

Social Media Framing of Ethnic Labelling on Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour's Candidacy in the 2023 Lagos State Gubernatorial Election

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ABSTRACT

Ethnicity remains a decisive undercurrent in Nigerian electoral politics, particularly in cosmopolitan states like Lagos, where identity, belonging and legitimacy shape political contestation. The Lagos State 2023 gubernatorial election generated sustained social media discourse around the candidacy of Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour, whose identity became the subject of deliberate ethnic labelling centred on indigeneity, belonging and legitimacy. This study investigated social media framing of that ethnic labelling, examining the frames through which ethnic labels were constructed around his candidacy and identifying the dominant narratives underlying this labelling. Anchored in Entman's (1993) framing theory, the study adopted a qualitative approach, combining qualitative content analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis. Data were drawn from X (formerly Twitter) through a keyword-based search that returned 1,122 publicly available tweets, from which 1,000 were screened against inclusion and exclusion criteria to arrive at a final analytical sample of 200 tweets. Ethnic labels such as non-indigene, outsider, stranger, settler and Igbo candidate were organised around three dominant frames: an outsider frame, an ownership frame and an indigeneity frame. These frames in turn fed three overarching narratives centred on Lagos ownership, indigenous belonging and political legitimacy. Social media constituted a significant arena for negotiating identity and political legitimacy during the election. The study established the need for issue-based political communication and civic engagement that promotes democratic inclusion and political tolerance.

Keywords: Social Media, Ethnic Labelling, Political Communication, 2023 Lagos Governorship Election, Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour, Framing Theory

INTRODUCTION

Digital communication has changed how elections are conducted in democratic societies. Social media platforms have become an important source of political communication, information and citizen engagement, allowing political actors, supporters, opponents and ordinary citizens to produce, circulate and contest political messages in real time, unlike traditional media, which is governed by gatekeepers (Abdulazeez, 2025). Agbaje, Owens-Ibie, Ogwezy-Ndisika, Oyeleye, Aondover and Ademosu (2026) argue that digital technology has altered Nigerian political communication by creating interactive spaces where discourse stays constantly contested. In the run-up to the 2023 elections, platforms such as Instagram and X made identity-based political conversation especially visible. Candidates and citizens used hashtags, reposts and rapid exchanges to debate national issues.

Lagos State occupies a distinctive place in this landscape because its politics often carries national significance, so that contests for the governorship tend to reflect wider political and social currents rather than purely local concerns (Agbaje et al., 2026). This was evident in the 2023 election, in which Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour emerged as the Labour Party's candidate on the back of the party's presidential campaign. He drew strong support from young and urban voters seeking an alternative to the established political order.

However, discussion of his candidacy quickly moved beyond policy and governance to questions of identity, ethnicity and political affiliation, as online discourse framed him through stereotypes and identity criteria rather

than through his platform (Aboh, Oni, & Uwen, 2025). Social media, and X in particular, became the primary arena where users constructed and contested competing narratives about his identity and legitimacy. Ndiinee (2026) shows that digital platforms readily circulate identity-based political narratives and often carry ethnic undertones that shape public perception. Okeke and Omosotomhe (2025) show that social media environments support the ongoing construction of ethnic identity through sustained user interaction. This makes the onlinediscussion of Rhodes-Vivour's candidacy a valuable context for examining how users frame and circulate ethnic labels during electoral contests. This study applies Entman's (1993) framing theory to a sub-national election that scholars have largely overlooked.

Statement of the Problem

Ethnic political rhetoric became especially visible in discussions of Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour's candidacy during the 2023 Lagos State gubernatorial election, as debate across social media repeatedly intersected with questions of ethnicity, indigeneity and political belonging (Ademosu, Aondover, & Osadolor, 2025; Aondover, Ademosu, & Acheme, 2026). A number of studies have examined related dimensions of this landscape. Jimada (2023) investigated hate speech and misinformation in the 2023 elections. Adu (2024) examined political discourse and information operations. Nwaoboli, Uchenunu and Asemah (2024) studied the rhetorical strategies of political figures on social media. Okeke and Omosotomhe (2025) and Abdulazeez (2025) examined the construction of ethnic identity and othering in digital rhetoric. Chigbu, Aboh and Ganaah (2025) explored ethnic othering in Nigeria's electoral discourse more broadly. Kolawole (2021) examined how labels shape identity construction in public communication.

Although these studies illuminate general patterns of ethnic rhetoric, hate speech and identity politics in Nigerian elections, none has examined specifically how social media users framed ethnic labels around a named candidate's bid for the Lagos governorship, nor the dominant narratives embedded within that labelling. It is this gap that necessitates an investigation into the social media framing of ethnic labelling on Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour's candidacy in the 2023 Lagos State gubernatorial election.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following questions:

1. What frames were ethnic labels presented in social media discussions about Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour's candidacy during the 2023 Lagos State gubernatorial election?
2. What are the dominant narratives that underlay the ethnic labelling of Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour's candidacy in social media discussions during the 2023 Lagos State gubernatorial election?

Scope of the Study

The study is limited to publicly available tweets posted on X relating to Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour's candidacy in the 2023 Lagos State gubernatorial election. It covers only tweets that made explicit or implicit reference to ethnicity, indigeneity, belonging or political legitimacy; tweets consisting purely of campaign messaging, endorsements, or non-ethnic political commentary fall outside its scope. Analytically, the study is confined to Entman's (1993) framing theory in combination with qualitative content analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis, and does not extend to other social media platforms, other candidates in the election, or broadcast and print media coverage of the contest.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

Social Media and Electoral Engagement

Social media has become a central platform for political communication in Nigeria's recent elections. Inobemhe, Ja'afaru and Garba (2024) found that multimedia technologies expanded public participation by giving citizens

faster access to political information during the 2023 election. Politicians used this same environment strategically to shape public opinion. Nwaoboli, Uchenunu and Asemah (2024) examined the rhetorical strategies party flag bearers deployed on social media during the 2023 presidential campaign and found that candidates relied on issue-based content, pathos and voter mobilisation to sway public perception rather than simply inform.

This strategic use of media is not new to Lagos elections. Biobaku, Fatonji and Arowolo (2022) studied the *Lion of Bourdillon* documentary, a propaganda film targeted at Lagos electorates during the 2015 election, and found that the documentary shaped voter perception of the targeted candidate through selective imagery and narrative framing. A similar pattern reappeared in the 2023 election cycle. Biobaku, Soyinka, Adisa and Olokodana (2026) examined the *Emilokan* song, a propaganda tool used against Bola Tinubu during the 2023 presidential campaign, and found that Lagos electorates were significantly exposed to the song and that this exposure shaped their electoral perception of the candidate. These studies show that Lagos elections carry a long history of media-based devices that construct candidates in particular ways for the electorate. This study extends that pattern into the terrain of ethnic labelling on social media.

Social media use in Nigerian elections carries real risks alongside its civic benefits. Oso, Soremekun and Jimoh (2022) found a high prevalence of fake news and hate speech during the 2019 Nigerian elections, most of it circulated through social media and online news platforms, with political content as the dominant issue. They recommend a fake news and hate speech observatory and stronger media literacy training for journalists. Jimada (2023) and Adu (2024) similarly show that social media enabled misinformation and heightened electoral tension in 2023. This body of work confirms that Nigerian elections are shaped as much by online discourse as by formal campaign messaging, and that this discourse carries real consequences for how voters perceive candidates.

Ethnic Labelling

Ethnic labelling is one of the most visible forms of identity construction in Nigerian political discourse. Kolawole (2021) argues that labels categorise individuals within public communication and often produce simplified representations that shape public understanding. Aboh, Oni and Uwen (2025) confirm this pattern in online discussion of election candidates, where identity-based indicators shaped public opinion of two frontline presidential candidates in the 2019 election. Abdulazeez (2025) studied political othering as a campaign strategy in the 2023 presidential election and found that othering served to delegitimise opposing candidates rather than engage their policies.

Ethnic and religious labelling can also build solidarity within an in-group even as it excludes others. Chigbu, Aboh and Ganaah (2025) show that religious othering in Nigerian electoral discourse unites some actors while alienating others. Ikuelogbon, Idowu and Aloba (2025) found similar patterns of hate speech on X during the 2023 presidential election. This literature establishes that ethnic labels function as discursive tools through which political actors and the public negotiate legitimacy, belonging and exclusion online, a dynamic that runs through the present study's data on Rhodes-Vivour's candidacy.

Theoretical Review Framing Theory

Framing theory is anchored in Entman (1993), who defines a frame as the selection of certain aspects of perceived reality and their emphasis in a text in ways that promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation or treatment recommendation. Hallahan (2011) similarly argues that framing shapes public understanding by structuring information into interpretive packages that influence audience perception, while Entman (2010) extends the theory to political communication, arguing that political actors continuously compete to establish preferred interpretations of events and actors, so that political communication becomes a struggle over meaning rather than a simple transfer of information.

Framing theory has also been applied productively to Nigerian media in contexts far removed from elections, which speaks to its flexibility as an analytical tool. Thanny and Biobaku (2023) applied framing theory to newspaper coverage of sickle cell disorder in Nigeria and found that *Vanguard* and *Guardian* gave the disease low prominence, with most coverage limited to general health reporting rather than sustained advocacy. Their study shows that Entman's framework travels well beyond political communication, into health journalism,

while still explaining how media choices about prominence and emphasis shape public understanding of an issue. The present study applies the same theoretical logic to a different terrain: the framing of ethnic identity around a gubernatorial candidate on social media.

With the rise of digital media, framing is no longer the preserve of institutional actors. Güran and Özarslan (2022) show that social media users actively create, modify and circulate frames of their own. Knüpfer and Entman (2018) note that digital spaces allow frames to spread rapidly across networks and audiences. Framing theory is therefore well suited to this study, since ethnic labels can themselves be understood as frames through which social media users construct meaning about Rhodes-Vivour's candidacy.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative research design, combining qualitative content analysis and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to analyse the framing of ethnic labels on social media in relation to Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour's candidacy during the 2023 Lagos State gubernatorial election. This combined approach was chosen because the study was concerned not only with identifying the frames present in the online discourse but also with interpreting the implicit assumptions and narratives embedded within them.

X (formerly known as Twitter) served as the source of data, being a platform widely used by the Nigerian public during the 2023 election (Akintayo & Adetola, 2026). The population comprised all publicly available tweets concerning Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour's candidacy in the election. Tweets were retrieved through keyword-based searches using terms such as 'Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour', 'GRV', 'Lagos election 2023', 'Lagos governorship election', 'Lagos is Yoruba land', 'Lagos belongs to', 'indigene' and 'Gbadebo non-indigene', among others, generated from an initial reading of relevant tweets. A total of 1,122 tweets were retrieved.

Purposive sampling was used to select tweets relevant to the study. An initial set of 1,000 tweets was screened against a predetermined criterion that retained tweets making implicit or explicit reference to ethnic identity, indigeneity, belonging, political legitimacy or labels connected to the candidate's ethnic background, while excluding tweets consisting only of campaign messaging, election commercials, generic endorsements, non-ethnic political commentary, duplicated content, or text too brief for meaningful analysis. This process yielded a final analytical sample of 200 tweets.

Data were gathered and managed using a custom coding guide developed in line with the study's research questions, with coding categories covering ethnic labels, dominant frames and recurrent narratives relating to identity, belonging, inclusion, exclusion and political legitimacy. Qualitative content analysis was first applied to categorise and retrieve ethnic labels and frames within the sampled tweets, after which Critical Discourse Analysis was used to examine how language and discursive practice contributed to the framing of issues around Rhodes-Vivour's candidacy.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Ethnic identity was a prevalent and recurring theme in social media narratives surrounding Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour's 2023 Lagos State governorship bid. Rather than functioning as a simple descriptive category, ethnicity was deployed as a resource through which political identity, belonging and legitimacy were constructed, negotiated and challenged in online discussion. This section presents the analysis in relation to the study's two objectives and questions, before discussing the findings in light of the reviewed literature and Entman's framing theory.

Frames Through Which Ethnic Labels Were Constructed Around Rhodes-Vivour's Candidacy in the 2023 Gubernatorial Election in Lagos State

The analysis shows that ethnic references to Rhodes-Vivour's candidacy were rarely deployed in isolation but were organised around three broader interpretive frames through which social media users made sense of his candidacy and what it represented for Lagos politics. These frames portrayed Rhodes-Vivour both as an outsider whose participation threatened established political and ethnic structures, and, in counter-discourse, as a

legitimate democratic candidate.

Framing Rhodes-Vivour as an Ethnic Outsider

The most dominant frame in the analysis positioned Rhodes-Vivour as an outsider to Lagos's political and cultural community. This framing was performed through repeated use of the labels non-indigene, outsider, stranger and settler, consistently tied to arguments linking political legitimacy to indigenous blood and ethnicity. One user wrote that "Lagos should remain for Lagos indigenes. GRV is not one of us" (Tweet 17), while another argued that "the governorship of Lagos cannot be handed to someone who is not truly from Lagos" (Tweet 25) and a third insisted that "this election is about protecting Lagos from outsiders who want to take control" (Tweet 42). The labels stranger and settler reinforced this positioning further: "we cannot allow strangers to determine the future of Lagos" (Tweet 63); "Lagos belongs to its people, not settlers looking for political power" (Tweet 77); and, more pointedly,

"Settlers should know their limits. Leadership should remain with the owners of Lagos. Yoruba can't come to your land and start taking political positions or acting like we own the place. Go back to your land" (Tweet 91).

A closely related pattern within the same frame reduced Rhodes-Vivour's political identity to a single ethnic trait, repeatedly labelling him an Igbo candidate: "It is about stopping an Igbo candidate from taking Lagos, we are not talking about parties" (Tweet 104); "Everybody knows who the Igbo candidate is in this election" (Tweet 119); and "Lagos politics should not be controlled by an Igbo agenda. All they seek to do is take over Lagos and now they are calling Lagos no man's land" (Tweet 131). A further tweet extended the outsider frame into explicitly hostile territory:

"This election has moved from just voting to defending Lagos from people who do not belong here. The Igbos have been spreading like wildfires across our lands, and they still have the guts to pick a fight with us daily. If you try that in Anambra... make I no talk" (Tweet 74).

Across these examples, the labels stranger, settler, outsider and Igbo candidate worked together to establish symbolic boundaries between those regarded as legitimate members of the Lagos political community and those considered external to it, while his policy proposals, leadership capacity and qualifications were displaced by an emphasis on his ethnicity.

Framing Lagos as an Ethnic Possession

Closely related to the outsider frame was an ownership frame, through which Lagos was represented as the collective possession of a particular ethnic group. One user described claims that "Lagos is a no man's land" as ridiculous, insisting that "Lagos belongs to its indigenous people and should remain under their control" (Tweet 82), while another argued that "when a lion builds a pride, no matter how strong a jaguar is, it can't rule over a pride built by lions. Our ancestors built Lagos. We cannot allow others to take it from us" (Tweet 97). A third tweet stated that "the governorship of Lagos is not for outsiders because Lagos is the heritage of the Yoruba people. #yorubaronu" (Tweet 113). Phrases such as belongs to, our ancestors and our heritage recast Lagos as an inherited ethnic good rather than a shared political space, casting the electoral contest as a form of territorial dispute over ethnic inheritance.

Framing Political Legitimacy Through Indigeneity

The third frame articulated political legitimacy through claims of ancestry, bloodline and ethnic origin rather than collective ownership. One tweet argued that only those of genuine indigenous origin would understand the needs of Lagosians (Tweet 126), while another stated,

"If Gbadebo can prove himself to be a Lagosian, then he may have my vote. Otherwise, I stand my ground that the governor of Lagos must come from families that have historical roots in the state" (Tweet 139).

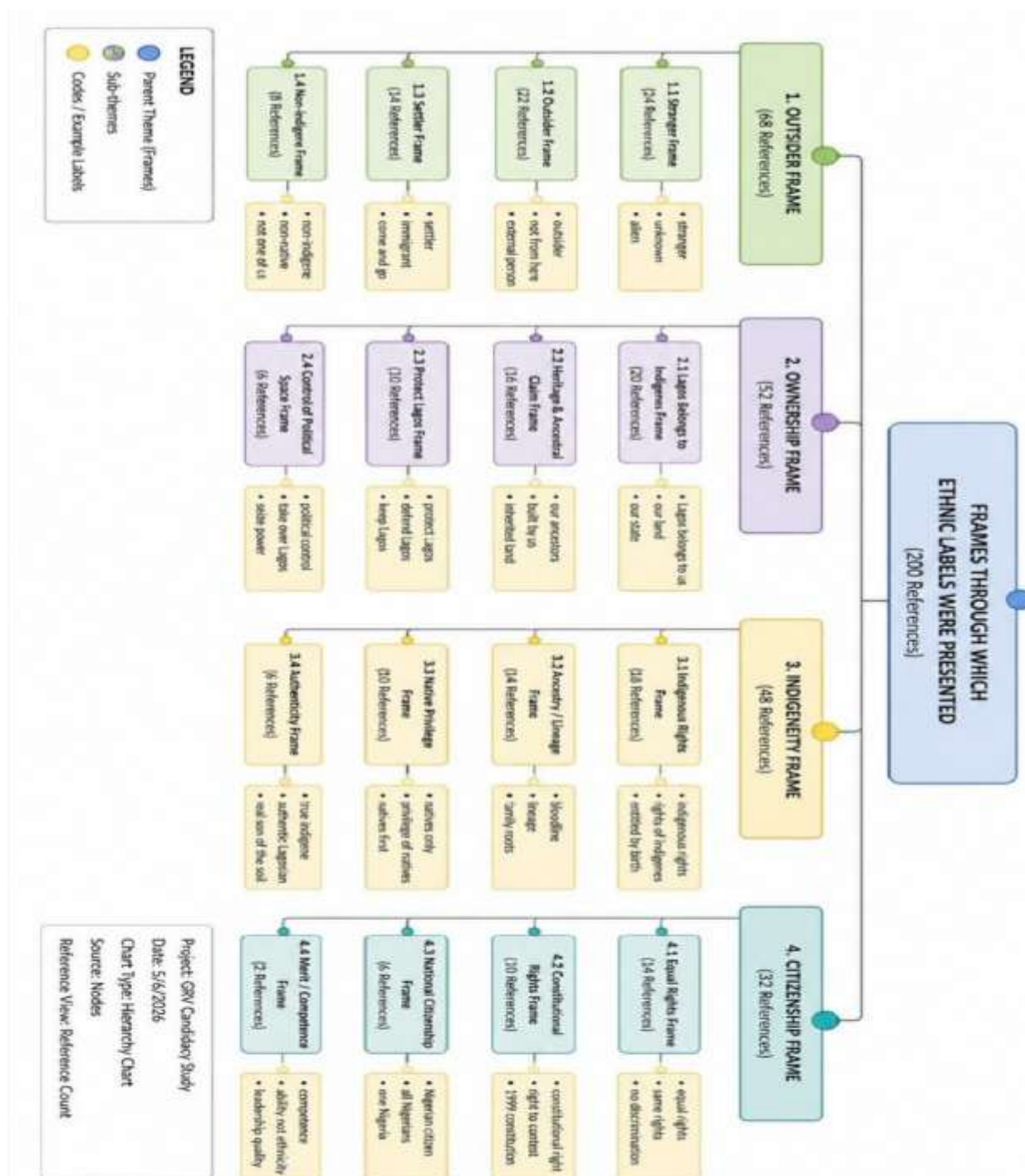
A related comment held that "being born in Lagos doesn't make you a bona fide indigene. It has to do with where your people come from. It doesn't matter if your forefathers weren't Lagosians" (Tweet 151). These contributions

show indigeneity being used to authenticate political qualification through heredity rather than residence or citizenship, connecting leadership to inherited rather than democratic authority.

Interpretation of Figure 1

Figure 1 below maps three frames behind the ethnic labelling of Rhodes-Vivour's candidacy: the outsider frame, the ownership frame and the indigeneity frame. Each frame draws on a distinct cluster of labels. The outsider frame relies on non-indigene, stranger and settler. The ownership frame rests on claims that Lagos belongs to one ethnic group. The indigeneity frame rests on ancestry and bloodline as grounds for political legitimacy. Users combined these frames rather than relying on a single label. The figure shows Entman's (1993) point in practice. Social media users selected specific aspects of the candidate's identity and gave them repeated emphasis, and this repetition produced clear, patterned frames rather than scattered remarks.

Figure 1: Thematic Map of Frames Through Which Ethnic Labels Were Presented (Source: Author's Coding Analysis)



Dominant Narratives Underlying the Ethnic Labelling of Rhodes-Vivour's Candidacy in the 2023 Gubernatorial Election in Lagos State

Beyond the specific frames, the analysis identified three dominant narratives running through the sampled tweets: a Lagos ownership narrative, an indigenous belonging narrative, and a political legitimacy narrative.

The Lagos Ownership Narrative

This was the strongest narrative in the dataset, conceptualising Lagos as the private possession of a particular ethnic group and framing the election as a battle to preserve that possession. One user wrote,

“While I may not agree with APC party for this election, I believe it is right that Lagos belongs to us and should remain in the hands of our people. Labour Party should produce a Yoruba candidate for Lagos, otherwise, this seems like there's an agenda from the Igbos because Labour Party pushed out a lot of people who don't belong in Lagos to take power in Lagos” (Tweet 24).

Another argued that “the forefathers of the Yoruba nation made Lagos and we Yorubas can not let anyone take what belongs to us” (Tweet 53), while a further tweet stated, “I agree that the governorship election of Lagos State is about protecting ownership of Lagos. Igbos are taking our lands and markets. #yorubaronu” (Tweet 81). Phrases such as belongs to us, our forefathers and what belongs to us recast Lagos as an ancestral family possession rather than a civic or political space, translating political power directly into ownership.

The Indigenous Belonging Narrative

Where the ownership narrative emphasised control over land, the belonging narrative concerned itself with who qualifies as a member of Lagos's political community. One tweet argued, “I was born in Lagos is not enough to be a Lagosian. Chickens are born among humans many times amonth but that doesn't make them humans. What matters is where your roots come from” (Tweet 97), while another stated that “when we say Lagosian, we are not saying where you were born. We are asking if your forefathers are from Lagos. A true Lagosian is someone whose family has historical ties to the state” (Tweet 114). A further tweet held that not everyone living in Lagos belongs to Lagos (Tweet 137). These statements show belonging being understood through ancestry rather than habitation or citizenship, transforming it into an ascribed rather than a civic identity.

The Political Legitimacy Narrative

The third narrative linked political authority and eligibility for leadership directly to ethnic belonging. One user argued that the governor of Lagos “needs to be one of them that really understand Lagos” (Tweet 121), another that “leadership need to belong to the people with deep roots in Lagos” (Tweet 149), and a third that leadership should belong to those who “genuinely represent the people of Lagos' interests” (Tweet 166). Phrases such as deep roots, really understand and genuinely represents show political authority being tied to origin and inheritance rather than to competence or achievement.

Interpretation of Figure 2

Figure 2 below maps the three narratives that ran beneath the frames in Figure 1: the Lagos ownership narrative, the indigenous belonging narrative and the political legitimacy narrative. These narratives extend the frames into larger stories about the election. The ownership narrative casts Lagos as inherited property. The belonging narrative casts Lagosian identity as a matter of ancestry rather than citizenship. The legitimacy narrative casts political authority as something owed by blood rather than earned through competence. Read together with Figure 1, this shows that individual labels fed into a coherent discursive system. Users were not making isolated remarks. They were building and defending a shared account of who belongs in Lagos and who has the right to lead it.

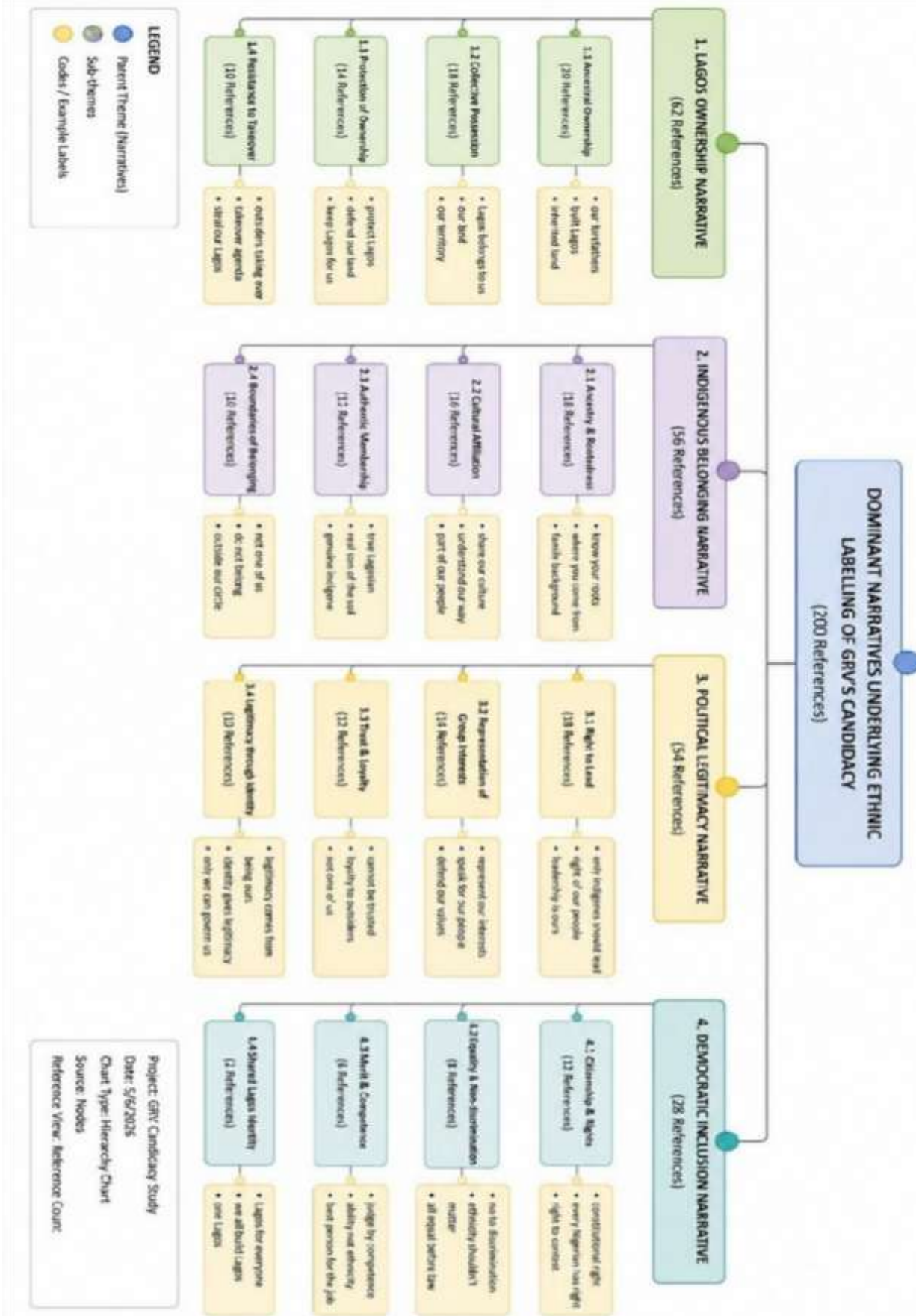


Figure 2: Thematic Map of Dominant Narratives Underlying Ethnic Labelling (Source: Author's Coding Analysis)

DISCUSSION

These findings show that the construction of self and other, belonging and political legitimacy, were contested throughout social media discussion of Rhodes-Vivour's candidacy. Ethnic markers such as non-indigene, outsider, stranger, settler and Igbo candidate did more than describe the candidate. They worked as discursive devices through which users understood and negotiated political space and power. This confirms Entman's (1993) central claim that framing involves selecting certain aspects of reality and giving them emphasis in a text. Users foregrounded Rhodes-Vivour's perceived ethnic identity and pushed his policy proposals, professional experience and political ideology into the background. The repeated use of descriptors such as Igbo candidate, non-indigene and outsider illustrates exactly the kind of selective emphasis Entman describes.

The findings extend Hallahan's (2011) and Entman's (2010) argument that political communication is a struggle over meaning. Social media users did not simply receive frames from political elites. They built and circulated their own frames in real time, which supports Güran and Özarslan's (2022) claim that social media users actively create and modify frames rather than passively repeat them. The outsider frame, the ownership frame and the indigeneity frame identified in this study each represent a distinct interpretive package through which users made sense of the same candidacy. This is consistent with Knüpfer and Entman's (2018) observation that digital spaces allow frames to spread and multiply quickly across networks.

These findings sit alongside other Nigerian studies of media influence on electoral perception. Biobaku, Fatonji and Arowolo (2022) found that the Lion of Bourdillon documentary shaped how Lagos electorates perceived a candidate through selective narrative and imagery during the 2015 election. Biobaku, Soyinka, Adisa and Olokodana (2026) found a similar pattern with the Emilokan song during the 2023 presidential election, where repeated exposure to a propaganda artefact shaped voter perception of Bola Tinubu. The present study shows that ethnic labels performed a comparable function during the same 2023 election cycle, but through organic user generated content rather than a single produced artefact. Lagos elections appear to be shaped by multiple overlapping framing devices, some produced by campaign machinery and some generated by ordinary social media users.

The recurrent use of labels such as non-indigene, outsider and stranger suggests that political legitimacy was frequently assessed against birthright rather than policy or competence. This reinforces Kolawole's (2021) argument that labels produce simplified representations that shape public understanding, and Abdulazeez's (2025) finding that othering was used as a campaign strategy during the 2023 presidential election. This study extends that literature by showing that ethnic framing in the Lagos governorship race was not always overtly hostile. It was equally embedded in narratives of belonging and ownership, as in the recurring claim that Lagos belongs to its indigenous people.

Oso, Soremekun and Jimoh (2022) found that fake news and hate speech were common features of Nigerian elections and recommended stronger media literacy training for journalists and the public. The present findings support that recommendation. Much of the ethnic labelling identified in this study, particularly claims that reduce a candidate's identity to a single ethnic trait, functions in a similar register to the hate speech Oso, Soremekun and Jimoh describe, even where it stops short of direct incitement.

Finally, these findings confirm that framing theory travels well across different subjects within Nigerian media research. Thanny and Biobaku (2023) applied the same theoretical framework to newspaper coverage of sickle cell disorder and found that selective emphasis shaped public understanding of a health issue. This study applies the same logic to ethnic identity on social media and finds that selective emphasis performs the same function it did in Thanny and Biobaku's health coverage. It directs public attention toward some attributes of a subject and away from others. Taken together, the findings reassert the explanatory power of Entman's

framing theory across both traditional and digital media, and across both health and political communication, while showing that ethnic identity remains a resource Nigerian social media users draw on to negotiate legitimacy, belonging and citizenship.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that social media provided a significant space for negotiating political identity, belonging and legitimacy during the 2023 Lagos State gubernatorial election. Discussion of Gbadebo Rhodes-Vivour's candidacy moved well beyond conventional electoral debate to become a site where rival conceptions of membership, representation and political entitlement were expressed and contested. Ethnic identity remained a salient resource in this digital political communication, shaping how political actors and electoral participation were interpreted in the public sphere. The study further shows that this discourse reflected the enduring influence of identity-based politics in Nigeria's democratic process, even within a highly urban and cosmopolitan setting such as Lagos, while the presence of competing civic and citizenship-oriented perspectives indicates that ethnic interpretations of political participation are neither fixed nor uncontested, and that digital spaces can support both the reinforcement and the contestation of exclusionary political narratives.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, the study recommends that:

1. Political actors, political parties and campaign organisations should prioritise issue based political communication during electoral campaigns.
2. Electoral management bodies, civil society organisations and civic education agencies should strengthen public enlightenment programmes on democratic citizenship and political inclusion, to promote constitutional rights, democratic participation and political tolerance.
3. Social media platforms and digital advocacy groups should encourage responsible political engagement and discourage exclusionary narratives.
4. Future studies should undertake comparative analyses across different election cycles, political offices, states and social media platforms to deepen understanding of the relationship between social media, ethnic identity and political communication in Nigeria.

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