



Political strategies and social movements: A preliminary analysis of the failure of ENDSARS movement in Nigeria

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Abstract

The recent proliferation of scholarship on strategies and framing processes in relation to social movements indicates that strategy and framing have come to be regarded, alongside resource mobilization and political opportunity processes, as a central dynamic in understanding the success or the failure of social movements. This article examines preliminarily the rationale behind the failure of the ENDSARS social movement on the basis of three important factors i.e. the mobilization processes, the framing process and the Tactics adopted by the protesters. A qualitative content analysis approach was adopted in this study. The concept of social movement and the theoretical frameworks upon which the research revolves were discussed. The article further reviews how social movement frames, mobilization process and tactics have been empirically analysed, including their characteristic and variable features. The relevance of these characteristic and variable features to the success or otherwise of the ENDSARS social movement in Nigeria were thematically analysed. The findings from this preliminary study suggest that for social movement to succeed, gathering a band of passionate enthusiasts is not enough, the organizers should take a stock of the political environments in order to identify the local power matrix with considerable level of influence as well as the normative and cultural inclinations of the targets publics to which they address their action. The article then concludes with a brief insight on framing processes for future social movements in the country.

Keywords: Political Strategies, Social Movements, ENDSARS, Nigeria

1.0 Introduction

There have been many social movements throughout history that have dramatically changed the societies in which they occurred (Oberschall, 1973; Benford & Snow, 2000). There have been many failed social movements as well (Ciurel, 2018). Throughout the history of the Nigeria alone there have been a number of important and notable social movements such as the protest against fuel subsidy removal and the bring back our girls social movement. These movements have varied widely in their

ideologies; some movements have been revolutionary in their aims, some have advocated reforms to the existing system, and others still have been conservative in their orientation and have worked to oppose changes in society. Globally, social movements varied in scope, for example, many movements are limited to local policies while others have been international in their focus. Despite all of the differences in social movements though, there are important analytic similarities that political



scientist has distinguished, especially with regard to the life cycle of a social movement (Wilson, 1973; Bail, 2016).

Because social movements have led to so many dramatic changes in societies around the globe, scholars have spent a great deal of time trying to understand where they come from, who participates in them, how they succeed, and how they fail (Touraine, 1985; Hardnack, 2019). Much of what they have discovered is that successful social movements do not just happen; they require many resources and have many stages through which they develop. In other words, people do not simply suddenly become upset with a policy or even a ruling system and then instantly form a social movement with a coherent ideology that is capable of holding mass demonstrations or overthrowing an existing power structure (Melucci, 1980). Instead, social movements grow through stages (Jost-Creegan, 2017).

Against the above backdrop, a social movement that exploded against police brutality and developed into anti-government protests has recently rocked the southern parts of Nigerian state, leading to a deadly crackdown. Young people mobilized through social media began staging demonstrations calling for the abolition of the federal Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), which has long been accused of unlawful arrests, torture and extrajudicial killings (Tayo, 2020). SARS was a special police unit set up decades ago as Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, battled rising levels of crime and kidnappings.

The social movement were sparked by a viral video allegedly showing SARS officers killing a young man in the southern Delta state. With the demonstrations against SARS growing in size, the government was forced to dissolve the controversial unit on October 11, 2020. "The disbanding of SARS is only

the first step in our commitment to extensive police reform in order to ensure that the primary duty of the police and other law enforcement agencies remains the protection of lives and livelihood of our people," President Muhammadu Buhari said (Oxford Analytica, 2020). Authorities later ordered all personnel to report to the police headquarters in the capital, Abuja, for debriefing and psychological and medical examination. Meanwhile, the forming of a new Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team was announced to replace SARS (Uwazuruike, 2020).

However, despite the above announcements the organizers of the social movement continued to barricade public roads and other strategic locations remained under sieged by the teaming youth who even went ahead to defy a curfew imposed in places like Lagos leading to the alleged shooting at Lekki Toll Gate after which everything degenerated very quickly. Earlier, in Benin, Edo State, there were reports of the escape of prisoners from two prisons: The Benin Maximum prison and the Oko prison (Oxford Analytica, 2020).

This would eventually become a pattern as there were reports of attempted jailbreaks in Ikoyi and Kirikiri Prisons, Lagos and successful jailbreak in Okitipupa, Ondo State. About 27 police stations in Lagos, were attacked and razed to the ground. The fate of other police stations across the southern parts of the country was the same thing where it was reported that total number of 22 police personnel were killed while 205 police stations were destroyed. By weekend, Nigeria was in a state of anomie. In Lagos, Calabar, Jos, Osogbo, Ilorin Kebbi, Jimeta, Jalingo, warehouses storing COVID-19 palliatives were attacked by the youths. They said they were taking what belongs to them (Igwe, 2020).



It is imperative to note that even before the movement degenerated into chaos and anarchy there were insinuations of an ethnic, religious and geographical tint to the protests. For instance, Northern Youth Alliance (NYA) argued that there was nothing wrong with the Nigeria Police and that indeed, the people of the North needed the Special Anti-Robbery Squad that is considered lawless by protesters in the South. Northern Governors also visited the Presidential Villa to tell the President that the people of the North need SARS (Hattingh, 2020). What was seen by many neutral observers to be a peaceful movement against police brutality quickly degenerated into the politics of ethnicity and geography thereby becoming a colossal failure (Oxford Analytica, 2020). This paper therefore attempts to provide a preliminary analysis of the rationale behind the failure of the #ENDSARS# social movement on the basis of three important factors i.e. the mobilization processes, the framing process and the Tactics adopted by the protesters.

The Concept of Social Movement

Defining what, exactly, a social movement is can be difficult. It is not a political party or interest group, which are stable political entities that have regular access to political power and political elites; nor is it a mass fad or trend, which are unorganized, fleeting and without goals (Pichardo, 1997) Instead they are somewhere in between (Guenther, Ruhrmann, Bischoff, Penzel, & Weber, 2020). Some characteristics of social movements are that they are “involved in conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents; are linked by dense informal networks; [and they] share a distinct collective identity” (Jost-Creegan, 2017). Social movements, can therefore be thought of as organized yet informal social entities that are engaged in extra-institutional

conflict that is oriented towards a goal. These goals can be either aimed at a specific and narrow policy or be more broadly aimed at cultural change. To early scholars, collective action was inherently oriented towards change (Cooper, 2020). Some of the earliest works on social movements were attempts to understand why people got caught up in collective action or what conditions were necessary to foment social movements (Carroll & Ratner, 1996). These works were rooted in theories of mass society. Mass society theory was concerned with the increasing industrialization of society, which many felt led to a sense of alienation among individuals as traditional social structures and support networks broke down. The study of social movements as specific social processes with specific patterns emerged from this field of study.

Material and Methods

The work adopts a qualitative research methodology where data were secondary sourced and contently analysed thematically.

Theoretical Framework

4.1 Political Process’ Theory

Emerging from seminal debates about the conditions for collective action and earlier discussions about collective behaviour resource mobilization theory focused on the balance of costs, rewards and incentives that provided people with the motivation to become involved in struggle. Early developments centered upon two elements. First, a rational actor model was employed, along with an economic focus on exchange relations in social life. This was linked with a structural ‘network’ model of social relations and social life as emergent from the rational actions and exchanges of individuals (Lin, F., & Zhao, 2016).

Thus collective protest is more likely to be present where there is a strong organisational base, in a collectivity distinct



from the rest of society (Lin, F., & Zhao, 2016). McCarthy and Zald (1977), who coined the term ‘resource mobilization’ argued that the increased availability of expanded personal resources, professionalization, and external financial support made possible the creation of professional movement organisations. By the 1980s resource mobilization theory dominated the study of social movements, especially in the United States, yet came under critique for three main reasons (Norris, 2017). First, these theorists used the language of economics, but ignored how questions of ideology, commitment and values and, in particular, solidarity might motivate and draw together movement participants. Second, it was difficult to distinguish movements as defined in resource mobilization theory from interest groups. Third the theory focused on professional movement organisations and particularly on the American context, ignoring the many grass-roots movements emerging in different parts of the world.

One line of response to these critiques came to be known as ‘political process’ theory. While similarly emphasizing movement resources and organisations, the political process approach seeks to explain mobilization processes and their success or failure by reference to the political and institutional context. It stresses dynamism, strategic interaction, and response to the political environment and the ‘political opportunity structures’ made available.

Historical work on political processes produced investigations of the forms of claims-making that people use in real-life situations, what has come to be called ‘the repertoires of contention’, which represent the culturally encoded ways in which people interact in contentious politics, sometimes

within what was termed ‘cycles of protest’ (Pain, 2018).

In the study of END SARS social movement in Nigeria, the political process theory therefore become more appropriate where a movements have emerged in response and opposition to police brutality but with an uncoordinated and regional-looking team, including youth-based militias who have seized the movement for a more violent campaign of chaos, lawlessness and lewdness on the back of the #End SARS# struggles.

4.2 Theory of framing

Theory of framing emphasize how mobilization takes shape around and actively involves the construction of, particular ideas, meanings and cognitive and moral constructions of a ‘problem’. This may involve selecting from an available repertoire of concepts, explanatory schemes, or arguments in ways that fit the moment, perhaps reframing or redefining these. Mobilization thus involves struggles not just to promote a given social or political agenda, but to establish and promote certain meanings and problem-definitions as legitimate as against those who would dispute them. Framings therefore emerge from deeper moral and political commitments which shape the nature of mobilization (Benford & Snow 2000).

Framing theory also become an important analytical tool in this paper in the sense that the construction of End SARS placards such as “Na guy wey comot come protest na him we go give toto” “Na SARS collect my babe from me” “Na guy wey comot com protest na him we go give doggy” “Buhari must go” conferred on the whole movement a negative cognitive connotation thereby giving some amoral constructions of a ‘problem with hiding political agenda.



These two theories therefore become the main analytical tools in this study the political process theory focuses on the mobilization process while the framing theory dwelled on the framing and tactics adopted by the ENDSARS organizers.

Mobilization Processes, Framing Dynamics and Tactics Adopted By Social Movements: A Review The Literature

5.1 Mobilization Processes

This involve the process of assembling and readying passionate enthusiasts with the view to embark on a social movement. Mobilization is a key components of a successful social movement. It depicts one of the strongest pillar upon which the entire gamut of the movement is rested, once poorly done the movement fails. In this article we reviewed two vital parts of the mobilization process which are: Networks of informal interaction and Shared beliefs and solidarity

Networks of informal interaction

The Presence of informal interactions involving individuals, groups and organisations is widely acknowledged as the factor behind successful social movement (Ramesh, 2019). A successful social movement must be an embodiments of collective actors where organisations, individuals and groups all play a role (Benford, & Snow, 2000). Even where the emphasis is put on a 'set of opinions and beliefs' the transformation of these ideas into action requires the interaction between specific social movement organizers, constituents, adherents and bystander publics (Ramesh, 2019).

The characteristics of these networks may range from the very loose and dispersed to an organically solidified social group (Ramesh, 2019). Such networks promote the circulation of information, expertise, material resources as well as of broader

systems of meaning which are all essential for action (Rinaldi, 2018). Thus, networks contribute both to creating the preconditions for mobilization and to providing the proper setting for the elaboration of specific world-views and life-styles (Si, 2019). A successful social movement therefore usually devised an effective network in recognition of the plurality of actors involved and the informality of the ties which link them to each other (Rinaldi, 2018). A successful social movement must therefore evolve a network of informal interactions between a plurality of individuals, groups and/or organizations'

Shared beliefs and solidarity

To be considered a social movement, an interacting collectivity requires a shared set of beliefs and a sense of belongingness (Ramesh, 2019). The movement must be seen to be revolving around solidarity and collective identity. Scholars have argued that the continuity and success of social movements relies upon 'group identity' and 'ideologies (Rinaldi, 2018). Identity and ideology are defined here in the broad sense of the term, which makes them very close to sets of beliefs, emotions and value system (Si, 2019). Collective identity and solidarity can be considered synonymous in this context, in so far as it is hard to conceive of the former without the latter, i.e. of a sense of belongingness without sympathetic feelings, associated with the perception of a common fate to share (Rinaldi, 2018).

The emphasis on the role of 'micro-mobilization contexts' and 'frame alignment processes' testify to their growing concern for the interactive processes of symbolic mediation which support individuals' commitment on the basis of common belief and identity. Collective identity is both a matter of self- and external definition. Actors must define themselves as part of a



broader movement and, at the same time, be perceived as such, by those within the same movement, and by opponents and or external observers (Rinaldi, 2018).

In this sense, collective identity plays an essential role in defining the boundaries of a social movement. Only those actors, sharing the same beliefs and sense of belongingness, can be considered to be part of a social movement. The presence of shared beliefs and solidarities allows both actors and observers to assign a common meaning to specific collective events which otherwise could not be identified as part of a common process. It is through this 'framing process' that the presence of a distinct social actor becomes evident, as well as that of related issues (Si, 2019).

The process of identity formation cannot be separated from the process of symbolic redefinition of what is both real and possible. Moreover, such collective identity may persist even when public activities, demonstrations and the like are not taking place, thus providing for some continuity to the movement over time. Taking these qualifications into account, we can define the second component of mobilization as follows: 'The boundaries of a social movement network are defined by the specific collective identity shared by the actors involved in the interaction (Rinaldi, 2018).

5.2 Framing Dynamics

The concept of frame as used in the study of social movements is derived primarily from the work of Goffman (1974). For Goffman, frames denoted "schemata of interpretation" that enable individuals "to locate, perceive, identify, and label" occurrences within their life space and the world at large. Frames help to render events or occurrences meaningful and thereby function to organize experience and guide action (Rinaldi, 2018).

Social Movement frames also perform this interpretive function by simplifying and condensing aspects of the "world out there," but in ways that are "intended to mobilize potential adherents and constituents, to garner bystander support, and to demobilize antagonists" (Snow, 2013). Thus, Social Movement frames are action-oriented sets of beliefs and meanings that inspire and legitimate the activities and campaigns of a social movement organizers (Si, 2019). In this article three important variables in relation to social movement framing relevant to this study are reviewed, the variables in question includes: Flexibility and Rigidity, Inclusivity and Exclusivity, Variation in Interpretive Scope and Influence and Resonance.

Flexibility and Rigidity, Inclusivity and Exclusivity: Collective action frames may vary in the degree to which they are relatively exclusive, rigid, inelastic, and restricted or relatively inclusive, open, elastic, and elaborated in terms of the number of themes or ideas they incorporate and articulate. Hypothetically, the more inclusive and flexible collective action frames are, the more likely they are to success (Si, 2019).

Variation in Interpretive Scope and Influence. The scope of the collective action frames associated unsuccessful movements is limited to the interests of a particular group. However, successful social movement frames are quite broad in terms of scope, functioning as a kind of master algorithm that colors and constrains the orientations and activities of other movements (Rinaldi, 2018).

Resonance: The fourth major way in which collective action frames can success or fail is in terms of the degree of resonance. The concept of resonance is relevant to the issue of the effectiveness or mobilizing potency of



proffered framings, thereby attending to the question of why some framings seem to be effective or “resonate” while others do not (S). Two sets of interacting factors account for variation in degree of frame resonance: credibility of the proffered frame and its relative salience (Rinaldi, 2018).

The credibility of any framing is a function of three factors: frame consistency, empirical credibility, and credibility of the frame articulators or claims makers. A frame’s consistency refers to the congruency between a social movement organizer’s articulated beliefs, claims, and actions. Thus, inconsistency can manifest itself in two ways: in terms of apparent contradictions among beliefs or claims; and in terms of perceived contradictions among framings and tactical actions as between what the social movement organizers says and what they do (Si, 2019).

Hypothetically, the greater and more transparent the apparent contradictions in either realm, the less resonant the proffered framing(s) and the more problematic the mobilization. To date, little research has been conducted on this frame resonance factor, although there are some hints of it in the literature where it is argued that one factor that contributed to the rapid mass mobilization of ordinary Chinese citizens in 1989 was the perceived consistency between what the student activists asserted in their public framings and their behavior at Tiananmen Square compared with the apparent inconsistencies between what state elites claimed and their actual policies. Studies also found that inconsistencies between the group’s framings regarding nonviolent direct action and their tactical actions, which violate traditional tenets of nonviolent philosophy, have created inconsistencies that mute the prospect of

broader support for most unsuccessful social movement (Si, 2019).

A second factor affecting frame resonance has to do with the empirical credibility of the collective action frame. This refers to the apparent fit between the framings and events in the world (Tarlau, 2014). The issue here is not whether diagnostic and prognostic claims are actually factual or valid, but whether their empirical referents lend themselves to being read as “real” indicators of the diagnostic claims. Can the claims be empirically verified? Is there something out there that can be pointed to as evidence of the claim embedded in the framing? Hypothetically, the more culturally believable the claimed evidence, and the greater the number of slices of such evidence, the more credible the framing and the broader its appeal (Tarlau, 2014). The difficulties some movements experience in expanding their ranks is likely to be due in part to the empirical incredibility of their framings to more than a small cadre of people (Si, 2019)

The final factor affecting the credibility of a collective action frame has to do with the perceived credibility of frame articulators. It is a well-established fact in the social psychology of communication that speakers who are regarded as more credible are generally more persuasive. Variables such as status and knowledge about the issue in question have been found to be associated with persuasiveness (Rinaldi, 2018). Hypothetically, the greater the status and/or perceived expertise of the frame articulator and/or the organization they represent from the vantage point of potential adherents and constituents, the more plausible and resonant the framings or claims.

In addition to issues of credibility, the resonance of a collective action frame is affected by its salience to targets of



mobilization. Three dimensions of salience have been identified: centrality, experiential commensurability, and narrative fidelity. Centrality has to do with how essential the beliefs, values, and ideas associated with movement frames are to the lives of the targets of mobilization. Research on values and beliefs indicates that they are typically arrayed in a hierarchy (Si, 2019). Hypothetically, the more central or salient the espoused beliefs, ideas, and values of a movement to the targets of mobilization, the greater the probability of their mobilization. Experiential commensurability constitutes a second factor contributing to a collective action frame's salience. Are movement framings congruent or resonant with the personal, everyday experiences of the targets of mobilization? Or are the framings too abstract and distant from the lives and experiences of the targets? Hypothetically, the more experientially commensurate the framings, the greater their salience, and the greater the probability of mobilization. The last factor that appears to have significant impact on frame resonance is narrative fidelity. To what extent are the proffered framings culturally resonant? To what extent do they resonate with the targets' cultural narrations, "myths," "domain assumptions," and "inherent ideology" in contrast to its "derived ideology"? When such correspondence exists, framings can be said to have what has been termed "narrative fidelity" (Si, 2019). Hypothetically, the greater the narrative fidelity of the proffered framings, the greater their salience and the greater the prospect of mobilization.

5.3 Strategy and Tactics

Strategy connote the overarching plan or set of goals of a particular social movement while Tactics are the specific actions or steps undertaken by such movement to

accomplish the strategy (Tarlau, 2014). Tarrow (2003) identifies good strategy as the basic hallmarks of successful social movements. While Halpern (2013) asserts, 'Tactics are the essence of collective action'. Strategy is how we turn what we have into what we need by translating our resources into the power to achieve purpose. Strategy involves planning oriented toward achieving objectives, which is not to say that it is fully rational, but that it exhibits intention or purpose.

For the purposes of this article, we will focus on the subsection of strategic concerns related to social movements tactics, remembering that tactics are not only externally oriented but play important roles in movement organizations, such as building solidarity among participants. The study of tactics, usually discussed under the rubrics of 'protest,' 'contentious challenges,' or 'insurgency', has produced a significant line of inquiry, even if it has developed on the periphery of the main theoretical traditions (Halpern, 2013).

Political process scholars opened the door for further attention to strategic and tactical issues when they widened the frame of analysis to address the influence of the political environments in which Social Movement Organizers contend and the targets and publics to which they address their action, but most have focused on the windows of opportunity that allow movements to emerge and take action instead of the action itself (Tarrow (2003). That said, some have acknowledged the capacity of movement organizations to create opportunities for one another through effective collective action tactics, especially as a fluid and changing political and cultural environment demands strategic innovation and adaptation (Tarlau, 2014).



The Endsars Social Movement: Mobilization, Framing, Strategic and Tactical Consequences.

Against the above theoretical and empirical background, this section of the paper provides a panoramic analysis of the rationale behind the failure of the #ENDSARS# movement taking into cognizance the framing dynamics, the mobilization processes and the strategy and tactics adopted by the organizers of the social movement.

Framing Dynamics

It is imperative to note that nothing works against the success of a social movement more than a poor framing (Norris, 2017). Frame serves as an important image projector that can assist the organizers in winning over neutral citizens to their cause. Social Movement frames are constructed in part as movement adherents negotiate a shared understanding of some problematic condition or situation they define as in need of change, make attributions regarding who or what is to blame, articulate an alternative set of arrangements, and urge others to act in concert to affect change (Pain, 2018). It involves the decomposition of ideology into three component parts problem identification, blame attributions and articulation an alternative set of arrangements that can motivate act in concert to affect change (Lin & Zhao, 2016). To this end, the interconnected concepts and processes central to framing that have surfaced as the rationale behind the failure of the ENDSARS movement has been analysed in this section. However, it should be noted at this juncture does not imply the inability of the movement to trend on social media and other media outlets but rather the inability of the movement to record a widespread acceptance across the six geo-political zones of Nigeria and failure in this

regard also connote the degeneration of the movement into chaos and anarchy at the end. The following factors were therefore extracted from the literature to explain how poor framing of the ENDSARS movement led its colossal failure.

Lack of Flexibility and Inclusiveness

As evidence showed in the framing theory and literature review so far the more inclusive and flexible social movement frames are, the more likely they are to success (Norris, 2017). Conversely, the less inclusive and inflexible movement frames are, the more likely they are to fail. Taking the above into cognizance it is imperative to note that #ENDSARS# movement had continued to protest even when the Government accepted unconditionally its five-point demand which include release of all persons arrested and justice for victims of police brutality.

Other demands are “setting up an independent body to oversee the investigation and prosecution of all reports of police misconduct psychological evaluation of all disbanded SARS officers before they can be redeployed, and increase police salary so that they can be adequately compensated for protecting lives and property of citizens. This shows a high degree of lack of flexibility on the part of the ENDSARS movement convener a single act which compelled many neutrals to start thinking whether there was hiding agenda beyond the disbandment of the SARS event quickly take a new turn where counter-protest were organized in places like Abuja which signal an impending doom to the ENDSARS movement.

As indicated by the literature the scope of the collective action frames associated unsuccessful movements is limited to the interests of a particular group (Norris, 2017). This factor was also conspicuous in the



ENDSARS movement frame as it failed woefully to capture the predicaments of the Northern Region such as Boko Haram and banditry. Some observers even asserted that the southern region refused to reciprocate when the NORTHERN LIVES MATTER was trending a movement that was champion to end the spate of killings and kidnapping in the North. Therefore, limiting the scope of the frame to include only the problem of a particular region denied the ENDSARS movement a wide spread emotional supports from the Northern Region.

Resonance

Another important way in which social movement frames can success or fail is in terms of the degree of resonance. Central to resonance are the frame's consistency, the empirical credibility of the frame and the perceived credibility of frame articulators (Guenther, Ruhrmann, Bischoff, Penzel, & Weber, 2020).

A frame's consistency refers to the congruency between a social movement organizer's articulated beliefs, claims, and actions. Thus, inconsistency can manifest itself in two ways: in terms of apparent contradictions among beliefs or claims; and in terms of perceived contradictions among framings and tactical actions as between what the social movement organizers says and what they do ((Norris, 2017). The ENDSARS movement frame showed an apparent lack of consistency both in terms of organizer's articulated claims, and actions, in the sense that there was a conspicuous contradiction between what the organizers say and what they do. This is because the movement was portrayed to the international community as a peaceful protest against police brutality but in reality the protesters engaged in all sorts of activities that impinges on the rights and liberties of other

citizens which eventually denied the movement a massive support off the social media.

The lack of consistency therefore works against the movement's popularity among neutral in the sense that the greater and more transparent the apparent contradictions in either realm, the less resonant the proffered framing(s) and the more problematic the mobilization (Norris, 2017).

Studies also found that inconsistencies between the group's framings regarding nonviolent direct action and their tactical actions, which violate traditional tenets of nonviolent philosophy, have created inconsistencies that mute the prospect of broader support for most unsuccessful social movement (Guenther, Ruhrmann, Bischoff, Penzel, & Weber, 2020). So the degeneration of the #ENDSARS# movement into violent confrontation and looting of both private and public properties denied it the supports it might get had peace and decorum were observed by the protesters.

A second factor affecting frame resonance has to do with the empirical credibility of the collective action frame. This refers to the apparent fit between the framings and events in the world (Guenther, Ruhrmann, Bischoff, Penzel, & Weber, 2020). The issue here is not whether diagnostic and prognostic claims are actually factual or valid, but whether their empirical referents lend themselves to being read as "real" indicators of the diagnostic claims (Norris, 2017). Can the claims be empirically verified? Is there something out there that can be pointed to as evidence of the claim embedded in the framing? The more culturally believable the claimed evidence, and the greater the number of slices of such evidence, the more credible the framing and the broader its appeal (Guenther, Ruhrmann, Bischoff, Penzel, & Weber, 2020).



The #ENDSARS# movement equally lacks empirical credibility in the sense that the Northern Youth Alliance (NYA) had come out argued that there was nothing wrong with SARS and that indeed, the people of the North needed the Special Anti-Robbery Squad that is considered lawless the #ENDSARS# movement. Northern Governors would also soon visit the Presidential Villa to tell the President that the people of the North need SARS. This shows that the frame lacks empirical relevance because of its inability to be applicable to Northern Nigeria.

The final factor affecting the credibility of a collective action frame has to do with the perceived credibility of frame articulators. It is a well-established fact in the social psychology of communication that speakers who are regarded as more credible are generally more persuasive (Guenther, Ruhrmann, Bischoff, Penzel, & Weber, 2020). Variables such as status and knowledge about the issue in question have been found to be associated with persuasiveness.

Hypothetically, the greater the status and/or perceived expertise of the frame articulator and/or the organization they represent from the vantage point of potential adherents and constituents, the more plausible and resonant the framings or claims. To this end, the apparent involvement of people and organizations with questionable character such as IPOB members made the movement a less enticing project to many. In fact, the hands and faces of some key members of opposition party was written boldly on the protest which eventually made some citizens who are sympathetic to the ruling party to withdrew their supports.

The Mobilization Process

As indicated by the literature and the political process theory, the boundaries of a

social movement network are defined by the specific collective identity shared by the actors involved in the interaction (Guenther, Ruhrmann, Bischoff, Penzel, & Weber, 2020). It is imperative to note that right from inception questions were been asked by many Nigerians regarding the relative purpose of the ENDSARS movement. The movement appears to lack a clear purpose in the sense that rather than focusing on the ENDSARS slogan several divisive and politically induced placards such as “revolution now” “Buhari Must Resign” were equally brandished at the protest ground. For successful social movement there was never a question about what they were set out to achieve (Pichardo, 1997).

Another factor central to the mobilization process the absent in the #ENDSARS# social movement the genome of shared values. As argued by scholars the continuity and success of social movements relies upon ‘group identity’ and ‘ideologies (Cooper, 2020). This is because rather than a vague set of slogans such as “Na guy wey comot come protest na him we go give toto” “Na SARS collect my babe from me” “Na guy weycomot com protest na him we go give doggy” the movement does not provide any meaningful rules for adaptation by people from other region whose value system has zero tolerance to lewdness. It is evident from the literature that a successful social movement, requires a shared set of beliefs and a sense of belongingness (Pichardo, 1997; Bail, 2016).

The movement must be seen to be revolving around solidarity and collective identity. Scholars have argued that the continuity and success of social movements relies upon ‘group identity’ and ‘ideologies (Ciurel, 2018). Identity and ideology are defined here in the broad sense of the term, which makes them very close to sets of beliefs,



emotions and value system (Cooper, 2002). Collective identity and solidarity can be considered synonymous in this context, in so far as it is hard to conceive of the former without the latter, i.e. of a sense of belongingness without sympathetic feelings, associated with the perception of a common fate to share (Lin, & Zha, 2016).

Strategy and tactics

To the onlookers the ENDSARS looked spontaneous and chaotic there is lack of effective planning and no connection with the mainstream. There was total absence of politeness and respect towards citizens who are not protesting which would have helped win more people over to their cause rather the movement degenerated into wild provocation. It is imperative to note that for any movement to succeed it eventually has to garner more support from diverse sorts of people (Hardnack, 2019). This is the difference between the ENDSARS movement and the BLACLIVES MATTER movement, for instance when the former sought to demonize and disrupt the police department the latter was determined to enable change in the police department without destroying the system.

Conclusion

As this study has demonstrated the ENDSARS social movement has achieved a remarkable failure in the sense that it has created lawlessness and chaos where the security situation degenerated quickly into massive looting and robbery which makes the SARS era look even better. To this end, the success of future social movements in Nigeria will be advanced if more attention is devoted, both theoretically and empirically, to how framing intersects with the issues and processes examined in this article via the mobilization process and tactics. This article should be seen not as an opposing view to the ENDSARS movement but as

shedding light on different aspects of the character and dynamics of social movements which have been ignored by the ENDSARS movement.

In order to make change happen, gathering a band of passionate enthusiasts is not enough. The organizers need to make their purpose clear, establish values and create a plan for success. Today, social movement organizers can most effectively influence and persuade not through coercion, but by inspiring and empowering belief among those who will be affected. The organizers of social movement should therefore take a stock of the political environments before staging a social movement in order to identify the local power matrix with considerable level of influence in the environments and the targets and publics to which they address their action. The movement frame, the mobilization process and the tactics to be adopted must be derived from the windows of opportunities prevailing in the environment that allow movements to emerge and take action instead of the action itself.

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