

Chapter 14

Digital Governance in Post–Modern Africa: Evolving Realities of a New Communication Paradigm

Melchizedec J. Onobe

Bingham University, Nigeria

Desmond Onyemechi Okocha

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5070-280X>

Bingham University, Nigeria

Michael Agbo John

Bingham University, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

A strong reason democracy continues to be favored in the 21st century is because it is presented as more fluid and amendable to political evolution in digitization. While digitization of governance is an advantage worth exploring, in Africa, Western democracy remains a challenge especially for young and experimental governments and particularly that the system lacks indigenous organism in origin. A fundamental thrust of this chapter therefore is to interrogate how nations of Africa are grappling with the many variables of democracy as a Sphinx, how good governance, postmodernist demands jump in the fray of theories and practices to shape the form of governance evolving in Africa. The chapter is a positional outlook on the development as they unfold. It suggests that though there is a speed deficit of Africa catching up with the hypothetical perfect Western system's demand, the dawn of e-governance in the continent should be uniquely organismic to sync with Africa's heterogeneous cultural diversity in order to achieve desired results of speed and all-around development.

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INTRODUCTION

Every society's strength, guaranteed post-humus applause, may be in the investment and commitment it makes to the class it has groomed to further its gene. There is growing concern that many African societies are not investing in the development of their human capital. Nowhere perhaps is this truer than in the realm of politics and leadership in managing resources. Africa is believed to have a "notoriety" of leadership complex that believes it is messianic and should continue to be dominant else things will fall apart irredeemably. The erstwhile President of Nigeria, General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida once granted African Independent Television (AIT) an interview in early 2000, responding to a question "why Nigeria keeps recycling ex-rulers". He said Nigeria would continue on the path of recycling leaders for another 50 years because those that are recycled into leadership are mature; they have been tested and should be trusted. His response encapsulates a threadbare mental stereotype, and this may be reflective of Africa.

The leaders are over-protective of the political experiment that trusting a younger generation may seem like running against general norms. This sit tight syndrome is characteristic and Sesay (2014, p.4) describes it as, "One of the defining features of African governance systems ... the phenomenon of 'sit tight' leaders and 'presidents for life' in many countries". That aberrant behavior, wrong as it is without justifying the unjustifiable, begs a nifty question. Is it exclusively African or a dis-contextualization to demonize African nations? Are the rules the same in measuring all, or there is a pedagogic manipulation in conceptualization that has initiated a rite of reasoning and a color of perception? What about the Queen of England, other Presidents in the European countries that have ruled well over a decade?

However that mental frame of "birth-right-ship" to rule perhaps heavily contradicts common aphorism in most African communities that, "youth are leaders of tomorrow" in political leadership and sectors of managerial responsibilities. It may be a carry over of a normative that children and youth do not lead. They are too inexperienced and full of exuberance to steer, since in many African cultural settings particularly with mixed demographics, it is the elders that hold leadership responsibilities in society. We can admit that a stereotype that lives in denial of present day reality is stunted and trapped in the past, which is the case with many African states; but it may, after all, not necessarily be a seminally African trait.

Africa has youth age groups that are led by youth with no umbilical attachment or waiting on elders to cheer their courses (Sesay, 2014). The history of African modern political structure can be annotated by taking a cue from the structure of the capital to which it's system of rule is annexed. If we defer to the leadership of the colonial masters of many parts of Africa like the British Monarchy, it may reveal a revisit pattern. A parenthetical age class that cannot be described as youth holds the Queen's stool and much of the leadership in Europe. Middle age and old in society dominated the leadership of many European countries, until quite recently. The same pattern is true of North America, until recently as well. Their demographic characteristics, arguably, reflect the index of those societies as investigation reveals.

Eurostat (2021, para 8, 18) shows, "the share of the population aged 65 years and over is increasing in every EU Member State. Another aspect of population ageing is the progressive ageing of the older population itself, as the relative significance of the very old is growing at a faster pace than any other age segment of the EU's population. The share of those aged 80 years or above in the EU's population is projected to have a two and a half fold increase between 2020 and 2100, from 5.9% to 14.6%" The leadership from this class will dominate, as it has, for more than half the EU countries. However, when the same scenario plays out in Africa with a diametrically opposite wealth of youth and work force latched in a bracket of youthful generation whose population is projected according to Hamdok (2015)

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