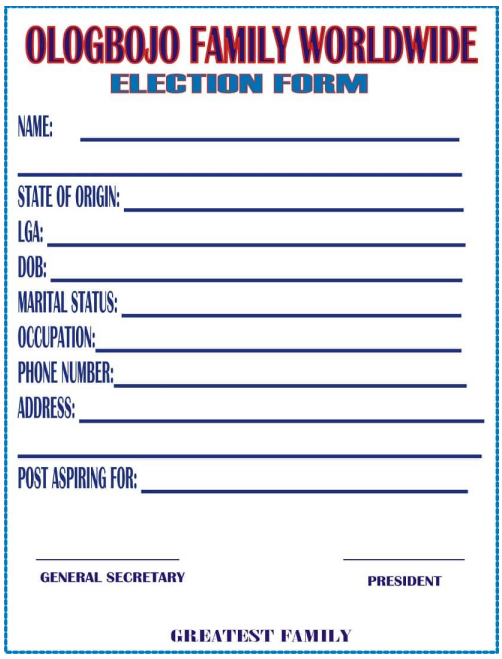
2.4 The Fújì Fans Club

Fújì fans are a core of fújì's aesthetic experience because they carry fújì's essence and experiences beyond the performance spa into the lived spaces. They are important stakeholders, given that their role in fújì gatherings transcends the ordinary. fújì fans drive conversations in spaces outside performance spaces. The fans articulate the dynamics of affiliation and rivalry

outside the performance music. Iconic statuses are partly derived from the cumulative activities of their fans. fújì fans are co-creators of fújì aesthetics in the everyday context of Yorùbá urban spaces. It is uncommon to observe that discourse on topics in fújì varies because fújì fans, in their groupings, often narrate versions of debates based on their affiliations. An average fújì fan identifies with their favourite fújì icons through aliases or self-adopted titles.

The dynamics of the formation and operation of the fans club can be considered organic. One of the fújì musicians I observed closely during the fieldwork is Abass Akande alias Obesere. Our first meeting occurred on 16th September 2018 at Lagelu FM radio station in Ibadan. Thankfully, he granted me high access to some networks of his fans' club, which allowed me a broader insider's view. The members of Obesere's fans' club, just like the fans of other fújì musicians identify, often adopt aspects of the musician's aliases that appeal to their sentiments. In this case, disparity may exist in fans referencing of the same fújì musician. In the city of Ibadan, one of Obesere's fans identified as the "Ologbojo[102]" family or "Ologbojo fans club". Another group in Lagos with a similar objective identifies simply as the "Obesere fans club". The fans operate like a social club; they are self-governed and self-organised with independent governing or operation structures. The elected officials of the respective fan clubs are usually responsible for the mobilisation and welfare of their members.

[102] Ologbojo is a title that is derived from Abass Akande alias Obesere lineage Oríkì. Ologbojo is a unique title in the Yorùbá Egungun (masquerade worship), it is a title that is reserved for the head chief of the Egungubn clan. "Ologbojo ni baba Egungun – Ologbojo is the father of all Egungun" is a common Yorùbá statement. Thus, the symbolism of the adoption of 'Ologbojo'alias or his fans club is a symbolic representation of their imagination of his leadership status (a discourse refercing his positionality amongt his peers of fújì musicians).



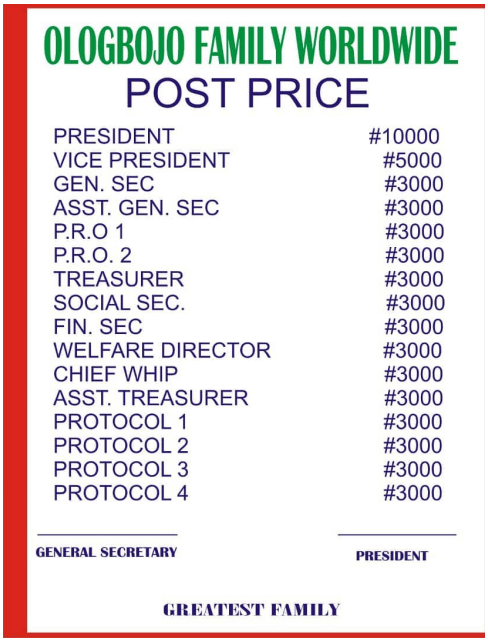


Fig 2.1: Examples of a branch of Obesere's fans club election materials: a. 'Ologbojo Family' election nomination form and b. list of elective positions in the fans club and the cost of the nomination forms. Source: Alhaji Adegoke alias Oluyole.

As seen in the above images, the fans' club group gives a semblance of a structured organisation. My interaction with a local chapter of Obesere fans club at the Ketu-Alapere neighbourhood in Lagos reveals that the chapter has between 35 to 40 active members. The members are men and women of different professions and age grades[103]. Although there are more men than women, a significant number of women are participating in the fans' club activities and administrative roles.

This image above represents the internal working of a fújì fans club belonging to 'Ologbojo Worldwide'. The document is a portrayal of fújì fans clubs as structured entities. The inclusion of 'worldwide' on the election nomination suggests that members of the 'Ologbojo' fans club sees their membership beyond Nigeria. In essence, they have diaspora membership spread beyond the Nigerian geographical jurisdiction. The club officers mobilize the members for events and occasions. The club also pay attention to welfare of their members, they support each other in times of need, they contribute and assist members during special occasion. Members of the executives gain prominence visibility as they are known by the musician, his staffs and band members.

[103] The youngest members are in the early 30s while the oldest members in their late 50s.

Fig 2.2: Posters are advertising 'Obesere Fans Club' in Lagos, and Ibadan, respectively. Source Alhaji Adegoke alias Oluyole.

The above images are examples of fan club posters. The poster on the right is from the "Ologbojo" family "worldwide" based in Ibadan. It is evident that the public image of the musician, Obesere, is at the centre of the activities of the self-identified fans' clubs. Similarly, the poster on the left belongs to a branch of Obesere's fans club located in the Abesan Estate in the Ipaja neighbourhood of Lagos. The poster's background shows the bold image of the musician and the band. The poster also has an abbreviated alias of the musician, 'PK 1st'. The initials 'PK' stands for 'paramount king' and indicate that Obesere is considered and accepted by his fans as a "paramount king". Being a "paramount king" in the fújì constellation is still within the dynamics of rivalry and an awareness that other fújì musicians identify as kings in the fújì space. The adoption of the alias 'paramount king' is itself an acknowledgement of the existence of the other kings of fújì.

Another appellation in the poster is 'Alhaji Agba' or 'senior Alhaji'. Again, the title 'VC' features on the appellations of the Obesere – a re-echo of the title 'vice chancellor'. On the same poster is "Aare Amuludun Adinni[104] Worldwide" – *The chief/Adin or Adeen of merriment/celebrations worldwide.* The numerous titles echo Barber's earlier argument of the

[104] This appelation speaks to the vision of the Yorùbá Islam community as a core in the fújì space and a reflection of the musician's religious leaning as a Muslim.

‘seniority’ (even if relative) among the Yorùbá people. It speaks to an entrenched cultural practice and philosophically induced concept of Gbajúmọ̀ or the big man. I will discuss the concepts of Gbajúmọ̀ and big man extensively in chapter five.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have provided basic background information on fújì music. I have established discourses like the origin of fújì, and the meaning of the name fújì, which is even contentious even among practitioners. I have partly anchored fújì’s history on the persona of the revered musician and central figure in creating the genre known as Sikiru Ayinde alias Barrister. I also have characterizedd fújì in terms of its key instruments and the influence of other Yorùbá Ismalic genres in its formative stage. I have also situated fújì as a dynamic genre which is always in the process of transformation. For me, the degrees and elements of fújì transformation are also markers of generational shifts. In this regard, I elaborated on the role of Yorùbá drummers and their creation of “Tungba” or “Alujo” drumbeats – major transformative elements in the works of the second, third and fourth generations of fújì musicians. Similarly, as “Alujo” or “Tungba” drumbeats are incorporated into the genre, introducing the ‘alter-ego’ persona into the fújì *egbe* (backup) singers group plays a centra aesthetic purpose or part of the defining element in the wors of contemporary generations of fújì musicians. To this end, I discussed the role of the “alter-ego” persona and how it contributes to fújì's sonic transformation.

I concluded my characterisation of fújì by discussing the fújì fans clubs and their dynamics. I provided the case study of Abass Akande alias Obesere fans group that I encountered during the fieldwork and how they contribute to the core essence of fújì world.

CHAPTER THREE

3 Negotiating Status in Fújì World: Mobility, Hierarchy, Rivalry and Affiliation

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will delve into the analysis of fújì by discussing some interrelated themes and practices. To achieve this, I will begin my discussion focusing on the theme of social mobility in fújì. I envisage the discussion on social mobility provide provide the basis, insights and context of fújì musicians socio-economic background. By this, I argue that the theme of social mobility is part of imaginaries that are drawn from the lived experiences of fújì musicians. In this case, I will do a close reading of Saheed Osupa's lyric excerpts from the album "*Kokoro Alate*" and "Orin d'owo – *Singing has turned to Riches*" in the album *Flavours* (2017) by Kwam1 as analysis texts for discussing the theme of social mobility in fújì music. In the next section, I am reading fújì lyrics to illustrate how the theme of rivalry between the musicians is represented in their works. To answer this question, I will do a close reading of Akorede Babatunde Okikiola alias Saheed Osupa's song lyrics titled "*Kolokolo Okota*" (2015) – "The Fox of Okota*".* My analysis of this work will allow me to discuss the theme of rivalry as a recurring trope in fújì discourse, particularly amongst musicians. Rivalry in this context will be discussed as a marker and manifestation of both inter- and intra-generational professional dynamics amongst the musicians and as part of the struggle for big-man-ship.

In addition, I am interested in how the urban milieu gestures back into the fújì performance space. Does fújì performance space enable status negotiation? To answer the questions, I will discuss the significance of fújì musicians' aliases and descriptive titles in their artistic persona imagination and representation. I argue that fújì musicians, through their adoption of oríkì strategies, their adopted aliases and descriptive titles, implicitly convey their individual stories and career trajectories. The last analysis section in this chapter will also cover my discussion of the fújì performance space as a space where fújì audience negotiates visibility and their social and professional networks of affiliations. In this case, I will rely on observable aspects of insignia on the audience costumes as examples of modes and strategies for negotiating visibility and affiliations in the fújì performance.

3.2 Theme of Social Mobility: A Recurring Trope in Fújì World

The theme of social mobility in fújì is a recurring trope where the lived experience feeds into the artistic imagination of fújì. My discussion on the theme of social mobility will further complement the

biography and social conditions of fújì musicians that I touched on in chapter two. By this, I will touch on personal narratives that will provide further insights into the socio-economic background of the third and fourth generation of fújì musicians whose works are relevant to this thesis. My argument is that the recurring theme of social mobility in fújì has a deeper signification. The deeper signification I refer to in this case situates the theme of mobility in fújì as part of the "interconnections between "lifestyle" and the aesthetic" Klein (2012: 128). Following Barber's argument about popular culture material as the embodiment of "historical memory and a consciousness of continuity with the past" Barber (2018:3). The result of this development is expectedly manifested as the emergence of what Barber further explains as the "new orientation to what is new and changing in social experience (Ibid. 3). Against this backdrop, I present some aspects of fújì musician's background narratives as an exemplar backdrop to the understanding of the theme of social mobility in their songs. During one of our interview sessions, Taye Currency had this to say about his childhood[105]:

> *"Orúkọ mi ni Alhaji Taiwo Akande Adebisi, Taye Currency, a bí mi ní Ìbàdàn ní ọdún 1974, nígbà tí mo pé omo 14 years ní 1988, mo drop-out ní secondary school, mo lọ sékòó mò ń rìn kiri, láláìní ilé kankan, mi ò ní ibi tí mo ń sùn, ọ̀dọ̀ àwọn ọmọ ìta ní Garage ni mò ń sùn sùn. My name is Alhaji Taiwo Akande Adebisi alias Taye Currency. I was born in the city of Ibadan in 1974. I dropped out of secondary school at the age 14 before travelling to the city of Lagos. In Lagos, I became a vagrant; I did not have a place to lay my head. I was living among the homeless and street thugs at motor parks."*

Similarly, Saheeed Osupa in one of the media interviews I referenced earlier in this chapter has the following to say about his background:

> "I lived in Ajegunle and you know that Ajegunle is a ghetto and in the ghetto, everybody is always looking for ways to survive and so I took to music. Some end up being touts, some end up in music like me, some end up as armed robbers, but I thank God that I have ended like this. I can't remember or say much about my father. I was not even up to a year when I saw my father last. He is still alive, but I am not someone who has dependence on my parents. I believe in surviving by myself."[106]

What stands out for me in the above narratives is how they echo similar socio-economic conditions which characterize the background of the prominent fújì musicians. In fact, all the popular fújì musicians I interviewed during the fieldwork, Suleiman Alao alias Malaika, Abass Akande alias Obesere and Taye Currency articulate similar stories of a difficult childhood. The

[105] Apart from Taye Currency, Obesere has the following to say as part of his reflection on his childhood and early career development. While attending secondary school education at Jubril Martins secondary school in Lagos, Obesere recounts, how he combined his education with apprenticeships, he intitally enrolled as an apprentice at a Printing press. By the time he left secondary school, he became an apprentice in the following fields: welding work, electronic electrician work and boxing career until 1980 when he branched into fújì music profession.

[106] https://www.vanguardngr.com/2011/08/am-a-self-made-man-king-saheed-osupa/

narratives of their life trajectories are often marked with narratives of limited education due to a lack of financial and moral support, tough childhood characterised by poor living conditions, and growing up with an absent father. In this case, there is a consistent pattern of disadvantaged lifestyle and upbringing. Thus, a recurring theme of social mobility in fújì is a pointer to the history of both individual and collective social struggle. In this case, I will further read two lyrics excerpts from Saheed Osupa and Wasiu Ayinde alias Kwam 1 as follows:

Table 3.1: Okunola Babatunde Akorede Saheed alias Saheed Osupa - *Kokoro Alate* (2012)

	Yorùbá	English Translation
1	*Ẹ má pè wá lálágbe mọ́ o o*	Stop addressing/referring (to) us as beggars
2	*Ayé òní ti yàtọ̀ sí tayé ọjọ́hun*	The reality today differs from the olden days
3	*Iṣẹ́ là ń ṣe kì mà í seré*	We are no mere entertainers, our is a profession
4	*Iṣẹ́ ọpọlọ, ní iṣẹ́ tiwa*	intellectual work is what our profession stands for
5	*Iṣẹ́ là ń ṣe kì mà í seré*	We are no mere entertainers, our is a profession

The above is an excerpt from a recorded live performance album titled *Kokoro Alate* (2012), by Saheed Akorede, alias Saheed Osupa. The verse presents a dialogic performance, and the musician addresses an unspecified audience (the general public). The dialogue shows how the musicians challenge the audience/public to re-orientate themselves and shift their perception of fújì musicians as 'beggars' to a more respected position of professionals and 'intellectuals'. Since the performance of hierarchical relations permeates the entire (Yorùbá) society[107], an individual's profession and the extent of their success are determinants of social perception. Thus, professionals like musicians (praise singers) and drummers are examples of professionals that are not considered part of the elite or upper class. Klein's (2012) provides an example of the social condition of the "drummers and masquerade dancers from Èrìn-Òsun" whom she describes as "strictly artisans, members of a lower, working class" (130).

When Saheed Osupa sings in line 1 that *"Ẹ má pè wá lálágbe mọ́ o o* - Stop addressing/referring to us as beggars", he addresses a historical and social reality – a bias of perception and the (mis)conception of social stratification. In the lyrics, the musicians are seen to contest the dominant view and a product of the historical condition of the Yorùbá social dynamics that a musician or entertainer belongs to the lower class.

He sings in line 2 that, "*Ayé òní ti yàtọ̀ sí tayé ọjọ́hun* - The reality today differs from the olden days". By juxtaposing the realities of the past against 'today's reality, the musician is re-

[107] Barber (1991) explains how structures of hierarchy defines the Yorùbá lifeworld. I will revisit this debate and phenomenom in the subsequent chapters of this thesis.

negotiating the public perception of Yorùbá musicians in the court of public opinion. The need to re-negotiate the public perception of the musician is unconnected to the opportunities to be "upwardly mobile"[108] – a reality that is availed by the new realities of the urban Yorùbá economy.

To further my argument on the representation of social mobility in fújì lyrics, I will analyse a track titled "Orin d'Owó – *Singing has turned to Riches*" in the album *Flavours* (2017) by Wasiu Ayinde alias Kwam: The lyrics goes as follows:

Table 3.2: Wasiu Omogbonlahan Ayinde alias Kwam 1 - "Orin d'owo" in the album *Flavours* (2017

	Yorùbá	English Translation
1	*Orín d'Owó*	Singing (fújì) has turned into riches,
2	*Orin dọlá*	Singing (fújì) has turned into wealth
3	*Ló jẹ́ n wá dúpẹ́ o*	*Hence, I've come to show my appreciation*
4	*Orin dowó*	*Singing (fújì) has turned into riches,*
5	*Orin dọlá*	*Singing (fújì) has turned into wealth*
6	*Ló jẹ́ n tọ́pẹ́ dá*	*Hence, I'm eternally grateful*
7	*Bíṣẹ́ bá ti lálùbáríkà*	*When a profession becomes profitable,*
8	*Ṣebí ọpẹ́ ló yẹ kẹ́rú dá*	*is the servant ought not to be grateful?*
9	*Orin dowó*	*Singing (fújì) has turned into riches,*
10	*Orin dọlá*	*singing (fújì) has turned into wealth*
11	*Ló jẹ́ n wá dúpẹ́ o*	*Hence, I'm eternally grateful*
12	*Orin dowó*	*Singing (fújì) has turned into riches,*
13	*Orin dọlá*	*Singing (fújì) has turned into wealth*
14	*Ló jẹ́ n tọ́pẹ́ dá*	*Hence, I'm eternally grateful indeed,*
15	*À ní bíṣẹ́ bá ti lálùbáríkà*	*when a profession becomes profitable,*
16	*Ijó ló yẹ kẹ́rú ó ljó*	*the servant should be rejoiceful*

In the above excerpt, the musician reflects on his blessings. He sings about fújì ushering in riches and wealth. The voice narration establishes a tone of personal reflection that is anchored on emphasising the essence of being a professional musician to the narrative voice. The voice expresses a general sense of gratitude to God as it emphasizes the transformative role of music to the singer. The musician sings:

12	*Orin dowó*	Singing (fújì) has turned into riches,
13	*Orin dọlá*	Singing (fújì) has turned into wealth
14	*Ló jẹ́ n tọ́pẹ́ dá*	Hence, I've come to show my appreciation

[108] Waterman (1990) in his work in *Jùjú* explains that although operating within the realities of "fluctuations in the urban economy" the Jùjú band leaders have become updwardly mobile.

In the above opening lines, the narrative voice is deliberate in highlighting what "Orin" – "singing" (being a musician) signifies for him. By this "riches" and "wealth" are highlighted as the outcome or aftermath of being a musician for the musician. The emphasis on riches and wealth is symbolic of a discourse on social mobility and the attainment of social status.

This narrative cannot be dissociated from the background of fújì musicians I mentioned above. I am referring to the idea that the background (the conditions that shaped their childhood and early career) of most fújì musicians is intrinsically connected to what career success symbolises for them. To go further is also to identify and situate fújì musicians in the economic framework of the Yorùbá working class[109] who are mostly situated in the economic frame of the Yorùbá working class and the informal sector[110] . As such, professionals like butchers, taxi operators, vulcanizers, mechanics, tailors, bus drivers, conductors, and other professionals in the informal transportation value chain often emerged through the indigenous apprentice system (not a formal education system).

The message in the above lyrics excerpt is somewhat related to the lyrics excerpt of Saheed Osupa which I discussed earlier because it alludes to the social position of the musician as being part of the low class. The musician sings as follows in lines 7- 10 that:

7	*Bíṣẹ́ bá ti lálùbáríkà*	*When a profession becomes profitable,*
8	*Ṣebí ọpẹ́ ló yẹ kẹ́rú dá*	*is the servant ought not to be grateful?*
9	*Orin dowó*	*Singing (fújì) has turned into riches,*

The voice in the above lyrics reflects on the reward of his career path as proifitabitable. However, the narrative voice idiomatically invokes the image of a "servant" and gratitude. Indeed, the image of a servant in this discourse of self-reflection and gratitude can be seen in relation to the apprenticeship journey whose career outcome is a rewarding career. Also, the "servant being grateful" in this narrative can be an allusion to the framing of the narrative voice and the expression of gratitude to God. In these interpretations and nuanced reading, the lyrics present to the reader a clear tone alluding to the process of social transformation and whose

[109] , it is worth mentioning that the professionals in this category include tailors, bricklayers, clerks, shoe-(makers) shiners, petty traders, taxi drivers, bus conductors, butchers, vulcanisers, plank sellers, local herbs/gin traders, carpenters, beer parlours owners, recharge card sellers, mill grinders, electricians, welders (I am expanding the list as provided by Barber (2003)

[110] Although, I claim that *fújì* musicians are socioeconomically located in the informal sector. It is important to state that I gain insights from the position of Klein about the economic conditions of most Nigerians from the 1990s leading to the contemporary urban realities. Klein while drawing from (Apter 2005) concludes that there was a collapse in the "informal and informal sectors of the economy" – a lived experience that is characterized by "extremes …increasing devaluation, inflation, and desperation" (2007: xix)

evidence is anchored on "profit", "riches" and "wealth". Indeed, it cannot be dissociated from the discourse of social mobility.

3.3 Hierarchy and Rivalry Contestation in Akorede Babatunde Okunlola alias Osupa's *Kolokolo Okota*

In this section, I will analyse the work of Akorede Babatunde Okunlola alias King Saheed Osupa (KSO). Saheed Osupa started his professional music career in 1983. He grew up in the suburban slum area of Lagos, known as Ajegunje. In an interview KSO granted to the popular Nigerian Newspaper outlet, *Vanguard* which was published on August 6th, 2011, he narrates parts of his background as follows:

> "I lived in Ajegunle and you know that Ajegunle is a ghetto and in the ghetto, everybody is always looking for ways to survive and so I took to music. Some end up being touts, some end up in music like me, some end up as armed robbers, but I thank God that I have ended like this…My childhood was spent with my sisters. I don't even know if I would call that a childhood because I left home very young to start life on my own. I was about thirteen years old when I left home."[111]

Saheed Osupa belongs to the third generation of fújì musicians whose works became prominent in the early 1990s and the wake of the millennium. Saheed Osupa is often celebrated for his mastery of Yorùbá language: He is known to use Yorùbá words, proverbs, and world play in many of his works[112]. KSO has over forty albums to his credit, he is still active in the fújì scene (realising new albums and performing at live performances in Nigeria and abroad[113]. Saheed Osupa's work titled "Kolokolo Okota" or "*The fox of Okota*" (2015) falls into the category of works of musicians that emerged from live performances but are widely circulated and popular. It is popular due to the direct inferences to other musicians the listeners could make out of it. This popular album serves as example material for me in the discussion of fújì rivalry. This informed my choice to closely examine the representations of rivalry and other complimentary debates of hierarchies in fújì. "Kolokolo Okota" or "*The fox of Okota*" (2015) was popular during the period of my fieldwork – the album is widely played in commercial buses, bars and restaurants. In this repetitive encounter in different spaces, I became acquainted

[111] The interview is titled "I am a self-made Man – King Saheed Osupa" (https://www.vanguardngr.com/ 2011/08/ am-a-self-made-man-king-saheed-osupa/)

[112] He is also acclaimed to be be a crator of Hip fújì genre – a genre of fújì which delve into Afrobeats genre. The fújì musicians in this case, work with music Afrobeats music producers while also featuring prominent and upcoming Afrobeats musicians. Saheed Osupa released "Vanakula" in 2015 (produced by K SOLO) amd the album "Non-Stop" (Produced by Indomix) in 2018.

[113] The recent trip is a four months Musicial tour to the United States and Canada in 2022 (https://www.qed.ng/saheed-osupa-returns-home-after-us-canada-tour/)

with the implicit and explicit references to other fújì musicians. These factors informed my choice of the album for analysis. I will explain the synopsis of the transcribed lyrics of "Kolokolo Okota" as consisting of a repetitive call-and-response chorus - an exchange between the lead musician (Saheed Osupa) and the Egbe –*the backup singers*). The call and response lines are provided below:

Saheed Osupa: Akuko Omole

Egbe'- *back-up singers*: Kolokolo Okota

Saheed Osupa: The Young rooster of Omole

Egbe (Back-up singers): (and) the fox of Okota

Apart from describing the call and the response, I will explain the symbolism of the images invoked in the song later in the analysis segment. For a start, it is worth noting that the lyrics have a diverse story world that is anchored on the imagery and activities of the main character named "the fox of Okota", and there is a constant supporting character who is paired with the "the fox of Okota" known as "the Young rooster of Omole". In the lyrics the lyrical 'I' is sometimes called "Seedon P, Saheed Osupa, or Osupa[114]". The narrative voice, in some instances, takes on a role of a supporting character role and either re-creates imagined dialogue or is found to be in dialogue with the main and secondary characters in the lyrics. Other names in the lyrics are Barrister, whose full name is Alhaji Sikiru Ayinde – the most revered figure in fújì (see chapter two), and a third generation fújì musician, Pasuma. The lyrics are transcribed below:

Table 3.3: Saheed Babatunde Akorede alias Saheed Osupa (S. O.) - "Kolokolo Okota" (2015)

	Yorùbá	English Translation
Chorus	S. O.: Àkùkọ Ọmọ́le	Saheed Osupa: The young rooster of Omole
Chorus	Egbe: Kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ Okota	Back-up singers: (and) the fox of Okota
1	S. O.: Kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ Ọkọ́ta, gbogbo adìẹ ló pa tán, ṣùgbọ́n tó bá ti rákùkọ, Àkùkọ Ọmọ́le, ní ṣe ló má ń sá fún un	S. O.: The Okota Fox, spared no chicken, but when he sees the young rooster, with great fright, he takes to flight.
Chorus	S. O.: Àkùkọ Ọmọ́le	S. O.. The young rooster of Omole
Chorus	Egbe: Kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ Okota	Egbe: (and) The Fox of Okota
2	S. O.: Kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ Ọkọ́ta, gbogbo adìẹ ló pa tán, ṣùgbọ́n tó bá ti rákùkọ, Àkùkọ Ọmọ́le, ní ṣe ló má ń sá fún un	S O: Okota Fox, he had devoured every chicken, but by the time he sees the young rooster, Omole young rooster, with great fright, he takes to his heels.

[114] All these acronyms are part of the fújì musician. Akorede Babatunde Okunlola. Osupa is also translated as "the moon."

Chorus	S. O.: Àkùkọ Ọmọ́le	S. O.: The young rooster of Omole
Chorus	Egbe: Kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ Okota	Back-up singers: (and) The Fox of Okota
3	S. O.: (adresses the audience) Ẹ ń wo ibi tí mo fẹ́ bá story já	S. O.: (Addressing the audience) You are all anticipating the outcome of the events of this story.
	Interjection: noises, laughter inaudible comments from the audience	
4	S. O.: Ìtàn Àkùkọ Ọmọ́le Àkùkọ Ọmọ́le mo fẹ́ kí a fi kọ́gbọ́n	S O: This is the story of Omole's young rooster, and I want you to learn from it.
Chorus	S. O.: Àkùkọ Ọmọ́le	S O: The young rooster of Omole
Chorus	Egbe: Kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ Ọkọ́ta	Back-up singers: (and) The Fox of Okota
7	S. O.: Sẹ́ rí Àkùkọ Ọmọ́le, ó lọ bá Kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ o, Kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ Ọkọ́ta Okota	S O: You see, this young rooster of Omole went to meet the Fox, the Fox of Okota.
8	Ó ní kábíyèsí, kí ló dé tẹ má ń rí mi sá?	He said, O King, why do you flee at my presence?
9	Ẹ è ṣe mú mi mọ́ra? Mo mà lè jẹ Ọ̀túnba	Why don't you make me an associate? To become your deputy.
Chorus	S. O.: Àkùkọ Ọmọ́le	S O: The young rooster of Omole
Chorus	Kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ Ọkọ́ta	S O: The young rooster of Omole
	S. O.: Àkùkọ Ọmọ́le, kàkà kó di territory tiẹ̀ mú, Ó fẹ́ dàbí i Kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ Ọkọ́ta tó jẹ́ nationwide, worldwide Olójúkòkòrò ni, you know?	S.O.: The oung rooster of Omole, instead of keeping at bay, wants to emulate the Fox of Okota, a nationwide, worldwide, greedy person, you know?
10	Ẹ è rí Àkùkọ Ọmọ́le, tí wọ́n ń bẹ̀ru	You see the young rooster of Omole, the most feared,
20	Ló wá di ẹni tí wọ́n ń rán níṣẹ́kíṣẹ́	Is now an agent of horror missions
21	Wọn a ní lọ tán àgbébọ̀ (adìẹ) wá o Tán òròmọ adìrẹ wá	They will say go and Entice young chicks to their slaughter, and hens to their on-slaught
22	Tí ó mọ̀ pé tó bá jẹ wọ́n tánn Òun lọpọ́n má sún kàn o	Knowing fully that he would be next to be eaten.
Chorus	S. O.: Àkùkọ Ọmọ́le	S. O.: The young rooster of Omole
Chorus	Egbe: Kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ Ọkọ́ta	Egbe: (and) The Fox of Okota
23	S. O.: Àìmoye Adiẹ tí Kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ ti jẹ séyìn	S.O: the Fox has devoured countless chickens.
24	S.O.: Tó bá ti rí i pé Olórin kan lórúkọ	Anytime he notices a rising music star,
25	Á wọ́ mọ́ra, á ma bá a ṣe	He befriends and accommodates such,
26	Á ṣò, á sò, á wá là ńkọ́,	Waiting to strike when the prey is not watching
27	Tó bá ti balẹ̀, a filẹ̀ bẹ́ ẹ	Once he falls, he moves on,
28	S.O: Tó bá ti bá lẹ̀, a filẹ̀ bẹ́ ẹ Ó ti di ẹni àná nìyẹn	Once he falls, he moves on, Gone to become forgotten
29	S.O.:Tó bá ń kí i kò ní dá a lóhùn mọ́	He will no longer respond to any salutations

	S. O.: projecting in another voice	
29	SO.: "Ta ni wèrè ńkí! Ẹ má jẹ́ kó dé bí o! À ṣé wèrè ni? E lé wèrè dànù."	"Who is the lunatic hailing? Stop him there! Don't let him come close. He is a mad man. Chase him away."
Chorus	S. O.: Àkùkọ Ọmọ́le	S.O: The young rooster of Omole
Chorus	Egbe: Kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ Ọkóta	Egbe:(and) The Fox of Okota
	New verse chorus	New verse chorus
30	S. O.: Ẹ dákun ẹ gbà ẹ̀ gbà, ẹ gbà, ẹ gbà yìí ẹ gbé yẹ̀ wò o	S.O. Please listen to this story and ponder on it.
31	S. O.: Ẹ dákun ẹ gbà, ẹ gbà ẹ gbà, ẹ gba èyí ẹ fi kọ́gbọ́n	S.O: Please, listen to this story and learn.
	(…)	(…)
32	S. O.: "Mi ò bá torogún wáyé, mo ré kọjá"	S.O. My birth on earth is not to strive with envy hence, I move on.
33	S.O.: „Ẹ mọ ayé mi ò bá torogún wáyé?"	Don't you (my audience) recall, the season of "I was not born to strive with envy?
34	Ẹ má fẹ́jọ́ mi sùnkà, ẹ má fẹ́jọ́ mi sun èké	Please, do not speak ill of me to the wicked nor the gossip."
35	Ṣé wọn kí Barrister nìyẹn?	Are they hailing Barrister like that?
36	Ayé ẹ rọra sọ̀rọ̀ wa, ṣé ń kí Barrister nìyẹn?	The season of " Please, spread rumours about us gently". Was he truly praising Barrister like that?
37	Kó tó dáyé *Flavour*, Seedon P, ṣe wọn ń ki Barrister nìyẹn?	Before the era of *Flavour* (album)[115] Seedon P. Is he singing the praises of Barrister in that album that way?
36	Ẹni tó wà ní number one, wọ́n gbé e sí number twelve	The first person has been demoted to the twelfth (hierarchy) position.
37	S.O. Ṣé promotion nìyẹn?	S.O: Is that supposed to be a promotion?
38	S.O. Kín ni mo ti wá Saheed tó jẹ́ pé	S.O where has Saheed erred?
39	Tán fi ń rojọ́ kiri Seedon P	That makes you spread rumours about SeedonP[116]?
40	Pé Òṣùpá má ń rí òun fín	"Claiming that Osupa is usually disrespectful."
41	Ẹ̀san ohun tẹ́ ṣe sẹ́yìn, òun sá lẹ̀ ń gbà	Now, my nemesis has caught up with you.
42	Ẹ dẹ̀ tí gba nǹkan kan, Seedon P Saheedi, Saheed Osupa	And, "you are yet to receive your nemesis in full!" SeedonP Saheed, Saheed Osupa
43	Ìtàn Àkùkọ Ọmọ́le	The story of the young rooster of Omole
44	Kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ Ọkọ́ta	the Fox of Okota

[115] Wasiu Ayinde alias Kwam1 released a three series album in 2007 titled *Flavour*.

[116] Seedon P is part of the numerous aliases of Sahed Babatunbde Akorede, Seedon is an adaptation of the name Saheed while P is abbreviation for Papa.

45	Ṣé ẹ rí Àkùkọ Ọmọ́le	You see, this young rooster of Omole whose story I tell,
46	Ó ya Asa, O lógbe lórí	Is well known, well known for the comb on his head
47	Ogbe tó ní lórí yẹn	This comb he bears
48	Làwọn èèyàn ń fi fẹ́ ẹ	Makes him beloved far and near.
Chorus	S. O.: Àkùkọ Ọmọ́le	S. O.: The young rooster of Omole
49	Egbe: Kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ Ọkọ́ta	Egbe: (and) The Fox of Okota
50	S.O. A mọ kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ Ọkọ́ta	Egbe: But Fox of Okota,
51	Ó má ń ṣe mo tó mo tó	Is conceited
52	À fèmi, à fèmi	So self-centered
53	Èmi nìkan ṣoṣo	And wants all things to himself
54	Ó ní àgàbàgebè, he is unpredictable	He is very cunning, very unpredictable
Chorus	S. O.: Àkùkọ Ọmọ́le	S O: The young rooster of Omole
Chorus	S.O: Kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ Ọkọ́ta	S.O. (and) The Fox of Okota
	(...)	(...)
55	S. O.: Ẹ mọ ká má jísòró ara ẹni ni?	S.O. You know, we just need to respect one another?
56	Kí ajá ma sàba ẹkùn	For the dog to avoid the tiger's path
57	Kí ẹkùn ma sàba Ajá	For the tiger to avoid the dog's path
58	Àmọ́ Àkùkọ ò mọ̀ ni	But the young rooster couldn't understand
59	Pé kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ ń sàba òun ni	That the Fox is taming him
60	Kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ Ọkọ́ta	The Fox of Okota
61	Gbogbo Adìẹ ló jẹ tán	Had devoured every chicken.

The content of the lyrics in Akorede Babatunde alias Osupa's song, "Kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ Ọkọ́ta", reveals the underlying themes of rivalry and struggle for hierarchy, perceived naivety, insecurity, bullying, allegiance, and establishment of loyalty camps. The story narrated in the transcribed lyrics has three points of view through which three characters/personas are seen and understood. The points of view of these personas reveal the dynamics of the complex relationship among fújì musicians. The first point of view, which is also the dominant one is the lyrical 'I' (Seedon P, Saheed Osupa), the second point of view is "the fox of Okota" while the third point of view is, "the young rooster from Omole". These points of view of the three characters in the song reveal the nature or pattern of contentious relationship dynamics that exist between Akorede Babatunde Akorede alias Saheed Osupa on the one hand, and Wasiu Ayinde alias Kwam1 (represented as the fox of Okota in the song) and Wasiu Alabi alias Pasuma (represented as the young rooster of *Ọmọ́le*) on the other. The narrative reveals that the contention between the three musicians forms the basis of the thematic concerns expressed in the song.

The ‘fox’ and the ‘young rooster’ are metaphors deployed by the musician in the songs to represent the persona of his artistic rivals or colleagues in the opposing camps of fújì space. Pasuma, (*àkùko Ọmọ́le*- the young rooster in the lyrics) lives in a popular housing estate known as ‘Omole Estate’, located in a neighbourhood known as ‘Ogba’ Lagos. The musician merges the metaphor of ‘Akuko (young rooster) and Omole which translates in meaning to Pasuma’s neighbourhood of residence. Thus, the musician sings ‘*Àkùkọ Ọmọ́le’*, *T*he young rooster of Omol*e,* in the song. Wasiu Alabi alias Pasuma in the space is known to pay allegiance to and demonstrate cordial relations with his professional colleague Wasiu Ayinde alias Kwam 1, Kolokolo (the fox), who lived in Okota neighbourhood (until the year 2017)[117]. Thus, the metaphor of *Kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀* (fox) + *Ọkọ́ta* makes ‘*Kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ Ọkọ́ta*’, which translates to ‘the fox of Okota’.

In chapter two, I have discussed how scholarly works like Sunday (2010) document the first wave of the professional rivalry between Barrister and Kollignton. The “verbal assaults” Sunday explains illustrates how hierarchy discourse is important to establish for the two prominent musicians. Against this backdrop, I find hierarchy still a recurring trope in contemporary fújì works. Just as Sunday (2010) alludes, rivalry and hierarchical contestation are both human and cultural. In this case, I am more interested in exploring the theme of rivalry and contestation dynamics through the prism of Yorùbá cultural practices. This rivalry refers to the experience of acquiring the ‘big man’ status. It is crucial to revisit Barber’s (1991) idea description of the “consciousness of relative seniority is acute” (1991:183) and the performance of self-aggrandizement. Therefore, it is not surprising to find the trope of rivalry and contestation re-enacted in Saheed Osupa’s “*Kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ Ọkọ́ta*”– “The young ‘rooster and ‘Fox*”.*

Kolokolo Okota” ‘ The young ‘rooster’ and ‘Fox’ are the central metaphors used in creating the call-and-response chorus of the song. The choice of the two animals: the predator ‘fox’ and its prey, the ‘young rooster’, sets the tone for the theme of rivalry and contestation the lyrical ‘I’ seeks to portray. The call-and-response chorus constitutes a significant part of the lyrics and is repeated for emphasis and to underline the message the musician intends to convey to his audience. There is a cordial relationship between “the Young rooster of Omole” and “The Fox of Okota” for the lyrical persona”. The lyric ‘I’queries the logic of the relationship between “The Young rooster of Omole” and “The Fox of Okota”. The “ Fox of Okota” is considered to

[117] In 2017 when he marked his 60th birthday, Wasiu Ayinde moved out of his popular Okota residence into a bigger mansion in his town of origin in Ijebu-Ode, Ogun state. He converted eh popular Okota reside into a mosque that is open for public use (https://www.nairaland.com/3656339/fújì-musicianwasiu-ayinde-converts-multi-million)

be inimical to the growth of the younger generations of fújì musicians (lines 24-27 & 51-54). 'The fox' is portrayed as repressive, cold and calculative, who is intimidated by the talent of a younger musician like "the young rooster of Omole". However, the 'young rooster of Omole' is portrayed as talented, and well-loved but naïve and vulnerable compared to 'the fox of Omole'. This is evident in the following lines:

45	Ṣé ẹ rí Àkùkọ Ọmọ́le	You see, this young rooster of Omole whose story I tell,
46	Ó ya Asa, O lógbe lórí	Is well known, well known for the comb on his head
47	Ogbe tó ní lórí yẹn	This comb he bears
48	Làwọn èèyàn ń fi fẹ́ ẹ	Makes him beloved far and near.

Using another layer of metaphor, the persona "I" uses the comb on the head of the young rooster to suggest his musical talent of Pasuma. The 'comb' on the young rooster's head symbolises the bird's beauty, mystery and maturation. These qualities make the musician 'the young rooster of Omole' uniquely admired among his peers and fans. However, the 'Fox of Okota" on the other hand is portrayed in line 2 as follows:

2	S. O.: Kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ Ọkọ́ta, gbogbo adìẹ ló pa tán, ṣùgbọ́n tó bá ti rákùkọ, Àkùkọ Ọmọ́le, ní ṣe ló má ń sá fún un	S O: Okota Fox, he had devoured every chicken, but by the time he sees the young rooster, Omole young rooster, with great fright, he takes to his heels.

The 'fox of Okota', unlike his rival the 'young rooster of Omole', is portrayed as a devourer (in the spirit of Fox's carnivorous nature). Notwithstanding that fact, the persona "I" presents explains that the Fox is terrified of the 'comb' on the head of the young rooster – an indirect way of suggesting that Kwam 1 is intimidated by the talents of younger fújì musicians.

The persona "I", establishes a mutual re-aprapprochement between his colleagues, in which he sings about in the following lyrics (7-9):

7	S. O.: Sẹ́ rí Àkùkọ Ọmọ́le, ó lọ bá Kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ o, Kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ Ọkọ́ta Okota	S O: You see, this young rooster of Omole went to meet the Fox, the Fox of Okota.
8	Ó ní kábíyèsí, kí ló dé tẹ má ń rí mi sá?	He said, O King, why do you flee at my presence?
9	Ẹ ẹ̀ ṣe mú mi mọ́ra? Mo mà lè je Ọ̀túnba	Why don't you make me an associate? To become your deputy.

The above narrative points to the rapprochement between the "young rooster of Omole" and the "fox of Okota" establishes the underlining reason for the tension between the musicians[118]. Similarly, the question provides the basis for understanding what is at stake for fújì musicians who are rivals. However, the audience might not be privy to the battle of hierarchy, seniority, and alignment. Kwam 1 is a self-proclaimed 'king of fújì' – a position that automatically puts him against many of his colleagues (older, contemporaries and younger).

The adoption of the title king of fújì by fújì musicians is part of their artistic strategies in the curation of their public personae and its needs to be situated in a within a complex web of events amongst the musicians. It also speaks to the nature of the culturally enabled performance hierarchy where "competitive struggle for self-aggrandisement" (Barber 1991: 183) informs the social self of the big man.

A brief historical inquiry into some events which precede the release of the song will indeed reveal a context of build-up or tension, allignement and rivalry in the fújì world. Kwam1, who Klein describes as "fújì's most renowned and prolific bandleader" (2019:145) has managed, in fact he often introduced as King Wasiu Ayinde Marshal (Ibid.145). In fact the alias KWAM1 is a deriative composition from the first letters of the names arrangment. In deed Kwam1 or K1 is delberate in curating the discourse of king arround his fújì personae having being procalimed as the king of fújì since 1993[119]. Successive generations of fújì musicians, particularly, the third generation, begin to adopt the title of the king of fújì musicians in one form or another. Abass Akande alias Obesere for example adopts the title "the paramount king of fújì music[120]" and "Aleyaluwa[121]" is one of the aliases of Suleiman Alao Malaika. Saheed Osupa the singer of the

[118] There are several mdia reports which account for tensions between fújì musicians at different phases of the career (see: http://encomium.ng/my-fight-with-pasuma-is-simply-over-supremacy-saheed-osupa/ ; https://web.archive.org/web/20151119130600/http://sunnewsonline.com/new/day-female-fan-stripped-felix-duke/ ; https://web.archive.org/web/20160205070431/http://www.nigeriafilms.com/news/1887/3/saheed-osupa-speaks-on-war-in-the-house-of-fújì.html)

[119] The event is referenced in a recorded interview of Barrrister while in response to the reactions that trailed his endorsement for Saheed Osupa as the king of fújì music (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lw_ibKmOKl0)

[120] Obesere explained in a radio interview that he was conffered with the title of "Paramount king of Music" by the association he refers to as Pinnacle International Media. The title emerged against the backdrop of series of other events of adoption of king titles amongt fújì musicians. He specifically refers to the case of Saheed Osupa that was conferred as king of fújì by Barrister in 2008. The paramount king title as he explained means he acknowledge the existence of other king in fújì and beyond but he considers himself as the king of all music genre (https://web.archive.org/web/20160205070431/http://www.nigeriafilms.com/news/1887/3/saheed-osupa-speaks-on-war-in-the-house-of-fújì.html)

[121] Alayeluwa is a compound word that is common in the oríkì poetry of a Yorùbá king or royalty – it is derived from Alaye+l'iwa (owner of the world) + luwa (bearer of good character)* explanation is based on my knowledge and observable usage of the word in many contexts.

above lyrics was also pronounced the king of fújì and the event was witnessed or endorsed by the reverred figure, Sikiru Ayinde (Barrister) in the city of Ibadan in 2008[122].

Indeed, the endorsement of Saheed Osupa by Barrister is somewhat perceived as a way of undermining his mentee[123] (Kwam1) in the fújì world. Although, it is important to note that Barrister often justfies his indifference and neutral dispositions on the adoption of the king titles by the younger generations of fújì in several interviews[124]. However, it evident that the more the younger generations of fújì musicians gain promimnence the infilterating king titles grows exponintially. Thus in the case of Saheed Osupa who also benefits from the subtle endorsement of Barrister appears as setting himself as a rival to Kwam1 who equally idemntifies as the king of fújì. Agaunst this backdrop, Saheed Osupa's role and image of self-positioning in the lyrics can be read through the lens of (anticipated) allegiance and acknowldgement from other fújì musicians.

As part of his strategy, Saheed Osupa takes the liberty of authorial intrusion to pass a commentary on the work of his colleague, Kwam 1[125]. By this, some discourse in the lyrics are not just representational but concrete. Saheed Osupa explicitly reference one of Kwam 1's earlier works to establish the latter's perrceived disrespectful actions towards older generation of fújì musicians, particularly Barrister. The lyric excerpt interrtextually references Kwam 1's album titled " *Flavour*" (2007) series, which reads in part as follows (lines 32- 36) :

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[122] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFWj78rEkc8

[123] Kwam1 has discussed his relationship with Barrister in many public fora as that of father and son, he lived in Barrister's household, worked and rose through the ranks in Barrister's band (https://punchng.com/i-used-to-share-a-room-with-barrister-kwam-1/)

[124] Barrister in this interview talks about how he continues to adopt new titles after he was named fújì king in 1976 at the railway recreation club. He would later adopt the title Mr fújì, fújì originator, fújì creator and later fújì garbage. According to Barrister, the changing titles are reflective of how he is adjusting to changing times and the critcims of his titles. According to him fújì Garbage is his ultimate metaphoric response to cricism – implying that he has gronw to become a refuse dumping sites for all his critic. Rather than being trated as filth, he considers himself a manure which fertilizes the fújì music genres (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lhX1aL5wn0A)

[125] The album is titled "Flavour" series and was released in 2015 by Wasiu Ayinde Marshall. In the song, Kwam 1 tried to praise the stakeholders of fújì genre (the ones before him, his contemporaries, and the generations after him). However, lots of controversies followed the release of the album. One of the major issues the fújì community had against the album was the order of listing of the musician's names by Kwam, especially with regards to the the position of Sikiru Ayinde Barrister in the list. In the name order, the most revered figure in fújì, Sikiru Ayinde alias Barrister was listed and mentioned after twelve other musicians singing the genres of Ajísàrì and Ajiwere and other Yorùbá music genre performed by Yorùbá muslims. Suggestivesly, the framing of the praise names portrays fújì and Barrsiter as an offshoot of old and existing tradition, while also acknowledging that Barrister trasnforms the existing Ajísàrì and Ajiwere genres into the contemporary fújì sonic. The backlash and reactions of fújì fans and fújì musicians to this ordering and the positioning of Barrister in the oral framing attracts animosity against Kwam 1, as he is considered disrespectful, disingenuous, and deliberaely undermining the legacy of the revered "founder" of fújì genre, Sikiru Ayinde alias Barrister.

32	S.O: “Mi ò bá torogún wáyé, mo ré kọjá”	My birth on earth is not to strive with envy hence, I move on.
33	S.O: “Ẹ mọ ayé mi ò bá torogún wáyé?”	Don't you (my audience) recall, the season of “I was not born to strive with envy?
34	Ẹ má fẹjọ́ mi sùnkà, ẹ má fẹjọ mi sun èké	Please, do not speak ill of me to the wicked nor the gossip.”
35	Ṣé wọn kí Barrister nìyẹn?	Are they hailing Barrister like that?
36	Ayé ẹ rọra sọ̀rọ̀ wa, ṣé ń kí Barrister nìyẹn?	The season of “ Please, spread rumours about us gently”. Was he truly praising Barrister like that?
37	Kó tó dáyé *Flavour*, Seedon P, ṣe wọn ń ki Barrister nìyẹn?	Before the era of *Flavour* (album)[126] Seedon P. Is he singing the praises of Barrister in that album that way?
36	Ẹni tó wà ní number one, wọ́n gbé e sí number twelve	The first person has been demoted to the twelfth (hierarchy) position.
37	S.O: Ṣé promotion nìyẹn?	Is that supposed to be a promotion?
38	Kín ni mo ti wá Saheed tó jẹ́ pé	where has Saheed erred?
39	S.O: Tán fi ń rojọ́ kiri Seedon P	That makes you spread rumours about SeedonP[127]?
40	S.O: Pé Òṣùpá má ń rí òun fín	“Claiming that Osupa is usually disrespectful.”
41	S.O: Ẹ̀san ohun tẹ́ ṣe sẹ́yìn, òun sá lẹ́ ń gbà	Now, my nemesis has caught up with you.
42	S.O: Ẹ dẹ̀ tí gba nǹkan kan, Seedon P Saheedi, Saheed Osupa	And, “you are yet to receive your nemesis in full!” SeedonP Saheed, Saheed Osupa

In lines (32-34) the listener encounters a varying degree of a dialogic situation and reference within the lyrics, the first line saying: “Mi o ba t’orogun waye, mo re koja” - “My birth on earth is not to strive with envy” is a direct lyrics line quotation from Kwam1’s album “ Flavour” (2015) series. In order to drive home his point and signpost the hidden meaning in the lyrics line (which indeed, appear neutral without further context), Saheed Osupa sings as follows in lines (33,34 &35):

E o mo, aye, “Mi o ba torogun waye?”

E ma f’ejo mi sun ka, e ma f’ejo mi sun eke

Se won ki Barrister niyen?”

Don't you (the tone addresses audience) recall, the season of “I was not born to strive with envious people?

[126] Wasiu Ayinde alias Kwam1 released a three series album in 2007 titled *Flavour*

[127] Seedon P is part of the numerous aliases of Sahed Babatunbde Akorede, Seedon is adaptd from Saheed while P is abbreviated from Papa

Please, do not speak ill of me to the wicked nor the gossip." Are they hailing Barrister like that?

By speaking directly to the audience in a dialogic manner, Saheed Osupa challenges his audience to recall an era of insults or perceived disrespect from Kwam1 to the revered figure, Barrister. Saheed Osupa paints the picture of Kwam1 deliberate choice of words is oblique and disrespectful to Barrister. Although the lines of the lyrics itself do not make any direct reference to Barrister, Saheed Osupa's interpretation of Kwam1's choice of language, especially his intertextual usage of the lyrics line provides an opportunity for the audience to interrogate the layered meaning of Kwam1's lyric composition and choice of words. Specifically, the line shifts the attention of the listener to the implied meaning in Kwam1's choice of words like "Orogun[128]" (Orogun a reference term for co-wife or co-wives married into a family) in the context of fújì musicians' hierarchy and dynamics. The usage of "Orogun" by Kwam 1 as reproduced in Saheed Osupa's song signals outright disrespect to the status of Barrister (the father and revered figure of the fújì world). For Saheed, it is inconceivable or inexcusable for Kwam1 to replace or reduce the essence of a father figure, Barrister with "orogun" – co-wife. By doing so, Saheed Osupa'sis was able to draw attention to how Kwam1 had undermined his seniors in the fújì world by suspending or flattening the hierarchy and suspending the practice of respect for the elders.

Saheed goes further to challenge his audience to recall Kwam1's perceived disrespectful actions towards Barrister not just as an event or a mere occurrence but in terms of durée, he sings: "Don't you (my audience) recall, the season of "I was not born to strive with envious people?"

He also inserts a direct quotation of the lines of the song from Kwam 1's album " Flavour" (2015) series: "My birth on earth is not to strive with envy". The introduction of Barrister's narrative adds a twist to the song's plot. In this case, the musician, Saheed Osupa, aligns himself as belonging to Sikiru Ayinde alias Barrister camp. The musicians consider his verbal abuse of Kwam 1 as the nemesis of the latter's disrespect to the older and revered musician. He sings in lines 38-41):

Kin ni mo ti wa Saheed to jepe
Tan fin n rojo kiiri Seedon P
Pe Osupa ma n ri hun fin
Esan ohun te se seyin, ohun sa le un gba
E de ti gba nkankan, Seedon P Saheedi, Saheed Osupa

[128] The *Dictionary of Modern Yorùbá* translates orogun as "fellow-wife" or "co-wife" Abraham (1958:486)

Where has Saheed erred?

That makes you spread rumours about SeedonP?

"**Claiming that Osupa is usually disrespectful**."

Now, **my nemesis has caught up with you**.

And, "you are yet to receive your nemesis in full!" SeedonP, Saheed, Saheed Osupa

In the excerpt above, the musician positions himself against Kwam 1, and while portraying himself as the person with the desire to restore Barrister's respect. By his self representation, he considers his role as the nemesis to a disrespectful colleague. Thus, rivalry and hierarchy contestation in fújì shapes the imaginative and aesthetic experience of the fújì world. The acknowledgement of these dynamics concerning fújì musicians provides the basis on which I further explore how the question of imagination of territories and the symbolism of fújì musicians' aliases arise.

3.4 Curating Fújì Persona Through Aliases and Descriptive Titles

As seen in the above lyrics, the debates, or verbal attacks between fújì musicians can be rife and titles and aliases are not all innocents. They especially signal artistic imagination of hierarchies, signposting their individual career experiences and projection of a public persona. These aliases are multi-layered, accumulating over time and reflecting moments in the artist's evolution as a performer and public figure.

The adoption of aliases and descriptive titles are forms of praise-singing. I regard self-praise by fújì musicians as not just a strategy for engaging with the competitive nature of their profession but also a strategy for curating their personal vision of self. However, By this, self-praise through aliases and descriptive titles is an outcome of the performance and the cultural form of the 'big man' status (see chapters one, five and six). The culturally enabled big man does not exist in isolation. It is a curated category that requires a collective consciousness and social acceptability. In this case, the fans become an essential part of the experience. For now, I am discussing an aspect of self-representation in fújì which concerns the adoption of aliases by fújì musicians. I argue that stage names or aliases of fújì musicians are cultural practices of praise singing, Oríkì (see chapter chapter one and five). This trope is deployed in the context of aliases to enhance the public status of a musician.

On the one hand, the aliases of fújì musicians take the form of oríkì, as I explain in chapter one, because it is a form that is not static, for each fújì musician, their aliases and descriptive titles often grow. Sometimes fújì musicians shed old aliases or sometimes they use them to refer back to a particular time period. This process of alias transformation is critical to the formation

of the self. On the other hand, it is often specific to an individual fújì musician's persona – making it untransferable. For an average fújì musician, aliases and descriptive names or titles are the core of their identity. Wa Mũngai (2013), while describing the Matatu experience in Nairobi, talks about the practice of "conspicuous bias for names and icons that evince potential for subversive and scandalous meaning" (78). In this context, the Matatu operators, and especially the men in Nairobi, are in constant need to "adulate masculine characteristics" (Ibid.78). This reality can be considered as part of fújì experience, especially with regards to making sense of the aliases and the content of fújì musicians' numerous invented titles. The broader implication of the situation where fújì musicians adopt exaggerated titles or aliases is fueled by the need to curate self-image-enhancing aliases that put them at the centre of public debates (especially amongst fújì fans) and into the public consciousness.

In thenabove lyrics, Saheed Osupa queries the choice of his colleague Pasuma (The young rooster of Omole) in alligning and taking up the role of a deputy to Kwam1(the fox of Okota). Saheed Osupa sings about how his colleague (Pasuma) adopts the chieftaincy title of "Otunba"- *the chief on the right-hand side of the fújì king*. This points to a desire to be seen as elevated and affiliated with the highly successful fújì musician, Kwam 1. He questions the rationale of adopting of the alias "*Otunba*" (a chieftaincy title in a Yorùbá king's court) - *Otunba* title is reserved for a high ranking chief, he is expected to sit at the right hand of the king's throne) to Kwam1 is perceived as underming his "kingship" title. Pasuma, unlike other fújì musicians of his generation did not opts for a king alias. He prefers to be known as otunba – the deputy of Kwam1 (a k fújì king). On the one hand, the adoption of otunba-deputy chief title uphold a configuration of an alliance bloc in fújì, especially as it relates to the imaginative "throne" of fújì king. On the other hand, it undermines another other fújì "kings" . It is against this backdrop that Saheed Osupa sings about his opponet king (the Fox of Okota) and hus deputy (the rooster of Omole)

Having laid down the basis for the discussion by providing the example of Pasuma's alias, "Otunba", I will further provide more examples from other known aliases of Pasuma to illustrate the layered signification of fújì musicians' aliases. The following nicknames are also known as Wasiu Alabi aliases, "the Vice-chancellor of fújì ", "Ijaya fújì" – *the dreaded one of fújì*, "Oganla fújì" - *the big boss of fújì*, "African Puff-Daddy", leader of "Arabambi" group. Again, the ideal framework to use to think through fújì musicians' aliases lies in their vision or strategy for "project self-narration, self-performance and self-inscription onto public

consciousness" (Ibid.78). These aliases convey and communicate aspects of an individual's (fújì musician) aspiration, hope.

I argue that for every self-idolising alias fújì musician adopts, an implied life struggle and desire are communicated. In situations when Pasuma adopts an alias like "the Vice-chancellor of fújì", the vision or the desire to be the head or the highest-ranking person in the fújì sphere is communicated. What is more? In Chapter two, I have laid out the argument that fújì musicians' socioeconomic background is ingrained in fújì's overall identity. The awareness of the social experience of most fújì musicians makes higher education, among other things, out of reach for many of the likes of Pasuma. Understanding such a disadvantage provides an alternative for reading fújì musician's alias like "the Vice-chancellor of fújì".

The reality of aspiration for upward mobility is also implied in the aliases of many successful fújì musicians. "African Puff Daddy" is another alias for Pasuma; Obesere also refers to himself as "African fújì Micheal Jackson". The two aliases are adaptations of the artistic name of the American pop-culture icon, Micheal Jackson, and the American rapper Sean Combs[129]. The vision of the fújì musician, located and majorly performing in the Yorùbá urban space, is not only conditioned by local realities. Pasuma and Obesere are re-imagining and localising the American artists' media-mediated persona through their aliases. I am not arguing that fújì musicians aspire to become American rappers by adapting their aliases. Rather, the adoption of the aliases is part of the processes of self-curation and modes of articulating the social image of self into the broader social consciousness.

Mbũgũa Wa Mũngai talks about the "matatu man's awareness of his space – physical and symbolic" (2013: 73) as a significant factor in shaping relationships and interactions. Specifically, Wa Mũngai talks about the "male-centric view of space", which experience is not only true in terms of the presence of the male in fújì but is also reflected in the vision of driving the formulation or adoption of the aliases by fújì musicians. Pasuma's aliases of "Ijaya fújì" – *the dreaded one of fújì* and "Oganla fújì" - *the big boss of fújì* are examples of the mode of masculinity display and ways of communicating potential aggression towards rivals in the space.

[129] Appadurai's idea of global cultural flow is also relevant to understand these examples.

3.5 Negotiating Visibility and Affiliations at Fújì Performance Space

Before I wrap up my argument in this chapter, I find it productive to discuss another aspect of the events in the fújì world are strategies of negotiating visibility and affiliations by the musicians and their audience at the fújì performance space. By this, I consider these strategies or occurrences at the performance space as not explicitly represented through verbal representation but conspicuous through imagery and gesture representations in the performance space. I am referring specifically to aesthetic expressions that are represented in clothing or costume as l examples of means of understanding alliances and power negotiation in fújì performance space.

To begin, I will speak first to a long-established Yorùbá traditional costume, Aso-Ebi. Aso-ebi means "cloth of the family or kin" (Familusi 2012:1) tradition. Aso-ebi is a type of "uniform dress worn by family members during social events in Nigeria. However, this practice now includes a larger network of unfamiliarity, which transcends the Yorùbá ethnic group and is gradually becoming an integral part of national culture" (Ajani 2012:108). In fújì world, the Aso-Ebi is an important signifier of negotiation, visibility and affiliations.

In fact, it is now an adopted business model which replaces the ticketing options at the entrance for fújì performance attendees. Some of the fújì shows I attended during the fieldwork exposed me to this phenomenon. It is an increasingly popular practice for fújì musicians and shows promoters to pre-select and sell an exclusive pattern of Ankara fabric prints for show attendees.

Fig 3.1 a, b: Audience and fújì musician (Taye Currency) wearing unformed Ankara fabrics at a music carnival in Ibadan. Photograph by the author, Podo, Ibadan, 2018.

The example of the images I provided above shows some audience and the musician, Taye Currency wearing the same Ankara fabrics. A few weeks before the event captured in the above photos, I was at the booking office of Taye Currency in Ring-road, Ibadan. I was asked to purchase five yards of the fabric (the required measurement for buba, a *shirt-top* and sokoto

trousers for my size). The fabric was sold for #4,000 naira. Taiye Currency explained to me during one of our interview sessions that the introduction of fabric sales to a potential fújì audience is a reflection and understanding of the economic situation of their audience. By this, the audience is somewhat guaranteed a tangible value for their money. In the same vein, the musician believes that Ankara's pre-event sales before the carnival eliminate the risk of fraud which he comes with ticketing at the performance venue. Beyond the commerce option, the Ankara fabric uniform provides the audience with a sense of community, affiliation and belonging.

However, this aspect is not limited to the use of Ankara fabric. I observed that some audience members appear with paraphernalia or customised clothing, conveying choice messages. A close look at some of the photographs I took when I attended an event dubbed "Ògún ajọbọ day"[130] will make that fact apparent. The outdoor carnival was held on a closed-road in the neighbourhood known as Sango, Iso pako Ibadan on 28th November 2018.

Fig 3.2 a, b: fújì musician and audience during a Performance at Ogun Ajobo festival. Image by author, Sango, Iso-pako Ibadan, Nov. 2018.

In the above two images, the fez cap plays an important role in representing alliances and allegiance in the urban space. The fez caps are symbolic connectors to the layers of alliance representation in the fújì world. The main subject in the left frame is seen as part of the dancing audience below the performance stage. The main subject is a male wearing a white fez cap with a fading abbreviated insignia of N.U.R.T.W (National Union of Road Transport Workers). Meanwhile, the second picture frame (right) shows two men standing in opposite directions (wearing two white fez caps with inscriptions) across the performance stage. In addition, a man –a member of Taye Currency's band– holds money in his right hand while whispering to the musician's ears. The scenario in the second picture frame suggests that the men are taking turns

[130] Ogun being the Yorùbá God of iron imply that the carnival has a religious undertone - a celebration of Ogun-the God of iron.

spraying the musician with money. Taye Currency, the musician, dresses casually in a sweatshirt and a baseball with a skull image printed on it.

The inscription on the fez caps of the subjects (the musician's audience) in both images points to the subjects' affinities and networks which will benefit by interacting with the fújì performance space. The images make it plausible to assume the professional affinity and network of the subjects. In the first image, the insignia on the subject's cap (although partly fading out) reads "NURTW" (National Union of Road Transport Workers). Thus, the subject's professional or network affinity lends itself to be read as close to the transport union network (although the local branch of the subject or link with the National Road Workers Association cannot be explicitly ascertained). It is important to state that my understanding of the transport union's everyday workings gestures towards a complex chain and hierarchy and commands which partly manifests through patronage and clientele networks. In this case, a public performance of loyalty and display of affinity to the union's leadership(s) structure is important. Thus, a fújì performance space enables not just the entertainment pleasure for its audience, it provides the space to project one's affinity towards networks of common interest.

Similarly, one of the two subjects in the second image has the inscription "Eji Ogbe[131]" on his white fez cap. At the time of field research in 2018, there was a change in the leadership of the road workers' union in Oyo state. The former chairperson, Alhaji Taofeek Oyerinde alias Fele, died on 20th August 2019. The incident led to the emergence of the union's former vice-chair Abideen Olajide alias Ejiogbe (I will explore this subject further in Chapter five, where I analyze the elegy of the Gbajúmọ̀ or big man). As it is a common practice for the transport union member to express or exhibit their allegiance to the current leadership structures with objects like car stickers and other paraphernalia. It is against the backdrop of the event of leadership change in the union that fez cap conveying the new union leader's nickname "Ejiogbe" gestures towards how the fújì performance space is enabling mod of expressing social alignment, network and affiliation. In essence, the subject's Fez cap points towards ways of expressing and displaying public support for the new leadership of the transport union. The Fez cap in the context of fújì performance space represents the subject's attempts at curating self within his professionally affiliated networks and hierarchies of power. It is a

[131] Originally known as one word "Ejiogbe" is the first verse of the first original sixteen verses of oral Ifa corpus where it is possible to derive additional 240 verses to make the 256 verses of Ifa's odu (verses) see Epega and Neimark (1995)

communicative mode of performing solidarity and alignment with the new leadership in the union's order.

Fischer-Lichte argues that the body is essential in the creation of performance experience:

> The particular phenomenal body whom performance is brought forth – the body of the actor who by applying certain techniques and practices succeeds in occupying the space and drawing undivided attention of the spectators on this, his bodily presence, as well as the body of the spectators who respond to such an experience of presence in a particular way. (2004:6)

Although Fischer-Lichte's perspective emerges from the theatre performance point of view, the body's role as a space of activities and its occupation of space invokes multiple realities. Against this backdrop, the subject's costume in the picture above brings to the fore the role of fújì performance space in mediating alliances and power negotiation in the Yorùbá urban space.

Another example of alliances and affiliation in the fújì performance is the interface of fújì and politics is also generated at the same carnival as above, the Ògún Ajobo Carnica in Sango neighbourhood, Ibadan, on 28th November 2018[132]. My point of interrogation still rests within the prism of the fújì audience at the performance space and the type of agency and affiliations they exhibit. By November 2019, the Ibadan-based fújì musician Taye Adebisis alias Taye Currency had immersed me into his itinerary (home, office and performances schedules). Part of what became clear to me during this period is that Yusuf Adebisi was one of the candidates of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2019 Oyo state parliamentary election.Yusuf is a son to Taye Currency, the fújì musician, Taye Adebisi (Taye Currency). The main subject is the audience at the Ògún Ajobo carnival.

[132] fújì musicians are of strategic impoirtance to politicians on the campaign trails. Their affinities with the the Yorùbá working class, the non-educated and semi-educated populace makes them an attractive choice of the politicians during campaigns and political rallies. fújì musician's ability to connects and articulate the visions of the 'Igbooro' (an urban demography I will analyze in the next chapter) makes them a political viable mobilizers at election cycles. Indeed, the voting population is dominated not by the Yorùbá middle class or educated elite. Rather, the highest voting demographies are the citizens in the lower stratum of the society.

Fig 3.3: fújì audience with a fez cap bearing a political message before the 2019 electoral campaign season. Image by author, Sango, Iso-pako Ibadan, Nov. 2018

The picture above features a middle-aged man wearing a branded baseball cap. The cap has a bold message: "ANOBI YUSUF 2019". The cap also has an umbrella logo featuring the green, white and red colours of the People's Democratic Party (PDP). It is worth noting that the time the event took place, like the rest of the fieldwork period, coincided with Nigeria's February 2019 pre-election political campaign season. As seen in the photo, the subject or the man captured realises that there is a public gaze on him- that there is targeted attention on his person. Hence, he resorts to pointing his index finger towards the "ANOBI YUSUF 2019" slogan on his fez cap. Anobi Yusuf is the nickname of the candidate – the Anobi is an adaptation of the Arabic name Nabiyy (singular) and Alnabiu (plural). Although subtle and unsuspecting in appearance, the example I have provided reveals that the subject is conscious of his agency in the performance space. He consciously deploys and curates the camera's attention to capture the political message he sought to popularise during the performance. The costumes of the fújì audience in the performance spaces are thus part of the signification of diverse experiences of how fújì mediates versions of alliances and power negotiation.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have anchored my analysis of fújì on the representation of status, rivalry, hierarchies and affiliations. I have specifically explored the theme of hierarchies and rivalries among fújì musicians through reading Akorede Babatunde Okikiola alias Saheed Osupa's song titled "*Kolokolo Okota*", The Fox of Okota. In my analysis of Saheed Osupa's work, I have

shown the strategies fújì musicians deploy to narrate professional rivalries among them. I have also shown how hierarchy and affiliations are represented in fújì lyrics.

Other parts of my analysis are anchored on my critical look at fújì musicians' stage names, aliases, and descriptive titles as part of the strategies for curating the 'self'. I discussed this phenomenon as an outcome of oríkì practices. I have also shown how the fújì performance space enables affiliations and negotiation of different networks. Specifically, I have provided examples of clothing and other costumes and their symbolism in fújì performance spaces. I have considered such occurrences in fújì performance space as modes of performing social affinities, visibility and performing allegiances. I concluded the chapter by examining the theme of social mobility in fújì lyrics. In this context, I have analysed the work of Saheed Osupa and Wasiu Ayinde alias Kwam1 to highlight the symbolic representation of the theme of social mobility for fújì musicians vis-à-vis their socio-economic background.

CHAPTER FOUR

4 Fújì: Performing Street Culture (Ìgboro) in Yòrúba Urban Space

Field Notes Entry 2: Ìgoro culture

In my earlier account and reflections on the fújì performance space at the beginning of the chapter of this thesis, I narrated my encounter with the groups of young and middle-aged men chorusing their greeting towards me on arrival at an event in the city. The groups, as I discussed, would call the attention of arriving guests like me and passers-by raising their two hands above their heads. They will chorus in a cacophony of voices calling: "Chairman", "fine boy", "Olórí" – "leader", "Ègbón" – "older brother", and "Alayé[133]". As a continuation of my description of the activities at the fújì space. I will consider the moment of exit of popular fújì musicians after each performance as a relevant talking pin worth exploring in the context of ritualistic occurrence or performance in the fújì world. This mode of ritualistic occurrence is prominent with established or popular fújì musicians, unlike the moments of their arrival at the performance venues, where they are often greeted with pomp and cheers from the waiting crowd. I observe a pattern where fújì musicians are often held hostage by a section of their audience known as "the area boys" or "omo – ìgboro" at the point of exit of their performance. The situation where the "area boys" or "omo – Ìgboro" hold the fújì musicians, I observed a performance on its own. It is a performance mode where their affiliation with "Ìgboro" is reaffirmed. At the end of each stage performance or public appearance, the fújì big man and his team often contend with at least a group of energetic young men at the exit point. This is a common sight, particularly in urban Yorùbá spaces where the once cheerful and dancing set of the audience during the performance will transmute to perform hostage-taking. At the point of exit, the same audience category will regroup around every known exit route at the performance space to collect money from the musician.

Although the situation is often a rowdy and somewhat dangerous moment, at the end of each event, the musician (often sitting in his car) and his team will be seen contending with the young men who, at this point, would have overwhelmed the security officers (when they exist) at the exit—the space. I will refer to the moment of social transaction, a contractual obligation, a performance of haggling between a patron and his clientele. For an outsider or a first-time

[133] The literal translation for Alaye means "the owner of the world". It is a slang or appellation highlighting the addressee as a sociable personality.

witness, the exit ritual will appear as a hostage-taking situation of the popular fújì musician the "area boys". However, the import of the interaction goes beyond acts of thuggery or hooliganism by self-identified groups of "Area-boys".

The tone and dynamics of interaction between the big fújì musician team and the group of young men known as "omo-Ìgboro" often take on the tone of negotiation, appeasement, patronising, and subtle threats from both parties. It is more or less performative even when it involves moments of threats from both sides. It is often a moment of reclamation and assertiveness of culture and the application of "Ìgboro". The demand to be acknowledged and respected on the one hand and the moment when the fújì musician evokes his street knowledge, respect, and understanding for a social category that appears socially disenfranchised. This interaction often culminates in the musician and his team parting with some monetary gifts often sprayed in the air, causing a distraction or being handed over to group leaders when they are identifiable. The role of the omo-Ìgboro and the way their presence and activities define the fújì performance space exemplify intricate networks of connection between fújì musicians and the Yorùbá urban space.

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss fújì as an enabler of the representation, performance, and experience of Yorùbá urban street culture, Ìgboro. The analysis of Ìgboro will provide a window opportunity to identify and analyse Yorùbá street culture to understand fújì's urban and working-class history, practices, and aesthetics. As illustrated in the above vignette, the Ìgboro experience characterises fújì's aesthetics. However, ìgboro culture is much broader than the fújì world. fújì musicians and audiences who continue to co-create and co-curate the fújì world have been negotiating their version of ìgboro culture (perhaps a subculture of ìgboro) for the past sixty years. My analysis in this chapter covers five sections.

In the first section of this chapter, I will present transcribed fújì lyrics by Wasiu Alabi alias Pasuma titled *Oga nla*" – "the big boss". My close reading of the lyrics will provide a background and context into the usage of the that I will discuss in other parts of this chapter. The second section will extend the basic definitions of '*Ìgboro*' concepts. My discussion of Ìgboro will highlight it as an analytical concept and a social category. Subsequently. my analysis will take another turn to reflect on how the concept of *Ìgboro* is imagined in an everyday context. One of the ways I will show this is my discussion of the fieldwork interview I had with an Ibadan-based sports journalist. In the third section, which I will divide into two parts, I will focus on the language aspect of Ìgboro and its connection with fújì. Part of my

argument in this part is that fújì musicians contribute to the contemporary Yorùbá urban-non-standardized through their usage of Ìgboro language. In the fourth section, I discuss Ìgboro salutation and how it contributes to the aesthetics of fújì performance space. In the fifth section, which concludes my analysis in this chapter, I will focus on fújì iconography in the contemporary Yorùbá urban space.

To start my analysis, I will begin with the lyric excerpt Wasiu Alabu alias Pasuma titled "*Oga nla*" – "the big boss"[134]. In the lyric excerpt, I will tease some relevant examples of Ìgboro concepts, which also runs through other parts of my analysis in this chapter.

Table 4.1: Odetola Wasiu Alabi alias Pasuma – *Ile Agbara* Live Performance "Oga nla" (2016)

	Yorùbá[135]	English Translation
1	*Ẹ káàbọ̀ sí ilé agbára powersecco*	Welcome to the powerhouse called *powersecco*
2	*Wón ní mo l'érú-ikú, mo ní*	It was said of me that eru-iku and I have disciples
3	*Tí ẹ bá rí mi, ẹ ye má s'ọ̀tẹ̀, kò wà pa*	Stop conspiring whenever you see me, it is unfair
4	*Wọ́n ní mo carry shoulder s'ókè, mo gapá*	It was said of me that I am proud and that I often raise my shoulder
5	*Ọ̀gá ńlá, Ọ̀gá ńlá, Ọ̀gá ńlá*	The big boss, the big boss, the big boss
6	*Ègbè: Boss*	Ègbè: Boss

The musician enacting the lyric persona in line 1 of the above verse welcomes the audience to "*ile agbara*" – "the power-house" which is also nicknamed "*powersecco*[136]". In line 2 of the above lyric verse, the persona refers to the "unnamed" subject using the plural pronoun "won" – "they", - a plural pronoun suggestive that the persona is speaking to the audience about another camp(s) ("rival" or "enemy") existing outside the performance context. In the same line, 2, the musician goes on further to say "*Won ni mo l'Ẹrú-Ikú, mo ni disciple"* – "It was said of me that I have Ẹrú-Ikú and I have disciples", the tone of the lyric persona is a reported speech that is addressed to his audience about the representation of his image, perhaps from his opponent camp. The musician states that "it was said of him to have "Ẹrú-Ikú" – "death-slaves" and "disciples". The disciple in the context evokes the image of leadership relations to a committed follower. The disciple discourse or image alludes to herds of followers, perhaps his

[134] Oga nla" is an alias or descriptive title of Pasuma.

[135] Lyric excerpt from Wasiu Alabi alias Pasuma titled "Oga Nla", which translates to "The Big boss" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-6-xKrk6_g&t=330s)

[136] "powersecco" for me is incompressible slang. However, "power" is connoted as part of its meaning.

vast network of fans. However, in the same boastful tone, the persona speaks of an Ìgboro performative signifier "Ẹrú-Ikú" – "the death-slaves".

While "disciples" in the lyric excerpt alludes to active followership (perhaps committed or dogmatic) in the leadership dynamic. "Ẹrú-Ikú" signals a more nuanced language of submissiveness in patron, followership, or subordinate discourses. "Ẹrú-Ikú" – death slave connotes a life that is not valued, a debasement term of reference to an easily disposable and dispensable life. The term also signals submission and is available for master's bidding when imagined in a master and slave situation. Thus, going back to the title of the song "Oga nla" or "the big boss and the repeated chants of "Oga nla" or "the big boss" by the musician and the Egbe and the boastfulness of having "Ẹrú-Ikú" indicates a representation of a dialectic relationship of the master, "Oga nla" or "the big boss and the "Ẹrú-Ikú"- the death slaves. This narrates a vision of "leadership and follower" and "enslaver and slave discourse". Indeed, the master or leader in the lyric context is the musical persona, the musician authorial voice, Pasuma.

Therefore, the above lyric verse is an allegory of a social category or concept that fújì curates. The social category "Ẹrú-Ikú" as I will show in this chapter, is part of a broader category that is subsumed in fújì's performance of urban Yorùbá street culture, "Ìgboro". My use of Ìgboro and my subsequent attempt at it as an important concept within the framework of fújì is part of my attempt to contribute to existing discussions of Yorùbá urban culture and social stratification. Ìgboro, as a category or entity, is not an explicit group in fújì lyrics but is quite feasible in its live performance space. In fact, "Ìgboro" characterises the persona of the fújì musician and its performance space more than it is often represented or alluded to in the works of fújì. In this case, I will further provide examples of fújì as a practise of everyday life in the Yorùbá urban space by drawing from my fieldwork interview materials and participant observation with an Ibadan-based radio host, Ibadan-based fans, examples of Ìgboro language in fújì and their usages, and visual aesthetics in the public transport.

Subsequently, as I have explained in chapter one, I use "*Ìgboro*" (street) as an analytical concept emerging from the fújì text and context. I use the "Ìgboro" concept to capture the total essence of Yorùbá urban youth and working-class culture that are often exhibited in many forms of masculine stylised performativity. The categories of "Ìgboro", which I have discussed as broad, are captured in this thesis as omo-Ìgboro; ọmọ-àdúgbò, area-boys, and Ẹrú-Ikú (death-

slaves)[137] will also be analysed as they play an important role in this context. fújì is primarily linked to the context of the working class in the informal sectors of the urban Yorùbá economy. My use of these Ìgboro categories in this chapter is about its process of re-negotiation or re-reclamation in and through fújì performance and performance spaces from negative, derogatory zones of meaning to an empowering, creative, and expressive way of being.

4.2 Fújì Street Culture: 'Ìgboro', '*Ọmọ*-Ìgboro', 'Ọmọ-àdúgbò', 'Area Boys' and 'Ẹrú-Ikú'

In Chapter One, I provided the preliminary contextual definitions of '*Ìgboro*' and the sub-categories of *Omo-Ìgboro* or *Ọmọ-àdúgbò*, *Area-boys*[138], and *Ẹrú-Ikú*. I have argued that the terms reflect contextual experiences or the speaker's bias, relationship, and positionality concerning the addressed subject or audience. These concepts feature in fújì discourse or performance space in different forms. Irrespective of the event, space, or time, one of the defining characteristics and markers of fújì musicians' presence in the public space, especially during their performances.

As an analytical category, *Ọmọ-Ìgboro* or *Ọmọ-àdúgbò* refers to a broad range of experiences and identities. However, I am exploring its usage in the framework of the contemporary Yorùbá urban non-standard everyday language. Based on my experience, if the word "omo-Ìgboro" is deployed in a dialogue situation, it is largely referring to a nonconformist individual. "*Ọmọ*-Ìgboro" speaks to the out-of-the-box behaviour of individuals or groups. Thus, we can think of it derogatorily as a nonconformist, a thug, or a person or group behaving as thugs. "*Ọmọ*-Ìgboro" usually young or adult males. However, the operationalisation of the term is not exclusive to men. Thus, I further explain it to refer to stylised masculinity performance or exhibited as a lifestyle (my use of lifestyle does not exempt the possibility of being a result of socio-economic background). It is also a social reputation earned, and a mode of exhibiting or expressing one's personality. In sum, *Ọmọ-Ìgboro* connotes a street-smart persona on the one hand, and on the other it references the lifestyle of thuggery and a non-conformist.

[137] In some instances, the activities and spaces of their dwellings qualify these categories as part of the underground urban Yorùbá network.

[138] I have discussed the Area phenomenon in chapter one citing Emordi (2005), it is important to stress that broadly speaking Area boys or Ọmọ-Ìgboro culture would include men, women, and children who inhabit spaces like manor bus stops. Motors, parks, and fly over bridges in the Yorùbá urban space. This demography is expected not from the same ethnic group or religious affinities. Thus, what I have in mind when I speak of Ọmọ-Ìgboro, Area boys, and Ẹrú-Ikú in the context of this thesis are fújì fans and fújì performance spaces goers.

I have explained in chapter one that the *Ìgboro* subcategories, *Ọmọ-Ìgboro, Ọmọ-àdúgbò, Area-boys, and Ẹrú-Ikú*, are not static and not all negative in meaning, they are performed and negotiated in different contexts. Thus, the ultimate meaning they convey is an ascription to a person or a group by a speaker based on their respective experiences. In understanding the meaning the words convey in various contexts, the speaker and audience's positionalities, intention, and context are relevant in making sense of the terms. It is important to clarify when the terms *Ọmọ-Ìgboro or Ọmọ-àdúgbò*, *Area-boys, and Ẹrú-Ikú* are used interchangeably in contemporary urban Yorùbá everyday speech situations.

fújì music, like other forms of popular culture, is a product of everyday experiences, where encounters with "the unofficial, the non-canonical, (… and) the culture of 'ordinary people" (Barber 2018:1) take precedence. Quayson (2014) compels us to think of the "street" experience or concepts within the framework of urban studies as being beyond a "domain of peculiar geographical and cultural imaginary" (129), where the core assumptions are fuelled by the conception of the "street" as "geographical locations" (Ibid.129). However, Quayson defines the "street" as "lively expressive archives or urban realities" (Ibid.1). On this basis, I argue that the Yorùbá Ìgboro transcends actual geography and lived experiences but serves as the prime imaginary of urban lifeworlds. fújì as a performance space enables a re-imagination and re-imagination of Ìgboro by various actors. Since I hold the view that, fújì, within the framework of popular music, enables the re-enactment of social roles. Thus, Ìgboro as a social phenomenon, a reference category in lyrics, or a category of audience in performance space is in a state of constant re-imagination, and fújì music plays a decisive role in these performance outcomes and negotiations. Against this backdrop, I think of *Ìgboro* as a concept exhibiting social imaginaries, categories, and spaces. These constellations co-interact and co-constitute in many ways through fújì.

Second, the practise of patronage and clientele relations (see chapter three) shapes *Ìgboro* dynamics in the fújì performance space and beyond. *Ìgboro* is partly a manifestation of the patron-clientele network. However, the patron category is often experienced in fújì as the outcome of *oríkì*'s incorporation in fújì (see chapter three and subsequent discussion on the big man in chapter five). Oríkì, is the constitutive and vital trope of fújì, which historically also played a role in Muslim praise culture. *Ìgboro*, the aspect in focus here, refers to the social context of the Yorùbá urban working-class community. These categories overlap and are not exclusive It is possible for an individual to operate from the three constitutive identity spaces simultaneously.

In the introductory chapter of this thesis, I describe a fújì event I attended on September 25, 2018 at "Badewa House", Ketu-Alapere, Lagos. As part of my description of my encounters with the "Area boys" or "omo-Ìgboro" who are often positioned at different points of entry at the event, I mentioned how I was hailed as: "*Chairman*", "*fine boy*", "*Olórí*" – "leader", "*Ègbón*" – "older brother", and "Alayé[139]" at such encounters. In this context, I have argued that the presence and observation of such performative exchanges often confirm fújì musician attendance at an event. Indeed, the presence and the interaction of uninvited groups of men in the neighbourhood and around the venue of the potential event space actions around and in fújì performance space constitute an atmosphere of ritualistic build-up. The ritualistic build-up translates to the constant presence of groups of young men in the neighbourhood, all main entry and exit points of the event venue loitering, hailing, and haggling for money or any form of gifts from arriving or departing guests.

I attended 16 fújì performances between September and December 2018 with four popular fújì musicians (Wasiu Alabi alias Pasuma, Abass Akande Obesere alias Obesere, Taye Adebisi alias Taye Currency, and Saheed Akorede alias Saheed Osupa) in the cities of Ibadan, Ilorin, Lagos, and Oyo town. My observation of the events space, most especially the event that was held in an open space (like the middle of the street Sango, Iso-pako[140] area of Ibadan or the palace compound oof Alaafin of Oyo) the presence of omo-Ìgboro often attracts other small-scale sellers of beverages, hawkers of sweets, mints, cigarettes, kola nut, and bitter kola. At the outdoor performance spaces, the presence and activities of Omo-Ìgboro or Ọmọ-àdúgbò, Area-boys, and Ẹrú-Ikú[141] will be observable in and around the fújì performance stage itself; this experience constitutes a major defining character of fújì outdoor live performance atmosphere.

The groups are often outside or at the periphery of the performance stage because they are uninvited and rarely fit into the event space as a guess. Their overall appearance (costumes and conduct) often suggests lack and being part of a lower social stratum. Their gestures either outside or inside the performance space often present paradoxes with other categories of people

[139] The literal translation for Alaye means "the owner of the world". It is a slang or appellation highlighting the addressee as a sociable personality.

[140] Some examples of the outdoor events I observed during the fieldwork: Taye Currency performance at an event tagged "Ogun Ajobo" Day in Iso-Pako area, Sango, Ibadan on November 28, 2018. On December 13, 2018, I also observed the same musician at a performance that occurred at Ifelodu Sawmill, Ayetoro Village, Lagos-Ibadan expressway Ibadan.

[141] Typically, group or clusters of young and middle-aged men. Some of whom are from the "adugbo", thus being referenced in the true sense as Ọmọ-àdúgbò (folks from the neighbourhood) or Area-boys. When the group constellation becomes unfamiliar in the neighbourhood discourse, Ọmọ-Ìgboro is appropriately invoked. However, when the activities of any of these categories exhibit or connote violence or hostility, "Ẹrú-Ikú becomes the appropriate term of reference to this male (mostly young) group.

in the space. This should not be read as fújì being an exclusive space for the rich or privileged, being Ẹrú-Ikú, omo-Ìgboro or omo adugbo, although it is connected to poverty and lack, it is rather characterised by performative acts of 'hooliganism, thuggery, care-free and unconventional attributes. The constant projection of these attributes by the omo-Ìgboro[142] categories in and around the fújì performance space constitutes a major defining character of its live performance atmosphere.

Also, noticeable will be the presence of small-scale commercial activities often taken within the radius of the nucleus units where *Omo-Ìgboro or Ọmọ-àdúgbò, Area-boys*, and *Ẹrú-Ikú* are situated. Products such as candies, menthol, chewing gum, and biscuits. It is common to have hawkers of groundnuts, cigarettes, alcohol, and non-alcoholic beverages are sold predictably. In this space are also marijuana (which is prohibited by Nigerian law) exchanges and consumption. While their presence is always guaranteed at the fújì performance space, their activities and the dynamics in their groups do not often align with the main events. Despite this, the musician's instruction to the group during the performance was often acknowledged[143] by the *Omo-Ìgboro or Ọmọ-àdúgbò, Area-boys, and Ẹrú-Ikú*. Considering the dynamics in a typical fújì's actual performance space and the demography of fújì fans, the *Ìgboro* subcategories are visible, active, and unique fújì fans. The *Ìgboro* subcategories often constitute a core of what defines the fújì experience in the Yorùbá urban space.

As a way of reading the theory of performance politics, Askew (2002) brings together two notions of performance from Victor Turner (1986) and Goffman (1959) to establish how performance is deployed as a means "in the negotiation of power relations" (Askew 2002:21). On the one hand, Ìgboro speaks to the question of power relations between a patron and the network of people he perceived to be under his direct influence in the fújì performance space and sometimes beyond the space. On the other hand, Ìgboro speaks to a shared experience of social disenfranchisement, continues to characterise the early lives of successful fújì musicians

[142] It is important to clarify that these groups also participate in and define other kinds of popular "performance" spaces, such as other musical events, comedy shows, sports events, even religious events, and rites of passage events in the Yorùbá urban space. The fújì space and dynamics with the musician is unique because fújì musicians, unlike other musicians in other Yorùbá popular music genres, identify as being part of ìgboro; they make this claim or project the Ọmọ-Ìgboro persona as a way of re-enacting their background from the street or their economically disadvantaged histories (see my discussion in Chapters 2 and 3).

[143] When I speak of ìgboro categories as pliable to a musician's instruction and acknowledgment, I speak of the situations when the musician instructs them to conform and his event. As uncooperative as they might appear to an average audience in the fújì performance space, the ìgboro category does not want to be ordered out of the performance space. Their goal is to also witness and enjoy the performance. Their sparse acknowledgement by fújì musicians is about their invisibility in the dynamics of gifting money to the musician by the audience whose objective is to be praised.

and, continues to represent the reality of many, not famous fújì musicians and the Yorùbá/Nigerian working-class communities.

I find good use of Askew's framing of performance as a productive way of highlighting the implication of *Ìgboro* categories as fújì's enabled performance in the Yorùbá urban space. Moreover, the social conditions that produce and enable the street experience in the Yorùbá urban space in Nigeria are implicated in the broad reality of poverty, social stratification, and class dynamics. I revisit the idea of social drama as the "dialogic relationship between performance and social life such that each informs and is informed by the other" (Askew 2002:20) alongside Goffman's idea that "the self is always a performed self and social life is always a stage" (ibid. 20). Thus, social drama, explains Turner:

> results precisely from the suspension of normative role-playing - in its intense activity abolishes the usual distinction between flow and reflection since it becomes a matter of urgency in the social drama to become reflexive about the cause and motive of action damaging to the social fabric. The performative genres are, as it were, secreted from the social drama and, in turn, surround it and feed their performed meanings back into it. (1986:90)

In this argument, the performance takes a dual experience form, which is from the point of enactment by the individual and that of society. However, the people also exhibit their liberty in their choice of role-playing. "A correctly staged and performed character leads the audience to impute a self to a performed character," says Goffman, who also goes on to express caution, saying, "but this imputation – this self – is a product of scene that comes off, and is not a cause of it" (1959:252). As observed in many random discourses of fújì musicians of self, they will often refer to themselves or their close associates loosely as "omo-ita"[144], "omo-Ìgboro", "Ẹrú-Ikú"[145], and *Area boys*. Therefore, nomenclatures are flexible and open to layers of interpretation both as a concept and as social categories.

However, these social categories connote, on the one hand, derogatory terms referring to thugs, street urchins, or gang groups. On the other hand, the terms signal re-appropriation from a derogatory zone (this example will be seen in the next lyric analysis), especially in fújì and street discourse; they become re-negotiated categories through casual reclamation in discourses and contexts highlighting an individual's tenacity, doggedness, and being street smart. In this type of narrative, Ìgboro categories are invoked or re-enacted as modes of empowerment. In

[144] 5Another slang/synonym for Ọmọ-Ìgboro, a thug, a street-smart person, this example of this term in the lyrics will be provided in the next lyrics analysis in this chapter.

[145] Emphasising not just being street smart but also a tenacious and rugged personality

essence, they reflect Goffman's idea as part of social drama in the context of Yorùbá urban space. A lyric verse excerpt from Pasuma's *Oga Nla* (2016) album will illustrate this aspect of social drama and corroborate the argument I have made so far:

Table 4.2: Odetola Wasiu Alabi alias Pasuma – *Ile Agbara* Live Performance "Oga nla" (2016)

	Yorùbá	English Translation
1	*Níbi orin (Wésẹ̀ boy) a jura wa o*	In the (fújì) music profession, we outrank another
2	*Gbogbo iṣẹ́ ni, wésẹ̀ boy Ajíbọ́lá*	This is an applicable reality to all professions
3	*Ẹ gbọ́! Wọ́n ṣe ọ̀gá fún ẹ lónìí*	You all, listen! That you are an apprentice under someone's authority today.
4	*Ìwọ tí wọ́n ṣe ọ̀gá fún*	You will also become someone's boss tomorrow
6	*O ti ṣe ọ̀gá fún ẹnìkan*	You will also move up the ladder and become the master of your profession
7	*O ti ṣe ọ̀gá fún ẹnìkan*	Even those that are your immediate bosses today shall continue to have the opportunity to move up the ladder.
8	*Kí o ti wá di master*	They will become masters of the profession
9	*Àwọn tí ó ń ṣe ọ̀gá fún ọ lónìí*	The culture and cycle of respect and obedience will be sustained
10	*Àwọn gan á di master*	Since other people will continue the cycle of obeying and respecting the new (emerging) leaders in the future
11	*Àwọn kan á tún má se sàdáńkátà fún àwọn yẹn Ó dà bí ọmọ iṣẹ́ tó kọ́ iṣẹ́ mechanic, àbí èyí tó kọ́ welder*	The conditions of a junior apprentice at a mechanic or a welder's workshop are examples of my illustration of a workplace.
12	*Àbí tó kọ́ fashion designer*	Or an apprentice at a fashion designer's shop
13	*Tó jẹ́ pé ó sẹ̀sẹ̀ dé*	Where the lowest-ranking apprentice is expected to run errands for the seniors
14	*Wọ́n á gbé abọ́ oúnjẹ fún pé kí ó lọ ra oúnje wá*	Once the lowest-ranking apprentice accumulates experience and moves up the ladder of seniority
15	*Á lọ ra oúnjẹ wá fún àwọn senior*	Other new apprentice recruits will also run his/her errands
16	*Tí ohun náà bá d'àgbà o*	Even future apprentices shall benefit from the tradition and cycle of moving up the ladder and new apprentice queuing behind him .
17	*Tí ó ṣe freedom*	*And completes apprenticeship training*

18	*Àwọn kan á lọ ra oúnjẹ wá fún òun náà* *Àwọn tó ra oúnjẹ fún òun náà* *Àwọn kan sì má ra fún àwọn gan*	Life is cyclical and repetitive; it is a place where each person takes his/her turn
19	*Ilé ayé step by step*	*Life is step-by-step*
	Pasuma points his finger and addresses a member of the band behind; he asks:	
20	*Iṣẹ́ wo l'ẹ̀yin kọ́?*	*You were once an apprentice of which profession?*
	Egbe responded (inaudibly but seen being jovial) while Pasuma re-echoes egbe's response, saying:	
21	*Iṣẹ́ tí ẹ kọ́ pọ̀…*	*I see you were a jack of all trades…*
22	*Mechanic, Welder, Radionic, Battery-charger, vulcanizer, ẹ tún ta òròkí l'Ọ́ṣogbo*	Mechanic? Welder? Radio repairer (repairer of household electrical appliances)? Car battery charger? Vulcanizer? Tooth herbal medicine?
23	*Ah ah Abájọ, ẹ ti pẹ́ ní ìta…*	Pasuma: Ah Ah, Now I fully understand, you have been on the street for a long time.

In the above lyric verse, Kondo's idea of social drama is re-enacted through the narration and numerous illustrations in Pasuma, creating imaginaries of a story world and dialogic situation. Line 1 opens alludes to the practice of acknowledging hierarchy in fújì world which I discussed in chapter three through the musician's statement, "*Nibi ise orin, a ju ra wa lo*" – "we outrank one another in the music (fújì) profession". The lyric line also opens up the musician's message discouraging "victimhood". The musician sings as follows. In lines 1-4:

1	*Níbi orin (Wésẹ̀ boy) a jura wa o*	In the (fújì) music profession, we outrank another
2	*Gbogbo iṣẹ́ ni, wésẹ̀ boy Ajíbọ́lá*	This is an applicable reality to all professions
3	*Ẹ gbọ́! Wọ́n ṣe ọ̀gá fún ẹ lónìí*	You all, listen! That you are an apprentice under someone's authority today.
4	*Ìwọ tí wọ́n ṣe ọ̀gá fún*	You will also become someone's boss tomorrow

The musician advises his audience in the above lines not to consider themselves socially disadvantaged even if their current position says otherwise. Rather, they should focus on the promise and hope of promotion and social mobility.

As I have stated above, the *Ìgboro* concept speaks to the categories of people who are socially disadvantaged within the context of urban Yorùbá space. The fújì musician knows his constituents, and his messages are carefully worded to reflect the audience's social category. In this regard, he sings as follows:

11	*Àwọn kan á tún má se sàdáńkátà fún àwọn yẹn* *Ó dà bí ọmọ iṣẹ́ tó kọ́ iṣẹ́ mechanic, àbí èyí tó kọ́ welder*	The conditions of a junior apprentice at a mechanic or a welder's workshop are examples of my illustration of a workplace.
12	*Àbí tó kọ́ fashion designer*	Or an apprentice at a fashion designer's shop
13	*Tó jẹ́ pé ó sẹ̀sẹ̀ dé*	Where the lowest-ranking apprentice is expected to run errands for the seniors
14	*Wọ́n á gbé abọ́ oúnjẹ fún pé kí ó lọ ra oúnje wá*	Once the lowest-ranking apprentice accumulates experience and moves up the ladder of seniority
15	*Á lọ ra oúnjẹ wá fún àwọn senior*	Other new apprentice recruits will also run his/her errands
16	*Tí ohun náà bá d'àgbà o*	Even future apprentices shall benefit from the tradition and cycle of moving up the ladder and new apprentice queuing behind him .
17	*Tí ó ṣe freedom*	*And completes apprenticeship training*
18	*Àwọn kan á lọ ra oúnjẹ wá fún òun náà* *Àwọn tó ra oúnjẹ fún òun náà* *Àwọn kan sì má ra fún àwọn gan*	Life is cyclical and repetitive; it is a place where each person takes his/her turn

The musician's choice of professions and workspaces in the above lines (11-12) conveys his message to his audience; his workspace references are a mechanic workspace, a welding garage (line 11), and a fashion designer's shop (line 12). In the urban Yorùbá economic space, the workstations signal professions and workspaces populated by socially disadvantaged populations. Paradoxically, jobs such as mechanics, welders, and fashion designers are still inhabited by citizens with basic primary and secondary education (if at all). The working conditions for the apprentices in the song confirm the class and social category the musician is referencing. According to Pasuma, the apprentice in these spaces is expected to run errands (buying food) for every senior at the workstation until they move up the ladder through the enrolment of a new apprentice. Similarly, the word "freedom", which refers to graduation after years or stipulated period of apprenticeship, is peculiar to the low-income and informal training space.

In line 23, the musician, in a dialogue with one of his band members, exclaims: "Ah ah, abajo, e ti pe ni ita" – "Ah Ah, Now I fully understand, you have been on the street for a long time" is the closing statement made by the musician in the dialogue situation he shared with one of his band members. "pe ni ita" that literarily translates as "to be late outside" is a discourse of unbelonging, struggle, and displacement that characterises *Ìgboro* categories. Pasuma shows the extent of the struggles of the *Ìgboro* through his pleasant way of mentioning multiple

professions as possibilities of his band member's life trajectory; he concluded for the band member by remarking that and asking the rhetorical question about the possible "ise ti e ko po (I see you were a jack of all trades) … mechanic, welder, vulcanizers, radionic and battery charger" lines 21&22. Although the list of the possible jobs the band members might have had apprenticeship experience in the past is couched in a jovial tone in the lyrics, it is relevant and an essential backdrop for the socio-economic realities of the *Ìgboro* categories. Thus, being a jack of all trades, being socialised, and groomed within an apprenticeship system[146] suggests that servitude is not considered an extreme condition in the dialogue. Instead, they are appropriated as badges of honour for being socially sophisticated, streetwise, and tenacious to withstand difficult situations. The above example is briefly discussed to set the tone for the chapter and sketch out aspects of social categories active in fújì space. They are the urban working class of contemporary Yorùbá society, and their everyday, informal economic space enables the representation and performance of Ìgboro category.

Field Notes Entry 3: Olawale Hamzat alias (Top Striker) A Radio Presenter's Commentary on fújì and Ìgboro

Olawale Hamzat is a popular radio broadcaster in Ibadan, and he anchors a Yorùbá sports programme on Lagelu FM 96.3 known as Je kan mo, which translates to "Let them know". The programme is aired daily between 7:30 and 8:00 am. In 2018, the production team of the Yorùbá sports analysis programme introduced a twist to the programme. The Je kan mo crew would go to a strategic location in the city (open market spaces, motor parks, gas stations etc.) to re-create the live studio broadcasting experience for the public.

The chosen spaces are not elite residential neighbourhoods; they are spaces where informal economic activities occur. In these spaces, workers such as drivers and conductors, road transport workers, shop owners, and hawkers are the primary audience of public broadcasting programmes. They all gravitate towards the process of witnessing a live production of the radio programme. They observe and participate in animating the programme live on air with the presenter. The outdoor live transmission sessions become participatory and interactive for the audience, who would have only been able to participate during phone-in segments of the programme. A sports betting company known as Bet9ja sponsors the special editions of the Je kan mo programme I witnessed. One of the side attractions of the monthly outdoor broadcasting event is an interview session with a fújì musician. During the programme, the fújì musician will

[146] Karin Barber's (2003) works titled *The Generation of Plays: Yorùbá Popular life in Theatre* and Debra Klein's (2007) *Yorùbá Bata Goes Global* touch on the nuances of the apprentice system social category.)

interact with the audience and perform music briefly on any elevated platform. The betting company has an existing contractual agreement with media personalities, and fújì musicians like Taye Currency are part of the personalities the brand employs to promote their products. The three events I witnessed featured the Ibadan-based fújì musician Taye Adebisi alias Taye Currency. The radio presenter informed me that the musician was a brand ambassador for the betting company. Thus, appearances and participation at such events are part of his contractual obligation to promote the betting company brand.

Having observed three editions of the outdoor broadcasting programme, I had an interview session with the host of the radio programme, Olawale Hamzat. During the interview, I asked what informs the production team's choice of fújì music in the production of the programme experience and what role Taye Currency plays at the outdoor sessions. The following are his responses:

> *The original Response in Yorùbá:*
>
> *"Tí a bá ń sọ nípa Yorùbá sport, ó nííṣe pẹ̀lú grassroot gan-an, mo lè sọ pé, 80% tàbí 90% ló nííṣe pẹ̀lú **grassroots**, àwọn èèyàn yìí ni a tún lè pè ní **street**, ṣùgbọ́n ọ̀pọ̀lọpọ̀ wọn ni wọn ò ní access sí internet láti mọ nǹkan tó ń sẹlẹ̀ ní world of sport, ìdí nìyẹn tí wọ́n fi máa ń gbọ́ Yorùbá sport programme.*
>
> *Ní Nigeria lónìí, àwọn ọmọ Nigeria fẹ́ràn Football, tó jẹ́ pé bí 70% ló fẹ́ràn ẹ̀, nítorí náà, ìròyìn sport tí wọ́n bá gbọ́ lẹ́nu wa máa ń tẹ́ wọn lọ́rùn. Àwọn tí ó fẹ́ràn onífújì ninú àwọn grassroot tó bíi80% léyìí tó jẹ́ kí ẹni tí ó bá fẹ́ kí grassroot accept event òun gbọ́dọ̀ lo onífújì, kí ó lè ba jẹ́ ìtẹ́wọ́gbà.*
>
> *Taye currency ni ambassador ilé iṣẹ́ tó ṣe onígbọ̀wọ̀ outside broadcasting, nítorí ó ní ṣe pẹ̀lú sport betting, àti wí pé betting náà ní ṣe **pẹ̀lú àwọn street**.*
>
> *Èmi ń yan àwọn onífújì fún event mi torí mo mọ̀ pé òun náà jẹ́ **street, àwọn ọmọ-ìgboro** ni a fẹ́ ṣe event fún."*
>
> English Translation:
>
> "If we are to discuss a sports programme on radio in the Yorùbá language, it has much to do with the grassroots. I would say that between 80 and 90% of our target audience are ***grassroots people***. I also refer to this category of people as **the streets**. Most people in these categories do not have internet. Therefore, they rely on this programme to access the latest sports news worldwide. That is the basis for the Yorùbá sports programme *Je kan mo*.
>
> Football is very popular in contemporary Nigeria. Many people rely on platforms like mine to access their current soccer news worldwide. You see, eighty to ninety percent of the audience I call **the grassroots, or the streets**, are also fújì core fans.
>
> The choice of Taye Currency as a guest on the programme is both a strategic and a business decision for the programme's sponsors and us since he is a brand ambassador for the betting company. Having him perform during the live shows, our programme remains acceptable on **the street and** is quite popular amongst **omo-Ìgboro."**

The above description and the radio presenter's subsequent response to my question provide the basis for further exploration of *Ìgboro* subcategories in everyday life contexts. The radio presenter explains how fújì fans are important in mobilising his listening audience. He goes further to establish his conception of the categories of his audience, whom he refers to as ***the street***, ***the grassroots,*** and ***awon omo-Ìgboro*** (children or persons of Ìgboro). Although the presenter introduces the category, he refers to the street and the grassroots in his discourse. I read the two terms as synonymous references to the localised category of Ìgboro.

In the above narrative derived from an encounter with the radio sports presenter, the radio presenter's use of the term *"street"* stands out for me as a key concept signalling my argument of igbooro. However, the loose reference to "the street" by my respondent can be read as part of the influence of the popular American hip-hop experience in Nigerian imaginaries and narratives. In her work titled *Rap Music and Street Consciousness*, Keyes (2002) extensively explores the concept of the street in rap music in the United States context. The street is a category in the urban landscape that 'nurture, shape and embody the hip-pop music aesthetic' (2004:122). In this case, the street represents a spatial manifestation where hip-hop fans, especially the black community, relate to represent their individual and collective experience. In essence, the concept of 'street' in the context of the United States mirrors the specific social reality of race, urban poverty, and ghetto living conditions, primarily in Black communities. Within this context, the street trope in hip-pop stands for struggle, survival, and a specific urban form. Furthermore, hip-hop also celebrates how the street-smart subject or persona manages to make a living against the backdrop of socio-economic disadvantages.

In the Yorùbá urban space, the social and economic conditions of inequalities, social stratification, and exclusion are relevant to make sense of the categories of people the presenter refers to as *the street*. The radio presenter highlights some challenges of "the street" not having access to news. Thus, the outdoor programme intervenes by providing direct access for the audience outside the regular studio transmission. The intervention in this case provides "the street" or "grassroots" access to sports news. This ingenious intervention to bring sporting news to the audience in an interactive way outside the studio presents new opportunities for brands like betting companies to "access" the market (of potential consumers). The radio host, the betting company, Taye, and the fújì fans are mutually benefiting from this culturally specific *Ìgboro* event. The situation also offers a business opportunity for the fújì musician Taye currency to get a corporate deal from the betting company to advertise their product to the "grassroots". In turn, the "grassroots" (the street)

constituting much of the audience have a first-hand opportunity to interact at close range with their fújì icon.

As I further reflect on the radio host's subject position in relation to Ìgboro culture, I am asking what the dynamics of the collaboration between the corporate, the musician, and the fújì fans. In this case, Taye Currency is a conduit or medium for gaining traction and an audience for the live experience the radio programme producers are creating for their audience. However, there is an implied assumption of "otherness" in the framing of the radio presenter. In this case, the "other" is framed *as the street* and *omo-Ìgboro*. In essence, there is a target audience that is pre-defined and categorised as "grassroots" (the street). The presenter repeatedly uses the term "grassroots" in his explanation, signalling the ordinary people. The "grassroots" signifies that the radio presenter is referring to the people at the lowest the urban Yorùbá social stratum. Although he is in his mid-thirties, an urban dweller and a person positioned to influence public information; the presenter confirmed during the interview that he does not consider himself part of the *Ìgboro*, the street, or the grassroots. The position of the radio presenter concerning the concept of *Ìgboro* differs from what is represented in Pasuma's performance. The radio presenter sees the need to clarify his affinity with "the street" as business-like (employing a defamiliarization strategy in his reference to the category). Pasuma and his band members do not struggle with the label. For then, "pe ni ita" – "being on the street for long" – is their embodied experience. In these scenarios, the prevalent social conditions in Nigeria characterised by lack of education[147], lack of social safety net and limited economic opportunities play an essential role in driving class conception and relation (I have touched on this aspect in chapter 3 and it shall be further discussed in chapters five and six).

"Music performance", explains Kelly Askew, is one of the "easily identifiable and highly emotive elements of cultural practice" (Askew 2002:13-14). In this case, cultural brokers, especially from the government domain in most African postcolonial states, are known to devise co-opting musical genres as drivers of their preferred agenda on cultural policies. Is the appropriation of musical performance space the exclusive right of the ruling elite or the state? Klein (2007) talks about the power dynamics inherent in cultural brokerage; she deploys the example of how Yorùbá artists "perform Africa" in the global market expected from them,

[147] My use of "lack of education" in this context of ìgboro discussion does not necessarily establish a lack of competence in literacy culture or practice. Specifically, we think of a Yorùbá primary school or secondary educated person vis-à-vis opportunities and social stratification that is predominantly skewed to favour higher degrees. Higher degrees in this context are strong markers of class, access, and mainstream media visibility. Indeed, apprenticeship is a valid system of grooming towards a professional path. However, the apprenticeship system is yet to be formally organised or formalised by the Nigerian state.

thus gaining access to the power of global travel and all its perks. In the context of *ìgboro, fújì* musicians, notwithstanding their success in upward mobility, continue to invoke ìgboro as a term of reference to the Ọmọ-Ìgboro (the street) as a reflection of a shared background and social realities. The reference to the ìgboro narrative by the musician is a reminder or reflection on their individual journey and success stories. Thus, the ìgboro category reference is a form of mobilisation of the core constituents of the fújì musician's supporters. By this, the musician gains through and from their association with *Ọmọ-Ìgboro*. The omo- ìgboro in turn gains from and through fújì because fújì musicians have a rub off as a reflection of a shared experience and aspiration for upward mobility.

4.3 Fújì Street Language: Performing Ìgboro I

How does *the ìgboro* language work in everyday context in the contemporary urban Yorùbá space and how does fújì musicians represent *the ìgboro* language in their works? I will answer this question in a two - part analysis for the ease of flow of thoughts and my categorisation of the primary materials of analysis; the examples are both textual and contextual. In this first part, I will focus on my reflection on the point of view of two fújì fans, Adenike and Adebola, whom I interviewed during the fieldwork to show the use of *ìgboro*-lexica as a strategy of exclusion of a perceived "other". Thereafter, I will do a close reading of transcribed fújì lyrics by Taye currency for the analysis of the ìgboro-lexicon in the texts.

Youth culture while moving beyond the derogatory meanings attached to the concepts? Hurst's (2009) work on Tsotsitaal, global culture, and local style provides an analytical guide to attempt the question I raised in this section. Hurst explores the Tsotsitaal, a linguistic phenomenon in urban townships of South Africa, as a cultural currency that is gained through "process contextualisation in township spaces and between individuals" (Ibid.244). In the urban South African context, Tsotsitaal is a township 'slang' that "is style-related and linked to extra-linguistic markers, including clothing, body language, and cultural preferences" (Ibid.245). *Ìgboro* and its subcategories share similarities with the South African phenomenon of Tsotsitaal because in their respective contexts, they "align across a spectrum of identities" and their "purpose is more complex than merely an "argot" or language of criminals" (Ibid.250). Thus, their usage and meaning transcend the narrow labelling category. In this regard, this section explores some examples of *the ìgboro* language and its connotations.

During one of the focus group discussions at Taye Currency's booking office, located at the Ring-Road neighbourhood of Ibadan on December 28, 2018, I had a session with Adenike and

Adebola[148], two fújì fans who identify as super fans of an Ibadan-based fújì musician, Taye Currency. During our interaction, I inquired about the extent to which they love and identify as fújì fans. My question was partly informed by the prejudice associated with sections of fújì fans considered in the framework of *ìgboro* and their case, female fújì fans. Before they answered my question, one of the ladies (Adenike) turned towards her friend (Adebola) saying: "*Broda yii o ti e mo oju Oja*" – "This brother does not recognise the marketplace". Indeed, Adenike's side comment to Adebola is an example of *ìgboro* discourse, and how it resonates with Hurst's description of Tsotsitaal generative themes in the aspects of the demography of the speakers who are "young and define themselves by difference from the older generation." (Ibid.250). In the context of my interaction with the two female fújì fans, their statement suggests my perceived ignorance of their reality regarding their use of language. Going back to my reflection on my positionality as a researcher in the context of fújì, especially my identity as 'alakowe'- 'an educated person', it is plausible to assume that Adenike (speaker) speaks on the assumption that I could not comprehend. Also, the relative age difference between us pitches me against my respondents as a 'relatively older' person is another plausible reason for her switch to *the ìgboro* language. In essence, the urban Yorùbá *ìgboro lexica* is codes and language of exclusion by its users against those they consider outsiders. Keyes (2004) talks about the "social structure of the inner-city" and street speech (123-124) as part of the aesthetics of the rap experience. In the scenario of my encounter with Adenike and Adejoke 'the marketplace' becomes a symbolic marker of my presumed difference, the discourse from an outsider's perspective in and about their space, and the ìgboro speech code. The speaker Adenike views me (her interviewer) as naïve. I am expectedly assumed not to understand the nuances of her code message, *oju-oja* – "the marketplace", in the context of our conversation. From the viewpoint of Adenike and Adebola, I am an outsider to the *ìgboro* context, and language is a marker of our differences in this context.

The term '*oja*', which translates to '*The market*' and was used by Adenike (my interlocutor), can be interpreted in different ways within the framework of *the ìgboro* category. '*oja*' is an *ìgboro* term and a common trope for marijuana or hard drugs in the Yorùbá urban lexicon. This is often articulated in the fújì lyric lexicon. In fact, the Ibadan-based fújì musician Taye Currency's album titled "*Candidate and Aspirant*" (2018) invokes the '*oja*' trope as follows:

[148] The two names are pseudonyms for my two female respondents.

Table 4.3: Adebisi Taiwo Akande alias Taye Currency – Oja Majemi *Candidate and Aspirant* (2018)

	Yorùbá	English Translation
1	Má fà á!	Do not puff it!
2	Ó yá, má fà á!	Do not puff it! If you puff it
3	Tó bá fà á	If you puff it
4	Má lọ foul	Do not commit a foul
5	Ọmọ, ìwọ lo gbé codeine	*'Omo'* (child), you are the one who consumes Codeine (cough syrup)
6	O tún fa Arizona	You even puff Arizona (*Arizona is a grade of cannabis in Nigeria, probably inspired or originated from Arizona, USA*)
7	O tún gbé loud	You also consume 'loud' *(another grade of cannabis*)
8	O tún gbé gbèsè	You also gulp Schooshies (*a herbal drink with combinations of cannabis, cough syrups other substances and sweetener*)
9	O tún mu Schoochies (Skushi)	You also gulp Schooshies (*a herbal drink with combinations of cannabis, cough syrups other substances and sweetener*)
10	Gbogbo nǹkan níwọ̀n níwọ̀n ni o	Everything should be in moderation
11	**Chorus by *Egbe*** *(backup singers)*	**Chorus by Egbe**
12	Ọjà má jẹ mí	'*Oja*' (the market or illicit drugs) does not (eat me) consume/ defeat me
13	Èmi ni n ó jọjà	I am the one to (eat) consume or defeat the '*Oja*' (the market or illicit drugs)

The above lyrics' excerpt provides further evidence of the embedded slang in fújì. This is important in making sense of how fújì fans like Adenike draw from fújì lyrics in orientating themselves with the Yorùbá-ìgboro- urban lexicons. To move further in my analysis, it is important that I continue the close reading of the themes in the above fújì lyrics excerpt by Taye Currency within the framework I had provided in my earlier discussion of the ìgboro concept.

The central theme in the verse and chorus is illicit drug consumption. The musician uses the song as a form of *edutainment* to enlighten the audience on the dangers of drug abuse. Barber argues that verbal texts have "the capacity to shed light, in a way nothing else can, on the inner life of societies" (2007:2). In the case of the above text, its entirety is rendered by the ìgboro speech style. It is perhaps primarily conceived to convey a message to the ìgboro constituents. In essence, the musician knows the inner life of his society. The expected audience will require knowledge of the Yorùbá language and the lexical competence to decode the message in the above lyrics. Hence, the target audience is assumed to have sufficient knowledge of ìgboro, which enables them to understand the world from the prism of ìgboro vocabularies and speech acts.

At the beginning of the verse, the lyrical persona engages in a dialogue with an unnamed audience. The lyric verse in lines 1- 4, the musician opens with direct instruction in an appealing

tone: "*ma faa_– do not puff it*" (line 1). Although the audience that the lyrical persona addresses are unknown, the opening lines carry a sense of familiarity and conviviality between the lyrical person and his audience. In addition, lines 1-3 are anchored on the rhyme sound /*fa*/; the first two lines have a similar end rhyme /*fa*/, while the last word in the third line produces the /fa/ sound. This use of assonance by the musician at the opening of the verse helps to convey his message in a playful but consistent manner. The repeated use of "*fa*" as "puff" signifies a statement about smoking, which becomes more obvious in the subsequent lines. The third line, where the musician uses the English word "foul" (line 4) as a warning, clarifies the musician's intention and message. The warning of absenance in lines 1-2 culminate in the lyrical persona's attempt to seek mutual agreement with his audience in line 3, singing: "To ba fa"- "if you must puff it". Line 4 says challenge the users or consumers ensure "the puff" is done in moderation. "Foul" (line 4) is commonly used in the context of a soccer game. The audience is admonished to "play safe" and not to commit "a foul" in the act of "puffing".

The lyrical persona becomes specific in the subsequent lines by addressing an imaginary "Omo" or *child* (line 5). In the ìgboro lexicon, "Omo" can also refer to one's "mate", "comrade", and "lady *in the context of girlfriend*", and it is also used in the context of expressing subtle "mild-lamentation or surprise". Thus, when the lyrical persona says, "*Omo, iwo lo gbe* codeine", which translates to, "*'Omo'* (child), you are the one who consumes Codeine", he possibly expresses a subtle surprise. In lines 5,7 and 8 of the verse, the musician uses the verb "*gbe*", which means "*to carry*", to express the acts of gulping, consuming, or drinking (liquid) substances such as "Codeine", "loud", "Schoochies". The verb "*gbe*" is re-used in the *ìgboro* lexicon to communicate the process of drug consumption. In the non-standard but popular everyday expression of drinking strong content, the expression "*gbe lu* '*ra*" – the verb "*gbe*" takes a new meaning beyond *to carry* into "knocking oneself out". By listing the varieties of illegal substances, the musician provides more context and meaning to the first few lines, in which he admonishes the audience against the use of drugs or advises on moderate use.

In the chorus (lines 11-13), the musician clarifies his position regarding the use of drugs and introduces a unifier slang for all outlawed drugs with his use of the word in line 12, "*Oja*" or "the market" (the same word my female interlocutor used in the above narrative). The musician and his *Egbe* (back-up singers) sing the chorus as a sign of a collective community and the interrelation with the community of substance users in the society. This is clear when in the chorus, the musician sings, "*Oja ma je mi, Emi ni n o j'oja* "(Oja, do not consume me, I am the one to consume Oja), (12-13). The musician personifies "Oja" to demonstrate the struggle and

negotiation between the "Oja" substance and its users—the *ìgboro* umbrella words for all forms of outlawed-drugs. The dialogic situation in the chorus becomes an example of how '*Oja*' is the code and signifier word for a broad spectrum of illicit and outlawed substances. However, the ìgboro's usage of the term gives subtleness to its meaning and identity. It is thus flexible, negotiable, and re-appropriated from an exclusively derogatory zone to a more subtle lexicon meaning.

As seen through the evidence of the lyrics, the musician did not take a hardline position or complete condemnation of "Oja". The tone stirs up sentiments of self-compassion and moderation. The ability of fújì musicians to be flexible, negotiate, and re-appropriate out-lawed substances is hinged on their deployment of ìgboro (street) credibility. This means they represent a familiar order or moral authority in ìgboro. However, I am limited to commenting on the (potential) interpretation by the audience or their (new) ways of thinking about "Oja" during and after the performance of the song by the musician. I am also unable to establish the aftermath effect on consumers from the album perspective in the short period of the fieldwork. However, Taye Currency's account of his personal struggles during our interview sessions established that he was homeless in the city of Lagos at a phase of his personal growth. According to him, he lived with and as "Ọmọ-Ìgboro" in different locations in Lagos, varying from make-shift sheds constructed under the bridges of Lagos to inside buses parked at the motor parks. The implied reality of this type of living conditions is plausible to explain exposure to a lifestyle social vice of drugs or its awareness. Thus, a career in fújì for Taye Currency is redemption and escape from the harsh conditions of hustle and homelessness. In turn, the lived experiences become a backdrop of the artistic tone of friendliness or *edutainmen*t rather than an outright condemnation of the "Oja" consuming demography.

4.4 Fújì Street Language: Peerforming *Ìgboro* II

In this second part of my analysis of fújì street language as an ìgboro practice, I will provide a series of fújì-enabled ìgboro lexicons that have been mainstreamed into the contemporary urban Yorùbá language. In this aspect, my knowledge of the contemporary spoken Yorùbá language and urban Yorùbá youth language becomes relevant in providing the point of view of my lived experiences and that of my network. The examples of words and speech situations I am providing cut across context. However, they are used on a wide scale in many Yorùbá towns and cities that I have transversed in the last twenty-five years. Specifically, I will be providing my reflections and my knowledge in terms of contextual usages and interpretations and meanings of fújì-produced and ìgboro-inspired slang and phrases like "Solo Makinde",

"Sempe", "Òròbòkibo", "Je ko po l'eti e" and "No clinching" as part of efforts to begin to document these contemporary urban Yorùbá everyday slangs.

Observable and of significant occurrence, fújì plays a critical role in (re)inventing the contemporary experience of the Yorùbá language. An assumption of "fixity of forms", argues Raji-Oyelade, should be discouraged because it contradicts the ideas of "dynamism of societies and cultures" (2012: 27). In this regard, the changes in language usage experience, especially those mediated by or through fújì, define contemporary Yorùbá experience. Building on my earlier analysis of ìgboro categories and the urban Yorùbá language, I extend the earlier arguments on fújì to show more examples and contextual experience of fújì's mediation of the Yorùbá language experience. I am particularly discussing how fújì, as part of the medium of cultural exchange in the contemporary Yorùbá language, changes and transforms mainstreaming and normalising ìgboro-inspired and generated lexicons.

The ìgboro lexicon is fluid and constantly expanding, and subject to adapting to context and reflecting expressive generational priorities. fújì is a crucial medium or vehicle for interfacing ìgboro's aesthetic experience in the everyday context. Irrespective of their generation, fújì musicians are consistent with their role as a conduit of or for mediating the contemporaneous everyday experiences dialectically with the music genres. Some prominent figures in the second, third, and subsequent generations of musicians like Wasiu Ayinde alias Kwam 1, Alabi alias Pasuma and Abass Akande alias Obesere and Taye Adebisi alias Taye Currency have and continue to etch their footprints on the expansion and enrichment of ìgboro lexicon.

The two-sided known album, '*fújì Fusion*', '*Oko Faaji Carnival,' was* released by Wasiu Ayinde alias Kwam 1 in 1999. The album became popular during that period[149]. I will present the excerpts of some verses of the lyrics below:

Table 4.4: Ayinde Omogbolahan Wasiu alias Kwam 1 – Solo makinde '*fújì Fusion*' (1999)

	Yorùbá	English Translation
	(…)	(…)

[149] Since there are no formal or clear indices to support such claim because of other parameters or indices of judging a "popular music" such as music chart, official records of radio airplay, online streaming numbers, award nominations. Thus, my use of popularity was large on my observations, reflections, and recollections of events and lived experiences in the many Yorùbá contexts. The indices I will think of in judging a viral fújì music will be a combination of many factors like the extent of radio airplay (there is a caveat in this case, the music message must be deemed as usable on radio), use of songs by local DJs at week days and weekend party (growing up we often refer to Djs who often cob´mbine the job of an hype man as "gbogbo-elere"– "an all-rounder performer". There is also a high tendency that popular or viral fújì albums will be encountered by regular users of public transport; motorparks where music stores are often located, beer parlours, and relaxation centres are also major places to have an informed knowledge of a viral or popular fújì music album.

1	Nípa àwọn olófòófó	About those gossipmongers
2	Tí wọ́n ń jẹ́ Solo Makinde	Whom we know as Solo Makinde
3	Kí ló ń jẹ Solo Makinde o?	What do we mean by Solo Makinde?
4	Àwọn olófòófó àdúgbò ni	They are the town's gossipers
5	Solo Makinde	Solo Makinde.
6	Òfófó ò pa ẹgbàá o	Gossip doesn't earn a dime
7	Ìdí ọpẹ́ ló mọ	'Thank you is their only reward.
8	Solo Makinde	Oh gossiper - Solo Makinde
9	Ta ló fi iṣẹ́ rán yín?	Who sent you?
10	Èké ilé	Home peddlers
11	Solo Makinde	Oh gossiper - Solo Makinde
12	Kí ló ń jẹ́ Solo Makinde?	What do we mean by Solo Makinde?
13	Ìsọ̀wọ̀ olófòófó	They belong to the gossip folk
14	Èké àdúgbò ni	Community talebearers
15	ló ń jẹ́ Solo Makinde?	They are the Solo Makinde
16	*Àbí ẹnu di lẹ̀ bí asín*	*The one with the mouth like a shrew*
17	Olófòófó	Oh gossiper
18	Solo Makinde	Solo Makinde
19	A wá yín délé	We paid you a visit to your home
20	A ò bá yín níl'e	You were not there
21	Ọmọ yín la bá tó ń jẹ́ Ojúyọbọ́	We met your child, who bears Ojuyobo,
22	Àtẹ́wọ́ lojú wà Àyìndé	Eyes are on the palm Ayinde
23	Eyes kòǹgbà o	A bigeye being
24	Tí ẹ bá sọ fún wọn	When you point their wrongs to them, they care not to heed
25	Ẹ máa wò wọ́n o	Just look at them
26	Wọ́n tún lórúkọ kejì	There is another name we give them
27	Nínú Solo Makinde Èyí tó bá lọ jẹ́ ọkùnrin	Males among the Solo Makinde
28	Yahaya ló ń jẹ́	Bears Yahya
29	Èyí tó bá lọ jẹ́ Obìnrin	While the female among the Solo Makinde
30	Ló ń jẹ́ Deborah, Ayinde	Bears Deborah, Ayinde
31	Eyes Kòǹgbà	Bigeye fellows.
32	Tí ẹ bá rí wọn	Anywhere you come across them,
33	Ẹ má ma wò wọ́n ire	Examine them critically
34	Tó lọ ń tojú bọ ilé ká	That poke noses into people's home
35	Ẹni tí a ò fi iṣẹ́ rán	Whoever is not sent among them
36	Èké ilé Solo Makinde	Busybody, Solo Makinde
37	Solo Makinde	Solo Makinde

38	Èké yín	You talebearers
39	A wá yín délé A ò bá yín nílé	You talebearers We paid you a visit to your home
40	Ọmọ yín la bá	You were not there
41	Tó ń jẹ́ Ojúyọbọ	Whose name is Ojuyobo,
42	Òfófó lojú wà Ayinde	The one that is a chronic gossip
43	Àwọn Eyes kòǹgbà	Those bigeye folks.

In the lyrics excerpt, Kwam 1 sings repetitively about a main fictional character named 'Solo-Makinde' (see lines:1-6,8,11,15,18,27,36 &37), and later the wife of 'Solo Makinde', Deborah (line 30) and their children 'Ojú yobó'- Bigeeye (line31), Atewolojuwa alias 'Eyes-kongba' – *big-eyed*" (line 22). Solo-Makinde's family is portrayed by a lyrical persona as a family of gossipers, double-speakers, and rumour peddlers. The album remains popular among fújì lovers and becomes the basis of 'Solo' or 'Solo Makinde', an urban term synonymous with *Olofofo* – a gossiped about in the contemporary Yorùbá space.

'Solo' or 'Solo-Makinde" is ordinarily a name of a Yorùbá male child; 'Solo' is the abbreviation for Solomon, while Makinde is a typical Yorùbá surname. However, due musician's rendition of the above chorus, especially the image of the main character in the lyrics, Solo-Makinde is now used in real conversational contexts or dialogue to mean a "snitch". Solo-Makinde is also synonymous with describing or cautioning a "nosy person" in a conversation. Thus, the once common name or its abbreviation "Solo" or "Solomon" and a common Yorùbá surname "Makinde" have gained new traction and meaning through their usage and connotation in fújì. In any random speech situation in the Yorùbá urban space today, whenever a speaker refers to another person as "Solo Makinde[150]", the speaker calls attention to gossip or acts of poke-nosing.

Similarly, the term *Sempe* was also popularised by the same fújì musician Kwam 1 around 2011/2012. The musician used this term in viral live-recorded performances. In the music, the musician deploys a line from his song to address the group of women on the dance floor to step back and wait for their turn to be praised and acknowledged by him. Part of the verse of the song goes:

> Wọ́n máa pè yín kò tíì kàn yín – You shall be called upon; it is not yet your turn
> Ijó má kàn yín, kò tíì kàn yín – It will soon be your turn to dance, it is not yet your turn

[150] Unlike Solo Makinde and Deborah, I am unaware of instances where Yahya (all other names in the lyrics) connote any symbolic meaning.

Ẹ̀yin màmá ẹ lọ Sẹ́mpẹ́ – All the Mama's, go and (Sempe) be relaxed

The song became quite popular as it generated intergenerational and gender banters and debates regarding the musician's intention and perspective on the place of the older generation of women, especially in the context of whether they belong to the fújì performance space. The song's aftermath is that *lo sempe,* which connotation is used in the discourse to suggest to someone to go to or figuratively "take a backseat". Therefore, fújì contributes to the creation of new language experiences among Yorùbá speakers.

Barber (2018) discusses new popular cultural forms as emergent from historical change and participates in embodying them and commenting upon them. Raji-Oyelade (2012) talks about the role of some fújì musicians and Yoruba language as being "graphically revisionists" because of aspects of fújì musician's works that are producing "aesthetics of funk … (challenges the mainstream Yorùbá), logic and morality (88).

Òròbòkibo is the title of a fújì album by Wasiu Alabi alias Pasuma Wonder, a Lagos-based popular fújì musician Wasiu Alabi. Pasuma came to the limelight in the early 1990s. The album Òròbòkibo was a hit album and one of the most popular fújì albums in 1995. The album has many parts, and the term Òròbòkibo did not take a significant aspect of the album. In the song's first two minutes, the musician sings, "E ma rocking, keep on rocking". The line is the hook the musician and the backup singers use in a call-and-response way. Òròbòkibo, in a sense, becomes a corrupted adaptation of "rocking"; it is used as a call to a response "E ma rocking, keep on rocking".

Until Pasuma's album, the term Òròbòkibo, if ever existed, would belong to the conversational fringes of a few communities of Lagos ghettos and the working-class neighbourhoods of Lagos. After Pasuma's album went viral in the early 1990s, Òròbòkibo assumed a new form and meaning, which is experienced in the everyday Yorùbá language vocabulary. The musician, Pasuma, reflects on this phenomenon in another live performance album titled "*My History*" (around 2016). He sings as follows.[151]

Table 4.5: Odetola Wasiu Alabi alias Pasuma - "*My History*" (around 2016)

	Yorùbá	English
1	(…)	(…)
2	Ni 95 Àlàbí o	Alabi, in the year 1995

[151] The version currently available on YouTube is titled "PASUMA-AFTERK1,I AM NEXT-LIVE SHOWS AT ADESH HOTEL" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5HOk1qU4Jg)

3	A lọ bẹ Ọlọ́run	We prayed to God
4	Pé t'á ba má padà dé	We appealed that on our return
5	K'órúkọ yapa Jíbọ́lá	That our name (Jibola) should be popular (viral)
6	À ṣé bẹ́ẹ̀ l'Ọlọ́run Ọba ṣe e	God granted our prayers
7	A má padà dé	On our return
8	First Live cassette eyi ti a se fun Hamburger	Our first live recorded cassette we made for "*Hamburger*" (possibly a nickname of a patron)
9	Ó dà bí record ni Àlàbí o Amama	The sales record was impressive like a studio record
10	95 Wasila kan Kúnlé	In the year 1995 Kunle the father of Wasilat
11	Bóyá ẹ rò pé a sẹ̀sẹ̀ bẹ̀rẹ̀ ni Àlàbí o Amama	Some people assumed we are new in the fújì scene, Alabi Amama
12	Ẹ jẹ́ á sọ kí wọn gbọ́	They all need to be educated
13	After live Cassette	After the release of our live recorded Cassette
14	A wá wọ studio	We proceeded to record the next studio album
15	A p'àkọlé ẹ l'*Ọ́rọ̀bọ̀kíbọ̀ọ́*	We titled the album Ọ̀rọ̀bọ̀kíbọ̀ọ́
16	Ní 95, Ọlọ́run bá wa fi àṣẹ sí	God blessed our works in 1995
17	After Ọ̀rọ̀bọ̀	After the release of the album, Ọ̀rọ̀bọ̀kíbọ̀ọ́
18	Wọ́n ṣe rice Ọ̀rọ̀bọ̀ Jíbọ́lá	They started branding Ọ̀rọ̀bọ̀ rice
19	Wọ́n ṣe Ẹja Ọ̀rọ̀bọ̀	They started labelling Ọ̀rọ̀bọ̀ fish packs
20	Wọ́n ṣe mineral	The carbonated soft drink sizes that were tagged Ọ̀rọ̀bọ̀ emerged.
21	Ọ̀rọ̀bọ̀ káàkiri	Orobo became a household name
22	Gbogbo Obìnrin tó bá sanra	Every plus-size woman
23	Tó ń ba ńlọ ní títì	As she walks on the streets
24	Wọ́n ní Ọ̀rọ̀bọ̀kíbọ̀ọ́	Are publicly addressed as Ọ̀rọ̀bọ̀kíbọ̀ọ́
25	Haúsá gan-an dáa mọ̀	Even the Hausas caught up with the slang
26	Wọ́n ání Ọ̀rọ̀bọ̀kíbọ̀ọ́	They will call it (mimicking the Hausa accent for Ọ̀rọ̀bọ̀kíbọ̀ọ́)
27	Ọmọ Íbò gan-an dá mọ Àlàbí	Even Ibo people are not left out, Àlàbí
28	Wọ́n ṣe bread Ọ̀rọ̀bọ̀ Àlàbí ní 95	In 1995, Bakers produced Ọ̀rọ̀bọ̀ bread
29	Ó tún wá fún un ni first award FMA Àlàbí O Amama	These led to my first career award from FMA, Alabi
30	Best fújì Artist	I was named the best fújì artist
31	Pasuma kan Jíbọ́lá	Ajibola Pasuma, the special one
32	Alhambudulilahi	Alhambudulilahi
33	Níbo lẹ wà nígbà yẹn Mr Laibaka	Where were you all back then? Mr Labaika

In the above excerpt, Pasuma sings about his invention and the transmutation of the term "orobokibo" from his song into various aspects of everyday life as a testament and reflection

of how his work is impacting the everyday reality of Yorùbá everyday life. Pasuma laid out the album's background and the year of release of this symbolic album as 1995. From line 15 of the lyrics, he begins reflecting on how the terms have been used and re-used to signify different shades of meaning in the Yorùbá lexicons and life situations. In this case, commencing in line 17, singing "after Orobo" (referring to album released in 1995), he sings (18-20):

18	Wọ́n ṣe rice Ọ̀rọ̀bọ̀ Jíbọ́lá	They started branding Ọ̀rọ̀bọ̀ rice
19	Wọ́n ṣe Ẹja Ọ̀rọ̀bọ̀	They started labelling Ọ̀rọ̀bọ̀ fish packs
20	Wọ́n ṣe mineral	The carbonated soft drink sizes that were tagged Ọ̀rọ̀bọ̀ emerged.

Indeed, across many Yorùbá cities, towns, or villages today, the word Òròbò means "extra-large". A 50-cl Coca-Cola bottle, compared to a 35-cl bottle, is referred to as Coke-Òròbò (an extra-large bottle of Coke). This is part of Pasuma's reflection in the above verse, saying, "*Won se mineral*"- "The carbonated soft drink sizes that were tagged Orobo emerged" (line 20). Indeed, other Household items are also renamed "orobo". Fromm my personal experience, it a commonplace to describe a polythene bagof extra-large size in any market located in today's urban space colloquially as nylon-Òròbò (the extra-large nylon).

Beyond being a descriptive adjective, extra-large size packages and objects, Òròbò has transmuted from a lyric word to describe human size. Thus, a chubby man can be called brother-Òròbò (a chubby man). At the same time, his female counterpart will be sister-Òròbò (a plump woman). Pasuma confirms this claim in the above verse singing:

22	Gbogbo Obìnrin tó bá sanra	Every plus-size woman
23	Tó ń ba ńlọ ní títì	As she walks on the streets
24	Wọ́n ní Ọ̀rọ̀bọ̀kíbọ̀ọ́	Are publicly addressed as Ọ̀rọ̀bọ̀kíbọ̀ọ́

Regarding sexuality, Òròbòkibo is vulgar slang, understood and translated to capture the acts of sexual penetration (penis, finger, objects, and other forms). Òròbòkibo becomes a signifier of what and how fújì contributes to the emergence of changes in the contemporary Yorùbá lexicon. Thus, this points to an emerging trend in the flow of ìgboro vocabularies into the everyday urban Yorùbá lexicons.

The first viral encounter of the word Òròbòkibo[152] is intricately connected to Pasuma's fújì album Òròbòkibo's viral spread. There is overwhelming evidence of mainstreaming the word into the contemporary Yorùbá spoken language. Furthermore, fújì musicians not only create words but also respond and forge new kinds of social realities within the social strata. Such realities are witnessed in everyday contexts, for example, in an encounter with a bus conductor or driver in Lagos, phrases like "Je ko po l'eti e, which translates to "let it fill up your ears". The phrase reiterates or warns that the speaker expects the listener to comprehend the information given in its entirety. The addressed person or the audience is expected to pay more attention and show a deep understanding of what is being said to them. Phrases like this feature prominently as signature slang for fújì musicians like Wasiu Alabi alias Pasuma[153] and Taye Currency.

In addition, "no clinching" is an adaptation and ìgboro corrupted version of the verb "to clinch". "No clinching" in the ìgboro context signals a deeper everyday contextual reference. It is a term operationalised as a discourse of order and space management in the overcrowded commercial buses of Lagos. Since passengers are known to hang on moving buses, especially during peak periods or rush hours, bus conductors and drivers are known to exclaim "No clinching" to passengers attempting to hang on the moving buses. Thus, the ìgboro-enabled lexicon of "no clinching" finds its way into the fújì lyrics as a trope of speaking about personal space between individuals.

The examples I have provided above show how fújì musicians' socio background of ìgboro (the street) puts them in a place of power to make social commentary through their work. Thus, getting people (their audience) to think and talk in new ways. Indeed, their impacts on the urban Yorùbá space experience can be gauged through their engagements with social issues covering crowded public spaces, drugs, gossip, sexuality, gender, intergenerational perspectives, commodities, and consumptions, among others.

4.5 Fújì Street Gestures: *ìgboro* Salutation

Are there other ways to experience fújì's *ìgboro* beyond inventions or usages of the ìgboro lexicon? In his work titled *Heavy Metal in Madagascar*, Verne explores the concept of

[152] The term "orobokibo" or "orobo" has become reused and adaptable to communicate in several everyday situations. Insisting on its actual meaning is a trap; since it is an invented ìgboro vocabulary, the quest for its original purpose might be fuzzy and subjective.

[153] An example of this phrase can be found in the album "Napoli like Lagos" by Wasiu Alabi alias Pasuma (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SgpTcypoOcg)

"wildness", where he argues, "Music acts upon its listeners and forces or at least enables them to explore the imaginative worlds it evokes" (118). fújì plays a significant role in cultivating and nurturing certain characteristics of ìgboro through a series of bodily performative acts. I am particularly interested in how ìgboro body gestures, especially the modes of greetings, become part of the defining characteristics of the fújì experience. I am inspired to inquire if fújì also inspires a "wildness" performance similar to Madagascar's Heavy metal experience. How do we capture the performance of "wildness" in fújì, when looking beyond the obvious ìgboro lexicon? In Verne's findings, dancing styles are a marker of "wildness" that heavy metal incorporates. There is an observable popular greeting pattern that I attribute to part of the ìgboro greeting exchange mode and fújì cultures.

I think of scenarios of greetings between two parties. I am explicitly referring to the gesture where the two hands (open and not fisted) are raised above the head, two hands slightly above their head, projecting jovially curated military command-type salutations. A continuous stamp of the feet often accompanies the raised hands above the head on the same spot. Hurst (2009) highlights "clothing and body language (particularly ways of walking)" (252) as part of Tsotsitaal's indicator performance. In the contemporary Yorùbá urban space, and most especially in the fújì space, which by extension suggests the collective '*Ọmọ-Ìgboro*' primarily, new modes of greetings are constantly in use.

Fig 4.1: A fújì fan is seen greeting Taye Currency in an ìgboro way; the musician acknowledges the greetings with a wink; the hand raise is complimented with a gesture of foot stamping on the ground or brief match culminating into a final foot stamping on the ground like a salute. image by the author, Mapo Hall Ibadan, Dec. 2018

The *ìgboro* greetings or salutations often complement the adaptive salutation gestures of hands, which are raised above the head (with widely open palms) and are often chorus slang

like "Tuale!", an *ìgboro* slang for a salute. "*Mama niyen*!" – hailing salutation for slang meaning a woman-patron; "Baba!" – Boss, or father; "*Oga*!" - Boss; "*Oluwa mi*" - my patron, my God, my master; *Mo gba fun e* – I submit/surrender to you; *Mo gba fun Oga* – I admit, or I pledge my allegiance for the boss/I surrender/I submit to the boss. These modes of "social interaction… are contingent, emergent, undetermined, and susceptible to unrehearsed actions" Askew (2002:14-15) that fújì musicians and their fans project in their interactions. Indeed, these modes of expression and greetings are phenomena that should be attributed as urban youth language but not as "urban languages in general" (Kiessling 2004:304). While it is plausible to adopt Kiessling's argument to explain *ìgboro* performances as the urban youth language, the youth culture would have been read as operating outside other specific cultural variables.

4.6 Fújì Iconography and Yorùbá Urban Space

My discussion also draws insights from Barber's notion of text as "not reserved for the written or printed document" but as "oral configurations of words – and indeed configurations of visual images and musical sounds" Barber (2007: 21). To remain in the sphere of the nonverbal fújì - enabled texts, I will extend my analysis in this chapter to the iconography space. The "African street" (2014:129) argues that Qauyson is not static. In fact, *ìgboro* (the street), as an actual place, continuously provides "a transcript of dynamic discourse ecologies, at once historical yet also bearing the sense of the vital immediacy of oral cultures" (Ibid.129). Thus, I am exploring the symbolism of fújì iconographies in the Yorùbá urban space. My argument in this section is that the images of fújì musicians that are observable in public spaces, for example, the public transportation space, curate the stories of the extent to which fújì musicians command street credibility and acceptance.

A close look at most privately-owned public facilities such as commercial buses, tricycles (also known as Marwa[154] or Kepe NAPEP[155]), and motorcycles known as Okada, images of and insignias referencing fújì musicians are quite common as they form part of the identities and experiences of or in such spaces. Although graffiti culture is synonymous with the experiences of contemporary cities in many African countries and beyond, Yorùbá cities and urban spaces do not have a significant presence in graffiti culture.

Street artists or roadside artists, whose works focus on painting various portraits, the most common being portraits of notable public figures in Nigeria and beyond (politicians, activists,

[154] Keke Marwa – triycle named after a military governor of Lagos, General Buba Marwa by Lagosians.
[155] Keke NAPEP – meaning NAPEP tricycle: an acronym for National Poverty Eradication Programme

musicians, Nollywood actors, and actresses), cannot be ignored in the Yorùbá urban everyday experience. However, their works can be viewed in the context of advertorials and talent displayed to the public. Despite the commercial undertone of these works, fújì musicians are part of their subjects. Beyond street portraits, commercial transport systems constitute a significant sport producing a "transcript of dynamic discourse ecologies" (Quayson 2014:129). Stickers bearing images of fújì musicians are part of transcript of nuanced representation which an observer of the space is likely to encounter in the contemporary Yorùbá urban space, especially on the commercial means of transportation. Indeed, the iconographies of fújì musicians are not the only subject (but significant) on displays on privately owned transport systems. However, other local and global iconic images are often displayed through the media.

Fig 4.2: The rear view of a tricycle bearing the images of the Ibadan-based fújì musician and his descriptive title (APESIN 1 – the one we gather to worship), Taye Currency, the Barcelona FC soccer logo, and FC Barcelona soccer players Lionel Messi (Argentine) and Luis Suarez (Uruguayan). Image by author, Agbowo, Ibadan, Aug. 2018.

Fig 4.3: An inner view of a tricycle comprising the windscreen and parts of its body frame. image by the author, Bodija, Ibadan, Aug. 2018.

The above image is the interior of a tricycle in Ibadan. It is the inner part of the tricycle windshield. I identify nine stickers with the portrait of a popular fújì musician, Wasiu Alabi alias Pasuma, and two of the *Afrobeats* musicians, Ayo Balogun Wizkid and Adekunle Temitope alias Small Doctor. Three stickers bear different messages. Considering Meyer (2010)'s argument on the affective power of images, which are considered ways through which they would remain in the imagination of the fújì fans in this context, materialised in concrete forms. In this off-stage and everyday life setting, fújì musicians are prominent icons.

Meyer (2010) provides a framework for thinking through this everyday phenomenon the above image represents through her idea of "aesthetic formations". Meyer stresses the "affective power of images, sounds, and texts over their beholders" (6); all these, she argues, are "modes through which imagination materialise and are experienced as real, rather than remaining at the level of interchangeable representations located in mind" (Meyer 2010:7). Also, Debra Klein, in her work "Allow Peace to Reign: Musical Genres of fújì and Islamic Allegorise Nigerian Unity in the Era of Boko Haram" (2020), a road map of reading fújì through and based on Meyer's notion of aesthetics formations is established. According to Klein, the concept of aesthetics' formation provides a framework for analysing fújì and the Muslim music genre as having "the power to hone individual imagination into shared imaginaries", thus mediating "between the personal and the social" (5).

On the one hand, the image provides a lens for assessing the general state of the means of transportation for ordinary people in urban spaces. Unlike the regular working class in the contemporary Yorùbá urban space, the middle class and the rich, if accessing publicly available means of transport, are naturally tuned to patronise less rickety and more comfortable options of privately operated taxis and the recently Tech-enabled taxi options like Uber or Bolt. However, the above image exemplifies the means of public transportation (taxis, buses, motorcycles) for everyday working-class people. It provides a lens into imagining the lived experiences of the *-ìgboro or Ẹrú-Ikú.* It is a window into accessing a sense of aesthetics that includes fújì musicians' images, which are evidence that fújì is part of a visual ìgboro (street culture) including the transportation industry.

There is a conspicuous large blue sticker design taped across the border of the windshield. Also evident are various cracks on the windscreen, a pointer to the underlining economic condition of the owner and a significant percentage of the users of this mode of transportation in the Yorùbá urban spaces. Different stickers are spread across the artificial blue cover of the windshield. Two toys are also hanging from the attached rear mirror with visible inscriptions. However, despite the trope of lower socioeconomic status that the above images speak of, there is also a clear representation of the reality of *joie de vivre* as part of everyday reality. In this sense, the collage of images and symbols and the combination of colours represent inscriptions, and the hanging objects on the tricycle attest to the creative and personalised curation of the experience associated with this type of privately owned but shared public space.

The collage of stickers, especially the dominant images of fújì musicians on the tricycle windshield, curates the story of the extent to which fújì musicians command street credibility and acceptance. What we have in most public transport, such as taxis or tricycles in the Yorùbá urban spaces, is the elevation and celebration of fújì musicians as leading icons from the viewpoint of the major actors and the everyday people interacting and operating within those spaces. The iconic images of fújì musicians vis-à-vis the economic condition of everyday users are also a symbolic performance of reverence and celebration of icons whose stories and backgrounds intersect and embody the collective experiences of ordinary people. As I demonstrate in my discussion of fújì musicians' backgrounds earlier in this thesis, *from grass to grace* is a mantra characterising the stories of most successful fújì musicians across time and space.

4.7 Conclusion

In what ways does fújì illuminate our knowledge of the inner workings of the Yorùbá urban spaces? This question guided my activities in the chapter as I explored fújì through the lens of the analytical category of '*ìgboro*' and '*Area-boys'*, *Ọmọ-Ìgboro*' and '*Ẹrú-Ikú'* As I have illustrated, '*ìgboro*' subcategories are part of the core element of the fújì aesthetic experience. Through fújì's referencing and interconnection to the Yorùbá working-class communities such as transport workers, I have argued that its performance spaces and lyrics narratives are constant mediation spaces of ìgboro experience. Through fújì, a process of re-negotiation and reappropriation of ìgboro from a derogatory zone is enacted. I discuss ìgboro as a performance that occurs through fújì, '*ìgboro*' through a series of performative acts of reclamation from negative, derogatory zones of meaning to the empowering, creative, and expressive way of being. Consequently, this broadens our understanding of fújì as contextualising and ways of knowing the constitutive "lifeworld" of Yorùbá urban space through the concept of ìgboro.

I have shown this on several layers. In the first instance, I have shown conceptualisation of street culture in fújì as an accumulated cognitive experience from a close reading of Pasuma 'Oga Nla'. I have also closely reflected on the activities and interviews of the Ibadan-based sports journalist Olawale Hamzat alias Top striker vis-à-vis fújì and 'the grassroots' to provide the shifting notion and signification of ìgboro as dependent on the speaker's social standing, class, and life experience. Subsequently, I have analysed fújì's street language as an ìgboro practice. I have shown this phenomenon through my close reading of different lyrics and instances like 'Oja' from Taye Currency's work, 'Solo Makinde'. 'Sempe' from Kwam1 and 'Orobokibo' by Pasuma. I have shown how fújì mediates the 'ìgboro' practise of salutations. Indeed, fújì musicians' iconographies are represented in the imagination of everyday Yorùbá urban experiences. Fújì as re-enacting the *ìgboro* experience through a dialectic interaction with the everyday experience has been established through various aspects of my analysis.

CHAPTER FIVE

5 Fújì Lyrics: Gbajúmọ̀ (Big man), and its Rootedness in Praise Singing

5.1 Introduction

My analysis of the big man or Gbajúmọ̀ is conceived to evolve into two chapters. As the first of the two chapters, this chapter will focus largely on the conceptual framework of the big man or Gbajúmọ̀ as part of expressing the visions of social realisation and self-realisation. The conceptual ingredients for articulating self-realisation in fújì is influenced by the performance of oríkì. In the first section of this chapter, I will present three lyric excerpts from the works of Akorede Babatunde alias Saheed Osupa to give a first impression of how the praise of the big man or Gbajúmọ̀ is represented in fújì. The first examples will lay the foundation for my discussion of the conceptual framework in the next sessions, where I will discuss praise singing in fújì as deeply rooted in the Yorùbá practice of oríkì. To outline the connection, I will hence start by considering oríkì as a layered system of cultural practices which culminate in the performance of 'Gbajúmọ̀' or big man, which also finds its expression in fújì. Thus, before I find it essential to situate the notion of oríkì and praising within a larger framework of the flexible construction of personhood – ènìyàn in Yorùbá.

In sections four and five of this chapter, I will continue analysing the big man or Gbajúmọ̀ in specific lyrics. I will do a close reading of a fújì performance that focuses on Aare Ona kakanfo, Gani Adams, as the main subject of praise by the fújì musician Wasiu Ayinde alias Kwam1. My analysis of Gani Adams's public performance of his big man's status will not be limited to the music lyrics. I will also zoom my analysis on other aspects of the performance captured by the audio-visual material I will analyse. In this case, the dynamics between the praised subject and the fújì musicians, Wasiu Ayinde alias Kwam1, during the performance and his style of rewarding the musicians are relevant in making sense of the public performance of a big man or Gbajúmọ̀ during a fújì performance. Since context matters for my analysis, I will take into consideration YouTube commentaries on the audio-visual material of the Gani Adams praise performance for highlighting the extent and the nature of the public debates a big man's status generates outside the performance space. The chapter will be concluded by an analysis of the elegy genre in fújì as part of curating the big man or Gbajúmọ̀'s legacies after their death.

5.2 Gbajúmọ̀ (Big man)

In chapter one of this thesis, I have provided the basic definitions of oríkì, and the social categories of the big man, Borokinni, and Gbajúmọ̀. However, it is important to revisit the explanation and where necessary expand on the earlier descriptions for the purpose of the analysis of the primary materials in this chapter. Thus, I will commence with a discussion on Oríkì, the big man before going to a discussion on Bọ̀rọ̀kìnní and Gbajúmọ̀.

Sahlins (1963) discusses personal power as one of the defining dynamics of the big man since it is "the outcome of a series of acts which elevate a person above the common herd and attract him to a coterie of loyal, lesser men"[156]. The idea of the big man is rooted in differentiation and hierarchy. What is obtainable in this social process is an individual ambition and drive towards upward mobility in a social system. It is an idea that acknowledges an individual's place as justifiably or potentially different from others. At the same time, however, it is linked to notions of social obligations towards inferior people. There are constant mutually acknowledged activities of reciprocities within a patronage network. The patron pays for the loyalty of the community, which, in turn, elevates him. One can also argue that the concept of big man is connected to power relations, mainly because Sahlin describes it as an outcome of repeated actions of ambition as well as reciprocity – these repeated acts elevate a person and individuals gain prominence through a series of activities. At the same time, big men also create links with other (potential) big men. The process of linking up with others with the objective of network expansion of an individual is often geared toward "harnessing" the production of others in the central big man's ambition (Sahlins 1963: 288-292). While tracking what he considers the roots of ample man practice in Africa, Utas thinks of the big man in Liberia and Sierra Leone as "a partial consequence of colonialism and related politico-economic endeavours of conquest" (2012:4). However, the colonial angle and its aftermath are not enough for the context of manifesting the big man's experience in the Yorùbá context. This is because there are existing cultural frameworks of hierarchy and class which locate the big man within a Yorùbá cosmological framework. This will be shown through my definitions of Borokinni and Gbajúmọ̀ which I will discuss in the next paragraphs.

In the Yorùbá context, there is the situation where individual constructs and maintains recognition within and outside his social networks, professional, neighbourhood, political groups, and age-age grades – and fújì music, including its performance and fan culture, play

[156] Sahlin 1963:289 qtd in Utas 2012

the central role in bargaining for it. According to the Yorùbá Modern Practical Dictionary by Kayode J. Fakinlede (2003), Gbajúmọ̀ and Bọ̀rọ̀kìnní are classified as synonyms. Gbajúmọ̀ is a noun, which translates as "famous individual" and "celebrity" (547), while Borokinni translates as a "respected man" and "wealthy man" (Ibid.510). Also, in the Yorùbá English/English Yorùbá Dictionary entry published by Olabiyi Babalola Yai, Borokinni translates as a "gentleman" and respectable person" (1996:31). At the same time, Gbajúmọ̀ is also defined as a "gentleman" and "famous person" (Ibid.47). For both Yai (1996) and Fakindele (2003), Borokinni and Gbajúmọ̀ are framed to suggest a masculine performative identity – respect is something to be gained –, and this is indicative and consistent with the idea of "gentleman" in both sources.

Falola (1984) and Olukoju's (2014) historical account of the 19th - century events with the Yorùbá entrepreneurs allows for a more nuanced and contextual grasp. Olukoju deploys Borokinni and Gbajúmọ̀ as the indigenous concepts of reference that signal the cultural "conception of accumulation of wealth and social status"[157] (Ibid.226) amongst the Yorùbás. To reach his conclusion, Olukosi delineates the Yorùbá stratum of social class as follows: the poor (*akuse, olosi, and talaka*), the rich (olowo), the wealthy (oloro *or olo*la) and the honourable person (olola). In this socially acceptable hierarchy of class distinction in the Yorùbá context, the Bọ̀rọ̀kìnní and Gbajúmọ̀ expectedly fall the rich (olowo), the wealthy (oloro *or olo*la) and the honourable person (olola). I have stated in chapter one however, that it is possible for a person to be Gbajúmọ̀ but is not rich or wealthy.

Notwithstanding, the meaning of Borokinni and Gbajúmọ̀ are related to strict hierarchical order or social stratification, which is, however, not merely fixed: One can climb the ladder or descend it. Beyond the delineated stratum of being poor, rich, and wealthy, the Borokinni or Gbajúmọ̀ is one who combines "honour and wealth with generosity" (ibid.2014:209). It is through performance, particularly a 'generous performance' that an individual can gain membership in the upper social class. The big man as well as a class are hence a fluid concept.

The big man essentially depends on the recognition and, in terms that are more concrete, followers and supporters. To support the big man in this context would mean the big man is regarded as one's patron. The supporter of a big man for example will align with the political view of his or her patron. Group of supporters are often available to be part of big man entourage in public events. On these occasions, a group of big man's supporters might sing his praises,

[157] See also Falola (1984:74)

clap and gesture positively during the speech of a big man at a public event. Generally, Gbajúmọ̀ in today's Yorùbá context will connote a bubbling, sociable persona with a wide range of networks or popularity.[158] On the one hand, one gains social recognition as a big man attracting followers through 'generosity', i.e. the distribution of wealth, but also support that decisively depends on relations and influence. The followers, on the other hand, profit from the concrete support of the patron. They gain concrete material, business empowerment, jobs, and protection from persecution (if and when the need arises).

Furthermore, it is the patron's fame that shines on/extends onto them so that the followers also try to support the patron: Thus, on the one hand, the concepts of Bọ̀rọ̀kìnní and Gbajúmọ̀ is ingrained in an individual's aspiration and an awareness of a socially acceptable performance towards a patron, a socialite and a famous personality figure. On the other hand, the intrinsic motivation at the heart of Borokinni, Gbajúmọ̀'s performance amongst the Yorùbás is strongly connected to self-enhancement. Barber explains that the "competitive struggle for self-aggrandisement" (1991:183) is entrenched in Yorùbá cultural space. However, to understand how the struggle for self-aggrandisement thrives as a cultural phenomenon, it is vital to examine the flexible notion of personhood in the Yorùbá context.

Before I proceed into the next section, it is important to acknowledge that the big man or Gbajúmọ̀ I explore in this chapter exists against the backdrop of the contemporary socio-economic factors in Nigeria and the broad framework against the global neo-liberal economy. I will elaborate on this aspect further in the next chapter of this thesis.

5.2.1 Towards Self-Realisation: Personhood (Èniyàn) and Ori (Individual's lot)

Scholarship on personhood in Africa is not scarce. One of the highlights of earlier works, which explore the question of personhood in Africa, is spawned as a reaction to limiting the universalisation posture of the prevailing European invented trope of 'autonomous person' (Comarroff and Commaroff 2010:267). Drawing from this scholarly point of view it is important to the state I understand Yorùbá personhood as not autonomous but relational. By these big men or Gbajúmọ̀ exist in relation to their larger patron-clientele networks. Therefore, a vista of accessing "alternative modernities in which very different notions of selfhood, civility, and publicity have taken root" (Ibid. 268)[159] is opened. One of the works known to shape the debate in the African context over the year is the work of Meyer Fortes (1973) titled

[158] While Borokinni is not frequently used in today's Yorùbá everyday language, Gbajúmọ̀ is still very used. Gbajúmọ̀ can be deployed both in formal and casual spaces.

[159] See also Comaroff and Comaroff (1999)

"On the Concept of the Person Among the Tallensi". Through this work, the notion of personhood as "a mode of becoming" (Ololajulo 2021: 171) is established. In other words, personhood, especially among the Tallensi people of Northern Ghana, is captured as an evolving process of growth in quantity with the possibility of an accomplished potential or otherwise[160]. Comaroff and Comaroff explain this in another word:

> "a universe in which people, especially men, had to 'build themselves up' – to constitute their person, position, and rank – by acquiring 'wealth and people', orchestrating ties of alliance and opposition, and 'eating' their rivals" (2010: 269)

Eramian (2014:20) clarifies more specifically by discussing the nexus between personhood and collective memory in post-genocide Rwanda as "mutually constitutive" in terms of social relationships. Since personhood is considered socially constituted, Comaroff and Comaroff provide two core layers of understanding personhood. In the first instance, a person is deemed not isolated but "in relation and concerning, even as part of a wide array of significant others" (2001:268). At the same time, the second layer of what constitutes a person is "forged, cumulatively, by an infinite, ongoing series of practical activities" (Ibid.268) – which points to the importance of performance. These two layers of postulation on personhood, Comaroff and Comaroff highlight the agency of/in the person and the community as explicit ingredients for constructing a social person. In addition, by implication, the construction of social person becomes a processual subject by default since there is a continuous (re)construction of the significant persona.

The concept of personhood in Africa can also be articulated from various philosophical points of view. For instance, the Ubuntu notion of a person as being a person not only because of their personality but also because of another speaks to a contextual outlook on personhood (Nyamnjoh 2015; Ololajulo 2021).

Similarly, Gbadegesin (1998) explores the concept of *Ènìyàn* 'human being' from the point of view of Yorùbá cosmology. According to Gbadegesin:

> The Yorùbá word for a person is ènìyàn. However, ènìyàn has a normative dimension as well as an ordinary meaning. Thus, it is not unusual when referring to a human being for an observer to say, "ki i se ènìyàn" (He/she is not an ènìyàn). Such a comment is a judgement of the moral standing of the human being who is thus determined as falling short of what it takes to be recognised as such. (1998:149)

[160] See also Hickman 2014:321

Indeed, what constitutes the moral standing for an individual, as hinted by Gbadegesin, will differ on an individual basis. However, the implicit idea in the argument is that self-realisation, at the core of the big man's concern, is ingrained and essential not just for an individual's existential satisfaction but as the basis of working within prevailing Yorùbá social ideals and communal ethos (Gbadegesin 1998:168). To understand the core of the Yorùbá concept and the collective vision of a person, it is essential to examine what and how a person *ènìyàn* is constituted within the Yorùbá cosmology. The Yorùbá notion of the head (ori) becomes relevant to understanding a person.

5.3 Gbajúmọ̀ (Big man): Analysis through Fújì lyrics

Oríkì is an "attributive name for a person derived from prior heroism displayed by his (or her) descendants" (Fakinlede 2003:620). Essentially, oríkì performance "evokes a subject's qualities, goes to the heart of it and elicits its inner potency" Baber (1991:12). I have also explained that oríkì has a transcendental effect on its subject. Its effect is expected to not only highlight, but rather to bring out its subject's essence and qualities and hence to transform the praised subject. A person becomes a big man only through and in performance.

An oríkì performance typically takes the form of a rather figurative narration: Barber stresses oríkì as "attributions or appellations: collections of epithets, pitchy or elaborated, addressed to a subject" (1991:1). Oríkì provides a basic social discourse. Oríkì, as a source of "master discourse", as Barber (1991) explains it permits its user to cover a wide range of subjects, referring to a subject's achievements, possessions, lineage, affiliations etc. The attributes, social standings, histories, family and social ties amongst others are parts of what constitutes what fújì musicians sing about when praising their praise subjects. Oríkì has many dimensions. For instance, Awe (1974), a Yorùbá historian, dissects Oríkì as a basis and a means of historical (re)construction. While agreeing with the historical construction quality of oríkì, Adeeko (2001) emphasises how oríkì, through the poetic embellishment of a name given to a person, lends itself to change and adaption at every stage of development in the personality's life. Thus, fújì forms a basis for accessing the praise subjects' history or biography highlighting their stages of development or accomplishments. All of these ingredients can be found in fújì lyrics, where the performance and construction of the big man is key. The big man's status can only be enhanced by his followers. Barber paints the picture of interdependent relations between the big men's status and their followers or the public. She explains:

> "Both orisa and the big men are endowed with their powers by the attentions of their followers; if the regard of their followers slackens, their powers wane." (1991:193)

Thus, Babrer in the article titled "How man makes God in West Africa: Yorùbá attitudes towards the Orisa" (1981), underlines the resemblance between big man and spiritual beings. She underlines how the Yorùbá traditional thought system allows for constant the creation of the òrìṣà ('gods') through praising. This agency of creation is attributed to the human devotees – the òrìṣà ('gods') are maintained and kept in existence by the attention of humans. In Barber's explanation, a reading of a praise subject in fújì, especially the big man is highlighted as potentially potent in instigating public attention and a process of recruitment of followers. This recruitment process and acceptance by followers is considered to rely on nurturing (in the case of fújì) a performance process where followers are cultivated.

The Gbajúmọ̀ is a central Yorùbá category of personhood. As I have mentioned already in chapter one Gbajúmọ̀ is a common term often used to describe a popular person (men and women) in everyday discourse amongst Yorùbá people. "Popular" refers to the aspect of having many followers: The term Gbajúmọ̀ not only connotes popularity but often echoes the idea of being a socialite and having access to a vast network of people in a social space. The Gbajúmọ̀'s network constantly has to be regained or reaffirmed through performances, including fújì performances. To have a full grasp of Gbajúmọ̀'s representation, lyrics matter as much as the context. Thus, before explaining the concept of the big man more in detail, I will start off with two transcribed and translated lyrics (three) verses to provide a first introduction to what is at stake in this chapter. On this basis, later, I will turn to the social scientists and anthropologist debates on big man in Africa informing my framing. Thereafter, I will return to considering the Gbajúmọ̀ in the context of Yorùbá lifeworlds through its representation and signification in the Yorùbá socio-cultural or urban space. What I intend to illustrate is how oríkì is appropriated by fújì musicians in their construction of the big man and how it relates to the moral or ethical imagination of the Yorùbá people's idea of the 'Ènìyàn' or personhood. I will do a close reading of the works of three fújì musicians namely Akorede Babatunde Okunola alias Saheed Osupa, Wasiu Ayinde alias Kwam1, and Abass Akande alias Obesere.

To get an impression of the representational image of a Gbajúmọ̀ in fújì, I will present two verses of lyrics excerpts from Saheed Osupa's album titled "*C- Caution*" (2018)[161] and the third verse from the same musician Saheed Osupa titled "*Osupa for Ìgbòho*" (2021). The three verse lyrics are transcribed below.

[161] The entire album goes for 43 minutes and 26 seconds. The version I use in this thesis was found YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mlPGSgF37nA

Table 5.1: Okunola Babatunde Akorede Saheed – Live Performance "*Osupa for Ìgbòho*" (2021) – Part I

	Yorùbá	English Translation
1	Adùn-ún-bá-rìn má tòsì	A kind man whose affluence rubs on one
2	Adùn-ún-bá rìn má tòsì sá ni ẹ	You are a kind man whose affluence rubs on one[162]
3	Ọkọ Mọlará Alayé mi [163], Déndè mi	The husband of Molara, my beloved (Alaye) Dende
4	Ẹ̀bùn pàtàkì tí o fi fún mi ní ìgbà yẹn	The special gift you gave me some time ago
5	Ṣebí òun ló ṣín Tí mo fi ń ra ọkọ̀ mọ́kọ̀ yìí	It is that (gift) that opened doors of blessings for me, cusing me to acquire more cars.
6	Mò ń gba motor bí ẹni ra dùndú wá lé ni	I began receiving cars like one who buys roadside yam chips.
7	I am grateful omo Eegungbohun, o se gan-an *(Transition to the praise of the second subject)*	I am grateful! the son of Eegungbohun[164], thank you very much. *(Transition to the praise of the second subject whose name is Kabiru Yaro)*
8	Èèyàn má n jọ èèyàn o	Humans take after one another
9	Èèyàn má ń jọ èèyàn	Humans take after one another
10	Lágbájá ti ẹ̀ ní àfiwé	Someone might even become a standard of good qualities – one to aspire to be like
11	Èwo ni kí àpẹẹrẹ ẹni ire sọnù lára náà?	Then why should one be lacking in good character?
12	Bí èèyàn ò ní inú ire	But if one lacks in good character
13	Ó yẹ kí ó lè ní ọ̀rọ̀ ire	Such should at least possess good communication manners
14	Kabiru Yaro kò wọ́pọ̀ láàrin àwọn elépo	A person like Kabiru Yaro is uncommon or rare among oil marketers
15	KABIGAN Petroleum, ni sagamu	KABIGAN petroleum in Sagamu
16	Ó ń ná owó ná ara	He is generous and selfless
17	Ó tún máa ná aájò mọ́ ọn	He is also sympathetic and compassionate
18	Ọkọ Adija	The husband of Hadijat
19	Ọkọ Ganiyatu mi	My beloved, the husband of Ganiyatu
20	Bí Ọlọ́run bá gba ẹnu mi ṣe àṣẹ ni	If only God could grant requests through my mouth,
21	Ǹbá ní kí ó gba ọlá lọ́wọ́ ẹni tí kò mọ iyì Ọlọ́run	I would ask Him to withdraw wealth from those who do not acknowledge Him
22	Kó gbé e fún Yaro tó mọ Ọlọ́run ẹ̀ dá dáadáa	And bestow it upon Yaro who knows His God very well.

[162] This expression communicates the acknowledgement of being a benefactor of someone's goodwill and generosity.

[163] The world "Alaye" literaily means the owner of the world. In ìgboro context, it could communicate the intenstion to elevate a person's social status or a nickname for a person known to be a socialite. However," Alaye mi" in the lyrics is an expression of "my beloved friend".

[164] Eegungbohun is a Yorùbá name that is formed from the combination of Eegungun (masquerage) + gba (take or receive) + ohun (voices, supplications or request) – Eegungun gba ohun (Eegungun receives oour supplications)

Before I proceed with the close reading of the above lyrics, it is important to state that the above lyrics were transcribed from a commercially available album. Thus, I am not able to provide other personal information on most of the praise subjects in the lyrics outside what is obtainable in the lyrics. Where there are secondary materials available on the praise subject(s) like media reportage, I will refer to such to assist with contextual or background information on the praise subjects and my overall reading of the lyrics. Bringing in mind that my reading of the lyrics leans on literary methods, I am reading the lyrics as text, which is rendered by a narrative voice, a lyric I. My strategy in this case will also involve delineating where necessary between the layered narrative voices: I am referring to the lyrical I or personae as not always the same as the musician. In this approach, the praise subjects are seen as characters that the musician highlights their characteristics and activities to communicate certain vision(s) of their persona to the listening audience.

In the above lyrics, I identified two main praise subjects whose qualities and social standings are highlighted in the song. By social standing, I refer, for example, to how oríkì compositions provide nuanced information about a subject's family as well as associates and connections. The first praise subject the musician sings about is called Dende; his additional name, like Eegungbohun comes later in the lyrics. The second praise subject I identify is called Kabiru Yaro. The listener is able to get an insight into the personalities of the two praise subjects, their affiliates and in some instances, their profession or business interests.

In the first two lines, the musician introduces his praise subject with a popular Yorùbá saying that is used in the context of hailing a person. He sings:

1	Adùn-ún-bá-rìn má tòsì	A kind man whose affluence rubs on one
2	Adùn-ún-bá rìn má tòsì sá ni ẹ	You are a kind man whose affluence rubs on one

These first two lines of the verse prepare the listening audience for the personality that the musician is about to praise. Two characteristics of the praised person are briefly signalled as "affluential" and "generous". "A dun ba rin ma to si[165]" in line 1 and 2 is a statement that will come up when a speaker is highlighting the characteristics of another person. When this statement is said of a person in a dialogue, the speaker is drawing attention to the quality and character of the subject as a person with great benefits for his associates, network, and family

[165] My explanation of this statement is a product of a conversation with my childhood friends Lekan Ogunkele and Afolabi Olayiwiola. Thus, it speaks to our lived experiences and dialogues scenarios we have witnessed, participated as Yorùbá speakers.

members. The subject must have a track record or evidence of positively impacting his close associates.

The musician goes further to concretize the image of the prise subject he is depicting by introducing the praise subject as "oko Molara" - "*The husband of Molara*" (line 3). By this, the musician has further and more concrete information about the praise subject. The line provides information about "Dede" as an adult (matured enough to be a married man) and indeed married to "Molara". Later in the verse, the audience further encounters the family name of the subject; the musician sings about "Dende" as the son of "Eegungbohun". By this, the audience has the idea that the praise subject is "Dende", the husband of "Molara" of the Eegungbohun family (in other words a descendant of the Eegungbohun a member of Eegbugbohun family). Thus, in the lyrics above, one can see Dende in relation to his family ties, lineage and hence even history. These strings of information will not only locate the praise subjects within their family ties, but they are also ways of highlighting the praise subject's social standing for the listening audience.

However, beyond establishing the family ties of the praise subject "Dende", the subject is projected by the musician as a generous man "A dun ba rin ma to si – A kind man whose affluence rubs on one*"* suggesting that he is a beneficiary of Dende's kindness and generoisty. The subject, Dende is regarded as generous enough to gift the musician a car at a point in time (see lines 4-6). What is more instructive in the musician's mode of appreciating 'Dende's generosity' is the fact that the subject's (Dende) generosity symbolically extends beyond the gift of a car. It is the car which is evidence of Dende's personhood and his achievement not to fall behing his 'inner head', the *orí*.

In chapter one, I have mentioned, that, variegated notions of success and self-realisation are predicated on the individual's Orí: the Yorùbá cosmology allows for an individual's *Orí-inu* (inner-head) to signify an understanding of "prenatal allotment" (Abiodun 2014:24) of one's potential or destiny. I have also discussed an *Olóríire* as a person with a 'good head' or a 'fortunate person. While its opposite is *Oríburúkú* ('a bad head', 'a misfortune head'). For the above scenery Orí is central, since it refers to the constitution of the socially acceptable human: it is the richness, the possibility of providing cars, which hints at or is evidence of the person's 'good head'. The praise subject, Dende is presented by the musician in this cultural framework of the Yorùbá personhood constitution. Dende is projected as a persona with a 'grace' to be successful and be a benefactor to others. In this regard, the musician acknowledges the praise subject's generosity towards him (see line 6)- as evidence of Dende's achievements. In lines 5-7, the musician narrates that the nature of Dende's gift triggers an influx of other gifts or chains

of pleasant events for the beneficiaries. He sings: " Mo n gba moto bi eni n ra dùndún wa le ni" – " *I began receiving car gifts like the one who buys roadside chips*" What is important to keep in mind at this point is that in the representation or performance of 'Gbajúmọ̀' or the big man "generosity" is not an innocent gesture or attribute, it is partly regarded as a core manifestation of an Orí-inú, an individual's inner head or a personal lot within the Yorùbá cosmology: it is generosity which builds the network of followers, who in turn manifest a person's success. Thus, the musician's emphasis on the ripple but positive aura or blessing of his praise subject's deed. Sheed Osupa through his oríkì of the praise subject also presents himself as a benefactor of Dende's good deeds, saying: "Ebun pataki to fi fun mi nigba yen" – "That special gift you gave me some time ago". So, he is one of the followers of Dende.

In the lyrics of the same verses, I present above, the musician transits from the praise of his first subject "Dende" to another one which is introduced as "Kabiru Yaro". The musician, Saheed Osupa, switches to the second subject through his use of an extended metaphor between line 8-13. He sings:

8	Èèyàn má n jọ èèyàn o	Humans take after one another
9	Èèyàn má ń jọ èèyàn	Humans take after one another
10	Lágbájá ti ẹ ní àfiwé	Someone might even become a standard of good qualities – one to aspire to be like
11	Èwo ni kí àpẹẹrẹ ẹni ire sọnù lára náà?	Then why should one be lacking in good character?
12	Bí èèyàn ò ní inú ire	But if one lacks in good character
13	Ó yẹ kí ó lè ní ọ̀rọ̀ ire	Such should at least possess good communication manners

In the above lines, the musician sets the tone for the emergence of a new praise subject by metaphorically invoking analogies of what constitutes a socially acceptable person (ènìyàn), which I touched on in chapter one. By this, the principle of an individual's social standing is conveyed. The musician sings: "Lagbaja ti e ni afiwe" - *Someone might even become a standard of good qualities – one to aspire to be like*" (line 10); stressing good character in lines 11&12 and good communication manners (line 13).

After the above-detailed analogy, the second praise subject is introduced as Kabiru Yaro. Kabiru Yaro's praises are woven against the backdrop of his good social standing. He is projected as a subject with good character that is also endowed with good communication skills. Apart from Kabiru Yaro's social standing and reputation of generosity, good character, and good communication attributes. In this sense, Kabiru Yaro is represented as as a distinguished and honourable person that does not exhibit bad personality. In the same vein, Kabiru Yaro is

also represented as a business owner. Kabiru Yaro owns a filling station known as "KABIGAN petroleum" located in Sagamu town, Ogun state, Nigeria. The family life of Kabiru Yaro is also revealed as the husband of Hadijat and Ganiyat. With this additional information, the audience can identify Kabiru Yaro as the husband of at least two wives (Hadijat and Ganiyat).

The images and the representation of the two praise subjects by the musician with respect to my exploration of 'Gbajúmọ̀' or the big man provides a first illustrative exemplar that my subsequent analysis in this chapter will hang on. The narratives of the two praise subjects share similarities with regards to highlighting family and communal links, generosity as not just a mere attribute but symbolic gestures of responsibilities of the successful persona, on the one hand, and the alignment and acknowledgement of the aura of graciousness and generosity by beneficiaries or the clientele network of the big man. Genorisity is in fact an obligation in the context of the client-patron relationship.

The second and the third example that I will present to ground our initial understanding and impression of the 'Gbajúmọ̀' or the big man representation also from the same fújì musician Saheed Akorede alias Saheed Osupa's album titled "*C- Caution*" (2018)[166] and "*Osupa for Ìgbòho*" (2021). I am particularly interested in verses of the albums because the central praise subject in the transcribed is Chief Sunday Adeyomo alias Sunday Ìgbòho. Sunday Ìgbòho is one of the fújì fans I have discussed in chapter two. Apart from being afújì fan, Chief Sunday Adeyemo alias Sunday Ìgbòho [167] is one of my collaborators during the fieldwork. Sunday Ìgbòho prefers to introduce himself as a businessman, an international businessman who imports cars from Germany to Nigeria. He is also a politician with ties with politicians across political parties. During my fieldwork in 2018, Sunday Ìgbòho allowed me to visit his home on a regular basis – this opportunity to have a first-hand observation experience of a Gbajúmọ̀ or big-man of his calibre up close. I could also observe Sunday Ìgbòho in his interactions with his family members, associates, and clientele. The wide range of wall photographs and its composition is one of the elements that could not be missed by an observer on Sunday Ìgbòho 's home. In the pictures (see example at. The appendix section of this thesis), Sunday is seen posing with popular fújì musicians like Wasiu Ayinde alias Kwam1, Wasiu Alabi alias Pasuma, and Akorede Babatunde alias Saheed (whom he often referred to as his close friend and favourite fújì musician). Sunday Ìgbòho often speaks of Saheed Osupa in admiration, and he often credits the latter's depth and usage of Yorùbá language in his fújì composition.

[166] The entire album goes for 43 minutes and 26 seconds. The version I use in this thesis is a YouTube version https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mlPGSgF37nA

[167] Ìgbòho is a town in Oyo state Nigeria. It is Sunday Adeyemo's ancestral home.

Sunday Ìgbòho 's everyday persona courts the image of a patron to a vast network of young men in the city of Ibadan and other Yorùbá cities. In any public appearance or a typical day at his home, Sunday Ìgbòho is always surrounded by an average number of 10 to 20 mostly young men. Apart from this, his public appearance often attracts many followers and loyalists.[168] Sunday Ìgbòho ’s public image also varies. To some, he is a philanthropist because of how he helps people, to others he is a rich thug who acts above the law. Sunday Ìgbòho ’s public image began to attain a new dimension between the years 2020 and 2021. He is self-regarded and publicly acknowledged as an activist due to his activities of leading resistance and campaign in support of Yorùbá farmers and against the incidences of herdsmen invasion in some Yorùbá villages.[169] In 2021, Sunday Ìgbòho ’s activism against the Fulani herdsmen in southwest Nigeria took a new turn as he began a secession campaign of the “Yorùbá nation”[170] from the Nigerian state. At the dawn of July 1, 2021, the news broke that Sunday Ìgbòho ’s residence had been attacked by the Nigerian Directorate of State Security Service (DSS)[171]. Although Sunday Ìgbòho escaped the Nigeria’s DSS arrest on the evening of July 1, 2021, he was later arrested on 19th July 2021 at Cotonou airport[172] en route to Germany.

The next excerpt is drawn from the album titled “C-Caution” (same as above) by Saheed Osupa. It is a continuation of praise sections in the album. Here the central main praise subject is Chief Sunday Adeyomo alias Sunday Ìgbòho. Saheed Osupa creates a three-way dialogue situation in the lyrics, that is, the lyric persona (narrating), an unknown “you” and his main praise subject Sunday “Ìgbòho “. Sunday Ìgbòho is referenced interchangeably with different metaphors, like *Ṣẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀* “a Yorùbá or west Africa musical instrument, a guard that is covered with strings of beads or (owo-eyo) -cowry shells”; *Oka* “king Cobra”; *Majasola* “one who does not fight over wealth”; *Èṣù* “the Yorùbá God of crossroads”; and *ẹ́rúku ata* “the smoke from

[168] Sunday Ìgbòho is a patron of a vast network of Ọmọ-Ìgboro across many Yorùbá cities and towns. On igbooro, see chapter four.

[169]https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/468241-sunday-Ìgbòho-issues-fresh-eviction-notice-to-herdsmen-in-south-west.html?tztc=1;

https://dailypost.ng/2021/02/20/analysts-explain-why-sunday-Ìgbòho-gave-up-his-fight-against-herdsmen/ https://punchng.com/sunday-Ìgbòho -visits-igangan-after-herdsmens-attack/

[170] https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-55934275

[171] https://www.bbc.com/pidgin/world-57690475

https://www.thecable.ng/the-insider-how-sunday-Ìgbòho s-house-was-attacked

[172]https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/474749-how-sunday-Ìgbòho-was-arrested-in-benin-republic.html

https://saharareporters.com/2021/07/19/exclusive-Yorùbá-freedom-fighter-sunday-Ìgbòho -arrested-cotonou

burning pepper*"*. I will be providing the meanings of the metaphors in the context alongside my analsys below. However, the lyrics excerpt goes as follows:

Table 5.2: Okunola Babatunde Akorede Saheed - *"C-Caution"* (2018)

	Yorùbá	English Translation
1	Ṣẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀[173] ò ṣé fi ọ̀pá lù o	The Ṣẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀ cannot be played with a rod
2	Ṣẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀ ò ṣé fi ọ̀pá lù	The Ṣẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀ cannot be played with a rod
3	Yé má fọ́ pé o lè mú Ìgbòho[174]	Stop bragging about, that you can contend with Ìgbòho
4	Níbi tí Ọ̀ká dáná. Kìí ṣe ibi tí ọmọ erè fún ẹranko mìíràn	Wherever the King Cobra sits is a no-safe zone for other animals
5	Májàsọ́lá[175] o kọ̀ ní ìṣẹ́jú kan kí ọ̀sán dòru	Majasola does not care if the daylight turns into darkness in a minute
6	Gbogbo ẹlẹ́nu kí ó ti ọwọ́ ọmọ rẹ̀ bọ aṣọ ni	Let all boastful keep their nuisance at bay
7	Torí Èṣù ọ̀dàrà[176] ń wá ohun tí ó jẹ o lóríta	Because Èṣù is at the crossroad looking for whom to devour
8	Ẹ̀rúku ata ni Májà má wulẹ̀ fi ojú kó	Maja is the smoke from burning pepper, take your eyes off it, do not attempt to sniff

In the first line, the central praise subject in the above verse is first introduced as "the gourd that cannot be played with a rod". This line presents the praise subject as a delicate persona or sensitive subject. Thereafter, the lyric "I" addresses an unknown "you" say: "Ye ma fo pe o le mu Ìgbòho – "*Stop bragging about, that you can contend with Ìgbòho*" (line 2). By this, the image of Sunday Ìgbòho subject is building up with emphasis on masculinity, notoriety and virality. In line 3&4, the unnamed enemy of Sunday Ìgbòho is warned by the musician not to dare contend with him. By this, the audience gets a feel of Sunday Ìgbòho as being "contentious" and combative. In fact, line four specifically says:

4	Níbi tí Ọ̀ká dáná. Kìí ṣe ibi tí ọmọ erè fún ẹranko mìíràn	Wherever the King Cobra sits is a no-safe zone for other animals

In the above praise line of Sunday Ìgbòho, the musician sings proverbially about a territorial idea of Sunday Ìgbòho 's control – this statement alludes to the sphere of influence of the subject

[173] Ṣẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀ is a percussion musical instrument – a netted gourd surrounded by strings of beads.

[174] Ìgbòho is a name of a town in Oyo state Nigeria. However, in this context it is a nickname of the of the praise subject. The full name of the praise subject is Sunday Adeyemo and his popular by the alias Sunday Ìgbòho (meaning Sunday from Ìgbòho town).

[175] Majasola meaning "do not fight over riches" is also another aliases of Sunday Adeyemo. Majasola is sometimes abbreviated to "Maja" (also in the above excerpt)

[176] Èṣù-odara is the name of a Yorùbá God. Èṣù is also known as God of the crossroads.

and the mode of maintaining such influence. The metaphor "King Cobra" in the above lyric line depicts Sunday Ìgbòho as a cobra, a predator, who is further characterised dangerous to other animals. In essence, the audience has a feel of Sunday Igboo's world of enemies, contestation, scheming, and plotting to come out ahead of opponents.

In the fifth line of the verse, the musician sings "Májàsọ́lá o kọ̀ ní ìṣẹ́jú kan kí ọ̀sán dòru – Majasola does not care if the daylight turns into darkness in a minute". Majasola being one of the aliases of the praise subject is a strategy to evoke the praise subject vividly. In this case, the larger-than-life and absolutist nature of the praise subject is not only pushed forward into the public domain through the song. There is, in addition, the fear element being communicated as part of Sunday Ìgbòho 's personality. In this context, the audience is reminded of Sunday Ìgbòho's ability to foment trouble without consequence. As he is said to "not care if the daylight turns into darkness in a minute". In this characterization of Sunday Ìgbòho, the audience gets the feel of a larger-than-life personality – one who does as he pleases, even if it means upturning or working against the natural processes of nature, such as substituting the day in place of the night.

The larger-than-life, fearful and perhaps ruthless image of Sunday Ìgbòho is further reinforced in the concluding lines (6-8) of the lyrics excerpt. As seen in line six of the lyrics, the enemies of Sunday Ìgbòho are warned to "keep at bay". The necessity for not being boastful around Sunday Ìgbòho is in fact seen in line seven of the lyrics because the musician sings:

6	Gbogbo ẹlẹ́nu kí ó ti ọwọ́ ọmọ rẹ̀ bọ aṣọ ni	Let all boastful keep their nuisance at bay
7	Torí Èṣù ọ̀dàrà[177] ń wá ohun tí ó jẹ o lóríta	Because Èṣù is at the crossroad looking for whom to devour
8	Ẹ̀rúku ata ni Májà má wulẹ̀ fi ojú kó	Maja is the smoke from burning pepper, take your eyes off it, do not attempt to sniff

As I explained at the beginning of the analysis of this lyric example, the musician substitutes Sunday Ìgbòho 's name with other metaphorical expressions to connote and invoke the essence of the persona of his praise subject. In this case, "Èṣù", the Yorùbá God of crossroads is invoked in its elements, "the crossroad" and looking for "whom to devour". The essential characterization element of Sunday Ìgbòho in this case takes on the ability of "Èṣù" to wreak havoc, be a consequence towards action and instil fear in the heart of people. In fact, part of the consequence one could expect from being the "enemy" of the praise subject, Sunday Ìgbòho is

[177] Èṣù-ọdàrà is the name of a Yorùbá God. Èṣù is also known as God of the crossroads.

captured as "Ẹrúku ata ni Maja ma wule fi oju ko" – "*Maja (**abbreviation for Majasola, alias**) is the smoke from burning pepper, take your eyes off it, do not attempt to sniff*".

As seen in the above close reading of the lyrics, fújì lyrics communicate, reflect, construct and invoke the essence of praise subjects. It is essential in the making and archiving, the contemporary Yorùbá Gbajúmọ̀ or big man.

I will now transit to the second lyrics excerpt by Saheed Osupa titled "*Osupa for Ìgbòho* " (2021). As seen in the first lyric example, the content of the lyrics is often enigmatic, and they leave room for interpretation of the Gbajúmọ̀ or big man. As the examples show, a big man can be constructed in different ways. For clarification, I do not take the outcome of the persona representation of Sunday Ìgbòho in the selected fújì works as the archetype for all categories of Gbajúmọ̀ or big man that can be encountered across the socio-economic, socio-cultural, and socio-cultural spheres of the contemporary Yorùbá society. At least the first two examples (Dende Eegungbohun and Yakubu Yaroo) I presented above set a different tone and contrast textual texture from Sunday Ìgbòho 's persona representation. However, it is important also to acknowledge the enigmatic nature of Sunday Ìgbòho 's representation in fújì lyrics and the extent it signals the perception and nature of personalities like Ìgbòho within the Nigerian state.

Thus, my choice of the next lyrics excerpt is deliberate and strategic to further insights into the nature of the Gbajúmọ̀ like Sunday Ìgbòho. As I will further show in the next close reading of the lyrics excerpt from Saheed Osupa's album titled "*Osupa for Ìgbòho"* (2021) – as the name suggests, it is a special release for Sunday Ìgbòho. The album was released against the backdrop of Sunday Ìgbòho 's detention after his eventual arrest by the authorities of the Republic of Benin at the Cardinal Bernardin International Airport in Cotonou on the 19th July 2021.[178] The next lyric excerpt was released after the arrest of Sunday Ìgbòho and his persona in the fújì lyrics can be seen at the intersection of mediating the image of Sunday Igbpho, a Gbajúmọ̀ or big man, with the overlapping Yorùbá ethnic nationality and Nigerian politics. The lyrics excerpts read as follows.

Table 5.3: Okunola Babatunde Akorede Saheed – Live Performance "*Osupa for Ìgbòho*" (2021) – Part II

	Yorùbá	English Translation
1	Ìgbòho Májàsọ́lá	Ìgbòho Májàsọ́lá
2	Ìgbòho, tí wọ́n bá sọ pé: "Ìgbòho dé", Ikookò	Ìgbòho, if they mention that: "Ìgbòho is here", they mean the Fox is here.

[178]https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/474749-how-sunday-Ìgbòho-was-arrested-in-benin-republic.html

3	Ajeegun-jẹran, Akọni ọmọ	The flesh and bone crushers, the brave child
4	Ọmọ abẹ́rẹ́ mẹ́ta òde ayé	The child of three types of needles which descended on the earth
5	Tó gún wọn ló jú, gún wọn l'ẹ́nu, pẹ́lú ọ̀na ọ̀fun	one in the eyes, one in the mouths and one in the throat
6	Torí wèrè ìta la ṣe ń ní tilé jàre	We raise a lunatic at home to wade off an invading troublesome lunatic
7	Ẹkùn ọkọ Fulani Ajínigbé[179] ni Sunday yẹn	Sunday is the tiger, that vengeance over the kidnapping Fulanis,
8	Pa kìràkìtà ẹni orí yọ, ó dilé	When there is chaos, they scrambled and took to their heels. It is he, whom Orí (Head) rescues that arrives safely home
9	Ṣànpọ̀nná Oòduà[180], ó yọ lókèèrè wọ́n mú eré.	The Ṣànpọ̀nná of Oòduà, he appears from afar.
10	Ẹni orí yọ, ó dilé	It is he, whom Ori (Head) rescues Who arrives safely home
11	Bi won ba so pe Ìgbòho de, Ikoko	If they say Ìgbòho is here, they mean the Fox is here

In the first line of the above lyrics verse, the musician signalling the commencement of the praise of Chief Sunday Adeyemo mentioned two of his aliases, saying "Ìgbòho Majasola". He sings "Ìgbòho, ti won ba so pe: "Ìgbòho de", Ikoko" – "*Ìgbòho, if they mention that: "Ìgbòho is here*", they mean the Fox is here". In lines 2-5, the musician highlighting the praise of Sunday Ìgbòho 's image as a fox emphasising his "predator", notorious and ruthlessness. Trying to underline Sunday Ìgbòho 's popularity, especially as a subject of public discourse, the musician referred to a reported speech by the unnamed "they". I read the plural pronoun "they" in this narration to reference a section of the public that is discussing "Sunday Ìgbòho ". The musician represents what the public(they) are discussing Sunday Ìgbòho as a "fox", the one who eats and crushes "flesh and bones" on arrival. (Line 3). The musician moves on to use the "metaphor" of "a needle" to to convey the innate quality of his praise subject, Sunday Ìgbòho in lines 4-5, he sings:

4	Ọmọ abẹ́rẹ́ mẹ́ta òde ayé	The child of three types of needles which descended on the earth
5	Tó gún wọn ló jú, gún wọn l'ẹ́nu, pẹ́lú ọ̀na ọ̀fun	one in the eyes, one in the mouths and one in the throat

[179] The reference to Fulani in the lyrics does not refer to the entire Fulani nationalities or ethnic group in Nigeria. It is a peculiar reference to the transborder terrorist and violent groups of masquerading as herdsman or bandits.

[180] Sopona is another Yorùbá God. It is the God of infectious disease, most especially "small-pox" Sopona-Odua, Odua is an abbreviated word for Oduduwa – the 'progenitor' of the Yorùbá people. In the context of separationsits or Yorùbá (sub) nationality discourse in the larger Nigerian political discourse, "Sopona Odua" will connote the infectious disease that will attack the enemies of the Yorùbá (Oduduwa) people.

The imagery deployed by the musicians of multiple needles piercing an individual in the eyes, mouth and throat can only convey and invoke the sense of extreme pain and effect on the body being inflicted. Sunday Ìgbòho , being the "Ọmọ abẹ́rẹ́ mẹ́ta òde ayé" (*the child of three types of needles which descended on earth*" partly communicates the attributes of mysticism and dreadfulness of the subject. In this line, the praise subject, Sunday Ìgbòho , is not represented by the natural attribute of being born as an infant by his mother. Rather the musician projects a persona with the attribute which transcend the ordinary person – a sort of alien or superhuman who had to "descend" on earth. An embodiment of unique attributes is represented in "Ọmọ abẹ́rẹ́ mẹ́ta òde ayé" - *the child of three types of needles which descended on earth*" - in this sense, *the three types of needles* convey a metaphor of an innate essence the praise subject essence.

In lines 6-7, the musician provides complementary information that will provide insight into the basis for the praise of Sunday Ìgbòho. In this case, a direct reference is made to the "kidnapping Fulani" - he also refers to them as "troublesome lunatics". It is important to stress that discourses like "kidnapping Fulani" and "troublesome lunatics" must be critically examined within a broader framework of ethnic profiling and stereotypes within the Nigerian context. While the musician generalizes, and his representation did not provide a nuance representation of reality. It is important to acknowledge that some arrested[181] kidnappers are are represented by the media as Fulani. This translates to some sections of Yorùbá to conclude that most of the kidnappers are Fulani herdsmen. Indeed, such narrative within critical lens falls into ethnic profiling, the discourse of "otherness" and stereotypes. Notwithstanding the lyric line provides an insight into representation of the other or the enemies of Sunday Ìgbòho. Particulalry, the Fulani ethnic nationality becomes the reference category and the basis of a combantant persona the musician is projecting to his listening audience. He sings:

6	Torí wèrè ìta la ṣe ń ní tilé jàre	We raise a lunatic at home to wade off an invading troublesome lunatic
7	Ẹkùn ọkọ Fulani Ajínigbé[182] ni Sunday yẹn	Sunday is the tiger, that vengeance over the kidnapping Fulanis,

[181]https://thisnigeria.com/suspected-fulani-kidnappers-arrested-in-osun/ ;
https://tribuneonlineng.com/presidential-election-that-produced-tinubu-not-free-fair-—-prof-onigbinde/;
https://www.nairaland.com/7163578/breaking-fulani-men-kidnapped-methodist
https://oyoaffairs.net/ibadan-court-remands-15-suspected-fulani-kidnappers-arrested-at-onigaari-village/

[182] The reference to Fulani in the lyrics does not refer to the entire Fulani nationalities or ethnic group in Nigeria. It is a peculiar reference to the transborder terrorist and violent groups of masquerading as herdsman or bandits.

As I discussed earlier, one of Sunday Ìgbòho 's activism before his arrest was focused on the campaign against the presence of "so-called" Fulani killers, herdsmen in the Yorùbá region of southwestern Nigerian states. This campaign is considered heroic and brave by the admirers of Sunday Ìgbòho. In this scenario where the musician sings "Tori were ita la se n ni tile jare" - "We groom a lunatic at home to wade off an invading troublesome lunatic", Sunday Ìgbòho is considered a "home-bred" lunatic against the so-called others "Fulani killers". The musicaian represents Sunday Ìgbòho as a necessary evil or "an arsenal" of retaliation that is helping the "the Yorùbá" ethnic nationality to wade off the "invaders" or "intruders."

I have argued in chapter one that the entire concept of Orí is itself grounded in spirituality and Yorùbá cosmology. The subject is represented as not born like a human but a force of nature and worldly phenomenon in the human world. This image that is embedded in this line of the lyrics carries through a deeper essence and meaning-making of the potency of an individual's "Orí" or "Orí-inú". In line 8. the musician sings (see also line 10):

8	Pa kìràkìtà ẹni orí yọ, ó dilé	When there is chaos, they scrambled and took to their heels. It is he, whom Orí (Head) rescues that arrives safely home

In this context, the role, and the agency of Orí is signlled as the ultimate "safety" for an individual in the days of troubles and uncertainties.

What I have discussed so far in the three lyrics excerpt I discussed above are exemplars to grasp the elements of representation and construction of Gbajúmọ̀ or big man's image in fújì. As shown Gbajúmọ̀ or the big man is a constantly constructed social category in fújì through a language or style of praise singing, Oríkì.

5.3.1 Transactions in Fújì Space: Towards Public Performance of Gbajúmọ̀ (Bigman)

As shown in the above examples analysis and the conceptual discussions, the presence of Oríkì in fújì indicates, amongst others, that fújì is attractive as a transactional space for people who consider themselves or aspire to be known as Gbajúmọ̀ and the big man. fújì as a medium for self-curation does not only apply to the audience fújì musicians' positionalities are implicated in the cultural processes and cosmology which support the act of appeasing one's Ori. In this regard, the need to curate one's attributes and social standing as part of reflecting on one envisioned idea of self intersects with their artistic practices. These dynamics imply interrelatedness that suggests how the fújì lyrics and spaces are spaces of the dialectic interactions of categories of persona performance and the negotiation of Gbajúmọ̀ and the Big man's status. One only becomes a Gbajúmọ̀ or the big man through oríkì which exists as a core

of fújì performance. It is oríkì which boosts the head and the moral and social role of the *ènìyàn.* This interaction is sustained through its transactional usage, making it available for acquisition through diverse performance modes. However, oríkì in fújì is not reproducing or inventing new praise poetry: The Oríkì not only carried the cosmological vision and practices of communing with the individual's Ori, but also carried along with the philosophical means of validating personhood (being Ènìyàn) to fújì.

In this section, I will proceed with the analysis by closely interpreting audio-visual material on fújì music published on YouTube titled "MONEY SPEAKING GANI ADAMS OVER SPEND FOR K1 DE ULTIMATE @ MC OLUOMO MOTHER INLAW BURIAL". It is a live performance show by Wasiu Ayinde, alias Kwam1 (K1). My analysis of this material will unfold in three folds as follows. First, I will provide brief background information about the event and the host as well as information on the main praise subject of the lyrics.

The performance took place in the city of Lagos at a burial ceremony in Lagos on February 12, 2018. It is a burial reception – a carnival-like gathering where relatives, friends, associates and the community come together to celebrate the life of a departed aged person. The event host, Musiliu Akinsanya, alias MC Oluomo. Musiliu Akinsanya is a son-in-law to the diseased. He is a top-ranking officer of the Lagos state chapter of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW). Being a top-ranking officer means he oversees levy collection and remittance to the authority. The union hierarchy also manages the union's dues. This operation itself is known as Union ticketing at each designated route. At each daily shift (morning, afternoon, and night shifts), the ticketing officers (the union's foot soldiers) will sell (often forcefully) a fixed-price ticket to each driver commercially. Thus, the host of this event is an influential figure with massive access to the road transport union fund and network. He is a big man whose event is expectedly graced by other big men and popular figures.

The big man I focus on in this analysis is not the host but one of his guests, known as Ganiyu Adams alias Gani Adams. Apart from the timing of the public appearance and his conduct during at the event, Gani Adams had some 6 minutes of exclusive praise from the musician.

Gani Adams is not a transporter or a member of the Union of transport's hierarchy. However, he is a prominent figure in the contemporary Yorùbá socio-cultural and socio/political spaces. He is a non-state actor and an "activist" through his activities as a factional leader of Oodua People Congres OPC. It is also known as Oodua Liberation Movement (OLM) a Yorùbá nationalist organisation that emerged against the backdrop of the historical event of the annulment of the June 12, 1993, presidential election won by Chief M.K.O Abiola by the

military government of General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida. The event led to seven years of democratic struggles by members of political and civil societies before the return to a constitutional democracy in Nigeria in 1999.

The Oodua group, which Gani Adams is a factional leader, are non-state actors. These activities involve neighbourhood securities in many Yorùbá communities and neighbourhoods. The OPC group leadership, alongside other militant groups in the South-South region of Nigeria (the oil-producing) regions, were awarded a major pipeline protection contract worth Billions of naira for three months (March –June 2015) by the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan. Their task is to prevent incessant destruction and vandalisation of oil installations – a task the government thought its security network was losing the battle. Thus, Gani Adams is not only regarded as political or professional elite but is indeed a patron with a wide range of networks and influence. The demography of OPC members or volunteers is a majority male Yorùbá working-class group. Therefore, the personal relationship between the host of the party, Musiliu Akinsanya, Gani Adams and even the popular fújì musician, Kwam 1, is a point of clientele of intersection or convergence in terms of their social or clientele networks.

On January 13 2018 (four weeks before the event), Gani Adams was installed as a chief by the Oyo monarch, Alaafin of Oyo (Lamidi Adeyemi). Gani was pronounced the 15th Aare Ona Kakanfo of Yorùbáland in a well-attended and well-publicised ceremony. The Aare Ona-Kakanfo is historically significant in the old Oyo empire history. The Aare Ona-Kakanfo is the ceremonial Field Marshal of the king's (Alaafin) army. The title is historically reserved for the king's most outstanding soldier and tactician[183].The office was significant to the Old Oyo empire's expansion and its protection. The title and the role were created in the 17th century during the reign of Alaafin Ajagbo. The traditional role of the Aare Ona-Kankanfo[184] in the old

[183] https://litcaf.com/?s=Aare+Ona+Kakanfo

[184] The Aare Ona Kakanfo chieftaincy title is one of the honourary chieftaincy titles that a non-royal Yorùbá person could attain. The title is still one of the exclusive titles that the Oyo king (Alaafin) can give to an individual. The title has transcended its provincial prestige to become one of the Pan Yorùbá chieftaincy titles for its holder. In the contemporary Nigerian experience, the Aare figure expectedly has a wider implication regarding Yorùbá ethnic group posturing culturally and politically in the broader Nigerian debates. Like Yorùbá kings, the Aare title holder is expected to promote the interest and discourse of Yorùbá political and cultural agenda within any broader national dialogue or debates.

The two past holders of the title are Chief S.L Akintola and Chief M.K.O Abiola. The period of their chieftaincy spanned through Nigeria's post independent era until the eve season of the transition to the commencement of Nigeria's fourth republic in 1999. The two characters, although distinctively unique in their own way and life trajectory. They are regarded as Yorùbá "sons" with national reach. Therefore, the eminence status of the past Aare Ona kakanafo is a salient criterion for the newly installed chief. By this, he will not only contend against the backdrop of historical figures of the past (modern chief), but he will also strive to curate his personality while alive, in terms of greatness and historical figure.

Oyo empire, leading up to contemporary Yorùbá history, can be seen as significantly necessary to the expansionist project of the Old Oyo Empire in west Africa and the protection of the empire from external aggression.

To this end, the title of Aare Ona Kakanfo comes with a huge burden of history burden, expectations, and negotiation for the newly installed chief. In contrast, the title does not have a place within the constitutional framework of the Nigerian state. There is always to negotiate and navigate diverse interests along Nigeria's over 250 ethnic divides. In this case, ethnic titleholders, like the Aare, have the implied task of deploying the title's prominence to operate for the interest of their ethnic groups in the broader Nigerian socio-cultural framework. Against the backdrop, the image of the newly installed Aare Ona Kakanfo, Chief Gani Adams is analysed in the following synopsis and the development of events in the audio-visual praise song by the fújì musician Kwam 1.

How can a newly decorated personality achieve a widely acceptable status in the contemporary Yorùbá? This question is relevant when imagining how specific traditional roles/ title like that of Aare Ona Kakanfo is not accommodated in the actual reality of the Nigerian state apparatus – at least from the constitutional point of view. In essence, the title becomes decorative and ceremonial for its holder in the material sense within the framework of the actual Nigerian state. However, to negotiate this position or occurrence where the Aare title does not remain as just a mere title, the newly installed subject begins to make a move that will resonate with the public's memory and reverence for the title in the traditional sense for relevance and public acceptance. In this case, the subject will be considered worthy of being an Aare.

In addition, the historical implication which leads to expectations on a newly installed Aare alongside the ambition of the individual's big man justifies the extent and context of monetary gifts from the subject, Gani Adams gift to the musician during the praise sessions. In this regard, such exchanges in the contemporary space as part of the strategies to sustain the intended public image and public discourse on the personality of Gani.

Chief S.L Akintola, a Yorùbá man from Ogbomoso town in Oyo state, was the first republic politician and a leader of the Action Group – a political party established in 1951 with strong success in Western Nigeria. Akintola was also the premier of the Western Region of Nigeria and minister of different portfolios in Nigeria. He was one of the Nigerian leaders killed in the first Nigeria coup of January 1966. The immediate past Aare Ona Kakanfo was Chief M.K.O Abiola, a Yorùbá man from Abeokuta in Ogun state was a businessman and politician. Abiola contested for the position of Nigeria's president in the election supervised by the military regime of General Ibrahim Babangida in 1993 under the political party Social Democratic Party (SDP). Abiola was acclaimed the winner of the presidential. However, the military regime eventually annulled the election, and he was incarcerated and died in military custody on July 7, 1998.

The big man's argument of as performance of masculinity and modes of projection of wealth accumulation and social status and the idea of being honourable and generous becomes even more relevant to grasp the dynamics and extent of monetary gifts from Gani Adams to Kwam 1 during the performance. For one, the public records on Gani Adams do not indicate his major economic activities to justify a lifestyle of wealth or affluence. I mean either as an entrepreneur, businessperson, or employer of labour. Despite this reality, the extent, and the observable sums of monetary gifts to the musician during the performance become not justifiable within the logic of commensurate economic activities. Instead, it evokes the idea of the Bigman's, especially with the symbolic role of money spraying money in curating the public image of the persona.

As discussed earlier, the presence of Gani Adams at the event is symbolic not just because it's part of the 'big men' gathering. However, it is one of the social events he attends after his grand installation some weeks earlier as Aare Ona Kakanfo in Oyo town. Barber describes personhood as "emergent and processual" (2007:104) in situations and several moments of improvisations. In light of his newly acquired status, it is expected that the subsequent public appearances will be curated to reflect how he embodies the new status.

More so when the public appearance is juxtaposed with material elements and symbolic gestures. Specifically, I am referring to the complimentary costume to his agbada dress - the typical regalia for Yorùbá adult males (trousers, an upper short or long sleeve shirt and a flowing Buobuo). Gani appeared around his neck, flowing down to his upper waist and complimentary hand beads with a specially designed white walking stick symbolising his office staff. These costumes and his deliberate slow-paced movement alongside his regalia distinguish his persona amongst the crowd of other guests.

At 16 minutes 40 seconds timeline, Gani is seen in the video to be moving at a slow pace toward the musician's stage at the indoor event hall. In addition, he moves within a column of security details and personal aides (all male). Some aides with the posture of security officers (around six people) and a man dressed in not elaborate Yorùbá attire of trousers and dashiki (male flowing top, a mini agbada) with a complimentary head cap. This man (presumably his assistant) is responsible for carrying Gani Adams personal effects (phones and a big pouch which contains wraps/bale of money).

Gani acknowledges salutations from bystanders by raising his fist with some eye contact As Gani Adams mounted the stage, the staff responsible for his personal effects bag stayed close to him. He is attentive and ready to his principal for the following tasks. Just behind the two are two men dressed in black suits and white shirts and black ties – they are strategically positioned

like security officers. This posture is both for security reasons and status enhancement – the whole setting already suggests differences and social hierarchy between Gani and another guest in the event hall. The security wall around him means that other unwanted guests cannot approach the stage while he is having his praise turn with the musician. These paraphernalia and public modes of appearance for Gani are ways to step into his newly attained status as a prominent Chief – a big man in the Yorùbá.

Next is the musician's serenading Gani Adams with praise performance and Gani being the main subject rewarding the musician with bale or naira denomination. The money's stack is unbroken and is sequentially passed directly to the waiting hands of the musician on the stage. The stage assistant stood around 2 meters from the musician and focused on the big man ready to spray money on their boss.

Two factors shaped the relationship dynamics between Wasiu Ayinde alias Kwam1 (the musician) and Gani Adams (the praise subject) during their exchanges that deserve to be highlighted. First, their age difference as in 2018, when the performance took place, Kwam 1 was sixty-one years old while Gani Adams was forty-eight. In this regard, Kwam 1 will naturally see himself as older than his praise subject age, which might affect his language choice. As revealed in the lyrics, in the instances the musician addresses his subject directly, he uses the singular pronoun of "O – you". If he wants to project respect for his subject's age or/and status, he will use the abbreviated singular pronoun "E (from Eyin) - you plural). Since modes of respect are not only constrained to age difference but can also be shaped by one's status and official capacity. In the traditional sense, the musician will acknowledge Gani's new title, or the role of his office as socially hierarchized compared to his position as a musician. However, due to the change in time and perhaps the newness of the title, Gani is yet to or not accorded fully by the musician in terms of relation.

Beyond the age dynamics, the second factor that could explain the musician's interaction with his subject Gani is the fact that the musician is also known to be very wealthy (perhaps the highest-paid fújì musician). Thus, his idea of his subject's monetary worth prior to their encounter will play a significant role in their interaction. In essence, the moment of praise of a big man is not always innocent or a one-way experience. It is a moment where social relation or status is, in fact, negotiated between the musician, the praise subject, and the listening audience.

Another relevant activity or action of negotiating identity for the musician and his praise subject is the mode of money exchange. Traditionally, it is acceptable that the praise subject in

appreciation of the praise he/she received press money at the head of the musician or the praise singer. However, in this situation, the praise subject is not seen to press money at the head of the musician. Instead, he hands over the money he wants to give to the musician to a waiting band member. This scenario can be interpreted on the levels: 1) it could be the musician's way of respecting his Ori (if we consider the spiritual dimensions). As I discussed earlier, an individual's conception of Ori has a spiritual dimension, and projection can play out differently. 2) It also signals the musician's way of insisting on self-respect and personal dignity from his audience or the public, 3) providing an alternative way of receiving money from the praise subject may also signal the level of commercialization and strategy of creating a sense of order, respect for money and safeguarding money.

5.3.2 Aare Gani Adams (Aare Ona Kakanfo): A Gbajumo and His Praise in Fújí Lyrics

The next phase in the analysis of Gani Adams's praise will be the transcribed lyrics of the performance by Wasiu Ayinde alais Kwam1. Before I proceed, it is important to comment on some of the terms that are used in the lyrics, and I use words like – "the General", "the High chief", or "Generalissmo", "the government" interchangeably as a translation for title Aare. Except for the term "the government" which I translate directly. These titles, drawn from the local media representation of the title of Aare Ona Kankanfo are symbolic in how they express, represent, or capture the imagination and understanding of the traditional role of an Aare. These titles describe the military persona in the historical context of the old Oyo empire. Since my focus in this chapter is the idea of the big man, it is important to state that the translated choices for Aare in the song lyrics are envisaged to capture the essence of the grandeur persona the musician project about his praise subject, Gani Adams. The lyrics go as follows:

Table 5.4: Ayinde Omogbolahan Wasiu alias Kwam 1 Live Performance Gani Adams' Praise (Aare Ona Kakanfo)

	Yorùbá	English Translation
1	Àárẹ !	The General!
2	Àárẹ agba oye!	The General, the High chief!
3	Ìjọba! Ni amúni mú iyè	The authority/The Government! The one with power over the body and soul
4	Ẹ rí? Ìjọba àwọn ni amúni mú iyè, Arábámbí	Can't you see the Government? The one with power over the body and soul, Arabambi
5	Èèyàn tó bá ní òun ò rí ìjọba ta ló tún rii?	Whoever denies the presence of the Government is blind (not able to see anything)
6	Olúayé Onífújì, ọmọ ọdọ̀ àgbà o	The custodian of the fújì world, the son of the elders

7	Àárẹ tí ń jẹ́ Ganiyu, o kú oríire	The General whose name is Ganiyu, congratulations
8	Àárẹ gbogbo Yorùbá pátápátá	The General of the entire the Yorùbá race
9	Àárẹ abetílu-kára-bí-ajere, Àárẹ	The General, Thee one whose ears are perforated like a sieve, ajere[185]
10	Àárẹ tí à ń bù lẹ́yìn, tó ń bú ará iwájú	The general who is not perturbed by conspiracies around him but always pressing forward to challenge his adversaries ahead of him
11	Àárẹ abetílu-kára-bí-ajere, Àárẹ!	The General, Thee one whose ears are perforated like a sieve, the general!
12	A kú oríire tọlá Ọlọ́run Ọba	Congratulations on the blessings of God
13	Àárẹ gbogbo Yorùbá	The General for the entire Yorùbá
14	Àdúrà tó ti gbà kò ní dojúrú	The answered prayers shall not be reversed
15	Bí eré bí eré. Bí eré, orí tí a bá ti sọ pé ó máa lọ́lá	With ease and unassumingly, the head which is destined for greatness
16	Ire lọ́wọ́ Ọlọ́run (...)	All goodness which cometh from the Lord
17	Gbogbo Yorùbá a dúpẹ́ lọ́wọ́ Ọlọ́run ọba, a ti fi	The Yorùbá people are grateful to God, we installed
18	Àárẹ jẹ Àárẹ!	Our general
19	Sígun kó bojú wẹ̀yìn	Declare a war! And look behind you,
20	Bó bá ti lọ́mọ ogun, Ìwọ̀ peja	Since you are the controller of the garrison, call for battle. Test your popularity with the army
21	Bó bá ti lọ́mọ ogun	Since you are the controller of the garrison, call for battle. Test your popularity with the army
22	Àárẹ-Ọ̀nà-Kakanfò gbogbo ilẹ̀ Yorùbá	The General of the Yorùbá people
23	Ó wu Ọlọ́run Ọba ni ó dá Ganiyu yìí ní ọlá	Thanks to God's benevolence, He chooses to bless Ganiyu
24	Ọláyíwọlá Làmídì Àtàndá, ikú Bàbá yèyé, a kí ẹ kí ẹ o. Làmídì Ọláyíwọlá	Olayiwola Lamidi Atanda,His Royal Majesty, we hail you. Lamidi Olayiwola
25	Lẹ́yìn Abíọ́lá Moshood, Àárẹ tó kú	After the demise of Abiola Moshood, our immediate past General
26	Àárẹ wá dé ọwọ́ Àárẹ Gàníyù mi	The great honour is now bestowed to my beloved General Ganiyu
27	Àárẹ, o fi kékeré gbà á	General, You are decorated in your youth
28	Wa fi agba lò ó	You shall live long as a General
29	Àárẹ! Àárẹ o!	General'! 'General'
30	Orí mi má jẹ́ n ṣẹ Àárẹ Ọ̀nà kakanfò	May my *Ori* cause me not to offend the General! -
31	Owó, ọkọ Mojísọ́lá	Money! The husband of Mojisola
32	Abetilú-kára-bí-ajere	Thee one whose ears are perforated like a sieve

[185] Ajere coveys the idea of being omnipotence

33	Àárẹ Yorùbá, Bí ìyà bá jẹ ọmọ Yorùbá, Gani ṣígun	The General for Yorùbá. The one to defend Yorùbá songs and daughters against maltreatment. declare war!
34	Kó síwájú, gbogbogbo Yorùbá lẹ́yìn	Take the lead. the entire Yorùbá is behind you
35	Àárẹ Yorùbá	The Yorùbá General

The musician commences the new performance segment by chanting "Aare – The General" (line 1). This chant is what Barber refers to as "signposts" (Ibid.23) –an indication of a moment of transition during Oríkì performance. This chant of "Aare" signals transition and an acknowledgement of a new praise subject during the performance. Such signposts also indicate the commencement of a new subject or theme. Before the commencement of the Gani's praise, the musician was praising other subjects whose information was inscribed on a sheet of paper in his hand.[186] Through the opening signpost chat of "Aare – General", the listener (familiar with Oríkì poetry progression) can know that the musician has a new subject of praise in front of him. The signpost, in this case, becomes a strategy to refocus the listener's attention on the commencement of a new praise verse.

Like every other subject, Gani Adams has many attributes or identities that socially inform how they are perceived. Gani can be seen in the light of the following signposts: a "child of … (parent/lineage)"; "an indigene of …"; "the husband of his wife or wives" (see line 31); "the father of his children"; "a friend to his friends" amongst others. All these appellations would have also served the purpose of opening the praise verse. However, the musician evokes the abbreviated title of "Aare" to open the verse. In this regard, the tone is set to indicate the musician's reference to what the entire praise might subsequently highlight as relevant information on the praise subject.

As part of his improvisation strategy in the moment of spontaneous praise performance, the musician invokes imagery to highlight the larger-than-life figure or status of his subject. The musician's interchangeable use of words for "Aare - the General, the Authority" (line 3) and "the Government" repeatedly in his performance are pointers imageries (see also lines 13,18,26,27,29 &33). They are symbolic, conveying and reinforcing the praise subject's status and idea. Remarkably, the reference to Gani Adams as "the Authority and the Government" is strategic in not only calling his praise subject into his new role as "powerful historical chief"

[186] This person can also be refernced as the fore man. The role of a foreman is to compile names and information of guests and ensures the musicians gets to know who and how to praise the subjects.

but also important to project the subject's image as powerful influential and larger than life. Barber talks about the idea of the big man as also conceivable as a spiritual being (1991:193)

To emphasize or reinforce the public perception of the strength and qualities of the big man, Gani, the musician did not stop at only referring to him as "Government" – the perception or the descriptive function of the government concerning the use of power, control and force are captured in lines 4-5):

4	Ẹ rí? Ìjọba àwọn ni amúni mú iyè, Arábámbí	Can't you see the Government? The one with power over the body and soul, Arabambi
5	Èèyàn tó bá ní òun ò rí ìjọba ta ló tún rii?	Whoever denies the presence of the Government is blind (not able to see anything)

By this, the persona of Gani Adams is curated as being larger than life. To this end, the public is expected to have an image of Gani in the light of being uniquely endowed like the Yorùbá spiritual beings. The lyrics line, "Ijoba amuni mu iye – The authority/The Government! The one with power over the body and soul" further supports my claim. The statement not only creates a sense of superiority for the subject, it makes it uniquely attractive to his followers.

In addition, the line "Ijoba amuni mu iye – The authority/The Government! The one with power over the body and soul" (line 5) brings up the musician's strategy of drawing a parallel between his praise subject and the might of the modern Nigerian state. By doing so, Gani Adams image is elevated beyond the ordinary plain to the endless of possessing the capacity of a state. The Aare title as a traditional military rank, when invoked in the discourse of the state as "having power over body and soul" reminds the audience that the modern or contemporary state might lean towards its ability to monopolize violence. Similarly, Aare, in the manner of the orisa, alludes to mystical power and physical strengths. The above praise/description illustrates the extent of the invention and the creation of the Aare persona within the larger framework of public discourse, public image, and Yorùbá system of inventing gods.

In continuation of his strategy of enhancing the public image of Gani Adams, the newly installed Aare Ona Kakanfo, the musician, invoked the concept of Ori to establish the idea of difference and hierarchy. Line 30 in the lyrics says: "Ori mi ma je n se Aare Ona kankanfo - May my Ori not cause me not to offend the General!" What is expressed in this line is multi-layered. First, the line goes back to the idea of Ori, which I discussed earlier as the core, the prior for an individual in the Yorùbá worldview. The musician, in this case, implies the individual's condition helplessness concerning the direction one's Orí-inú choose in life situation. The agency and determinant agency of the outcome of an action is given to the Ori.

Thus, the necessity appeals the Ori not to set him up against his praise subject, Gani Adams. The performance thus projects the extent of Gani Adams as superior to an ordinary person through the musician's invocation of Ori's discourse. It also goes further to it show the nuances of justifying human relations and the cultural acceptance of the big man since social status, like life attainments, are considered predestined.

Intertextual borrowing is also part of the musician's strategy to anchor the persona of the big man —the presence of Oríkì in fújì further guarantees intertextual borrowings from pre-existing oríkì verses. Kwam1 adapts a line from the oríkì verse of Oya – the deity of wind, violence and storm. The praise line "abeti lu jara bi ajeere – the one whose ear is perforated like a sieve (ajere)"- line 11 is known to be synonymous with Ọya. This borrowing through the signification of the metaphor of "Ajere- the sieve" conveys the idea that the praise subject, Gani Adams, has the unique ability to gather information on a wide scale. This aspect is relevant for a military figure and strategy since it speaks to his intelligence-gathering ability on a wide scale. The metaphor of "the sieve" conveys the praise subject's ability to hear words without impairment or interference.

In another instance, the musician references the Oríkì of a 19th-century Yorùbá warrior (Ijesha warrior). Part of the original oríkì of Ogedengbe that is recited to me orally by Professor 'Sola Ajibade[187] is transcribed as follows:

Ogedengbe agbogun-gboro – Ogendengbe, a dexterous warrior fortified with charms.
A tiiti-popon -l'ojuogun
A n le-bo-l'eyin
O n l'ara iwaju
O p'ara iwaju, O p'ara eyin
Eni akoko n b'imo sin
L'ese oke

A warrior delicately guided in battle
The one who is being chased by warriors from behind.
While he is chasing the warriors in front
He conquered the warriors in his front, He kills the warriors in front.
The conquered female subjects reward him with offsprings

[187] This took place during one of his Alexander Von-Humboldt research visit to the University of Bayreuth around October 2021 when I the draft of this chapter with him. Where I know some parts of oríkì Ogedengbe partly and incoherently, Prof. Ajibade recited the verse and also provided insights into the persona of Ogedengbe.

All, at the base of the mountain

The strategy to insert a pre-existing fixed Oríkì from elsewhere into the new mode of performance to form a new discourse has been highlighted by Barber through her invocation of entextualization (2007:22). In Kwam 1's (the musician) praise of Gani Adams, the third and the fourth lines of the above oríkì Ogedengbe were re-used to highlight Gani Adams' quality in the contemporary time. In this regard, he reproduces and adapts the oríkì line 10 as follows: "Aare ti a n bu l'eyin, to o n bu ara iwaju – *Aare! The general not perturbed by conspiracies behind him, always pressing forward to attack the enemy ahead in front of him*"

The mobilisation of the oríkì Ogendengbe in the context of the newly installed Aare Gani Adams puts his persona in a relational dialogue with the Yorùbá warrior who reigned in a distant past. Through oral history, Ogedengbe is part of a broader spectrum of Yorùbá pantheons of warriors. Thus, the oríkì verse Kwam1 deploys and modified for his subject's praise will elevate the public image and the social standing of the newly installed chief. This oríkì puts the myths forwards to characterise and define the personalities of the new Aare Gani Adams.

As part of the strategy to situate his subject further within the larger Yorùbá and Nigerian discourse, the musician references the subject's immediate predecessor to draw the linear historical plot of these big men and their symbolic posture, and he sings as follows:

22	Àárẹ́-Ọ̀nà-Kakanfò gbogbo ilẹ̀ Yorùbá	The General of the Yorùbá people
23	Ó wu Ọlọ́run Ọba ni ó dá Ganiyu yìí ní ọlá	Thanks to God's benevolence, He chooses to bless Ganiyu
24	Ọláyíwọ́lá Làmídì Àtàndá, ikú Bàbá yèyé, a kí ẹ kí ẹ o. Làmídì Ọláyíwọ́lá	Olayiwola Lamidi Atanda,His Royal Majesty, we hail you. Lamidi Olayiwola
25	Lẹ́yìn Abíọ́lá Moshood, Àárẹ́ tó kú	After the demise of Abiola Moshood, our immediate past General
26	Àárẹ́ wá dé ọ̀wọ́ Àárẹ́ Gàníyù mi	The great honour is now bestowed to my beloved General Ganiyu
27	Àárẹ́, o fi kékeré gbà á	General, You are decorated in your youth
28	Wa fi agba lò ó	You shall live long as a General
29	Àárẹ́! Àárẹ́ o!	General'! 'General'
30	Orí mi má jẹ́ n ṣẹ́ Àárẹ́ Ọ̀nà kakaǹfò	May my *Ori* cause me not to offend the General! -

Barber (1991) talks about how oríkì is often used to accurately fix a subject "on the genealogical grid" (184) during the performance. This strategy implies that the information on the praise subject is used to interact with some historical figures in his/her lineage or with

historical subjects relevant to contemporary discourse. The subject of praise is put in his/her place within the historical frame of the Aare Ona Kakanfo chieftaincy title. In this praise verse, the musician references God for blessings and the Oyo king Alaafin (Olayiwola Lamidi Atanda) for his role in installing Gani Adams. In the same vein, the immediate past Aare Abiola Moshood (the predecessor of the newly installed chief) is mentioned in the song before the praise subject. The musician mentions God, king, and Aare's predecessor to align Gani Adams into the title's history, aura, and goodwill.

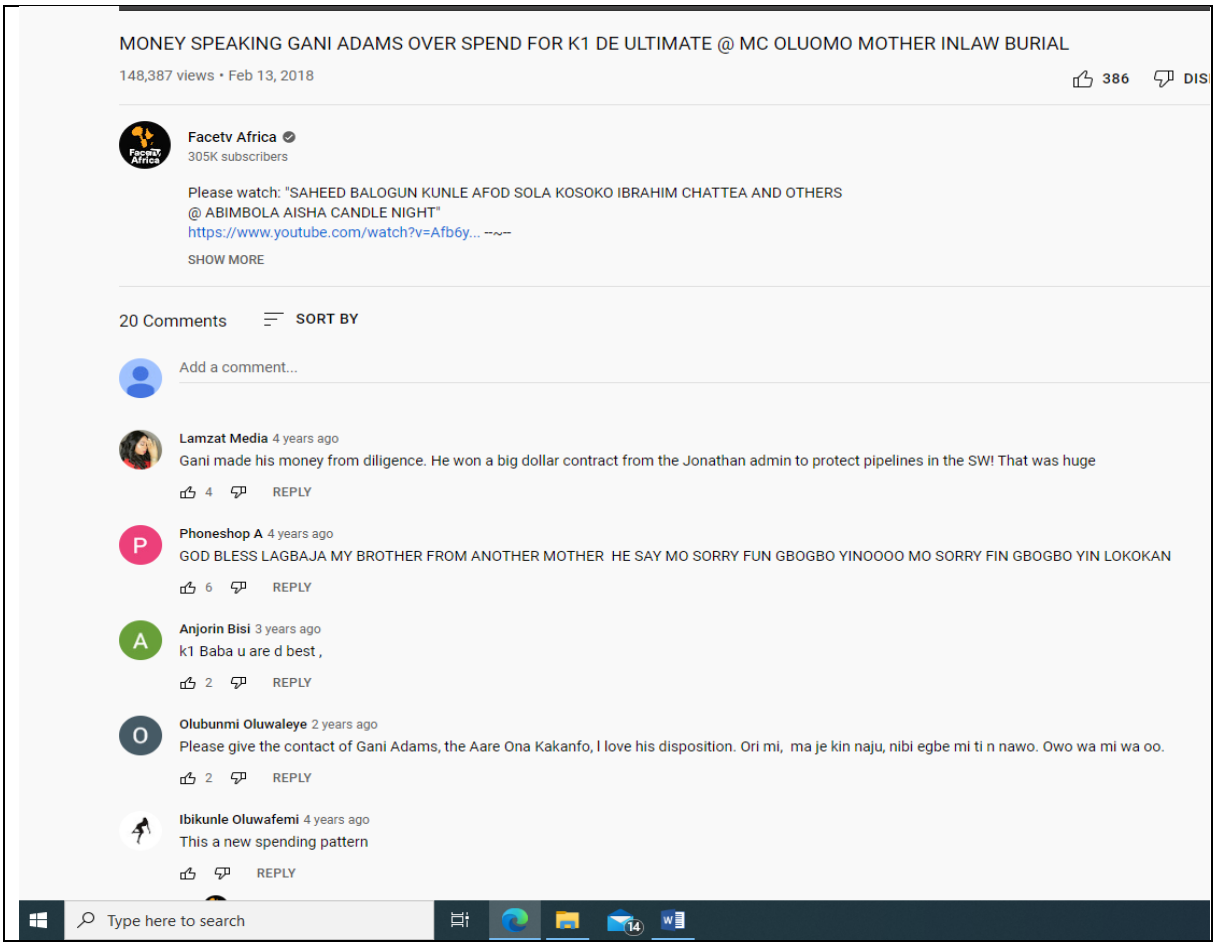
After highlighting the figure that is relevant to situating the title's history, the musician prays for Gani: “The honour has been bestowed to my beloved General Ganiyu/You have been decorating the general in your youth/You shall occupy it till old age”. In essence, the role of invoking the genealogical grid for the praise subject goes to positioning the subject to align with relevant historical figures; also, it serves as a mode of invoking traditional prayers on the praise subject. This mode of performance also serves to reinforce the invocation of believe in ancestors’ role in keeping balance for the living – thus it is a framework for prayers which invoke the praise of the subject’s ancestors or the spirit of past holders of the chieftaincy title.

5.3.3 YouTube Commentaries on Fújì: Gbajúmọ̀ and Public Perception

In the context of analyzing Gani Adams praise material within the framework of Gbajúmọ̀, I am paying attention to the comment section of the YouTube video. As discussed earlier, the title of the audio-visual material I explored on YouTube is “MONEY SPEAKING GANI ADAMS OVER SPEND FOR K1 DE ULTIMATE @ MC OLUOMO MOTHER INLAW BURIAL”. As of May 22, 2022, there are twenty-two comments under the audio-visual material. I will use only four comments in this section. The comments I choose are comprehensive and speak to the question I am trying to answer. As a further reflection, the framing title which the audio-visual is published has a complimentary meaning to my argument in this chapter: “MONEY SPEAKING GANI ADAMS OVER SPEND FOR K1 DE ULTIMATE @ MC OLUOMO MOTHER INLAW BURIAL”, “money speaking” is a common term in Nigeria that emphasize the role of money in various social interaction and contexts. Money is personified with the human attribute of speaking to stress the type of agency the person considered wealthy automatically carries within the Yorùbá/Nigerian context. In essence, the capture suggests the distinction of persons and class and the allotment of privileges to be visible and have a voice in the social milieu.

The insights I am drawing from the comment section is meant to enrich my understanding of the type and extent of the public debate resulting from the performance the Gbajúmọ̀ or the

big man, Gani Adams. This is important because of my hypothesis that fújì plays a vital role in shaping the social persona. Furthermore, in recent years, social media have increasingly become an extension of debates taking palce in the urban space. They have not replaced them but rather add on them. Also, in the comment section of youtube, the enhancement of a persona often discussed also in terms of the display of richness as well as the distribution of money, which are common topics also found in other parts of everyday discourse.



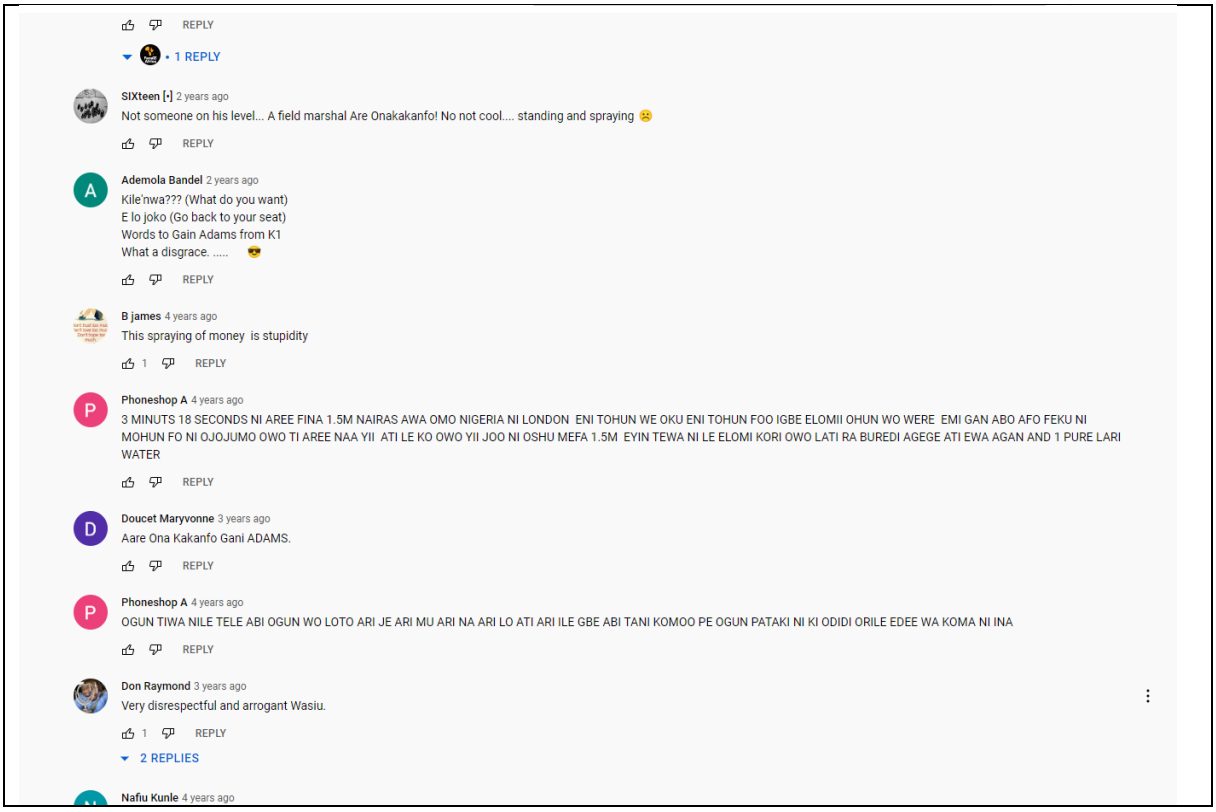


Fig 5.1 a & b: Screenshots capturing fújí consumers comments under an album on YouTube.

The above YouTube commentaries, among other things, support the argument that fújì performance is a genre of performance, which attracts public interest. The public attention on the big man is generated in fújì through the featuring of a praise subject but also the performance of exchanging money. Through the performance, there are public debates and public commentary, which fújì performance also invites for. Given the dialogic function on Youtube inviting for comments, like many other social media, the "public" or audience experience can be easily extended into the social media space. In a sense, social media inviting for assessment converge with the much older debates on fújì, where also assessment – does a big man achieve to stylize himself as a big man – and the attraction of followers plays a pivotal role.

The first comment displayed in the above image is written under the social media name "Lamzat Media", this commentator's comments on the praise subject's, Gani Adams', social status and his source of wealth. According to the speaker, the subject, Gani Adams is 'diligent' person who earned his money through a legitimate contract. In 2015, the Nigerian government under the administration of President Goodluck Jonathan issued a multi-billion Naira oil-pipeline protection contract to some known ex-militants and non-state actors like Gani

Adams.[188] Thus, the first comment on YouTube speaks to public justification and explanation for his scale of dispensing money to a musician in the public (which some other parts of the audience could have considered far too much). As the first reaction and other reactions in the above image will reveal, the praise subject image is celebrated as a successful and inspiring figure for a section of the public. This is evident in another comment saying, "*Please provide me with the contact of Gani Adams, the Aare Ona Kakanfo, I love his disposition. My Ori, bless me not be an onlooker where my contemporaries spend money*[189]". This Commentator expresses two major points. First, the tone indicates a total admiration for the praise subject and his overall demeanour. It is important to note that the praise subject, casually dole out packs of money (100 pieces) as for the musician while being praised. By saying " I love his diposition"the projected public persona of Gani is what this commentator admires in the performance. Secondly, the commenter moves beyond the admiration of the persona of Gani to invoke the concept of Ori for blessing. The prayer is that his/her should avail the opportunities to excel and not be a failure. The person wants to be a centre attraction in the social or public space like Gani Adams. In this case, the big man status becomes aspirational trope in the wider social conversation.

Another YouTube Commenter in the above image expresses, "Not befitting of his caliber… A field marshal Are Onakakanfo! No not cool…standing and spraying[190]". This comment falls into the category of public discourse where the observer critic the big man, Gani Adams for his public performance in a social gathering. The commenter frowns at the Aare Onakankanfo's public conduct of standing in front of a musician to be praised nd engaging in "profanity " of spraying money. The discourse of "befitting" and "calibre" speaks to the idea of status anc perception of the Aare Ona Kakanfo title. The title holder is viewed in thos case through the lens of royalty and honour therefore, his public acts should represent such vision. The idea of status is conveyed: For this commenter, Gani already embodies the status of the Aare "field marshal" and in this sense, a field marshal would not want to be imagined as a public entertainer and display of mundanity. The commentator introduces the titles of "field marshal" – despite its current emptiness as a military title in the context of the nation-state, the title signals high

[188] https://www.herald.ng/opc-contract-will-provide-15000-jobs-for-Yorùbá-youths-gani-adams/

[189] Original comment is by made Olubunmi Oluwaleye as "Please give the contact of Gani Adams, the Aare Ona Kakanfo, l love his disposition. Ori mi, ma je kin naju, nibi egbe mi ti n nawo. Owo wa mi wa oo"

[190] The YouTube Commentor with the name *sixteen* expresses "Not befitting of his caliber… A field marshal Are Onakakanfo! No not cool…standing and spraying."

social standing in the fújì and oríkì context. The awarding of the title underlines the admiration of the audience as well as the elevation of the praise subject

"This is a new spending pattern" is the expression another YouTube Commenter (see last line in screen shot 1). The statement reveals a perspective or debate generated by public gestures of the subject while distributing the money. In the video, one can see that Gani Adams as the praise subject did not dance and make any outward bodily movement to indicate that he is moved to dance to the performance. Gani is seen to stand still, the only physical he displays is the act of picking money and handing it out for the musician's fore-man. Gani did not dance to the music while being praised, he keeps a straight posture while he also doles out bales of money. This udnerlines that the whole posturing and the modes of spraying money, which I described, are an essential part of negotiating social position, and power and hierarchy between the musician and the praise subject.

The following comment by the commenter with the handle name *PhoneshopA* is found in screenshoot 1 comment line 2)[191]:

> "The Aare is seen spraying the sum of 1.5 million within 3 minutes and 18 seconds. Many of us Nigerians residing in London, including those working at the morgue, those working as caregivers and morticians where they wash dead bodies, some work at psychiatric wards – even me a dish washer, for most of us, it is almost impossible to raise 1.5 million (Naira) the money sprayed by the Aare to the musician in six months. And many of those living in Nigeria could not afford the staple of beans, bread and sachet water"

The above comment can be subject to multiple interpretations: It can either be read as a form of admiration, but a critical stance seems to be more prevalent. The commenter's tone suggests lamentation and a critique of obscene display of spraying huge amounts of money. The commenter goes ahead and compares the living conditions of working class in Nigeria in London and the fact that they will never be in position to afford such lifestyle given the jobs they have: References to professions like caregivers, morticians and nurses at psychiatric wards are prominent in the comment– many immigrants in the western worlds are in these sectors. The commenter also draws attention to the extent of poverty in Nigeria by saying bread is a luxury for some people. Thecomment suggest that the commenter is a Yorùbá migrant who is

[191] The commenter with the handle name *PhoneshopA writes* in the original as "3 MINUTES 18 SECONDS NI AARE FINA 1.5M NAIRA AWA OMO NIGERIA NI LONDON ENI TOHUN WE OKU ENI TOHUN FOO IGBE ELOMII OHUN WO WERE EMI GAN ABO AFO FEKU NI MOHUN FO NI OJOJUMO OWO TI AARE NAA YII ATI LE KO OWO YII JOO NI OSHI MEFA 1.5M EYIN TEWA NI LE ELOMI KORI OWO LATI RA BUREDI AGEGE ATI EWA AGAN AND 1 PURE WATER"

part of the working-class and not a rich person- at least the speaker does not project himself/herself to be socially at per with Gani Adams. An estimated sum of 1.5 million naira (approximately 2500 EUR) was made as what he or she sees Gani Adams (the praise subject) spray on the musician. Similarly, an allussion to the insanity and the discontent about such cultural practice is conveyeded in the comment– for the commenter it is alarming to spray such huge money in the Nigerian context. Especially from the perspective of the average citizens struggling to make living. The persona of Gani Adams is not seen in a celebratory light. Rather, it is seen as insensitive and cowardly in the context of unequal opportunity and the value of the money for the working-class people.

I have discussed earlier in this chapter that the performance of self-aggrandisement by ambitious men is part of what makes the persona or the public image of the big man. While some public commentaries are critical of the persona of the big man, they encounter through fújì public, especially the lavishness and in the praise subjects' persona. Some of these commentaries also bring to fore wide range of debates, especially the ones on economic inequalities as pervasive in the contemporary Yorùbá/Nigeria as well as their diaspora communities. However, there is also a wide range of public acceptance and awareness of the status. The commentary confirms that the fújì performance is the space where the 'Gbajúmọ̀' or the big man is constructed, negotiated, and confirmed in public. The evidence of self-recruitment and display of admiration and allegiance is communicated in sections of the commentaries. In fact, some members of the public are seen in the comments to actively suggest themselves to become part of the Gani Adams network.

5.4 Elegy Genre in Fújì: Curating Gbajúmọ̀ or Bigman's Legacies

This section further extends the mapping of the big man's experience in/through fújì from the discourses and narratives of self-realization and the grandiose visions of ambitious people (primarily men) – this time in the context of elegies which track the legacies[192] of the Gbajúmọ̀ or Bigman. I argue in this section that the elegy genre in fújì is relevant in the debates of the Bigman and Gbajúmọ̀. In this section, I base on my analysis firstly on a fieldwork narrative and lyrics that I recorded during my participant observations with a famous fújì musician, Abass Akande alias Obsere in Ilorin.

[192] As a further example of praise of a deceased 'Gbajúmọ̀' or the big man as a common practice in fújì, I will attached another lyric verse I transcribed from the album by Sikiru Ayinde alias Barrister titled "Adieu M.K.O Abiola" in the index section of the thesis.

As observable in the collection of fújì oeuvres across time, the theme of death features prominently in fújì works. fújì musicians are known to sing and reflect on the memory of their departed relatives, especially their parents. There are instances where fújì musicians sing in honour of their departed colleagues in the fújì scene and departed colleagues in other Yorùbá/Nigerian popular music genres. In the same vein, fújì musicians sing in honour of departed Nigerian sports icons, media personalities and Nollywood actors and actresses, Yorùbá kings, prominent members of their fans clubs, political figures, and international icons, like Nelson Mandela.

The extent a dead person gets eulogized in fújì performances varies - it could be an entire album, a track in an album or a passing commentary during a praise performance. In all of these scenarios, Oríkì still plays a vital role in curating the legacies of the departed through fújì. The role of oríkì in this context again beco-mes polyvalent. In the first instance, it provides the framework to enact praise elements for the dead during or in a performance. Furthermore, Oríkì's relationality to Yorùbá cosmology even makes it viable as ritual vehicle: Oríkì praise is traditionally used as a verbal ritual to "open windows simultaneously onto the past and the present" Barber (1991:15). Oríkì is the language for the living as much as it is for the dead. Oríkì performance is one of the critical rituals the surviving relatives and the community enact as part of the final burial rites of a deceased person. Oríkì, in this context, is considered a way to "establish a link with the rapidly receding person (the deceased) who had just gone out" Barber (1991:118, emphasis mine). It does not only curate the legacy of the dead person in fújì, but also creates a spiritual link to the deceased. This is possible because oríkì is known to "capture and evoke the essential characteristics of the subjects… and have the most profound ad intimate access to its inner nature" Barber (1991:15).

The notion of oríkì is linked to the Yorùbá worldview and concept of death. The Yorùbá worldview believes in the existence of three realms of existence for humans (Soyinka 1976; Lawuyi and Olupona 1988; Olupona 1993; Oripeloye and Omigbule 2019). The first is the living realm, and it is also known as the marketplace. The realm of the dead also exists in the Yorùbá worldview. The realm of the dead is the home to which individuals return after their sojourn at the marketplace. The third realm is the realm of the unborn – this realm is considered the in-between space, the liminal space. The liminal space is the intersecting space between the dead and the unborn. The Yorùbá's three-dimensional cosmos are interlinked and processual.

In the narrative that I present below, I will discuss my observation of a situation where an elegy is commissioned for a popular person (Big man) and the process and content of its rendition during an evening fújì performance by Abass Akande alias Obesere.

Field Notes Entry 4: Friday 21st September 2018, Solid Worth Hotel Ilorin.

I travelled from Ibadan to the city Ilorin in the company of the band members of Abass Akande alias Obesere to observe an event, which took place at Solid Worth Hotel. The hotel facility has a medium-scale lodging facility and indoor and outdoor bar segments. There is also an open area of around 540 sqm within the brick-fenced and gated facility. The hotel is in a middle-income neighbourhood known as Asadam in the city. We travelled to Ilorin in a big coaster 22-seater bus branded with one of Obesere's aliases, "Sidophobia" and we arrived the city around 2.30 pm. In addition to the driver and myself, 18 members of the band travelled to Ilorin on this date. The manager of the Obesere band, whom his colleagues often address as Apa ("the arm"), coordinates the group and gives instructions on the affairs of the bands, including the food arrangements. The road trip to the city of Ilorin and the ample free time we had before the performance allowed me to familiarize myself with some of the band members while also observing the band's internal dynamics and internal hierarchy. The interaction between the band members is very cordial. They interact jovially and tease one another before and during performances. For instance, I observe the close dynamics between 3 men who work as backup singers. There is also a group of drummers - men played the sákárà drums, two men played the talking drums, and one man played the drum set. There is also a unit responsible for the keyboard and electric guitars. Another member of the band plays Ṣẹ̀kẹ̀rẹ̀ ("the gourd"). Apart from these men who play active roles on the performance stage, I also identified four other members who neither play instruments nor sing as a backup. One of the four men stands strategically below the stage - directly opposite the lead musician. He serves as a gatekeeper or a buffer between the approaching audience and the lead musician. He ensures that audience members leave a fair distance before the performance stage. He is sometimes assisted by other audience members not stationed on the stage. Another memer stays close to the lead musiciansician to callprovide information on the members of the audience appraochin the stage. Sin some instances, he hands over pieces of paper containing names of guests which has been collatd by her other two colleagues (see chapter one for the description oof the role of a foreman). Apart from these four members of the band whose responsibility is not directly connected to singing or playing musicial instruments on the stage, the rest of the band will change into a uniform Ankara fabric before the commencement of the performance.

The band members refer to Obesere as “Chairman”; he arrived at the venue and headed straight to one of the hotel lounges around 7.45 pm (during one of the home-based artists’ performances). Obesere, who travelled separately, arrived at the hotel premises in a four-wheel-drive car and a police escort pick-up van. He also arrived with additional two personal aides, one of them identified as his social media manager.

The all night-party commenced at around 7 pm with lined-up, Ilorin based musicians. They are female Islamic singers and Waka musicians, and male fújì musicians. In addition, present and participating in the pre-Obesere’s performance were a group of Islamic clergies who rendered short sermons and prayers for the hotel management and their well-wishers. Most of the attendees wore customised T-shirts with “Solid worth Fans Club”. As the performance from other musicians progressed, one of Obesre’s band members excused me to move away from the reach of the loudspeakers so that I could hear him effectively. The man is in his mid-50s, and he is one of the members who are not on stage and do not wear the uniform Ankara fabric.

By the time we were able to communicate and audibly hear each other, he solicited for my assistance in writing down a message he was about to receive via a phone call from the city of Ibadan. According to him, the message needs to be delivered to the Chairman “in the course of the evening performance”. By the time the call came through, I had assisted him in scribbling down the following names:

Ejiogbe Abideeni
Ade-ori okin
Oko Sadiatu
Olajide Abeeden aka Ijoba Abass

At the end of the phone call, I handed the piece of paper to him. He also pleaded with me to remind him to hand the paper to “the Chairman” (Obesere) before he commenced his performance. The nickname “Ejiogbe” in the name “Ejiogbe Abideen” is quite familiar to me, mainly because it became a significant part of the news items and public discourse for two weeks. The name became prominent to me due to the news of the newly inaugurated chairman of the Oyo state chapter of the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW). The former NURTW chairman (Oyo state chapter), Taofeek Oyerinde, died on the 21st of August 2018 (a few weeks earlier). Until the death of the former union’s chairman (Taofeek Oyerinde alias Fele), Abideen Ejiogbe was the vice-chairman of the transport union in Oyo state. Thus, after the death of the union’s chairman, the former vice-chairman known as Alhaji Olajide

Abideen alias Ejiogbe inevitably becomes the new state chairman of Oyo state Road Union of Transport Workers (NURTW).

Obesere would commence his performance around 10.00 pm and he would end the live performance around 4.30 am. At around 3.30 am when the audience activities around the performance stage had reduced drastically, the man I had assisted earlier with the information he received on the phone waved across the stage at Obesere, and the musician, in turn, acknowledged him by nodding his head. Immediately Obesere pulled the paper out of his trousers pocket. He also signalled the social media manager who had stopped recording to commence recording. Standing below the stage, the social media manager focused his phone on the musician to transmit the recording on Facebook.

5.4.1 Eulogy in Fújì: Taofeek Oyerinde alias Fele – Departed Gbajúmọ̀ and Legacies

I will commence this analysis with a synopsis, the lyrics and a close reading of the lyrics. The song begins with the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) motto (see below, line 1). The motto of the NURTW always goes in a call and response format saying: "Up National!" and the typical response goes: "Progress!".The invocation of the NURTW's motto serves three purposes in the performance's opening. On the one hand, it signals to the listening audience that the song performance will be addressed to the collective. On the other hand, the call "Up National!" indicates a transition into a new performance phase in the evening's performance repertoire. It also signals the specificity and the particularity of the audience the next performance will address. The last signification of the transport workers union's motto by Obesere indicates that the musician is putting himself into the Union's collective identity. In this case, he takes the position of an insider in the association, a familiar friend of the union.

After the salutation, the musician expresses his condolences to the union members on the death of their leader, whom he referred to as "Taofeek Oyerinde alias Fele Fele" (see table below: lines 2-3). However, the musician anchors the verse on the philosophical reflection on death. He sings about how death confounds humans' efforts to avoid it. Death is painted as inevitable and impossible to appease. The futile appeasement process is anchored on the image of different animals (goats and rams) as offered items to death. The musician also uses money as part of the sacrifice items humans would have preferred to appease death to avoid its inevitability (see table below: lines 7-10).

As a pause, the musician comes back, singing himself into the song, he invokes his personal Oríkì referring to himself as "Akande[193] Ade mi" "my beloved Akande" (below: line 5).This is once again a unique practice by fújì musicians in their works, it is a style that is consistent as being an authorial intrusion. This aspect is a watermark or signature strategy for fújì musicians to remind their audience, the listener, of the performer's name.

The following discourse in the subsequent verse of the song is the prayer for the soul of the departed union leader . While invoking the prayer, he provides a brief insight into the union leader's life as a man with a surviving family. The musician mentions the name of the widow of the dead union leader (below line 22). The musician also condoles the union's leaders – the national headquarters and local branches.

After addressing the union's hierarchy, the musician switches to a more persona dialogue mode, he opens a direct conversation with the death, saying " Fele to ba se pe aye lo pa e - Fele in case any human causes your death" (see line 34). By this, he invokes the trope of the enemy as a possible explanation for the cause of Fele's death. This intervention aims to touch on any perception or concern of foul play/witchcraft around the incidence of the death of the former union leader (lines 34-38). However, the musician wraps this narrative up by invoking the sense of justice and the futility of life by alluding to the idea that even the wicked person is not immune to death . Therefore, even the enemy of the dead person (if they exist and are responsible for his death) will ultimately die. This part is followed by Obesere's direct incorporation of the voice of the departed person, and he sings: " Ma fi iku yo mi - Do not mock me in Death" (see below lines 37-38) . This moment of performance comes with a different sorrowful tone - a dirge and sombre performance tone where the voice reminds everyone not to mock him in death since every human will die as no one is immune to death.

The subsequent verses address the successor of the departed union leader. The musician alludes to the reluctance but the inevitability of the power shift between the dead union leader and his successor, the former union's chairman (see below lines 41-42). The musician situates the discourse linearly to present the situation of a natural change of guard and a continuation of the deceased leader's legacy.

While the musician blurs the power shift event as a continuation carefully and narrates the emergence of the new chairman as a commencement of a new era, this part of the song stresses

[193]Akande is a common name or oríkì of a male child amongst the Yourba's. It can be roughly translated as explaining a child who arrived the family in a special way.

the symbolic role of the new leader in a celebratory mode (see below lines 44-45).The new leader is praised extensively for his new status as the new "head of the house" (the union) (see below lines 42-49).

Towards the end of the elaborate performance, the musician weaved in the name of the person who had commissioned the praise – the man that provided the praise lines I assisted the band member to write on the paper. The name of the person is Babajide, and he is praised as the protégé of the new leader (see below lines 54-56). Babajide is weaved into the praise of Ejiogbe, the new chairman, as a loyal subordinate to the new union chairman. There is a new performance of alignment, proximity and patronage of the new union leader.

As I explained earlier, my involvement and time spent with the band avail me the opportunity to discuss this particular performance as a commissioned work. I consider the phone-call situation that I witnessed and narrated above as an exemplar to provide insight into how praises are commissioned before the performance.

In this analysis, I will further invoke the concept of Oríkì to explore the question the role elegy praise genre in the representation and performance of 'Gbajúmọ̀' and the big man in/through fújì. In this regard, the Yorùbá cosmology on death that I discussed earlier is also a relevant framework that Oríkì will allow for analysing the lyrics. The relevance of the elegy of a 'Gbajúmọ̀' or the big man is that it represents the legacy of the dead through the effect of inscribing their story into the public or the collective memory of the society. In the same vein, the relatives and the network of the deceased is further acknowledged and affiliated in the discourse of the departed legacies. providing succour for the surviving relatives. Furthermore, the performance of the elegy in/through fújì provides a pathway for the surviving actors and associates in the 'Gbajúmọ̀'or big man's network to emerge or appropriately fused into the role or the legacy of the deceased person. These aspects will be revealed through the close reading of the transcribed and translated lyrics:

Table 5.4: Abass Akande alias Obesere's Elegiac Praise for Taofeek Oyerinde alias Fele – Live Performance (2018)

	Yorùbá	English Translantion
1	Up National! A kú lédè ẹni rie tó kú	Up National! Sorry for the loss of the good man
2	Ọlọ́run Ọba kó fori ji òkú ọ̀run tó kú	May God forgive the dead
3	Oyerinde Taofeek Fele Fele	Taofeek Oyerinde alias Fele Fele
4	Ìbá ṣe pé ikú máa ń gba ẹran ni	Had death been lenient to recive a goat

5	Àkàndé Adé mi	Yours truly, Akande-Ade, (Akande-the crown)
6	bó bá ṣe pé ikú máa ń gba àgbò	Had death been lenient to take a ram
7	À bá fún un lágbò tó pọ̀	we would have offered lots of rams
8	Kódà à bá fowó san díẹ̀	We would have even offered part payment in cash
9	Torí Fele	For Fele's sake
10	Pé kó má ṣe pa Fele	That he may spare Fele's life
11	Àmọ́ ikú kìí gba àgbò	But Death doesn't take sacrifices of Ram
12	Kìí gbowó	neither does he receive money
13	Gbogbo onímọ̀tò pátápátá	All Transport workers
14	A mà kú lédè ẹnire tó kú	Sorry for our loss, the loss of a good man
15	Alhaji Taofeek, Fele fele	Alhaji Taofeek alias Fele fele
16	Iwájú tó dojúkọ	Your destination after-life
17	KỌ́lọ́run jẹ́ kó dáa ni	May God, make it a comfort
18	Ẹ̀yìn tó o fi sílẹ̀	All that you left behind
19	Má ṣe bàjẹ́ láéláé	Shall never be in ruins forever
20	Fele Taofeek Ọkọ Kafaya o	Fele, Taofeek, the husband of Kafayat
21	Gbogbo ẹgbẹ́ onímọ̀tò	All transport workers
22	A mà kú lédè ẹni ire	Sorry for our loss, a good man
23	Láti orí ọ̀gá wa	Starting from our boss in the union's National headquarters in Abuja
24	Ní ìpínlẹ̀ Ọ̀yọ́ wa dé Àbújá	To the local chapter in Oyo state
25	Fele ti wá kú	Now that fele is no more
26	A ti ka Kurisuyu tó pọ̀ fún un	And after we have said several verse Qurisiiyu
27	A ti ka ọ̀pọ̀lọpọ̀ Kuhlihuwallaahu fún un	We have recited several chapters of Qulihuwaalaahu
28	Pé k'Ọ́lọ́run ọba kó jẹ́ kó bá ojúrere ọ̀hun nílé ọ̀hun	We prayed that may God show mercy to the soul of Fele in life after
29	Iwájú tó dojúkọ, k'Ólúwa jẹ́ ó dáa	That his place in after-life is peaceful
30	Ẹ̀yìn tó o fi sílẹ̀	That all he left behind
31	Kó má ṣe bàjẹ́ láéláé	Shall not perish till eternity
32	Fele tó bá ṣe pé ayé ló pa ẹ́	Fele in case your death is caused by any human
33	Kí wọ́n má ṣe kú mọ́	Let those human responsible prove to have ability to live forever
34	Kí wọ́n fi jọ baba bàbá wọn tí kò lè kú (repeat)	Let them be like their ancestors who has been living forever
35	Má fi kú yọ̀ mí	Do not mock me in death
36	Dákun má fi kú yọ̀ mí	Please do not mock my death

37	Gbogbo wa pátá la dágbádá ikú	Afterall we have sown the garments of death
38	Àwáyé ìkú ò sí	No one lives and never dies
39	Fele ti wá lọ o	Now that Fele is no more with us
40	Èjíógbè ó dọwọ́ rẹ o	This home is now in Ejiogbe's care
41	Ọlájídé mi tó jẹ́ Abidiini	My beloved Olajide known as Abeeden
42	Ọlájídé mi tó jẹ́ Abidiini	Olajide known as Abeeden
43	Èjìogbè, àṣẹ ti dọwọ́ rẹ, nísìnyìí	Ejiogbe, authority now rest with you
44	Èjìogbè, tó ń jẹ́ Abidiini	Ejiogbe that is known as Abideen
45	Adé orí ọ̀kín	The jewel crown of a peacock
46	Kò jọ tẹyẹkẹ́yẹ	Is not for common birds
47	Jagunlabí ọkọ Sadiatu mi	The strong man and the husband of Sadiat
48	Kí ẹ ṣojú Fele	Continue to uphold Fele's legacy.
49	Kí ẹ ṣe èyìn Fele	Continue to uphold Fele's value.
50	Torí Ọlọ́run	I plead with you, for God sake.
51	Kí ẹ ṣe èyìn Fele	Continue to sustain Fele's legacy.
52	Ìjọba tó ń jẹ́ Abass	Abbas, whose alias is government
53	Ìjọba tó ń jẹ́ Abass ọmọ tí Ọlájídé mi Èjìogbè	A protégé, known as Saheed, the son to Olajide Ejiogbe
54	Bá ń kí ọmọ Ọlájídé	Please extend my salutation Olajide

The above transcribed lyrics are the eventual outcome of the commissioned praise which was earlier communicated to the band member of the musician, Obesere, whom I had assisted in writing on a piece of paper. The original (four lines) of information say:

Original Text	Translation to English and Explanation
Ejiogbe[194] Abidemi	Ejiogbe Abidemi - is a combination of nicknames (Ejiogbe + **Abidemi,** a first name of the primary subject in the elaborate praise. It is the name of the new NURTW chairman, a successor of the dead leader of the union.
Ade-ori okin	**Ade-Ori Okin** – the crown jewel on the Peacock. It is a standard line of Oríkì.
Oko Sadiatu	**Oko Sadiatu** – The husband on Sadiatu (a personal additional complementary information on Ejiogbe Abidemi)

[194] *The nickname **Ejiogbe** is drawn from the Yorùbá oral religious text Ifa. It is considered "the most important Odù (verse) … regarded as the father of all Odùs". The occurrence of the Odu Ejiogbe during Ifa divination by a Babaláwo (Ifá priest) symbolises, amongst other things, "the masculine principle"* (Epega and Neimark 1995)

Olajide Abeeden A.K.A Ijoba Abass	**Olajide Abeeden aka Ijoba Abass –** Olajide Abideen (perhaps full official name) + A.K.An (Abbreviation for Also Known As -another way of saying alias) The abbreviation A.K.A introduces the nickname **Ijoba Abass.** Ijoba translates as *government or, in some context, a regime*+ *Abass* (a common Yorùbá Muslim name). *The nickname could therefore be translated as Abass the government. This nickname once again goes back to our earlier discussion on the nature and imagination in the spaces like the NURTW in terms of hierarchies, overt masculine performance or projection.

Indeed the above information appears scanty and unspecific. However, it provides information on two subjects. Regarding our knowledge before the performance, Ejiogbe Abideen is the nickname of the primary subject of the commissioned performance. This is evident in the information (nickname, full name,alias and information on his family ties), while Olajide Abideen A.K.A *Ijoba-Abass* appears as secondary information. However, the original script does not contain the information about the second primary praise subject of the praise performance Taofeek Oyerinde alias Fele - the late predecessor of Abideen Olajide alias Ejiogbe.

Therefore, the above four lines of information inspired multiple verses of the performance and gave room for the emergence of themes, references and discourses running through the lyrics I presented above. However, in this particular case, the theme of death and the mode of performing it, especially concerning big man's legacy, is of particular interest.

The components and framing of the above composition in the above lyrics draw from the traditional Yorùbá praise performance for the dead. This specific performance will initially occur during the final ritual for the dead and the surviving family members, the deceased network or/and the deceased affiliated community(ies). It is also traditionally performed by groups of women known as "*omo-osu* (daughters of the same lineage) or as *orogun* (wives of the same lineage)" (Barber1991:117). However, it is important to keep in mind the reality of the dislocation of social configuration to the traditional Yorùbá ways of life where it was plausible to have the close-knitted compound-family structure, which enables women's performance to be a vital part of the burial process. Also, with the entrenchment of Islam and Christianity modes and practices in the sphere of events such as final burial rites, it becomes more challenging to abide by burial practices where women groups in the deceased family have a prominent role and space performance. These factors are also morphed into the urban space where individuals' networks of relations become more heterogeneous and transcend patrilineal and matrilineal affiliation.

In this new contemporary urban context and reality, the fújì musician steps in mediating a big man's post-death and post burial experience. Finnegan provides a general framework that distinguishes an elegiac genre in African oral literature; she argues that the main "focus of the dirge is on the diseased – his nature and qualities, his ancestors, his historic home – the mourner also makes certain reflections." (155). The above spontaneous composition for the Taofeek Oyerinde alias Fele resonates with Finnegan's criteria on two levels. Finnegan talks about the focus on nature, the qualities of the diseased, and the information on the historic home. In Obesere's lyrics, the audience encounters the information on the dead subject, Taofeek Oyerinde alias Fele (line 3). The diseased is represented and represented as a union leader, a transporter. By starting the song in line 1, with " Up National", the slogan of the National Union of Road Transport Workers, the musicians positioned the diseased as belonging both in a professional and family sense to the union. Barber stresses that the praise of the dead establishes how the "dead bring with them a web of connections" (Barber 199:118). Although, in the traditional performance of the dead, the web of connections will be addressed to the family members (immediate and extended family). However, this performance expands such configurations by not only referencing the deceased wife as " Taofeek, the husband of Kafayat" as a representation of the close family ties but also the union collectives (line 22). Thus, the musician's chant of the NURTW motto also speaks to the deceased connection to the union. It emphasises a narrative of a shared fraternity and a family-like bond.

The second aspect that Finnegan emphasise is suggested in what she refers to as the mourner making "certain reflection" (Ibid.155). In Obesere's elegy for Fele, the audience also has a feel of other reflections. First, the narrative of death is not presented as an isolated incident which happened to the diseased but as a collective reality. The following metaphors are used: "goat", "rams", and "money" as possible options of sacrifices humans would be willing to part with to avoid death are all attempts to capture the helplessness and frustration humans had to contend with through death and loss of people. Indeed, the metaphors symbolise how death has demystified all human possessions and accumulation. Death is also not represented as an occurrence, and it is personified more like a person or a deity (see lines 7-10).

Death in the above lines is personified and characterized as a rational being and one with feelings or emotions to the extent where leniency can be an option to the finality of human demise. Thus, death's representation in the lyrics transcends the individual case of the subject of elegy but becomes a general reflection with universal appeal to the audience.

Similarly, the Yorùbá cultural and Islamic outlook on death coalesces as part of the musician's broad reflection in the above lyrics. In this case, there is an intertextual reference made to a sura of the Quran, namely verse 255, commonly called Ayatul Kursi in the chapter Surah al-Baqarah and the formula *qul huwal laahu ahad* "He is Allah who is One" found in chapter 112, Surah Ikhlas of the Quran[195]:

26	A ti ka Kurisuyu tó pọ̀ fún un	And after we have said several verse Qurisiiyu
27	A ti ka ọ̀pọ̀lọpọ̀ Kuhlihuwallaahu fún un	We have recited several chapters of Qulihuwaalaahu
28	Pé k'Ọ́lọ́run ọba kó jẹ́ kó bá ojúrere ọ̀hun nílé ọ̀hun	We prayed that may God show mercy to the soul of Fele in life after
29	Iwájú tó dojúkọ, k'Ólúwa jẹ́ ó dáa	That his place in after-life is peaceful
30	Ẹ̀yìn tó o fi sílẹ̀	That all he left behind
31	Kó má ṣe bàjẹ́ láéláé	Shall not perish till eternity

As seen in the above verse, incorporating these Quranic religious verses highlights both the responsibility and religious obligation the living have for the dead. It also speaks to the vision of the afterlife experience, which is as necessary for the survivors as the dead. This notion resonates with the Islamic view of the afterlife. It aligns with the Yorùbá worldview (at least in part) – through the conception of death as a transition and acknowledgement of the afterlife. I explained in the synopsis that the narrative of the successor in the union hierarchy is weaved into this elegy song. In the case, key actors were mentioned, particularly the new union leader, and the successor of the deceased union leader was praised. In this scenario, the living subjects in the lyrics, most especially the new union leader referred to as Abideen Olajide, alias Ejiogbe, receive elaborate praise (see lines 41-45).

Indeed, fújì mediates the legacy of the big man or Gbajúmọ̀ in the contemporary Yorùbá urban space. As seen, it is a practice that has deeper implications for both the legacies of the deceased, their surviving relatives and clientele networks. With the use of oríkì, the persona of the deceased is highlighted in fújì. The product of such endeavour becomes part of public discourses and the collective memories of a deceased person's legacies relevant for their

[195] Allah! There is no god ˹worthy of worship˺ except Him, the Ever-Living, All-Sustaining. Neither drowsiness nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who could possibly intercede with Him without His permission? He ˹fully˺ knows what is ahead of them and what is behind them, but no one can grasp any of His knowledge—except what He wills ˹to reveal˺. His Seat1 encompasses the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of both does not tire Him. For He is the Most High, the Greatest. (https://quran.com/al-baqarah/255#)

memory afterlife and the dynamics of everyday life for their surviving relatives and affiliated networks.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the representation and the performance of the big man or Gbajúmọ̀ has been discussed from different points of views and examples. My analysis of 'Gbajúmọ̀' or the big man is hinged on the broad framework and a vision of the self-realisation that is mediated in fújì through the use of oríkì. In fújì performance, the inner essence of a praise subject is enhanced and brought to life through the process of praise performance mainly oríkì. It is the oríkì which brings to full emergence the ori (the individual's lot or destiny).

I have done a close reading of selected fújì lyrics to illustrate how fújì does not only present but create the contemporary big man and Gbajúmọ̀ in the contemporary Yorùbá urban space. Chief Sunday Adeyemo alias Sunday Ìgbòho is one of the examples of the big man, I discussed in this chapter to emphasise how fújì musician projects the persona of the big man within a broader discourse, events and networks. I have also discussed the big man positioning within the wider scope of historical events and a struggle for alignment and affiliation towards self-realization and social expectations. Finally, I did a close reading and analysis of a performance that has Chief Gani Adams, the Aare Ona Kakanfo the main protagonist in the performance by Wasiu Ayinde alias Kwam1. My analysis of the big man's performance and representation did not stop at focusing on Gani Adams at the event, I have gone further to show examples of how the public interest emerged and existed beyond the performance space and time. I used the examples of YouTube commentaries to highlight this aspect of the discourse of the big man or Gbajúmọ̀ transcending the performance space into every day in the Yorùbá urban space.

My analysis of the big man or Gbajúmọ̀ representation in fújì lyrics is also extended to deceased using the elegy mode of oríkì performance. In this case, the legacy of the big man is illustrated as part of collective memory within their network. In this case, the performance of a big man is not a performance of finality but an ongoing and in fact an integral link for the surviving relatives and networks.

CHAPTER SIX

6 Broader Implications: Performing Gbajúmọ̀ (Big man) in Urban Yorùbá Space

6.1 Introduction

This chapter continues my critical examination of the representation and the performance of the cultural categories of Gbajúmọ̀ (big man), in the contemporary Yorùbá urban space and its underlining connection to fújì. In chapter five, my analysis primarily focused on selected lyrics where I showed the representation and the strategies of narrating Gbajúmọ̀ or the big man in fújì from various perspectives. In this chapter, I am largely moving beyond the lyrics to examine the everyday context to interrogate further the performance of 'Gbajúmọ̀' or the big man in the urban Yorùbá lifeworlds. I am exploring the imaginaries hitherto honed in/through fújì lyrics as transcending the performance space and becoming an aspect of daily lived experience. Thus, fújì plays an active role as the backdrop curating Gbajúmọ̀ or big man experience in the urban, contemporary Yorùbá context. Indeed, fújì is not only a musical genre of street solidarity (see chapter four) but (which almost seems a paradox) an essential ingredient to becoming a Gbajúmọ̀ or a 'big man' imaginatively and performatively. Part of what fújì curates are the intersection of social stratification (and not solidarity), projection of grandeur or successful persona and discourse of individual aspiration or testimonies of upward social mobility. These aspects are what the chapter seeks to highlight within the framework of Gbajúmọ̀ or big man I have opened in the previous chapters.

The chapter is divided into three major sections. The first section will discuss Gbajúmọ̀, or the Big man, against the backdrop of the Yorùbá informal economic space. At the same time, fújì articulates a vision of grandeur for a big man. The everyday life of the big man becomes the extension of the persona nurtured in fújì. The second section has two parts. In the first part of the section, I will explore the interview materials from Abass Akande alias Obesere to fújì musicians emerging from a context outside the music performance space (the Ibadan radio station). I will use the interviews of Abass Akande alias Obesere and other materials I generated during my participant observations of Obesere in the radio station to show how much the narrative of success and social mobility matters for the social persona of fújì musicians. In the second part, I will also discuss the ultimate effect of the projected image of the Gbajúmọ̀ or big man in the public imagination. I am referring to the type of public reaction that expects social

responsibility from the successful Gbajúmọ̀ or big man due to the persona that has been projected in fújì music or other discourses.

The last section of this chapter will wrap up the discussion on the Gbajúmọ̀, or big man, by closely reading a lyric excerpt from the Ibadan-based Fuju musician, Taye Adebisi alias Taye Currency. It will be analysed through the lens of the Yorùbá proverb, "Mo lowo, mo lènìyàn, ki lo tun ku ti mi o ni?" - *I have money, I have people, what else is there that I have not got.*

6.2 Beyond Lyrics: Gbajúmọ̀ in Everyday Context

Big men exist across the socio-economic sphere in today's (urban) Yorùbá space. They live as Bankers, politicians, business owners, professors, pastors, Imams, Babalawos, Journalists, Farmers, Transporters, Actors, Musicians, and Men of the Nigerian security force. However, the categories of the Gbajúmọ̀ or the big man I have been discussing in the context of fújì are mainly in the informal economic space (not formal). That means that most of their economic activities characterise their means of livelihood and put them outside the 'white-collar' professions.

To understand the nuances of everyday life birthed due to the formal and informal economic constellation in the Yorùbá urban spaces and many parts of Africa, a revisit to Barber's (2000) discussion of the Nigerian urban mobile entrepreneurial sector vis-à-vis the white collar professionals. For Barber and other scholars of popular culture in Africa like Newell and Onokoome (2014), the everyday life that the lens of popular culture critically captures often comprises sets of professionals or entrepreneurs like tailors, bricklayers, clerks, shoe-(makers)shine, petty traders, taxi drivers, bus conductors, butchers, plank sellers, local herbs/gin traders, carpenters to mentions a few. At the same time, the formal spaces, compared to the informal, would comprise professionals like Nurses, doctors, teachers, lawyers etc. These two categories of economic spaces co-exist, co-depend and create lifeworlds of experience. Western education (although not always) plays an important role in defining, for example, an individual's positionality and visibility within the larger framework of dominant discourse and identity formation within a state's larger socio-economic/political spectrum (see also Fabian 1998; Askew 2008)[196]. Western education also means prevalent perceptions of professionals, spaces, and networks exist. I am referring to access to gaining social visibility within the official cultural spaces, for example, the mainstream media (Newspapers, Television, and Radio).

[196] In fact, Watermann also speaks specifically to this reality…

In chapters two and three, I have discussed that most fújì musicians are mainly from the Yorùbá working-class communities. Essentially, their everyday life and most of their clientele networks revolve around informal spaces. The successful fújì musicians I encountered in their respective spaces are Gbajúmọ̀ or the big man. These men are usually addressed by their network - staff and band members in a strict hierarchical tone with nomenclatures like Baba – (father), Baba-Alaye (the man who owns the world), Oga – (the boss), and Oluwa-mi (my lord). The observable dynamics in their network often play up the relational experience of Igbooro and its sub-categories I discussed in chapter four. Their band members, staff or subordinates are often addressed or acknowledged as omo + the patron's name (the child of…).

While giving insight into traditional Yorùbá big man space, Barber paints the following picture:

> " Money is one of the principal ways of gaining public acknowledgement as a bigman; but 'having people' constituted that acknowledgmemt itself. Wives and children, visiting matrilateral relatives, labourers, attached 'strangers' segment in long-term residence, bondsmen, labourers, visitors, friends, and adherents of all kinds, from the most permanent to the most casual – all were the 'people' on whose acknowledgment the ambitious man's standing depended." (1990:183)

Barber described the lived spaces of the big men who belonged to the time past in Yorùbá history. However, the reality of today's Big men is compatible with any past in many ways. Money, having people and public acknowledgement are attributes consistent with today's reality. Successful fújì and everyone I interviewed or whose works I analysed were rich (not middle class), polygamous with a vast network of dependants outside their immediate family ties. So also, the labourers in the traditional setting described above by Barber will qualify in the fújì big man's space today as their domestic staff, cooks, drivers, and gate man. I do not think of fújì band members as part of this category. Their role is more often defined and business-like (although the band leader and members' dynamics are still hierarchical). The sum-up of the staff, hangers-on, large families and dependents constitute the qualification of fújì musicians as Gbajúmọ̀, especially with their immediate network. In other words, I consider them as a patron of their clientele network.

According to Smith (2017), a Big man in the Nigerian space is "a male figure who not only supports and has authority over his household and family but also caters to his political clients in the role of a patron" (5). Gbajúmọ̀ projects a grandeur persona, and he is responsible for providing social security or support to their dependents. The benefits that have been affiliated with a big man vary. Some of their dependents are part of their households where their shelter

means of livelihood are connected to the opportunities provided or facilitated by the patron. In other instances, the subordinates or clientele networks of the big man also enjoy their modest sphere of influence. The sphere of influence and accruing benefits often plays out like a pyramid structure where the big man sits on top to dispense favour and patronage. Barber explains how the Yorùbá towns are constituted through a hierarchical order.

Having discussed who the subordinates of the big men are, it is essential to further our understanding of the dynamics between the big man and his network of beneficiaries. My discussion in Chapter five shows that when *fújì* musicians praise big men, it triggers varieties of public discourse and willing loyalists. The very fact that fújì musicians also use Oríkì praise the Gbajúmọ̀ by highlighting their exaggerated persona, their extent of material success or their unique character, which put them apart from the ordinary person.

It is important to emphasise that an analysis which projects the Gbajúmọ̀ as all glowy status and performance of ambitious men is insufficient. This perspective leaves out the nuances or perhaps downsides of being either the big man (of enormous social responsibilities) or a subordinate (the indignity of lack, vulnerability and begging for basic needs)

Even though Gbajúmọ̀ is a product of a necessity ambition propelled by the cultural vision of Ori and its interactions with an individual's quest for (becoming) personhood (Ènìyàn). Gbajúmọ̀ or the big man is also a product of a socio-economic condition that propelled poverty, weak state[197], and lack of social safety net for the contemporary Nigerian rural and urban dwellers echoing Fabian's notion of "creativity in situation of oppression" (1998:2). The Brookings Institution 2018 report on poverty on a global scale states the following:

> "At the end of May 2018, our trajectories suggest that Nigeria had about 87 million people in extreme poverty, compared with India's 73 million. What is more, extreme poverty in Nigeria is growing by six people every minute, while poverty in India continues to fall."[198]

Therefore, the Gbajúmọ̀'s relation and experience on the one hand builds on earlier historical models of ẹrú/ìwọ̀fà/ọmọ-bíbí-inu: slaves, bondsmen, and trueborn children of the lineage (as discussed in chapter one, the coordinate chapter). On the other hand, the miserable socio-

[197] In chapter five, I analyzed the praise of a non-state actor by Saheed Osupa, known as Sunday Ìgbòho . In one of the verses is said to be " "Ekun oko Fulani Ajinigbe ni Sunday yen - *Sunday is the tiger, that vengeance over the kidnapping Fulanis",* this line of the praise speaks to the persona of the praise subject as a non-state actor, a vigillante who emerged as a result of the state's inability to resolve crimes that are considered to be affiliated with criminal elements parading as "herdsmen". This is a testament of how the state failure puts up a condition for the emergence of some categories of the big men.

[198] https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2018/06/19/the-start-of-a-new-poverty-narrative/

economic situation of most Nigerian citizens feeds greatly into the Gbajúmọ̀ as patrons in dependent clientele relations. These two trajectories are indeed not mutually exclusive. There are cultural and historical conditions but also a harsh economic reality. Fújì, a culturally produced genre, brings to bear the vivid manifestations of these experiences. I have examined social mobility in Chapter three by analyzing a lyric excerpt. I am revisiting this theme of social mobility in fújì musicians' everyday discourse (not lyrics). I am showing how fújì musicians reflect on their background and perform their newly attained status of Gbajúmọ̀ beyond fújì performance space to highlight upward mobility.

6.3 Fújì Musicians: Revisting Social Mobility as Lived Experience

Fújì is not only a medium for articulating visions of Gbajúmọ̀. It also goes beyond curating the persona of praise subjects - where musicians sing the praises to boost their subjects into recognition. For fújì musicians, fújì has also become a way of climbing the social ladder: material wealth and recognition are also goals for musicians. The following passage comes from my interview with Abass Akande Obesere at his residence in Ibadan on 17th November 2018

> *Ọmọ ọdún mẹ́ta ni mí tí màmá mi ti gbé mi lọ sÉkòó, ìlú Èkó ni mo dàgbà sí, mo lọ sí St Paul Primary school ní Àpápá Road, Ebute meta, láti ibẹ̀ lọ sí Jubril Martins secondary school, lẹ́yìn ti wọ́n ti yí school náà padà sí Ìpọ́nri Secondary school kí ń tó wọ secondary school ni mo ti máa ń fi tábìlì lu ìlù fún àwọn ẹgbẹ́ mi tí mo máa ń kọrin fún wọn, tí mi ò mọ̀ pé nǹkan tó máa padà wá jẹ́ iṣẹ́ fún mi ni.*
>
> *Mo kọ́ iṣẹ́ Printing press, mò ń lọ school mo dẹ̀ ń kọ́ṣẹ́, tí mo dẹ̀ ríi later pé mi ò mọ iṣẹ́ yẹn, orin ló máa ń ṣábà wà lórí mi, mo tún lọ kọ́ iṣẹ́ welding engineering, àti electronics àti boxing síbẹ̀ mi ò fi ìkankan ṣe iṣẹ́ ti1ti1 di ọdún 1980 mo má ń ṣe practice ní Ebute Meta, ẹgbọ́n kan tí a mọ̀ sí Shina Bakare, banker ni wọ́n nígbà yẹn, àwọn ni wọ́n ra àwọn ìlù bíi Sákárà, omele fún mi tí a máa ń lò fún practice …*

> My mother migrated to Lagos (from Ibadan) when I was three years old, so I grew up in Lagos. I attended St Paul's Primary School in Apapa Road, Ebute-meta, Lagos. My secondary education was at Iponri Secondary, later renamed Jubril Martins Memorial Grammar School. Although, I did not know early in life that I would become a musician. As a young boy, I am always known to beat any available drum beats while singing with my mates.
>
> I combined apprenticeship and studies as a young boy and was an apprentice at a Printing press. I realised I was not good at the printing apprenticeship, and I was always singing at work. I also enrolled as a welding engineer apprentice. Later I became an apprentice electrician before I became a boxer. I was not known to be successful in any profession until 1980, when I began my

musical rehearsal in Ebuta-meta, Lagos. An older friend, a banker known as Shina Bakare assisted me by setting me up with musical instruments. He gifted me with my first set of dru sákárà and Omele) to support my rehearsal sessions (…)"

The above interview excerpt is intended to revisit the discussion on the background of most fújì musicians in chapter two. It will provide context and insight into the experience and the formative years of the main subject of this section, Abass Akande alias Obesere. Obesere is in his mid-50s. He belongs to the third generation of popular fújì musicians. As I discussed earlier in this thesis, the socio-economic conditions which shaped the background or the formative years of most successful musicians are similar. They are mainly from an economically disadvantaged family or backgrounds. Against this backdrop, their Gbajúmọ̀ or the public performance of the newly attained status; reinforces fújì's in availing the possibility of social mobility, financial empowerment, material acquisitions, and "having people" like the numerous fan network I discussed in chapter three.

Suppose the social condition is poverty and lack are considered a common thread in characterising the formative years of many fújì musicians. The representation of themes of upward mobility and their public gestures towards performing the big man status becomes plausible. In this case, I will present a vignette illustrating how a fújì musician Abass Akande alias Obesere, projects his Gbajúmọ̀ status in the public domain (outside the performance space)—mapping how the fújì musician performs his big man's status in everyday situations and what these performances connote. This particular narrative emerges from my participant observation at a radio station in Ibadan.

Field Notes Entry 5a: Obesere at Ibadan Radio Station

At around 10.25 am on Wednesday, 19th September 2018, I received a phone call from a cousin who works at a private media organisation, West Midlands Communications Ltd. The private media organisation operates two radio stations in Ibadan; Splash 105.5 FM and Lagelu 96.3 FM. Before this day, I had challenges accessing popular fújì musicians. I was contacted by a cousin who requested that I head to their office complex in the Felele neighbourhood in Ibadan South-west local government in the city of Ibadan, where I will meet the musician up close for the first time.

Obesere, like other fújì musicians, has many aliases like Omorapala – the slippery child, PK 1st. During the early phase of his career, he is known as the proponent of the Asakasa- Nonsense style of fújì (

Raji-Oyelade 2012). Obesere's style of Asakasa is fast paced, with heavy use of drum percussion. He is an energetic performer who is also described as the "undisputed leader of smutty art" (Olorunyomi 2013:16).

Obesere was a guest on the radio's weekly programme called O Selenkejo – a phrase expressing a response to a beautiful thing/experience. O Selenkejo runs between 10 am-noon every Wednesday. The weekly programme is a personality-focused programme anchored in the Yorùbá language. It focuses on the social lifestyles of prominent personalities. The programme host, Kola Olootu (omo Adabanija), has over 30 years of experience in radio broadcasting. In the Yorùbá-speaking part of Nigeria, he is considered a veteran among the network of broadcasters across South-West Nigeria. Kola Olootu deploys humour and exaggerated innuendoes on his programme, sometimes narrating fictional stories in contemporary Nigeria.

I could follow the radio programme on my way to the radio station via my mobile phone. The interview between the presenter and Obesere was, amongst others, focused on the promotion of an upcoming event tagged Ankara Carnival. It is an event/carnival to celebrate the 60th birthday of the radio presenter, Kola Olootu. Below is a translated excerpt from an interview that was conducted initially in the Yorùbá language and translated below [199]:

> *"Kọ́lá Olootu: Bí a bá bíni, láti ìgbà tí ó ti padà sí ìlú Òyìnbó, ó ti wá sí Nigeria bí ẹ̀mẹ̀ẹrin láàrin bí oṣù mélòó tó lọ sí ìlú Òyìnbó. À ń lọ, à ń bọ̀ yẹn, o ń padà ó ń wọlé, àwọn nǹkan yẹn, kí ló fa sábàbí?*
>
> *Obesere: Bí mo ṣe ń lọ bí mo ṣe ń bọ̀ yẹn, iṣẹ́ ló ń gbé mi lọ, ló ń gbé mi lọ, tó ń gbé mi bọ̀, kò sí nǹkan méjì, kò sí àáyè ká sọ pé à n lọ sinmi ni níbìkankan, iṣẹ́ ni, kí Ọlọ́run jọ̀wọ́ kó kó máa fi àlùbáríkà sí i*
>
> *Olootu: Lónìí, ó ti di ọmọ onílùú, ní ìlú Òyìnbó, a ò lè pè ọ́ ní Nigerian citizen mọ́?*
>
> *Obesere: Ah méjèèjì ni o, Nigerian-British ni àwọn kan ń pè mi nísìnyìí o.*
>
> *Obesere: All glory to God, it is God's doing*
>
> *Olootu: Kí ló dé tí wọ́n pè ọ́ ní ọmọ Biritiko?*
>
> *Obesere: nítorí wípé ìwé wọn ti wà ní ọwọ́ mi*
>
> *Olootu: Ìwé Biritiko wà lọ́wọ́ ọ̀tún, ìkan wà ní ọwọ́ òsì... o mú páálí méjì... ìwọ ni a bá mọ́ ọn pè ní oníléméjì*
>
> *Obesere: Ọlọ́hun ló ń jẹ́ bẹ́ẹ̀ Òtunba, Ọlọ́hun ni*

[199] I use Olootu for the radio presenter and Obesere for the fújì musician

Olootu: O fò wá láàrin London sí Nigeria, o balẹ̀ sé Èkó, o gbéra ó di i Ọ̀ṣun state láti seré

Obesere: Bí Èkó sí Ìbàdàn ló ṣe rí l'ójú méjì misin, èló mí á ní ṣe kó kì jìnnà lójú mi, èlómìín á ní ṣe ara ò kì ń ro mí ni... mo ní kín ni, tí n bá ti wọ inú plane báyìí, tí mo bá ti tẹ chair mi sẹ́yìn báyìí... mo ti sùn lọ nìyẹn

Olootu: Abass Akande! Ọjọ́ ìbí mi ń sún mọ́lé, àwọn èèyàn fẹ́ gbọ́ irú itú tí ó máa pa ní ọjọ́ náà, Ankara Carnival! Tó ni ó fẹ́ gbé káàkiri àgbáyé yìí, A n lo Hongkong, A lo China, A n lo London, À lọ Dublin. Ti Nigeria, kín ni kí àwọn èèyàn mọ́ retí báyìí?

Obesere: Ti Nigeria tí a fẹ́ ṣe yìí, tí a pè ní Ankara carnival tí a fẹ́ fi ṣe ọjọ́ ìbí yín, Ọ̀túnba, Ọlọ́.run á bá wa s.é, á kọjá bẹ́. Oríṣìíríṣìí àwọn àrà tí àwọn èèyàn ò tí rí rí, ni wọ́n máa rí ní ọjọ́ yẹn. Èmi gẹ́gẹ́ bí ẹnìkan o, mo ti sọ pé ní ọjọ́ yẹn o máa gbé ẹ̀bùn 1 million Naira cash sílẹ̀.

Olootu: One million naira? Ilẹ̀ ó mì tìtì!

Obesere: Bẹ́ẹ̀ ni 1 million, tó má jẹ́ raffle draw, ẹni tó bá jẹ ó jẹ é nìyẹn (...). Mo dẹ̀ gbọ́ pé ọkọ olóyún náà máa gbé 5 million Naira sílẹ̀ láti fi ṣe ìróni ní agbára fún àwọn èèyàn. Mi ò fẹ́ kẹ́ ẹni méjì jẹ, mo fẹ́ kí ẹnìkan jẹ, kí ó lè báa tó o lò. Yí inú bá bí mi, mo le tún fi 1 plot ilẹ̀ sílẹ̀ fún ẹni yẹn lẹ́yìn ọjọ́ yẹn.

Olootu: Ah! Mo ti bínú jù o, ti inú bá bí ọ, ilẹ̀ ọ̀dọ̀ mi ni kí o wá bínú sí o... torí ilẹ̀ ọ̀dọ̀ mi mò ń wá ilẹ̀ plot kan tí a so mọ́ ọn.

Obesere: ẹ mọ̀ pé àwọn èèyàn kan sọ pé Abass Akande Obesere, bó ṣe jẹ́ ọmọ Ìbàdàn, kò kọ́ ilé sí Ìbàdàn, kò ra ilẹ̀ sí Ìbàdàn, mi ò dẹ̀ kí ń pariwo

Olootu: Kí ló dé ti ìwọ náà ò ṣe kọ́ ilé sí Ìbàdàn?

Obesere: Èmi ti ní ilé ní Ìbàdàn.

Olootu: Ah! Àyà mi já

Obesere: Nǹkan tí mo fẹ́ fà yọ ni pé, ẹni tí ó ní ilé ní Ìbàdàn, ẹni tí ò ní ilé, báwo lo ṣe fẹ́ fún èèyàn ní ilẹ̀?

Olootu: Ilé tibi tí ó ń gbé tẹ́lẹ̀, àwa ọ dé ibẹ̀, wọ́n ní pé Abass ti move lọ sí ilé tuntun

Obesere: Lágbára ti Elédùmarè, pèlú àṣẹ Ọlọ́run Ọba alááànú

Olootu: Kí ló dé tí o kó family kúró ní ilé tí ẹ gbé tẹ́lẹ̀r ni, ẹ kó sí ilé tuntun ní London, ṣe bí gbogbo nǹkan ṣe ń lọ náà ni?

Obesere: Torí wí pé mi o ti wá darapọ̀ mọ́ wọn ni ìgbà yẹn, ìgbà tí mo dé, mo wá wò pé a ni láti move lọ sí ibò mì ni. Glasgow àti London ni ilé wà.

Olootu: Eh, ilé méjì lo ń control níbẹ̀"

"Olootu: If I may ask, between now and the last time we had you on this programme, you seem to have made at least four trips abroad in these few months. Do you want to explain this back and forth, the going and coming? What exactly is at stake for you?

Obesere: My many trips are all business trips – That explains the back and forth. They are no leisure trips. May God continue to bless the work of our hand!

Olootu: You are currently a citizen of another country, I guess. Can we safely say you are no longer part of us in Nigeria?

Obesere: Ah! I belong to both places now. Some people now prefers to address me as a Nigerian-British.

Olootu: Why do they call you omo Britiko (English man)?

Obesere: This is because I now possess a British passport.

Olootu: So, you mean, you now possess the British passport? You now hold the British passport on the one hand and the Nigerian one on the other. I guess it is safe to address you as the man with two homes.

Olootu: You mean you came into Nigeria via Lagos via aeroplane only to proceed to Osun state for a performance (Obesere cuts in)

Obesere: Well, these days, travelling abroad for me (these days) feels like the distance is between Lagos and Ibadan.

Olootu: If I may ask further, how many properties do you possess? And I mean both in Nigerian and abroad.

Obesere: I have two homes in London, and we bless God for the ones he permits us to own in Nigeria

Olootu: Eh! You mean you own two properties abroad?

Obesere: Yes, it is the grace of God.

Olootu: Abass Akande, my birthday celebration is coming up soon and our listeners are curious. They want to know the surprises you have in mind for them at the Ankara carnival. You have informed me privately about your plan to host the event worldwide. You said the celebration should occur in Hongkong, China, London, and Dublin. So what should our Nigerian fans expect? (…)"

The above radio interview/dialogue is relevant to (re)contextualiSe the performance of Gbajúmọ̀ or the big man's everyday in the contemporary Yorùbá space. Smith discusses the idea of a "befitting performance of manhood" (2017:3) as a prevalent form of masculine aspiration and performance that is observable in the contemporary Nigerian space.

Money makes a man" is a widely spoken statement in Nigeria; according to Smith, "having money is essential for successful masculinity" (2017:3) in contemporary Nigeria. The above

dialogue/ interview situation provides the context for the musician, Obesere, to highlight his achievements to elaborate on the grandeur image of himself as a successful (wealthy, upwardly mobile, and implicitly an oloriire (the successful man with a good Ori). The testimonies of a nouveau riche persona, Obesere projects in the dialogue with the radio broadcaster to the listening audience projection cannot be read in isolation from his childhood experiences, particularly the socio-economic conditions which define it.

The above dialogue strongly references the projection of grandeur persona for the listening public. The references to musician's frequent travel experiences – a class signifier discourse and experience in the Nigerian context. Flight travel and the frequent travel to Western cosmopolis is symbolic discourse and a signifier of an individual's upward mobility and success within Nigeria's contemporary reality. So also, the interview and the response by the musician touch on the discourse of possession and being a nationality of the United Kingdom[200]. There is also the aspect of projecting the fújì musician's success by highlighting his ownership of multiple homes in the United Kingdom and Nigeria. All these examples are symbolic in curating the image of success, and upward social mobility from a man from a disadvantaged social background and his transformation and attainment of Gbajúmọ̀ or big man's status. Indeed, the narratives highlight the cultural notion of a big man and their symbolic performance of "self-aggrandisement" (Barber 1991:184).

I have touched on the cultural perception of Yorùbá drummers and praise singers and the constant process of the musician's strategies of negotiating their perceived status within the Yorùbá class constellation in chapter five. The persona, the radio interviewer and the responses of his respondent (Obesere) also present an alternative image of a fújì musician (who traditionally will be known as a praise singer) as a successful and upwardly mobile persona. In this case, fújì musicians as a professional are redefining and challenging the status quo of cultural perception and false assumptions. The musician seizes the opportunity of the media interview to curate the image of the fújìi big man into public consciousness and collective Yorùbá social memory.

Field Notes Entry 5b: Obesere at Ibadan Radio Station

(...) towards the end of the interview on the Oselenkejo, the host, Kola Olootu inquired from Obesere on what he and his audience should expect from the musician at his upcoming birthday

[200] the United Kingdom is also just one of the preferred destination for migrating Nigerians. Nigerians are in constant quest to emigrate to Canada, the United States, European metropolis, South Africa, Dubai, India, China – all in quest for "greener pastures" – a dream for a better life, a desire for upward mobility and become 'sucessful'.

celebration tagged Ankara Carnival. This inquiry is beyond confirming that the musician shall be the main performer at the Ankara Carnival celebration. Obesere giggled as he casually announced his intention to make someone a millionaire on the event day to the audience. The presenter, in his response, exclaimed, expressed his surprise, and repeatedly confirmed what had just been announced. The one million, according to Obesere goes to the raffle draw prizes. He further gives a condition that the money should not be shared. Instead, he wants to have just a winner. He was someone to know what it felt like to be a "millionaire" and have an opportunity to change their life for good (...)

Fig 6.1: E-poster of the upcoming event, the radio image of the radio presenter[201] is at the left side of the banner and by the right side is the musician's image with money. Source: presenter's (Kola Olootu) office.

I arrived at the radio station just when the show was about end. The show, which concluded by a radio jingle promoting the presenter's birthday party date, was tagged Ankara Carnival. As I approached the iron gate of the radio station, I encountered a crowd of people whose numbers were still building up. I struggled to find my way to the gate through the bodies of people busy positioning themselves to find a strategic position before Obesere exited the station's premises. This group comprises older people, nursing mothers and relatives of sick people displaying photographs depicting the health condition of their relatives. There are also clusters of young men known as Area Boys (mostly in their 20s and 30s). The Area boys do not have definitive jobs in the neighbourhood. They use their discretion to control traffic often or render community service. Their presence is often due to selfless service but lack of meaningful employment and kills. All these people are waiting for the big man, Obesere, and the radio presenter to exit the radio station.

[201] The "BAA SORO OF YORÙBÁLAND" appellation under the name of the readion presenter, Otunba Kola Olootu means that he is a Chief with the title that can be translated as "the chief orator of Yorùbáland".

Just about 15 minutes after I entered the radio building, I had a brief introductory meeting with Obesere in one of the offices before he exited the building accompanied by his staff and the radio station staff. The main host Kola Olootun accompanied him out of the station. As Obesere makes his way out of the building, he is greeted impressionably by the increasing number of radio station staff. As he approached the exit door, he handed a minted pack of 200 naira notes to one of the radio station's staff. This gesture was greeted with excitement and a chorus of appreciation by everyone.

The main entrance was full of people waiting for the musician to exit the premises when he exited. The group are unrelenting in their effort to be better-position, visible and heard by the musician -. In this case, there is an apparent struggle for space and feasibility. Also visible in are individuals stretching photographs of sick relatives and medical reports – the prevailing chant from the crowd to get the big man's attention is a repeat of, Alhaji! Alhaji! Alhaji!

Fig 6.2: a. The radio presenter and staff are planning the musician's exit amidst the waiting crowd at the main gate of the radio station. b. Obesere, the fújì musician, is led by the radio presenter to wave at the waiting crown at the gate. Images by author. Felele, Ibadan. Sept. 2018.

Obesere walked into one of the four-wheel-drive vehicles parked on the radio station premises after waving at the crowd. In less than two minutes in the car, the radio presenter, Kola Olootu steps out of the car with two packs of naira notes of 500 Naira denomination. He approached the crowd, who had become more forceful in their chorus of Alhaji! Alhaji! The presenter shared the money randomly across the stretched hands between the metal gate – a lucky recipient got 1 or 2 notes of the naira denomination. Once the money-sharing phase was completed, the station's guard began the crowd control as the musician's car swerved and sped off between the waiting crowds on the street. The men and the owners of the motorcycles in the group chased after the moving vehicle hoping to catch up with the car at a bad portion of the road, a major junction or on bumpy parts.

Fig 6.3: Popular radio presenter (Kola Olootu) sharing money on behalf of fújì musician, Obesre to the waiting public. Image by author. Felele, Ibadan. Sept. 2018.

This above part of the vignette is intended to further situate my discussion on fújì musicians in the public domain as a Gbajúmọ̀ or big man with social responsibilities. In this sense, I am tracking fújì musicians as big men and how they interact with people daily beyond the usual performance space. I think of their peculiar relation as a continuum performance – an outcome of an established public image as Gbajúmọ̀ or big man. Thus, there is a cause-and-effect situation in their ultimate interaction with the public, whether as a praise-subject in a performance or a subject of dialogue in a radio interview. In this sense, I think of the result of 'people's recruitment', discussed by Barber as "recruitment" of people or the process of gaining public acknowledgement. In the first instance, I am reading the three images and the situational account of the musician's exit at the radio station as a consequence or outcome of the big man's social responsibilities – it is an alternative insight into the big man's situation in terms of social expectations. In the scenarios, the big man is implicated as a moral and social burden in the contemporary Yorùbá urban space rather than an extended performance of cultural principles of celebrating wealth and generosity.

Fújì musicians are known for constant public outreach, apart from providing jobs and means of livelihood for coteries of staff and hangers-on. They provide support for a large number of people in their network or around them. This hope of being the means of a safety net for fellow citizens plays as people's desperation in the above images.

The term giveaway is everyday in Nigeria, especially on social media. However, it applies to media personalities, like Nollywood practitioners, Afrobeats musicians, media personalities, and social media influencers. It captures their philanthropic gestures to members of the public. It is also a somewhat transaction practice in the recruitment of 'followers' and fans for media personalities online. The usual practice will be an announcement and distribution of money to their followers. The gifts aid the promotion of their latest works or corporate brand advertisement drive. However, it is often an intervention to alleviate the financial condition of their fans and fellow citizens – and to gain their recognition, constructing a network of followers and supporters. This practice culminated during the COVID-19 lockdown as a form of solidarity and recognition of the living conditions of their fellow citizens.

The Obesere scenario in the media house provides an alternative to reading the big man's role in the contemporary Yorùbá urban space. While reporting on "Inequality in Nigeria", the Oxfam report states as follows:

> "In Nigeria, the scale of economic inequality has reached extreme levels, and it finds expression in the daily struggles of the majority of the population I the face of accumulation of the obscene amounts of wealth by a small individual. While more than 112 million people were living in poverty in 2010, the richest Nigerian man will take 42 years to spend all of his wealth at 1 million per day" (2017:4)

As I discussed earlier, in the traditional sense, the big man's status relies on "public recognition" (Baber 1991:183): However, public recognition in this context is not propelled by wide-scale poverty and a sense of lack and disillusionment. Unlike contemporary Nigeria's reality, where most citizens face harsh economic conditions and gross inequality, the big man becomes a burden on the individual to respond and react to their immediate community. The Oxfam report references 'small individuals' who have obscene wealth in Nigeria. The successful fújì musicians like Obesere and other big men in their categories are not close to the small groups the report captures. Instead, going by their life trajectory and instability, which defines their career trajectory, they are familiar with the working class and the poor communities. The desire of the musician expressed through the One million cash gift to a lucky winner at a raffle draw scheduled for the radio presenter's birthday speaks on the one hand to his sense of generosity- an essential attribute of a big man and on the other hand, his attempt to change the living condition of people.

Furthermore, the practice of sharing money gifts by the musician and assistance by the radio presenter to the less privileged members of society by the musician also advances the Islamic

religious practice of Sadaka. It is instructive for privileged Muslim believers to give alms to the poor or less privileged also plays out in the narrative and the images. The chants of the Islamic honorific title Alhaji! Alhaji! by the people evokes and informs this perspective.

6.4 "I have money, I have people": A Close Reading of Taye Adebisi alias Taye Currency's Viral Chorus

"Mo lowo, mo lènìyàn, ki lo tun ku ti mi o ni? - I have money, I have people, what else is there that I have not got?"[202]

This section will continue the analysis of Gbajúmọ̀ through the lens of fújì. I will speak directly to the essence of the above Yorùbá proverb as a cultural signifier for the experience and the performance of Gbajúmọ̀. Popular music, according to Verne (2013), "inspire the fantasies and imaginations which guide us through our lives (1). The above proverb, "Mo lowo, mo l'ènìyàn, ki lo tun ku ti mi o ni? - I have money, I have people, what else is there that I have not got? conveys and articulates the vision of Gbajúmọ̀ in the light of one individual|s imagination and fantasies. This section will still take on Gbajúmọ̀'s performance to curate a boastful/grandeur persona. However, I will discuss Gbajúmọ̀'s experience with class exclusivity and difference by using the above proverb as an analytical frame and reference.

The Ibadan-based fújì musician Taye Adebisi, alias Taye Currency is one of the fújì musicians I followed extensively during the six months of fieldwork in 2018. In all of the live performances I witnessed, there is a recurring performance of the verse and chorus. It is a choice chorus because it causes ecstatic reactions from the audience. The viral chorus verse is an excerpt from a double album, Favour & Achievements (2018).

The content of the short excerpt in the viral/popular chorus by Taiye Currency is a call-and-response performance that has the musician Taiye Currency as the lead. The response is in two layers, the first set of respondents are the backup singers and drummers (with the echoing talking drums), and the audience often choruses the response after the band members. During live performances, the chorus often starts with the lyrical "I" (as projected by the musician). The lyrical "I" instruction goes to the unnamed audience presented with a plural "You". The instruction is always about the audience's lyrical "I" expectation (address as You plural) during the performance. The audience is expected to comport themselves and be relaxed. The musician talks about himself – a narrative reaffirming his personality and accomplishments. This part is

[202] A Yorùbá proverb, also referenced by Karin Barber while discussing the big-man

achieved through his adaptation of the Yorùbá proverbs I introduced at the beginning of this section. The excerpts go as follows:

Table 6.1: Adebisi Taiwo Akande alias Taye Currency (T. C.)- "Mo lowo, mo lẹrúku" *Favour & Achievements (2018)*

	Yorùbá	English Translation
1	Tẹ́ bá ti dé kẹ wà pa	*Once you arrived at our show*
2	Kí ẹ má ṣeyánmọ yànmọ	*Once you arrived, be relaxed*
3	Mó tún ní	*Do not misbehave*
4	*Chorus: (musician, egbe - the back-up, the talking drums and the audience*)	*Then I sing as follows*
5	T. C.: Emi gangan ni Taye Currency o	T C: *I am the real Taye Currency*
6	Egbe &Audience: Taye Currency o	Back-up &Audience: *Taye Currency*
7	T. C.: A lówó	*We have money*
8	T.C: A l'ọ́lá	*We have wealth*
9	T. C.: A l'ẹ́rùkù lẹ́yìn	*We command the loyalty of the death-slaves*
10	T. C.; Àwa la ni ìgboro Kubamson o	*We own the city Kubamson* (Kubamson is one of the musician's nicknames)
11	Ègbè, drums & audience: Ó l'ówó, O l'ówó, O l'owo (repeat)	back-up, drums & the audience:
12	The Egbe's: L'érúkú lẹ́yìn o	You are rich, you are rich, you are rich (repeat) Back-up: You command the death slaves

The above lyric of the chorus by Taye Currency exemplifies the performance, which supports the idea of the big man as a performance of "self-aggrandizement which permeated the society from top to bottom" (Barber 1991:183). Thus, the musician Taiye Currency as an artist is being curated within the discourse of the big man. A close look at the framing of the dialogic situation of the song will showcase the musician taking the addresser and his audience taking the addressee role. Closely reading the lyrics will produce a productive reading of the vision of the self, the musician's projects and the mode of relation he envisages from his audience.

Tí **ẹ bá ti dágbo t'àwa**	*Once you arrive at our show*
Tí **ẹ** bá ti dé ki e wà pa	*Once you arrive, be satisfied*
Kí e má ṣe yánmọyànmọ	*Do not misbehave*

In the three lines (1-3), the dialogic situation is established between the lyrical persona (the addresser), which is signalled by the possessive pronoun "our" - "awa" and the second person pronoun "e" (eyin) - "you". The dialogue situation initiated by the lyrical persona reveals an unveiling of a discourse that projects the musician in plural form. A performance of self-

positioning between the musician and the audience is implicated in the framing "awa" and "e" (eyin). This framing speaks to the musician's strategy, the vision of mapping the performance space and the relation between the musician and the audience. Although line 1 of the chorus states, "Ti e ba ti d'agbo t'awa - Once you arrived (our show)", this suggests that the musician recognises the inclusivity of his band members and the rest of his staff as a collective unit.

However, the internal power relation in a typical fújì band does not often give much agency to the band members. The lead musician wields absolute power and control over the band[203] (see my discussion in chapter two). The band's identity is also never mistaken to be anything beyond the persona of the lead musician. In this case, the vision embedded or communicated through "awa" – "our" goes directly and only to the musician, Taiye Currency. Indeed, the plural "our" could signal the vision, including the audience as a unit. However, this collective unit only has a defining and constant identity: Taiye Currency's. My argument on hierarchy speaker establishes while instructing the addressee becomes more self-evident with the subsequent, direct statement "ki e ma se yanmo yanmo" – "do not misbehave". This statement is not only an explicit instruction from the lyrical persona to the audience. It establishes the speaker as being in a higher hierarchical dynamic of relations. It creates the tone and hierarchy the musician shows with his audience and listeners in the song.

What more can we learn from the performance concerning the Gbajúmọ̀'s image? The second call-and-response chorus in lines 7-9, initiated by the musician (Taiye Currency) provides more perspective, it goes:

Taye Currency: **<u>Emi gangan ni Taye Currency o</u>**	Taye Currency: *I am the real Taye Currency*
Egbe &Audience: Taye Currency o	Back-up &Audience: *Taye Currency*
Taye Currency: A lówó	*We have money*
A lọ́lá	*We have wealth*
A l Ẹrú-Ikú lẹ́yìn	*We command the loyalty of the death-slaves (thugs)*
Àwa la ni ìgboro Kubamson o	*We, Kubamson*[204]*, owns the city* (Kubamson - nickname)

In the second part of the chorus, the musician explicitly centres himself on the ensuing discourse. He does this by invoking authorial intrusion (line 5) to sing: "Emi gangan ni Taye Currency - I am the real Taye Currency".This opening line in the second part of the chorus becomes relevant in the context of the subsequent lines of the lyrics. Since the subsequent lines say, "A l'owo, a l'ola, a l'ẹrúku l'eyin" – "We are rich (money)/ We are wealthy/ We command

[203] See Waterman (1990)

[204] Kubamson is an unstranlatable nickname for Taye Currency

the loyalty of the death-slaves (thugs)/ We, Kubamson, owns the city. The subsequent lines of the chorus revealed a shift in the narrative style. In line 5, Taye Currency switches from first person singular narrative voice communicated through the authorial intrusion of "Emi gangan ni Taye Currency - I am the real Taye Currency" to first person plural pronoun "awa -. We". The pronoun plural "awa -we" refers not to many people but to the musician Taye Currency. In essence, a larger-than-life or expansive image of the musician is invoked.

Another layer of the signification of the adapted proverb will show this by juxtaposing the original Yorùbá proverb side by side with its adaptive form in the song chorus.

Original Yorùbá Proverb and English Translation	Proverb Adaptation in Taye Currency Song and English Translation
"Mo lówó, mo lénìyàn, kíló tún kù tímì ò ní?" *I have money, I have people, what else is there that I have not got*	"A lówó, A lọ́lá, A lẸ́rú-Ikú lẹ́yìn, àwa la ni ìgboro" *We have money, We have wealth, We command the loyalty of the death-slaves (thugs), We, Kubamson, owns the city*

The original version of the proverb is short, and the relevant social possession in the Yorùbá socio-cultural context is built only on two strands (to possess money and people). However, the musician expands on the categories in its adaptation by invoking a structural discourse of class and hierarchy. In his (adaptative) version, "being wealthy" is included as a social status apart from "having money". To articulate his vision of the grandiose persona within the reality of the contemporary Yorùbá space, the musician invokes the performative categories to capture both the class constellations realities and the dynamics of social relations amongst the existing social classes. In addition, the original Yorùbá is perhaps enough within its historical moment of conception to only refer to "having people" in the description constitution of a Bigman's social capital and network. Although to have people is indeed open-ended and encompassing, but indeed neutral. However, the shifting reality will be established if the musician's representation is examined in line with the (new) reality of his contemporary social visions of class dynamics and social relations.

In chapters one and four, I discussed the concept of 'Ẹrú-Ikú' as part of 'Ìgboro' catgeories. I explained that the social category "Ẹrú-Ikú" – "Death-slaves" exists as an urban and lower-class phenomenon. The social categories are defiant, located amongst the working class and economically disadvantaged groups/ communities. They are primarily young men, and their modus operandi is often implicated in violent and masculine performance. They are implicated in the patronage system with a distinct chain of command with a patron on the hierarchy ladder.

In essence, when Taye Currency sings about commanding loyalty of "Ẹrú-Ikú – Death slaves", the "Death slaves" category displaces the more neutral idea of "having people" in the original Yorùbá proverb. Taye Currency indeed provides an insight into the prevailing social visions where the category of Ẹrú-Ikú gains prominence in the discourse of a Gbajúmọ̀. By this, the new Gbajúmọ̀'s imagination is implicated in patronage and sphere of influence along the line of the economic positionality of people. The social order that the musician evokes provides a systematic mind map of distinct categories (but culminating in the case of the Gbajúmọ̀) in terms of "being rich", being wealthy", "being a patron or commanding large followership of death slaves".

Taye Currency sums up the essence of being a Gbajúmọ̀ in the contemporary space by declaring in line 10 that "awa la ni igbooro - We, Kubamson, owns the city". In essence, to be a Gbajúmọ̀'s in Taye Currency's vision is ultimately to own the city. The musician's image is curated as Gbajúmọ̀ with a strong sphere of influence through the famous chorus.

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have concluded my critical examination of the representation and the performance of the cultural categories of Gbajúmọ̀ in the contemporary Yorùbá urban space and its underlining connection to fújì. I have examined Gbajúmọ̀ against the backdrop of the Yorùbá informal economic space and strategies of articulation of grandeur persona for a big man, especially the fújì musician. I have argued that the everyday life of Gbajúmọ̀ is an extension of the persona nurtured in and through fújì.

I have tracked fújì musicians beyond the performance space, where they are not just Gbajúmọ̀ by their artistic positionalities. In this case, I have discussed the strategies of narrating the success and testimonies of the social mobility of fújì musicians. I examined the interview materials of Abass Akande alias Obesere in a context outside the music performance space (the Ibadan radio station). I have also shown that against the backdrop of socio-economic conditions in the informal economic spaces (fújì's primary constituent), in Nigeria, the persona of Gbajúmọ̀ comes with a sense of social responsibility to the members of the public.

The lyric excerpt of the Ibadan-based Fuju musician Taye Adebisi alias Taye Currency speaks to the vision of Gbajúmọ̀ because it re-enacts the Yorùbá proverb "Mo lówó, mo lénìyàn, kíló tún kù tímì ò ní?" - *I have money, I have people, what else is there that I have not got.* Thus, wrapping a long thread of argument, I open in chapter five that Gbajúmọ̀ is a cultural

product at the intersection of self-realisation, socio-economic reality, individual ambition and public participation.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7 Conclusion

7.1 Fújì a way of knowing the contemporary Yorùbá world

fújì produces ways of knowing the everyday life of the Yorùbá urban space in diverse ways. It shapes the contemporary Yorùbá world in various ways as much as it contributes to the construction of the social persona. The transcendental nature of fújì's aesthetic beyond lyrics and the associated experiences of the performance underlines its manifestation as a continuum in the Yorùbá urban everyday life. I argue that the events in the urban Yorùbá lifeworld feed into, and produce, fújì aesthetics. In this way, fújì, a popular music genre, constitutes a constant dialectic aesthetic effect with the contemporary urban Yorùbá lifeworlds.

I have foregrounded the conceptualization of methodology and analysis of fújì as "generative … not starting from a finished text … (but) starting from a given context and tracing the emergence of a form, its articulation, consolidation, expression and recycling (Barber 2018:16). I have centred on the everyday as sources of producing "cultural texts" (Barber 2007) and encountering "social facts" (Barber 1987). In and through fújì, social struggles, life aspirations, and identities of musicians and their audience are negotiated within the dynamics of the urban Yorùbá space. The Yorùbá social-cultural space is constituted for fújì's identity and transformations where the self (either as a performance or representation) manifests in constant mediation with and through fújì. To understand fújì aesthetics, the context of production as part of its texts must be emphasized.

Having acknowledged fújì's roots as foundationally Islamic through its outgrowth from *Ajísàrì* tradition, where amateur Yorùbá Muslim male musicians "traditionally performed in the early hours of the mornings of Ramadan fast" Watermann (1990:372), the thesis demonstrates fújì's transformational characteristics built on constantly incorporating other musical elements, communities, and themes. I have engaged with fújì's history by pulling together a non-linear historical approach and anchoreing it on key figures associated with founding the genre, generations whose socio-economic background and lifeworks contribute to fújì's evolution and transformation. One of the key aspects of fújì's transformation is the incorporation of religious discourses and musical instruments beyond the Yorùbá Muslim community to musical (western) expansion instruments expansion driven by generations of fújì musicians. While constantly maintaining its foundational identity hinged on sets of Yorùbá traditional drums ensemble, thematic framings of religious discourses, melismatic single-note

renditional tonal delivery, and the Yorùbá oral poetic forms of oríkì. fújì's in-road into the mainstream Yorùbá urban space is discussed, as its ability to articulate and represent the aspiration of the realities of the urban Yorùbá working-class communities.

The thread of thoughts, arguments and reflection in this thesis will be further subsumed under two thematic anchorages that I refer to as 1) fújì: Reading Dyanmism and Complexities of everyday and 2) the aesthetic experience and the agency of music on the self.

7.2 Fújì: Reading Dynamism and Complexities of Everyday

Fújì defies simple definitions and classifications, and I have shown this in this thesis in various ways. This aspect is strongly reflected in chapter One of this thesis, where I reflect on the challenges of limiting literary methods on the strict assumption of classification underpinning plural epistemologies. The debate about the announcement of the 2016 Noble Prize in Literature, which saw Bob Dylan, an American singer-songwriter, as the winner, serves as an entry point into the debate. On this basis, the thesis stresses the acknowledgement of pluralities of historical trajectories and values, Barber (2007) as a catalyst to approach literature and its methods of analysis in a broad sense. The awareness of the assumptions that come with the understanding of literature beyond the written traditions thus gave impetus for the adoption of texts which Barber defines broadly to capture both written and oral (Ibid.3).

In the thesis, I embrace the context and the text – this is embedded as a product of the everyday life. As a people's invention that is "produced in specific historical circumstances" Barber (2018:3), thus fújì, as a popular music genre, allowed for interrogating the everyday life reality in the Yorùbá urban space. What I did in this study is to seize the opportunity to engage more broadly and robustly in the contemporary Yorùbá urban space through the lens of fújì. In this case, I learned that everyday life is complex, dynamic, unpredictable, and sometimes surprising. My study has been able to make sense of and interpret the idea espoused by Spencer, Ligaga and Musila (2018) that popular imaginaries as "range of cultural productions, platform, and interaction between consumers and producers" (3). I have conceptualized the fújì performance as a genre which offers a continuum mode of experience beyond the performance space through its extension into everyday urban Yorùbá space dynamics

Meanwhile, fújì as a popular music genre, foreground encounters with indigenous Yorùbá knowledge and contributes to the understanding of the contemporary Yorùbá urban space. Indigenous concepts like Ìgboro" (street) have been used as an analytical framework in the analysis of fújì practices of fújì and its context. In Chapter Four of this thesis, I have discussed

Ìgboro as a reference frame to a community of its kind as well as its particular, stylized performativity, which emerges out of and relates to the Yorùbá urban lifeworld. Through the insights gained through participants' observation of the Yorùbá urban spaces, the thesis has shown the relationship that exists between the concepts of Ìgboro performed in and through fújì, and their affinity to the Yorùbá historically marginalized working-class people. I argue that the ìgboro-enabled categories in the fújì context are often re-negotiated through performative acts of reclamation from negative, derogatory zones of meaning to the empowering, creative, and expressive way of being.

The cultural and artistic dynamics that exist between fújì musicians and their fans with a lens of rivalry and contestation contribute to the greater understanding of the contemporary Yorùbá urban milieu Focusing on the theme of rivalry in fújì lyrics provided the basis for analysing the representation of rivalries and hierarchies among the fújì musicians. Rivalry is not represented in fújì as isolation but is part of the broad manifestation of the socio-economic background of generations of fújì musicians. Thus, the theme of social mobility is a recurring theme in fújì music and discourse, In the thesis, I made a connection between the representation and the performance of mobility in fújì as part of ways of reading "interconnections between "lifestyle" and the aesthetic" Klein (2012: 128). I have shown how fújì musicians deploy their lyrics to reorientate the public perception of their status as part of their signalling deeper socio-cultural class constellations.

7.3 Aesthetic Experience and the Agency of Music (Fújì) on the Performance of Social Persona

The idea that music has the agency to act upon listeners is another major thread of thought through this thesis. This idea is drawn from Adorno, and it is within the framework of aesthetic experience. The effect of music on its listeners is taken seriously in my analysis in this thesis. The emphasis was on how the aesthetics approach to studying popular music helps to transcend music analysis as mere windows of reflecting societal issues. As ways of allowing fújì to manifest as a generative text, my thesis draws from the Yorùbá concepts, Ìgboro, Oríkì, Gbajúmọ̀, Èníyàn, Orí, which are relevant to engaging with fújì through the lens of aesthetic experience. The close reading of lyrics in different chapters of the thesis identifies oríkì as a Yorùbá oral performance and verbal practice that is adaptable and available for diverse subjects, animate and inanimate. Since Oríkì goes to the heart of and elicits the inner potency of the praise subject" (Abiodun 2014:12), it has a transcendental value. In this case, incorporating

oríkì into fújì makes it a performance space for articulating and projecting the imaginaries of the social persona of the individual.

However, the representation or performance of a social persona in fújì is not an innocent practice. Rather it is a cultural practice that is entrenched in the Yorùbá moral and ethical imagination of personhood, Ènìyàn. The Ènìyàn imaginary intersects with the Yorùbá indigenous cosmology of Ori. In the fújì context, these esoteric and philosophical notions culminate into the performance of the social category of Gbajúmọ̀. The how is situated in the nexus of connections and parameters of self-relation, which exists in fújì through the incorporation of oríkì poetic corpus in fújì. The oríkì's trope in fújì enables, diverse possibilities of imagining, performing, and curating the Gbajúmọ̀ into public discourse and collective memory of the Yorùbá society.

The thesis touches on elements of oríkì (self-praise) of fújì musicians through their adoption of aliases and descriptive titles as part of curating the 'self' strategies. As an extension of the self-manifestation, the performance space becomes the fújì's audience's space for articulating social alliances and projecting networks. Futhermore, the study has shown that the imaginaries of Gbajúmọ̀ which is hitherto curated in fújì lyrics transcend the confines of sonic space to the fabric of the everyday hustle and bustle of the urban Nigerian Yorùbá reality. In the everyday context, the grandeur persona and the generous traits of Gbajúmọ̀ were examined against the backdrop of the Yorùbá informal economic space. I have revealed the connection between the manifestation of Gbajúmọ̀ or the big man as a product of wide-scale socio inequalities and the everyday life of the working-class people in urban space that is marked with struggles of thriving and surviving.

7.4 Future Outlook

I have discussed in the thesis that the bulk of argument and analysis in this chapter is centred on the masculine performance space and subjects. However, females are still a minority in the fújì performance space. Notwithstanding, I have not engaged with any female musician's work in the thesis. I must acknowledge that researching fújì and gaining access to fújì networks is challenging. It is a masculine space with its peculiarity for patronage and clientele dynamics. Thus, accessing fújì musicians required access to a challenging and evasive network. Since fújì is traditionally an Islamic genre, my preliminary reflection of the dynamics with the limited presence of female fújì musicians is connected to the extent a woman musician can go in the context of Islam. In fact, Klein (2022) has drawn our attention to the complexity and the burden of being a female fújì musician in her discussion of the backlash that followed Alhaja Shaidat

Fatimah Al-Jafarriyah's at a public event she organized at the University of Ilorin on August 22, 2012). Klein showed that even in spaces like the University, a female fújì musician like Shaidat Fatimah is not immune from critics and gatekeepers of the moral and religious codes. my preliminary assessment of all the works of female fújì musicians like Alhaja Shaiidat and Alhaja Modinat Asabi alias Barry Ti De shows that while the male fújì musicians have mainstreamed their style of fújì by incorporating diverse themes ranging from religion, economy, and rivalry, sexually explicit themes; the works and the persona of the female musicians still reflect themes that stay true to the themes of religion and moral teachings.

Earlier in this thesis, I discussed my positionality regarding the fújì space as a Yorùbá male, educated and Christian. These layers I brought to the fieldwork space have produced research results to the extent that I have established in many instances of this thesis. However, it is important to state that my short stay in the field, with frequent travel across cities, does not allow me to establish a close relationship with some of the socially disadvantaged categories I have discussed. I am speaking particularly about the Ọmọ-Ìgboro or Ẹrú-Ikú (most of whom are casually referred to as thugs in the urban Yorùbá discourse). The extents I explored the phenomenon in fújì space in this thesis are the results of my participant observations and my insider's experience of the Yorùbá urban space.

On the one hand, my network of friends and family often express their dreadfulness of the fújì space. The basic assumption is that thuggery, hooliganism and risk of violence thrive in an average fújì performance space. Thus, my attempt in this thesis is to make sense of ìgboro experience as an extension of the urban Yorùbá social conditions. In essence, future research with adequate time resources and a model of incorporating the voices of Ọmọ-Ìgboro as part of fújì's aesthetic community will be a plausible endeavour.

Another limitation of this research can be situated in my limited engagement with the role the online community or online discourse on fújì plays in shaping the everyday experience of the urban Yorùbá lifeworlds. As I conclude this thesis in May 2023, one of the trending words on the Nigerian Twitter space is hashtag #Idan. I will translate #Idan loosely as magic, tact, an expression of the manoeuvring skill of an individual and a trickster persona. In the late 1990 and early 2000s, Sunny T Adesokan[205] was an household name in fújì space, he pioneered the

[205] Sunny T stands for Sunday Tua. He was popularly known as "Omo ina to n ko fújì"- " the Igbo boy who sings fújì". Sunny T was of Igbo ethnic extraction but became a professional fújì musician, he died on July 1, 2012 (https://naijagists.com/fújì-musician-sunny-t-adesokan-is-dead/ ; https://pmnewsnigeria.com/2012/07/02/how-fújì-star-sunny-t-died/)

slang “Idan” through his descriptive alias known as “Idan Amani”[206] popularly known as. Indeed, I have discussed how fújì contributes to the contemporary urban Yorùbá lexicon in chapter four, and I have also acknowledged the role of the work of Raji-Aderemi (2012) in pioneering the debate in this direction. What I envisage the future research on fújì to capture regarding fújì’s online representation or experience will partly speak to how the slangs or fújì materials like #Idan becomes an online trope of understanding notions of incipient virality.

[206] I am currently unsure of the first published date of the work. However, I found the link to the audio-visual material on YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y1msv3LVeBY)

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