

Ayo Olukotun · Sharon Adetutu Omotoso
Editors

Political Communication in Africa

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*To our spouses Stella and Ralph
and
Our students: the coming afro-optimist
generations, committed to seeing Africa gain
prominence in the global sphere of influence.*

Preface

Our experiences as teachers of Political Communication across Universities in Nigeria revealed a limited understanding of the subject. Similarly, our interactions with fellow scholars at continental and international workshops and conferences also reflect how developing countries are viewed as mere receivers (receptors) who may contribute little or nothing to global development. With more states turning towards democratic rule in Africa, there is a necessity to examine the centrality of political communication within and among states and in relation to the world at large. African theorists and their postulations have not gained as much attention as they should and issues which should form the crux of political communication in Africa have not been cogently addressed by scholars first and then other stakeholders.

Having observed the rate at which political communication has been at the periphery of African political discourses, and in fact how it has been ignored in global politics, we have identified a dearth of home-grown thoughts, theories, and innovations which could challenge the status quo and chart a pathway for the future of scholars, researchers, citizens, politicians, as well as the media. We then decided to examine and reformulate contents and contexts within which political issues and how they are communicated to and in Africa are discussed. To this, contributors have carefully raised robust intellectual and sufficiently viable issues to address current trends and anticipate future researches.

The book provides a lucid introduction to central themes through a comprehensive account of the past, present, and future. The essays deal critically and concisely with fundamental issues defining the nature and direction of political communication in Africa. In all, it presents a continental account for all stakeholders from International Communication, African Studies, Media studies, Cultural Studies and Political Science backgrounds. Research libraries, government institutions, policymakers, undergraduate and postgraduate students, as well as scholars from different disciplines will also find the book useful.

While salient issues generated in our class discussions gave birth to scholarly contributions which have been put together in this edited volume, we are hopeful

that this would give birth to further issues that would enhance studies of political communication in continental contexts for global influence.

Ibadan, Nigeria

Ayo Olukotun
Sharon Adetutu Omotoso

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The African *Policom* Stew

Osagioduwa Eweka, Sharon Adetutu Omotoso, and Ayo Olukotun

The field of study known as Political Communication, hereinafter referred to as *policom*, is indeed an emerging one on the global landscape, yet the world has for centuries been driven by political activities both on local and international scenes. Connotatively, significant is the theory–practice divide in relation to political communication in the world. Since the scholarship of political communication is nascent even in developed countries of the world (see Gronbeck 2004:148), it then follows that it is a latecomer to the Global South. It has yet to be institutionalised in Africa as a whole, especially as it failed to creep into the continent with colonisation but was introduced thereto almost half a century after independence.

Political communication is “a system of dynamic interaction between political actors, the media and audience members, each of whom is involved in producing, receiving and interpreting political messages” (Voltmer 2006:6). The concept of political communication cannot be unequivocal in that it diversifies as dictated by situational contexts in relation to era, societal traits, geography, culture, race, system of government, behaviour of leaders and the led, and opinion of communication scholars and others who have shed their searchlights over the subject matter. Since its introduction to Africa, the field of study has continued to experience stunt growth (see Lulofs and Cahn 2001:14) attributable to certain interwoven factors such as inadequate understanding of its concept and scope as well as lack of

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recognition of its import in society, apparently leading to its being erroneously circumscribed to and confiscated by the mass media. Notably, such restriction is one of the many reasons that account for the confusion in the meaning of political communication which has largely undermined its study in Africa.

To prove that political communication goes beyond the mass media, Manheim (1991:7) intervenes with a less restrictive definition of *policom* as: “the creation, distribution, use and control of information as a political resource, whether it is done by governments, by organizations like pressure groups or the media, or by individuals.” Nevertheless, Manheim goes further to limit his own definition to verbal means, ignoring nonverbal means of political communication, where he declares it to be “the art of getting it merely by expending words”, just as Denton and Woodward (1990:14) limit political communication to a “pure discussion about the allocation of public resources (revenues), official authority (who is given the power to make legal, legislative and executive decision), and official sanctions (what the state rewards or punishes)”. In a bailout, McNair (1995:4) presents political communication as consisting of “not only verbal or written statements, but also visual means of signification such as dress, make-up, hairstyle, and logo design, that is all those elements of communication which might be said to constitute a political ‘image’ or ‘identity’”.

Of the plethora of definitions of political communication projected by scholars of (political) communication, hardly is any found to be instrumental to a proper understanding, perhaps a near perfect reflection, of the concept within the African context. What this means is that the definition of the concept as well as the carvings of its curricula within and outside Africa is so far rather blanket and devoid of any form of African idiosyncrasies, a situation which portrays the non-institutionalisation of the study and decisively adequate practice of political communication in a continent that appears to need it the most at this time as always. While wondering if the concept and scope of political communication are universal, and whether it is necessary to construct one for Africa, one question that must be asked at this juncture is to what extent are the construct, practice, and scholarship of political communication of the Global North applicable to Africa?

Omotoso (2013:60) indirectly tackles this question where she avers that cultures have their specific modes of communication among, and information dissemination to, citizens which are peculiar to them, and interrelations/connections between leaders and the led, as well as people within and outside cultural boundaries. Africa is no exception in this regard. She further asserts that while due attention has to be accorded to the idea of “encoding” and “decoding” in the process of communication, the encoded messages meant for transmission cannot enjoy understanding if communication is done outside the linguistic and cultural capacities of decoders. Against this backdrop, she contends in agreement with Traber (1989:93), who believes communication to be an integral part of culture, that “situating communication in culture also takes into cognizance, the existence of local as well as the global cultures, within which communication is largely construed” (Omotoso 2013:60–61).

In clear terms, it is difficult, if not impossible, to borrow the concept, scope, and, in fact, dynamics of political communication of the West for African use given that

Africa has a history of gross underdevelopment occasioned by the colonisation activities perpetrated by the West which makes the sociopolitical realities of its countries a far cry from those of any country of the Global North. It is worthy to emphasise that Africa still suffers the vestiges of malevolent colonisation which erupted multi-religious and multi-ethnic *cum* multicultural dichotomies characterised by highly consequential intolerance. It is a continent which was rendered artificial by the mere alteration of its various but similar cultures, traditions, and religions; one whose system of government was interrupted and completely replaced with a foreign one in the name of popular participation. Prior to European contact, Africans already had an institutionalised monarchical system of government intertwined with customs and tradition and laced with divinity, a system that presupposed that the monarch (often a king) was seen and regarded as a demigod who must be feared and revered at all times.

The mere fact that Africa is still battling to understand how to adequately deal with a whole new, alien and imposed system of governance is a valid explanation for why political communication on the continent has yet to be judiciously demystified. Similarly, the same situation accounts for the continued struggle for institutionalisation of political communication as a field of study on the continent, and this struggle is most likely to continue for a long time to come, not even if conscious effort is made to domesticate the concept, scope, and dynamics of political communication of the West for African use. The argument here is that political communication in the Global North and its Global South (African) counterpart are parallel lines that can never meet and ought to be treated as such, not denying the existence of structural similarities and common realities between them. It is therefore incumbent to exceed the norm of ideological dependency on the West and autonomously study political communication in Africa according to African socio-cultural, political, and diplomatic realities; idiosyncrasies; and specificities, thereby restricting its encounter with its foreign counterpart to the necessity of comparison (see Mazrui 1977:91).

One of the many elements of such comparison may be the means and/or methods of communication between the government and the masses. In developed societies such as Europe and America, the media remains the most vibrant means of information and feedback dissemination between the leaders and the led. In the same vein, citizens often have recourse to peaceful means of addressing government even in the most difficult times. For instance, it is not uncommon to have situations of peaceful protests and peaceable industrial actions, while hunger strikes and work to rule also come into the equation. Press releases, communiqués, and official letters may also come into play in certain instances. On the other hand, the African experience is arguably more often than not the direct opposite of its European and American counterparts. In Africa, the mass media whether public or privately owned has problem of trust and objectivity, as such, the citizens are frequently reluctant to explore them as an option of political communication, rather, they may choose to explore other means of communication which are usually characterised by hostility. This is, however, not surprising as democracy itself which is now practiced today in most countries of Africa was transported into the continent by

means of force and hostilities. What has been said of the citizens is also true about the government. The situation described above is deeply rooted in the interference of the government in the activities of the media as well as the unavailability of freedom of information in almost all countries of the continent.

Today, and deplorably, it appears that political communication in and outside Africa is hardly studied in isolation of the mass media; yet it is a diverse and interdisciplinary field of study of which mass media is only a part, albeit essential to an extent, but most definitely not indispensable. In the words of Nyamnjoh (2005:27), “almost everywhere, liberal assumptions have been made about the media and their role in democratization in society, with little regard to the histories, cultures and sociologies of African societies”. This state of affairs can be argued as apt in the Western setting considering the argument earlier projected that political communication is more or less intertwined with the mass media in developed countries, but this may not necessarily be the case in Africa. The point here is that political communication cannot, or at least must not, be studied in Africa in isolation of an African underlying philosophy which is predicated on African ethics and cultural values. Such philosophy, Omotoso (2013:62) argues, is “premised on Africa’s concept of a society that possesses critical and analytic skills to decipher what is being communicated and how such communications should be interpreted” for the good of the society.

The foregoing is compressible into the following vital questions. What exactly does political communication mean? How should African political communication be studied? Is African political communication same as political communication in Africa? Is there, or should there be any difference between political communication in Africa and its counterpart of elsewhere? What ought to be the scope of the study of political communication in Africa? What challenges militate against the institutionalisation of political communication as a field of study in Africa? Why are there few scholars of African political communication? What is the place of the mass media in the theory and practice of political communication in Africa? Does African political communication have a place in the global communication market? How can the theory and practice of political communication in Africa be (speedily) enhanced?

Political Communication in Africa: is concerned with answering these questions in a groundbreaking manner. The standpoint of the publication is that African political communication scholarship is of essence to a peaceable interaction between government and the masses in Africa which would in turn translate into smooth running of government for societal good. The aim of this book is therefore to expose the nitty-gritty of political communication in an African perspective, i.e. beyond the exotic plumes of the West, towards a sociopolitical and economic advancement of the continent. It can be safely submitted that the Malawian proverb: “He who thinks he is leading and has no one following him is only taking a walk” and the Senegalese proverb: “there can be no peace without understanding” aptly capture the opinions communicated in the book given that effective (political) communication engenders understanding between the leaders and the led in society towards ensuring effective leadership and followership for societal development.

This is unarguably impossible in a situation of political monologue. Furthermore, the array of perspectives presented in this publication reveals that political communication in Africa is underresearched in spite of its multifaceted nature and intellectual promise.

Tayo Popoola's contribution entitled *Political Communication: An Evolving Field yet to Berth in Africa* presented in Chap. 2 elaborates on the foregoing encapsulated viewpoints. Premised on Huntington's classic observation and on the agenda setting theory of the mass media, the chapter abundantly laments the deplorable state of education and literacy in Africa while dwelling on the case of political communication. Placing much emphasis on the evolution of political communication as a field of study in African universities, the contributor argues that the late entry of political communication into the African curriculum which is blamed on both colonial and successive, autochthonous governments has for a long time caused more harm than good. Making a case for the decisive inclusion of political communication in the curriculum of African universities, he suggests ways of institutionalizing the scholarship of political communication in Africa and stresses that the onus of seeing it through lies chiefly on communication experts and political scientists alike.

The question of African diplomacy and the place of African political communication in the global communication market raised in this chapter are intelligently and meticulously tackled in Chap. 3 by Alaba Cornelius Ogunsanwo. Titled *Political Communication and African Diplomacy*, two approaches are put forth to interrogate the nexus between political communication and diplomacy in Africa. First, the foreign policy of each African state is considered and, second, the joint focus of African states in influencing events within the international system of which they form part. African political communication in the early years of independence focused on attempts at putting a stop to the then trending pattern of coup d'états but would later incline towards the struggle against racism and apartheid not at the expense of economic developments.

Trade with European nations, particularly Russia, later became prominent and so was political mingling with the other countries practicing democracy, a situation which made the institutionalisation of liberal democracy on the continent reasonably less difficult to achieve. In this chapter, consideration is also given to the influence of external powers on the content and current of political communication in Africa right from the Cold War era, and how various African nation states such as Congo, Angola, and South Africa responded to those powerful nations concerned. Reference is additionally made to the synergic efforts of African nations under the aegis of (O)AU to counter all forms of imperialist intrusion in Africa's polity and political communication. In other words, diplomatic political communication in Africa has continued to be the responsibility of regional and subregional bodies.

However, failure traceable to lack of political will and commitment to common cause, deficiency in logistic and financial resources, and, ultimately, ineffective political communication of intentions expressed in (sub)regional charters and related documents is said to be recorded in the area of (internal) conflict

management and peace maintenance on the continent, and the attendant result has been exodus from Africa to Europe and America, not to mention increasing imperialist intrusion, among others.

In Chap. 4, Sharon Adetutu Omotoso philosophically comments on the link between ethics and political communication within an African purview. Her contribution, *African Ethics and African Political Communication: Some Comments*, intellectualises the debate about the reality of an African political communication and the lack of commensurability of intellectual presentation of ethical reasoning with Africa's gargantuan media presence. Omotoso describes African ethics, with ample examples, as those elements of moral beliefs, cultural norms, and presumptions emanating from communalistic traditions as well as the philosophical clarification/interpretation of these beliefs embodied in African histories, proverbs, mythologies, arts, and so on which characterise the sub-Saharan African people, and which translate into good virtues and social values. She goes further to advocate an African political communication predicated on an African philosophy rather than an imperialist one which is likely to serve the interest of the West. She borrows agronomic registers such as *tillage* and *cultivation* to call for African traditional values. According to the author, it is of essence for African political communication actors to return to the root of their values (tillage) and make concerted efforts to build, transport, and uphold their moral values (cultivation) by means of communication. This is made possible through what she terms "political commitment" or "ethical commitment". To ensure feasibility, it is argued that an increased contribution of theorists to debates on Africa in relation to contemporary times may be inevitable.

The fundamental essence of strategic communication in Africa as it relates to political communication on the continent is the concern of Chap. 5 authored by Charles Okigbo and Ben Onoja. Entitled *Strategic Political Communication in Africa*, the chapter concentrates on five basic concepts, namely, election campaign, governance and government policies, internal cohesion, public opinion, and crisis management, with relevant examples drawn from political events in African countries, namely, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, and South Africa, to point out the establishment, trends, and benefits of strategic political communication to the individual countries in particular and Africa at large. Having reviewed an array of definitions of strategic communication from various scholars from diverse disciplines, the authors give the two major aims of strategic political communication as campaigning and governing. While tracing the origin of strategic political communication, the authors dichotomise the phenomenon into three eras, namely, the precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial eras, and further subdivided it into undeveloped and burgeoning democracies.

According to the authors, tactics in strategic communication during these eras differed in line with the realities of system of government trending on the continent. Commenting on the success of strategic political communication, the duo contend that although there are no indexes for measurement, it is not uncommon to believe that ethical, socially responsible, and professional use of communication may be directly associated with transparency in governance as against condemnable, anti-

people vices such as corruption and other unwholesome, unethical conducts. What this implies is that the more strategically communicative a nation, the less problematic and corrupt it will be. They further argue that the core of strategic political communication in Africa is to influence public knowledge, beliefs, and actions on political matters in order to arrive at good governance objectives for public good.

Today, as the continent is moving with the rest of the world from analogue to digital communication age, many gains and losses are recorded. One of the many examples of recorded gains is the combination of traditional and new media for the purpose of effective governance and nurturing of democratic principles and values. It is the contention of the contributors that since strategic communication means achieving its potential, especially in goal setting, situational knowledge, communication competence, and control of anxiety, it has the propensity of planting and sustaining genuine democracy, and that strategic political communication in Africa has bright future.

Habermas in Africa? Re-Interrogating the 'Public Sphere' and 'Civil Society' in African Political Communication Research presented by Suleiman A. Suleiman in the sixth chapter throws up a formidable basis for an argumentative, theoretical discourse on political communication, i.e. the synergy between the media and political systems in countries of Africa in a democratic milieu, with some rather philosophical bearings. Grounded in the work of the German philosopher, Jürgen Habermas, the author catechises the emergence and transformation of the public sphere and its different constructions in political communication in a universal sense before building on critical works pertaining to sociology, anthropology, history, and media in Africa to enable him rethink the public sphere and civil society with a view to rendering them relevant as much as possible not only to the scholarship of political communication but also to the consolidation of democracy on the African continent.

A distinction is drawn between the public and private spheres in Africa which are very powerful instruments of political communication, and this can be said to delimit the scope of politics. The paths taken by the public sphere and civil society in Europe and Africa differ considerably. Unlike in the West where the same moral foundation determines public and private behaviour, the case of Africa is a far cry. For instance, public sphere of civil society was borne out of the internal conditions or necessities to foster democracy while in Africa, it derived from colonial experience and would later come to undermine democracy. The chapter equally draws on the associated works of Mahmud Mamdani and Peter Ekeh of Uganda and Nigeria, respectively, to contextualise, localise, and adopt the Habermasian idea of public sphere and civil society in Africa and all its unique specificities within the context of political communication research on the continent. Put differently, it is important for the public sphere to be conceptualised anew in terms of culture instead of just institutionalisation of the media or civil society organisations in Africa. African political communication research provides a viable means for such reconceptualisation.

In Chap. 7, a triad of examples are presented by Osagioduwa Eweka whose contribution is entitled *Hostile Political Communication: Triadic Examples from*

Africa. Eweka recognises the dichotomy of communication as verbal and nonverbal and laments the downplaying of nonverbal communication in the scholarship of political communication in Africa. What he laments even more is the hijacking of political communication studies in Africa, and even elsewhere, by the media at the expense of other means of (interpersonal) communication. Having recourse to Authoritarian, Libertarianism, and Development Communication theories, attention is given to the means and nature of communication between the government and masses in many African countries.

In most countries of the continent, such communication is frequently characterised by hostilities stemming from factors as leadership (il)legitimacy, ethnicity, and the influence of the mass media as evident in the cases of Libya, Nigeria, and South Africa which constitute the case studies of the chapter. In Libya, effective political communication is hampered by leadership illegitimacy, in Nigeria by ethnicity, and in South Africa by the mass media which communicates hate speeches. It is recommended that peaceable methods of communication between government and the masses such as constructive criticism, nonviolent protests, industrial actions, hunger strikes, people friendly policies, and fair and justiciable law enactment/enforcement should be adopted in African countries. Ultimately, the import of peace journalism and Peace Education to political communication must not be downplayed in Africa.

The powerful influence of the mass media on political communication also finds a prime place in Chap. 8 contributed by Joshua Olatunde Fajimbola under the title of *Media, Propaganda, and the Image Dilemma of African States*. Although the media is presumably categorised under the soft power approaches to curbing conflict and ensuring peace in society, the reverse is the case in Africa considering the negative news and information about the continent generated by international media. The Media System Dependency and Agenda Setting theories serve to explain the pejorative depiction of the nations of the continent by non-African and, sometimes, African media, thereby presenting the whole continent in a bad light underscored by degrading stereotypes about its governments and peoples. For example, it is frequently held that Africans are corrupt, unindustrialised, underdeveloped, capitalist, anti-democratic, authoritarian, to mention a few. Yet, more often than not, such accusations are nothing but mere imperialist perceptions against “third world nations” considered to be at the lower if not lowest stratum of the international system. Resultantly, unhealthy blows in form of politic-economic alienation among other are evidently dealt on African countries by the comity of nations. Factors responsible for this phenomenon may include colonial vestiges, overdependence on mono economy, leadership challenges in Africa, poverty and economic challenges, and lack of zeal by African media practitioners to project a good mental picture of the continent. The problem is equally traceable to factors such as lack of a unified media or broadcasting system in Africa, influence of governments of African countries on media organisations, overdependence by African media on international media for news and information, counterproductive government policies and programmes, and so on.

To restore the mental image of Africa in the global scene and chart a new course for the African continent in terms of global relevance, long-term and holistic African image rebranding programmes must be embarked upon and communicated through the media. African leaders must strive to redeem their images and that of their governments by ensuring credibility and respect for the rule of law. Additionally and very importantly, African states must collaboratively establish a formidable, indigenous global media that is not only capable of depleting Africa's dependence on Western media but also capable of propagating African values to the global community as much as serve the political and socio-economic purposes of the continent.

Chapter 9, *Singing Truth to Power and the Disempowered: The Case of Lucky Mensah and his Song, "Nkratoɔ"* by Obadele Bakari Kambon and Godwin Kwafu Adjei, interrogates political communication in Africa by situating it within a cultural, musico-dialogue context, using Mensah's *Nkratoɔ* as paradigm. Its focus is mainly on language use in the intermediary process of speaking for the voiceless in society in an era of democracy-mediated "freedom of speech". Interestingly, the article explores the satiric nature of Mensah's *Nkratoɔ* and its effect on the Ghanaian society in a given period. The contributors focus primarily on a musicological exegesis of Mensah's *Nkratoɔ* as an artistic piece due to its depth of language use with regard to proverbs, idioms, metaphors, analogies, and other devices for allusion, insinuation, and criticism. By describing *Nkratoɔ* as an exemplification of the changing landscape of political communication where artists utilise various means and channels of communication available to them to express themselves, modern Africa in general and Ghana in particular now have a platform from which representatives of common opinion can address concerns pertinent to the ordinary citizen, thereby transforming the powerful to reflexive listeners in order to empower the disempowered. The chapter is certainly insightful and politically inclined with its rare combination of musicology, politics, and literature—all within a cultural milieu.

In Chap. 10, Tayo Agunbiade and Jumoke Akiode's *Gender and Political Communication in Africa* reviews the ways and manners in which the defined roles of women in domestic and public strata of society influence their appearance in political and socio-economic milieus and in political communication. Lamenting the contentious, sexist issue of unequal political rights between men and women, the scholars expose gender gaps in politics in African countries and advocates integration of friendly and gender-sensitive initiatives into the content and aim of political communication on the continent. Women have been said to, for a long time, rank low in high-level political activities in most part of Africa on two strata, namely, access to the media and projection in the media. Female candidates and party members do not enjoy much media access as their male counterparts. In the same vein, issues on which the microscopic few women in politics are allowed to publicly comment are frequently those considered trivial and less important. Instances are cited of how African women have, right from the colonial era, made several attempts to take their place in politics and political communication in a chauvinist and patriarchal society. Deplorably, male domination of political

communication has continued to undermine these efforts. While they argued that gender mainstreaming completes or balances African political communication, they recommend that African women must borrow leaf from European countries like Britain and take the bull by the horn in holistically redefining political communication to accommodate them, not only in the scholarship and practice of political communication but also in more impactful political participation.

Another aspect of political communication explored in this publication is the symbolic communication. In Chap. 11, *From "Governor-General" to "Kwankwansiya": Democracy and Branded Political Communication in Nigeria's Fourth Republic*, Isaac Olawale Albert logically discusses verbal, nonverbal, and symbolic communication through the prisms of what he terms "branded political communication". He opens up two windows for the delineation of branded political communication. On the one hand, it refers to the phenomenon of politicians nicknaming themselves as well as adopting a particular, emblematic dressing style, sometimes esoteric, for the purpose of championing their political philosophy and gaining popular support. On the other hand, these politicians are nicknamed by their supporters who seek to curry support of other members of society and at the same time curry favour from these politicians.

Although reference is made to South African and Ugandan politicians, four governors from Nigeria, namely, Diepreye Alamieyeseigha of Bayelsa, Mu'azu Babangida Aliyu of Niger, Aregbesola of Osun, and Rabiu Kwankwaso of Kano who, at one time or the other in Nigerian history, were dubbed "Governor-General", "Chief Servant", "Ogbeni", and "Kwankwansiya", respectively, serve as study focus for those politicians whose brands are nominal, while Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Ahmed Bola Tinubu, and Mallam Aminu Kano aptly reflect those who opted for emblematic dressing style as their brand with each having recourse to caps. Albert argues that the essence of all these is to promote personal, political credibility in the eyes of the masses so that they could be re-elected, and so as to distract the public from possible maladministration. He also argues that this phenomenon is often coated in ethnicity and religion as ethnic and religious sympathies account for the warm reception given to the brands by the masses.

The author highlights four factors to consider in determining whether or not these brands are successful or sustainable. These include goal of the politician, their message, means of brand communication, and the background of the audience. The conclusion of the chapter is that politicians who indulge in branding for political purposes frequently lose popularity even while in office as the effectiveness of their brands fades away even before their term of office elapses.

Chapter 12, *Nigerian Newspapers' Publication of Predicted and the Actual Outcome of 2015 Presidential Election in Nigeria: Lessons for Africa*, is a deliberate attempt by Michael Abiodun Oni at directly linking the print media to electoral process in Nigeria with a view to pinpointing lessons which other African states stand to learn from Nigeria on how to systematically and constructively predict electoral outcomes without pre- or post-electoral violence in society. As the title of the chapter reveals, the author's focus is a comparative analysis of predictions made by Nigerian newspapers in the 2015 Nigerian presidential elections with a view to

determining the actual outcome. The author relied on one foreign and one local newspaper outfit, respectively, for his analysis. They include *Kimberly Associates* and *The Nation* newspapers. Also, emphasis is on the two major political parties in the country, i.e. the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC). The result is that the prediction of *The Nation* newspaper is uncontestedly more accurate by far than that of its foreign counterpart, *Kimberly Associates*. The author attributes *Kimberly Associate's* inaccuracy to employment of improper methodology and therefore recommends avoidance of sophisticated data collection and analysis techniques in the business of election prediction in Africa. Instead, the author recommends field investigation method of data collection with much emphasis on participant observation to guarantee accuracy.

Chap. 13, co-authored by Christopher Afoke Isike and Sharon Adetutu Omotoso, *Reporting Africa: The Role of the Media in (Un)Shaping the Democratic and Development Agenda* takes us back to the synergy between the media and political communication as it surveys how the mass media affect, if not manipulate, democracy and by extension development on the African continent. Hinging on content analysis of headlines of national newspapers of five African states belonging to each of the five subregions of the continent, and a focus group discussion with six Nigerian journalists, the authors argue that the mass media of Africa continues to contribute to the cynical depiction of Africa by virtue of the unselectively negative reportage they make on the continent.

Rather than decrying the aptness and professionalism in reportage of the continent by African journalists, what the authors seem to concentrate on is the undue emphasis accorded to such negative occurrences and phenomena as corruption, bribery, and misappropriation of funds, authoritarianism, and so on perpetrated by African leaders to the detriment of their commendable efforts in other spheres of life. While analytically dichotomizing the concepts of media about development and media for development in Africa, it is argued that the media does not appear to be adequately playing its agenda setting responsibility on the continent. One central revelation in this regard is that the media in Africa indulges only in indirect participation in democratic consolidation and development of the continent, i.e. reporting about development rather than for development.

According to the authors, the attendant, often sociopolitical *cum* diplomatic consequences, *inter alia*, is democratic instability and Africa's human and economic underdevelopment. They therefore call on the African mass media to enhance its relationship with African governments by assisting in setting and developing shared visions of progress across the continent.

In the last chapter, Okoth Fred Mudhai's Contribution, *Globalization and Political Communication in Africa: Anglo-American Influences in Kenya and Nigeria*, teases out how certain political communication trends that started and were popularised in Western democracies, especially the USA and the UK, have recently gained entry and popularity in Africa through homogenisation and globalisation processes, paying particular attention to Kenya and Nigeria with a closer look at the phenomena of pre-election live-televised candidate debates and hiring of tested communication-strategic consultants from the West to advise on

“messaging” (selling) policies and achievements of political candidates/leaders and their respective parties/regimes. Noting that, with large populations remaining poor due to corruption and resource mismanagement, and with clouds of violence and electoral malpractices hanging over polls in some African countries, Okoth posits that it is difficult to tell whether involvement of Western communication strategists adds value to African politics through their well-funded munitions of the mind, although he sees them as a welcome replacement for real munitions such as guns, stones, sticks, machetes, and similar weapons. He then proceeds to speculate the future of political communication in Africa.

Indubitably, these thematic chapters present us with ways in which to consider various African-centered political communications. While not ignoring the fact that this book is not exhaustive of imagined and emerging issues in African *policom*, we regard it as the beginning of further works, where subsequent research can interrogate and discuss aspects such as new media and its inequality between states that are advantaged in terms of opportunity and access to new media and disempowered African countries which Manuel Castells (2000) describes as “switched off areas”, implying that developing democracies in those areas cannot contribute meaningfully to democratic discourses. Furthermore, political communication research must revisit traditional mechanisms (such as theatre, carnivals, festivals, town criers, and so on) used to mobilise non-literate masses. It must also delve into ways in which elections in Africa are increasingly shaped by the whole gamut of new communication technologies.

The book is a compendium of necessary ingredients for the preparation of an *afropolicom* stew which would suitably go along with all healthy African delicacies for positive transformation and holistic development. The book is presented with optimism that future research and researchers would work assiduously to sustain and continue debates in the search for an Africa that we can remain proud of.

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Tayo Popoola

Introduction

S. P. Huntington, after a careful evaluation of governance in Africa, Asia, and Latin America in 1968, came out with his famous quotation that in many cases in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, “governments simply do not govern.”

Education and literacy are core areas where Huntington claimed the studied continents suffered shortages. This study, therefore, is designed to reveal great losses which Africa as a continent suffered due to late evolution of political communication as an academic field of study.

Sovereignty is generally regarded as an enormous responsibility. In the context of Deng et al. (1996:34), “it carries with it responsibilities.” Establishing political communication as an academic field of study is majorly a state-driven responsibility that could be effected through the ministry of education. This study, therefore, perceives the reluctance to introduce political communication as another symptom of a state that is not functioning correctly (Lulofs and Cahn 2001:14).

Ihonvbere (1988:2) described the Nigerian state and several other African states as very oppressive, repressive, and regressive. The fact is that the nature and character of the colonial and postcolonial African states have been very oppressive and hostile to the healthy growth and development of political science, a discipline that ought to have given birth to political communication. This study, therefore, sees the late evolution of political communication as an extension of the state hostility to political science in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular.

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