

The Role of Social Media in Mobilizing the #EndSARS2020 Protest in Lagos State, Nigeria.

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Abstract- This study explains the role of social media in mobilizing the #EndSARS2020 protest in Lagos State, Nigeria, exploring how online communication platforms helps in achieving civic participation, coordination, and organization. The #EndSARS movement, initially a digital campaign against police brutality, evolved into a nationwide protest largely driven by the active use of social media. To provide a theoretical foundation, the research adopts an integrated framework combining the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), Connective Action Theory, and Resource Mobilization Theory. The Uses and Gratifications Theory explains the individual motivations that led Nigerian youths to use social media for information sharing, social interaction, and self-expression during the protest. Connective Action Theory highlights how decentralized, network-based communication transformed personal expressions into large-scale collective mobilization without formal leadership. Meanwhile, Resource Mobilization Theory underscores how social media served as an organizing infrastructure for acquiring and deploying resources such as funding, logistics, and public support. A mixed-methods approach involving social media content analysis, interviews, and documentary review was used, focusing on Lagos as the centre of protest activity. Findings reveal that social media enabled real-time communication, enhanced participant motivation, and strengthened collective coordination, thereby shaping the dynamics of political activism in the digital era. The study concludes that social media platforms are critical tools for empowering civic engagement and sustaining contemporary youth-led social movements in Nigeria.

Index Terms- #EndSARS, social media, Digital activism, Police brutality.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Protests are often regarded as physical or online activities that involve mass demonstrations in particular physical or virtual spaces. Recently, most people have seen connections between the media and

agitations. But the question that begs answer is: how has the increased use of social media impacted on protest activities around the world? The internet is not only an information reservoir, but an avenue to air opinions, views, and agitations from anywhere in the world. The impact of social media on protest and government policies requires further study.

The #EndSARS2020 protest began as a call to end police brutality and the activities of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) in Nigeria, over the time evolved into one of the largest youth-led social movements in the country's history. Lagos State, being Nigeria's economic and media hub, became the centre of the mobilization. Social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook played a critical role in organizing, informing, and sustaining the protest. To understand how and why young Nigerians in Lagos turned to social media during the protest.

Oluwakemi and et al (2022) submits that Social media "are increasingly playing the role of public sphere where public issues are debated outside the control and dominance of government" and people come together as "equal" in a public debate. However, social media has therefore, now become the new voice of Nigerians in which people from all works of life freely express their opinions, aspirations, concerns and feelings about government corrupt practices and ways of governance; thereby, acquiring increased awareness and recognition globally. The use of social media for social activism has, of course, been a foremost political phenomenon in Nigeria's political sphere since the Arab spring revolution on 17th of December 2010 where Nigerians had taken a cue on how effective social media can be used to engage their government over misrule and bad policies Akerele et al citing (Hari,

2014). The use and instigation of social protests through social media platforms like X, Facebook, Instagram was, for the first time, established with the success of the nationwide protest tagged the "Occupy Nigeria" in 2012 which lasted for about one week and five days when citizens took to the street to protest against the removal subsidy from the Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) by the Federal Government. It was recalled that Nigeria in Diaspora also joined the protest in solidarity seeking redress from the federal government. Since then, it has been from one social protest to another, which were coordinated and amplified through the use of social media.

It's evident to note that social media play a pivotal and indispensable role in mobilizing different categories of people from different parts of the country, even within the country; to enable them come together as a whole and as well as one voice irrespective of their culture, traditions, race, colour and language to speak out their minds in mass in order to change government narrative. This was seen in the #Endsars 2020 where Nigerians took to the street of social media calling out government to disband SARS and end Police brutality, injustice and maltreatment. These led many Nigerians to street protest agitating for drastic change in the Nigeria Police Force and as well maladministration in governance.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Social media has become an essential part of everyday life, transforming how individuals communicate, access information, and participate in social and political issues. In Nigeria, platforms such as Twitter (now X), Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp have evolved into key tools for youth engagements and public expression (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). The 2020 #EndSARS protest marked a huge turning point in the use of social media, as thousands of Nigerian youths especially in Lagos State used these platforms to organize, mobilize, and demand an end to police brutality. "Hashtags" became rallying points that connected people across geographical, social, online space and cultural boundaries. Through social media, protest information spread rapidly, donations were

coordinated, and live updates kept participants informed in real time (Chiluwa & Ifukor, 2021).

Despite different studies which have examined social media's general influence on youth activism participation, few have specifically explored its role in the mobilization and coordination of the #EndSARS protest in Lagos. This gap limit policy makers, civil society actors, scholars, ability to developed informed strategy for digital rights activism, civic mobilization and effective communication in future demonstrations.

Therefore, this study seeks to investigate how social media facilitated the organization, mobilization, and sustainability of the #EndSARS 2020 protest in Lagos State. Also, it identify the ways in which digital platforms encouraged active participation, unified voices, and connected online engagement with physical protest actions, while also highlighting the limitations and broader implications of civic participation in Lagos state.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To examine the influence of social media in coordinating and mobilizing the #EndSars movement.
2. To assess how social media influence participant decision to engage in online activism.
3. To examine the relationship between online and physical participation in protest demonstration in Lagos state
4. To identify the implications of social media driven mobilization for future digital participation.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the influence of social media in mobilizing the #EndSars movement towards shaping public opinion in Lagos state?
2. How do social media social media influence participant decision to engage in online activism?
3. What is the relationship between online and physical participation in protest demonstration in Lagos state?
4. What are the implications of social media driven mobilization for future digital participation?

1.5 Scope of Study

This study focuses on the role of social media in mobilizing the #EndSARS2020 protest within Lagos State, which served as the central hub of the movement. The analysis is limited to major platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp, examining their influence on protest organization, information dissemination, participant motivation, and on-ground coordination. The study covers events surrounding the 2020 protest period and does not extend to other unrelated civic movements. It targets Lagos residents who engaged with #EndSARS content online and/or participated in physical demonstrations.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study contributes to academics, policy makers, students, governmental agencies and parastatals as well as civic understanding of digital activism and participation in Nigeria.

By offering an in-depth examination of the #EndSARS2020 protest in Lagos State, the study:

1. Provides empirical insight into how social media shapes contemporary protest mobilization among urban youth in Nigeria.
2. Enhances understanding of the digital tools, messaging patterns, and community-building processes that influence large-scale civic participation.
3. Informs policymakers, human rights organizations, and civil society groups working to protect digital rights and freedom of expression in Nigeria.
4. Offers valuable knowledge for communication scholars and practitioners seeking to understand the evolving relationship between online activism and physical demonstrations.
6. Serves as a resource and evidence for future scholars of communication, youth participation, and social movements.

1.7 Operational Definitions

Below are working definitions for the following lexicons as utilized in the context of this research;

1. Social media: This refers to the applications and websites that allow users to create and share content and participate in social networking.
2. Media: This can be defined as the platforms or channels at which information is being disseminated or transferred to people.
3. Mobilizing: This can be defined as gathering and converging of people to perform a certain task or operation.
4. Endsars: This is a tag to put a stop to police harassment, intimidation and brutality.
5. Protest: This simply means people coming together to show their grievances, disapproval of an idea or policy.
6. Police brutality: This means an act of misconduct and unnecessary exercise of power to the citizens.
7. Lagos state: A state in Southwest Nigeria

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual review

2.1.1 The Concept of Social Media

A lengthy history exists about the utilisation of social media to disseminate knowledge and instigate social change. (Fasuwon 2019) asserts that social media is a cutting-edge network and technology that enables effective human contact and communication. (Obar and Wildman, 2015) define social media as online networks that facilitate the creation and dissemination of knowledge, opinions, and diverse forms of expression through interactive digital tools. (Uwazuruike 2020) asserts that interpersonal communication and information exchange have undergone significant transformation in contemporary society as a result of social media. A diverse array of information formats, such as text, photos, and tables, must be easily accessible across different social media platform interfaces. in contemporary society, social media undeniably function as a catalyst for social reform. Social media has the capacity to disseminate misinformation (Adepetun, 2020). The term "misinformation" denotes the intentional dissemination of false or erroneous information aimed at deceiving individuals. Baseless anxieties have escalated owing to misinformation on social media in recent years (Allcott Gentskow & Yu, 2018). Leading news

organisations have invested in digital journalism, content improvement, and the expansion of their online and social media platforms. (Xiang and Gretzel 2010 and Ahn et al, 2007) contend that social media is rapidly emerging as the pre-eminent medium for information dissemination, as its primary objectives for users are communication, networking, and knowledge sharing. The emergence of social media coincided with technological breakthroughs that facilitated the global dissemination and democratisation of knowledge. (Burkhardt 2017) asserts that knowledge facilitates access to novel concepts and previously inaccessible locations. It enables customers to determine the utilisation of the data they obtain and offers a platform for diverse perspectives.

2.1.2 The Impact of social media on the Endsars protest

It is imperative and evident to note that social media was instrumental to the Endsars protest as it was used as the engine of information and mobilization. One thing that was distinct in the Endsars protest and previous protests in Lagos is the usage of social media. The social media was used as a platform for the voice of the protesters to be heard globally and the news of the social demonstration was all over the globe due to the spread and reach of social media. Social media was also used to protest online with the use of Hashtags which has been discovered in this study as a new form or digital means of protesting. Social media can play a vital role in mobilization because it enables access to a huge amount of contacts, create collective identities, and serves as a site for distributing information. Additionally, social media is used in coordinating protests and to condemn police violence, it is also an alternative source of information, a space to publish a narrative that counters those of pro-government propaganda channels. The engine room of the Endsars protest was social media because it served as the engine room and it was used to mobilise, raise funds, coordinate, and get information about the protest. The #EndSARS protest in Nigeria in 2020 is a clear example of this transformation. What started as online outrage over police brutality evolved into one of the most significant youth-led movements in the country's history. Lagos State, as the heart of the demonstrations, witnessed how digital coordination

translated into street action. Social media served as a mobilizing agent, enabling youths to organize logistics, raise funds, document abuses, and sustain momentum (Olowolagba, 2020).

Burkhardt (2017) asserts that in a wholly unregulated, advertising-driven media environment, the pursuit of profit often outweighs the motivation to act ethically. This significantly impacts the medium's development over time. (Burkhardt) noted the development of misinformation as a consequence of technological advancements associated with social media. She raises a pertinent observation that, while misinformation exists, its velocity and extent of distribution have reached unprecedented levels due to technology improvements. The widespread use of smartphones and social media facilitates the rapid and effortless dissemination of misinformation (Fox, 2018). (Fasunwon 2019) asserts that social media has transformed into a medium for disseminating information and ideas, while also fostering collective violent social activities. A novel global threat has emerged: the dissemination of misinformation and propaganda via social media platforms. Fasunwon (2019) asserts that certain individuals have utilised social media to disseminate misinformation to incite insurrection against the government.

2.1.3 Hashtag Activism and Networked Publics

Hashtag activism refers to the use of hashtags to rally support for social causes, promote awareness, and coordinate actions (Yang, 2016). During #EndSARS, hashtags such as #EndSARSNOW and #EndPoliceBrutality became digital banners under which millions of Nigerians gathered virtually. These hashtags not only helped categorize protest-related content but also created a sense of community among dispersed individuals.

According to (Castells, 2012), social media networks form networked publics decentralized communities connected by shared interests rather than physical proximity. These online publics facilitate large-scale coordination and enable rapid information dissemination. In the case of #EndSARS, users utilized retweets, likes, and live streams to maintain engagement and accountability. Each post became part of a larger collective narrative, reinforcing solidarity and visibility (Ibrahim, 2021).

2.1.4 The role of social media in protest formation and sustenance

Numerous demonstrations in the past decade have significantly depended on social media (Silva, 2015). Mobilisation can significantly benefit from social media, as it enables extensive connections, promotes the building of collective identities, and acts as a conduit for information distribution (Valenzuela, Arriagada and Scherman, 2012). Academics, however, readily assert that social media does not inherently induce individuals to devise novel protest methods or to entirely overhaul conventional organisational practices. (Valenzuela et al. 2012) assert that activism extends beyond the digital realm. In summary, it is not unusual for social media to advocate or support traditional methods of protest. Protesters organised demonstrations and condemned police brutality via social media, which they also utilised as an alternative information source and to contest the official narrative.

The Endsars protest #EndSARS campaign was started when convener Segun Awosanya published a petition (Oloyede & Elegu, 2019). #EndSARS began as a call for the dissolution of the special anti-robbery squad (SARS), a component of the Nigerian Police Force that has come under fire for its brutality and violations of human rights. Nigerian citizens' incomprehensible dissatisfaction with the police agency's service delivery system was the target of the #EndSARS protest.

Social media and the Endsars protest during this era of globalisation, characterised by increased digitalisation, the utilisation of social media as a communication instrument is substantial across economic, social, political, and business domains (Ajisafe, Ojo, and Mayonmi, 2021). This is especially accurate in Africa the emergence of social media has signified a pivotal milestone, initiating a new epoch of global social movement mobilisation. The substantial rise in social media usage in Nigeria has significantly impacted the nation's recent social movements. The #Endsars protest, a peaceful demonstration against police brutality and a demand for comprehensive reform of the national police force, prompted young Nigerians to utilise social media to express their concerns, subsequently

impacting the nation's social policy and security measures (Soladoye & Ojo, 2020). This emerging tendency requires rigorous academic discourse on how citizens in Nigeria and elsewhere might leverage social media to influence governmental policy and decision-making. Social media was important in organising and mobilising participants during the #Endsars protest. The principal individuals responsible for leading and organising the demonstration have consistently participated in social movements (Ajisafe, Ojo and Mayonmi, 2021). Social media has effectively replaced the former mobilisation framework and is now a crucial tool for the global protests

2.1.5 Organisation and coordination of social movements

Social movements have utilised social media as a forum for protest, as it unites individuals from all socioeconomic backgrounds through a common identity (Cammerts, 2015). The #Endsars protest utilised social media as a venue to express grievances against police violence. This platform allows for dissent against the government and its propaganda, representing a significant improvement over the biased reporting that has afflicted most news channels. It was revealed that social media, while crucial for communication and information dissemination during the demonstration, also served as a conduit for the propagation of incorrect and misleading information. Conversely, social media significantly influenced the #Endsars protest through communication, formation, organisation, coordination, and mobilisation.

2.1.6 Summary

This conceptual review establishes that social media has evolved from a platform for entertainment and networking into a strategic tool for social change and collective action. The #EndSARS 2020 protest in Lagos exemplifies this transformation, as digital platforms facilitated awareness, organization, and global advocacy. Concepts such as hashtag activism, digital empowerment, and networked publics reveal that online spaces now serve as alternative arenas for democratic engagement.

While challenges such as misinformation and surveillance persist, the role of social media in mobilizing Nigerian youths remains important. It

bridges the gap between citizens, government and power structures, reshaping civic participation in the digital age.

2.2 Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework is a foundational review of existing theories that serves as a roadmap for developing the arguments to use in a research work.

Theories are developed by researchers to explain phenomena, draw connections and make predictions. In a theoretical framework, it explain the existing theories that supports research, showing that research papers or dissertation topic is relevant and grounded in established ideas

2.2.1 Uses and gratification theory

Uses and gratifications theory asserts that people use media to gratify specific wants and needs. Unlike many media theories that view media users as passive, uses and gratifications sees users as active agents who have control over their media consumption. Uses and gratifications characterizes people as active and motivated in selecting the media they choose to consume. The theory relies on two principles: media users are active in their selection of the media they consume, and they are aware of their reasons for selecting different media options. The greater control and choice brought about by new media has opened up new avenues of uses and gratifications research and has led to the discovery of new gratifications, especially in regards to social media.

2.2.2 Early modifications of uses and gratification theory

Uses and gratifications theory, first advanced in the 1940s by (Lazarsfeld and Stanton, 1944), attempts to explain the reasons people use mass media and the different types of gratification they receive from it. Gratifications, simply stated, are rewards or satisfactions obtained by the individual. The theory relies on the belief that the audience is not merely a group of passive media consumers, but that they play an active role in selecting different media to meet their needs (Infante, Rancer & Womack, 1997; Lowery & De Fleur, 1983). The theory came into prominence in the late 1950s and early 1960s at a time when researchers realized that traditional effects theories did not adequately explain audience

experiences with mass media (Blumler, 1979; Swanson, 1979).

Rubin (1986) stated two underlying presumptions of the uses and gratifications model. First researchers need to understand audience needs and motives for using mass media in order to comprehend the effects of the media. Second, understanding audience consumption patterns will enhance understanding of media effects. (Rubin 1979) identified six major uses of television for children and adolescents: learning, passing time or habit, companionship, escape, arousal, and relaxation. In a separate study, (Rubin 1983) found five reasons that adults use television: passing time, information, entertainment, companionship, and escape. (Rubin 1984) also identified in a subsequent study two types of television viewers – ritualized and instrumental. Ritualized users are frequent TV viewers who use television mainly as a diversion. Instrumental users usually have a specific purpose in mind when they watch TV and often use it for information purposes.

2.2.3 Assumptions of the theory

Uses and gratifications theory relies on two principles about media users. First, it characterizes media users as active in their selection of the media they consume. From this perspective, people don't use media passively. They are engaged and motivated in their media selections. Second, people are aware of their reasons for selecting different media options. They rely on their knowledge of their motivations to make media choices that will help them meet their specific wants and needs.

On the basis of those principles, uses and gratifications theory goes on to outline five assumptions

- Media use is goal-directed. People are motivated to consume media.
- Media is selected based on the expectation that it will satisfy specific needs and desires.
- Media influence on behavior is filtered through social and psychological factors. Thus, personality and social context impact the media choices one makes and one's interpretation of media messages.
- Media are in competition with other forms of communication for an individual's attention.

For example, a person may choose to have an in-person conversation about an issue instead of watching a documentary about the issue.

- People are usually in control of media and therefore are not particularly influenced by it.

Taken together, uses and gratifications theory stresses the power of the individual over the power of the media. Individual differences mediate the relationship between media and their effects. This results in media effects being driven as much by the media user as by the media content itself. So, even if people take in the same media message, each individual will not be impacted by the message in the same way.

2.2.4 Limitations of Uses and Gratifications Theory

Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) is a popular framework in media studies that focuses on why individuals actively seek out specific media to satisfy various needs. However, it has several limitations:

1. Overemphasis on Individual Agency

UGT assumes that individuals have complete control over their media choices, which may overlook the influence of social, cultural, and economic factors.

2. Neglect of Media Effects

The theory tends to downplay the potential effects of media on audiences, focusing more on the reasons for media consumption rather than the consequences of that consumption.

3. Limited Scope of Needs

UGT categorizes needs into specific types (e.g., information, personal identity, integration, and social interaction), but this may not encompass all motivations for media use.

4. Methodological Challenges

Research based on UGT often relies on self-reported data, which can be biased. Respondents may not accurately recall their motivations or may provide socially desirable answers.

5. Static Framework

The theory may not adequately account for the dynamic nature of media consumption, especially with the rise of digital media and changing audience behaviors.

6. Cultural Bias

UGT was primarily developed in Western contexts, which may limit its applicability to non-Western cultures or different social settings.

7. Lack of Predictive Power

While UGT explains why people use media, it does not predict how media use will change over time or in response to new technologies.

In summary, while Uses and Gratifications Theory provides valuable insights into media consumption, it is essential to consider these limitations when applying the theory to research or practical scenarios.

Uses and Gratifications theory can be linked to the #EndSARS protests by explaining that Nigerian youth actively chose social media to meet specific needs, such as the gratification of identity (expressing solidarity), information (sharing news and coordinating protests), and social interaction (connecting with fellow protesters and the global community). The theory helps analyze why individuals used platforms like Twitter and Facebook, viewing them as tools to fulfill desires for political expression, information, and community, which directly fueled the mobilization for the #EndSARS movement in Lagos State.

2.2.6 Application of Uses and Gratifications to the #EndSARS20 protests

• Information and Education:

Individuals used social media to access real-time information about police brutality, the protest's progress, and the demands for reform. This fulfilled the need for information and education, as shown by the rapid spread of news and updates on platforms like Twitter.

• Social Interaction and Belonging:

Social media provided a virtual community for protesters to connect, share their experiences, and build solidarity. This allowed users to feel a sense of belonging and collective action, which was crucial for mobilizing against a common cause.

• Personal Identity and Self-Expression:

The #EndSARS movement allowed individuals to express their political identity and solidarity with

the cause. Using hashtags like #EndSARS became a way for people to publicly align themselves with the movement, fulfilling the need to express their personal beliefs and social identity.

- Political and Civic Engagement:

The theory frames the use of social media as an active choice by individuals to participate in civic life. For many youth, social media was a preferred channel for political expression and activism, seen as more immediate and effective than traditional methods for amplifying their voices and pushing for government action.

2.3 CONNECTIVE ACTION THEORY

Connective Action Theory, developed by (Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg, 2012) explains how digital media enables new forms of collective action and social movements. However, this describes how individuals use digital networks, like social media, to organize and mobilize around shared goals without relying on formal organizations or a strong collective identity.

To this end, the theory of connective action may deliver explanations about the origin and development of Connective action which describes how loosely connected actors make use of technological platforms such as social media (Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg, 2012). It tackles the changes in shared forms of activism due to the enforcement of social media venues. Those led to reduced hierarchies in terms of organization and leadership of movements and looser connections among participants, although all of them contribute to a shared goal.

In this context, we will extend the body of knowledge about the theory of connective action by reflecting on these roles from the perspective of connection action (Felix Brunker, 2021). Thus, this study will expand the understanding of the theory of connective action by providing novel insights about participating roles over the long-term course of an online social movement. Furthermore, the findings may support actors, such as non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), activists, or governmental institutions, by providing knowledge on the understanding of how an

online social movement is formed and evolves over the years (Lance Bennett and Alexandra, 2012). Considering these findings may help to better organize and understand loosely connected actors participating in the movement.

(Camilo Cristancho and Eva Anduiza, 2013) postulate that theory of collective action provides an answer to the general question of why people get involved in collaborations with others by explaining that people act in a collective manner with the purpose of achieving a shared goal (Manaf Bashir, 2012). This addresses goals mainly in the form of public goods, those from which many members of society can profit (even those individuals who did not take part in the collective action). This refers to diverse actions ranging "from neighborhood associations to community organizations and urban coalitions to trade agreements, defensive alliances, and collaborative initiatives on national and international scales" (Bimba, 2012).

2.3.1 Core Assumptions of Connective Action Theory

The core assumptions of Connective Action Theory were given by W. Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg in 2013.

1. Digital media enables new forms of collective action: Connective Action Theory assumes that digital media has transformed the way people organize and participate in collective action.
2. Personalization is key: The theory assumes that individuals are more likely to engage in collective action when they can personalize their involvement and express themselves in ways that are meaningful to them.
3. Decentralization is preferred: Connective Action Theory assumes that decentralized, networked forms of organization are more effective and sustainable than traditional, hierarchical forms of organization.
4. Action is driven by shared concerns: The theory assumes that collective action is driven by shared concerns, interests, or values, rather than solely by organizational affiliations or ideological commitments.

5. Networks are fluid and dynamic: Connective Action Theory assumes that networks of collective action are fluid and dynamic, with participants forming and reforming connections over time.
6. Technology is not neutral: The theory assumes that technology is not neutral, but rather shapes the way people interact, organize, and participate in collective action.

2.3.2 Limitations of the theory

The limitation of the theory was also given by W. Lance Bennett and Alexandra Segerberg in 2013.

1. Over-emphasis on digital media: Some critics argue that the theory overemphasizes the role of digital media in collective action
2. Lack of clear boundaries: The theory's concepts and boundaries can be fuzzy, making it challenging to apply consistently.
3. Limited attention to power dynamics: Connective action theory may not fully account for power imbalances and inequalities within social movements.

2.3.3 Application of the Theory

The #EndSARS movement in Lagos and across Nigeria is a typical representation of Connective Action in the Global South. The movement was not premised on a complex ideology but on a simple, deeply personal, and widely relatable demand, "End Police Brutality", with hashtags specifically by disbanding the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). The hashtag was a container for millions of individual stories. Nigerians used Twitter, Instagram and Facebook to share their own bloody and terrible experiences even with pictures, audio and video clips unveiling SARS extortion, torture, inhumane treatment, harassment, kidnapping, and murder. This made the issue visceral and undeniable. As a result, It wasn't a unified "party line"; it was a massive, collective and outpouring of personal trauma. By re-tweeting and sharing these stories, individuals personalized the issue, making it their own, owing to the almighty powers of the social media. The world is not only a global village but a hamlet where individuals discuss issues online as if they had met before, despite their ethnicity, race or colour etc. However, social media, using connective action

theory has now brought about a community of affinity. With the use of this theory, it was however seen that Nigerians in diaspora was also mobilizing themselves to support their home country with funds and other resources to fuel the protest. This is nothing but the powerful effect of Connective action theory. Social media platform was seen as the meeting point where information were disseminated to large heterogeneous audiences. Infact, there were opportunity for those who were unable to participate physically while digital participation was the order of the day with #Lekkitoll gate, #Alausa etc. The logistical backbone of the Lagos protests was crowd sourced through digital networks with the use of connective action theory.

2.3.4 Conclusion

In summary, Connective Theory explains how social media transformed the EndSARS protest in Lagos State from a potential collective action into a massive, decentralized, and highly adaptive connective action movement.

2.4 Resource mobilisation theory

Resources mobilisation theory is a theory that refers to an expansion of relations with resource providers, and the skills, knowledge and capacity for the proper use of resources. It is the process that achieves the mission of the organization through mobilization of knowledge for skills, equipment, and service. Thus, it refers not only to fundraising, but also includes other resources, as well as the correct and maximum use of available resources (Babybonela, 2013; UNDP, 2002).

Resource-Mobilization Theory emphasizes the importance of resources in social movement development and success. Resources are understood here to include: knowledge, money, media, labour, solidarity, legitimacy, and internal and external support from a power elite. The theory argues that social movements develop when individuals with grievances are able to mobilize sufficient resources to take action. The emphasis on resources explains why some discontented/deprived individuals are able to organize while others are not. Resource mobilization theory also divides social movements according to their position among other social movements. This helps sociologists understand them in relation to

other social movements; for example, how much influence does one theory or movement have on another?

2.4.1 Key components of the theory

- The resource -mobilization theory asserts that social movements form when people who share grievances are able to mobilize resources and take action.
- This theory places resources at the center of both the emergence and success of social movements.
- In this case, resources include knowledge, money, media, labor, solidarity, legitimacy, and internal and external support from a powerful elite.
- The centrality of resources to the success of social movements explains why some discontented people are able to form movements while others are not.
- This theory has a number of underlying assumptions regarding movement membership, movement organization and broader societal factors that influence movement formation and development.
- This theory has been criticized for placing too much emphasis on resources, particularly financial resources, as the success of some movements depends more on the time and labor of members rather than on money.

2.4.2 Assumptions of the theory include:

- There will always be grounds for protest in modern, politically pluralistic societies because there is constant discontent (i.e., grievances or deprivation); this de-emphasizes the importance of these factors as it makes them ubiquitous
- actors are rational and they are able to weigh the costs and benefits from movement participation
- members are recruited through networks; commitment is maintained by building a collective identity and continuing to nurture interpersonal relationships
- movement organisation is contingent upon the aggregation of resources
- social movement organisations require resources and continuity of leadership

- social movement entrepreneurs and protest organizations are the catalysts which transform collective discontent into social movements; social movement organizations form the backbone of social movements
- the form of the resources shapes the activities of the movement (e.g., access to a TV station will result in the extensive use TV media)
- Movements develop in contingent opportunity structures, which are external factors that may either limit or bolster the movement, that influence their efforts to mobilize. Examples of opportunity structures may include elements, such as the influence of the state, a movement's access to political institutions, etc. As each movement's response to the opportunity structures depends on the movement's organization and resources, there is no clear pattern of development nor are specific movement techniques or methods universal.

2.4.3 Limitations and Critiques of Resource Mobilization Theory

Resource Mobilization Theory has faced several limitations and critiques, including:

- Neglect of Structural Factors: Critics argue that the theory overlooks the influence of broader structural factors such as inequality, power differentials, and historical contexts in shaping social movements.
- Focus on Rational Actors: The theory's emphasis on rational, goal-oriented actors has been criticized for neglecting the role of emotions, culture, and identity in driving social movements.
- Resource-Centric View: Some scholars argue that the theory's exclusive focus on resources (e.g., money, skills, and organizational capacity) overlooks the importance of ideology, grievances, and collective identity in mobilizing movements.
- Elitist Bias: Critics contend that the theory's emphasis on formal organizations and resource acquisition tends to favor movements with access to institutional resources, potentially neglecting grassroots and marginalized movements.

- Limited Predictive Power: Some scholars argue that the theory's predictive power is limited, as it fails to account for the unpredictable and spontaneous nature of some social movements.

In summary, while Resource Mobilization Theory offers valuable insights into the organizational and strategic aspects of social movements, it has been critiqued for neglecting broader structural factors, overemphasizing resource acquisition, and its limited predictive power.

2.4.4 EndSars2020 Management and Coordination of Resource Mobilization Activities

To manage resources efficiently, a resource mobilization centre was formed by the feminist coalition during the endsars20 protest.

The feminist coalition committee was responsible for:

- Developing policy and guidelines as well as providing advice on resources mobilization (Including the development of a resource mobilization strategy e.g websites, help centers and hotlines).
- Assisting in the identification of potential providers of resources such as organizations and Individuals. E.g. donors of crypto currencies and legal tenders from the diaspora community.
- Developing and maintaining a donor databank.
- Preparing reports for funders and other development partners.
- Creating and maintaining a resources mobilization environment

2.4.5 Identifying the EndSARS2020 Needs Applying the Resource Mobilization Theory

The Resource Mobilization Committee attracted several voluntary donors and funders, including:

- Private sector organizations
- International non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and philanthropists
- Individuals from the Nigerian diaspora
- Private foundations

2.4.6 Key Mobilisation channels Applied in Funding

The Endsars mobilization committee utilized multiple channels to receive these funds, reflecting its decentralized nature:

GoFundMe: A major platform, especially for international donors.

Bitcoin & Cryptocurrency: Embraced for its relative anonymity and to bypass traditional banking systems.
Direct Bank Transfers: To Nigerian bank accounts managed by trusted individuals within the committee.

2.4.7 Implementation of the Resource Mobilization Strategy

Monitoring and Evaluation
Monitoring and evaluating the success of the resource mobilization strategy was very important. The main measure of success was the committee's ability to gather enough resources to carry out all planned protest activities effectively. Updates and evaluation results were shared with the public through various social media accounts. These channels also served as feedback platforms, allowing protest leaders from different parts of Lagos State to share their reports and updates. The main measure the strategy was carried out through the following steps:

Staffing and Systems:

Volunteers were recruited into the resource mobilization unit. Recruitment was carefully done to attract skilled, experienced, and competent individuals, with social media used as a major platform for outreach.

Engaging Resource Partners:

The committee worked to build partnerships and maintain communication with key donors and supporters to ensure continuous funding and collaboration.

2.4.8 Summary

Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT) provides a powerful and highly relevant framework for explaining the success and scale of the #EndSARS2020 protest in Lagos State. Traditionally, RMT argues that social movements succeed not just because of grievances, but through the effective acquisition and management of key resources. The #EndSARS case study demonstrates that social media

acted as a revolutionary "resource mobilizer," amplifying and transforming every traditional resource needed for a modern protest.

2.6 Conclusion

The case study of the #EndSARS protest in Lagos State shows that Resource Mobilization Theory remains critically relevant, but its dynamics have been fundamentally altered by social media. The theory correctly predicted that resources, not just anger would be decisive. However, social media acted as an important tool, in making the mobilization of moral, cultural, social, human, and material resources faster, more efficient, and more decentralized than any traditional protest model. The #EndSARS movement effectively used social media to overcome the classic collective action problem, demonstrating that in the digital age, social media, smartphone and internet connection can become the most powerful resource social movement can possess.

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