

# DISCOURSE OF RESISTANCE THROUGH DIGITAL ACTIVISM: A RHETORICAL CRITICISM OF NIGERIAN POLITICS

Kunle Oparinde<sup>a</sup>

**Abstract:** Amid widespread disillusionment marked by governance failure, insecurity, and economic hardship, many ordinary Nigerians turned to social media as a space for political resistance. The present article explores the ways in which citizens engaged digital platforms, particularly X (formerly Twitter), to contest power and reframe the national political discourse during the 2023 presidential elections. Drawing on purposively selected posts, messages, and texts, the study interrogates how Nigerians deployed language as a tool of resistance against dominant political narratives. Anchored in Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the article identifies four key strategies employed in this digital resistance: (1) emotive appeals and affective language, (2) strategic discursive maneuvering, (3) rejection of the (ab)normal, and (4) propaganda and counter-narratives. In mapping these discursive acts, the article foregrounds the agency of citizens in shaping political meanings.

**Keywords:** discourse of resistance, digital activism, social media, political discourse in Nigeria, Critical Discourse Analysis

## Introduction

The sporadic ability of social media applications to spread information has been exploited by many social media users for their own benefit. From utilising social media for marketing purposes, to using it as a platform for information sharing, users of digital media are constantly reinventing ways to maximise their potential. This indestructible power of social media has also found its way into politics, where politicians utilise the platforms for the purpose of political engagement. Conversely, social media users have found the platforms comfortable for challenging power and political authority. In fact, according

---

a Department of Media Language and Communication, Faculty of Arts and Design, Durban University of Technology, South Africa, e-mail: kunleo@dut.ac.za

to Adewale Fadugba (2023), networked digital activism is a transformative force in Nigerian politics, giving rise to new forms of resistance from below. Rodwell Makombe and Grace Agbede (2016: 40) also affirm that traditional methods of speaking truth to power, such as demonstrations, strikes, and petitions, are being increasingly replaced, or in some cases complemented, by digital resistance. Thus, through social media one becomes aware of critical occurrences in several parts of the world, especially through trending topics or hashtags. Although not without its own shortcomings, one cannot dispute the fact that social media is indeed powerful in disseminating dissident views.

Scholars have established that several parts of the African continent are permeated with governance failure. In a study by Thomas Tiekou (2019), in which he examined the entire continent through the lens of the African Union (AU), the author contends that Africa has continued to lack in specific areas for a long time, such as: the provision of common public goods and services valued by commoners in Africa; giving a voice to the majority of young people in Africa; the promotion of intra-Africa trade; good governance; and financial independence in the African continent. Tiekou's (2019) study implies that despite the existence of the African Union, the continent continues to suffer from dysfunctional governance. More specifically, Nigeria, which is often said to be the giant of Africa, is currently inflated with several socio-political issues including corruption, governance inefficiency, insecurity, economic instability, and so forth. This is a point affirmed by David Nwogbo and Akhakpe Ighodalo (2021), who state that Nigeria is often affected by dysfunctional governance due to corruption, a dysfunctional educational system, high poverty rates, infrastructural decay and unemployment, insecurity, the rigging of elections, embezzlement of public resources, poor economic growth, manipulation of electoral process by government officials, and consequent political instability.

Dele Babalola (2024) examines Nigerian politics through the lens of the 2023 presidential elections, offering insights that can be seen as reflective of the broader state of the nation's political environment. He argues that Nigeria's political landscape is primarily defined by the pursuit of electoral victories and a significant focus on the distribution of the country's wealth among the political elite. This observation highlights the prevailing dynamics of power consolidation and resource distribution that shape Nigeria's political landscape, which in turn creates a context in which resistance to the status quo becomes a necessary response for many Nigerians. The perspective presented by Nwogbo and Ighodalo (2021) effectively encapsulates the state of Nigerian governance and the motivations behind the widespread challenge to the political status quo in 2023, particularly among Nigerian youths.

These youths, leveraging the influence of social media, sought to disrupt the entrenched political elite. Building on the momentum of the 2020 #ENDSARS protests – when Nigerian youths rallied against police brutality – the 2023 general elections emerged as a crucial opportunity for change. The protests highlighted the limitations of direct action in addressing governance issues, leading to the adoption of the slogan “take the anger to the polls.” This phrase was intended to channel the energy of the protests into active participation in the electoral process, offering an alternative means for effecting change by voting for better leadership. Thus, the surge in resistance discourse among Nigerian youths in 2023 can be traced back to the 2020 protests, which, despite their focus on police brutality, also saw additional fatalities at the hands of law enforcement. In the wake of the protests, many Nigerians began to explore the concept of a “third force,” a political alternative to the two dominant parties that have governed the country since its return to democracy in 1999.

Hence, for the first time since 1999, a less popular political party convulsed the political atmosphere of the entire country in an unpredicted and unprecedented manner. When the eventual Presidential candidate of the Labour Party (LP), Peter Obi, suddenly decamped from the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) in May 2022, several Nigerians who perceived him as a potentially good leader saw hope for the “third force” and began to demonstrate discourses of resistance towards the two popular political parties and their candidates – Bola Ahmed Tinubu of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and Atiku Abubakar of the People’s Democratic Party (PDP). The abilities of social media were thoroughly exploited, which resulted in arguably the biggest populist movement in Nigeria referred to as the “Obidient Movement,” a coinage which stems from “Obi,” the surname of the Labour Party candidate. It is worth noting that although the discourse of resistance permeated the Nigerian social media space, mostly by the “Obidients” (supporters of Peter Obi or those who subscribe to Peter Obi’s ideology), it did not result in Peter Obi winning the general elections. However, it brought about the greatest number of votes by a determined “third force” in Nigeria, as well as a significant amount of the “third force” making their way into the National Assembly of the country, which comprises the legislators. These instances all draw dividends from the discourse of resistance, promulgated using social media as a platform for challenging power and authority.

### **Theorising Resistance in the Era of Social Media: An Overview**

Attempts to understand resistance have been met with scholarly variations, which have prevented the concept from developing a universal definition.

Hence, as scholars continue to investigate resistance from multidisciplinary viewpoints, the exploration of the concept expands. Despite these variations, approaches to the study of resistance have maintained one focus – a refusal to comply. However, notwithstanding the lack of a generic definition, scholars have made significant efforts to conceptualise resistance through different facets. Authors have referred to resistance through varying concepts which include, but are not confined to, acting autonomously in one's interests, active efforts to refuse cooperation, abusive behaviour and control, engaging in opposing behaviours, as well as questioning and objecting (Hollander and Einwohner 2004). Jocelyn Hollander and Rachel Einwohner's (2004) study of resistance appears to be one of the most popular in terms of the concept from a sociological perspective. From their study, it appears that older viewpoints on resistance put too much emphasis on the concept as a physical or material activity, often in the form of social movements, protests, picketing, and marches among others. In their typologies of resistance, they developed seven categories, namely overt, covert, unwitting, target-defined, externally defined, missed, and attempted resistance. Their study is in fact an indication of why resistance should not be treated universally. While they admit that there is a virtual consensus that resistance involves oppositional action of some kind, the natures and forms of resistance are still loose, suggesting that as the word develops resistance will continue to take on new dimensions and approaches.

Later studies have rightly extended the understanding of resistance to include new elements in the current world. Scholars such as Makombe and Agbede (2016), drawing from Achille Mbembe's (1992) notion of resistance as cohabitation rather than oppositional confrontation, argue that Internet memes are now a form of resistance used to subvert oppressive regimes. They use Zimbabwe as a case study. In their study, they note that although meme creation as a form of resistance may not have the same effect as direct, oppositional resistance, it is effective for those who wish to challenge the system without disclosing their identity, particularly ordinary people. Kunle Oparinde and Rachel Matteau-Matsha (2021) also argue for the use of counter-discourse as a form of resistance, basing their argument on Felicitas Macgilchrist's (2007) logical inversion which suggests countering a situation by arguing for an alternative reality. Oparinde and Matteau-Matsha (2021) contend that resistance from the use of counter-discourse can be achieved through formulating messages to expose the gravity and prevalence of a problem, call for the recognition of alternative ways of solving the problem, and ultimately call for action in changing the system.

Thus far, it has been established that resistance transforms based on the available resources and situational contexts. For this reason, political resistance through discourse has become even more popular since the proliferation of social media. In what Hollander and Einwohner (2004) refer to as the consensual core of resistance, overt resistance is the behaviour that is visible and readily and generally recognised as resistance. Overt resistance could include collective acts, such as social movements and revolutions, as well as individual acts of refusal, such as personal fights against abuse. Hollander and Einwohner's (2004) typologies are still relevant, although the present study intends to broaden the overt resistance by incorporating social media posts meant to challenge political power in its definition. This point is echoed by Maria Cristina Nisco (2021), who claims that digital media is increasingly advocated as a tool to engage with society's most pressing and tricky issues, reaching a more inclusive public discourse that can empower minority or stigmatised groups by granting them access to online communication and, potentially, to public, political, and institutional dynamics.

Praisegod Aminu, Ifeoluwa Awopetu and Foluke Unuabonah's (2024) study spotlights the political resistance embedded in the Oduduwa secessionist rhetoric by analysing not only the linguistic elements of the discourse but also the non-verbal modes of communication, including visual symbols, that play a significant role in the secessionist messaging drawn mainly from Twitter and Facebook. According to them, the language used by secessionist leaders often portrays the Yoruba people as victims of systemic oppression, positioning their resistance as the means to recover lost dignity and sovereignty. This framing mobilises support by appealing to a shared sense of history, highlighting the injustices suffered by the Yoruba people under the current political system. The authors maintain that the political resistance articulated through the Oduduwa secessionist discourse is a response to long-standing issues of political exclusion, and without engagement from the central government, Nigeria may face increasing challenges to its unity. In a similar study, Aminu (2024) affirms that social media serves as a vital tool for political resistance, particularly in marginalised communities by examining how digital communication technologies are employed to reinforce the secessionist agenda and mobilise support for Yoruba self-determination. Aminu highlights the discursive techniques employed by secessionists on social media to assert their political resistance as including aggressive rhetoric and provocative statements, which are common in online discourse. His study concludes that the digital space has transformed the dynamics of political discourse, providing a platform for marginalised groups to challenge state power.

Innocent Chiluwá's (2012) contribution to the study of discursive resistance recognised social media as a tool that has been used to champion social protests and resistance against oppression and political power abuse. Chiluwá explored how social media was used as a platform for political resistance, particularly in the context of the Biafran separatist movement. He argued that online discourses surrounding Biafra were vital in constructing and disseminating resistance narratives against the Nigerian state. Thus, social media platforms became an instrument that provide a space for marginalised voices to challenge government authority, articulate grievances, and mobilise support for the Biafran cause. Through a socio-linguistic critical discourse analysis (CDA), Chiluwá highlighted the linguistic and communicative strategies, such as framing, emotive language, and historical references that the Biafran separatists employed to reinforce their political resistance. He suggested that these discourses not only serve to critique the central government but also to forge a collective identity among supporters, strengthening their resolve for self-determination and challenging the political status quo.

Social media has had an unprecedented influence on several sectors, among which the communication, marketing, and public relations sectors are included, among others. It has equally changed how common people, including those traditionally discriminated against and marginalised, now voice out against oppression. The traditional way of opposing repression has strategically transformed since social media has become one of the most powerful tools of resistance. Trending topics now receive global attention due to the sporadic nature of social media. It is for this reason that discourse of resistance has become a popular phenomenon on social media. For Fadugba (2023), digital activism is now utilised as a tool for political resistance in Nigeria, focusing on grassroots movements. He argues that the Internet, particularly social media, has become a powerful platform to express dissent and challenge dominant political structures. Through networked digital activism, ordinary Nigerians now amplify their voices, and draw attention to issues such as corruption, inequality, and government repression. Fadugba emphasises that this form of resistance empowers citizens, fosters solidarity, and enables rapid mobilisation, while also revealing the potential for digital activism to challenge political authority and disrupt the status quo.

Political resistance to oppression in Nigeria, particularly on social media platforms, has manifested in various forms. As demonstrated by Aminu (2024) and Chiluwá (2012), secessionism represents one such form of resistance. Awopetu and Chiluwá (2023) presented a different form in their multimodal critical discourse analysis of resistance in visual narratives focusing on the

images of the #EndSARS Protests in Nigeria. The study uses multimodal critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine how images from the protests communicate resistance, amplify the demands of protesters, and challenge the Nigerian government's actions. The authors argue that these visual narratives, including photographs, posters, and social media images, played a crucial role in shaping the discourse around police brutality and state repression. By analysing the visual language, symbols, and emotional appeal of these images, they showed how protesters used them to mobilise support, draw international attention, and frame their struggle as one for justice and human rights. Awopetu and Chilwa conclude that visual narratives were essential in expressing dissent and enhancing the impact of the #EndSARS movement.

Another instance of digital resistance in Nigeria is the frequent admonition on social media for young Nigerians to flee the country in what is now popularly known as the *japa* syndrome. Oparinde and Makombe (2024) discuss how the term *japa*, referring to the mass emigration of Nigerians in search of better opportunities abroad, is constructed on social media. They argue that the rhetoric surrounding *japa* reflects deep anxieties about economic instability, political failure, and the erosion of hope within Nigeria. The social media discourse around *japa* portrays it as both a form of resistance to the country's perceived dysfunction and an act of self-preservation. Oparinde and Makombe analyse how this migration discourse creates a complex identity, positioning Nigerians who leave as both victims of a failing system and agents seeking personal success.

Having explored resistance in various contexts, the present study aims to examine resistance within the framework of electioneering, utilising data from social media, particularly X (formerly known as Twitter). Agaptus Nwozor et al. (2022: 109) characterise politics in Nigeria as “a power game akin to war,” emphasising the immense value placed on political power and its associated benefits. This perspective highlights the intense competition and high stakes involved in Nigerian politics. Given this context, political discourses in Nigeria are inherently diverse, taking various forms as individuals and groups navigate the complexities of politics in the country.

### **Conceptual and Methodological Approaches**

To achieve an in-depth analysis of instances of discourse of resistance in Nigeria politics, this study adopts Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to deconstruct the raw data for the purpose of this study. There are as many approaches to CDA as there are scholars. However, to satisfy the objectives of this study,

Norman Fairclough's approach is considered more suitable and preferred. In his book, *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language* (2013), Fairclough establishes a strong connection between language and power, thus suggesting that language use in everyday context (discourse) has the power to construct and reconstruct reality. Tracing back to his earlier work on language and power, it can be argued that the predominant objectives of Fairclough's CDA are twofold: (1) correcting a widespread underestimation of the significance of language in the production, maintenance, and change of social relationships of power; and (2) increasing consciousness of language and power and how language contributes to the domination of some people by others (Fairclough 1989: 1-4). Fairclough's approach to CDA relies on the notion that language use influences society and society is, in turn, shaped by language. The foregoing implies that it would be inappropriate to conduct a study on language use without simultaneously considering the societal conditions, inferences, and implications.

Therefore, Fairclough's analytical framework of discourse involves text, discursive practice, and social practice. Texts, which are considered the smallest particles of the framework, deal with the discursive objects of analysis. The discursive practice is concerned with the process of discourse creation, distribution, and the interpretation of produced discourse. The social practice aspect of the framework relates to the social conditions of consumption and interpretations of the produced discourse. Putting this clearly, language on its own does not have power, it is in the societal context that the language is used in, and the function fulfilled by such language that power is fully exercised. Undoubtedly, language has power, and by extension language becomes powerful when used in a specific social context to achieve a specific social function. Hence, what CDA is about is revealing the hidden power in discourses and, in the case of the present study, examining power in the discourse of political engagements on social media. Essentially, Fairclough's CDA recognises that the current world is fraught with unequal power relations, hence the need for the critical study of language as a tool to challenge power in the era of globalisation and Internet (Fairclough 2013).

The present qualitative study deploys a purposive sampling technique to gather relevant data for the purpose of this study. The criterion for selection includes whether the data showed resistance to power in relation to the 2023 presidential elections in Nigeria in the form of social media posts, messages, and memes. Specific keywords were used to gather the data for this research. The keywords included: *Obidient(s)*, *BAT(ists)*, *Atikulat(e/d)*, *renewed hope*, *possible*, *BATified*, and *Emilokan*. They all represent the identity of each of the



three leading candidates as they are popular mantras/slogans used by their supporters. The candidates include Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Atiku Abubakar, and Peter Obi, who are the flagbearers of the All Progressives Party, Peoples Democratic Party, and Labour Party, respectively. Since the data were collected in an election season, the data crawling process revealed a total of 1,790,469 results combined. The inclusion criteria for the data included in this study are: (1) the data were posted on X (formerly Twitter) from March 2022 to September 2023; (2) the data showed evidence of resistance; (3) the data spoke particularly to the 2023 Nigerian Presidential elections. To refine the initial dataset, the researcher applied a filtering process based on relevance, engagement metrics (likes, shares, and comments), and thematic alignment with resistance discourse. Only posts that meet at least two of these criteria in relation to the 2023 elections were found suitable for this study. It is worth noting that although the data were already in the public space, the originators of the content of the posts were deliberately left out of this research.

In line with Fairclough's (2013) three-step framework for Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the researcher conducted a thorough examination of raw data by considering its relevance to the study's objectives. The analysis focused on the discourse of resistance in Nigerian politics as articulated on social media, beginning with an examination of the texts alongside the broader discursive and social practices. Fairclough's approach emphasises the necessity of not isolating discourse from the context in which it is embedded but instead establishing a connection between discourse and the socio-political practices that shape it and are shaped by it. This methodological orientation underpinned the analysis, particularly in the context of understanding how ordinary Nigerians resist power using social media as a tool. This involved examining not only the content of the discourse but also the situational contexts that prompted such forms of resistance. The study aimed to capture how these discourses intersected with broader social practices, which is in line with Fairclough's notion that discourse cannot be treated in an isolated manner without considering the social structures and power dynamics surrounding such discourse.

The analytical process followed the thematic approach outlined by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2016), which provided a structured and systematic framework for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within the data. The process began with the researcher immersing himself in the data by repeated reading of the data thus ensuring a versed understanding of the content. Then the initial codes were generated where relevant data were highlighted and organised into meaningful categories. Then the researcher began the process of theme development guided mainly by the objectives

of this study. The analysis resulted in a series of themes and relevant data demonstrated at least one or more signs of demonstration. The researcher maintained a reflexive stance throughout the analysis in accordance with Braun and Clarke's (2016) advice to consistently revisit the data and their interpretations in order to ensure the validity and rigor of the study.

### **Discourse of Resistance in Nigerian Politics: Discussing Themes**

To breakdown the discourse of resistance emerging from social media in connection with Nigerian politics, a thematic analysis of the discourse of resistance collected from social media regarding Nigerian politics was undertaken. Critical Discourse Analysis, for its prowess in deconstructing the relations between discursive strategies and social context, was used to uncover instances of resistance in the gathered data. The four themes that emerged from the critical analysis of the raw data include: (i) emotive use of language; (ii) strategic maneuvering; (iii) rejection of "(ab)normal"; and (iv) propaganda and manipulation.

#### ***Emotive Appeals and Affective Language***

Aristotle's examination of rhetoric, and by extension, language, suggests that emotion plays a crucial role in the act of persuasion. Thus, in a political context, the use of emotive language is perhaps considered appropriate, going by Franziska Marquart et al.'s (2022) view that emotions do not only play an important role in everyday politics, but individuals also react emotionally to political messages, and, depending on the respective emotions activated by political stimuli, peoples' attitudes and behaviour toward political entities vary. A non-contestable fact acknowledged by scholars of political discourse is that the language of politics is fraught with emotional rhetoric in order to appeal to the in-depth feelings of the voters. However, several scholars, such as Marquart et al. (2022) and Kunle Oparinde et al. (2021), among others, have mostly described such emotive use of rhetoric from the perspective of politicians and their political parties. Therefore, in the present study the notion of emotive language is extended to include how the voters utilise emotive language to resist power in Nigeria as revealed by data drawn from X.

Table 1 below presents examples of emotional appeals and affective language categorised broadly into Positive Emotive Language (PEL) and Negative Emotive Language (NEL), selected based on their affective tone and function

within resistance discourse. The categorisation draws on Sajira Khatoun and Varisha Rehman's (2021) distinction between positive emotions (eliciting hope, encouragement, or solidarity), and negative emotions (expressing anger, hostility, or frustration). Posts were included if they contained affective political expressions relating to the elections. The instances of presented below were selected from a broader set of frequently circulated X posts during the 2023 campaign period.

Positive Emotive Language (PEL)	Negative Emotive Language (NEL)
<p><i>To all the Obidients out there working without anyone noticing; may you never labour in vain. God will reward our efforts with good governance (PEL1)</i></p> <p><i>Obidients are challenging the establishment, and this is highly commendable. Let us keep pushing (PEL2)</i></p> <p><i>Obi's supporters offline might be the game changer. Kudos to the hardwork support groups did offline. You are the heroes (PEL 3)</i></p> <p><i>All I see is a young population willing to take back their country and change the status quo. But we have to avoid being overzealous so we can achieve the goal (PEL4)</i></p> <p><i>The Obidients movement is a workaholic one. We cannot relent. We are working hard building bridges and pressing the neck of oppositions. Let us do more! (PEL5)</i></p>	<p><i>Any old man or woman who is supporting Atiku and Tinubu is an enemy of the youth (NEL1)</i></p> <p><i>Anybody voting for Tinubu is against my future and my enemy (NEL2)</i></p> <p><i>Anyone voting for Tinubu is an enemy of Nigeria (NEL3)</i></p> <p><i>Nigerians are goats, despite all the gaffes by Tinubu, they still want to vote him. Is Nigeria a joke to you?? (NEL4)</i></p> <p><i>If you will be voting Tinubu or Atiku in the next election, you are an irredeemable idiot and a threat to my life (NEL5)</i></p>

Table 1. Categorisation of emotional language in Nigerian political resistance discourse (selected posts from X, 2022–2023).

The instances above represent a few examples of the social media activism that took place in Nigeria in the lead-up to the 2023 presidential elections. A significant movement within this activism was initiated by the “*Obidients*,” a group of supporters advocating for Peter Obi of the Labour Party (LP). This movement, which gained considerable traction, saw many youths express strong enthusiasm in their efforts to resist the established political order. Notably, many young Nigerians viewed Peter Obi as a political saviour, one who could rescue the country from the political turmoil attributed to the APC and PDP (Ikechukwu-Ibe and Aboh 2024). However, the widespread perception of Obi as a liberating figure led to some, at times, overly zealous expressions on social media, which resulted in the PEL and NEL classifications above. The NEL instances illustrate negative emotional expressions, whereas the PEL instances demonstrate positive emotional displays. A key factor influencing many Nigerians’ support for Peter Obi was the desire to avoid electing visibly older candidates. Of the three leading candidates, Atiku Abubakar at the time was 76 years old; Bola Tinubu was 70 years old; and Peter Obi was 61 years of age (Kohnert 2023).

NEL1 explicitly characterised supporters of the other two presidential candidates as enemies of the youth, which can be interpreted as an attempt to foster division between Peter Obi’s supporters and those backing alternative candidates. This aligns with the findings of Chioma Ikechukwu-Ibe and Sopuruchi Aboh (2024), who observed that criticisms and resistance directed at APC and PDP politicians also extended to their supporters, particularly those who had overlooked the parties’ failings in campaigning for their re-election. In a democratic society like Nigeria, however, individuals retain the fundamental right to vote for any candidate of their choice without being stigmatised as enemies of the people. This perspective is similarly relevant for NEL2 and NEL3. Furthermore, in the context of resisting the candidacy of Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC), NEL4 resorted to dehumanising his supporters by depicting them in animalistic terms. This “name and shame” strategy, as Mark Nartey and Yating Yu (2023: 4) argue, serves the purpose of publicly identifying individuals, groups, or organisations guilty of criminal or anti-social behaviour, thereby exposing them to public disgrace. This form of derogatory discourse highlights the perception that the choice of candidate by these individuals was considered, by others, as both unacceptable and misguided.

Similar to NEL4, NEL5 resorted to the use of insults in an attempt to discourage Nigerians from supporting either of the other two presidential

candidates. This mirrors the findings of Praisegod Aminu (2024), who notes that aggressive rhetoric and provocative statements have become common discursive techniques in political resistance. Aminu suggests that this represents a shift in how political resistance is organised and executed in Nigeria. Social media, in this context, serves as a platform for expressing dissent and challenging the political establishment, free from the constraints of traditional media. The instances identified within the NEL category highlight significant expressions of overzealousness and negative emotions by Nigerians as they sought to resist the prevailing political situation in the country. The anger displayed by some Nigerians can be partially attributed to the governance of the APC prior to the elections, which many perceived as having been woeful in its performance. Consequently, the potential replacement of an APC president with another individual from the same party incited widespread anger, further amplified by the fact that the PDP had previously governed the country for 16 years. Together, the APC and PDP would have governed Nigeria for a combined total of 24 years. As a result, ordinary Nigerians took to social media to portray both the APC and PDP as obstacles to progress, emphasising their failures during their respective 16-year and 8-year terms in office, and presenting arguments as to why neither party should be re-elected (Ikechukwu-Ibe and Aboh 2024).

Given that Peter Obi was often perceived as the underdog among the three leading candidates, many of his supporters resorted to negative emotive language in their discourse of resistance. However, the data also revealed several instances of Positive Emotional Language (PEL), where many Nigerians maintained a positive emotional tone despite their resistance to power. As illustrated in PEL1, PEL2, PEL3, PEL4, and PEL5, there was a clear emotional investment in the commitment of the *Obidients* as they sought to challenge the dominant power structures in the country. Numerous posts on X (formerly Twitter), as seen in the PEL examples, were dedicated to appealing to the emotions of Nigerians, urging them not to relent but to intensify their determination as the nation attempted to wrest power from the APC. In PEL4, a social media user commended the resistance of Nigerian youth, recognising their efforts as praiseworthy, but also cautioned against the overzealousness observed in the NEL instances. According to Ikechukwu-Ibe and Aboh (2024), the juxtaposition of positive associations (prosperity) and negative associations (failure) in the X posts creates a compelling narrative that draws a distinct contrast between Peter Obi and his opponents, while reinforcing the perceived salvific nature of Obi's anticipated leadership. PEL5 frames the *Obidient* movement as

a formidable challenge, especially in light of the established dominance of the two other major political parties, encouraging Nigerians to persist in resisting the status quo. PEL1, PEL2, and PEL3 serve as evidence of Nigerians expressing emotions towards fellow Nigerians who are perceived to be challenging the hegemonic political structures in the country.

This “emotive appeals and affective language” theme aligns with Fairclough’s (2013) CDA theoretical dimensions. At the textual level, it examines the linguistic expressions, while at the discursive level, it considers how users interpret and circulate emotionally framed messages for the purpose of solidarity and mobilisation. The social practice level underscores the broader societal perspectives of the Nigerian citizens.

### ***Strategic Discursive Maneuvering***

Some of the discourse of resistance strategies employed by Nigerians can be interpreted as instances of strategic manoeuvring, which primarily involves the use of rhetorical tactics and strategies to influence discourse in a manner that furthers one’s objectives. Strategic manoeuvring is understood as a communicative process in which messages are conveyed through stages, tactics, and pragmatic strategies (Al-Hindawi and Rahi 2022). Given that the individuals visibly resisting the status quo on social media were predominantly from opposition parties, the task of gaining popularity was one that the *Obidients* embarked upon at an early stage as a means of counteracting the established candidates’ dominance. Strategic manoeuvring manifested in various forms of political resistance, predominantly through persuasion, caution, and exploitation. Instances of *Obidients* encouraging other Nigerians to cross-post across different social media platforms include:

- i. Obidients stop waiting for mainstream politicians to endorse Obi, the people have endorsed Obi and that is all that matters, shout on all social media.
- ii. Guys, let’s show them what four people tweeting in a room can do. Continue to post your support for Obi.
- iii. Intensifying publicity for Obi is all that should matter now, spread the message across social media.
- iv. Always include #Obidients in your tweets so others can also retweet to make the message go viral.
- v. Retweet aggressively.

With Peter Obi running as the candidate of the Labour Party (LP), a party that held less than a quarter of the popularity of the other two major contenders (APC and PDP), the initial challenge was how to increase the party's visibility across Nigeria with only eight months remaining until the election. The solution was found in leveraging social media. Given that the *Obidient* movement aimed to primarily engage Nigerian youths, the prevalent belief that many youths were active on social media reinforced this approach. This was exacerbated by dismissive social media posts from opposing parties, which underestimated the Labour Party's potential to achieve significant traction in such a short period. Early in the *Obidient* movement's rise, certain remarks from rival parties became highly popular on social media, reflecting their underestimation of the movement's capabilities. These remarks include: "4 people tweeting in a room, Labour Party has no structure, Peter Obi cannot even get up to 100,000 votes, a party of only on region."

Remarks such as the ones mentioned above quickly gained traction on social media, suggesting that the number of individuals supporting the Labour Party and the *Obidient* movement was smaller than initially assumed, with many of these posts likely originating from the same geographic location. There was a prevailing belief that it was highly unlikely for anyone to amass such online support in such a short time frame. Additional comments insinuated that the Labour Party lacked the human and physical infrastructure necessary to challenge the APC and PDP, particularly considering Nigeria's size and the limited popularity of both the party and its candidate, Peter Obi, across the country. These concerns implied that the *Obidient* movement would need to intensify its efforts to spread its message nationwide within the span of less than a year, with social media emerging as their most significant tool. This point is also acknowledged by Aminu (2024), who argues that the rise of online resistance movements highlights the limitations of traditional state responses to dissent, as social media platforms enable the rapid dissemination of information and the mobilisation of large numbers of people. In the first example mentioned above, when many *Obidients* were uncertain about their next steps and eagerly awaiting influential politicians to publicly endorse Obi to enhance his popularity, a supporter advised caution, urging the *Obidients* to manage their expectations. Rather than relying on political endorsements, the supporter encouraged them to shift their focus to engaging with the general public, advocating for the use of social media as a platform to campaign for Peter Obi. Such advocacy represents an element of strategic maneuvering, which Oparinde et al. (2021) identify as encompassing both warning and persuasion, a characteristic commonly found in political discourse.

The second and third examples above illustrate instances of *Obidients* attempting to encourage their supporters to heavily invest in social media engagement as a strategy for broadly disseminating support for Peter Obi. The views expressed in the posts above were widely shared by many *Obidients* and reshared by numerous others. It soon became evident that reliance on social media was essential. The hashtag #*Obidients* was created and rapidly gained traction across the country. In the fourth example mentioned above, supporters were encouraged to consistently include #*Obidients* in their posts in order to increase their viral potential and encourage reshares. This strategy has become a popular method of campaigning on X, a point also acknowledged by Felicity Morse (2014), who argued that hashtag activism was an effective way to draw attention to a campaign. Recognising the power of hashtags, the *Obidients* strategically leveraged this tool to their advantage. As Fairclough (2013) asserted, discourse practices perform ideological work by shaping the representation of societal or community realities. In this context, the social media posts by *Obidients*, as a form of resistance discourse, highlighted the collective experiences of many Nigerians concerning the country's challenges. Other hashtags that emerged included #*Obidientmovement*, #*LabourParty*, #*PeterObi4President2023*, #*Obidatti2023*, and others. The use of these hashtags played a crucial role in spreading the movement's message. Nisco (2021) further noted that hashtags, with their ability to represent experiences, amplify ideas and opinions, navigate interpersonal relationships and alignments, and can be viewed as a form of social practice. This practice has attracted an increasing number of activists and ordinary individuals seeking to engage in public debate through social media.

A phrase commonly used by many X users in support of Peter Obi was to "retweet aggressively." This expression was frequently employed by *Obidients* to rally other members into solidarity whenever a tweet was posted, with the goal of amplifying its reach. "Retweet aggressively" was typically used in response to new information, alarming revelations, propaganda, or rebuttals from *Obidients*. In this context, retweeting was not merely about sharing content but was framed as a fierce and deliberate action. What became evident through this practice was that *Obidients* had captured a significant portion of social media, bolstered by their growing popularity and the sometimes-unruly behaviour of certain members who exploited this visibility to attack supporters of other political parties. It is, however, not surprising that Nigerian youths are highly motivated in their demand for substantial change through the #*Obidient Movement* on Nigerian social media, as



many view the movement as a catalyst for the comprehensive restructuring of the country's educational, political, and economic systems (Ikechukwu-Ibe and Aboh 2024). The resistance discourse demonstrated on social media was undeniably loud and pervasive, to the point where opposition party members began referring to *Obidients* as “keypad warriors.” This led to new insinuations from supporters of Bola Ahmed Tinubu (BATists) of the APC and Abubakar Atiku (ATIKUlates) of the PDP, claiming that elections are not won on social media. Despite being a seemingly minor political party with a less popular candidate, it became apparent that *Obidients* had made a notable impact on social media. As *Obidients* sought to challenge the status quo, new evidence emerged that the tweets were not the product of a small, localised group, but rather represented a nationwide movement, largely driven by youths who were disillusioned with the country's current state.

The strategic maneuvering theme directly reflects Fairclough's (2013) CDA theoretical dimensions of discursive practice involving the deliberate production and distribution of persuasive content aimed at shaping public perception and rallying support.

### ***Rejection of the “(Ab)normal”***

The complex nature of Nigerian politics has given rise to various practices and behaviours that have gradually become normalised or accepted by the Nigerian populace. One of the key resistance strategies employed in the lead-up to the 2023 general elections was the overt rejection of what had been considered “abnormal” yet unconsciously accepted as the norm by many. By referencing the political candidates' past actions and consistently highlighting various forms of abnormalities, Nigerians aimed to reject the aspects of Nigerian politics that, while having become accepted, were deemed inappropriate.

Even before the elections, it was an undeniable fact for discerning Nigerians that the country required improvements in its leadership. This recognition provided the justification for rejecting politicians from the old order, with the belief that in order for the nation to progress, power must be wrested from those entrenched in the corrupt political system. Among the three leading political parties in the 2023 presidential elections, the candidates from both the APC and PDP were widely regarded as representatives of the old political establishment. Although Peter Obi of the Labour Party had also held a political position, his tenure was more recent, and his political

trajectory was perceived as distinct from that of the other two candidates (Ikechukwu-Ibe and Aboh 2024). This perspective aligns with the argument put forth by Rehan Tariq et al. (2022), who assert that the younger generation is more dissatisfied with democratic performance than the older generation, and that young adults have increasingly turned to social media to fulfil their political needs. Their study identified a connection between political interests and candidates' past experiences, suggesting that in political communication, reference to antecedents is inevitable. Consequently, the widespread awareness of what has been perceived as the norm in Nigerian politics fostered a need to challenge and reject some of these established practices. The following examples are reference made to prior knowledge in a bid to challenge power in Nigeria:

- i. We no dey give shishi
- ii. We cannot have another sick president use our money for treatment abroad.
- iii. Tinubu doesn't look healthy, let's not do this to ourselves again.
- iv. We need a healthy person to oversee the affairs of this country, Tinubu looks very sick.
- v. Bola Tinubu and Atiku are forcing themselves on Nigerians, in terms of age, both of them cannot pilot a digital economy.
- vi. Atiku is just too old to be running for the highest office in Nigeria.

Nigerian youths once again utilised social media to challenge the candidacies of Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Atiku Abubakar, drawing upon their awareness of these politicians' past experiences. A notable example of this was the widespread circulation of the phrase "*we no dey give shishi*" across Nigerian social media platforms, which was a direct response to the prevalent monetisation of Nigerian politics. It is evident that financial incentives have become a key determinant in Nigerian elections, with voters being heavily influenced by money politics (Onah and Nwali 2018; Dauda and Moses 2024).

Consequently, politicians who are unable to financially support voters face significant challenges in gaining traction. Although the phrase "*we no dey give shishi*" is expressed in *Pidgin*, a widely spoken English-based informal language in Nigeria, it can be loosely translated as "*we do not give a dime*." For years, politicians have relied on financial inducements to attract supporters, and vote-buying has become a normalised practice. As a result, the Labour Party's perceived lack of financial resources led to the belief that Peter Obi's candidacy would struggle to survive in the Nigerian political

landscape, where money is often used to secure votes and garner support. In response to this, Nigerian youths sought to resist the prevailing norm of politicians buying their way into office, only to perform poorly once elected. This desire for change, combined with the widespread understanding of Peter Obi's reputation as a prudent and meticulous politician, gave rise to the phrase "*we no dey give shishi.*" Through this slogan, *Obidients* leveraged social media to discourage vote-buying, signalling that this traditional practice would not be tolerated in the current election cycle.

The second, third, and fourth examples cited above mocked Bola Ahmed Tinubu's frailty, highlighting his unsteady posture and incoherent speeches, which reminded many Nigerians of the outgoing President Muhammadu Buhari. According to Ibitayo Oso (2024), a major issue in the campaign against Bola Tinubu was the state of his health as it was hotly debated that he had an ailment that he was battling with that he had not disclosed to Nigerians. Thus, the political resistance posts in Nigeria tended to reflect Peter Obi as young, good looking, and healthy while Tinubu was represented as old, incapable and sickly thus portraying Tinubu as incapable due to age and ill health (Oso 2024). Given Buhari's frequent medical trips abroad during his presidency, particularly to the United Kingdom, many Nigerians expressed concern about repeating this situation. At the time of his election, Buhari was 72 years old, and his health challenges during his two terms in office led to continual foreign medical visits. This sparked fears of a similar scenario under Tinubu, whose contested age (71) and health issues, including frequent medical trips to France, already raised concerns about his ability to govern effectively.

Similarly, Atiku Abubakar, at 76 years of age, was also viewed as too elderly to lead, with many Nigerians advocating for a younger, more energetic president. This desire for a change in leadership was reflected in the growing support for Peter Obi, who, at 61, was seen as a more dynamic and viable alternative to the ageing candidates. A view shared by Chukudi Okwelum (2023) was that the 2023 general elections was one in which the Nigerian youths became keenly interested in seeing that the old brigade was rooted out of power and, in order to do so, they routed their support for the youngest of all the presidential aspirants particularly within the bracket of the four front liners in the race in the person of Peter Obi. The "rejection of the (ab)normal" theme particularly engages Fairclough's (2013) social practice dimension by challenging normalised political dysfunctions in Nigerian society. The explicit rejection of ill health, age, and corruption in candidates reflects a shift in societal expectations and values among Nigerians.

### ***Deployment of Propaganda and Counter-Narratives***

As with political discourse, generally, rhetorical devices of engagement and manipulation are popular discursive strategies during campaigns and electioneering. Tsz Hang Chu and Tien Ee Yeo (2020) rightly posit that social media has been widely credited for facilitating young people's political engagement, most notably by providing a conducive platform for political expression. It is no news that a successful political endeavour requires connecting and engaging with the voting population. Since the *Obidient* movement relied mainly on social media engagement, words of advice, warning, and admonishments among other things were disseminated using social media platforms. In mobilising for more people to support the *Obidient* movement, thereby resisting the status quo, the rhetorical devices discussed under this theme were used both positively and negative by *Obidients* in their engagement with the voting populace. While some engaged other Nigerians respectfully by disseminating accurate and useful information, others made use of social media platforms for the purpose of manipulation by spreading inaccurate, false, and exaggerated information to attract more supporters. The use of manipulation is not new to politics. For Garth Jowett and Victoria O'donnell (2018), manipulation is a type of disinformation defined as the systematic and deliberate process of shaping opinions, influencing thoughts, and directing the behaviour of a person to achieve a desired intention. Instances of this theme include:

- i. There are 26 days to collect your PVC [permanent voter's card] from INEC
- ii. Obidients please make out time to do the needful and get your PVCs as soon as possible.
- iii. Tinubu is a druglord who went to jail in the US, we cant afford to have a criminal president.
- iv. Tinubu forged his certificate and did not attend any university as he claimed.
- v. Atiku has stolen enough money from Nigeria that there is nothing to steal again, he needs to rest and should not be contesting for any position.

In challenging the established candidacies of Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Atiku Abubakar, *Obidients* also utilised social media as a tool to expose what they perceived as the corrupt histories of both individuals, while simultaneously presenting Peter Obi as the superior candidate. As a result, many Nigerian

youths contended that the electorate should avoid choosing leaders with questionable pasts. In their efforts, many of Peter Obi's supporters resorted to character assassination and the dissemination of hate speech, particularly targeting Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Atiku Abubakar, whom they widely regarded as having corrupt backgrounds. Tinubu, for example, was accused of involvement in a drug trade and of falsifying his educational qualifications. Atiku, on the other hand, was alleged to have misappropriated public funds in the past. In contrast, Peter Obi was portrayed as the candidate with greater integrity. According to Ikechukwu-Ibe and Aboh (2024: 340), "the idea of Peter Obi being a saviour is reinforced by contrasting him regularly with the perceived negative qualities of his opponents and those affiliated with the APC and PDP, further solidifying his image as a viable candidate for change." This strategy not only highlighted the perceived flaws of Tinubu and Atiku but also served to bolster Obi's reputation as a candidate capable of bringing about the desired transformation in Nigerian politics.

Some of the perhaps well-intended messages the *Obidients* intended to make known was the lack of differences between the APC and the PDP, which are the two most popular political parties in the country. This is quite evident in the dealings of the two parties as in the past several politicians have decamped and cross-carpeted between the two parties for their own political interests. In fact, the former Chairman of the country's Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Professor Attahiru Jega, had referred to the two parties as "Siamese twins of corruption" (Vanguard 2021). Also, a blunder made by Bola Ahmed Tinubu, who was the presidential candidate of the APC, when he accidentally almost said God bless PDP further confirmed to the *Obidients* that there is no significant difference between the two parties (Oparinde and Makombe 2024). Although Bola Ahmed Tinubu corrected himself instantly, the statement eventually unfolded as God bless PDAPC. Several memes, posts, and tweets surfaced for several months to inform Nigerians that the two parties are not different from each other and that there is no better candidate between their flagbearers. Findings from the study of Oluwayemisi Adebomi (2025) also suggest that many *Obidients* saw the PDP and the APC as partners in progress in terms of political ideology of corruption and misrule.

As part of their efforts to engage the public constructively, *Obidients* used social media to encourage Nigerian youths to obtain a PVC, a permanent voter's card, which would enable them to vote for Peter Obi. Members of the opposition party frequently made remarks such as: "*Elections are not won on social media; many of you won't even vote since you don't have PVCs; elections are not about shouting 'Obidients' on social media.*" In response,

*Obidients* launched a countdown to the PVC collection deadline, urging potential voters with statements such as: “*There are 26 days left to collect your PVC from INEC; Obidients, please make time to do the needful and get your PVCs as soon as possible.*” These statements served as reminders and calls for action for Nigerian youths to acquire their PVCs, emphasising that this was the only legitimate means of voting.

In addition to mobilising voters for PVC registration and collection, it is significant to note that during the 2023 presidential election campaign, X became a platform for recruiting volunteers who would eventually penetrate grassroots or rural areas to further mobilise voters (Ikefuama 2023). The social media activity, while essential for engagement, would have been futile without the acquisition of PVCs. Although social media was used productively to engage with the population, resist the status quo, and advocate for a change in leadership, it also gave rise to overzealous reactions. Some individuals exploited the momentum to spread unruly messages and manipulate the discourse. Unverified information, and in certain cases, deliberate disinformation, became part of the resistance narrative. Allegations surfaced about Bola Ahmed Tinubu’s past criminal activities, just as stories emerged regarding Atiku Abubakar’s alleged theft of government funds. These unsubstantiated claims contributed to the charged atmosphere surrounding the election, demonstrating how social media was used not only for mobilisation but also for the spread of divisive and sometimes misleading narratives. Idayat Hassan (2023) also found that social media has emerged as a significant source of fake news, with disinformation being strategically employed as a tool to manipulate public opinion and delegitimise opposing voices.

These and numerous other accusations gained traction on social media, portraying both candidates as highly corrupt and, consequently, unfit to serve as presidential candidates for Nigeria. While neither of the two candidates has been convicted of any crimes, the widespread perception of their alleged corruption was strategically used to influence public opinion and steer the populace towards considering an alternative in Peter Obi. The “deployment of propaganda and counter-narratives” theme illustrates how textual elements such as repetition, exaggeration, and metaphor were used to frame political opponents and reassert preferred narratives, which aligns with Fairclough’s (2013) textual dimensions of CDA. At the social level, the use of both propaganda and counter-narratives signals a broader societal struggle, with digital activism acting as a space for contesting hegemonic representations of leadership and governance.

## Conclusion

The present study has established that the concept of resistance has evolved significantly, particularly in terms of its form and nature, diverging from its traditional perceptions of direct action or physical social movements. The rise of social media has contributed to this transformation by facilitating novel communicative techniques, allowing resistance to oppression to manifest in more subtle, discursive ways. Drawing from data collected during the 2023 Nigerian presidential elections, the study illustrates how ordinary Nigerians utilised social media as a platform to challenge the prevailing political status quo. In this context, resistance was framed not as physical opposition but as a discourse rooted in verbal chastisement, reproach, and warnings, with social media serving as a tool for public expression. From a Faircloughian perspective on power in discourse, this shift reflects the reconfiguration of power relations in the digital age. Social media platforms provide a space for individuals to exercise counter-power, subverting traditional hierarchical structures of authority through the exploitation of discourse.

Nigerians employed a range of discursive strategies to enact resistance, including the deliberate use of emotive language, rhetorical maneuvering, rejection of the “(ab)normal”, and engagement with propaganda. The strategic deployment of emotive language, ranging from affirming to deeply pejorative, served to unsettle dominant narratives of political legitimacy by amplifying public affect and fostering dissent. Similarly, the production and circulation of digital propaganda functioned dually: as a warning against certain political choices and as a tool for delegitimising opposing candidates. This dual function highlights how propaganda, in the digital era, becomes both a defensive and offensive discursive weapon. Taken together these strategies reveal a complex discourse of resistance in which power is challenged not through direct physical confrontation, but through the calculated manipulation of language and media. This study’s reliance on purposively selected social media posts limits its ability to capture the full range of resistance discourses or reflect offline motivations. By focusing on digital activism, it also overlooks traditional resistance and the interplay between online and offline efforts. Future research should incorporate broader data sources, such as interviews and surveys, in order to better understand how these forms of resistance intersect within Nigeria’s socio-political context.

## References

- Adebomi, Oluwayemisi Olusola. 2025. "What We Ordered: A Multimodal Framing Analysis of the Memetic Representation of the Obidient Movement in Nigeria." *Language and Semiotic Studies* 11(1): 1–27.
- Al-Hindawi, Fareed Hameed and Rahi, Hawraa Jabbar. 2022. "Trump's Strategic Maneuvering in Coronavirus Press Conferences." *Linguistics and Culture Review* 6(S5): 306–320.
- Aminu, Praisegod. 2024. "Digital Resistance: Discursive Construction of Polarization and Otherness in Oduduwa Secessionists' Social Media Discourse." *Discourse and Society* 35(1): 27–47.
- Aminu, Praisegod, Awopetu, Ifeoluwa and Unuabonah, Foluke Olayinka. 2024. "Let's Talk Divorce: A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis of Oduduwa Secessionist Discourse." *Multimodal Communication* 13(3): 263–280.
- Awopetu, Ifeoluwa and Chilwa, Innocent. 2023. "Resistance in Visual Narratives: A Multimodal CDA of Images of the #Endsars Protests in Nigeria." *Visual Communication Quarterly* 30(3): 155–167.
- Babalola, Dele. 2024. "Party Politics, Dearth of Political Ideology, and the 2023 Presidential Election in Nigeria." *The Round Table* 113(5): 434–450.
- Braun, Virginia and Clarke, Victoria. 2016. "(Mis)conceptualising Themes, Thematic Analysis, and Other Problems with Fugard and Potts' (2015) Sample-Size Tool for Thematic Analysis." *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 19(6): 739–743.
- Chilwa, Innocent. 2012. "Social Media Networks and the Discourse of Resistance: A Sociolinguistic CDA of Biafra Online Discourses." *Discourse and Society* 23(3): 217–244.
- Chu, Tsz Hang and Yeo, Tien Ee Dominic. 2020. "Rethinking Mediated Political Engagement: Social Media Ambivalence and Disconnective Practices of Politically Active Youths in Hong Kong." *Chinese Journal of Communication* 13(2): 148–164.
- Dauda, Sharafa and Moses, Jude Melea. 2024. "Unholy Alliance: Media, Democratic Accountability, and Monetisation of Elections in Nigeria." *MCC* 8(1): 1–24.
- Fadugba, Adewale. 2023. *Resistance from Below: Networked Digital Activism in Nigeria*. PhD Thesis, The State University of New York.



- Fairclough, Norman. 1989. *Language and Power*. New York: Longman. Reprinted 2013.
- Fairclough, Norman. 2013. *Critical Discourse Analysis: The Critical Study of Language*. London: Routledge.
- Hassan, Idayat. 2023. "Dissemination of Disinformation on Political and Electoral Processes in Nigeria: An Exploratory Study." *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 10(1): 2216983.
- Hollander, Jocelyn and Einwohner, Rachel 2004. "Conceptualizing Resistance." *Sociological Forum* 19: 533–554.
- Ikechukwu-Ibe, Chioma Juliet and Aboh, Soporuchi Christian. 2024. "The Youths Are Wiser Now: A Positive Discourse Analysis of Resistance in Nigeria's 2023 Electoral Rhetoric." *Journal of Language and Politics* 24(2): 328–347.
- Ikefuama, Akachukwu Elijah. 2023. *Social Media and Political Participation in Nigeria: Examining the Use of Twitter in Election Campaigning*. Master's Thesis, University of Siegen.
- Jowett, Garth and O'Donnell, Victoria. 2018. *Propaganda and Persuasion*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Khatoun, Sajira and Rehman, Varisha. 2021. "Negative Emotions in Consumer Brand Relationships: A Review and Future Research Agenda." *International Journal of Consumer Studies* 45(4): 719–749.
- Kohnert, Dirk. 2023. *The Aftermath of Nigeria's 2023 Presidential Elections and Its Impact on the Sub-Region*. Hamburg: Social Science Open Access Repository.
- Macgilchrist, Felicitas. 2007. "Positive Discourse Analysis: Contesting Dominant Discourses by Reframing the Issues." *Critical Approaches to Discourse Analysis Across Disciplines* 1(1): 74–94.
- Makombe, Rodwell and Agbede, Grace Temiloluwa. 2016. "Challenging Power through Social Media: A Review of Selected Memes of Robert Mugabe's Fall." *Communicare: Journal of Communication Sciences in Southern Africa* 35(2): 39–54.
- Marquart, Franziska, Brosius, Anna and De Vreese, Claes. 2022. "United Feelings: The Mediating Role of Emotions in Social Media Campaigns for EU Attitudes and Behavioral Intentions." *Journal of Political Marketing* 21(1): 85–111.

- Mbembe, Achille. 1992. "Provisional Notes on the Postcolony." *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 62(1): 3–37.
- Morse, Felicity. 2014. "The Bring Back Our Girls Campaign is Working: Boko Haram should be Scared of a Hashtag." *The Independent*. <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/the-bring-back-our-girls-campaign-is-working-boko-haram-should-be-scared-of-a-hashtag-9360830.html> (Accessed 22 December 2023).
- Nartey, Mark and Yu, Yating. 2023. "A Discourse Analytic Study of #Fixthecountry on Ghanaian Twitter." *Social Media + Society* 9(1): 1–11.
- Nisco, Maria Cristina. 2021. "Practices of Resistance in Social Media Discourse." *Anglistica AION: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 25(1): 73–85.
- Nwogbo, David and Ighodalo, Akhakpe. 2021. "Governance and Corruption in Nigeria." *Journal of Good Governance and Sustainable Development in Africa* 6(2): 81–97.
- Nwozor, Agaptus, Ajakaiye, Olanrewaju, Okidu, Onjefu, Olanrewaju, Alex and Afolabi, Oladiran. 2022. "Social Media in Politics: Interrogating Electorate-Driven Hate Speech in Nigeria's 2019 Presidential Campaigns." *Jedem-Ejournal of Edemocracy and Open Government* 14(1): 104–129.
- Okwelum, Chukudi. 2023. "President Tinubu Inauguration in Nigeria: To Be or Not to Be?" *European Journal of Theoretical and Applied Sciences* 1(3): 285–298.
- Onah, Emmanuel Ikechi and Nwali, Uche. 2018. "Monetisation of Electoral Politics and the Challenge of Political Exclusion in Nigeria." *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 56(3): 318–339.
- Oparinde, Kunle Musbaudeen and Matteau-Matsha, Rachel. 2021. "Powerful Discourse: Gender-Based Violence and Counter-Discourses in South Africa." *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 8(1): 1–15.
- Oparinde, Kunle Musbaudeen and Makombe, Rodwell. 2024. *Social Constructions of Migration in Nigeria and Zimbabwe: Discourse, Rhetoric, and Identity*. Leeds: Emerald Publishing Limited.
- Oparinde, Kunle, Rapeane-Mathonsi, Maleshoane and Mheta, Gift. 2021. "Exploring Manipulative Rhetorical Choices in Nigerian Political Discourse." *Cogent Arts & Humanities* 8(1): 1–13.

- Oso, Ibitayo Olamide. 2024. "Impoliteness Strategies in Political Tweets of the Nigerian Electorate in the 2023 Presidential Election." *Arusha Working Papers in African Linguistics* 6(1): 97–119.
- Tariq, Rehan, Zolkepli, Izzal Asnira and Ahmad, Mahyuddin. 2022. "Political Participation of Young Voters: Tracing Direct and Indirect Effects of Social Media and Political Orientations." *Social Sciences* 11(2): 1-21.
- Tieku, Thomas Kwasi. 2019. The African Union: Successes and Failures. In William Thompson William (ed). *Oxford Research Encyclopedias: Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1–25.
- Vanguard. 2021. "APC, PDP've Ruined Nigeria, Don't Vote them Again — JEGA." *Vanguard Newspaper*. <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/08/apc-pdpve-ruined-nigeria-dont-vote-them-again-jega/> (Accessed 14 December 2024).