

Politics, Social Media and E-campaigning in Africa: South Africa-Nigeria Familiarities during Their 2019 Presidential Elections

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ABSTRACT

Social media in today's world of electioneering in Africa has gained popularity not mainly as an efficient medium of articulating and propagating manifestos but more for political grandstanding. This study sought to theorize about the utilitarian value of social media use in Africa's e-campaigning by examining its application in the 2019 Presidential Elections in South Africa and Nigeria. The study's theoretical framework is based on key research works on e-electioneering and perception of social media e-campaign messaging. It employed the narrative technique to describe interview data and also presenting the same in quantitative-content analysis format. Data were gathered from interviews with post-graduate candidates in politics departments in the understudied countries to gauge the perception of the functional value of social media campaign sloganeering. The study finds that social media served a more optimal value from a moralistic perspective in the 2019 electioneering in South Africa than Nigeria. It notes that this finding derives from a more prevalent political culture of civility and a better functional public order to punish misuse of social media which prevailed in South Africa than Nigeria.

KEYWORDS: *Social media; E-electioneering; brinkmanship; political communication; political grandstanding; e-campaign*

Definition

E-electioneering is herein conceptualized as the structural architecture whereby ICT is deployed in politics of which social media is most conspicuous. The avowed utility of social media lies in its potency to enable personalized information such as one's manifesto to be known to the global community as an audience very fast and rapidly. The Pew Research Centre 2018 survey notes that seven out of ten Americans use social media with indications of far more fast-rising use of the internet in developing economies. According to Dollarhide (2019), the notable social media networks with their estimated users in descending order as in January 2019 are Facebook (2,27B), YouTube (1.9B), WhatsApp (1.5B), Facebook Messenger (1.3B), and Wechat (1.08B). Others are Instagram (1B), QQ (803M), QZone (531M), Douyin/Tik Tok (500M), and Sino Weibo (446M). In another Pew Research Centre survey carried out between Jan. 8 and Feb. 7 of 2019, American social media audiences who are mostly between the ages of 19 and 26 belong to the Facebook and YouTube networks. Similarly, a World Economic Forum perspective indicates that social media has become the "only" media in Africa with WhatsApp, Viber, and WeChat being the more popular networks and that particularly WhatsApp has become "a primary source of news" for Africans (Adegoke, 2017).

Social media currently represents one of those modern innovations of the information and communication technology (ICT) paradigm. It has proved to be highly

impactful also in the sphere of electioneering. Social media entails using ICT applications such as computer technologies like internet applications to facilitate the propagation of news contents, opinions, views, notions, and every other information speedily (Piskorski, 2014; Gentle, 2012). The usefulness of social media as a form of advancement in political communication and brinkmanship as well as in politics seems to be doubtless (Dearnley & Feather, 2001); empirically E-electioneering which encapsulates the use of social media amongst other ICT applications is a positive enabler that is getting ample consideration from political actors in all of their undertakings.

The fame of social media in the scheme of communication grows by the day because of rapid modernizations in this technological arena in terms of advances of gadgets, skills, and competencies. The ease, speed, and cheapness to deploy it in spreading messages also contributes to its fame. Again, the popularity of social media at present may not be unconnected with the low legalistic restrictions it enjoys unlike the entrenched information dissemination outlets like the print newspapers or cable television news stations. At any rate, Becta (2008) pointed out that social media technology among other modern information spreading innovations needs to be encouraged because of its revolutionizing composure. More so that its adoption in the process of politics helps to hasten the realization of a person's overall political objectives.

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The subsequent parts of this paper will be dedicated to deliberating whether the social media networks' use has inhibited civility in politics in Pat Leahy's (2018) view, or that E-electioneering has enhanced rectitude (Pineiro, 2015) in election contestations in the case study nations.

Theoretical background

The study's theoretical framework is eclectic and is based on decisive research works on e-electioneering and perception cum reflection of social media communications. The theoretic claims of these studies are suitable to test our formulated research questions relating to election contestations.

E-campaigning is now generally noticed as a component of Jurgen Haberman's notion of the public sphere (Gibson, Williamson & Ward, 2010; Macnamara & Kenning, 2011; Chen & Walsh, 2009; Gibson & McAllister, 2008; Macnamara, 2008b), and has proved beneficial in political brinkmanship during election competition. For example, the works of Macnamara (2008b) and Macnamara and Kenning (2011) pointed out that E-electioneering today constitutes part and parcel of the socialization interaction in the public space. Macnamara and Kenning (2011: 7) went further to posit that digital campaigning remains a potent force in the spatiotemporal space whereby the populace engages in a rationalized debate to "become informed, contribute to political discourse and reach consensus, expressed in the form of 'public opinion'". In their study, Gibson, Rommele, and Williamson (2014) note that Web campaigning has become the conventional mode of political communication and is now a critical learning environment or space for gauging legitimacy, credibility, and conformity with global best practices of how political actors abide by the tenets of democracy.

The works of Chen and Walsh (2009), and Gibson and McAllister (2008) adduce that it can be conveniently asserted that in the Australian society – as is also for the global community- internet-based election politicking penetration has gained firm roots. Such that the sophistication in digital campaign communication has reached phenomenal heights as politicians are embracing video messaging more and more via YouTube and sometimes creating special MySpace links and spreading video contents via mobile phones and other mobile internetable gadgets. Another significant advancement in E-electioneering is the use of online advertisements. In this regard, Chen and Walsh (2009: 49) acknowledge two models signifying development in e-campaign messaging: "use of Google's AdWords (a service allowing advertising to be associated with specific search terms) and the use of 'social advertising' through services such as <http://www.facebook.com> and <http://www.myspace.com>.

Regarding perception cum reflection of E-electioneering messaging, this study relies on the postulations of Cheng and Chau (2009: 338-342), Lee (2005), and Van den Berg, Admiraal, and Pilot's (2006). The authors' developed theoretical research models about perception and reflection in e-learning assessments are suitable for an explication of public perception of e-campaign messaging.

Cheng and Chau's (2009) study shows that social media can be the basis of reflection to enhance output and outcomes

from its use. As regards, perceptive feedback evaluation of social media contents, Van den Berg, Admiraal, and Pilot's (2006) developed a two-dimensional structure of Function and Aspect suffices. By deductive reasoning, Van den Berg, Admiraal, and Pilot's (2006) two-dimensional framework within our context will posit that feedback evaluation of social media content is assessed by its Function and Aspect. Thus, the authors propose that there are four possible feedbacks that electorates are likely to form by appraising the Function dimension of an e-campaign sloganering or missive or "post". One is Analysis which refers to intentions to understand the "post". Two is Evaluation that refers to making a value judgment of the "post". Three is an Explanation which refers to a self-conceived argument in support or otherwise of the "post". And four is Revision, referring to self-conceived suggested enhancements to the "post".

Furthermore, three feedback appraisals of social media "post" based on the Aspect dimension that Van den Berg *et al* (2006) theorized are Content, Structure, and Style. The content dimension concentrates on the intelligibility and consequences of the "post" from the perception of the public to our context. Structure applies to the organizational structure of the "post" in tandem with interrelatedness to different other consequential information. Style place emphases on meaningfulness deducible from the linguistic command of the "posts". These dimensions of feedback appraisal of e-campaign "post" are very good measures of evaluating E-electioneering in Africa, and hence necessitating this study to integrate them into its data analysis.

Lee's (2005) Reflectivity, Recall, and Rationalization dimensions which his study developed too with regards to the quality of reflection (i.e. to our context, perception) very helpful to interrogate our subject-matter. Borrowing from Lee's (2005) developed framework to gauge the quality of contemplation of an e-campaign "post" aids this present study from the angle of learning about how public perception usually evolves. The Reflectivity dimension refers to prior experiences and knowledge of an assessor of social media content aiding him/her to suggest possible changes or improvements to the "post". The Recall dimension simply refers to using prior experiences and knowledge to interpret the "post" without any iota of rationalizing beyond the social media content's proposed message. The Rationalization dimension refers to using prior experiences and knowledge to interpret and reinterpret a "post" to theorize about the social media content's public good or harm.

Literature review

Madden (2006) indicates that ICT technologies such as the internet's social media networks in advanced countries like the US have become part and parcel of humanity's socialization medium. A 2007 National Statistics of the United Kingdom notes that ICT-inclined forms of communications are now comprehensively deployed in all walks of life, including in electioneering. Likewise, Internet World Stats of the 2020 Q1 internet penetration in Africa for the continent shows that of the estimated 2020 population of 1, 340, 598, 447, the internet users as of 31, Dec. 2000 is 4,514,400. It further shows that internet users as on 31, Dec. 2019 is 526,710,313; penetration percentage level of population is 39.3%; internet growth percentage 2000-2020

is 11,567%. Facebook subscribers as of 31, Dec. 2019 is 212,911,701. Overall, the above statistics show that there is today a phenomenal growth in the utility of ICT *vis-à-vis* social media globally and also specifically in Africa.

While E-electioneering prospects have been extensively researched upon in advanced democracies (Bentivegna, 2002; Macnamara, 2008), its diagnoses in all of the terrain of the African politics remains under-examined (Obono, 2016; Ocitti, 1999; Oseni, 2015). According to Ajayi and Adesote (2015), social media has much to offer and plays tremendous roles in the consolidation of Nigeria's democracy *vis-à-vis* Africa's. Furthermore, the authors note that social media holds huge potential to defuse electoral violence. Writing on the contribution of social media on South Africa's democratization process, Strelitz (2005) notes that the consciencism of South Africa's youth population and their mindset change during elections have been much enhanced by social media.

Generally, public policies and institutional mechanisms to curtail the misuse of social media should be in place (Green, 2014). Government should endeavour to institute legal mechanisms to curb the abuse of social media, especially in political contestations. These mechanisms expectedly are to discourage the use of social media to indulge in negations like fake news, hate speech, or defamation of character. South Africa has a range of legislation criminalizing the use of social media to defame and spread falsehood. On its part, Nigeria's upper legislative chamber (the Senate) introduced a bill entitled Protection from Internet Falsehood and Manipulations Bill 2019 sponsored by Senator Mohammed Sani Musa (c.f. Wikipedia). Otherwise coded the Social Media Bill, many Nigerians alleged that the proposed law violates citizens' freedom of speech and liberties to freely access the internet (Omilana, 2019).

Besides the relevancy of social media as a viable e-campaign mechanism (Rodrigues & Niemann, 2017), Enli and Skogerbo (2013) have theorized that E-electioneering portends an effective platform to support 'all forms' of agendas in politics. Accordingly, intense use of social media has enabled politicians to utilize the medium in an "adapt-and adapt medium" (Cheng & Chau, 2009:338), suitable to broadcast manifestos in ways they prefer. However, with the relevancy of e-campaign networks in modern-day comes shreds of evidence suggesting a wide-ranging misuse of social media in politics in Africa particularly (Iwilade, 2013; Newsom & Lengel, 2012). What these outcomes indicate is that despite the innovativeness of E-electioneering, it can correspondingly be used to foster political negations such as spreading fake news, committing a hate crime, improper self-adulation of oneself, and outright defamation of other person's character, disposition, and image.

Problem statement

Especially in African electoral brinkmanship, it is generally acknowledged that social media has been used more to denigrate political oppositions. Researches have shown that technology (i.e. social media) produces either positive or negative outcomes based on the way and manner it is deployed (Van Dijk, 2005; Van Dijk & Hacker, 2003). Founded on the aforementioned, political actors in Africa more often seize on the opportunity created by the social media technology to peddle falsehood, hate, and fake news

about other contestants in a poll. Unfortunately, these negations prevail in Africa's political terrain due to a range of factors. Of all the factors, the absence of well-articulated authorized prosecutorial regulations to deter those contesting for elective posts from devious use of social media in electioneering for calumny, hate speech, fake news, and image laundering is highly prominent.

Another very poignant determinant of why social media produce toxic ends more often in Africa's electioneering aside the absence of standardized regulation has to do with a do-or-die propensity to desire to win an election at all cost. Africa portrays a political culture bedeviled by sit-tight leaderships who usually nurse fear of losing power and political relevancy; pursue to be the party godfather and eventually a hegemon, and very much indulge in empire-building to consolidate political clout while in office. Given the prevalence of these kinds of political conducts, the ethical aspect of electioneering through social media will be more eschewed and, therefore, remain unsustainable (Chadwick, 2006). Politicians with very little or no moral depth, and possessing a mentality of win-at-all-cost syndrome most likely will use social media to assassinate opponents, market falsehood about achievements, and "dry-clean" what their manifesto can achieve. And, as it is common in Africa, party candidates in an election are either the "big men" of society or are being sponsored by the "money bags" in the country. And so, they operate like they have overtaken the State and feel they are above the State's public ordinances such as its social media laws. Hence, a collectivity of politicians that exhibit decadent values coupled with the existence of actual weak public policies against using social media for damaging objectives in an election constitutes a problem which is what this study examines by x-raying Nigeria's and South Africa's contexts.

Research aim cum objective/questions

A social constructionism outlook inspired the study's overarching aim/objective which is to illumine perceptions of how political gladiators at the 2019 presidential elections in Africa's two most notable powerful nations (i.e., South Africa and Nigeria) use the social media in their electioneering. Additionally, the study aims to promote understanding of how to better the practice of social media in the e-campaigning of African nation-states besieged by "strong men/women" who supposedly belong to the committee of the ruling class and oftentimes operate as though public policies regarding internet-based politicking are insufficient to hold them to account.

To accomplish the aforesaid aim/objective, these research questions were formulated to be investigated:

- What factors militate against morality in the use of social media in electioneering chiefly in Africa?
- What features can be identified in the social media contents of Nigeria and South Africa during their 2019 e-campaigning?
- What measures can help safeguard against abuse of social media during electioneering particularly in Africa?

Research methodology

The present study utilized qualitative data to characteristically describe the reflective perceptions about e-campaign slogans in the 2019 presidential polls of Nigeria and South Africa. In the view of Brains, Willnat, Manheim,

and Rich (2011), the qualitative research method is most suitable to enable a broad understanding of how perceptions are framed. This is because perceptions are best described as they can only derive from commanding explanations of a topic like ours. Surveys earlier conducted to explore the use of e-campaign platforms as a dependable mechanism in politics generally were mostly based on qualitative methodology (Anstead & O'Loughlin, 2014; Soni & Soni, 2019).

Understudied locations

South Africa and Nigeria were the two study locations for some reason. Aside from that, the two countries are considered the major key power blocs in the African

continent (Landsberg, 2012), the developmental dynamics of each of the countries typify the prevalence historiographical socio-economic, and politico-environment of all of other Africa nations (Eweje, 2006). Again, both countries conducted presidential elections in 2019 thereby portending to be a viable socio-political-learning environment of the use of social media in electioneering in Africa. Also, the 2019 national/federal elections of the two countries were keenly contested by a dominant/ruling party versus another major and also a vibrant opposition party. This meant that the presidential candidates' "posts" from the ruling party and that of the Presidential hopeful, as in the case of South Africa, could be easily sourced.

Sampling and data gathering

Table 1 below indicates the demographic characteristics of the sampled interviewees for the study who were drawn strictly from political studies departments in various universities

Country	Sex/ Designate codename	Programme	Institution
Nigeria	1. Male/ (Nig.1)	1.PhD	1.University of Lagos (public)
	2. Female/ (Nig.2)	2.Masters	2.University of Lagos (public)
	3. Female/ (Nig.3)	3.Masters	3.Covenant University(private)
	4. Male/ (Nig.4)	4.PhD	4.Ambrose Alli University (public)
	5. Male/ (Nig.5)	5.PhD	5.Obafemi Awolowo University(public)
	6. Male/ (Nig.6)	6.PhD	6.Lagos State University(public)
South Africa	1. Male/ (SA.1)	1.PhD	1.North West University, Mafikeng(public)
	2. Female/ (SA.2)	2.Masters	2.North West University, Mafikeng(public)
	3. Female/ (SA.3)	3.PhD	3.Rhodes University(public)
	4. Female/ (SA.4)	4.Masters	4.Nelson Mandela University(public)
	5. Male/ (SA.5)	5.PhD	5.University of Pretoria(public)
	6. Male/ (SA.6)	6.Masters	6.University of Pretoria(public)

The above Table shows that seven male interviewees and five female participants were purposefully selected to engage in the interviews, making a total of twelve interviewees from Nigeria and South Africa. The inevitability of purposive sampling to this study has been stressed by Patton (1990:169) who posited that "the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases [sic. interviewees] to study in-depth". According to Suri (2011) and Flick, Kardorff, and Steinke (2004) purposive sampling is usually prominent in qualitative researches because it allows for effective maneuvering of would-be participants/interviewees by the researcher that best have the needed awareness to provide credible data.

Data gathering approach

The data gathering instrument used to elicit information from the sampled postgraduates in both countries is the semi-structured in-depth interview format done either face-to-face or through telephone. The justifications to design our interviews in a semi-structured plan tallies with the arguments of Whiting (2008), Holloway (2010), Barriball, and While (1994) on the desirability of this interview format over the formal-structured interview style. These authors argue that the qualitative-interview approach is less cumbersome and technically better to deploy than the quantitative method. This view of the above scholars explains the limited number of participants involved in the present study's data gathering. Our limited number of participants did not, however, diminish the strength of the data to make valid and reliable theory-building (Flick, Kardorff & Steinke, 2004). Necessary ethical requirements were honoured during the interviews of the present study.

Data analysis method

The narrations produced from the interactive semi-structured in-depth interviews were afterward transcribed. An iterative reasoning procedure based on content analysis was used to analyze the gathered interview data. The analyzed data were presented using the quantitative-content analysis format for easiness to understand, analyze, and discuss the results. Riffe, Lacy, and Fico (2008) have noted that quantitative-content analysis is a worthwhile measurement method for resolving data from qualitatively inclined researches because it helps to promote their validity and reliability of findings.

Following the interview data gathering and evaluation of works of literature, we evolved thematic codes (e.g. Brains, Willnat, Manheim & Rich (2011) explains gathering themes from qualitative data; Ajayi & Adesote, (2015), Leahy (2018), Strelitz (2005), et al, include works of literature that themes emerged from). The themes were sub-grouped under independent, dependent, and mediating variables. The description and analytic synthesis of the data narratively and presented in quantitative-content analysis format flow from the themes.

Table 2 below indicates the explication of the study's variables which were deduced from the interview data

Variables	Definition
Independent variable (Politics & political sociology of understudied locations. It addresses First Research Question)	
Political culture.	This encompasses socio-political historiography, dominant political values, and conducts in politics. It refers also to the attitudes towards constitutionalism and adherence to the rule of law in political brinkmanship. This thematic code speaks also to the predominant trend in political succession and mannerisms in electoral contests, as well as propensities towards win-at-all-cost in politics/elections. Ekeh's (1974 & 1990) treatises graphically captures the import of this variable.
Public order.	Two critical socio-political learning environmental spheres are referred to by this theme. These are the legal-jurisprudential setting and the public policies generally on social media regulation. The first refers to a learning environment as regards the activities of prosecutorial agencies that look into the misuse of social media. Such as from arrest by the police or designated security agency to the influences of legal representation and court judges. The second refers to such policy as the Protection from Internet Falsehood and Manipulations Bill 2019 of Nigeria. On its part, South Africa has a range of laws that regulate social media, and prominent of these laws is her Media Regulation and Ethics as inscribed in the country's Press Council Ordinance's Code of Ethics and Conduct for South African Print and Online Media. The regulation's reference to the public activities of social media in this era of "internet i-Report" is covered under the Compliant Procedure section.
Dependent variable (social media utility in electioneering. these variables speaking to Second Research Question)	
Calumny	Deliberate defamatory and false report just to damage another person's character (c.f. Cambridge English Dictionary). Given that the study considers audio, visual, and written electioneering "posts" in the social media, then words like libel, slander, malicious misrepresentation, etc designed to injure the reputé of an opponent in an election applies.
Image laundering	As is notably natural, E-electioneering is very often a branding avenue that politicians indulge (Karakaya & Glazier, 2019). This theme references the marketing of one's ambitions, abilities, achievements, and prospects in politics. It is a political maneuvering strategy which is often a "smokescreen" to garner the influence to swerve public perception positively to oneself. Karakaya and Glazier's (2019) work chronicled how social media is used to sway political support and active participation in politics.
Hate speech	All studies on hate speech, amongst which is Kwok and Wang (2013) concur in many respect that hate speech is obnoxious language about individuals, crowd or corporate character like gender, religious belief, ethnicity and sexuality/sexual preferences. The study concurs also to this generally held definition as it applies to social media campaign "posts".
Factual news	Social media E-electioneering "posts" that are factual news refers to possessing features such as verifiable truth, empirical in nature, contain indisputable ideas. For example, an e-campaign "post" stating that the ANC candidate in the SA 2019 national election for president, Cyril Ramaphosa is a staunch member of the party to boost his popularity has all the aforesaid features of factual news. Or, an E-electioneering messaging that Atiku Abubakar, the main opposition contender for President in Nigeria's 2019 Federal Elections retired meritoriously from the Nigeria Customs Service is verifiable, empirically testable, and not a the disputable impression as a campaign slogan because no record of his indictment during his tenure in the Customs Service of the country exist.
Fake news	Fake news is about the measured spread of misinformation, disinformation and ruse propagation with intent to harm. In this context, it is social media news spread using online networks to sway public opinion usually negatively against opponents in an election contest as Allcott and Gentzkow (2017) have noted.
Manifesto	This thematic code is understood in its literal meaning as in the electoral- learning environment. By this environment, the manifesto is "posts" expressing programme policy intents of a contestant in a poll.
Mediating variables (Ethico-human principles necessary for healthy E-electioneering. These variables advance Third Research Question)	
Civility	Civility denotes fundamentals such as adherence to ethical necessities in using social media during the campaign, high sense of obedience to prevailing social media public policy regulations (Emetumah, 2016), profound care and caution not to spread fake news and hate speech (Kwok & Wang, 2013; Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017), and judicious supervision of what one's e-campaign messaging is about that goes public.
Constitutionalism	Constitutionalism implies the existence of a functional, well-thought out language and letters of social media regulations that are enforceable and not intended to manacle human rights and liberties in the use of social media in the election contest. In the work of Macnamara, Sakinofsky and Beattie (2012), our constitutionalism theme is identified as critical infrastructure for purposeful E-electioneering to exist and persevere, as well as to advance e-democracy and democratization generally, as well as the optimum political participation of citizens normally.
Policing	This thematic code refers to the attitudes of public organizations charged with policing social media abusers and prosecuting them. The present study is of the view that social systems whereby E-electioneering is suitably regulated are very likely to have in existence an impartial policing system of social media use during electoral contestations.

Table 2 demonstrates that the eclectic theoretical framework of the current study is enunciated around annotated thematic codes suitable to measure perception, interpretation, and evolve meaning out of a social media e-campaign communication.

Results

The results and data analysis are illustrated in several tables below. It is to be noted that the quantitatively presented views are concerning interview questions that mirror interviewees' perception a hundred percent were quantified.

Table 3 present views (i.e. quotes) from the interviews that reflect Van den Berg *et al* (2006) self-perception feedback evaluation

Feedback evaluation - quote/by which interviewee

Based on the Function dimension

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| Analysis | - Most of the time, the public rarely decode the underlying intent of a "post" (SA.6).
- These politicians are not too smart with evading to tarnish images of opponents in the election process from their social media campaigning (Nig.3). |
| Evaluation | - The choice of language is usually to direct about their evil intentions (Nig.1).
- I agree these "posts" more often are always a propaganda message (SA. 2). |
| Explanation | - Julius Malema only post messages that attack the ANC government. And I feel that strategy helped his party to become more popular and win more seats (SA.4).
- Hardly do their social media posts be about their manifestoes. It is usually more fabricated stories of another or one that lampoons the other (Nig.6). |
| Revision | - And I notice the clear absence to what these actors intend to do for the grassroots in most of their "posts". It is all about grabbing power and nothing more (SA.5).
- It is very wrong to me to show graphics of a wrestler and plant the head of Buhari, our president, on an image of a perceived 'loser' wrestler just to degrade him (Nig.4). |

Based on the Aspect dimension

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| Content | - Many times the message is not brilliantly presented and this to me is a function of our level of enlightenment, education, and critical thinking. In short, the poor quality of Nigeria's education delivery shows in the e-campaign space (Nig.5). |
| Structure | - The ANC's social media contents are messages about their achievements from the days of Mandela's government. And the e-campaign "posts" of the other oppositions are about their criticisms of the ANC achievements as well (SA.1). |
| Style | - Malema particularly exhibits oratory skills and sound erudition in his video "posts" during the 2019 National Election campaigns. All South Africans and even the global community looks forward to another of Malema video that time (SA.3).
- Especially the typed-written campaign "posts" in Nigeria's 2019 Presidential elections are nothing more than calumny, character assassination, lies, laundering their image and spreading falsehood. |

Table 4 presents views (i.e. quotes) from the interviews that reflect Lee's (2005) notions of quality of perception of E-electioneering posts

Perception of quality evaluation - quote

Based on Lee's (2005) thoughts on the quality of reflection

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Reflectivity | - Atiku camp usually spread "posts" thinking Nigerians have forgotten his antecedents under the regime he served as Vice President (Nig. 2).
- The ANC has lost grounds in many grassroots areas because these categories of citizens feel dejected and know the party messaging is mainly about power at the national level, not about them (SA.5). |
| Recall | - The break-through of the opposition in places like the Nelson Mandela Bay municipality and Johannesburg before the election were good selling points in social media for the oppositions during our 2019 elections (SA.1).
- All of them are guilty of using the perceived failures of the other in the past to malign and try to influence public opinion negatively against the other (Nig.6) |
| Rationalization | - I do not doubt that a win-at-all-cost mentality underscored all of their social media E-electioneering without any reservation for fair play because these guys know that no law, rule, or person can confine or stop them (Nig.3).
- All of them deployed social media just to gain an impact before the electorate all in a bid to produce the ruling national government and be President. It's not really about good governance to me (SA.2). |

In the course of the interviews, participants allotted percent ratios based on their perception of the impact of the thematic codes.

Table 5 shows the percentage fraction of perception attached to the thematic codes by interviewees concerning the use of social media

Thematic code	- Impact-	- Nig.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6 / SA.1, 2, 3, 4, 5, & 6
Political culture	- Enabling	- Nig. 20%, 35%, 45%, 5%, 25%, & 40%/ SA. 55%, 60%, 55%, 80%, 75% & 80%
	- Disenabling	- Nig. 80%, 65%, 55%, 95%, 75% & 60%/ SA. 45%, 40%, 45%, 20%, 25% & 20%
Public order	- Enabling	- Nig. 35%, 20%, 35%, 5%, 25% & 30%/ SA. 60%, 55%, 75%, 80%, 55% & 80%
	- Disenabling	- Nig. 65%, 80%, 65%, 95%, 75% & 70%/ SA. 40%, 45%, 25%, 20%, 45%, & 20%
Calumny	- Prevalence	- Nig. 75%, 80%, 75%, 65%, 55%, & 95%/ SA. 35%, 30%, 30%, 25%, 30% & 35%
	- Not prevalent	- Nig. 25%, 20%, 25%, 35%, 45% & 5%/ SA. 65%, 70%, 70%, 75%, 70% & 65%
Image laundering	- Prevalence	- Nig. 90%, 85%, 90%, 90%, 95% & 90%/ SA. 95%, 99%, 80%, 90%, 95%, & 100%
	- Not prevalent	- Nig. 10%, 15%, 10%, 10%, 5% & 10%/ SA. 5%, 1%, 20%, 10%, 5% & 0%
Hate Speech	- Prevalence	- Nig. 70%, 65%, 65%, 70%, 65% & 75%/ SA. 15%, 10%, 25%, 20%, 25% & 20%
	- Not prevalent	- Nig. 30%, 35%, 35%, 30%, 35%, & 25%/ SA. 85%, 90%, 75%, 80%, 75%, & 80%
Factual news	- Prevalence	- Nig. 30%, 35%, 35%, 30%, 35%, & 25%/ SA. 85%, 90%, 75%, 80%, 75%, & 80%
	- Not prevalent	- Nig. 70%, 65%, 65%, 70%, 65%, & 75%/ SA. 15%, 10%, 25%, 20%, 25%, & 20%
Fake news	- Prevalence	- Nig. 70%, 65%, 65%, 70%, 65% & 75%/ SA. 15%, 10%, 25%, 20%, 25%, & 20%
	- Not prevalent	- Nig. 30%, 35%, 35%, 30%, 35%, & 25%/ SA. 80%, 90%, 75%, 80%, 75%, & 80%
Manifesto	- Prevalence	- Nig. 30%, 30%, 25%, 35%, 30%, & 35%/ SA. 30%, 25%, 30%, 30%, 35%, & 35%
	- Not prevalent	- Nig. 70%, 70%, 75%, 65%, 70%, & 65%/ SA. 70%, 75%, 70%, 70%, 65%, & 65%
Civility	- Helpful	- Nig. 20%, 35%, 45%, 5%, 25%, & 40%/ SA. 55%, 60%, 55%, 80%, 75%, & 80%
	- Unhelpful	- Nig. 80%, 65%, 55%, 95%, 75%, & 60%/ SA. 45%, 40%, 45%, 20%, 25%, & 20%
Constitutionalism	- Helpful	- Nig. 35%, 25%, 35%, 35%, 35% & 25%/ SA. 65%, 60%, 60%, 65%, 65%, & 60%
	- Unhelpful	- Nig. 65%, 75%, 65%, 65%, 65%, & 75%/SA. 35%, 40%, 40%, 35%, 35%, & 40%
Policing	- Helpful	- Nig. 35%, 20%, 35%, 5%, 25%, & 30%/SA. 60%, 55%, 75%, 80%, 55%, & 80%
	- Unhelpful	- Nig. 65%, 80%, 65%, 95%, 75% & 70%/SA. 40%, 45%, 25%, 20%, 45%, & 20%

Finally, the result of interviewees' views that address the research questions.

Table 6 presents interviewees' quotes concerning each research question

Research question quote

What factors militate against morality in the use of social media in electioneering chiefly in Africa?

- Nig.1 – A weak prosecutorial system cannot checkmate abuses of social media
- Nig.2 – Politicians who are "bigger" than the State never play by the rules
- Nig.3 – Even laws on campaign spending are violated without qualms
- Nig.4 – Our laws guiding social media generally are undeveloped and substandard
- Nig.5 – Politics is warfare. Any strategy to win, even if it calumny of another, is proper
- Nig.6 – During elections, a "post" is considered a foolish one if it is not embellished
- SA.1 – Poor knowledge of rules guiding E-electioneering is prevailing
- SA.2 – It is all about exposing the weaknesses and faults of other contestants
- SA.3 – Electorates are more interested in reading damaging information
- SA.4 – Our politics shows no incidence of prosecuting calumny
- SA.5 – Politicians are exploiting citizens' illiteracy and ignorance
- SA.6 – Letters and language of social media regulation are usually ambiguous

What features can be identified in the social media contents of Nigeria and South Africa during their 2019 electioneering?

- Nig.1 – Just too much satirical posts depicting to mock the opponent
- Nig.2 – Imagine planting Buhari's face on a sickly looking body-builder/wrestler
- Nig.3 – videos, audios, and comical posts far outweigh write-ups
- Nig.4 – They know Nigerians don't like reading. Lengthy write-ups are not just it then
- Nig.5 – Posts are mainly for image laundering, fake news, hate and rarely about the manifesto
- Nig.6 – I found a post depicting Buhari as a cattle herder bearing an AK-47 improper
- SA.1 – South Africans daily look forward to another Malema's video messages
- SA.2 – Do they write critical write-ups? They know many people won't read much here
- SA.3 – One notices much care not to slander or malign the ruling ANC particularly
- SA.4 – I feel the ruling party exhibited more maturity in the e-campaigning space
- SA.5 – Audio posts were rare. But ample catchy short write-ups and videos persisted
- SA.6 – Thank God the e-campaigning were not about anti-Apartheid struggles and racial profiling

What measures need to be in place to safeguard against abuse of social media during electioneering particularly in Africa?

- Nig.1 – INEC ought to have a task force charged with prosecuting damaging e-campaign post
- Nig.2 – More public enlightenment needed on negative e-campaigning as a crime like theft
- Nig.3 – Improve on policing and prosecuting campaign that indulges in slander/libel
- Nig.4 – We need to authorize strong regulations to deter abuses during E-electioneering
- Nig.5 – Weak administration of justice laws, procedure, and the process is a big challenge
- Nig.6 – Fearful judges that couldn't convict corrupt officials can't deliver ethical E-electioneering

- SA.1 – The public needs more education on ethical issues about E-electioneering
- SA.2 – The court process of prosecuting those that abuse E-electioneering needs to be shorter
- SA.3 – Encourage parties to sign memoranda to be civilized during elections
- SA.4 – Deregister parties that have extreme ideological views that propagate racial hatred
- SA.5- Apartheid is now history. No political party that dwell on it should operate
- SA.6 – Politicians hurt via e-campaign should not fail to file charges against those culprits

Discussion

The analyzed data show that the positive comments about E-electioneering by the South African interviewees outweigh that of the Nigerian participants, particularly about prevailing features of the 2019 e-campaign "posts". It is also evident from the result section that South Africa's context of E-electioneering showed more optimistic prospects of social media use going by the views on "features" and "measures". The abovementioned deductions tally with other studies that demonstrate the value of social media for the enhancement of productivity, output, and outcome generally (Cheng & Chau, 2009; Van Dijk, 2005; Oseni, 2015). By comparison, the result provides credence for the supposition that South Africa fared better in ethical compliance in their 2019 E-electioneering than Nigeria. Such an assumption suggests that laid down institutional norms for social media regulation are better standardized and respected in South Africa than Nigeria. Even with the inherent explosiveness of the elections in both countries, the political actors in South Africa were better civilized in their E-campaign. Contrary-wise, the policing infrastructure against abuse of social media was more relenting, partial, ineffectual, and unproductive in Nigeria.

Generally, the perception of the culture of E-electioneering, however, seemed unfavourably disposed to a moralistic mindset of Africa by simplifying from the data. This stance tallies with the long-ago thesis of Ekeh (1989). Ekeh (1989) has argued that Africa's emergent political culture which the Nigerian experience typifies is one of willful abdication of rule of law in socio-political engagements and mutual distrust by partisan actors. Researchers have shown that the African philosophy of politics and social engagements currently *a la* electoral contest is still fraught with many absurdities (Bratton, 2010; Akinwotu & Ekunnusi, 2020). Recent research works too on Nigeria's latest Fourth Republic from 1999 such as Anegbode, Asaba, and Olubuogu (2018), and Farayibi (2017) lay credence to the characteristic depravities in Nigeria's political contestation spaces of which E-electioneering is included.

Finally, the result section of our study *a la* measures to curtail abuses in the E-electioneering sphere in African politics. The analysis suggests that the strengthening and standardization of social media regulations in election contests as regards policing, prosecution, and justice administration issues is sacrosanct to raising its optimal value. The result also shows a significant influence of the strength of public order agencies to the sustenance of civility in the E-electioneering terrain. Thus, if the laws safeguarding against libel, calumny, the spread of hate and fake speech against opposition contestants, as well as criminalizing embellishment of one's image amounting to falsehood in the e-campaign universe is upgraded, our analyzed data otherwise support what Nandi Dabula (2016: 20-21) contended: E-electioneering framework is one that political parties could develop to strengthen their knowledge-base as a catalyst for forming civic communities, enhancing a sense

of community and fostering citizens' trust and loyalty, as well as effectively marketing their manifestos such as to increase their brand equity.

Conclusion

Succinctly put, the ulterior objective for this study was to ascertain efficiency-perception, result-perception, and outcome-perception of E-electioneering based on data from two African nations to generalize for the continent. Our data suggest that digital campaigning is highly in use in Africa and has immensely contributed to improving electioneering. No doubt, e-campaigning has moved beyond just being attractive for its possibilities as an effective political marketing medium that it offers. Our study, however, provides evidence that E-electioneering has become an avenue enmeshed in illegalities, caricatures, and more to promote assault on individual personalities, in-fighting amongst contestants for elective posts, and to sometimes to deceive the public. In conclusion, social media's positive benefits in politics can only be animated by civilized political gladiators that understand its import as a functional agency for nation-building and advancement of democratization. Unfortunately, these kinds of personas are rare in Africa's electoral spaces. What Africa needs therefore to maximally reap the benefits of E-electioneering is for those with very high ethical rectitude and temperaments to go into active politics and contest for elective positions.

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