

FOREWORD

That you are reading this, betrays your curiosity about its theme. This in turn suggests that you may be aware that nations everywhere are grappling with governance. The role of the media in accountability and management is vital in this, and peculiar challenge in Africa. This subject of how the media tackles governance and development in nation-states is fascinating for its immediate relevance to our times. Yet it may surprise those who hold the view that governance and nation-building have all to do with management style, resource generation and allocation, but very little to do with communication. This is shocking. That despite hard evidence showing how the media can fast track development of nation-states, governments (in fragile states or developing countries if you will) tend to underestimate the capacity for communication researchers and media practitioners to contribute significantly to community and nation-building.

Good governance and nation-building are analogous. Leaders should cater for the needs of their citizens by judiciously managing national resources. To do this, they have to engage with their citizens. They should be transparent in their actions if they are to command the confidence of their people. Through their communications, relevant best practices in various parts of nationstates can be identified and replicated across nations to bring about required development. Clearly, the media have their work cut out.

The media should serve as the compass for mapping paths towards quality in governance and social change. They should mirror what leaders have achieved, what citizens think of leaders and their achievements. Here lies the merit of *Media Reflections on Governance and Development*. I am convinced that this is best served up by those who understand the nature of a nation's management style, strong academic grounding and keen insight into media practice. Such is to be found among the contributors lined up for this book. Working closely with Professor Pate, whose stellar academic training and practice in the field of communication is applauded, are sixteen distinguished scholars and media experts. The authors share serious thoughts about the media, governance and development in Nigeria. These experts are needed now more than ever. Why?

There are new pressures on mainstream media. Storms of social media messages clog up information networks and people's minds, polluting reasoning faculties with unverifiable information. For those who care more about nation-building than frivolities, these are abysmal social distractions. Those who care about the plight of marginalized people and desire positive change should attend to such knowledge as offered here. Topics covered include existing media dimensions of ethics and nation-building; awareness of emergency helplines among taxi drivers in a local area; an appraisal of good governance; how the government mobilized the public to support its anti-corruption policies; and how the public viewed objectivity and bias in the newspapers coverage of anti-corruption efforts masterminded by Nigeria's reigning President, Muhammadu Buhari. This suggests that these are the major governance issues confronting Nigeria. Lessons therefrom are instructive for other nations.

Published by Canada University Press, it is the third in the book series of the Association of Communication Scholars & Professionals of Nigeria (ACSPN). This volume appeals to those studying mass media, development communication, practitioners of journalism communication, media advocacy and such disciplines. Media experts and those in government could benefit from the content of this book too. They can use the templates offered to help strengthen institutional democracies as is the case in better established democracies in the United Kingdom, United States, and Germany.

Each of the chapters in this book, will reveal to the reader how well the editor and the authors know the media and management landscape of Nigeria. They offer insights into how citizens contribute to nation-building and citizens' expectations of governments' need to produce, communicate and subsequently implement media and communication policies to enhance development even at national levels. These scholars have taken time to dissect how the Nigerian governments use mass media platforms to engage segments of the population. They also offer suggestions that may help the successive generation of leaders make decisions that foster good governance, and by so doing bring about significant development within their units of administration. Majority Oji's chapter exemplifies this. His observation that Nigeria's anti-corruption strategy lacks a communication component is profound.

Having surveyed the extent to which the Nigerian government mobilizes public opinion to support its communicated anti-corruption policies (with specific reference to the South-South region), Oji urged the government to put a communication plan in place if it must succeed its anti-corruption campaign. This advice driven by good intentions. Like others, it comes from a place of pragmatism and good morals. If you want the people to understand policies that can help prevent corruption, listen to media experts. Having clear communication plans, policies that are mindful of people's opinions, and communicating same is a sign of good governance.

The essays in this book constitute points of departure for new conversations between the political class and the media on the inevitable partnership required for good governance. The Nigerian society which enjoys some press freedom has made a few strides toward bedding a democratic culture. It should continue to make governance issues central in its public discourse. This book is an essential outlet for continuing such conversations.

I am happy that ACSPN in their new publication has taken this initiative. I salute their contribution to the field of media advocacy and communication for development. I invite you to take some time and read this book.

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July 2018

This book is both timely and expedient at this defining moment in Nigeria's history, when calls for the media to take the lead in the resetting of the nation's priorities along political, social and economic lines are so strong. Although its focus is on the Nigerian context, the book contains much that will interest people far beyond these shores. It is relevant to communications researchers, media practitioners and indeed anyone with a fascination for the links between media research and public policy.

Media Reflections on Governance and Development in Nigeria offers an interesting range of theoretical and practical perspectives from which to view the relationship between media systems, political systems and development in Nigeria. It argues that the media contribute meaningfully to the attainment of national objectives and examines an array of intriguing perspectives on the subject as its chapters unfold.

The book adds a unique set of voices to the age long discourse on the relationship between media and society on one hand; and journalism and democracy on the other. It argues that media play a pivotal role in shaping public knowledge and the perception of government policies and programmes. While readers can deduce that effective media systems strengthen democratic practice and social institutions, contributing authors acknowledge a caveat required for this to happen that is, the ruling political systems must not hinder the media in their pursuit of the assignments. The discernible central theme running through the chapters is that the media play a critical role in governance.

As a media practitioner, it is refreshing for me to find a blend of frameworks and research approaches assembled in one academic piece. For example, the historical research approach used to trace the trajectory of Nigeria's National Communication policy. There was also the more elaborate content analysis designed to determine patterns of news frames employed by Nigerian online newspapers when reporting the 2016 budget padding controversies. Such methodological considerations are crucial for the supporting evidence and arguments proposed.

I find that the book's unique contribution to the field of media and communication studies lies in its articulation of diverse roles and tasks undertaken within Nigeria's contemporary mass media, mindful of changes in the global political landscape. The authors tease out complex relationship between the media and Nigeria's unique political system, bringing out lessons to enrich existing academic debates. The chapters are engaging, appealing and consequential - seeking to prompt action. For instance *Kabir Alabi Garba and Hussein Hassan Shaibu* make's call for a vibrant Nigerian communication policy to help strengthen democratic practice. The media was positioned at the heart of this assignment. Similarly, in an intellectual fashion *Majority Oji* demonstrates how information dissemination (offered by a range of media - newspapers, magazines, television and radio) remains a crucial component of development programmes.

For students of mass communication, media practitioners, and all its readers, this book is a source of invaluable information. It should ignite their curiosity and guide their exciting forays in the course of their duties. The authors can be confident that there will be many grateful readers

whose perspectives of the disciplines of media, communication and development have been broadened as a result of their efforts.

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July 2018