



Mass Media in Sub-Saharan Africa

By Louise M. Bourgault

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Mass Media in Sub-Saharan Africa analyzes how historical, political, economic, social, cultural, and stylistic factors have shaped media products in African radio, television, and newspapers. Bourgault investigates three principal influences: the pre-colonial legacy of the oral tradition, the presence of an alienated managerial class, and the domination of African nations by systems based on political patronage. The first two chapters provide the theoretical framework. Subsequent chapters look at the management of the electronic media, radio and television broadcasting in content and practice, the history of print media, and the discourse style found in the press. This work provides a wealth of historical information on media systems, particularly those of the former anglophone and francophone countries, together with recent developments in satellite communication, small-systems technology, and the current move toward decentralization and privatization. Bourgault also considers the political shifts affecting Africa in the 1990s and offers a radical blueprint for more responsive and informative media in the sub-Saharan area.

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Mass Media in Sub-Saharan Africa By Louise M. Bourgault Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #4203739 in Books
- Published on: 1995-06-22
- Released on: 1995-06-22
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.25" h x .75" w x 6.12" l, 1.02 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 320 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

Bourgault's work differs from previous treatments of African mass communications in that it covers all mass media in a representative cross section of sub-Saharan countries and draws on important ethnographic, historical, descriptive, and critical approaches. It is further enhanced by Bourgault's personal observations and accounts of experiences in at least 14 countries, vital discussions of African cultural traits that mix with communication patterns, and theoretical arguments on germane universal concerns (news flow, colonialism, dependency, media/cultural imperialism). The author (Northern Michigan Univ., Marquette) moves beyond outmoded Western concepts, adding numerous Asian and African experiences and theories. Occasional detailed case studies do not sacrifice more comprehensive and generalizable approaches. There are a few errors in this otherwise excellent volume: the author misspells Roy Thomson's name and confuses the Asian-conceived development journalism concept with development communication that emanated from Washington and Washington-financed academic think tanks. This volume is a significant contribution to the literature on Africa because of its intricate organization, up-to-date information, comprehensiveness, multicultural and multidisciplinary approaches, and story-like relating of both historical and contemporary phenomena. All collections. J. A. Lent, Temple University, 1996feb CHOICE

"This volume is a significant contribution to the literature on Africa because of its intricate organization, up-to-date information, comprehensiveness, multicultural and multidisciplinary approaches, and story-like relating of both historical and contemporary phenomena." ?Choice

About the Author

LOUISE M. BOURGAULT is Professor of Mass Communication at Northern Michigan University, Marquette.

Users Review

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