A SEMIOTIC STUDY OF THE END BAD GOVERNANCE PROTEST PICTURES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examines how protest images employ visual symbols and gestures, among other non-verbal elements, to convey complicated socio-political concepts. This research concentrates on 10 purposively selected visuals to interrogate the imagery, symbolism, and cultural histories they invoke around forms of resistance and change. The research is aimed at investigating the visual signs along with their interconnections to uncover the implicit meanings that protest images convey. It also seeks to discern the emotional and mental impact that these pictures produce not just on subjects but on observers as well. These images show that protest visuals are not only symptoms of discontent but play their part in battling governance failures. The study deepens our understanding of the investment in visual culture and political engagement, providing insight into how images impact contemporary social justice movements. The research outcome presents the semiotics of protest pictures as providing new perspectives on visual communication in political activism and offers a critical engagement with how ideology operates visually via photography, especially within the context of Nigeria. The study, therefore, confirms, in another form of assessment, the idea that a picture is worth a thousand words by showing pictures depicting ranges of characterization that went beyond what could be done with all our word lists.

Keywords: Protest, Semiotic Analysis, Nigeria, Endbadgovernance, Meaning

Introduction

The EndBadGovernance protest in Nigeria has become a formidable entity in the fight for improved government and social justice, largely through the use of creative visual media techniques. Above all, it is important to use images to spearhead a protest since they can effectively communicate ideas that have a strong impact on diverse people in various social, economic, and cultural setups. These protest visuals are more than mere depictions of happenings; they are rife with meaning, such as complex ideas, emotions, and calls to action. The visual elements in these portrayals act as staunch signs of resistance, sometimes passing linguistic borders and appealing to an audience far afield from Nigeria (Ibrahim, 2021). This research attempts to consider the semiotic dimensions of these protest pictures and how they constitute communication in the EndBadGovernance campaign.

Semiotic analysis of pictures will include the study and assessment of signs and symbols within a given visual context, the interpretation of messages conveyed by such signs and symbols, and an understanding of cultural and social factors that shape such interpretations. The protest photographs of the EndBadGovernance are of immense cultural and political importance in Nigeria, serving as potent totems symbolizing the people's fury and hopes. According to Adedayo (2023), the movement has been fuelled by intense disgruntlement in matters of governance, such as corruption, inequality, and police misconduct. Demonstrators have used pictures not only to document their grievances but also to mobilize support and provoke thought. The power of these images lies in their ability to clearly explain complex ideas in a few words, making them an invaluable tool at the protesters' disposal.

The use of visual media for protest is not new, but the advent of social media has increased its impact. Protest photos in Nigeria spread

at a fast rate through social media, including Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, hence promptly visible to a global audience. This is because the mechanism for organization and sustainment of demonstrations by networks is decentralized. Photos are playing a key role in this growing digital space. Their semiotic analysis provides insights into the strategies used by the protesters to navigate and control what the public sees and comprehends. The study tries to offer insight into how the visual media contributed toward building the storyline of the EndBadGovernance campaign in the process of decoding the symbols and meanings embedded in the images.

Similarly, semiotic analysis can be used to understand in detail how these protest images tap into cultural and historical references that are particular to the Nigerian context. For example, some images may evoke memories of struggles from the past or use traditional symbols to signify resonance within the Nigerian population (Eze, 2021). The dynamics of the interaction between such cultural allusions and the visual elements of these protest images would be very complexly woven into the meaning that carries a high potential for motivation of collective action. Hence, the study aims to question how, with the elements in the protest pictures and with a collective cultural sensibility, these images will thereby motivate and further sustain the movement.

Understanding semiotics in protest images related to the EndBadGovernance movement is crucial since signs interplay in contemporary political activity through visual communication. They serve as much more than indicators; indeed, they play an active part in the struggle for transformation. This paper further contribute to the ongoing debate on the role of visual media in social movements and, therefore, focus specifically on the Nigerian situation by examining the signs, symbols, and cultural references present in these photographs. The key findings from this ` provide important insights through which such forms of visual semiotics could be used to impact public opinion and political participation (Okeke, 2023).

Semiotic and Protest Studies

The discipline of semiotics, the study of signs and symbols, has been a helpful framework for evaluating visual media and its influence on communication and culture for quite some time. Semiotics is an area of learning first contributed to by scholars such as Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce, which provides tools for deciphering the messages that are being delivered in visual texts like pictures, photographs, and other media that are teeming with symbolic objects (Chandler, 2017). Semiotic analysis of the social movement can help in viewing the visual symbols in communication with a political message, galvanizing public sentiment, and voicing grievances by demonstrators. More recent studies have focused on the importance of visual semiotics in contemporary protest movements, especially in conjunction with the development of digital media. (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020).

While the use of visuals in social and political protests is not a new phenomenon, with the advent of social media, these images' reach has been tremendously spread and extended, making them more valuable as a powerful tool for activists the world over. The EndBadGovernance campaign in Nigeria is one of the most salient cases in which visual media, specifically protest images, can shape the communication and storytelling of a social movement. These photos, widely disseminated on all major social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, are presented as visual artefacts, summarizing the protests, demands, and emotions expressed by the protesters themselves. They serve not only as records of history but also as rhetorical devices that persuade, arouse, and mobilize.

Scholarship on visual semiotics in social movements has underlined the role of cultural symbols in the constitution of the resistance frame. Images of protest very often carry historical and cultural references that speak powerfully to the audience for whom they are meant, creating a sense of collective identity and solidarity among the protestors (Oduro-Frimpong, 2020). In the case of the

EndBadGovernance campaign, protest visuals could be made up of a mixture of symbols that hold very strong historical and cultural meanings for Nigeria. These may come in the form of allusions to previous political standoffs, traditional attire, or even aphorisms. Such symbols frame the movement within the particular socio-political context of Nigeria, ensuring at the same time that it can be relatable to a much larger set of people. Volli (2019) further concurs that it starts being necessary to inject culturally relevant symbols into the visual media for protest images to have their work done. At the same time, it links rather abstract political demands with the audience's real-life experiences.

Additionally, semiotic analysis of protest photos shows how visual texts have the potential to destabilize existing narratives and interrupt systems of authority. Protesters will make them put symbols and signs in another political context so that the meanings are undercut and with them, the position of the state is undermined (Tagg et al., 2020). For example, images from the recent protest EndBadGovernance in Nigeria are rife with symbols that mainly seem to portray the oppressive stance of the state in its symbolization of authority—police attire or government buildings. This visual subversion is a critique of the present government system, yet it re-entitles the protestors to the task of contributing to the political process actively (Adedayo, 2023). Protest visuals are important for understanding the operation of current social movements as the meanings and values they put out into the public sphere serve both as a question and a reshaper of both social and political realities.

Recent academic research has furthermore delved into the emotive and affective dimensions of protest images, illuminating how photographs contribute to feelings of anger, hope, solidarity, and resistance by viewers (Papacharissi, 2015). In this age of digital media, the use of images is very emotive and widely circulated via all manner of social media platforms. The latter, according to Adebisi & Olufemi, (2023), could generate, within a brief period, emotional responses that

created identities which were shared among the protesters. Images of protest that have an emotional impact were found to play important roles in sustaining this momentum and rallying support from both Nigeria and the diaspora. These insights will provide an exploration into the affective dimensions of protest images, whereby effects are mobilized toward social and political change.

In general, research on visual semiotics in social movements finds that protest pictures have varying effects on political conversation, popular sentiment, and power relations. The EndBadGovernance campaign provides a golden opportunity to understand these processes, especially within the context of Nigeria's socio-political culture. This paper enriched how visual media functions as an instrument for social and political activity in the digital age by the analysis of semiotic elements with protest images.

Theoretical Approach
Multimodal Semiotics

Theo van Leeuwen and Gunther Kress's multimodal semiotics present a new theory of contemporary modes of communication that go beyond language. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (2006), communication deploys sights, gestures, sounds, and words in meaning-making. Their seminal book *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* discusses this. According to this concept, every mode has its own "grammar," a set of rules and resources controlling meaning production and understanding. Relating this to the general concept, one can appreciate the fact that to apprehend the complex landscapes of the media, meaning, more often than not, is offered in more than one modality. How communicators choose and organize resources offered by semiotics across modalities in creating coherence and compelling messages is the principal concept in the approach of Kress and van Leeuwen called "design."

According to Kress (2010), communications are planned and organized, influenced by the intended message and the social and

cultural surroundings. It is through protest posters that the power of strong wording, brilliant colours, and provocative pictures is used to make one have a feeling and a call for action. The design of political communication in Nigeria is illustrated by Ogungbe and Oyedeji (2017). They show how culturally important symbols and stories are used to make multimodal texts meant for particular audiences. The term "visual grammar," as argued by Kress and van Leeuwen, has broadened multimodal analysis. In theory, visual elements, just like verbal elements, can be analysed to understand what role they play in meaning.

This means that they study how composition, frame, and colour operate as language syntactical patterns. This approach affords an appropriate foundation for analysing difficult visual texts, as presented by Bateman, Wildfeuer, and Hiippala (2017). With this approach, researchers can learn about the content they seek to communicate through visual-textual interactions. This is most helpful in advertising, online storytelling, and political campaign materials since impressions are determined by the images. Another theory that Kress and van Leeuwen suggest is "inter semiosis," or the way the modes involved in a multimodal text interact. Most meaning comes from the interaction of several modes, not from any one mode. This is paramount in understanding multimodal texts because it emphasizes the collective effects of integrating more than one semiotic resource. The effectiveness of a social media campaign becomes better when text, photos, and hashtags are used together. In political discourse, inter semiosis will empower any message by having visual, textual, and auditory meanings for the viewer to infer its intended meaning.

The work of Kress and van Leeuwen on multimodal semiotics has an impact on media studies, education, and digital communication. Their methods have reoriented semiotic analysis, compelling researchers to consider the many ways through which meaning is constructed. According to Jewitt (2021) and Djonov and Zhao (2022), the multimodal technique of research has been improved in digital

media. The method addresses complex communicative landscapes created by text, image, video, and sound. In this fluctuating world of digital communication, the work of Kress and van Leeuwen clarifies the meaning produced and understood. Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen developed multimodal semiotics in advancing the theory of new ways of looking at communication media beyond spoken words. The central thesis of Kress and van Leeuwen's book, *Reading Images: The Grammar of Visual Design* (2006), is that communication involves pictures, gestures, sounds, and words. It simply advances the idea that every mode possesses its 'grammar'; a set of rules and instruments for meaning generation and understanding. This is the case as rarely is the meaning of anything transmitted in the complex media environment carried by a single channel. Kress and van Leeuwen base their paradigm on 'design', where communicators select and organize semiotic resources to bring out coherent and meaningful messages in a relevant fashion, across modalities. Kress (2010) advanced that "communication is an intentional act of design" because the desired message and social and cultural milieu influence the selection and arrangement of modalities. Protest posters are powerfully worded, with the brilliance of colour and provocative pictures aimed at evoking emotions and inciting action. The design extends to political communication in Nigeria by Ogungbe and Oyedeji (2017).

Multimodal texts are created to resonate with specific audiences by making use of culturally meaningful symbols and storylines. The concept of "visual grammar" by Kress and van Leeuwen revolutionized the analysis of multimodality. They propose that for a coherent analysis of visual elements' meaning contributions to it, it is used as such that it is implied that the arrangement of these in a similar pattern as language elements. They analyse how composition, frame, and colour are being used as language syntactical patterns. This methodology, as proposed by Bateman, Wildfeuer, and Hiippala (2017), is said to provide a valuable framework, which is usable while analysing more robust visual texts. It allows visual-textual investigation by researchers to understand the

meaning; since images frame viewer attitudes, this becomes very handy while analysing advertising, digital narratives, and political campaign materials. "Intersemiosis" is also argued by Kress and van Leeuwen for the interaction between modes in a multimodal text. Many meanings arise not from any single mode, but through the interaction of several modes. In other words, such an idea involves this notion, thus highlighting an effect that collaborates with the effort of combining semiotic resources and understanding multimodal texts. The key to success with social media campaigns depends on how one combines content, images, and hashtags.

According to Ogungbe and Oyedeji (2017), the use of inter semiosis in political discourse amplifies a message through the application of visual, textual, and auditory all at once. The multimodal semiotics by Kress and Van Leeuwen are credited for having influenced the media study field, education, as well as digital communication at large. Academic gurus are now being forced to re-plan their strategy about the analysis of signs, and the many different modes that words pass with. The multimodal method has been furthered in research on digital media by Jewitt (2021) and Djonov and Zhao (2022). This method deals with the intricate communicative landscapes created by text, image, video, and sound. Kress and van Leeuwen's work sheds light on meaning creation and understanding in a world of shifting digital communication.

Methodology

This study utilizes a qualitative research approach that incorporates multimodal semiotic analysis to investigate the symbolic and communicative roles of certain protest photographs related to the #EndBadGovernance movement that has been shared on social media. The research investigates the interaction of pictures, text, and symbols in conveying protest messages within Nigerian socio-political discourse, using the theoretical frameworks of Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen's multimodal semiotics. An analysis was conducted on a

purposeful selection of 10 protest photographs that were extensively shared on Twitter and Instagram. The analysis focused on the visual grammar of the images, specifically examining their composition, colour, and inter semiosis. To assure the accuracy and reliability of the study, it will utilize triangulation by cross-referencing relevant literature and seeking input from expert peers through debriefing. Ethical issues encompass the process of de-identifying personal information and demonstrating regard for the socio-political circumstances surrounding the demonstrations. The results are anticipated to enhance comprehension of how visual semiotics influence public discourse during important socio-political movements in Nigeria.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section presents the data and the analysis using a multimodal semiotic approach.

Text 1

A corpulent and elegantly attired gentleman, probably a senator, is reclining on an opulently squishy green sofa in his domestic environment, greedily clutching a luxury beverage. Beside him stands a police officer, representing another level of authority and oversight. The window features images of havoc or protest, creating a stark contrast between the senator's comfort and the chaos outdoors. The vivid hues, like the emerald sofa and the senator's amethyst attire, are set off against the drab colours outside the window, highlighting his disconnection

from the harsh realities that ordinary people have been enduring for years.

This detail is key in making the cartoon deliver its intended message. The senator's deranged quote, "Hey... don't change the channel, I love uncommon reality shows!" reflects a wilful ignorance or detachment from the seriousness of these protests, treating real-life activism as mere amusement. The officer's reply, "Senator that is not the television that is the window!" underscores the senator's obliviousness to what is happening beyond his sheltered walls.

The fine typeface and strategic placement of text, near the mouths of the characters, direct the viewer's eyes to connect the message with the visual elements. This cartoon can be read as a social critique of the disconnection political leaders often have from the real hardships faced by the average population. The turmoil outside the senator's window serves as a critique of political figures who prioritize their comfort and amusement over addressing social issues. The animation uses humour and satire to engage viewers, encouraging thoughtful reflection on political and social matters. The interplay of graphic elements, text, and layout creates a multi-layered message loaded with humour and intellectual appeal, effectively critiquing political disengagement and apathy toward social issues.

Text 2

The central part of the painting features a woman standing with an empty container on her head, and with her mouth open while she is voicing either a yell or a cry. The empty container serves as a strong

symbol of hunger and poverty, which has been widely used in protests to show that there is no food and other basic needs. The face of the woman looks desperate and frustrated, while her open lips give the viewer a vision that she is shouting some slogans or crying for help. In many cultures, raising the hand with the pot above the head expresses distress or calls for attention. The iconic traditional African attire of the woman sets the cultural context quite clearly to be that of Nigeria, or perhaps another location in West Africa. This attire, combined with the pot, increases the visual argument to a higher level of a ground-level protest by regular citizens rather than the powerful. A placard, which is planted in the background behind the woman, says "THIS HUNGER IS TOO MUCH". It can grasp the attention of people with its vibrant, colourful writing and is quite successful in delivering a clear and urgent message emphasizing the emergency of food insecurity and the unbearable situation to which demonstrators are being subjected. The choice of these colours—red and green—for the words "HUNGER" and "TOO MUCH" is so that it would give an effect of seriousness. Red often symbolizes danger or urgency; green, in contrast, may reflect growth or, ironically, lack when compared with hunger. The organization of the photo places the woman front and centre, making her the focus and grabbing the audience's first gaze at her expression and the empty pot, which is a strong symbol of the underlying message of the protest.

The image serves as a reflection on the harsh economic conditions that are fuelling the protest. The woman's empty pot and her worried expression are symbolic of the desperate ways people must cope to eke out an existence in the face of a growing hunger and poverty problem. This adds to the visual impact of the sign from the protester: it spells out that it is an action demand for the rising food crisis. The photograph calls up emotional involvement from the viewer, who automatically feels sympathy, concern, or anger. It is as if the hard stare from the lady, with her parted lips, is trying to call upon the observer to realize why they are in protest. The use of traditional clothing and

the meaning behind the empty pot have cultural symbolism, particularly in the Nigerian protest context, signifying not only personal misery but a collective experience of hunger that motivates people to participate in the protest. This sample of multimodal semiotics combines both visual and textual characteristics along with a cultural background to communicate what is a strongly dramatic message about hunger and despair, one that would become instrumental to the emotional and social details of the protest.

Text 3

The photo is of a woman holding a placard, and by her expressions and body language, one can tell that she is exasperated and maybe even resigned. In a broader context of taking the photograph at a protest or demonstration, the very presence of others and the act of holding a placard would represent a shared emotion. Most probably, the woman in casual clothes represents the average Nigerian. The protester's attire indicates that the protest is going on under difficult circumstances, with the outside environment embodying real life and the difficulties associated with it. "NA BECAUSE OF BAD GOVT I NEVER SEE HUSBAND @ 37yrs." This use of Pidgin English just shows the Nigerian setting, but it helps the speaker of the sign bring out her message clearly because she blames the government for the mess she is in not being able to get a spouse at her age.

This comment merges human complaints with political criticism, depicting that the actions of the government have adverse effects on a man's life. The placard works out to be an authentic sign of protest and its diction shows the class identity of the speaker hence helping make sure that the message reaches easily to most people. It suggests that negative governance in Nigeria has far-reaching effects, even touching on intimate aspects of life such as marriage. The facial expression of the woman and the wording of the sign put the immediate and intimate relation to the wider political context, making the message translatable for others as well as they can identify with her plight. The cartoon criticizes the government's inability to provide a favourable environment in which people could pursue their objectives by pointing out the link between personal challenges and political failures. The deep reach of the government into people's lives is well reflected in the graphic, through visual and language elements, into an impactful story of individual and communal challenges.

Text 4

The image presents a deeply intricate composition, each element laden with symbolic meaning, serving as a powerful commentary on societal structures. At its centre stands a politician, adorned in traditional garb and ornamented with beads, symbolizing wealth and authority. His raised hands, clutching chains that extend to various other figures, vividly depict his control and dominance over multiple facets of society.

As the central authority figure, he exerts substantial influence across different societal spheres.

The figures bound by chains each represent distinct societal domains, all under the politician's influence. In the upper left, a judge clad in judicial robes and holding a gavel symbolizes the legal system, suggesting its corruption or manipulation by the politician. Opposite, in the upper right, a police officer in uniform represents the law enforcement sector, further implying widespread bribery and corruption. The figure in the lower left, dressed in traditional clothing and holding a staff, embodies cultural authority, similarly depicted as being under the politician's sway. Centrally located at the bottom, a market woman carrying a tray of goods represents the proletariat or working class, possibly signifying their oppression. Finally, the armed figure in the lower right, associated with militancy or rebellion, symbolizes resistance or defiance, though still under the politician's control, indicating that even dissent is manipulated.

The backdrop and overall atmosphere of the image accentuate its critical message. The city skyline at the top centre suggests an urban setting, representing modern civilization or the epicentre of power. The chains binding the characters to the politician underscore the themes of control, manipulation, and the interconnectedness of corruption across various societal sectors. The use of vibrant colours for the figures creates a stark contrast with the subdued background, drawing attention to their roles and the dynamics of power at play. The politician's red hat and beads may symbolize authority and wealth, while the money held by the police officer reinforces the theme of corruption. The inclusion of objects such as a sword, gavel, money, and traditional staff further illustrates the various means through which power and influence are exercised.

Overall, the image serves as a sharp critique of the pervasive influence of political power over different aspects of society, including the judiciary, law enforcement, cultural authority, the working class, and even rebellious forces. The chains symbolize the widespread

corruption that ties these sectors together under the politician's control, highlighting the deep-rooted manipulation and exploitation within society.

Text 5

The image prominently depicts a guy seated on a chair, displaying characteristics and behaviour that suggest he is a political person, as shown by his clothing and mannerisms. The primary visual component is a tall structure composed of either currency or blocks representing wealth, specifically identified as the "Nigerian Economy." The stack is currently ablaze, indicating significant devastation or harm. The guy wields a match or lighter, suggesting that he bears direct responsibility for kindling the fire that is engulfing the economy. The inclusion of diminutive, blurred silhouettes positioned in the lowermost part of the visual representation, portraying their hurried retreat from the engulfing inferno, symbolizes the populace at large gripped by a sense of alarm or trepidation, so accentuating the adverse consequences of the economic devastation on common individuals.

The graphic effectively communicates power dynamics and social ties from an interactive standpoint. The individual depicted in the artwork avoids direct eye contact with the observer and instead directs their attention towards the deteriorating economy, suggesting a sense of detachment or an intense concentration on their harmful acts. The image's low aspect positions the observer at the same eye level as the guy, evoking a feeling of seeing or being involved in the damage

from a helpless perspective. The social distance is accentuated by the little, far-off persons leaving the scene, representing the disparity between the leadership and the populace. The images exaggerated and symbolic style, commonly found in political cartoons, strengthens the criticism by highlighting the intense and disastrous nature of the issue.

The image's compositional meaning is meticulously organized to effectively convey a distinct message. The guy is situated on the left side of the image, which is typically associated with the "given" information. This location symbolizes the known person or source of the problem. The blazing "Nigerian Economy" depicted on the right side symbolizes the "novel" or the outcome of the individual's deeds. The stack of banknotes is the most prominent feature in the image because of its central placement, large size, and vivid flames that create a strong contrast with the darker background, instantly capturing the viewer's attention and conveying the concept of economic devastation. The visual correlation between the guy and the blazing economy, conveyed by the flames, indicates a cause-and-effect relationship, indicating that the devastation is a direct consequence of the man's activities.

In essence, the artwork employs visual metaphors and symbolic representations to provide a pointed criticism of political leadership, suggesting that the represented person bears responsibility for the continuous deterioration of the Nigerian economy. The flames not only reflect the act of causing physical damage but also the gradual deterioration of economic stability. Similarly, the persons fleeing from the scene signify the extensive adverse effects on the population as a whole. The image's dramatic tone and exaggerated features effectively emphasize the seriousness of the issue, conveying a powerful message about the perceived shortcomings of leadership.

Text 6
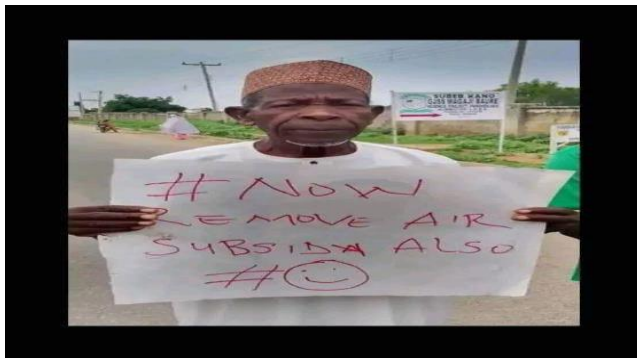
The image's figurative meaning focuses on an older guy who is holding a sign. The image's significance is significantly influenced by the subject's traditional dress and facial expression. The guy is seen holding a placard that has the inscription "#NOW REMOVE AIR SUBSIDY ALSO #". The placard appears to have a sardonic or humorous message, maybe criticizing the elimination of subsidies, particularly those related to gasoline or other types of subsidies. The man's countenance and the sign he is holding epitomize a blend of acceptance and sarcasm, as the cheerful expression on the smiling face starkly contrasts with the demand conveyed on the placard. The purposeful utilization of "AIR SUBSIDA" in place of "subsidy" might be seen as an intentional typo, employed to accentuate the sense of ridiculousness or exasperation towards the subject being discussed.

From an interactive semantic standpoint, the man is gazing straight into the camera, establishing a powerful rapport with the audience. The direct eye contact of the subject encourages the audience to actively interact with the message and contemplate the significance of the phrase on the placard. The close-up image of the guy carrying the sign conveys a sense of intimacy and immediacy, drawing the spectator into a closer connection with both the subject and the message. The shot possesses a high level of certainty, which gives it a strong impression of being realistic and trustworthy. Moreover, the casual, hand-written sign amplifies the genuineness of the conveyed message.

The significance of the message is heightened by the strategic positioning of the guy and his placard at the centre. The sign is the most prominent feature in the photograph, capturing the viewer's instant attention. The utilization of red ink for the wording on the sign also enhances the viewer's attention. The image is composed with a close-up focus on the guy and his sign, deliberately minimizing any background elements that may divert the viewer's attention away from the intended message. The efficacy of a picture is greatly influenced by colour and typography. The juxtaposition of the white placard and the red writing guarantees that the message is highly conspicuous. The man's conventional white clothing juxtaposes with the brownish-red hue of his cap, imbuing the image with a cultural element. The use of handwritten lettering on the sign imparts a sense of authenticity, indicating that the protest or remark is of grassroots origin or characterized by spontaneity. Adding a smiley face at the end of the message brings in an element of sarcasm or comedy. The graphic employs a blend of visual and textual components to convey a statement that is simultaneously critical and sarcastic. The old man's composed and unwavering stare, along with the sarcastic request on the sign, offers a critical analysis of governmental actions, including the elimination of subsidies. The misspelling of "subsidy" as "SUBSIDA" and the use of a smiley face provide elements of sarcasm and fun, which mirror the public's frustration with the situation.

Text 7
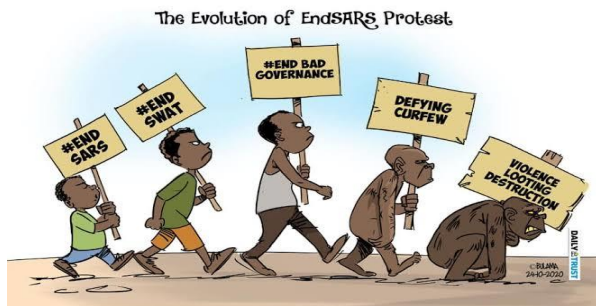
The image's symbolic meaning is conveyed by a depiction of a parade of individuals carrying placards, with a gradual transition from human-like appearances to more animalistic shapes. This transition implies a regression rather than progress since the figures become more rudimentary. The cartoon illustrates the many phases of the EndSARS protest, as seen by the signs held by the individuals. The posters bear the slogans "#EndSARS," "#EndSWAT," "#End Bad Governance," "Defying Curfew," and "Violence Looting Destruction." The transition of the figures from human to ape-like forms signify a retreat or decline in civility, suggesting that the demonstrations, which once had a valid purpose, had devolved into disorder and devastation. The cartoon's characters lack immediate engagement with the spectator, implying that the viewer is expected to critically evaluate the growth from an outsider's standpoint in terms of interactive significance. The people are depicted in profile, receding from the observer, suggesting a sense of detachment or the notion that the movement has deviated from its initial objectives. The utilization of a cartoon-style picture diminishes the level of certainty, so transforming the image into a more symbolic and open-to-interpretation representation, rather than a straightforward portrayal of events.

The compositional meaning adheres to the "Given to New" structure, wherein the original objectives of the protest (Given) are shown on the left, while the present condition (New) is depicted on the

right. This pattern suggests that anything that first started as beneficial and progressive has now transformed into something detrimental and retrogressive. The observer's gaze is instinctively captivated by the sequence of the characters and their signs, wherein the more prominent and conspicuous figures command greater focus, so accentuating the storyline of deterioration. The figures are linked in a linear arrangement, representing uninterrupted flow; nonetheless, the visual alteration interrupts this flow, indicating a disruption in the initial purpose of the demonstrations.

In terms of colour and font, the cartoon employs predominantly subdued hues, with browns and earth tones prevailing in the colour scheme. The selection of this hue may represent the gravity of the subject matter or the deterioration and corruption of the movement's original aims. The content shown on the placards is prominently formatted in bold and capital characters, guaranteeing its visibility and legibility. The typeface employed accentuates the message shown on each sign, effectively delineating the many stages of the protest. The interdependent connections between text and pictures are essential for comprehending the underlying meaning of the cartoon. The wording displayed on the placards is crucial for comprehending the development of the data, which may otherwise be perplexing. The visual metamorphosis of the characters from human to ape-like creatures enhances the written storyline, strengthening the concept of regression. Considering the backdrop of the EndSARS demonstrations, this cartoon seems to be criticizing the movement's trajectory, indicating that it has veered off course and descended into a state of violence and disorder, far removed from its initial, honourable objectives. The cartoon employs visual metaphor and symbolism to critique the apparent deterioration of the EndSARS movement, emphasizing the tendency of movements to lose their original goal and direction as time progresses.

Text 8

The cartoon's representational meaning revolves around a caricature of a guy who is seen carrying two signs with contradictory messages: "ENDURE BAD GOVERNANCE" and "THIS IS A PROTEST AGAINST ALL FORMS OF PROTEST." A group of others in the background are seen holding their signs, indicating their involvement in a protest. Meanwhile, another person cynically comments, "Behold, he is setting a fine example." Impressive! The principal individual embodies a paradoxical or hypocritical scenario in which he supports the persistence of ineffective leadership while also opposing any type of protest, thereby emphasizing the underlying irony of his position. The exaggerated and caricatured portrayal of this character, together with his casual red cap, represents a person in a position of power or influence who is either disconnected from the needs of the people or deliberately repressing opposition. The banners he holds symbolize conflicting concepts, so accentuating the irrationality of his stance. The central figure's absence of eye contact with the spectator generates a feeling of detachment or apathy, signifying his contempt for public opinion or the repercussions of his behaviour. The figure's conspicuous placement in the foreground signifies his pivotal role in the storyline, while the demonstrators, portrayed in the background, seem to be overshadowed or marginalized by the focal figure's conflicting signals. The cartoon's stylized and exaggerated elements diminish its level of

certainty, enhancing its symbolism and directing the viewer's emphasis on the underlying message rather than a realistic depiction.

The cartoon's compositional meaning positions the centre character in a prominent location inside the image, highlighting the importance of the conflicting signs he is holding. The demonstrators in the backdrop, while not the main focus of the composition, are nonetheless essential in demonstrating that the focal figure's actions directly contradict the popular movement. The prominent dimensions of the placards, especially the one with the words "ENDURE BAD GOVERNANCE," instantly capture attention, while the crimson hat further accentuates the main figure. The composition of the prominent guy and his banners, juxtaposed with the smaller, less intricate portrayal of the demonstrators, implies the diminished authority or impact of the latter in comparison to the former.

The cartoon's message is well conveyed through the use of colour and font. The employment of contrasting colours, shown by the red cap juxtaposed with the subdued hues of the person's attire and the black lettering on white placards, serves to accentuate the centre figure and his paradoxical words. The subdued background guarantees that attention is directed towards the core parts. The prominent, capitalized text on the signs accentuates the lucidity and assertiveness of the conflicting messages, while the informal, rather nonchalant font employed for the speech bubble in the backdrop imparts a touch of irony. The interplay between text and picture in a multimodal format, along with the contextual interpretation, leads to a potent analysis of hypocrisy and conflicting actions. This analysis likely addresses political leaders who stifle public opposition while advocating for the acceptance of inadequate governance.

Text 9
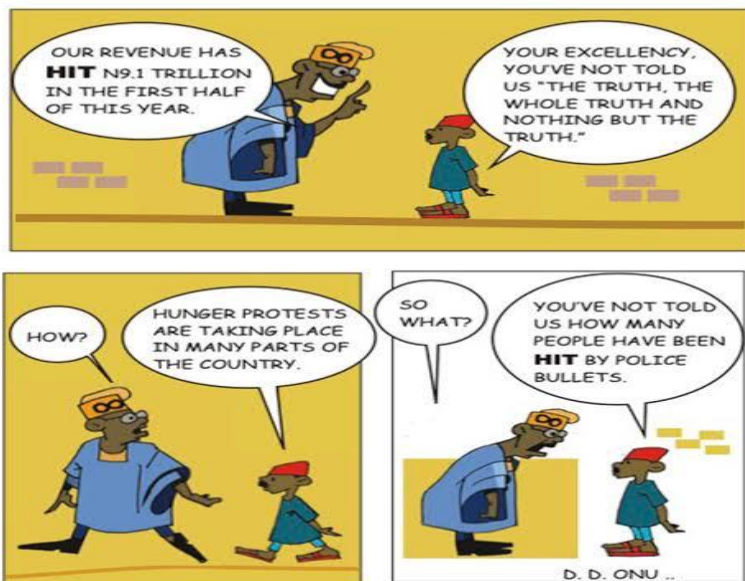
Kress and van Leeuwen's paradigm define "representational meaning" as the image's content. The cartoon shows a guy with a blue agbada and a child in a red hat, possibly representing a lower-ranking or younger individual. Nigeria's budget, hunger protests, and police violence are discussed. The story contrasts the favourable income report with the brutality of social upheaval, showing how official terminology differs from people's realities. Interactive meaning involves the picture-observer relationship. The characters in this cartoon talk instead of looking at the viewer. This creates a tale the viewer should notice and comprehend. Speech bubbles focus attention on the verbal exchange, making discourse the main part of engagement. As the child questions the father in a way that indicates resistance, the spectator is forced to think.

Compositional meaning is how a picture's pieces are organized and affect its meaning. Like reading, the cartoon's four panels focus on

the viewer's eyes. The first panel introduces the income, but later panels discuss starvation and police violence. The actors and their dialogue at the top and bottom of the frames indicate hierarchy. The man in Agbada may represent the government or authority, while the child represents the average citizen or youth. This composition reinforces hierarchical connections and criticizes the government's focus on economic numbers above people's well-being. Colour is vital to visual communication, even if Kress and van Leeuwen's theory doesn't adequately address it. Blue for the agbada and scarlet for the boy's cap provide a striking contrast that draws attention to the people and their interactions. Political cartoons are stylized, reducing modality. Instead of realistic portrayals, these cartoons employ exaggeration and symbolism to convey deep concepts. The cartoon's topic is symbolism. The discourse emphasizes the government's focus on income increases over human suffering, such as famine and police brutality. The boy's final question, "You have neglected to disclose the precise number of individuals who have been struck by police projectiles," powerfully condemns the government's indifference to ordinary citizens. The term "hit" in different contexts (economic prosperity versus physical aggression) shows the gap between government goals and public problems.

Text 10

Pictures' representational significance depends on their subject matter. In the cartoon, a soldier (representing the government) and a citizen

(representing the public) have different power levels. The soldier holds the civilian's collar, symbolizing control and compulsion. The civilian's chat highlights the absurdity and annoyance of the situation, as they request simple essentials like economical cooking gas and tomatoes yet are met with tear gas and pepper spray. The story's main topic is the large gap between population needs and government actions, illustrating the community's socioeconomic issues. Interactive meaning involves the viewer-visual representation relationship. Instead of talking to the audience, the characters interact, creating a scene for them to interpret. Since the soldier's aggressive posture shows a power imbalance, the audience is strategically oriented to empathize with the civilian. A speech bubble draws attention to the civilian's situation and the government's absurdity in responding to basic demands. This interaction makes the spectator question the justice and usefulness of such a domineering attitude.

Compositional meaning is how visual elements affect the message. The cartoon's simple format has two major characters positioned prominently to draw attention to their interaction. The soldier, who is taller and more authoritative, dominates the composition, emphasizing authority and rule. To help the viewer grasp the citizen's message, the speech bubble's wording is big and bold. The backdrop's "HUNGER PROTEST" placard links the interaction to a bigger socio-political issue. The animation is meaningful. The soldier's uniform and gun symbolize governmental authority and compulsion, whereas the civilian's small size and placards symbolize vulnerability and peaceful protest. A reference to "teargas" and "pepper spray" instead of cooking gas and tomatoes shows the government's misdirected focus and ruthless suppression of peaceful concerns. The cartoon accuses the government of using force to alleviate poverty and hunger. The animation uses bright colours and colours to captivate viewers and make characters and settings relatable. The soldier's deep green uniform contrasts with the civilian's bright yellow shirt, emphasizing the power imbalance. Political cartoons utilize visual hyperbole to make their

messages clear and powerful. The soldier's austere face and the civilian's nervous face are exaggerated.

Findings

The study's findings highlight the important significance that visual semiotics play in the communication methods of the EndBadGovernance campaign in Nigeria. Protest photographs are examined to uncover how visual symbols, gestures, and non-verbal aspects are deliberately selected to communicate intricate socio-political meanings that strongly resonate with the Nigerian population. These photographs frequently mix cultural allusions, such as traditional clothing or emblems of power, juxtaposed with symbols of defiance, such as clenched fists or hoisted banners, to construct a compelling visual story of opposition. The deliberate utilization of colour, facial expressions, and body language in these photos the emotional depth of the imparted messages, transforming the protest images into more than mere representations of dissatisfaction, but rather instigators of communal mobilization.

The study also discovered that these protest photographs are a powerful means of expressing the frustrations of the general public, especially in situations when traditional media may be limited. The examined photos frequently portrayed situations of conflict, resilience, and unity, which effectively mobilized public backing and maintained the movement's progress. The utilization of social media channels to distribute these photographs had a pivotal part in their influence, as it facilitated swift and extensive circulation, so enabling the protest messages to reach a worldwide audience. The study emphasizes which the visual symbols used in these protest images captivate viewers on an emotional and psychological level, promoting a feeling of collective identity and a common goal among participants and supporters.

Moreover, the study demonstrates that the protest photographs linked to the EndBadGovernance movement are not only passive depictions but rather active catalysts in the fight against governance

shortcomings. The visuals are intentionally created to elicit strong emotional responses, confront conventional thinking, and motivate, frequently conveying messages of optimism, resistance, and the potential for transformation. The semiotic analysis revealed the role of these pictures in larger narratives of resistance, utilizing both historical and present allusions to criticize the existing state of affairs and promote a new political structure. The findings illustrate that these visuals possess the capacity to surpass language boundaries, effectively conveying intricate concepts using visual methods that can be understood by a broad audience.

Conclusion

To summarize, this study emphasizes the crucial significance of visual semiotics in moulding public discourse and impacting collective action within the EndBadGovernance campaign in Nigeria. The protest photographs examined in this study serve not just as depictions of dissatisfaction, but also as active instruments of political mobilization that involve viewers on several levels. Through the analysis of the visual signals and symbols included in these photographs, this research reveals the hidden meanings they convey and illustrates their role in the wider fight against governance deficiencies in Nigeria. The research findings indicate that analysing protest photos from a semiotic perspective provides useful insights into the way visual communication functions in modern political action, especially in the era of digital technology. As visual culture remains influential in social justice movements, comprehending the significance of images in these situations becomes more crucial for researchers, activists, and politicians.

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