



**ASSOCIATION OF
COMMUNICATION SCHOLARS
& PROFESSIONALS OF NIGERIA
BOOK SERIES**



CANADA UNIVERSITY PRESS

INTRODUCTION: REFLECTING ON GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

PATE, Umaru

To cite this article:

Pate U. (2018). Introduction: Reflecting on Government and Development in Media Reflections on Governance and Development in Nigeria, ACSPN Book Series 3, pp. 1—4

Retrieved from <http://www.acspn.com.ng>

(Institutional or Subscribed access may be required)

Please note that this is an electronic, pre-print version of this article published by the Canada University Press, Concord Ontario, Canada for Association of Communication Scholars & Professionals of Nigeria (ACSPN).

The ACSPN Book Series is exclusive to the Association of Communication Scholars & Professionals of Nigeria.

ISBN: **978-1-989271-02-5**

Copyright © 2018

Editor and Contributors

Layout/Design: Ashroph De Grafico

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any form or any electronic or mechanical means, including information storage and retrieval systems, without permission in writing from the publisher, except by reviewer who may quote brief passages in a review.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION: REFLECTING ON GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

PATE, Umaru



This is the third in the ACSPN book series. The theme was informed by evidence from previous activities of the association and observations from earlier volumes. These in various ways highlighted the symbiosis between communication, governance and development. ACSPN is convinced that society needs a robust credible communication and media system that is a good complement of mass media channels that are professional, active and deemed relevant by diverse audiences that they serve (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). The bid of such media is to enlarge the number of participants in the public space and by so doing strengthen the democratic structures. In democracies, “the media have a complex relationship with sources of power and the political system” (McQuail, 2010: 523). To this extent, the fortunes of the media are closely tied to the political system; therefore, addressing the issue of the media must be done within the context of the political framework.

Large scale participation as mass media affords, if unfettered and professionally moderated will foster the kind of liberty that ensures accountability and upholds principles of efficient delivery of service for national development. In this way, media systems are used to safeguard good governance as implied by Habermas's ideal. Sadly the converse to this ideal could well occur; governance may suffer, development may get stunted if media and communication in society were to fail. It is therefore imperative that media experts pause to reflect on media performance as is being done in this volume.

The 1999 Nigerian Constitution is emphatic on the responsibility of the media in upholding good governance through the process of accountability. This provision is enshrined in Chapter 2, Section 22, which states that:

“The press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this Chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the people.”

This provision follows the specified objectives and principles guiding the duties of the state. With this, the primacy of the media within the process of governance is indicated. Apart from their routine tasks of gathering, processing and disseminating information in the country, media

organs are required to act as watchdogs that maintain surveillance on all sections of the society for collective good and development. This is why citizens feel threatened when the watchdog is weak or appears unable to act appropriately, or when it behaves contrary to societal and professional expectations. These concerns continue to attract scholarly attention as reflected in the volume edited by Olukotun (2018). By serving sectional or commercial interests, the media mortgage their conscience and yield to manipulative predispositions. This erodes citizens' confidence in democratic structures, making them insecure or apathetic.

The chapters in this volume have been carefully selected from a long list of contributions from diverse sources. Each chapter addresses different aspects of the theme for the book, from particular perspectives. In Chapter Two, Kabir Alabi Garba and Hussain Hassan Shuaibu focus on the development and utilisation of Nigeria's National Communication Policy and Strategy over the years. The chapter traces the background and series of efforts made to harmonize the various regulatory instruments available in Nigeria. They track the efforts made to generate a broad but unified national framework that both reflects the general interest of the nation, as well as sectorial directions within. These directions tend to be informed by global realities and emerging situations in local contexts. The authors compare Nigeria's communication architecture to that of Ghana and Canada and argue for a more consolidated National Communication Policy especially in view of Nigeria's quest for a stable democracy and vibrant economy.

The issue of government mobilisation of public opinion for its anti-corruption policies formed the subject of discussion in Chapter Three written by Majority Orji. The study finds that high awareness among Nigerians on government anti-corruption crusade did not translate into effective public opinion. He submits that when public opinion against corruption was regressed against government communicated anti-corruption policies, Nigerians appeared ignorant on specific actions to take against corrupt practices because of the low understanding of the issues canvassed in the anti-corruption campaign.

In Chapter Four, Ahmad Muhammad Auwal appraises the performance of the mass media in Nigeria's democratic process and the imperatives of good governance in the country. Auwal argues that since the era of colonial rule, the mass media have been engaged in the struggle to enthrone democratic values and good governance but these have been impeded by numerous factors. Consequently, the author advocates for strict adherence to professional standards and firm commitment to promoting positive values which will enhance the active participation of citizens in governance for development.

Sunday Olayinka Alawode and Stephen Sonayon Fatonji analyse traditional governance perspectives from Nigerian video films as demonstrated in four indigenous (Yoruba) films in Chapter Five. The chapter presents a qualitative analysis of four Yoruba epic films focusing on traditional governance as documentation. The findings provide opportunity for further research in traditional governance as well as democratic enthronement in modern societies.

In the next chapter, Daniel Chile and Tordue Simon Targema write on film and good governance in Nigeria. Through their analysis of Praise Abraham's *Tartor Wase* - an indigenous film portraying Nigeria's political reality, the duo consider enormous potentials of film as a medium of social communication. They submit that the medium has not been sufficiently exploited. Of particular concern to the authors is the positive social influence that films can have, as demonstrated in the case study. They submit that continuous positive portrayal of political reality by the media will help to correct the country's negative political culture for a development

oriented democracy.

Chapter Seven's focus is on perception of objectivity and bias in newspaper coverage of Buhari-led anti-corruption campaign by Stephen Sonayon Fatonji and three others. The chapter submits that majority of free readers studied perceived newspapers' coverage of corruption positively but believed that the Buhari-led anti-corruption crusade, though commendable, is largely one-sided. The authors recommend that the media, anti-graft bodies and the National Orientation Agency should intensify efforts in public education on anti-corruption for national acceptance and support.

Chapter Eight has Nnanyelugo Okoro and Kenneth Adibe Nwafor engage the subject of framing, as they examine the coverage of the controversies trailing the 2016 Nigerian budget. The study content analysed 158 reports on the budget padding saga as reported by three online newspapers. Findings indicate that five kinds of frames were employed in reporting the act (political, conflict, conspiracy, issues and value frames). It shows that political, conflict and conspiracy frames predominated in the *Sahara Reporters* and *Premium Times*, just as issue and value frames manifested more in the *Vanguard*. The conclusion is that online newspapers reported the act with political, conflict and conspiracy undertones.

Chapter Nine presents a discussion on public perception of media performance in the coverage of the 2014 National Conference in Nigeria. The author, Chinedu Christian Odoemelam concludes that the Nigerian media supported the 2014 National Conference by providing access to plural sources of information and communication as well as equal opportunities for inclusive participation and voice in the country. In his conclusion, the author finds that the media were perceived as sustaining democratic processes and good governance in a pluralistic Nigeria.

Oludare Ebenezer Ogunyombo and Olakunle Yusuf Azeez dwell on the awareness, access and use of emergency telephone lines provided by the Lagos State government in Chapter Ten. How aware are the public of this service in their time of need? How reliant are they on the service at such moments? This was a qualitative study conducted among taxi drivers in the Ikeja area of Lagos. The inquiry was based on Focus Group Discussions with this strategic niche in the population. Findings revealed that taxi drivers in Ikeja are highly informed on the availability of the lines and quite willing to use them in emergencies. However, occasional congestion and quest for personal safety limit the use of the lines in emergencies. The authors had specific recommendations for the Lagos State Government as the initiator of the scheme. However, the chapter is more widely instructive. It should be beneficial for those responsible for strategic audience targeting and media interventions required to introduce other government initiatives.

In the final chapter, Umaru Pate addresses the connection between ethics and national development with reference to the critical role of the media in the matrix. The chapter submits that Nigeria has remained a nation seized by poverty, poor governance, conflict, corruption, materialism, weak institutions, political misbehaviour, general indiscipline, and infrastructural weaknesses that subvert national development. Arguably, the failure can be related to poor governance, disregard for ethics and negative attitudes. In this respect, the chapter concludes that the mass media and its professionals have a strategic role to play in helping Nigeria develop by its adoption of globally acknowledged ethical values.

These chapters are valuable and relevant in enhancing their understanding of the issues of communication, governance and development in the Nigerian context. It is hoped that readers will find these to be so.

REFERENCES

- Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria [Nigeria], Act No. 24, 5 May 1999 available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/44e344fa4.html> [last accessed 24 July 2018].*
- Hallin, D. & Mancini, P. (2004). *Comparing media systems: Three models of media and politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McQuail, D. (2010). *McQuail's mass communication theory*. London: Sage Publications.
- Olukotun, A. (2018). Introduction and overview In Ayo Olukotun (Ed) *Watchdogs or captured media? A study of the role of the media in Nigeria's emergent democracy 199- 2016*. Lagos, Nigeria: Diamond Publications Ltd.