

Working Title of my PhD Research Project: *Political Campaign Communication in Transitional Democracies: The Cameroonian Experience in a Global Perspective*

By Teke Ngomba

Brief Presentation of the Research Project

The evolution of political campaign communication in Western democracies has been a subject of intense interest to communication scholars. While this has blossomed into a 'booming area of research' in the West, our knowledge of key areas of political communication in Africa, such as political party communication in the context of electoral politics, is severely limited. Most scholarly discussions of political communication in Africa have not systematically addressed the issue beyond the recurrent perspective of government-media relations and normative role of the media in democracy.

Fully-funded by the University of Aarhus, this four year study (2008-2012) sets out to address this gross omission by bringing new insight into the study of political communication in Africa through an analysis of political communication mainly from a political party standpoint. Applying principles from six inter-related theoretical frameworks; this study broadly seeks to understand, through a contextually informed and more detailed investigation:

- a.) The evolution of electoral campaign communication in Cameroon, pointing out among others, its distinctive constitutive features and examining also, the extent to which global changes in campaign communication have impacted on comparable processes in Cameroon
- b.) Media use patterns of political parties in a hybrid media environment characterized by persistent traditional forms of communication and forcefully emerging modern media and
- c.) The implications of the nature of election campaigning in Cameroon on the country's democratization process.

Inter alia, the study aims to point out that theories used to explain the evolution of political communication in Western democracies are incapable of providing sufficient explanations of the situation in Africa. On the basis of this contention and drawing from scholarly discussions on political parties and party systems in Africa; conduct of election campaigns in Africa and political culture, the study will conclude by outlining a framework to theorize political campaign communication in Africa grounded on a combined understanding of African media systems, party systems and political culture.

Findings are expected to significantly extend knowledge in the field both within Africa and globally as well as open up questions for further scholarly research. Further, the aim is also to conclude with informed suggestions on the need for policies towards democracy promotion in Africa to also focus for instance, on strengthening the communication capabilities of political parties and related policy sectors.

About Me:

I hail from Bokwaongo, a little vibrant village in Buea, Cameroon. I have a bachelors degree in Journalism and Mass Communication with a Minor in Political Science and Public Administration from the University of Buea in Cameroon. Shortly after obtaining my bachelors, I worked as an Administrative Assistant in the Public and Alumni Relations Office of the University of Buea before travelling to South Africa in 2005 to undergo an intensive Media Training with a focus on critical analysis of Africa's development at the South African Institute of International Affairs in Johannesburg.

Upon returning from South Africa, in 2006, I obtained the EU-Funded Erasmus Mundus Master Scholarship to study for an MA in 'Journalism and Media within Globalization: The European Perspective' at the University of Aarhus, the Danish School of Journalism, the University of Amsterdam and the University of Hamburg- where I went on to specialize in Public Spheres and Comparative Media Systems Analysis.

Shortly before completing my MA studies, I obtained a fully-funded four-year-PhD admission into the University of Aarhus, where I am based at the moment, studying for a doctorate at the Institute of Information and Media Studies.

I have published a series of analytical pieces in and out of Cameroon touching on several issues of Africa's democratic and development challenge. My research interests span the fields of political communication, development studies, development communication, journalism studies, media/communication studies, political science, as well as international relations, with a focus on Africa.

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