



Africa's Media, Democracy and the Politics of Belonging

By Francis B. Nyamnjoh

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This major study explores the role of the mass media in promoting democracy and empowering civil society in Africa. The author contextualizes Africa within in the rapidly changing global media and shows how patterns of media ownership and state control have evolved and the huge difficulties under which most African media workers labour. The author also explores the whole question of media ethics and professionalism in Africa. The general analysis is supported by a very detailed unique case study of Cameroon. Nyamnjoh is critical of the Western-derived institutional framework for multi-party democracy that overlooks the social realities of African citizens' multiple identities, and their cultural orientation to communal values. He also concludes that African governments have gone very little way in encouraging independent media, but that the media themselves must also share some of the blame.

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Editorial Review

Review

"An exceptionally rich and thought-provoking work. Nyamnjoh gives us a vivid, well researched picture of the new African media landscape, while asking probing questions about both journalistic practice and the meaning of democracy."--James Ferguson, Department of Cultural and Social Anthropology, Stanford University

"Nyamnjoh's book is a worthwhile addition to the growing body of knowledge on African communication and politics. It is creatively rendered in a descriptive and critical style that combines the anthropologist's eyes for patterned behaviour and the journalist's nose for social criticism. The result is a delicious rendition on the complex role of communication in democracy. This should be required reading in journalism, political science, and sociology."--Charles Okigbo, Department of Communication, North Dakota State University

'This latest work by Professor Francis Nyamnjoh raises the level of the debate on the media and the democratization agenda in Africa to a very high level with perceptive and insightful analysis of the problematic. The work is informed, detailed, useful, and meaningful. It serves as an outstanding contribution and source for scholars, professionals and top-level decision makers in the area of media and democracy in Africa. It is a "must" text for all students of mass media and development in Africa."--Cecil Blake, Chair, Africana Studies Department, University of Pittsburgh

"Nyamnjoh's analysis innovatively develops a new conceptual framework in assessing studies on, and the state of, African media and how people use them. His theoretical achievement is to critique African essentialism on the one hand, while developing an indigenized critical theory on the other. He speaks from Africa, about Africa, in an engagement with Western theory, assumptions and policies. This study is a breakthrough."--Keyan G. Tomaselli, University of KwaZulu-Natal and President, South African Communication Association

About the Author

Francis B. Nyamnjoh is Associate Professor of Sociology and Head of Publications and Communications with the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA).

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