The #Endsars Movement and the Reshaping of Political Discourse in a Digital Age: A Nigerian Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Social media has become a powerful tool for activism, enabling movements like #EndSARS to advocate for human rights and social justice. This paper examines the impact of social media on the #EndSARS movement in Nigeria, focusing on how it empowered activists, raised awareness about police brutality, and promoted freedom of expression. Drawing on existing literature and empirical data, the study analyzes the role of social media in mobilizing support, documenting human rights abuses, and pressuring the government to address systemic issues within law enforcement. The findings highlight the positive influence of social media in amplifying marginalized voices, fostering global solidarity, and driving meaningful change. By leveraging platforms like Twitter and Instagram, the #EndSARS movement galvanized public support, attracted international attention, and contributed to disbanding the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS). The paper also explores the challenges faced by social media activism, including the spread of misinformation, government crackdowns on online dissent, and the digital divide that limits inclusivity in movements. In conclusion, the study underscores the importance of promoting digital literacy, advocating for digital rights, and addressing social media activism's limitations to enhance future advocacy efforts' effectiveness. By understanding the implications of social media activism for human rights advocacy in Nigeria and beyond, this research contributes to the ongoing discourse on the role of digital platforms in advancing social justice causes and holding governments accountable.

Keywords: Social media activism, #EndSARS movement, human rights advocacy, freedom of expression, Nigeria, digital activism

INTRODUCTION

Freedom of expression goes beyond simply being able to speak one's mind. It is crucial in promoting transparency and holding governments accountable for their actions. When individuals can freely express their criticisms and concerns, they expose potential injustices and misconduct by those in power. This, in turn, fosters a more accountable and responsive government, leading to a more just society (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2023).

The ability to express oneself freely is also a powerful tool for promoting social change. By sharing information and ideas, individuals can raise awareness about critical issues, mobilize support for social movements, and advocate for reforms. This can lead to positive changes in human rights, environmental protection, and social equality (Karatzogianni & Koutzami, 2021).

Statement of The Problem

Despite its importance, freedom of expression faces numerous challenges in the modern world. These include government censorship, media repression, and the spread of misinformation online. Addressing these challenges is crucial to ensure everyone can enjoy this fundamental right and its benefits for society (Freedom House, 2023).

Social media's emergence has transformed how information is conveyed, and activism is conducted, providing citizens with fresh avenues to participate in public discussions and promote societal transformation. Social media platforms have expanded access to information, enabling users to freely express their opinions, rally support, and ensure that those in power are held responsible, which was previously limited by traditional media outlets (Trauthig et al., 2023; Treré, 2020). Despite the attempts made by social media platforms to counteract false information, there is still a widespread growth of conspiracy theories on many subjects, such as vaccines (Pierre, 2020). The immediacy and broad reach of social media enable citizens to actively engage in public discussions, elevate the perspectives of marginalized groups, and question prevailing narratives (Trauthig et al., 2023; Treré, 2020). In addition, social media simplifies the coordination and mobilization of collective action in grassroots movements and protests, allowing for fast organizing (Trauthig et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, it is critical to recognize that social media platforms pose specific difficulties. Due to the potential for echo chambers, the dissemination of false information, and the difficulty of verifying information online, critical engagement with these platforms is required. However, social media's capacity to democratize information access and empower individuals continues to be a potent catalyst for constructive transformations on a global scale.

The #EndSARS movement in Nigeria exemplifies the significant role of social media platforms in enabling freedom of expression and advocating for human rights. Originating in 2020, the movement emerged in response to police brutality and called explicitly for the disbandment of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) in Nigeria (Agbo, 2021) (Ekoh & George, 2021). Platforms like Twitter and Instagram were pivotal in amplifying the voices of protestors, coordinating demonstrations, and highlighting human rights abuses (Ekoh & George, 2021; Obadare, 2021). This movement underscored how social media empowers citizens to voice concerns, mobilize backing, and push for social equity (Obadare, 2021; Agbo, 2021). Despite encountering obstacles within Nigeria's political landscape, the #EndSARS movement illustrated how social media can instigate social transformation and foster accountability (Agbo, 2021). Through hashtags and online activism, awareness about police brutality was raised, culminating in a widespread movement transcending conventional media boundaries (Ekoh & George, 2021; Obadare, 2021). The #EndSARS movement uses social media to mobilize, fight injustices, and hold authorities accountable (Agbo, 2021; Ekoh & George, 2021).

Aim and Objectives

This study aims to investigate the role of social media platforms in facilitating the #endsars movement and the reshaping of political discourse in a digital age: a Nigerian case study. We will achieve this by analyzing the #EndSARS movement in Nigeria as a case study.

Objectives:

1. Examine how social media platforms were used by the #EndSARS movement to document police brutality.

2. Investigate how social media empowered the #EndSARS movement to mobilize protests and organize collective action.

3. Analyze how the #EndSARS movement leveraged social media to amplify its reform message and advocate for human rights.

METHODOLOGY

This paper utilized a descriptive methodology to comprehensively understand the #endsars movement and the reshaping of political discourse in a digital age: a Nigerian case study. It gathers data from various secondary sources, including textbooks, newspapers, the internet, and all relevant publications and periodicals on human rights.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right crucial in holding governments accountable and advancing social justice. It is widely recognized in regional and international human rights law as a cornerstone of democracy and ensuring respect for all other human rights (Muhvić & Čulo, 2022; Pettrachin, 2018). This right is essential for promoting transparency, enabling individuals to voice their opinions, and fostering a pluralistic and tolerant society (Pettrachin, 2018). The importance of freedom of expression extends to the digital age, where discussions on internet-related rights and freedoms are gaining prominence (Zahra & Nasr, 2019; Raffaghelli, 2020). The ability to freely express oneself is vital for individual autonomy and challenging societal inequalities and injustices (Horsford, 2016; Nielsen & Axelsen, 2016). Moreover, the right to freedom of expression is interconnected with other rights and freedoms, forming a basis for social justice and equitable distribution of resources (Reutter & Kushner, 2010).

Freedom of Expression in Nigeria

To understand the legal foundation for freedom of expression in Nigeria, one must carefully analyze the constitutional provisions and the legislation that regulate this right. The Nigerian Constitution, particularly Chapter IV, Section 39, establishes freedom of expression as an essential entitlement (Nigerian Constitution, 1999). This clause ensures individuals' entitlement to own and articulate their beliefs without hindrance or intervention. Furthermore, it ensures the liberty of the media, enabling the circulation of knowledge and concepts without any control or suppression.

In addition to the Constitution, legislation that advocates for and safeguards this fundamental right further reinforces freedom of expression in Nigeria. The Freedom of Information Act of 2011 is a significant law that enhances openness and responsibility by allowing individuals to get public data kept by government institutions (National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2011). This enables anyone to formally request and obtain information, promoting a transparent and democratic society.

Nevertheless, despite the existence of these legislative safeguards, Nigeria still faces significant obstacles to the exercise of freedom of speech. Detractors assert that the government employs legislation like the Cybercrime Act of 2015 to stifle opposition and curtail digital communication (Human Rights Watch, 2023). Moreover, the recent prohibition of Twitter in Nigeria has sparked significant apprehensions regarding the government's dedication to safeguarding freedom of speech in digital communication (BBC News, 2021). These acts have sparked discussions on the delicate balance between national security concerns and safeguarding free speech rights. Nigeria's legal structure acknowledges and safeguards the right to freedom of expression. However, persistent obstacles and restrictions impede the complete fulfilment of this essential entitlement.

Historical and Contemporary Challenges to Freedom of Expression in Nigeria

Notwithstanding the existence of legal safeguards, freedom of expression in Nigeria encounters a multitude of obstacles encompassing both historical and contemporary dimensions:

Throughout history, the Nigerian government has implemented many strategies to stifle dissent and exert control over information. This included the imprisonment of journalists and the suppression of critical media outlets and publications during periods of military dictatorship and colonial rule (Akinola, 2018). Presently, covert manifestations of censorship persist, wherein governmental entities exert pressure on media organizations through press intimidation and the selective distribution of advertising revenue (Freedom House, 2023).
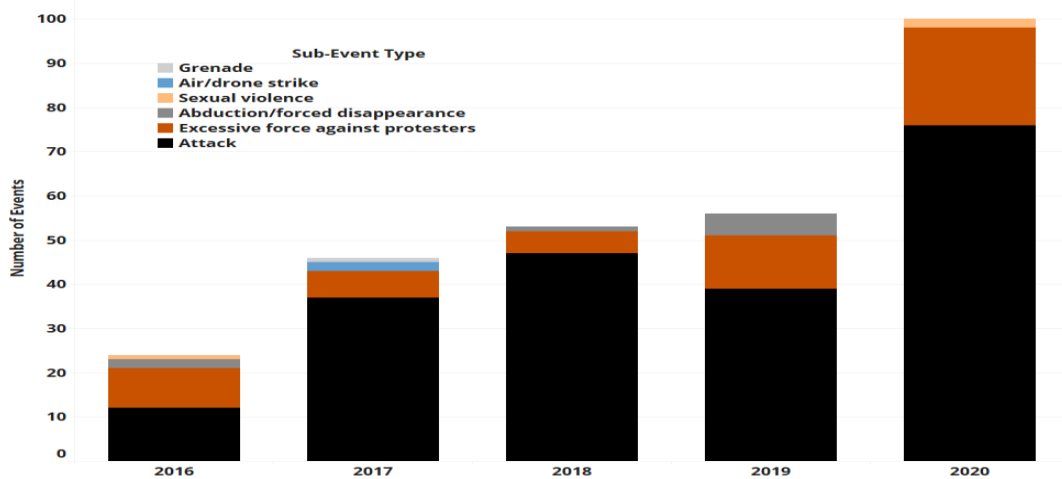
Source: Lessons From the #EndSARS Movement in Nigeria (acleddata.com)

The bar chart presented here, obtained from "Lessons From the #EndSARS Movement in Nigeria" (acleddata.com), offers insight into the geographic distribution of the protests. By considering the x-axis to symbolize Nigeria's geopolitical zones and the y-axis to symbolize the number of demonstrations, discrepancies in protest activity across various regions may be discernible through the bar heights. Different regions may have experienced notably greater demonstrations than others, indicating the possibility of concentration. Conversely, bars of significant height spanning all zones might signify a nationwide mobilization involving broad participation. Drawing upon insights gained from the #EndSARS movement, the source implies that the chart could be employed to ascertain whether the demonstrations extended beyond geographical boundaries.

Media Repression: The relationship between the Nigerian government and the media has frequently been contentious. State actors subject private media organizations to threats, intimidation, and physical harm, whereas state-owned media frequently serve as mouthpieces for the government (International Press Institute, 2023). This restricts the free movement of information and constrains the diversity of viewpoints in the media.

The regulation of social media and the Cybercrime Act of 2015: The Cybercrime Act of 2015 confers extensive authority on the government to surveil online behaviour and initiate legal proceedings against users who engage in "offensive" or national security-threatening online speech. As a result, online activism and discourse are challenged (Human Rights Watch, 2023).

The constrained availability of technology, specifically in rural regions, obstructs freedom of expression by establishing a digital divide. Consequently, a considerable segment of the populace cannot engage in online discussions or readily access information (International Telecommunication Union, 2022).

Constraints of Conventional Media and Protests

Although conventional media outlets such as newspapers and radio have historically been instrumental in fostering human rights activism and increasing public consciousness in Nigeria, they are not without their constraints:

One challenge traditional media entities pose is their restricted reach, which hinders the ability to galvanize support throughout the expansive nation. Valuable information and calls to action may also be withheld from rural communities that have restricted access to conventional media outlets.

Government Control: As previously stated, the government's influence may constrain the ability of state-owned media outlets to report freely on crucial issues, limiting the range of perspectives conveyed within the media sphere.

Organizing large-scale protests can incur significant costs due to logistical considerations, including printing materials and transportation. Moreover, demonstrations are vulnerable to government repression and security personnel suppression.

In Nigeria, social media has emerged as a potent instrument for human rights activism, surmounting certain constraints that conventional media and protests have encountered:

Enhanced Mobilization and Perception: Social media platforms allow activists to distribute information, establish connections with supporters, and swiftly and effectively galvanize national and international action.

Decentralization and Control Bypass: Social media functions independently from conventional media administrators, permitting unrestricted access to information and a multitude of perspectives, notwithstanding efforts by the government to exert authority over traditional media establishments.

Greater Participation and Reduced Expenditure: Social media activism enables individuals in different geographical locations to engage in movements and effortlessly exchange information, all while requiring minimal financial investment.

Nevertheless, it is critical to recognize that social media encounters obstacles, including the potential for governmental surveillance and censorship of online activity and the dissemination of false information.

Theoretical Framework: Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT)

Resource mobilization theory is not attributed to a singular advocate. It originated from research conducted by multiple experts during the 1970s. The theory is linked to John D. McCarthy and Mayer Zald. In the mid-1970s, their efforts established the foundation for this theory, explicitly examining social movements' organizational elements. Although other researchers have contributed to the development of resource mobilization theory, McCarthy and Zald are widely recognized as the primary originators.

Resource Mobilization Theory (McCarthy & Zald, 1977) offers a valuable framework for analyzing how social media empowers social movements like #EndSARS. This theory emphasizes the importance of resources, such as information, communication channels, and social networks, for movements to mobilize effectively and achieve their goals (Amenta et al., 2010). In the context of #EndSARS, social media platforms served as critical resources, enabling protesters to disseminate information about police brutality, coordinate activities across Nigeria, and garner widespread support (Marlow & Baloch, 2018). By leveraging social media, activists amplified their message, attracting international attention and mobilizing individuals to participate in demonstrations (Gehlke, 2021). Resource Mobilization Theory highlights how access to resources through digital platforms empowers movements by facilitating communication, organizing collective action, and raising awareness about social injustices (Wang & Eyal, 2017). In the case of #EndSARS, social media functioned as a catalyst for mobilization, enabling protesters to connect, share experiences of police brutality, and collectively advocate for change. This case exemplifies the theory's continued relevance in understanding the dynamics of contemporary social movements empowered by digital resources.

## Social Media as a Resource Powerhouse for #EndSARS

Social media platforms played a pivotal role in empowering the #EndSARS movement in Nigeria by providing crucial resources that significantly contributed to its success and impact. Firstly, social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook facilitated communication and coordination among geographically dispersed supporters, effectively reducing mobilization costs (Marlow & Baloch, 2018). These platforms allowed activists to reach a broad audience instantaneously, organize protests, and mobilize individuals across different regions without the need for extensive physical infrastructure or financial resources typically associated with traditional mobilization efforts.

Secondly, social media empowered rapid information dissemination, bypassing traditional media gatekeepers. Activists utilized platforms like Twitter to share real-time updates, videos, and personal accounts of police

brutality, raising awareness and galvanizing support locally and internationally (Gehlke, 2021). By leveraging the viral nature of social media, the #EndSARS movement amplified its message. It drew global attention to the injustices faced by Nigerian citizens, garnering widespread solidarity and condemnation of police violence (Wang & Eyal, 2017).

Furthermore, social media platforms fostered network building and solidarity among movement participants. Platforms like WhatsApp groups, Telegram channels, and Twitter hashtags created online spaces for discussion, collaboration, and support, cultivating a strong sense of community and unity among protestors (Arce & Xiao, 2015). These digital networks facilitated the exchange of ideas and strategies and nurtured a shared identity and purpose, strengthening the resolve and commitment to collective action (Bennett & Segerberg, 2012).
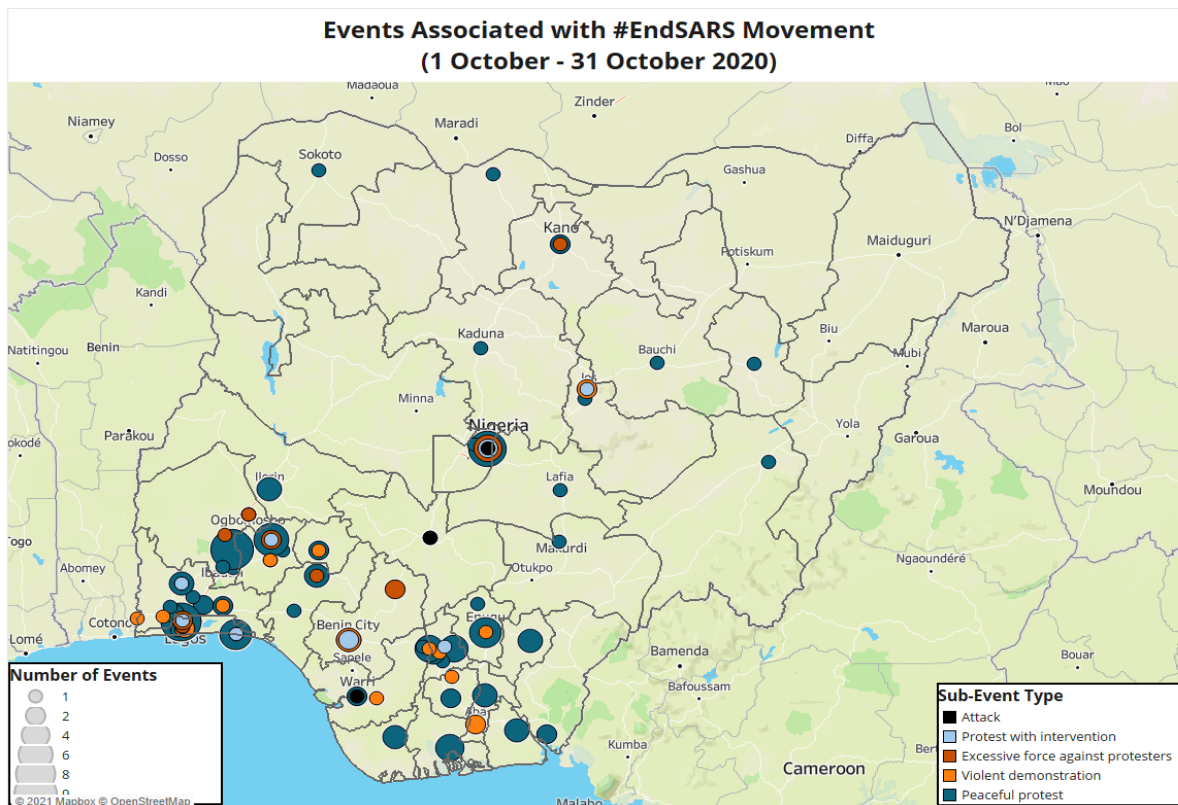
Source: Lessons From the #EndSARS Movement in Nigeria (acleddata.com)

The image above illustrates the spatial arrangement of the #EndSARS demonstrations. Given that the y-axis denotes the number of protests, and the x-axis signifies the geopolitical zones of Nigeria, the bar heights potentially unveil discrepancies in protest activity among distinct regions. Different regions may have experienced notably greater demonstrations than others, indicating the possibility of geographic concentration. Conversely, bars of significant height extending throughout all zones might signify a nationwide mobilization that garnered extensive involvement.

Case Study: #BlackLivesMatter Movement in the United and #EndSARS in Nigeria.

The #BlackLivesMatter movement originated in the United States as a potent catalyst for social justice to eradicate police brutality against Black individuals and attain racial parity (Black et al.). Following the 2013 acquittal of George Zimmerman in Trayvon Martin's shooting death, the movement gained notoriety and has since evolved into a worldwide force that advocates for fundamental changes in the system (Gehlke, 2021). An analysis of the utilization of social media by the #EndSARS and #BlackLivesMatter movements uncovers both shared characteristics and divergences in their approaches.

Both revolutions utilized social media to record, organize, and magnify the voices of underrepresented individuals. Social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook played a crucial role in

disseminating immediate updates, videos depicting instances of police brutality, and personal narratives. This helped to increase awareness and galvanize support (Marlow & Baloch, 2018). Nevertheless, distinct disparities arose in the utilization of platforms. The #EndSARS movement in Nigeria employed Twitter to coordinate protests and distribute information, resulting in hashtags such as #EndSARS gaining worldwide popularity (Adegoke, 2021). Conversely, the #BlackLivesMatter campaign in the United States utilized a more extensive social media approach, using platforms like Instagram and Facebook to connect with a wide range of viewers and participate in advocacy endeavors (Emerson et al., 2020).

The strategies utilized on these platforms also varied. The #EndSARS movement in Nigeria employed internet fundraising campaigns to provide financial assistance for legal representation to protestors and enhance the visibility of their cause (Amnesty International, 2021). However, the #BlackLivesMatter movement in the United States prioritized using social media to organize rallies, champion legislative reforms, and disseminate educational materials pertaining to racial justice matters (Morris, 2016).

FINDINGS

Impact and Challenges of Social Media Activism

The #EndSARS movement in Nigeria significantly raised awareness about police brutality and advocated for police reform in the country. Social media played a crucial role in amplifying the movement's message, mobilizing support, and pressuring the government to address the issues raised by protestors. The widespread sharing of videos, images, and personal accounts of police brutality on platforms like Twitter and Instagram shed light on the systemic abuses committed by the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), leading to increased public outrage and calls for accountability (Dambo et al., 2020; Agbo, 2021).

The social media pressure exerted by the #EndSARS movement played a pivotal role in the eventual disbandment of SARS by the Nigerian government. The online activism and advocacy efforts of protestors, coupled with international attention and solidarity, created a groundswell of pressure that forced the government to act. Using hashtags, viral campaigns, and digital organizing strategies effectively galvanized public support and pushed for concrete reforms within the Nigerian police force (Dambo et al., 2020; Agbo, 2021).

Despite its successes, the #EndSARS movement also faced several limitations and challenges due to social media.

Misinformation and disinformation: Misinformation and disinformation spread rapidly during the protests, with fake news and propaganda circulating online, potentially undermining the movement's credibility and diluting its message (Spelke et al., 1983). The proliferation of false information posed challenges in maintaining the movement's integrity and countering misleading narratives that sought to discredit the protestors.

Government crackdowns: Furthermore, the movement encountered government crackdowns aimed at restricting social media access and silencing online dissent. Instances of internet shutdowns, censorship, and arrests of activists highlighted the government's attempts to suppress the movement and limit freedom of expression (Adedokun, 2022). These actions raised concerns about human rights violations and infringements on the right to peaceful assembly and protest.

Digital divide: The digital divide in Nigeria posed a significant challenge to the inclusivity of the #EndSARS movement. Not everyone in the country has access to social media platforms, leading to disparities in participation and limiting the movement's reach among marginalized communities. The lack of internet access for certain populations exacerbated existing inequalities and hindered the movement's ability to fully represent and advocate for all segments of society (Ajemba, 2022).

While social media activism played a crucial role in the success of the #EndSARS movement, it also presented challenges such as misinformation, government crackdowns, and digital divides. Addressing these limitations

is essential for future movements to navigate the complexities of online advocacy effectively and ensure inclusivity, accuracy, and resilience in the face of external pressures.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The #EndSARS Movement and Social Media

The #EndSARS movement in Nigeria emerged as a significant protest movement that aimed to address police brutality and advocate for police reforms in the country. The primary goal of the movement was the dissolution of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a unit of the Nigerian Police Force notorious for human rights abuses, extrajudicial killings, and harassment of Nigerian youth Dambo et al. (2020). The demands of the #EndSARS movement included calling for thorough investigations into cases of police brutality, ensuring accountability for perpetrators of such abuses, and pushing for comprehensive reforms within the Nigerian police force (Aboh, 2023).

The movement gained momentum through social media platforms, particularly Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, where activists and supporters utilized hashtags like #EndSARS to raise awareness, share personal accounts of police brutality, and mobilize individuals to join the protests (Mwaura, 2023). Social media played a crucial role in amplifying the voices of protestors, coordinating demonstrations, and galvanizing public support both within Nigeria and on a global scale (Chiluwa, 2023). The online discourse surrounding the #EndSARS movement framed SARS as oppressors, criticized the Nigerian government for its perceived insensitivity, and called for immediate action to address police brutality and ensure accountability (Gaventa et al., 2023).

The #EndSARS movement exemplified the power of social media in facilitating collective action, organizing protests, and demanding social justice. The movement's use of digital technologies and online platforms enabled activists to sustain momentum and solidarity and drew attention to systemic issues of police violence and human rights violations in Nigeria (Uwalaka, 2022). By leveraging social media as a tool for advocacy and mobilization, the #EndSARS movement sparked a national conversation on police reform, accountability, and the protection of citizens' rights, highlighting the transformative potential of digital activism in addressing social injustices (Nwakanma, 2022).

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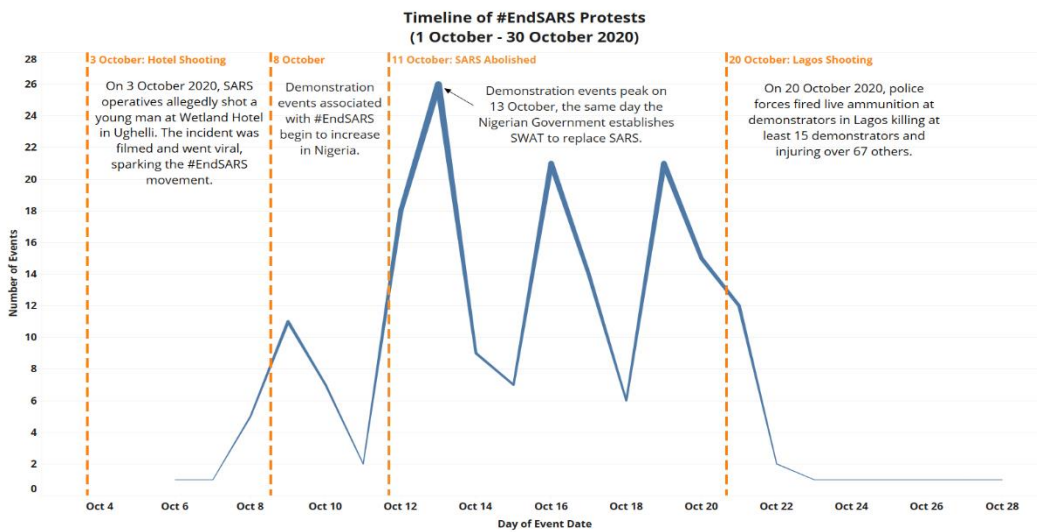
Source: Lessons From the #EndSARS Movement in Nigeria (acleddata.com)

Analysis of the Graph Above:

Examining the timeline of Nigeria's #EndSARS protests in October 2020 (October 3rd - 28th) through the provided graph (ACLED, 2021), a fascinating trend emerges. The graph depicts a steady rise in protest events in the first two weeks, potentially fueled by public outrage following the initial police brutality incident (Amnesty International, 2020). This surge peaked around October 13th, coinciding with the government's announcement of a new police unit, viewed by some as an insufficient response to the movement's demands (Human Rights Watch, 2020). The graph then suggests a decline in protests after October 13th. This could be attributed to numerous factors, including a potential government crackdown or protester fatigue. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that this decline partially overlaps with the tragic shooting of peaceful demonstrators at Lekki Toll Gate on October 20th. This event, which sparked international outrage, might have led some to prioritize safety and withdraw from protests (International Crisis Group, 2020).
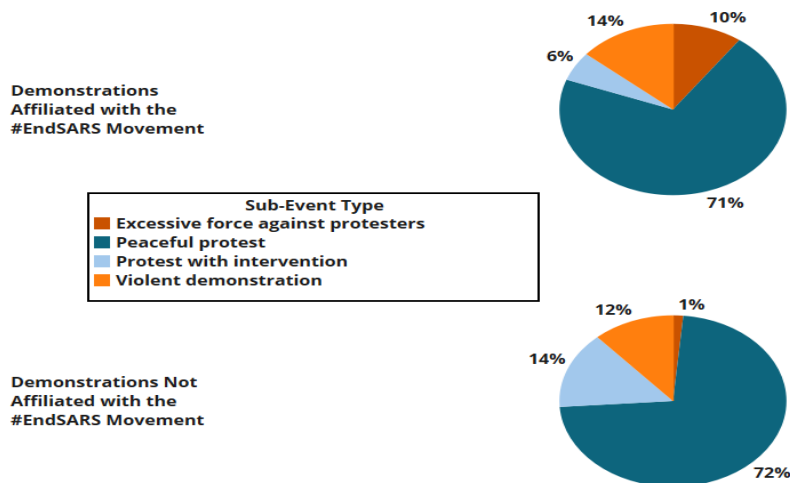
Source: Lessons From the #EndSARS Movement in Nigeria (acleddata.com)

This pie chart is extremely informative, obtained from "Lessons From the #EndSARS Movement in Nigeria" (acleddata.com).

The pie chart could potentially examine the protests using a particular metric, including the distribution of pivotal demands arising from the movement (e.g., government accountability, police reform, cessation of brutality, sit-ins, vandalism), the spectrum of outcomes encountered throughout the protests (including government concessions, continued violence, and heightened awareness), or the variety of protest activities (including peaceful marches, sit-ins, and vandalism). Subsequently, the predominant element's relative abundance would be reflected in the dimensions of each pie segment. Nevertheless, it is probable that the pie chart's purpose is to scrutinize a particular facet of the demonstrations. By comprehending the pie chart's intended message, one may learn about the movement's objectives, its results, or the characteristics of the protest endeavours.

In conclusion, although the pie chart provides a possible initial reference, it is also a valuable tool for delving deeper into the #EndSARS movement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To optimize the beneficial influence of social media activity, it is possible to implement the measures below:

Improve Digital Literacy: Promote digital literacy initiatives that teach users to distinguish reliable information from false information on social media platforms. Educational programs can equip citizens with the skills to critically evaluate information online, identify misinformation, and participate responsibly in online discussions. Imparting instruction on critical thinking skills and fact-checking procedures can effectively counteract the dissemination of false information and propaganda in initiatives such as #EndSARS.

Advocate Digital Rights: Promote policies that uphold freedom of speech on the internet and protect digital rights. It is imperative to guarantee the freedom of individuals to express their thoughts without any apprehension of censorship or government repression on social media. Civil society organizations and tech companies should collaborate to advocate for policies protecting freedom of expression online, including government censorship and surveillance limitations.

Promote Inclusivity: Mitigate the digital gap by advocating for efforts that enhance the accessibility of social media platforms for all sectors of the population. Promoting inclusivity in online activism can enhance the representation of diverse views and perspectives, bolstering the effectiveness of advocacy endeavours. Investments in infrastructure expansion and promoting affordable internet access are crucial for inclusive online participation in human rights advocacy.

Combat Misinformation: Formulate tactics to effectively counteract misinformation and disinformation in the context of social media activism. Establish fact-checking systems, enhance media literacy, and promote responsible information sharing to uphold the credibility and efficacy of advocacy movements.

Promote Global Collaboration: Facilitate international cooperation among human rights campaigners and organizations via social media platforms. By strategically utilizing international support and solidarity, movements such as #EndSARS may enhance their influence, ensure governmental responsibility, and catalyze significant transformation on a global level.

Research and Evaluation: Conduct research and evaluation studies to assess the influence of social media activism on promoting human rights. By analyzing the efficacy of digital advocacy initiatives, organizations can improve their methods, find optimal practices, and boost the results of future advocacy endeavors.

Promote Grassroots Activism: Facilitate grassroots activity on social media platforms by offering information, training, and tools to enhance the effectiveness of online advocacy. Enabling individuals and local groups to participate in digital activism can enhance advocacy campaigns and facilitate long-lasting social transformation.

By integrating these recommendations, forthcoming social media activism endeavours can effectively confront challenges, maximize impact, and advance human rights advocacy on a global scale, including in Nigeria. By acknowledging and confronting these obstacles while advocating for conscientious utilization of social media, the complete potential of social media activism to further human rights in Nigeria and other regions can be actualized.

CONCLUSION

The #EndSARS movement in Nigeria, bolstered by the influence of social media, played a pivotal role in heightening consciousness regarding police brutality and promoting the need for police restructuring in the nation. By leveraging networks such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, the movement effectively magnified its message, rallied support, and pressured the government to tackle structural problems within law enforcement. The documentation of instances of excessive force by law enforcement, the organized actions taken to promote and support the movement, and the increased visibility and support given to marginalized communities through social media platforms played a crucial role in advancing the movement.

The influence of social media activism on promoting human rights advocacy in Nigeria and worldwide is significant. Social media can amass global support, surpass geographical limitations, and enforce responsibility on governments for their acts. The #EndSARS movement exemplifies the effectiveness of online activism in catalyzing global social transformation and promoting universal human rights. Through the strategic utilization of social media platforms, activists may enhance the impact of their messages, increase public consciousness of injustices, and foster a sense of unity across various communities.

However, social media activism has obstacles that require careful consideration. False or misleading information and deliberate spreading of false information threaten the credibility of movements, thereby reducing their impact and effectiveness. The enforcement actions taken by the government to restrict access to social media and suppress online opposition highlight the importance of protecting the ability to express oneself freely and maintaining the rights related to the digital realm. Moreover, the digital gap, which refers to the unequal access to social media among individuals, might hinder inclusivity in movements and worsen pre-existing inequalities.

In conclusion, the #EndSARS movement demonstrates the profound impact of social media activism in promoting freedom of speech, advocating for basic human rights, and mobilizing international backing. By recognizing the abilities and restrictions of social media activism, confronting obstacles, and applying remedies, future movements can use digital platforms' full potential to promote significant transformation and propel social justice initiatives.

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