DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AND REVOLUTION IN AFRICA: COMPLEXITIES, AMBIVALENCES, AND CONTEXTUAL REALITIES

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Introductory statement

The rise of digital technologies has brought about significant changes in revolutionary projects across Africa. The impact of these technologies on social movements and activism is complex and multi-faceted. This panel examines the role of technology in shaping African revolutionary projects, such as the use of social media platforms for mobilisation and coordination, and the challenges around issues like manipulation and exploitation. It also delves into the diverse goals and aspirations that drive these movements, from seeking social justice to reorganising social orders. By discussing these topics, the panel aims to provide attendees with a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between technology and revolution in Africa and the different discourses that shape these movements.

The first paper focuses on Kenya and examines the role of digital technologies, specifically social media, in promoting socio-political change and revolution. The

author notes that Kenya has been regarded as one of the technological hubs in Africa, and the increased use of internet technologies has become part of the everyday life of most citizens, especially in urban areas. Social media has become essential for political participation in Kenya, particularly among marginalised communities such as the youth and women. The author highlights the dynamics of protests and socio-political issues that shape socio-political movements, emphasising the use of social media in politically led and grassroots-led protests.

On the other hand, the second paper looks at Nigeria and explores the forms of civic engagement and citizenship performance on Twitter spaces leading up to the country's 2023 national elections. The author uses the lens of digital citizenship to situate citizens as politically engaged subjects who gather and share information and make rights claims online, potentially altering the balance of power. The author acknowledges the need for contextual understanding when studying a country like Nigeria imbued with culture and diversity. The author also highlights how new media technologies facilitate African digital citizenship and the tacit and observable ways citizens experience their social and cultural context in digital environments that may be uniquely African.

The third paper examines the presence of influencers and grievances among the "soro soke" generation during Nigeria's 2023 election cycle. The study aims to show the significance of influencers in the core networks of "soro soke" election tweeters and how their grievances are expressed through personalized statements of hopes, frustrations, and lifestyles that lead to collective action. Additionally, the author explores the response of leading presidential candidates to the #EndSARS movement, highlighting how the movement connected the "soro soke" generation with like-minded politicians and how resources were mobilized to support them.

The fourth paper critiques the discourse of social media platforms driving political revolutions in Southern Africa. It rejects the technological determinism and solutionism approaches and favours theoretical toolkits such as social shaping of technologies, structuration theory and technological dramas. The paper explores digital technologies' complex roles in political struggles, acknowledging their potential for democratization, citizen participation and political voice, as well as negative impacts like digital surveillance, authoritarianism, disinformation campaigns, cyberbullying, and dark participation. It highlights the disruptive tendencies of hashtag movements in Southern Africa, examining the positive and negative outcomes of digital technologies. This study contributes to understanding the relationship between digital technologies and political struggles in Southern Africa and challenges revolutionary technologies, actors, movements, and goals' rhetoric on social media.

This paper examines how African youth and first-generation young African diasporas in the USA, UK, and France use social media to contest and reframe global media narratives about Africa and its people. It analyzes subversive online narratives that challenge settler colonialism legacies and global north media control. Social media provides a new frontier for disrupting media hegemonies and challenging stereotypes. The study concludes that social media facilitates protests and increases opportunities for youth engagement in collective action. African youth and diasporic communities use social media to challenge negative stereotypes and reframe global media narratives about Africa, redefining identities in the process.

All 5 papers are related in that they all focus on the role of digital technologies in shaping political and social change. They explore how digital technologies are leveraged to challenge dominant narratives, amplify alternative voices, and mobilize collective action. The abstracts also share a critical perspective that seeks to move beyond deterministic and solutionist approaches to analyzing the relationship between society and technologies and instead highlight the complex and multifaceted ways in which digital technologies can enable or constrain political struggles. In addition, the abstracts focus on different geographic contexts, including Nigeria, Kenya, Southern Africa, and the diaspora in the USA, UK, and France, indicating the global reach of digital technologies in shaping political and social change. Overall, the abstracts highlight the potential of digital technologies as a tool for challenging dominant narratives and mobilizing collective action while also acknowledging the ambivalent and contested nature of their impact.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND PROTESTS IN KENYA: A DIGITAL REVOLUTION FOR DEMOCRACY

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Introduction and Background:

The rise of digital technologies has had a significant impact on politics and activism across the globe. In Africa, digital technologies have been instrumental in promoting political participation and revolution, particularly in countries where authoritarian regimes have restricted traditional political engagement (Mare, 2014). This paper aims to explore the role of digital technologies in promoting socio-political change and revolution in Africa, with a specific focus on Kenya. I will examine the dynamics of protests and the socio-political issues that shape socio-political movements, emphasising the use of social media in both politically led and grassroots-led protests. Key questions for this paper will be: (a) How do protest dynamics manifest and evolve within political movements? (b) What are the socio-political variables that influence digital activism in Kenya? (c) In what ways do protest dynamics and socio-political factors impact political transformation within political movements?

Kenya has been regarded as one of the technological hubs in Africa, and the increased use of internet technologies has become part of the everyday life of most citizens, especially in urban areas. The use of social media has become an essential tool for political participation in Kenya, particularly among marginalised communities such as the youth and women. The Arab Spring in 2011, which saw the use of social media in mobilising and organising protests against authoritarian regimes in North Africa and the Middle East (Hussain & Howard, 2013), has inspired many activists in Kenya to use social media for similar purposes. However, there is a lack of empirical research on the impact of social media on political participation and activism in Kenya.

Literature

The emergence of online social networks in the 1990s, particularly the internet's global reach, has been a significant area of study for scholars like Manuel Castells. Castells (2008) believed that networks are a crucial feature of social morphology and

have transformed social organization globally. He also studied the shift of power resulting from increased mediatisation, arguing that power rested in networks created by people. Similarly, Keck & Sikkink (1998) have offered an understanding of how networks operate in political science and international relations, referring to them as transnational networks that are brought together by principled ideas or values. They argue that for networks to be effective, information exchange between them is necessary. Castells (2008) and Keck & Sikkink (1998) acknowledge the importance of information in creating and strategically using it for socio-political change. The 2013 massive protest in Brazil's capital, Sao Paulo, due to the hike in bus fares is an example of the power of networks (Purdy, 2019).

Despite increased global social network research, research on online political participation and social movements in sub-Saharan Africa remains limited. Scholars such as Bosch (2017) and Mutsvairo (2016) have recognized that socio-political, cultural, and economic issues affect digital media experiences in the region. Mukhongo's work examines how young people in sub-Saharan Africa use digital media for political activism, including the challenges posed by these technologies (2015). She highlights socio-political issues as significant factors in how young people engage politically online. Despite growing interest in digital media for political participation in the region, there is a lack of empirical studies on how social media is used in political and grassroots protests. This research aims to contribute to filling this gap in the literature.

Theory

This study draws on network and resource mobilisation theories to examine the emergence of social movements such as #OccupyPlayground, #OccupyParliament and #IEBCMustGo. The network society concept, developed by Jan Van Dijik (1991) and Castells (2008), argues that digital information has become the primary driver of economic, cultural, and social change. This theory highlights the changes in the global economy and the expansion of networking logic in social structures, leading to social change. Resource mobilization theory, developed by McCarthy and Zald (1977), emphasizes the importance of organizational structures and resource accrual in mobilizing collective action. By examining the online and offline spaces where these movements emerged, this study demonstrates how the networks formed in these spaces provided fertile ground for political action.

Research Design:

This study employs a qualitative research design, and multiple case study research approaches to explore the role of social media in promoting socio-political change and revolution in Kenya. Three socio-political movements in Kenya between 2013 and 2016 were selected to study the phenomenon. These included two grassroots movements - #OccupyParliament and #OccupyPlayground - and one politically led movement, #IEBCMustGo. The use of these sources of data made it possible to understand the dynamics of protests in digital activism in grassroots-led and politically-led protests.

Findings:

This research suggests that using the media for activism in the pre-independence and various political environments and leadership have continuously shaped post-

independence eras – from a more restricted media environment in the colonial period to free media in the current post-independence age. The findings indicated that grassroots and politically led protests use various media differently for activism, primarily due to the existing socio-political factors. For example, politically led protests rely more on mainstream media outlets such as television and radio, while grassroots-led protests utilise social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. However, it is important to note that both types of protests use a combination of online and offline activities to achieve their objectives.

Moreover, the findings of this research showed that offline activities during protests, such as street protests, meetings, and court processes, complemented by online protests, are all critical in realising socio-political change. The importance of offline activities was evident in the case of the #IEBCMustGo protests, where the coalition of opposition parties relied heavily on offline activities such as street protests, meetings, and court processes to achieve their objective of forcing the electoral commission to reform.

Another interesting finding from this research was that the use of social media in protests in Kenya was not limited to urban areas. The study found that social media was used to coordinate and mobilise protests even in rural areas, where internet access is limited. The use of basic mobile phones with internet capabilities was found to be the primary means of accessing social media platforms in these areas. This research highlights the importance of digital technologies in socio-political movements in Kenya and how they have transformed the nature of protests. The use of social media has created a more decentralized and democratic platform for activism, allowing marginalised communities such as women and youth to participate and have their voices heard. It has also allowed for coordinating protests and sharing information in real time, leading to more efficient and effective protests.

However, the research also highlights the challenges associated with using digital technologies in socio-political movements in Kenya. The most significant challenge is the limited access to the internet, especially in rural areas, which limits the ability of some communities to participate fully. Additionally, the government has been known to shut down social media platforms during protests, limiting communication and the ability to coordinate protests.

In conclusion, this research showed that digital technologies have played a significant role in socio-political movements in Kenya. The use of social media has transformed the nature of protests, making them more democratic and decentralised, allowing marginalised communities to participate fully. However, challenges associated with limited internet access, government censorship and the spread of false information must be addressed to ensure that digital technologies continue to play a positive role in socio-political movements in Kenya and beyond.

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DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP IN NIGERIA: CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, ONLINE ACTIVISM, AND DIGITAL CONTENTION ON TWITTER

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In Nigeria, enthusiasm for dissent, sousveillance, and digital opposition peaked in parallel with the #EndSARS movement in October 2020(Uwazuruike, 2020). The country has been on the cusp of an upsurge in citizen participation since then, with ordinary citizens emerging as front-stage social and political actors asserting civic rights. Social media, particularly Twitter, drives this activation as an alternative public sphere (Van de Donk et al., 2004), enabling political discourses and dissent in a space less dominated by mainstream media and more open to broader public participation, especially by those with access. This paper explores the complex forms of civic engagement and citizenship performance on Nigeria's Twitter spaces between April 2022 and February 2023, leading to the country's 2023 national elections. It uses the lens of digital citizenship that situates the citizen as a politically engaged subject who gathers and shares information. It makes rights claims online, potentially altering the balance of power (Isin and Ruppert, 2020; Hintz et al., 2018).

Heeding the numerous calls made by many scholars to pay attention to the African digital cultural context rather than theorise from the vantage point of the Global North

(Srinivasan et al., 2019, Willems, 2014, Bosch, 2022, Schoon et al., 2020), this study unpacks how new media technologies facilitate African digital citizenship and the tacit and observable ways citizens experience their social and cultural context in digital environments that may be uniquely African(Roberts and Bosch, 2021). Such a contextual view is necessary when studying a country imbued with culture and diversity, such as Nigeria, because prevailing cultural, regional, and religious contexts and the peculiarity of shared practices across ethnicism, class, gender, and political leanings matter for how digital citizenship is understood, reimagined and reinvigorated among African digital publics.

Moreover, some research showed that political expression is the least essential part of citizenship compared with other, more traditional ways of participating in society(Lane, 2020). Within this context, this research teases out country-level experiences of citizens who transcend traditional levels of citizenship practices to adopt Twitter as a space where convening publics come together to express forms of participation, including discussions of social, cultural, economic, and political issues and how Twitter may shape what democratic action is possible and desirable from the citizens' perspective.

While various social media are widely used in Nigeria, the dominant use of Twitter for civic and political debate makes it the most relevant for this research(Obia, 2020). Twitter has the potential to be a strong force as a communicative environment that enables the performance of citizenship due to its open, very public, horizontal, vertical and broadly networked structure(Puschmann et al., 2014). Given the political tensions, repression of communicative freedom, ethnic and religious violence, and widespread gender inequality in Nigeria, the study explores Twitter as an alternative public sphere and platform for back-channel meaning-making. It underscores how political discourses, social justice activism, and civic agency become articulated in the broader repertoire of digital contention.

With data collected using Twitonomy and Tweet deck software over eleven months, the study examines the nature of mediated citizen practices using a sample of twelve hashtags selected based on the trending hashtags on Nigeria's Twitter during the months leading up to the 2023 general elections. These include #NigeriaDecides2023, #BAT2023, #PeterObi4president, #Atikuokowa2023, #NairaRedesign #Justice4Deborah, #Ujuanya, #FemCoScam, #FreeAminuMuhammed, #AtikuGate, #FakeBisopChallenge, and #jagabanArmy. These hashtags show how Nigerians use Twitter to engage in political discourse and social justice activities. Results offer several essential contributions to the theoretical understanding of digital citizenship. Given that the research was carried out during a period of heightened election tensions, most of the conversations on Twitter were about political parties and political talk, even though politics is not the main focus of the study. However, the study goes beyond the narrow confines of politics to simultaneously include issues of culture, gender, economy, and other dimensions of citizenship and common interest.

In theorising digital citizenship practices in Nigeria, the study moves away from technological determinist-thinking implicit in an ideology that emphasises the liberating potential of social media to counter state control or any hegemonic order to emphasise the possibilities and limitations of deploying Twitter as a tool for expressing dissent, and civic engagement. The research shows that Twitter is embedded in the broader networks of relations in which ordinary citizens have

become political subjects of power who make the right claims through their discursive participation on Twitter (Vromen et al., 2015; Isin and Ruppert, 2020). In these instances, Twitter users become digital citizens by holding those in power accountable through emotional expressions of dissent, explicit points of view, humiliating metaphors, and dark humour. The study found that humour is a dominant discursive practice on Nigeria's Twitter and a mode of civic engagement used to challenge civil rights violations and mock politicians for their excesses. This study argues that, perhaps, reactions through humour, memes and jokes displayed on Twitter are mechanisms Nigerians rely on to cope in situations they cannot rectify or change. A meme of the APC's presidential candidate, Bola Asiwaju Tinubu, riding an exercise bike as proof of health and wellness after it had been rumoured that he is unwell and therefore unfit to rule the country is a few examples of the types of creative, humorous expression that flourished on Twitter. Twitter Nigeria as a platform has been instrumental in sustaining mobilisations and information sharing, evidenced by the significant amount of politically critical content sharing and conversations about contentious issues. During these processes, political views were often conflated with party affiliations, ethnicity, and religion politics, but this did not determine the flow of conversations. Counter to the previously held assumption that the complexity of Nigeria's diversity would lead to polarization on Nigeria's Twitter, it was interesting to find that, to a large extent, some hashtags allowed for less vertical but more horizontal participation in discussions among citizens where users from diverse cultures and ethnicities actively assert civic rights by forming collective voices around specific hashtags such as #GetYourPVC. It allowed users to express solidarity with others and claim statehood. At the same time, Twitter reflected hierarchies of belonging and forms of exclusion even within digital counter-public spheres formed in opposition to the existing public sphere, giving shape to a public that includes citizens who are pro-government elites and those in opposition to the government. Thus, the existing counter-public is curtailed and not entirely detached from the dictates of the status quo but can be seen as existing outside the realm of state power. This observation reinforces the argument that in digitally mediated communication, the public must be viewed as simultaneously public and personal(Bryan, 2021).

Invariably, political elites and their supporters manipulated the digital public sphere by pedalling disinformation and fake news for political gains, which undermines the integrity of the democratic process. However, Twitter's affordances allowed citizens to confirm and verify these falsehoods. It became evident that the same affordances that make Twitter easy to fabricate falsehoods, such as the platform's openness, publicness and ephemerality, facilitated the verification of information. In this way, Twitter constitutes a socio-technical environment where political participation as a communicative process is intertwined with imagined affordances that enable and constrain citizenship. Ultimately, the study recognises that while it may not always serve as a revolutionary or transformative space, Twitter provides a space for the contextual articulation of citizenship and remains a transgressive site for civil disobedience and the subversion of hegemonic platforms and ideologies.

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#ENDSARS: THE ROLE OF THE "SORO SOKE" GENERATION IN NIGERIA'S 2023 ELECTIONS

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Introduction

#EndSARS, the hashtag that pervaded the global space in October 2020 while the world was battling with Covid-19, has since become a rallying point for Nigerian

youths (Oxford Analytica, 2020; Balogun & Akano, 2021; Agbashi et al., 2020; Aniche & Iwuoha, 2022) who had previously battled different forms of marginalization by their established political class in the country (Dambo et al., 2022). While studies like Balogun & Akano (2021) reservedly suggested that the movement highlighted the need for youths to use their resources to participate in the country's next general elections and indeed, Aniche & Iwuoha (2022) established that the protesting youths had attempted to float a new party albeit unsuccessfully, Oxford Analytica (2020) predicted an emergence of a youth-based party that would struggle to challenge the main two parties.

Although #EndSARS started in December 2017, the movement went global in late 2020 after a video on Twitter showed police brutality on an unarmed young man in the Southern region of Nigeria (Dambo et al., 2021). The reaction of youths and their ability to mobilize despite oppositional governmental activities like freezing the bank accounts of protesters illustrated the disruptive power of digital technologies, which empower marginalized groups to bypass the structures that marginalize them by forming their values and goals (Castells, 2015). These new values and goals included finding alternative ways to pull resources to sustain their connective activities (Dambo et al., 2021).

Conceptualizing marginalization as a problem that generally affects African youths, depriving them of political, economic and social resources, Dambo et al. (2022) showed how the Twitter ban enforced in Nigeria in 2021 was another attempt to suppress already marginalized youths in Nigeria. Beyond this, it also delineated the disconnect between Nigeria's established political class and its oppressed youthful class (Dambo, 2022).

Now called the "soro soke" generation (Balogun & Akano, 2021), the youths in Nigeria, particularly those invested in the #EndSARs movement, have expanded their activities by seeking change through democratic means. Soro soke, a Nigerian slang for speaking out loud in the Yoruba language, now signifies a moment in Nigeria's recent history when its youths collectively stood up against injustice.

Theoretical framework

Leaning on the logic of connective action as the theoretical basis for this paper, this paper attempts to interrogate the connective action of the "soro soke" generation beyond the #EndSARS movement that gave it its identity.

González-Bailón and Wang (2016) divide the various theoretical approaches to online collective action into two groups: those that view digital technologies as communication structures where those in control of the information are considered as communication brokers and another class that views them as power structures where those in control of the information are regarded as influential.

Furthermore, the resource mobilization theory explains how structural factors influenced the mobilization of resources by the "soro soke" generation in their attempt to restructure the political class in Nigeria.

Research objectives

The paper draws from the research objectives of Dambo et al. (2021), which established the presence of influencers and the expression of grievances among the "soro soke" generation in Nigeria's 2023 election cycle.

In connected action, a few users are required to facilitate information flow by moving data from one cluster to the next (Dambo et al., 2021; González-Bailón & Wang, 2016). Due to gaps between clusters that can be filled by influencers evaluated by their betweenness centrality, these minority participants can enable the dissemination of information using their social capital within the same core network (Burt, 2001). Following this, this paper elicits the presence of influencers to illustrate their significance within the core networks of the "soro soke" election tweeters as a first objective.

The second objective probes the different ways the grievances of these identified tweeters are expressed within their core network. This is because personalized statements of hopes, frustrations, and lifestyles arguably lead to collective activities that enable connected action, as seen in previous movements like the Arab Spring, the Occupy protests, etc. (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

Lastly, new expressions made possible by transformative technologies allow for self-generated narratives steered and selected by network users (Castells, 2013). Those who have lost trust in institutions and are prepared to discontinue sustaining the system by participating in online protests drive these self-expressions of hope, rage, and disappointment (Castells, 2015). However, since the logic of connective action is limited in the sense that it is restricted to the manifestations and expressions of dissent in online digital spaces, the paper uses the theory of resource mobilization (RMT) to make up for this limitation to elicit how the "soro soke" generation followed up on their demands for change with resources in the 2023 general elections. In this objective, the paper will highlight the response of the current leading presidential candidates to the #EndSARS movement when the movement scaled to a global community. As such, the third objective directly connects the "soro soke" generation with politicians who share their values and illustrates how resources are mobilized to support the identified contestants.

Research Methodology

While this paper is being written, Nigeria's 2023 election cycle is ongoing. The study uses Twitter data to fulfil its objectives, which are to elicit the presence of influencers in an attempt to illustrate their significance within the core networks of the "soro soke" election tweeters, to probe the different ways the angst of these identified tweeters is expressed within their core network and; to connect the "soro soke" generation with politicians who share their values and illustrates how resources are mobilized to support the identified contestants. As an excellent resource for political information, Twitter data has been used in numerous studies to show the power play between information brokers and marginalized groups.

To this end, Twitonomy is used to retrieve data for the study. Due to the vast amount of data it provides and analyzes, Twitonomy has been hailed as an excellent resource for Twitter data collection (Guijarro et al., 2018). It is an analytics application for Twitter that enables tracking and analysis of all Twitter activity, encompassing tweets, retweets, replies, mentions, and hashtags (Ioannidis, et al., 2020).

Two types of Twitter will be retrieved: first, tweets that combined #EndSARS and the 2023 elections will be recovered to establish a connection between the "soro soke" generation and their participation in the 2023 elections as predicted by Oxford Analytica (2020) and secondly, another set of tweets will be retrieved to find connections between the influencers identified in the first set of data collected and the types of Twitter activities they engineered during the election cycle.

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The Revolution Will Be Tweeted. Social Media and The Rhetoric Of Political Revolutions In Southern Africa

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The widespread rhetoric of revolution has accompanied the advent of digital technologies. This rhetoric assumes that digital technologies have inherent power to usher in revolutionary political changes in societies caught up in an authoritarian habitus. Some structural challenges facing African postcolonial societies are bad governance, corruption, cronyism, one-partyism, human rights violations and repression. This has profoundly affected the deepening of democratic cultures and practices across the continent. In response to the shrinking democratic space, some African countries have witnessed the resurgence of youthful but resilient oppositional politics, disruptive social movements, and vibrant hashtag movements. Partly because of the closure of the democratic space, opposition activists and social movement actors in Southern Africa have appropriated digital technologies for progressive and retrogressive politics. From Eswatini to Lesotho, Malawi to Mozambique, and Zambia to Zimbabwe, digital technologies have been used to mobilise supporters, spread messages of dissent, coordinate protests, and engage in diverse forms of political action.

Taking a historical look at the demonstration effect of the Arab Spring in Southern Africa, this presentation problematises the rhetoric of political revolutions inherent in framing the creative uses of social media platforms. It critiques this discourse mainly driven by technological determinism and solutionism approaches to analysing the relationship between society and technologies. Jettisoning the technological determinist-thinking implicit in framing digital technologies as 'revolutionary tools', this presentation leans towards the social shaping of technologies, structuration theory and technological dramas as more appropriate theoretical toolkits for analysing the complex relationship between political change and technology. The presentation sheds light on digital technologies' ambivalent roles in political struggles. It demonstrates that the nexus between digital technologies and their impact on political struggles is complex and multifaceted. It acknowledges that, on the one hand, digital technologies have enabled the democratisation of the public sphere, citizen participation and enjoyment of political voice. On the other hand, it has opened floodgates for digital surveillance, digital authoritarianism, disinformation campaigns, cyberbullying, and other forms of dark participation.

Whilst these digital technologies have empowered activists to engage in what can be referred to as 'revolutionary struggles', the presentation also reminds us of how these actors are susceptible to platform and infrastructural vulnerabilities. These platform-specific vulnerabilities undercut the positive aspects associated with digital

technologies. The presentation critiques the rhetoric of revolutionary technologies, tactics, actors, movements, and goals on social media. Focusing on the disruptive tendencies of hashtag movements in Eswatini, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe, this presentation examines how digital technologies have been leveraged for positive and negative outcomes in Southern Africa. It goes beyond the simplistic framing of digital political action as 'social media dissidence' and 'digital dissidence'. It argues that revolutionary actions are disruptive, transformative, and transgressive. They are rooted in the quest to foster alternative political futures rather than simply (re)engineering regime change.

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REVOLUTIONIZING AFRICAN MEDIA NARRATIVES: REFRAMING, DISRUPTING AND OCCUPYING GLOBAL DIGITAL ECOSYSTEMS

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The paper explores global media ecosystems through analysis of processes of global media hegemony in reinforcing media marginalities, carcerality of indigenous knowledge and subalternity in the global south and African diaspora, and further details how global south users and African diaspora audiences are reimagining digital tools to create a global consciousness and resurgences through reframing, disrupting and occupying digital spaces. The broad goals of the paper are (a) to analyze the global media narratives about Africa and the diaspora and reframing strategies used by audiences and users, (b) to discuss social media contestations and anti-algorithmic disruption strategies used to amplify African narratives, and (c) review of sustained occupying of online media spaces in attempts to shift dominant global narratives about Africa. The paper analyzes deliberate and sustained online subversive narratives that counter and challenge settler colonialism legacies and global north media carcerality of African narratives and their peoples.

The main questions the paper seeks to answer are: How are global south and African diaspora audiences and users reframing African narratives while capturing and celebrating diversities without morphing into the dominant image of the global north? How do African Diasporic youth negotiate the tensions and convergences between their mediated experiences of Africa (via media) and their lived experiences of being African in American and European metropoles? The study focuses on online identity formation, construction and contestations of global media narratives by African youth and first-generation young African diasporas in the USA, UK, and France. This study uniquely sought to explore, analyze, and determine the contestations and reframing of global media narratives by African youth and the extent of the influence of global media and non-media narratives about Africa among young African diasporas in the USA, UK and France at a time when digital technologies have allowed them to access other alternatives as well as to challenge and forge a new identity for themselves and the African continent. The study was framed by the RDO model developed by the Africa Media Collaborative team that seeks to decolonize media narratives and positions key steps in shifting the narrative (narrative change strategy) as (R)eframing, (D)isrupting, and (O)ccupying. (Africa Media Collaborative, 2020).

The data was generated through online interviews with African youth in the diaspora and web scraping of social media contestations by youth in Africa and African diasporic communities. Data on African youth narratives and contestations were initially generated using Twitter API and later complemented with web scraping from Twitter focusing on tweets posted between April 1, 2020, and December 31, 2022. The data was initially generated from Twitter using the Twitter API during momentous events in Africa (such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2022 World Cup, and the COP27). Still, due to limitations of how far back the Twitter API could pull data, it was subsequently complemented with web scraping methods during data collection and analysis, especially when there was a need to go back and get more information about a specific tweet or hashtag. It was further complemented by archival data and content illustration of analysis of global news coverage and mining of online conversations, stories and mentions about Africa in interpersonal, organizational, and global diasporic platforms. Using a snowballing and purposive sampling of African youths in the African diaspora, 90 male, female and non-binary

young Africans were selected from the UK, USA and France. The interviews generated data on how young African migrants experience the diaspora as liminal spaces and how they negotiate relationships with other Africans in these indeterminate spaces to construct, redefine, negotiate and contest identities. The data were analyzed qualitatively using narrative analysis and thematic content analysis (TCA).

The findings showed a strong sentiment toward an African identity among African youth and diasporic communities, defined through claims supported by belonging to Africa through humour, media, family connections, history, and knowledge of Africa. Participants felt a sense of pride regarding their African identity and a recognition that Africa is much more than what is seen in global media coverage. African diasporic communities hear both positive and negative stories about Africa. The most common negative stories about Africa were political violence and poverty. In contrast, the most common positive stories were about the beauty of Africa and different indigenous and entrepreneurial inventions in Africa to overcome different obstacles Africa faces in its economic and infrastructural development. The participants also argued that global media representation of Africa is mainly negative, and there was an overwhelming sense of frustration about how Africa is portrayed. Those who lived in Africa and had travelled to Africa or had close engagements with friends and family had a more favourable opinion and were more critical of global narratives and media coverage that presents the 'stereotype image' of Africa in the media and the diaspora.

From the discussions of findings, it can be concluded that social media is the latest frontier with incredible potential to challenge and disrupt media hegemonies in the fight to challenge the stereotypical image of Africans and redefine identities. While the role of social media and mobile technologies in revolutions such as the Arab Spring has been contested, what is evident is that social media has facilitated protests by increasing opportunities for youth engagement in collective action (Bosch, 2017). Youth in Africa and African diasporic communities described social media as a source of stereotypes and negatives. For example, TikTok as a space was riddled with jokes where they made fun of African accents. On the other hand, social media was also a platform for showcasing the best of Africa. They were proud of prominent African figures in global spaces, such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Lupita Ny'ong'o, Burna Boy, Diamond Platnumz, Trevor Noah, Tiwa Savage and WhizKid. It can also be concluded that while global media coverage has been historically biased towards Africans, social media offers spaces where youth in Africa and African diasporic communities can contest hegemonic biased stories, challenge the stereotype image and reconstruct their identities. One interesting finding was how young Africans use hashtags and Twitter bombing to disrupt online narratives and create social media visibility for African youth voices. It can also be concluded that young African diaspora youth negotiate spaces in the global south or liminal and indeterminate spaces that characterize diaspora communities. Young African migrants are constantly negotiating their identities in American and European metropoles, especially made worse with the rise of the far-right movement in the global north and triggered by racism and othering in the global north spaces. They are vigilant and survivalist in their outlook and strategy and are increasingly activists. The killing of Trayvon Martin in 2012 in the USA led to the emergence of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement (Onwuachi-Willig, 2018), and the murder of George Floyd in 2020 and the subsequent BLM riots solidified their experience of

marginality. Consequently, the sense of belonging to Africa is seen as a source of pride to be nourished, preserved and developed through visits and historical reimagination.

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