

Youth Involvement in Politics and the Use of Social Media for Activism: A Case Study of Not Too Young To Run & EndSARS Campaigns in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The present study employs the theoretical tenets of public sphere, communicative action and the logic of connective action to investigate how new media technologies are leading the way for new forms of political inclusion campaigns and political activity among youth in Nigeria by examining the activities of the #NotTooYoungToRun (NTYTR) and #EndSARS campaigns in Nigeria and the drive for change in youth participation.

Probing the activities of both campaigns, the present study sampled 22,064 publicly available tweets from online protesters whose activities were recorded in the hashtags under investigation. The study answers three questions; what issues challenge the youths from accessing formal political, economic and social opportunities as expressed by Nigerian youths on Twitter in the NTYTR and #EndSARS campaigns? How are youths using Twitter to campaign against perceived challenges in Nigeria's political, economic and social life in the NTYTR and #EndSARS campaigns? What suggestions are offered by youths in the NTYTR and #EndSARS campaigns on Twitter on how to increase their participation in Nigeria's political, economic and social life? Findings strongly reveal that Twitter offers an avenue for Nigerian youths to converge and discuss issues in patterns that are evident in the public sphere by using their personalized action frames. Through content analysis, the study established that a common problem identified in both campaigns studied is the systemic marginalization of young people from access to opportunities that would advance their wellbeing politically, economically and socially. This has further prevented their full participation in formal politics while also threatening their livelihood. The study found

that the youths' attempt to resolve this challenge has involved the use of social media platforms like Twitter to lobby international organizations for support for their causes.

Keywords: *Public sphere, communicative action, connection action, #NTYTR, #EndSARS*

ÖZ

Bu çalışma, yeni medya teknolojilerinin Nijerya'daki gençler arasında siyasi katılım kampanyalarının ve siyasi faaliyetlerin yeni biçimlerine nasıl öncülük ettiğini araştırmak için kamusal alan, iletişimsel eylem ve bağlayıcı eylemin teorik ilkelerini kullanıyor. Ayrıca, Nijerya'daki #NotTooYoungToRun (NTYTR) ve #EndSARS kampanyalarının faaliyetlerini ve gençlerin bu eylemelere katılımındaki değişim hareketini inceliyor. Her iki kampanyanın faaliyetlerini araştıran bu çalışma, faaliyetleri incelenen hashtag'lerde kaydedilen çevrimiçi protestoculardan kamuya açık 22.064 tweet'i örnekledi. Çalışma üç soruyu yanıtlıyor; Nijeryalı gençlerin Twitter'da NTYTR ve #EndSARS kampanyalarında ifade ettikleri gibi gençleri resmi siyasi, ekonomik ve sosyal fırsatlara erişmekten alıkoyan sorunlar nelerdir? Gençler, NTYTR ve #EndSARS kampanyalarında Nijerya'nın siyasi, ekonomik ve sosyal yaşamında algılanan zorluklara karşı kampanya yürütmek için Twitter'ı nasıl kullanıyor? Twitter'da NTYTR ve #EndSARS kampanyalarında gençlerin Nijerya'nın siyasi, ekonomik ve sosyal yaşamına katılımlarını nasıl artırabilecekleri konusunda ne gibi öneriler sunuluyor? Bulgular, Twitter'ın Nijeryalı gençlerin kişiselleştirilmiş eylem çerçevelerini kullanarak kamusal alanda belirgin olan kalıplardaki sorunları bir araya getirip tartışmaları için bir yol sunduğunu güçlü bir şekilde ortaya koyuyor. İçerik analizi yoluyla incelenen her iki kampanyada da tanımlanan ortak bir sorunun, gençlerin siyasi, ekonomik ve sosyal olarak refahlarını artıracak fırsatlara erişimden sistematik olarak marjinalleşmesi olduğunu ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu durum, gençlerin resmi siyasete tam katılımlarını engellerken, yaşamlarını da tehdit etti. Bu çalışma; gençlerin bu zorluğu çözme girişimleri, amaçlarına destek bulmak, ve uluslararası

kuruluşlara lobi yapmak için Twitter gibi sosyal medya platformlarını kullanmayı tercih ettiğini ortaya koydu.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Kamusal alan, iletişimsel eylem, bağlantı eylemi, #NTYTR, #EndSARS*

DEDICATION

To my niece, Kazakayet, who has made me laugh since I first met her.

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God has always been my starting point for everything and because of this reason, He has always seen me through it all. Naturally, my first acknowledgement goes to God who was with me from the beginning of this journey until now. I will remain to God for His help during this journey.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Amnesty International
API	Application Programming Interface
EYF	European Youth Forum
HURSDEF	Human Rights Social Development and Environmental Foundation
NOPRIN	Network on Police Reform in Nigeria
NPF	Nigerian Police Force
NTYTR	Not Too Young To Run
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
RQs	Research Questions
SARS	Special Anti-Robbery Squad
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
YIAGA	Youth Initiative for Advocacy, Growth & Advancement

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The study engages with user generated Twitter data to examine the claims of political, economic and social marginalization of young people in Nigeria that affects their participation in formal politics. The impact of emerging digital technology is particularly evident in society's youthful demographic. Extant research has consistently tried to unravel why youths are largely apathetic towards politics (Henn, Weinstein, & Wring, 2002; Kovacheva, 2005; Benedicto, 2008; Farthing, 2010; Valenzuela S, 2013; Pruitt, 2017). However, recent studies are indicating a shift in this approach as scholars are drawing attention to the use of social media by youths to make political statements (Castells, 2015; Collins, 2015; Kelly, Campbell, Harrison, Hickey 2018; Harris, 2008). This is evident in boycotts and online petition. Existing literature is however limited in its scope of coverage. Studies on youth involvement in politics and the use of social media for political movements focus attention on developed nations. This study therefore aims to fill this gap in knowledge by studying the online strategies and online activities of the #NTYTR and #EndSARS campaigns in Nigeria. The study extends the scope to propose that marginalization should be regarded as a credible defence for apparent disconnectedness among youths in Nigeria. Marginalization is particularly relevant to the arguments in this study because as Mengistu (2017) suggests, one of the challenges young people encounter in politics (in Africa) is that there are very limited spaces for their voices to be heard and this

affects their ability to shape their own destinies. He also adds that institutionalized problems like limited capacity, poor skill, limited resources have hindered the youth from fully functioning in the African political structure. The study therefore conceptualizes the political marginalization of youths as an oppressive system that wilfully excludes young citizens from fully participating in the political affairs of their nation to the extent that it transcends beyond their political capital but also their economic and social life. In broader terms, marginalization always affects minority groups like women, smaller ethnic tribes, the youth and adolescent.

As Sloam (2011) argues, marginalization can affect the political behaviour of youths where the youth would be motivated to engage in other forms of political actions that are common in networked society. As Kamau (2017) states, there are studies that support the claim that those who feel marginalized from formal politics create new forms of participation by turning to social networking sites. This is particularly strengthened by the fact that the use of social media has become habitual for most young people with access to internet (Edwards, 2015). Murphy (2012) seems to support this notion as she reflects that the exclusion of Arab youths from established structures of political relevance forced them to create their own forms of protest and activism.

1.2 Problem Statement and Research Questions

This study is conducted to investigate the processes of two online campaigns in Nigeria; the persistent Not Too Young To Run campaign (henceforth used as NTYTR with movement and campaign used interchangeably) and EndSARS, and their impact on the participants.

The impact of emerging digital technology is particularly evident in society's youthful demographic. Extant research has consistently tried to unravel why youths are largely apathetic towards politics (Henn, Weinstein, & Wring, 2002; Kovacheva, 2005; Benedicto, 2008; Farthing, 2010; Valenzuela S, 2013; Pruitt, 2017). However, recent studies are indicating a shift in this approach as scholars are drawing attention to the use of social media by youths to make political statements (Castells, 2015; Collins, 2015; Kelly, Campbell, Harrison, Hickey 2018; Harris, 2008). This is evident in boycotts and online petition. Existing literature is however limited in its scope of coverage. Studies on youth involvement in politics and the use of social media for political movements focus attention on developed nations. This study therefore aims to fill this gap in knowledge by studying the online strategies and online activities of the #NTYTR and #EndSARS campaigns in Nigeria. The study extends the scope to propose that marginalization should be regarded as a credible defence for apparent disconnectedness among youths in Nigeria. Marginalization is particularly relevant to the arguments in this study because as Mengistu (2017) suggests, one of the challenges young people encounter in politics (in Africa) is that there are very limited spaces for their voices to be heard and this affects their ability to shape their own destinies. He also adds that institutionalized problems like limited capacity, poor skill, limited resources have hindered the youth from fully functioning in the African political structure. The study therefore conceptualizes the political marginalization of youths as an oppressive system that willfully excludes young citizens from fully participating in the political affairs of their nation to the extent that it transcends beyond their political capital but also their economic and social life. In broader terms, marginalization always affects minority groups like women, smaller ethnic tribes, the youth and adolescent.

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Based on the arguments cited above, the research asks;

1. What issues challenge the youths from accessing formal political, economic and social opportunities as expressed by Nigerian youths on Twitter in the NTYTR and #EndSARS campaigns?
2. How are youths using Twitter to campaign against perceived challenges in Nigeria's political, economic and social life in the NTYTR and #EndSARS campaigns?

3. What suggestions are offered by youths in the NTYTR and #EndSARS campaigns on Twitter on how to increase their participation in Nigeria's political, economic and social life?

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The main goal of this study is to explore the online formation of social protests undertaken by young people in Nigerian Twitter space in order to determine the challenges that engineer these protests as well as the structure and strategies of these campaigns. Ultimately, the study will assess the impact of two protests based on their structure, strategies and limitations.

1.4 Motivation for the Study

The study was motivated by a number of factors. First, the need to test the democratic potential of the internet (Breindl, 2010) in Nigeria was necessitated by the limited presence of such researches in Nigeria and Africa. Furthermore, the lack of consensus among scholars about the benefits of social media warrants the need for more debate in the field. On the one hand, tech-optimists support the consensus that SM offers alternative platforms for citizens to negotiate their political positions (Castells, 2015) while tech-pessimists debate that social media campaigns encourage lady activism (Morozov, 2009). To make meaningful contribution on this subject-matter, (Esser & de Vreese, 2007) have long argued for the need to look beyond advanced democracies where discourse is already saturated and to expand the field to look at emerging democracies. Furthermore, Xenos, Vromen & Loader, (2014) add that conducting country specific studies will expand the field and provide more knowledge that can be used to form a consensus.

1.5 Justification for Using Twitter

Twitter has recently become the focus of scholarly attention with growing emphasis on how it can be used to facilitate communication, to inform and mobilise during social unrest and also to inform political discourse, As the third most popular website social networking site (Gleason, 2013). Also, in general, Twitter engagement is more intense than engagement on Facebook (Bosch, 2017).

Twitter was chosen for this study because Twitter conversations have the tendency to influence political discourse (Weinhardt, 2021; Smith, Rainie, Shneiderman, & Himelboim, 2014). Also, Olson (2016) argues that trending topics on Twitter influence traditional media organisations as they sometimes build their agenda based on trending issues. This is because Twitter is argued to provide meaningful discourse. Another reason for choosing Twitter for this study is because of its ability to initiate conversations with people whom organisers are not directly familiar with. In this regard, the research intends to make the claim that by finding a common problem for weak ties to relate with, connective action is also capable of engendering the ‘we-ness’ that collective action is known for. The ‘we-ness’ can be easily established on Facebook because of the strong ties it specializes in. The advantages of the strong ties and weak ties of both Facebook and Twitter are drawn from Valenzuela, Correa, & Zúñiga (2018, pp. 117, 118) who explain that while Facebook is effective at boosting engagement by offering the public influence and incentive required to participate in expensive, time-consuming behaviors like public protests, which are all common in strong networks, Twitter, on the other hand, excels at disseminating new information. By depending on a weaker, more varied social network structure, Twitter is better in infusing innovative information (e.g., political information, mobilizing content,

contacting, etc.). Moreover, having these two forms of social links, which can be established through Facebook and Twitter, may facilitate civic engagement. Twitter is significantly linked to protest activity when it connects individuals with weak-tie networks. Facebook, on the other hand, is conducive to protesting when it connects users with strong-tie networks.

Also, one fundamental reason for choosing Twitter for this research is the ease with which tweets can be retrieved. It is common knowledge that on Twitter, one needs only type out a hashtag and the tweets that have been with that hashtag will manifest on the user's screen. This ease with which tweets can be accessed could be responsible for the growing attention the app has been getting in media scholarship (Latina & Docherty, 2014).

1.6 Significance and Contribution to Knowledge

For starters, there are more studies on what sparks protests than there are on the impact of the protests. Also, scholars warn of the dangers of regarding social media as the new model for activism because even though it might allow activists to express themselves with ease, it could also make it harder for that expression to have any impact in the real world (Gladwell, 2010).

As a result of the convenience the internet offers users, it has become difficult to coordinate individuals who already have personalized differences and interests (Odou, Roberts, & Roux, 2018). This has raised scepticisms on the overwhelming endorsement of online protests as having any meaningful impact and has in turn created gaps in studies on online social movements. Thus, this study significantly aims to establish the significance of online movements to determine their impact and

successes. As stated earlier, studies on youth involvement in politics largely alienate progresses made by youths in countries of the global south. There is very little academic research done on social movements in Africa. This study would be an attempt to fill in the gap. To achieve this, the research would draw a distinction between the classification of youths in the global north and youths in the global south and also show how policies regarding youths in the global north and south differ from each other. The aim of this is to bridge the gap in knowledge and to show how youths in the global south, specifically Nigerian youths use internet technologies to reduce the imbalance in their society.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Academic studies are not absolute so they are therefore not without limitations. This study is therefore limited by a number of factors. First, this study is restricted to social media therefore findings cannot be generalized to mainstream media. In addition, the study is restricted to Twitter therefore findings cannot also be generalized to other social media platforms. Secondly, the study is restricted to Nigerian Twitter users that participated in the two hashtags studied in this research. As such, findings cannot be generalized to other countries and they may also not be generalized to Nigerian users on other social media platforms. Third, the data collected for the study covers only three years which span from 2016 to 2020 therefore the findings can only be limited to that period. The last limitation is related to the methodology that was employed in the study. The study employed the use of computer assisted qualitative analytical software (CAQDAS) to retrieve and analyze data. While researchers may benefit from this because it saves time and also reduces the margin of error during analysis, it is also limited by its inability to differentiate trolls from real persons. As

such, the study does not claim to know the exact percentage of real people and trolls that participated in the campaigns on Twitter.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms

This section will conceptually define key terms that form a major part of this research. The purpose of this is to help the reader understand the context in which the researcher uses them. This will help the reader follow the progress of the research as well as aid in understanding the findings and conclusions drawn at the end of the study.

Political marginalization – this is a situation in which some groups are deprived access to formal political institutions. In this research, it is claimed that youths in Nigeria are deprived from accessing formal political institutions. This hinders their participation in political affairs of the country.

Gerontocracy – this is a political system that favours an older political class to the disadvantage of the younger class. In a gerontocracy, a common phenomenon is the recycling and exchange of leadership among a cycle of older politicians that have been in power for long periods of time.

Social movements – this is a collective action that is undertaken by a large group of people usually to address an unfavourable situation by resisting or rallying to support a cause. Usually, social movements pursue political or social causes.

Activism – this refers to a series of activities or an activity that are/is undertaken to promote or bring political or social change. It is sometimes used interchangeably with social movements because both concepts rely on action. However, they differ in the number of people that can undertake such causes. While one person or more than one

person can engage in activism, social movements is more restrictive in the sense that they rely on group efforts.

Online protests – online protest which is also referred to as digital activism is the use social digital technologies to promote hashtags or trend messages that are either social or political in nature. Such protests involve the use of hashtags, images, memes, videos to address issues.

Social action – this involves the collaborative endeavours of individuals or groups of people who converge to take action that improves their situation.

Collective action – This refers to the mutual or communal action undertaken by a group of people to achieve a similar goal. It is used to refer to a theory in social movements which suggests that some form of compulsion needs to be exerted on individuals in a group if they are to become involved in a social movement.

Marginalized groups – This refers to minority groups in society that are deprived from resources or access to resources that would advance their wellbeing and progress.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines a variety of literatures that are relevant to this research. The term “youth” is discussed in general, while the “African youth” is also conceptualized in order to draw distinctions from the global discussion of youth. The literatures in this chapter make a case as to why studies on the African youth are vital. The chapter also discusses social media and the part it plays in mediated practices of contemporary social movements with particular interest on youth in Africa.

2.2 Conceptualizing Social Movements

In his book chapter, titled “collective behaviour”, Blumer attempts to create a better understanding of collection action by differentiating between masses, crowds and the public. First, he describes the public as “partial issue public” whose members regularly engage in discussions on specific subjects and also share suggestions to problems. For him, this type of publics is not planned but come about as a consequence of specific events (Blumer, 1939).

Killian (1993) lists longevity, emergence, planning and spontaneity, strategy and independent initiatives as some of the common attributes witnessed in social movements.

Social movements are also characterised by the unorganised structure of unique individuals that make up the movement (Scharpf, 1997). Since these individuals do not actively associate with each other, they do not evoke coordinated attitudes (Killian, 1993).

Social movements can therefore be regarded as alliances among unique individuals who come together to demand and establish a new system of living. These individuals are usually motivated by their unsatisfactory conditions and are spurred by their mutual desires for a better way of life (Blumer, 1995). As a result of their fervent pursuit of activist causes, social movements are empowered to produce new norms and objectives, which in turn modify societal institutions by utilizing the newly constructed norms to establish new standards (Castells, 2015).

Because of the dynamic nature of social movements, their political, cultural or even biographical effect may influence another future movement. Furthermore, the consequences of some social movements may be immediate, delayed and even happen long after the initial issue that caused the protest (Bosi, 2016). For example, the civil rights movement of the 1960s, which was sparked by Rosa Parks' refusal to give up her bus seat to a white person, can be considered to have produced the first coloured President of the United States in 2008. Social movements which successfully result in policy change can in the long run affect cultural changes which would also affect individual attitudes. On the other hand, cultural modifications which are inspired by social movements can also institute new public policies (ibid). Also, Melucci (1989) explains that as a result of their participation, the exercise of using their own unique culture to create broader communities which ultimately change the biographical attributes of the participants largely is one of the many contributions of social

movements. Thus, consistency and commitment by activists will lead to successful policies and reformed institutions particularly if the activists are able to gain enough social and political capital to occupy public offices. This will help in the realisation of the early goals of the movement.

2.2.1 Relationship between Communication Technologies and Social Movements

Communication in today's world is largely defined by the technologies we use to share information. Unlike traditional societies when information took days, weeks and sometimes months to get to the intended receivers, information today can be shared and received instantaneously. The impact of this is felt in all facets of life. For activists, the organisation and coordination of protest activities is even made easier. From Obama's use of Facebook to campaign to the use of Facebook and Twitter in the Arab Spring and also Trump's use of Twitter to campaign in the US 2016 election, scholars have been interested in the phenomenal use of social media and its dynamics. With the emergence of social media, activist communication has been and is being re-shaped and traditional media are in turn influenced by the "techno-cultural and political economic relations" (Poell, 2014).

With digital technologies asserting themselves as part of our daily existence and the use of social media becoming a natural habit as a result, social movements now "exercise counter-power by constructing themselves through a process" of what Castells calls "autonomous communication" which refers to the creation of a new-networked-public space (Castells 2015 p. 9).

Dolata & Schrape (2016) suggest that the digital and technological services which the internet offer – particularly the frequently used social networking sites - are directly linked to the many variations of collective behaviour that are observed in the internet.

These variations may manifest in different ways. First, they argue that the enabling features which the web offer provide opportunities for users to expand their access to information and also facilitate the observation of other users while also increasing the speed in which the collective exchange of ideas take place. Secondly, web services enable movements with features to coordinate and regulate their collective behaviour. Although these are positive developments, new forms of social control are emerging out of these technological infrastructures (ibid). To buttress this point, Dolata & Schrape (2016) argue that while technological structures offer opportunities for empowerment, they also create avenues for elite control thus showing ambiguity in the effects of movement formation. As a result of this ambivalence, Bosi, et al (2016) reject any notion that social movements could have restricted impact in terms of transition from movement to success/failure. In this regard, the twists and turns that are to be expected from any kind of social behaviour should be taken into consideration when studying social movements. In addition, researchers should also look beyond immediate consequences of social movements to changes they evoke in the long run (Sztompka, 1995).

Public relations scholars on the other hand suggest that digital online technologies address and go as far as equalising the power imbalance between traditionally established organisations and the “resource-poor activist groups” (Tomblison & Wolf, 2017).

Social media provide a critical platform for political discussion, including the expression of political opinions about political candidates, current events, and political issues. While some scholars separate political expressions on social media as completely separate from politics by simply measuring it as interactive social media

use about politics, other scholars regard it as a form of engagement that is similar to offline political engagement thereby making it an extension of political engagement (Boulianne, 2017). This argument is backed by evidence in recent social movements that occurred both online and offline e.g. #BringBackOurGirls (BBOG), #BlackLivesMatter, the Women's March in January 2017 etc.

While critics have doubted the impact of social media in making meaningful impact, social media have been noted to “disrupt oppressive governments and repressive policies worldwide as people have used social media to bypass traditional media to organise in-person protests and rallies” (Olson, 2016, p. 777). In addition to this, the ability of social media to foster protests is said to have impact on traditional media to a point where traditional mainstream media are now being intertwined with new media platforms. As a result of this interaction, there are now aspects of social media that are found in traditional media and vice versa (ibid). Also, it can be said that a hashtag's narrative logic fuel's its political growth because of its ability to produce and connect individual stories (Clark, 2016).

To explain how internet can contribute to social mobilization, scholars have through the years pinpointed various ways through which change is initiated on internet. These views are captured in a summary by Lee and Chan; organisers of movements are given a platform to interact with their supporters and the general public (Atton, 2002; Forde, 2011; Hajek & Kabele, 2010; Stein, 2009); cost of coordination and facilitation of national /trans-national/inter-continental actions is greatly reduced (Juris, 2005). However, as the literature on this subject increase, there are gaps in the literature. For instance, how participation affects the participants is silent.

Explaining the attitude in most social movements, Rootes (1990) argues that movements acknowledge that total victory and the utter destruction of opponents is not feasible therefore it is not attempted. What activists therefore seek through their action is; to increase their negotiating power and influence so that the outcome of debates and concessions is most beneficial to their constituents. If activists are to attain such optimal solution, they must gain the ability to understand the situation through the eyes of their opponents in order to avoid adopting actions that will strengthen rather than lessen resistance (Rootes, 1990, p. 8).

Communication scholars are of the belief that activism is influenced by the central and emerging mass media of the era (Ganesh & Stohl, 2013). This would seem to be in agreement with the technological determinist theory that works with the assumption that the emerging technology of a society determines the structure of that society. To prove this, renowned activist, Mahatma Gandhi's journalistic prowess coupled with the widespread distribution of print media in the early twentieth century is said to have helped sow the seeds for and cultivated protests in South Africa and India where he prominently organised his protests (ibid). In the same vein, when television became a central social institution, scholars argue that the televisual public sphere became "prime real estate in the landscape of public deliberation" which put faces behind the protests (Ganesh & Stohl, 2013). As stated above, TV's capturing of police brutality against Martin Luther King and his marchers drew country wide support for them which eventually led to the more protests around the country.

Consequently, the emergence of social media and its use to coordinate political campaigns and protests alike has resulted in a growing body of scholarship which focuses on "examining activist engagement with contemporary digital media

technologies and the consequences of that engagement”. Ganesh & Stohl, (2013) suggest that digital technologies have enabled a shift in activism. Not only do users post, share, quote or like posts, tweets, snaps or mods that align with their beliefs, they also have an opportunity to register their protests on issues through online petitions.

2.3 Literature on Early Activism

An activist is one who is involved in the non-institutionalised form of resistance. By this definition therefore, activism could be described as an act that involves resistance to various techniques and institutions of political power (Schwedler, 2016). Although this description limits it to resistance to political power, it is worth noting that activism involves change and change is only accomplished by negotiation through politics. Brian Martins simply describes activism as action on behalf of a cause.” Listing the various types of actions involved in activism, he includes door-to-door canvassing, alternative media, public meetings, or hunger strikes (Martin, 2007). He goes on to list rallies, marches and public meetings as part of the activities involved in protest marches. Brown (2006) chooses to define the concept by focusing on political activism which he describes as activity aimed at influencing government action either directly or indirectly by attempting to ‘affect legislative decision-making’ (directly). This usually involves negotiation which may take the form of lobbying or protesting. This form of activity may give attention to voter-registration efforts with the aim of influencing the selection of people who make policy (indirectly).

Scholars suggest that there may be factors responsible for activism and one of these factors is the political opportunities inherent in the results. Here, political opportunity may refer to the possibility that engaging in protest actions will lead to success in reaching desired goals (Goldstone & Tilly, 2001).

On the issue of contentious politics and activism, the dynamic processes which have manifested over a 50year period influenced activist activities. These are; elite divisions, the power of political allies and political threats (Jenkins, Jacobs, & Agnone, 2003).

Perhaps when the issue of activism or social movement comes up, the first names that come to mind are Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. This may not be unconnected to them being the most famous activists of the 20th century (Martin, 2007). Nelson Mandela is also an easy name to think of and this may be connected to his 27 years imprisonment and the global activist movements that his incarceration started.

Earlier, most activist/social movements involved students on campuses and these movements were caused by reasons ranging from war to social welfare. This ties the history of activism to student protest with ties to elite schools (Buchanan & Brackett, 1970). Also, there are factors that determined “the development of an active political culture” and this includes, the level of involvement in governmental policy of the faculty at elite institutions, the background of the students involved in protests (students from wealthy families seemed to have more awareness and connection that inspired them to political action and the political background of the students involved in the protests (Dyke, 1998). Thus, delving into the history of early activism is also a history journey of student protests.

In the 1960s, the activism of that generation was a result of a high level of social capital and partnerships formed as a result of common grounds. In this case, the common ground was protesting against the prolonged Vietnam War which threatened nuclear

escalation. The need to stop the diversion of resources from the welfare state to the warfare state was another common factor. In addition to that, the activists of that generation had the full benefits of having a well-defined career structure contributed to the movements of that era. This is because dropping out of work to join a movement did not impede on their economic future. That generation has since been replaced by generation X who had fewer opportunities (Edmunds & Turner, 2005).

To explain why the 1960s generation made such a huge impact in global politics, Edmund and Turner (2005) cite advancement in communications technology as the reason for their involvement and impact. To explain this, the authors state that “social generations are defined by having a collective memory” and this memory could be gotten from direct experience or mediated experience. The crediting of technological advancements as reason for the social consciousness of the 1960s generation strongly lends support to Marshall McLuhan’s technological determinism which suggested that technology determined how culture and knowledge was transmitted and also influenced how society was shaped.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, activism was manifested in the reactive rebellion of college students against restrictive doctrines, curriculum and bad food (Novak, 1977). For college students at the time, these conditions were particularly unacceptable. The rebellion that emerged as a result of this angst would influence activism in that era up till the twentieth century. Citing Novak, Broadhurst (2014) explains that it was the wealthier students that engaged in rebellious behaviour as opposed to the students from poorer homes who felt privileged to be getting an education. The acts of rebellion in this era which was also rebelled against colonialism involved boycotting British

products and burning effigies of pro-British leaders (Broadhurst, 2014). This form of rebellion is still very inherent in today's brand of activism.

A typical structure of an activist movement is in three folds. First, there is a tiny minority, also known as the inner caucus of that movement which constitutes people that usually more radical and devout to the cause than other members; the active followers who are well informed about the cause and do not mind participating in physical protests and a larger section of students who understand the cause and are therefore sympathetic to it but are not as active as the first two groups. Also, there may be a larger group of students who oppose the movement or are merely apathetic towards it. It is worth noting that student protests are usually similar in their characters in that the students involved are usually within the same age range, they exist within the same community and may have similar social backgrounds/status (Altbach, 1989).

In the case of Nigeria, activism can be said to have fully started manifesting since the country's independence in 1960 as a result of government actions or inactions. These earlier movements like most movements of their Western counterparts included "riots, strike actions, protests and demonstrations." An example can be cited from the Ali-must-go riots in the 70s which rallied against the rise in the cost of student meals by the then military administration. Also, the women's protest in the 80s and 90s are clear examples of Nigeria's activist culture but perhaps the most memorable protest involved the riots that broke out in 1993 after a democratic election results had been cancelled by then military administration. The protesters called for "the practice of true democracy" and the need to implement favourable policies that would maintain the country's resources (Williams-Elegbe, 2015).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

In today's society, communication technologies have been a major part of important innovations, resulting in close inspection of their effects and the changes they make (Morrison, Kieran, Svennevig, & Ventress, 2007). Social networking sites (SNS) are not immune to such queries as high hopes have trailed their rise and use for social action (Vydra & Klievinkb, 2019). SNSs provide services that allow users to create publicly accessed or restricted profiles and to access, for interactive purposes, profiles of other users within the platform (Castells, 2013). Through the affordances of SNSs, users are empowered to challenge established structures (Milan & Hintz, 2013). Information control has been considered critical to the continued dominance of the elite (Castells, 2013) because information control implies the ability to retain power (González-Bailón & Wang, 2016). Thus, while traditional mass media have historically had the power to regulate and form opinion on issues, - arguably under the influence of the current elite - SNSs have empowered average citizens not only to mobilize and share information among themselves, but also to mobilize the elite and traditional mass media on issues important to citizens (Wang, Wang, & Zhu, 2013). In comparison to seeking information from conventional media, young people have been found to seek information from their social circle, as shown by Vromen et al (2015), and these social circles are easily seen on SNSs as they disrupt communicative power relations (Loader & Mercea, 2011).

Following the rise of networked action witnessed in the Arab spring and the occupy protests, social scientists have probed with enthusiasm, if social media can be used by disadvantaged minorities to alter the course of inequality (Wyatt, Bier, Harris, & Heur, 2013; Xenos, Vromen, & Loader, 2014). Although the benefits are elusive (González-

Bailón & Wang, 2016; Vydra & Klievinkb, 2019), the diversification of communication channels which has been ushered in by social media is clear (Castells, 2010). The diversification which is aided by cheaper costs of engagement not only encourages mobilization but also broadens participation (Xenos, Vromen, & Loader, 2014). The diversification has been instrumental in withdrawing the gate-keeping power that solely existed in the hands of an elite class (González-Bailón & Wang, 2016). This was evident in the Egypt protests where SNSs provided access to new sources of information that could not be controlled by the regime (Tufekci & Wilson, 2012). At best, SNSs like Twitter facilitate internal communication among organizers for logistic purposes while amplifying the message and protests to outsiders (Segeberg & Bennett, 2011). They also offer new opportunities for engineering social action (McCarthy, Thomas, Lala, Smith, & Bluic, 2014) while also expanding users' network by increasing their social capital (DiMaggio, Hargittai, Neuman, & Robinson, 2001) and providing new and creative platforms for activists to organize (Dessewffy & Nagy, 2016).

The obvious dismay at the increasing patterns of injustice and the utter disregard for people by a political class that treats its citizens in contempt is a strong motive for participating in protests, whether offline online (Castells, 2013).

As the Black lives matter protests show, humans are reinventing humanity by exploring new ways to expose and fight injustice (Wade, 2017). Castells (2015) supports this argument, theorizing that SNSs provide new pathways for society to be revived by offering new paths to change communities that are still hampered by structural obstacles. Previous research on the role of SNSs in the information age shows that SNSs have reshaped the way activists collaboratively take action against perceived inequalities (Garrett, 2006). Changes arise in loyalties as personalized

actions replace group loyalties which were widely apparent in earlier social movements (Bennett, 2012). A common trait of networked action is the fluid structure where participants are not connected by strong ties (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Trott, 2018). But far from the loose ties that networked action is known for, González-Bailón & Wang (2016) show that only a few users facilitate networked action that subsequently gains global traction. Furthermore, pre-existing social ties are required to influence participation as (Onuch, 2015) argues that in spite of their significance for contemporary social movements, SNSs alone do not have mobilising influence on users.

The study is therefore anchored on two theories; the logic of connective action and theory of communicative action.

2.4.1 Jurgen Habermas: Public Sphere and Theory of Communicative Action

Although not the originator of the public sphere concept, his development of the concept is relevant to the discourse of this research because of the recognition given to a new type of engagement that was sharply different from the courtly life which revolved around the aristocratic class (Kings and Lords) in the 15th and 16th centuries (Thompson, 1993). Habermas himself traced the concept of the public sphere back to the classical Greek city-states where public life was socially entrenched in the market setting. In addition, it was common practice for the citizens of the early Greek city-states who considered themselves equal to one another, to debate critical issues in open fields (Adut, 2012). This is in direct contrast to the European concept of public sphere which revolved around the aristocratic class. Having declined in significance due to the rise of a merchant class in the 16th century, Europe experienced a new form of public sphere started moving away from the court life to a state system that had legal jurisdiction over matters (Thompson, 1993). This necessitated Santos (2012)

submission that the theoretical and cultural preconceptions of public sphere are entirely European even after observing that these preconceptions are not universally valid. Beyond this, there seems to be consensus among scholars that public opinion is easily formed in the public sphere due to the active participation of citizens who come together to debate issues (Adut, 2012).

In recent times, the debate about social media and its contribution to public discourse has been observed to draw inspiration from the concept of public sphere because of its foundational practice of linking media practices to the practice of democracy (Fenton, 2018). As a result, any medium that is used to exercise ‘free speech’ which happens to be one of the core principles of democracy would be appropriately inspected via the lens of the public sphere as some scholars have done in recent times. While public sphere would have been sufficient to discuss current debates on social media and even mainstream media, it has one major weakness in that it failed to consider the social context (administrative and legal restrictions) within which these debates can take place (Matingwina, 2018). However, Habermas makes up for this deficit by advancing the theory of communicative action which pragmatically establishes a connection between public sphere and the law (ibid).

Arguably, social relationships embedded in participatory action can be better illustrated within the scope of Habermas’ theory of communicative action which Habermas himself described as some type of action which people engage in when they attempt to achieve inter-subjective agreement for the purpose of reaching mutual agreement on issues which will subsequently provide a consensus about actions to take in certain situations (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007). It is an everyday action that somewhat relies on the practice of argumentation which serves as a court of appeal to

prolong communication and settle disagreement without any form of force (Habermas, 1984).

In communicative action, those involved in this type of action are required to decide if they understand the present discourse, what they consider to be true in view of their own knowledge of the situation, if they believe facts are truthfully and sincerely stated on all sides and the moral uprightness or appropriateness of the judgment about the situation (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007). Thus, it is an attempt to balance between the objective and the subjective as well as a balance between the individual and the social. Together, the principles of the theory are argued to be renowned staple of deliberative democracies (Matingwina, 2018) because of the public debates that deliberative democracies encourage. Using Habermas' two-track model in communicative action, this study attempts to establish the relationship between NTYTR & EndSARS Twitter campaigns with Nigerian legal system in order to determine how these affect the access to the political, economic social opportunities provided to Nigerian youths.

With social media encouraging public debate by providing citizens the platform to debate issues, today's society can be said to be a witness of the type of public debates that characterized the European public sphere of the 16th century even though these debates occur in digital spaces in contrast to the coffee houses that early European public sphere thrived on.

2.4.2 Logic of Connective Action

The arguments in this study are located within the logic of connective action. Earlier attempts by scholars like Bimber, Flanagin, & Stohl (2005) expanded discourse on the well-known economic theory of collective action by taking into account the evolving nature of social action which now uses tools of modern technology. This new discourse

was necessitated by the need for an alternative theory that would determine if online protests could be as successful as traditional modes of collective action. It is upon this principle that Bennett & Segerberg (2012) conceptualised the logic of connective action. As Shumate & Lipp (2008) observe, online networks are connective goods that become visible when members and nonmembers of a movement collectively participate in advancing causes. Thus, the logic of connective action recognises social media as an organising platform where participating individuals are self-motivated to freely express views and others are free to share the same (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). What separates connective action from collective action is the lack of formal or organised structure that is known to be an important characteristic of traditional movements. Also, these movements are driven by the personal experiences of the participants in the movement. That is to say, actions taken are spurred by vested interests of the participants (ibid). As Caraway (2016) suggests, the content shared by participants in networked movements promote connective action.

2.4.3 Connective Action in Social Movements

The logic of collective action which was postulated by Mancur Olson (1965) explains that individuals are more inclined to support a collective action when they are compelled to do so. In spite of the benefits the support of this action might bring, individuals are not easily persuaded to support such actions because of the time and resources that would be involved. As such, some form of compulsion must be exerted on participating members if they are to realize their shared goals or public good. Collective action is relevant for any social movement because it acts within established parameters to enact much needed change for the group (Pond & Lewis, 2019).

Drawing on Olson's work, Bimber, Flangin and Stohl (2005) re-conceptualized the postulations of the theory in a now technology driven world by first laying out the ease

with which people are empowered by technology to organise and assemble. Unlike traditional collective action which can be challenging, Bimber and colleagues list cheaper ways – cheaper and easy communication that is not as time consuming or limited - in which technology allow collective action to happen thereby setting the path for a re-conceptualization of Olson's logic. This cheaper technology-driven collective action is seen in the Zapatista movement, the landmine ban movement, the antideforestation movement etc. who all used technology to coordinate their activities and gain support (Shumate & Lipp, 2008). In Bimber et al (2005) reconceptualization, they illustrate the importance of two principles of collective action – the binary choice of participation and the place of formal organisations – in technology-enabled collective actions. A more elaborate reconceptualization of collective action was done by Bennett & Segerberg (2012) who theorized that networked actions are characterized by unstructured, leaderless groups that use online and offline channels to coordinate their activities while relegating more formal groups like political parties and labour unions to the background. Bennett and Segerberg maintain that conventional forms of activism are not being replaced by technology driven movements (Trott, 2018) even though digitally networked movements are more personalised and considerably larger and are also able to identify the various political issues and players to lobby (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). In their study of social movements, Bennett and Segerberg's (2012) identified two major logics behind contentious politics and protests. These two categories have been the basic of much research. The first, which is the traditional logic of collective action involves coordinated protest activities by already established activist groups while the second is the digital logic of connective action which is highly de-centralised. Bennett and Segerberg explain that while central organisations negotiate, broker and control

movement goals in the first logic, the second logic “does not require strong organisational control or the symbolic “we” factor that is evident in traditional collective action (Ganesh & Stohl, 2013, p. 430).

Proposing a three-part classification, they describe three types of behaviours witnessed in digitally enabled social movements; ‘self-organizing, organizationally enabled and organizationally brokered networks’ (p. 756), each with their own distinct qualities.

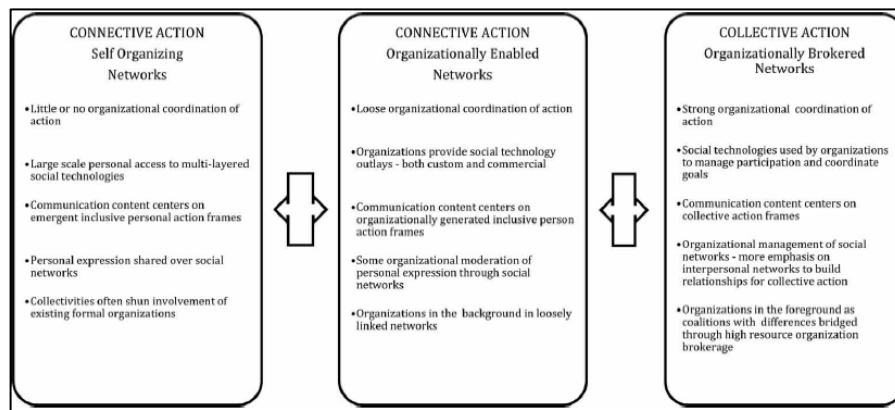


Figure 2.1: Illustration of connective action. Source: Bennett & Segerberg, (2012)

Social media researchers define connective action by its anatomy (Pond & Lewis, 2019; Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). According to Bennett & Segerberg (2012), understanding connective action requires exploring the ways in which modern technologies aid personalized grievances in ways similar to actions that were witnessed during the Arab spring. While endorsing this view, Pond & Lewis (2019) posit that the theory of connective action advances the logic of collective action by minimising ‘personal and collective’ risks of political actions through the modern tools of connectivity. Thus, social media enables an era of political action in which scholars

wonder if social media could be regarded as catalyst for the success of a social movement (ibid).

According to Olson (2016), ‘community formation is a large part of digital interaction’. To discern why this is important, one needs to explore how activists engage in the business of pursuing justice. Educating, organizing and activating followers are essential ingredients for activists’ operations and digital communities have largely been useful in that regard. Using Manuel Castells’ argument that “activist hashtags act in a similar way as occupied spaces have traditionally worked for social movements”, this research attempts to draw comparisons between the formation of traditional social movements and current formation of online social movements. The literature compares the formations and operations of both traditional social movement and contemporary digital social movements to see if they complement each other in academic scholarship. To explain this further, Castells’ argument that hashtags create community which is a public place of engagement sheds some light. This community eventually becomes a political space where sovereign assemblies meet and recover their rights of representations (Castells, 2012).

Given that the interactive, individual-driven communication system of social media allows for a less hierarchical and more participatory organization of social movements, social media then creates “a new species of social movements” (Olson, 2016, pp. 774, 775).

One of the affordances of social media is that it offers new opportunities for social action (McCarthy, Thomas, Lala, Smith, & Bluic, 2014); it can increase an individual’s social capital by expanding their network (DiMaggio, Hargittai, Neuman,

& Robinson, 2001); it can also provide creative new platforms for social organization (Dessewffy & Nagy, 2016).

Of the various submissions by scholars regarding the affordances of social media, this study focuses on Manuel Castells' submission as it deals with the subject of social justice. Drawing on the various online social movements that occurred at the dawn of the 21st century, he theorized that by empowering social movements, social media offer a new path for reconstructing humanity all over by creating a new path for society that is already limited by systemic obstacles (Castells, 2015). Conversely, social media has been argued to eliminate the top to bottom structure of governance where leadership is placed in the hands of leaders who alienate their people and also not instilling trust in the people they lead (Moreno-Almeida & Banaji, 2019).

While many scholars have attributed numerous positives to social media, there are those who argue on the contrary. Their arguments are reflected in the next section of this chapter.

2.5 Slacktivism as the Other Side of Online Activism

In an interview with CBC which has now popularized the term, the blogger Evgeny Morozov likened the now rising form of networked activism to 'slacktivism' which was a combination of the words 'slacker' and 'activism' (Clements, 2009). Describing as the ideal activity for a lazy generation, Morozov defines the concept as sensational type of activism that begins and ends online without significant impact in the world (Morozov, 2009). Limiting slacktivism to activities such joining a Facebook group or in the case of this research participating in a Twitter hashtag or signing/forwarding a petition, he shows why this type of social movement rarely yields social impact.

In a New Yorker article Gladwell (2010), sustains Morozov's argument by drawing parallels between the American civil rights movement of the 1960s and networked movements of the 21st century to dismiss the argument that social media brings revolutionary activism. On the contrary, social media movements are maintained by 'weak ties.' While agreeing that weak ties have their benefits, he concludes that they could not build revolutionary movements because those kinds of movements are 'high-risk' movements that depend on having 'strong-ties' with co-protesters. In a more extreme dismissal, White (2010) who described the now rising social media activists as 'marketeering technocrats' opined that by employing the tools of marketing and obsessing over clicks, this type of activism which he also termed 'clicktivism' was essentially destroying activism. Halupka (2014) describes 'clicktivism' as the reduction of activism to the signing or sharing of petitions, content and the use of social features like retweets and likes. Morozov (2009), Gladwell (2010) and Halupka (2014) agree that 'slacktivism' or 'clicktivism' culminate in lazy activism and also does not have meaningful impact offline.

2.6 Conceptualizing Political Marginalization

The study borrows from Causadias & Umaña-Taylor (2018) to define marginalization as a multi-tiered structure of systemic power imbalance which affects certain groups in society. This imbalance is maintained by depriving (consciously or unconsciously) access to political, economic, social and even health resources thereby putting them at risk of underdevelopment (Hall & Carlson, 2016). Contextually, Causadias & Umaña-Taylor's (2018) definition is central to the United States which is multi-cultural and hence possess different layers – racial minorities, refugees, religious sects - in which marginalization can occur. This definition is adopted because Nigeria is a large country with diverse ethnic groups. In any given society, various groups suffer some form of

marginalization. However, the study is restricted to the political marginalization of youths in Nigeria. Because the participation of youth in politics and civic engagement is crucial for democracy (Brady, Chaskin, & McGregor, 2020), and therefore cannot be negotiated, the continuous marginalization of youths in Nigeria demands urgent attention.

2.7 Social Media

Since its introduction, Web 2.0 has become one of the most utilized highlights of the internet. (Mandiberg, 2012). Social media can be defined as a group of Internet-based applications that builds on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and that allows for the creation and exchange of user-generated contents (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Web 2.0 itself emerged from ‘O’Reilly Media’s Web 2.0’ and has been defined by Tim O’Reilly himself as “as an upgraded computer-programming model that has enabled a set of participatory websites built on lightweight server-based applications that move rich data across platforms” (Mandiberg, 2012). In a bid to further explain the concept of social media, Kaplan & Haenlim (2010) describe the term as a string of activities, practices, and behaviours among people who gather online to share information, knowledge, and offer inputs on matters using conversational media. They explain that not all social media are the same and that it is important to distinguish them. To do this, they theoretically draw inspiration from a set of media theories and social presence theories. The media theories they used are; social presence and media richness while the theories from social processes are; self-presentation and self-disclosure.

Media richness suggests that media differ in the degree of richness (the amount of information allowed to be transmitted at a given time) they offer while also conceding

that the goal of communication is to reduce any form of ambiguity. Applying this to social media would therefore refer to the richness of the medium and degree of social presence it allows (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

From the descriptions of social media, it is evident that social media introduces the concept of 'interactivity' between users who generate contents and distribute same. This interactivity enables networking in social media. According to Isa & Himelboim, (2018), "a social network is formed when social actors (nodes) form connections among them". In the case of twitter, users form social networks when they mention or reply each other in tweets.

Dewing (2010), highlights several forms of social media popularly used around the world vis: Blogs, Wikis, Social Bookmarking, Social Networking Sites, Status Update Services, Virtual World Content and Media-Sharing Site.

Social media users now use the media as an avenue to showcase what they do in real life. As such, studies have emanated on the various uses people use social media to achieve certain goals and objectives. In a literature review on the benefits of social networking sites, Collin, Rahilly, Richardson, & Third, (2011) list the benefits of social networking as; Media Literacy, Education, creativity, individual identity and self-expression, strengthening interpersonal relationships, sense of belonging and collective identity (social capital), strengthening and building communities, civic political participation and well-being. Social media has been a fast-rising medium through which serves the functions of the conventional mainstream media function as stated by Harold Lasswell and Charles Wright (surveillance, correlation, transmission of cultural heritage, inform, persuade, educate, entertain etc). Its root has been traced

to the technological innovation of the Electronic Mail in 1971 where humans exchange messages and interact without physical communication. Other scholars have argued against this due to the following reasons:

- (i) Email is a distribution mechanism whereas Social Media is a collective mechanism.
- (ii) Mass communication is different from Mass collaboration.

Although the details regarding the history of social media are sketchy, one can concede the introduction of the electronic mail ushered in the era communicating long distance without barriers. With the email, humans could exchange messages and ideas over long distances without physically seeing each other. In an attempt to trace the history, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) argue that the idea behind what we know today as social media was far from ground-breaking. They suggest that the idea originated in 1979 when two graduate students from Duke University, Tom Truscott and Jim Ellis created the Usenet (a worldwide discussion system that would allow Internet users to post public messages). According to the scholars however, the era of social media as we know it today started when Bruce and Susan Abelson founded the “Open diary” a worldwide discussion system that allowed Internet users to post public messages (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Kohli & Gupta, 2015). The open diary first brought diary writers together and it was on this site that the term “weblog” came to be. The term was later reduced to “blog” when a blogger transformed the noun into a sentence by saying “we blog”. The rise in Internet access ushered in the era of social networking sites like Myspace in 2003 and Facebook in 2004. This in turn created “social media”. Before Myspace and Facebook however, classmate.com was created in 1995 by Randy Conrads to assist people in the US in finding friends and acquaintances from all school

years (from kindergarten to those working in the military) (Ali, 2012). With classmates.com however, users did not have the ability to create their own content.

2.7.1 Social Media and the Youth

Ever since social media became a global phenomenon, it has been utilized across the globe by people of all ages, gender, race and other demographic characteristics. However, the youth have consistently maintained their spot as the largest consumers of social media content. A report by Pew Research Centre on social media usage in the US showed that young adults are still heavy users of social media as 90% of youths are active users of social media (Pew Research Center, 2018).

With such statistics, it cannot be overemphasized about the power social media has on audience (Ahn, 2012). Once they understood the technology, the youth began to build large online network across various social media platforms with people they know and those they do not know (Swist, Colin & McCormack, 2015). As such, it would ensure the continual interactivity with people all over the world on issues that sparks their interest.

Such utilization of media inevitably has effects on young adults as it shapes their attitudes and behaviours towards certain phenomena (Wheeler, 2015). The impacts of social media on the young generation can be theorised and measured in numerous ways and are researched from a plethora of disciplinary perspectives across cultural studies, psychology, public health and youth studies (Brown & Gregg, 2012; Kross et al., 2013; Winpenny et al., 2013; De Ridder & Van Bauwel, 2015).

As a crucial part of youths' communication and conversation activities (Adaugo, Ovute and Obochi, 2015; Shabir *et al.*, 2014), social media aid exposure, awareness

and facilitate the exchange of ideas, opinions, data, etc. via texts, audio, video and pictorial modes (Mustapha, Gbonegun & Mustapha, 2015). Ehidiamen (2013) says social media has a crucial role to play in ensuring Nigerian leaders are held accountable. The technology of social media is relatively cheap, and it has made it very relatively easy to access and disseminate important information. Social media has also helped activists organize and mobilize electorates' support on political issues (Onwukwe, 2011).

Social media has also increasingly provided avenues for young people to create content and share experiences which are meaningful to them, inform their wellbeing and sense of belonging which makes them feel part of a community. Such level of interactivity can enable children who have low level of offline social relationships to be part of community without fear of intimidation as they can share norms and collective identities through social media" (Lim, 2013). Collin et al (2011:7) argue that the "...strong sense of community and belonging fostered by SNS [social networking services] has the potential to propagate resilience, which can aid young people adapt to change and stressful events".

While all these seem to be positive impact of social media on youth, this is not to say that there are no negative impact social media has on the lives of these young adults. Among which scholars attribute to be part of the negative effect is addiction which Bhavana (2014) believe that youth who are addicted to social media may spend long hours on social sites, which can affect their concentration and focus in particular tasks. This has cost social media addicts immeasurable losses to their lives. Social media has also made youth lose touch with the physical world as they tend to lose their ability to socialize properly. This is one of the side effect of the addiction as youth who spend

most their time on social media, lack real human contact (Parvathy and Suchithra, 2015). Health wise, Parvathy et al (2015) posit that social media does not give room for people (including youth) to engage in physical exercise, which can cause varieties of health complications such as cardiac arrest, cancer, diabetes and a host of health endangering ailments. Wasswa (2013) also contributed on the negative role of social media in the Kenyan 2013 election, where social media can provide another avenue via which, unscrupulous politicians and supporters can spread hate speeches, propagate false information, and incite their members to orchestrating violence.

2.8 Youth and Politics

In the previous sub-topic, it attempted to provide explanations on how media affect youth in various spheres of their lives, while trying to alienate from civic and political participation by youth. This section would explain how social media affect youth in engaging into various political avenues.

In youth studies, the concept of participation is expanded to include ‘engagement’ which points to other kinds of involvement that bring change in their everyday lives. Also, issues regarding resources and social justice are common in discourse on youth and politics even if they suggest consumerism and ‘vain representations of selfhood’ (Oinas, Onodera, & Suurpää, 2018).

Scholars worry about the rising rate of decline of youth political participation as it has been observed in almost every developed democracy globally (Gray & Caul, 2000). An instance is one in Canada as data reveals that voter turnout has declined significantly in Canada, particularly over the past twenty years, falling to 59% in 2008 and only recovering slightly in 2011 to 61% (Brewer & Cao, 2016). Similarly, voter

turnout has consistently depreciated in the United Kingdom from an average of 85% in the year 1950 to 65% in 2010 (Boulianne, 2011). In France, youth decline in politics also been on a down low as voting decreased from 69% in 1993 to 56% in 2012 (Holt, Shehata, Strömbäck & Ljungberg, 2013). Italy on the other hand, has also witnessed a huge margin in decline in political participation from an average of 90% between 1946 and 1983, to 75% in 2013 (Carpini, 2014) and in Germany, where voter turnout peaked in 1972 at just over 91%, but dropped to 71% in 2009. In the US, although official figures for the 2012 presidential election are yet to be ascertained, it is also estimated that turnout for votes were lower than in the previous two elections (Diesing, 2013). Finally, electoral participation in New Zealand has experienced a similar downward trend over the past fifty years. Falling from 98% in 1946 to 80% in 2008, voter turnout dropped to just fewer than 74% of eligible voters in the 2011 general election. The 2011 New Zealand general elections were noted for its very low voter turnout, where New Zealand experienced the lowest turnout ever (Vowles, 2012).

The local setting in Africa is no different as there has been sharp decline in youth involvement in politics over the years. Although studies indicate that youth in Africa also vote less than older citizens research on youth's political participation (Resnick & Casale 2011). In Nigeria, the systemic voter turnout since 2007 is an indication that Nigerian youths have greatly become apathetic towards elections (Agaigbe, 2015). INEC captured the trend in voter turnout in the country since 1999; 52.2% in 1999, 69.08% in 2003, 57.49% in 2007, 53.68% in 2011 and 43.65% in 2015. The Institute of Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2015) in a report state that youth influence in national politics is limited as they believe that actively promoting the inclusion of youth in political processes is not only about norms, values and rights, but also about practical politics.

Many scholars attribute such marginalization to the negative attributes of gerontocracy. However, Berry (2012) concludes that generational differences in political priorities partly justify young people's claim that older people tend to marginalize their core concerns. He also asserts that political power of older cohorts risks the relative disenfranchisement of young people. This is why Faye (2017) believes that the African landmass is still tormented by a gerontocratic political class, which does not have the dynamism, moral uprightness and inventiveness that the young encapsulates and could add to the political scene in Africa. The ending result for the seeming continual and recurring recycling of elders in the sphere of politics (Oyebode, 2014) which according to Faye (2017) is described as "a wave of political apathy", which has made youths lose interest and are less likely to engage in political participation than were previous generations of the same age (Quintelier, 2007). This is also visible within the Nigerian context as President Muhammadu Buhari is not only a member of the gerontocratic class, but is currently ruling the country for the second time (with first time being a military Head of State). This has left many youths' wonder about their fate and as such, douse hopes of ever being full members of the political circle. Political apathy has not only led to make youth lose interest in politics, but has led to low turnout of votes during election periods (Agaigbe, 2015).

Some scholars believe that this downturn in the rate of participating into politics by youth is as a result of lack of interest in politics. Young people according to O'Toole, Henn, Weinstein & Forrest (2003) are less concerned with politics, less politically knowledgeable, do not participate in social or political activities, are more apathetic, and have low levels of political interest. They also posit that youth are not properly motivated or engaged into having interest in politics. Others argue that young people

cannot participate politically until they become eligible voters in their country (Highton & Wolfinger, 2001).

2.9 Social Media, Youth and Politics

Social media seem to be like the new messiah via which hopes can be rekindled in resuscitating political participation as studies are now showing that social media can lead to such.

According to a study by Strandberg (2013), using Facebook and Twitter to engage in politics has a significant impact. His research also found that social media users who are uninterested in politics are more likely to consciously access political materials through social media. That way, better political knowledge can be achieved, which can lead to political participation. In the broader context of elections, the use of social media for political purposes is one of the determinants of political engagement, particularly in terms of mobilization and voting. (Strandberg, 2013). According to Vitak, Zube, Smock, Carl, Ellison, and Lampe (2011), there is a clear connection between the intensity of political use of Facebook. and college students' political participation because it allows them to gain better political acumen, which can lead to greater civic participation. Bekafigo and McBride (2013) contend that social media creates a balance between the politically educated and the citizens who are ignorant in politics by expanding the channel via which information about politics is exchanged. Whether in the conventional method of political participation or through the instrumentality of social media, scholars agree that one obstacle via which youth do not engage in politics is the lack of access to information (ISS, 2012). According to Goshit (2016), the reasons these were possible is because social media gives people the ability to emerge from consumers of content to publishers of same. That way, there

is instantaneous dissemination of information where feedback is also derived without delay. This dissemination of information has to a shift from transmission of information from mainstream media to citizens, to citizens to citizens.

Social media was adequately noticed by scholars in Nigeria to be used in the political realm since the 2011 general elections (Bartlett, Krasodonski-Jones, Daniel, Fisher, and Jespersen 2015). Furthermore, Nigerians are said to use social media during election periods in a variety of ways. This includes the sharing of electoral information, campaigning and creating awareness for political parties, candidates, and governmental organizations. Overall, Nigerians use social media to improve the efficiency of election observation (PLAC, 2012). The use of social media to improve election efficacy can be argued to have been instrumental in the rate at which Nigerians became citizen journalists.

As media organizations increasingly enabled their subscribers to report on internet platforms, observations from citizen journalists were progressively finding their way into the mainstream news by 2015. One distinguishing element was the increased usage of hashtags as a focal point for political debate and lobbying. A day to the 2015 presidential elections, about fifty (50) active hashtags appeared in which Nigerians discussed the prospects and anticipated results of their favoured candidate (Dunu, 2018). Hashtagging is one of the ways Nigerians identify political affiliation and support for candidates of their choice.

In the spirit of appreciating the concomitance of social media in encouraging political participation, it is however interesting that there is a negative kind of participation youth partake in Nigerian politics, which has been the positive participation

aforementioned. This is not only peculiar to the Nigerian landscape, but the whole continent of Africa at large. This is in respect to the involvement of youth in orchestrating all forms of political violence, which leads to the loss of lives and properties during electoral periods. Youths are made to perform such acts in order to further the cause of the dominant elite in the society they reside. They are used as ready-made weapons in the hands of political elites who are not concerned about national development but rather, parochial interest (Okafor, 2015). This is why, according to Ojok and Acol (2017), young people perceive electoral violence as a final option for establishing their own political spaces. From events that have been occurring especially in developing, embarking in political violence seem to be the only way via which their opinions, grievances and agitations can be taken seriously by the political leaders who see political offices as their homes. This trend not only jeopardizes Africa's peace and security, but it also jeopardizes the long-term viability of democratization initiatives (Buchard, 2016).

As previously noted, political participation does not only include voting or following normal electoral process. It also encompasses repercussions such as participating in civil protests, making online petitions, and joining lobbying or political advocacy interest organizations (Muxel, 2014). The importance of social media in facilitating this form of political participation should not be overlooked. The 2011 widely known protests known as the "Arab Spring," which were largely arbitrated through the use of social media such as Twitter, Facebook, and blogs, deliver one of the most notable examples of the impact of technology in strengthening civic democratic engagement. The Arab Spring was the culmination of years of abusive and autocratic political structures, economic failures, and socially disenfranchised and disenchanted populace, primarily affecting youth. (Aissa 2012). As demonstrators marched against widespread

corruption and unemployment in Tunisia, the 'Jasmine Revolution' was predominantly planned, backed, and pushed on Facebook and Twitter. Social media platforms aided the Tunisian revolution in a variety of ways, including grassroots organization, supporting and boosting the function of civil societies as well as acting to refute government propaganda efforts (Howard, 2011). Similarly, citizens' access to and use of social media technologies was a major driving force behind Egyptian uprisings (Honwana, 2012). The mass media interacted with demonstrators online, and citizens who were well-informed about the protests aided in energizing public demonstrations against Mubarak's regime. As Egyptians talked with one another about their unhappiness with the Mubarak administration, different social media activities supported the free flow of information among citizens in Egypt. These actions included participating in Facebook pages and groups, as well as communicating significant political matters relating to the protests via the internet (Bhuyian, 2011). Similarly, Twitter saw a surge in activity as citizens became more comfortable with the platform. According to statistics, the number of tweets from Egypt during this period jumped from two thousand and three hundred to two hundred and thirty thousand per day, and the 23 most shared protest clips circulated during that time had around 5.5 million views at the time. (Mourtada, 2011).

2.10 From Old Activism to Hashtag Activism

According to Olson, 'community formation is a large part of digital interaction'. To discern why this is important, one needs to explore how activists engage in the business of pursuing justice. Educating, organizing and activating followers are essential ingredients for activists' operations and digital communities have largely been useful in that regard. Using Manuel Castells' theory that "activist hashtags act in a similar way as occupied spaces have traditionally worked for social movements", an attempt

is made to draw comparisons between the formation of traditional social movements and current formation of online social movements. The aim here is not to make the claim that traditional social movements can be reduced to today's online activism but to compare the formations and operations of both kinds of movement to see if they can complement each other in academic scholarship. To explain this further, the study draws on Castells' argument that hashtags create community which is a public place of engagement. This community eventually becomes a political space where sovereign assemblies meet and recover their rights of representations (Manuel Castells 2012). Technologically enabled protests in the twenty-first century are distinct from previous movements in several aspects, and they usually operate in a different manner. First, it should be noted that contemporary movements largely depend on the advantages of technology to organise and form communities of protests. Furthermore, many current movements have cultural and political origins that precede the internet, but have found better communication through the use of new tech and connected locations (Tufekci, 2017). One of the challenges that networked protests may face is the struggle to maintain momentum after assembling big numbers of demonstrators through digital means. This is because networked protests side-step some of the traditional tasks of organising which historical movements are known for. In addition to that, an important aspect of traditional movements is the avenue it offers for collective decision-making, which can occur through traditional and modern leadership frameworks, as well as the development of a bond between members by their shared experiences and struggles (ibid). Through shared hashtags however, members of networked movements can share experiences. Tufekci voices another criticism of networked movements by arguing that even though they claim open participation whereby there is no visible leader, their practice is almost always muddier than traditional movements. This is

because open participation in most situations, this does not imply equality, and that only few actors continuously appear as unofficial but consistent representatives for the networked cause over time.

However, this is not entirely a bad thing as social media is said to create new species of social movements (Castells, 2012) through its interactive, individual-driven communication system which allows for a less hierarchical and more participatory organisation of social movements. (Olson, 2016). Still, some scholars call for caution about the eagerness to regard contemporary social media action as a new version of activism because while it may offer activists the platform and freedom to easily express themselves, there is also the possibility that it could hamper the ability of their expression to positively effect any change in the real world (Gladwell, 2010). In an interview with CBC which has now popularized the term, the blogger Evgeny Morozov likened the now rising form of networked activism to ‘slacktivism’ which was a combination of the words ‘slacker’ and ‘activism’ (Clements, 2009). Describing as the ideal activity for a lazy generation, Morozov defines the concept as sensational type of activism that begins and ends online without significant impact in the world (Morozov, 2009). Limiting slacktivism to activities such joining a Facebook group or in the case of this research participating in a Twitter hashtag or signing/forwarding a petition, he shows why this type of social movement rarely yields social impact.

In a New Yorker article Gladwell (2010), sustains Morozov’s argument by drawing parallels between the American civil rights movement of the 1960s and networked movements of the 21st century to dismiss the argument that social media brings revolutionary activism. This is because people who participate in online campaigns get

the false illusion that they have making impact without doing anything more than joining a Facebook group or in the case of this research, sharing a hashtag.

To reinforce this scepticism, Odou et al (2018) argue that in as much as the Internet has long been considered as a space of freedom where new forms of communication and mobilization have appeared, it also attracts fickle and lukewarm protesters who do not necessarily participate in long-term action either online or in the real world.

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However, Boulianne (2017) responds to these skeptics by arguing that while “political expression on social media could be viewed as a superficial method of criticizing the political system without requiring any concrete, offline action”, bloggers in authoritarian states are often harassed and sometimes murdered like Khaled Said who was killed in Egypt for sharing information online. For Boulianne (2017), such criticisms could only serve in a democratic society where offline political action is a given right.

While critics have doubted the impact of social media in making meaningful impact, these technologies have been noted to be instrumental in the disruption of oppressive governments and unfavourable policies as they have given young people the avenue to organize political action (Husain 2011). An example can be cited from the Arab spring protests where organisers relied on Facebook and Twitter to share information

and unite the people. Because of the impact of social media in fostering protests, traditional media are now said to be influenced by social media (Olson, 2016). Also, it can be said that a hashtag's narrative logic fuels its political growth because of its ability to produce and connect individual stories (Clark, 2016) even though maintaining engagement over longer periods of time is a fundamental difficulty in technologically driven activity (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Tufekci, 2017). Engagement with digital action can take many forms (Haperen, Nicholls, & Uitermark, 2018) and in this study's campaign, the chosen frame was #NTYTR and #EndSARS. The well-documented history of the Zapatistas' use of Internet is a clear indication of the inexpensive but speedy platform the internet offers for the exchange of messages (Earl, 2010); it expands the action and coverage of social movements (Earl & Kimport, 2011); cost of information and participation for citizens is lowered (Coopman, 2011); citizens no longer need to be affiliated with civic groups to mobilize. Individuals can now self-mobilize to conduct offline protests (Harlow, 2012; Lee, 2015a); social media now enable the formations of new movements (Lee & Chan, 2016).

Although their use of social networks reflects a certain degree of sub-activism (Bakardjieva, 2010), which is an important dimension in citizenship and democracy, the democratic potency the internet adds (Breindl, 2010) to the political participation of young people has not been fully demonstrated through their online interaction. Sub-activism is considered as the freedom of the individual to become who they want to be based on their careful choice of moral and political principles, rather than merely political power. Young individuals take advantage of the system. The website creates a new type of citizen biography, one that is more individualized in nature (Bosch, 2013). They might enjoy the shared experience of social media as well as the new forms of citizenship that these platforms provide.

Wood and Smith (2014) characterized dialectic resistance as process of conceiving alternatives to prevailing power structures through various forms of communication (verbal and non-verbal alike), and other kinds of meaning formation. For Wang & Caskey (2016), the internet has provided the avenue to imagine these options.

Reducing participation costs, fostering shared identity, and forming networks are three possible ways for integrating technology and participation, according to the literature. While the viability of networked organizational structures is increasing, which presents benefits, it also poses a significant threat. Activists aren't the only ones who can benefit from technological advancements in order to be more flexible and fluid.

As Castells (1996) explains, many elite corporations have since the 1970s undergone such a makeover (Castells 1996) and as a result of the transformation, these businesses are now less reliant on traditional leadership structures and are less vulnerable to regional influences. Also, social movements may as a form of necessity rely more on these emerging forms of organization (Garrett, 2006). These new forms of citizenship are only aided by the ability of the youth to imagine an alternative structure.

Three mechanisms that have the ability to link technology and participation are: reduction of participation costs, promotion of collective identity and creation of community (Garrett, 2006). Castells (1996) however cautions that even though the emerging networked form of organising has the potential to create opportunities, it bears its own significant risks that activists should note. This is because the ability to use technology to make themselves more visible and relevant is not restricted to activists alone. Castells (1996) further explains this by adding that elite organisations have since the 1970s realised the importance of this transformation. Thus, the

organisations are also evolving and just like these activists are depending less on traditional structures of leadership and are also recognising the importance to be flexible with location pressures. As a result, it becomes pertinent to adopt new forms of organisation as this may prove necessary for the survival of social movements (Garrett, 2006).

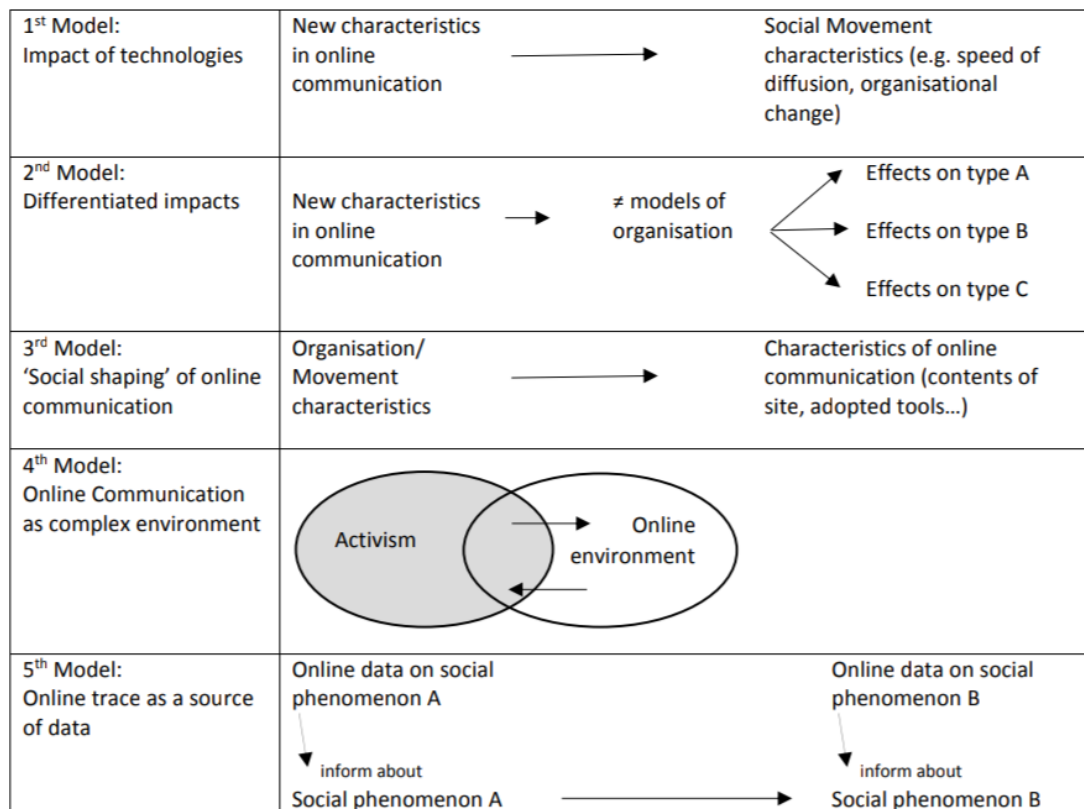


Figure 2.2: Research designs applied to the study of digital movements. Source: (Cernision, 2019)

2.11 Literature on Online Protests from 2010 to 2020

Anti-government riots in Tunisia and Egypt sparked a surge in the using social media to organize protests. Both countries' revolutionary upheavals highlight the potential of social media for large-scale mobilization and implementation of significant protests (Abdelhay, 2012).

Painting a vivid picture of that moment in history, Abdelhay (ibid) explains that the enormous number of images and videos that circulated daily on social media allowed the world to not only glimpse what was going on but it also enabled the world to witness how the average citizens utilized technology that allowed them to create ideas and signs and then effortlessly share them with just a few clicks. As such, social media was able to unlock a key of freedom that would have ordinarily been censored. By circulating images and videos, the protesters participated in what could be described as the ‘production of historical memory’ (Wetzstein, 2017).

One important aspect of the Arab spring was that it helped bring attention to activities on a regional and international level that would have been hidden from public space. By taking that power away from the authority, it prevented the isolation of the participants.

Coming down to Nigeria, one of the few unexpected and shocking protests against government was the Occupy Nigeria protests which were sparked in January 2012 after the government of the day partially removed fuel subsidy in a message broadcasted to commemorate the start of a new year. With many people deeming the action as insensitive, a wave of protests swept across the country. The Arab revolution and the Occupy wall street movement (which was inspired by the Italian anti-global movement in 2011 (Vicari, 2012) may have influenced the protests from which Occupy Nigeria got its tag from (Abdullahi, Adekeye, & Balogun, 2014).

Unsurprisingly, the Occupy Nigeria protests started a debate about waste and corruption in government. As the dominant sites used to organize the Occupy Nigeria protests, Facebook and Twitter offered Nigerian youths an opportunity to not only vent

their anger and frustrations but to also mobilize and use the internet to recruit young people, potentially leading to real-time protests in networked places (Ibrahim, 2013).

The mass protests, however, appeared to be untenable as the rallies increasingly turned political and subsequently got hijacked by leaders of the labour union and some government agencies (Abdullahi, Adekeye, & Balogun, 2014).

Since the anti-globalization movement used the internet as a significant instrument, news organizations have taken a technologically determinist stance, describing any emerging movement in terms of the technology it chooses to employ for its mobilization and communication purposes. Examples can be cited in how mainstream media tagged the Arab spring as either 'Facebook protest' or 'Twitter protest'. The impact of this movement influenced the creation of Aljazeera *The Stream* to connect with social media users on topical issues (Gerbaudo, 2012).

As research continues to pile up, three major changes are attributed to the use of the internet are identified. They are; changing repertoires of participation and mobilisation, changes in political organisation and changes in communication and the spread of information (Theocharis, Lowe, & Deth, 2013). Thus, two aspects of traditional social movement – the cost of participation and the need for physical presence – have been transformed. The online dimension to current engagement repertoires like signing petitions or writing letters as well as the addition of new forms like hacktivism, demonstrate this (ibid).

There is prove to show that online and offline actions often intertwine in contemporary social movements. The growing importance of social media, for example, helps to

establish online activities in previously established patterns (i.e. traditional forms of communication). Other parameters, such as the various types of online connection, the degree of action of who participates online, or the many ways of using web technologies, all add to the complexity of observing social processes in a digital context (Cernision, 2019).

2.12 Focus on Africa

African youths have exploited global crises in a variety of ways, one of which is the formation of hybrid identities, which are becoming progressively essential for establishing counter cultures within the democratic system (Iwilade, 2013). Hybridized identities are antagonistic to standing authority (Clothier, 2005) and in the context of this research, when young people take advantage of the opportunities provided by the global social media space to reinvent themselves in society, they will be empowered to build global identities as creative social actors and agents, while incorporating these "new" identities into youth culture and reality. What then follows this process of identity construction is a mixed-youth that is well aware of the global discourse of development and democracy, and at the same time comes into contact with the local level of exclusion and deprivation of power (Iwilade, 2013).

Prior to the use of social media for social uprisings in Nigeria, power has traditionally been concentrated in the hands of the established politicians, especially state governments, who exploited vigilante groups and other youths to promote their own agendas against the federal government in order to win elections (Nolte, 2004). It's plausible to infer that the Nigerian youth's main use for political operatives at this period was to perpetrate violent acts on their patron's behalf.

By the early 2000s, violence had become the major means by which power and resources were negotiated in Nigeria such that the disparate Niger Delta militant groups were able to successfully negotiate an amnesty programme in 2009 worth billions of dollars, and set the precedence for the violent confrontation with the state as a means of resolving disputes (Zalik, 2004).

Youth groups were content to use violence, protests or threats of these to negotiate favourable deals with the state, often serving as agents of, or being propped up by, politicians (Watts, 2007). As previously stated, the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street protests in the United States, which resulted in the toppling of some autocratic regimes in the Middle East, may very well have inspired Nigerian youths to believe in their own capacity to affect or even alter the country's leadership, as well as the use of social media for mobilization (Akor, 2017).

Youth are thought to be a significant constituency for electoral engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa. Despite making up 70% of the population of the region however, they are far less involved in party politics for a variety of reasons. Without a doubt, elections are becoming increasingly marked by acrimonious battles over state resources. Due to the high costs of gaining state power, politicians have learned to value youth groups' organizational skills (Bob-Milliar, 2014).

As the wind of revolution blows through SNSs across the globe, African youths have also utilized these tools to show their disapproval of perceived ills like gender inequality in Nigeria as gathered from the #BBOG campaign (Akpojivi, 2019), continued systemic racism in South African universities as seen in #RhodesMustFall campaign (Daniels, 2016), the decline in government funding of tertiary education in

South Africa which has led to high tuition fees as witnessed in the #FeesMustFall campaign (Bosch & Mutsvairo, 2017), the continued gerontocratic government of Zimbabwe's former President Mugabe as seen in #ThisFlag campaign (Gukurume, 2017) etc. While the reasons for these campaigns vary, they are all united by one central theme, marginalization. In each of the campaigns cited above and many other campaigns around the world, social movements are spurred by political, economic and socially disadvantaged groups in society. Marginalization is described by Causadias & Umaña-Taylor (2018) as a multi-layered structure of inequality which affects certain groups in society. Although the situation is still far from ideal, the privileges of modern society (education for women and their right to vote, abolishment of slavery, recognition of human rights etc) were birthed by social movements like women's suffrage and civil rights movement which were all organized by marginalized groups. In the same vein, the #EndSARS movement in Nigeria shows the perceived marginalization of youths in the country and their attempt to fight through hashtags. The #EndSARS hashtag campaigns against a brute police force that is yet to rid itself of its colonial practice of citizen harassment and abuse even after more than 60 years of colonial rule (Ikuteyijo & Rotimi, 2014; Ojo, 2014; Akinlabi, 2017).

2.12.1 Describing Africa's Youth

Although Africa currently only makes up 16% of the world's population, it is the fastest growing continent with more than half of the global population expected to emerge from the continent by 2050. The countries where half of the world's population growth is expected to come from are; India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America (USA), Indonesia and Uganda. Five out of these nine countries are in Africa. In terms of

population, the fastest growing country in the world is Nigeria (United Nations, 2015). These figures solidify Africa as a youthful continent.

Although the World Health Organisation (WHO) describes adolescents as people between the ages of 10 and 19; young people as those between 10 and 24 years and youth as those between 15–24 years (WHO, 1989), sociologists argue that the term ‘youth’ cannot be universally defined without taking into consideration, the cultural contexts of various societies. This is because what constitutes a youth varies with the society in question (Abdullahi, Adekeye, & Balogun, 2014).

This argument is proved in the definition of youth by the African Union which slightly differs from the WHO definition with regards to the age limit for youthfulness. For African Union, consideration is placed on the delayed transition into adulthood that plagues most young people in Africa. Therefore, a youth in this context is described as one between the ages 15 to 35 years old (Oinas, Onodera, & Suurpää, 2018).

Explaining this, Iwilade (2013) suggested, when defining the term "African youth", the landscape of the African continent should be taken into consideration as the term does not mean the same thing the very culturally, materially, ethnically and even racially diverse continent. Different African societies have quite different historical and material experiences, so it can be seen how these experiences constitute differences in the ways in which young people are configured and their social roles. A more elaborate concept of youth should be expected to contain four basic points. First, it considers youth as a social category in intergenerational discourse. Second, it will situate this multigenerational conversation inside a larger conversation about status, dominance, and influence. Third, it will pay close attention to how the intrinsic link

between power and influence is changing and how it affects young people's social perceptions. In the end, one would be steered to regard youthfulness as a real-life experience rather than a fantasy. Also, the term youth is defined in opposition to those who are established as adults and elders. Persons who have not yet entered the phase of being responsible for others but are rather being taken care of by others fall within this group (Nolte, 2004).

With Africa experiencing a growing youth bulge, the growing calls for empowerment among young Africans would prove valuable for change. Defining what the term 'youth bulge' is, Garvin (2007) describes a situation in which emerging countries with high birthrates and high mortality rates begin to reduce birth and infant mortality rates. As a result, there would be an increase in the number of children who live to adulthood, reshaping the demographic landscape. While suggesting that there was need for a closer examination of this phenomenon, he noted that the region was also plagued by a state that was in charge of power and economic opportunities in the midst of weak governing institutions. The result of this was grave political implications which would stem from the desires and grievances of the youth (Gavin, 2007). Judging by what happened during the Arab spring, one would say that his assessment was correct.

Akor (2017) draws a sharp distinction between African youths who grew up in the 1960s into the late 1970s and the African youth that grew up in the 1980s. While the former did not struggle for economic opportunities, the latter grew up "disempowered, stunted and now bitter with less access to the means of becoming adults." As a result, their youth is put at risk as it becomes unnecessarily prolonged.

Abbink (2005) painted a grim picture when he described the typical situation of the average African youth. According to him, not only do the youth face tremendous odds, but they also do not have control over their own future. While conceding that there had been progress in some areas like education, migration and job opportunities in urban areas, stiff competition for limited resources have greatly reduced the quality of life for these youth. As a result, the African youth is growing up in conditions of mass unemployment while also being side-lined in governmental policies and bargains from a weak legal standing. Unfortunately, however, the African youth easily becomes a target for criminals who are recruiting armed rebels or insurgents.

With the growing population of young people in Africa, the ‘African youth’ became a commodified entity in academic research (Christiansen, Utas and Vigh 2006). The increased interest in the African youth is due to the massive number of young people in the continent with need for social policies that would aid development, immigration among other things (Kelly & Kamp, 2015). Also, rise in rebellions, unrest in the continent, never ending conflicts etc. have influenced this growing interest (Oinas, Onodera, & Suurpää, 2018). In spite of these challenges, it is important to note any development that might evoke change (Allaste & Cairns, 2016). This research draws inspiration from this reasoning. Also, because the continent has experienced its own share of unfortunate incidents, it is not within the scope of this research to highlight any violent movement. It focuses on a common feature in African politics – gerontocracy - which is defined as a rule by the elderly. Although over half Africa’s population are below the ages of 30 (Bob-Milliar, 2014), the consistent rule of the elderly points to the systematic marginalization of youths (politically and economically) in the continent (Oinas, Onodera, & Suurpää, 2018).

2.12.2 History of Nigeria

Colonial rule in Nigeria began in 1900 and ended in 1960. Modern Nigeria's political past is tied to its independence as well as the successive military regimes that plagued the country in its nascent years. Prior to colonial Nigeria, the unified state that is now known as Nigeria was made up of different kingdoms and empires that were distinct from each other but were broadly separated into the centralized system of governance (as observed in the pre-colonial Edo, Hausa, Yoruba, Kanuri and Jukun kingdoms) and the de-centralized system of governance (as observed in the Igbo, Tiv or Idoma pre-colonial societies) (Iweriebor, 1982). Following its independence in 1960, Nigeria was intermittently ruled by successive military for 28 years (Oyewale & Osadola, 2018). These military years span from 1966 to 1979 and again from 1984 to 1999 (Ayua, 2005). These successive military regimes left marks on the fabric of Nigerian society in a number of ways.

Politically, the Nigerian constitution has undergone major changes as the successive regimes (with the exception of two military leaders) each drafted new constitutions before handing over to civilian rule even though they were documented to suspend the constitution upon taking over (Shehu & Jahun, 2018). For example, the two principal constitutions upon which modern Nigeria rests on are the 1979 and 1999 constitutions, both of which were drafted by the military (Ayua, 2005).

Economically, a new regime always meant new policies thereby disrupting whatever policies were put in place by the previous administrations as then head of state, Ibrahim Babagangida's Structural Adjustment program (SAP) suggests (Iweriebor, 1982). The structural adjustment program which was designed to reduce the state control on the economy. This would have been useful for sustainable growth as it was geared towards

establishing a free market economy for every Nigerian (Diamond, 1991). This plan was however suspended after a failed election and the overthrow of Babangida's government by former military Head of State, General Sani Abacha.

Culturally, the Nigerian people became accustomed to these disruptive moments in progress thereby allowing many issues go on unchallenged. Arguably, this culture of acceptance is tied to the country's colonial history as the British colonial masters were documented to have consolidated their powers by gross abuse of human rights (Jauhari, 2011). Additionally, the suspension of the constitution by each military coup upon taking over served to further facilitate the abuse of human rights in the country (ibid).

Indeed, Nigeria's turbulent past has affected progress in all areas of life as frequent disruptions have required more adjustment on the part of the Nigerian people. Return to civilian rule in 1999 continued the culture of abuse witnessed in the colonial era which involved the use of state forces to intimidate and sometimes violate citizens (Ojo, 2014). The earlier civilian government of 1960 which was parliamentary in nature, having a ceremonial Head of State who was the president and an Executive Head of Government, could not be sustained as it created political and economic chaos and led to a rise in ethnic consciousness (Iweriebor, 1982). The chaotic situation in the crisis led to the country's first coup (ibid). This would eventually sharpen the ethnic consciousness in the country that would lead the 3-year civil war in the country. Furthermore, subsequent democratic governments continued the practice of corruption and electoral malpractice that was witnessed in the early democratic governments in the country. This meant that certain groups in society were overlooked and marginalized thereby leading to growing opposition from within the people. Evidence

abounds in the rise of groups like Niger-Delta militants. In more recent times, given the rise in the use of social media, evidence abounds in the hashtags that are trended in Nigerian Twitter space (see next section for a summary of hashtags). For example, the focus of this study, which includes two hashtags, NTYTR and EndSARS are campaigns driven by Nigerian youths who have felt neglected politically, economically and socially. Using the peace journalism (PJ) lens, it can be said that the Nigerian state has maintained a history of being hostile towards its youth.

As Galtung (1996) explains, looking at PJ from the perspective of violent wars and conflicts only restricts the approach because not all conflicts involve physical violence. In *peace by peaceful means*, Galtung approaches the subject of conflict by describing a triangle of violence with clear distinctions among the types of violence. This triangle consists of direct violence whose impact is visible and felt by the ones it harms; structural violence whose effects are indirect and come from a 'social structure' that may stem from politics through repression and economics through exploitation; and cultural violence which can be rooted in 'religion, ideology, language and art, science and law' and legitimizes direct and structural violence. From this visualization, Galtung transfers the approach to violence from just looking at the perspective of victims to the source of violence. He also asserts that peace can be either positive or negative and getting either type of peace is rooted in the conflict triangle as there are political structures that give veto-powers to a select few as opposed to the majority; states with massive defense budgets as opposed to peace-keeping forces with non-military skills; economic structures that favour the top 1 percent as opposed to equitably sharing access etc. This diagnosis of violence and peace is fundamental to understanding PJ. It is also with this understanding that the research argues that Nigeria has politically,

economically and socially been violent towards its youth and this has given rise to numerous issues within the Nigerian state.

2.12.3 Political Protests in Nigeria

The increasing violence and destructive nature of young Nigerians which have been well document in research are said to be connected to their anger and frustration at the state of affairs in the country which negatively impacts on their collective well-being (Abdullahi, Adekeye, & Balogun, 2014). However, their use of social media to form protest communities is visibly changing the political landscape in the country. In Nigeria, a protest against fuel subsidies in January 2012 convincingly demonstrated how young people can use new media to challenge the dominant narrative of state apparatuses of power and to also protest against injustices in Africa in general, in direct contrast to earlier forms of protests which may have turned violent. During the Occupy Nigeria protests, rather than employ the authoritative approach of suppressing social media, the Nigerian government instead, opted to reach out to dissenting youth on social media. Important officials from the government that were personally held responsible for the partial removal of subsidy tried to reason with the youth by offering explanations on their Facebook and Twitter pages (Iwilade, 2013). During this period, civil society organisation (CSOs) like Enough is Enough (EIE) (an organisation that emerged when Nigeria's former President, the Late Yar'adua was said to have returned from a medical trip and didn't appear in public for over a month (Williams-Elegbe, 2015)) emerged as one of the key leaders of the movement.

Although the #BringBackOurGirls movement was more of a humanitarian/social movement than political, it sparked a political debate on the competence of then President Goodluck Jonathan. The campaign is said to have caused his defeat to current President in the 2015 general elections (Shearlaw, 2015). Even Goodluck tried to

appropriate the hashtag in his campaign for re-election by using the hashtag #BringBackGoodluck2015. Typically, this did not sit well with many. The ability of the campaign to spark global advocacy is a convincing example of how online advocacy can translate into offline citizen activity capable of gaining recognition on an international scale (Williams-Elegbe, 2015). The campaign will be remembered as much for its impact on global and national politics as for the events that triggered its conception. This was a campaign that relied on rallying support on social media to pressure the Nigerian and United States governments to fulfil the responsibility of bring the girls back (Khoja-Moolj, 2015).

Although news about the kidnapping hardly made it outside of Nigeria, the use of hashtags to create awareness of the issue made it a trending topic globally. By the time the hashtag gained traction, it topped other international newsmakers during that time, including Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370 (#PrayForMH370), the sunken South Korean ferry MV Sewol (#PrayForSouthKorea), and a squabble between two American pop music celebrities (#WhatJZSaidToSolange). It is suggested that the BBOG hashtag had staying power because it was sparked by a Nigerian Twitterstorm a week after the girls' abduction and got a second wind when Michelle Obama joined the campaign (Ofori-Parku & Moscato, 2018).

2.12.4 Overview of #NotTooYoungToRun

A group of Nigerian youths started the NTYTR campaign on Twitter and Facebook in July of 2016 to address the frustration of youth who felt redundant and at the mercy of an older political class who only seemed to have use for them during elections. The implication here is that the needs and perspectives of the youths were immediately disregarded after elections. The NTYTR campaign received the support of both Senate President Bukola Saraki and Speaker of the House, Yakubu Dogara who voiced their

support to youth growth and development. Additionally, the campaign was boosted when the UN launched the NTYTR global campaign (ibid) on 22nd November 2016. The global launch was initiated by the office of the UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth in partnership with UN Development Programme (UNDP), the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the European Youth Forum (EYF). The campaign was coordinated by Youth Initiative for Advocacy, growth & Advancement (YIAGA). In July of 2017, Nigerian senate passed the NTYTR Bill with 86 senators voting in support. The bill which lowered the age requirement for people seeking elective offices needed at least 24 states to pass it before the president could assent to it (Inyang, 2017). By February of 2018, 24 states had passed the bill (Asadu, 2018). The bill became law on 31st May 2018 after President Buhari assented to the bill. Thus, the age limit for people with intent to run for President was reduced from 40 to 35 years while a 30-year-old could run for governor of his/her state.

2.12.5 Overview of the #EndSARS campaign

The EndSARS movement which started on twitter on December 1, 2017 was started as a protest against police brutality in against Nigerian youth. Just like the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement which arose in response to the numerous killings of unarmed African Americans by white police officers (Clayton, 2018), the End SARS movement has also protested the killing of unarmed Nigerians, extortion, harassment etc. by some members of SARS in Nigeria's police force. As reflected on twitter protests, SARS, whose responsibility it is to detect and prevent robbery has found some of its members carrying out extra-judicial killings, unlawful arrests and harassing young Nigerians.

Prior to the #EndSARS movement, there had never been any movement to protest police brutality in Nigeria. Amnesty International and other civil societies had been

acting as lonely voices. Most civil societies protested isolated cases. Example can be cited from a 2014 report released by AI which highlighted how inhumane force is commonly practiced in Nigeria's military and police force. Unfortunately, AI's lone fight did not yield significant change as torture continues to thrive in various police units across Nigeria and especially in units of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). Besides AI, two other human rights organizations - the Network on Police Reform in Nigeria (NOPRIN) and the Human Rights Social Development and Environmental Foundation (HURSEDF) - have corroborated the claims of the use of torture to force confessions by the NPF. In addition to this, these confessions are used in courts to convict suspects (Amnesty International, 2016).

The problems inherent in the NPF contradict their mandate to enforce the law. The problems include; corrupt practices, brute force, unhealthy relationships with host communities which sometimes leads to more abuse and other administrative problems like poor recruitment processes (Ojo, 2014) – this also includes inadequate training for new recruits - poor working conditions for the NPF (Chinwoku, 2016), inadequate welfare package (Ayoyo, 2018) etc. As such, the unethical execution of responsibilities by some over-zealous officers have done disservice to NPF's reputation and done more harm in society. A few studies have traced this seeming abuse of power by the NPF back to the colonial era (Ikuteyijo & Rotimi, 2014; Ojo, 2014; Akinlabi, 2017; Edet, 2017; Adebisi, 2018). In contrast to the NTYTR campaign however, the EndSARS campaign has not achieved any legislative success yet.

2.13 Review of Related Studies

In a study that used 14 million geo-located tweets (geo-located tweets work best when users within the hashtag in question have a location in their bio) and data on protests

from 16 countries during the Arab revolution, the scholars proved that increased coordination of messages on Twitter using specific hashtags resulted in increased protests the following day. This suggests that for any offline activity to be meaningful, members of any online movement would need to uniformly tweet with specific hashtags. Also, the study was able to prove that the combined efforts of members of the protests influenced the impact of the protests as opposed to the general assumption that the media and elites drive results. From the results of the study, it follows that social media activity bears a mutual connection with “large-scale decentralized coordination of protests” and the relevance of this kind of activity to the future balance of power between citizens and their states (Steinert-Threlkeld, Mocanu, Vespignani, & Fowler, 2015).

In the case of the Chilean student movement however, the results seem to be different. The Chilean student movement is a period of massive student mobilizations that occurred on Facebook during a phase of 7 months where young people led important conversations about the country’s education. Facebook was one of the social media sites that were utilized the most during the mobilizations. Facebook was used to call for protest actions, highlight the achievement of the movement and to draw attention to the opposition. The researchers conducted a content and textual analysis of the Facebook page of the Student federation of the University of Chile to investigate the phenomenon that would be dubbed the ‘most important social protests of Chile’s recent history’. In contrast to the study conducted by (Steinert-Threlkeld, Mocanu, Vespignani, & Fowler, 2015) however, this study found that most of the content published on the Facebook page was produced by traditional media. Because of this fact, the researchers were convinced that “conventional communication strategies of social movements are interrelated with new innovative practices” (Cabalin, 2014).

In their study which used data from news reports, online diaries of participants in the environmental activism in Xiamen and Panyu cities of China, Huang & YIP (2012), suggested a typology of functional significance of the internet to collective action. The research was guided by theories of contentious politics and the proposed typology are; social media as information-disclosure platform; social media as a discussion platform; social media as a mobilization structure; social media as a facilitator in locating external allies.

In another research, the Umbrella movement of Hong Kong in 2014 was studied to determine the role of social media in the mobilization efforts and confrontations that happened within secondary schools in Hong Kong during the movement. However, (Chu, 2018) departed from the usual tradition of focusing on the occupied sites and chose to instead conduct in-depth interviews with students, teachers and principals from four schools. The purpose of this was to ascertain how members used different media to share information, express themselves and mobilize others. The study found that social and cultural contexts still determine how different communication practices are mediated.

Casas and Williams's (2018) study which used existing models of psychology to determine how images functioned in the Black Lives Matter movement, found that the use of images in online campaigns increase the chances of online protests spreading online. They submitted that images that evoked enthusiasm, anger and fear were strong determinants for mobilization while images that evoked sadness were demobilizing.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

The dynamic nature of social media allows multiple doors of entry for academic researchers. To this end, there are various research tools and methods for conducting social media research. For instance, social media giants like Facebook and Twitter offer application programming interface (API) for users who are able to use such to establish patterns of engagement like number of unique users, the geo-location of users participating in a hashtag, consistency in participation, common actions of the protestors (Haperen, Nicholls, & Uitermark, 2018) or even determine key actors in online protests through their out-degree centrality and in-degree centrality (Tremayne, 2014).

Through this, researchers can identify key participants in protests like NTYTR and EndSARS campaigns. Identifying key actors in online campaigns helps researchers categorize the level of influence participants wield within a campaign. It also helps to determine the success of campaigns based on the participants they attract and recruit.

3.1 Research Design

The research design is made to revolve around the research questions. That is to say, the questions that the research seeks to answer determine the research design chosen for the study (Myers, Well, & Lorch, 2010). The research plays an important role for the researcher. It shows the researcher and other researchers how to use the tools in research as well as aid in understanding the research area, reading and interpreting

research results, evaluating your research, improving your knowledge in your chosen field etc. (Mitchell & Jolley, 2010). Furthermore, research builds trust in the process as it helps to draw clear distinctions between science and pseudo-science (ibid).

With the growing use of social media among professionals and non-professionals, social media now serve as a hub of resources for media researchers in terms of access to data and tools for research. As stated in the introduction of this chapter, the dynamic nature of social media has made it possible for multiple doors of entry for research. It is important to note that numerous problems are now captured in hashtags. Some hashtags start movements that will change the political landscape in many societies. For example, the #Occupy protests which have amplified the social inequalities that exists between the 99 percent and the top 1 percent have been well researched and proved to be inspiring change in various countries. Some of these academic endeavours have adopted the qualitative approach (Olson, 2016), quantitative (Wang & Caskey, 2016) or mixed-methods approach (Gleason, 2013). Yet, there are some that have chosen to conduct a social network analysis (SNA) (Tremayne, 2013). Although not fully acknowledged as a methodology in its own right (to the best of the researcher's knowledge), social network analysis uses a set of metrics to perform tasks researchers cannot manually perform themselves by explaining the factors that may influence how ties are formed among netizens or the influence that these ties have on outcomes (Grunspan, Wiggins, & Goodreau, 2014).

Following the research questions which are stated in the introduction of this research, it is clear that a mixed-methods approach would best answer the research questions stated at the introduction of this research. However, since this research focuses on two separate online campaigns with large sets of separate data, the tools provided by

computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) were employed to analyse the data in the first campaign and collate and analyse the data in the second campaign.

3.2 Sample of the Study

A total of 22,064 are used in this study. These tweets were all collected from two hashtags. The hashtags, #NTYTR and #EndSARS were the focus of this study. Twitter was specifically chosen for this study because social media in general have arguably become rallying point for marginalized groups or movements (Martins, 2020). As it highlights leaders' accomplishments and failures, social media has created an avenue where progressive leadership is discussed by various groups (ibid). Thus, tweets posted in the #NTYTR and #EndSARS campaigns are captured in the study. Two separate procedures are used to collect data for the study and these will be extensively discussed in the next section of this chapter. The use of different methods to collect separate data has been previously used in another study (Broek, 2016).

3.3 Instruments and Data Gathering Procedures

As stated in the preceding section of this chapter, data for this study was imported manually from Twitter for #NTYTR and automatically for #EndSARS using NodeXL pro through Excel sheets.

For #NTYTR campaign, data was manually collected via web by using Twitter advanced searched API. After scrolling through the hashtag, the researcher traced all publicly available tweets¹ in the hashtag to the first tweet for the campaign on May, 19th 2016. The keywords, #NotTooYoungToRun and #NTYTR typed in the hashtag

¹ Based on its algorithms and privacy requirements, Twitter does not give access to all tweets. For example, tweets from private accounts are not visible in the search query. Therefore, only publicly available tweets were captured.

box and the date for the search was set from May, 19th 2016 to March, 19th 2019 after the general elections in Nigeria.

This period was specifically chosen for two reasons;

- (i). #NTYTTR is a political movement whose major aim is to increase the chances of Nigerian youths to run for elective offices in Nigeria by reducing the age restriction required to run for different offices.
- (ii). Since the movement is a political one and successfully resulted in a constitutional amendment in 2018 whereby certain age barriers were removed for youths who wanted to run for elective offices, it was important to collect tweets up to show this progression.

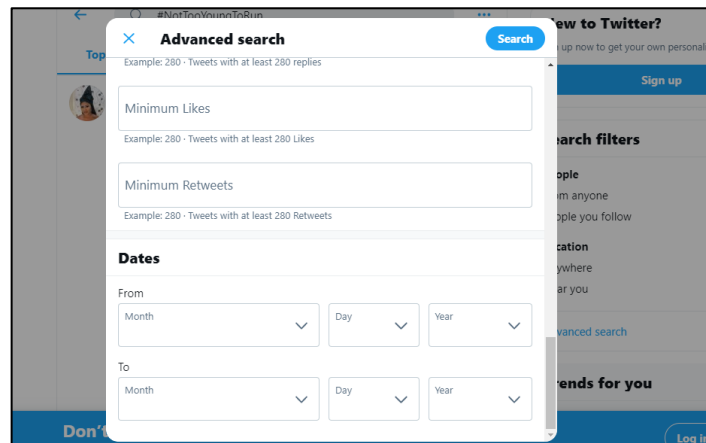


Figure 3.1: Snapshot of Twitter search API

After running the search, a Google extension, Fullpage screen capture² was used to capture and save to the researcher's system for archiving and analysis. A total of 4064 tweets were collected from the #NTYTTR hashtag. These tweets were copied into an Excel file to be used in subsequent analysis. To collect data for #EndSARS, the

² Chrome store provides a range of extensions that can be added to a user's chrome extensions tab. For this research, the Fullpage screen capture was used to save the publicly available tweets manually accessed on Twitter.

researcher chose a different path by using NodeXL programme to collect and store the tweets. The use of a computer assisted software implies that the dates for data collection are restricted to 9 days with a maximum of 18,000 tweets (SMR foundation, 2016). NodeXL has been employed in diverse academic studies (Ahmed & Lugovic, 2019) to collect, study and publish datasets (Himmelboim & Smith, 2017). Because of the volume of texts accessed via the programme, the data was collected on Tuesday, the 20th October, 2020. It will be noticed that two different procedures were employed to collect the data for the two studies conducted. It therefore becomes necessary to justify this. First, both campaigns occurred at different periods. While it was important to trace data for the first study to its origin due to the context and goal of the campaign, this was not a necessary element of the second study. Also, NodeXL, which was used to collect data for the second study only collects data as far as 9 days prior to the actual date of collection (SMR Foundation, 2016). This is due to Twitter privacy settings which protects the data of its users. While NodeXL was sufficient for the second study because of the recency of the #EndSARS protests in October, 2020, it was not sufficient to collect data for #NotTooYoungToRun as it cannot expand its search date to 2016 when the campaign began and 2019 when it ended. It is worthy to also note that while there are still some users that tweet with the #NotTooYoungToRun hashtag, their twitter presence is not significant enough to make up a comprehensive data for research.

The NodeXL application integrates Excel features to collect and store data off social media (Smith, 2013). The researcher performed this action by selecting the Twitter search list option and then typing #EndSARS in the search box. Afterwards, the basic network of users in the campaign was imported to provide the option of accessing who was replied to or mentioned and then the programme was authorized to run the search

and automatic analysis. The report automatically generated by the programme was used for the study. See the interface for importing the basic network below;

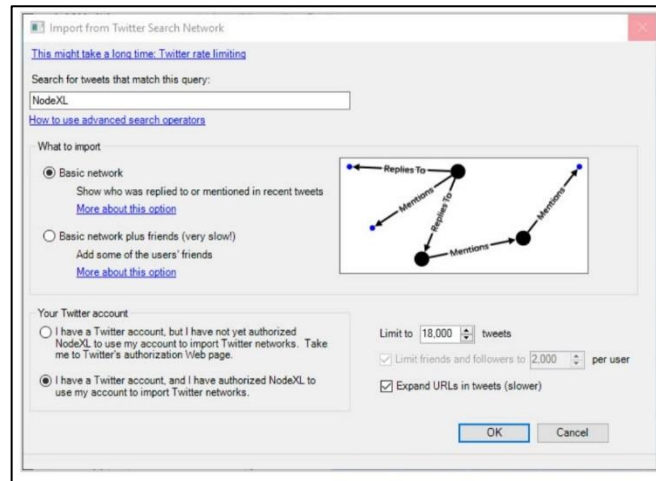


Figure 3.2: NodeXL search interface

After running your search, NodeXL lets you send your data to the graph gallery to be publicly accessed. From the gallery, the user is able to download the tweets collected for the study in Excel file along with the graph cluster of the networked action in the data (see example below);

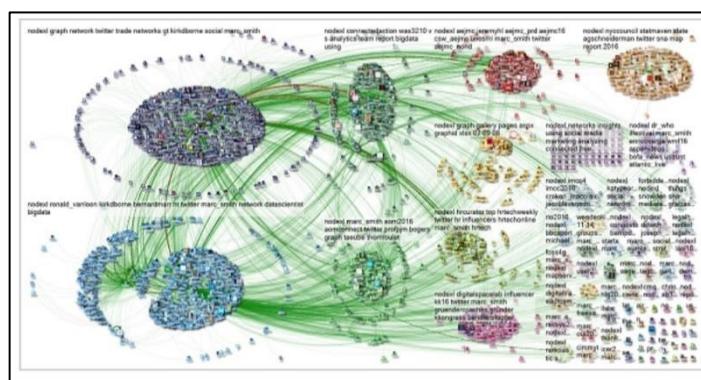


Figure 3.4: Interactive graph showing networked action in NodeXL data

The graph cluster shows all the users captured in a particular data set and the activity they are engaged in (tweeting, retweeting, liking) or feedback their activity generates

(being replied to, mentioned, liked or retweeted). This makes NodeXL a crucial programme for determining connected action in a hashtag. Additionally, the software offers benefits for social media researchers by utilizing social network analysis to identify keywords used in an online movement, the relevant actors in online campaigns, establish patterns of exchange among actors in an online campaign, influential users in a movement on Twitter etc. (Matei, 2011). For academic scholars looking into online social movements, NodeXL can help answer questions about the influences of participants in an online social movement and their social roles (Hansen, et al., 2011) by analysing the network structure (Leeuw, Browne, & Gleeson, 2018). This is accessed from the report that is generated after the analysis of the programme. In the report, users are able to access metrics like; vertices³; unique edges⁴; edges with duplicates⁵; mentions; retweets; mentions in retweets; tweets; replies to tweets; self-loops⁶; connected components⁷; single-vertex connected components⁸; maximum vertices in a connected component; maximum geodesic distance⁹.

3.4 Procedure for Analyzing Data Used in the Study

Since the study employs the CAQDAS, it is important to clarify how the processes that will be taken to analyse its data. After data retrieval and archiving, the excel files in which the tweets are stored are converted into CVS and exported them from NodeXL

³ A vertices count refers to the number of users captured in the data obtained

⁴ Unique edge refers to the number of times where multiple connections between a user and another user are counted only once

⁵ Multiple connections between users

⁶ Reciprocal relationship between users

⁷ Number of separate sets of connected vertices

⁸ Number of vertices with zero connections

⁹ A geodesic is chain or path composed of edges that link two vertices

into a computer-assisted content analytical tool called, Leximancer. Concepts emerge based on their frequency of occurrence while the most prominent concept emerges as the theme of a cluster (Cretchley, Rooney, & Gallois, 2010). The software allows the user to rename themes, a feature the researcher utilized to appropriately summarize the concepts within clusters. Clusters are formed when concepts embedded within sentences close to each other re-occur (Cretchley, Rooney, & Gallois, 2010). This is enabled by the software's conceptual and relational analysis where the programme extracts its own thesaurus for terms in the text thereby removing the need for coding and also measures how much some concepts occur together. See the first step in running a Leximancer analysis below;

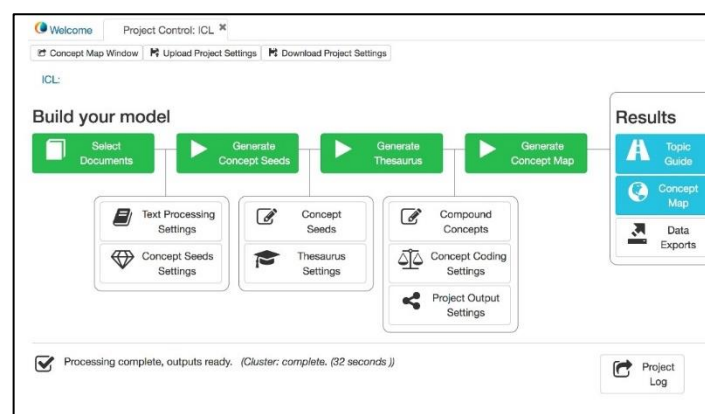


Figure 3.5: Leximancer interface for uploading and analyzing data

The software allows the user to manually modify, merge or delete certain concepts to avoid over-saturation of similar concepts. This was done after generating and examining our concept seeds. Since #NTYTR and #EndSARS are the hashtags under investigation, it was expected that these hashtags would be included in every tweet collected. As such, these hashtags were removed from the concept list. Additionally, other hashtags that were included in the posts were removed. Next, similar concepts

were merged to reduce redundancy of concepts. See example of how this is done below;

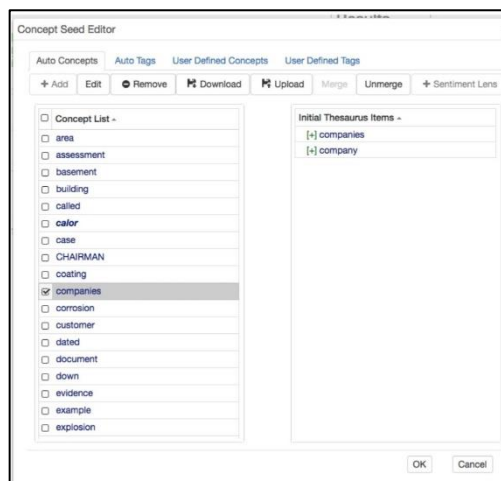


Figure 3.6: Thesaurus items of initial Leximancer analysis

Since Leximancer typically separate words to look at their occurrence, concepts like young men or young boys were separated. The researcher then followed up on these concepts and merged them with youths to form a singular concept after which these concepts were modified to stand as the word young. Various everyday words which emerged as concepts (this, that, or etc.) were eliminated from the concept list. This is an acceptable practice in Leximancer analysis as it allows the user to remove irrelevant or distracting concepts (Thomas, 2014). See how this can be done below;

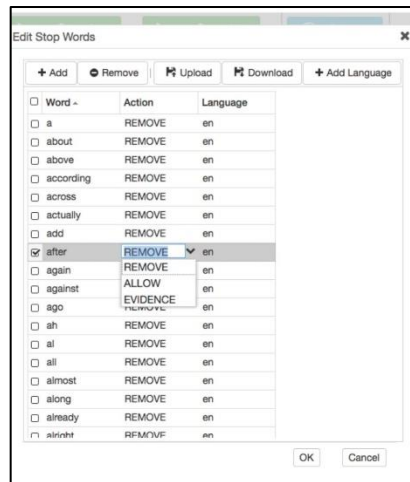


Figure 3.7: Illustration of concepts coding in Leximancer data

3.5 Validity and Reliability

The use of Twitter application programming interface (API) to harvest data for the research allows the researcher to harvest data on social networking and microblogging platforms like Twitter. This will not only help the researcher to perform a qualitative analysis of the data that has been generated but it also enables the researcher to visualize the connective patterns in networked actions like #NotTooYoungToRun and #EndSARS (Lomborg & Bechmann, 2014). APIs are however limited to publicly available information and there is no way of verifying the accuracy of all the information tweeted by participants in a networked action (ibid). Also, lurkers who happen to be the most dominant group on social media (van Dijck, 2009) are not captured in the data. This therefore restricts the claim of generalization. It is equally important to note that Twitter API shows the “what” and not the “why” in users’ activities but this is not a problem for the current study as the RQs of the research are restricted to the “what” and “how” in the networked actions in both campaigns. Furthermore, since the analysis of the data is performed with the use of Leximancer and since the concept list that the software automatically produces is from the text imported into it, this resolves the issue of reliability (Angus, Rintel, & Wiles, 2013)

because the researcher does not interfere with the outcome of the list that emanate from the data.

3.6 Ethical Concerns

Rivers & Lewis (2014) present ethical issues that researchers engaged in social media research must consider. These issues have to do with transparency in the data collection process, the context in which users shared their messages which must be respected by the research, privacy matters whereby all data that can be used to identify users must be protected, requiring the approval of an institutional review board for studies that require data collection from only a few individuals. Some of the ethical concerns in Twitter research include the ability to precisely locate a user due to inclusion of geospatial data that show coordinates from which a Tweet was posted (Ahmed, Bath, & Demartini, 2017). This raises privacy concerns as well as issues of informed consent (Weinhardt, 2021). I submit that Twitter privacy settings which inform users of the possible use of their data with Twitter partners and other APIs (Twitter, 2021) settles the issue of informed consent. However, the study follows the recommendations given by Rivers & Lewis (2014) that data that could expose tweet authors should not be include in research. This not only respects their privacy but also, since their identity is not given, it also eliminates the need for informed consent.¹⁰. Furthermore, the data used in this research will also not be used by the author of this study for any other reason besides academic purposes. Also, where tweets are directly used, the context in which they were tweeted was respected by the authors as recommended in Rivers & Lewis (2014).

¹⁰ The only users identified in this study are elected officials.

Chapter 4

DATA ANALYSIS

This chapter presents results from the Leximancer analysis that was performed on the two studies conducted in this project. It also includes the discussion of the findings from the analysis. Qualitative answers are provided for the research questions raised in the first chapter of the study. Due to the computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) used to collect the data for this research, some quantitative elements will be presented but these are only used to show the expanse of the data collected.

Because this study conducts an investigation on two distinct campaigns, the chapter is divided into two main sections with sub-sections assigned to each main section. In the first section of the study which begins at 4.1, the reader will find the presentation of results for the first study. This is accompanied by Leximancer and SPSS analysis of the data. While Leximancer provides a visualized map of the data, SPSS presents it in a simplified manner for the reader to understand. This is to enable the reader arrive at the same conclusion that the researcher does. After presenting the results, the chapter goes further to discuss each theme separately under section 4.2. This is because Leximancer is set up in a way that warrants this endeavour. The chapter then proceeds to answer the research questions for the first study in section 4.3.

Presentation of results for the second study begins at section 4.4. and it follows the same pattern that is applied in the first study with a discussion of themes following at section 4.5 while attempts to answer the research questions are carried out in section 4.6. Discussion of results is presented in section 4.7. In this section, attempts are made to unify both studies irrespective of their differences in order to show their relevance to the theory of connective action.

4.1 Presentation of Results in the First Study

As explained in the second chapter of this work, Bennett & Segerberg (2012) proposed a three-part classification where they describe three types of behaviours witnessed in digitally transformed social movements; ‘self-organizing, organizationally enabled and organizationally brokered networks’. For the first study, the elements of the organisationally enabled networks will be elicited. This category is a hybrid model that meshes elements of the self-organising and organisationally brokered networks together. In other words, it includes types of action witnessed in old collective actions and actions witnessed in loosely connected networks like the social media to comprehensively describe how connective action takes place. As suggested by Bennett & Segerberg, this hybrid model of connective action is characterised by loosely coordinated action by an organisation. In the case of the NTYTR however, the action is more strongly coordinated by YIAGA as explained in the second chapter of this study than loosely. It is important to stress that the essence of the hybrid model is to show how elements of collective action can be found in contemporary social movements like NTYTR. The hybrid model also consists of organisations performing such activities as providing custom and commercial support for social technologies needed for any action within the movement; inclusive conversations; moderation of personal expression on digital networks; relegation of organisations to the background.

Other hashtags within the NTYTR dataset include; #ReadyToRun, #NigeriaDecides¹¹, #YouthWhoLead etc.

Against the backdrop of this information, the study will provide a visual picture of the analysis performed for this study. In the analysis for NTYTR, eight (8) themes and fifty-three (53) concepts¹² were elicited from tweets collated for the study. The themes are; young, elections, constitutional reform, age, gerontocracy, vote, presidential and lawmakers. The summary of the themes is presented in the table below with the bar chart following at figure 4.1 while the relationship of the themes and concepts is presented in Leximancer map in figure 4.2. Each theme will be separately assessed qualitatively.

¹¹ #NigeriaDecides became a trending topic within the NTYTR hashtag during the elections in Nigeria. It was important to capture this because it was relevant to the research.

¹² As explained in the methodology chapter, concepts appear based on their semantic relevance and frequency in the data. These concepts in turn are grouped in clusters according to their semantic connection to each other. The clusters which appear as themes in the data provide context for the analysis. For example, the theme 'gerontocracy' is connected by other such concepts as 'old', 'corrupt', 'competent', 'leadership', 'movement', 'legislators'. The concepts are clustered together under the theme because according to the CAQDAS used for the analysis, each concept with mentioned in relation to each other therefore their association with other is significant. As a result, the Leximancer programs conducted the analysis based on the frequency of concepts as they appeared in the Twitter data. Furthermore, concepts are associated by various variations of words. For example, the concept 'old' in this study was also identified by other terms in the data like 'men/class of 1966', 'sick', 'stale', 'outdated' etc. This suggests that the frequency of concepts can be expected to be above the number of data collected.

Table 4.1: Summary of concepts frequency in Leximancer data for NTYTR

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Young	3370	27.3	27.3	27.3
	Elections	2123	17.2	17.2	44.4
	Constitutional reform	1805	14.6	14.6	59.1
	Age	1761	14.2	14.2	73.3
	Gerontocracy	1488	12.0	12.0	85.3
	Vote	1224	9.9	9.9	95.2
	Presidential	444	3.6	3.6	98.8
	Lawmakers	144	1.2	1.2	100.0
	Total	12359	100.0	100.0	

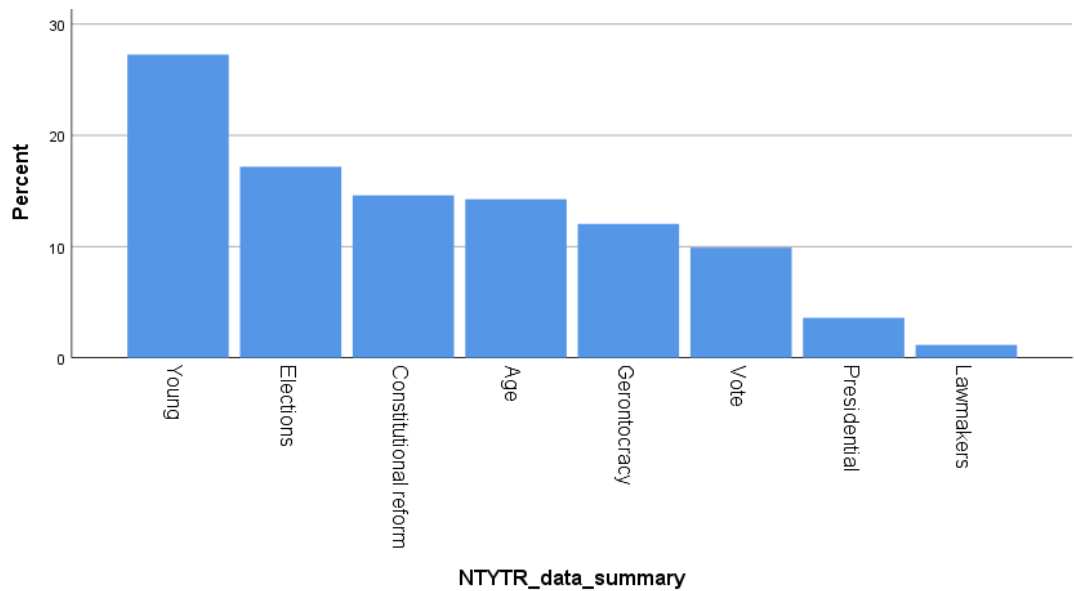


Figure 4.1: Bar chart showing data summary in Leximancer analysis

The synopsis of the results shown in Table 4.1 reveals that the most dominant theme in the analysis is “young” ((27.3%), followed by elections (17.2%) which is also followed by “constitutional reform.” (14.6%). The theme of “age” (14.2%) is followed by “gerontocracy” (12%) which is also followed by “vote” (9.9%). The last two themes are “presidential” (3.6%) and “lawmakers” (1.2%). Dominance is determined by the number of hits that concepts within a theme and the relationship they have with

concepts in other themes/clusters. Leximancer enables the researcher to view the relationship among concepts in an entire data. This relationship is illustrated in below;

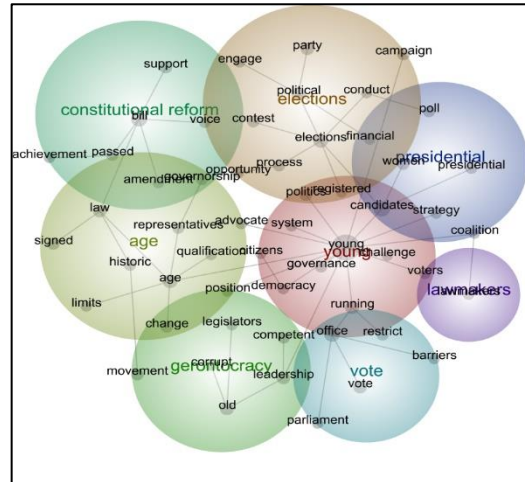


Figure 4.2: Map showing relationship among themes and concepts in NTYTR
Leximancer analysis

In the map above, all 53 concepts that emerged from the analysis are spread out across the clusters. From the map, one can see that there is no single concept that does not connect to another concept in another part of the map. As such, it illustrates the relationship among themes as each concept is linked to another concept in a separate cluster. This relationship is further illustrated by the overlapping of concepts within themes. As a result of this interrelationship, the themes are related. Thus, the themes that emerge are used to answer the research questions.

As a reminder, the research questions for this research are;

1. What issues challenge the youths from accessing formal political, economic and social opportunities as expressed by Nigerian youths on Twitter in the NTYTR and #EndSARS campaigns?
2. How are youths using Twitter to campaign against perceived challenges in Nigeria's political, economic and social life in the NTYTR and #EndSARS campaigns?

3. What suggestions are offered by youths in the NTYTR and #EndSARS campaigns on Twitter on how to increase their participation in Nigeria's political, economic and social life?

4.2 Discussion of Themes in the First Study

4.2.1 Young

Young emerged as the most dominant theme in the data with 3370 hits. These hits not only stem from the number of times the concepts appear in the data but they are also determined by the connection its concepts have with other concepts in the entire data. Since NTYTR's key message is about youth increased participation, it was expected that it would emerge as a relevant topic in the analysis. Within the theme, there are such concepts as "registered" (1.4%), "politics" (3.1%), "system" (4.5%), "challenge" (8%), "running" (10.2%), "governance" (2.7%), "democracy" (20.5%), "young" (34.5%), "voters" (3.9%), "candidates" (11.1%). It then follows that the most relevant concept within this theme is 'young' which has a frequency of 1164 tweets thereby giving it 34.5% overall. The next most relevant concept in the theme is 'democracy' which has a frequency of 692 thereby having 20.5% in the overall data set. This is also followed by 'candidates' which has a frequency of 374 and a cumulative of 11.1% in the data. The least relevant concept within this theme is the concept 'registered' which has a frequency of 48 and an overall percentage of 1.4%. A visual illustration of the theme is presented below;



Figure 4.3: Concepts in young

Table 4.2: Frequency and Percentage of Concepts in young

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Politics	105	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Registered	48	1.4	1.4	4.5
	Young	1164	34.5	34.5	39.1
	Challenge	269	8.0	8.0	47.1
	Governance	90	2.7	2.7	49.7
	Running	344	10.2	10.2	59.9
	Democracy	692	20.5	20.5	80.5
	System	152	4.5	4.5	85.0
	Voters	132	3.9	3.9	88.9
	Candidates	374	11.1	11.1	100.0
	Total	3370	100.0	100.0	

4.2.2 Elections

After the theme young, “elections” emerged as the second most relevant theme in the data with 2123 hits. This was also to be expected because the movement was about youths being given equal opportunities to campaign and run for elective offices across Nigeria and Africa in general. Besides, the campaign ran from 2016 until 2019 which happened to be an election year in Nigeria. It was therefore consistent with events in the country. The theme consists of such concepts as “party” (14.5%), “engage” (10.9%), “campaign” (10.3%), “political”, “conduct”, “contest” (23.4%), “elections”

(21.1%), “financial” (9.6%), “process” (5.6%), “opportunity” (4.7%). The most dominant concept is ‘contest’ which occupies 21.1% (n=496). Although not expected, this is understandable because tweets that are connected by this concept discussed the need for youths to participate by contesting in elections. Thus, the concept is connected to the theme. Following suit, the concept of ‘elections’ occupied 21.1% (n=447) and it is also followed by ‘party’ which has 14.5% (n=308). This concept is connected by tweets that made references to elections in relation to joining political parties or having youth oriented political parties that would represent the ideas and cater to the needs of young people. The concept, ‘engage’ which is connected by tweets that discussed the need to engage in political conversations or with the political system in general, has an overall percentage of 10.9% (n=232). The least concept in this theme is ‘opportunity’ which is connected by tweets that discuss the need for more political opportunities for the youths. The concept has 4.7% with a frequency of n = 99. One can also see two other concepts that emerged in the young theme. This is so because of the close interaction the concepts have with each other. As such, they occupy the dark space in between themes to show that they could be relevant to either theme. A clearer illustration is presented below;

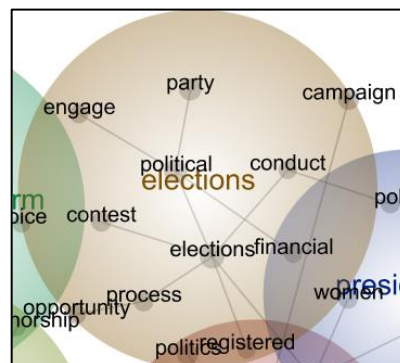


Figure 4.4: Concepts in elections

Table 4.3: Frequency and percentage of concepts in elections

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Party	308	14.5	14.5	14.5
	Engage	232	10.9	10.9	25.4
	Contest	496	23.4	23.4	48.8
	Elections	447	21.1	21.1	69.9
	Financial	204	9.6	9.6	79.5
	Campaign	218	10.3	10.3	89.7
	Process	119	5.6	5.6	95.3
	Opportunity	99	4.7	4.7	100.0
	Total	2123	100.0	100.0	

4.2.3 Constitutional Reform

Once again, this theme is relevant to the goal of the NTYTR campaign. The consistent aim of the NTYTR campaign was the need for youths to be given a fair chance to be involved in national matters. With an age requirement that restricts them from fully participating, this could not be achieved without a constitutional amendment. Seeing as this target was achieved in 2018 (see chapter 2, section 2.1.1), the emergence of constitutional reform as a theme in the data was expected because any success of the movement depended on a constitutional review. With 1805 hits, this theme emerged as the third in terms of relevance. It consists concepts like, “support” (18.2%), “bill” (29.8%), “passed” (7.7%), “achievement” (5.4%), “amendment” (24.8%), “voice” (10.1%), and “governorship” (4%). The most important concept in this theme is ‘bill’ which largely discusses the age reduction bill that was the highlight of the entire campaign. It has 29.8% (n=537) and is followed by ‘amendment’ which has 24.8% (n=448) and is characterized by the discourse around constitutional review which is a central idea in this theme. ‘Support’ is the third most relevant concept in the theme with 18.2% (n=328) and it is largely connected by tweets that discuss the need for young people to support the campaign. After support, ‘voice’ which has 10.1%

(n=182) relevant within the theme continues the appeal to other young people to support the campaign by lending their voice either by sharing, posting or liking the message to increase engagement online. The least most important concept in the theme is 'governorship' which has an overall 4% (n=73) and it is characterized by tweets that show young people expressing their desire to run for governorship or supporting other young candidates running for the office. The visual illustration of this theme is presented below;



Figure 4.5: Concepts in elections

Table 4.4: Frequency and percentage of concepts in constitutional reform

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Support	328	18.2	18.2	18.2
	Bill	537	29.8	29.8	47.9
	Achievement	98	5.4	5.4	53.4
	Passed	139	7.7	7.7	61.1
	Amendment	448	24.8	24.8	85.9
	Governorship	73	4.0	4.0	89.9
	Voice	182	10.1	10.1	100.0
	Total	1805	100.0	100.0	

4.2.4 Age

Youthfulness is defined by age. As Oinas et al (2018) show, due to the delayed transition that youths experience in Africa, the definition of youth in Africa differs from the general description given by WHO. A youth in Africa is therefore anyone between the age of 15 and 35. Given that age requirement was a hindrance for youths as seen in the previous theme, its emergence as a theme with 1759 hits is of importance. The theme consists concepts like “law” (13.4%), “signed” (8%), “historic” (6.2%), “age” (9.4%), “citizens” (29%), “representatives” (5.6%), “advocate” (7.9%), “qualification” (5.1%), “limits” (5%), “position” (10.5%). In this theme, the most dominant concept is unexpectedly ‘citizens’ and it has an overall percentage of 29% (n=510). The concept is connected by tweets which demand that young people be treated as citizens in the country. The next most dominant concept is ‘law’ which has 13.4% (n=235). It is connected by tweets which show an understanding of the need for legal framework that backs the demands of young people in the campaign. ‘Position’ which is the third most dominant concept within the theme has 10.5% (n=184) and it speaks to the need for young people to position themselves in government matters. The concept ‘age’ which was expected to be the most dominant in this this theme failed to accomplish this as it appears as the fourth most dominant concept with 9.4% (n=166). Once again, one can see the meshing of two concepts “amendment” and “governorship” in this theme. Both concepts settle between constitutional reform and age to show the connection between the needed constitutional reform and the age reduction that was approved by Nigeria’s senate and signed by the president in 2018. Below is the visual illustration of the theme;

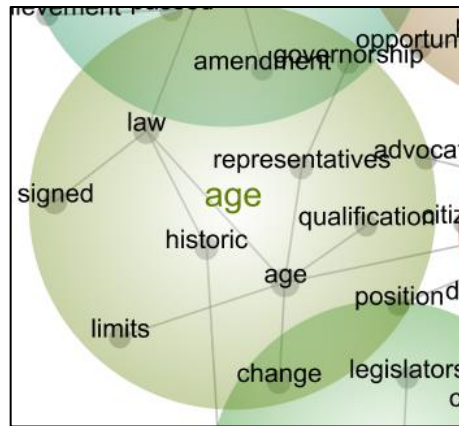


Figure 4.6: Concepts in age

Table 4.5: Frequency and percentage of concepts in age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Law	235	13.4	13.4	13.4
	Signed	141	8.0	8.0	21.4
	Limits	88	5.0	5.0	26.4
	History	109	6.2	6.2	32.6
	Age	166	9.4	9.4	42.0
	Representatives	98	5.6	5.6	47.6
	Advocate	139	7.9	7.9	55.5
	Qualification	89	5.1	5.1	60.5
	Citizens	510	29.0	29.0	89.5
	Position	184	10.5	10.5	100.0
	Total	1759	100.0	100.0	

4.2.5 Gerontocracy

Gerontocracy which is termed as a type of system that marginalizes a younger population in favour of an older political class emerged as a theme in the analysis. The core value of the NTYTR campaign is a stance against the marginalization of youths which favours a repeated cycle of an older political class. The emergence of gerontocracy as a theme with 1490 hits is consistent with the message. Concepts like “legislators” (16.2%), “competent” (14.3%), “corrupt” (26.2%), “leadership” (13%), “old” (14%), and “movement” (8.6%) emerge within this theme. We can see “change”

(7.7%) settling between the theme and the preceding theme, **age**. The most dominant concept in this theme is ‘corrupt’ with 26.2% (n=390). The tweets that connect this concept carry an accusatory tone that suggest that the older political class are mostly corrupt. The second most dominant concept is ‘legislators’ which has 16.2% (242) and it is largely connected by tweets that address the need for legislators to widen the political class by reducing the age requirement. ‘Competent’ which addresses the need for competent leaders and also includes tweets that denigrate the older political class as incompetent has 14.3% (n=213). This is followed by the concept ‘old’ which was expected to be the dominant concept within this theme but instead emerged as the fourth concept in terms of frequency has 14% (n=208). The least most dominant concept within this theme is ‘change’ and it has 7.7% (n=115). Below is the graphical illustration of the theme;

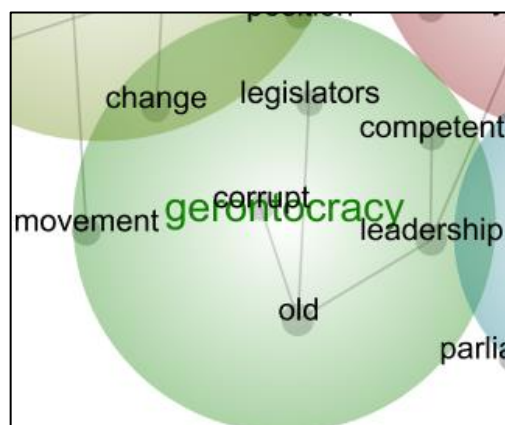


Figure 4.7: Concepts in gerontocracy

Table 4.6: Frequency and percentage of concepts in gerontocracy

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Change	115	7.7	7.7	7.7
	Legislators	242	16.2	16.2	24.0
	Movement	128	8.6	8.6	32.6
	Old	208	14.0	14.0	46.5
	Leadership	194	13.0	13.0	59.5

Competent	213	14.3	14.3	73.8
Corrupt	390	26.2	26.2	100.0
Total	1490	100.0	100.0	

4.2.6 Vote

As stated previously in this chapter, the data for NTYTR spans from 2016 to 2019 with 2019 being an election year in Nigeria. As such, voting matters were featured in the conversation. Vote therefore emerged as a theme with 1224 hits. It consists of concepts like “office”, which is unexpectedly the overall dominant concept as with 46.5% (n=569) and refers to the need to vote for young people that are running for office. The second most dominant concept in the theme cluster is ‘vote’ which has 18.1% (n=222). This concept was expected to be the dominant within this cluster but the results contradict this expectation. The third most dominant concept within the cluster is ‘barriers’ which is connected by tweets that discuss the need to remove the barriers that hinder youths from running for office. This concept has an overall percentage of 14.7% (n=180). In terms of dominance, this concept is closely followed by the concept ‘restrict’ which has 13.1% (n=160) and is a connective distribution of tweets that discuss the issues that restrict youths from the voting process. The least concept within the cluster is ‘parliament’ which has 7.6% (n=93). The theme also shares two concepts, “office” (46.5%) and “restrict” (13.1%) with the first theme, *young*.

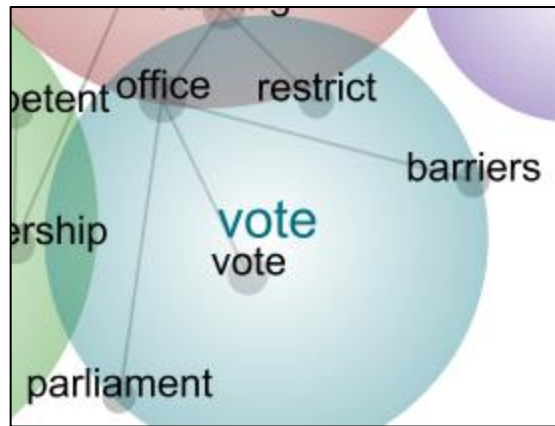


Figure 4.8: Concepts in vote

Table 4.7: Frequency and percentage of concepts in vote

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Office	569	46.5	46.5	46.5
	Restrict	160	13.1	13.1	59.6
	Barriers	180	14.7	14.7	74.3
	Vote	222	18.1	18.1	92.4
	Parliament	93	7.6	7.6	100.0
	Total	1224	100.0	100.0	

4.2.7 Presidential

With 444 hits, the presidential theme shares concepts with two other themes within the map. like ‘strategy’ which is the most dominant concept and has about 42.1% (187). This is followed by the concept “poll” which discusses all matters of elections like polling units and has a percentage 27% (n=120). The third most dominant concept in the cluster is coalition’ is connected by tweets that support the idea of an alliance among youths across the country and it has a percentage of 20.3% (n=90). The concept ‘presidential’ has a percentage of ‘6.1% (n=27) and it is connected by tweets that discuss the presidential elections in 2019. The least concept within the cluster is “women” which has 4.5% (n=20). One can see the overlapping of “financial” from the

theme of elections and an overlapping of “candidates” from the theme of young. The figure below exemplifies this relationship;

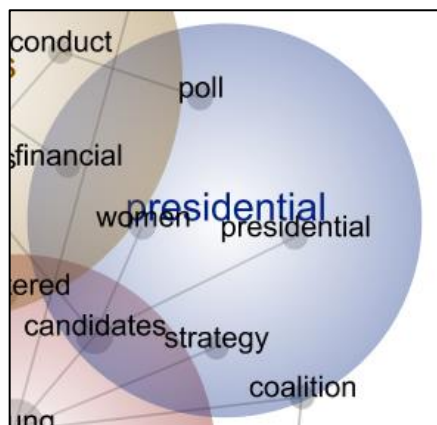


Figure 4.9: Concepts in presidential

Table 4.8: Frequency and percentage of concepts in presidential

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Poll	120	27.0	27.0	27.0
	Presidential	27	6.1	6.1	33.1
	Women	20	4.5	4.5	37.6
	Strategy	187	42.1	42.1	79.7
	Coalition	90	20.3	20.3	100.0
	Total	444	100.0	100.0	

4.2.8 Lawmakers

Lawmakers is the last and most insignificant theme to emerge from the data with 144 (100%) hits. However, its emergence in the data exemplifies the processes the campaigners used to realize their goal. As it has been consistently maintained in this chapter, the goal of the NTYTR movement was to create a level playing ground for youths in Nigeria’s political processes and the pragmatic way to achieve this was by addressing the age restrictions that limited the youths from fully participating in the political processes. Seeing as this type of change can only be addressed

constitutionally, it was to be expected that lawmakers would become an important staple in the campaign because they handle constitutional matters. Therefore, the emergence of lawmakers in the analysis even though it stands as a single entity within the cluster is consistent with goal of the campaign.

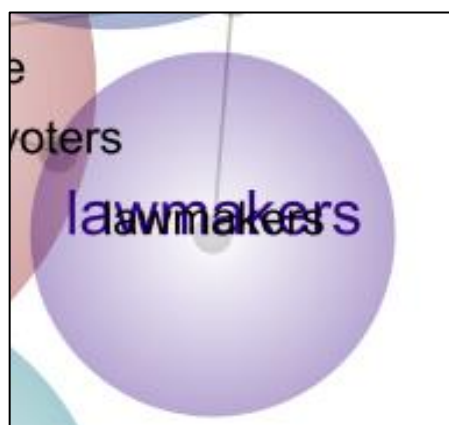


Figure 4.10: Concepts in lawmakers

Table 4.9: Frequency and percentage of concepts in lawmakers

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Lawmakers	144	100.0	100.0	100.0

4.3 Answering the Research Questions in the First Study

4.3.1 Challenges that Prevent Nigerian Youths from Accessing Political, Economic and Social Opportunities as Shown in NTYTR Data

To answer RQ1, concepts within elections, young and gerontocracy will be culled to show the perceived challenges described by participants of the NTYTR on Twitter. As shown in the second chapter of this study (see section 2.6), marginalization is sustained by depriving certain groups in society access to political, economic, social and health resources thereby increasing their risk of underdevelopment (Hall & Carlson, 2016). Yet, the legitimization of a democratic system and its survival depends on participation

of all groups especially young people (Snell, 2010; Brady, Chaskin, & McGregor, 2020) as their involvement ensures generational replacement (Sloam, 2011). As Akor (2017) noted, there is great disparity between youths in Africa in the 1960s and present-day youths in Africa. While the former did not have to struggle for economic opportunities, present-day youths in Africa have to deal with restricted access to opportunities that would propel them into becoming adults. This is because of the weak institutions that control the power and economic structures (Gavin, 2007). In the analysis, concepts in the map like “financial”, “politics”, “system”, “corrupt”, “old”, “challenge”, “restrict” etc elucidate the challenges that members of the movements believe limit them from fully accessing political, economic and social opportunities in Nigeria. As explained in the third chapter of this work, these concepts emanate from the thesaurus generated by Leximancer from the tweet dataset that is inputted into the program. Tweets within this category have tried to explain why youths seem impeded. A sample of tweets that are classified under this category are presented in this section. In line with the ethical concerns discussed in the third chapter of this study (see section 3.5), the identity of users is not used in this work. Each tweet presented will be selected from the cluster where it appears in the Leximancer cluster. The sampled tweets are referenced to show the arguments made by members of the movement about the challenges that impede their progress in the Nigerian state. The sampled tweets are presented below;

User1:

That’s what everyone’s overlooking: The financial muscle needed to run a campaign in Naija¹³ is huge, how many young people can afford that?

Also, another user2 tweets the report:

¹³ Naija – the affectionate name given to Nigeria by its youthful demography

Inadequate funding pose threat to youth campaign success at polls.

To elucidate the point from user2 above, a tweet from user3 is sampled to summarize how expensive it is to run for elective offices:

Nigeria is the poverty capital of the world but the ruling party's presidential nomination form goes for N55 million.

Even though the cost of politics in Nigeria is too high for young people, User4 is optimistic:

The benefits of laws like #NotTooYoungToRun Act may not be manifest immediately. People are ridiculing it because of the price of nomination forms and trolling it with #NotTooPoorToRun. But one day, some young rich genius with plenty money will use it to his/her advantage.

On the issue of gerontocracy, user5 below references the 2019 election violence where some lost their lives to show support for the movement;

The #Elections2019 are almost over, the old politicians still occupying most of the offices while we the #youths are counting our losses, attending the funerals of our brothers & sisters, visiting our friends. When will we occupy major political seats? We are #Nottooyoungtorun.

User6:

Whether **#NotTooYoungToRun** or **#TooOldToRule**, the thing is that the present generation of politicians are ensuring they get the people divided whilst they discuss their sharing hustle¹⁴ irrespective of their party lines.

The sampled tweets emphasize how financial matters are perceived as challenging for youths in Nigeria and how this challenge has limited them. Also, this concept is

¹⁴ Sharing hustle in this context refers to the looting and sharing of Nigeria's resources among the political class to the detriment of average Nigerians as the tweet implies. The concept of corruption in the gerontocracy cluster stems from ideas that are related to this.

connected to the power that Nigeria's older political class have as users 5 and 6 suggest in their tweets.

4.3.2 Twitter Campaign by Youths in the NTYTR Movement Against Perceived Challenges

RQ2 seeks to determine the ways in which members of NTYTR used Twitter to address the challenges that are believed to impede their political, economic and social advancement. Although there have been concerns about youths seeming disinterest in politics globally (Brewer & Cao, 2016; Carpini, 2014; Holt, Shehata, Strömbäck & Ljungberg, 2013; Boulianne & Vowles, 2012), there also signs that youths are finding alternative forms of participation like the use of digital technologies to engage in activities like signing petitions, boycotts, hashtag tweeting etc. (Sloam, 2011; Abdu, Bahtiar, & Muda, 2016; Castells, 2015; Collins, 2015; Kelly, Campbell, Harrison, Hickey, 2018). In NTYTR campaign, there is evidence to support this assertion. This evidence is established in the analysis where concepts like “campaign”, “strategy”, “running”, “candidates”, “registered”, “engage”, and “advocate” are used to show the activities geared towards this commitment. Tweets in this category express the need for youths to have strategies for campaign, run for office, register to vote, engage with lawmakers to advocate for constitutional amendment and also advocating or campaigning for other young candidates. Such activities show the democratic potential of the internet as Breindl (2010) hopes. Sampled tweets are used to illustrate this;

User7:

Our nation needs the energy and innovation of our young people. Hence, the next phase of the #NotTooYoungToRun must be young people registering to vote, collecting their #PVCs, running for office and/or working to get their peers elected into both legislative and executive offices.

User8:

Very interesting shred! More so the Nigerian **#NotTooYoungToRun** campaign! I agree w/ you, let youth inclusion not be just about the talk but lets actually make it a meaningful engagement. Let's stop designating youth roles but rather let's partner with them all thru! **#YouthWhoLead**.

User9:

Shouting and ranting on social media will not rescue Nigerian youths from being misgoverned by old corrupt politicians, we cannot change a process we not part of. Nigerian youths need to be active politically to take leadership position of this country.

User10:

Poll agents have the right to challenge any irregularity during elections. We will be training over 1000 party agents for young candidates on this and other rights of poll agents on election day.

User11:

The Plateau State House of Assembly will tomorrow Thursday 15th of February, 2018 consider the age reduction bill popularly known as **#NotTooYoungToRun** bill. The **#NotTooYoungToRun** Movement in Plateau State is kindly calling on citizens to converge at Beach Road.

From the sampled tweets above, it can be gathered that members of NTYTR movement not only advocated for a change in the system but they also strategically used Twitter to give updates about their progressive activities. Some of these activities include protecting young candidates during the 2019 elections by training polling agents that would challenge any irregularities; advocating for partnership with young candidates as well as encouraging youths to engage with the system by coming out converging in a physical space to rally as seen in User11's tweet, registering to vote, collecting their voter card and voting in the elections.

4.3.3 Recommendations Given by Youths on how to Increase their Participation in the Political, Economic and Social Life of Nigeria as Shown in NTYTR Data

As stated from the beginning of this study, NTYTR singular goal was to address the marginalization of youths in politics in Nigeria. For members of the NTYTR movement, the starting point to reducing this imbalance and deprivation is the reduction of age limit required to run for certain elective positions in the country and this can be gathered from the suggestions offered in constitutional reform and age clusters in the concepts map. Concepts that answer this RQ illustrate support for the reduction of age requirement which could only be done through a constitutional amendment and the believe that the signing of the age reduction bill would give room for credible young candidates to run for elective offices in Nigeria. The tweets below exemplify this;

User12:

The #NotTooYoungToRun Bill seeks to alter the Section 65, 106, 131, 177 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) to reduce the age qualification for the office of the President from 40 years to 30 years; #DemocracyDay

User13:

While I applaud #NotTooYoungToRun Act, I prefer a person of character and good leadership capability, whatever the age. A corrupt 'old man' and a corrupt 'young man' will produce same result irrespective of age disparity.

User14:

I'll repeat myself by saying, being young isn't what qualifies a person to lead, #NotTooYoungToRun is about opening the door for competent and credible young people who may have been excluded due to age restrictions. Make sure everyone you vote for is CREDIBLE.

User15:

#nottooyoungtorun we should not take it for granted, we have to unite and organise first, we have to present competent among us. It isn't just the age barrier, there is a cartel barrier & money barrier. We need to be stronger to break through these bigger barriers.

4.4 Presentation of Results in the Second Study

In connected action, information flow is necessitated by a minority of users who bridge ties within a network by transferring information from one cluster to another (González-Bailón & Wang, 2016; Zaheer & Soda, 2009; Burt, 2001). These minority users are able to facilitate the spread of information based on their social capital within that network structure (Burt, 2001) as research suggests the existence of gaps between clusters which can be filled by influencers ranked by their betweenness centrality (Haperen, Nicholls, & Uitermark, 2018; Hilbert, Vasquez, Halpern, Valenzuela, & Arriagada, 2017).

An enabling force of connective action is the personalized expressions of hopes, grievances and lifestyles which result in collective actions as witnessed in previous movements like the Arab spring and the Occupy protests (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). These varied expressions are enabled by transformative technologies which in turn enable self-generated texts that are self-directed and self-selected by members within networks (Castells, 2013). These self-expressions of hope, anger and disappointment are driven by citizens who are disillusioned by institutions and are therefore willing to withdraw their support for the system by protesting using digital tools (Castells, 2015). In contemporary protests, issues of grievance resemble older collective actions while the practice of protesting is more personalized and flexible (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).

The tweets obtained from the data collection procedure described in the previous chapter produced 16,904 vertices¹⁵; 26,714 unique edges¹⁶; 3043 edges with duplicates¹⁷; 3021 mentions; 17,064 retweets; 5282 mentions in retweets; 3519 tweets; 871 replies to tweets; 3552 self-loops¹⁸; 1385 connected components¹⁹; 529 single-vertex connected components²⁰; 14,214 maximum vertices in a connected component; 26,813 maximum edges in a connected component; 16 maximum geodesic distance²¹.

While #EndSARS is the hashtag being researched, other hashtags within the movement which were captured by NodeXL within the search period are; #genocide, #EndpolicebrutalityinNigerianow, #SARSmustEnd, #EndbadgovernanceinNigeria, #basedonwhat.

The top ten (10) influencers that emerged in the dataset include elected officials, foreign media, celebrities and activists. NodeXL ranks influencers based on betweenness centrality. Betweenness centrality in this context is ranked by a user's position as a bridge in the shortest possible path between two other Twitter users within a particular network (Hilbert, Vasquez, Halpern, Valenzuela, & Arriagada, 2017). The top ten (10) replied-to in the graph includes central voices in the protests, public officials, celebrities and media figures while the top ten (10) mentioned in the entire

¹⁵ A vertices count refers to the number of users captured in the data obtained

¹⁶ Unique edge refers to the number of times where multiple connections between a user and another user are counted only once

¹⁷ Multiple connections between users

¹⁸ Reciprocal relationship between users

¹⁹ Number of separate sets of connected vertices

²⁰ Number of vertices with zero connections

²¹ A geodesic is chain or path composed of edges that link two vertices

graph was a list of elected officials, the Nigerian military and Twitter handles of media organizations.

While the top tweeters category shows a diverse list of users with high Twitter activity within and outside the #EndSARS network, influence is measured by the most activity directed at a number of users within the selected data. It then follows that the out-degree centrality will be measured by users with the most unique mentions and #EndSARS related hashtags (Tremayne, 2014). In the data, the top-ranking user within the network had the most out-degree sending 25 unique tweets with the #EndSARS hashtag with over 200 replies and mentions. The official Twitter handle of Nigeria's President Buhari, Muhammadu Buhari had 808 replies and mentions with the #EndSARS hashtag even though no #EndSARS tweet was reported from the handle in the data. This gives the handle the highest in-degree centrality. This is closely followed by another user, who had 2 out-degree centrality and 1185 in-degree centrality.

Ten (10) themes and seventy (70) concepts emerged from the text mining performed by Leximancer. These themes are; protesters, "Lekki toll gate", "government", "citizens", "police", "Nigerians in diaspora", "power", "pressure", "celeb support", and "sacrifice". Figure 5 shows some concepts sitting between two themes. For example, the concepts, authorities and demonstrations sit between the themes, "government" and "citizens". This shows the evidence of the concepts in both themes.

Table 4.10: Summary of concepts frequency in Leximancer data for #EndSARS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Lekki toll gate	7406	28.4	28.4	28.4
	Protesters	7403	28.4	28.4	56.9
	Citizens	4472	17.2	17.2	74.0

Government	4358	16.7	16.7	90.8
Celeb support	820	3.1	3.1	93.9
Nigerians in diaspora	628	2.4	2.4	96.3
Police	335	1.3	1.3	97.6
Sacrifice	290	1.1	1.1	98.7
Power	190	.7	.7	99.5
Pressure	140	.5	.5	100.0
Total	26042	100.0	100.0	

Expectedly, the dominant theme in the text is “Lekki toll gate” with 7406 hits (28.4%). This is followed by “protesters” which has 7403 hits (28.4%). The theme of “citizens” has 4472 hits (17.2%), “government” has 4357 hits (16.7%), “celeb support” has 821 hits (3.1%), “Nigerians in diaspora” has 628 hits (2.4%), “police” has 335 hits (1.3%), “sacrifice” has 290 hits (1.1%), “power” has 190 hits (7%) and, “pressure” has 140 hits (5%).

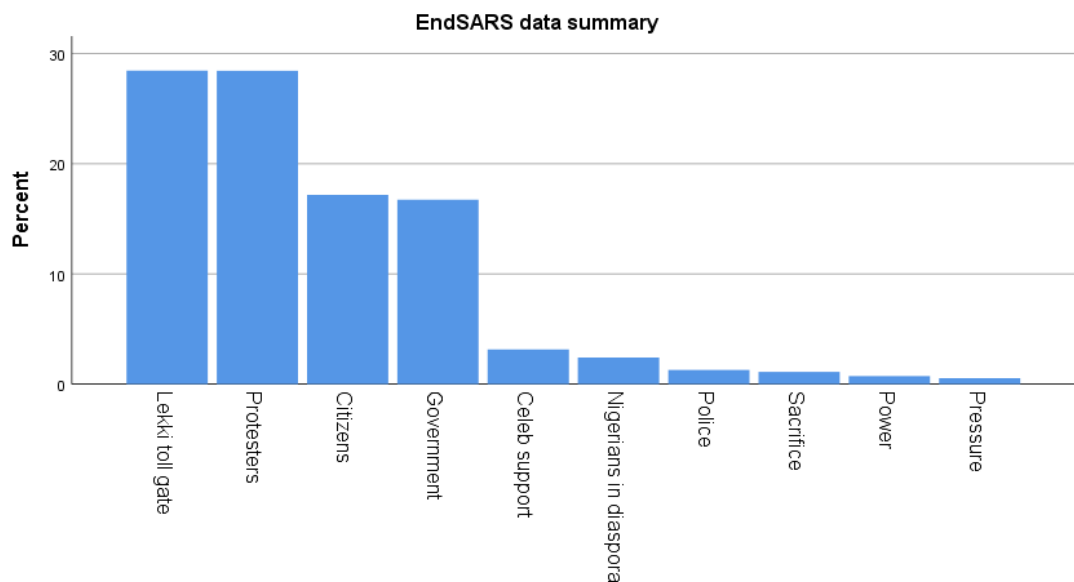


Figure 4.11: Figure Sample

democracy and what democracy is supposed to be therefore the concept ‘democracy’ expectedly emerged with 5.1% (n=378). A more vivid illustration is presented below.



Figure 4.13: Concepts in Lekki Toll Gate

Table 4.11: Frequency and percentage of concepts in lekki toll gate

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Video	1138	15.4	15.4	15.4
	Lagos state government	1149	15.5	15.5	30.9
	Shooting	721	9.7	9.7	40.6
	Believe	164	2.2	2.2	42.8
	Lekki	552	7.5	7.5	50.3
	Gate	649	8.8	8.8	59.0
	Past	187	2.5	2.5	61.6
	Peace	269	3.6	3.6	65.2
	Attack	126	1.7	1.7	66.9
	Soldiers	1001	13.5	13.5	80.4
	Ordered	462	6.2	6.2	86.7
	Innocent	281	3.8	3.8	90.5
	Democracy	378	5.1	5.1	95.6
	Officer	329	4.4	4.4	100.0
	Total	7406	100.0	100.0	

4.5.2 Protesters

Concepts within the protesters cluster all centered on the shooting of protesters thereby illustrating the relationship among themes within a map. Concepts

include “brutality” (14.8%), “justice” (10.8%), “peaceful protesters” (63.3%), “freedom” (2.3%), “injured” (8.7%). Tweets in this category expressed shock and frustration at the shooting that occurred while also expressing the need for justice. Thus, the most dominant concept in the cluster is ‘peaceful protesters’ which has 63.3% (n=4688). Tweets in this category highlighted the insistence of campaigners that the act of aggression witnessed in Lekki toll gate was uncalled for as the protesters were mostly peaceful. The second most dominant concept within the theme is ‘brutality’ which has 14.8% (n=1099) and is connected by tweets that express shock at the brutality that occurred on the night of the alleged shooting. ‘Justice’ emerged as the third relevant concept with 10.8% (n=803) while freedom has the least frequency with 2.3% (n=171).



Figure 4.14: Concepts in protesters

Table 4.12: Frequency and percentage of concepts in protesters

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Peaceful protesters	4688	63.3	63.3	63.3
	Brutality	1099	14.8	14.8	78.2
	Injured	642	8.7	8.7	86.8
	Justice	803	10.8	10.8	97.7
	Freedom	171	2.3	2.3	100.0
	Total	7403	100.0	100.0	

4.5.3 Citizens and Police

The clusters of citizens and police are discussed together because they highly interact with the protesters cluster. The citizen theme with 4472 hits contained the concepts, “killing” (11.7%), “authorities” (3.4%) “world”, “massacre” (4.5%), “young” (27.1), “people” (24.1%), “brave” (7.2%), “needs” (5.5%), “praying” (7.9%), “voice” (8.6%). These concepts continue the expression of frustration gathered in the previous themes. The difference now is that some users within this category are praying while some are calling on the world to support the protests. As such, the concept ‘young’ emerged as the most dominant concept with 27.1% (1211) while ‘people’ emerged as the second most relevant concept with 24.1% (n=1076). The concept, ‘killing’ emerged as the third most relevant with 11.7% (525). ‘Voice’ which seeks the support of everyone to give their support to the victims and the overall movement by lending their voice has a percentage of 8.6% (n=383). ‘Praying’ emerged with 7.9% (n=354) while massacre which emerged as the least relevant concept has 4.5% (n=200). For the police theme which has 335 hits, the concept ‘killed’ emerges as the dominant concept with 79.7% (n=267) while the concept ‘police’ emerged with 20.3% (n=68). Tweets in the category carry accusatory tones towards the security forces as they seem to suggest the intimidation of protesters by the police and the armed forces.



Figure 4.15: Concepts in citizens and police

Table 4.13: Frequency and percentage of concepts in citizens & police

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Killing	525	11.7	11.7	11.7
	Authorities	151	3.4	3.4	15.1
	Young	1211	27.1	27.1	42.2
	People	1076	24.1	24.1	66.3
	Massacre	200	4.5	4.5	70.7
	Brave	323	7.2	7.2	78.0
	Voice	386	8.6	8.6	86.6
	Praying	354	7.9	7.9	94.5
	Needs	246	5.5	5.5	100.0
	Total	4472	100.0	100.0	

		Police			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Killing	267	79.7	79.7	79.7
	Police	68	20.3	20.3	100.0
	Total	335	100.0	100.0	

4.5.4 Government

Different sentiments are expressed in the government theme. The concepts in the theme include, “flag” (9%), “country” (25.6%), “demonstrations” (4.8%), “presidency” (1.4%), “live” (17.5%), “thugs” (6.7%), “curfew” (10.8%), “security” (8.6%), “watching” (15.7). While some users expressed anger at the entire political class, others accused the government of hiring thugs thereby allowing the protests to descend into chaos. The most dominant concept within the theme is ‘country’ which has 25.5% (n=1115). The concept, ‘live’ which refers to live bullets that were released on the night of the alleged massacre emerged as the second most dominant concept within the cluster with 17.5% (n=763). The third most relevant concept within the cluster is ‘watching’ which refers to the events unfolding in Nigeria as the world watches. The concept has 15.7% (n=682). ‘Curfew’ emerged next with 10.8%



			Cumulative

Tweets within the theme of the celeb support is targeted at various activities such as

other Twitter users to sign the petition that calls on the foreign powers to sanction the leaders involved in the alleged massacre. This concept is followed by ‘donate’ which is connected by tweets that encourage others to support the movement by donating. This concept has 17.5% (n=144). ‘International media’ emerged as the third most relevant concept within the category with 16.7% (n=137). ‘Helpless’ which is connected by tweets that describe the helplessness of young people in the country has 14.1% (n=116). The concept ‘celeb support’ which highlights Nigerian celebrities supporting the movement has 11.9% (n=98). The theme and all its concepts are visually illustrated below;

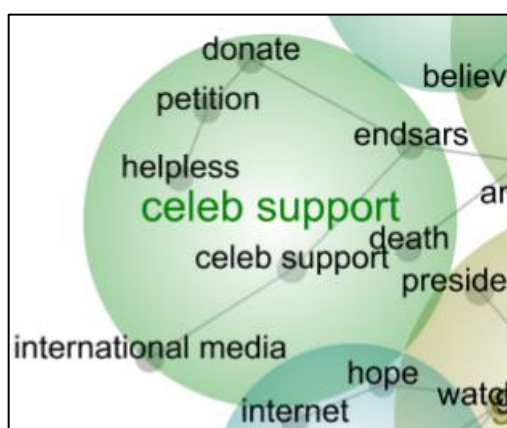


Figure 4.17: Concepts in celeb support

Table 4.15: Frequency and percentage of concepts in celeb support

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Donate	144	17.5	17.5	17.5
	Petition	147	17.9	17.9	35.4
	Helpless	116	14.1	14.1	49.6
	Endsars	80	9.7	9.7	59.3
	Celeb support	98	11.9	11.9	71.3
	Death	99	12.1	12.1	83.3
	International media	137	16.7	16.7	100.0
	Total	821	100.0	100.0	

4.5.6 Pressure and Power

The themes, pressure, power and Nigerians in diaspora discuss the protests through the lens of power. The concepts in pressure theme include, “pressure” (20%), “hope” (14.3%), “internet” (15.7%), “generational disconnect” (29.3%), and “political” (20.7%). Although concepts within the pressure theme showed awareness of the generational disconnect between the youth of Nigeria and its political elite, the internet is seen as a source of hope for young people. The most dominant concept in this category is ‘generational disconnect’ which points to the wide gap between the older political class and Nigeria’s young people. The concept has 29.3% (n=41). ‘Political’ emerges as the second most dominant concept with 20.7% (n=29) and it calls on other members of the public to exert pressure on Nigeria’s political class. ‘Pressure’ which was expected to be the dominant concept in this category surprisingly emerged as the third most relevant concept within the category. The concept is followed by ‘internet’ which is characterized by tweets that describe the internet as a beacon of hope for oppressed youths. The concept has 15.7% (n=22). Expectedly, this concept is followed by ‘hope’ which has 14.3% (n=20). ‘Pressure’ is closely related to the theme of power which recognises the power that the youths have in respect to their numbers, the tools at their disposal and their ability to use their voice. Here, the concepts include, ‘problem’ which has 46.8% (n=89) is closely followed by ‘politicians’ which has 33.2% (n=63) of the connected tweets that refer to Nigeria’s politicians as a problematic class. The least dominant concept within this category is ‘power’ which has 20% (n=38).

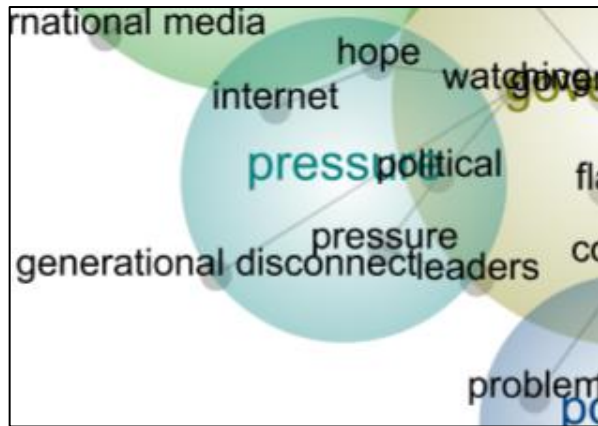


Figure 4.18: Concepts in pressure

Table 4.16: Frequency and percentage of concepts in pressure

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Pressure	28	20.0	20.0	20.0
	Hope	20	14.3	14.3	34.3
	Internet	22	15.7	15.7	50.0
	Generational disconnect	41	29.3	29.3	79.3
	Political	29	20.7	20.7	100.0
	Total	140	100.0	100.0	

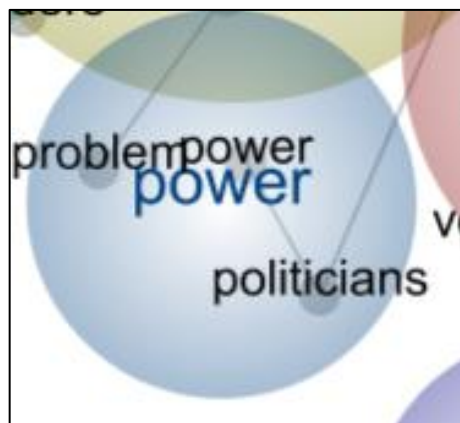


Figure 4.19: Concepts in power

Table 4.17: Frequency and percentage of concepts in power

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Problem	89	46.8	46.8	46.8
	Power	38	20.0	20.0	66.8
	Politicians	63	33.2	33.2	100.0
	Total	190	100.0	100.0	

4.5.7 Nigerians in Diaspora

The Nigerians in diaspora cluster amplifies the significance of the Nigerian migrant network and the Nigerian government's inability to silence them both online and offline. Online, they can tweet support while offline, they can mobilize and protest in different Nigerian embassies worldwide. This reiterates the communicative power of digital technologies as it fosters partnerships among people with common interest.



Figure 4.20: Nigerians in diaspora theme

Table 4.18: Frequency and percentage of concepts in Nigerians in diaspora

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Nigerians in diaspora	628	100.0	100.0	100.0

4.5.8 Sacrifice

In the sacrifice theme, concepts like “memorial” (21%), “history” (25.5%), “heroes” (53.4%) draw attention to the victims of the toll gate shooting while resolving that the scene of the shooting will now be a memorial site for the victims of the toll gate shooting and all other citizens killed by the police in previous years. As such, the most relevant theme in this category is ‘heroes’ with 53.4% (n=155) of connected tweets within the cluster referring to the victims of the alleged massacre as heroes who have sacrificed their lives for a better Nigeria. ‘History’ emerges as the second concept with 25.5% (n=74) while the least concept is ‘memorial’ is 21% (n=61).



Figure 4.21: Concepts in sacrifice

Table 4.19: Frequency and percentage of concepts in sacrifice

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Memorial	61	21.0	21.0	21.0
	History	74	25.5	25.5	46.6
	Heroes	155	53.4	53.4	100.0
	Total	290	100.0	100.0	

4.6 Answering the Research Questions in the Second Study

4.6.1 Challenges that Prevent Nigerian Youths from Accessing Political, Economic and Social Opportunities as Shown in #EndSARS Data

As explained in the second chapter of this study, the #EndSARS protests emanated from the profiling and abuse of mostly unarmed youths by the NPF. As Amnesty International has reported, some of the acts carried out by the NPF include unlawful detention, use of torture to force confession out of suspects and then using such confessions in court proceedings (Amnesty International, 2016). The phenomenon is an aftermath of the colonial era as well as decades of military rule that have plagued the country (Dambo, et al., 2020). This is evident in the analysis which features a series of concepts that typify the angst among the youths during the protests.

Figure 4.13 therefore shows a highly interactive map that has concepts across various clusters that tell the stories of challenges experienced by youths who participated in the online protests. The map is therefore not sectioned to show how each RQ is answered unlike the analysis in the first study where related themes are interact closely with each other. As a result of this high activity, concepts from various clusters in the map will be used to answer RQ1. The study therefore draws from the concepts, “generational disconnect”, “power”, “leaders”, “political”, “politicians”, “authorities”, “attack”, “innocent”, “justice” etc. to buttress explain the challenges expressed by the youths that participated in the online protests. Tweets from which these concepts were drawn tried to draw attention to their inability to freely express themselves both online and offline as a result of the government’s use of security forces to thwart any form of dissent. There are also accusations leveled by the youths that the government hired thugs to attack and disrupt the protests so as to have legitimate reasons to quell the

movement. Observing this, some Twitter users attributed this strategy to the generational disconnect that exists between Nigeria's political class and its youthful populace.

An emotional outburst is seen in expressed from user16 below:

For Nigeria to move forward, all our current affairs leaders have to die...AN OLDER GENERATION SO DESPERATE FOR NIGERIA'S FUTURE NOT TO RISE...Omo I was getting tired but zero that. How can the Government open fire on its unarmed citizen?

Along the lines of blaming the government, user17 below cites the government as responsible for the escalation of violence during the protests:

#EndSARS Protesters were on the streets 11 days without any violence. Except when govt sends thugs, police or soldiers. The govt as usual is sending its thugs to burn down Oriental hotel so they can send govt money to the owner as "compensation".

For User17, this signifies Nigeria's oppressive state which is a hindrance to the youths truly exploring their full potential:

The more things change, the more they remain the same. We're officially an oppressed people. No Govt. should ever deploy the military on its people, period! It's a sad day, yet again!

4.6.2 Twitter Campaign by Youths in the #EndSARS Movement Against Perceived Challenges

From the analysis, it can be gathered that #EndSARS protesters engaged in a series of activities to record their stance against oppression. This is captured in such concepts like, "donate", "petition", "international media", "video", "celeb support", "pressure", "internet", "demonstrations", "praying", "voice", "world" etc. The concepts describe the series of activities carried out by online protesters during the selected period. These activities answer RQ2 which seeks to establish how online protesters are

addressing the challenges that are perceived to hinder them from harnessing their potential as young citizens of Nigeria.

For starters, User16 chooses to condemn the government's attempt to stop the right of citizens to peacefully protest and assemble:

The unified voices of Nigerians have been treated as a threat to democracy instead of an expression of it. We unreservedly condemn the government's use of violence against peaceful protesters.

For Twitter user17, the desire to donate is expressed the tweet below:

My whole chest is on fire watching these videos. Meticulously planning to shoot protesters is nothing short of literal evil. I cannot believe we're watching this unfold in real time I am floored #EndSARS. Where can we donate?

Twitter user18 calls on other users to share any evidence they might have to counter any narrative set by official sources. That way, online protesters are taking communicative power during the protests:

The Govt said no one died! This is it. We can't let this go slide. If you have pictures, videos, or names of people you know. Pls share it here. This is for justice. This is for Nigeria. #ENDSARS.

The tweet from User19 below explains another angle to this this power by describing the limit of the Nigerian government over the digital space and particularly, Nigerians abroad:

There are 2 "Curfews" the @NigeriaGov @NGRPresident @MBuhari @ProfOsinbajo and their allies like @jidesanwoolu and Obaseki cannot engineer: 1. Digital Curfew - No. the internet is not within their repressive reach. 2. Diaspora Curfew. So, #EndSARS goes blast Online & Abroad

Suggesting the reliance of developing countries like Nigerian on media in the developed world, User20 encourages other users tag what they perceive to be international media:

Online protesters I beg you in the name of God. This is not the time to be tired.
Tag international media, RETWEET ANYTHING #EndSARS

The tweet from User21 below shows another type of action that was taken by youths during the protests. Since there were reports about shootings on the night of 20th October 2020 and there were also claims of alleged victims not being able to access medical care, some members/supporters of the movement organised for emergency doctors to attend to some of the alleged victims. The tweet below and others like it gave information about where to go in case any protester needed help:

If you can make it to Reddinton in Lekki, a team of emergency DRs have been mobilised. We are there to attend to you. PLEASE RETWEET and SAVE A LIFE.

4.6.3 Recommendations Given by Youths on How to Increase their Participation in the Political, Economic and Social Life as Shown in #EndSARS Data

As it is with all protests, there are grievances that start these protests and these grievances are usually accompanied by suggestions to address those grievances that have been expressed. In this study, the recommendations given by the protesters in the #EndSARS movement are summarized in the title of the #EndSARS movement itself which is to end the police unit that is accused of abuse. However, other suggestions are drawn from the concepts, “memorial”, “justice”, “voice”, “freedom”, “watching”, “politicians” etc.

User22 calls for the firing of heads of Nigeria’s security forces for overseeing the events that occurred on the night of October, 20th 2020:

The DG DSS, the Chief of Army Staff and the IGP should all be fired. Pass this on.

User23 takes a more gentle approach by calling on the world to intervene in what is happening:

ALL EYES need to be on #Nigeria as the #EndSARS movement was met with violence earlier this evening. There is more than a US election happening in the world, people!!

For User24 calls on young Nigerians to prepare for the next election cycle to vote out the older political class who have been deemed as responsible for Nigerian youths:

APC y'all played yourself. Just forget about ruling this country on different levels. My Nigerian Youth it's time we dust and get our voters card and kick out this bunch of old devils.

4.7 Discussion of Results

Connective action simplifies researchers' need to categorize the various actions that occur within a networked action. As explained by Bennett and Segerberg (2012), connective action draws from actions witnessed in collective actions and new actions now made possible with digital technologies. In connective action, there is little or no formal coordination and where there is evidence of formal organization, it varies from that of systems witnessed in collective actions. In the two campaigns studied in this research, there is clear indication of the hybrid model suggested by Bennett & Segerberg. In NTYTR campaign, there is a central coordinating organization which is YIAGA that partnered with other organisations like the UNDP, OHCHR and EYF (see chapter 2 section 2.1.1) who work in the background to provide support and resources to the campaign. Also, even though personal frames are given by youths who participated in the online campaign as is common practice in most networked protests, there is still some evidence of moderation by YIAGA through the Twitter interviews given and press releases given by the organization. By giving these interviews and

press releases, YIAGA ensured that the central goal of the movement did not get lost in the various personalized frames that were tweeted within the hashtag. Thus, YIAGA subtly maintained its influence over the movement by maintaining the already established narrative. That also suggests that there was evidence of strong organizational control as witnessed in collective actions. In this movement therefore, the hybrid pattern of connective action comes to life. While the movement depended on the voluntary participation of Nigeria's youth on Twitter and that participation was heightened by their ability to share personalize experiences that connect to others within the movement and the ability to frame these experiences in a way that is a relevant to the movement, there are still other events that occur within this movement that show the old forms of social movements. However, this is the advantage that social media offers contemporary social movements. Each movement can design/coordinate their activities to suit their intended audiences and meet their targets. For NTYTR, this argument is drawn from the fact their core message. The need to reduce the age requirement for elective positions in the country could not have been achieved without some lobbying with key players and organisations. Thus, the support from UNDP, EYF and OHCHR as well as lawmakers was necessary for the goal of the movement. As the data shows, "lawmakers" emerged as a single cluster in the analysis thereby showing the extent to which participants engaged with lawmakers on Twitter at the height of the campaign. Scholars have noted this access to be advantage for average citizens as social media now give citizens access to elected officials that would have been ordinarily inaccessible to their citizens. Although this may not be a general situation as citizens in developed countries have means of reaching their elected citizens, this is relevant to developing countries like Nigeria where social media has reduced communication gap between citizens and their representatives. Besides the

age restriction that was listed as a limitation, financial limitation was also described as one of the issues that contribute the marginalization of the youths in Nigeria. While this was strongly expressed in the data, missing in the recommendations was the financing options available or that could be offered to young candidates who feel qualified to run. While this was missing in the first study, activities of youths witnessed in the second study provided solutions to this problem and will be discussed subsequently.

In the second study, top ten influencers emerged from the network. Influence was scored based on the connection of each user to disconnected users within the network structure and since data for this study was collected using NodeXL, the influence of users was automatically calculated by estimating betweenness centrality²². Typically, Nigeria's president and Lagos state governor ranked high on this list as a series of network activity from multiple users was directed at their account. Betweenness centrality limits a user's influence to the activity it generates within a discourse at a particular time. As such, attention is not paid to their overall influence outside the network. However, the users ranked within this network structure expectedly exert influence based on their political and social capital. As González-Bailón & Wang (2016) argue, a few users facilitate the popularization of a networked action. Thus, the findings support this assertion. Muhammadu Buhari, being Nigeria's president and Jide Sanwo-olu, being Lagos state governor where the Lekki shooting took place, expectedly wield significant influence both within the #EndSARS network and outside the network. Similarly, the United Nations and BBC user accounts are also influential

²² Betweenness centrality is the value that determines the size of each element (vertex) in a network

within and outside the network structure. Other users within this structure also wield influence based on their consistent use of Twitter for activism.

The dominant theme in the analysis is the Lekki toll gate which is location related. This is supported by Earl et al (2013) who argue that during protests, Twitter is used to share location related information. This is also illustrated in Bennett & Segerberg's (2012) hybrid model of connective action which combines online and offline practices. Tweets in this category show that protesters not only tweeted the hashtag but some tweeted while on the ground. Another manifestation that is consistent with previous research is seen in the theme of celeb support where tweets calling for donations or expressing the desire to donate and also signing petitions are published (Haperen, Nicholls, & Uitermark, 2018). The call for demonstrations is also a manifestation of this hybrid model and it has been witnessed in various contemporary protests (ibid).

Thus, the study finds that Nigerians in diaspora are an important arsenal for Nigerian protesters as they can be instrumental in drawing global attention to issues concerning Nigeria's youth. This is consistent with previous research on activism in Nigeria (Olabode, 2016).

As observed in the first study, the subject of the youths' limited resources also surfaced in the second study. In the second study however, it took a different direction. While it was acknowledged that the limited resources of the youths have always been an obstacle to their collective growth as politicians could always capitalize on that to their advantage and to the detriments of the youths, there seemed to be an unspoken resolve to not let that happen during the #EndSARS protests. As seen in the "celeb support"

cluster, concepts like “donate”, “celeb support”, “hope” contained tweets that described the efforts of youths with the means to pull resources together in order to support the youths who were protesting on the ground. In Nigeria’s recent history, this was the first time this had happened. Coordinated with support from Nigeria’s tech-industry, the youths were able to bypass the restricted channels set by Nigerian banks to raise financial support for the movement (Johnson-Omodiagbe, 2020). Upon the restriction placed on protesters’ bank accounts, they soon started accepting bitcoin donations with Twitter CEO, Jack Dorsey giving more visibility by tweeting the bitcoin donation link (Kazeem, 2020). This act confirmed Castell’s (2015) argument that through digitally enabled networks, citizens are able to reduce the power imbalance in their societies. Through these donations, protesters on the ground were fed and medical issues attended to particularly on the night of October 20, 2020. Furthermore, online protesters supported each other by paying for data subscriptions for other protesters who were running out of data. As such, the protests were fueled not only by the shared experiences but also shared resources of the protesters. This suggests that activities in the second study indicates alternative resource sources for young people with genuine interest in political affairs of the country but lack the financial power to compete with the established political class.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Summary

This study was conducted to ascertain the online formation of social protests on Nigerian Twitter in order to determine the challenges that led to protests like NTYTR and #EndSARS protests. Since protests usually emanate from conflicting situations and protesters embark on protests to address these conflicting situations, the research set out to establish the challenges that led to the protests, the strategies that were used to organise for protests and suggestions made by protesters to address the conflicts. The research was anchored on the Bennett & Segerberg's (2012) logic of connective action which tried to unify old social movements and new forms of social movements that are emerging on social media by creating a hybrid model of connective action that used variations of both old and new social movements.

The study used secondary sources by using tweets posted in both NTYTR and #EndSARS hashtags. A total of 22,064 tweets were collected for this study – 4064 from NTYTR and 18,000 from #EndSARS – and the tweets were analyzed with Leximancer qualitative analytical programme. The research made important findings that contribute to knowledge on social movements in Nigeria. Because the study makes use of tweets from protesters who are live-tweeting events as they happen during the protests, findings of the study provide insights on the obstacles that challenge the progress of young people in Nigeria.

5.2 Conclusion

The study set out to investigate the anatomy of online protests in Nigeria using two case studies; NTYTR and #EndSARS. Both campaigns were chosen because they represent the manifest political voices of Nigeria's young people. Although both campaigns are very different in their origins and core message, they are united by the singular fact that they suggest a key issue in Nigeria's political structure which is the isolation of its youthful population. This isolation/exclusion is witnessed in the type of policies that are proposed which can be argued to stifle and not advance the progress of the youths. Like all problems, there are multiple paths to address such issues. Thus, NTYTR campaign enter the discourse by challenging the age limit required for contesting elective positions in the country while #EndSARS campaign approaches the issue from the path of police profiling and brutality which prevents the youths from fulling exploring their potential.

To this end, the research asks the following questions;

1. What issues challenge the youths from accessing formal political, economic and social opportunities as expressed by Nigerian youths on Twitter in the NTYTR and #EndSARS campaigns?

As shown in the first and second studies, restrictive age limits and police brutality prevent Nigeria's youths from living up to their full potential. I argue that both issues stem from age-long practice of marginalizing the youths who lack the resources or even the constitutional backing to legally address these restrictive situations. As revealed in data for the first study, age limits along with financial limitations and corruption thwart the ability of the youths to access political, economic and social opportunities in the Nigerian state. In #EndSARS campaign, the answer lies in police

brutality which youths claim dis-inhibit them from exploring whatever opportunities exist due to the fear of being profiled and unlawfully apprehended just on account of being young and appearing in a certain way. In data for the second study, there is evidence of generational disconnect between the older and younger citizens of the country thereby cementing the issue of marginalization as a major problem in both campaigns. Therefore, in both campaigns, there are calls to re-write or make laws that would create the environment for the youths to thrive.

2. How are youths using Twitter to campaign against perceived challenges in Nigeria's political, economic and social life in the NTYTR and #EndSARS campaigns?

Although youths largely turn away from politics due to issues like marginalization (Brewer & Cao, 2016; Carpini, 2014; Holt, Shehata, Strömbäck & Ljungberg, 2013; Boulianne & Vowles, 2012), the adoption of alternative channels of participation (Sloam, 2011; Abdu, Bahtiar, & Muda, 2016; Castells, 2015; Collins, 2015; Kelly, Campbell, Harrison, Hickey, 2018) shows that digital technologies are helping them change their story by providing them opportunities to voice their dissent and create the change they want. This fact is evident in this study as Nigeria's youths are shown to use Twitter to address the issue of marginalization which has hindered them from exploring political, economic and social opportunities. In the first study, campaigners used Twitter to strategise for future campaigns by encouraging eligible young people to register to vote, qualified young people to run for various offices as well as using Twitter to advocate for reduction in age requirement by lobbying lawmakers and encouraging other young people to do the same.

Data in the second study showed the youths going beyond tweeting to engaging in such activities as donating resources, engaging in prayer walks, seeking support from foreign media organisations, demonstrations, signing petitions and a series of other activities. All activities in both studies reveal the level of seriousness given to the issue of marginalization as it pertains to the youths.

Perhaps the most important revelation in this study is the ranking of influencers discovered in the second study in which Twitter handles of media accounts dominated the top influential users within the network. The interesting aspect of this finding is that all five media accounts that are ranked among the top mentioned are foreign media outlets. Prior research has shown that media generally receive more than 80% of Twitter mentions along with official protest voices (Hilbert, Va'squez, Halpern, Valenzuela, & Arriagada, 2016). A departure from this point is that the significant mention of foreign media may suggest that they are regarded as allies as opposed to local media. In spite of the devaluation of protesters which media engage in when they adopt the protest paradigm, they are still argued to set counter-narratives for protesters in fragile democracies like Nigeria (Harlow, Kilgo, Salaverría, & García-Perdomo, 2020). In this regard, the information monopoly that authorities have in setting the narratives is challenged (Earl, Hurwitz, Mesinas, Tolan, & Arlotti, 2013) because protesters are able to by-pass the system to get foreign media support. This is consistent with Castells (2013) argument that SNSs level the communication playing field for activists. This opens up a door for further investigation that would seek to exclusively determine the difference between Twitter users' mention of local media versus their mention of international media in fragile democracies like Nigeria and the significance of such. For NTYTR campaign, collaboration with international

organisations was the better strategy. This reveals the reliance on international agencies rather than local agencies for support and success.

3. What suggestions are offered by youths in the NTYTR and #EndSARS campaigns on Twitter on how to increase their participation in Nigeria's political, economic and social life?

Data in the first study revealed that NTYTR had the singular goal of getting the age requirement for contesting political offices in Nigeria reduced to accommodate Nigeria's young people. For #EndSARS, the answer lies in the name of the movement itself as it calls for the abolishment of the police unit that is accused of acts that are deemed unworthy of humanity. Beyond the call for ending SARS, protesters also call for justice for victims of SARS and the NPF in general over the years.

With the great strides both campaigns made – NTYTR in successfully getting the age requirement lowered and #EndSARS in getting international visibility – there are still problems observed. While NTYTR successfully got the age requirement reduced, financial limitations still hindered the success of young candidates as the analysis would suggest. Furthermore, if all successful social movements show their power by realising their chosen social goals (Freelon, McIlwain, & Clark , 2018), then it would be expected that the goal of the #EndSARS which was a permanent end to police harassment and abuse of Nigerian youth was not achieved because justice has still not been served.

5.3 Contribution to Media Studies

The study extends the corpus of Jurgen Habermas' theory of communicative action & public sphere by showing how protests in Nigeria followed the principles of the

theories. As discussed in the second chapter of this research, public sphere recognizes the type of public discourse that occurs in modern life that sharply differs from the type of engagement that happened in the 15th and 16th centuries where discourse revolved around the aristocratic class. As with other hashtags that have been trended around the globe (the Zapatistas movement, Arab Spring, Occupy protests, the Euromaidan protests in Ukraine, Black Lives Matter protests in the United States, Asian-American story, the Oscars protests etc) Twitter was used in the two campaigns studied for this research to discuss issues that affect ordinary citizens. A unifying element in global hashtags is the departure from courtly life where the elite (top 1 percent) are made the center of attention to an era where ordinary citizens (the ninety-nine percent) highlight their own experiences in connection to a much bigger issue. If focus is given to the elite, it is to show weaknesses such as their contribution to environmental degradation, disregard for citizens' welfare, economic greed and marginalization as seen in NTYTR and EndSARS. In this regard, the research supports the principle of the theory that public sphere easily helps in the formation of public opinion because of the active participation of citizens (Adult, 2012). On Twitter, the debate is facilitated by hashtags which attract other individuals to participate.

Similarly, the theory of communicative action which makes up for the legal and administrative weaknesses inherent in public sphere was supported in this research. The theory which highlights that people engage in some type of action that will further engender a consensus (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007) rests upon the use of argumentation or debates to resolve conflicts without employing force (Habermas, 1984). Resolution in this case is achieved by using the two-tier system of legal and administrative framework. For example, countries require citizens to seek for

permission to participate in any form of rallies, protests, demonstrations or sit-outs. Obtaining permission will therefore require legal processes which also require citizens knowing their rights and the roles they must play in ensuring the safety and freedom of other citizens. Beyond getting legal permits, protesters must also respect that other citizens have rights therefore traffic laws, respecting the rights of private properties, adhering to pedestrian signals and controlling noise pollution are a few examples of the issues that protesters must consider (ACLU, 2021). In the same vein, curfews can be imposed when governments sense possible disruption to peaceful activity. Some local administrations in countries like the United States can even impose fees on the protesters for clean-up, police overtime etc. (ACLU, 2021). This falls within the administrative tier of the theory. Such legal and administrative restrictions can also be accessed on Twitter hashtag protests. For example, there are legal consequences on social media platforms that allow hate-speech and the promotion of any form of violence. One administrative consequence that such platforms can face is they can either be shut down by governments. For example, China, Iran and currently Nigeria have blocked the access of Twitter in their country (Walsh, 2021). Legally, such platforms can be sued by governments who feel that their laws are being violated on these platforms (Diaz, 2021; Drozdiak & Brody, 2021). To prevent this therefore, Twitter has its own internal mechanism that removes such posts that encourage hate-speech, anarchy or violence or remove the users that post them altogether. In such situations, both legal and administrative restrictions are evident. As such, both legal and administrative restrictions control this type of communicative action. It also follows that an enabling environment is provided for argumentation to occur and conflict to be resolved without the use of force. This is a common principle that unifies protesters globally. They have to adhere to rules and regulations of Twitter that are in

tandem with the peculiar laws of their host nations. The study therefore supports the principles of the theory.

The study also extends the corpus of connective action by confirming the evidence of the type of actions described by Bennett & Segerberg (2012) in their development of the logic. First, the study explores the visual potential that social network analysis offers (Trott, 2018) by using both NodeXL and Leximancer. The visual images used in this study provided illustrations to the activities that were all carried out within the networked actions investigated in this study. In tandem with Caraway (2015) & Bennett & Segerberg (2012), personal action frames manifested as very important drivers for the campaign. As suggested by Caraway (2015), while they seem to connect us to each other in a grander scale that was originally possible, digital technologies have at the same time manage to socially fragment and isolation individuals, thereby significantly complicating collective action. To resolve this conflict however, activists utilize the personal frames provided by connected users to advance their causes. What this achieves is that it fosters inclusivity among connected participants and no one feels like they have to suppress their views for the collective agenda. This fact is evident in NTYTR and #EndSARS as shown in the previous chapter of this study. Because connective action allows for individuals to share their own personal/personalized messages/experiences, a diverse range of issues surfaced. This unifies the theory of public sphere and connective action in that personalized action frames represent the coming together of citizens to debate issues that affect them. While some users some tweets related to matters of age reduction for elective contests in Nigeria, as shown in NTYTR data, some were concerned with the problem that is gerontocracy. Still, there are other tweets that were grouped under the matter of constitutional reform, others focused on the youthful demographic in Nigeria while there are still others that

targeted lawmakers. While all these of tweets were pushed to advance an agenda, they all deployed a variety of issues within the networked action. This suggests the relevance of individuality in connective action as suggested by Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Caraway, 2015; Trott, 2018. In the same vein, the use of personal frames was also highly evident in the #EndSARS campaign as revealed in the results. The utilization of these personal action frames fostered the mapping of 10 themes from the dataset. What this suggests is that connective actions highlight the individual views of their participants unlike collective actions where leaders or organisations speak for the entire movement. Because of this, individuals are more confident to participate in the movement as they all have the equal opportunity of being seen and heard. Furthermore, this resolves whatever hostile relationship some users might have towards coordinated action especially as it pertains to their personal beliefs. What this means is that, individuals who might ordinarily hesitate to join social movements due to their need for freedom of opinion or the lack of motivation to participate in physical actions, might find online connective actions much more convenient. This is because online actions remove these barriers thereby increasing their willingness to participate. Not only are users able to include their own personal frames to their tweets within these networked action, they are even able to do so anonymously thereby protecting their privacy. That is why this study does not use any information that might identify users within the networked actions investigated in this study. In the case of Nigeria, this is even more legitimate as the alleged events of October 20, 2020 show.

Another important postulation of the logic of connective action is that the hybrid model conceptualized by Bennett & Segerberg (2012) eliminates the need for formal recruitment strategies like registering to participate in causes as this may put some users

off. To this end, participants join the movements willingly. In both NTYTR and #EndSARS, there are appeals to participate in the movements but there is formal processes for participation. This is similar to discovery made by Caraway (2015) where activities appeal to other people within their required demographic to participate in order to advance the cause. This gave the participants the freedom to choose based on their own needs and conscience. However, some participants turn away from participating due to fear of consequences from the authorities (ibid).

The study also contributes to literature on connective action by showing how online campaigns use the different variations of connective action to advance their cause. While the NTYTR campaign is a connective action, it easily classifies under the organisationally-enabled action due to the loose coordination of action by YIAGA. Loose coordination in this case describes the presence of informal organizational actors that coordinate the movement. As already explained, YIAGA organised the campaign. However, it did not impose a collective activity for participants even though maintained narrative for the campaign. Also, the organisation was instrumental in mobilizing resources for the campaign in a manner that is characteristic of connective action as argued by (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012). For #EndSARS campaign, the strategy is much different as the campaign can easily be classified under the self-organising action where there is evidence of a leaderless structure in the campaign. In this case, there are heightened instances of personal frames thereby suggesting more inclusion. In fact, formal organisations were prevented from taking over the coordination of the campaign.

5.4 Implications for Policy

The successes of protests (or lack of success thereof) could be directly traced to the political environment where these protests occurred (Wolfsfeld, Segev, & Sheaffer, 2013). Connective action can thrive insofar as the environment in which activities are organised allow room for such actions to thrive in their pursuit of goals. As it was revealed in the previous chapter, both campaigns showed more trust for international bodies/media than local bodies. I argue that this suggests distrust that Nigerians have for their political institutions. While this reveals the need to build trust on the part of government officials and institutions, for the academic scholar, it also leaves much room for assumptions that could be critically investigated in future research. In fact, a recommendation is made in the last section of this chapter.

Although there are various strategies employed by connective actions to evoke change, the political environment plays a major role as getting the endorsement of people in power is a strong force for institution change. For example, the civil rights movement used strategies like lobbying public officials, signing petitions, mobilizing votes etc all of which proved instrumental in getting federal support in America (Button, 1989). Contemporary movements can learn from this as “elite attention” is a formidable asset for power with expected outcomes (Freelon, McIlwain, & Clark , 2018).

However, for any protest to successfully make a positive impact, the political environment must be tolerant of citizens’ right to protest undemocratic values and principles (Claasen & Gibson, 2018). This accommodating environment allows room for ideas and free expression.

The educational level of citizens also serves as an important factor that compliments the political environment because it enables an accommodating environment for progressive dissent (Dahlum & Wig, 2019). The relevance of education to protest activity can manifest in two forms; while it increases the political activity of citizens wherein citizens are educated enough to demand for their rights, the educated citizens know enough to offer criticism of their governments if their education is wasted without jobs (ibid). Coordinators of the NTYTR campaign seemed to understand this as there was evidence of training of political agents that was conducted by the movement. Thus, political education was not ignored by the movement.

For tolerant democracies in the Western world, the impact of an enabling political environment which is advanced by education is visible. For example, while university students boycotted classes without incident in India (The Times of India, 2019), black youths took to the streets in the US to protest anti-black sentiments among the police. The US government under President Obama invested \$75 million in body camera for the police (Majerol, 2015).

Protesters in Africa have experienced a different treatment from their counterparts in other parts of the world. There are reports of police physically attacking, shooting, arresting, spraying teargas at and even killing protesters (CNN, 2019; Aljazeera, 2019; New York Times, 2019; BBC, 2018; Christensen, 2017; The Cable, 2016; Baker, 2015; The Guardian, 2012). This seeming use of state institutions to quash civic rights can be attributed to Africa's faulty adherence to the rule of law (Christiansen, Jensen, & Kelly, 2019; Fombad & Kibet, 2018; Adelman, 2015; Baker, 2015). This argument is relevant in Nigeria.

Historically, Nigeria's political environment has been marred by corruption (Obuah, 2010; Adesina, 2016), impunity (Ndaguba, Ijeoma, Nebo, Chungag, & Ndaguba, 2018), abuse of human rights (Amnesty International, 2016), apparent disregard for rule of law (Punch Newspaper, 2019; AFP International Text Wire, 2018; Ujomu & Olatunji, 2014). Years of military rule have contributed to this (Bienen, 1978). The country which experienced different successions of military rule saw the return to democracy in 1999 with successful democratic transitions afterwards. However, the effects of military rule still linger (The Atlantic, 2019). Perhaps, the trauma of enduring military regimes has been transferred from generation to generation. Psychologists argue that trauma can be passed down from one generation to the next (Lehrner & Yehuda, n.d). Some of the traumatic experiences endured by Nigerians during military rule include the draconian policy tagged War Against Indiscipline in which civilians were physically assaulted by military personnel for not adhering to basic sanitary rules or civilised behaviour. Ironically, the military general who enacted this policy is currently the democratically elected President of Nigeria. Under his Presidency, human rights abuses are alleged to have been carried out by the police against unarmed civilians (Africa, 2020; Premium Times, 2018). Police abuse has also occurred under the previous leadership of Nigeria. For example, there is evidence to suggest that the police shot and killed unarmed protesters during the #OccupyNigeria protests that erupted in 2012 (Aljazeera, 2012; CNN, 2012). We bring these examples to support the Wolfsfeld et al (2013) consensus that the political environment plays a huge in determining the success of protest actions. For Nigerians, experience has been a great teacher. Engaging in protest action against police brutality might put protesters in danger. Motivation may further be lost when track records show the slow arm of justice in holding guilty parties accountable for their action, the presumed reluctance of

leaders to enact laws that would make significant changes and the continuous attack on unarmed citizens by some officers of the law. In light of the above arguments, I argue that Nigerians' tendency to politicise issues of great importance has likely affected the success of the #EndSARS campaign.

The argument that culture can inhibit or disinhibit protest action in Nigeria must take into consideration the complexities of the Nigerian society. With over 250 ethnic groups, Nigeria is a multi-ethnic state with diverse cultures. This diversity is reflected in the Nigerian identity. Six geo-political zones are allocated to the very different peoples of Nigeria; North-West, North-East, North-central, South-West, South-East and South-South. Although there are some similarities, each of these zones has cultural practices that are distinct from the others. These differences were also heightened under military rule (Mohammed, 2014). As such, using a universal argument for protest action in Nigeria would be intellectually conflicting.

To resolve this conflict, a researcher could begin from cultural theorists who argue that culture has supreme influence over society. Cultural scholars cite examples from traditional/pre-industrial societies where total deference to one's parents was expected and the unit of the family was considered as central to survival. Also, nationalism was highly practised and members of society were expected to conform to social rules. In contrast to traditional societies, post-industrial societies embrace more liberal culture of free expression, tolerance and emphasis on 'subjective well-being' (Inglehart & Welzel, 2005). While post-industrial societies accept divergent views, traditional societies oppose them.

In spite of the cultural differences, the Nigerian society is very much a traditional one. The differences in traditional culture have however influenced divergent approach to issues. In the same vein, analogue culture and the digital age take different approach to culture. Culture is said to have influenced the differences in pattern of the Tunisian and Egyptian protests (Kidd & McIntosh, 2016). For the modern-day Nigerian youth, protest culture is at variance with protest before digital media. While social movements before social media required in-person involvements, movements on social media require buttons (click, share, like etc). Perhaps, this new culture has impacted culture in diverse ways.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Studies

The study is obviously limited by the data collected for the study. The purpose of this study was to determine the Twitter activity of NTYTR campaigners from the 2016 until 2019 and #EndSARS protesters on the night of the Lekki shooting. There is still a wealth of data that is yet to be explored on the protests in Nigeria. For example, the interpersonal variations that influence the initial decision to participate in such movements can not be sufficiently determined by the type of data used in the study. Therefore, future studies could explore survey studies that would identify key participants in such campaigns with the aim of determining how offline/online personal relationships influence their decision to get involved with such movements. Secondly, it is important to note that the study was restricted to online protest only. If there was any reference to offline or on-the-ground activity, this was obviously gotten from the tweets collated for the study so this should therefore not be regarded as a consideration for offline activity. As such, future studies could cast a broader net by studying the occupation of physical space to determine the extent of the relationship between offline and online protest in Nigeria. Importantly, considering the need for

alternative channels of support for protesters, future studies could investigate the importance of digital currencies for activism in fragile democracies. As discovered in the previous chapter of this study, youths in Nigeria face financial obstacles that hinder them from pursuing their full potential. As research has shown, social movements require resources to thrive. Research can show how digital tools can be used to continue legitimate and peaceful protests. Also, a future research can attempt to compare the formation and execution of activities between #EndSARS protests and other similar global movements like #BlackLivesMatter. For NTYTR, a future study can be conducted among the organisers of the movement to ascertain their evaluation of the movement in terms of successes, failures and areas for improvement. Such a study will be seeking to produce lessons that future protests in Nigeria can build upon to produce more meaningful results. Lastly, future research critically reflect on the reliance on international agencies as opposed to reliance on national or local agencies among protesters and the consequence of such dependence for Nigeria's future. Researchers can also try to compare protests among African nations to ascertain if this is a continental issue or it is only restricted to Nigeria.

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