

Effective Soundbites for Democracy: The Strategic Use of Political Slogans as Instruments of Steadfast Democratic Consciousness and Mobilisation in Africa

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Abstract: *Slogans play a crucial role in branding, mobilising collective actions and shaping democratic consciousness. The mobilisation of synergies is particularly important in contexts where socio-political engagement is politically risky. In many African countries, slogans serve as powerful tools for seeking and reinforcing democratic aspirations and ideals such as freedom and social justice. This study examines the effectiveness of political slogans as soundbites for democracy, decrypting their literary representation in African socio-democratic movements. The theoretical framework of the study is informed by critical discourse analysis, which highlights the role of language in constructing social realities and influencing socio-political behaviour. By focusing on the literary and rhetorical dimensions of slogans, the study offers insights into their persuasive power and positive impact on democratic struggles. The findings of this research contribute to the broader understanding of political communication in Francophone Africa, underlining the significance of slogans as strategies designed to energise the marginalised people for collective actions that solidify democratic aspirations.*

Keywords: Socio-political slogans, democratic aspirations, mobilisation, critical discourse analysis, political communication, social justice, Francophone Africa

INTRODUCTION

Political slogans have long played a pivotal role in shaping collective consciousness, mobilising social and political action, and reinforcing ideological commitments (Tincheva, 2020). What's in a Political Slogan? *Philology* 38 (38), 57-69. In democratic and authoritarian contexts alike, slogans serve as potent instruments for rallying support, constructing identities, and asserting political agency. This study investigates the strategic use of socio-political

slogans as effective soundbites for democracy in Francophone Africa, emphasising their capacity to foster steadfast democratic consciousness and mobilisation.

The literary representation of slogans in post-independent African novels offers rich insights into their rhetorical power and socio-political significance (Igwebuike, 2010). Through a critical discourse analysis of five selected novels, this study examines how slogans encapsulate collective aspirations, challenge authoritarian narratives, and sustain democratic struggles. The study aims to highlight the transformative potential of slogans as effective soundbites for democracy, illuminating their role in fostering political consciousness and inspiring collective action. As democratic movements continue to evolve in Africa, the findings of this study offer valuable perspectives on the enduring power of political slogans as tools for empowerment, resistance, and change.

In relation to the context of this study, it can be argued that political slogans function as vehicles of ideological transmission and collective identity formation, particularly in regions where socio-political participation is met with suppression, coercion, or systemic barriers. In many African nations, where democratic transitions have often been fraught with challenges, slogans have emerged as key instruments of political resistance and civic engagement. Their brevity, emotional appeal, and symbolic potency enable them to resonate across diverse socio-economic groups, thereby galvanising movements, inspiring action, and solidifying democratic aspirations.

The use of slogans in African politics is deeply rooted in the historical struggle for independence, the fight against colonial rule, and the post-independence movements advocating for democracy and good governance. Scholars such as Mbembe (2001) and Bayart (2009) have extensively analysed the role of political discourse in African governance, highlighting how slogans, as linguistic tools, encapsulate complex socio-political narratives in succinct and emotionally resonant phrases. They argue that political language in Africa is often characterised by metaphorical and symbolic expressions that serve to both legitimise and challenge power structures.

In Francophone Africa, slogans have been instrumental in democratic transitions, opposition movements, and civic engagement. According to Nzongola-Ntalaja (2002), political slogans in countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Senegal, and Burkina Faso have functioned as rallying cries for resistance against authoritarian rule. Similarly, Diawara (2010) explains the role of slogans in the Malian democratic movement, where they have been used to articulate collective grievances and aspirations. These slogans not only mobilise the masses but also serve as rhetorical devices that frame political ideologies and movements.

The literary representation of political slogans in African fiction provides a unique lens through which to examine their socio-political significance. African writers, particularly in the Francophone tradition, have incorporated political discourse into their works to critique governance, advocate for social justice, and document historical struggles. Novels such as Jean-Marie Mbailao's *Le Prostitué Politique* (2021), Alimou Sinta's *Le sang pour l'alternance*

(2021), Eugène Nzamboung's *L'amour à l'ombre des guerres tribales* (2018), Dianguina Diarisso's *Et les oiseaux chantaient l'aurore* (2014), and Dominique M'Fouilou's *Vent d'espoir sur Brazzaville* (1991) illustrate how political slogans function within fictional narratives to reflect real-world political struggles. By analysing these literary representations, this study seeks to uncover the deeper rhetorical and ideological dimensions of political slogans in Francophone Africa.

The study of political slogans is essential in understanding the dynamics of political communication and democratic engagement in Africa. Fairclough (1995) and Van Dijk (2008) have demonstrated that language plays a critical role in shaping political realities and influencing socio-political behaviour. In the African context, where oral traditions and linguistic creativity are deeply embedded in cultural and political practices, slogans serve as a bridge between political elites and the masses.

Francophone African countries, in particular, have witnessed a proliferation of political slogans during election campaigns, protests, and revolutionary movements. For instance, in Burkina Faso, slogans such as "Blaise dégage" were instrumental in the popular uprising that led to the ousting of President Blaise Compaoré in 2014. In Senegal, opposition movements have used slogans such as "Y'en a marre" [Enough is enough] to mobilise youth against corruption and political repression (Gueye, 2013). These examples illustrate the potency of slogans as catalysts for political change and social mobilisation.

By focusing on the literary and rhetorical dimensions of political slogans, this study extends the discourse beyond traditional political communication studies. Literature serves as a powerful medium for preserving and analysing political narratives, offering insights into how slogans resonate within different socio-political contexts. Through a critical discourse analysis of selected novels, this research examines how fictional representations of slogans contribute to the broader understanding of political activism and democratic struggles in Francophone Africa.

Theoretical framework

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) provides a theoretical lens through which to examine the intricate relationship between language, power, and ideology. Political slogans, as discursive constructs, play a vital role in shaping and reflecting socio-political realities. This literature review explores the foundations of CDA, the significance of political slogans, and the application of CDA to analyze political discourse. Special attention is given to the perspectives of leading scholars, including Norman Fairclough, Teun A. van Dijk, and Achille Mbembe, whose works provide essential frameworks for understanding the socio-political implications of slogans, particularly in the context of Francophone Africa.

CDA emerged as an interdisciplinary approach to analysing discourse, focusing on how language functions as a means of social control and ideological reproduction. Fairclough (1995) argues that language is both a social practice and a mechanism through which power relations are established and maintained. He introduces a three-dimensional framework for

CDA, comprising textual analysis, discourse practice, and social practice. Through this framework, researchers can explore how discourse is produced, distributed, and consumed, revealing underlying ideological structures.

Van Dijk (2008) extends Fairclough's work by incorporating cognitive and social dimensions into CDA. He argues that discourse serves as a battleground where ideological struggles unfold, with different actors seeking to assert dominance over public narratives. His concept of the "ideological square", which highlights the ways in which discourse emphasises the positive aspects of "us" and the negative aspects of "them", is particularly useful in analysing political slogans. These slogans, often employed in electoral campaigns or protests, reflect broader struggles over representation, identity, and power.

In relation to the political slogans as discursive constructs, it is argued that such communicative elements are more than mere rhetorical devices; they function as ideological tools that encapsulate collective aspirations, grievances, and calls to action. According to Chilton (2004), slogans use persuasive linguistic strategies such as metaphor, repetition, and ambiguity to evoke emotional responses and mobilise public sentiment. The brevity and memorability of slogans allow them to permeate public consciousness, reinforcing political messages and shaping discourse.

In authoritarian or repressive regimes, slogans take on an additional role as instruments of resistance. Wodak (2009) emphasises that discourse is inherently linked to power structures, and in contexts where free expression is curtailed, slogans serve as subversive speech acts. By analysing slogans within their socio-political contexts, researchers can depict how language functions as a mechanism for both control and opposition.

Applying CDA to socio-political slogans enables a deeper understanding of how language reinforces or challenges ideologies and power structures. Studies have demonstrated that slogans employ strategic linguistic choices to shape political narratives. For example, a CDA study of political slogans in post-apartheid South Africa revealed how slogans were used to frame historical injustices and articulate visions for the future (Martin & Wodak, 2003). The analysis of lexical choices, syntactic structures, and rhetorical devices in these slogans highlighted the ways in which political actors sought to establish legitimacy and mobilise support.

Similarly, a study on political discourse in Pakistan used CDA to examine how slogans reinforced nationalistic ideologies and religious identities (Hussain, 2020). The findings showed that slogans functioned as ideological markers, framing political opposition as threats to national unity. This study underscores the broader applicability of CDA in examining the ideological underpinnings of political discourse.

Achille Mbembe's (2001) concept of the postcolony provides a critical framework for analysing political discourse in Francophone Africa. He argues that postcolonial states are characterised by the interplay of power, resistance, and performative politics. Language,

symbols, and public rituals play a crucial role in shaping political realities, with slogans acting as key elements in this discursive landscape.

Mbembe's work highlights the ambivalence of power in the postcolony, where state authority is simultaneously reinforced and undermined by its own discursive practices. Political slogans, whether issued by the state or opposition groups, participate in this dynamic by constructing political identities and legitimising or delegitimising authority. For example, during anti-colonial struggles, slogans served as rallying cries for independence movements, encapsulating aspirations for sovereignty and self-determination. In contemporary postcolonial states, slogans continue to function as expressions of dissent and resistance, challenging the persistence of neo-colonial structures.

Van Dijk's (2008) framework for analysing discourse and power is particularly relevant in political contexts. He argues that discourse is not merely a reflection of social reality but an active force in shaping power relations. His work emphasises that access to discourse is unequally distributed, with political elites exerting control over dominant narratives while marginalised groups struggle for representation.

In the context of Francophone Africa, where political repression often limits freedom of speech, slogans serve as alternative avenues for political expression. Van Dijk's concept of "cognitive control" whereby elites shape public opinion through discourse helps explain how political authorities attempt to regulate slogans and counter-discourses. Conversely, slogans created by opposition movements function as counter-hegemonic narratives, contesting official discourse and challenging state power.

In Francophone Africa, political slogans have been instrumental in shaping public discourse and political engagement. During the colonial period, slogans played a crucial role in mobilising resistance against European rule. Post-independence, slogans were used by political leaders to construct national identities and legitimise governance structures. However, as authoritarian tendencies emerged, slogans also became tools of state propaganda, reinforcing official ideologies and suppressing opposition voices.

In recent years, social movements in Francophone Africa have revitalised the use of political slogans as instruments of protest. The strategic use of language in these slogans underscores the enduring power of discourse in political struggles.

This research situates slogans within the broader discourse of political communication, recognising them as linguistic tools that encapsulate complex socio-political narratives in accessible and memorable forms. Given the complex intersections between language, power, and ideology, CDA emerges as a pertinent theoretical framework for analysing political slogans. By focusing on the ways in which discourse reflects and shapes social and political realities, CDA will facilitate an examination of how slogans operate within literary texts as sites of political contestation. The selected novels, written in response to the socio-political conditions of their respective periods, offer critical insights into how slogans contribute to

democratic struggles. Through a close reading of these texts, the study examines the rhetorical strategies used by political slogans and their effectiveness in influencing both fictional and real-world political discourses.

Analysing the representation of socio-political slogans as effective soundbites for democracy in Africa

Socio-political slogans have long played a crucial role in shaping public discourse and mobilising communities in Africa. As powerful soundbites, they encapsulate complex ideas into concise, memorable phrases that resonate with the masses. These slogans serve as tools of persuasion, uniting people behind common causes, whether in times of social events, political upheaval, social movements (Menci, and Hamzaoui, 2024), or electoral campaigns. The rhythmic and repetitive nature of slogans enhances their effectiveness, making them easily recalled and widely disseminated across different linguistic and cultural landscapes. Their oral transmission, often reinforced by chants, songs, and protest marches, transforms them into auditory symbols of resistance and collective identity.

This section explores how socio-political slogans function as effective soundbites for democracy in Francophone Africa, examining their linguistic structures, rhetorical strategies, and the contexts in which they emerge. From independence-era struggles to contemporary demands for good governance, slogans reflect the evolving political consciousness of citizens. Drawing on examples from the literary representation of social events, political rallies, and activist movements, the analysis highlights how slogans contribute to democratic engagement by simplifying complex social and political messages and fostering collective action. By unpacking the power of slogans (Van de Velde, 2022) as both verbal, visual and sonic expressions, this chapter seeks to illustrate their enduring role in shaping socio-political participation, challenging authority, and reinforcing democratic ideals across Francophone Africa.

The power of collective rhythms: chanted slogans and body sounds as instruments of unity

Throughout history, the synchronisation of voices and bodily movements in collective settings has served as a powerful tool for unity, resilience, and resistance. Chanted slogans, coupled with the rhythmic sounds produced by body movements, form an essential social ritual that not only strengthens group identity but also galvanises individuals in times of adversity. Whether in labour-intensive agricultural work, political protests, or team sports, these vocal and physical expressions generate psychological force and communal solidarity, enabling participants to confront challenges with renewed vigour.

One of the fundamental aspects of chanted slogans is their ability to energise and unify a group. In various cultural settings, collective chanting fosters a shared emotional experience that amplifies motivation and determination. This phenomenon is particularly evident in agricultural sectors, where labourers use synchronised chants while cultivating the land. The rhythm created by their voices, in conjunction with the sounds of their hoes striking the soil, provides not only a sense of coordination but also a motivational cadence that alleviates

physical exhaustion. This act of vocalisation transforms an otherwise strenuous task into a collective experience where hardship is mitigated through mutual encouragement.

Similarly, when chanting is paired with synchronised body movements, it enhances a group's psychological and emotional strength. The repetitive nature of these actions generates a trance-like state that allows individuals to transcend their limitations. In many cases, participants experience an increased sense of purpose, as the unity of voices and movements fosters a deeper connection to the cause at hand. The impact of this synchronicity extends beyond physical endurance; it creates an emotional resonance that fortifies individuals against external pressures and adversity.

A poignant example of this phenomenon is illustrated in Dominique M'Fouilou's *Vent d'espoir sur Brazzaville* (2000), where a determined crowd mobilises through the fusion of rhythmic footsteps and political chanted slogans.

« Leurs pas résonnaient dans un écho harmonieux que seuls les bruits du dehors atténuaient. Lorsqu'ils apparurent, une joie souleva la foule entassée au coude à coude dans la cour et à l'entrée. 'Vive le Congo! Vive le Congo!', hurlait-elle. Quelqu'un lança:
- Hip, hip, hip...
- Hourrah ! hourrah ! » (Vent, p.58).

[Their footsteps echoed in a harmonious rhythm, softened only by the noises outside. When they appeared, joy lifted the crowd, packed shoulder to shoulder in the courtyard and at the entrance. 'Long live Congo! Long live Congo!' the crowd shouted. Someone called out:
-Hip, hip, hip...
-Hooray! Hooray!].

As the narrative describes, the footsteps of the assembled people create a harmonious rhythm, reinforcing the collective resolve of the demonstrators. The synchronisation of movement and sound serves as an emotional catalyst, uniting individuals under a common purpose. The spontaneous eruption of slogans such as "Long live Congo! Long live Congo!" not only instills a sense of national pride but also solidifies the determination of the crowd in the face of adversity. The call-and-response structure of "Hip, hip, hip... Hooray! Hooray!" further amplifies this unity, turning individual voices into a singular force of resistance.

This ritualistic practice of chanting and rhythmic movement is not limited to political activism. It must be noted that across cultures and historical periods, similar expressions have been used in religious ceremonies, military drills, and even sports. In each of these instances, the combination of vocalisation and synchronised bodily action fosters group cohesion and psychological resilience. In military traditions, marching soldiers chant cadences to maintain unity and discipline, transforming individual effort into collective strength. Likewise, in sporting events, fans and players alike engage in rhythmic clapping and chanting to bolster team morale, demonstrating the universal nature of this social phenomenon.

One of the primary reasons chanted slogans and rhythmic bodily sounds are so effective in challenging adversity lies in their ability to create a heightened sense of belonging:

« ‘A bas la présidence à vie’, ‘A bas la modification de la constitution pour mourir au pouvoir’, et le public de toutes leurs tripes, de toute leur exaspération, vomissait ‘A bas la présidence à vie’, ‘A bas la modification de la constitution pour faire la présidence à vie’, leurs vociférations mêlées à la vigueur de leurs pas faisaient trembler tout le coin » (Sang, p.50).

[‘May the lifetime presidency be cursed’, ‘May the constitutional amendments to die in power be cursed’, and the crowd, with all their guts, with all their exasperation, roared: ‘May the lifetime presidency be cursed’, ‘May the constitutional amendments to establish a lifetime presidency be cursed’. Their shouts, combined with the vigour of their steps, made the whole area tremble].

When individuals participate in a shared vocal and physical ritual, they experience a dissolution of personal boundaries, merging into a collective identity. This collective consciousness provides psychological reinforcement, making it easier to endure hardship and resist external threats. The very act of voicing slogans and moving in unison produces a psychological feedback loop in which confidence and determination are continually reinforced by the presence of others.

Furthermore, this practice serves as a non-violent yet powerful form of resistance. In moments of political or social upheaval, chanted slogans transform into a means of defiance, amplifying the voices of the oppressed. As seen in *Vent d’espoir sur Brazzaville*, the rhythm of feet and voices not only marks the physical presence of the demonstrators but also symbolises their unwavering commitment to their cause. The communal experience of chanting transforms fear into courage, disillusionment into hope, and passivity into action. This shared energy challenges adversity by creating a force that is greater than the sum of its individual participants.

The ritual of chanted slogans combined with bodily sounds ultimately functions as a profound instrument of unity, motivation, and resistance. Whether in the fields of agricultural labour, the fervour of political demonstrations, or the camaraderie of sports teams, this practice strengthens collective identity and fosters resilience. The power of this tradition lies in its ability to transform individual effort into collective strength. By synchronising their voices and movements, individuals transform into a formidable force capable of confronting adversity with unwavering determination.

The power visual slogans as catalysts of unity, community, and resistance

Visual slogans, coupled with the strategic use of colours, have long served as important tools for social and political movements, fostering unity, building community, and articulating resistance against adversity. Whether displayed on banners, placards, or t-shirts, these visual

expressions are more than simple statements; they are symbols of collective identity and defiance. As illustrated in Alimou Sinta's novel *Le sang pour l'alternance* (2021), the imagery of demonstrators clad in red t-shirts emblazoned with powerful slogans exemplifies how colour and text together create a visual language of protest. This section explores the ways in which such visual slogans and colour choices function as mechanisms of solidarity, group cohesion, and political resistance in the face of oppression.

Slogans act as rallying cries, encapsulating the shared goals and frustrations of a movement. When displayed prominently on clothing, banners, or public spaces, they serve as unifying elements that bring together diverse individuals under a common cause. In Sinta's novel, the demonstrators' t-shirts bore slogans such as “*No to a lifetime presidency*”, “*No to a third term*”, and “*No to constitutional amendments*”:

« À six heures déjà, alors que la fraîcheur et la pénombre saisissaient encore la nature, quelques personnes étaient déjà au carrefour-tannerie, tous vêtus de rouge, de t-shirts sur lesquels étaient écrits plusieurs slogans ‘Non à la présidence à vie’, ‘Non au troisième mandat’, ‘Non à la modification de la constitution’ » (Sang, p.41).

[It was already six o'clock and while the coolness and darkness were still gripping the horizons, a few people were already at the Tannerie boulevard, all dressed in red, wearing t-shirts with several slogans written on them: ‘No to a lifetime presidency’, ‘No to a third term’, ‘No to constitutional amendments’].

These short, direct messages succinctly communicate the protestors' grievances, ensuring that their collective stance is visible and understood by both supporters and adversaries.

The uniformity in these slogans fosters a sense of belonging, as participants see their personal convictions echoed in the statements worn by those around them. This shared visual language creates an environment where individuals, regardless of their backgrounds, can identify with a larger movement. The act of wearing the same slogans reinforces the idea that their struggle is not an individual one but a collective effort, strengthening their resolve and unity in the face of political oppression.

Beyond slogans, the choice of colour in protest movements plays an equally significant role in fostering community. Colours carry symbolic meanings that transcend language barriers, making them effective tools for unifying groups. In *Le sang pour l'alternance*, red t-shirts dominate the scene of protest, creating a striking and cohesive visual identity among the demonstrators. Red, often associated with passion, urgency, and resistance, becomes a symbol of defiance against an unjust system. By donning the same colour, protestors visually reinforce their commitment to the cause, forming a powerful collective front that commands attention.

The use of colour not only strengthens solidarity among demonstrators but also facilitates recognition and visibility. Media coverage of protests often relies on strong visual imagery, and a crowd wearing the same colour creates a striking, memorable image that resonates far beyond the protest itself (Tshuma, et al., 2024). This visibility ensures that the movement's

message reaches wider audiences, further solidifying its presence in public discourse and fostering a broader sense of community among sympathisers who may not be physically present.

Furthermore, in oppressive political climates, visual slogans and colours serve as a form of resistance, allowing marginalised voices to challenge authority even in the face of censorship and repression. Slogans like “No to a third term” explicitly reject authoritarian tendencies, making it difficult for those in power to ignore the people’s dissent. When worn publicly, these slogans transform the bodies of demonstrators into moving billboards of resistance, forcing political leaders to confront the opposition that surrounds them.

Finally, the strategic use of colour amplifies this resistance. Governments often attempt to suppress protests by dispersing crowds or silencing voices, but a uniform visual identity, such as the red t-shirts described in Sinta’s novel, ensures that the colour itself becomes a symbol of defiance, and the act of wearing it can be a defiant statement against the status quo.

Political slogans as effective sonic expressions for mobilisation

Political slogans have long served as excellent tools for mobilisation and the reinforcement of democratic consciousness in Francophone Africa. As effective soundbites, these slogans encapsulate complex political ideologies in a few words, making them accessible to the masses and instrumental in collective action. The strategic use of slogans in political mobilisation finds resonance in literature, where authors depict their sonic impact and their ability to forge unity and determination among the people. Through an analysis of M’Fouilou’s *Vent d’espoir sur Brazzaville* (2000), Diarisso’s *Et les oiseaux chantaient l’aurore* (2014), and Nzamboung’s *L’amour à l’ombre des guerres tribales* (2018), this section explores how political slogans function as democratic instruments, enabling mass mobilisation and fostering a steadfast political consciousness.

In *Vent d’espoir sur Brazzaville*, M’Fouilou illustrates how a slogan can rapidly transform an uncoordinated crowd into an organised political force. The passage vividly describes a group moving through the neighbourhoods, gaining momentum as individuals emerge from their homes and join the movement.

« La bande, par les quartiers, sous la pénombre du crépuscule, s'en allait, débordant les rues. A la clameur jetée par toutes les bouches, certains sortaient de leurs maisons, galopant eux aussi, se joignant à la bande qu'ils grossissaient. Lorsqu'elle arriva devant la première maison, elle formait déjà une masse compacte, confondue de gens décidés, aux cheveux épars et poussiéreux. Les cris recommencèrent: 'Mort aux ministres! Mort aux ministres!' » (Vent, p.66).

[The group moved forward through the neighbourhoods and under the twilight darkness, overflowing into the streets. A simple call by some people made some individuals to come out of their homes running, joining another group and swelling its ranks. By the time the group

reached the first house, it had already formed a compact mass of determined people with dusty and uncombed hair. The shouts began again: ‘Death to the ministers! Death to the ministers!’]. The repeated slogans of “Death to the ministers! Death to the ministers!” signal a collective outrage against political leaders, turning an otherwise dispersed population into a formidable mass of resistance. The sonic force of the slogan, simple yet incendiary, reinforces a collective political consciousness. By repeatedly voicing their grievances, the demonstrators solidify their resolve, using the slogan as a binding force to sustain their democratic struggle. The author’s description of their physical state, “a compact mass of determined people with dusty and uncombed hair”, further emphasises the depth of their struggle and commitment. The effectiveness of this slogan as a tool of mobilisation is evident in its ability to generate unity and incite action, demonstrating how words, when collectively chanted, can become catalysts for political change.

Similarly, in Diarisso’s *Et les oiseaux chantaient l’aurore*, the sonic expression of a slogan reverberates through the scene, disrupting normal urban life and forcing observers like Kounady to confront its power:

« Il entendit venir de loin, le bruit d’une manifestation, hurlant un slogan que Kounady ne parvenait pas à comprendre. Il distingua un voleur poursuivi et harcelé par des gens et le cortège de la manifestation répétait toujours le même slogan. Les voitures bloquées par cette marche klaxonnaient d’impatience» (oiseaux, pp.166-167).

[He heard from afar the noise of a demonstration, shouting a slogan that Kounady could not understand. He saw a thief being chased and harassed by people, while the protest procession kept repeating the same slogan. The cars, blocked by the march, honked impatiently].

The passage describes a demonstration advancing with relentless energy, chanting a slogan that remains incomprehensible to the protagonist. The fact that the slogan remains unintelligible to Kounady underscores the way sound, beyond its literal meaning, can exert an overwhelming force. The protest's intensity is magnified by its disruptive effects, such as cars honking, pedestrians frozen in their tracks, all of which illustrate how slogans, through the intensity of repetition and volume, can create an immersive resistance atmosphere. This scene highlights the unifying function of slogans, demonstrating their ability to momentarily suspend routine activities and immerse an entire community in the act of political protest.

Nzamboung’s *L’amour à l’ombre des guerres tribales* offers a more performative perspective on the role of slogans in mobilisation. In this novel, slogans merge with music, dance, and visual spectacle, creating a deeply immersive political experience:

« Ils dansaient et chantaient avec des voix graves. Des taches aux couleurs vives qui maculaient leurs visages arrachaient des cris de frayeur aux enfants portés par les nombreux spectateurs qui bordaient le circuit du défilé » (Amour, p.136).

[They danced and sang in deep voices. The bright-coloured stains that covered their faces elicited cries of fear from the children carried by the many spectators lining the parade route]. The fusion of slogans with rhythm and movement reinforces their mnemonic quality, making them not only auditory but also performative acts of resistance. The fear elicited in the children unveils the emotional intensity of the moment, illustrating how slogans, when embedded in powerful demonstrations, can evoke visceral reactions. By integrating slogans into traditional forms of expression such as dance and song, the demonstrators ensure their messages for political resistance resonate deeply with both participants and onlookers. This strategic use of sound amplifies their message, demonstrating that political consciousness is not only verbal but also embodied and enacted in communal performances.

The effectiveness of political slogans as democratic instruments also lies in their capacity to distil complex political sentiments into concise and repeatable phrases. These slogans serve as auditory symbols of resistance, reinforcing shared grievances and aspirations. They create a sense of collective identity among protesters, uniting them under a common cause. The repetition of slogans transforms them into powerful calls to action, motivating individuals who might otherwise remain passive. As seen in *Vent d'espoir sur Brazzaville*, the crowd's collective chanting reinforces their determination, illustrating how slogans can sustain momentum in political struggles. In *Et les oiseaux chantaient l'aurore*, the disruption caused by the repeated slogan highlights how sound itself can become an agent of resistance, compelling even those outside the movement to acknowledge its presence. Meanwhile, *L'amour à l'ombre des guerres tribales* reveals how slogans can be integrated into cultural traditions, enhancing their memorability and impact.

Beyond their immediate role in mobilisation, slogans also serve as instruments of steadfast democratic consciousness. They act as reminders of political struggles, ensuring that democratic aspirations persist beyond the immediate moment of protest. Even when demonstrations dissipate, the slogans endure, reinforcing the collective memory of resistance. This endurance is particularly significant in societies where political repression seeks to silence dissent. By continuously voicing these slogans, communities assert their agency and sustain their democratic consciousness despite opposition.

Furthermore, in many Francophone African societies, where oral traditions play a crucial role in knowledge transmission, the spoken and chanted word holds profound significance. Slogans leverage this cultural context to maximise their reach and impact. The power of repetition ensures that even those who may not initially understand the nuances of a political issue can grasp its essence through the rhythmic and emphatic delivery of slogans. This accessibility makes slogans an indispensable tool in socio-democratic movements, enabling broader participation and engagement.

Finally, the Francophone African literature captures the strategic use of slogans in ways that reflect their real-world impact. In each of the novels analysed, slogans emerge as more than words; they become sonic weapons that shape political realities. They unify the marginalised, disrupt the status quo, and embed democratic ideals within the consciousness of the people.

Whether through the forceful chants of M'Fouilou's demonstrators, the overwhelming sonic atmosphere of Diarisso's protests, or the performative energy of Nzamboung's resistance movements, these texts highlight the enduring power of slogans as soundbites for democracy. By framing political struggles in rhythmic, repeatable phrases, slogans transform fleeting moments of dissent into lasting movements for change. They remind the people that their voices, when united in a chorus of defiance, have the power to challenge authority and demand justice. In this way, the sonic expressions of slogans continue to serve as vital instruments of democratic mobilisation and consciousness in Francophone Africa.

Political Slogans and ideology, mobilisation, and electoral impact"

The representation of political slogans in narratives serves as a crucial analytical framework for understanding the broader socio-political landscape in which they are embedded. While this study has so far focused on the triple-dimensional nature of slogans, such as verbal, visual, and sonic, it is also essential to recognise their function as strategic tools for articulating political ideologies and manifestos. Political slogans are not merely catchy phrases meant for rhetorical effect; they are vehicles for ideological dissemination, mobilisation, and identity formation within political movements.

Jean-Marie Mbailao's *Le Prostitué Politique* (2021) provides valuable insights into the role of political slogans within electoral campaigns, arguing that every political party crafts slogans as part of its strategic communication to highlight its unique selling points. These slogans function as condensed ideological messages designed to galvanize the electorate, persuade undecided voters, and consolidate party support. As Mbailao observes:

« Pendant ces passages à l'antenne, chaque parti choisit les meilleurs slogans pour convaincre les Tadorais de voter pour son candidat »
(Prostitué, p.232).

[During these broadcasts, each party chose the best slogans to convince the Tadorais to vote for its candidate].

This statement underscores the deliberate selection of slogans to optimise voter persuasion and electoral success. To understand the effectiveness of political slogans, one must examine their linguistic, semiotic, and psychological dimensions. Linguistically, political slogans often employ rhetorical devices such as parallelism, rhyme, and alliteration to enhance memorability. For instance, slogans like "Yes We Can" (Barack Obama, 2008) or "Take Back Control" (Brexit Campaign, 2016) use simple, affirmative structures that reinforce agency and empowerment. These linguistic choices are not accidental but are carefully crafted to resonate with the emotions and aspirations of the target audience.

Visually, political slogans gain traction through their representation in campaign posters, banners, billboards, and digital media. The choice of typography, colour schemes, and imagery further amplifies the message's impact. For example, red is often associated with revolutionary or socialist movements, conveying passion and urgency, while blue suggests stability and

trustworthiness, frequently used in conservative or centrist campaigns. The visual reinforcement of slogans enhances their psychological imprint, making them more persuasive and enduring in public consciousness.

The sonic aspect of political slogans plays a significant role in their dissemination, particularly in oral and audio-visual media. Chanting slogans at rallies, incorporating them into campaign songs, or using them in advertisements ensures they reach a wide audience. The repetitive nature of slogan chanting in protests or political gatherings reinforces collective identity and solidarity among supporters. Historical examples include “Workers of the world, unite!” (Karl Marx) and “Sí se puede” (César Chávez), both of which transcend their immediate political contexts to become rallying cries for broader social movements. Slogans like “Make America Great Again” (Donald Trump, 2016 and 2024) evoke a sense of nostalgia and national pride, appealing to voters’ emotions and perceptions of historical decline and potential restoration. Beyond their aesthetic and rhetorical functions, political slogans serve a pragmatic purpose in electoral politics. They encapsulate party ideologies and policy priorities in digestible formats that can be easily communicated to mass audiences. In electoral democracies, where political parties must compete for attention in an increasingly media-saturated environment, a well-crafted slogan can mean the difference between electoral victory and failure.

Mbailao’s assertion that political parties select slogans to “convince the Tadorais to vote for their candidate” suggests that slogans are not just reflections of political ideologies but also performative acts aimed at shaping voter perceptions. This performativity is evident in the way slogans construct political narratives.

The impact of political slogans extends beyond election cycles. They often become embedded in political discourse and collective memory, influencing future campaigns and policy directions. The endurance of slogans in political culture is evident in how movements and parties continuously adapt and repurpose them to suit new contexts. For instance, the civil rights slogan “Black Lives Matter” has transcended its original protest context to influence mainstream political discourse, policy discussions, and global social movements.

However, the effectiveness of political slogans is not guaranteed; they can also backfire if perceived as insincere, ambiguous, or contradictory. A poorly chosen slogan can alienate potential supporters or become the subject of ridicule. For example, in the United Kingdom, Theresa May’s 2017 campaign slogan “Strong and Stable” was widely criticised when her government appeared anything but stable, ultimately contributing to a loss of public confidence. Similarly, slogans that oversimplify complex political issues may be challenged for their lack of substance.

The study of political slogans in literature and real-world electoral politics highlights their dual nature as both ideological markers and pragmatic tools for persuasion. By analysing their verbal, visual, and sonic components, one gains a deeper understanding of how political actors communicate with and influence the electorate. Mbailao’s *Le Prostitué Politique* provides an

illustrative case study, demonstrating how slogans function within political narratives to frame ideologies and mobilise citizens.

Conclusions and contribution of the study to the body of knowledge

In conclusion, this study's aim was to decrypt political slogans and unveil how the literary representation makes them indispensable elements of political communication, serving as strong mobilisation and persuasion tools, and symbols of socio-political ideology. The study has revealed that the effectiveness of slogans lies in their ability to condense complex political messages into accessible and emotionally resonant expressions. Well-designed slogans have the power to shape political landscapes, influence voter behaviour, and leave lasting imprints on collective memory. Thus, a critical examination of their role in political narratives provides valuable insights into the dynamics of power, rhetoric, and mass persuasion in contemporary politics.

This research makes several contributions to the fields of political communication, literary studies, and Francophone African studies. First, it highlights the role of political slogans as literary and rhetorical devices that shape democratic consciousness in Francophone Africa. By analysing slogans within literary texts, this study broadens the scope of political discourse analysis, demonstrating how fictional narratives serve as critical spaces for reflecting and contesting political realities.

Second, this study enhances the understanding of political mobilisation strategies in contexts where direct political participation is constrained. Scholars such as Chabal and Daloz (1999) have argued that African political engagement often operates within informal networks and alternative communication channels. By examining the symbolic power of slogans, this research reveals how linguistic economy and rhetorical force sustain democratic engagement, even in repressive environments.

Third, this study contributes to literary criticism by offering a discourse-based analysis of African political novels. While much scholarship on African literature has focused on political themes of colonialism, postcolonial identity, and resistance, this research specifically foregrounds the role of slogans as narrative devices that encapsulate political struggle. By doing so, it provides a fresh perspective on how Francophone African writers engage with political discourse, illustrating the interplay between fiction and reality in shaping democratic aspirations.

Fourth, this study offers practical implications for political actors, activists, and policymakers interested in the role of communication in socio-democratic movements. Understanding the strategic function of slogans in mobilisation efforts can inform the development of more effective political messaging, advocacy campaigns, and grassroots activism. By recognising the power of succinct and emotionally resonant language, political leaders and civil society organisations can harness slogans as tools for fostering civic engagement and sustaining democratic movements.

Finally, this research contributes to the broader discourse on political communication in Africa by focusing specifically on some of the Francophone countries that may be underrepresented in scholarship on African political rhetoric. By analysing slogans within a Francophone African context, this study provides a nuanced understanding of regional political dynamics, emphasising the linguistic and cultural specificities that shape political discourse.

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