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CONTENTS

CONTENTS	PAGES
<p>Narrating the Black Male Immigrant Experience in Yaa Gyasi's <i>Transcendent Kingdom</i> (2020) Christabel Aba Sam, University of Cape Coast, Ghana</p>	1
<p>Confusion where there is none: Of Ifa, what it is and is not amongst the peoples of West Africa Eesuola, Olukayode Segun & Ayodele Yusuff, University of Lagos, Nigeria</p>	21
<p>Re-contextualizing the decolonization discourse: a critical reading of selected post-independence African narrative texts Mawuloe Koffi Kodah, University of Cape Coast, Ghana</p>	45
<p>Social Media and Political Communication in African Politics: Insights from Nigerian Context Ikemefuna Taire Paul Okudolo, Ajayi Crowther University Oyo, Nigeria</p>	79
<p>African Languages for African Studies: Agenda Setting Abisoye Eleshin, University of Lagos, Nigeria</p>	105
<p>Between Ideology and Praxis: Zikist Movement and Radical Nationalism in Colonial Nigeria Shina Alimi, Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria</p>	125

Adoption of Sustainable Solid Waste Collection and Disposal Practices in Urban Settlements in Lagos, Nigeria Elizabeth Murey, ¹ Moi University, School of Arts and Social Sciences, Kenya	163
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Social Media and Political Communication in African Politics: Insights from Nigerian Context

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Abstract

A contemporary worldwide norm in political contestations today is more recourse to social media political communication. Therefore, African countries cannot but sustain their political fray by applying it. The study interrogates the role that social media plays in African politics and democratic elections. It utilizes the Nigerian context of presidential polls from 1999 to 2023 to make theoretical generalizations about the aforesaid modern phenomenon for the African continent. Its first objective: To gauge whether e-campaigning facilitates uncivilized? acts like the spread of fake news, hate speech, calumny, libel, slander, character assassination, among others in African elections. Also, the second objective's research question is what governance policy measures and public institutional administrative considerations need to be instituted to curtail the use of social media political communication in African elections to inhibit uncivilized criminal deeds as enumerated in the first objective? It adopts James W. Carey's transmission model of communication and political communication theory as its theoretical framework. The triangulation method of data collection was adopted while the qualitative content analysis technique was used to interpret the data collected from participant observation, interviews and document analysis. Two thematic codes emerged that were the basis of data analysis: uncivilized and civilized. It theorizes from

the Nigerian context that social media political communication facilitates more uncivilized cum criminal deeds, thereby generalizing same in African politics. And this is because the public administrative institutional machineries to curtail such negative outcomes are weak and ineffectual in Nigeria viz. across the African continent.

Keywords: Social media; political communication; Nigeria's presidential elections; African politics; James W. Carey's transmission model of communication

Les réseaux sociaux et la communication politique en Afrique : aperçu du contexte nigérian

Résumé

Une norme mondiale contemporaine dans les contestations politiques d'aujourd'hui est le recours accru à la communication politique par les réseaux sociaux. Par conséquent, les pays africains ne peuvent que soutenir leur lutte politique en l'appliquant. Cette étude a pour objet le rôle que jouent les réseaux sociaux dans la politique africaine et les élections démocratiques. Elle utilise le contexte nigérian des élections présidentielles de 1999 à 2023 pour faire des généralisations théoriques sur le phénomène moderne susmentionné pour le continent africain. Son premier objectif : Évaluer si la campagne en ligne facilite les actes inciviques tels que la diffusion de fausses nouvelles, les discours de haine, la calomnie, la diffamation, la calomnie, l'assassinat de personnage, entre autres, dans les élections africaines. En outre, la question de recherche du deuxième objectif est la suivante: quelles mesures politiques de gouvernance et quelles considérations administratives institutionnelles publiques doivent être instituées pour limiter l'utilisation des réseaux sociaux dans la communication politique

lors des élections africaines afin d'inhiber les actes criminels incivils tels qu'énumérés dans le premier objectif ? L'étude adopte le modèle de transmission de la communication de James W. Carey et la théorie de la communication politique comme cadre théorique. La méthode de triangulation de la collecte des données a été adoptée tandis que la technique d'analyse qualitative du contenu a été utilisée pour interpréter les données collectées à partir des observations des participants, des entretiens et l'analyse de documents. Deux codes thématiques ont émergé et ont servi de base à l'analyse des données : non civilisé et civilisé. Le contexte nigérian permet de théoriser le fait que la communication politique par les réseaux sociaux facilite des actes plus incivils et criminels, généralisant ainsi la même chose dans la politique africaine. Et ce, parce que les mécanismes institutionnels administratifs publics visant à limiter ces résultats négatifs sont faibles et inefficaces au Nigéria et sur tout le continent africain.

Mots-clés: Réseaux sociaux ; communication politique ; élections présidentielles au Nigeria ; politique africaine ; modèle de transmission de la communication de James W. Carey.

1.0 Introduction

The intellectual basis of social media as a tool for political communication in politics generally, but particularly in elections contests, is inclined to the use of ICT technology to propagate self-interested ideologies, information, vision, and thinking, among others. Through social media usage, current political gladiatorial actors in their campaigns cannot but use computer gadgets like smartphones and tablets and every computer tech form through web-based software applications to be perceived as contemporary politicians. According to McNair (2018), consensus flourish that political communication is both about the behaviour of interaction between political actors and their constituencies

and the means that communications in politics among many other endeavors transpire. Herein the study, political communication in the present world is most ideal to ensue by social media. In light of the above reasoning, terms like e-campaigning, e-electioneering, social media politicking and digital politicking are compatible and also indicative of the concept of social media political communication in this study.

In the pursuit of modernizing African politics comes increased aspiration towards e-electioneering. The above view explains why Gibson, Rommele and Williamson (2014) posit that the rudiments of political development can be sought in the willful embrace by modern political actors of social media politicking in the election brinkmanship game. In evolutionary terms, the advent of the World Wide Web combined with the innovative technological advances in ICT-inclined mass media underscores the impetus of the social media political communication era. To stress further, social media use in political communication will be concerned with the dissemination of information inclined to be of a strategic political purpose and content. Of which the spreading of such information through social media platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, or Yahoo Messenger indicates the new norm in political communication, thereby underscoring why far above four billion persons in the global community use social media (Theocharis & Quintelier, 2016).

Distinctively, therefore, modernization of political communication in practice, which is precisely what digital politicking is about, is tilted towards actualizing the goal of politics and nature of politicians. That is, digital politicking aligns with the ultimate goal in politics which is manipulating, persuading and influencing others on self-interested topics of politicians. This implies that playing politics is better off today with social media.

Politicians thrive best in political communication because digital politicking is highly impactful for the purpose. The social media approach of communicating messages to political constituencies using ICT technologies to propagate opinions, manifestos, views and news has proven to promote timeliness, speediness and quickness (Halpern, Valenzuela & Katz, 2017; Adegoke, 6 March 2017).

The study progresses from its introductory section into a brief literature excursion on the value of social media political communication. Next, the eclectic theoretical framework is expounded. Methodological issues are then espoused, explained and justified. The interpretation, analysis and discussion of data, as well as, summarizing findings follow. Recommendations and concluding remarks come in the last two sections.

2.0 Brief Literature Review

In this epoch, e-campaigning represents a revolution as a dynamic intervention for ease, cheapness, and speed with which political messaging between politicians and the electorates happens. It signifies the dismantling of the old social order whereby political communication goes on physically (Michaelsen, 2011). The old social order by physical presence is restrictive of the audience reach at a time; is found to be highly laborious, and is known to be costlier than the digital medium (Michaelsen, 2011; Apuke & Tunca, 2018). A few of the pressing needs in contemporary political contestations is the need for a critical reassessment of how politicians disseminate more efficaciously, speedily and with much precision the intent of their communication.

This implies in modern parlance an enthusiastic application of technology as this is the well-known medium to actualize greater dissemination of political communication. Global advances of the

last few decades have demonstrated paradigmatic shifts in communication in politics, election contests and every other basis of political engagements towards digitalization of the processes. According to Okudolo (2020), social media politicking constitutes the most reflective propensity of the adoption of modern technology and is particularly the reification of ICT usage in political affairs.

Communication about shared values, beliefs, and common normative rituals of a group or society such as communication of political parties and their members or news about governance **Social Media and Political Communication in African Politics: Insights from Nigerian Context** outcomes is better broadcasted via social media. One can thus imagine its value too in election contests. From the foregoing analysis, it can be inferred that the worth of social media political communication far outweighs its shortcomings. This point is underscored in the studies of Zhang, Seltzer, and Bichard (2013) and Xenos, Vromen, and Loader (2014). These studies which diagnosed the impact of the use of various social media platforms in political communication documented significant positive gains in terms of increased political participation levels, particularly of young people newly attaining voting age.

The positive contribution of digital politicking in numerous other studies such as Kahne and Bowyer (2018), Boulianne (2009, 2015), found overall that the social media communication medium has impacted positively on election conduct and increased political participation levels globally. Also, the meta-analysis study of Boulianne, (2009, 2015) testified to a positive correlation between social media political communication and political engagements of all kinds. Theocharis and Quintelier's (2016) study which sought to describe the connection between

Facebook use and citizens' involvement in political affairs reported a positive correlation as well. In a synopsis, studies affirm that there exists an actual cum potential complementarity of the value of e-campaigning in political processes. This theory, therefore, stresses the content of communication, as being political as long as it aims to further unearth a political view, message, interest, ideology, or debate, which can best be maximized via social media nowadays (Macnamara & Kenning, 2011).

3.0 Theoretical Framework

It is worth restating that political communication theory and James W. Carey's transmission model of communication constitute the eclectic theoretical framework of this study. These theories reflect two important academic subfields that underlie the premise of the study's theoretical orientation. The subfields are political science (i.e. politics particularly in terms of electoral campaigns and other political interactions) and communication science (i.e. in terms of information, messages and views/opinions exchanges, coding, analysis and decoding in human interactions). First, it is necessary to stress key intersecting realities of the two academic subfields that help to underscore the theoretical groundings and how they aid the explanation of our thesis-of-thesis.

A central feature of both subfields (i.e. political and communication sciences) is that they indicate the study of socio-human interactions *in vivo*. This means that the academic subfields deal with interrogating human interactions, and not in the least of an abstract phenomenon outside a human environment. Again, the historical-intellectual sociology of the subfields as arenas of academic scientific inquiry indicates a

processual evolutionary growth of conceptual, analytic and methodological accounts of how these subfields explain the human-society nexus. That is, these subfields account for distinct versions of the influence of socio-human interactions on society and vice versa. Thereby contributing to illuminating theories that explain social, human and societal development. Consequently, political communication theory and James W. Carey's transmission model of communication, relate, derive and contribute to the academic knowledge economy. That is, political communication theory is analogous to political science while James W. Carey's transmission model of communication relates to the communication science field of academic research.

Political communication theory submits that communication comes about in various forms like conversations, written statements, verbal interactions, behaviour, attitude, or even hair, dressing and flamboyancy styles. McNair (2018) holds that a political personality's dressing and communication elegances, including haircut style constitutes political communication. As long as the communication form enables to propagate a political identity or image in the subconscious mind of others, especially the voting public. Thus, Bakir (2013) talks about strategic political communication (SPC) as a form of communication, with manipulative, persuasive and focused intent often utilized to influence public opinion on sensitive issues.

Regarding James W. Carey's transmission model of communication, Carey's (2009) transmission view of communication contrasts significantly with his ritual view. In the main, the transmission model of communication according to Carey (2009) identifies with a conscious role of information disseminators to control, manipulate, persuade or influence the audience or general public. Long before Carey fine-tuned his

theory, Kaplan (2003) had argued that the primary goal of a kind of transmission view of communication is to influence perception. Carey explains the transmission model of communication as a form of messaging meant to impart, transmit and provide news to the decoders (i.e. those that receive the information) chiefly to persuade, manipulate, influence and control the opinion or view about the information. This view concurs with Bakir's (2013) SPC and Khan's (2017) intellectual thinking. The foregoing intellectualization of Carey's transmission model of communication is common in socio-human interactions or organized settings wherein brinkmanship-driven activities, decision making and upheavals are common. This thinking is what Qayyum, Williamson, Liu and Hider (2010) note as the underlying major motif of political communication. Transmission-kind of political communications are common in human interrelationships such as in politics generally (i.e. Stieglitz, Brockmann & Dang-Xuan, 2012), and competition endeavors like marketing, business and insurance (Massey, 2001).

One criticism of Carey's theory is that it is not easy to discern between a communication that is transmission and not merely ritualistic. This is because, many a time, a ritualistic communication could have profound conscious and strategic communication messaging. Therefore, critiques claim there persist the absence of conceptual clarity between a ritual and transmission communication in Carey's theorizations. To these critiques, both transmission and ritual communication are coded in metaphors that means different things to different people. Thus, Carey's modelling suffer inadequate conceptual illumination.

4.0 Methodological Concerns

This section elucidates the methodological concerns of the study.

4.1 Problem Statement

The underlying emphasis of the study is to discover whether e-campaigning in Africa evolves into civility or otherwise in the art of politics. This implies exploring the notion of e-electioneering to the extent that its bearing portrays the broadcast of hate speech, fake news, slander, libel or character assassination in politics against contenders, especially during electoral competitions. From observation, political communication among contenders for elective offices in Nigerian politics viz. African politics hardly is ethical, ideological or developmental. African politicians are inclined to grab power at all costs, including indulging in telling lies and maligning opponents' integrity willfully. Perhaps, the political actors in the understudied context have a "militarized" mindset of not accommodating opposition views or being interested in intellectual debates and governance devoid of rancor. Following such a mindset, it is interesting to interrogate the character and dominant tendencies in African digital politicking spheres.

The realpolitik of e-campaigning as empirically observed offers a working theory of the implications of social media political communication of Nigerian politicians as an incentive to indulge in uncivilized acts like spreading hate speech or fake news. In this respect, its hypothetical assumption attempts to contribute to the practical impact of e-electioneering on ethical conduct in African politics. This is not unconnected to the shortage of research on this phenomenon in African elections. However, it may be necessary to inform of studies that investigate determinants, impacts and intentional propensities of e-campaigning in Nigerian politics cum elections, their dynamism

and dimensions as well (see Cheeseman, Fisher, Hassan & Hitchen, 2020; Chinedu-Okeke, & Obi, 2016; Mustapha, 2017; Apuke & Tunca, 2018).

4.2 Aim, Objectives and Research Questions

The study's overarching aim is to know whether e-campaigning enables vices like fake news, hate speech, calumny, and character assassination via social media in African politics.

Objective 1: To gauge whether e-campaigning facilitates uncivilized acts like the spread of fake news, hate speech, calumny, libel, slander, and character assassination, among other criminal deeds in African politics/elections.

Research Question 1: Dose e-campaigning facilitate uncivilized acts as mentioned in Objective 1 or otherwise in African politics/elections?

Objective 2: To propose governance policy measures and public institutional administrative considerations that should be instituted to curtail the use of social media to propagate uncivilized and criminal deeds like fake news, hate speech, calumny, libel, slander, character assassination, among others in Africa politics/elections.

Research Question 2: What governance policy measures and public institutional administrative considerations need to be instituted to curtail the use of social media to propagate uncivilized and criminal deeds as enumerated in Objective 2 above in African politics/elections?

4.3 Research Method

The study is anchored on the qualitative methodology. According to Soni and Soni (2019), qualitative methodology is a viable

strategy to descriptively characterize reflective perceptions about e-campaigning. To Brains, Willnat, Manheim, and Rich (2011), the qualitative methodology has the advantage of enabling a broad understanding of how notions are framed from perceptions and other sources of qualitative data like interviews, observation and document analysis. This methodological orientation also helped to provide insight into governance and public policy flaws that enables abuses in e-electioneering as related to perception of both Objectives. The researcher believes that the description of the perceptions in line with answering the two research questions is best attained through the qualitative methodology. Hence, Anstead and O'Loughlin's (2014) supposition is apt to the context that qualitative methodology is a viable facilitator for providing rich descriptive and explicit answers to researches aimed at explaining the why and how outcomes of socio-human activities.

4.4.1 Triangulation of data gathering

According to the 2009 International Encyclopedia of Human Geography, triangulation in research can be used in data collection and also in data analysis. It is the technique in research involving the adoption of multiple methods to generate a dataset. Studies that employ two or more methods leading to generating different datasets, particularly in data collection are said to be involved in triangulation (Mertens & Hesse-Biber, 2012). The triangulation method enables the deduction of consequences from data gathered from multiple sources in a study, thus serving to enrich the validity of the findings cum middle-level theory formulated from the research. This approach to data collection also supports the generation of rich and in-depth findings from analysis of the variables being measured and best increases insight and profound understanding of the problem being investigated in research (Hussein, 2009). Triangulating data

collection for the study aided reliability as a way to prove that different data sources can view a social phenomenon similarly. By contrast too, the approach helps to expose discrepancies in studies that misuse the triangulation method in the sense of utilizing a particular data source that cannot provide cogent information about a research problem (Flick, 2002). For instance, the use of close-ended questionnaires in a survey that attempts to understand intensely qualitative themes may prove insufficient to provide rich descriptive views. Such a mismatch cannot be used to generate valid and reliable middle-level theory about deeply qualitative social phenomena like understanding broad-based emotion, perception, feeling, belief or ideology or intent of social media messaging. To a lot of extent, the study's triangulation of data collection enabled insightful theoretical generalizations to be made for African politics.

4.4.2 Collecting of Data

As noted in the preceding subsection, the triangulation of data gathering is utilized for the study to boost the reliability and validity of its theoretical generalizations about African politics based on the e-electioneering model. For emphasis, e-campaigning is the study's dependent variable that is primarily being appraised. Terminological themes like fake news, hate speech, calumny, character assassination, etc are the independent variables that are typical features of political communication meant to show how much digital politicking has fared in terms of the dependent variable in concrete reputes. Accordingly, the data gathering assisted in the generation of two thematic codes: civilized and uncivilized.

Three data collection sources were triangulated to generate data. The techniques were participant observation, interviews and

document analysis. These techniques are intricately qualitative data generation methods, hence underscoring the study's alignment with the qualitative methodological orientation. Deployment of our triangulation of data collection started by firstly couching the title of the study to reflect a qualitative theme. Understanding the social media political communication nexus in African politics is one theme that qualitative data surely provided rich descriptions and answers to our research questions. Secondly, the research objectives and questions were framed to thematically reflect qualitative reality rather than a quantitative methodological posture. For instance, interviewees – this category was purposively sampled - were asked to describe whether they feel e-electioneering aggravated or otherwise hate speech, calumny, and fake news in politics. Also, the document analysis ensured the production of corrective measures to boost public institutions' capacity to mitigate the abuse of social media via digital politicking. In addition, the study's researcher actively participated and observed how interlocutors in social media political communication were civil or uncivilized in their communications. The research of Yin (2014) attests to the reliability of the study's adopted data gathering by its assertion that triangulation of data collection yields holistic and synergic perspectives.

4.4.3 Data analysis technique

The study utilized the qualitative content-analysis tool in analyzing its collected data. The qualitative content analysis method is about making subjective interpretations chiefly from qualitatively inclined data such as interviews, contents of texts or videos, and observations amongst others (Saldaña, 2011). This data analysis method is thus significant in studies based on qualitative methodology. Also, the data analysis tool aids

deduction and making of inferences from contents of a qualitative nature such as from observation, interviews responses, and documents (textual data sources like from social media info essays, news features, books, social media platforms, among others) (Vaismoradi, Bondas & Turunen, 2013). Essentially, the qualitative content analysis method builds on interpreting and making meaning cum deductions by examining the recurrence of words, themes, or concepts - in short, codes or thematic codes – in data that have been collected. It was during the micro-level analysis of the collected data the two thematic codes emerged, and it should be noted that the thematic codes are direct opposite terms. Consequently, views about uncivilized deeds indicate the opposite will be civilized. The two evolved codes follow Creswell (2014) observations that they came about from a painstaking and exhaustive process of analyzing the triangulated collected data.

5.0 Data Interpretation, Analysis and Discussion

The data from the Nigerian context during the earmarked polls overwhelming reveal that uncivilized deeds dominated. This view resonates Henneberg and O’Shaughnessy (2010) and Harris and Lock’s (2010) research findings on ethical adherences in social media use. Most prominent of the uncivilized deeds were misinformation, fake news, disinformation and others like lampooning opponents, fake news, hate speech, and calumny also prevailed. Perhaps, what our data speak to at an intellectual level of reasoning is that the predominance of uncivilized deeds and crimes committed via digital politicking is reducible to the incapacity of the policing and prosecutorial mechanisms to curb such negations. The research of Onah and Nche (2014), and Okoro and Santas (2017) have shown that civility in e-electioneering is not only a function of the moral mindset of

actors but also the individuals working in institutions meant to arrest and adjudicate over criminal use of social media. At least, Omotayo and Folorunso's (2020) study shows that Nigerian youths were spurred into greater political participation in Oyo State based more on civil messages of online debates about choices and preferences of manifestos.

This researcher observed that e-campaigning and the brinkmanship that ensues are done as if the contest is a do-or-die affair. Hence the propensity to deploy social media politicking to dig up dirt or expose dirt of oppositions and abusing one another than engage in critical discussions of development administration. Thus, one interviewee, a university lecturer said *"...Hardly are the social media posts about their manifestoes. It is usually more fabricated stories of another or one that lampoons the other"*. The politicians that operated during the studied polls in Nigeria more often seized on e-campaigning to peddle falsehood, hate and character assassination of other contestants. Incidentally, Nwodu's (2007) study adduces that where misuse of social media flourishes is very likely because those who establish regulations or have the power to formulate punitive policies against infractions of laws and regulations are themselves indulging in the misuse.

In Nigeria, there is a popular saying that laws are meant for the common man and not the powerful high-and-mighty "big" personalities. Unfortunately, this saying plays out in real life going by the fact that hardly are the so-called "big" persons in Nigerian society brought to book for criminal breaches that poor people are sentenced to long imprisonment time for. A participant who is a public servant of the rank of Assistant Director said *"...These politicians are just out to tarnish the image of opponents in the election process through their social media campaigning without*

fear that they can be arrested and jailed for such action". Mustapha's (2017) observation is apt on this point. He holds that contestants in an election work to win at all cost because they feel that extant laws to curtail criminalities are ineffective. This researcher observes that Nigerian politics experience the malfeasances of strongmen/women who operate and believe they are above the law.

Following the aforesaid consequently, concerns for constitutionalism and adherence to rule of law are hardly a concern in Nigerian politics in the minds of the politicians including in their social media political communication from the researcher's participant observation. And this observation concurs with the arguments of Ida, Saud and Mashud's (2020) study. The above reasoning underscores why the studies of Okoro and Nwafor (2013) and Nche (2012) come to conclude that digital politicking in Nigeria usually does not strengthen social relations but worsens its toxicity. The works of Chinedu-Okeke and Obi (2016), Lawal (2010), and Nkala (2012) direct attention to the ethnic consciousness in Nigeria's election contests and by implication, the deployment of e-electioneering to promote ethnic bigotry, hate speech and antagonism of other tribes living in one dominant ethnic group's community. For example, many social media videos are threatening Ibos doing business and living in Lagos, Nigeria, of consequences if they refuse to vote for a Yoruba presidential contestant in the 2023 Presidential Election. The interview data overwhelmingly concede that the weak prosecutorial and other public institutional frameworks cause uncivilized acts in Nigeria's digital politicking spheres to continue unchecked. The scholarships of Nwabueze and Ezebuenyi (2012),

and Omenugha, Ukwueze and Malizu (2011) agree with the above view.

6.0 Summary of Findings and Generalizations

Each of the summaries herein is in tandem with the aforementioned espoused focus of the study and analyzed thematic codes:

- a) Uncivilized deeds dominate e-campaigning in Nigeria viz. African politics such as slander, character assassination, fake news, misinformation, disinformation and manipulation. This is connected to the foundations of African political culture which reflects the poverty of African politics that encompasses perverted and immoral political values. Thus, the unwillingness to adhere to constitutionalism and rule of law in African election brinkmanship via social media accentuates the uncivilized deeds to happen.
- b) The legal-jurisprudential frameworks and public-institutional policies geared toward curtailing misuse of social media political communication, which ordinarily constitutes the basis of arresting uncivilized deeds in e-campaigning in Nigeria viz. African politics are weak, dysfunctional and ineffectual.

7.0 Recommendations

Uncivilized deeds via social media politicking, and irregularities persist due to poor ICT infrastructure, incapacity to police misuse of e-campaigning, and organization of elections that raise legitimacy questions. It is recommended among others the promulgation of stiffer punitive measures like the imprisonment of those guilty of using social media to broadcast defamation of

character, libel and slander among other vices against other contestants in the elections. The study also recommends huge court-ordered compensation for election contestants that suffer damage from vices like hate speech, calumny and fake news perpetrated via e-campaigning. Thus, there needs to be in place a strengthened policing infrastructure to arrest perpetrators that deploy e-electioneering for uncivilized deeds. Again, Nigeria viz. other African countries need to formalize a social media use Act to empower prosecutorial agencies like the courts to easily convict those that willfully abuse social media politicking. The formalization of a Social Media Politicking Regulation and Ethics Act will go a long way to curb the criminal use of social media for uncivilized deeds in election contestations.

8.0 Concluding Remarks

From the foregoing analysis, the paper theorizes among other things that e-campaigning in Nigeria viz. Africa is deployed customarily for uncivilized conducts. This view is just as the research of Unwuchola, Adinlewa and Udeh (2017) noted a general inclination to also exploit the ICT for immoral activities. And the prevalence of using ICT for social vices indicate the consequences of the incompetent mechanisms to curtail such preponderances which is a reality across the African continent. Disorders in e-campaigning and their prevalence clearly attests to one aspect of the cause of immorality of African politics and election engagements.

Consequently from the abovementioned analysis, “uncivilized deeds” include thoughtful defamatory and false report to injure person’s character, hence its link to libel, slander, and malicious misrepresentation, among others. Hate speech is uncivilized deeds too. It is detestable messaging about individuals, groups,

religious beliefs, and foul message about other people's ethnicity or sexuality/sexual preferences. Also, fake news relating to spread of disinformation, misinformation and deceptive propaganda to cause harm is an uncivilized deed. Civil deeds, therefore, signifies the opposite of uncivilized deeds by not committing such conducts in e-campaign enumerated above. Civility hence implies adherence to ethical norms in social media political campaign, as well as deliberate compliance to social media policy rules and regulations indicating e-campaigning posts that are in devotion to constitutionalism and rule of law.

Therefore, in some sense, the predominant problem of capacity deficit of law enforcement, prosecutorial and adjudicatory institutions as well ineffective public laws in Nigeria viz. Africa is associated with the contradictions in social media political communication. In conclusion, this paper exemplifies the character of politics which is played out in e-electioneering practices and by extension indicates the underlying philosophy of African politics. Finally, the paper posits that continuous adherence to the aforementioned uncivilized deeds in e-campaigning in Nigeria viz. Africa, despite the saying that the end justifies the means in politics, will never result in good end in political contestations.

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