

Clicktivism and Political Engagement in Nigeria

UWALAKA, Temple *PhD*

School of Arts and Communication
University of Canberra, Australia

Abstract

This study evaluates the importance of clicktivism and connective action in political participation and engagement in Nigeria by interrogating how Nigerian youths and civil society groups that supported them used social media to enhance their #nottooyoungtorun bill campaign in Nigeria. The 'Not Too Young to Run' bill was a constitutional amendment movement led by young Nigerians to reduce the age limit to run for elected office in Nigeria. This paper analysed 12,763 sample contents from Facebook and Twitter regarding #nottooyoungtorun. Data reveal that clicktivism played a potent role in the success of the campaign. Data further reveal that social media was used to educate supporters of the bill, contact and shame lawmakers into supporting the bill. Findings show that clicktivism is a germane political participation and engagement act. Using the logic of connective action theory broadly, this paper argues the fusion of collective and connective actions in the campaign, and through this, extend the theorisation of the logic of connective action.

Keywords: Clicktivism, Social Media, Hashtag Activism, Nigeria, Collective Action, Connective Action

Introduction/Background

The 'Not Too Young to Run' bill was a constitutional amendment movement led by young Nigerians to reduce the age limit to run for elected office in Nigeria. The bill was conceived by civil society groups such as Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth and Advancement in Africa also known as YIAGA Africa from May 2016. The bill was sponsored in the Nigerian House of Representatives by Hon Tony Nwulu and in the Nigerian Senate by Senator Abdull Aziz Nyako. The bill sought change to sections 65, 106, 131, and 177 of the Nigerian Constitution (YIAGA Africa, 2018). The alteration to these sections of the Nigerian Constitution reduced the age of running for elective positions. The bill sought to change the age limit for Houses of Assembly and Representatives from 30 years old to 25 years old, Senate and Governorship from 35 years old to 30 years old, Office of the President from 40 years old to 30 years old, and the introduction of an Independent candidature in Nigeria (YIAGAAfrica, 2018).

The Not Too Young to Run campaign met opposition in many quarters. For example, it was alleged that the bill was removed at the Committee stage by the Constitution Review Committee (Suraju, 2017). It was reported that during the joint retreat on constitution review held in Lagos, that the Senate and House Committee 'killed' the bill. According to the report, the bill, though scaled the 1st and 2nd readings was not included in the final report that was considered and adopted in Lagos (Suraju, 2017). This report enraged the Nigerian youths who then took to social media to register their discontent and to shame the lawmakers into considering and passing the bill (Anajama, 2018; Suraju, 2017). Another example is the opposition from the States Houses of Assembly. The Taraba House of Assembly is a case point. Taraba House of Assembly initially voted down the #Nottooyoungtorun bill. However, after they were listed in YIAGA's 'Hall of Shame', they subsequently rescheduled their vote. This time, the vote went from zero vote of the Taraba state legislators supporting the bill to all supporting the bill (Anajama, 2018). More than 26 State Houses of Assembly assented to it, surpassing the 24 states benchmark required for a constitutional amendment that the bill needed.

After many months of impasse between the Nigerian youths as well as the civil societies groups supporting the bill and Nigerian leaders, the #Nottooyoungtorun bill passed both chambers of the National Assembly and two third of the State Houses of Assembly. This culminated in the bill becoming an Act of the Nigerian Congress on the 31st May 2018 when President Muhammadu Buhari signed it into law (Adetayo, 2018; Tukur, 2018). The passage of the bill brought an opening for the participation of youths in the political process in Nigeria. With the bill, there was an opening of the political participation space for a new breed of young contestants for various political offices in the 2019 General Elections in Nigeria. According to "Uzor (2019), youths candidacy increased from 21% in 2015 to 34% in 2019. In the 991 seats in all 36 State Houses of Assembly in Nigeria during the 2019 election, 68 members are between the ages of 31 and 35. As a result of the age reduction legislation that was passed, 22 candidates between the ages of 25 to 30 benefitted directly from the Act in the State Houses of Assembly in the last election ""(Uzor, 2019; YIAGA Africa, 2018). This improvement can be alluded to the Act as many of these successful candidates would not have qualified to stand for election prior to the Not Too Young To Run Act.

The innovative use of social media platforms such as Facebook, and Twitter by the Nigerian youths and their civil society supporters has been hugely neglected in the study of the Not Too Young To Run Act. For example, scholars have scarcely mentioned social media use as one of the ways the organisers of the campaign coordinated their campaign. Among the works that the researcher saw, Anajama (2018) acknowledged the influence of social media in the Not Too Young To Run Act campaign. He described the campaign as going from a 'hashtag to a law' (Anajama, 2018). Beside this reference by Anajama (2018), there appears to be no published study that interrogates the contributions of innovative use

of social media to the success of the campaign. Researchers have focussed on the use of print media for the propagation of the campaign (Etika, 2018). In doing so, researchers have abandoned the case of social media impact to political engagement.

There are overwhelming findings (Hari, 2014; Uwalaka, 2015, 2017, 2019; Uwalaka & Watkins, 2017, 2018) that Nigerians distrust their mainstream media. Uwalaka and Watkins (2018) argued that Nigerian students were furious at the inability of the mainstream media in Nigeria but praised social media for fulfilling its 'fifth estate' role (Uwalaka & Watkins, 2018, p. 34). It is puzzling that scholars continue to focus on mainstream media and leaving social media from their studies. This study attempts to bridge that gap in the literature. It looks at this from the debates about the political impact of clicktivism and connective & collective action. Some scholars remain critical of the role of social media to political participation. For example, White (2010) states that online participation is ruining activism, while Fenton and Barassi (2011) argue against the effectiveness of social media to enhance political participation. Also, clicktivism has derogatorily been referred to as 'slacktivism' (Kristofferson, White, & Peloza, 2014), 'micro-political action' (Vromen, 2017, p. 9), while others see it as 'unproductive, ephemeral' (Gladwell, 2010, 2011), and 'activism for the lazy' (Morozov, 2009a, p. 1; 2014).

However, it has been argued that contemporary political participation and activism though carried out at the individual level or even as a solitary action, do benefit political groups, as such political action, though individualistic, are usually situated around a common concern (Halupka, 2014, 2016, 2018; Karpf, 2010). Clicktivism can therefore be conceptualised as a '...low risk, low-cost activity via social media, whose purpose is to raise awareness, produce change, or grant satisfaction to the person engaged in the activity' (Rotman et al., 2011, p. 821). In its simplest form, clicktivism maybe just a 'like' on Facebook, or a 'share', 'tweet' or even a 'retweet' (Halupka, 2014; Karpf, 2010; Lee & Hsieh, 2013). Due to its online domain and types of activities that characterise it, clicktivism is usually conceived as kit and kin of the logic of connective action. At the nucleus of the logic of connective action, 'is the recognition of digital media as organising agents' (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013, p. 34). In this logic, taking action becomes an act of personal expression and acknowledgment attained by communicating concepts and activities in trusted relationships (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013).

This study therefore evaluates the influence of clicktivism on political participation and engagement in Nigeria by investigating how the Nigerian youths and civil society groups that supported them used social media to enhance their #nottooyoungtorun bill campaign leading to the Not Too Young To Run Act. Thus, this work sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the themes from social media contents regarding #nottooyoungtorun bill in Nigeria?
2. How did social media use impact the #nottooyoungtorun bill campaign in Nigeria?

Clicktivism as Political Participation

Much of the literature on political participation focused extensively on forms of civic engagement which emphasise the role of citizens within representative democracy, including the channels influencing elections, governments, and parties (Norris, 2007). Much has been written about low voter turnout and dwindling party membership (Miller & Shanks, 1996; Norris, 2002; Piven & Cloward, 2000; Putnam, 1996, 2000) but these researchers neglect online political activism of citizens. Cohen and Kahne (2012) contend that some scholars misunderstand the passive stance of the citizens in mainstream political activities such as voting, becoming a political party member and supporting political campaigns as lack of political interest and activism. For example, young peoples' abhorrence to politics does not mean that they are politically inactive. Cohen and Kahne (2012) suggest that researchers maybe missing the picture if they consider only traditional measures of civic engagement, such as voting as a measure of how active or inactive people are becoming as there are other channels that people, particularly young adults are using for political participation. The idea of considering alternative political participation styles outside mainstream political participation activities will help researchers to provide an all-inclusive theory of political participation.

Some studies (Putnam, 2000; Morozov, 2009a; White, 2010; Gladwell, 2010; Oyston, 2012; McChesney, 2013) still blame the citizens' 'political apathy' on the information and communication technologies especially the internet. Whereas, internet technologies has arguably helped rekindle the interest of the people in politics or has given the people multiple channels to participate in politics (Breuer & Farooq, 2012; Freelon, 2014; Halupka, 2014; Howard, 2014, 2015; Tufekci, 2014; Zuckerman, 2013, 2014). Given the level of disillusionment many citizens feel with the political process (Harvard University Institute of Politics, 2013; Pew Research Center, 2013b) maybe citizens should not be expected to get involved with politics in the traditional way.

The accounts by Zuckerman (2014), Norris (2007), and Halupka (2014) are useful starting points because they aim to locate specific ways of current political participation strategies of the people, particularly the youth and juxtapose it with how people participated in politics prior to innovation in internet technologies. Zuckerman (2014) reports that dissatisfaction with existing government; a broad shift to post-representative democracy and the rise of participatory media are leading towards the visibility of different forms of civic participation. He submits that citizens are critical of representative democracy and the traditional means of influencing elected representatives, thereby creating a new form of political participation that he called 'participatory civics' (Zuckerman, 2014, p. 151). Participatory civics refers to forms of civil engagement that use digital media as a core component and embrace a post-informed citizen model of civic participation (Zuckerman, 2013, 2014).

Furthermore, Norris (2007) argues that the realisation of the citizens that they have limited power in effecting policies and securing some degree of accountability from their

leaders force them to seek alternative means of participation. One of such alternative means is 'cause-oriented activism' (Norris, 2007, p. 638). Similarly, Halupka (2014) has argued that clicktivism should be seen as a legitimate political act. Clicktivism may not involve a great deal of effort or commitment, but it is now probably the most 'common form of "political" engagement and it can, and often does, lead to more overt political action, sometimes in the political arena' (Marsh & Akram, 2015, p. 641).

Extant literature in political communication holds that the 'political' is innately tied to conventional modes of political engagement (Hirst, 1999; Schmitt, 2008). The 'political' is usually voting, government, democracy, political parties, politicians and legislature. These are traditional approaches to political participation and are considered as the arena for the definition of politics. The definition is in contrast to a process definition of politics which sees politics 'occurring more broadly in society, both within and outside formal institutions and processes' (McCaffrie & Marsh, 2013, p. 114). Marsh and colleagues (Marsh & Akram, 2015; McCaffrie & Marsh, 2013) support a broader definition of political participation. To them, a process definition of politics is required to understand the changing nature of political participation occasioned by innovation in internet technologies.

A process definition of politics and political participation recognises that contemporary political participation has diversified in terms of 'agencies, the repertoires, and the targets' (Norris, 2002, pp. 215-216) and also acknowledges other popular forms of political participation that is not within the political arena. A process definition of politics and political participation accepts the use of memes, social buttons and social media to engage in political participation. One example of this type of political participation is clicktivism. This sees people engage in small, impulsive, non-ideological, political actions such as clicking a like on Facebook, in an attempt to bring about social change through awareness-raising (Halupka, 2014; Karpf, 2010; Kristofferson et al., 2014).

There are increasingly forms of political participation that are underpinned by engagement norms, rather than duty norms (Bang, 2011), and as such, the emphasis is on engaging with particular problems, rather than taking action which is ideologically driven. A process definition of politics permits researchers to recognise action based on engagement norms, which at some stage spill into the political arena, as another way to participate in politics. More importantly, a process definition of politics and political participation understands and acknowledges the changing nature of the society given that the internet has helped uncouple citizens from their political authorities. This has empowered these citizens to seek political change on their own, engaging on their own terms and in their own ways (Halupka, 2016).

However, these changes in political engagement norm have forced critics of the process definition of politics and political participation to argue that process definition will lead to a 'study of everything' as politics and 'every action' a political participation (Hirst, 1999; Schmitt, 2008). In addition, Hay (2014) argues that the engagement pattern of

process definition of politics and political participation marginalises the political arena thereby undermining arena based definition of politics and democracy.

The above critique is flawed by an overtly narrow focus, evaluating the relationship between acts of clicktivism and the desired political outcome in isolation (Dennis, 2019). By conceptualising participation as a process, 'a new set of questions emerge regarding the value of social media as a tool for deepening knowledge, for civic discussions and for action' (Dennis, 2019, p. 25). Based on the foregoing, scholars have warned that clicktivism should not be written-off as an ineffective feel-good tool that young people utilise but rather as a legitimate form of social and political action (Piat, 2019). It has been demonstrated that online petition creation and signing, plays an important role in citizen's engagement in politics (Halpin, Vromen, Vaughan, & Raissi, 2018). It has also been argued that the education potential of online social media groups helps members deepen their understanding of democracy and confidence to take action (Schroeder, Currin, Washington, Curcio, & Lundgren, 2019), and that clicktivism helps participants in their political and civic engagement (Literat, Markus, & Society, 2019).

Clicktivism has also been argued to be used to express popular internet culture, resistance and solidarity during crisis event such as terror or to participate in a protest. For example, scholars have noted how "Brussels will land on its feet like a cat' memes during the terror attack in Brussels, Belgium, presented a forum for solidarity building that helped the people to overcome fear (Jensen, Neumayer, Rossi, & Society, 2020). Others (Hari, 2014; Ibrahim, 2013; Uwalaka, Rickard, & Watkins, 2018) have noted how clicktivism helped educate and motivate Nigerians during the 2012 Occupy Nigeria protest. In all these, rather than reduce political participation as envisioned by its critics, clicktivism enhances and broadens political participation and engagement.

Appraising the Logics of Connective and Collective Actions

The debate about the logic that necessitates collective action is one that has evolved as digital technologies evolve. In the one hand, are scholars that believe in the logic of collective action and these scholars argue that a collective action that can impact political participation has to be a collective enterprise, which involves the development of strong, thick, deliberative ties between participants (Hay, 2007; Stoker, 2006). Hay and Stoker, and some communication and digital activism scholars (Gladwell, 2010, 2011; Morozov, 2009a, 2009b, 2014; Putnam, 2000) agree that the shift in late-modernity towards the atomisation and personalisation of politics stands in contrast to the thick collective capacity a healthy democratic system requires.

Conversely, Bennett and his colleagues (Bennett, 2012; Bennett & Segerberg, 2011, 2012, 2013; Bennett, Segerberg, & Walker, 2014) contend that communication, and the means of communication; can facilitate the development of organisational structures. According to them, communication acts as organisation, and in this way, permits the

development of connective action frames. Digitalised technology results in loosely interconnected, interpersonal networks to create outcomes that 'resemble collective action, yet without the same role played by formal organisations or the need for exclusive, collective action framings' (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013, p. 35). This point is crucial, as it highlights how online forms of engagement can reflect the function of their traditional counterparts.

In a survey (N=705) that evaluated digital media and the organisation of anti-Iraq war demonstrations in the United States of America, Bennett, Breunig, and Givens (2008) found that personal networks diversity provided a far stronger explanation for predominantly reliance on digital media than simple association with organisations sponsoring the demonstrations. This means that those who are not 'loyal' to an organisation are more likely to use digital media. This has a crucial ramification for the logic of connective action. Tacit in this study is that Bennett and Colleagues' logic of connective action is similar to the intriguing inquest of other scholars (Bimber, Flanagin, & Stohl, 2005), as terms such as 'self-organising groups' and 'private-public lives' are synonymous to Bennett and colleagues' 'loose networks' and 'personal action frames.' These logics like the definitions of what is 'political' are related but are also different.

In contrast to earlier models of dutiful citizenship based on a one-way communication managed by authorities, current generation particularly, young adults are embracing more expressive styles of actualising citizenship defined around peer content sharing and social media (Bennett, Wells, & Freelon, 2011). Therefore, communication aimed at promoting civic engagement is becoming problematic. In an analysis of 90 youth websites operated by diverse civic and political organisations in the United States, results reveal uneven conceptions of citizenship and related civic skills, suggesting that many established organisations are out of step with changing civic style (Bennett et al., 2011).

Also, in proposing the theory of reflexive modernisation, Beck and Colleagues (Beck, 1994, 1997; Beck, Giddens, & Lash, 1994), used the term 'sub-politics' to explain politics beyond those tenets that have been espoused by scholars of collective action type of political participation and political system. In explaining the 'sub-politics' concept, Beck (1997) hinged his argument on the concept of 'individuation'. He believes that through sub-politics, individualism has returned to the society. His explanation of individuation aligns not only with the process definition of politics but also to the logic of connective action.

Again, Beck and his colleagues (Beck, 1994, 1997; Beck et al., 1994; Giddens, 1991, 1999) defined sub-politics to mean the shaping of the society from below. They went further to state that when, 'viewed from above, this results in the loss of power, the shrinkage and minimisation of politics' (Beck et al., 1994, p. 23). Their argument is that in the wake of 'sub-politics', there are growing opportunities to have a voice and a share in the arrangement of the society even for groups hitherto uninvolved in the substantive

'technification and industrialisation process'. This brings further opportunities for courageous individuals to “move mountains” in the nerve centres of development (Beck, 1994, p. 23). In brief, the rise of sub-politics could be said to indicate a weakening of bureaucratic, state-oriented politics thereby, suggesting a tilt towards the process definition of politics or connective action. Giddens's argument about the usefulness of sub-politics critically recount shifts in democracy and political participation. His definition of sub-politics as 'politics that has migrated away from parliament towards single-issue groups in the society' (Giddens, 1999, p. 49) strengthens the arguments that citizens engage in solitary political action that are situated around a common concern, helping stimulate the idea of collective togetherness through comradeships that comes from such participation.

Overall, with evidence from contemporary studies and the changing pattern of political participation, it will be erroneous to perceive politics and political participation as something that happens only in the political arena; neither does it benefit the research community to see it as ubiquitous (Marsh & Akram, 2015). There is a need to carefully evaluate the relationship between the social and the political. That is the thrust of this paper particularly as it relates to Nigeria.

Data and Methods

This study utilised social media network analytics. According to Khan (2017), this is the art and science of extracting, constructing, analysing, and understanding social networks. The researcher analysed Facebook posts and tweets from the hashtag, “#nottooyoungtorun” to ascertain the number of posts and tweet about the age reduction bill campaign known as #nottooyoungtorun in Nigeria.

Researchers are attracted to social media platforms because they can harvest thousands of contents using freely and publicly available and easily configurable tools (Marwick & Boyd, 2014; Uwalaka & Watkins, 2018). The large amount of data that can be gathered from social media platforms has given rise to the use of data science tools to analyse “big data” (Marwick & Boyd, 2014). Researchers are growingly using techniques such as social networking analysis (Bosch & Society, 2017; Literat et al., 2019) to make sense of “big data”. While hashtags have been challenged as a sampling approach in big data analytics (Rafail, 2018), they are still one of the most commonly used methods for capturing topic specific data in social media, particularly Twitter and Facebook (Bosch & Society, 2017; Jensen et al., 2020; Uwalaka & Watkins, 2017).

This paper analysed 12,763 contents from social media users in Nigeria using the hashtags, “#nottooyoungtorun”, “#notsoyoungtorun”, and “#nottoyoungtorun”. The researcher used these three hashtags as a means of extracting representative tweets and comments. The last two hashtags were mainly syntax error hashtags. That is, those who wanted to post or tweet at “#nottooyoungtorun” – the main hashtag but misspell the

hashtag by using only one “o” in “too” and those who used “so” instead of “too” in their comments and tweets. These spelling mistakes were accounted for through the inclusion of those erroneous hashtags in the data extraction phase. These tweets and posts were collected in three phases. The first phase was scraped using Netlytic between 1st and 9th of August 2016, while the second phase was collected using Netlytic between 29th of May and 2nd of June 2018 and the third phase was collated using Netlytic between 7th and 15th of December, 2019. The first phase was when the bill was proposed by Hon Tony Nwulu and was being debated, while the second phase was events leading to the signing of the bill and the third phase was after the 2019 general election.

These posts and tweets were scraped using Netlytic and were subsequently imported first to an excel and then transferred into an NVivo 12 Pro for analysis. NVivo is a qualitative data analysis software that helps the researcher come up with themes and other relevant trends as well as graphs for a qualitative data. The researcher preferred this software because the aim was to develop common themes from the posts and tweets. This method has been used by other studies to analyse their data (Uwalaka & Watkins, 2018). The aim here, is to categorise users posts and comments as well as tweets and retweets regarding #nottooyoungtorun campaign.

Results

As stated earlier, social media (Facebook and Twitter) contents relating to #nottooyoungtorun were analysed to understand how users framed their tweets and posts during, and after the debate leading to the Not Too Young To Run Act in Nigeria. The total number of tweets and posts analysed is 12,763. Of these, 7,698 were tweets and retweets while 5,065 were Facebook posts and comments relating to the hashtag, “#nottooyoungtorun”. These contents were extracted in three phases as has been stated above. The total number of contents that were harvested in phase one is 6,600 (Facebook = 2,000 and Twitter = 4,600). In phase two, the researcher extracted 4,065 social media contents (Facebook = 2,065 and Twitter = 2,000), and in phase three, the researcher scraped 2,098 contents (Facebook = 1,000 and Twitter = 1,098).

Phase one was collected during the debate of the #nottooyoungtorun bill in the floor of the national assembly of Nigeria. According to Figure 1 below, out of the 6,600 posts and tweets that were analysed, 37 percent (2,438) consisting of 1,807 tweets from Twitter and 631 posts and comments from Facebook educated one another on the usefulness of age reduction to run for political office in Nigeria. About 22 percent (1,460) of the posts and tweets comprising 1,000 tweets from Twitter and 460 posts and comments from Facebook encouraged Nigerian youths to contact their lawmakers. Many of the tweets and posts were directed to specific lawmakers; while 20 percent (1,340) involving 908 tweets and 432 Facebook posts and comments blamed corruption and corrupt leaders as the reason the lawmakers were finding it difficult to support the bill. About, 13 percent (912) consisting of 617 tweets and 295 Facebook posts

and comments were directed to Nigerian lawmakers in a bid to shame them into supporting the bill. Facebook and Twitter users directed their insults and angst at the Nigerian lawmakers especially the leaders of the national assembly on their perceived aloofness to the yearnings of the people.

For example, a tweet by a Twitter user reads, 'If young Nigerians are old enough to vote, then they are certainly #NotTooYoungToRun'. Another Twitter user noted that 'young people are 60% of the voting population. Excluding young people is excluding the political majority'. A Twitter user criticised and provided an alternative narrative on the notion of youths not being matured enough to stand for elective position. He stated that 'with age comes wisdom. True. But with youth comes passion, zeal and innovative ideas. Give youth a chance to change future'. Here, the user is arguing that while youth have their shortcomings, that they also have traits that are beneficial to the society when harnessed appropriately. One user shamed the All Progress Congress (APC) national lawmakers when she opined that the APC lawmakers are not doing enough to support the bill. She noted that the 'honourable that sponsored #NotTooYoungToRun and @stellaoduah that sponsored Independent Candidate Bill are both PDP. APC folks must support it'. Inherent in this tweet is the subtle 'shaming' of the ruling party in an attempt to pull their hands in supporting the bill.

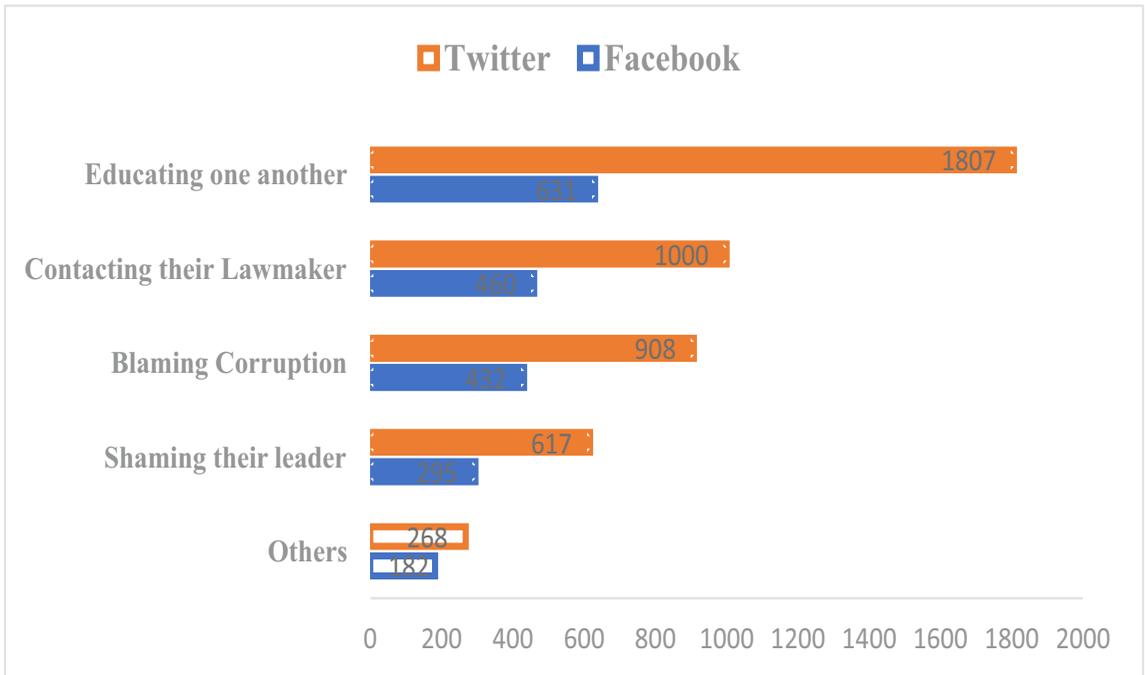


Figure 1: Themes of Users' Posts and Tweets during Phase One of Data Extraction

Phase two was collected after President Buhari has assented the bill, thereby, making it an Act of Parliament, that is, a law in Nigeria. Figure 2 shows that out of the 4,065 posts and tweets that were analysed in phase two, 37 percent (1,505: Facebook = 800 and Twitter = 705) of the tweets and posts and comments were sheer elation. Here, users appeared to be high fiving one another and giving one another ovation for what they achieved. Another 23 percent (922: Facebook = 400 and Twitter = 522) of the posts and tweets conveyed an obeisance to the President as users talk about the #nottooyoungtorun Act. Users messages appeared to be paying obeisance to the leaders both in the National Assembly and President Buhari for assenting the bill into law. Another 17 percent (705: Facebook = 325 and Twitter = 380) tweets and Facebook posts and comments were sanguine messages. It was evident that the bill that passed has some shortcomings. Based on these, some users expressed optimistic messages even in an apparent bad or difficult situation. About 15 percent (598: Facebook = 305 and Twitter = 293) tweets and Facebook posts and comments were dystopian messages. The users appeared not to see anything good in the bill that passed into law.

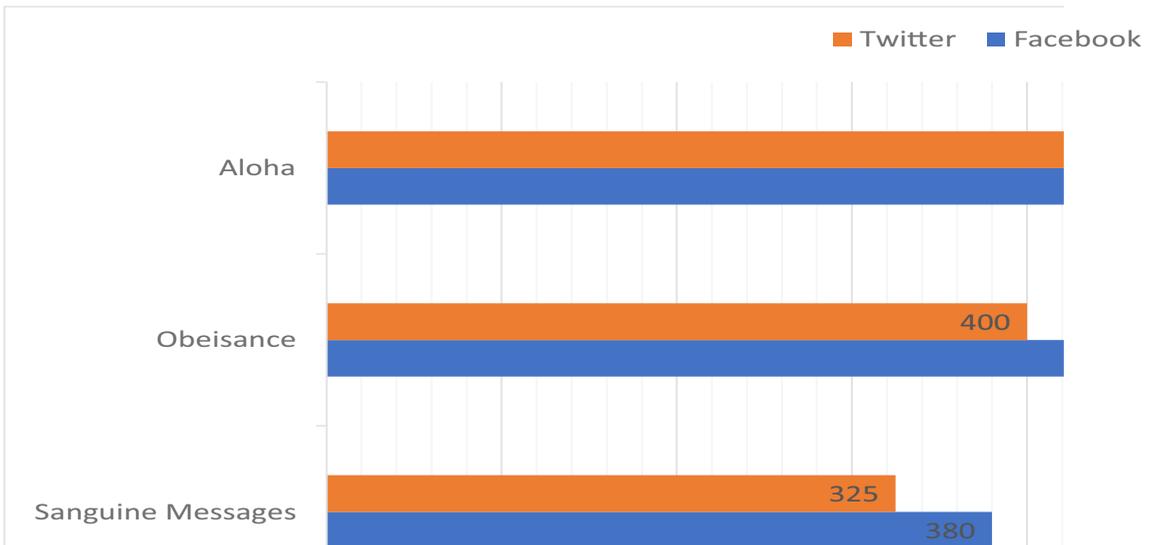
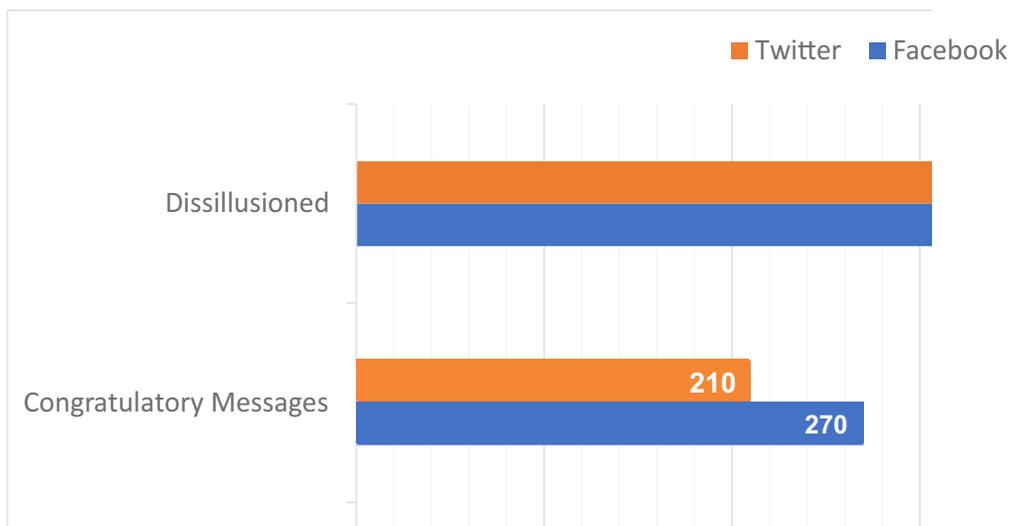


Figure 2: Themes of Users' Posts and Tweets during Phase Two of Data Extraction

Phase three was collected after the 2019 Nigerian General Election. Figure 3 shows that out of the 2,098 posts and tweets that were analysed in this phase of data extraction, 52 percent (1,101: Facebook = 600 and Twitter = 501) of the tweets and posts and comments were users displaying their frustration and disillusionment. Another 23 percent (480: Facebook = 210 and Twitter = 270) of the posts and tweets were congratulatory messages to the youths who were victorious in the 2019 Nigerian election. Another 19 percent (404: Facebook = 200 and Twitter = 204) tweets and Facebook posts and comments conveyed optimistic messages for what the youths were able to achieve.



One user congratulated young victorious politicians. He felicitated with another when he tweeted, 'Congratulations Rt. Hon. Dr. Simon Karu Elisha on your appointment as Deputy Chairman House Committee on Human Rights'. The user was showing his happiness for the progress made by congratulating those that were successful. Others were just ecstatic and were announcing the signing of the bill into law. One user announced, 'Since #NotTooYoungToRun was signed into law, 86 young Nigerians have stood up to declare their intentions for #2019 Elections!' Another user declared, '#NotTooYoungToRun is now a law!!'. These announcement and declaration tweets point to the fact that some users were overjoyed and in awe at their achievement.

Some users were sanguine about prospects for youth chances in political leadership in Nigeria. One of such users wrote, 'we think, youths in Nigeria have made so much progress as regards participation especially with the #NotTooYoungtorun campaign'. Another added, 'yesterday's signing of the #NotTooYoungToRun Bill by @NGRPresident @MBuhari has energised our youth and will further democratise the governance of our nation', and one more user said, 'the real achievement of the #NotTooYoungToRun Act is not the lowering of age limits or even the chances of increased participation. Those may not make much difference in the short term. It is that change is possible in Nigeria when the youth come together & demand it. That's BIG!'. Twitter and Facebook users appear to be happy about the progress made by the signing of the bill to law.

Other users seemed to be disillusioned and held dystopian views regarding the #nottooyoungtorun bill. For example, a Facebook user lamented in Pidgin English, 'how pesin wan pay 12 million just to buy form wen pesin neva fit save 1m for bank account?'. The user is disillusioned with the price and nomination forms of the major political parties. Another user argued that 'while we are struggling to #NotTooYoungToRun and still being out spent, out gunned, out thugged, and out schemed. Our 35-year-old Malian Sister has been named the Minister of Foreign Affairs, in Mali'. A user complained that 'young aspirants can't afford party nomination forms', while another user asked, 'now that the bill has become law, I hope that we have not inadvertently opened the doors for the elites to populate public offices with their moronic children? It is a curse to serve a master and his kids too o!' These users like many others were not elated for the Act. They were infuriated with the spending power of the elites and the greed of the major political parties to sell the nomination forms at an exorbitant price. They appeared to be disillusioned.

#NotTooYoungToRun @DSamsonItodo · Aug 3, 2017

Before **#NotTooYoungToRun** can become law, these steps MUST be followed. Engage your state legislators @CDDWestAfrica @OSIWA1 @EiENigeria

#NotTooYoungToRun @YIAGA · Aug 5, 2017

Replying to @Discuss_NGR and @nassnigeria

Contact your legislators in the state house of Assembly to vote 'YES' for the **#NotTooYoungToRun** bill as soon as it is transmitted to them.

26-Year Old Bob Otobong Won a Seat at Akwa Ibom HoA & He Tells Us About It

Hamzat Lawal (cum) @hamzycodemay 31, 2016

We built alliances As Young Leaders, We engaged lawmakers, mobilized, organized, educate and demanded with ONE Voice **#NotTooYoungToRun**
Today, history is made for Young People to have a space and voice in active elective politics and inclusion in democratic good governance

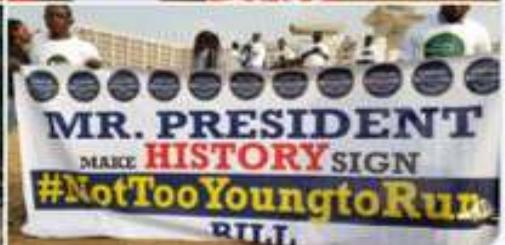


Figure 4: Sample Tweets

Discussion of Findings

This study examined the importance of clicktivism to political participation and engagement, particularly during and after the #nottooyoungtorun bill in Nigeria. The paper attempted to achieve this aim by evaluating themes from the social media posts regarding the #nottooyoungtorun bill campaign in Nigeria and the impact of social media use during the campaign. Data reveal that the themes coalesced around user education about the need for the constitutional amendment, shaming, and contacting the political leaders. In conformity with previous digital activism studies in Nigeria, that found that shaming and online confrontation with leaders and media elites usually pressure such leaders to support ideas that is beneficial to the people, but which might be antithetical to the interest of such leaders (Uwalaka, 2016, 2017; Uwalaka & Watkins, 2017). For example, YIAGA Africa used its 'Hall of Shame' to browbeat erring lawmakers to force them to vote for the bill.

Data further show that clicktivism, that is, social media engagement, played a potent role in not only educating the people but also to force the hands of elected office holders in Nigeria. This means that social media (Facebook and Twitter), helped the constitution amendment lobby campaign spearheaded by YIAGA Africa and their legions of online army to bring the campaign to a desired conclusion. This finding suggests that scholars, particularly those that espouse arena definition of political participation as well as collective action, cannot ignore the role of self-organising groups and the modern way that they participate in politics. This study argues that it will be harsh to see these new participatory styles as inauthentic, as is sometimes the case for mainstream analysts, because it does not happen in the political arena, or is not collective in nature. Results here, show that some of these new activism and participatory styles such as clicktivism (Halupka, 2014), lead to more visible political action.

This study reveals the need for scholars to move beyond the differences of the logics and embrace what they have in common as the advancement in communication technology has made it almost impossible to see political participation as something that occurs only in a strong, thick, deliberative ties between citizens neither does it help to see it as pervasive. Rather, it should be seen as dualities where one helps the other. Marsh and Akram (2015) made this point when they argued that 'connective action and personal action frames are becoming increasingly important, but if citizens are to effect change this still usually involves collective action' (Marsh & Akram, 2015, p. 641).

From these findings, this study argues that clicktivism is a legitimate political participation activity. These findings show that rather than look at the variance in the logics of collective and connective action, researchers should examine their relationship and use that to inform their research. In effect, instead of studying one in isolation of the other, scholars should juggle the two logics to see which best describe the result of their study.

Bennett and Segerberg (2013) have started this discussion in their 'when logics collide' Chapter. According to them, 'one might expect the ideal types of connective and collective action to appear in pockets, layers, and overlap within the same protest space' (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013, p. 200).

This study considers the logics of connective and collective action in a continuum. Unlike other scholars (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012, 2013), this study argues that when logics collide, that it is salient that researchers show where the result leans more. For example, the results of this study as well as the nature of the #nottooyoungtorun campaign show a crossover of 'crowd-enabled networks' and 'organisationally enabled networks' in the typology of collective and connective action network' (Bennett & Segerberg, 2013, p. 45). When logics collide, this study suggests 'collective action' to depict when a study leans more to connective action and 'collnective action' to represent studies that leans more to collective action. In this study, the logics collided. However, the study leans more to crowd-enabled networks. This means that the study is 'conllective action' based than 'collnective action'. Although there were civil society groups that championed the #nottooyoungtorun bill, they relied on the people to hassle their lawmakers into passing the bill.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study found common themes from the tweets and posts from Facebook and Twitter. These themes were analysed based on the phase of the data collection. phase one, that is during the debate of the bill, the major themes were educating one another. That is followed by contacting and shaming their leaders. Phase two, that is, the signing of the bill into law, had the theme of 'aloha' and obeisance, as the overwhelming themes. People were congratulating one another and the leadership of the House of Representatives, Senate and the President after the bill was signed into law.

It is also the conclusion of this study that clicktivism is a germane political participation activity. The study argues that clicktivism encompasses a vital aspect of all contemporary connective action movements, that is, the fusion of individual views by means of personalised action frames and project-based methods (Halupka, 2018). Irrespective of arena definition of political and participatory legitimacy, connective action more broadly, and clicktivism in particular, has emerged as a feasible substitute to traditional avenues. Consequently, this study concludes that clicktivism is legitimate political participation in that it impacts the political.

This study recommends further examination of clicktivism and the logic of connective action in Nigeria to help produce a body of research in the area of digital activism and political communication. This will help in the deepening of the theorisation of these concepts and hypotheses.

References

- Adetayo, O. (2018). Buhari Signs Not-Too-Young-To-Run Bill into law. Punch. Retrieved from <https://punchng.com/breaking-buhari-signs-not-too-young-to-run-bill-into-law/>
- Anajama, C. (2018). Not Too Young To Run: From a hashtag to a law. Retrieved from <https://www.thecable.ng/not-young-run-hashtag-law>
- Bang, H. P. (2011). The politics of threats: late-modern politics in the shadow of neoliberalism. *Critical Policy Studies*, 5(4), 434-448.
- Beck, U. (1994). Reflexive Modernisation. In *The Reinvention of Politics: Towards a Theory of Reflexive Modernisation* (pp. 56-110). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Beck, U. (1997). *The Reinvention of Politics: Rethinking Modernity in the Global Social Order* (R. Mark, Trans.). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Beck, U., Giddens, A., & Lash, S. (1994). *Reflexive modernization: Politics, tradition and aesthetics in the modern social order*. Cambridge: Stanford University Press.
- Bennett, W. L. (2012). The personalization of politics political identity, social media, and changing patterns of participation. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 644(1), 20-39.
- Bennett, W. L., Breunig, C., & Givens, T. (2008). Communication and political mobilization: Digital media and the organization of anti-Iraq war demonstrations in the US. *Political Communication*, 25(3), 269-289.
- Bennett, W. L., & Segerberg, A. (2011). Digital media and the personalization of collective action: Social technology and the organization of protests against the global economic crisis. *Information, Communication & Society*, 14(6), 770-799.
- Bennett, W. L., & Segerberg, A. (2012). The logic of connective action: Digital media and the personalization of contentious politics. *Information, Communication & Society*, 15(5), 739-768.
- Bennett, W. L., & Segerberg, A. (2013). *The logic of connective action: Digital media and the personalization of contentious politics*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bennett, W. L., Segerberg, A., & Walker, S. (2014). Organization in the crowd: peer production in large-scale networked protests. *Information, Communication & Society*, 17(2), 232-260.
- Bennett, W. L., Wells, C., & Freelon, D. (2011). Communicating civic engagement: Contrasting models of citizenship in the youth web sphere. *Journal of Communication*, 61(5), 835-856.
- Bimber, B., Flanagin, A. J., & Stohl, C. (2005). Reconceptualizing collective action in the contemporary media environment. *Communication theory*, 15(4), 365.
- Bosch, T. J. (2017). Twitter activism and youth in South Africa: The case of#

- RhodesMustFall. *Information Communication, & Society*. 20(2), 221-232.
- Breuer, A., & Farooq, B. (2012). Online political participation: Slacktivism or efficiency increased activism? Evidence from the Brazilian Ficha Limpa campaign. Paper presented at the ISA Annual Convention, San Diego.
- Cohen, C., & Kahne, J. (2012). *Participatory Politics: New Media and Youth Participatory Action*. Oakland: YPP Research Network. Retrieved February 1, 2020 from http://ypp.dmlcentral.net/sites/all/files/publications/YPP_Survey_Report_Full.pdf.
- Dennis, J. (2019). #stopslacktivism: Why Clicks, Likes, and Shares Matter. In *Beyond Slacktivism* (pp. 25-69). Interest Group, Advocacy and Democracy Series: Palgrave Macmillan, Cham
- Etika, D. (2018). USE OF PRINT MEDIA IN PROPAGATING NOT TOO YOUNG TO RUN BILL IN NIGERIA: A STUDY OF SELECTED NEWSPAPERS. *International Journal on Transformations of Media, Journalism and Mass Communication*, 3(1), 45-59.
- Fenton, N., & Barassi, V. (2011). Alternative media and social networking sites: The politics of individuation and political participation. *The Communication Review*, 14(3), 179-196.
- Freelon, D. (2014). Online Civic Activism: Where Does It Fit? *Policy & Internet*, 6(2), 192-198.
- Giddens, A. (1991). *The consequences of modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Giddens, A. (1999). *The third way: The renewal of social democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gladwell, M. (2010). Why The Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted. *New Yorker*. Retrieved from http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/10/04/101004fa_fact_gladwell?currentPage=all
- Gladwell, M. (2011). From innovation to revolution-do social media made protests possible: An absence of evidence. *Foreign Aff.*, 90, 153.
- Halpin, D., Vromen, A., Vaughan, M., & Raissi, M. J. (2018). Online petitioning and politics: the development of Change.org in Australia. *Australian Journal of Political Science* 53(4), 428-445.
- Halupka, M. (2014). Clicktivism: A systematic heuristic. *Policy & Internet*, 6(2), 115-132.
- Halupka, M. (2016). The rise of information activism: how to bridge dualisms and reconceptualise political participation. *Information, Communication & Society*, 19(10), 1487-1503.
- Halupka, M. (2018). The legitimisation of clicktivism. *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 53(1), 130-141.

- Hari, S. I. (2014). The Evolution of Social Protest in Nigeria: The Role of Social Media in the “# OccupyNigeria” Protest. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention*, 3(9), 33-39.
- Harvard University Institute of Politics, H. (2013). *Survey of Young Americans' Attitudes Towards politics and Public Service*. Retrieved from http://www.iop.harvard.edu/sites/default/files_new/spring_poll_13_Topline.pdf
- Hay, C. (2007). *Why we hate politics*. Cambridge: John Wiley and Sons.
- Hay, C. (2014). Depoliticisation as process, governance as practice: what did the 'first wave' get wrong and do we need a 'second wave' to put it right? *Policy & Politics*, 42(2), 293-311.
- Hirst, P. (1999). Carl Schmitt's Decisionism. In C. Mouffe (Ed.), *The Challenge of Carl Schmitt* (pp. 7-17). London: Verso.
- Howard, P. N. (2014). Participation, Civics and Your Next Coffee Maker. *Policy & Internet*, 6(2), 199-201.
- Howard, P. N. (2015). *Pax Technica: How the Internet of Things May Set Us Free or Lock Us Up*. New York: Yale University Press.
- Ibrahim, B. H. (2013). Nigerians Usage of Facebook during 2012 Occupy Nigeria Protests: a. Between Networked and Real Public Spheres. *Science Journal of Researcher*, 5(7), 55-64.
- Jensen, M. S., Neumayer, C., Rossi, L. (2020). ‘Brussels will land on its feet like a cat’: motivations for memefying# Brusselslockdown. *Information, Communication & Society* 23(1), 59-75.
- Karpf, D. (2010). Online political mobilization from the advocacy group's perspective: Looking beyond clicktivism. *Policy & Internet*, 2(4), 7-41.
- Khan, G. F. (2017). Social media analytics. In *Social Media for Government* (pp. 93-118): Springer.
- Kristofferson, K., White, K., & Peloza, J. (2014). The nature of slacktivism: How the social observability of an initial act of token support affects subsequent prosocial action. *Journal of Consumer Research* 40(6), 1149-1166.
- Lee, Y.H., & Hsieh, G. (2013). Does slacktivism hurt activism? The effects of moral balancing and consistency in online activism. Paper presented at the Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, Paris France.
- Literat, I., Markus, S. J. (2019). ‘Crafting a way forward’: online participation, craftivism and civic engagement in Ravelry’s Pussyhat Project group. *Information, Communication & Society*, 23(2), 1-16.
- Marsh, D., & Akram, S. (2015). In conclusion. *Policy Studies*, 36(6), 640-643.
- Marwick, A., & Boyd, D. (2014). ‘It's just drama’: teen perspectives on conflict and

- aggression in a networked era. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 17(9), 1187-1204.
- McCaffrie, B., & Marsh, D. (2013). Beyond mainstream approaches to political participation: A response to Aaron Martin. *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 48(1), 112-117.
- McChesney, R. W. (2013). *Digital disconnect: How capitalism is turning the Internet against democracy*. New York: New Press.
- Miller, W., & Shanks, M. (1996). *The Changing America Voter*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press.
- Morozov, E. (2009a). From Slacktivism to Activism. Retrieved from http://neteffect.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/09/05/from_slacktivism_to_activism
- Morozov, E. (2009b). Iran: Downside to the "Twitter Revolution". *Dissent*, 56(4), 10-14.
- Morozov, E. (2014). *To save everything, click here: The folly of technological solutionism*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Norris, P. (2002). *Democratic Phoenix: Re-inventing Political Activism*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Norris, P. (2007). Political activism: New challenges, new opportunities. In C. S. Boix, S (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of comparative politics* (pp. 628-652). New York: Oxford University Press.
- O y s t o n , G . (2 0 1 2) . We Got Trouble. Retrieved from <http://visiblechildren.tumblr.com/post/18890947431/we-got-trouble>
- Pew Research Center, P. (2013). Trust in Government Nears Record Low, But Most Federal Agencies Are Viewed Favorably. Retrieved from <http://www.people-press.org/2013/10/18/trust-in-government-nears-record-low-but-most-federal-agencies-are-viewed-favorably/>
- Piat, C. (2019). Slacktivism: Not simply a means to an end, but a legitimate form of civic participation. *Canadian Journal of Family*, 11(1), 162-179.
- Piven, F. F., & Cloward, R. (2000). *Why Americans still don't Vote: And why Politicians want it that way*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Putnam, R. D. (1996). The strange disappearance of civic America. *American Prospect*, 24(1), 34-49.
- Putnam, R. D. (2000). *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Rafail, P. J. (2018). Nonprobability sampling and Twitter: Strategies for semibounded and bounded populations. *Social Science Computer Review*, 36(2), 195-211.
- Rotman, D., Vieweg, S., Yardi, S., Chi, E., Preece, J., Shneiderman, B., Glaisyer, T. (2011). From slacktivism to activism: participatory culture in the age of social media. In CHI'11 Extended Abstracts on Human Factors in Computing Systems (pp. 819-822). Vancouver, Canada: ACM.

- Schmitt, C. (2008). *The concept of the political: Expanded edition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Schroeder, S., Currin, E., Washington, E., Curcio, R., & Lundgren, L. (2019). "Like, Share, Comment," and Learn: Transformative Learning in Online Anti-Trump Resistance Communities. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 70(2), 12-55.
- Stoker, G. (2006). *Why politics matters: making democracy work*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Suraju, O. (2017). Pursuing Its Self-Serving Agenda, National Assembly Kills 'Not Too Young To Run' Bill. Retrieved from <http://saharareporters.com/2017/07/16/pursuing-its-self-serving-agenda-national-assembly-kills-not-too-young-run-bill>
- Tufekci, Z. (2014). The Medium and the Movement: Digital Tools, Social Movement Politics, and the End of the Free Rider Problem. *Policy & Internet*, 6(2), 202-208.
- Tukur, S. (2018). Buhari signs "Not Too Young To Run" bill. *Premium Times*. Retrieved from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/270538-breaking-buhari-signs-not-too-young-to-run-bill.html>
- Uwalaka, T. (2019). Social Media and the Rise of Digital Activism among Students in Nigeria. *Journal of Communication and Media Research*, 11(2), 11-25.
- Uwalaka, T. (2017). *Mobile Internet and the Rise of Digital Activism Among University Students in Nigeria*. PhD Dissertation, University of Canberra.
- Uwalaka, T. (2016). *Muzzling the Fifth Estate: An Analysis of the 2015 'Social Media' Bill in Nigeria*. Paper presented at the Australian and New Zealand Communication Association Conference: Creating Space in the Fifth Estate, Newcastle. <https://anzca2016.files.wordpress.com/2016/06/program170616v4-docx.pdf>
- Uwalaka, T. (2015). *Nairaland and the Reconstruction of the Public Sphere in Nigeria*. Paper presented at the Australia and New Zealand Communication Association Conference: Rethinking Communication, Space and Identity, Queenstown, New Zealand.
- Uwalaka, T., Rickard, S., & Watkins, J. (2018). Mobile social networking applications and the 2012 Occupy Nigeria protest. *Journal of African Media Studies*, 10(1), 3-19.
- Uwalaka, T., & Watkins, J. (2018). Social Media as the Fifth Estate in Nigeria: An Analysis of the 2012 Occupy Nigeria Protest. *African Journalism Studies*, 39(4), 22-41.
- Uwalaka, T., & Watkins, J. (2017). Social Media vs Mainstream Media: An Analysis of the 2012 Occupy Nigeria Protest. In L. Allen (Ed.), *6th Annual International Conference on Journalism & Mass Communication* (pp. 59-68). Singapore: Global Science and Technology Forum.

- Uzor, D. I. (2019). Young Women's Struggle for Political Participation in Nigeria: Examining the 'Not Too Young To Run' Movement. (Masters), International Institute of International Studies, The Hague.
- Vromen, A. (2017). Digital citizenship and political engagement. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- White, M. (2010). Clicktivism is Ruining Leftist Activism. The Guardian. <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/aug/12/clicktivism-ruining-leftist-activism>
- YIAGA Africa. (2018). Not Too Young to Run Age Reduction Law. Retrieved from <https://www.yiaga.org/resources/nottooyoungtorun-age-reduction-law/>
- Zuckerman, E. (2013). Rewire: Digital Cosmopolitans in the Age of Connection. New York: WW Norton & Company.
- Zuckerman, E. (2014). New Media, New Civics? Policy & Internet, 6(2), 151-168.