

# **Youth Participation and Political Change: An Evaluation of the Socio-Economic Drivers of the #endbadgovernance Protests in Nigeria**

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## **Abstract**

Nigeria is on the verge of a significant crisis, fueled by a disproportionately unemployed youth population, alongside a skyrocketing cost of living that has made life increasingly unbearable for both those who are gainfully employed and those who are not. Regardless, the country's political leadership at the federal, state, and local levels has been accused of being disconnected from this reality, as exemplified by the deregulation in the petroleum sector and the devaluation of the national currency, which have exacerbated the country's already existing hardships and thus triggered a youth protest under #endbadgovernance. Relying on primary sources, 150 questionnaires were administered to identified respondents, including youth, social activists, and government officials, using the purposive sampling method. The data collected was analysed using simple percentages and further complemented with material from secondary sources. While the study's findings reveal that the #endbadgovernance protest was fueled by Nigeria's socio-economic conditions and is, therefore, a manifestation of resentment against poor governance, the study recommends increased youth engagement in the country's political process.

**Keywords:** Bad Governance, Political Change, Youth Participation, Socio-economic Drivers, End-Sars Protests

## **Introduction**

Emerging from a chequered history of military authoritarianism and a struggle to entrench a lasting democratic governance, women and youth in Nigeria remain among the most marginalized groups in the country's political and governance processes. With an estimated population of 237 million (worldometer, 2025; Afrobarometer, 2025), and despite the youth constituting nearly 58% of this population (Afrobarometer, 2025), they continue to face systematic neglect and exclusion from meaningful political participation and employment opportunities.

This exclusion has contributed to a growing crisis driven by a burgeoning youth population, many of whom are unemployed. The situation is further exacerbated by dire economic conditions and a skyrocketing cost of living, which has defied logical explanation and reached unprecedented levels in the country's history. To put this into context, youth unemployment in Nigeria has remained persistently high (Olubusoye et al.,

2023; Olajuwon, 2023). For instance, the unemployment rate among youth aged 15–24 years stood at 7.2% in Q2 2023, up from 6.9% in Q1 2023 (NBS, 2023; The Cable, 2023). By Q3 2023, this figure had risen to 8.6%, representing a 1.4 percentage point increase from the previous quarter (NBS, 2023).

Yet, the country's federal, state, and local political leadership is alleged to be far removed from this reality and is bent on adding to the harsh policies that may aggravate an already dire situation. This can be gleaned from the fact that, since assumption of office by President Tinubu on 29th May 2023, there has been frequent adjustments of electricity tariffs, and deregulation of the petroleum sector that had seen a liter price of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) rising from less than 200 Naira to between 1100 and 1200, depending on the location.

Similarly, the country's currency, the naira, was floated against the US Dollar, effectively setting off a wave of devaluation that saw the Naira exchange from 350-375 Naira to 1 USD to 1,650 Naira to 1 USD. These policies have combined to worsen an already challenging situation, creating the worst cost-of-living crisis in Nigeria's history and sparking a 10-day protest, the "#endbadgovernance" movement, organized by Nigerian youth.

With the benefit of hindsight, the #endbadgovernance followed similar past youth-organized protests under the #endSARS protest of 2020 (Amnesty International, 2020, Human Rights Watch, 2021, Ojewale, 2021); the Online Surveillance of Digital Protest of 2020 (Freedom House, 2021, Paradigm Initiative, 2021); the Occupy Nigeria Protests of 2012 (Oloruntoba, 2012, Olorunmi, 2012); the June-12 Pro-Democracy Protest (involving mostly youth and democracy activists in the South-West) (Adebanwi, 2004, Diamond, 1995); and the Ali Must Go Protests under the then National Union of Nigerian Students of 1978 (Falola, 2008, Nwala 1981), among others.

While it is important to acknowledge the state's brutal suppression and the killing of many protesters (Amnesty International, for instance, reported that over 56 people were killed during the EndSARS protests), it is also important to understand that the immediate causes of these protests may vary. Nevertheless, these protests reflect a common demand for an end to authoritarianism, the entrenchment of democracy, a rejection of youth marginalization, and a call for greater socio-economic and political inclusion in the country's governance.

With growing activism led by youth at the forefront of redefining the country's political landscape, a new era of political re-engagement and realignment appears to be on the horizon. However, in the wake of the #endbadgovernance, the role of social media and the long-term effects of the youth's re-engagement and political realignment remain unclear.

This paper aims to unpack the implications this might hold for Nigeria and the country's future by, firstly, providing insights into the socio-economic dynamics that led to the #endbadgovernance protests. Secondly, examines the role of social media as a tool for mobilizing protests and social movements. Thirdly, it serves as a valuable reference material for policymakers and researchers, offering a deeper understanding of how socio-economic factors drive political change.

In the context of the foregoing, the following questions will serve as a guide to the conversation in the paper: What socio-economic grievances gave rise to the #endbadgovernance protests? How did youth involvement shape the movement for the #endbadgovernance protest? What are the potential long-term effects of the protest on Nigeria's political landscape and future? The paper will attempt to understand the strategies and tactics employed by protest organizations, providing a valuable guide for policy formulation and the management of youth agitation.

In other words, the objectives of the paper is therefore, to understand the specific socio-economic grievances leading to the #endbadgovernance protest; understand why it was easy for the youth to galvanize the #endbadgovernance protest and its processes; identify the long-term effect of the protest on the political future of the youth and Nigeria in general, and to provide necessary recommendations that would guide youth engagement in the country.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Two critical theories, the Social Identity Theory and the Grievance Theory, have been found helpful in understanding the analyses for this paper.

The Social Identity Theory (SIT).

The Social Identity Theory (SIT) focuses on how people derive identity from social groups. Developed from the work of Tajfel and Turner (1979), this concept assumes that an individual's sense of identity within a group influences their behavior. In other words, and specifically for this paper, the commonality of socio-economic hardship and political exclusion in which the youth have found themselves has driven them to collective action.

Within this context, this paper assumes that the shared identity among Nigerian youth and the commonality of their condition, shaped by socio-economic deprivation, have reinforced the desire for political change and provided the unity of purpose and determination that led to the # EndBadGovernance protest.

The Grievance Theory.

The Grievance Theory has its proponents, such as Gurr (1970) and Davies (1962). The theory is premised on two fundamental assumptions. Firstly, social movements are

primarily driven by deep-seated grievances, including political repression, economic inequality, and social injustice. Secondly, significantly related to the first, when and where grievances become widely shared, they often have the potential to lead to collective action. This theory is critical as it helps to situate many of the youth's grievances, including unemployment, corruption, and a lack of political opportunities, as the stimuli that have led to their participation in protests, such as the #endbadgovernance protest.

While both theories are relevant in explaining Nigeria's social and political processes, they have shortcomings. For instance, the Social Identity Theory suffers from, among other things, an overemphasis on group identity and a tendency toward oversimplification and reductionism. The Grievances Theory, on the other hand, is fraught with challenges, including an overemphasis on subjective perception and a lack of predictive power.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Socio-economic realities and youth participation in social movements have significant implications, particularly in addressing social conditions. This section reviews related literature on the subject in a thematic format.

#### **Youth Participation in Politics:**

Discourses on youth participation in the political process have elicited comments from Zohdy (2017, p.9) thus, "young people and their adult counterparts will generally be more likely to participate and see value in their participation if it is structured around meaningful opportunities to change material conditions, decisions/policies, or other concrete outcomes than general participation efforts not linked directly to solving actual problems in people's lives." Zohdy's assertion aligns with the theoretical position of social identity theory, particularly the argument that individuals or groups are more likely to participate in matters related to their material condition and daily survival. In this case, the youth's condition has become the rallying point for the protest.

In a study by Qasem (2013, p. 1), the author opined that growing frustration with institutional deadlock at the political level led many young people to express themselves in alternative ways. Qasem's view reinforces the central belief that the longer the youth, who form a large segment of any society suffer from exclusion (akin to the reference by Zohdy on youth's material condition and daily survival), the more will be their resolve and willingness to employ other methods, including movements and protests, to take their rightful place in the society.

In the same vein, the United Nations Youth (nd, p. 1) alludes to two issues at the heart of the conversation on youth engagement in the political process. Firstly, "opportunities for youth to engage in governance and participate in political and decision-making

processes depend largely on the political, socio-economic, and cultural contexts where social norms in many parts of the world result in multiple forms of discrimination. Secondly, “there exists strong evidence that the participation of young people in formal, institutional political processes is relatively low compared to older citizens across the globe. This challenges the representativeness of the political system and leads to the disenfranchisement of young people.” (United Nations Youth, nd. p.1). Specific to the first, it is not doubtful that youth exclusion and marginalization in the political process are contextual and often reflect a country’s level of development. The second statement could also be valid, as such a situation has frequently degenerated to a point where the youth are compelled to seek political change through informal channels, such as protests and movements.

While writing on Nigeria, Shola (2021, p.6) admits to declining youth participation in the formal political process. Reinforcing Zohdy’s and United Nations Youth’s view, young people have become involved in self-organizing informal movements and activities, across borders and around issues of common concern, which readily answers why the youth in Nigeria could galvanize the #endbadgovernance protest: it was an issue of common concern to them.

### **Protest Movements and Social Change**

Tarrow’s (2011) conversations on protest movements and social change serve as foundational texts in studying social movements and political change. According to Tarrow, while protest movements have the potential to influence public policy, rearrange political opportunities, and alter public opinion, their efficacy lies in the influence they exert through the contention they create. He thus opined that the inherent collective action within the mobilization of protest movements may sometimes lead to a sustained political change.

In the same vein, Chenoweth & Stephan’s (2011) analysis has dwelt on why non-violent movements/protests have often achieved social and political change more successfully than violent types. Using empirically based evidence and numerous case studies, the study concludes that nonviolent resistance is better positioned to gain broad-based support while undermining the legitimacy of the existing regime and capturing international attention; it also tends to accelerate, as earlier argued by Tarrow, more sustainable and profound societal changes.

Tilly & Tarrow’s (2015) study provides two essential contributions to the study of social movements. One, the study offered a theoretical basis for understanding contentious politics, which, according to the analysis, includes social movements, protests, and other forms of collective action. Two, it discusses how social movements and protests can challenge the existing power structures and foster significant political

and social transformations. These views are an invaluable contribution to understanding how protest movements have influenced political decisions, altered discourses, and changed the course of history.

### **Digital Activism and Global Social Movements**

Howard & Hussain's (2013) study exposes the critical role social media has played in the Arab Spring protests and other social movements across the Middle East and North Africa. According to the study, social media achieved its success by mobilizing and sharing information, which gained traction and international support for the protest. Additionally, the study highlighted the roles of social media platforms by enabling activists to disseminate uncensored information and coordinate actions across different countries, bypassing the traditional and state-controlled media. Howard & Hussain's study thus concludes that while social media presence in these movements has ensured decentralization, rapid response, and adaptation to changing circumstances, it has also diluted and removed the barriers to political participation, which was seen as the primary characteristic of the region's politics. This is in addition to linking disparate groups with common goals and fostering revolutionary ideas among the movement's members and beyond.

Lending further voice on the role of social media in protests and movements, Lee and Chan (2018) highlight what is called the "insurgent public sphere," where alternative narratives are formed and spread. The study observed that social media platforms were critical not only in mobilizing, sustaining, and garnering international support for the pro-democracy movement, or what later became known as the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong in 2014, but especially in how they were deployed to expose surveillance and state censorship, provide opportunities for deliberation, foster collective identities and ideas, and the coordination and, as earlier alluded to by Howard & Hussain, decentralization of actions while maintaining one voice and a unified movement.

Bonilla & Rosa's (2015) study reveals how social media created awareness, mobilized protesters, and fostered a global conversation on racism and racial justice through the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter, which became a symbol of resistance and a tool for connecting with other activists worldwide. They argue that social media has become a handy means of showcasing the power of digital networks in sustaining long-term activism and amplifying marginalized voices to reach a wider audience.

Similarly, Mendes et al. (2018) have explored the role of social media in protest movements. In an analysis of the #MeToo movement, which gained traction in 2017 as a global campaign against sexual harassment and assault in the media industry, the study argued that social media played a critical role in sharing personal stories, creating solidarity among survivors, and challenging existing power structures. Mendes et al., like

Bonilla & Rosa (2015), have echoed the potential of digital activism in challenging and transforming social norms, and providing a platform for collective storytelling that articulates shared grievances among victims and non-victims.

### **Nigeria's Socio-economic Conditions and Protest Movement**

Existing studies on Nigeria's unemployment, poverty, corruption, and public services point to a gloomy picture. In the same vein, Abosede (2022) notes that Nigeria has a vast population, with many of them within the youth age bracket, who lack access to employment opportunities. Citing figures from the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2021), the unemployment estimate of 27.10% increased to 33.30% in 2021 and is projected to hit 40% in 2023. Abosede concludes that the disturbing figures of youth unemployment have continued to create a sense of disillusionment and resentment against the current order, and insist on change.

In the same vein, Obasi (nd), while reflecting on youth unemployment, has argued that unemployment remains a critical socio-economic issue in Nigeria and was a significant driver of protest movements elsewhere. Highlighting further, Obasi has argued that since increasing frustration from unemployment is an important factor that has led to the mobilization and youth-led movements elsewhere, the #endbadgovernance needs to, therefore, substantially be located as a movement that seeks to address these concerns, and the failures of governance and economic stagnation in the country. The crux in Obasi's analysis is that unemployment and lack of opportunities among youth are central to Nigeria's rising social movements and protests.

Chayes et al.'s (2015) analysis explored the link between corruption and poor governance, and how it has impacted the socio-economic conditions that have become the hallmark of public outcry and movements, such as #endbadgovernance in Nigeria. Further analyzing the pervasive nature of corruption, its impact on economic development and governance, she posits it as the major purveyor of inequality and poverty, fueling public dissatisfaction and driving the demand for accountability and better governance, which the #endbadgovernance symbolizes.

Writing on Nigeria's socio-economic reality, Ben (nd) and Garba (nd) highlight Nigeria's economic reality and its organic linkage to poverty and poor governance. While Ben insists that the #endbadgovernance was only a smokescreen and a demand for better governance and equitable distribution of the country's resources, Garba's view is that the vicious cycles inherent within the country's poor governance and socio-economic deprivation have not only reinforced each other but have also cultivated a public discontent that culminated in the #endbadgovernance in Nigeria.

The literature reviewed so far aligns with the two theoretical positions of the paper in two fundamental ways. First, as mentioned earlier, individuals or groups are likely to be

motivated by issues concerning their material condition and daily survival. The individual's sense of identity, as advanced by social identity theory, is a potent mobilizing factor, as seen not only in the age brackets of the protesters but also in their material conditions. Secondly, the assumption of grievance theory is further reinforced, especially in how the youth's deep-seated grievances, such as political marginalization, economic inequality, and social injustice, became a mobilizing symbol, which led to the recruitment of digital space for collective action, as symbolized in the #endbadgovernance protests.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research Design**

This study drew on data from both qualitative and non-qualitative sources for its analysis. The combined use of these two approaches, often referred to as the mixed approach, allows researchers, as Denzin & Lincoln (1998) have argued, to leverage the strengths of the methods for rigor, depth, and breadth in the analysis. It is also important to note that while each approach has its shortcomings, combining the two methods allows each approach to supplement the shortcomings of the other.

### **Data Collection**

The study's instrument consisted of primary data (quantitative) generated using the survey method, specifically a questionnaire. This method was adopted to allow the generalization of the study's findings in a broader context (Bryman, 2004). The questionnaires primarily consisted of closed-ended questions. The data generated from the questionnaire were supplemented with information from secondary sources, including journals, textbooks, newspapers, and official publications.

### **Sampling Method**

Havens for questionnaire administration were deliberately identified using a purposive sampling technique, thereby ensuring access to respondents with relevant characteristics and experience for the study (Patton, 2015; Creswell & Poth, 2018). A sample size of 150 was deemed sufficient to provide reliable data for drawing meaningful conclusions in the study. The questionnaires were distributed, as indicated earlier, purposively to youth participants, activists, and government officials. Each category received 50 questionnaires, totaling 150. In other words, the purposive sampling method was adopted to ensure the population size was manageable and could be studied efficiently.

The data collected from the questionnaires were thematically presented in tables and analyzed using simple percentages for clarity and ease of interpretation. Recognizing the potential for value bias, a common challenge in social science research, the study

employed the Audit Trail approach to ensure transparency and reflexivity. This method allows for the systematic documentation of each stage of the research, thereby enhancing the credibility of the findings. In addition, qualitative insights were derived from open-ended responses and secondary sources, enabling a thematic analysis that complemented the quantitative results and provided a richer interpretation of the data.

### **Data Presentation and Discussions**

Out of 150 questionnaires administered for the study, 141 were filled out and returned. This constitutes approximately 94% and is sufficiently large to analyze.

**Table 1****1. Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Respondents**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
<b>Gender</b>	-	-
Male		89
63.1		
Female		52
36.9		
Total:		141
100%		
<b>Age</b>	-	-
Under 25 Years		33
23.4		
Under 40 Years		87
61.7		
Above 40 Years		21
14.9		
Total:		141
100%		

**Employment Status--**

Employed	65
46.1	
Unemployed	76
53.9	
Total:	141
100%	

Table 1 presents the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents to the questionnaire, with a total of 89 male respondents (63.1%) and 52 female respondents (36.1%). Regarding age classification, the data show that 33 respondents, equivalent to 23.4%, are under 25 years of age, 87 respondents, or 61.7%, are under 40 years of age, and 21 respondents, equivalent to 14.9%, are above 40 Years of age. Employment status shows that 65 respondents, 46.1%, are employed, while 76, 53.9%, are unemployed.

**Table 2**

2. Are you aware of the #endbadgovernance protest?

Yes	138	97.9
No	3	2.1
Total:	141	100%

The data in Table 2 shows that while 138 respondents, or 97.9%, agree that they are aware of the #endbadgovernance protest, 3 respondents, or 2.1%, are unaware.

**Table 3**

3. What were the issues that led to the #endbadgovernance protests?

Corruption and economic hardship in the country:

141 100

Because Ahmed Tinubu won the 2023 presidential election:

00 00

No idea: 00 00

Total: 141  
100%

The data in Table 3 shows that 141 respondents, equivalent to 100%, agree that corruption and economic hardship in the country are responsible for the #endbadgovernance protest, with no respondents making claims to the contrary.

**Table 4**

4. What, in your opinion, was the role of social media in the organization and the execution of the #endbadgovernance protest?

Positive	132	93.6
Negative	8	5.7
None of the Above	1	0.7
Total:		141
100%		

132 respondents, or 93.6%, view the #endbadgovernance as positive, while 8 respondents, 5.7%, view the protests as unfavorable. However, 1 person, equivalent to 0.7%, sees the protest as neither positive nor negative.

**Table 5**

5. Which social media platform was most impactful in the #endbadgovernance protest?

Tik-Tok	17	12.1
Whatsapp	11	7.8
X (Twitter)	44	31.2
All of the above	69	48.9
Total:		141
100%		

The data in Table 5 shows that 12.1%, equivalent to 17 respondents, believe that TikTok plays the most impactful role in the #endbadgovernance protest, while 7.8%, equivalent to 11 respondents, consider WhatsApp to be the most impactful. Another 44 respondents, equivalent to 31.2%, see Twitter now X as the most impactful. 69 respondents, equivalent to 48.9%, believe that the three platforms, TikTok, WhatsApp, and X (Twitter,) played the most impactful role.

**Table 6**

6. Did the #endbadgovernance protest have any impact?		
Yes	60	42.6
No	81	57.4
Total:		141
100%		

While 60 respondents, equivalent to 42.6% in Table 6, believe that the #endbadgovernance protests have an impact, 81 respondents, equivalent to 57.4%, view them differently.

**Table 7**

7. With reference to 4 above, in what ways can the impact of the #endbadgovernance protest be seen?		
It has seen the government trying to meet some of the demands of the #endbadgovernance protests.	89	63.1
It has sent shock and fear down the corridors of government:		
	39	27.7
None	13	9.2
Total:		141
100%		

The data in Table 7 shows that 89 respondents, equivalent to 63.1%, believe the impact of the #endbadgovernance protest can be seen in the government's efforts to meet some of the protesters' demands. 39 respondents, equivalent to 27.7%, see the impact in the way it has sent shock and fear through the government's corridors. A total of 13 respondents, equivalent to 9.2%, believe that the impact of the protests is not visible in any way.

**Table 8**

8. Did the #endbadgovernance protest help to redefine youth participation in politics and governance in Nigeria?

Yes	63	44.7
No	75	53.2

No Idea	3	2.1
Total:		141
100%		

As to whether the protest has redefined youth's participation in politics and governance in Nigeria, Table 8 shows that 63 respondents, equivalent to 44.7%, answered in the affirmative. In comparison, 75 respondents, equivalent to 53.1%, responded 'no'. Another 2.1%, equivalent to 3 respondents, said they had no idea.

**Table 9**

9. In your opinion, are social movements like #endbadgovernance essential for enhancing political and economic inclusion among marginalized groups in Nigeria?

Yes	48	34.0
No	92	65.2
No Idea	1	0.7
Total:		141
100%		

Whether social movements, such as #endbadgovernance protests, can enhance the political and economic inclusion of marginalized groups in Nigeria, the data from Table 9 indicates that 48 respondents, equivalent to 34.0%, viewed this in a positive light. In comparison, 92 respondents, equivalent to 65.2%, responded 'no'. Additionally, 1 respondent, equivalent to 0.7%, stated that they have no idea.

**Table 10**

10. Would you consider social movements and protests, such as #endbadgovernance, as important for promoting political and social change in Nigeria?

Yes	72	51.1
No	69	48.9
Total:		141
100%		

When asked whether social movements and protests, such as #endbadgovernance, can be a relevant tool for promoting political and social change in Nigeria, 72 respondents, or 51.1%, answered in the affirmative, while 48% or 69 respondents, thought otherwise.

## **Discussions**

### **Understand the socio-economic grievances leading to the #endbadgovernance protest.**

Reviews from literature, such as Obasi, Ben, and Chayes's, have reinforced the role of socio-economic factors in shaping the #endbadgovernance protest. For instance, Obasi (nd) sees socio-economic issues as the driver of movements elsewhere and in mobilizing the #endbadgovernance protest in Nigeria. Similarly, Chayes et al. (2015) opined that socio-economic conditions were the hallmark of public outcry and other social movements, such as the #endbadgovernance protest.

Similarly, while Garba has reinforced socio-economic deprivation as responsible for cultivating the public discontent that culminated in the #endbadgovernance movement, Ben (nd) has argued that Nigeria's social inequality and economic policies have created the discontent and social unrest that characterized the country's social movements, including the #endbadgovernance movement. The above arguments in the literature align with 100% of the views expressed by the respondents who have identified corruption and economic hardship as the primary drivers of the #endbadgovernance protest. The term "corruption" was deliberately used, as it connotes significant implications and profoundly impacted the social conditions that gave rise to the protests. In other words, corruption-related situations, such as bad governance, economic hardship, and rising youth unemployment, were partly responsible for the #endbadgovernance protests.

### **Why and how it was easy for the youth to mobilize and galvanize the movement leading to #endbadgovernance protests**

The conversations on why it was easy to mobilize and galvanize the #endbadgovernance protests need to be located in two fundamental perspectives. Firstly, in the context of why the demonstrations were easily mobilized and galvanized. Secondly, in the context of how the protests were sustained. While 93.6% of respondents view social media as having played a positive role in the movement, 48.9% consider it the most important factor in the mobilization and sustainability of the #endbadgovernance protests.

The literature reviewed aligns with the respondent's perspectives, providing a theoretical framework for understanding the why and how of its mobilization and sustainability. For example, Howard & Hussain (2013) have attested to the critical role of all the social media platforms, especially in sharing information that gained traction and

support for the protest. Other studies by Lee & Chan (2018), Bonilla & Rosa (2015), and Mendes et al. (2028) think no less, as they all attest to the role of social media in providing opportunities that allowed not only for deliberation of collective ideas and coordination but in creating further awareness among the protesters.

In this context, it is noteworthy that the #endbadgovernance protests were partly sustained by the sheer presence of social media and its ability to create a hashtag that symbolized resistance and became a clarion call among the protesters.

### **Effects of #endbadgovernace protest on the political future of the youth and Nigeria in general**

The #endbadgovernance protest has elicited numerous comments on its impact, particularly on the political future of young people and Nigeria as a whole. Three key data points have helped contextualize the impact of the protests on the political future of young people in Nigeria. For instance, while 65.2% believe the protests would not enhance political and economic inclusion for the marginalized groups in Nigeria, which suggests skepticism and the long-term belief that the government will resist systemic change, 51.1% believes that the protests were important in promoting political and social change and viewed the protests as a catalyst for broader reform even in the face of the skepticism. Another subset of data, 63.1%, believes that the effect of the protests can be seen in how the government has implemented measures to address the protesters' demands, which indicates not only the government's response but also a partial yielding to some of the protesters' demands. The last two data points support the effects of the #endbadgovernance protests, which align with two perspectives reviewed in the literature.

First, it aligns with Tarrow's (1998) argument, which views it as inherent in every broader social mobilization and protest; if sustained, it has the potential to bring about political and sustainable change. This is even more so if the protester's influence has created enough pressure and contention in the political system. Similarly, Tilly & Tarrow viewed protest movements and mobilizations positively, especially in terms of their influence on political decisions, alteration of discourses, and the course of history. Therefore, social movements and protests have enormous potential to foster significant political change that can bring about social transformation.

While it is safe to note that the government's response to the #endbadgovernance protests appeared to have further affected the direction of youth's political engagement and participation in Nigeria, whether the policies introduced by the government in the aftermath of the protests can be sustained, remains uncertain and is dependent on the commitment of the country's leadership, continued civic participation, and policy implementation.

### **Findings**

- The #endbadgovernance protests were fueled by the country's socio-economic conditions.
- Social media has played a pivotal role in galvanizing the processes leading to the #endbadgovernance protests.
- #endbadgovernance protests have impacted youth political engagement and influenced the introduction of government policies promoting youth inclusion. However, it remains to be seen whether the policies introduced can be sustained.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Thus far, the paper has explored the trajectories of protest movements and social change, digital activism and global social change, and the socio-economic conditions that have shaped protest movements, particularly the #endbadgovernance protests that enveloped Nigeria in August 2024. Findings from the study have shown that the #endbadgovernance protests across the country were a product of the country's dire socio-economic condition, occasioned by the government's new economic policies. However, it is pertinent to note that the latter only served as the last straw, providing the country's youth with a window of opportunity to vent their frustration at bad governance and growing youth unemployment. While the protests may have set the stage for youth political engagement by prompting new government policies to promote youth inclusion in governance, social media has played a significant role in driving and ensuring the effective mobilization of the protests. However, whether the gains from the protests will be sustained remains to be seen. Consequently, the article has the following practical recommendations, which include a need to:

- i. Promote the further integration of civic education in the country's national curriculum at all levels to foster a culture of democracy and instill democratic values among the youth.
- ii. Promote a culture of inclusion and participation among youth and other marginalized groups in the country's political governance. This can be achieved by implementing institutional reforms that lower the age for political candidacy, encouraging political parties to establish youth wings vested with real decision-making power, and implementing a youth quota system in governance.
- iii. Ensure that the gains arising in the aftermath of the #endbadgovernance protest are widened and sustained through legal and policy reforms, and ensure police accountability to laws. This is in addition to promoting further civic engagements that will keep the youth informed of their rights.

- iv. Embrace digital technology literacy to promote a culture of awareness and as a platform for promoting political participation and change in the country.
- v. Provide good governance and ensure that government policies, apart from being transparent and accountable, also allow for public participation in the budget process toward meeting the people's needs.

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