The Role of Media in End Sars Protest: Framing, Bias, and Peace Journalism

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Abstract

The study is an analysis of the impact of the media on the EndSARS civil resistance in Nigeria in October 2020. The work determines the relationship between the framing and biases of the media and EndSARS protesters. The major objective of the study is that it analyzes the role the media played in the EndSARS protest with a focus on the framing and biases as well as stereotype of the media. The theory adopted is the failed state theory and the methodology utilized is both primary and secondary sources of data collection. The #EndSARS protest of October 2020 was facilitated by social media. It was found that the mobilization of protesters, amplification of their voices, sourcing of funds, and so on were done using these platforms even when the protesting youths did not have a structural leadership for coordination. The study recommends that the role of the media during the EndSARS protest and indeed other civil disobedience can never be overemphasized. As such, moving forward, stakeholders, including media practitioners, policymakers, and civil society actors, must learn to collaborate and create a media landscape that amplifies diverse voices, promotes transparency, and facilitates constructive dialogue for positive social change.

Key Words: Media, EndSARS, Media Framing, Biases and Peace Journalism

Introduction

Background to the Study

The protests against SARS in Nigeria began in October 2020 with a primary focus on ending police brutality and disbanding the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) within the Nigerian Police Force. SARS, initially created in 1992 to combat armed robbery and other serious crimes (Akinwotu, 2020), had devolved into an epitome of police brutality, extortion, and unchecked violence (Human Rights Watch, 2020). The spark that ignited the #EndSARS movement can be traced back to a

video surfacing online, showcasing a young man allegedly shot by SARS officers (Oludayo, 2020). The digital age, with its unfettered access to social media, turned a localized incident into a national outcry. Twitter became the conflagration that fueled the #EndSARS campaign, a hashtag pushing the bounds of virtual activism into tangible protests (BBC News, 2020).

Protesters flooded the streets of Lagos, Nigeria on October 8, 2020, demanding an end to police brutality with the powerful chants of "End SARS!" echoing in the air, symbolizing a call for change, respect, and justice. During those crucial days, the Nigerian youth illustrated a story of defiance, not through violence but through the peaceful shield of unity. Protesters, social media personalities, trendsetters, and famous figures came together as a collective representing a generation tired of enduring systemic shortcomings. The protest had transcended its initial demands, evolving into a call for good governance and accountability (Maclean & Mark, 2020).

Yet, despite the peaceful intent, the protests were tinged with the darker hues of repression. On the night of October 20, 2020, a peaceful protest at the Lekki toll gate turned tragic as armed forces allegedly opened fire on unarmed demonstrators (Akinwotu, 2020). Following the events of the Lekki Massacre, the protest environment in Nigeria underwent a significant transformation. There was widespread international criticism, as various organizations and individuals spoke out against the brutality inflicted on peaceful demonstrators. According to Amnesty International, the protests resulted in a minimum of 56 fatalities nationwide, with approximately 40 occurring on October 20 (Amnesty International, 2020).Yet, the embers of #EndSARS continue to glow, igniting conversations on African governance, youth activism, and the unyielding spirit of a people in search of justice. The protests have shed light on the wider implications of police brutality, systemic corruption, and the role of social media in modern advocacy (Nyabola, 2020).

The media played a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing the narrative around the protest. However, concerns about framing bias and the lack of peace journalism practices emerged. It is against this backdrop that examining the media's involvement in the End SARS protests from the perspectives of

framing, bias, and peace journalism provides valuable insights into how media coverage during social movements impacts democracy, social equity, and conflict resolution.

Statement of Problem

Despite the crucial function of the media in shaping public opinion and influencing the outcomes of social movements such as the End SARS protests, there remains a dearth of comprehensive knowledge on how media outlets portrayed the protests, the presence of bias in their reporting, and the degree to which peace journalism principles were adhered to. This informational gap impedes our capacity to evaluate the media's impact on the protest movement and its results, as well as to pinpoint potential areas for enhancing media coverage of forthcoming social movements and conflicts.

Consequently, there exists an urgent necessity for thorough research into the media's role in the End SARS protests, with a specific focus on framing, bias, and peace journalism principles, in order to provide insights to media professionals, policymakers, and the general public for more accountable and efficient media practices in the future.

Research Questions

The research questions that will be considered in this work are as follows:

i. What is the role of the media the EndSARS protest?
ii. To what extent did the media framing and biases against the protesters fueled EndSARS protest?
iii. What are the challenges of the media that constrained them to biased reportage of the EndSARS protest?
iv. To what extent did media outlets engage in peace journalism between the police and EndSARS protesters during the protest?

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to analyze the impact of media in the EndSARS protest. The specific objectives are:

i. To examine the role of the media the EndSARS protest;

ii. To analyze the extent to which the media framing and biases against the protesters fueled EndSARS protest;
iii. To assess the challenges of the media that constrained them to biased reportage of the EndSARS protest;
iv. To evaluate the extent to which the media outlets engage in peace journalism between the police and EndSARS protesters during the protest.

Research Propositions

The research propositions for this study are as follows:

i. There are different roles the media played in the EndSARS protest;
ii. Media framing and biases against the protesters fueled EndSARS protest;
iii. There different challenges of the media that constrained them to biased reportage of the EndSARS protest;
iv. The media outlets were effectively engaged in peace journalism between the police and EndSARS protesters during the protest.

Significance of study

The importance of the study lies in its ability to enhance our understanding of how media can shape public perception and influence outcomes in social movements and conflicts, specifically focusing on the End SARS protests. The significance of the study can be highlighted through the following aspects:

i. Informing Media Practices: Gaining insights into media framing, biases, and adherence to principles of peace journalism can provide valuable guidance for media professionals, policymakers, and civil society members to improve responsible and ethical media practices when covering social movements and conflicts.
ii. Improving Public Discourse: Understanding the impact of media coverage on public perception and government responses can contribute to promoting more informed public discussions and supporting democratic governance.
iii. Empowering Civil Society: The study's findings can empower civil society groups and activists to engage with media organizations, advocate for fair and unbiased coverage, and effectively utilize media platforms to amplify their messages and voices.
iv. Promoting Peaceful Conflict Resolution: Understanding the influence of media framing and principles of peace journalism can help develop

strategies for promoting non-violent conflict resolution and constructive dialogue, not only during the End SARS protests but also in future social movements and conflicts.

v. Academic Contribution: The study adds to the existing academic literature on media studies, social movements, and conflict resolution by providing empirical evidence and theoretical insights into the relationship between media, society, and politics in the digital era.

Overall, this study is important for deepening our theoretical understanding and providing practical applications in the fields of media, politics, and societal transformation.

Scope of the Study

This study covers the impact of the media on the EndSARS civil resistance in Nigeria in October 2020. This study also determines the relationship between the framing and biases of the media and EndSARS protesters. The above scope was chosen because this was the period that Nigeria saw a significant increase in violence targeting civilians by state forces. Demonstrations associated with the #EndSARS movement against this violence were subjected to excessive force than other types of demonstrations. More than half of all events of excessive force against protesters by state forces in 2020 were recorded at protests associated with the #EndSARS movement.

Literature Review

Conceptual Framework

The following are some of the concepts considered in this study:

Media

The Media refer to all the avenues through which Information can passed from one person to countless, heterogeneous people. They are the vehicles through which messages, information, ideas, persuasions are transmitted from person to person. Examples of these vehicles include television stations, radio stations, newspapers, drums, flutes, gongs, bells, and most recently, social media. Media in this study is conceived as agents of information communicated to large groups of people through a group of corporate entities, publishers, journalists, reporters,

pressmen, newscasters and others who constitute the communications industry and profession. It also includes the ability to inform, educate and entertain the populace.

Akinkuotu (2020) argues that the mass media are components of the society which major function is to enrich the culture of the people and help them to be aware of and adapt to their environment. This is because human environment is dynamic, and changes occur in all facets of human existence. This may make it difficult for every area of man's life to be studied. Thus, people choose what they listen to and watch based on what captures their interest. Adesina (2021) asserts that the press, regarded as the fourth Estate of the Realm after the order of the Crown, is an institution vested with the responsibility of being the watchdog of the society; the voice of the masses, and expected to be a reminder to government officials of the its responsibility especially, in an ideal democratic society. This is as democracy is seen as the pedestal on which a society can lay a strong foundation for its socio-economic and political stability.

Most scholars like Adepegba (2020) and Adeoye (2020) have written in sympathy to the social media; they have erroneously believed that social media are the veritable tools to organize people for social movements or political changes. They tend to forget in a hurry that before social media gained ascendency in the last decade, social movements of different degrees had been organized in various parts of the world. For instance, the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917, the Orange Revolution led by Pastor Sunday Adelaja in Ukraine, and so on. At this juncture, it is expedient the related literature is being reviewed.

Media Framing

Framing essentially involves selection and salience. To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described.

Gamson and Modigliani (2019:143) conceptually defined a media frame as "a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip

of events . . . The frame suggests what the controversy is about, the essence of the issue". Viewing media or news frames as necessary to turn meaningless and nonrecognizable happenings into a discernible event, Tuchman (2018:193) offered a similar definition for media frames: "The news frame organizes everyday reality and the news frame is part and parcel of everyday reality . . . (it) is an essential feature of news". Media frames also serve as working routines for journalists that allow the journalists to quickly identify and classify information and "to package it for efficient relay to their audiences" (Gitlin, 2019:7). This concept of media framing can include the intent of the sender, but the motives can also be unconscious ones (Gamson, 2019).

Adediran (2020) asserts that media framing often manifests itself by the choice of some key words, key phrases and images that reinforce a particular representation of the reality and a specific emotion toward it, and the omission of other elements that could suggest a different perspective or trigger a different sentiment. It can also be observed in the journalist's selection of whom to quote, what to quote and where this quote will be placed in the story. This selection process is known to be influenced by multiple factors, including the journalist's personal belief system, his working conditions, the editorial position and journalistic practices in his organization, as well as more distant factors such as the economic environment, the political climate, and the broader ideological and cultural conditions prevalent in his society. News framing by journalists is often highly dependent on the availability of various sources of information and their specific attributes (such as perceived credibility, legitimacy, power status, etc.) and may shift in time, influenced by new events and changing conditions.

Media Bias

Media bias occurs when journalists and news producers show bias in how they report and cover news. The term "media bias" implies a pervasive or widespread bias contravening of the standards of journalism, rather than the perspective of an individual journalist or article. The direction and degree of media bias in various countries is widely disputed.

Bakare (2021) submits that media bias occurs when journalists and news producers show bias in how they report and cover news. The term "media bias" implies a

pervasive or widespread bias contravening of the standards of journalism, rather than the perspective of an individual journalist or article. Media bias could be defined as the unjust favoritism and reporting of a certain ideas or standpoint. In the news, social media, and entertainment, such as movies or television, we see media bias through the information these forms of media choose to pay attention to or report. "Media bias," is defined as the bias -- or **perceived bias** -- of journalists and news producers within the mass media in the selection of events and stories that are reported and how they are covered.

Peace Journalism

Peace journalism is a style and theory of reporting that aims to treat stories about war and conflict with balance, in contrast to war journalism, which peace journalism advocates say display a bias toward violence. Ogunleye (2021) asserts that the theory proposes practical methods for correcting biases in stories appearing in the mainstream and alternative media, and suggests ways for journalists to work with other media professionals, audiences, and organizations in conflict.

Eze (2021:23) argues that peace journalism aims to correct for these biases. Its operational definition is "to allow opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict". This involves picking up calls for, and articulations of, non-violence policies from whatever quarter, and allowing them into the public sphere.

Ukonne & Okoye (2021) assert that peace journalism aims to shed light on structural and cultural causes of violence, as they impact upon the lives of people in a conflict arena as part of the explanation for violence. It aims to frame conflicts as consisting of many parties and pursuing many goals rather than a simple dichotomy. An explicit aim of *peace journalism* is to promote peace initiatives from whatever quarter and to allow the reader to distinguish between stated positions and real goals.

Empirical Review

Role of the media in the EndSARS protest

The media, particularly social media or new media has played a veritable role in civil disobedience world over. In the case of the #EndSARS protests, the media played a big role and that is because the media were used as a means to galvanize the youths to participate in the protest.

The #EndSARS protests of October 2020 were series of widespread, mass protests in Nigeria. These protests were targeted at the Federal Government of Nigeria to enforce the end of police brutality, undue harassment and extortion meted against the masses, especially the youths in Nigeria. To this end, the predominant participants of these protests were the Nigerian youths from all walks of life. Idagu & Kolo (2020) using the survey method and conflict theory submit that what 'ordinarily' started on Saturday, October 3, 2020, with a video showing a SARS police officer shooting a Nigerian youth in front of a hotel in Ughelli town, Delta State of Nigeria on the internet; and another report on Monday, October 5, 2020, of the same sect killing a 20-year-old upcoming musician, turned into an outrage by the youths. This was such that on Thursday, October 8, 2020, the most populous African nation was thrown into an unprecedented social unrest, represented by all manner of demonstrations, online activism, protests, civil disobedience, and so on. Onuoha & Ebebeinwe (2020) using the correlational coefficient and mixed research design argue that though the Nigeria Police Force attempted to disrupt these protests in some cities, the protests soon, attracted the sympathy of the international community. This was as the Nigerian youths in Diaspora and other nationals lent their unreserved voices in solidarity for the mass protests. Sadly, in about three weeks, the protests recorded the loss of lives by the various parties and destruction of inestimable properties. The spread of these protests was believed to have been facilitated by the media, especially the social media. This is given the fact that the various social media platforms have tended to globalize the world in an unimaginable way, especially with the internet driven generation. This is given credence to by Obidi (2020) who submits that the media have the capacity to bring together people that are not physically in the same place in what he calls "placeless culture". However, his submission encompasses the various media outlets, and not only the social media.

Ogunleye (2021) using the historical research design submit that though these protests culminated in a remarkable success represented by the disbandment of the SARS unit of the Nigerian Police Force on Sunday, October 11, 2020, and the eventual setting up of panels of judicial inquiry for compensation and prosecution by various states. However, it should be pointed out that these same social media platforms were also responsible for instilling fear, creating panic and inciting the unsuspecting, ignorant and gullible Nigerians into decisions and actions that endangered their lives and the corporate existence of Nigeria. This was as lies were being spread and issues being over exaggerated.

The extent to which the media framing and biases against the protesters fueled EndSARS protest

The mainstream media framing and biases against the protesters fueled the #EndSARS protests in the sense that they were involved in selective reporting, prejudicial stereotypes about the protesters, making generalized statements not supported by facts and figures, attributing statements by individuals to collectives, publishing of rumours about the #EndSARS protest as facts, publishing unfair and discriminating adverts and use of inflammatory language in news reporting against the protesters..

The social media as an approach has become the latest and most revolutionary tool in the formation of social movements or protests. This communication revolution has brought about rapid emergence of scholars who are now looking at social media as an instrument of shaping the agendas of social movements and aiding collective action both online and offline at the local and global levels. This now enables the youths to connect and organize themselves with little or no cost in order to fight a cause. This is such that events now spread even to the remotest part of the globe with the speed of light.

Igbinedion & Idemudia (2021) submit that in 2016, a human rights activist, Segun Awosanya, popularly known as Segalink, started EndSARS campaign on twitter, which prompted the Nigerian Police Force to frantically announce the reformation of the notorious unit which did not come to fruition eventually. Eze (2021) asserts that in 2017, Nigerian activists, youths and celebrities took to the streets in a peaceful protest to create awareness of SARS brutality and extortions while

demanding for its disbandment. Remarkably, the protest found its way to the social media with the hash tag: #EndSARS. More so in 2017, a petition signed by 10,195 people calling for an outright disbandment of SARS was submitted to the Nigerian National Assembly. Odesola (2020) submits that although a number of lawmakers endorsed the scrapping of the unit, the police high command, represented by the PRO, CSP Jimoh Moshood, rather turned deaf ears and went about calling the campaigners criminals. In his words: "Those who are calling on the scrapping of SARS are people to be suspected, I think they are robbers themselves". In 2018, a Nigerian rapper, Micheal Ugochukwu Stephens, popularly known as Ruggedman, took his toll in the campaign to end police brutality in Nigeria. This he did by releasing a single titled: "Is Police Your Friend?".

Adesina (2021) asserts that amidst several calls geared towards the disbandment of SARS, the last straw that broke the camel's back was the October 2020 widespread (national and international) protest that manifested in dimensions unusual to the chagrin of the government of Nigeria. Following the release of a video showing a SARS operative to have allegedly killed a young man in Ughelli Town, Delta State on October 3, 2020, and the report of the killing of one Daniel Chibuike, a Rivers born 20-year-old musician in the Elelenwo area of Port-Harcourt, a lot of Nigerian youths went agog in nationwide protests and demonstrations of all manner. This was beginning on Thursday, October 8, 2020.

Adepegba (2020) asserts that the major cities of Nigeria which included Lagos, Abuja, Ibadan, and so on were the first hit. For instance, the #EndSARS protesting youths gathered and passed the night at the Lagos State Government House entrance, Alausa, till they were addressed by the Deputy Governor, Femi Hamzat, on October 9, 2020. In his address, he acknowledged the excesses of police officers; he condemned police brutality and the abuse of rights of law-abiding citizens regardless of their dress or dressing, and expressed the state government's readiness to nip the menace to the bud. The above scenario replicated itself at the headquarters of the Nigeria Police Force in Abuja where the angry protesters vowed to build a tent until they were addressed by the Inspector General of Police, Mohammed Adamu.

Bakare (2021) submits that in Ogbomosho, Oyo State, it was reported that the protest turned violent on October 10, 2020 where it was said that men of the Nigeria Police injured seven protesters and killed a young man known as Jimoh Isiaka, though the Oyo State Commissioner of police, Nwachukwu Enweonwu, denied the allegation. On the other hand, the State governor, Seyi Makinde sent a condolence message on the death of the young protester.

Adeoye (2020) argues that on Sunday, October 11, 2020, the IGP announced the dissolution of the notorious police unit, SARS. However, the announcement was not taken seriously by the protesting youths. This was because such announcement had been made in time passed without requisite enforcement. So, Nigerians, especially the protesting youths were not ready to be taken for a ride again. As a result, the protests were sustained, with some Nigerian celebrities such as Davido and Falz joining the train. However, it could as well mean that the sponsors of the protests kept fuelling them so they could achieve their aim.

Adesina (2021) submits that on Tuesday, October 13, 2020, the Public Relation Officer of the Nigeria Police, Frank Mba, announced the creation of another unit known as Special Weapon and Tactics Team (SWAT) to be saddled with the responsibility of the just disbanded SARS. Again, Ogunleye (2021) asserts that the protesters understood it to be a prank in the sense that, in their belief, that was a mere change of nomenclature with same personnel. More so, it was gathered via a video on the social media that President Muhammadu Buhari treated with levity, the compensation proposal presented to him by Lagos State governor Babajide Sanwo-Olu. This development also heightened the protest in some sections of the country by the youths oblivious of the fact that it could be a make-believe video by miscreants that are power thirsty. Akinkuotu (2020) submits that on October 15, 2020, the Federal Capital Territory Minister, Malam Muhammad Bello chaired a meeting in which it was decided that demonstrations within the FCT be prohibited. This decision was premised on the fact that COVID-19 protocols were violated. Conversely, Onyeyi (2020) asserts that the protesting youths were angered by the pronouncement; pointing out that Ondo and Edo gubernatorial elections rallies were characterized by mass gatherings weeks earlier. Secondly, the President's daughter had her elaborate wedding ceremony; while Abba Kyari,

the late Chief of Staff of the president, had been buried without recourse to any of the COVID-19 protocols even at the peak of the pandemic.

Akinkuotu (2020) argues that October 20, 2020 has been adjudged by many to be an unforgettable day in the history of Nigeria. On that fateful day, which has come to be referred to as 'Lekki Massacre', the Lagos State Government had declared curfew in the state, effective from 4pm WAT, but later extended it to take effect from 9pm WAT. No sooner than the announcement was made, a video captured some persons removing cameras at the toll gate and turning off street light within the vicinity. A few hours later, even before the curfew took effect, armed men on the Nigerian Army Camouflage arrived the scene and began shooting. This was as shown in a video bravely recorded by a protesting youth known as DJ Switch which was now making rounds on the media. Subsequently, there were reports and videos showing that unspecified number of persons lost their lives while many sustained varying degrees of injuries.

Olisah (2020) asserts that though the authorities, after pointing accusation fingers on each other, did not deny the use of arms on the protesters, it was reported by the Defence Spokesperson, Major General John Enenche, that those videos were photoshopped. Meanwhile, in a video, it was shown that the armed 'soldiers' took away some bodies of shot youth in their van. Gradually, the protesting youths were dispersed.

Challenges of the media that constrained them to biased reportage of the EndSARS protest

The first casualty in the #EndSARS protest was the nature of communication among the protesters and other stakeholders in the civil disobedience. Perhaps, that is why conflict is commonly referred to as "breakdown in communication". Ordinary statements from the actors are interpreted within the context of police brutality and this has the potential of escalating the problem. It can therefore be assumed that when third parties, like the media intervene wrongly, they can easily contribute to the escalation of the problem based on what they say and how they say them. The media, in the eyes of the public are the vanguard of accurate, factual and correct

perspective of events; hence the people reliance on them. Thus, arguably, it can be easy for the media to play negative roles in conflict situations.

The media promoted prejudicial stereotypes about the #EndSARS protesters and individuals through selective reporting and the protest was mostly reported out of fundamental sociological, economic, political and other contexts. According to Ukonne & Okoye (2021), the major challenges are:

i. The reporting of the #EndSARS protest out of their fundamental sociological, economic, political and other contexts; in many cases, media persons merely respond to statements of politicians, ethnic champions, religious zealots and other interested party rather than initiate their own independent inquiries about specific social conflict.
ii. Promoting, by selective reporting, prejudicial stereotypes about groups and individuals.
iii. Making generalized statements not supported by facts and figures.
iv. Attributing statements by individuals to collectives.
v. Publishing of rumours about the #EndSARS protest as facts.
vi. Publishing unfair and discriminating adverts.
vii. Use of inflammatory language in news reporting.
viii. The problem of editors allowing the letters column and opinion pages to be used to make inflammatory statements against some people or groups.
ix. The use of inflammatory, misleading and sensational headlines to attract sales.
x. Demonization of certain ethnic, religious or political groups in an already divided and tensed society.
xi. The use of cartoons to malign a community, group or individual.
xii. Use of unrepresentative pictures
xiii. Un-objective and clearly biased reporting against some groups, individuals or communities.
xiv. Inappropriate use of language in reporting conflict stories.
xv. Total blackout on some groups, individuals or community
xvi. Expression of ill-informed opinions by columnists, writers, etc. on issues that affect certain groups of people in the country.
xvii. Shallow and episodic coverage.

xviii. Exposition of sources of information which leads to harm; many a times information is divulged in such a way that exposes victims of violent attacks to further attacks.

The extent to which the media outlets engage in peace journalism between the police and EndSARS protesters during the protest

The EndSARS protest started on Twitter, a social media platform, with the hash tag: #EndSARS before it went physically on the street. Obidi (2020) argues that the protests, which started on October 8, 2020, attracted the attention of the international community via the media which has made the world a global village. The social media, no doubt, contributed as avenues through which the excesses of the SARS officers against Nigerian youth was communicated to the world. That global consciousness now compelled the Nigerian government to wake up to its fundamental responsibilities of protecting lives and properties of its citizens.

Igbinedion & Idemudia (2021) argue that many Nigerians now began to share stories of their experience and that of their loved ones who had been victimized by the men of SARS on social media, including unverified and fake stories. This unfortunate development, thus, kept on fuelling the protests both online and in the street of Nigeria to the extent that hoodlums, apparently sponsored by another set of selfish individuals or groups, hijacked the protest and began to loot public and private treasuries with the attendant destruction of properties.

Idagu & Kolo (2020) assert that the social media platforms, especially the Twitter and Facebook were used to rather incite young Nigerians to join the #EndSARS protests against police brutality; to the end that what started as a just cause turned to hoodlums' affair. Onyeyi (2020) asserts that Jack Dorsey, the Chief Executive Officer of Twitter also supported the protests by creating a special emoji for the protest and canvassed donations to be made to protesters in Bitcoins. But then, he paid for inciting the gullible youths as his business and bitcoin have lost grounds in Nigeria by a way of being banned by the federal government of Nigeria.

Adediran (2020) submits that social media purportedly amplified the voices of the Nigerian youths. However, one of the negative impacts of social media on the protests was in the case of the Lekki shooting. At that, there were a lot of videos

showing people being shot to death. On the contrary, those acclaimed to have died in the shooting came out to say they were alive. Meanwhile, this fake news had already triggered gullible youths to resort to vandalism of all sorts putting their lives on the line and tarnishing the image of the nation.

Theoretical Framework

Failed State Theory: Failed state theory examines how the inability of a state to provide basic security, governance, and economic opportunities leads to instability and conflict. The failed state theory describes a situation of failure by a state in its performance of certain duties. Put differently, the theory explains a state that has failed in the performance of its duties (Olaniyan, 2020). Central to the failed state theory is the definition of a state as a service provider. In this sense, a state protects the lives and properties of its citizens, creates an allowance for political participation, health, education, and maintains security of the rule of law (Akinkuotu, 2020). On this premise, state failure refers to the inability of a state to provide essential services. In line with this, Adepegba (2020) submits that state failure occurs when states are unable to fulfil their obligations which in this case reflects the failure to provide essential services. In essence, failed states refer to states that are no longer capable of performing their obligations.

In the contemporary political landscape of Nigeria, the End SARS movement has emerged as a seminal point of civil activism, bringing to the forefront issues of police brutality and systemic injustice. It is a pointer to the fact that the Nigerian state has failed her citizens and that has caused the obvious discontent on the streets of the country leading to the wide protest which has come be know is End SARS protest.

Research Methodology

This section is on research methodology and it unravels research design, population of the study, sample size, sampling technique, method of data collection and method of data analysis not forgetting justification for the methods adopted.

Research Design

Descriptive research design was adopted in this research because it is primarily concerned with the collection of data for the purpose of describing and interpreting existing condition with the central purpose of discovering certain facts that were hitherto obscure. It also specifies the nature of the situation in Nigeria as regards police brutality and the EndSars protest.

Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

Population of the Study: The population of this study consists of staff of the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Police Affairs, Ministry of Information, Nigeria Police Force, Lagos State Government and Ministry of Youths and Sports Development. The reason for the choice of the above institutions is because they have the relevant information needed to enrich and fast track the completion of the project. The total population of the study is 1342.

Table 1: Population of Selected Institutions

S/N	Selected Organizations	Population of Staff
1	Ministry of Interior	320
2	Ministry of Police Affairs	460
3	Ministry of Information	220
4	Nigeria Police Force	66
5	Lagos State Government	46
6	Ministry of Youths and Sports Development	230
	TOTAL	**1342**

Source: Field Survey, June, 2024

Sample size: This study utilized the Taro Yamane formula to arrive at the sample size as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1342}{1+1342\,(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1342}{1343 \times 0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{1342}{3.3575}$$

n = 400

The distribution of the sample was done using the formula below:

$$n = \frac{\text{Population}}{\text{Total Pop. of the Study}} X Sample$$

$$n = \frac{320 \times 400}{1342} = 95$$

$$n = \frac{460 \times 400}{1342} = 137$$

$$n = \frac{220 \times 400}{1342} = 66$$

$$n = \frac{66 \times 400}{1342} = 20$$

$$n = \frac{46 \times 400}{1342} = 14$$

$$n = \frac{230 \times 400}{1342} = 68$$

Table 2: Sample Size of the Study Selected Institutions

S/N	Selected Organizations	Sample Size
1	Ministry of Interior	95
2	Ministry of Police Affairs	137
3	Ministry of Information	66
4	Nigeria Police Force	20
5	Lagos State Government	14
6	Ministry of Youths and Sports Development	68
	TOTAL	**400**

Source: Field Survey, June, 2024

Sampling Technique: Purposive sampling technique was adopted in this research. Purposive sampling technique involves the process whereby the researcher purposively identify the sample population based on his judgment. The main aim of purposive sampling technique can be specified as cost reduction and increasing the levels of efficiency of sampling.

Method of Data Collection

Primary Method: The questionnaire instrument of data collection was used and it entails preparing the questionnaire that is made up of several relevant questions that are germane to the research work and it is given to the respondents to answer. A total number of four hundred (400) questionnaire were administered to obtain information on the impact of the media on EndSARS protest in Nigeria in 2020. It is good to mention also at this point that of the 400 questionnaire sent out to the respondents only 392 were retrieved from the respondents.

Secondary Data: Secondary data collection involved collection of data by other means than primary method. The secondary sources involve the use of existing but related data, which were produced by earlier researchers for the purpose of contributing their quota to the problem under study.

Techniques for Data Analysis

Technique of data analysis in this study involved the use of simple percentages and tables. This does not involve statistical analysis. In this regard, data from questionnaire will be analyzed using textual method of analysis, while data from secondary source will be analysed using content analysis.

Data Presentation

This section presents data generated from both primary and secondary sources and the analysis. It is worthy to note that 400 copies of questionnaire were distributed to the respondents, but only 392 filled questionnaire were returned for the analysis. This means that the researcher recorded a return rate of 98% and the non-return rate of 2%. Statistically, the return rate recorded is reasonable enough for generalization.

Table 3: Number of Questionnaire Returned

S/n	**States**	**Questionnaire Distributed**	**Questionnaire Returned**	**Questionnaire Not Returned**
1	Ministry of Interior	95	92	3
2	Ministry of Police Affairs	137	133	4
3	Ministry of Information	66	65	1
4	Nigeria Police Force	20	20	0
5	Lagos State Government	14	14	0
6	Ministry of Youths and Sports Development	68	66	2
	Total	**400**	**390**	**10**

Source: Field Survey, June, 2024

Table 3 above explains that for Staff of Ministry of Interior, the questionnaire distributed were 95, questionnaire returned were 92 and not returned were 3. Ministry of Police Affairs, the questionnaire distributed were 137, questionnaire returned were 133 and not returned was 4. For Ministry of Information, the questionnaire distributed were 66, questionnaire returned were 65 and the ones not returned were 1. 20 questionnaire were given to Nigeria Police Force and 20 of them were returned. For Staff of Lagos State Government, the questionnaire distributed were 14, questionnaire returned were 14. For Ministry of Youths and

Sports Development, the questionnaire distributed were 68, questionnaire returned were 66 and those not returned were 2.

Table 4: The role of the media the EndSARS protest

Options	Response	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	30	7.7%
Disagree	93	23.7%
Undecided	68	17.3%
Strongly Agree	165	42%
Agree	36	9%
Total	392	100%

Source: Field Survey, June, 2024

Data obtained revealed that, no respondent representing 7.7% strongly disagreed with the view that the media have played a lot of positive role during the EndSARS protest. 93 respondents representing 23.7% disagreed while, 68 respondents representing 17.3% were undecided. 165 respondents representing 42 percent asserted that the media particularly the social media did a yeoman's job during the EndSARS protest. While 36 respondents representing 9 percent agreed with the above assertion.

It goes without saying therefore that media, particularly the social media played a lot of positive role during the EndSARS protest. The conclusion above was reached due to the pattern of responses. Table 4.7 presented that the reason the EndSARS protest was considered largely successful was because of the role the media played in ensuring that the Nigerian youths are properly mobilized participate in the protest..

Table 5: Media framing and biases against the protesters fueled EndSARS protest

Options	Response	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	65	16.6%
Disagree	33	8.4%
Undecided	68	17.3%
Strongly Agree	190	48.4%
Agree	36	9.1%
Total	392	100%

Source: Field Survey, June, 2024

Data obtained revealed that, 65 respondents representing 16.6% that strongly disagreed were of the view that media framing, biases and other stereotypes have fueled the EndSARS protest. 33 respondents representing 8.4 percent disagreed, 68 respondents representing 17.3% were undecided. 190 respondents representing 48.4 percent strongly agree with the above assertion while 36 respondents representing 9.1% disagree while,

It can therefore be deduced from table 4.5 above that media framing, biases and other stereotypes have fueled the EndSARS protest. Although, the mainstream media were very careful but the social media was agog with sensational news that spurred the protesters.

Table 6: Challenges of the media that constrained them to biased reportage of the EndSARS protest

Options	Response	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	25	6.3%
Disagree	43	10.9%
Undecided	68	17.3%
Strongly Agree	170	43.9%
Agree	86	21.9%
Total	392	100%

Source: Field Survey, June, 2024

Data obtained revealed that, 25 respondents representing 6.3 percent strongly disagreed with the view that the major challenges that constrained the media in their reportage of the EndSars protest. 43 respondents representing 10.9 percent disagreed while, 68 respondents representing 17.3% were undecided. 170 respondents representing 43.9 percent strongly agreed while 86 respondents representing 21.9 percent also agree with the view canvassed above.

It can be safely concluded that some of the challenges that constrained the media in their reportage of the EndSars protest are promoting, by selective reporting, prejudicial stereotypes about groups and individuals, making generalized statements not supported by facts and figures, attributing statements by individuals to collectives, publishing of rumours about the #EndSARS protest as facts, publishing unfair and discriminating adverts and use of inflammatory language in news reporting.

Table 7: Extent to which media outlets engage in peace journalism between the police and EndSARS protesters during the protest

Options	Response	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	25	6.3%
Disagree	73	18.6%
Undecided	48	12.2%
Strongly Agree	210	53.5%
Agree	36	9%
Total	392	100%

Source: Field Survey, June, 2024

Data obtained revealed that, no respondent representing 6.3% strongly disagreed with the view that media outlets engaged in peace journalism between the police and EndSARS protesters during the protest. 73 respondents representing 18.6% disagreed while, 48 respondents representing 12.2% were undecided. 210 respondents representing 53.5 percent asserted that media outlets engaged in peace journalism between the police and EndSARS protesters during the protest. While 36 respondents representing 9 percent agreed with the above assertion.

Findings and Recommendations

Discussion of Findings

The research focuses on the role of media in the EndSARS protests and it has shed light on framing strategies, biases and the application of peace journalism principles in media coverage of social movements. The impact of media narratives on public perception, government response, and the direction of social movements is significant.

The study identifies areas for improvement in media practices particularly social media and offers practical recommendations for responsible and ethical reporting, contributing to scholarly knowledge and real-world efforts to promote democratic governance, social justice, and peaceful conflict resolution instead of just resorting to 'free style' nature of the social media.

Social media platforms for all intents and purposes, were meant to disseminate information globally at the speed of light. However, there is no gainsaying the fact these platforms have been instrumental in spreading fake news that are capable of tearing nations apart.

The #EndSARS protest of October 2020 was facilitated by social media. It was found that the mobilization of protesters, amplification of their voices, sourcing of funds, and so on were done using these platforms even when the protesting youths did not have a structural leadership for coordination.

It should be noted that these youths may have, through the social media, taken advantage of the porous nature of the system; where anyone can access the web and post anything without due censorship. Thus, it is expedient that the regulations be tightened in order to check these excesses. This is because digital technology and internet have come to stay in this age and Nigeria cannot be locked out of it.

Recommendations

The study recommends as follows:

i. The role of the media during the EndSARS protest and indeed other civil disobedience can never be overemphasized. As such, moving forward,

stakeholders, including media practitioners, policymakers, and civil society actors, must learn to collaborate and create a media landscape that amplifies diverse voices, promotes transparency, and facilitates constructive dialogue for positive social change.

ii. Media framing and biases against the protesters fuelled EndSARS protest. As such, the media should be encouraged to continue to offer balanced and neutral reportage of issues in Nigeria or negatively portraying them unnecessarily and equally should be alive to their social responsibility and agenda setting functions by using their reports to bring public dialogue.

iii. The challenges of the media that constrained them to biased reportage of the EndSARS protest are legion. As such, the Nigerian press should give prominence to reports on the negative implications of crises issues in terms of priority placement on the pages of newspapers.

iv. The media outlets engage in peace journalism between the police and EndSARS protesters during the protest to a great extent. Therefore, the Nigerian press should renew attention towards enriching its reports with depth while being proactively disposed towards advocacy journalism as the watchdog of the society.

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