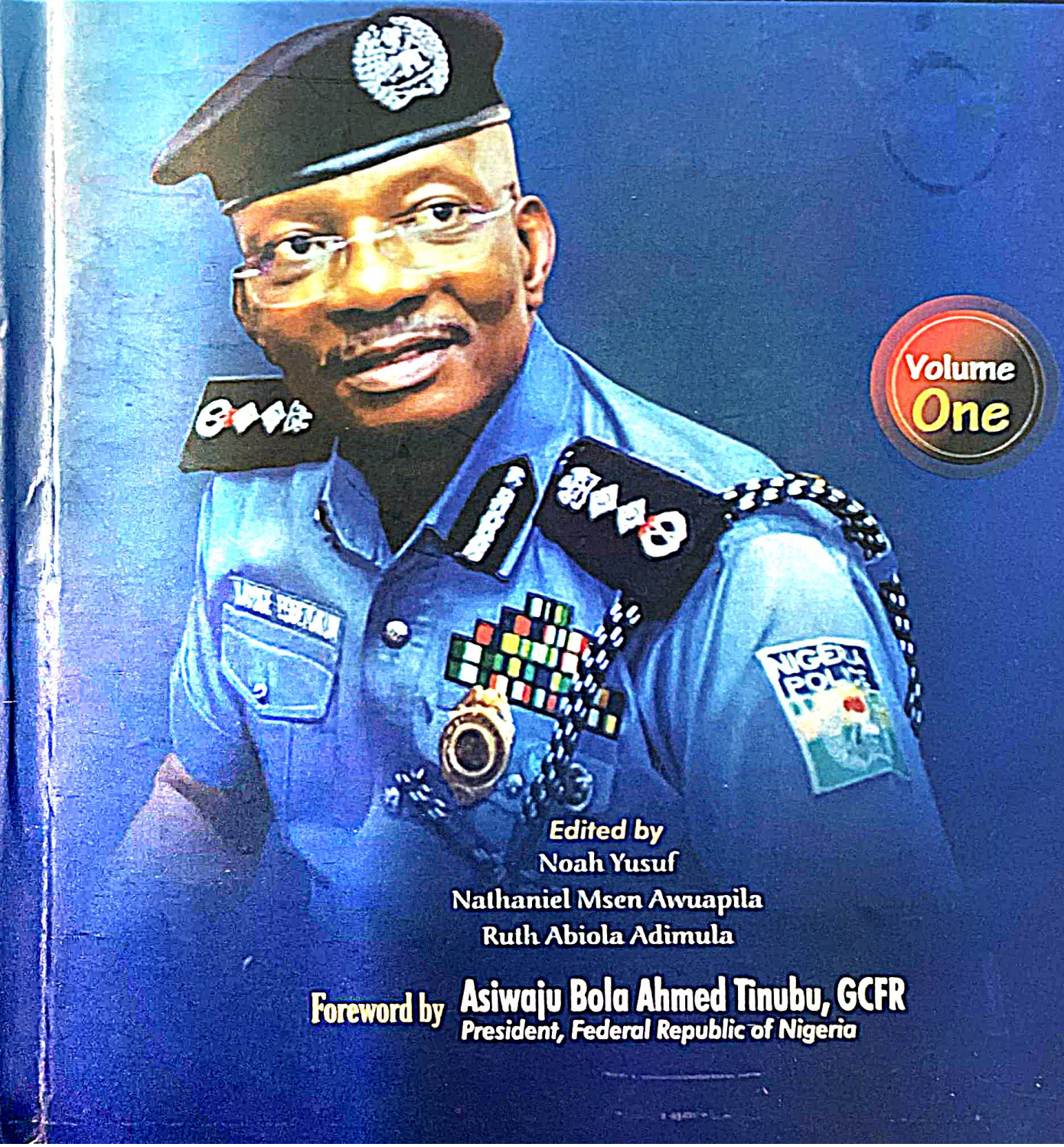
READINGS IN POLICING
PEACE & SECURITY

A Festschrift in Honour of
Kayode Adeolu Egbetokun, PhD, NPM, fspsp



Volume One

Edited by
Noah Yusuf
Nathaniel Msen Awuapila
Ruth Abiola Adimula

Foreword by **Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR**
President, Federal Republic of Nigeria

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PRESIDENT,
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

FOREWORD

READINGS IN POLICING, PEACE, AND SECURITY
A Festschrift in Honour of Kayode Adeolu Egbetokun, PhD, NPM, fspsp,
Inspector General of Police, Federal Republic of Nigeria

It is with great pleasure and admiration that I introduce this festschrift entitled "Readings in Policing, Peace, and Security," a profound compilation of insights, analyses, and reflections in honour of Kayode Adeolu Egbetokun, PhD, NPM, fspsp, the 22nd indigenous Inspector General of Police, of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and a distinguished scholar in peace and security.

This commemorative publication is a timely compendium assembled by a team of renowned scholars and peace practitioners to explore the intricacies of managing our internal security and ensure enduring peace in our nation. This anthology of articles, research papers, and reflections is a tribute to Kayode Adeolu Egbetokun's lasting impact on Nigerian law enforcement practice.

Few figures stand as tall and resolute in the national policing landscape as Kayode Adeolu Egbetokun. His ongoing illustrious career has exemplified unwavering dedication, unyielding courage, and unshakeable integrity in pursuing justice and peace. Kayode Adeolu Egbetokun is not only safeguarding the lives, properties and liberties of citizens but is also inspiring countless others to join the noble vocation of serving and protecting our diverse communities.

Kayode Adeolu Egbetokun's eminent career began as a Cadet ASP in 1990, culminating in his appointment as Inspector General of Police on 19th June 2023. In between, Kayode Adeolu Egbetokun worked with me as my Chief Security Officer (CSO) when I was the Governor of Lagos State between 1999 and 2007. He demonstrated a high level of character, competence, capacity, unwavering loyalty, and impressive commitment to service.

This compilation serves as a testament to his enduring legacy, capturing the essence of his leadership, his immense impact on policing, peace and security in Nigeria, and his passion for academia. Over his ongoing career, he has been able to complete four postgraduate programmes successfully. This demonstrated his immense capacity to combine diligence at work with challenging and rigorous

academic pursuits. This is a rare combination that needs to be commended. This volume explores the multifaceted challenges and triumphs encountered in pursuing public safety and societal harmony through diverse essays, case studies, and research papers authored by eminent scholars.

As we navigate an increasingly complex and interconnected world, the professionalism, compassion, and collaboration principles espoused by Kayode Adeolu Egbetokun remain as relevant and indispensable as ever. The contributions herein offer valuable insights and perspectives that honour his remarkable career and illuminate pathways forward for advancing policing, peace and security in our nation.

I am pleased to take a moment to express my respect for the Society for Peace Studies and Practice (SPSP) and its partner universities – the University of Ibadan, Al-Hikmah University, Ilorin, University of Ilorin, University of Lagos, Lagos State University, and Bauchi State University. They carefully identified excellence and celebrated the same.

To the honouree, we extend our deepest gratitude for his tireless service, visionary leadership, and unwavering commitment to the principles of policing, justice, and peace. This volume stands as a fitting tribute to his exemplary legacy and will inspire future law enforcement professionals to continue his noble work. I recommend this book to all who seek unique insight into policing policy, peace, and security, including the various programmes, tactics, and strategies that have contributed to the nation's policing architecture.

The contents of this book hold within them a treasure trove of insight, wisdom and the promise of a safer Nigeria. As we dig deeper into this volume, we will better understand the link that Egbetokun has forged between theory and practice, and we will honour his contributions to the fields of policing, peace and security. Through this festschrift, we recognise the torch Kayode Egbetokun passes to the future guardians of our safety, and we will use this valuable resource for guidance in our quest to create a safer and more secure future for all Nigerians.

Bola Ahmed Tinubu
16th May 2024

Preface

Policing, Security, Peace and Development

This book, facilitated by the Society for Peace Studies and Practice (SPSP), is a collection of essays in honour of Dr Kayode Adeolu Egbetokun, a Fellow of the society and the current Inspector General of Police (IGP) in Nigeria. To put all other issues raised in this treatise in proper perspective, it is necessary to start here by providing some basic information about SPSP. Though it did not effectively take off until 2002, the Society was formed in 2000 alongside the postgraduate (MA and PhD) course of the University of Ibadan in Peace and Conflict Studies with the support of the British Council. The original intention was to make it serve as a body through which those graduating from the course and their teachers could bond to engage in peace practice. The University of Ibadan also sought to use it to link the town and gown for making its postgraduate courses truly development-relevant. Sooner than later, its membership was expanded to include stakeholders outside Ibadan. Today, SPSP is a global brand with members in different parts of the world and a towering impact on peace studies and practice in other parts of West Africa. Beyond helping to expand the programme in Ibadan, SPSP supported the University of Ilorin and Al-Hikmah University in Ilorin to start their peace studies centres. It supports the growth and development of peace studies across Nigeria by producing high-impact publications. It has two national headquarters: the University of Ibadan houses the technical headquarters, and the National Open University Abuja houses the administrative headquarters.

Most contributors to the present publication are members of the Society who feel compelled to celebrate one of their own to motivate others to greater heights. Though the Society has many police officers as members, Egbetokun is the first to become an IGP. He graduated from one of the peace studies programmes established by the Society: the Centre for Peace and Security Studies at the Al-Hikmah University in Ilorin. His appointment is therefore considered a watermark in the annals of the Society. Egbetokun is also celebrated for his partnership with SPSP, silently promoting "community engagement" in Nigeria since his days as Commissioner of Police in Kwara State. "Community engagement" means the attempt to make Nigerians better understand the institutions that protect them and be ready to work collaboratively with

them. The framework for the partnership that Egbetokun forges with SPSP is informed by the Police Act 2020, which is aimed at birthing a more transparent, accountable, and people-oriented Nigeria Police Force shortly.

This volume contains twenty-six (26) articles from reputed academics and practitioners. It is designed to be a credible reference resource on policing, peace, and security in Nigeria. The publication's focus, as the title suggests, is on "policing" and not the Nigeria Police. How do we differentiate between the two? Policing is the act of protecting citizens generally. It is an activity that involves several agencies: military and para-military agencies. The police, a specific policing institution, is the lead agency for protecting the country's internal security in Nigeria and is the institution that Egbetokun heads. However, the present publication seeks to not only study the police but a broad spectrum of the security challenges in the country as well, and the efforts made to contend with them.

Nigerians are asking for state policing. That is the right way to go in a federal state, given the widespread violent extremism across the country and the NPF's inability to solve the problems. However, the state police system may not work if managed like the Nigeria Police Force. Hence, state governors would do themselves a lot of good by studying the Nigeria Police with a more open heart before taking off with their ideas of state policing.

The position of the SPSP, which Dr Egbetokun supported and is taking to greater heights, calls attention to another critical lesson in policing. Police institutions would only function well if closely linked with the society they police. That is the logic! For Nigeria, the Police Force is too distant from the people. How can the like of the SPSP be supported to link the state and society on policing generally? The core belief of the SPSP is that peace will continue to elude Nigeria until the experiences, moods and feelings of the grassroots population in Nigeria are fed into the country's peace and security architecture. Conflicts occur in contexts that those managing the issues must understand and factor in their interventions. To this end, the main goal of SPSP is to build peace in Nigeria by linking the state and society more closely on peacebuilding issues. It holds workshops, seminars and annual conferences suggested by the security challenges in the land. It has a good relationship with the Nigerian military, and this is why the relationship between police and society is significant at this moment. SPSP is more interested in Nigeria's internal security than its external security. It matters a lot for the Society to work more closely with the police.

When the Ibadan Peace and Conflict Studies started in 2000, it was realised that most of the books out there were produced by foreigners who sometimes misinterpreted the conflict situations in Nigeria and made recommendations that needed to be in tune with building sustainable peace in the African continent. Hence, the academic programme and the SPSP gave birth to the decision to start promoting publications that enable Africans to tell their own stories and develop management strategies that are in tandem with the African Union's mantra of "African solutions to African problems." Our ultimate goal is to bring peace to Nigeria through policy-relevant discourses and community engagement. Dr Egbetokun was part of this process before he became the IG, which was one reason why his appointment excited many members of the society. It was thought necessary to do this publication in his honour. However, several other publications were done or promoted by SPSP before this very one. They include: (1*) Knowledge Economy and Nigeria's National Security: Essays in honour of Basorun Seinde Arogbofa; (2) Urbanism and Crisis Management in Africa: A Festschrift for Akin Mabogunje; (3) Readings in Peace and Conflict: Essays in honour of Professor Isaac Olawale; and (4) Leadership and Nigeria's Sustainable Development Programmes: Essays in honour of Elias Suleiman Bogoro*.

Added are several published proceedings of the Society's annual conferences. The Society also publishes *Peace Studies and Practice: Journal of the Society for Peace Studies and Practice*. These publications, which are widely distributed across West Africa, have one objective; that is, to serve as a reading text for those teaching issues relating to peace and security in Nigeria. The present one in honour of Dr Egbetokun is an invaluable addition to the long list. It is the first to be published since SPSP celebrated its 20th anniversary of holding a national conference in 2023.

Therefore, those behind the project must be specially commended for honouring Egbetokun and giving us another piece of literature to make Nigeria a better place. A lot of work went into the production of the book, most especially during the rigorous review process of the papers. Only 53 of the submitted articles were accepted. For this, the editors, the reviewers, and the authors are warmly appreciated for their efforts. The President of the Society, Nathaniel Awuapila, who worked closely with Prof. Noah Yusuf and Dr Abiola Adimula must be primarily appreciated for the sleepless nights they had on the book project. Last is the Board Chair of SPSP, Prof. Elias Suleiman Bogoro. He made it all possible through his multisectoral push of everybody to get to this point.

I have carefully gone through the book. It constitutes a significant contribution to the study of policing, security, peace and development in Nigeria. I recommend it to us all. I congratulate Dr Kayode Adeolu Egbetokun, *fspsp* for this great honour done him!

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YOUTH, PROTESTS AND THE SOCIAL MEDIA IN NIGERIA: LAGOS STATE AND THE #ENDSARS AGITATION

Shittu Adewole Raji
Kayode Adeolu Egbetokun

Introduction

Youth agitation largely influenced by the social media, remained a recurrent issue in the contemporary world, especially in developing countries (Aduloju, 2016). To Aduloju (2006), youth protest or response could be described as "restiveness, which borders on restlessness, impatience, frequent inquisitiveness, deviance and agitation." While this is referred as essential part of growth and biological development of every youth, the phenomenon becomes worrisome and inimical to sustainable peace and development the moment the restiveness begins to generate violent deviant behaviour among them. It is noteworthy that such actions might constitute security challenge as it was in the case of #EndSARS in Lagos State (Aduloju, 2016).

It should be noted that the phenomenon of violent youth agitation is not limited to Lagos State or Nigeria. It is indeed, an emerging global dimension to youth response and agitation against agencies of the law, and the government of the day in particular. Such violent restive acts among youth take many forms, including militancy, terrorism, armed banditry, kidnapping and violent protestation, which are often embarked upon by the youth to enforce desired outcome from constituted authorities (Yusuf, 2014; Adesomoju, 2020). For instance, xenophobic attack is a regular occurrence in South Africa while youth restiveness still persists over irreconcilable political and ethno-religious agitation in Central African Republic (CAR).

The Southern Cameroon is largely bedevilled by violent youth agitation over socioeconomic and political crises, including violent agitation for the Republic of Ambazonia in its English-speaking region while ethnic and religiously motivated violent agitation is a regular security challenge in Mali. In

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addition, Somalia and Kenya have continued to witness rising cases of piracy, insurgency and terrorism, which are being perpetrated mainly by the youth.

Amnesty International (2020) reported over 200 youth protests across African countries between 2019 and 2021 with over 9,000 violent protest-induced deaths and loss of property worth over $110 billion. Not only has violent youth agitation led to loss of lives and properties, it has also undermined socio-economic development and occasionally led to overthrow of government as witnessed in the youth protest cluster called "Arab Spring", which swept across the Arab world in 2011, leading to the overthrow of the governments of Ben Ali of Tunisia, Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, Muammar Gaddafi of Libya and Abdullahi Saleh of Yemen (Egbetokun, 2022).

A major influence and agent of widespread youth agitation towards unpopular policy is the prevalent of social media outlets with speed that shared information, fake or real, unknown in the last centuries. It suffices to say that the social media accommodates 4.65 billion users in the world, with more than half of the users being youth (Digital Advancement, 2022). These social media platforms include Twitter, Facebook, You Tube, WhatsAPP, Instagram and Telegram with the YouTube sharing about 10 billion videos in a month to various countries across the world (Digital Advancement, 2022:5). The social media technologies, which enhances its optimal functionality include feeds, picture uploads, emails, instant messaging, and Voice over IP (VOIP). These media are often integrated into other social media aggregation platforms, such as Plaxo and MyBlogBlog to enhance optimal efficiency (Abimbade, Olayoku and Herro, 2022). In whatever form they come across, social media networks are platform where people come to share common and uncommon ideas and opinions.

However, as numerous as the advantages are, a number of negative impacts of social media have also been documented, including its impact on youth restiveness, which gives rise to incidences of violent protests across the world. For instance, the attack on US Capitol building by rioters, following the electoral defeat of Donad Trump; the former President of the US in 2021, was organized on the social media (Abimbade, Olayoku and Herro, 2022:6). In India, social media platforms were used to transmit objectionable contents to incite and mobilize the public against the government in the State of Bihar, which led to the burning down of trains by violent youths. In Sierra Leone, the youth protest, on August 10th 2022 was largely incited through the spread of hate speech and misinformation shared on social media, just to mention few examples of how the social media is being misuse to perpetrate violent (Egbetokun, 2022).

Nigeria has witnessed massive involvement of youth in many violent acts; including armed banditry, terrorism, militancy, and violent protests along inter communal killings, which are politically, economically and ethno-religiously induced (Raji and Niyi, 2018). Such protests included the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) riot in 1986 over the removal of product subsidy and job cut by the Ibrahim Babangida administration, which led to loss of 15 lives, and mass violent protest over the annulment of the June 12th presidential election by Babangida government, which led to the deaths of over 200 persons (Raji and Niyi, 2018). There was youth protest against the government of Goodluck Jonathan on January 1, 2012, over the removal of fuel subsidy, which led to the death of 6 protesters. On the average, youth protests in Nigeria have led to a combined loss of over 2,000 lives between 1999 and 2019 (Egbetokun, 2022).

A major addition to youth restiveness in Nigeria in year 2020 was the #EndSARS protest; that provoked a broader resentment and mass action by the Nigerian youth, which called for the disbandment of the then Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) unit of the Nigeria Police for alleged operational brutality, intimidation and harassment of the youths in many cities, especially in the state capitals and Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory. The #ENDSARS trouble spots in Abuja were the Unity Fountain, Apo axis, Waru/Wumba, Dutse Makaranta, DutseAlhaji, Kubwa and Berger junction. The protest also took place in Delta State, where 16 lives were lost and the areas mostly affected included the Koka Modern Leisure Park, Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) office on Asaba-Benin Express way, and the High Court complex on Ibusa road, Asaba (Adigun, 2021). In addition, the #EndSARS protest took place in Imo State, where youths set ablaze the Nwaorie ubi Police Divisional Headquarters in Mbaitoli (Adigun, 2021:6).

In Lagos State in particular, infrastructural facilities were seriously destroyed by "#ENDSARS" protesters. The protest, which held in the state between the 8th and 20th of October 2020, led to destruction of lives and properties, disruption of business activities with intense security breaches by the protesters (Egbetokun, 2022:9). The specific theatres of protests in the state with attendant destruction included the Lekki Toll Gate, Oyingbo and Berger Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) offices, the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) and the Vehicle Inspections (VIO) Offices in Ojodu (#EndSARS Protest Panel Report, 2021). The palace of Oba of Lagos, the premises of the Television Continental (TVC) Ketu, Nigeria Port Authority headquarters in Marina, and the family home of the State Governor, Babajide Sanwoolu were torched by protesters with outright lootings in many places, including the Shoprite at Ajah. The mega protest caused several security breaches, community insecurity, and business

lull while the protest led to the destruction of properties worth ₦400 billion (#EndSARS Protest Panel Report, 2021).

There is no doubt that social media has improved the manner Nigerian youth interact and communicate to achieve their personal and collective development aspirations through information sharing. However, the sharing of negative contents on the social media, which are sometimes not verified and most of the time untrue, have contributed to youth restiveness in Nigeria, including the #EndSARS protest in Lagos State of Nigeria. This study examines the influence of social media on youth restiveness in Lagos State, using the #EndSARS protest as case study. The objectives of the study are to examine the causes of the #EndSARS protest, investigate the contributions of the social media to the protest, and explore the challenges of using social media as platform for promoting youth agitation in Lagos State.

Statement of Knowledge

Writing on the nexus between social media and youth agitation, Murthy (2018) finds that many youth have used the social media to aid the course of social reforms through protest across the globe, including New York, Minneapolis, Hong Kong, Egypt and Spain. These protests are often depicted by a unique hashtag (#), which explains its objective. For example, #BlackLivesMatter emphasises the sanctity of the life of every black person; #OWS; which represents Occupy Wall Street, was a protest against income inequality and demand for bank reforms in the United States; and #Standwithhongkong symbolises pro-democracy protesters in Hong Kong. The author finds that the social media is used to promote protests because of the advantages it holds in the areas of transmitting, informing, coordinating planning and organising the protests to the greatest number of audience across the world unlike the conventional media outfits that have limited network coverage with frequent censorship from the government. Thus, the roles of the social media in promoting and sustaining youth social movements cannot be understated because, even if people ignore what they hear, they are unlikely to disregard the viral images circulating on what they see on the social media. However, Digital Advancement (2022:6) posits that the easy access of many youths to the social media raises several professional and ethical concerns in the use of media space by the youths because many of those posts often contain outright falsehood. Aborisade and Obileye (2018) linked incidences of youth restiveness to bad governance, disrespect for fundamental rights of individuals, unemployment, poverty, inadequate educational opportunities and weak resources for personal and group socioeconomic survival.

While speaking on the connection between Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) and #EndSARS Protest in Nigeria, Akanbi (2020) asserts that even though SARS was initially highly successful as a counter armed robbery force after its establishment in 1992, the squad soon became enmeshed in allegations of corruption, extortion, human rights violation, extrajudicial killings, and sexual abuses before its disbandment in 2020 (Spaces for Change, 2021). According to Adekunle (2022), there were clear cases of youth harassment, especially those alleged to have engaged in Advance Fee Fraud (AFF), while the squad was implicated in some instances for unlawful methods of investigation and interrogation, which are often redressed the moment it got to higher policing authorities but to the dissatisfaction of the general populace.

Akinyetun (2021:2) finds that although Nigerians have been protesting against police brutality for a long time, the October 2020 #EndSARS protest was different for two major reasons. One, the protest coincided with the COVID-19 pandemic when Nigerians were grappling with the attendant socioeconomic dislocation of the pandemic, including unemployment, hunger and poverty. Secondly, the protest was highly aided by the social media having been circulated on the digital devices with wider support by the youth who had and spent more time and airtime on their phones and social media due to the lockdown occasioned by the pandemic. While tracing the history of the protest, Ekoh and George (2021) note that the calls for an end to SARS had earlier started in 2017 as young people who have for a long time been denied access to governance found their voice on the social media by protesting police brutality and demanding general reforms and inclusive governance. This led to the circulation of other hashtags such as #EndBadGovernanceInNigeriaNow and #NASSSalaryCut.

Even when the government hurriedly announced the scrapping of SARS and its replacement with the Special Weapons and Tactics unit (SWAT), the protesters rejected this gesture, using tag #EndSWAT, believing that the changes is more or less an "old wine in a new bottle". Without a doubt, Instagram, Facebook and particularly, Twitter, became critical platforms to spreading messages about the #EndSARS protest. These social platforms became the primary online avenues where users recounted their experiences and that of their friends on the social media about incidences of security brutality, corruption and other injustices in Nigeria, thus prompting physical demonstrations in October 2020. The reviewed literature distilled the factors responsible for youth agitation and its implications for national security and identified variety of relationship between the youth and social media. In spite

of the availability of literature on the effect of social media on youth agitation generally, not so much work was found on the contributions of the social media to the #EndSARS protest in Lagos State of Nigeria, an academic lacuna this study intends to bridge.

Understanding the Theories and interrogating the Methodology

This essay adopts the Structural Conflict Theory and Theory of Communication as its frameworks of analysis. While the structural theory explains why social conflict generally, and violent youth agitation in particular happens, the theory of communication explains the power of social communication to escalate or de-escalate such conflict, especially when media is involved (Castells, 2012).

Working within the confines of the Structural Theory of Conflict, Gszek (2016) linked social conflict and deviant behaviour to structural defects in the distribution of global resources and lack of equity and social justice in the sharing formula. The author posits further that depending on the way a society is structured, conflict could be built into a particular way in which such society is organised. In this regard, issues like political and economic exclusion, injustices, unfairness, denial of fundamental rights and inequities, amongst others, are primary sources of conflict, especially in a society that is negatively structured to disfavour the governed by the government or disfavour the poor by the rich. The structuralist argues further that tension and conflict arise when resources and state power are unevenly distributed among the contending groups in the society and that this conflict becomes the primary basis for violent or non-violent agitation for social change. In this context, power is understood as control of material resources and accumulated wealth, and control of politics and institutions in the society, and the social status of the agitated parties relative to others. Carty (2015) postulates that social status, especially those determined by class, race, gender, sexuality, culture and religion among other things are precursor to violent agitation because of unfairness and injustices inherent in them.

The Structural Theory of Conflict as used in this study is complemented by Communication Theory as propounded by Robert Weiner (1961) and adopted by Deutsch Keri (1988) as a model for understanding the social media. While the structural theory best explains why violent youth agitation does happen, the communication theory explains the power of information to escalate or de-escalate such conflict. According to Croteau and Hoynes (2003), the entire media space is a "network of communication channels" which has its processes and mechanisms for acquiring, collecting, transmitting, selecting and storing

information on the entire governance and developmental processes. Information is also central to governance for the collation of the needs of the governed by the government while also serving as a feedback mechanism on the decision of government on the requests of the governed, including the youths.

The power of the media as instigator or pacifier of conflict was amplified by Denning (2000), when he argued that media discourse may or may not provoke conflict instantly, but it does set agenda for sustained peace or conflict in the society. As noted by the author, by discussing conflict or potential conflict issues sustainably, attention of the public is often forced on such issues by the media to convince, and sometimes confuse the public on which social issues are important, and which ones are not. The authors avert further that the concentration and repetition of issues by the media, unwittingly leads to the beliefs by members of the public that the content of discourse on such issues are true and relevant, even when they are sometimes not, and that such issues are more important than others not discussed.

The relevance of communication theory to this study borders on the realisation that social protests rely so much on information sharing among the restive youths, in which the syndicate leading members identify their roles during protests, including their role towards the success of the protest. Much of the decisions taken by the protesters and relevant government agencies to increase or douse the protest respectively are also based on the interpretation of the information available to them from the media with both parties relying on adequate information towards the realisation of their collective interests.

The essay adopts the qualitative research design, in which Key Informant Interview (KII) was used to generate the required data for the study. With the use of the KII, relevant information was sourced from key stakeholders involved in the #EndSARS protest in Lagos State, including the participants in the protest, especially from among those who appeared to testify at the Lagos Panel of Enquiry. Other stakeholders interviewed were the military, members of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, social media bloggers, Nigeria Police, BRT Transport Management, market women, and traditional rulers, and relevant government functionaries. In all, 16 KII, representing the interests of the key stakeholders in the protest was conducted. The study equally made use of secondary sources, including relevant information from the textbooks, journal articles, thesis, newspapers and magazines.

To understand the dimension of youth response and agitation against law enforcement brutality and what they considered as government official jobbery, we utilised ethnographic research method. Interviews with sampled

participants beyond social media postings and writings illuminate our knowledge about causes, responses, actions, inaction and the trajectory of events in Lagos during the period under review. We should note that some of the respondents' opinions are reported in direct quotation while some were paraphrased and reported in narrative to avoid long quotations.

The first question was what could be the reasons for the outbreak of lawlessness and disorderliness which emanated from the #EndSARS protest in Lagos? The immediate causes of the#EndSARS# protest was linked to unverified rumour of killing a Nigerian in Delta State by the police and unprofessional conduct of the disbanded SARS, including extortion, incivility to members of the public and poor sense of judgement on duty in some instances. Reinforcing the foregoing findings, a human right advocate who participated in the #EndSARS protest in Lagos State asserts that:

> The SARS here in Lagos is notorious for high-handedness; torture and extrajudicial killings, which are perpetrated against the same citizenry it ought to protect. Many of the reports implicating the police on human right violation during the #EndSARS protest were highly doctored by the police. However, the panel of inquiries set up by the Lagos State Government has confirmed many of my claims. My brother, despite its vaunted slogan: "Police is your friend," most Nigerians perceive the police as a dreaded enemy that must be avoided at all costs. (KII/ Male/ ex-#ENDSARS protester/ Lagos/ March, 2022)

Though the above respondent linked the immediate causes of the #EndSARS protest to police high-handedness, the remote cause of the protest was traced to the socioeconomic frustration facing many Nigerian youth. This position was confirmed by the demand of the #EndSARS protesters in Lagos which goes beyond the alleged brutality of the Nigeria police to include their request to end bad and unaccountable governance, continued ASUU strike, economic hardship, and high cost of food items. The protest was also caused by non-distribution of COVID-19 palliatives, and the hike in fuel price. This finding confirms Aborisade and Obileye's (2018) postulation that violent youth agitation is directly or indirectly linked to bad governance and unemployment while also confirming Snapps and Hamilton's (2019) finding that lack of adequate access to functional education due to frequent strikes by Nigerian higher institutions is a contributory factor to youth restiveness in Lagos State. The prolonged ASUU strike in 2020 created an avenue for many youths who should be in the school to participate in the protest.

Contributions of the Social Media to #EndSARS Protest in Lagos State

We also ask respondents to critique the role of the social media in this context. Majority of the response identified the significance of the social media.

As distilled from all the respondents interviewed, the social media contributed to the #EndSARS protest in seven major ways by providing the social discussion space, serving as platform for information sharing, providing the voices and views of the parties to the protest, encouraging freedom of expression, serving as platform for protest intelligence gathering, providing the platform for mobilising and coordinating the protest and serving as training platform for the success and sustenance of the protest.

Thus, the distillation of the findings from the interviewees confirmed that in Lagos State, the social media platforms provided the virtual space for active interaction among the youths during the #EndSARS protest to implement their protest action plans. The adopted platforms included the Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp, Telegram, Youtube, and Instagram. The social media technologies equally provided the space for picture uploads of alleged police infractions and voice over IP (VOIP) for active interactions among the youths during the #EndSARS protest to implement their protest action plans. In addition, the Facebook, You Tube and Twitter, among others, provided the space for airing the opinions and views of the youth about the alleged brutality by the Nigeria Police. The digital media provided the space for relevant government institutions, including security agencies and the Lagos State Government to discuss strategic action plan to end the protest. Since many of the roads were blocked by the protesters, government officials could not meet physically in some instances but relied more on WhatsApp and telegram specifically dedicated to curtail the protest. The media provided the space for discussion on different challenges confronting Nigeria apart from alleged police brutality, including weak accountable governance with greater number of Nigerian youth contributing their own experiences and possible solutions to Nigeria's socioeconomic problems. Thus, the social media provided the space for synthesising individual agitation preference into a coherent public opinion independent from government control.

A social media blogger confirms to the researchers that:

> Based on my experience of the #EndSARS protest, it was evidenced that the social media provided the virtual space for the restive youth who repeatedly use the advantage to upload and post what Nigerians are passing through, including the bitter experience of non-distribution of a large chunk of Covid-19 palliatives, pictures of how they were beaten by security personnel with

evidences displayed on the social media (KII/ Female/social media blogger/ Agege-Lagos/May 2022).

The Commissioner interviewed in Lagos State during the attempted post #EndSARS protest in 2021 to commemorate the first anniversary of the protest admonishes that:

> Our youth should always calm down. What do they need again? After all, even though they operated faceless leadership, we were able to collate their demand from the social media space and virtually met all their demands. For instance, the SARS unit of the Nigeria Police Force was disbanded as requested by the protesters while the Lagos State government set up panel of inquiries to investigate cases of human right abuses as alleged by the protesters. The panel has submitted its report to the government and the government is at the stage of implementing the panel's recommendations. (KII/Male/Commisioner /Alausa, Ikeja- Lagos/July 2022).

Through the social media space, public opinion, whether right or wrong, was eventually formed about the Nigeria government and the police, judgement passed and decision taken to protest the anomalies. The timeline was adequately projected within the online space, thus enabling many youth across Nigeria to monitor the timeline for their collective actions. In another dimension, the social media space was useful for strategic action plan to mobilise and actualise protest participation by greater majority of the youth. It also provided the platforms for the youth to embark on rational and irrational, critical and uncritical debate and judgement. The space provided the platform for the use of emotive language without focusing on the rationality of the contents. Thus, Twitter and Facebook were used to keep many indigenes of Lagos State abreast of what was happening while encouraging them to ply places and roads that were safe and avoid those not. Social media space also provided a universal opinion intake on the accusation and feasibility of the #EndSARS protest from interested parties across the world where inputs on how to end the protest were largely sourced by the government.

Through the social media, the virtual audience participated in social discussion relating to the activities of the Special Ant-Robbery Squad in particular and the socioeconomic state of the Nigerian nation. The platforms had more than one million youth as audience that were at once discussing the protest. Thus, without the social media providing the required audience space, such as visual and virtual gathering of mass group of people would not have been possible because it is impossible for such huge number of people

to meet physically in one place to discuss the protest. In addition, the media space conferred emotional advantage on the protesters as media space was effectively used to convey and spread motivational messages from the core group (faceless protest leaders) to the periphery group (the core supporters) to garner support for the protest by exposing government shortcomings, which deprived the youth of their personal and collective aspirations. It provided the space for advocating social justice, moral indignation, fairness, and respect for the rights of the youth. Thus, the social media provided the virtual space for the youth in Lagos State to air their views on the protest.

Through the social media, the voices of many agitated youth were broadcast "live" over their primary agitations and other contending issues in Lagos State. Thus, the social media allowed the youth, including those in Lagos State, to air their views with video support to back up their claims. The youth equally sent out voice messages calling for a mass movement with mass action to curtail the security challenges confronting the youth by banning the SARS unit of the Nigeria Police. The media space also provided live viewing of the protest by releasing relevant videos, voice broadcast along written messages as they were taking place during the #EndSARS protest with overwhelming wider coverage of the event beyond Nigeria.

As noted by a respondent:

> The accommodating disposition of the Lagos State Government towards the youth during the #EndSARS was beamed live on the social media as the Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, and members of his cabinet were seen on the digital media embarking on peaceful protest with the restive youth, he was also seen collecting letters from the protesters and boarding the aircraft to Abuja to deliver the letter to the President. (KII/ Male/Government official/Ojodu - Lagos/September 2022).

The beaming of the involvement of the State Governor in the peaceful protest on the social media live convinced majority of the protesting youth that the contending issues were receiving attention from the highest authorities. The live broadcast and video coverage of the #EndSARS protest equally exposed how the protest was managed and controlled in Lagos by security agencies as the conduct of security forces was beamed live online.

The social media also provided the needed platform for many restive youth to advance their freedom of expression without hindrance and any form of censorship by the government unlike the conventional media who could not publish anything without conforming to the rules of the regulatory bodies,

including the regulatory guidelines of the National Broadcasting Commission (NBC). Such freedom of expression allowed the Lagos State Government to be aware of the existing issue agitating the mind of the youth in the state. Thus, with the use of the social media, it was impossible for the Lagos State government and the Nigeria security agencies to monopolise media information as a one-way traffic flow from government to the people but rather, the platform effectively served as an interactive avenue to facilitate equal exchange of messages between both government and the agitated youth.

While confirming the roles of the social media during the #EndSARS protest, an interviewee confirmed that:

> In order to put the #EndSARS# story in correct perspectives many citizens-turned journalists who were not satisfied with the original version of the event as dished out by the Federal and Lagos State government told their own version of the #EndSARS stories, using the social media. With the use of social media, the protest was effectively organised with roles awareness on the part of the concerned youth who monitored information dissemination to them within a short possible time simultaneously. The use of media was better and faster than distribution of leaflets which has a narrower and restricted audience. (KII/Female/Journalist/Agege - Lagos/July 2022).

It should be noted at this juncture that the social media was also beneficial to the enforcement agencies and government. It allowed the security apparatus to monitor the trend of discussion among the youth on different social media. Thus, strictly restricted and dedicated social media platforms were created to monitor the protest by the security forces, while security threat analyses of the visual messages posted online were regularly carried out. Security forces eventually used beat patrol, road blocks and stop and search to curtail the crisis, using the social intelligence monitoring on their devices. As a respondent remarked:

> There were different dedicated digital platforms that were used to monitor the #EndSARS protest by security forces. These platforms were created to seek voluntary intelligence information from the members of the public to ease the work of the security agencies at curtailing the crisis. Thus, through the social media platforms, the progress and challenges of the protest were effectively monitored by the security forces, with the forces re-strategising to bring down the protest. Conversely, the digital platforms made it difficult for the security forces to apprehend many of the protest leaders as the platform protected the identity of the ring leaders from arrest by sustaining the anonymity having largely operated on fake account while passing unfiltered information to the

targeted online audience largely undetected. (KII/Male/Security Personnel/ Ojodu - Lagos/November 2022).

Platform for Protest Mobilisation and Coordination

Perhaps of major significance is the emergence of social media platforms for mobilisation of youth towards the success of the protest. Mobilisation requires a lot of information on the motive of the mass action, which was provided by the leadership of the movement, leading to the successful mobilisation of the youth for the mass action. In specific terms, the social media provided vital information on where and when the demonstration were to take place in Lagos State with clear explanation on the reasons why members should take part, and the items to be brought along. Through the social media platforms, the progress and challenges of the protest were effectively monitored by the protesters while the leadership and protest coordinators constantly monitored the activities of the security agents on the social media space to manoeuvre their ways out of security clampdown. The constant monitoring of the tremendous support base for the protest through the social media convinced and encouraged the faceless leadership to sustain the protest for days in Lagos State. The social media was equally used to coordinate protest activities in Lagos State by circulating news about logistics available to the protesters, including transportation, medical services and areas where medical support was available for the protesters.

The social media equally became an avenue for "protest training." While this could be seen as a global phenomenon, the youth protesters in Lagos were not unaware of the capacity of social media outlets to gain quick training about modalities for coordinated protests. Frequent Google search on the social media provided adequate information for the protesters and taught them how to carry out the protest successfully with the engine search giving them clear illustration of how previous demonstrations were successfully done and how the current one can be won. The guiding input provided by the social media aided the success of the #EndSARS protest in Lagos State before it was brought down. More so, whenever an individual had technical information to share on how to change the course of the protest, they did it within the comfort of their home and other safe avenues while relying less on face-to-face interaction to avoid arrest by security agents.

There were, however, challenges despite the effective utilisation of the social media by youth to accomplish their goals. From the findings, there is no doubt that the social media tremendously contributed to sustain the #EndSARS protest till the time it lasted in Lagos State. However, the challenges of using the social media as platform for promoting youth agitation in the state are

many. Some of these challenges were that much of the information sent on the social media was not filtered to establish their authenticity, objectivity and truth disposition. Therefore, much of the claims of the protesters were mere falsehood without optimal credibility and reliability. In addition, the social media did not respect ethical consideration in its coverage of the #EndSARS protest in Lagos State as most gory incidences, including people being burnt alive, were beamed to the public while the perpetration of the act was going on.

As noted by a respondent:

> The social media helped in amplifying hate speeches, especially against those in government and innocent private individuals. For example, both the Oriental Hotel and the Continental Television (TVC) premises were burnt down as the protester projected on the social media that they are owned by an influential politician in Lagos State without adequate verification. Thus, the social media was used in the name of the #EndSARS protest to bully many innocent citizens, especially against those the protesters thought were responsible for their plights. (KII/Male/ Community Leader /Ketu - Lagos/ January 2023).

Conclusion

This chapter concluded that the causes of the #EndSARS protest in Lagos State were multifaceted. More so, the social media contributed positively to the #EndSARS protest in seven major ways by providing the social discussion space for the restive youth and creating the platform for information sharing, airing the voice and views of the parties to the protest, encouraging freedom of expression unlike government owned conventional media, serving as platform for protest intelligence gathering, providing the platform for mobilising and coordinating the protest and serving as training avenue for the success and sustenance of the protest. In addition, the study concluded that social media contributed negatively to the #EndSARS protest by accommodating unfiltered and subjective information, which does not represent true reflection of events. The fuzziness and cloud generated by misinformation and the speed at which it consumed the space increase mistrust and challenge to resolving issues on time.

Recommendations

From the foregoing, therefore, we are of the view that the:

i. social media should be retained and reformed to enhance optimal benefits for the youth in diverse areas, including employment generation,

education and business opportunities, which are the basic foundation of youth productive capacity in Lagos State.

ii. both the Federal and Lagos State government should improve on accountable governance to improve dividends of democracy and reduce violent agitation among youth.

iii. security personnel should be adequately trained on respect for fundamental rights of every Nigerian and uphold democratic policing based on the rule of law while Nigerians should improve their digital literacy to enhance their capacity to detect fake news easily in the social media.

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