

Digitalization, Politics, and Governance in Africa

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Editorial Note

In an era dominated by the omnipresence of digital technologies, the intersection of digitization, governance, and politics has emerged as a pivotal focal point shaping the contours of modern society. The advent of the digital age has revolutionized not only the way we communicate, interact, and conduct business but also fundamentally altered the landscape of governance and political discourse. Digitalization has brought about unprecedented disruptions in governance and politics. The unprecedented flow of information through digitalization has turned the world into what McLuhan¹ predicted as a ‘global village’ into fruition.² Therefore, the governance and politics of hitherto compartmented nations have become global in terms of interest and attention.

Digitalization contributes to the exposure of the political and governance space through the opportunities it offers citizens to express opinions, vote on election day, canvass for votes or support prospective candidates in an election, monitor elections, scrutinize the government, deepen participation, and expand the horizons of freedom. Digitalized governance and political systems stimulate societal transformation through citizen involvement in governance and by accelerating development.³ The African continent is not left out of the transformation of governance through digitalization. With increasing Internet accessibility, Africans are now more enlightened, trained, and well-informed about political issues and governance, and capable of participating in democracy than at any moment in history.⁴

This special issue of the E-Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences delves into the multifaceted dimensions of digitization, governance, and politics, seeking to unravel the intricate tapestry that binds these domains. The confluence of these elements has given rise to unprecedented opportunities and challenges that demand scholarly attention and rigorous analyses.

Within this issue, an array of scholarly contributions grapples with the transformative impact of digitization on governance structures worldwide. From the utilization of big data analytics to enhance decision-making processes in public administration, to the intricate dynamics of digital diplomacy in international relations, the spectrum of topics covered underscores the breadth and depth of this evolving landscape.

Moreover, the intricate relationship between digital technologies and political processes is central to several insightful articles. The influence of social media on shaping public opinion, the implications of algorithms and artificial intelligence on electoral processes, and ethical considerations in the use of technology for political ends constitute some of the thought-provoking discussions encapsulated within these pages.

This special issue serves as a compendium of diverse perspectives, inviting readers to navigate the intricate maze between digitization, governance, and politics. The amalgamation of scholarly research, theoretical frameworks, and empirical studies encapsulated within these pages aims to not only dissect the current situation but also provide a roadmap for future inquiries and policy considerations.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the contributors, reviewers, and editorial team, whose dedication and scholarly rigour culminated in this comprehensive compilation. It is our sincere hope that this issue catalyzes

¹ M. McLuhan, *Understanding the Media: The Extension of Man* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964).

² Michael Morley, “The Global Village—It’s Here,” in *How to Manage Your Global Reputation: A Guide to the Dynamics of International Public Relations* (Springer, 1998), 1–9.

³ E. Domingo and L. T. Shiferaw, *Digitalisation and Democracy: Is the African Governance Charter Fit for the Digital Era?* (Maastricht: ECDPM Discussion Paper, 2022).

⁴ Vincent Labhard and Jonne Lehtimäki, “Digitalisation, Institutions and Governance, and Growth: Mechanisms and Evidence,” 2022.

stimulating dialogue, fostering critical thinking, and steering scholarly endeavours toward a deeper understanding of the symbiotic relationship between digitization, governance, and politics.

As editors, we invite readers to engage with these articles, contemplate their implications, and join the ongoing discourse surrounding this pivotal juncture in human history, where the digital realm intertwines inexorably with the mechanisms of governance and the fabric of political systems.

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ABOUT THE GUEST EDITOR

Professor Victor Ojakorotu is a scholar of International Relations and an Astute Professor at the North West University, South Africa. He is also an Honorary Professor at the Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) South Africa. He holds a PhD in International Relations from the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. A First Class Honours graduate (BSc) from the prestigious Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria in International Relations and an MSc. Degree in the same school. He has actively worked in various capacities as an academic of repute in the last 28 years, specifically, he worked for Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, University of Kwazulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg, and Monash University, Johannesburg. Currently, he holds a position as Deputy Director, the School of Government Studies, North West University, Mafikeng – South Africa and was recently appointed as an Honorary Professor at the Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) South Africa. His research interests span across several areas which are not limited to peace and conflict issues, social movements, environmentalism, peace advocacy and inter-ethnic harmony in local communities in Africa.