

# **An Assessment of Nigeria's 2020 #EndSars Protests and a Comparative Analysis with US's Black Lives Matter Protests**

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**ABSTRACT:** A social mobilization effort by the Nigerian youth against police brutality introduced via Twitter in 2017 turned into one of the largest youth protests in October 2020, when the hashtag #EndSars rattled the foundations of Nigeria as a unified nation. While some scholars claim that the protest seems to echo and borrow from the sympathies of the US's Black Lives Matter movement, another movement against police brutality with a decentralized network of activists which began in July 2013 and also peaked somewhat during the pandemic era of 2020, the #EndSars effect on national security, politics, and socio-economic lives of Nigerians, however, appear deeper and far reaching. This study compared the two movements regarding police brutality, uncovered the nuances of the #EndSars movement, the factors that led to its deeper impact, and lessons to learn from the experience. A survey of Nigerian undergraduate students (youth), was conducted and the data analysed using the social movement theory. Except for the differences in their historical development, the findings from the conduct of the two protests show significant similarities. The student's survey, in particular, shows that while the respondents support the original demands for a call to action by the #EndSars organizers at 84%, they did not, however, believe the violence and destruction were justifiable (at 59.7%). Also interesting was their response that they believed (at 73% of respondents) that the movement was influenced by US's Black Lives Matter.

**KEY WORDS:** Nigeria #EndSars, social mobilization, new media and protests, social movements

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## Introduction

Decentralized social movements powered by social media mobilization efforts that have swept many countries of North Africa and the Middle East during the last decade (Wolsfeld et al. 2013) have, in general, failed to produce credible changes sought, but have caused so much in social destabilization, political upheavals and other endemic problems that most of these countries are still navigating ways to find lasting solutions. That movement which started in 2011 in Tunisia and was later named Arab Spring, spread to many other Muslim Arab-speaking countries of Africa and Middle East such as, Egypt, Morocco, Bahrain, Yemen, Syria, etc. The Arab Spring brought down governments in several countries such as Zine Al Abidine's (Tunisia), Hosni Mubarak (Egypt), Muammar Gaddafi (Libya), and Abdullah Ali (Yemen). Of these Middle Eastern countries, "only Tunisia made a lasting shift to democracy, whereas Egypt backslid, and Libya, Syria, and Yemen spiralled into protracted civil wars" (Robinson 2020). The most recent social movement that occurred in Nigeria, with the potential to go the same way was the one that started based on a protest tagged #EndSars in October 2020.

The protest started on October 8, 2020, and by October 11, 2020, the Nigerian government announced that SARS had been scrapped as per protesters demand. The government also ordered the release of detained protestors, in addition to prosecuting police officers found to have been abusive, and compensation to the families of victims of police brutality. These were the demands presented to the government by the organisers of the protest. The protests did not stop however, but continued unabated. It turned into demands that the President should resign, with other political requests unrelated to police brutality. In addition, jail breaks in some southern Nigerian cities occurred where 2,051 inmates were set free by protesters in Ondo and Edo states, while a similar attempt was foiled in Lagos City. Other violent actions included looting of stores (Olufemi 2020), destruction of police stations, arson, and violence against some innocent citizens. The government and some media later alleged that the protest has been hijacked by thugs. The Lagos state government, in particular, the most affected city, imposed a curfew to be observed and enforced by security forces to restore peace. It attracted the most attention on October 20, 2020, when allegations

of shootings by the military at a toll gate in Lagos city were reported, where a casualty of 12 was quoted. The government to date denied giving such orders or having shot anyone (Mohammed 2021), and counter-allegations followed. The Lagos State government later ordered the investigation on allegations of Lekki Toll Gate shootings of protesters, and peace was later restored.

The EndSars protest was not the first social movement, however. A few others, such as, Occupy Movement of January 2012 over the proposal to remove petroleum subsidy for Nigerians, Bring Back Our Girls which started in 2014 after the kidnap of hundreds of young girls from a boarding school, all occurred within the past decade, but did not deteriorate to the #EndSars level as violence and destructions.

### *The EndSars Protest of October 2020*

The hashtag #EndSars was a social movement with roots from 2017, when it was introduced on Twitter to call attention to extrajudicial activities of a squad of the Nigerian Police force named the Special Anti-Robbery Squad, SARS. The SARS unit comprised of a few officers of the Nigerian police force under the criminal investigating department (CID), established first in Lagos state in 1992 to curb the rising menace of armed robbery, and was later adapted by many other states across the nation to deal with similar criminal tendencies. The Criminal investigation department that established SARS is the highest investigative arm of the Nigerian police force (Salaudeen 2017).

To study the protest in isolation of why the unit was established will fall short of a comprehensive analysis. The highest threat to social, economic and political stability today in Nigeria is without a doubt the high rate of crimes and criminal activities. Before SARS was established, reported cases of rising crime in Lagos and other parts of southern Nigeria in the early 1990s were getting out of control. Because of the successes registered by one of the specialized police squads in Benin City, established by Officer Simeon Danladi Midenda of the Nigerian Police, which earned him commendation by the highest ranking Police Officer in the federation, Officer Midenda was transferred to Lagos to deal with the menace (Malumfashi 2020). In 1992, Midenda established a unit he named Special Anti-Robbery Squad, which registered immediate successes, and was later adopted in several states to combat similar menaces.

Years down the line, there were several allegations of extrajudicial handling of suspects. The emergence of a video clip circulated via social media about an alleged incidence in Ughelli, Delta state, supposed to have occurred on October 3, 2020, where an officer of the squad allegedly shot and injured a young man ignited the protest (Reliefweb 2021). Even though the video was later scrutinized for reportage on mainstream media but appeared to fall short, the youths were already on the street in protest by October 8, 2020. Among other things, it seems to echo the ongoing mass police brutality protests elsewhere such as Black Lives Matter in the US, drawing international sympathy (Obaji 2020, BBC 2020), though the context appears different. Even Occupy Nigeria, which enjoyed wider support from all segments of the Nigerian population, mirrored Occupy Wall Street, including its timing. And among the #EndSars enabling environment was the highly tensed pandemic lockdown that has hitherto confined people to their homes for months.

It is also worth noting that the southern coastal cities of Nigeria along the southern states, whose participation in the #EndSars protest was overwhelming (See map fig 1.), most especially Lagos city, have recently been battling rising cases of commercial internet scam by youths that have empowered the likes of Hushpuppy, a Nigerian multi-millionaire scam artist. The local popular tag for those scam artists is yahoo boys, coined from the use of yahoo browser for internet access to commit financial cybercrime. Just like in advanced communities dealing with drug infestations, you find youths involved, the yahoo boys, who have no business or employment to their name owning expensive vehicles, jewellery, phones etc.

These specialized trained police squads, SARS, fish the criminals out easily while some human rights critics call some of their methods profiling. As to excesses labelled against their modus operandi, an interview with the founder of the squad, retired Corporal Midenda says, "It is highly difficult to arrest a robber without application of force except, probably, if he is met at his place of leisure. Robbers arrested during shoot out will most likely be dead or injured. The injured ones were those giving us information and preserving them was most paramount to us" (Nnadozie 2017). Midenda also decried the changes introduced later, where squad officers were openly armed, and used police vehicles. Midenda added, "The secret behind the successes of the original SARS was its facelessness and its mode of operation. We operated

in plain clothes and used plain vehicles that could not be associated with security or any government agency.”

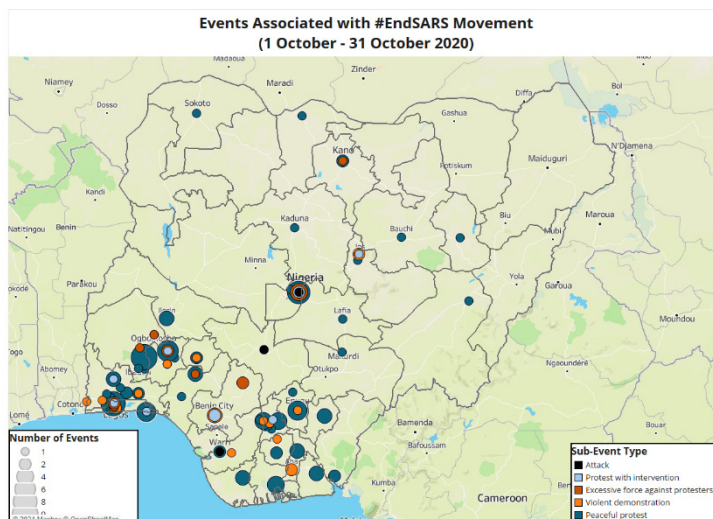


Fig. 1. Map of protest sites across the country

*Courtesy of Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), 2021*

## Statement of the Problem

Nigeria is a country of about 200 million people. It holds about one-fifth of the total African population, meaning every one in five Africans on the continent is a Nigerian. Any destabilization of the country may cause a catastrophic refugee phenomenon the continent may have ever seen, as none, or even all four, of the neighboring countries put together, can absorb such refugees.

The trend the world has seen so far shows that social media inspired mobilization of protesters hardly make lasting if any significant impact in developed nations (Robinson 2020), as we have seen with the WTO Seattle Protest of 1999 against world trade inequalities, Occupy Wall Street against economic inequalities of 2011, and the current Black Lives Matter movement, all three occurred in the United States without destabilization, beyond the conviction of the police officer responsible for the death of George Floyd, ruled a homicide by the court. But to countries of Africa and the Middle East, it continues to cause massive social disruptions, displacement of populations, political crisis, economic and other impacts.

This study therefore aims to examine the #EndSars protest of October 2020 in Nigeria with the aim of better understanding its causes, factors that aided it, as well as its impact. The protest that occurred during the pandemic season continued unabated, even after the swift resolution by the federal government of the demand put forward by the protesters. Among the issues this study will explore is why the #EndSars protest in particular became so far reaching among the social movements the nation has seen, and why the effects of the global protest on police brutality seems to be far deeper in Nigeria than say in the United States of America where it began. A survey of Nigerian youth will also be conducted to see their view of the protest and its impact.

## Literature Review

Quite a number of scholars have argued from various angles and reached various findings and conclusions regarding social movements and social mobilization for protests via social media platforms. From those that argue that the existing political environment of the protesters is crucial as a variable (Wolsfeld et al. 2013), to others who try to link the upheavals from Arab Spring to cultural incongruence hypothesis, where they argue that the intensity of the upheaval is relative to the gap between the youth's demand for democracy and the existing level of democracy in a country (Almond et al. 2000). Others found that the degree of social media involvement for mobilization efforts differs from one country to the next (Howard and Parks 2012). Another angle (Salvatore 2013) saw the lack of meaningful achievement for the revolution within the spectacles of new media in the hands of a segment of the population outside of the usual 'opinion leaders' who are used to framing issues of 'common good' to their political and most especially corporate and financial goals. In other words, the inability to make significant impact rests on a struggle between a tool (social Media) empowered class within the society (youths) battling over their interests that clash with those of the 'opinion leaders' and corporate class who control media, politics and resources.

The deeper impact and ease of mobilization provided by social media use relates to its cheap access and ease of use is another angle (Earl & Kimport 2012), just as other studies show Twitter as a leading and popular platform used in spreading awareness about protests or movements, ahead



of Facebook. Traditional media and television, in particular, scored zero effect in that regard based on their study (Boulianne et al. 2020). Salvatore also argues for extending the issues beyond class related bias to scrutinizing Eurocentric bias alongside it (Salvatore 2013). Others believe more studies are needed to explore escalation of peaceful protests into violence as most studies concentrate on escalations on political and campaign rallies only (Ives & Lewis 2019). Apart from tendering recommendations for citizens and organizers to effectively pursue their goals, Ives and Lewis's findings show "violent escalations are more likely to occur following recent repression and when protests are unorganized." Key achievements of the Black Lives Matter Movement, according to a writer (Clingham-David 2020) include police reform and defund the police campaign becoming mainstream issues to be addressed, receiving international solidarity over its causes; and the success in removal of confederate statues from public spaces.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Social movement theory is an interdisciplinary study within the social sciences which works on explaining why social mobilization occurs, including its social, economic and most especially political impact. Aside from media and communication studies, it extends into various disciplines like, political science, sociology and most especially psychology, as scholars pry into how it forms, who participates in it and why. Few scholars (McAdams 1982), for example, see such protests as emanating from structural strain and grievances that do not have a formal channel of resolution. However, that thesis was later challenged as limited and modified (McAdam, Tarrow & Tilly 2000).

Others discuss, under grievance theory, a branch of social movement study, that Fraternalistic deprivation, or group comparison up and down the class strata within a society, results in one group feeling deprived and aggrieved in some way, in this case, the youths feeling targeted by a squad of the police force unjustly; where in the EndSars protest youths in particular expressed being disproportionately targeted by SARS as a motivation for participation (Runciman 1966). As for determinants for participation, studied under 'action mobilization,' four steps are identified; "the (i) need to sympathize with the cause, (ii) need to know about the upcoming event, (iii) must want to participate, and (iv) must be able to participate." (Klandermans & Oegema 1987). Also relevant to this study and theoretical perspective

is how the age of popular use of social media platforms may impact social movements, especially the organizing and publicizing aspect (Lopes 2014).

## Methodology

For this study, social movement is defined as a loosely organized but sustained campaign in support of a social goal; and protest is defined as “a public action by a group of people expressing disapproval of or objection to something; in this case, police brutality. Using these definitions, a historical account and study of racial issues or civil rights that begot black lives matter movement in the United States was reviewed, and its 2020 campaign timeline was tendered alongside that of #EndSars, side by side via a table, to draw similarities and differences for analysis. For the second segment of the study, 100 questionnaires were distributed randomly to undergraduate students of Kaduna State University, from all four levels of study, to elicit their responses to questions regarding the #EndSars protest. Their ages range from teenagers (17 years) to about mid-twenties. A total of 97 were returned and used for analysis.

## Data Presentation

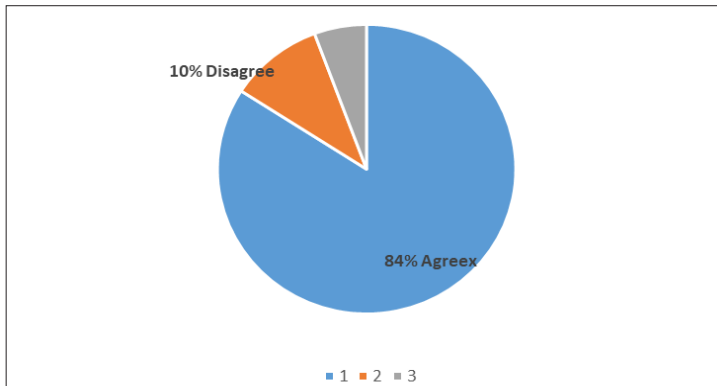


Fig. 2. Whether Respondents Agree that the EndSars protest was a worthy cause

Of the 88 respondents who answered the question, 74 at 84% agree that the EndSars protest was a worthy cause to protest for, while only nine (9) at 10% of respondents disagree. Five respondents as 6% hold no opinion on the matter (see fig. 2). But what about whether the protest achieved its goals?



While 59 respondents at 62.7% out of 94 believe they have registered success with the dissolution of the squad by the government as per the protester's demands, 70 percent of them at 68 respondents out of 97 do not believe that overall the goals were achieved, as far as seeing any changes in the operational manners of the police even after the dissolution of the squad in 2020.

Another question asked of the respondents is whether Jail breaks, destruction of property and violence that occurred during the protest was justified as part of what is expected during a protest, a greater majority of the respondents, at 58 out of 97 or 59.7% do not believe those actions were justified, while only 25 respondent agreed that it was justified, representing 25.7%, and 13 respondents at 13.4% hold no opinion on the matter. Another 78 respondents out of 96 representing 81% believe that the hijacking of the protest by hoodlums in the latter part of the movement, which was chiefly responsible for much of the destruction including violence and jail breaks caused so much harm to the original purpose, derailing the issues, and casting doubt as to the credibility of the protest.

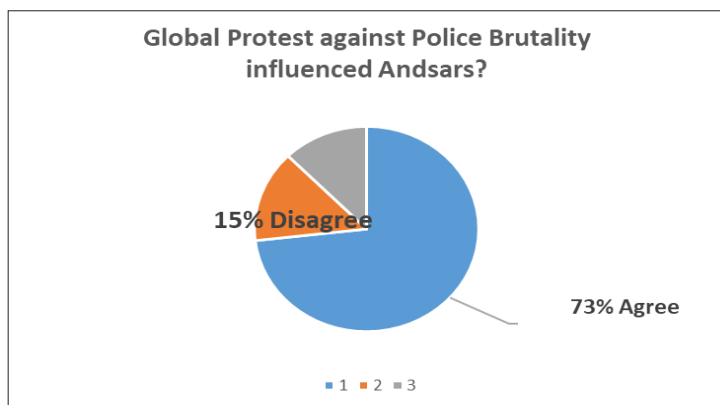


Fig. 3. Whether the Global protest against Police Brutality influenced the call for EndSars protest in Nigeria

A question regarding whether the youth (respondents) think the global movement against police brutality that was occurring about the same time has any influence on the organization and conducting of the Nigerian EndSars protest, most of the respondents, 71 out of 97 at 73% agree that it did influence the Nigerian EndSars movement, with 4 respondents at 14%, disagreeing that it did, as graphically represented in Fig. 3.

Another important finding was 84 out of 97 respondents, at 86.5% believe the pandemic lockdown and its impact on lives in October 2020 influenced and boosted turnout for the protests. In addition to that, unemployment, and poverty that was also aggravated by the lockdown restricting the means of earning a living and wages being a condition at the time of the protests.

Table 1. Timeline comparison Chart between 2020 Black Lives Matters Protests and 2020 #EndSars's

2020 Black Lives Matter Timeline (Courtesy CBS)	2020 #EndSars Protests Timeline (Compiled)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Started 2013 with shooting of an unarmed teenager in Florida.</li> <li>2. With several similar shooting deaths, the movement went global in 2017 with the establishment of BLM Global Foundation.</li> <li>3. Escalated after George Floyd was choked to death by a police officer on 25 May, 2020.</li> <li>4. Protests started immediately.</li> <li>5. On 27 May, 2020, all four police officers involved were fired by the police department.</li> <li>6. On 29 May, 2020, Former President Trump tweeted calling protesters 'thugs' threatening when looting starts they will be shot.</li> <li>7. On 31 May, 2020, protests around the federal capital begins to turn violent. Virginia state governor declares state of emergency, DC Mayor reported damaged businesses and 11 police officers injured, though non-life-threatening.</li> <li>8. 1 June, 2020, DC police charged 18 protesters aged 18-34 for rioting, looting, robbery. Same day, DC Mayor issued citywide curfew for two days.</li> <li>9. 3 June, 2020, more than 300 protesters arrested in DC, same day that police officer in court over George Floyd killing charges were upgraded to second degree murder.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Started in 2017 incident trigger unknown.</li> <li>2. Revitalized after alleged shooting and injury of a young man on 3 October, 2020.</li> <li>3. Protests starts 8 October, 2020, in several cities across Nigeria. On the same day, protesters in Lagos gathered at the residence of the state governor where they spent the night into 9 October.</li> <li>4. 9 October, Lagos State legislature held an emergency session on the protest and issued a seven-point resolution most of which tasks the federal legislature in Abuja to probe SARS, protect protestors, guard against youths abuse, proscription and replacement of the Unit SARS with a new unit to operate with a clear code of conduct.</li> <li>5. 10 October, 2020, BBC reported Nigerian Police have begun to use tear gas to disperse protesters in several cities.</li> <li>6. 11 October, 2020, protesters listed a five-point demand for the Nigerian government to meet.</li> <li>7. 11 October, 2020, The Nigerian Police announced the dissolution of the SARS squad. The government also committed to the other four demands of the protesters.</li> </ol>

<p>10. 9 June, 2020, DC council unanimously passes massive police reform package that bans using tear gas by police and making police choke hold that killed George Floyd a felony.</p> <p>11. On Juneteenth (19<sup>th</sup>) Protesters brought down the only remaining confederate statue erected in DC since 1901 (general Albert Pike), burnt it.</p> <p>12. Protests waned months later, after global sympathetic rallies, but BLM movement is still active.</p>	<p>8. 13 October, 2020, The public relation officer of Nigerian Police announces the setting up of a new unit named SWAT, which was to start operating a week later.</p> <p>9. October 15, 2020, protest prohibition in the nation capital was announced after a meeting of Capital area security council under the chairmanship of the Federal Capital Minister.</p> <p>10. October 20, 2020, the protesters who were reported to have defied the Lagos state curfew and gathered at the Lekki Toll Gate were allegedly shot by military officers.</p>
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*Table Originally designed by the author,  
with the source of BLM timeline information acknowledged*

## Discussion and analysis

### *Significant Findings from the EndSars Protests Survey*

We find general agreement in the survey response from the youths from Nigeria, and also the timeline comparison table as to day to day pattern of the protests regarding police brutality in the two nations. The agreement as to that influence by the respondents was at 73%, or 71 out of 97 respondents. In short both studies affirmed that the protests largely carried out in the United States and tagged Black Lives Matter from May 2020 may have influenced the #EndSars protests in Nigeria in October 2020.

Another significant finding that ties to contemporary protest studies come from the questions we posed for the youths as to whether local conditions existing at that time may have boost the number of protesters, for which the response was in the affirmative with 84 out of 97 respondents, at 86.5% believing it impacted turnout for the protests. Many scholars do stress the study of the existing environmental conditions at the time of mobilization as well as launching a protest (Wolsfeld et al. 2013), arguing it is crucial to any study.

The protests occurred during the pandemic lockdown in Nigeria which effectively confined the Nigerian population to their homes, regardless of age, for at least five months by October 2020 when the protest commenced. Distribution of food by government and other non-governmental

organizations to relieve the difficulties encountered by people, most especially those who work daily to earn a living, has already encountered challenges making life more difficult, especially in Lagos and other large commercial cities that saw the most violence from the protests. EndSars organizers appear to understand and used that situation by distributing free food to participating protesters. That was in addition to ability to gather publicly to ease tensions after months of lockdown.

When the protests continued even after all demands of the protesters were accepted by the federal government four days into its launch, the protests began to face criticisms of insincerity, foreign financial support for destabilization, and other ulterior motives. Especially when it turned violent, jail breaks, looting and destruction for days following the protesters demands were met. Majority of youth respondents to the survey conducted by this study, at 59.7% of respondents, also believed such actions were unjustified and may have taken much away from the credibility of the protesters. After successive studies on the Arab Spring, a scholar (Salvatore 2013) reached as one of his conclusions “looking simultaneously at the, albeit different, Egyptian and Iranian cases, the everydayness of communication not only in Facebook but in all social networks, including their ritualized forms often transgressing into the carnivalesque, entails a subversive potential irrespective of the intentions of the actors” (Salvatore 2013, 226).

It does appear though that another factor may also be relevant. According to a study (Ives & Lewis 2019), “violent escalations are more likely to occur following recent repression and when protests are unorganized.” So did the viral video from an injured young man circulated via social media count as a recent repression igniter, in addition to possible lack of good organization of the protest?

### *Comparing Black Lives Matter protests in the United States to the EndSars protest in Nigeria*

We learn from scholars on these issues that “social movements emerge within democracies because of perceived perceptions of the democratic failings of the state (Kirkpatrick 2008, Tilly and Wood 2009, 13 and 142); etc.” And that these kinds of movements’ demands are generally described and argued

within the context of 'social contract theory' where in democracies such social contracts for coexistence in justice for all groups is spelled out in the nation's constitution. In her works (Stephanie 2020) describes how peaceful protest could end up with some violence, which are sometimes described as having been hijacked. She described how movements actually factionalize based on levels of satisfaction of individual members. In fact, she says, the 21st century Black Lives Matter movement to a larger extent echo the more violent approaches of Malcolm X and the Black Panther Party (Stephanie 2020, 225). She writes about the Black American civil rights struggles that spanned many years thus "One of the leaders of the politically violent faction, Stokely Carmichael explained the necessity for the revolutionary Black Panthers in 1967 when he wrote: "Black people must organize themselves without regard to what is traditionally acceptable, precisely because the traditional approaches have failed (Self 2003, 218 quoted in Stephanie 2020)" a position also echoed by another Black Panther leader, Eldridge Cleaver.

Since the legitimacy of protests based on these backgrounds appears legitimate, why then do the protests turn violent even as they start as peaceful protests? Rudimentary reference to Black American civil rights struggles, that today manifests in Black Lives Matter Movement shows two parallel channels, the non-violent struggle which the world recalls as the Martin Luther King kind, and its revolutionary violent counterpart represented by the likes of Malcolm X and the Black Panther Party. Furthermore, and based on an academic study of Black America struggles also, the long history of civil rights struggle that was slow to deliver ultimately led to the violent struggles that were at times experienced, with the leaders of the violent struggle expressing losing faith in the authorities' court system, police and law enforcement, and other major institutions as stipulated in the American social contract.

Comparing that American experience to the #EndSars protest even on this matter alone will be difficult and should be a subject of further and more enriched studies. For one, the Nigerian records of robbery menace, for which the SARS was founded to deal with it by law enforcement remains real and at its highest peak today. Shortly after the Nigerian civil war, 1967-1970, left over rebel arms were used in menacing armed robbery, with 70-80% of total robbery incidents in Nigeria occurring between Western Region and Mid-

Western region the capitals of which were Lagos and Benin, (Wada 2015, 28), the same two cities where the founder of SARS worked. Up until 1992 (SARS formation), and to date Lagos and Benin form the main centres of persistent armed robberies. When the #EndSars protest went violent also, it was mainly within those areas, with the allegation of killings at the Lekki Tool gates occurring in Lagos. So also some prison breaks, violence against some citizens, police stations and members of the police forces elsewhere in southern Nigeria. Racial discrimination was not the cause of the protest on police brutality, though there was a significant campaign that defined the youth as disproportionately targeted by the Special Anti-Robbery Squad, SARS.

Probably another stark difference is the Nigerian authorities' sense of responsibility during the initial years of Nigerian native government of the 20th century, were their being stern in upholding the nation's law (Social contract) against both the criminals and the police was effective. Trials were swift and execution of convicted armed robbers, who used arms against citizens, was immediate after conviction. A Deputy Supretendant of Police, George Iyamu, found by the courts to have connived with a notorious armed robber Lawrence Anini was executed, for example, just as Lawrence Anini the armed robber was also executed earlier on March 29, 1987. These occurred in the early years of effective governance after the civil war (Wada 2015, 31). Other notorious robbers apprehended and executed almost immediately were Sunday Oyenusi, Monday Osunbor, and Mighty Joe who was shot in 1973. The decree that established execution of convicted armed robbers by the post-war reconstruction government of General Yakubu Gowon was effective in nixing the menace within just a few years. The death penalty decree against armed robbers, was challenged for abrogation by South West lawyers during the civilian administration of President Shehu Shagari 1979-1983, but was not abrogated and was later used effectively to bring down the menace once again by another military government. Some scholars to date advocate for the enforcement of the capital punishment law against armed robbers in Nigeria as a deterrent (Abangwu 2013), as its recent non enforcement has left innocent Nigerians in their thousands at the mercy of armed robbers annually, who today kill with no remorse in the process of robbing people for money, property and mostly cattle (rustling), as well as kidnapping.

While some reports against SARS' mode of operation have emerged over time, the general opinion of those who have been covering the high crime rate in the country, including newspapers do not suggest scrapping the unit as a solution. "... They had busted a lot of crimes and restored sanity in many instances. Therefore, isolated cases of a few "criminals" or the ill-behaved amongst them should not be generalised or form the basis to write them all off" (*ThisDay* editorial 2017).

## Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, this study found many similarities between the conduct of the Black Lives Matter 2020 protest, using its activities timeline side by side with that of the 2020 EndSars protest in Nigeria. It also found that the former protest of May 2020 tagged Black Lives Matter in the United States did influence the ease of mobilization of the latter, the Nigerian #EndSars protest of October 2020. EndSars, however, appear more deadly. For example, while some police officers were reported injured in the Black Lives Matter protests, in the case of EndSars some police officers were actually killed, police offices burned down, and several buildings vandalized and destroyed. Jail breaks that resulted in 2051 inmates freed during the Nigerian protests also had no equivalent in the US protest. A survey of undergraduate youth from Nigeria shows 84% support the original demand by protestors, did not believe violence and destruction was justifiable at 59.7%, and believed the protest was influenced by the black lives matter movement by 73% of respondents.

Recommendations include the need for the government in Nigeria to study these recent social movements as soon as they start, so it can better deal with it. It also needs to act fast to study the validity of the organizers' claims and, if credible, work on a solution. As the original founder of the SARS squad that registered much success suggested in an interview with Vanguard newspaper (Nnadozie 2017), the need still exists to keep any anti robbery squad operating underground and in plain clothes using unmarked vehicles to complement their counterparts that roam the street daily dealing with the issue directly. That was critical to the element of surprise they successfully used to deal with the armed robbery menace.



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