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TELEVISION AND THE TRANSPARENCY CONSTRUCT IN GOVERNANCE

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Abstract

Television is an impressionistic medium which combines sounds, visual scenes and graphics subjected to goal-oriented editing effects to create an impact on the viewing public. Its potentials make television an irresistible medium to political actors who see it as capable of reflecting and enhancing political governance. This article stresses that television is not a neutral medium, as it is sometimes difficult to separate it from governance that it is supposed to reflect, a situation which causes the television medium to alter or blur the vision of what it reflects. Thus, much of the governance shown on television is a construction by political actors or television operatives to enhance transparency in governance. The paper gives an insight into the various ways that transparency is constructed through the television medium as well as the implications for the political system. It draws living examples across the nation, particularly Akwa Ibom State where the author is based.

Introduction

Transparency is a desired virtue in governance. Both the leader and the led have a shared feeling that with transparency, good government and good followership can be achieved. Transparency implies knowledge about government actors and decisions, access to government information, ability to participate in political decisions and ability to hold government accountable for its actions and inactions (Balkin, 1998). It also connotes that government is keeping to the social contract of governance with the people by discharging its obligations dutifully.

This paper is concerned with how political leaders in Nigeria have used the television medium to simulate transparency in governance. This implies that much of the action which seemingly portrays transparency in governance is constructed by both political leaders and television operatives. Political actors

cannot be successful in constructing transparency without the involvement of the mass media, particularly television. This involvement works in a combination of ways: political leaders actively seek to portray themselves as being transparent and television operatives do nothing to counteract that strategy. At other times, television operatives, either as a professional or solicited duty, use the inherent advantages of the television medium to simulate transparency for political actors.

The Nature of the Television Medium

Television is the most dominant mass medium in the 21st century. As Baran (2007:213-214) notes:

After the printing press, the most important invention in communication technology to date has been television. Television has changed the ways teachers teach, governments govern and religious leaders preach and the way we organize furniture in home. Television has changed the nature, operation and relationship to their audiences of books, magazines, movies and radio.

Television's inherent characteristics of sound and vision as well as its complex, manipulative devices make it more suited to political use than other forms of mass media.

Television is a language with four components. According to Shook (2005), the first component is the visual image without which television would be radio. Meaning is established when scenes are placed next to others. The second component is sound which complements the visual imagery to add effect and drama. The third component of television language is the video editing process in which scenes and ideas are structured together and given a relationship. The last component is writing which uses words to guide, clarify and emphasize as well as establish tone and mood. These four components, combined deliberately by the television specialist, make the television medium the chief instrument in the hands of political leaders to demonstrate their level of transparency in governance.

As Shook (2005:1) further points out:

Television uses words, but its primary content lies in the visual images that unfold on one of the most powerful communication tools ever devised: the television

screen. Since its infancy, television has distinguished itself as a medium that works best when it communicates visually. In a word-oriented society television has its detractors, chiefly those who fail to understand the television screen's ability to impart ideas and to make those ideas stick in people's minds.

Politicians, particularly those who are accustomed to the use of television, understand and appreciate the importance of television in governance, and are pro-active in exploiting the medium's fascinating and complex characteristics to their political advantage, sometimes with or without the active connivance of television operatives. A society with a large illiterate, uncritical and gullible population easily falls prey to television offerings, especially news, which are largely unquestioned. As television news is usually very transient, lacking in details and with no immediate opportunity for a repeat, the gullible readily accepts what he sees on television as religious truth. Political actors seize on this situation to intimidate the viewer with highlights of activities that they envisage would attest to their transparency in governance.

The dominance of the Nigerian government in the broadcasting domain heightens the seemingly transparency level of political actors since much of what is offered to the viewer comes through government-controlled channels such as the Nigerian Television Authority, NTA and publicly funded stations in the states. Once viewed on television, a government official is believed and his point of view accepted, partly as a result of the blind faith of the uncritical mind in the believability of the television medium and government officials.

Theoretical Framework

This article is anchored on the Theory of Social Construction of Reality (Tuchman, 1978). A product of extensive media research spanning more than ten years, the theory holds that making the news, and indeed other media contents, is an act of constructing reality itself rather than a picture of reality. Media content, according to Tuchman, is an ally of legitimated institutions, and legitimates the status quo in the process.

To the extent that reality is constructed, the theory further holds that media content "is a social resource whose construction limits an analytic understanding of contemporary life" (Severin and Tankard, 1992:306). Supporting the view that

much of media content is a construction, Dowie (1985:34) says that "the selection and editing process is designed to produce, along with news and entertainment, an aura of objectivity". This point had earlier been made by Breed (1955) when he said that the media use omission, differential selection and preferential treatment to depict objectivity, and, by extension, transparency, in the political process.

Thus the theory of social construction of reality underlines the kernel of this paper - that the television medium is consciously employed by both the political actor and the television professional to depict transparency, which may not be real, on the part of political actors.

The Mass Media and the Political Process

The mass media, of which television is part, are one of the three elements in political communication the others being political organizations and the audience. McNair (1999:21) has suggested five functions of the communication media in governance:

- i. First, they must *inform* citizens of what is happening around them.
- ii. Secondly, they must *educate* as to the meaning and significance of the 'facts'.
- iii. Thirdly, the media must provide a *platform* for public political discourse, facilitating the formation of 'public opinion', and feeding that opinion back to the public from whence it came.
- iv. The media's fourth function is to give *publicity* to governmental and political institutions.
- v. Finally, the media in democratic societies serve as a channel for the *advocacy* of political viewpoints. The media's advocacy function may also be viewed as one of persuasion.

In the discharge of the above functions, the media, as McNair (1999:11) puts it, "function both as transmitters of political communication which originates outside the media organization itself, and as senders of political messages constructed by the journalists". Political actors utilize the media to convey their messages to their intended audience. But this is to the extent that such messages are reported by the media and received by the desired audience. The relationship among the three elements in political communication is such that

the behaviour of one of the elements at any point in time is likely to affect the behaviour of the other elements one way or the other.

Given the constraints and pressures which affect news selection and production, the media do not simply report the day's intelligence and offer analyses in a neutral and impartial way. This, then, makes it difficult, on the one hand, for the media television, in this case to be a neutral medium through which governance is seen, and easy for them, on the other hand, to be made an integral part of governance, not from the point of active policy making but from the angle of being used by political actors to achieve their goals.

Metaphor of Transparency

According to Balkin (1998), transparency suggests a medium through which things are viewed. The medium should be transparent to vision to give an accurate view of what is on the other side. Balkin says the metaphor of transparency assumes that:

- i) The medium is conceptually separate from the object on the other side;
- ii) The process of seeing through the medium does not substantially alter the nature of the object viewed.

However, these assumptions are fallacious in the case of television as the medium, and governance the object. In reality, the medium television is not substantially different or separate from the object governance for the simple reason that governance is achieved through the medium. In the process, viewing governance through the medium of television substantially alters the way governance is perceived. To that extent, therefore, transparency seen through television is altered and/or constructed.

That television operatives (as part of the medium) many a time find it difficult to extricate themselves from events that they report strengthens the point that the television medium, rather than offer an unadulterated view of governance, simulates it to meet the needs of those behind the object (i.e. those behind governance). Sometimes, simulation may not only alter vision, it may confuse or blur the vision. Similarly, television does not only prevent the viewer from seeing governance as he should, but intentionally confuses the vision such

that the viewer is lost, and does not know what to make of what television has presented to him.

In the light of the above, how does television, as manipulated by its operatives as well as politicians, construct the transparency with which the public is presented?

1. Montages and Soundbites

Transparency is easily constructed with montages and soundbites. Here montages containing actions and statements of political actors, and which are considered to be likely impactful, are produced and aired on television repeatedly. Former President Ibrahim Babangida was often shown on television with the soundbite: "We will handover to a democratically elected government in 1993". His second-in-command, Augustus Aikhomu, also adopted that soundbite. The surprising thing was that even though some critical minds had alerted the nation to the inbuilt booby traps in the transition process, many Nigerians believed the President through the incisive soundbites.

The same strategy is being repeated on NTA to make Nigerians accept the 7-Point Agenda of the Yar'Adua Administration. Soundbites of the president which emphasize the Agenda are intermittently aired on television to encourage people to believe in the President and in his words. Two areas of the 7-Point Agenda – electricity and security – are worth mentioning here. Despite increased power outage and the general insecurity in the country, the president, on a daily basis on NTA, is given soundbites on these issues.

A former Head of State, the late General Sani Abacha, carefully exploited the use of montage in his attempt to succeed himself in 1998 in the proposed election of that year. Montages on NTA showed General Abacha as the only man in Nigeria that the cap of governance fitted. The station similarly showed the late General as the only one with the key to open the doors of Nigeria to prosperity. The portrayal was simply that General Abacha was a nationalist and statesman whose records of performance in his five-year reign were enough to entrust him with Nigeria's leadership.

Montages are also a key ingredient in the Administration of Musa Yar'Adua as President. Against the backdrop of accusations that the president's administration is rudderless, NTA has been awash with montages suggesting

that the president has a focus in his 7-point Agenda as well as a commitment to that focus. Within the montages are sharp, impactful soundbites of the president on issues contained in the Agenda. But in order to prevent the viewer from suffering an information overload, each montage addresses a single item on the Agenda. The montages are meant to present the president as a statesman whose cause and focus are good for the nation.

Political actors do employ montages to impress the viewing public with their 'sincere' efforts to solve the ills of the society and promote better living. For example, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, despite the allegations that it is selectively used against some persons and interests, maintains its montages on NTA - first the catchphrase was 'Nobody is above the Law', and now, 'We'll get you anywhere, anytime'.

Across the country, state government-controlled television airwaves are also flooded with montages of their governors in one action or the other. In Akwa Ibom State, for instance, the governor's face on different occasions forms the takes of most of the montages on the state-owned station, Akwa Ibom Broadcasting Corporation, Channel 45, Uyo. This is in addition to the intermittent airing of the governor's soundbites considered sharp and impactful.

2. Sharpening and Levelling

Sharpening and levelling involve bringing in extra pictures that would help tell the news better or eliminating those ones that are not likely to promote the cause of the political actor. For example, in reporting the presentation of Appropriation Bills by State Chief Executives to their respective parliaments, television operatives, intending to add flesh and content to an otherwise banal and empty presentation, shoot extra rushes on electricity, water, road, health projects etc (which might have been constructed many years before the governor's tenure) to back up their reports. That is sharpening. At other times, levelling is the action word. Pictures that would likely portray political actors in bad light before the viewer are carefully edited out. Only visuals (and sounds) adjudged to add to the 'wonderful' performance of a political actor are allowed to pass through the editing gate.

However, problems do arise when there is a conflict in interpretation of

what should be left out or brought into the series of visuals. In 1992, the Akwa Ibom Broadcasting Corporation, Channel 45, Uyo, aired a news item on a courtesy visit by a group of women to the wife of a key politician in Akwa Ibom State at that time. One of the shots in the visuals accompanying the news revealed the legs and jewellerys, particularly bangles, of the wife of the politician. Aides to the wife of the then governor developed envy over the visuals and rumoured aloud that the editors were biased in letting the world view the beauty and adornments of a 'mere' woman, while Her Excellency was denied such treatment! There was another incident in 2007 when a cameraman covering the Deputy Governor's Office was re-assigned for taking a shot of a permanent secretary sleeping at a public event, and the shot eventually found its way into the edited visuals accompanying the news story later that day!

There are also countless cases of scenes excluded from the edited visuals (which the editor considered unimportant) that have brought editors on collision with political actors. The point here is that in engaging in sharpening and levelling to enhance transparency for political actors, television operatives often find themselves in awkward situations that threaten to or sometimes consume them.

3. Diversion of Attention

Events do unfold in a way that suits the agenda of political actors, and give the actors the opportunity to divert the attention of the audience from something critical and perhaps 'damaging' to that which enables them to engage in image-laundering. This happens very often. By diverting attention, political actors produce new things to be concerned about, to become angry about and to fight about (Balkin, 1998).

In June 2009, at the heat of kidnapping in Uyo, the Akwa Ibom State capital, two brothers, Emmanuel and Mathias Ekpenyong, were kidnapped, shot and killed the same day within an interval of minutes. The outpouring of emotions centred on alleged government's inability to protect the citizens. Government was ruffled, but immediately found a way to divert the attention of the people from the cold-blooded murder. About the same time, the first civilian governor of Akwa Ibom State, Obong Akpan Isemin, died at an old age and government suddenly accused the University of Uyo Teaching Hospital, where the former governor died, of negligence of duty. It eulogized the deceased and flooded the state-controlled television and radio airwaves

with these issues. It used the death of the former Governor to crowd out from the airwaves the news on the murder of the two brothers. Whether government was successful in crowding out the murder from the hearts and minds of people is another issue.

Diversion of attention also involves the suppression of information or points of view by crowding them out, or by inducing other people or groups of people to stop listening to certain arguments. It is common for government officials to appear logical with statements which, in truth, are mere logical fallacies. This involves carefully selecting facts and preparing one-sided statements that appear impressionistic but lack depth if such statements were subjected to scrutiny. Points of view or information that may be harmful to the cause or that may inadvertently reveal the real intention of government is suppressed or is carefully avoided. The case of the June - October 2009 Strike by the Academic Staff Union of Universities, ASUU, is a glaring example. Government, to justify its reneging on its agreement with ASUU, dwelt on issues which were more a diversion from signing the Agreement with ASUU than an honest intention to resolve the impasse. Examples of such issues canvassed by the government were that:

- i) government had no agreement with ASUU;
- ii) the Government Team to the negotiation was not briefing the Federal Government;
- iii) ASUU wanted the Federal Government to repudiate the principle of federalism by asking the Federal Government to sign a binding agreement on state governments;
- iv) government had met 75% of the demand of ASUU.

Government's expression of these shifty positions came in short soundbites involving the Minister of Education or his counterpart in Labour, or the Government Chief Negotiator, Gamaliel Onosode.

In instances where government is unable to suppress "other points of view", it does often try to dissuade people from believing such views by asking them to engage their time in more useful ventures than give attention to arguments that are "bereft" of truth. For example, when government could not convince the world that it did not enter into an agreement with ASUU, it said the agreement, if signed, would mortgage true federalism and introduce unitarism into the educational sector. The intent was to present the agreement as an unserious, worthless draft that was inimical to the political

Ideals of democracy in Nigeria.

4. Documentaries

By their nature television documentaries are not an objective presentation of issues. They represent a highly skewed version of reality to serve the interest of the sponsor(s). The subjective selection of issues for the documentary, the diligent choice of pictures, angle of shots, accompanying music, pace and tone of narration, soundbites and, most importantly, the video editing in which scenes and ideas are structured together and given a relationship all make the documentary a indispensable tool in the hands of skilful political schemers to create transparency where none may actually exist.

Essentially an image-building strategy, documentaries do not subject issues to critical examination (of course, the airtime is too short to allow that), do not contain any opposing views and only highlight what is seen as the 'great' performance chart of the political actor. The cost of producing a documentary makes rejoinders from an opposing group by way of another documentary an unattractive adventure. Hence issues raised in documentaries often go unchallenged in the same programme form.

5. Appeal to Patriotism and Nationalism

The strategy here is for political actors to use the media, especially the television, to evoke sentiments of patriotism and nationalism, particularly in times of crisis or presumed danger. It has become an established strategy by political actors to make appeals of "patriotism and national interest", however so defined, whenever workers are on strike. By so doing, the political actors present themselves and their position as patriotic, while the workers, by reason of embarking on strike, have become patriotism blind. At that point, the lens of patriotism is held by the political actors and only those who view the crisis from their lens could be termed to be patriotic.

The recent handover of the Bakassi Peninsula to Cameroon is another case in point. Commentators had drawn the attention of the Yar'Adua Administration to the fact that Nigeria's National Assembly had not ratified the judgment of the International Court of Justice, ICJ, at the Hague as well as the Green Tree Agreement in New York between Nigeria and Cameroon to make

them legal in Nigeria. In reaction to this lapse, and in the face of international pressure, the Federal Government made appeals to Nigeria's "long standing integrity" among the comity of nations, Africa being the centerpiece of the country's foreign policy and the need not to jeopardize Nigeria's desires in international affairs, particularly a permanent seat at the United Nations. At the same time, pictures of Nigerian troops in several peace-keeping efforts, globally, were shown on television to underline Nigeria as an active participant in the search for global peace. Those emotions were evoked as part of attempts to overshadow legal arguments, and justify the Administration's apparent refusal to renege on the steps of its predecessor the Obasanjo Administration. When reference was made that many Western countries neither obey nor subscribe to the ICJ, the Federal Government resorted to the "need to act responsibly".

6. Media Events

Since the goal of transparency is to help people watch over the operations of government and the behaviour of government officials, media events are to encourage people to watch the event. Media events involve displays of governance, and are designed to look governmental, and sometimes spontaneous. They are events specifically staged to be covered by the media. According to Balkin (1998):

By demanding our attention, and the attention of the news media, media events appear to offer us substantive information although what they actually offer is largely political image and showmanship. Moreover, by commanding media attention, media events trade on a fundamental difficulty facing all forms of political transparency. This is the problem of audience scarcity.

Media events come in various forms.

- (i) They come as town hall meetings where the political actor appears to be consulting with, or explaining or being attentive to, the people over their problems. At such meetings, the emphasis is not on what the people suggest, but on the listening and sensitive nature of the political actor as well as what he is doing to solve the problems so identified. As a media event, the town hall meeting is strictly managed to achieve its aims;

hence those who attend or speak or ask questions are pre-selected along with the contents of their speeches or questions.

- (ii) Political actors engage in television interviews in which most questions have been pre-agreed upon. If the interview is *live*, phone-in questions and reactions are screened before being passed on to the interviewee. Majority of the reactions in short messages (sms) are either edited or dropped if they are not in tune with the goal of the media event.
- (iii) To demonstrate their transparency in governance, political actors engage in inauguration of projects, visits to orphanages, trips to disaster scenes, ground-breaking ceremonies, project inspections etc. The idea is to make government appear active and robust and align with issues to which the people are emotionally attached. The events are also staged to emphasize the achievements of the government vis-à-vis the lean resources of government.
- (iv) Breakfast/lunch/dinner with media operatives is also common. The television pictures the political actor as media-friendly and one who is willing and ready to consult in the task of building a just and egalitarian society.
- (v) Sports interactions are sometimes carefully arranged for the political actor to display or reveal his affection for sports. Such an actor may be invited to take the kick off of soccer events. In apparent designs to show concern for the health of the people, the political actor is pictured engaging in jogging amidst other joggers. The cameras would often look the other way when, as a result of exhaustion, the actor boards his official vehicle to complete the official distance for the exercise, and return a few metres to the home point of the race. Behold, the political actor has completed the jogging successfully! As expected, the sycophants mill around to congratulate him on this rare achievement!
- (vi) Live events: Live coverage of events offers the political actor another opportunity to merge the act of governance with media display. It is designed to make an event look spontaneous. Hertsgaard (1988) says the late President Ronald Reagan of the United States took media display to an art form, the reason he was called the Great Communicator

(McNair, 1999). Live events are carefully packaged to enhance the goals of the political actor. In Nigeria today, there seems to be a competition among the state governors for live coverage on NTA. The Presidency and the National Assembly are not left out. Corporate bodies and educational institutions such as the Universities during their convocations are also involved. This is done despite the cost of coverage charged by NTA. To the political actor, however, the need to impress the viewer is higher on the scale than the prudent management of resources.

7. Propaganda

Political actors do employ propaganda, mischievously presented as persuasion, to drive home their point - that they are transparent. According to Lasswell (1937), propaganda is the technique of influencing human action by the manipulation of representations. These representations may take spoken, written, pictorial or musical form. Narrowing down the definition, Brown (1958), cited by Tankard (1992:300), says persuasive efforts are named propaganda "when someone judges that the action, which is the goal of the persuasive effort, will be advantageous to the persuader but not in the best interest of the persuadee."

For all the public expressions of concern for the welfare of the people, the principal goal of the persuasive efforts of political actors is to present themselves as transparent, responsible, accountable and democratic. And to achieve this, they employ a number of propaganda devices:

(i) Glittering Generality

This is a device which associates something with a word which connotes virtue. The idea is that as the 'virtue word' is accepted, so is that thing associated with it. Glittering generality has become so widely used and accepted in Nigeria that the audience hardly would notice it. Virtue words such as *Integrity, Due Process, Wise men, Truth and Reconciliation* have been introduced into the nation's political lexicon by political actors. For example, some members of the National Assembly, wishing to demonstrate their transparency level, describe themselves as *Integrity Group* and/or *Due Process Group*. Others, desiring to show that

they are pro-active, describe themselves as *Board of Initiatives*. During the presidency of Obasanjo, the panel set up to examine past human and institutional rights abuses was given a suggestive name *Truth and Reconciliation Commission*. A similar glittering generality took place in 1978 when the 70 men who fixed the 1979 Constitution were described as the *70 wise men*. As the virtue word is accepted, that which it is associated is similarly accepted without critical examination.

(ii) Transfer

“Transfer carries the authority, sanction and prestige of something respected and revered over to something else in order to make the latter acceptable” (Lee & Lee, 1939:69). Explaining further, Severin and Tankard (1992:98) write that transfer works through a process of association, but instead of guilt by association, it is usually something more like 'admiration by association'. The objective is to link an idea, cause or person to something or someone that people like.

In many parts of Nigeria, particularly in Christiandominated areas, state governors and other political actors have linked themselves to biblical heroes in such phrases as: the Moses of our time; the Joshua of our time; the messiah of our time; the Nehemiah of our time, etc. Political actors in Western Nigeria constantly seek to transfer the aura of Chief Obafemi Awolowo to themselves, the same way Northerners claim to work in the mould and spirit of Ahmadu Bello, and the Igbos, Nnamdi Azikiwe Transfer also takes place through the use of objects. Political leaders in Nigeria who wish to evoke the feelings of nationalism, patriotism and statesmanship fuse the pictures of revered nationalists (such as Nnamdi Azikwe, Obafemi Awolowo, Ahmadu Bello, Herbert Macaulay, etc) together, and walk with them or beside them to suggest that their actions are a continuation of the cause of the heroes past.

Political actors also use music to effect transfer. It is common in Nigeria for the National Anthem to be used to back up pronouncements/montages on governors and the president. In symbol, the use of the National Flag by political leaders suggests that such leaders are patriotic.

(i) Testimonial

A common device in the hands of political leaders, testimonial consists in having some respected or hated person say that a given idea or programme is good or bad. When many state governors vie to return to power, men with integrity are contracted to give testimony on the 'good performance' of the governor(s); and the masses, seeing such respected men endorse the governors, accept such endorsements as true. Recently, the Federal Government employed this device in legitimizing its amnesty offer to Niger Delta militants by using outspoken members of the National Assembly to endorse the offer on television.

(ii) Plain Folks

Plain folks is the method by which a speaker attempts to convince his audience that his ideas are good because 'he is of the people' the plain folks. It is commonplace for political actors to mix with the plain folks on TV and say, 'I am one of you; I am from a humble background like you'.

(iii) Card Stacking

Lee and Lee (1939:95) describe the card stacking device "as the selection and use of facts or falsehood, illustrations or distractions, and logical or illogical statements in order to give the best or worst possible case for an idea, programme, person, or product". Severin and Tankard (1992:101) say "it is a selection of the arguments or evidence that supports a position and ignoring the arguments or evidence that does not support the position". In Akwa Ibom State, for example, the media slogan *Akwa Ibom! Ado ok* (Akwa Ibom is okay) - is justified by carefully selecting sectors that government's intervention is visible, leaving out areas that could constitute an embarrassment to the government.

Implications for the Political System

Simulation of political transparency, if successfully done, bestows enormous benefits to the political actor. Aside from presenting the political actor in good stead, and drawing for him tremendous goodwill, accomplished political transparency, constructed or not, makes it easy for the political actor to sell his political programmes to the people. It endears him to the people and persuades

them to accept that the political actor is acting in their best interest. This, indeed, explains why the politician is desperate to display transparency to his constituents.

Cherished as the above is, simulated transparency may, in the long run, harm the political system and the political actor. Whatever its lofty goals, simulated transparency draws people away from realities and emphasizes frivolities. Of truth, much of what the political actor does to drive home his transparency is frivolity that contributes little or nothing to progress in the society. This may make the people, the gullible ones though, to assume that governance begins and ends with what they see on television. It actually impoverishes the populace on informational transparency knowledge about government actors, decisions and access to government information. This lack of knowledge deprives the people of participatory transparency - ability to participate in political decisions, either through fair representation or direct participation as well as accountability transparency ability to hold government officials accountable (Balkin, 1998).

In an attempt to convey transparency, political actors go to the extent of emphasizing their personal activities, for example, a routine jogging or church service which is shown on television. By so doing, the dividing line between official and private activities is tactically and gradually removed. While basking in media glow, the political actor fails to realize that, unknowingly, he is opening up his privacy, his family inclusive, to the searchlight of the ever inquisitive journalists, always on the look out for possible scandals.

Transparency that is simulated must, of necessity, hide the truth, alter it or polish it. If and when the lid over the truth is removed, and truth is discovered, the ensuing eruption of emotions of anger and betrayal may consume the politician, and possibly his political party.

Conclusion

As stated much earlier in this paper, political transparency cannot take place without the active involvement of television operatives. That the operatives do simulate transparency for the political actor raises ethical and professional questions. Where a medium becomes an integral part of the object it is expected

them to accept that the political actor is acting in their best interest. This, indeed, explains why the politician is desperate to display transparency to his constituents.

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Transparency that is simulated must, of necessity, hide the truth, alter it or polish it. If and when the lid over the truth is removed, and truth is discovered, the ensuing eruption of emotions of anger and betrayal may consume the politician, and possibly his political party.

Conclusion

As stated much earlier in this paper, political transparency cannot take place without the active involvement of television operatives. That the operatives do simulate transparency for the political actor raises ethical and professional questions. Where a medium becomes an integral part of the object it is expected

to reflect, makes such a medium an ethical burden on the society. But the issue remains, can television by its very nature stay neutral in the moulding of political opinions? Given the growing daily importance of the television medium, and the inter-dependence between the media and the political system, this seems unlikely even in the long run. However, it requires television operatives to be more committed to the ethical demands of their profession in order to increase the possibility of the medium being separate from the object.

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