

Chapter 14

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

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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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to “represent over 40 per cent of the world’s young people, in less than three generations”, the aberration is dangerously rigged with potentials to plummet the polity into unimaginable abyss.

The ability of countries to harness the demographic dividend depends critically on their investments in human capital, particularly young people poised to enter the labor force, whose productivity, entrepreneurship and innovation will drive future economic growth (African Union, 2020). If human capital investment falls short and the labor market is unable to absorb new workers, the opportunity of this demographic dividend may be squandered. The future of the collective dream of the founding fathers of many African states and the aspiration of many youth will drown in the fears of short-circuitry leadership and mentorship.

GOVERNANCE IN POST-MODERN AFRICA

Governance as a concept is that mechanisms of coordination of human productivity in political, economic, social and psychological sphere for the purpose of harmonious productivity and sustainability in any milieu by public authorities or private organizations.

Governance in Africa is a malnourished concept because of its complex bowel and situational given regarding reality at every circumstance. From the get go a chunk of the system of governance practiced in Africa today is contrived, and has been since a long time ago. Indigenous system in places were collectively weighed in a balance and found wanting by the conquistadors.

Policies on international relations involving power states and blocs of economic control were made to align with political arrangements across the globe. Democracy was the currency and on that shaft Western policies regarding African nations were made to answer particularly after the collapse of the Berlin Wall in October 1989, the year that closed the Cold War (Sesay, 2014).

The corollary of that on Africa was the pressure point towards ratification of democracy in the continent championed by civil society forces and some political actors that were apparently the underdogs in the power tussle with either military rulers or rival political groups. The ignition for political reform enjoyed the support by self-styled Africa’s development partners that institutionalized conditions for friendship and aids. Acceptance of those codified prerequisites became keys to foreign aids, grants and technical supports. More pertinent were the agitations that became the fallout of much disquiet over a scripted political system that was not organic with manifest difficulties and signs of adaptation. Many protestations on the choreographed system were framed not as evidence of organic repudiation of a system but as symptoms of secondary concerns like economic problems, social and other political sutures.

The spectacle of yardstick used de-standardizes the African craft and by fiat foist a systems on Africa (Rahman, 2001). Somehow the continent had to stay in line. The line was drawn by Western nations with capitalist democracy as the rule. When the yardstick was “modernity”, Africa was “primitive”, now that the gauge is post-modernism Africa is intermediately modern. The continent seems to have the problem of size, not because there is no existing size for it but because people have always looked for its size in the wrong shops. Kataoka (n.d, p.6) states:

During the era of colonial rule, European powers tried to “civilize” Africa but they lacked an understanding of the values of traditional African society. Such misperceptions and these powers’ imposition of their structures and concepts on African countries gave rise to incomprehension in many aspects. Thus, although African leaders inherited states from their former colonial rulers at independence,

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these political and governmental structures were artificial constructs of the suzerain states rather than structures derived from traditional African society.

A contemptuous irony is that Africans have denounced Africa's system in many wide and loud proclamations. Many elites of African descent hypnotically praise democracy as the best system of governance for Africa although there have been innumerable cases of its crass failures. Lots of African countries, for example, have become consistent example of a failed state on the balance of that modeled system of government. Kataoka (nd, p.7) observes "When African countries achieved freedom from colonial rule by Western powers, their newly-created states were modeled after those of Western countries; African leaders attempted to introduce mechanisms of government from these models". It is easy to find the blame in Africa as a problem state than in the system since the benchmark system democracy is almost venerated as a perfect system.

The interesting thing is that the anatomical superstructure of the African's body seems to have unique features that make it easy to tell the skeleton of an African from a European, as studies have variously suggested (Kaur, Miller, Freitas, Bemben and Bemben, 2019; Looker, 2002). Wouldn't it therefore indicate that the architecture of governance for every race is a manual organically shaped by nature in a way for a people to follow? Is it civilization to be traditional in the way we dress? Is it primitive to not look and dress like a man from a different tradition? Would it be absurd to organize a society based on a system a people are comfortable in? Who labels and whose standardizes?

While it may not be too apparent, some lights are beginning to reveal that even the inerrant system of democracy may need some overhaul and re-evaluation by those that hold the ace on its pertinence. There are many greasepaints on the recorded successes that appear to eclipse internal combustions in the countries that hold the right to the system. Sabel (2001, p.121) avers:

The exhaustion of the party politics of Left and Right, together with assaults on central governments and spasmodic efforts to reform them, encouraged these developments. National governments of nearly all colors, embarrassed by responsibilities they cannot or will not discharge, are devolving authority to lower levels and loosening the grip of public bureaucracies on the provision of some services.

Are the birds coming to roost? Is the center holding for the Western style democracy in Africa with over 3,000 different ethnic groups speaking more than 2,100 different languages in all of Africa? Forcing a homogenous system of governance is to encounter the difficulty and dilemma of a camel passing through the eye of the needle. The challenges are enormous with variant shades of experimental mishaps of democracy in the continent and predictable consequences.

According to Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development {OECD} (2001, p.3) First, old forms of governance in both the public and private sectors are becoming increasingly ineffective. Second, the new forms of governance that are likely to be needed over the next few decades will involve a much broader range of active players. Third, and perhaps most importantly, two of the primary attributes of today's governance systems – the usually fixed and permanent allocations of power that are engraved in the structures and constitutions of many organizations; and, the tendency to vest initiative exclusively in the hands of those in senior positions in the hierarchy – look set to undergo fundamental changes.

These predictions are apt and tend to explain the need for a system that appears organic to every clime whether it is an adaptation of democracy or something entirely different. Scholars have conceptualized the brand as postmodernism. What will be the point of departure is that as much as possible, Ghasemi

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(2019, p.1) observes “postmodernism favors the diversity of human experiences, values, cultures, and identities, and thus, it critiques totality and universality... This is an effort to resist monophony and monopoly of power systems and to create pluralistic polyphony”...

There is a general paradigm shift and disquiet among old democracies. Sabel (2001, p.122) notes, where the rich democracies were once diagnosed as suffering a crisis of governability (Huntington, Crozier and Watanuki, 1975), today they are more likely to be diagnosed as suffering a deficit of democracy. More exactly, there is fear of parallel government, *imperium in imperio*: new structures of public action, outside the old ones, whose efficacy undermines the legitimacy of traditional democracy without offering an equivalent form of accountability of its own.

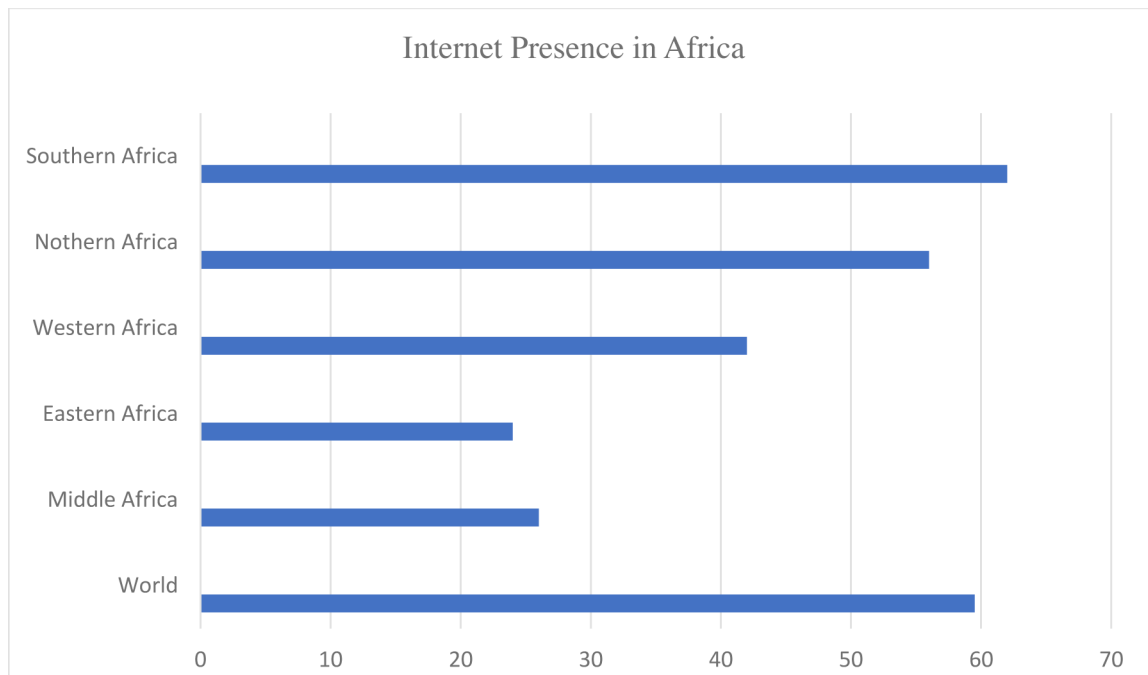
This was evident in the Arab Spring uprising and mass protests in post- communist regimes that capitalized on social media tools to co-ordinate and mobilize masses to challenge authoritarian regimes (Lynch 2011; Howard and Hussain 2013; Trottier and Fuchs 2014; Micó and Casero- Ripollés 2014; Tufekci 2017;). That wave of discontent swept around Nigeria in the form of #ENDSARS movement of 2020. The protests (#ENDSARS) are notable for its patronage by a demographic that is made of entirely young Nigerians. The movement used a symbolic reality instrumentalized by media platforms to demand for good and accountable governance (BBC News, Oct. 16, 2020). That media handle foreshadowed a possible lever of equalizing demands with the powers that be as well as gain opportunity for self-determination for disgruntled youth in many African society. How green is the collegial power that the new technology of ICT and its paraphernalia provide to a gapping population in a post-modernist Africa?

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY IN AFRICA

The reality of the digital era and revolution does not segregate or leave any in doubt. The advancement and social revolution that mobile Internet has engineered because of its proliferation has transmogrified society, shaped approaches to life not without dysfunctional droppings though. One of those gaps is the obvious inequality paradox between the rich nations and the poor nations, even though the technology was granted the pass of being a great equalizer. African Digital Policy Project (ADPP, 2020) characterizes the imbalance as “the digital inequality paradox”. Accordingly, it refers not only to the uneven physical access to varying forms of information and communication technologies (ICTs), but because of what people are capable of doing with digital technologies; the contexts in which they are using them, and the prices they pay for using them.

According to GSMA (2020) the prospect appears all green as “At the end of 2019, 477 million people in Sub-Saharan Africa subscribed to mobile services and half a billion mobile subscribers in 2021”... (p.3). Even then, for the “majority of people in Sub-Saharan Africa, the lack of a verifiable identity remains a major barrier to participating fully in the digital economy. Sub-Saharan Africa is home to only a sixth of the world’s population – but half the global population without an ID lives in the region” (p.25).

While the advent of mobile broadband has driven Internet uptake in Africa, the representation of it as a panacea for underdevelopment masks the fact that six billion people across the world do not have access to the Internet and their lives are largely untouched by this digital revolution (World Bank 2016, v). What is the salient issue here? Increased connectivity in itself does not correlate with reduced information inequality. For those connected people, the intensity of use within Africa is highly uneven, because it is between developed economies and developing economies.

Digital Governance in Post-Modern Africa*Figure 1.*

Even where networks and services appear relatively available, a swart of people majority of who are congregated in rural areas are unable to access these services affordably or use them optimally to enhance their social and economic wellbeing. This is unlike more mature economies, where levels of human development and equality are higher. Even where enabling environments have been created by legislative fiat for the extension of services, or where regulatory interventions have driven prices down, the limited demand-side data available in Africa illustrates how the socially and economically marginalized — particularly those at the intersection of class, gender, race or ethnicity, with generally lower education, employment and income — are unable to harness the benefits of the Internet (Gilwald, 2017, p.1). The 2007-2008 RIA demand-side survey across 14 African countries conducted by Gillwald, Moyo and Stork (2013) found that the bottom three-quarters of mobile phone users spent on average between 11 percent and 27 percent of their income on mobile communications, rather than the standard reference of two percent to three percent of income spent in developed economies.

Beyond the failure to policy perspectives informational asymmetries have yawning implications on social and economic wellbeing of society. In spite of divergences on the impact that the increase broadband penetration is likely to make on the economic fortune of society, there are strong indications that it has cumulative impact. Within a wider ICT ecosystem a broadband as a concept “encompasses the policies, strategies, processes, information, technologies, applications and stakeholders that together make up a technology environment for a country, government or an enterprise. Most importantly, an ICT ecosystem includes people — diverse individuals — who create, buy, sell, regulate, manage and use technology” (Kaplan 2005) cited in Gilwald (2017, p.9).

There is a cursory assumption from an empirical study that found that a broadband penetration ranging between 20-30 per cent is averagely required to propel about 0.8% increase in an average African nation

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GDP. When that benchmark is hit, there might be appreciable increase in the flow of information and a concomitant reduction in transaction costs as a result of ICT diffusion outcome in holistic transformative effect on economies (Koutrompis, 2009).

Looking at the index of the development it may be easy to tell that Africa is still a long shot from that reality. There are contentions that the baggage of stereotypes is still used in telescoping Africa in the global narrative. Ya'u (2012, p.86) contends, "It would seem that the virtual public in Africa is a site of ambivalences. It is simultaneously a 'we', 'us' and 'them' space, depending on what the issues are. It is both globally and locally rooted". Africa is languidly trudging in a plane that speed is the rule of the super high way. From a policy perspective the failure to address these informational asymmetries has wider social, economic and political implications.

Quite the obvious, data network are not like voice network services. The former have effects that stretch them beyond access to intensity of use reflected in global ICT indices. Outside a monumental improvement that has a semblance of what can be reasonably described as affordable services, fertilized by improvement in human development, these hyped developments may just be some cosmetics that are abstracted for dealing with the issue of digital inequality particularly in Africa (Gilwald, 2017).

DIGITAL AFRICA AND THE E-GOVERNANCE COCKTAIL

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) issued in 2009 *National Information Society Policy: A Template* (UNESCO, 2009) and in 2016 an updated version *Knowledge Societies Policy Handbook* (UNESCO & UN University, 2016). These detailed manuals for the development of national ICT institutional and policy frameworks target countries that do not possess necessary resources to develop their own, with the ultimate goal to universalize global ICT development (Budnitskiy 2018).

However, the trajectory to a webbed universe of information communication technology (ICT) is to really have all ends connected; otherwise, it is technically a turn not a web. The intention to have a bordered or borderless virtual village may be a subject of endless dialectics. What is of less controversy is the fact that its evolution seems as real as it can be. A breed with common interest, called netizens, is shaping up. Alasutari (2015) has termed it "the global tribe of moderns." The assumption is that everyone is connected to everyone because of the commonality of the linkage being the net, the Internet.

It implies that everyone is a neighbor to everyone; hence what you do not necessarily have in geographical connection is more than made up for you in the virtual space. In all of this communication is the key player in the creation of communities. Thus, Netizens are creations of communication, not necessarily technology. The paraphernalia or apparatus of communication like the Internet is a conveyor belt. Africa is at the base of the Internet chain, more like the weakest link as we have earlier observed, with low information technology penetration ratios (Ya'u, 2012; Gilwald, 2017). As noted, it is communication that creates the virtual reality and communication is culturally contextualized by complex socio-cultural nature and orientation of the netizens. That is to say communication at the virtual frequency is still subject to cultural filters, pulls and push. How can we theorize the virtual public in Africa?

Habermas conception of the public sphere places emphasis on three key issues: participation is open to all (there is a principle of inclusivity); all participants are considered equal (social status or rank is disregarded); and any issue can be raised for rational debate. Cyberspace is potentially open to all, even though in practice there are a number of barriers - but so has it always been with other forms of com-

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munication platforms. In so far as the cyberspace is concerned, all are also potentially considered equal, though here again practical exigencies put some limit to this equality.

The bedrock of civilization has remained dialogic communication. Debate and discussion normally prefigure dialogue and that is the sine qua non of the public sphere. Like a living thing, the public sphere is ever so ambitious and longs for reach and inclusivity and often throws the gauntlet to even embrace non-interactive communication opportunities and platforms. Sometimes this inadvertent outreach creates tension between interpersonal (interactive) media like telephone and the mass media. The weakness of the later in interactivity is compensated in reach. It is the dominance of the mass media that made Habermas (1999) to think they are undermining the public sphere.

However, that gap seems being bridged by digital public sphere, or so it seems, where participants are personalized as individual netizens. The dissolution of the pyramid of communication power, held exclusively by corporations, creates a common relational ground. Visibility is almost synonymous to accessibility. Beyond just the denudation of the old communication blocs, the development is a re-constitution that demystifies their operation, constitution and contents. Now because of digitalization everyone can reach the hierarchy of media organization, respond to a content, produce and disseminate contents without the bottlenecks imposed by certification or formal orientation. Nothing encapsulates the aspirations of post-modernism than these ideals. It must be remembered particularly in Africa that these potentials of ICT are embryonic at best. In other climes ICTs have led to what MacFarlane (1993) calls the ‘de-institutionalization of the process of information dissemination’.

If the media were regarded as the Fourth Estate of the Realm, now that the realm is notionally without a bar and a ‘bouncer’ to regulate entrants of commoners and comments about ongoing in acoustically sound-proofed executive and legislative floors, can governance remain a cult of those that qualify by criteria that is musty? It is tricky. The traditional public sphere may not be same as the cyberspace. What are the appreciable and applaud-able milestones to reckon in governance around Africa? We will chew on this question later in the work.

However, suffice to say that both, the traditional public sphere and the virtual public sphere are metaphysical and exist as construct and mental realities with veracities for socio-political concerns for netizens. One is a cocoon for the other – the traditional space provides discursive context and labyrinths for the emergence of a virtual public that has in its embryo the private and government-controlled spaces as well. Ya’u (2012, p.88) contends, “In the same vein, online communities cannot be conflated with the virtual public sphere. There are online governance structures, some of a commercial corporate nature, which are also part of the online communities”.

The constitution of the public sphere by shared understanding is non-inhibitive communication styled as a Meta discursive phenomenon. A valid understanding of the virtual space ought to reflect or constitute a broad-based articulation of matters that can get expression online under a milieu of discursive normative by citizens as they engage freely. The advocacy is for the platform to make no law abridging freedom of thought and decorous talk with a clear absence of government-incubus control or profiteering threats. They ought to reflect a town-square (public sphere) that will not be puppeteer to organized platforms or those that tend towards censorship, in the spirit of post-modernist drift.

This may be the ideal but it is problematized by consistent realities. Hypothetically, the virtual spaces that are constituents of the public sphere ought to have assumptive menus like provision for blogs, text, videos, audios, chat platforms, wikis, open publications etc., but can they truly exist independently of the platform owners who are there for business profit and not public interest? Indeed very doubtful. It is reason they run the platforms, in the first place, with a propagandized make-believe that public interest

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is first. In a way, these public space curators are economic authorities with their sometimes-stringent brand of censorship on whatever is 'inimical' to profit or business interest. Under these ropes, can post-modernism be a realistic feature in Africa?

There are power blocs like Google, Facebook, Twitter and the others contesting the suzerainties of the virtual public spheres. This development is a truism even in Western democracies. Many countries are calling for strictures by the platform providers under the guise of national and international security concerns. The case of the Wiki leaks and Julian Assange is one out of many. Llanso, van Hoboken, Leerssen, and Harambam, (2020) stress, "automation in content moderation has increasingly been used on a voluntary basis by the most popular global online platforms. Even when not applied with intent to silence any particular voices, it in fact 'exposes all speech to a form of evaluation *ex ante* and in a way that fails to consider linguistic, social, historical, and other relevant context. Głowacka, Youngs, Pintea, and Wołosik (2021, p.27) note, "It creates substantial risks to freedom of expression, especially when coupled with a lack of due process safeguards available to users, including transparency and effective remedies. The is exacerbated by the lack of independent, external oversight of platforms' decisions and the fact that these actors, not only due to specificities of their services but also their dominant positions on the market, serve as powerful gatekeepers for public discourse and access to information".

One seeming implication of ICTs in the making of the virtual public is that they not only de-territorialized the public sphere but they also appear to create a variety of public spaces that are presumably disconnected from the national space. This gives rise to specific features of the virtual sphere, such as the fact that they cut across countries and are not necessarily organized on the basis of nationalities. When the ban on Twitter by Nigerian government happened the decentralization of the network platform made it obvious that Nigeria may have been on a different lever from other Twitter users in Europe and America who did not see the trend until desperate users had to take a bye-pass in virtual private network (VPN) to access their accounts. With de-territorialization it may be possible to weaken links through filtration of what is shared by what bloc and for what purpose.

Be that as it may, it seems the challenge is graver than imagined. The platforms that should be the emancipators are the new oligarchs with insidious tricks benched on the path of free speech to surreptitiously subvert unionize displeasures over misrule and other legit protests. The virtual space is not a no-man's land. It is owned, monopolized and manipulated by social media moguls like Facebook and Google who are more-or-less a power to themselves, operating without a scratch on their regulatory power even when they restrain, thwart competition, prevent and manipulate innovation and barricade small firms from sharing the space. Alleman (2018, p.1) reasons, "Facebook and Google – have control over what information and news we receive through 'black-box' algorithms; they select what 'we need' and maintain our attention with click-bait and other software tricks. In addition, these platforms have not taken significant measures to address false-news, bots, trolls, or other malicious software on the Internet. Indeed, they make money off the proliferation of this misinformation".

The platforms service providers bug the virtual public sphere and so a hope that a rag tag contingent of youth may, without inhibition, get a hands-free right to stake their claims is almost vacuous. Public reactions to unpopular policies of government are ringed by counter reactions either by use of subtle or covert undercut from government monitoring agents. There is a growing use of spyware across the continent to snoop on government critics. Uganda, Benin and several other states have imposed a social media tax that has excluded many users. Chad went through a 16-month social media ban while Nigeria also took a share of Twitter ban over claims of security reasons (Cheeseman, Garbe and Hassan 2020).

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These giant tech corporations are polarizing society with directed click-baits, targeted ads, focused blogs, etc. In this way they appear a threat to a democratic society. How can virtual governance with participation of all and sundry be realized in such atmosphere, especially in Africa? Already Africa is now the unconquered territory of giant tech corporations where tech wars are staged. It is a test bed for AI technologies led and severally flanked by IBM, Google and Microsoft, companies believed to have invested hugely in “Africa’s AI development than any African government or the African Union” (Yeboah, 2021, p. 18). Why, anyone will wonder? Meanwhile the Chinese AI firms on the other flank are also contesting for the heart of Africa and appear to have won the sympathy of many African leaders more than the Silicon Valley trios.

One of the malaises of post modernism is a rogue fake news phenomenon that seems to run roughshod on all except those that benefit from it and studies show that the tech giants are huge benefactors “because they help retain users on the network” (Alleman, 2018 p.4). The norm for them is if it bleeds it leads, meaning the more sensational the “news” the better. False news spreads faster and wider than real news (Vosoughi, Deb and Sinan, 2018). Disinformation and Fake news seem all-good for profits! Moreover, fake accounts enhance profits; yes, even if they are fake! The more users on the platform, the more valuable the platform is to the advertiser.

In this context perhaps it is safe to surmise that there are contending elements working at cross-purpose with those that envisage a free and egalitarian society. How set then is the continent to develop an effective way to stop the flow of fake news, maximize the full benefits of digital democracy when digital exclusion driven by the high cost of data, the strategies of authoritarian governments, and in some cases the approach of major tech companies themselves are thwarting the effort and dimming the hope? Postmodernism favors the diversity of human experiences, values, cultures, and identities, and thus, it critiques totality and universality. However, the idea may be a wishful thinking if it can’t get through the trimester of conception to grow and resist monophony, monopoly of power systems and to create pluralistic polyphony (Ghasemi, 2019).

Nevertheless, AI technology can be a veritable window for postmodernist ambition to fruit and entrench a well-oiled leadership and governance in the continent. It holds the potential to improve governmental participation across the spectrum of a nation’s demographics; it could spawn political pluralism and enhance civic participation by democratizing communication platforms and strengthening transparency. In parts of Africa like Ghana where it was utilized, it helped to defog election results and “accurately” predicted the 2016 election results before the electoral commission declared the party as the winner. All it took was the expertise of a hired Ghanaian Telecommunications Service Manager at NASA to develop an innovative system that allowed them to input data from electoral centers, via pictures of the election results sheets. The data was then transmitted simultaneously to the region and national party offices where they had set up a technology unit.

The virtue of resiliency in Africans gets them to hope and attempt to circumvent daunting challenges. Yeboah (2021, p. 19) avers that it is becoming a common sight in Africa, for citizens and marginalized groups to use AI technologies such as cloud computing systems or fact-check systems to circumvent traditional political barriers in order to have a piece of the political power to influence policy discussions, ensure respect for human rights and hold governments accountable. By using these technological tools to change the political narrative, non-elites in Africa are less dependent on political elites to define the political discourse.

A testament to that is that in October of 2020 an online campaign protest spiraled out of disgruntlement with political evasiveness of the leadership class in Nigeria to handle police excesses, extra-judicial

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killings some of which are at the behest of politicians. Called the #ENDSARS protest that degenerated into a brouhaha, the success in youth mobilization was like none other seen in the country. As result of that success SARS, the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) - a unit of the Nigerian Police Force that is known for arresting, intimidating and killing citizens, was dissolved.

A naughty challenge of this conflagration is the dexterity of fake information. To trim that problem and restore some sanity and trust in political statements and public debates in Africa, African Check, a South African non-partisan fact checking organization is severally employing AI driven technologies to improve its fact checking capabilities. These AI driven fact checking tools collect and monitor information from leading news sites and social media platforms, identify and label controversial claims made by a political or any public figure, claims are matched with corresponding data to confirm or declare it false Yeboah (2021, p. 19). Happily, this and other innovations are encapsulated in the objectives of e-governance, which for the moment seems the escape capsule for sanity in leadership if structured well.

E-governance is a tripartite operational element that entails e-government, e-regulation and e-democracy. Viewed together it suggests an operating system that is transparent and allows for more trust, mutual trust between government and those served. Not all e-solutions and e-services that governments provide necessarily meet fully the needs of the ordinary citizen. A well-configured one should significantly reduce corruption, although the glass is often fogged by nefarious intents. The true existence of digital governance should whittle down much of the issue of misrule and abstractive governance managed by a hand full, which is angst that postmodernism ideology decries.

As an alternative to the ideals of postmodernism ideology, e-governance could carter to issues of how well the state makes use of ICT to lubricate, regulate and provide public services like prices of things, quality of products and accessibility. E-democracy, a synonym for e-governance, deals with how the state could use ICT to improve its rule –give everyone a sense of say and belonging and the possibility of being heard by the highest authority. Where it is well coordinated a president can hold a town meeting on a social media platform, for example, and respond to concerns and questions of the common man. It is reason a UN e-government survey (2004, 2005, and 2008) described the public sector use of it as the most innovative yet (Adeyemo, 2011). The United Nations e-government global survey has adopted a five-stage e-governance model (UN e- government survey, 2004, 2005; 2008), these are:

Stage 1 - Emerging presence: In this stage a country commits to becoming an E-Government player. A formal but limited web presence is established through a few independent government websites which provide users with static organizational or political information.

Stage 2 - Enhanced presence: In this stage, a country's online presence begins to expand as the number of official websites increase, with more dynamic and specialized information content that is frequently updated. The interaction is still primarily unidirectional with information flowing essentially from government to the citizen.

Stage 3 - Interactive presence: In this stage a country's presence on the internet expands dramatically by entering the interactive mode with access to a wide range of government institutions and services.

Stage 4 - Transactional presence: In this stage two- way interactions between the citizen and the government is included.

Stage 5 - Networked (or fully integrated) presence: This stage represents the most sophisticated level in the online e-government initiatives. It is characterized by an integration of G2G, G2C and C2G (and reverse) interactions. The government encourages participatory deliberative decision-making and is willing and able to involve the society in a two-way open dialogue (UN global e-government readiness Report, 2004).

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This UN model is an index that characterizes the state e-government readiness and e-government participation. The end ought to be development that is popularized by public yearning and acceptability. Adeyemo (2011, p.13) states, “The UN global e-government readiness index (UN e- government survey, 2004; 2005; 2008) is a composite index comprising the Web measure index, the telecommunication infrastructure index and the human capital index”.

These ideals could be realized by nations where there is a will power and a leaning on public good by the powers that be. There is a scientific way of assessing nations on the barometer of e-governance performance and compliance. For example, Adeyemo (2011, p.16) notes that, The UN 2001 benchmarking e-government report (Benchmarking E-government, 2002) had given a detailed assessment of Nigeria’s E-Readiness status, stating that Nigeria’s government web sites were primarily for public affairs issues, with very little dynamic information to the citizens. It avers that the unofficial government web site is the Presidency. Quotes about combating corruption and allegiance to the presidency are common features of the page and the site is bereft of direct access to all ministries and legislative or judicial issues, including laws and regulations or court decisions. The report stresses that Nigeria had no ministries online instead the site merely provided links to an array of agencies and departments concerning export regulations, ports authority, public enterprises, corporate affairs, and investment promotions. Information (or sites) relating to education, social services, health care or women and children specifically was conspicuously absent. It also observed that this pattern of unbalanced implementation was common among developing countries.

Reflection from the report points to the fact that Africa is technologically disadvantaged in terms of infrastructure, although it is rich in human capital base. There is an absence of patriotism to develop the human capital resources because of a morbid fear of what exposing people to knowledge will do to a parochial mindset of leadership. Many leaders in Africa prefer to buy foreign services than invest in the development of indigenous service providers. This explains why many African countries may yoyo at the toddler stage of e-governance for a long time.

Some gains may have been recorded since the UN report assessment of Nigeria and by extrapolation Africa E-governance readiness in 2001. In terms of consumerism, the acquisition of telecommunication infrastructure and paraphernalia has shored up the e-government ratings of a few African countries like Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa and Cape Verde as studies show (Adeyemo, 2011). The fertile Nigerian market for ICT accessories and technologies make them the craved market for investors from Middle East, Europe, Asia and North America. A big challenge of e-government implementation in any developing country is whether the intended objective of reaching the citizens is actually achieved. E- governance, which is similar to e-democracy, should reach all the people who need government services regardless of their location, age, status, language, or access to the Internet.

The two main objectives of e-democracy are:

1. To provide citizens access to information and knowledge about the political process, about services and about choices available
2. To make possible the transition from passive information access to active citizen participation by:
 - Informing the citizen
 - Representing the citizen
 - Encouraging the citizen to vote
 - Consulting the citizen
 - Involving the citizen

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The strategic objective of e-governance is to support and simplify governance for all parties - government, citizens and businesses. The use of ICTs can connect all three parties and support processes and activities (Backus, 2001, p.3).

A FINAL REMARK

Reforms and numerous theoretical expediencies prescribed from the Bretton Woods to the most recent display initial frenzies to kinetically steer a campaign, but that force is soon whittled down by razor-sharp intra-fit reactions like organic customization issues, identity question, and rules of applicability. Africa and its cultures are numerous. The collegial frames are like arteries that discreetly relate, following their route, but need not be replaced or collapsed into each other. It is reason the heterogeneity of the principle of postmodernism is worth paying attention to in looking at systems that can fit the development course of communities and the united states of Africa.

Along that field of governance shrubberies, Africa could significantly become amendable to digital governance in spite of their critical posture and suspicion of the dysfunctionality of digitalization in government operations - perhaps the suspicion can be excused because of strangeness. Beyond the synonymology of e-governance and digital governance what ought to spring out is for communities to trace their roots in governance, and that tributary is important, before they can be forged into regional borders. Although digitalization is a technical globalization in blueprint, individual roots of evolution can strengthen regional clustering. The center need not be a system of universal replicate anymore than we will demand that individual names of nations be mortgaged for one nation. Adaptation ought not to be forced; a rainbow of uniqueness will encourage mutual respect and discourage complexes of superiority and underdogs among nations.

Digitalization does not only offer just a new technology, but also a mechanism to transform the way government operates. Moving services online involves redesigning organizational structures and processes according to the citizens' and businesses' needs. It also entails integrating services across different governmental agencies, in an effort to simplify interaction, while reducing cost structures and improving overall service delivery. E-Government initiatives need to adopt a whole-of-government approach. Many countries have implemented one-stop portals, online transactions and e-participation possibilities. However, developing public value in e-government is still at the initial stages of conceptualization and implementation particularly in developing nations of Africa.

All the same, it is not likely that any one with a sense of discernment will drop 'yes' that e-governance is a cure-all answer. Like sharks, the elements that are conditioned to incinerate exchange of ideas freely will taste blood in every innocuous intention. E-governance and its dividend will be served step-motherly to the public to forestall a unified force that will topple the cart. They will comb restlessly the virtual halls with all tools at their disposal. The fight for democracy was never won on a bed of roses. Postmodernism has its Golgotha. The game is survival. African netizens need to own the patent to the innovations and not cede them to Silicon Valley or China. The erosion of identity has been the bane of Africa. Cultural preservation of Africa's intellectual property is one way to safeguard the heritage and existence of our virtual space. When a government is serious it will engage the people it leads and open channels for people to reach it easily and quickly. It is expected that governments in Africa will make concerted effort to boost the education and exposure level of citizens to change. Research ought to be

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actively encouraged to influence government significantly and understand possible loopholes in digital and data rights.

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