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Levi Obijiofor & Richard Murray, Challenges of Reporting Africa for an International Audience, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022; 215pp. ISBN: 9781527582347, £64.99

Reporting a diverse continent of 54 countries certainly presents a significant challenge to contemporary media. Levi Obijiofor and Richard Murray, both based at the University of Queensland, have chosen a huge and complex palette and offered a wide range of perspectives. Some are more illuminating than others.

This volume offers a comprehensive range of sources, and the authors have clearly done their homework in scoping the literature. The list of bibliographic material is impressive, and in some places the monograph reads like a vast review of the theory and practice of international reporting. Indeed, it strays well beyond Africa, including a discussion about covering the Middle East, as outlined by the well-known Dutch writer Joris Luyendijk. In another section, it highlights examples of the impact on Australian journalists on the rift in Chinese/Australian relations in 2020. The book might have therefore benefitted from a tighter and more restrained focus; this might have avoided some of the unfortunate typos which should have been spotted in the production.

Lack of nuance and prevalence of cliché are often cited in the analysis of how Africa is reported, and the authors demonstrate again the tropes of Afro-Pessimism. There are some useful case studies too of incidents where reporting on Africa has fallen into these well-worn patterns – for example, the international media framing of the Ethiopian Airlines plane crash in 2019 – although, in fairness, the habit of focussing on the deaths of those nearby is a generic issue in international reporting. Another case study on the murder of British soldier Lee Rigby is slightly odd, as it is more a reflection of UK media habits rather than a wider example of reporting Africa in highlighting tabloid assumptions about the Nigerian origins of the killers.

Some of the analysis of Nigeria overall reads rather strangely in this volume and includes some detailed examples which do not quite fit into the rest of the analysis. Another country where recollections might vary is the treatment of Rwanda. There is plenty of important discussion of threats to journalists and lack of free speech, but for some reason, reference to Rwanda whose record in this area is particular lamentable in recent years does not feature much. It would have been worth acknowledging the recent work of Michela Wrong, *Do Not Disturb: The Story of a Political Murder and an African Regime Gone Bad* and also the disturbing book by Anjam Sundaram, *Bad News: Last Journalists in a Dictatorship*.

Another topic which is highlighted is the familiar issue of local versus international reporting. It is invaluable to hear more voices from local journalists. However, in countries where the freedom to report is fragile, the perspective of outsiders who have greater leeway because they are not subject to threats to family or freedom is crucial and it is important to acknowledge this.

Finally, the diverse ways that reporting Africa can benefit from new technology rather than traditional foreign correspondents is an important development which the authors include. However, they could have ranged further in highlighting recent opportunities. The launch of the agency BIRD by #AfricaNoFilter is a fine example of vital work in challenging stereotypes through new ways of reporting. This growing diversity in the scope of storytelling is increasingly pivotal in ensuring that international audiences will receive reliable and properly rounded news about Africa.

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