Diaspora and Imagined Nationality: USA-African Dialogue and Cyberframing Nigerian Nationhood

A review of *Diaspora and Imagined Nationality: USA-African Dialogue and Cyberframing Nigerian Nationhood* by Koleade Odutola (Publisher: Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2012. 204 pp., ISBN: 978-1-59460-926-8) by Anita L. Harris (anita.harris@louisville.edu), Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Department of Pan African Studies/Department of Anthropology, University of Louisville.

Diaspora and nation are dynamic constructs constantly evolving through various forms of discourse. Cyberspace has created a virtual terrain for global communicative activities. This virtual space collapses geographical borders and cultivates online social networking conducive to cyber-framing nation-states. In *Diaspora and Imagined Nationality: USA-Africa Dialogue and Cyberframing Nigerian Nationhood*, Koleade Odutola analyzes unstructured dialogues and debates produced by technologically driven modes of communication. More specifically, Odutola focuses on the cyber-framing of Nigeria as a postcolonial nation-space by Nigerian intellectuals participating in an online forum created seven years ago by Professor Toyin Falola. Close readings of the virtual ethnography establish the online forum as a networking site for ongoing social enquiry relevant to diaspora and nation with references to collective identity, patriotism and reconstruction of memory.

This book clearly articulates the potentiality of online social networking in creating virtual spaces for political activism and scholarly interrogations of globalization, and democratization theories. The research questions guiding this study are concerned with the main themes and concepts of nation discussed in online postings among Nigerians in the homeland and Nigerians geographically dispersed. The questions also perpetuate exploration of the media's role in reinforcing or displacing previously held notions of nation when Nigerians relocate to Western countries.

Through implementation of first-person-narrative, the author adequately discusses the structure of Nigeria, issues of nationalism, online networking, applicable social-media-based theories and previous literature informing this text. The literature review of Nigeria-related studies, diasporan studies and studies emphasizing social and technological aspects of the Internet are well researched. Contextualization of Nigeria's cyber-presence within an African-diasporan paradigm anchors this exploration of transnational interaction, cultural identity, and politics of home. Incorporation of tables and figures documenting visual representation of Nigerian online communities substantiate participant-observation methodology, data collection and analysis framing this study.

The author's thick description of Nigerian structure, diaspora, nationhood and, media-based theories pertinent to system dependency, agenda setting, and symbolic interactionism will appeal to scholars of Africana studies, cultural studies and media studies. This text also contributes extensively to contemporary discourse on the reconstruction of memory and the impact of globalization on the formation of nation-states.