

Digital Uprisings and the Technocratic Turn: Assessing Nepal's Trajectory as a Blueprint for Nigeria

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Abstract

Purpose: This article focuses on the transformation from democratic discontent to modern digital dissent as seen in the 2025 uprising led by youth in Nepal, culminating with the election of an interim Prime Minister on Discord as an early example of media activism, and beginning the process of transitioning toward a technocratic order from an actual change through mass protests. The investigation also covered the #ENDSARS protest in Nigeria in 2020 to understand why it failed to achieve the same success enjoyed by the Nepal protests despite both being orchestrated using digital media applications.

Methods: A systems comparative case study design was employed to investigate the phenomenon of youth-driven digital disruption in Nepal and Nigeria. This research combines academic sources with proof from global news, policy papers, and studies of digital media about hashtag campaigns and memes on platforms like Discord, TikTok, and X.

Findings: The findings attribute Nepal's success to a few things: anti-corruption issues coming together, smart Discord use for command, and an unstable political leadership. On the other hand, even with its digital strength, the #EndSARS movement in Nigeria suffered. Several factors explain the lack of stronger action, most importantly the absence of a clear plan after the protests and the disruption of the protests because of ethnic, sectarian, and religious divisions.

Originality: This paper provides a novel comparative framework by juxtaposing Nepal's successful 2025 'digital coup' against Nigeria's arrested #EndSARS movement to isolate the specific political opportunity structures required for digital dissent to produce tangible change.

Keywords: Digital Mobilization, Digital Coup, Technocracy, Gen Z Activism, #ENDSARS.

Introduction

Currently, many places around the world are experiencing a widespread weariness of democracy. This suggests about observing dissatisfaction with key democratic institutions like political parties, media, government, courts, and legislatures, according to recent studies (Dean, 2024; Seyd, 2025), by Gen Z citizens in older and newer democracies. This is causing a problem with how valid these institutions seem to be (Valgarðsson et al., 2025). In this gap, a different player has appeared from online networks, which now are key for public discussion: Generation Z (Jude & P, 2025; Reilly & Hunting, 2025). This group knows digital tools and navigates a hybrid reality of online and offline life increasingly using the tools of their upbringing not only for social engagement but also for radical political engagement. This changes how social movements look, because they are moving away from the old, tightly controlled structures to more flexible, open, and media-aware networks (Hassoun et al., 2023; Nhedzi & Azionya, 2025).

This global phenomenon is not, however, uniformly expressed or prognosticated; from the climate activism inspired by Greta Thunberg (Matejova & Spáč, 2025) to anti-establishment protests in Chile and Iran (Abbasi, 2025; Carvajal, 2025), young people are scrambling with the architectures built by one platform to the next in their attempts to

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bypass traditional gatekeepers and deliver a forceful critique of the status quo. Their activism often welcomes the new media logic whereby, as powerful as any political manifesto, the viral meme supports opinion mobilization; where coordination is not in halls of unions but instead through encrypted channels and algorithmically curated feeds (Nikunen, 2019). This approach to journalism uses alternative methods. It's a type of communication where people get involved to shape discussions, decide what's important, and start action outside of standard news settings.

Recent political shifts in Nepal take scholarly direction. The events of 2025 civil unrest in Nepal would be strong and paradigmatic cases in point of this very dynamic. Here, a leaderless movement of young Nepalese sought weaponizing the aesthetics of internet culture and deployment facilities of the likes of Discord to achieve what years of conventional opposition politics had failed to do: forcing a direct confrontation with corrupt power and creating an interim technocratic government (P. Dahal et al., 2025; *The Kathmandu Post*, 2025). This paper interrogates this 'digital coup' not as isolated anomaly but as a critical case of how creating the architecture of digital communication includes acts of journalism and radical democratic renewal in the 21st century.

In the early weeks of September 2025, Nepal's political trajectory was fundamentally reshaped not by traditional party machinations or violent uprising, but by a digitally-native insurgency led by Generation Z students and young citizens. Leveraging social media platforms like Facebook, X and Discord for coordination, TikTok for dissemination, and Instagram for viral satire, this amorphous movement channeled widespread public anger over corruption into a potent political force. The large-scale protests and demonstrations took place across Nepal, predominantly organized by Generation Z students and young citizens (P. Dahal et al., 2025). The protests began following a nationwide ban on numerous social media platforms where hashtags such as 'Nepo Kid' and 'Nepo Babies' have been trending online, gaining momentum after the government decided to block unregistered platforms following complaints of the ostentatious lifestyle of family of political office holders (*The Kathmandu Post*, 2025), as well as frustrations with corruption and display of wealth by government officials and their families, as well as allegations of profligacy of public funds (*India Today*, 2025; Sharma, 2021).

The movement expanded to encompass broader issues of governance, transparency, and political accountability (Ellis-Petersen, 2025; Gurubacharya, 2025; *The Himalayan Times*, 2025). The protests escalated with violence against public officials and vandalism of government and political buildings taking place throughout the country. Their actions culminated in the peaceful resignation of high-ranking officials (Abe, 2025; Mohamed, 2025) and the unprecedented installation of an interim technocratic government via Discord (Kharel, 2025; Tagermann, 2025). This event transcended national borders, capturing global attention as a potential blueprint for digital-age civic mobilization (see Figure 1). It presented a compelling case study: a seemingly leaderless, meme-fueled movement achieving concrete political results, challenging entrenched powers with their own tools of communication and community.



Figure 1. Protesters in Nepal (source: Katmandu Post, 2025)

This paper seeks to critically interrogate the much vaunted ‘digital coup’ phenomena of Nepal and analyze the implications of the phenomena for the rest of the fragile democracies. The objective goes beyond description into three things: *first*, the systematic analysis of mechanisms and conditions underlying Nepal’s successful experience; *second*, the theoretical context of digital activism and democratic innovations; and third, direct comparative analysis with Nigeria, with a vast, young but disillusioned population, in whose political destinies are, however, fairly different from the digital activism industry. This then is to differ, for thus far, there’s no one-size-fits-all model, but to challenge transposability of tactics, assess the viability of technocracy as a transitional solution, and conjure the requirements for such ill-fitting kinds of democratic engagement.

Nepal’s politics is digital success, unlike Nigeria, which stands as a phenomenon, an instance whose course is arrested and whose promise has not been realized. The largest and most democratic economy in Africa is the launchpad for disillusionment about devastating democracy (Babalola, 2024); all this brings back to the grievances that triggered the Nepal uprising. A pool of youths plagued by endemic and huge unemployment, to which the political class is perceived to be a very extractive and unaccountable body (Abuh, 2025; Kelong, 2025). This scenario is indeed the most fertile ground for significant digital activism, especially the 2020 #EndSARS protests against police brutality (see Figure 2). This movement showcased a highly dynamic facility in decentralized, youth-driven mobilization, leveraging social media to forge a very powerful counter-narrative, yielding even temporary tangible concessions (Ihejirika et al., 2015; Okpalaeke & Aboh, 2024; Omilusi, 2025).

Much more fatally, the Nigerian scenario demonstrates the total disconnect between massive mobilization and a practice of sustainable political disruption. The #EndSARS protest, while being an occasion in history, exposes the limits of digital dissent in an increasingly convoluted and resilient political environment. The #ENDSARS movement began as a popular hashtag and grew to include occupying public spaces, before the Lekki tollgate shooting of unarmed protesters by state forces (Ekeke, 2023; Okpalaeke & Aboh, 2024), these events expose structural limits that separate Nigeria from a country like Nepal. The factors involve a political elites backed by oil money, favors, and patronage, very split public areas divided by religious beliefs, and a state security group able to use cruel force (Bolarinwa & Osuji, 2022; Igbinedion & Osobase, 2025; Peter & Ndinojuo, 2024). So, Nigeria finds itself in a tantalizing paradox: It has pretty much a full stock of demographic and grievance-based ingredients for a ‘digital coup’, and yet it is equally configured socio-political architecture has thus far choked such energies, siphoning off

the much vibrant but underutilized block of youth potential for systemic change. It is this tension that renders the Nigerian case analytically fundamental.



Figure 2. #ENDSARS protesters confront police (source: Adeniyi Ademoroti, Author at African Arguments (2020))

Digital activism forms the backbone of this research. It surpasses Ukpong's realm of internet-generated awareness or 'slacktivism.' Digital platforms are organized and strategically focused on political and social change (Kumar et al., 2025; Leonel et al., 2024). In Nepal and Nigeria, people learned how platforms function by using encrypted Discord channels as virtual command centers (Kharel, 2025). Reports show narratives quickly spread on TikTok and X through algorithms (Ariel & Elishar, 2025; Gupta, 2025; Hong & Kim, 2016). People also built communities and used satire on Instagram (Friedman & Partis-Jennings, 2025; Literat & Kligler-Vilenchik, 2023). Digital activism has to be thought not of merely as a complementary tool, but of as the vast infrastructure of mobilization: real-time share, decentralized guidance, resilient networks without leaders who would escape the habitually political and media gatekeepers. The analysis remains focused on how such digitally-native repertoire of action contests and potentially disrupts entrenched political power.

Technocracy is a system where experts in specific fields make governmental decisions. These experts are chosen for their skills, not through elections or because they belong to a certain political party (Askim et al., 2025; Fernandez & Cheema, 2025; Migchelbrink, 2023; Zingariello & Thake, 2025). This is pertinent in evaluating the product of the Nepalese movement and its proposed applicability to Nigeria. The technocratic ideal is such that its alleged neutrality and efficiency may serve as an antidote to the patronage, corruption, and short-termism of party politics. This study poses a challenge to that assumption. It analyzes the potential threats that technocracy might pose to the democratic process, government oversight, and participation by citizens. The analysis assesses the likelihood of a temporary technocratic administration operating as a legitimate 'circuit-breaker' in a corrupt system or if it will merely imply a transition to a fresh--unaccountable--form of elitist governance.

Meme culture represents the distinct discursive and aesthetic dimension of contemporary youth-led movements. Internet memes, which are cultural ideas that spread quickly, like funny pictures or short videos with sarcastic words, are strong ways to talk about politics (Chang et al., 2021; Lestari et al., 2024; Moreno-Almeida, 2021). This paper looks at meme culture as more than just silly jokes; it is a clever way to persuade people. Memes lower the threshold of political involvement, not simplify complex issues of corruption into more emotional and shareable critiques, and create among peer solidarity where one senses irony with their generational identity (Lim, 2024; Ofori &

Dogbatse, 2023; Toscano & Fernández-Villanueva, 2025; Xing et al., 2024). They become framing devices that utter ‘other’ to political elites while glorifying movements themselves. This paper explores how this seemingly silly culture became an important tool for getting people active in politics in Nepal and how it might do the same in Nigeria's active online communities.

Youth political agency sees Generation Z as active political players now, not just as passive people or the future, which can change the system (Ammassari et al., 2025; Dewi et al., 2025). This study moves beyond simply locating youth within adult-led movements or an uninterested cohort: Youth are seen as agents of capital- a specific form of capital-digital nativity, skepticism of traditional institutions and a readiness to use nonconventional forms (Choroszewicz, 2025; Rodríguez-Camacho et al., 2024). Agency is explored in the process of defining emergent political spaces online, the invention of alternative political discourses, and confrontation with power structures. This study compares how young people express themselves in Nepal and Nigeria. It looks at the situations that allow young people to turn their opinions into real political change.

This paper critically examines Nepal's 2025 ‘digital coup’ as a fledgling model of democratic disruption encompassing its constituent mechanisms and, most importantly, disparity with the Nigerian context. Instead of just describing the civic disruptions and their outcomes, a comparative study allows us to carefully isolate what exactly makes digital protests turn into real political changes? The scope encompasses an interrogation of tactical digital repertoires, the political opportunity structures they exploit, and the viability of technocratic governance as a proposed alternative to corrupt partisan systems. This investigation is guided by the following research objectives: *first*, to ascertain what led to the use of Discord by Nepal's Gen Z to fasttrack the process of political change, *second*, to find parallels with how Nigeria's youth have utilized digital activism for civil disobedience that leads to change in government policy, and *third*, to determine if technocracy offer a credible political alternative in contexts like Nigeria.

Meanwhile, these research objectives guided the following research questions: (RQ1) what enabled Nepal's Gen Z to catalyze political change through Discord?, (RQ2) how does this compare with Nigeria's youth and digital activism landscape?, and (RQ3) can technocracy offer a credible political alternative in contexts like Nigeria?

This study uses three supporting theories to study how digital disagreement is started, its setting, and its results. The Theory of Connective Action (Cieslik et al., 2018; Ingrams, 2017; Mirbabaie et al., 2021; Rodríguez-Camacho et al., 2024; Showden et al., 2025) provides a crucial alternative to traditional models of collective action. The theory suggests that in digital networks, sharing personalized messages might become a key way to organize (Ingrams, 2017; Mirbabaie et al., 2021). This could lessen the need to create for traditional groups, common beliefs, or strong leaders who could be compromised or targeted during these disturbances. This framework is key to understanding the decentralized, platform-centric qualities of movements in Nepal and Nigeria, bringing together the sharing of personalized memes and protest information on Discord and X to coordinate actions and build momentum without any centralized command structure. The Political Opportunity Structures were explored based on various scholars (Bandaiko & Arku, 2025; Haines, 2025; Santilli & Scaramuzzino, 2025; Satoh et al., 2025) and will be further explored to understand why some contexts are friendly, while for others are not, as regards connective action. This theory looks at the external political situation. It considers things, such as how open or closed government groups are, how steady political groups are, and how able the government is to either control or put down social actions.

Using this approach lets us compare Nepal, where political weakness and public anger made a chance for change, with Nigeria, where a stronger government has usually kept similar actions under control.

Finally, the results of mobilization assesses the theories of Technocratic Legitimacy (Bertsou, 2025; Esmark, 2020; Esmark et al., 2025; Iheuwa et al., 2024; Kentikelenis & Seabrooke, 2025). Technocracy grounds its legitimacy in the knowledge and neutral perspective of experts. This contrasts with how it views elected officials, who it sees as corrupt and inefficient. This scenario has the capacity to ignite conflict with how the concept of representation and accountability operate in a democratic environment (Urbinati, 2019). Thus such a critical evaluation is possible within the framework regarding what is expected to be the principal promise of such movements: whether legitimacy is restored by democratic renewal through removing a corrupt political class and giving it over to experts or whether such replacement makes things worse because what it introduces is an unaccountable form of elitist governance in a descriptive context like Nigeria's complex and pluralistic locale.

The rest of the paper proceeds to answering the research questions using a structured analysis; the theoretical framework and comparative methodology are laid in section 2. RQ1 is tackled in section 3, which is the dissection of RQ1. In other words, this is an anatomical dissection of the movement in Nepal while analyzing its digital tactics against the backdrop of the political circumstance that contributed to its advancement. The fourth section turns towards examining RQ1 to comprehend Nigeria's digital activism landscape through the prism of #EndSARS. This is done to detect considerable similarities and sharp divergences. Synthesis of RQ2 and RQ3 is done in the 5th section, which means comparing the two cases against a quite rigorous assessment of the prospects of a technocratic alternative for Nigeria. This section draws together our discourse to show possible problems and risks; the conclusion then answers the main research questions, mainly if the Nepal model can be replicated effortlessly.

Methods

This paper employs a systems comparative case study design to investigate the phenomenon of youth-driven digital disruption. This method was chosen because it is good at finding key things to study when you compare distinctly varied situations that still have a similar result. Through analyzing contrasting very different illustrations, the investigation can factor in many different nation-based attributes that might skew the outcomes. This research focuses on the politics and governance of Nepal and Nigeria. These countries were selected because they have different geographical, economic, and political situations. On the contrary, Nepal, in South Asia is now swaying into the post-conflict status of its political life after just recently adopting federalism (Chattopadhyay, 2025; Zipperer, 2025). Nigeria, a large federal state in West Africa, has a complex history of military rule; currently, it is in its 26th year of continuous democracy. Despite this, the country still functions in some ways like a highly militarized state. Its economy is heavily reliant on oil, which contributes to economic instability (Magdin, 2025; Ndinojuo, 2023). These strong differences make their similar potential for large-scale digital mobilization among young people an interesting topic for analysis. This approach is methodologically sound because observing a similar reason, such as digital engagement, leading to parallel results in such different places strengthens the argument for its importance. The most different logic is restricted along the shared factors like generational grievance and digital toolkits and systematically examines how different political opportunity structures, such

as state fragility in Nepal vis-a-vis entrenched elite power in Nigeria, ultimately decide the success or containment of a movement. This comparison goes beyond a simple look at the topic. It shows the needed conditions for digital disagreement to cause real political change.

This study uses a mixed-method approach to combine data, ensuring a thorough investigation. It starts with a review of academic papers from political science, media studies, and sociology. This review sets up the theoretical base for understanding digital activism, technocracy, and social movements. The insights gained from these literature then guide the interpretation of empirical data. Empirical evidence is drawn from three primary streams. *First*, news reports from international and local media are examined to create a timeline of events in Nepal and Nigeria and to identify possible biases in media coverage. *Second*, policy reports from groups like the World Bank, Transparency International, and local organizations offer background on corruption, governance, and political factors. A critical element of the analysis involves the systematic examination of existing reports on digital artifacts. Rather than collecting raw social media data, this study synthesizes and critically evaluates findings from digital media research firms, academic papers in media studies, and in-depth journalistic investigations that have already analyzed the public posts, hashtag campaigns, and meme content from platforms like X, TikTok, and Instagram. This would permit a second analysis of strong capacity to research the discursive patterns, tactical communication, and identity formation within these movements by using already established sources, be they peer-reviewed or professionally vetted. This study takes an iterative approach, setting digital trace data within the structure provided by policy reports, while using theoretical frameworks to examine both. The study can thus examine digital strategies in a way that is both rigorous and relevant.

Results

The huge political upheaval in Nepal, culminating into the interim technocratic government, is itself probably the biggest reference in paradigm shift concerning how change in the political arena is managed in the digital age. Thus, this section analyzes what comprises a 'digital coup' investigation into the precise mechanisms through which the decentralized movement of Gen Z activists has been able to do what has for long eluded traditional opponents. The analysis goes beyond social media use and emphasizes the synergistic play of three core ingredients. *First*, it is exploring the unique sociopolitical context of profound generational disillusionment and a specific political vacuum that provided a ripe opportunity structure. *Second*, it deconstructs the online arsenal. Such as as-how platforms like Discord have provided a secure, real-time command center for strategic coordination while TikTok and Instagram served as the frontlines for viral-meme-driven narrative building saturating the public sphere. Finally, it indicates causal pathways from online mobilization to offline results, demonstrating how this digitally native insurgency translated virtual dissent into tangible political concessions effectively forcing the resignations of the corrupt officials institutionalizing an expert-led governance demand. That three-part elucidation unveils the operational blueprint for a novel form of democratic disruption.

Not only was Nepal's successful digital uprising born from seed, but it drew very rich soil from a deep systemic failure and from generation ruptures. For many decades, an entrenched political class perceived as a self-serving cartel presided over rampant corruption and economic stagnation, such that the gap widened between the governing

elite and the masses (Biswas, 2025; Shahid et al., 2025). The semifilled discontent somehow came to consolidate itself into a very strong force with the emergence of a new Generation Z, a cohort that grew up through digital literacy but is now politically unequipped and battling unemployment and a future that looks to be stolen by kleptocracy. It was at that point of fusion when specific conditions made political opportunity alarming in terms of ordinary awareness. That is, disillusion in the present generation would significantly explode, as it did when displayed perceived impunity like that shown when it came to the ‘Nepo Kids’ scandal, a visceral symbol of systemic rot. Public anger and the perceived weakness of the ruling coalition seem to have created a critical moment. The traditional political system's legitimacy seems to have fallen so low that it was open to an unconventional challenge. These widespread complaints and the coalition's weak origins likely provided an opportunity for a digital generation to act and turn anger into political action (Biswas, 2025; Menon, 2025; Ndinojuo, 2023; Thapa, 2024).

The Nepalese movement's triumph was engineered through a sophisticated and synergistic digital arsenal, where each platform was strategically leveraged for a distinct tactical purpose. This was not mere social media activism but a coordinated deployment of digital tools that created an omnipresent and inescapable political front. It was a very integrated system that gave strength to the movement. Secret channels were used for private coordination, while video platforms helped produce emotional narratives. Spaces for internet memes allowed for cultural debate and strengthened group unity (de Guzman, 2025; NDTV, 2025; Rauniyar, 2025). This section breaks down that ecosystem, analyzing how the technical affordances of platforms like Discord, TikTok, and Instagram were weaponized into what became a coherent strategy. By looking at this digital toolkit, we will move beyond technology determinism to reveal the calculated operational logic that made it possible for a decentralized network to out--maneuver a traditional state apparatus.

As custom-designed for gaming communities, Discord through its peculiar architecture fit right into the strategic needs of an insurgent political movement and became, therefore, a command hub instead of mere social interaction. The architecture of Discord for private servers and channel topics allowed for more secure, organized and real-time environments unlike the broadcast-oriented application of platforms like X (formerly Twitter) or Instagram (Aquino et al., 2025; Eludu et al., 2016; Wiles & Simmons, 2022). The setup allowed for functional division of labor channels, like legal assistance, media monitoring, protest logistics, meme-making, without a communication channel being disturbed with so many activities done at the same time. It is akin to the quick briefing and debriefing tasks during military operation, for there can be fastness without much formality, but only the quickness is provided by virtual calls. Invite only were the most critical operational security servers of roles and permissions, filtering some participants, reducing possible infiltration, and allowing some bit of information to be kept out of the eyes of the state (de Viedma, 2025; Shrestha, 2025). Such was the mix of decentralization for resilience in adversity, segmentation for efficiency, and security/protection of information-it allowed a movement-without-edges to articulate a coherent strategy as well as synchronize action and adapt in real time outflank a classical hierarchical state apparatus poorly suited to counter such threats organized in this lively digital citadel.

Internet memes took on the status of an epicenter of sorts in political weaponry, with considerable power wielded. This was one of their major strengths to democratize

participation: if you had a cell phone, you could produce cheap memes and share them with friends to make an extensive political grievance accessible through hilarious visual satire. It has created a great bonding moment since the outset for a shared lingua franca in jokes and codes linking the otherwise heterogeneous youth generation against a common enemy—the political elite (Gupta, 2025; Sbordon, 2025). This was also, along with that turning point, when memes would begin to position tools by which all heavy lifting was being done methodically discrediting the legitimacy of the powerful (Onta, 2025). By such a framework, the juxtaposition of lavish lifestyles of ‘Nepokids’ with political promises brought to implementation in a reality corrupted to a greater or lesser degree trivialized once opaque corruption and developed into an emotional narrative of betrayal and generational theft. This cultural ridicule was not an ancillary process; it was, rather, a part of the strategy that disarticulated the state authority and vaulted a collective identity cast against the accepted framework through a shared subversive humor, impervious to the kind of propaganda that the state could construct.

The movement’s power was amplified not by using platforms in isolation, but through a sophisticated multi-platform synergy that created an inescapable digital front. They were able to forge vibrant protest communities on TikTok with every viral story (Ajayi et al., 2025; Rauniyar, 2025; Wheeler, 2025). Because short or sometimes crossover video explainers brought even the most complex grievances to life and spun them into very emotionally-charged stories making sense of the mass audience. Those considered simple here were easily redirected into Instagram, the only visual space that recreates and reaffirms communities and identities—through shareable memes and infographics. At the same time, X acted as a pressure valve and real-time broadcast; its public text-based character rapidly disseminated information, logistics for the protests, and relentless public scrutiny directed toward officials and media (R. Dahal, 2025; Sharma, 2025). The rise of social media has led to a closed-loop feedback system. These stories that have an emotional connection with the user are most seen on TikTok, Instagram serves as a confirmation tool for individual personal identities, and X becomes the third to make public accountability demands. This distribution of efforts accomplishes the widespread dissemination of opposition, even making difficult for official sources to provide other narrative forms.

The translation of digital mobilization into concrete change in the politics of Nepal has followed a direct, causal pathway—from coming together to irreversible political pressure. The digital space has almost become a way to seal agreements as intense meme debates and popular stories on public profiles changed individual public dissatisfaction into a clear call for responsibility (Hasugian et al., 2025). After that, planned actions happened offline because of unity formed online; Nepo Kids then became a common way to talk about misconduct around the country. The specific plans laid out in hack Discord servers facilitated fast, massive physical protests that demonstrated the organizational depth and popular legitimacy of the movement, extending beyond the mere online sentiment to become palpable street power (Thapa, 2025). Under the influence of this vicious combination of public shame and mass mobilization, the state’s ability to control the narrative essentially collapsed. The political pressure became unbearable for the ruling elite, and key officials were forced to resign due to being besieged on the digital front by the movement, which relentlessly framed them, with street protests now visibly escalating (Ellis-Petersen & Pokharel, 2025). This left a political vacuum filled by the movement, which institutionalized its core demand. The demand for clean governance that had been birthed and propelled online directly resulted in the formation of an interim

technocratic government that was claimed to be a logical antidote to the corrupt partisan system just destroyed by the movement. This example shows how digital noise can be strategically employed to create a clear political signal with enough strength to reshape a country.

Our conversation has been centered on Nepal as a digitally engineered political success. In contrast, Nigeria may experience real change, but its future remains unclear. Now, the analysis turns to Nigeria, the most populous democracy in Africa, which has a large, young population facing corruption and failure in politics. Nigeria has witnessed its fair share of digital movements birthed by the young; in 2020, an undercurrent of global attention was thrust upon police brutality as youth protested against the #EndSARS for online organizing that could easily flow (Omilusi, 2025). The other side of the coin is that the #EndSARS may, however, reveal a poignant difference from the Nepalese model. Truthfully, there are several overlapping aspects of grievances and operational approaches; generally, these are issues that have almost always cast digital activism in Nigeria under a more sinister design. This section seeks to unpack this ill-fated trajectory of a resilient political establishment, deep ethno-religious divisions, and instances of state capacity for violent repression, which have historically kept digital dissent energies suppressed and thus restricted any considerable transformation of those energies into protest with a political restructuring dimension.

The Nigerian political terrain is a text-book definition of havoc because of the chasm between the old and young population in the country and a failing governance structure. Nigeria is faced with endemic corruption and a political system that has made it well-functioning as a patronage network, to siphon public wealth and paralyze essential public services, from electricity to education (Arowosegbe, 2017; Roy et al., 2023). The failure that is systemic is exacerbated by severe economic distress, ranging from rampant inflation to possibly the world's highest rates of unemployment among young people. Nigeria's age structure is the most dangerous and lethal attribute that Nigeria possesses; with an almost median age of 18, Nigeria is dominated by an overwhelmingly majority of Generation Z and young Millennials, digitally connected, politically aware, and disproportionately suffering the burden of this governance collapse (Oduwole & Ibrahim, 2025). Thus, creating a flammable dynamic: the most massive, tech-savvy youth population aware of its potential and power systematically marginalized by an aging, unaccountable political elite (Akinyemi & Mobolaji, 2022). Thus, the material for dissent is created and becomes the same raw material as witnessed by Nepal-Nigeria, which is bound to always be perceived as a tinderbox, with the inherent, yet unfulfilled, potential for large-scale political disruption.

#ENDSARS was the scenario that thrusts Nigeria into the most significant precedent of youth-led using an avant-garde communication tool, digital mobilization per world government's norms, the defiance which has made quite some potential while exposing many limitations. They were a professional movement that was adept at using online media to mobilize small protests all over the country, raise funding for operations, and create unparalleled international network awareness about police brutality, all of which forced a public dissolution by the government of this notorious SARS unit (Akinwotu, 2020). All this shows some models that are tactically related to Nepal: decentralized organization, very effective narrative management via viral hashtags and threads, and the widespread-but-transient appeal that goes across divides. However, there are great lessons from #EndSARS. Because of its highly decentralized nature and the absence of any formalized political strategy other than the single-issue demands, it easily

proved vulnerable (Abimbade et al., 2022). The onslaught of deadly state violence at Lekki toll gate and subsequent fragmentation of the movement also revealed the major limitations of digital momentum in dealing with repressive state apparatuses (Iwuoha & Aniche, 2022). The main point is that even though digital tools can help groups of people get what they want, keeping that energy going means turning it into real political change, like setting up new ways to govern. This calls for careful political planning after the protests, which #EndSARS was not able to do early on.

The #EndSARS movement shares parallels with Nepal's digital coup, revealing a common playbook for 21st-century dissent. The initial instigation for rebellion in both instances was public anger, anger that is built on frustrations with the system, where the government constantly complains about the paucity of resources, yet live opulent lifestyles with family and friends. A lifestyle which can be passed down through generations and shown through physical actions. Online activism can turn into actual substantial numbers. *Secondly*, the digital coordination of these movements is itself highly complex and therefore defies inference. Like Nepal, whose organizers relied on Discord, those in Nigeria put up logistics in real-time through X and even encrypted messaging apps while making other pages where resource sharing and strategy of planning happen within a hired team, resulting in a much resilient structure without leaders that made it difficult to dismantle by the state (Abimbade et al., 2022). Digital ability allowed for the third parallel, a large increase in global awareness. #EndSARS became a trending topic globally and internationally reinforced through celebrities and media that exerted huge pressure from within the outside towards Nigeria, somewhat reflecting the global view on Nepal. Also, both movements had exactly public sympathy in the moral aspects unambiguously: plain police brutality in Nigeria and clear and open public political corruption in Nepal. The frame was a very easily narratable 'young against the corrupt establishment' defending the legitimacy of cause thus giving the movements wide domestic support which temporarily overshadowed the usual societal divides. These parallels confirm that the foundational elements for a successful digital-political movement were present in Nigeria.

The main contrast between the events in Nepal and #EndSARS lies in mobilization. After #EndSARS in Nigeria, a cohesive, non-violent political plan did not come together. In Nepal, the movement focused on a specific demand: a technocratic government (John, 2025; Mulmi, 2025). #EndSARS, while very powerful in drawing people together, stayed focused on protesting police brutality. It lacked a plan for changing the political system it challenged. Because it did not have a clear political aim, the movement had little power to negotiate real change after SARS was disbanded, despite its moral force. The government took advantage of this gap through violence, such as the shooting at the Lekki Tollgate (Mustapha et al., 2022; Udenze, 2025). It appears the Nepalese state should consider the demands of its population, while in Nigeria; citizens are forced to accept harsh realities to maintain the current political order. Not only this extreme form of violence broke what remained of the protesters, but it also carried a chilling message on the limits of dissent, fundamentally altering the calculative risk for participation, and highlighted in the Nigerian establishment resilience compared to that of Nepal.

It further proved to be a great weakness for the movement, along ethno-religious lines of fragmentation. It started to transcend them; the state and political actors managed to inject their divisive narratives into the space, calling the movement a sham ethnic-secessionist plot (Johnson, 2020; Proshare, 2020). Thus, through the weaponization of Nigeria's deep-seated cleavages, the wide and national coalition that matters in sustaining

challenges to central power was dispersed. In contrast, the Nepali movement sustained an encompassing national grievance of corruption, a frame that is far less susceptible to such tactical divisions. These differences, reactive state strategy, more repressive state machinery, and a fragmented social fabric contained the Nigerian disruptive potential, showing that digital mobilization will not work plus explain without a coherent political working strategy and weak political opportunity structure.

Nigeria's socio-political architecture presents formidable structural barriers that systematically hinder the emergence of a unified, Nepal-style digital coup. Relatively speaking, Nepal has a stronger cohesive national identity; they have a local language 'Nepali' as the national language with over 100 other local languages spoken (Gurung, 2024; Mohn, 2022), while Nigeria's public sphere is very fragmented, starting with a foreign national language (English), and over 500 local languages dominated by the three dominant languages (Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa) (Fasan, 2015; Tirosh, 2024). Political elites take these fragmented interests to harvest by using divisive narratives, as for example in the ongoing attempt to segment #EndSARS within a secessionist discourse and documented in government-orchestrated conviction of the leader of Independent People of Biafra Nnamdi Kanu using a deeply compromised judiciary (Musa, 2025; Premium Times, 2025). This has made it impossible to form a simple national grievance front as there are always strong government-sponsored counter opposition to any civil protest with the counter protesters mobilized using government vehicles and resources (Amnesty International, 2021; Oluwatoye, 2021).

Nigeria's leaders, strengthened by substantial oil wealth and established patronage, have the resources to manage opposition, withstand temporary protests, and maintain loyalty through patronage (Okere & Osemeke, 2020). Their political strength within the country is considerable. All of this creates a much more resilient establishment that is less vulnerable to public pressure when compared to Nepal's relatively nascent political class.

Most importantly, a history of state violence really serves as an effective deterrent; killing protests under #EndSARS at Lekki Toll Gate showed how much the state is willing to go to extreme lengths with violent force to keep up the status quo, which set a very different kind of cost-benefit analysis for protest participation as opposed to the quite peaceful surrender of Nepal. These elite entrenchments, fragmentations, and repressive state structures, when put together, work to contain and dissipate the energies of digital dissent within the confines of not consolidating into transformative political change. These patterns are causing fragmentation, the entrenchment of elite structures, and a repressive signature of the state to work together for containing and dissipating the energies of digital dissent. To allow dissent to have a political impact, groups might want to keep their separate identities instead of becoming one big group.

The analysis, on purpose, sets out to compare political maneuvers with the outcomes so as to inquire into directly the feasibility of the Nepal model being transferred. Whereas the digital tactics; decentralized coordination, meme warfare, and multi-platform synergy-are eminently transferable, the effectiveness is mediated by largely different political opportunity structures. Within a society fragmented as that of Nigeria, where the government is repressive, it will be very difficult to achieve any tremendous outcome through such methods. Thus arises a haunting central interrogation of RQ3: the feasibility of technocracy. While technocracy could have been a straightforward remedy to a reality-based governance issue in Nepal, that same suggestion imposes huge challenges of legitimacy and feasibility in Nigeria. The central question started to change from exploring a future possibility of a technocratic model in Nigeria unto whether such

a model would theoretically withstand the complexities of federalism interwoven with established patronage networks or would in practice be absorbed by them. Digital everywhere was just another one among so many alternatives; its political success very much will depend on local conditions. The very end outcome, which is the technocratic intervention, is not a given conclusion, but rather varies on the actual structural conditions that the movement seeks to amend.

Nepal and Nigeria used similar digital strategies, but the results differ. This difference stems from how their political structures, movement organization, and collective identities are shaped. The political opportunity structures diverged considerably to critically shape each movement's chances. Nepal's political system, marked by a fragile coalition government and a fairly recent history of constitutional instability, presented an open and relatively weak structure. It was possible to create steadily through pressure from the public a crisis of legitimacy that might proceed in a cascading manner all the way to the resignation of officials in power, opening space for occupation by the movement's influence. In contrast, Nigeria's political environment is deeply entrenched into affairs of duopoly strengthened by petro-wealth and patron-clientelism. It is a structure that is very resistant to protests; it can absorb protests, make tactical concessions to disperse resistance, such as abolishing SARS, and exert coercive force against any threat to the heart of the political establishment; thus an opportunity more closed for fundamental disruption.

The organizing structures shed deeper light on the divergences involved. Though decentralized, their networks were basically qualitatively different. Nepal's decentralization functioned as an organized swarm with a single purpose, suggested by the use of platforms like Discord for strategic coordination in broad consensus of national identity. Nigeria's decentralization was relatively disjointed. Although digital tools may help in mobilization, the networks of the movement have always remained propped upon the deep ethno-religious cleavages in the country. The unavailability of a coherent nationwide network made it difficult for any sustainable and unified effort against the state and political actors' narrative-driven division, thus forfeiting tremendous staying power.

Framing processes were equally pivotal. The unification of all segments of society against a central grievance referred to as "corruption" was successfully achieved by the Nepalese movement. This frame applied to the political class as a collective enemy and compelled its acceptance into a powerful singular narrative mouthpiece of generational struggle. In Nigeria, however, while #EndSARS was heralded with the very common unifying frame against police brutality, the nature of the narrative remained prone to splintering. The state's ability to inject ethno-religious narratives and the pre-existing societal divisions meant the collective identity was more fragile, preventing the consolidation of a sustained (Maishanu, 2020; Oyeleke, 2020), singular grievance that could override sub-national identities.

Nepal has generated the digital guide, which includes toolkits of tactics that are easily applicable to the Nigeria case. Their usefulness ranges from direct applicability to Nigeria such as having tools like Discord for coordination and meme warfare for narrative-building. Indeed, the youth of Nigeria are in full swing with those mediums, besides, nothing can communicate emotions as well as satire across boundaries. The core principle of multi-platform synergy is also highly transferable, using each platform for its native strength.

While the conditions of Nigeria remain the ever-unique ones restricting strategy utility for these platforms; Discord might be considered viable, but preconditions must prevail; these being an already constituted united national movement for a more effective unified command. This is not really the case in Nigeria, given its societal divisions. Memes may be created, but the power to forge an identity into a single unifying form is diluted within a context wherein the ethno-religious divisions can be weaponized to splinter narratives.

Crucially, the most significant non-transferable element is the assumption of a vulnerable political elite. The Nepalese playbook was designed for and succeeded against a fragile political structure. Until operational success is guaranteed, tactical module resolution will remain. Nigerian establishments are well-funded, deeply rooted, and can harshly coerce insurrections. They need a deeper beginning of national consensus and a strategy tailored to confront a more resilient and repressive state apparatus.

The prospect of technocracy as the answer for Nigeria is, in every sense, an enchanting yet sadly disturbing projection. The appeal is hard to dismiss given the backdrop of general governance failure. It offers some kind of "circuit breaker" to the self-help and self-perpetuating practices of patronage and corruption by putting the impartial experts on basis of merit in place of his politically appointed loyalists. This model winks at the near desire for evidence-based policy, efficiency, and restoration of public trust regarding the primary functions of the state, which are direct affronts to the very grievances with which movements like the #EndSARS were launched.

Nevertheless, this attraction is, perhaps, restrained by certain harsh realities. *First*, a real crisis starts when there is no election to back things up. In a democracy, even if it is not ideal, what the people want is the only thing that gives power to govern. But, if a technocratic group is not elected and mainly cares about their know-how, they would have to explain why they have the right to be in charge right away, which would make the political situation even more insecure. *Second* is the one which is very crucial in Nigeria: the so-called Federal Character, which is a constitutional provision for geographical representation in public offices (Demarest et al., 2020; Nwachukwu & Tijani, 2024). A merit-based technocracy would, indeed, challenge the quota system in an outright challenge, risking immediate rejection for being imposed as an attempt to marginalize certain regions and indeed heightening the much-touted ethno-religious cleavages that tear apart national unity.

The threat of capture by the elites or itself evolving into an authoritarian regime is indeed considerable. Nigeria's existing political and economic leaders have been good at incorporating and stopping potential challenges. This government could be hijacked to serve the self-interests it had supposed to dismantle, while being purely referred to with the motivation of military intervention because of absence in popular mandate, ushering in a new form of authoritarianism, albeit in the guise of efficiency. Nigeria suffers from functional inadequacies and theorized a country that would address such problems, though somewhat dangerously in that it ignores the highly complicated political and sociological realities that define the nation.

Discussion

This synthetic discussion builds upon findings from our comparative investigation on the most central and important question: whether the digital coup in Nepal can be replicated. Earlier on we undertook an analytical epitome of achievements in Nepal (RQ1) vis-a-vis setbacks in Nigeria (RQ2), making us ready to engage the central study research

question of technocratic feasibility (RQ3). This section moves further than mere descriptive and comparative analyses to attempt to distill the very basic prerequisites required for the success of such movements elsewhere. It evaluates in a systematic manner whether the enabling conditions for Nepal's transition from digital coordination to technocratic outcome could be assembled in a context like the one in Nigeria. These potential risks associated with the new model of democratic disruption include co-opting, violent escalations in response to intervention, and the risk of backsliding into democracy. By collating these insights into a clear prognosis for Nigeria, we discuss the appeal of a digital-first intervention against the structuring historical barriers that define this political reality. Subsequently, the synthesis does not merely repeat what has been said previously; it looks ahead to the future of youth-led democracy renewal in fragile contexts.

Synthesizing the analyses of Nepal and Nigeria reveals four necessary conditions for a digital movement to achieve transformative political change. *First*, a unified, national grievance is essential. This one frame must somehow touch different strata of society to create a widespread coalition. Corruption provided the glue in Nepal as with Nigeria's #EndSARS. Perhaps out of the initial tensions, the process later became susceptible to fragmentation. Following the facts, movements require a secure coordination platform that enables real-time, strategic planning. Discord served this function in Nepal, providing a resilient command centre. While Nigerian activists used digital tools, the lack of an equally secure and universally adopted platform for high-level strategy has hindered the consolidation of their efforts.

Precisely, it must have a concrete and actionable political goal. In the case of Nepal, there was a very specific endpoint for mobilization: the demand for a technocratic government that directed the whole energy into a concrete political outcome. The #ENDSARS campaign ended up a casualty of the movement's lack of direction, as the post-protest political agenda was not concrete, nor was it intended to be taken up by the movement while it was still ongoing (Abubakar, 2020). #EndSARS was created in Nigeria to protest against police brutality. Weak political elite are the final enabling factor. The disunited political elite in Nepal hardly possess any kind of solidarity or means to stifle greater pressure. While on the one hand, the elite who are so deeply entrenched, rich, and willing are, in fact, a deadly hand as seen in Nigeria. The aforementioned barriers to mobilization via digital efforts are so strong that none of these three parameters look too bright for what we have called 'digital coup.'

For a technocratic alternative to work, it would need to be nourished by very peculiar and monolithic circumstances. The transition can only be justified by extreme crises, such as a total collapse of government, sovereign debt default, or national unity crises, so discrediting the whole political class as well as creating a consensus on the perception that a partisan system has been compromised forever. Such a transitional arrangement would require a broad-based coalition, including rumblings of protest, the military, traditional institutions, and the organized private sector. Even so, strong constitutional and procedural protections should still be in place to prevent authoritarianism or elite control. The first would be a legally binding sunset provision and a clearly defined publicly ratified roadmap to the reestablishment of democratic elections, which would situate the technocracy as a temporary set of course corrections rather than a permanent system.

The next, innovative balancing of merit and Nigeria's constitutional principle of 'Federal Character,' ensuring geographical equity in order to avoid any perception of the

processes being used as an instrument of sectional dominance. Independent civil society and media watchdog committees needing to be created with sufficient audit and subpoena powers would be required to hold some measure of accountability on a part of the public. To restore good governance, focus on the key tasks of running a reliable census, managing a fair election, and dismantling patronage networks. If these are not addressed, any technocratic approach will lack legitimacy and could be controlled by special interests. This could cause unrest and worsen the instability it's trying to fix.

The overwhelming potential impact of digital movements comes with enormous threats to democracy. The top most imminent danger is the escalation of violence. In Nigeria's case, a state on the verge of extinction resorts to lethal repression, while a disjointed movement may also become a mob action that lowers the moral standing of such movements. Another universal threat is the co-opting of movements by elite interests. The very informality that provides speed can also assist in the infiltration of these networks by a large political actor that seeks to retrieve public anger for their own agenda, thus applying the brakes to the very movement they have been set to advance.

These movements will do the most damage to the democratic norms. Targeting corrupt democracies, the unjust appointed technocracies, and direct actions would reduce the electoral legitimacy, the due process, and the pluralism through indirection. A flawed democracy can lead to a decrease in democratic practices, potentially encouraging public support for unconstitutional actions over standard legal methods. This model of disruption will give only temporary promise from corruption, ironically also destabilizing the very democratic institutions it tries to cleanse and thus creating a political vacuum that is almost fraught with danger.

Though this research offers a strong comparative framework, it is not free from limitations. *First*, it mainly uses information from other sources, like reports and articles, instead of directly collecting and analyzing data from social media. So, what it says about online activity might not fully show what's happening in private chats. *Second*, comparing Nepal and Nigeria is good for coming up with ideas, but it's hard to say if the results apply to all democracies in similar situations. The specific situations in those two countries might not be the same as others. Given the quick development of technology, digital platforms change fast. For example, understanding things like how the Discord platform works today has an impact on long-term worth of guidance.

The study opens up a number of interesting possibilities for future research. An important sphere deals with longitudinal studies on technocratic governance in Nepal to test whether it can sustain itself as a stable system working to expectation, or fail under pressures as previous models. Other categories for comparison might be included, for example, cases such as the Chilean protest-oriented constitutional process or Kenyan digital activism-through which further tests and refinements of the proposed model of digital disruptions can emerge. One area of futuristic study on movements concerning implications of AI and automation-focused research may investigate whether AI-assimilation disinformation or bot networks truly amplify real grassroots mobilization or export their harm. Finally, there needs to be a more in-depth inquiry into the internal governance of decentralized movements, looking at how accountability, resource allocation, and decision-making are happening in the absence of formal structures of leadership. These inquiries would further illuminate the evolving relationship between digital technology, political power, and democratic renewal in the 21st century.

Conclusion

This research thus answers its main research questions clearly and empirically. In RQ1, it found that Nepal achieved success with a common anti-corruption complaint; strategic use of Discord for tradecrafting; movements through memes for mobilization; and a politically vulnerable elite. Research Question 2 shows that while the #EndSARS movement in Nigeria used digital methods and mass rallies like those in Nepal, it was very different because of serious social divisions and a deeply rooted, harsh political group that did not act with a clear political plan after the protest, which could have stopped the same result from happening. RQ3 ends with technocracy having constrained viability for Nigeria. This theory is attractive enough, like a circuit-breaker; but the actual application would be largely hampered by crises in democratic legitimacy, by the demand of Federal Character, and by a potentially very high risk of elite co-option of or authoritarian drift, making this unstable and more high-risk compared to Nepal. This analysis finds that while Nepal's digital coup tactics could be applied in advance to Nigeria, the resulting political outcome of a stable, technocratic transition is unlikely. The digital playbook for decentralized coordination and meme warfare is globally available public resources; Nigerian youth have proven themselves adept in it. Successfully emulating Nepal's success is ultimately determined by political and social structures of the receiving environment. Nigeria's elite are more deeply entrenched against the public outcry, and the country is really more fragmented as a society. The history of state violence sets a far heavier political battle ground. Such features function as firewalls for digital dissent locked against transformation power consolidation or while they may replicate the conditions of success, ultimately a Nepal-style uprising in Nigeria brings with it little chance of producing a peaceful legitimacy technocratic outcome. Digital mobilization clearly cannot be a panacea; it has uneven effects in its potential to transform as it thrives in fragile states, whereas it groans under the weight of fortified, complex political economies. Thus, the conditions under which Nigeria's emerging path to democratic renewal are drawn further into uncertainty and danger.

Conflict of Interest

The researcher certifies that there is no conflict of interest with any financial, personal, or other relationships with other people or organization related to the material discussed in the manuscript.

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