

THESIS

AFFECTIVE ATTUNEMENT AND COUNTER-POWER AFFORDANCES OF TWITTER TO  
THE 2020 #ENDSARS PROTESTS IN NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

### AFFECTIVE ATTUNEMENT AND COUNTER-POWER AFFORDANCES OF TWITTER TO THE 2020 #ENDSARS PROTESTS IN NIGERIA

Using the Network theory of Power, and Affective Public, this study employs a Critical Technocultural Discourse Analysis (CTDA) to examine the affective attunement and counter-power affordances of Twitter during the 2020 #EndSARS protests in Nigeria. Drawing on qualitative data collected from Twitter during the protests, the study examined the ways in which Twitter facilitated affective attunement - the ability of Twitter users to attune to each other's emotions - in amplifying activist voices and mobilizing publics for collective action. It also analyzed the counter-power affordances of Twitter, which enabled protesters to challenge dominant discourses and power structures in Nigeria. Through a CTDA lens, the study explored the ways in which power, cultural ideologies, users' online experiences, and technology intersected in the #EndSARS protests, and how these dynamics shaped the outcomes of the protests in addressing police brutality in Nigeria. The findings suggest that Twitter played a significant role in the mobilization and organization of the protests, and that affective attunement and counter-power affordances were key factors in the success of the movement. This study contributes to our understanding of the complex relationships between power, technology, and social change, and provides insights for future research on the role of social media in protest movements within regimented democracies. Limitations and future directions are discussed.

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background

“In January 2018, SARS picked up my cousin, Henry Anthony Dokotri and some others from a viewing center. One of the officers decided to test his skills, shot Henry in the head. They drove round with him bleeding for three hours before taking him to the hospital, he died.” (Anita Dokotri. @MsDokotri, Oct 19, 2020). This is one of the 5.3 million tweets that surfaced on Twitter in October 2020, lamenting police brutality in Nigeria. Activists and victims of police brutality began has stories to tell, and used Twitter, one of the popular social media platforms used by Nigerians in making their voices heard. As stories that were often suppressed, forgotten or never told emerged on Twitter of alleged police brutality and gross human rights abuses by SARS, public sentiments were stimulated and became channeled towards the struggle to disband SARS.

“SARS” is an acronym for Special Anti-Robbery Squad, a special unit within the Nigerian Police Force that was set up in 1992 to fight incessant robbery in Nigeria (Iwuoha & Aniche, 2021). SARS functioned effectively in stemming criminality in Nigeria until early 2017 when multiple allegations of profiling, abuse of power and brutality prompted public outcry that turned into a social movement demanding that the government end the operations of this special police unit (Gladstone & Specia, 2020; Malumfashi, Aljazeera, 2020). EndSARS is the acronym used for the social movement that emerged to demand the disbandment of SARS (Akerele-Popoola et al., 2022).

Social movement (Touraine, 2002) refers to loosely organized efforts by groups of people in response to perceived injustice, oppression, and/or unfulfilled social, political, economic, or



cultural demands (Amenta et al., 2010), and the term “EndSARS” represents the demand for the abolishment of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) of the Nigerian Police (Iwuoha & Aniche, 2021) based on allegations of police brutality. George (2020) suggests that the EndSARS protests were triggered on October 4, 2020, by a widely shared video recording of police brutality that was uploaded on Twitter. This video caused intensified public outburst against the government (George, 2020) within digital platforms, especially Twitter, and the outbreak of protests within cities in Nigeria.

Twitter as a form of social media communication (Weller et al., 2014) is known for the viral spread of information and ideas that mobilize publics to action (Rosenbaum & Bouvier, 2020) over contentious political issues (Carty & Reynoso Barron, 2018). With indications that the affective production (Papacharissi, 2015) of Twitter posts such as videos, comments and images using the hashtag #EndSARS were catalysts to the #EndSARS protests in Nigeria, this research examined the attributes of selected Twitter posts, how they were channeled using the technological architecture of Twitter, and the reactions they elicited from audiences. This study assessed Twitter’s impact on the 2020 #EndSARS protests in Nigeria using key parameters around public enlightenment and participation in discourses on EndSARS, public mobilization and participation in physical protests, and the coordination of protest actions within offline spaces.

From 2019 to 2021, Twitter ranks behind WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram as the most popular social media platform in Nigeria (Sasu, Statista, 2022) yet it was targeted with a ban by the Nigerian government owing to what the government described as Twitter’s use in undermining Nigeria’s corporate existence through the spreading of radical news that could potentially have violent consequences (Ezeama & Umejiaku, 2021; Princewill & Busari, CNN,

2021). The ban which lasted seven months, from June 2021 to January 2022 indicates the recognition of Twitter as impactful on social discourse and activism in Nigeria and is why this study is important in examining the chances of circumventing government control over information and communication channels in Nigeria using social media platforms (Lawal, 2021).

Nigeria's democracy has often been categorized as regimented (Dambo et al., 2020). Regimented democracy is a term often used to criticize governments that claim to be democratic but do not have the characteristics of true democracy (Akerele-Popoola et al., 2022). It refers to a form of democracy where the government exerts extensive control over the citizens' political activities and restricts civil freedoms through undemocratic means (Obaji, 2020). In the context of this study, regimented democracy manifested in the stringent regulation and censorship of the media by political leaders in Nigeria; where news around contentious political issues were manipulated to reflect favorably on the government (Akerele-Popoola et al., 2022; Obaji, 2020).

In a regimented democracy, the constitutional separation of powers inherent in democratic institutions is blurred, and the ability to hold the government accountable in this situation rests mainly with the ruling party in power (Erezi, 2021). In this context, Twitter as a social media platform that allows for free and open exchange of ideas and information provided Nigerians a communication channel for amplifying voices against oppressive government policies (Zeitsoff, 2017), and police brutality, especially where civil rights violations go unchecked (George, 2020). It also facilitated the sharing and dissemination of news contents that would have been censored by the Nigerian government, thereby giving activists a formidable tool for spotlighting contentious political issues in Nigeria through public discourse and engagement (Schmidt, 2014).

## **1.2 Rationale and Significance**

Through the lens of networked theory of power (Castells, 2010) and affective public (Papacharisi, 2015) this research identified within the EndSARS protests how social media messages connected people around issues, stimulated their feelings, and cued them to action (Anderson et al., 2020). This is of practical importance in the context of Nigeria's diverse population where people are not easily united around a shared cause (Flynn, 2011). With focus on the 2020 #EndSARS protests, this study explored the ways Twitter facilitated social activism in Nigeria by its use as a tool for generating discourse, sharing information, constructing identity, mobilizing support and stimulating public participation in efforts to address social injustice in Nigeria. Given the context of Nigeria's socio-political environment, the study asked pertinent questions aimed at identifying unique Twitter affordances to the EndSARS movement, how affective attunement was stimulated, and how themes emerged out of Twitter discourse to produce counterpower sentiments in Nigeria. This was imperative in understanding how the concept of power can be perpetuated or challenged with control over communication infrastructure (Henrik, 2011) in Nigeria.

Victims of police brutality in Nigeria used Twitter to share stories about their lived experiences, and post videos and images that substantiated their stories of police brutality. In addition to the platform users' engagement around these stories on Twitter in terms of likes, retweets, shares, and comments, the posts are unique because they are identifiable with real people, within traceable locations, and at specific timelines (Schreiber, 2017). Again, despite efforts by the Nigerian government, particularly the Nigerian Police Force to challenge the veracity of public allegations of police brutality, videos and images widely circulated on social

media provided compelling evidence of police brutality that informed agitations for the disbandment of SARS and prosecution of police officers found culpable (Abimbade et al., 2022).

EndSARS offers evidence that the technological affordances of Twitter such as hashtags, shares, likes, mentions and comments can be repurposed in circumventing government control over information and channels of communication in Nigeria. It also demonstrates that storytelling, images, and videos are powerful tools that are used by social movements in stimulating desired sentiments around contentious issues from diverse population groups as seen in Nigeria. Although studies (Rosenbaum & Bouvier, 2020; Gerbaudo & Trere, 2015; Iwuoha & Aniche, 2021) show the effectiveness of Twitter in mobilizing social protests, results from this research highlighted the implications of repurposing Twitter affordances for counter-power struggles within regimented democracies such as Nigeria. This is particularly important because the EndSARS protests demonstrated the inherent value of public participation in news content creation and reporting (Apuke, 2016) in such a way that active voices were no longer amplified through traditional media establishments alone (Dawson, 2020). This significantly demonstrates that by using social media, marginalized groups can challenge dominant power structures that are anchored on the flow of information and means of communication. In this vein, the virality of news around police brutality and the 2020 EndSARS movement tested the ability of the Nigerian government to censor news coverage of contentious socio-political issues in Nigeria (Ezeama & Umejiaku, 2021).

### **1.3 Thesis Overview**

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter two includes the theoretical framework and literature review. It discusses recent studies and arguments around social media use through the lens of the network theory of power (Castell, 2010) and the theory of affective publics

(Papacharissi, 2015), and how these reflects on the issue of the 2020 #EndSAR protests in Nigeria. Chapter three explains why the researcher adopted a qualitative analysis approach and applied Critical Techno-cultural Discourse Analysis (CTDA) in this study. This section also explains the data collection, sampling and coding process conducted by the study. Chapter four explains the data analysis conducted and discusses the findings and implications of the research. Chapter five provides the conclusion, highlights the limitations of the study, and offers suggestions for further research.

## CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 The EndSARS Movement and 2020 Protests in Nigeria

EndSARS started as an activist movement in 2017 when the slogan “EndSARS” was created with a hashtag (#EndSARS) on Twitter to campaign against Police brutality in Nigeria (Uwalaka, 2022), and materialized as street protests from October 4 to 20, 2020. The movement is focused on highlighting the flagrant disregard for the lives and dignity of Nigerians by the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a unit of the Nigerian Police Force tasked with responding to the incessant cases of armed robbery and other violent crimes in Nigeria (Abimbade et al., 2022).

SARS was initially established to operate autonomously from other operatives of the Nigerian Police Force to identify and tackle organized crime and criminality (Akerele-Popoola et al., 2022). In responding to community distress calls about armed robberies and other violent crimes, the effectiveness of SARS depended on its secrecy and method of operation (Uwalaka, 2022). Members of SARS operate without uniforms or badges, they drive unmarked vehicles, and openly carry assault rifles, and this is important in understanding how covert their operations were supposed to be. However, SARS operations did not remain covert; by the end of 2016, SARS was getting involved in civil issues, operating outside of their jurisdictions, and linked to multiple cases of human rights abuses. Over time in, SARS became synonymous with illegal arrests, arbitrary detainments, torture, rape, extortion, and extrajudicial killings (Akerele-Popoola et al., 2022). By the end of 2017, SARS had become notorious that activists began a campaign for its disbandment. Although the government made repeated promises to investigate these

allegations, there wasn't much record of government initiatives to address the human rights abuses (George, 2020).

Literature on the EndSARS movement (Akerele-Popoola et al., 2022; Abimbade et al., 2022; Uwalaka, 2022) suggests that the heightened media campaigns and publicity using the affordance of Twitter hashtags moved #EndSARS from a trend across social media platforms to reactions and peaceful protests in the streets of Nigeria. (Iwuoha & Aniche, 2021). Citing various reports of Amnesty International, a global watchdog on human rights and social justice, Dambo et al. (2022) suggests that a series of unfulfilled promises and measures to reform the Nigerian police and its Special Anti-Robbery Squad sum up to events that triggered the October 2020 protests (Ojedokun et al., 2021). Government efforts at police reforms in Nigeria during this period were seen as mere announcements to pacify public outcry (Aluko, 2021) because they were not adequately implemented and fell short of addressing the issue of SARS. According to Pond and Lewis (2019), when public perception is shaped to attribute responsibility for a cause against the government, counterpower sentiments are stimulated and often cued to resistance action (Pond and Lewis, 2019).

Although existing literature (Anderson et al., 2020; Fenton, 2008; Kazeem, 2020) vary on what marks the beginning of social movements, and EndSARS as a social movement (Aluko, 2021; Anderson et al., 2020; Abimbade et al., 2022), this research proposes that every social movement is unique in its formation, mobilization, strategy, and objectives, and could be defined based on the impact identifiable with various stages of its emergence. This argument aligns with (Murthy, 2018; Cortes-Ramos et al., 2021; Hong & Kim, 2021; Castell, 2015; Abimbade et al., 2022) in their proposition that social movements could begin as grassroots activism that develops over time, or they might appear out of nowhere in reaction to a particular incident or disaster.

This also applies to EndSARS emanating on Twitter as an activist hashtag in 2017 and materializing four years later within offline spaces in Nigeria as street protests in October 2020. In what they described as “hybrid activism” (Cortes-Ramos et al., 2021) argue that online activism and offline actions are integrated and cannot be divorced from each other. According to Akerele-Popoola et al. (2022), social media activism and its manifestation within offline spaces are connected to each other in the sense that while one stage of the social movement such as awareness and advocacy is enhanced by digital platforms, the corresponding test for mobilization, participation, and impact is better served by offline activities (Akerele-Popoola et al., 2022).

As the allegations mounted against SARS over extortions, kidnapping and unlawful arrests, intimidation, torture, and extrajudicial killing, Nigerians, particularly young people between the ages of 17 and 38 who were the most profiled by SARS began documenting their interactions with the Nigerian police using cameras and smartphones, and posting the contents on social media platforms such Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter using the hashtag #EndSARS (Uwalaka, 2022). The 2020 EndSARS protests in Nigeria was therefore remarkable for being organized by a demographic that is composed of entirely youthful Nigerians (Busari, CNN, 2020). This is important to the study because it provides a lens to understanding the context of human motivation that is inevitable in mobilizing for collective action (Schmidt, 2014).

Using the hashtag #EndSARS, images, videos and stories of ongoing human rights abuses by the police in Nigeria continued to flood social media platforms, particularly Twitter which amplified active voices calling for the government to disband SARS (Ojedokun et al., 2021; Iwuoha & Aniche, 2021). By late 2017, following multiple reports of illegal arrests, unnecessary detention of suspects, extortions, and torture, the Nigerian government passed



legislation criminalizing torture as a means of police interrogation, and proposed other broad reforms to address illegal arrests and detentions, and the excessive use of force by the Nigerian police (Ojedokun et al., 2021). Although this was lauded as a landmark achievement by EndSARS activists because it showed the impact of active voices, it didn't stem the tide of atrocities committed by SARS (Ojedokun et al., 2021; Iwuoha & Aniche, 2021). Little was done by the government to implement these reforms because there was no significant change in how SARS kept operating.

By 2018, the EndSARS movement had channeled its social media campaign at spotlighting the insensitivity of the Nigerian government to the plight of its citizens and victims of police brutality in Nigeria. This was reflected in the tagging of official social media accounts of elected government officials, law enforcement agencies, National Assembly members, local and international media organizations such as CNN, BBC and Aljazeera, and human right organizations such as Amnesty International by using the "mention" affordance of Twitter (Uwalaka, 2022). The 'tag' and 'mention' affordance of social media platforms such as Twitter works by adding the symbol "@" before the social media account intended recipients, and this enabled the platform users to send messages directly to the account of desired targets without necessarily being part of their social media network (Twitter, 2022; Zeitzoff, 2017). Reports (Erezi, 2021; Adebayo, 2020; Obaji, 2020) suggest that the widespread demand for the investigation and prosecution of SARS officers culpable for the extrajudicial killings of civilian detainee must have significantly influenced Prof. Yemi Osibanjo, the vice-president and acting president of Nigeria within that period, to set-up a presidential panel of inquiry on police reforms by the end of 2019 (Egbunike, 2020).

According to Schreiber (2017) social media offers windows of engagement for diverse groups of people to connect to any issue from any angle that resonates with them. In this context, the hair-dressing professionals and fashion artists can relate to the EndSARS struggle by reflecting on how police profiling of young male Nigerians based on how their braided hair and stylish dressing impacts on their businesses. With intense media publicity, #EndSARS became the rallying point for other human rights campaigns and brought visibility to fights against corruption and bad governance in Nigeria (Akinyetun, 2021). By June 2020, an online petition demanding an end to police violence circulated through social media platforms, and in response to the petition, the Nigerian government announced several police reforms which included the dissolution of SARS and its replacement with another SWAT unit (Akinyetun, 2021). According to reports by Amnesty International, the disbandment of SARS at this point was faulted by EndSARS activists because the new SWAT unit was made up of the SARS operatives that should have been investigated and prosecuted if found culpable (Amnesty International, October 2020).

The months preceding the EndSARS protests in October 2020 has been characterized as a period of uneasy calm in Nigeria both in online and offline spaces. As indicated by Twitter's algorithm (Twitter, 2022), #EndSARS was one of the top five trending hashtags in digital spaces. This is significant because it substantiates the claim (Cortes-Ramos et al., 2021) that the EndSARS movement was not birthed during the physical protests, but had been an ongoing process, strategically mobilizing participants for collective action by using its identity construction of "the oppressed people" versus "the abusive government" as a rallying call (Akerele-Popoola et al., 2022). According to (Castells, 2015), the grievances of social movements are often like ticking bombs waiting to explode and protests usually become an

outlet for such collective expression; so was the case with the EndSARS movement in October 2020.

According to Iwuoha and Aniche (2021) the sharing of people's experiences in graphic pictures and videos on Twitter had a far-reaching impact in providing indisputable evidence that the narrative of ongoing police brutality wasn't all misinformation. This is significant because it stimulated and sustained discussions, and motivated people to participate in the movement. (Uwalaka, 2022).

On October 3, 2020, a video recorded by an eyewitness to SARS operatives shooting an unarmed man in Ughelli, Delta state, Nigeria was posted on Twitter (Abimbade et al., 2022). The video alleged that SARS operatives drove off with the victim's new Lexus SUV and showed the eyewitness narrating the event while chasing SARS operatives in his own car (George, 2020). As the video spread on Twitter and other social media platforms spontaneous protests erupted within the streets of Nigeria, marking the beginning of a series of other demonstrations (Abimbade et al., 2022) which were mostly peaceful.

By the end of October 2020, #EndSARS had become the most trending hashtags on Twitter and other social media platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp, and Instagram, as Nigerians uniquely repurposed their mobile phones from what has just been social communication gadgets to tools of social activism (Akerele-Popoola et al., 2022) by livestreaming ongoing protests which provided the world with a front row view of the struggle against police brutality in Nigeria, and the Nigerian government's response to it. (Akerele-Popoola et al., 2022; Iwuoha & Aniche, 2021; Abimbade et al., 2022; Uwalaka, 2022).

Literature on the EndSARS movement is widely researched on the role of social media in addressing police brutality in Nigeria. However, there is need for specificity on how the success

attributable to use of social media platforms, particularly Twitter, was enacted. Through the theoretical lens of affective publics (Papacharissi, 2015) and networked theory of power (Castells, 2010) this study focused on identifying some specific attributes of Twitter that played a role in the EndSARS protests, explained how these attributes were used, and the impact that they made.

## **2.2 Network Theory of Power**

The network theory of power (Castells, 2010) is a supposition in the study of power relations that considers power to be embedded in networks of social interactions rather than a quality of specific people or organizations (Castells, 2010; 2015). In the context of this research, power is defined as the possession of control mechanisms that grants an entity the authority and/or the ability to influence the course of events or the behavior of others (David & Schmidt, 2019). Network theory of power is based on the idea that technology plays a significant role in providing access to information and amplifying voices of the marginalized. It proposes that power is dynamic, which means that it can be challenged when it is not influenced by relationships with others in the network (Castells, 2010; 2015). It also rests on the belief that wherever power exists as an integral part of a society, there will be counterpower dynamics manifested in forms of resistance from decentralized social movements over contentious issues (David & Schmidt, 2019).

According to the theory, power is not solely derived from formal positions or resources, but it is also shaped by the patterns of social interactions and the distribution of resources within a network (Castells, 2015). This suggests that the ability to exercise power is not solely inherent or drawn from positions of authority or the resources associated with such positions but determined by a collective majority of people who network around issue to demand change. For

example, an individual who is well-connected and influential within a network may have more power to shape outcomes and decisions than someone who holds a formal position of authority but lacks these relationships.

Additionally, the network theory of power highlights the importance of considering the distribution of resources, such as information, knowledge, and access to resources, within a network as these resources can enhance the power of some actors and constrain the power of others. By offering a more nuanced and dynamic view of power relations, Castells (2015) recognizes that power is a fluid and context-dependent concept that arises from the complex interplay of relationships, resources, and interactions within a network.

One of the primary resources that sustain power is information; the control over what is shared among members of a society and the communication channels through which they are distributed (Castells, 2015). Literature on the network theory of power (David & Meersohn Schmidt, 2019; Hong & Kim, 2021; Castells, 2010,2015) has shown the significant impact that technology and social media platforms can have in shaping the distribution of power. For example, (Gonzalez-Bailon & Wang, 2016) found in their network analysis of Twitter, that social media can play a key role in enabling and amplifying the voices of marginalized groups, as well as facilitating the spread of information and mobilization for social movements. This includes the ways in which social media platforms and other digital technologies can democratize communication and information, by making it easy for everyone to have their say on contentious socio-political issues (Zhuravskaya et al., 2020).

In expanding on the notion of power as perpetuated through control over communication channels (David & Meersohn Schmidt, 2019; Castells, 2015), the theory provides a framework for understanding power as not just a matter of control or domination, but also as embodied in

patterns of social interaction, technological practices, and socio-cultural norms that shape interactions (Brock, 2020). According to Castells (2015), the power of the state exercised over the citizens around contentious issues is constantly challenged by the universal transformation of communication technology with the pervasive domain of social networks that circumvents state powers to sanction, sideline, intimidate, and manipulate traditional media agencies (Castells, 2015). For example, the political landscape in Nigeria where democracy is considered regimented, allows for state censorship of traditional media agencies whose operation is strictly in adherence to the policies of whichever party that is in power. Against this background, social media strikes a chord as a leveler of power by facilitating the democratization of information and communication, with its platforms providing spaces that are hard-to-reach for the government seeking to censor information over contentious socio-political issues that do not reflect positively on government activities (Theocharis et al., 2022).

According to Castells (2010; 2015), the use of digital technologies and affordances of social media platforms have decentralized ownership of socio-political discourse in a way that allows individuals to participate differently by constructing their own digital identity in a loose frame that still reflects their connection to the core issue. This means that social media platforms such as Twitter grants platform users' agency of their stories in a way that they are able to with other platform users with shared experience by using features such as hashtags.

In analyzing social movements as networks of outrage and hope, Castells (2015), credits the veracity of co-created discourse on social media as critical in dismantling the incredibility of government institutions upon which the structure of state power rests. Because social media platforms and affordance also serve as mediums for propaganda and misinformation, they can alternatively serve dominant powers such as the state in efforts at countering narrative around

contentious public issues (Schreiber, 2017). According to Cardoso & Carvalho (2019), Information and communication technology matter in organizing collective action. In the light of the EndSARS movement, the emergence and proliferation of images and videos on social media platforms depicting acts of police brutality from different sources and verifiable social media accounts was a trigger pulled in the direction of counter-power sentiments in Nigeria.

While the relevance of Castell's propositions is applicable to understanding the dynamic relationship between power and communication technology today, recent studies (Brock, 2020; Bouvier & Machin, 2018) attempt to address the gaps identifiable with the application of network theory of power by considering other complexities of technology and social movements that shape distribution of power such as the rise of global culture and ideology of freedom, the coexisting prevalence of information and dis/misinformation across digital platforms, and the significance of cultural norms, political institutions, economic conditions, race, gender and class. (Brock, 2020). Castells' argument about the ability of social movements to build images of their struggle with simple messages that produce a collective challenge to an oppressive status quo (Castells, 2015) resonates strongly with EndSARS.

Looking at the 2020 #EndSARS protest in Nigeria through the lens of the network theory of power, this study identified some gaps in academic scholarship on the use of social media technology in circumventing government censoring of news around contentious socio-political issues, especially within regimented democracies such as Nigeria (Apuke, 2016). Because internet technologies and social media platforms can also be used to reinforce existing power structures especially where democracy is not practiced (David & Schmidt, 2019), or regiment at its best, this study argues that the significance of Twitter to social activism rests more in

repurposing its platform affordances in amplifying marginalized voices to elicit counterpower sentiments and cues for action towards renegotiating power and advancing change.

Results from the study substantiates the proposition that power can be challenged (Castells, 2010) in the way EndSARS protesters mobilized to collectively demand accountability, good governance, and social justice from the institutions or structures of government from which dominant powers derive their legitimacy. Findings from the study also shows that circumventing government control over information and communication channels in Nigeria using social media platforms such as Twitter facilitated counterpower actions as proposed by Castells (2010; 2015)

Digitally mediated activism is grounded on shared sentiment across a broad spectrum of public demands for social reforms relevant to platform users' experiences (Skoric & Zhu, 2016; Carty & Reynoso-Barron, 2018). With a focus on how connectedness is forged on digital platforms such as Twitter, and how it shaped the mobilization of operational activism for the EndSARS movement in Nigeria, this research examined the interplay between political discourse, and sustained engagement on Twitter platform by identifying elements within digital communication around the #EndSARS movement that stimulated users' understanding, emotions, sense-making and influenced participation using the application of the theory of affective publics.

### **2.3 Affective Publics**

The theory of affective publics (Papacharissi, 2015a) is a concept in the field of communication and cultural studies that focuses on the role that emotions play in shaping public opinion and collective action. It suggests that emotions, such as anger, joy, or sadness, are an important factor in forming publics and in shaping the way individuals think about and respond



to issues and events (Papacharissi, 2015). In the context of affective publics, the term "publics" refers to groups of individuals who share a common emotional experience or bond. Their connectedness to a common issue can exist both online and offline. These groups are characterized by a shared affective investment, meaning that they are united by shared emotions, feelings, and sentiments. These shared emotions and sentiments may be triggered by a specific event or issue, or they may arise spontaneously, based on shared experiences, values, or interests (Geboers & Van De Wiele, 2020).

The theory of affective publics argues that emotions play a central role in shaping individual and collective identities and that they can serve as a basis for political mobilization and collective action (Papacharissi, 2015). This is because the attunement that emanates from affect plays a significant role in shaping public opinion, which can influence the attitudes and behaviors of other people and contribute to the creation of collective emotional responses to social, political, and cultural issues (Hou et al., 2021). The theory proposes that emotions are not just personal experiences, but also have a public dimension because they are often shaped and influenced by larger cultural, social, and political forces (Doveling et al., 2018).

Furthermore, affective publics are not mapped or limited to specific demographic or geographic groups but can instead be formed around a range of issues and experiences, such as a shared interest in a cultural phenomenon, political issue, or social movement (Pond & Lewis, 2019). For example, a group of people who are passionate about a specific sports team, a particular cause, or a cultural event may form an affective public. These publics can be defined by their shared feelings and emotional experiences, rather than their shared demographic or geographic characteristics.

According to Papacharissi (2015a; 2015b) affect is the sum of often disagreeing feelings about issues examined as the energy that drives the action of people or groups. Affect amplifies the awareness of a particular feeling and precedes emotions to drive the intensity with which it is felt (Papacharissi, 2015a). An example could be when feelings are amplified from Interest to excitement, surprise to startle, distress to anguish, anger to rage, and fear to terror. It is the ability to affect the tendency by which the body's power of acting is increased or diminished, aided, or restrained by ideas and feelings without entirely suspending the ability to think clearly because it creates consciousness and directs cognition (Papacharissi & de Fatima Oliveira, 2012). This means that affect doesn't put emotions in contradiction with rationality or activate emotions at the expense of acute reasoning. By this, affect stimulates not just feelings about the issue but also opens the mind to processing information in such a way that it seeks to find solutions to the issue at stake. It shapes our thoughts, behaviors, and interactions with others, and can also influence how we perceive, interpret and make decisions about issues.

In what Gregg and Seigworth (2010) described as "an inventory of shimmers", affect contains anticipation, promise, hope, potential, and cues to action, and has been attributed to how participants are mobilized and connected to social movements through the expression of sentiments (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010, p.16). Papacharissi (2015b) characterized the creation of affect as an intentional interplay of reason and emotion embedded in messages that are shared on digital platforms such as Twitter that mobilize people through an intensified feeling of collectiveness, connectedness, and belonging (Papacharissi, 2015a; 2015b; Meraz & Papacharissi, 2013).

Affective publics has been used in the study of the elements of storytelling encoded with sentiments (Papacharissi, 2015b) in such a way that it amplifies what the audience as emotion

and drive their reasoning around an issue. According to Papacharissi (2015a; 2015b), affective publics explains the intensity of public feeling emanating from shared stories that are framed around political issues and social systems to resonate with the audience. Because Twitter provides a platform for shared experiences, its affordances mediate affect in such a way that the sense-making of information transcends emotion and stimulates a sense of connective identity where personal experiences are subsumed in the collective sentiment that is key to mobilizing participants for social movements. Papacharissi (2015b) suggests that the role of Twitter in mediating the affective attunement of its platform users is intentionally constructed by the storyteller with the platform serving as a channel of conveyance. This means that the interplay between the technological features of the platform and the technological practice of the platform user must be integrated for affect to emanate. These elements of affective attunement facilitated by Twitter provided a lens through which digital footprints on Twitter and other social media platforms around the issue of police brutality in Nigeria are analyzed for a better understanding of the “EndSARS” protests.

## **2.4 Social Media**

Social media is a type of networking and communication that enables people to use internet-based platforms for message, content, and information sharing (Theocharis-Boulianne et al., 2022). Examples of social media platforms include Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, Reddit, Tiktok, among others. Social media allows people to follow and exchange ideas and information with other users or groups (Zeitzoff, 2017). In the early 2000s, social media platforms such as Myspace and Facebook were designed mainly as platforms for social interactions among peers and friends who desire to share information among themselves (Chon & Park, 2020). By the late 2000s, social media has grown to be a significant component of

contemporary communication, and is utilized for a variety of activities, including personal communication (Kim & Ellison, 2022), commercial promotions (Zhuravskaya et al., 2020), political campaigns (Skoric & Zhu, 2016) and more recently for social activism (Chon & Park, 2020).

With increased access to the internet around the world, social media has revolutionized the way humans communicate, and has become an integral part of daily life for many people to operate and convey meaning to others (Siegert et al., 2020). Users can now create profiles and upload contents in the form of texts, images or videos on these platforms. As social media increasingly became a medium of self-expression (Brock, 2020), users are also able to repurpose contents uploaded by other users and tailor them to reflect their own experiences, convey meaning or share their own stories. Although some social media platforms are designed for closed-user groups, most platforms offer access to a wider public audience especially with the ability to distribute contents across platforms (Siegert et al., 2020). These numerous benefits of social media have been identified by this research as affordances that enable users to do more by using the technology architecture of digital communication platforms such as Twitter.

#### **2.4.1 Social Media Affordances**

The term “affordance” was first introduced as a psychology concept by psychologist James J. Gibson in the 1950s. It was defined by Ingold (2018) as the physical or perceived relationship between an object or environment and the actions that are possible to be done with it (Ingold, 2018). This research refers to social media affordance as the capabilities and features of a digital communication medium that determine how such a medium can be used to interact with others, transmit information (Bucher & Helmond, 2018), and convey meaning (Ronzhn et al., 2022).

The concept of affordance offers this research a useful lens for observing and understanding how technological practices are performed to communicatively drive sensemaking of critical issues using some unique features that one platform may have over the other. It relates to the possibilities of actions that a communication medium presents to senders and receivers of information especially within digital spaces (Valenzuela et al., 2018). This means that social media not only serves as an essential information source but can fundamentally facilitate how users seek out information that resonate with them, and forge connections with like-minded individuals or groups of people regardless of their physical locations (Siegert et al., 2020).

Social media platforms provide spaces for open and inclusive dialogue which fills the interactive communication gaps in democratic societies such as Nigeria where marginalized and minoritized populations are underrepresented. This affords users the opportunity to communicate directly with their target audience without going through intermediaries that act as traditional gatekeepers of information (Groshek & Tandoc, 2017). Furthermore, social media lowers communication costs (Flynn, 2011). This means that with little barrier to entry on most social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook, and the low internet bandwidth consumption social media applications, users require minimal financial investment to set up accounts and start communicating with a large audience compared to traditional media channels (Poell & Van Djick, 2015). This is an important attribute of social media because it minimizes the chances that information could be distorted between its source and its intended recipients (Mortensen, 2011; Batos et al., 2013) thereby speeding up the spread of information (Alqudsi-Ghabra, 2012).

The capacity for individuals to look for information and distribute their own contents on digital platforms is one of the fundamental advantages of social media over traditional media channels (Cardoso Boudreau & Carvalho, 2019). This means that the traditional role of legacy

media in determining what is newsworthy for the public or setting the agenda in line with government/corporate interests became is somewhat eroded (Uldam, 2018). Although social media platforms have rules governing the ethics of what users can post on them (Chen et al, 2016; Marwick & Boyd; 2011, Twitter, 2022), people can create, follow, engage and recommend contents that appeal to their interests, both within and outside their network (Tufekci 2015).

Social media platforms have continued to provide the opportunity for communicative adaptations (Kaun, 2017) to its users. Communicative adaptation refers to the process by which individuals adjust their communication behaviors and strategies in response to changes in their social context. This can involve adapting to the norms, expectations, and communication styles of different social groups, as well as adjusting one's communication in response to changes in the situation, such as a change in the medium of communication, the presence of others, or the need to elicit reactions (Hase et al., 2022). This means that social media platforms can fundamentally alter how information is presented using texts or graphics in a way that influences how issues are understood by platform users (Fenton, 2008). For example, communication can be intentionally transmitted as plain texts or images, a combination of texts and images, or videos, making it possible for users to frame contents in a way that magnifies or diminishes certain aspects of the message in order to resonate strongly with their target audiences (Hase et al., 2022). When messages capture the attention and interest of people, it makes it more likely that the intended audience will engage with the information (Goboers & Van De Wiele, 2020).

In contrast to the minimal reporting of police brutality by traditional media channels within some countries and some democracies such as Nigeria, social media has facilitated public discourse and engagement through the unique features of some platforms such as Twitter (Bloodgood & Mason, 2018), and amplified voices around issues that could have been

suppressed or given less attention (Geboers & Van De Wiele, 2020). With visibility and wide audience reach being among the prominent affordances of social media, this research contextualized the struggle against police brutality in Nigeria through the lens of recent studies on the purposeful use of texts and graphics by activists in presenting messages that conveyed meanings around the EndSARS agitation to the public audience. This is significant in determining how vital Twitter was to the recorded successes of the 2020 EndSARS protests in educating the public, mobilizing participation, and coordinating efforts for peaceful demonstrations in Nigeria.

#### **2.4.2 Twitter as a Form of Social Media**

Twitter is a social media platform that was launched in 2006 by Jack Dorsey and colleagues. From a few technology enthusiasts in 2006, Twitter, valued at over \$44 billion in 2022 and owned by Elon Musk has grown to be adopted by individuals, organizations and businesses as a tool for self-expression (Brock, 2020), journalism, advertising, political participation (Tucker et al., 2017), and activism (Abimbade et al., 2022). Statistics show that there were around 106 million registered users on Twitter in 2010, which continued to grow to 313 million active monthly subscribers in 2016, and over 330 million active users as of 2021 (Dixon, 2022). During the EndSARS protests in October 2020, Nigeria had around 15 million active Twitter users (Dixon, 2022). This placed Nigeria among the global top 20 countries that utilize the social media platform (Degenhard, 2022), and demonstrates the growing significance of social media, and the part Twitter plays in connecting people, shaping public discourse, and disseminating information in the country. Twitter allows users to post short messages known as “tweets” and follow other users to interact with contents on their timelines (Hou et al., 2021).

When a user logs in to Twitter, they are taken to their home feed, which displays tweets from accounts they follow. Users can scroll through the feed to see the latest tweets from accounts they are interested in, and can engage with those tweets by liking, retweeting, or replying. During the #EndSARS protests, the home feed would have displayed tweets from accounts that were covering the protests or participating in them. As a real-time platform, Twitter's algorithm provides its users with access to the most recent news and information as they develop by arranging tweets in chronological order. It also grants access to searchable archives of old tweets based on hashtags and search parameters (Twitter, 2022) This is important because Twitter users and activists can direct audience attention to what is happening now or what is stored within the archives based on how issues are continuously updated on the platform (Dawson, 2020). With limited access to traditional media coverage of contentious socio-political issues in Nigeria, social media activists capture public attention by making their stories prominent on social media platforms. The ability to set news agenda around EndSARS through the viral spread of stories and live updates, without requiring the structures of traditional media outlets which were often controlled by the government is key to the success of the #EndSARS protests (Khazraee, 2018).

## **2.5 Social Media Activism**

Social media activism is a term used to describe the actions initiated by individuals or groups on social media platforms, often involving advocacy and education, aggressive campaigning, and other tactics such as protests to bring attention to a particular issue for a political or social change (Murthy, 2018; Ya'u, 2012; Fenton, 2008). This research conceptualized activism as a communicative process that adapts information transmission as key to generating public support of, or opposition to one side of, a contentious issue (Khazraee,



2018). Social media activism thrives on using communication as the first of all possible options in drawing attention to contentious issues and initiating actions for change (Anderson et al., 2020).

Social media activism happens when people communicate about issues that impact on their lives and wellbeing and coordinate to act about them using social media platforms (Uldam, 2018; Segerberg & Bennett, 2011). In this way, social media provides a platform and opportunities for the emergence and development of digitally connected groups of people that aim to create changes within their offline communities (Murthy, 2018). Social media activism has been a part of social justice reforms with varying degrees of success across the world. From the Arab Springs in North Africa and Middle East which witnessed the rise of anti-government protests in response to economic stagnation and corruption (Tudoroiu, 2014); to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) Movements in the United States of America which centered on the highlighting discrimination, racism and racial inequality especially with the police treatment of black men and people of color (Mundt, 2018), and to the “EndSARS” protests in Nigeria which rose to demand the disbandment of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad of the Nigerian Police Force due to incessant reports of police brutality (Abimbade et al., 2022), social media has played a dominant role.

Social media activism is not just about digital discourse on digital platforms, but how mediated communication on contentious issues translates to actions and results within offline spaces (Gonzales-Bailon & Wang, 2016; Khazraee, 2018). According to Chong and Park (2020), social media activism shares positive intertwining connections with offline activism. Testing an integrative model of activism on contentious issues, Chong and Park (2020) proposed that the consumption of contentious political information mediates public participation in political

expressions and offline activities, and Twitter as a type of social media offers that platform for the free expression of personal opinions on socio-political matters.

Although activism usually focuses attention on the mobilization of populations that are negatively affected by issues, it also involves those sympathetic to the cause (Poell & Van Dijck, 2015; Bennett, 2012). According to Geboers and Van De Wiele (2020), visibility is one of the key elements of social media activism. It begins with advocacy, raising awareness concerning a particular situation (Gerbaudo & Trere, 2015; Hand, 2016; Treem & Leonardi, 2012), presentation of clearly identified actors such as oppressors, oppressed, victims, marginalized, underrepresented, and a well-constructed perspective of “we versus them”(Neumayer & Rossi, 2018). It goes on to canvas for solidarity and mobilize participation in activities that will advance its set objectives (Bennett & Segerberg, 2015).

Activists invest in drawing attention to certain issues by producing media attention and coverage of negotiations, protests and confrontations with the authorities being challenged, especially where there is minimal or no assumption of good faith among contending parties (Chon & Park, 2020; Treem & Leonardi, 2012). Although studies (Bennett et al., 2014; Gerbaudo, 2012) on social media and offline activism have attempted to established distinctions between activism within offline spaces and digitally mediated activism on social media, the connections between the EndSARS agitations on Twitter and corresponding offline activities in forms of rallies and protests within the streets of Nigeria suggests that activism can equally be traced back to both offline spaces and social media platforms (Dawson, 2020; Iwuoha & Aniche, 2021).

In considering the situational variables between offline and social media activism, Skoric and Zhu (2016) suggest that while social media activism provides a digital platform to amplify

those voices and reach a wider audience, activism within offline spaces manifesting in forms of physical demonstrations, protests, and rallies often become parameter for determining successful enlightenment, engagement, and mobilization of the public (Rosenbaum & Bouvier, 2020).

However, this study found it plausible to argue that offline activism and social media activism complement each other with the difference being the agency of the space in which they are performed and what such space and its features affords activists to accomplish.

### **2.5.1 Twitter Affordance to Social Media Activism**

Twitter affordances are embedded within the technology infrastructure of its platform and manifest themselves through the functions they perform (Weller et al., 2014). The like, share, tag, and retweet buttons are some of the features that function in both ways when used as artifacts or enacted as performances (Rosenbaum & Bouvier, 2020). Mediated engagement among platform users become easily identifiable when the “like” button is used as a show of agreement with the message, the tag button centers the message within the timeline of intended platform users, and the “share” button facilitates the spread of the message from Twitter to other social media platforms (Ingold, 2018). For example, when users shared their personal experiences around police brutality in Nigeria, it encouraged others with similar experiences to post about their encounters as well (Uwalaka, 2022). This demonstrates how the collective networks and connective engagement that enhanced mobilization and participation in the 2020 EndSARS protests were sustained.

It is also interesting to note that activists have utilized the metrics of click-through rates in the number of likes, shares, comments, replies, and retweets of their Twitter posts as analytics of their audiences’ understanding and engagement with the message (Rosenbaum & Bouvier,

2020). Another way that Twitter has enabled its platform users to keep track of engagements with the contents of their posts is through hashtags.

Hashtag, one of the most prominent affordances of Twitter has made it easy for users to search out and connect with contents and trending discourse on social media (Rauschabel et al., 2019). Hashtags are unique catchwords or phrases that are used to define certain topics, identify issues and categorize material on social media platforms (Yang, 2016). Hashtags are prefixed with the sign "#" making them clickable and a pathway to a collection of other public contents with the same hashtag (Garfield, 2011). Hashtags are used in a way that makes them easily searchable and retrievable across Twitter and social media platforms (Rosenbaum & Bouvier, 2020). When numerous social media posts use the same hashtags (#) to make a social or political statement, these various posts get connected within a grouped network in a way that digital footprints are made prominent (Rauschnabel et al., 2019).

Some examples of the notably recent activism hashtags that have been employed to raise awareness of significant social and political concerns include:

1. **#BlackLivesMatter:** A hashtag that emerged around July 2013 in response to the systemic violence and racial profiling faced by Black individuals and communities and has since become a global movement for racial justice.
2. **#MeToo:** A hashtag that went viral in 2017 to bring attention to the widespread problem of sexual harassment and assault, and to give a voice to survivors of these experiences.
3. **#ClimateStrike:** A hashtag used to raise awareness and mobilize support for the global youth-led climate strike movement, which aims to bring attention to the urgent need for action on climate change.

4. **#Women'sMarch:** A hashtag used to bring attention to and mobilize support for the Women's March movement, which seeks to advance women's rights and address issues such as gender-based violence and pay equity.
5. **#NeverAgain:** A hashtag used to bring attention to and mobilize support for the gun control movement, following the mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.
6. **#EndSARS:** A hashtag that sprouted in 2017 in demand of the disbandment of a Special Anti-Robbery Squad, an arm of the Nigerian Police following incessant reports and evidence of police brutality in Nigeria.

These hashtags have been crucial in assisting activists connect with, engage, and raise public awareness for the important issues they represent. According to Brock (2020), the performance of identity and techno cultural ideology owe visibility to the value users place on the platform affordances of Twitter such as hashtags. The hashtag affordance of Twitter can be deployed towards unveiling a broad sense of issues such as the #BlackLivesMatter that centered on racial justice, or it could center on specific aspects of the broad issue such as awareness for Black women victims of police brutality using the #SayHerName (Brock, 2020). This demonstrates that Twitter as a form of social media is adaptable to situations as they impact social activism (Brock, 2020).

Another unique affordance of Twitter to social media activism that distinguishes it from other social media platforms is its character limit to every tweet. Originally Twitter had a 140-character limit which doubled to 280 characters per tweet as of October 2020 (Twitter, 2022). Studies (Shaw, 2017; ) suggest that this 280-character maximum to every tweet poses some challenges where it forces users to omit some important information, or post incomplete and

fragmented messages in order to fit within the character limit (Dawson, 2020), and lack of details in this regard may complicate the communication of complex thoughts and idea; it could also lead to difficulty in conveying tone and emotion which may lead to misinterpretation and misunderstanding (Dawson, 2020). However, this study acknowledges that this affordance is a great feature that compels users to be concise and creative with messaging, and where necessary rely on media attachments such as photos, images or videos to communicate successfully (Akerele-Popoola et al., 2022). In this context, the saying that, “a picture is worth a thousand words” aptly describes the effectiveness of minimized text usage in mediated engagement among Twitter users.

In his critical analysis of African American cybercultures, Brock (2020) proposed that images on Twitter play a significant role in online identity formation, self-expression, representation and shaping resistance for marginalized populations. Graphics are vital for enhanced storytelling and have been impactful on Twitter by making messages more memorable for emotional and cognitive processing (Brock, 2020). For example, images and videos that surfaced on Twitter in the wake of George Floyd’s death were crucial in rousing emotions, inciting protests and pursuing social justice because of its graphic depiction of the police officer Derek Chauvin kneeling on Mr. Floyd’s neck for nine minutes (Reny & Newman, 2021).

According to Njoku (2021), with less emphasis on the use of written words, images, a combination of texts and images, and videos have been used on social media to remarkably influence audience perception in several ways (Geboers & Van De Wiele, 2020). Images and videos help in clarifying and simplifying complex information, making it easier for people to understand and remember (Khazraee & Novak, 2018). They serve as memory aids, making it more likely that people will remember the information later (Geboers & Van De Wiele, 2020).

Because images are often interpreted through a cultural lens, they manifest more when combined with texts in social media posts to provide context for information, making it more meaningful and relevant to the viewer (Chen et al., 2021). Videos and images captured as digitalized photos are evidence-based artifacts that enhance the credibility of the information shared, making it more likely to be believed and acted upon (Murthy, 2018; Meraz & Papacharissi, 2013; Garfield, 2011).

The video and image-posting affordance of Twitter is pertinent to how perceptions of platform users are shaped because they substantiated the counterpower claims of activists and portray the plights of victims in a graphic and relatable form that withstands counter-narratives from the entities being challenged. This study searched out images and videos relating to the #EndSARS movement in Nigeria and examined how they could have amplified voices, and stimulated feelings towards connecting people and mobilizing them to participate in active protests.

Analyzing the levels of visibility and interaction with contentious issues on Twitter, Duncombe (2020) suggests that tweets that include images or videos tend to attract more engagement in terms of likes, comments, shares, and retweets. According to Neumayer and Rossi (2018), digital witnessing, referring to the use of technologies such as cameras and smartphones to observe events and document experiences has significantly altered the power imbalance that initially favored government authorities, and established institutions such as the police, and traditional media corporations and journalists against social activists (Neumayer & Rossi, 2018).

Recent studies (Duncombe, 2020; Neumayer & Rossi, 2018) suggest that the ability of victims or witnesses of contentious events to document and post them directly on social media

platforms circumvent the control of traditional gatekeepers such as journalists governed by in-house restrictions or government regulations in mistranslating, distorting or completely ignoring reports on the issue (Blaagaard et al., 2017). The array of strategies employed by activists in posting these images and videos on social media such as Twitter without violating platform policies, has shaped the impact they have on platform users (Njoku, 2021). This is significant to this study because these posts draw public attention to most information that could have been censored or reduced in significance within societies such as Nigeria where the media is regulated by the government (Apuke, 2017). It also demonstrates how public attribution of responsibility around contentious issues can be framed and influenced by social media (Pond & Lewis, 2019).

Images, texts, and videos evoke emotions (Papacharissi, 2015b) when they are intentionally presented in a way that conveys specific meanings around particular issues especially in democratic societies. Papacharissi's ideas offer valuable insights into the role of activists in taking advantage of the affordance of Twitter to manipulate texts and graphics in stimulating feelings of joy, fear, hopelessness, or anger that contribute in shaping public perceptions around contentious issues. For instance, catchy headlines or message captions are intentionally framed as the first and the only thing that the audience reads to derive meaning (Ezeama & Umejiaku, 2021). In the same vein, graphics are presented in formats such as memes, caricatures, live pictures or videos, and within a frame that collaborates the argument presented by the platform users to their audience. This also impacts on how audiences are triggered to respond to the issues highlighted with a sense of urgency (Ingold, 2018).

Although some studies (Hou et al., 2021; Hase et al., 2022; Poell & Van Dijck, 2015) suggest some negative impacts of social media on activism such as information overload and desensitization can happen, and makes it unattractive for audience to effectively process and



react to the avalanche of messages being share on digital platforms such as Twitter (Dawson, 2020), this research focuses on examining the forms in which messages emerged on Twitter around the EndSARS protests, what made it possible to target and tailor these messages to specific people as well as wider audiences, how the messages increased the persuasiveness of the information and the reactions it received, and how it translates into social activist communication.

## **2.6 Social Movements**

The beginning of a social movement is influenced by several variables, such as the degree of public knowledge around the issue, the accessibility of resources, the level of backing from influential people and groups, and the larger socio-political climate (Gonzalez-Bailon & Wang, 2016). This means that the more people know about what is going on, and the higher the stakes, the more they participate and invest their resources in the agitation for change. Although some social movements thrive without defined leadership, the role of strong charismatic individuals such as elected officials, media personalities, social media influencers and other celebrities can motivate and mobilize people to join the movement (Doveling et al., 2018). Technology, manpower, and financial resources also makes it more likely that a movement will grow and attain its objectives.

Social movements can begin at any moment (Galis & Neumayer, 2016), typically as a reaction to an issue or perceived injustice that impacts many people. Numerous problems, including discrimination, injustice, violations of human rights, environmental degradation, and governmental corruption, can serve as catalysts for social movements (Leong et al., 2019). They are motivated by a need for change and a conviction that change can be brought about via collective action (Castells, 2015). According to Bennett (2012), political ideology and landscape

such as democracy, authoritarianism, or regimented societies within which the movement emanates also has a significant impact on how the movement navigates its struggles and successes (Flynn, 2011). The political environment often makes conditions and provisions for the rights and privileges, or restrictions and suppressive censorship movements may encounter (Abimbade et al., 2022). Social movements are also known to have struggled to sustain momentum, mobilize support, and succeed or fail based on the clarity and attainability of their objectives (Touraine, 2002). This is identifiable with the 2020 EndSARS protests in Nigeria which led to the disbandment of SARS after about four years of agitations.

### **2.6.1 Affective Attunement and EndSARS**

Affective attunement refers to the process of becoming attuned to or in tune with someone else's emotions and feelings. Affective attunement is a key aspect of interpersonal relationships, particularly in the development of empathy and emotional connection with others. It involves the ability to understand and respond appropriately to another person's emotional state and reason (Greg & Seigworth, 2010). This can involve verbal and nonverbal cues, such as tone of voice, facial expressions, body language, and more (Papacharissi, 2015a; 2015b). Within digital spaces such as Twitter, affect is created using texts, images, hashtags, emojis, language, memes, videos, and other sociopolitical and cultural artifacts or forms of expression that have the tendency to produce meaning and direct reasoning for its target audience (Geboers & Van De Wiele, 2020).

During the “EndSARS” movement, strongly worded personal slogans by Nigerian social media users gave expression to how the protests resonate with them (Abimbade et al., 2022). Slogans such as “*NaijaBleeds*”, “*OurMumuDonTooMuch*”, “*SoroSoke*”, loosely translated as “Nigeria is bleeding”, “Our foolishness is enough” and “Speak up” are few used in framing the

sentiments and objectives of EndSARS activists and protesters (Uwalaka, 2022). By narrating lived experiences, posting pictures and images that depict encounters with the police, and sharing videos that substantiate claims of abuse perpetrated by SARS operatives, Twitter users were able to transmit feelings of rage, frustration, helplessness, Strength, and an urgency for change (Abimbade et al., 2022). Protest-focused hashtags that were consistent with the curated theme of #EndSARS also played an integral role in highlighting the diverse experiences around the discourse, thereby connecting users, sustaining engagement, and networking publics (Meraz & Papacharissi, 2013).

Drawing from Papacharissi (2015a), the role Twitter played in networking publics for the “EndSARS” movement in Nigeria is evidenced in the utilization of Twitter affordances by the platform users in creating and sharing contents that shape public experience and action within a cultural or political formation. This means that public notions around issues such as respect for human life and dignity, resisting tyranny, and advocating for the marginalized were easily identifiable meanings that the messages conveyed. According to Papacharissi (2015a; 2015b), affect is framed by language, image, or symbols, and employs the simulation of senses, bodily response and emotion in the creation, reception, and delivery of messages. These same characteristics align closely with the basic configuration of the technological architecture of Twitter that facilitate users’ interactions, engagement, and connection.

Affect is lasting; it is not fleeting as mere feelings of emotions and cannot be confined to time and space (Greg & Seigworth, 2010). This means that sentiments stimulated by affect will not easily fade in the absence of the communicator or the platform by which it is conveyed. In support of this argument, Papacharissi (2015b) suggests that although the platform and communicator is imperative in creating an attunement, affect is mainly anchored in the message

conveyed, received and interpreted between the sender and the audience (Greg & Seigworth, 2010; Papacharissi, 2015a; 2015b). Affect is not confined to technological platforms, and affective publics do not disintegrate with the temporary or permanent shutdown of the platform or absence of the message sender (Uwalaka, 2022). This is further substantiated by the resilience of networked publics around the EndSARS protest in the face of Nigerian government ban and seven-month shutdown of Twitter to curb what they described as social media threat to democracy in early 2021 (Erezi, 2021). The effective story therefore remains the story that the target audience understands and connects with.

Contrary to the inference that the possibility of transporting affect out of Twitter reduces the impact of the platform a mediator of attunement, the argument (Greg & Seigworth, 2010) reinforces the interplay between social media as a technology platform, platform users' experiences, cultural ideologies, and the socio-political dynamics that surround the contentious issue around which affect is attuned (Papacharissi, 2015a; 2015b). The storytelling affordance of Twitter for instance has given rise to significant mobilized participation in calls for activism and political action has manifested as protests within offline spaces just as the 2020 #EndSARS protests did. This means that there is an interplay between the communicative process, technological platform affordances, and sociocultural ideologies that stimulate affect to occur (Papacharissi, 2015a).

According to Brock (2020), the interplay of culture, ideology, politics, and the platform affordances of digital spaces such as Twitter significantly shape how users manifest sentiments, negotiate meaning, and navigate connective action around a particular discourse (Brock, 2018; 2020). For example, in relation to "EndSARS" communicative hashtags such as #SARSMustEnd, #EndPoliceBrutality, #EndBadGovernance, #EndSARSNow, #SoroSoke,

#FreeFromSARS were not just hashtags, but multiple interactive entry points digitally mediated to facilitate individualized participation in the discourse. This allowed platform users to have agency in telling their personal stories and experiences their own way and at the same time connect them to the broader issue at stake (Brock, 2020; Papacharissi, 2015b; Bennett and Segerberg, 2013). This aligns with Cao (2016) who proposed that “social protest networks emerge and are sustained when people are connected by their overlapping concern to a social cause giving rise to their affective attunement to a course via digitally mediated networks” (Cao, 2016, p.2150). Being digitally attuned is significant to the EndSARS study because of how it enabled the issue of police brutality within Nigeria to manifest in discussion globally (Papacharissi & Oliveira, 2012).

Because digital platform users make sense of narratives and engage with them differently, Papacharissi (2016) proposed that affect is intentionally constructed in communication to persuade the audience by defining issues within a particular context and organizing contents along themes or keywords which conveys meaning, a sense of urgency, or cues for action. According to Seigworth and Gregg (2010), “affect is not something that is positive or negative, rather it is a question of what it does in increasing or diminishing the capacities to act or connect” (Seigworth & Gregg, 2010, p. 3). The study examined the media appeal that facilitates peoples’ connection and participation in social activism by looking at Twitter posts, images and videos on EndSARS. It considered how meaning can be embedded within these elements of communication to stimulate how people feel about the issues at stake, and the suggestive actions required to address those issues. It also examined the themes that manifested from activists’ use of Twitter in negotiating change around the issue of police brutality in Nigeria.

## 2.7 Research Questions

This research combined the application of the theory of affective publics and network theory of power to examine the role of Twitter in mobilizing diverse groups of people to participate in the 2020 #EndSARS protests in Nigeria, by answering the following questions:

**RQ1:** *In what ways did the Twitter affordances and affective attunement impact the “EndSARS” protests in Nigeria?*

**RQ2:** *What dominant themes on Twitter reflect the production of counter-power sentiments around the 2020 “EndSARS” protests in Nigeria?*

## CHAPTER 3. METHOD

### 3.1 Overview

This study used qualitative analysis in examining how Twitter as a social media platform enabled social activism and influenced the 2020 EndSARS protests in Nigeria. Using the Critical Technocultural Discourse Analysis (CTDA) enabled this study to conduct three phases of analysis using a single framework. This includes interface analysis, textual analysis, and thematic analysis. The research objectives (figure 1) provide context to the approach in establishing connections between the #EndSARS discourse on Twitter and its influence on platform users, which manifested during the October 2020 protests within Nigeria.

| Objectives  | Source data                           | Medium                  | Framework   | Outcome data   |
|---|---------------------------------------|-------------------------|---|--|
| Identify affordances of Twitter   | Twitter features                      | Twitter architecture    | Interface analysis                                | List of affordances  |
| Identify Technology practices   | Twitter Platform users' experience    | Engagement              | Textual analysis                                  | List of platform user's performances   |
| Identify emerging themes  | Twitter discourse/posts               | Texts, Images, Videos   | Thematic analysis                                 | Trends & patterns of posts and reactions   |
| Identify cultural ideologies/artefacts  | Textual & thematic analysis result    | Symbols, beliefs, norms | Thematic analysis                                 | Interpretation & meaning.<br>Descriptive coding  |
| Identify interplay between Twitter features, users' engagement & cultural artefacts | Interface & thematic analysis results | Thematic codes          | Critical Technocultural Discourse Analysis (CTDA) | Description of Twitter influence on EndSARS through affective attunement and counter power affordances |

**Figure 1.** Steps showing objectives and approach to data collection and analysis.

Following these steps, interface analysis was used to identify and describe Twitter affordances to the EndSARS protests by examining Twitter features and its platform users'

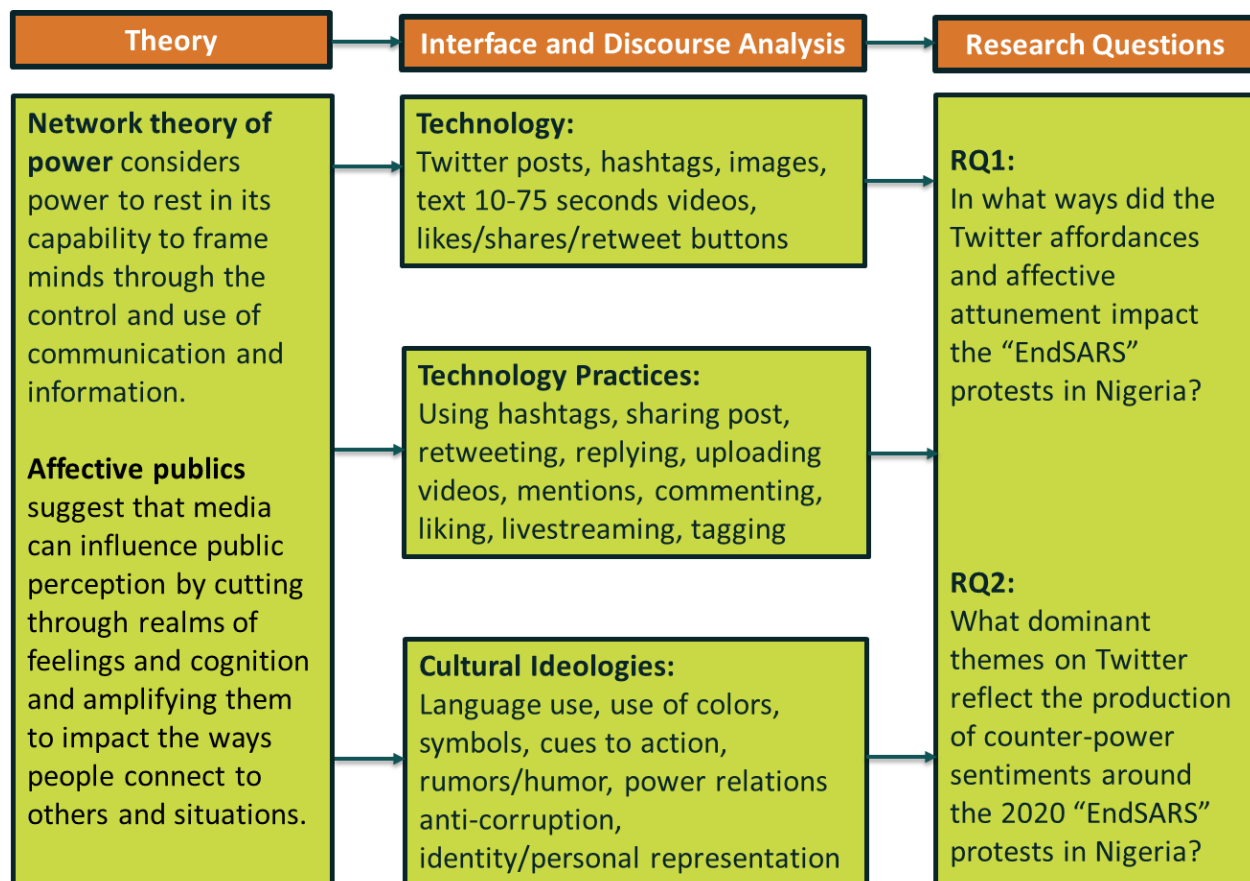
experiences. Twitter posts were examined using textual analysis to understand and describe the context of Twitter messages around EndSARS. Thematic analysis was used in identifying themes as they emerged, and describing meaning embedded in them.

Critical Technocultural Discourse Analysis (CTDA) is a research framework that examines the relationship between technology, culture, and power (Brock, 2018; 2020). CTDA examines the ways in which technologies are constructed and used in discourse, in which they are embedded in broader social, cultural, and political contexts. It involves a critical analysis of the power relations and social inequalities that are produced and reinforced by technological discourses, as well as an examination of the ways in which technologies are used to resist or challenge dominant power structures (Brock, 2020). It seeks to understand how technology and cultural practices intersect and shape each other, and how they impact individuals, communities, and societies (Brock, 2020). This is accomplished by a close reading of textual and visual materials, including online discourse, social media posts, and other digital artifacts.

CTDA views technology as a cultural and social artifact that is shaped by and in turn shapes social and cultural norms, values, and beliefs. It recognizes that technology is not neutral but is shaped by power dynamics and that its development, deployment, and use reflect and reinforce existing power structures and social inequalities. However, Brock (2020) utilized CTDA to show that technology platforms such as Twitter and its affordances can be utilized to produce and enhance visibility for marginalized people who are now able to create, share, and distribute their own representations and narratives online (Brock, 2020). This was demonstrated by applying CTDA towards identifying of themes as they emanate from online discourse, analyzing the linguistic and visual features of non-text materials, and describing the social and cultural contexts in which they are produced and consumed (Brock, 2018; 2020; Arthur, 2021).



In using CTDA, the study examined the interplay between Twitter as a technological platform, users' technological practices, and cultural experiences (Figure 2). This study explored how societal voices and activities that are represented in text (comments, images, videos) were shared on Twitter (Geboers & Wiele, 2020), and influence the interpretation of critical issues such as the power relations in the “EndSARS” movement.



**Figure 2.** Diagram showing how the interconnection of technology, technology practices, and cultural ideology relate to the theories and prime the research questions around the #EndSARS protests.

CTDA was useful in acknowledging texts as having different forms and meanings, and offering an interpretation within the context they are used (Brock, 2016; 2018; Papacharissi, 2015; Arthur, 2021) around #EndSARS. Because social movements impact on human experiences, centers around power, and is shaped within time and space, the use of the Critical Technocultural

Discourse Analysis (CTDA) in examining the cultural and political context of the messages selected, the perspectives/themes identifiable, and the influence of Twitter's unique technological configuration in the EndSARS protests facilitated answers to the research questions. CTDA was used to identify and describe the interplay between Twitter as a technology, its platform users' practices, and cultural ideologies/artifacts that manifested in people sharing their experiences and stories around police brutality in Nigeria.

This overall qualitative approach has been applied by Arthur (2021) in describing dominant indicators of meaning that are embedded in texts using metaphoric expressions, innuendos, analogies, and figures of speech (Arthur, 2021). Because texts, images and videos formed part of the data for this research, this approach was used to understand and interpret narratives constructed beyond the use of clear languages such as symbols and images (Arthur, 2021; Adekola, 2018; Reese, 2009). It was also effective in describing the experiences and perspectives of protesters as they manifested on Twitter, including their motivations, emotions, opinions, and attitude which are complex phenomena that cannot be easily quantified (Adékola, 2018) In this way, the study was able to identify and describe elements in Twitter features that facilitated affective attunement as well as Twitter messages that produced counterpower sentiments around the EndSARS protests.

According to Chen et al. (2021), analyzing texts using mediated indicators such as themes and tones found in messages around a phenomenon and extricating embedded meaning that offer a condensed and broad description of the issue helps in answering issue-related questions. This study also relied on Fursich (2009) proposition that images, objects and cultural practices can all be analyzed as texts for contextual meanings to be derived. To facilitate knowledge transfer from one form of media to another such as pictures or videos to text, the

researcher's experience with Nigerian culture was helpful in the translation of videos to English where local dialects were detected then transcribed to text for easy analysis. In order to test the applicability and manageability of this method and establish parameters of this research, a pilot study was conducted.

### **3.2 Pilot Study**

The researcher conducted a test for this study by using the hashtag #EndPoliceBrutality on Twitter to look at data around the EndSARS movement. The hashtag #EndPoliceBrutality was chosen for the pilot study because it is relatable and clearly conveys the issue at stake with EndSARS movement. The pilot study looked at Tweets posted on Twitter from September 25 to October 3, 2020. This timeline was chosen because it reflected recent discourse around EndSARS and helped with establishing familiarity with the dataset anticipated for the main study.

The pilot study revealed over 3,000 posts with indications that most tweets on Twitter were repeatedly posted by different platform users at different times and with a combination of other hashtags. This is significant because it highlighted the hashtag #EndSARS as the predominant hashtag used around the issue of police brutality in Nigeria. The pilot study guided the coding scheme that was used in identifying and describing themes that emerged from the data. In this regard, three major categories of themes were theoretically established along the tenets of network theory of power (Castells, 2010) and affective publics (Papacharissi, 2015) such as affective attunement, connective action, and counterpower. These formed the a priori codes for the study in examining the themes as they emerged from Twitter data of the 2020 #EndSARS protests in Nigeria, as well as guided how these themes were coded.

The pilot study also informed an adjustment to the parameter set for this study and provided insight to the method of sample selection adopted through a glimpse at what makes

posts on. This initial test established the practicability of the data collection instruments and procedure, as well as the relevance of the dataset in answering the research questions effectively. Twitter prominent and relevant to the study.

### **3.3 Data Collection and Sample**

The ethical guidelines of the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR) were followed in ensuring reflexivity over the type of Twitter platform users' personal information and the context in which they are represented (Franzke et al., 2020; Blazhevski, 2022). This means that steps are taken to mitigate personal biases. The data for this study was gathered through the Bright Data Initiative Twitter Capture and Analysis Toolset (BDI-TCAT) using the #EndSARS hashtag and timeframe parameters. This tool generated data from the search in an order of ranking that shows numbers of likes, retweets, views and comments for every post. It also generated URLs that gave the study access to the original posts on Twitter. The dates covered October 4 – October 30, 2020. This timeframe was guided by the pilot study which suggested an uptick in digital discourse on EndSARS within this period. The period focuses on discourse from the first major EndSARS protest within offline spaces on October 4, 2020, and the aftermath of the last major protest on October 20, 2020. It also serves in setting a manageable dataset for the study.

Manual screenshots were used to extract images (pictures, illustrations, cartoons, symbols) that were relevant to the study pasted on a word document. Videos ranging from 10 - 75 seconds were downloaded from Twitter in MP4 format using a web-based application known as Tweet Video Downloader. In the light of identifiable language variations used in platform users' engagements with images, videos and texts posted on Twitter, the researcher translated non-English words, and transcribed videos to English text for easy extraction context and meaning from them. For the ease of data integration, an Excel spreadsheet was used to arrange all textual

data in columns and rows for easier examination and all the data were stored in a secure database. Non-text data such as images were pasted as they were retrieved for visual examination. All the files are saved within properly labeled folders on a computer. The data generated for this study revealed over 5,000 posts comprising of Twitter comments, images, and videos from which samples for analysis were selected.

### **3.3.1 Purposive Sampling**

The study used purposive sampling to select ten (10) tweets of videos, twenty (20) tweets of images, and fifty (50) tweets of texts from the data retrieved from Twitter. The number of tweet videos, images and texts that were selected for analysis was guided by the pilot study which showed that contents from users were reposted by other platform users with the intent of making them more visible and viral. In this way, videos, images and texts have the tendency to manifest multiple times with little or no alterations. The 10 videos, 50 text and 20 images of tweets were selected because they were the most prominent tweets among the data generated using the hashtags #EndSARS within the period under investigation. This means that they were ranked at the top of the search result by their relevance using indicators such as numbers of likes, views, retweets, and comments (Appendix A).

The study further examined how the posts generated the highest engagement of platform users by looking at the aggregated numbers of likes, retweets, shares, and comments as indicators. The numbers generated in this regard were not used just for counting purposes but reflected how platform users made sense of the content through their comments and replies, the number of shares/retweets indicating that the contents were thought to be worth disseminating, and the number of likes reflect that the messages is approved or appeals to them. In this context, higher numbers were indicative of higher user engagements (Chen et al., 2021).

Purposive sampling is suited for the study because it acknowledges that the EndSARS protests was without recognized leadership, hence individualized participation manifested in networks of people that shared similar perceptions, so tweets was not restricted to only verified accounts which were synonymous to individual status and influence (Gebaudo and Trere, 2015). Although the personality and status of twitter users are significant, the study focused on the content and context of messages shared and how Twitter platform users engaged with them to make sense of EndSARS. Once the sample selection process was completed, the next step in analyzing the EndSARS data was to code the collected information into categories and themes for further examination.

### **3.4 Coding**

The a priori codes that were established following the pilot study formed the preliminary thematic categories through which themes emerging from the EndSARS data were descriptively coded in Excel spreadsheets as:

1. Affective attunement: this manifested as various forms of shared feeling of emotions, sentiments and reasoning such as rage, excitement, helplessness, fear, and cues to action.
2. Connective action: this manifested in messages as various forms of identities, inclusivity, shared experiences.
3. Counter-power: this manifested as resistance, resilience, demands, various forms of protests, civil disturbances, and challenge to institutions of power.

These three broad categories of themes were helpful in identifying similar trends, concepts, ideas, and activities that emerged as themes from the data such as human rights, youth activism, democracy, power/resistance, coordination, identity, language, and gender equity. These emergent themes were descriptively coded to determine the stories that they tell concerning the EndSARS

movement.

Because emergent themes may not have been apparent at first glance, the researcher reviewed the dataset for this study by reading, viewing, and watching the text and non-text contents at least three times, on three different occasions, at least three days apart to establish reflexivity and confirmability. According to Korstjens and Moser (2018), this process is used in qualitative research to establish credibility and dependability of study. This process also facilitated the identification of any overlap between the themes by examining them through some units of analysis.

### **3.5 Units of Analysis**

The first phase of analysis examined the technological features of Twitter such as hashtags, like, retweet, tag, and mention in understanding how they were employed by platform users to impact the 2020 EndSARS protests. The study extracted indicators of how these features were utilized by platform users in order to describe the affordances they provided. Analyzing Twitter as a platform provided insights into the role of social media in facilitating and amplifying the EndSARS movements, as well as the challenges and opportunities presented by using social media for activism.

The second phase of analysis examined tweet contents to identify themes as they emerged from EndSARS discourse and activities on Twitter. Analyzing tweet contents contributed to the meaning-making of the social, political, and cultural context that was produced or perceived around the EndSARS protests. This enabled the study to understand how the public viewed the EndSARS movement and what was dominant in stimulating attitudes and reactions.

Finally, CTDA was used to analyze how the identified affordances of Twitter, visual culture of platform users, and the power dynamics between the different actors in the EndSARS

movement, including protesters, police, and government officials came together to shape the discourse around the EndSARS movement and facilitated certain forms of activism and communication (figure 3).



| TECHNOLOGY INTERFACE / USE |             |                 |   |              | POST ENGAGEMENT  |          |              | THEMATIC CATEGORIZATION |                 |  |  |                                   |  |                      |                                       |
|----------------------------|-------------|-----------------|---|--------------|--|----------|--------------|-------------------------|-----------------|--|--|-----------------------------------|--|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| S/N                        | Date posted | Twitter Handle  | Tweet URL   | Tweet format | Tweet content  | Duration | No. of views | No. of Likes            | No. of Retweets | Voice Transcript   | Description/Context  | Cultural Artefact                 | AFFECTIVE ATTUNEMENT   | POWER /COUNTER-POWER | CONNECTIVE ACTION                     |
| 1                          | 2020-10-17  | @falzthebanduv  | <a href="https://twitter.com/falzthebanduv/status/1317485013756223490">https://twitter.com/falzthebanduv/status/1317485013756223490</a>   | Video        | No matter what schemes they bring, let's be united in one voice #5for5 #EndSars #SarsMustEnd   | 1:09     | 287,400      | 74,800                  | 60,600          | No matter what they do, We the youths stay united. We don't have a leader that the government want to bank on negotiating with so they have to meet all our 5-point agenda. Stay focused guys, I love you all    | Self recording of activist calling on youths to stay focused and united. Celebratory tone indicates excitement with outcome of protest                                 | Language (Pidgin)                 | Excitement. Motivation. Mobilization                                     |                      | Unity                                 |
| 2                          | 2020-10-04  | @rudeboyysquare | <a href="https://twitter.com/rudeboyysquare/status/1312700777899663361">https://twitter.com/rudeboyysquare/status/1312700777899663361</a> | Video        | It's about time #EndSARS @Mbadari @ProFosinbajo for how long ☺   | 0:59     | 268,300      | 28,400                  | 12,100          | Enough with keeping quiet. Enough is enough. The govt has to do something. We must all speak up. EndSARS   | Shirtless activist calling on other influencers not to keep quiet but to open up and condemn SARS  | Lack of dressing, slogan, dialect | Anger, Frustration,  | Strenght             | Call to action, Mobilization          |
| 3                          | 2020-10-04  | @ormaiiv        | <a href="https://twitter.com/ormaiiv/status/1318262136016076800">https://twitter.com/ormaiiv/status/1318262136016076800</a>               | Video        | Heartbreaking story! Chijoke's sister Obianuju Ilomoya is live @bellamija now with @lshasay and it's too much what her family has been through. She says even if everyone stops, she'd remain on the streets protesting till justice is served! #EndSARS @PoliceNG @ProFosinbajo             | 2:20     | 144,700      | 8,120                   | 14,300          | Summary: SARS arrested and killed their brother. The SARS operative demanded money and when offered N3msaid it was too small that he had already killed the victim. SARS operative is still working for the govt | Interview of sister to a deceased victim of SARS detailing the trauma their family had to endure   | Storytelling. Family bond         |  |                      | Gender representation, Proof of abuse |
| 4                          | 2020-10-14  | @nrmacaronii    | <a href="https://twitter.com/nrmacaronii/status/1316391766367653891">https://twitter.com/nrmacaronii/status/1316391766367653891</a>       | Video        | Alausa!!!! Just after some hoodlums tried to hijack our peaceful protest!! We are stronger together! They want to divide us!!! Never Ever!! The government must listen to us!! The Nigerian youths deserve a better Nation now and forever!!! #EndSARS #EndSwat #EndPoliceBrutalityinNigeria | 0:26     | 140,500      | 22,800                  | 21,900          | Music Playing through video. Bob Marley's 'One Love'   | Protesters in front of the Lagos State government secretariate at Alausa, dancing & singing along to music played from a loud speaker                                  | Music                             | Oneness  |                      | Unity/ Togetherness                   |
| 5                          | 2020-10-03  | @Genetia1Somto  | <a href="https://twitter.com/Genetia1Somto/status/1312473176278888449">https://twitter.com/Genetia1Somto/status/1312473176278888449</a>   | Video        | Today In Broad Daylight By SARS Officers At Ughelli, Delta State. After Killing Him, They Stole His Car (Lexus Jeep) And Left His Body On The Road Side. SARS Officers Are Now Rogue Criminals In Uniform #EndSARS. Its Time The   | 1:15     | 66,300       | 1,990                   | 2,021           | They are running away after killing the boy in front of Westland hotel. The boy is dead by the road  | SARS operatives shot a young man and drove off with his vehicle leaving the victim at the scene. Civilian youths gave chase in their vehicle while recording the event | Smartphone recording              | Human rights abuse, active voices, proof, Killing, Victim identification | In pursuit,          | Site location                         |

**Figure 3.** Screenshot of codebook showing CTDA analysis of Twitter features, user's performance, and thematic categorization.

## CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the findings from the study and how they answer the research questions. First, it presents results from the interface analysis of Twitter which identified the five unique affordances of hashtags, likes, retweets, tags, and mentions, and describes how they enabled performances. In this context, the study discussed how emotions and feelings such as fear, excitement, hopelessness, anger, and trauma facilitated affective attunement in a way that mobilized public engagement and participation in demanding an end to SARS in Nigeria.

Secondly, this section discussed finding from the thematic analysis which identified and interpreted dominant themes such as language, coordination, identity, feminism vs patriarchy, democracy, connective action, police brutality, resistance, and cultural symbols. Finally, findings from the overall CTDA analysis describing the EndSARS protest was impacted by the relationship between Twitter as a technology platform, platform users' experiences and cultural symbols and ideologies. In answering research question one:

RQ1:

*In what ways did Twitter affordances and affective attunement impact the “EndSARS” protests in Nigeria?*

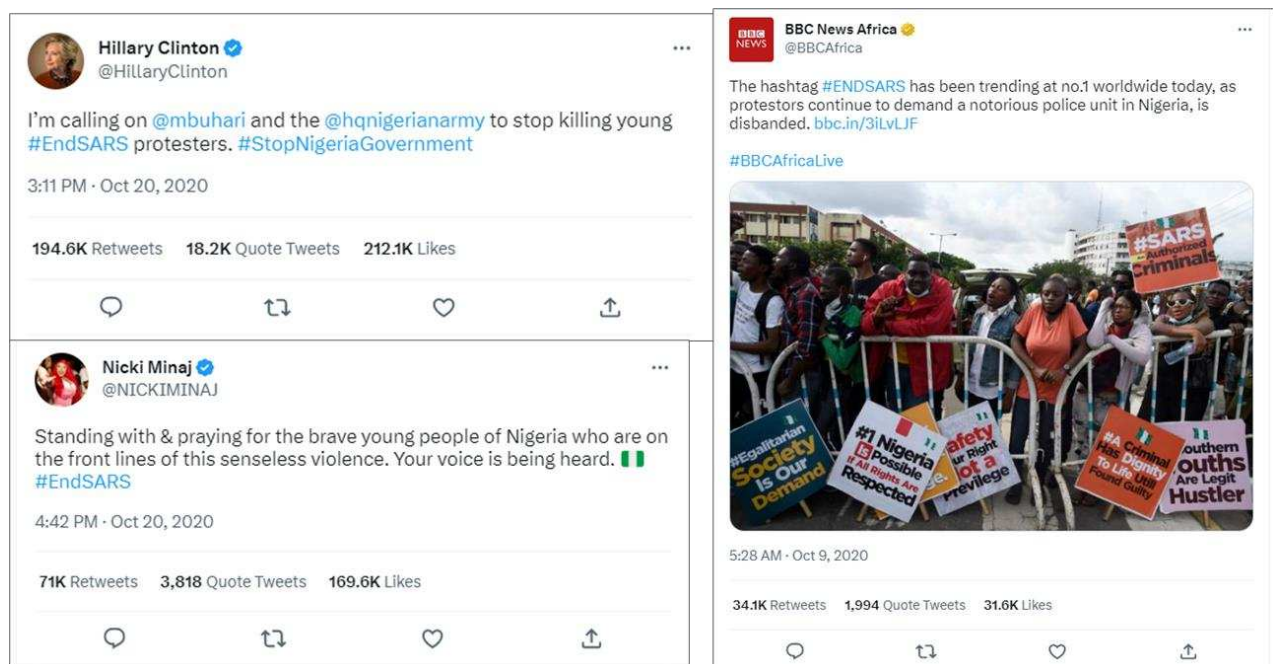
Results from the interface analysis of Twitter show that the unique features of the Twitter platform enable affective attunement using hashtags, likes, retweets, tags, and mentions.

### **4.1.1 Twitter Interface and Affordances**

Hashtags such as #EndSARS were critical tools in centering discourse around the EndSARS movement on Twitter, and as a rallying cry within offline spaces. As keywords or phrases preceded by the # symbol, hashtags helped to categorize tweets and make them easily

discoverable by other users. Results show that the hashtag affordance allowed individuals who had experienced police brutality and human rights violations to share their stories and connect with others who had similar experiences. This created a sense of emotional solidarity and community, which helped to mobilize people and sustain their participation in EndSARS discourse and activities over time.

Results also show that the hashtag facilitated the spread of information and images related to the movement, which helped to raise awareness and generate public support for EndSARS (figure 4). The use of Twitter allowed the movement to reach a global audience.



**Figure 4.** Screenshot of tweets showing global audience in support of #EndSARS.

The significance of having a global audience to the issue of police brutality and demands to end SARS in Nigeria manifested in how foreign media channels such as CNN, BBC, and Aljazeera followed developments around the #EndSARS protests objectively reported events without concerns of censorship by the Nigerian government as against Nigerian media.

Overall, the hashtag affordance of #EndSARS played a critical role in creating affective attunement for the movement by facilitating emotional connection, spreading information, and enabling public expression of emotions and feelings. This allowed people to show their support, empathy, and solidarity with the movement and the individuals who had been affected by police brutality and human rights violations.

Likes and retweets are other features of Twitter that made impact on the #EndSARS movement online. Likes and retweets are both ways for users to show their support for a tweet and help to amplify the reach and impact of a message. The study found that Twitter platform users were able to show their support for the movement by liking and retweeting tweets that shared information about the protests, updates on the situation in Nigeria, and personal stories from protesters and victims of police brutality. Likes and retweets (figure 5) were used to draw attention to important issues and stories related to the #EndSARS movement.



**Figure 5.** Screenshot of retweeted post showing the number of retweets and likes, and the account retweeting the post.

Likes and retweets helped to increase the visibility of tweets, making them more discoverable by other users who may not have been following the original poster. Retweets were significant to the movement as shown by posts reminding other platform users to retweet just to remind.

*“Let's all rt this till @MBuhari listen to us. This is happening live in Golden Pilars Hotel Ughelli Delta state. We are tired. The @PoliceNG just declared total war on the civilians. I support #EndSARS.”*

Findings show that retweets can sometimes go more viral than the original tweet, depending on factors such as the timing of the retweet, when more people are active and engaging on the platform, or the number of followers the retweeting account may have in their network.

Results found that the ability to like and retweet posts related to the EndSARS provided a way for individuals to express their support and solidarity with the movement and signal their endorsement to other platform users within their network who may not have been aware of the movement. This allowed people to reach a broader audience quickly and easily beyond those who were directly involved. The study found that people are perceived to have actively participated in the movement when they like and retweet posts, even if they were unable to attend protests or engage in other forms of direct action. This allowed people to feel a sense of emotional connection and investment in the movement, which helped to sustain its affective impact.

Twitter's tag and mention affordances were also found to have impacted the 2020 #EndSARS protests in Nigeria. Tags and mentions allowed protesters and activists to connect with each other, share information, and build a sense of community around the movement. By tagging other users in their tweets or mentioning them in their posts, protesters were able to reach specific audiences and build relationships with other users who were involved in the

movement. By tagging journalists, news organizations, and other influential users, protesters and activists were able to attract more attention to the movement. During the 2020 #EndSARS protests in Nigeria, tags and mentions were used to direct messages to key stakeholders in Nigeria that can influence police and initiate reforms (figure 6).



**Figure 6.** Screenshot of tweet tagging the President @MBuhari and Vice President @ProfOsibanjo of Nigeria.

In the context of Nigeria where it is significantly difficult to meet politicians and ranking members of government institutions, Twitter facilitated protesters access to the President of Nigeria @MBuhari, his Vice President @ProfOsibanjo, and other government functionaries such as the authorities of the Nigerian Police Force @PoliceNG, commands of the Nigerian Army @hqnnigerianarmy, and the National Human Right Commission @NhrcNigeria. By tagging government officials and law enforcement agencies with images and videos that support

allegations of police brutality, protesters were able to stimulate reactions put pressure on the government and law enforcement authorities to respond to protesters' demands (Uwalaka, 2022; Erezi, 2021; Adebayo, 2020; Obaji, 2020).

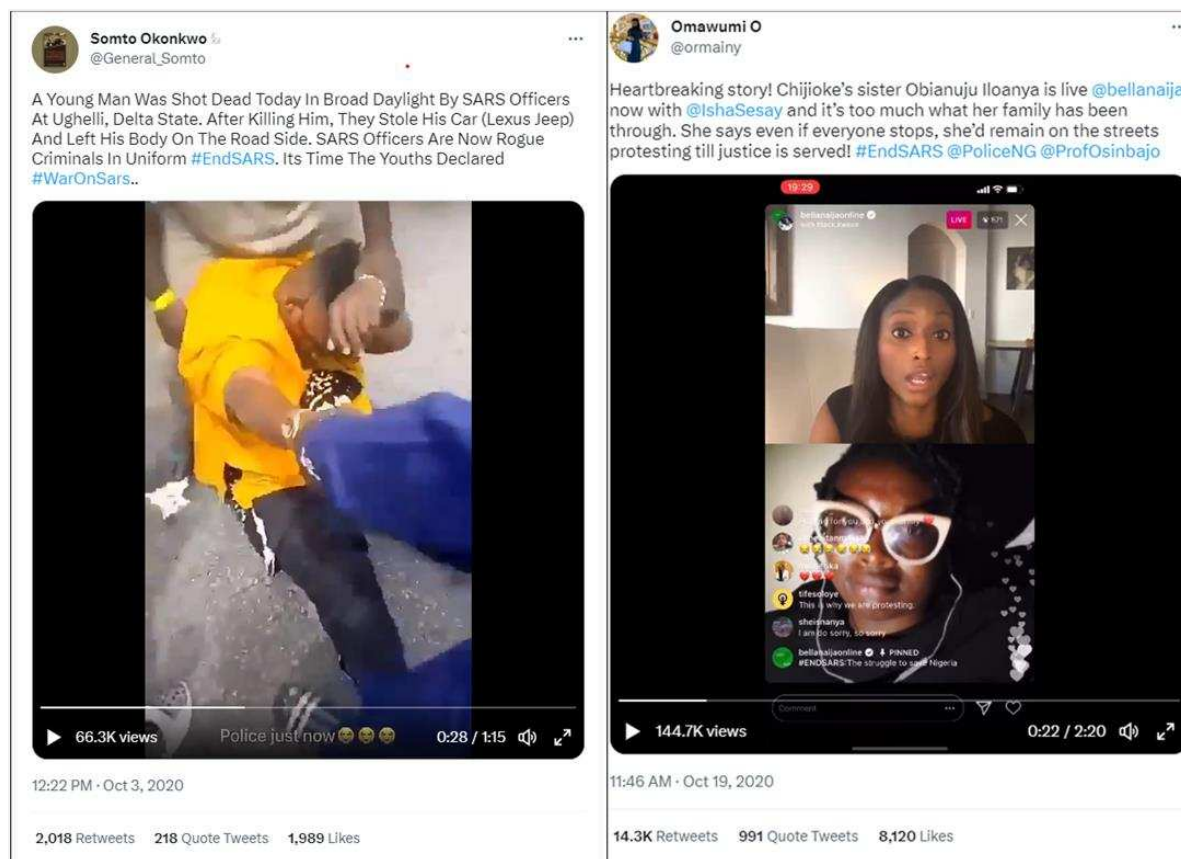
Because fake news and misinformation were often exaggerated or minimized, around the EndSARS discourse on Twitter (Ojedokun et al., 2021), tags and mentions were critical in sharing documented evidence of police brutality to specific critics as counter-narrative to notions that challenged the veracity of the stories posted on Twitter (Ojedokun et al., 2021; Iwuoha & Aniche, 2021). The study found that Twitter provided a digital channel for evidence-based grievances around police brutality to publicly reach government authorities and policy makers when their Twitter accounts are tagged or mentioned.

Furthermore, the study found that Twitter features offer affordances that could enhance or challenge social movements in societies such as Nigeria where the government can enforce ban on the use of social media. Despite the challenge posed by government control of communication channels in Nigeria, as seen in the Twitter ban of January 2021, diasporic Nigerians and others have found creative and innovative ways to promote the EndSARS movement and support political change in Nigeria. In addition, activists, and supporters of the EndSARS movement have used other creative means to get their messages out. For instance, by using virtual private networks (VPNs) to access Twitter and retweet contents from the platform's searchable archives from outside the country thereby increasing awareness which puts pressure on the government to address the issue of police brutality in Nigeria. Herein lies the correlation between the platform affordances of Twitter and the way platform users employ them in producing affective attunement. Results shows that the ability of activists to connect human



feeling to the issue of police brutality in Nigeria through images and videos posted on Twitter had a resounding effect on the EndSARS.

Results also showed that affective attunement is higher when messages were posted using visuals that depict a human angle to the story such as videos and pictures of actual people that experienced police brutality or actual events as they happened. Using the number of likes, views, comments, and retweets as indicators of platform users' engagement, affective attunement was found to be high when videos and images have strong emotional impact because of the feeling of anger, sadness or outrage evoked. Videos that produced affective attunement reflected human emotions such as tears, frustration, helplessness, and loss (figure 7), and made it easier for people to make sense of the stakes involved.



**Figure 7.** Screenshot of 2 video posts on Twitter showing live coverage of an encounter where SARS allegedly shot a victim and an interview with another victim's family that have indicators of affective attunement.



Findings suggest that Twitter users who were emotionally attuned to the EndSARS movement through shared experiences of trauma and anger respond by manifesting similar sentiments using emotional languages and emojis (figure 8). For example, the use of the fist emoji or the heart emoji were indications of support for the movement or an emotional connection to its goals. These responses and reactions are also indicator of platform users' sensemaking of the stories shared and the interpretations that were derived from them. This finding connects back to Papacharissi (2015) proposition that affect transcends emotions to facilitate the meaning making, stimulate responses, and cue people to action.



**Figure 8.** Screenshot of Twitter posts showing some indications of affective attunement from platform users' comments and responses to #EndSARS videos.

The findings indicate that affective attunement can be intentionally triggered or manipulated by social movements to stimulate attribution of responsibility towards structures of power in the society. This was evident in the themes that emerged from the study around the activities of SARS, the demands of protesters, and the role of the government on the issue of police brutality in Nigeria.

#### **4.1 Thematic Findings**

The study found nine (9) dominant themes that emerged from the study. These are connective action, coordination, identity, language, resistance, democracy, feminism vs patriarchy, police brutality and corruption, and cultural symbols. The result from the thematic analysis shows that the themes reflected the theoretical tenets of affective publics and network theory of power and often produced overlapping functions (figure 9). The study found that these themes were deeply rooted in the concerns and aspirations of activists and young Nigerians whose protests represented a powerful expression of frustration with police brutality, a challenge to the existing structure of power in Nigeria, and a strong demand for a change to the status quo.

The findings indicate that Twitter enabled EndSARS activists and protesters with counterpower capabilities that manifested in online discourse challenging the government to address issues of police brutality, as well in offline demonstration civil actions that disrupted activities within Nigeria.

Results from the thematic analysis were applied in answering research question two:

RQ 2:

*What dominant themes on Twitter reflect the production of counter-power sentiments around the 2020 “EndSARS” protests in Nigeria?*

| S/N | THEMES                 | DESCRIPTION   | EXAMPLES  | THEMATIC FUNCTIONS    |                |                 |                |
|-----|------------------------|---|---|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
|     |                        |   |   | AWARENESS /VISIBILITY | MOBILIZATION N | PARTICIPATION N | COORDINATION N |
| 1   | POLICE BRUTALITY       | Identifies content that signify perspective on how to address the Special Anti-Robbery Squad                      | Includes comments, image or video that depicts validation or vilification SARS activities           |                       |                |                 |                |
| 2   | LANGUAGE               | Identifies the use of non-English text or audio that should be translatable for contextual meaning                | Includes English & non-English texts and voices from videos that talk about EndSARS                 |                       |                |                 |                |
| 3   | DEMOCRACY              | Identifies posts that reflect civic/political engagement,   | Includes calls for constitutional rights, accountability, rule of law                               |                       |                |                 |                |
| 4   | IDENTITY               | Identifies contents that self/collective representation   | Includes comments on gender, youths, innocent, "All of us", We all, Nigerian Youths, Us, Them       |                       |                |                 |                |
| 5   | COORDINATION           | Identifies posts that reflect the scheduling and initiation of activities, provide updates and advice             | Includes comments about where, how & when to meet for protests in offline spaces. Location and time |                       |                |                 |                |
| 6   | RESISTANCE             | Identifies acts of civil disobedience, nonviolent protests, disruptions of government systems of operations       | Includes protests, sit-ins, obstructing traffic, violating curfews, expressed noncompliances        |                       |                |                 |                |
| 7   | FEMINISM vs PATRIARCHY | Identifies the role of women and the norms that try to keep them relegated to the background and out of limelight | Includes images and comments about the impact of women on EndSARS                                   |                       |                |                 |                |
| 8   | CONNECTIVE ACTION      | Identifies patterns of engagement among activists and protesters. Network structures, online/offline linkages     | Includes shared experiences and sentiments, shared performances and actions (retweets etc)          |                       |                |                 |                |
| 9   | CULTURAL SYMBOLS       | Identifies patterns in use of visual artefacts  | Includes images of flags, gestures, dialects, art, ideologies                                       |                       |                |                 |                |

**Figure 9.** Screenshot of codebook showing the descriptive coding of themes with color-coding across thematic functions

The first theme, connective action, shows that power can be challenged when the public majority connect around a contentious issue to disrupt dominant structures of power. Results shows that connective action enabled protesters to create a sense of shared identity and purpose, even in the absence of a central leadership structure, and amid prevailing multi-ethnic, religious, political, and social divides in Nigeria. EndSARS activists and protesters demonstrated connective sentiments through messages on Twitter that reflect the group identity of “us” and “we” versus them (figure 10). helped to sustain the momentum of the protests over a prolonged period, even in the face of government repression and violence.



**Figure 10.** Screenshot of Twitter post reflecting connective action by of participants at an EndSARS protest.

From the viral spread of shared videos and images of police brutality to the dissemination of information about protest locations, connective action facilitated and expanded the participation a wide range of actors in the October 2020 #EndSARS protests, including those

who may not have been able to attend physical demonstrations but were able to participate by sharing information and expressing their support for the movement online.

As connective action facilitated the creation of a sense of shared identity and purpose among protesters, it helped to challenge the structures of power and authority that are complicit in police brutality and social injustice in Nigeria.

The second theme from the results, the theme of identity shows the importance of personal and collective identity in shaping social and political activism. The movement was characterized by a strong sense of identity and unity among Nigerian youths, who identified themselves as the "EndSARS generation" and sought to challenge the oppressive power structures that perpetuate police brutality and human rights violations in Nigeria.

Through their activism and participation in the movement, Nigerian youths were able to construct a new identity for themselves, one that was defined by their shared experiences of police brutality, systemic oppression, and resistance. The theme of identity in the #EndSARS movement highlights the power of identity construction in shaping social and political movements and underscores the importance of personal and collective identity in shaping activism and social change.

The theme of identity highlights the role of social media in identity construction and activism. By constructing a shared identity and using Twitter to amplify their voices, Nigerian youths were able to challenge the dominant narratives around police brutality and human rights violations in Nigeria and demand accountability and justice from the government. The protests were marked by a sense of pan-Nigerian identity that transcended ethnic and religious divisions. Protesters came from all parts of the country and rallied around a common cause, with slogans such as "One Nigeria" and "We are all Nigerians" resonating across the country (figure 11). This

show a powerful moment of national unity that challenged the idea that Nigeria is a divided society because of its multi-ethnic groups.



**Figure 11.** Screenshot showing message and images of protesters identifying as Nigerians.

However, the theme of identity also played a complex and multifaceted role in the EndSARS protests. The theme of identity shows that there are deep-seated issues of inequality and exclusion that continue to plague the Nigerian society because of ethnic and religious divides, class and economic disparities, and political affiliations. On one hand, some protesters accused the government of favouring certain ethnic and religious groups at the expense of others



while on the other hand, some people branded the protest as an attempt to topple the political administration of the President Muhammadu Buhari based on tribal and religious sentiments.

Thirdly, the theme of language shows that protesters were able to articulate their demands on signs and placards, and to frame their struggle in terms of justice, equality, and human rights (figure 12). The theme of language shows a counterpower challenge by the protesters against government and police narratives that portrayed victims of alleged police brutality as criminals, minimized the rate of police brutality, or delegitimize rights of the protests in demanding justice.



**Figure 12.** Screenshot showing Twitter post and images of protester with placards of different inscriptions of #EndSARS.

The theme of language also showed that protesters used cultural and artistic forms of expression to communicate their messages and to mobilize support. This included the use of music, poetry, and street art to convey their emotions and to connect with others who shared their experiences. For example, the carnival nature of the October 2020 protests, filled with blasts of music from

Nigerian celebrity musicians is attributed with lightening the mood of what was already a gloomy situation around police brutality. It worked in drawing people to the location of the protests and helped in sustaining the heartbeat of the protests.

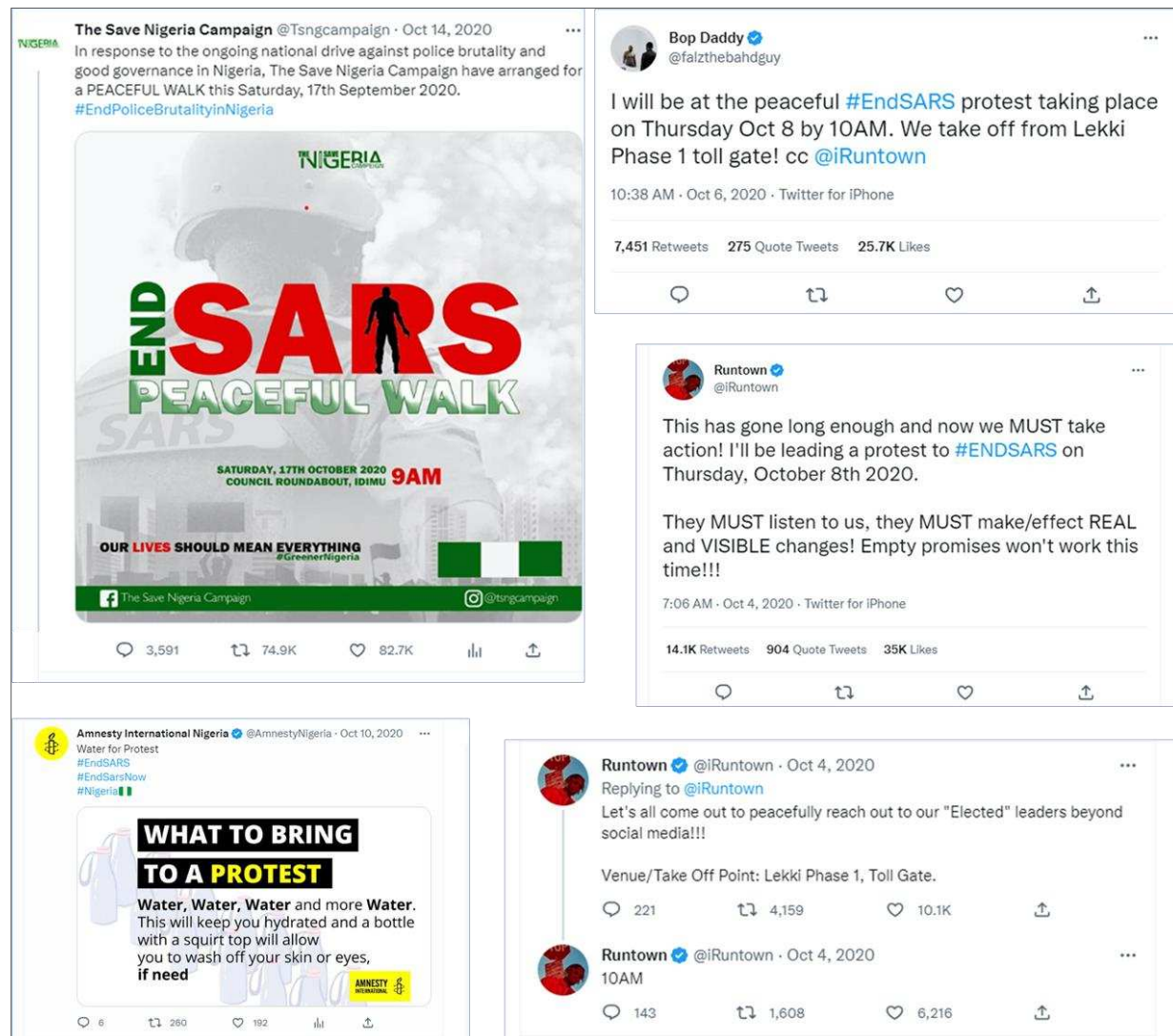
The impact of language on the EndSARS protests is profound. Results show that it created a shared expression of resistance and empowerment among the protesters and the wider public. By using language to articulate their demands and to challenge the dominant narratives of the Nigerian state, the protesters were able to generate a sense of collective and connective action that transcended geographical, ethnic, and religious boundaries. For example, commonly used slogans and mantras in local dialect such as “Soro Soke” meaning “speak out” were adopted as chants during the protests.

Language was also used as a leveler of social status and clout among activists and protesters. For example, “Pidgin”, a laidback version of the English that is commonly spoken as street language among the different ethnic and linguistic groups in Nigeria was used in facilitating online and offline interactions among protesters. By using a language that was familiar and accessible to many Nigerians, the protesters were able to overcome linguistic barriers and to build a shared sense of purpose and identity. This aligns with the logic of affective public which suggests that language is a tool for building affective attunement among publics (Papacharissi, 2015).

Fourth is the theme of coordination which demonstrates that activists and protesters organized themselves on Twitter and within offline spaces in challenging police brutality in Nigeria. Results shows that despite being decentralized and leaderless, protesters worked together to strategically select protest locations in cities across the country where public protests were held. For example, protesters used Twitter and other messaging apps to coordinate and



share information about where and when to gather (figure 13), and to communicate with each other about potential risks and threats. In many cases, protesters would gather at a designated location, such as a public square or a government building, and then quickly disperse and regroup at another location if they felt that they were in danger or if security forces were approaching.

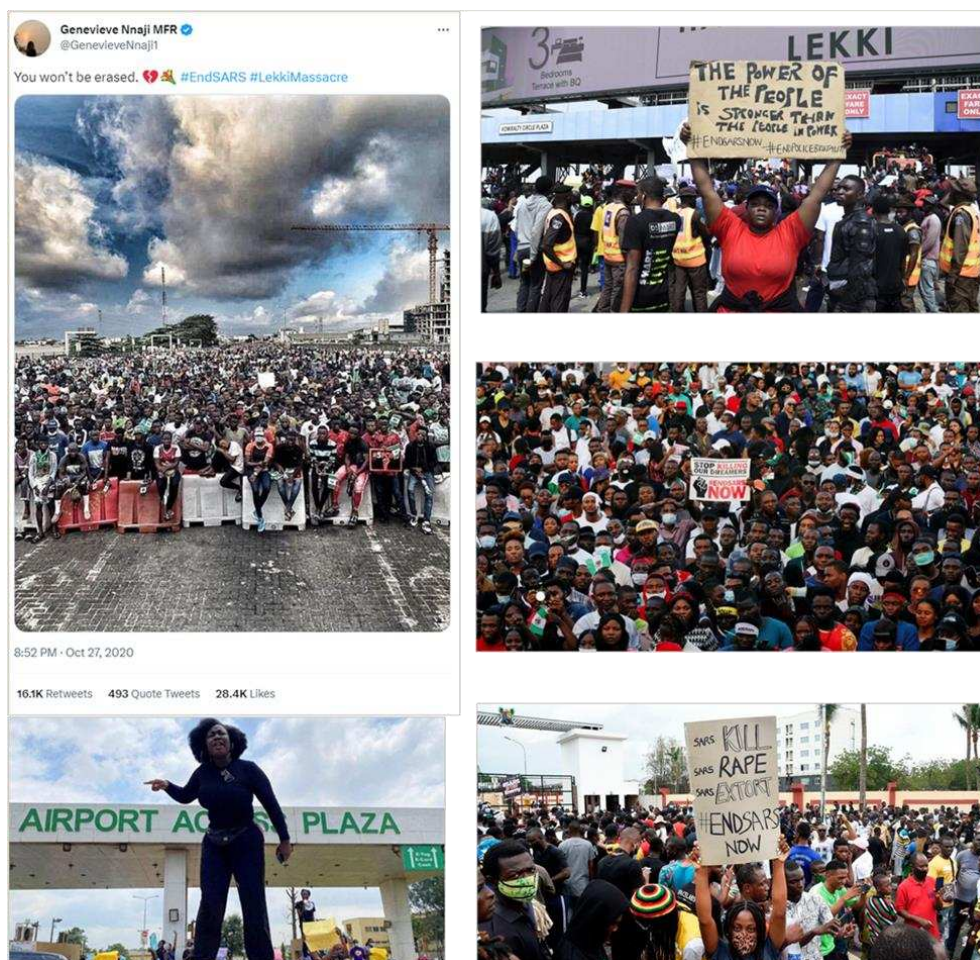


**Figure 13.** Screenshot showing Twitter use in organizing #EndSARS protests at certain locations and time.

On some occasions, rather than gathering in a single central location or following a predetermined route, protesters used a decentralized approach that emphasized flexibility and

adaptability. This fluid approach to protest locations allowed protesters to maintain a constant presence in the city, making it difficult for the authorities to disperse or contain them.

The theme of coordination shows that protesters interrupted governance and operational structures within major cities in Nigeria. For instance, locations for the protests were strategically chosen for maximum impact. Although the protests were peaceful, they obstructed the flow of traffic (figure 14) along major highways, especially roads leading to airports and other government establishments.



**Figure 14.** Screenshot showing images of coordinated #EndSARS protests at strategic locations in Lagos state.

Protesters were able to organize "sit-ins" at traffic intersections within Lagos and Abuja, the two major cities in Nigeria, specifically targeting major highways leading to the airports,

seaports, government secretariates, police facilities, and the Lekki toll gate. The inaccessibility of the Lekki toll gate was remarkable because it disrupted the significant amount of toll received manually by the government as commuters drive between Lekki, known as the residences of wealthy celebrities and politicians and the rest of Lagos state. According to Ogwu et al. (2020) Nigeria lost over N770 billion naira as peaceful and well coordinated protests grounded commercial activities within cities in Nigeria.

The theme of coordination was evident in the way it functioned as counterpower action by putting pressure on the commercial lifeline of states, corporations, and the federal government, and drew their attention to the urgency of the change needed to address police brutality and bad governance in Nigeria. It substantiates the logic of network theory of power (Castells, 2013) which suggests that mass mobilization in form of social action against the powers of the state over contentious socio-political issues will cause disruption to status quo for change to occur (Castells, 2010; 2013). It also displaced traditional notions that focused on the role of formal organizations such as the Nigerian Labor Congress, traditional rulers, and other trader/professional unions in mobilizing people for civil demonstrations against the government.

Fifth, the theme of resistance indicates the ability of protesters to create disruptive action against the power structures and institutions of governance in Nigeria. It shows that protester can make use of nonviolent direct action and civil disobedience to disrupt the normal functioning of society and to draw attention to the grievances of the protesters. This included blocking major roads, occupying public spaces, and staging sit-ins at government buildings. These actions helped to highlight the urgency and importance of the protesters' demands and to generate public support for the movement.



The theme of resistance further reinforced counterpower sentiments by highlighting government's response to the peaceful protests in Nigeria, which was marked by a heavy-handed crackdown on peaceful demonstrators. It shows how the government shut down social media platforms and imposed curfews in some areas, fueled public anger and resistance instead of diminishing the crowd of protesters. Security forces also used tear gas, water cannons, and live ammunition to disperse crowds, resulting in several deaths and many injuries which EndSARS protesters didn't fail to document on Twitter (figure 15). In response to these actions, the protests grew in intensity and scale, with people from all walks of life joining in to demand an end to police brutality and corruption.

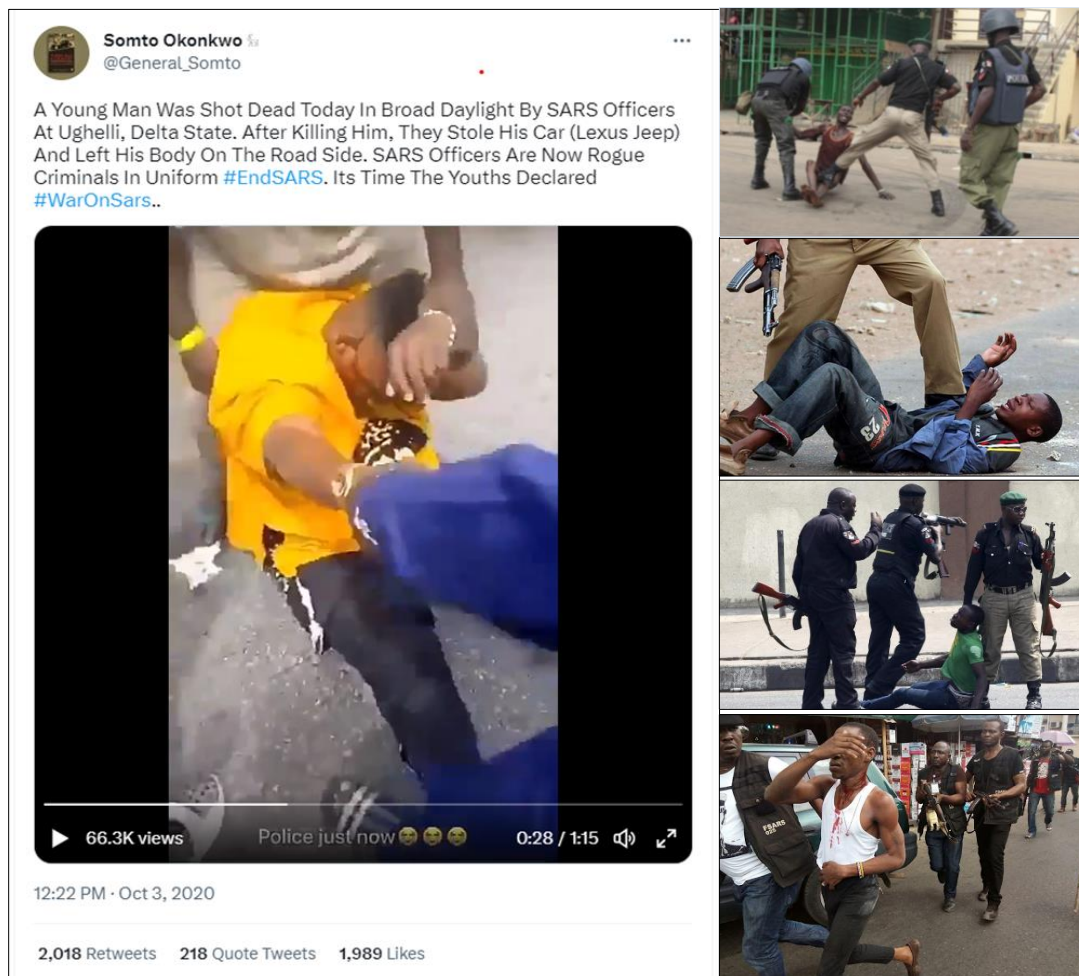


**Figure 15.** Screenshot of images showing police crackdown of peaceful EndSARS protesters in Nigeria.

Results show that the public sense of resistance that emerged during the EndSARS protests was a powerful force for change, reflecting a deep desire for justice and accountability that compelled the Nigerian government to disband SARS and initiate other police reforms. The

protesters demanded an end to police brutality and extrajudicial killings, but they also demanded broader reforms to address corruption, social inequality, and government accountability.

Sixth, the theme of police brutality and corruption was one of the most prominent and deeply felt themes of the EndSARS protests. It shows that the protests were sparked by anger over the actions of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (figure 16), which was notorious for its brutality and corruption. This theme was central and represented the demand for justice and an end to impunity.



**Figure 16.** Screenshot of tweet and images showing eyewitness account of SARS shooting and beating of unarmed civilians.

Results from the study suggests that police brutality in Nigeria has been left unchecked for so long despite documented evidence that substantiates the claims of victims and activists. which manifested throughout the samples analyzed study shows the impact of the EndSARS protest in forcing the Nigerian government to acknowledge the abuses committed by the police and to promise reforms, including the disbandment of SARS. It also sparked a wider conversation about police reform and the need for greater accountability and transparency in law enforcement.

Seventh, the theme of democracy shows that the EndSARS protesters saw themselves as defenders of the values of democracy by calling for an end to police brutality and other forms of oppression. Protesters criticized the government for failing to uphold democratic principles and for using violence and intimidation to suppress dissent. They also called for an end to corruption and for greater transparency and accountability in government.

The impact of the theme of democracy on the EndSARS protests was significant. It brought issues of democratic governance and accountability to the forefront of the national conversation and challenged Nigerians to rethink their understanding of democracy in the context of a changing society. The theme highlighted the regimentation of democracy which means that the government in power decides what aspect of the constitution to enforce or ignore, and where fundamental rights, even rights to life, and liberty to protest were not guaranteed.

The theme answered the two research questions of the study by showing the role of Twitter in promoting democracy through political participation by providing platform for free speech, access to information and opportunities to engage in contentious issues.

Overall, the theme of democracy played a critical role in the EndSARS protests by comparing Nigeria to other democratic nations such as America and the United Kingdom, and challenging

Nigerians to rethink their understanding of democratic governance and accountability in the context of a changing society. However, the theme also shows the challenges of democracy within Nigeria where the government responded to the protests with violence and repression and censored free speech with the ban on the use of Twitter in Nigeria in early 2021.

Eight, the theme of feminism versus patriarchy shows the prominent role that women played during the EndSARS protests, both as organizers and participants. The theme highlighted the ways in which gender inequality and patriarchy intersect with police brutality and other forms of violence in Nigerian society to impact women. Women's experiences of police brutality and harassment were often gendered, with female protesters reporting incidents of sexual assault and harassment by police officers.

*“A SARS officer once wanted to rape me under gun point because I refused to date him. How I escaped that day is still a mystery to me. I support #EndSARS.”*

These experiences were often compounded by the societal norms and attitudes that reinforce patriarchy and make it difficult for women to come forward and report these incidents. This theme shows the response of women protesters who organized themselves into groups and used social media to share their stories and demand justice. It called for an end to gender-based violence and discrimination in all its forms, including in the police force.

The impact of the theme of feminism on the EndSARS protests was significant. It brought issues of gender inequality to the forefront of the national conversation and highlighted the ways in which women's experiences of violence are often ignored or minimized. It also challenged the idea that the fight against police brutality is a male-dominated issue and emphasized the importance of intersectionality in social justice movements. The 2020 #EndSARS protests centered gender equity/equality by acknowledging the role of female key

opinion leaders on Twitter such as @AishaYesufu (figure 17) whose image became iconic to the struggle for social justice on Twitter and in offline spaces within Nigeria.

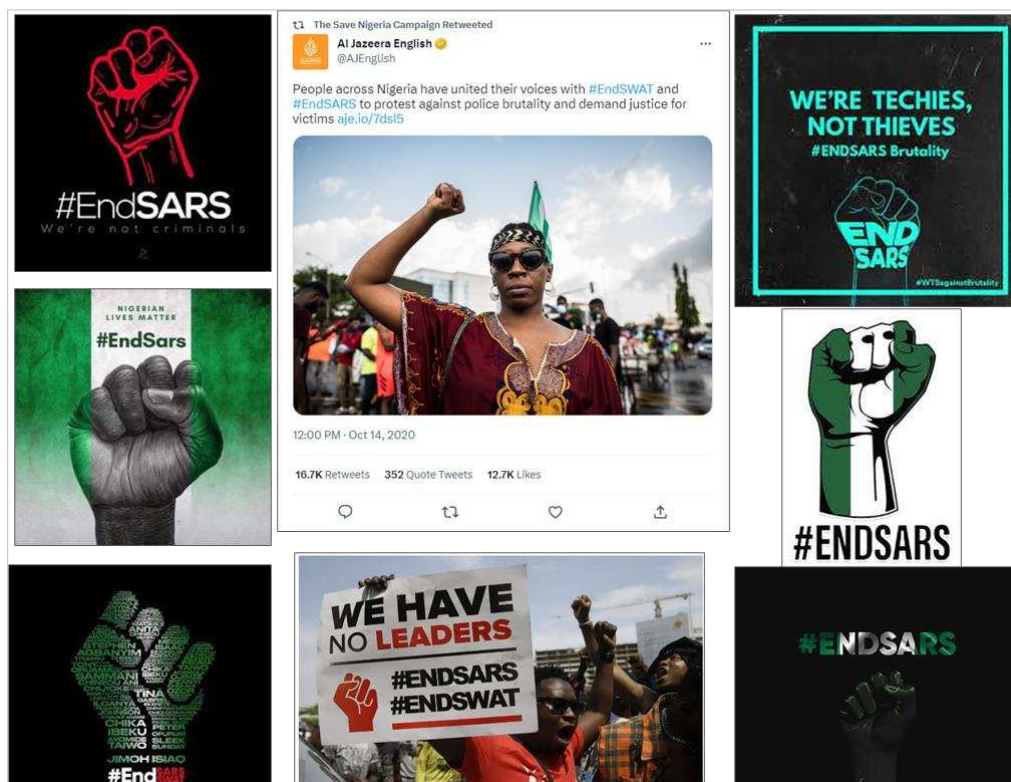


**Figure 17.** Screenshot showing Twitter post and the image of @AishaYesufu that reflects challenge to patriarchal norms in Nigeria.

Postured in hijab, with a clenched fist raised above her head, representing the struggle and tenacity of EndSARS activists, @AishaYesufu became an inspiration for Nigerian protesters demanding the disbandment of SARS. Despite uproar from some traditional and religious clerics around the patriarchal norms relating to gender/women roles in Nigeria, the theme of feminism versus patriarchy played a critical role in the EndSARS protests by highlighting the intersections between gender inequality, police brutality, and other forms of violence in Nigerian society.



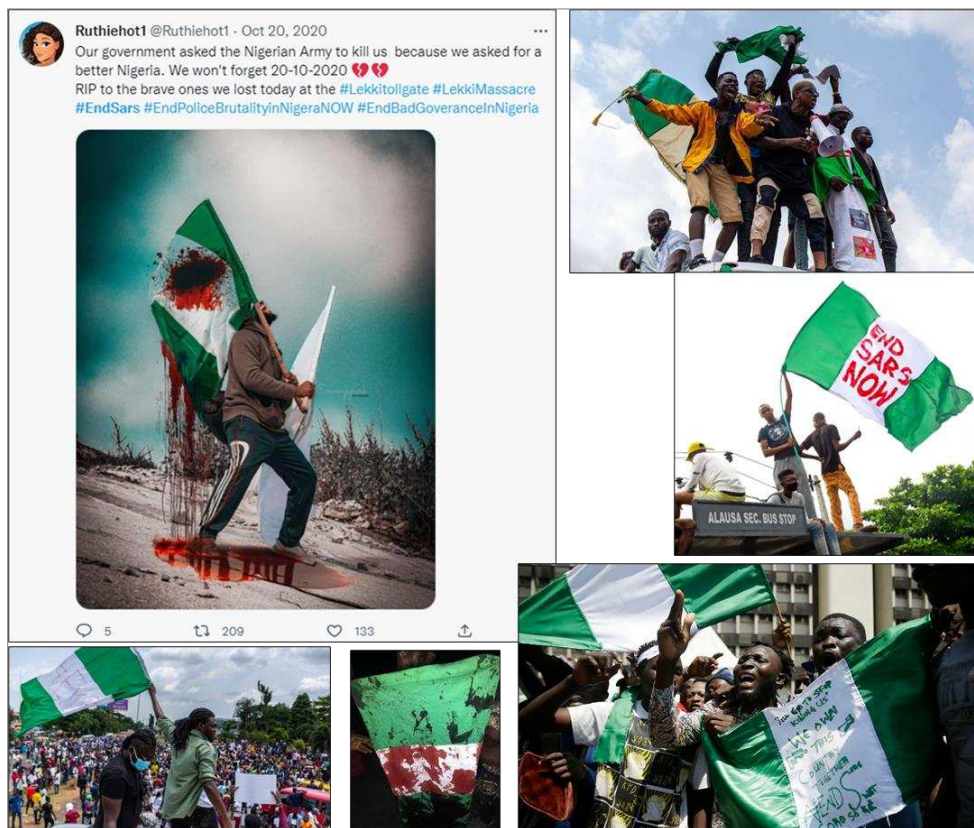
The theme is the use of cultural symbols which is tied to the larger issue of identity. It shows that protesters could use of cultural artifacts and symbols to express solidarity, identity, and resistance, and challenged cultural narratives and symbols that were used to maintain the status quo of inequality and oppression in Nigerian society. The clenched fist is one of the cultural symbols from the results that shows the commitment of EndSARS protesters to solidarity, resistance, and unity against oppression and injustice. In Nigeria, protesters used the clenched fist symbol to express their anger and frustration with the government and the police. The symbol was seen on banners, placards, and social media posts (figure 18), and became a visual representation of the protesters' demands for justice and accountability.



**Figure 18.** Screenshot showing the symbol of clenched fists raised in solidarity with the struggle to police brutality in Nigeria.

The impact of the clenched fist on the EndSARS protests was significant. It provided a unifying symbol for protesters from different backgrounds and communities, and helped to amplify their voices and demands. The symbol also provided a way for protesters to express their anger and frustration with the government and police without resorting to violence.

Another key symbols that was dominant during the protests was the Nigerian flag, with the colors of green and white symbolizing unity and peace. However, the theme shows that protesters used the Nigerian flag (figure 19) as cultural symbol to communicate different messages and meanings as the issue of police brutality in Nigeria makes sense to them.



**Figure 19.** Screenshot showing different way protester used the flag to convey meaning.

While many protesters used the unmarked flag to signify their believe in peace and unity, others carried white flags alongside the Nigerian flag signifying that the peace within Nigeria is

inadequate. Some other protesters had inscriptions on the white portion of the flag reflecting messages they want to communicate peacefully, and others carried blood-tainted flags signifying the bloodshed of innocent citizens by SARS operatives. The overall impact of the theme of cultural ideologies and symbols on the EndSARS protests was significant. It highlighted the ways in which cultural narratives and symbols can be used to challenge Nigerians to rethink their identities and reflect their values and aspirations in building a more just and equitable society.

In summary, the results of the interface analysis of Twitter demonstrates that the platform can be used by social movements in creating visibility, amplifying voices, and mobilizing participant when its affordances are intentionally employed by platform users to create affective attunement among target audiences. The finding answers our first research question and demonstrates the feasibility of exploring the use of Twitter affordances for social activism.

The result from the thematic analysis also shows that themes convey sentiments and meaning when messages are communicated on digital platforms such as Twitter through the medium of text, images or videos to direct meaning making and elicit response around contentious issues. The finding answers our second research question and demonstrates that communication contents can be intentionally constructed and deployed by social movements in cuing audience to action. However, Twitter and other social media platforms are limited in use. They are susceptible to manipulation and disinformation and can be used to particularly damage the context of social and political movements by undermining trust, sowing division, and fueling conflict. Social media platforms are also vulnerable to censorship by government as demonstrated by the Twitter ban in Nigeria from January to July 2021.

From the CTDA analysis, results show that the interplay between technology, users' experience and practices, and cultural and ideological artefacts are important in producing

elements that shape the outcome of social movements. For instance, the Twitter affordance to perform and the cultural artefact deployed on it should be informed by the intentionality of the users in producing affective attunement, counterpower sentiments or both.

## CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION

Overall, this study found that power can be challenge using information and communication channels. This study shows how underrepresented and marginalized groups within regimented democracies such as Nigeria can amplify their voices, mobilize support, stimulate the public and elicit action around contentious issues by using social media and its affordances in a way that disrupts dominant structures of power. Evidently, it was in response to global demand for accountability following the virality of social media posts about the EndSARS protests, particularly on Twitter, that the Nigerian government announced the final disbandment of SARS (Special Anti-Robbery Squad) on October 11, 2020, after days of peaceful but unrelenting protests. The study of the 2020 #EndSARS protests in Nigeria demonstrates the influence of social media platforms such as Twitter in social and political movements. Using hashtags, user-generated content and other digital affordances, protesters were able to mobilize resources, and coordinate their activities in Nigeria during the protests in October 2020.

This study shows that CTDA is an effective framework in the study of social movements, and the use of social media technology as tool of expression for marginalized populations. In highlighting how the technology use and experiences of Nigerians in addressing the issue of police brutality manifested on Twitter, result of the Critical Technocultural Discourse Analysis (CTDA) of the #EndSARS protests shows that the Twitter facilitated affective attunement and community-building by enabling protesters to express their emotions, share their experiences, and build a sense of community and solidarity. According to Arthur (2021) CTDA provides a framework for analyzing users' technology behavior and how this is informed by cultural ideologies in a way the centers underrepresented populations and marginalized voices. For the

future, this implies that CTDA can be used to identify elements of culture, ideology and values that can be amplified using technology to shape social movements in challenging power structures for social justice and human rights.

The study answered the pertinent question of how affective attunement emanated to impact on the 2020 #EndSARS protests in Nigeria as well as identified dominant themes that spurred counterpower sentiments and actions against the government. On one hand, the affective dimension was critical in mobilizing and sustaining the energy and commitment of protesters by creating a sense of urgency, shared identity and purpose. On the other hand, the counterpower dimension was vital in producing actions towards challenging dominant power structures by disrupting operations in Nigeria that compelled the government to disband SARS and prosecute its members found culpable of human rights abuses.

The result from this study is important as it shows that Twitter and social media can be a formidable tool for self-expression by marginalized groups. It highlights the value of user experiences and performances on technology, and how cultural ideologies/beliefs and symbols with embedded meanings shape platform users' interactions and meaning making. technology designs and repurposing them for social activism. The themes of trauma, excitement, fear, oppression and hopelessness show that social activist movements are galvanized when experiences are relatable to human lives and wellbeing irrespective of geography and ideological divides. This implies that activist communication using social media must be adapted to resonate with target audiences to stimulate the desired understanding and response.

The study is important in challenging the notion of power over information and communication channels in Nigeria and demonstrated the dismantling of the elitist notion of dominance in social media narratives. This supports (Castells, 2015, Uwalaka, 2022,

Papacharissi, 2015; Arthur, 2021; David & Meersohn Schmidt, 2019) that social media can be a powerful tool for social and political movements when repurposed for free speech and expression by marginalized populations in a way that amplifies voices, creates visibility, and engages with contentious socio-political issues. However, Twitter was subject to censorship and surveillance by the Nigerian government, highlighting the vulnerability of social media platforms to regulatory and infrastructural challenges. The 7 months ban on Twitter from January to July 2021 by the Nigerian government underscored the need for greater digital literacy and privacy protections for social media users in developing democracies such as Nigeria.

### **5.1 Theoretical Implications**

Applied to the 2020 #EndSARS protests, affective publics highlights the emotional intensity of the EndSARS movement, and the ways in which affective bonds were formed among protesters and supporters. One implication of affective is that by tapping into emotions and shared experiences, social movements can mobilize large groups of people and create a sense of collective identity and purpose. This can be especially important in contexts where traditional forms of political participation are limited or ineffective. However, there are also risks associated with affective publics, such as the potential for the manipulation of emotions for political gain. Additionally, affective bonds can be fragile and easily disrupted, making it challenging to sustain for a long-term political engagement after the contentious issue for which public was attuned has been resolved.

Through the lens of network theory of power (Castells, 2010; 2013), and affective publics (Papacharissi, 2015), the study identified themes that emerged from the #EndSARS protests, such as police brutality, corruption, identity, counter-power, language and democracy, their reflection of the longstanding social and political issue of police brutality in Nigeria. The protests brought

these issues to the forefront of national and international attention and helped to create a sense of community and solidarity among diverse groups of Nigerians. This implies that power is not just held by individuals or groups, but also exists within the relationships and connections between them. When applied to the EndSARS protests, this perspective highlights the collective power of the protesters and their ability to mobilize and coordinate actions through social networks.

One implication for the future is that the networked form of challenging power can continue to be a potent force for social change. As people become more connected through social media and other technologies, they can more easily share information and coordinate actions in pursuit of common goals. This can allow for more decentralized and organic forms of activism, as opposed to traditional hierarchies or centralized leadership structures. However, this also raises challenges and risks. For example, the lack of centralized leadership can make it difficult to negotiate with authorities or come to a consensus on specific demands. It raises questions of whether the protests would have been easily resolved and the demands of the protesters met if there were actual leaders the government could negotiate with on behalf of the protesters. Overall, the study highlights the applicable value of the network theory of power and its potential for collective action and social change through networked activism, while also calls attention to the need for strategies to address the challenges and risks associated with this approach.

The study also shows that affective attunement and counterpower sentiments can be stimulated and sustained within a network of people using social media affordances. On one hand, these affordances may encourage more Nigerians to use online activism to challenge dominant power structures and demand accountability from the government and other institutions. On the other hand, the ability of activists to challenge power structures using social media affordances may give rise to further crackdown on civil society and free speech in Nigerian as seen in the



January 2021 government ban of Twitter use in Nigeria, and this calls for media literacy and other socio-political reforms in Nigeria.

## **5.2 Practical Implication**

There are three practical implications of this study. This includes the bearing on political participation, mobilization of civil demonstrations, and the agenda-setting of news in Nigeria. First, the EndSARS protests served young Nigerians with a glimpse to what is obtainable when existing power structures of the state are collectively challenged with demands that are rooted in contentious socio-political issues that impact the lives and wellbeing of marginalized groups. This has the tendency of creating a new sense of public involvement in political affairs and democratic processes in Nigeria by encouraging individuals and groups to have their say about socio-political issues using the technological affordances of social media platforms. As Nigeria conducts its presidential election on February 25, 2023, one of the key implications of the #EndSARS protests is that it brought issues such as police brutality, corruption, and government accountability to the forefront of public discourse in Nigeria, and on the ballot. There is also the tendency of social media and digital campaigning playing a more significant role in the 2023 elections than in previous years. This could also lead to increased scrutiny of political candidates and parties, with citizens more willing to vote. Voters would also be looking for candidates who prioritize and committed to addressing issues that were unearthed by the October 2020 EndSARS protests in Nigeria.

The second implication is a likely shift from the norm of Nigerians relying on labor unions and trade organizations to initiate and lead civil demonstrations against the government over contentious issues. With the 2020 EndSARS protests demonstrating that social movements can be leaderless, advanced through social media platforms, and effectively coordinated,

Nigerian may have found a new approach to amplifying the voices of marginalized people and collective of demanding reforms and change. In the context of Nigeria where an average individual may not have access to the people in government, the study shows that social media bridges the gaps between citizens and their elected officials who may receive public notices through their social media accounts that will enable them address sociopolitical issues.

The third implication rests on the challenge of the agenda-setting agency of traditional media organizations in Nigeria. As demonstrated by EndSARS using social media platforms such as Twitter, activists can shape sociopolitical discourse around contentious issues in a way that circumvents the government censorship and/or regulatory requirements of traditional media. This has the tendency of increasing the information-seeking behavior of average Nigerians, leading to more digital literacy.

As the #EndSARS protests were driven by citizen journalism and social media, it demonstrates the importance of communication studies around the use social media in shaping public discourse and mobilizing people for social change especially within regimented democracies where the constitutional right to expression is not guaranteed. It raised important questions about the relationship between communication and democracy by highlighting the power of communication in mobilizing citizens for collective action, but also raised concerns about the role of the state in suppressing free speech and expression. This research contributes to an understanding of how repurposing social media platform affordances in mediating feelings of connectedness and counterpower sentiments can be applied towards stimulating the diverse and rich population of Nigerians towards participating actively in socio-political issues in Nigeria, and Africa at large.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

In conclusion, this study shows that conventional social movement ideologies and cultural notions that have focused on the role of formal organizations in Nigeria such as the Nigerian Labor Congress and other trader/professional unions in mobilizing people for counterpower actions may no longer be a sole option for activism in Nigeria. With an expanded access to the internet and social media use in Nigeria, there is need for digital literacy and a balanced legislation around the use of social media for free and open communication.

When democratic values are allowed to thrive, social movement receives less incentives to mobilize. Understanding and using social media platform affordances for its capacity to create a more equitable and balanced communication network for the society is crucial as Nigeria continues to struggle with addressing censorship, digital literacy, and other long-standing social and political issues.

### **5.4 Limitation and Future Studies**

This study examined the affective attunement and counter-power affordances of Twitter to the 2020 #EndSARS protests in Nigeria. Although Twitter was a major platform for organizing and mobilizing the #EndSARS protests, it is only one of many platforms that were used during the protests. Therefore, limiting the study to Twitter alone may not provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of social media in the protests. Future studies are encouraged to look at other social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp which also played important roles in mobilizing protesters and spreading information.

Finally, the study analyzed purposive sample of  $n=80$  Twitter posts comprising of comments, images and video. The results therefore are not generalizable. Future studies are encouraged to analyze more posts to compare results.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

Selected images showing indicators of platform users' engagement.

| Images | Number of Retweets | Quote Tweets | Number of Likes |
|--------|--------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1      | 35,200             | 338          | 16,400          |
| 2      | 34,100             | 1,994        | 31,600          |
| 3      | 29,500             | 549          | 21,300          |
| 4      | 27,000             | 309          | 13,300          |
| 5      | 24,800             | 479          | 21,700          |
| 6      | 21,100             | 6,678        | 12,344          |
| 7      | 17,200             | 712          | 13,500          |
| 8      | 16,700             | 352          | 12,700          |
| 9      | 16,600             | 493          | 28,400          |
| 10     | 15,700             | 209          | 10,900          |
| 11     | 14,200             | 156          | 5,941           |
| 12     | 11,300             | 7,443        | 9,887           |
| 13     | 9,800              | 211          | 9,100           |
| 14     | 9,800              | 359          | 8,300           |
| 15     | 6,858              | 144          | 4,727           |
| 16     | 6,085              | 180          | 4,102           |
| 17     | 5,571              | 226          | 5,405           |
| 18     | 4,119              | 60           | 2,298           |
| 19     | 3,148              | 21           | 1,780           |
| 20     | 3,044              | 300          | 1,475           |

Selected videos showing indicators of platform Users' engagement.

| Video | Number of views | Number of Likes | Number of Retweets |
|-------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1     | 287,400         | 74,800          | 60,600             |
| 2     | 268,300         | 28,400          | 12,100             |
| 3     | 144,700         | 8,120           | 14,300             |
| 4     | 140,500         | 22,800          | 21900              |
| 5     | 66,300          | 1990            | 2,021              |
| 6     | 36,000          | 5,549           | 6,854              |
| 7     | 34,300          | 2588            | 3,863              |
| 8     | 30,800          | 94,900          | 3,266              |
| 9     | 24,000          | 1,179           | 1,962              |
| 10    | 8,796           | 350             | 459                |

Selected tweets of texts showing indicators of platform users' engagement

| Posts | Number of Retweets | Quote Tweets | Number of Likes |
|-------|--------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1     | 204,000            | 8,195        | 358,800         |
| 2     | 194,600            | 18,200       | 212,100         |
| 3     | 142,400            | 8,186        | 176,100         |
| 4     | 114,600            | 953          | 133,600         |
| 5     | 113,000            | 4,700        | 33,100          |
| 6     | 109,200            | 2,284        | 153,200         |
| 7     | 106,600            | 956          | 305,400         |
| 8     | 105,600            | 11,200       | 173,500         |
| 9     | 96,800             | 5,244        | 104,300         |
| 10    | 89,000             | 668          | 91,900          |
| 11    | 72,600             | 377          | 143,200         |
| 12    | 71,000             | 3,818        | 169,600         |
| 13    | 70,800             | 438          | 141,300         |
| 14    | 70,300             | 4,200        | 91,000          |
| 15    | 67,300             | 1,111        | 98,500          |
| 16    | 63,700             | 368          | 165,600         |
| 17    | 62,800             | 755          | 148,200         |
| 18    | 60,700             | 4,404        | 74,900          |
| 19    | 56,200             | 118          | 131,200         |
| 20    | 53,700             | 231          | 144,900         |
| 21    | 53,400             | 994          | 202,400         |
| 22    | 51,500             | 1,880        | 63,200          |
| 23    | 51,300             | 9,200        | 17,015          |
| 24    | 50,400             | 11,354       | 130,400         |
| 25    | 49,700             | 4,547        | 94,700          |
| 26    | 47,900             | 572          | 136,600         |
| 27    | 46,000             | 1,200        | 13,400          |
| 28    | 38,600             | 1,862        | 61,300          |
| 29    | 34,722             | 4,309        | 67,400          |
| 30    | 34,200             | 8,623        | 119,600         |
| 31    | 30,600             | 1,565        | 43,100          |
| 32    | 29,500             | 549          | 21,300          |
| 33    | 25,900             | 2,956        | 33,400          |
| 34    | 24,800             | 479          | 22,900          |
| 35    | 22,600             | 176          | 14,400          |
| 36    | 21,600             | 605          | 21,400          |
| 37    | 15,700             | 190          | 10,900          |
| 38    | 14,100             | 904          | 25,000          |
| 39    | 10,100             | 259          | 12,300          |
| 40    | 9,845              | 190          | 8,491           |
| 41    | 9,486              | 812          | 12,300          |
| 42    | 8,700              | 733          | 6,600           |
| 43    | 8,483              | 68           | 5,819           |
| 44    | 7,451              | 275          | 25,700          |
| 45    | 5,571              | 285          | 5,405           |
| 46    | 5,420              | 69           | 2,606           |
| 47    | 4,119              | 60           | 2,298           |
| 48    | 3,629              | 89           | 2,464           |
| 49    | 3,044              | 300          | 1,475           |
| 50    | 1,565              | 27           | 886             |

## Appendix B

### Textual analysis of videos samples

| Videos | Video URL   | content  | Voice Transcript   | Description/Context  |
|--------|---|--|--|--|
| 1      | <a href="https://twitter.com/i/status/1312473176278888449">https://twitter.com/i/status/1312473176278888449</a> | A Young Man Was Shot Dead Today In Broad Daylight By SARS Officers At Ughelli, Delta State. After Killing Him, They Stole His Car (Lexus Jeep) And Left His Body On The Road Side. SARS Officers Are Now Rogue Criminals In Uniform #EndSARS. Its Time The Youths Declared #WarOnSars. | They are running away after killing the boy in front of Westland hotel. The boy is dead by the road  | SARS operatives shot a young man and drove off with his vehicle leaving the victim at the scene. Civilian youths gave chase in their vehicle while recording the event |
| 2      | <a href="https://twitter.com/i/status/1312700777899663361">https://twitter.com/i/status/1312700777899663361</a> | It's about time #EndSARS @Mbuhari @ProfOsinbajo for how long 😊   | Enough with keeping quiet. Enough is enough. The govt has to do something. We must all speak up. EndSARS   | Shirtless activist calling on other influencers not to keep quiet but to open up and condemn SARS  |
| 3      | <a href="https://twitter.com/i/status/1312704015554228225">https://twitter.com/i/status/1312704015554228225</a> | Replying to @rudeboyssquare @MBuhari and @ProfOsinbajo This type of citizen arrest is what will #EndSARS dem no fit kill everybody. Make una rise oo, no be by tweeting oo   | Why do you have to shoot. Officer, why do you have to shoot. See the woman now dead  | Citizen arrest of SARS operative that shot at a car killing a civilian woman inside  |
| 4      | <a href="https://twitter.com/i/status/1312709665730580481">https://twitter.com/i/status/1312709665730580481</a> | See them wasting peoples lives like it's nothing #EndSARS #EndSarsNow  | See as they killed the young men. Gunshots heard. SARS heard saying they should use only a bullet per person. Not to waste bullets. SARS seen dragging corpses of people they shot                               | Lady narrates while recording Police shooting of unarmed civilians and dragging their corpses out of a compound  |
| 5      | <a href="https://twitter.com/i/status/1318262136016076800">https://twitter.com/i/status/1318262136016076800</a> | Heartbreaking story! Chijioke's sister Obianuju Iloanya is live @bellanaija now with @IshaSesay and it's too much what her family has been through. She says even if everyone stops, she'd remain on the streets protesting till justice is served! #EndSARS @PoliceNG @ProfOsinbajo   | Summary: SARS arrested and killed their brother. The SARS operative demanded money and when offered N3msaid it was too small that he had already killed the victim. SARS operative is still working for the govt | Interview of sister to a deceased victim of SARS detailing the trauma their family had to endure   |

|    |   |   |  |   |
|----|---|---|--|---|
| 6  | <a href="https://twitter.com/i/status/1314327477934841856">https://twitter.com/i/status/1314327477934841856</a> | ATTENTION:<br>@StateDept, A Nigerian lady was shot on the mouth by the Nigerian @PoliceNG during #EndSarsProtests today. This is the level of human rights violations currently being perpetrated by the Nigerian state. Note: Viewer discretion is advised.                                    | Exclamations!! (Jesu!, Jesu!) Can someone take her to the hospital. Call emergency at 112. She is choking on her own blood   | Lady shot in the mouth by SARS operatives and left unattended   |
| 7  | <a href="https://twitter.com/i/status/1317939993642332162">https://twitter.com/i/status/1317939993642332162</a> | Many that started are no more. They will wish the demand for #EndSARS is the singularity of purpose, and no distraction is allowed.<br>Right now you do not have the luxury of anger, or distraction. Only one thing matters #EndSARS<br>#EndPoliceBrutalityinNigeria                           | Activist calling on Nigerian protesters not to relent but to remain focused on the goal of EndSARS. Pays tribute to victims of police brutality especially those killed while protesting | Activist, Aisha Yusuf calling on Nigerian youths to stay focused on the objective of dismantling SARS. Laments the death of score killed by SARS operatives |
| 8  | <a href="https://twitter.com/i/status/1318699696509116419">https://twitter.com/i/status/1318699696509116419</a> | These are the peaceful, unarmed protesters at Lekki Toll Gate, Lagos, whom the Nigerian military shot live rounds of ammunition at; 20-10-20.<br>They were waving the NG flag, singing the national anthem when nonstop fire was opened on them.<br>They continued singing ... 💔💔💔 #EndSARS     | Singing of the Nigerian National anthem. Sounds of gunshots  | Protesters sitting on the floor while singing the national anthem and waving the flag before they were dispersed by state security using live ammunition    |
| 9  | <a href="https://twitter.com/i/status/1318795931924504578">https://twitter.com/i/status/1318795931924504578</a> | How can you justify the barbarity that took place at the Lekki toll gate in Lagos yesterday evening? I have thought about it long and hard, and I have not been able to sleep all night because I just can't get my head around it! 1/6<br>#EndSARS #endsarsnow<br>#EndPoliceBrutalityinNigeria | Sporadic gunshots and shouts of "EndSARS" repeatedly   | State security in Army uniforms open fire on protesting civilians at the Lekki Toll gate Lagos, Nigeria   |
| 10 | <a href="https://twitter.com/i/status/1321818616279506945">https://twitter.com/i/status/1321818616279506945</a> | This is Abayomi Akinyemi Shot on Weds 21st of Oct at agidingbi while browsing on his phone in front of his house. The uniformed killers   | See what Nigerian Police did (Said repeatedly)   | Video of a young man shot and left to bleed to death  |

## Appendix C

### Screenshots of some tweets analyzed.

**Moe** @Mochievous · Oct 16, 2020

I get the argument of movements producing leaders. The prob with picking individuals as leaders is that the opposition will be focused on discrediting the so-called leaders with the purpose of discrediting the movement. On #EndSARS they know what should be done, they should do it

89 3,629 2,464

**FK.** @fkabudu · Oct 19, 2020

"We need to xyz" "We should be doing xyz" Beloved, go ahead and do it. This is an all hands thing.

We can fund, support and connect you to others. Organise the thing you think is necessary. Jump in and work with other people. We will support you #EndSARS

190 15.7K 10.9K

**End SARS Response Unit Retweeted**

**Bop Daddy** @falzthebahdguy · Oct 23, 2020

If they don't have regard for the lives that we have lost these past few days, I definitely do. And for their sake, I will NEVER EVER lose hope. Justice must be served. It is the very least they deserve.

1,862 38.6K 61.3K

**FK.** @fkabudu · Oct 20, 2020

4pm curfew while people are already outside? You didn't announce it in the evening so people just stay in? The very law enforcement we're protesting will now go out and harass people to go home when most can't get home for 4?

These people are not thinking. At all. #EndSARS

549 29.5K 21.3K

**End SARS Response Unit Retweeted**

**SERAP** @SERAPNigeria · Oct 26, 2020

BREAKING: We're challenging the illegal fines of N9m imposed by NBC on Channels TV, AIT and Arise TV [N3m each] over their coverage of the #EndSARS protests.

Please send us your full names if you would like to join us as Co-plaintiff. You can also email: info@serap-nigeria.org

285 5,571 5,405

**End SARS Response Unit Retweeted**

**MrMacaroni** @mrmacaronii · Oct 23, 2020

Too late to back down! I refuse to be let down! I refuse to lose hope! Nigeria will be better!!!

Well meaning Nigerian Youths, now is the time to come together as one irrespective of tribe and religion and make plans on how to make Nigeria better for all of us!!! One Voice

1,565 30.6K 43.1K

**Moe** @Mochievous · Oct 18, 2020

Let it be know that at 4am Abuja peaceful protesters were attacked and shot at. All 15 people @EndSarsResponse could reach are now safe. But if there's anyone that is not accounted for yet, please let us know ASAP. #EndSARS

**Teddie** @teddiebrand · Oct 18, 2020

Protesters are being attacked in Abuja, Cbn headquarters... Rt aggressively

#Endsars  
#EndPoliceBrutalityinNigeria #SARSMUSTEND  
#EndSWAT  
@Naija\_PR @apt @aproko\_doctor

69 5,420 2,606

**Tola** @adetolaov · Oct 16, 2020

"No leaders" does not mean "no leadership". It means EVERYBODY'S LEADERSHIP. It means not one person has higher responsibility than others for outcomes. It means everybody taking responsibility, showing up and playing their part. That's what you've seen everyday of #EndSARS

68 8,483 5,819

**Aisha Yesufu** @AishaYesufu · Oct 20, 2020

Dear Abuja #EndSars Protesters! You guys are amazing! You still came out today inspite of yesterday's numerous attacks on several fronts. I am in awe!

You have done great. Time to withdraw today to return with full force #WeMove! #AbujaProtests #EndSars #EndPoliceBrutality

479 24.8K 22.9K

**End SARS Response Unit Retweeted**

**Bop Daddy** @falzthebahdguy

Mr President, please treat as urgent @MBuhari

**ABUJA, NIGERIA**  
Dear Mr. President,  
I am writing to you regarding the recent statement by your Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Mr. Ibrahim, that the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has accepted the 5-point report of the ODESARS protesters regarding the cases of human rights violations in Nigeria.

I hereby write to Your Excellency to express my disappointment.

It has been brought to my knowledge via a statement by your Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Mr. Ibrahim, that the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has accepted the 5-point report of the ODESARS protesters regarding the cases of human rights violations in Nigeria.

This statement must mean that there would be an independent investigation Panel to look into the violations of Human Rights by the police and other agencies of the Nigerian Police.

Quoting Mr. Ibrahim's statement: "The Commission will set up an independent panel to look into the violations of Human Rights by the police and other agencies of the Nigerian Police."

It is pertinent to note that Section 5 of the National Human Rights Commission (Amendment) Act 2019 empowers the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to receive complaints and investigate all alleged cases of human rights violations in Nigeria and make appropriate recommendations to the President.

The detailed and complete provisions of this Section adequately empower the Human Rights Commission to look into these cases by itself. The Commission need not set up another panel for the sake of the President.

More importantly, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has a Governing Council under Section 2 of the National Human Rights Commission (Amendment) Act consisting of the following people:

(a) a chairman who shall be a retired Justice of the Supreme Court of Nigeria or the Chief of Appeal or a retired judge of the High Court of a State;  
(b) a representative each of the following Federal Ministries:  
(i) Justice; (ii) Foreign Affairs; (iii) Internal Affairs;  
(d) ... three representatives of interested Nigerian rights organisations in Nigeria.

Yours faithfully,  
Fidelis "Falz" Falz

2:02 AM · Oct 15, 2020

96.8K Retweets 5,244 Quotes 104.3K Likes 583 Bookmarks

**King Oliseh** @king\_oliseh · Oct 18, 2020

I'M BEGGING YOU, AS LONG AS YOU'RE AN ONLINE PROTESTER, PLEASE TWEET AND RETWEET!!! #EndSars

**END SARS**  
**SORO SOKE**  
**AGAINST POLICE BRUTALITY**  
**USE IT TO END POLICE BRUTALITY**  
**YOUR VOICE MATTERS**

309 27K 13.3K