

PREFACE

The world has witnessed the rapid emergence of regional organizations, the rise of individualism, increasing social media use playing a pivotal role in stopping dictatorial regimes and the election of new governments, and extreme advances in technology facilitating the strengthening of local economies, especially within the first 10 years of the twenty-first century. The widespread uses of the internet have granted citizens around the world unprecedented electronic access to alternative media and communication resources and have given rise to regionalization, particularly in the global South where bureaucratic and dictatorial regimes had restricted access to normal ways of living.

The information and communication technology (ICT) breakthrough has sowed the seeds for future control of political and economic systems inside the new nation states. As the World Wide Web and other forms of social media developed and expanded through the 1990s, no one foresaw their impact on national security, human rights abuses and protection, and other social foibles, and on communities and cities in wealthy, politically stable, as well as fragile and economically emerging states today. The resulting globalization has transformed human identity and redefined local and national space and international law, raising new questions about citizenship and nationality. With forced integration at the political, diplomatic, economic, social, and environmental levels, a redefinition of what constitutes civic space and a more intense examination of how new social movements affect lives occur almost daily.

The open internet, clearly the most powerful form of communication and information dissemination, has allowed young people access to information about previous actions and policies that put their countries on the wrong side of political and economic growth. In many developing countries, more young people are using Facebook, blogs, WhatsApp, and other internet platforms to forge political and social change. In Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and other parts of North Africa, and in the Middle East, they have used those applications to share information denouncing regimes, organize rallies, stay motivated, and even to protect their colleagues from being attacked by government authorities. We have noticed a similar trend in Cameroon, where people of Southern Cameroonian heritage, through social media broadcasts and text messaging, mobilized themselves and influenced international opinion to establish themselves as citizens of an independent state. In North Africa, social media activists have shifted their focus from denouncing oppression on the streets to turning their Facebook pages and blogs into spaces of resistance and sustainable activism.

Elsewhere, citizenship is up for sale. Wealthy persons can purchase citizenship for as little as \$100,000 without physically being in another country. According to a report on *60 Minutes* (a CBS news magazine) on January 1, 2017, any individual can obtain a passport in Malta or the Dominican Republic, Barbuda, or St. Kitts after answering questions online and going through a background check. These countries reportedly look for wealthy people, the “crème de la crème,” says Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda Gaston Browne, who confirmed that for \$250,000 people are screened by the US intelligence service and meet with local authorities for five days. Vast sums of money flow into those countries, but national and global security is guaranteed to be at stake, since persons with criminal backgrounds in one country can easily become citizens in those cash-strapped countries and use their new passports to travel to other nations.

As rapid changes occur in our world, scholars and students need information packages to help them understand these changes, their causes, and their impacts, especially in Africa and Asia. This book is an edited collection of essays in which the authors provide some explanations of these complex problems. The title, *Citizenship, Democracies, and Media Engagement among Emerging Economies and Marginalized Communities*, comes from the idea that putting together new developments in cyber

media use and citizens' reactions to governments' decisions can help national and international policymakers to plan better futures.

This book examines diplomatic relationships between local authorities and populations in fast-growing economies like China, India, and Brazil, and the large economies (UK, France, Germany, and the USA), revealing unique qualities and existing challenges among under-served groups in countries striving to emerge from poverty. The book offers a context in which some emerging economies in Africa, the Caribbean, South America, the Middle East, and Asia could chart their socioeconomic futures through regular democratic practice. The volume addresses human rights policies, diplomatic practices, and citizen journalism as paradigms for sustainable growth in those countries.

Using hundreds of references and data from existing physical and electronic texts, scholars and practitioners with research backgrounds on Africa, the Middle East, South America, North America, and India offer a broad range of perspectives on the changing face of democracy and markets in those countries, and on human rights, political communication, citizen journalism, international law and diplomacy, and political science. Through practical experience in the selected countries and field research, scholars are able to show how personal and national freedoms, as well as business deals, have been negotiated in a bid to create a new socioeconomic culture within these nations.

We prefer the term “tribe,” rather than “ethnic” or “linguistic group” that is used by most scholars, as the former denotes historicity and a social group existing before the infiltration or arrival of external forces. Functionally, we see the tribe as a group of people who are dependent on their immediate surroundings—fauna and flora—for their livelihood: men, women, and children who are mostly self-sufficient, and are not integrated into the national society. We feel that to ask appropriate questions around the definition or redefinition of “citizenship” and the challenges that states seeking a middle ground face between developing their economies and embracing media-induced external cultural patterns, one should appreciate the space and ways of the indigenous group—the tribe.

About 1000 ethnic groups in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, each with a common and distinctive culture, religion, and language, are among emerging markets in the world today. These markets are slightly different from communities, where ethnic groups use a single language and practice a religion. For clarity, we see the town and the city within

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the defined borders of the nation state as part of the “indigenous” or emerging community. By looking at those indigenous groups in the context of the new communities wired with global information technology, we may force the debate on how emerging economies and marginalized communities are handling issues of social media, broadcast media, and other forms of ICT.

We acknowledge that the internet and its social media tools have been instrumental in facilitating political uprisings, and we argue that while ICT has facilitated the exchange of information among people and organizations, governments and policymakers continue to ignore its capacity to disintegrate the nation and, in some cases, create economic chaos. We cite the militia and special interest groups in Libya, Chad, Mexico, Tunisia, Yemen, Eritrea, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, which have used social media to share information and galvanize the public against political authorities. Then there are the terrorist cells in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and Nigeria that destroy infrastructure and lives, rendering those countries politically unstable and causing foreign investors to suspend plans to set up their businesses in such territories. The ultimate result is that unemployment rates increase in those politically fragile nations, and the probability of civil unrest remains high. Similarly, the chances of foreign nationals migrating to such countries and seeking citizenship become limited.

We hope that through this volume, readers may have a clear understanding of how the socioeconomic gap between the so-called developed and emerging countries can be bridged. Some of the major issues discussed include:

- Political science and communication theories on democratization in developing countries.
- How public policy, international relations, and cyber communications (the internet, social media) have contributed to national democratic movements, including challenges and best practices.
- How the media, democracy, and electoral processes have influenced emerging democracies.
- How various organizations use and misuse poll data in measuring national democratic activities.
- How the ruling party influences the electoral process, including via corruption.
- Whether election observer missions add any value to the democratic process.

- Whether regular municipal, legislative, parliamentary, and presidential elections are necessary or even authentic.
- The role of the geopolitical landscape and neighboring countries in mitigating democracy.
- Whether experts can provide local media coverage to measure democracy.

The book includes several case studies on diplomacy toward emerging economies, focusing on how economic inequality is slowing the practice of healthy democracy in some developing countries and how thriving local democracies serve as a marketplace for foreign investments. Another study on public policies and social practices highlights the power of media advocacy and strategic networking in transforming norms and changing policies. It draws out implications for the study and practice of persuasion communication, arguing that without strategic advocacy and coalition building, it will be nearly impossible to achieve any significant change.

The book brings out two key problems caused by globalization: the scramble for and retrieval of local space by foreign entities; and the challenge for indigenous groups of protecting local resources against foreign “hawks.” A chapter reviews the communication actions needed to ensure peaceful coexistence between the native population and the government sector in Guyana over land titling. The book offers suggestions for socioeconomic changes to build democracy and equality, specifically how countries can reform their democracies to grow their social and economic institutions by using existing best practices, expatriates, and citizens in the Diaspora, as well as ways of building sustainable progressive democratic practices.

We feel that this book will be useful to political science, international communication, and international relations and diplomacy students, as well as researchers, scholars, diplomats, transnational business executives, and practitioners. Political scientists, policy scholars, development communication scholars, political communication scholars, researchers, international law and human rights experts, and legal scholars will find the content insightful and useful. Institutes for the study of human rights, minority studies, and international and cross-cultural studies programs may also find the material useful. After reading this book, readers will have the opportunity to explore media and citizenship, popular media, democracy and development in Africa, media studies, diversity teaching, and education in a multicultural society, and topics related to how the

media engages with small and large communities. Simply put, the book presents the media as a community watchdog, messenger, and organizer.

We also hope that those interested in citizen media, democracy and development, modern sociocultural anthropology, human rights, or cross-cultural studies will draw essential knowledge from this book. We note, however, that the book is not a lens through which we can see citizenship, democratic movements, and the media's role in emerging economies and marginalized communities around the world. Rather, we suggest that readers see this book as a hint to discussion on how globalization and mass media engagement affect the wellbeing of some communities, states, regions, citizens, and political actors in social and economic terms. Here, we see the media as the nucleus or foundation on which a state can grow its economy, improve its sociopolitical condition, or measure the safety and security of its borders. In tandem, the book presents the media as an arbiter of public interests, a peacemaking tool, a mechanism for promoting the agendas of politicians and governments, and an agent for constructing a new national identity.

Elizabeth City, USA, January 2017

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Citizenship, Democracies, and Media Engagement
among Emerging Economies and Marginalized
Communities

Ngwainmbi, E.K. (Ed.)

2017, XXIII, 387 p. 14 illus., 6 illus. in color., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-56214-8