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Digital Diasporas and Transnational Belonging: A Conceptual Model of Platform-Mediated Identity, Obligation and Political Voice Among African Migrants

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ABSTRACT

African migrants now live in two places at once. They are physically present in destination societies, yet through messaging groups, social media, livestreams and video calls they remain continuously present in the communities they left. Migration scholarship has documented this connectivity in detail, but it has tended to treat platforms as neutral channels that simply make older transnational practices cheaper and faster. That assumption leaves unexplained why the same connectivity produces closeness and fatigue, voice and silence, belonging and surveillance. This conceptual, non-empirical paper addresses that gap. It integrates three bodies of peer-reviewed scholarship published between 2023 and 2026: transnationalism and diaspora theory; digital-migration, polymedia and family-communication research; and studies of African, and especially Nigerian, Zimbabwean and Eritrean, diaspora practice. Every source was checked against its Crossref record and screened for retractions and editorial notices. From this synthesis the paper builds an identity–obligation–voice model of platform-mediated diasporic life. It argues that platforms transform each dimension differently. Identity becomes performative and audience-aware, because diasporic self-presentation is now watched simultaneously by kin at home, peers abroad and strangers. Obligation becomes continuous and surveilled, because family groups make needs, gifts and silences visible to everyone at once. Political voice becomes amplified abroad while remaining institutionally weak at home, because online mobilisation outpaces the formal channels through which diasporas can shape homeland decisions, and because visibility attracts monitoring and reprisal. Five propositions follow, on the intensity and direction of ties across generations, the conversion of care into continuous obligation, the gap between amplified and institutionalised voice, strategic disconnection under risk, and the relationship between connectivity and integration. The paper concludes with implications for Nigeria's diaspora institutions, for African homeland governments seeking diaspora engagement, and for a migration scholarship that still treats arrival as the end of departure.

Keywords: digital diaspora; transnational belonging; polymedia; diaspora politics; remittances

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1. INTRODUCTION

On any evening in Manchester, Houston or Johannesburg, a Nigerian nurse may end a shift, open a family WhatsApp group, read a request for school fees, forward a campaign video from a homeland political debate, and post a photograph from church that relatives in Enugu will see within minutes. None of these acts is new in itself. Migrants have always sent money, followed politics at home and presented themselves to the people they left. What has changed is that all of this now happens at once, on the same small screen, before overlapping audiences and with a record that does not fade. This paper argues that the change is not only one of speed or cost. It alters the substance of diasporic life.

The scholarship on transnational migration recognised long ago that migrants maintain ties across borders. Recent work has shown how digital media have become the infrastructure of those ties. Smartphones now organise migrants' everyday lives and mediate their encounters with hostile state practices (Morgan, 2023). Transnational families rely on messaging applications to coordinate care, share photographs and negotiate roles across generations (Alkobi & Khvorostianov, 2024; Kędra, 2023; Tawodzera, 2025). Diaspora communities organise political campaigns online, from Rohingya activism on Facebook to diasporic engagement with South Africa's #FeesMustFall protests (Ansar & Maitra, 2024; Govender & Moodley, 2025). For Nigeria, social media has been linked both to the wave of emigration known as *japa* and to the diaspora's role in movements such as #EndSARS (Adegoke, 2023; Akanle, 2023).

What this literature lacks is a model that explains why connectivity produces such divergent outcomes. The same platforms that sustain belonging also generate fatigue, surveillance and self-censorship. Diaspora voices that reach millions online often have little purchase on decisions at home. Second-generation migrants may be drawn into homeland ties more intensely than their parents expected, or may withdraw from them altogether (Cheung Judge, 2025; Woldu, 2025). Treating platforms as neutral pipes cannot account for these patterns. Treating them as all-powerful cannot account for the agency migrants show in managing them (Chung et al., 2026).

The paper sets out three objectives. It first identifies the dimensions of diasporic life that platforms reshape. It then specifies how each dimension is transformed and states the consequences as testable propositions. Finally, it draws implications for homeland diaspora policy, with Nigeria as the anchoring case, and for migration research. The guiding question is this: when belonging is mediated by platforms, what happens to who migrants are, what they owe, and how they are heard?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Digital diaspora. The term refers to diasporic communities whose formation, maintenance and action depend substantially on digital media. Yu and Parke (2023) argue that it has become hard to separate the digital diaspora from digital diasporic media, because the communities and the platforms constitute each other. Oltmann and Espinoza Vasquez (2024) show that social media affordances shape how diasporic members connect with each other and with their country of origin. This paper uses the term in that affordance-sensitive sense.

Transnational belonging. Belonging is the felt and recognised attachment to a group or place. In migration it is plural and contested. Nyakabawu (2024) shows that belonging among Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa spans home, diaspora and places beyond both, and shifts with experiences of exclusion and with plans for return or settlement. Sahakyan (2026) distinguishes forms of transnationalism that persist across generations even when personal ties to the homeland thin out.

Polymedia and co-presence. Polymedia describes an environment in which many communication

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options exist, so the choice of medium itself carries meaning. Co-presence refers to the sense of being with others despite physical distance. Ou and Lin (2024) refine this idea by proposing three modes of mediated presence, co-presence, dysco-presence and disco-presence, showing that digital connection does not always produce closeness. Barros (2023) shows that transnational families experience such mediated presence as enriching but also as demanding.

Obligation. Obligation here refers to the expectations of material support, care and participation that bind migrants to kin and community. Remittances are its most visible form, but obligations also include attention, advice and presence at rituals (Tawodzera, 2025).

Political voice. Following the classic distinction between exit and voice, political voice refers to the capacity of emigrants to influence homeland politics after leaving. Nnabuihe et al. (2024) apply this framing to Nigeria, asking how a large diaspora contributes financial and intellectual remittances while lacking formal channels of influence.

2.2 THEORETICAL REVIEW

The model draws on three theoretical traditions.

The first is transnationalism and diaspora theory, which holds that migrants live in social fields spanning origin and destination. Recent work extends this to multigenerational and diasporist perspectives (Sahakyan, 2026) and to the strategies that homeland states adopt towards their diasporas. Grossman (2024) shows how home-state elites' positions towards emigrant communities change over time, and Appe and Telch (2026) compare the diaspora engagement strategies of Egypt, India, Mexico, Nigeria and the Philippines. This tradition explains why ties persist. It says less about how the medium of connection shapes them.

The second is affordance theory as applied to digital media. Affordances are the possibilities for action that a technology makes available to particular users. For diasporas, the affordances of visibility, persistence, scale and searchability are likely to matter most, a point consistent with work on how affordances mediate the digital diaspora (Oltmann & Espinoza Vasquez, 2024). An affordance lens explains why a family WhatsApp group differs from a monthly phone call, even when the same people take part. Messages persist, reach everyone at once and leave traces of who has read them. Research on family groups confirms that these features generate new roles and rules (Alkobi & Khvorostianov, 2024; Ou et al., 2023).

The third tradition concerns authoritarian reach and transnational repression. Orjuela et al. (2025) show that non-democratic regimes now engage and control new generations of their diasporas. Studies of digital transnational repression document how states monitor, harass and intimidate critics abroad, with distinct gendered forms (Anstis & LaFlèche, 2025; Michaelsen & Anstis, 2025). Ardovini and Baser (2026) bring diaspora activism and repression into the same frame, and Harb and Wackenhut (2026) document these dynamics among Uyghur activists in Sweden. This tradition explains why amplified voice can be dangerous, and why some migrants choose silence.

2.3 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Research on identity shows that diasporic self-presentation is now shaped by many audiences at once. Mukhongo et al. (2023) find that media consumption, including global African narratives, shapes how young first-generation Africans in the diaspora form multiple identities and forms of belonging. Apata (2024) examines the role of identity in the reputed success of the Nigerian diaspora in the United States. Apiyo (2026) shows African diaspora podcasters shaping cross-border identity for transnational audiences. Kazira and Pasura (2026) document how young Nigerians and Zimbabweans in the United Kingdom use digital platforms for transnational religious practice, reclaiming marginalised African traditional religions and reconfiguring belonging and authority. Among second generations, Woldu (2025) shows Eritrean youth in London and Milan negotiating adaptive transnational identities, and Lan (2025) shows how geopolitics shapes ambivalent identities among second-generation youth. Hultin and Göransson (2026) find that the social media practices of young Syrian migrants in Sweden are integral to their "temporal identity work" as they acculturate.

Research on obligation centres on transnational families and remittances. Tawodzera (2025) studies

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families spread between the United Kingdom and Zimbabwe and finds that family WhatsApp groups enable them to organise aged care from a distance. Kędra (2023) shows how photographs shared in family chats work as narratives in doing family at a distance. Alkobi and Khvorostianov (2024) document the roles and rules that emerge in three-generation family groups. Cheung Judge (2025) studies Nigerian diaspora families in the United Kingdom and United States who send children "back home" for schooling, showing how intergenerational obligations are negotiated. On money, Badre (2024) examines how neo-banks are reshaping remittances among North African migrants in Europe, and Anaman et al. (2023) examine the link between international remittances and political participation in Ghana.

Research on voice covers both mobilisation and its limits. Akanle (2023) analyses the Nigerian diaspora's role in sociopolitical mobilisation at home, and the #EndSARS protests have been studied as a digitally amplified movement against police brutality whose grievances extended well beyond policing (Udenze, 2025; Udenze et al., 2024; Ugwueze, 2024). Govender and Moodley (2025) compare diasporic responses to two social media protests, #FeesMustFall and #Jallikattu, and find that the responses diverged, so diaspora engagement with homeland protest cannot be assumed. Ansar and Maitra (2024) and Mehran and Drzewiecka (2026) show how digital diasporas can unite around a cause or split along ethnic and political lines. Faras (2024) studies the narratives in conflict that emerge among Somali diaspora communities on social media. Formal voice is a separate matter. Allen and Wellman (2024) analyse the global spread of emigrant voting rights, Wellman and Allen (2026) warn that diaspora voting can become a tool of electoral manipulation, and Yener-Roderburg and Yetiş (2024) show how a homeland party built support abroad after external voting was introduced. Karabegović (2025) examines diaspora politicians who try to "fix things from the outside".

Research on connection and integration completes the picture. Morgan (2023) shows how everyday smartphone practices mediate irregular migrants' experiences of hostile state practices in Europe. Chung et al. (2026), studying the Hong Kong digital diaspora, find that migrants strategically modulate connection and disconnection to manage belonging, safety and visibility. Adegoke (2023) examines the roles social media play in Nigeria's *japa* out-migration trend. de Jong and de Valk (2023) find that the children of immigrants are more likely to emigrate again, which suggests that transnational ties can generate further mobility rather than settled integration.

2.4 GAPS IN THE LITERATURE

Three gaps stand out. First, studies of identity, family obligation and diaspora politics have developed largely in isolation, so the links between them are rarely theorised. A request for money in a family group, a political post and a religious livestream may come from the same person on the same evening, yet they are studied by different literatures. Second, the literature describes connectivity extensively but rarely explains why it produces divergent outcomes, such as closeness or fatigue, voice or silence. Third, African diasporas are often studied through remittances and development, while their identity work and political voice receive less conceptual attention. Where politics is studied, the gap between online amplification and formal homeland influence is noted but not modelled. The identity–obligation–voice model addresses these gaps.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design. This is a theoretical, non-empirical article. It uses integrative conceptual synthesis to build a model and derive propositions that later empirical research can test. No human participants were involved and no primary data were collected. Population, sampling and instrument validation in the empirical sense therefore do not apply.

Source identification. Literature was identified through structured searches of the OpenAlex scholarly index and the Crossref metadata service, using combinations of terms such as "digital diaspora", "African diaspora social media", "Nigerian diaspora", "transnational families", "WhatsApp", "polymedia", "co-presence", "remittances", "diaspora voting", "#EndSARS", "japa", "transnational repression" and "diaspora engagement policy". Searches were run in October 2026.

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Inclusion and exclusion criteria. Sources were included if they were peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2023 and 2026 and addressed digitally mediated diaspora identity, transnational family obligation, diaspora political participation or homeland diaspora policy. Preprints, conference papers, book chapters, book reviews, grey literature, items without a resolvable digital object identifier (DOI), items for which no abstract or full text could be consulted, and outlets whose peer-review practices could not be confirmed were excluded.

Verification. Each candidate was checked against its Crossref record for DOI, authors, title, journal, volume, issue and pagination, and was screened for retractions, corrections and expressions of concern through Crossref update metadata and the OpenAlex retraction flag. Publication year follows the issue year where one exists. Forty-five articles met all criteria and are cited.

Analytic procedure. Sources were coded for the dimension of diasporic life they addressed (identity, obligation or voice), the platform affordances involved, the generation and location of the people studied, and the outcomes reported. Coded material was then compared across cases to identify recurring mechanisms, and the mechanisms were stated as propositions. African cases, particularly Nigerian, Zimbabwean, Eritrean, Somali and Ghanaian ones, were used to test whether the model fitted, and cases from other diasporas were used where they clarified a mechanism.

Bases of judgement and trustworthiness. Conceptual work is judged by clarity, parsimony, explanatory reach and falsifiability. Each proposition is stated so that it could prove wrong, and the discussion identifies evidence that would weaken it.

AI usage disclosure. Generative AI tools were used to assist with literature retrieval, metadata checking and language editing. The arguments, interpretations and conclusions were developed and reviewed by the author(s), who take full responsibility for the content. No AI tool is listed as an author, and no source was cited without verification against its publisher record.

Limitations. The synthesis is restricted to English-language journal articles from a four-year window, so it under-represents francophone and lusophone African diasporas and older foundational work. Several mechanisms are illustrated with non-African cases where African evidence is still thin.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 RESULTS: THE IDENTITY–OBLIGATION–VOICE MODEL

The synthesis identifies three dimensions of diasporic life that platforms reshape: identity maintenance, obligation management and political voice. Platforms do not transform them in the same way. Table 1 summarises the model.

Table. 1. The identity–obligation–voice model of platform-mediated diasporic life

Dimension	Pre-platform form	Platform transformation	Key affordances	Illustrative African evidence
Identity maintenance	Segmented self-presentation for separate audiences; occasional visits	Performative and audience-aware: one self shown to kin, peers and strangers at once	Visibility; persistence; collapsed audiences	Young Africans' media-shaped identities; Nigerian "exceptionalism" in the US; digital religion among Nigerian and Zimbabwean youth
Obligation management	Episodic remittances, calls and visits	Continuous and surveilled: needs, gifts and silences visible to the whole kin network	Group messaging; read receipts; instant transfers	UK–Zimbabwe aged care through WhatsApp groups; Nigerian families sending children home for schooling
Political voice	Diaspora associations, newspapers, occasional lobbying	Amplified abroad, institutionally weak at home	Scale; virality; searchability (which also enables monitoring)	#EndSARS mobilisation; diaspora protest engagement; absence of external voting in Nigeria

Note. Compiled by the author(s) from the synthesis in Sections 2 and 4.1.

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Identity becomes performative and audience-aware. Before platforms, a migrant's self-presentation was segmented. One face was shown to colleagues in the destination country, another to relatives during rare visits, and another in diaspora associations. Platforms collapse these audiences. A post is seen by kin at home, by peers abroad and often by strangers, and it persists. The result is identity work that is constantly performed and constantly evaluated. Mukhongo et al. (2023) find young Africans abroad drawing on global African media narratives in forming identity, and Apata (2024) links the reputed success of Nigerians in the United States to a distinctive collective identity. Such identities are not false. They are, however, curated for an audience that includes those who expect the migrant to have "made it". Hultin and Göransson (2026) describe the temporal side of this work, and Kazira and Pasura (2026) show young Nigerians and Zimbabweans using digital religious practice to reconfigure belonging and authority.

Obligation becomes continuous and surveilled. Older forms of transnational obligation were episodic: a remittance at month's end, a phone call on Sunday, a visit at Christmas. Family groups make obligation continuous and collective. Tawodzera (2025) shows that WhatsApp groups now organise aged care between the United Kingdom and Zimbabwe, distributing tasks but also making each member's contribution, or absence, visible to all. Kędra (2023) shows that photographs circulated in family chats carry narratives of family life, which in practice can also show that care was given or money used. Read receipts, response times and silence all become signals. Barros (2023) finds that such mediated presence is experienced as enriching but also demanding. The model calls this surveilled obligation: a duty performed under the observation of the whole kin network.

Political voice becomes amplified abroad but remains institutionally weak at home. Platforms allow diasporas to reach homeland publics directly, bypassing gatekeepers. The #EndSARS movement showed how quickly a grievance can travel between Lagos, London and Houston (Akanle, 2023; Udenze, 2025). Formal influence is another matter. At the time of writing, Nigeria has not implemented external voting, so Nigerians abroad cannot vote in national elections from their countries of residence. Diaspora engagement has instead been channelled mainly through investment, remittances and dedicated agencies (Appe & Telch, 2026; Nnabuihe et al., 2024). The diaspora is therefore loud online but weak in formal politics. Its voice is amplified and at the same time institutionally weak.

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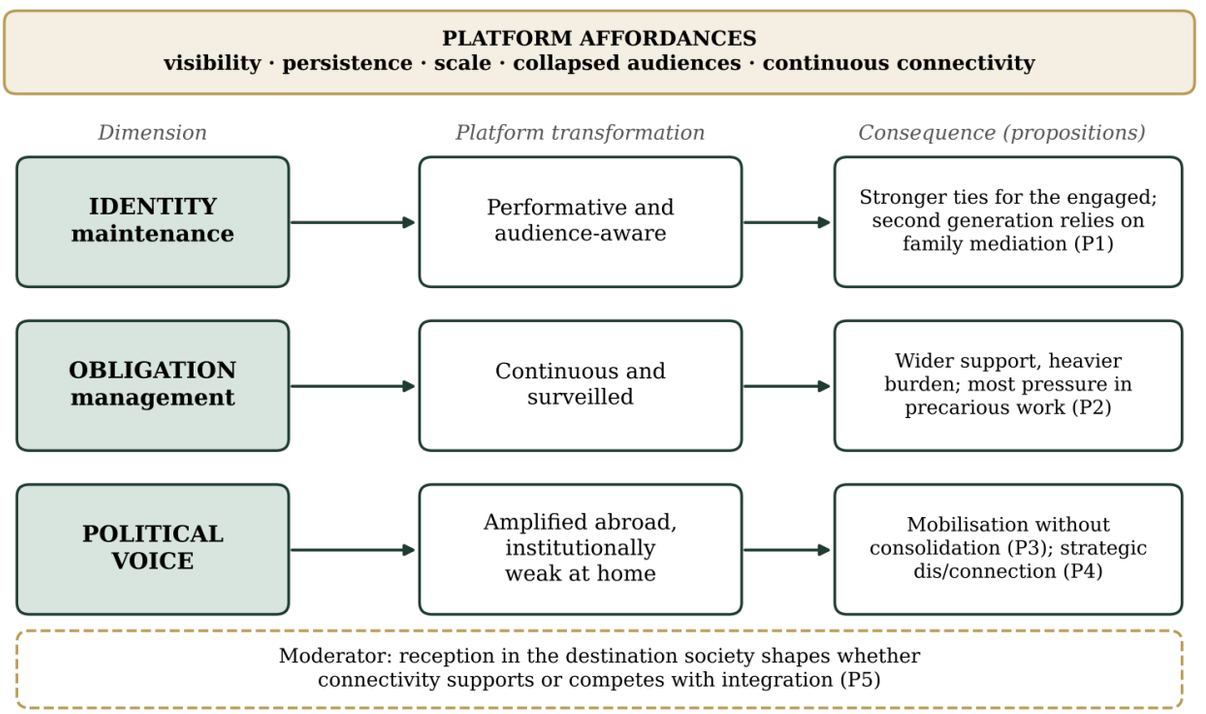


Figure. 1. The identity–obligation–voice model: how platform affordances transform three dimensions of diasporic life. Source: developed by the author(s).

From the model, five propositions follow.

Proposition 1: Platform affordances raise the intensity of transnational ties for those already engaged, but they do not by themselves create engagement across generations. Connectivity lowers the cost of contact, so migrants who already value homeland ties sustain them more intensely. For the second generation the effect depends on mediation by parents and institutions. Cheung Judge (2025) shows Nigerian diaspora parents sending children "home" for schooling, a deliberate offline intervention through which intergenerational values are negotiated, which suggests that families do not rely on digital contact alone to transmit belonging. Woldu (2025) finds that Eritrean second generations build adaptive identities that draw selectively on homeland ties, and Sahakyan (2026) shows that long-established diasporas sustain forms of transnationalism that no longer depend on personal ties. de Jong and de Valk (2023) add that transnational capital can lead the second generation to move again rather than to deepen ties with one place. The proposition would be weakened by evidence that heavy digital exposure produces homeland attachment in second generations without parental or institutional mediation.

Proposition 2: Continuous connectivity turns episodic duty into continuous obligation, which raises both the reach of support and the burden on the migrant. Family groups make support faster and easier to coordinate, as Tawodzera's (2025) study of aged care shows. The same visibility increases pressure. Requests arrive daily, contributions are compared, and silence is read as neglect. Digital financial services, such as the neo-banks Badre (2024) examines among North African migrants, make sending money easier, which removes a practical limit that once gave migrants room to delay. The model predicts that obligation pressure will be greatest for migrants in precarious work, whose incomes are least able to match the visible expectations of kin. The proposition would be weakened by evidence that perceived obligation pressure does not rise with participation in family groups or with the ease of digital transfers.

Proposition 3: The gap between amplified and institutionalised voice produces cycles of mobilisation without consolidation. When online

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voice cannot be turned into formal influence, diaspora politics tends to take the form of episodic surges around crises, as with #EndSARS, followed by retreat. Udenze (2025) shows how #EndSARS lives on through its anniversaries rather than through institutions, and Akanle (2023) documents the sociopolitical mobilisation of the Nigerian diaspora, whose formal channels into homeland decision-making remain limited. Comparative work suggests that formal channels have their own risks. External voting can become an instrument of electoral manipulation (Wellman & Allen, 2026) and a channel through which homeland parties organise abroad (Yener-Roderburg & Yetiş, 2024), and diaspora politicians face credibility problems at home (Karabegović, 2025). The model does not therefore assume that external voting would close the gap. It predicts that the form of institutional channel matters as much as its existence. The proposition would be weakened by evidence that diaspora online mobilisation consolidates into durable homeland influence without any institutional channel.

Proposition 4: Visibility invites monitoring, so diasporic voice is shaped by strategic disconnection as much as by connection. The affordances that amplify voice also expose it. Studies of digital transnational repression show states monitoring and intimidating critics abroad, often with gendered forms of harassment (Anstis & LaFlèche, 2025; Michaelsen & Anstis, 2025; Harb & Wackenhut, 2026). Chung et al. (2026) show diaspora members responding through "dis/connective identification", modulating what they share, where and with whom. Lighter forms of social monitoring by kin and community operate within families and hometown groups. The model treats silence, private channels and selective posting as political choices rather than as apathy. For African diasporas, where states differ widely in their capacity and willingness to monitor citizens abroad, the proposition predicts that self-censorship will be highest among diasporas from more repressive homelands. It would be weakened by evidence that perceived monitoring has no effect on what diaspora members post.

Proposition 5: Connectivity and integration are not a zero-sum trade-off; their relationship depends on the destination's reception. A long-standing worry holds that continuous homeland ties slow integration. The evidence reviewed here suggests a more conditional picture. Morgan (2023) shows smartphones mediating migrants' experiences of hostile state practices, and Hultin and Göransson (2026) find social media practices supporting the identity work of acculturation. Nyakabawu (2024) shows belonging among Zimbabweans in South Africa shifting with experiences of exclusion. Where reception is hostile, homeland connectivity offers refuge and may deepen. Where it is welcoming, connectivity can coexist with deep local ties. The model predicts that the destination's reception moderates the relationship between digital homeland ties and integration. The proposition would be weakened by evidence that heavy homeland connectivity uniformly predicts weaker integration regardless of reception.

Table 2 sets out how the model applies to the Nigerian diaspora and what it implies for homeland institutions.

Table. 2. Applying the model to the Nigerian diaspora: risks and institutional responses

Dimension	Observed pattern	Risk if unaddressed	Implication for homeland institutions
Identity	Success-oriented self-presentation circulates to kin and to would-be emigrants	Inflated expectations at home; social media feeding further *japa* aspirations	Provide realistic migration information and recognise diaspora identity work in engagement programmes
Obligation	Family groups make support continuous and visible	Financial and emotional strain, especially for migrants in precarious work	Treat diaspora welfare, not only remittance volume, as a policy concern
Voice	Strong online mobilisation in crises such as #EndSARS	Mobilisation without consolidation; frustration and further exit	Create standing consultative channels and design any external voting system with safeguards against capture
Voice under risk	Selective posting and private channels	Silence read as apathy; loss of diaspora expertise in public debate	Protect diaspora critics from reprisal and guarantee freedom of expression across borders

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Note. Developed by the author(s) from the propositions in Section 4.1.

4.2 DISCUSSION

The model's first contribution is to show that the effects of connectivity are dimension-specific. Debates about whether digital media "strengthen" or "weaken" diasporic ties are poorly posed. Platforms strengthen some aspects of belonging while burdening others. They give identity new audiences and new pressures, turn care into continuous obligation, and amplify voice without giving it institutional weight. This reading is consistent with studies that find mediated presence both enriching and draining (Barros, 2023; Ou & Lin, 2024), and it explains why migrants actively manage connection rather than simply consuming it (Chung et al., 2026).

The model also complicates the developmental framing that dominates discussion of African diasporas. Policy attention in Nigeria and elsewhere has focused on mobilising remittances, investment and skills (Appe & Telch, 2026; Nnabuihe et al., 2024). Evaluation of Ethiopia's 2013 diaspora policy highlights institutional coordination as a central problem of implementation (Yesigat et al., 2026). The identity–obligation–voice model suggests that engagement policy built only around money will misread the diaspora. Remittances arrive alongside, and are shaped by, identity performance and the pressures of surveilled obligation. Political voice that finds no institutional channel may turn into cynicism or into further exit. Adegoke's (2023) evidence that social media play a part in the *japa* trend points to a possible feedback loop, which the model makes explicit: success performed abroad may become an aspiration at home and shape the next wave of emigration.

The analysis engages critically with optimistic views of digital diaspora activism. Ansar and Maitra (2024) trace how Rohingya diaspora engagement on Facebook evolved between 2017 and 2022, and Govender and Moodley (2025) show diasporas engaging with protests at a distance. Yet the same literature records fragmentation and conflict (Faras, 2024; Mehran & Drzewiecka, 2026), and the repression literature shows the costs of visibility (Ardovini & Baser, 2026; Orjuela et al., 2025). Digital voice is real, but it is uneven, contested and risky. The model's distinction between amplified and institutionalised voice locates the problem precisely. Online reach is abundant, while durable influence over decisions is scarce.

Several limits deserve note. Much of the strongest evidence on family groups and transnational repression comes from non-African diasporas, so Propositions 2 and 4 rest partly on analogy. The model treats platforms generically, although WhatsApp, Facebook, TikTok and X differ in their affordances. It also gives less attention to class, gender and legal status, which shape every dimension. Tawodzera (2025) and Michaelsen and Anstis (2025) show the gendered nature of care and of repression respectively, and future work should build these differences into the model. Empirical tests could combine digital ethnography of Nigerian family groups, surveys of obligation pressure across income levels, and comparative analysis of diaspora engagement institutions across African states.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Platforms have not simply made African diasporas more connected. They have changed what diasporic life asks of migrants. Identity is now performed for many audiences at once. Obligation has become continuous and visible to the whole kin network. Political voice reaches further than ever but still lacks formal weight at home. These changes help explain why connectivity can bring both belonging and fatigue, both voice and silence.

Several recommendations follow. Homeland institutions in Nigeria, including the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission and the relevant legislative committees, should treat diaspora engagement as political and social as well as financial. They should create consultative channels through which diaspora voice can be heard between crises, and they should design any external voting system with safeguards against capture and manipulation. African governments more broadly should learn from comparative evidence that institutional coordination, data on diaspora populations and sustained dialogue matter more than one-off mobilisation campaigns. Destination-country service providers and community organisations should recognise continuous obligation as a source of financial and emotional strain, especially for migrants in

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precarious work, and should take it into account in advice and support services. Platform companies and digital-rights organisations should improve protections for diaspora users at risk of transnational repression, including privacy settings suited to group communication. Researchers should study African diasporas' identity work and political voice with the same seriousness as their remittances, and should treat arrival not as the end of departure but as the start of a continuing, mediated relationship with home.

6. CONTRIBUTION TO EXISTING KNOWLEDGE

The paper contributes in four ways. Conceptually, it offers the identity–obligation–voice model, which brings together the study of diasporic identity, transnational family obligation and diaspora politics, fields that have mostly developed separately. Theoretically, it specifies how platform affordances transform each dimension in a different way, producing performative identity, surveilled obligation and voice that is amplified but institutionally weak, and it states five falsifiable propositions about generations, obligation, mobilisation, disconnection and integration. Contextually, it places African and especially Nigerian diasporas at the centre of digital diaspora theory, linking #EndSARS, *japa* and family WhatsApp groups within one framework. Practically, it gives homeland institutions a way to see diaspora engagement as more than the mobilisation of money, and it points to the institutional designs that could turn amplified voice into durable participation.

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