**Police Brutality, Human Rights Violations and the 2020 *#EndSARS* Protests in Lagos, Nigeria.**

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**Abstract**

This study examines the factors responsible for the outbreak of the *#EndSARS* protest in Lagos, Nigeria. Relying on primary sources of data (questionnaires and Focus Group Discussions), correlation, regression and content analysis were employed to establish (i) relationship between human rights violations and protest outbreak; (ii) relationship between repressive response of government to protest and protest transformation from peaceful to violent one as well as manifestation of criminality. The results show that there exist a strong positive relationship between human rights violations and protest outbreak and between repressive response of state’s security agencies and protest transformation.

**Introduction**

The 21ts century has witnessed a large number of protests across the world. Some of these protests were peaceful while some were violent. While some of these protests have led to a peaceful change of governments, others have resulted in violent change of governments in some places. Classical examples of the foregoing remain the “Colour Revolutions” that took place in three post-Soviet autocratic states, that is, the Georgian Rose Revolution (2003), the Ukrainian Orange Revolution (2004) and the Kyrgyzstani Tulip Revolution of 2005 (1). Violent protests have over the years also led to the overthrow of long-ruling and authoritarian regimes. For example, the Arab Spring revolution that began in 2010 in Tunisia with the Tunisian Revolution which is also called the Jasmine Revolution spread to other Arab countries leading to the overthrow and destabilization of many authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) such as Tunisia, Egypt, Syria, Libya, Jordan, Bahrain, Algeria, Morocco, Yemen etc. (2). While some of the long-ruling leaders were simply dethroned, others were killed while some survived.

There are enabling social and political factors that were responsible for the eruption of these protests across geographical divides. These factors are similar, though different in nature and dimension. For both violent and peaceful protests to occur, factors such as widened social differences, high level of corruption, state capture by the privileged rulers, income/economic inequalities, the deteriorating standard of living induced by faulty economic policies, the rising cost of food, youth bulge and rising unemployment, manipulation/consolidation of political power by the few, oppression of political opponents, violation of fundamental human rights by state security agencies (1)(3)(4) (5)

In sub-Saharan Africa, the situation is not different. In Nigeria for example, hopes and expectations of rapid political and economic development immediately after independence were dashed by the maladministration of successive governments. Nigerian citizens are daily confronted with various economic, social and political problems (security challenges, rising unemployment, poverty, economic inequalities, lack of basic social infrastructure, harassment and violations of human rights by state security agencies etc.) with successive governments showing incompetence to provide lasting solutions to these endemic problems. The need to, therefore, nudge the government to action was one of the reasons for the protest. As rightly argued by Smith and Wiest (6) “… History has shown that major social change only comes when those excluded from power and privilege rise to challenge the existing social order. Moreover, it is in times of crisis that elites are most vulnerable to pressures from social movements and more radical change becomes possible”.

Nigerians have embarked on various protests in past to press for demands that were considered germane to the survival of the people as well as for the continued existence and survival of the Nigerian state.

**Social media and protests in Nigeria**

The use of social media during conflict and conflict situations has continued to increase. Social media have been used for different purposes during conflicts. For example, social media have been deployed as a tool for both recruitment and mobilizing members of terrorist organizations (7). Social media have also been shown to be capable of greatly influencing the views and opinions of social media users on issues

Several factors can enhance the dimensions of protest and contribute to their characterization as events. One of such is the use of social media. Starting from the first incident in Greece in 2008, the Moldova Twitter revolution of 2009 to the Iranian protest also of 2009, social media has been used as an instrument of demonstration orchestration and mobilization of support (8). Social media played a significant role in the mobilization of support for the Arab Spring, Occupy Movement and the Black Lives Matter movement (9) (10) (11)

Nigeria has also witnessed the deployment of social media in the prosecution of social protests to make the government accede to certain demands as declared by the conveners of such protests. Many impactful social movement protests started with the use of social media. Some of these protests against the Nigerian state, policies, programmes, actions or inactions and leadership include *#OccupyNigeria* which started as a response to the government removal of subsidy on fuel and subsequent increase of the price of petroleum product in January 2012; *#BringBackOurGirls* protest was one of the most popular protests in Nigeria. It was in response to the April 2014 abduction of about 276 schoolgirls in Chibok, Borno state by the Boko Haram sect. This campaign garnered over 3.3 million tweets from various personalities within and outside Nigeria (12); and the recent *#EndSARS* protest in 2020 also attracted the support of many personalities within and outside Nigeria (13)

**The Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) and rights violations**

SARS is an acronym for the Special Anti-Robbery Squad, a tactical police squad formed in 1992 in response to the increasing rate of crime in Lagos State. As a unit of the Nigerian Police Force, it was place under the supervision of the Special Criminal Investigation Department (SCID) of the Nigerian Police. At the early stage of its operations, the unit recorded huge success within its terms of operations. Due to the absence of supervision and control, however, the unit degenerated into an abysmally notorious unit infamous for violations of the rights of the citizens. The unit employed various unprofessional methods in the arrest, detention, and prosecution of suspects. Some of its personnel have been accused of mounting illegal roadblocks, intimidating citizens, carrying out unwarranted checks and arrests, detaining without trial, killing innocent citizens as well profiling and extorting young Nigerians driving exotic vehicles and using exotic gadgets (14). Amnesty International (15) report various forms of atrocities committed by the officers of the Special anti-robbery squad which include the systemic use of torture and other ill-treatment to carry out investigations, operating illegal torture and detention chambers contrary to what is constitutionally allowed within the operations of the Nigerian Police Force and to an absolute disregard for international human rights laws and standards.

The *#EndSARS* protest started in 2017 when some Nigerians agitated for the disbandment of the unit based on the various crimes against the rights of the Nigerian citizens. This agitation made the then acting President Yemi Osinbajo direct in 2018 immediate reform and reorganization of the unit (13). This was never carried out. The same was the previous promises of reform of the unit in 2014 and 2015.

The 2020 *#EndSARS* protest was the historic decentralized, acephalous two weeks nationwide movement and a global phenomenon that brought the country to a standstill in October 2020. It was ignited by a trending online video about how a police officer murdered a Nigerian in front of a hotel in Ughelli, Delta state. The police officer had previously seized the vehicle of the victim which was a Lexus SUV (16). Organized over social media, scores of young protesters across the country took to the streets on October 8, 2020, protesting against police brutality and other forms of human rights abuse. Lagos was the hotbed of the protest, but it also spread to many states and the federal capital in Nigeria. Human rights groups, social media influencers, personalities, and students were the major participants. Students constituted a largest part of the protesters as they were forced to stay at home due to prolonged industrial dispute between the federal government and tertiary institutions’ lecturers. The lecturers embarked on strike to press home their demand for better funding of education. Nigeria’s education sector has suffered long years of neglect and under funding from successive administrations in Nigeria (17)

Nevertheless, the protest took a different turn on October 17, 2020, as thugs in Lagos launched an attack on the peaceful protesters. Thus, transforming the protest from a peaceful one to a violent one with attendant criminality. In the same vein, the government invited the military to use force to disperse the protesters that were converged at the Lekki Toll Gate. The shooting and killing of protesters in what is referred to as the Lekki massacre on October 20, 2020, snowballed into something bigger; the looting and destruction of public buildings and private businesses, and the concomitant looting of Covid-19 palliatives kept in some warehouses across Nigeria.

**Objectives of the study**

The objectives of this study are (i) to examine how human rights violations/ police brutality led to the *#EndSARS* protest in Lagos state; (ii) to investigate the factors that led to the transformation of the *#EndSARS* protest to a violent one in Lagos state.

H1: That police brutality/ human rights violations did not lead to the *#EndSARS* protest in Lagos state.

H2: Repressive handling of the *#EndSARS* protest was not responsible for its transformation from peaceful to violent one.

H3: Infiltration and eventual hijack of the *#EndSARS* protest by hoodlums was not responsible for the dimension of the criminality of the protest

**Human rights violation and violent responses: a theoretical explication**

Theories exist that explain the causes of conflicts. Some theories explain the reasons behind violence against the state-civil unrest, protests, terrorism and insurrections (18). This work uses the greed-grievance theory as the framework of analysis. The greed and grievance theory as expounded by Collier and Hoeffler (19), consists of two components that explain the motivations for conflict actors' participation in conflict situations. The greed component of the theory attribute actors' involvement premised on cost-benefit consideration. In other words, what actors stand to gain in the conflict is a major motivation. The grievance component argues that the grievances as a result of certain deprivations motivate actors in rising against the state. For this study, we explain the greed component from the actions of the state's security apparatuses-the police personnel that defends and perpetuate the abusive system, Army-the shot and massacre the defenceless protesters and the thugs- that took advantage of the peaceful protest to engage in the criminal act including looting and destruction of private and public properties. The grievance component is explained from the deprivations and inhuman treatments experienced by the Nigerian citizens as imposed on them by the state security agencies and unfavourable economic policies that subject the citizens to untold hardship thereby violating human rights.

Determining direct causal connection has been difficult to establish, however, the relationship between human rights violations, state repression, economic inequalities and violence against the state -terrorism, civil unrest, protests etc. have been established (18) (20) (21) (22)

**Methodology**

Data for this survey research were collected using two primary sources: questionnaires and Focus Groups Discussions (FGDs). The questionnaire was prepared using Google form and was administered through WhatsApp platforms of social media influencers, human rights activists, residential associations, professional associations and academic groups. The choice of Google form and the targeted respondents was informed by reasons such as accessibility to these groups' platforms and the spread of respondents. The information from the questionnaires was inputted into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and analyzed. The views and opinions of participants at the Focus Group Discussions were analysed using content analysis. The participants’ views were presented using the word cloud. Word clouds are graphical depictions give to a word-based data or word occurrence presentation. It assesses the prominence in the use words used in terms of frequency and regularity. This means that, words that appear more in a document text are assigned greater prominence that those that appear less. In word cloud analysis, the larger the word in the visual presentation, the more commonly used the word is in the source document. Conversely, word cloud tools help to evaluate the incidence or regularity of each word available in any set of textual data so as to give an indication of the importance or otherwise of such word by its occurrence. In qualitative research, word cloud representations assist researchers with a tentative textual visualization that depict the usage and frequency of texts that is “exploratory textual analysis”. This is used commonly for interviews, focus group discussions, texts and other documented sources of data. It can also be used to identify and communicate striking and noticeable themes in a textual data.

 Results and analysis of the questionnaires, the Focus Group Discussions and the test hypotheses will be presented in three sections: section one presents the sociodemographic characteristics of respondents, their views on the two research questions; section two presents the views of FGDs’ participants; while section three presents the test of hypotheses that were raised.

**SECTION ONE: Analysis of questionnaire respondents to the study’s research questions Table:1 Demographic information of Respondents**

|  |
| --- |
| Highest Educational Qualification |
|   | Frequency | Per cent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|  | SSCE | 36 | 11.9 | 11.9 | 11.9 |
| HND/BSC | 175 | 57.9 | 57.9 | 69.9 |
| MSC/PHD | 47 | 15.6 | 15.6 | 85.4 |
| Prefer Not | 44 | 14.6 | 14.6 | 100.0 |
| Total | 302 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |
| Age |
|   | Frequency | Per cent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|  | 18yrs - 25yrs | 130 | 43.0 | 43.0 | 43.0 |
| 26yrs - 35yrs | 76 | 25.2 | 25.2 | 68.2 |
| 36yrs - 45yrs | 24 | 7.9 | 7.9 | 76.2 |
| 46yrs - above | 72 | 23.8 | 23.8 | 100.0 |
| Total | 302 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

**Table 2: Responses to Research Question 1**

|  |
| --- |
| Which of these factors are mostly responsible for the *#EndSARS* protest? |
|   | Frequency | Per cent | Valid Percent | Cum. Per cent |
|  | Police brutality | 122 | 40.4 | 40.4 | 40.4 |
| Harassment of citizens by the Police | 115 | 38.1 | 38.1 | 78.5 |
| Extortion by the police | 17 | 5.6 | 5.6 | 84.1 |
| Extra-judicial killings of the youth | 48 | 15.9 | 15.9 | 100.0 |
| Total | 302 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

**Table 2**  shows that the major factor that accounted for the *#EndSARS* protest was the brutality of the police unit. Police brutality is 40.4%, harassment of citizens by the Nigerian Police is at 38.1%, extortion by the police is at 5.6%, and extrajudicial killings of the youth is at 15.9%. Furthermore, a significant sector of the respondents believes that harassment of citizens by the police accounted for the *#EndSARS* protest.

**Table 3: Responses to Research Question 2**

|  |
| --- |
| What factors transformed the peaceful protest to become a violent one? |
|   | Frequency | Per cent | Valid Percent | Cum. Per cent |
|  | The use of the military by the government | 93 | 30.8 | 30.8 | 30.8 |
| The protest was hijacked by hoodlums | 107 | 35.4 | 35.4 | 66.2 |
| The killing of peaceful protesters | 93 | 30.8 | 30.8 | 97.0 |
| The attempt to replace the SARS team with the SWAT team | 9 | 3.0 | 3.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 302 | 100.0 | 100.0 |  |

**Table 3** above shows that 30.8% of respondents believed that the transformation of the protest from peaceful to violent one began as a result of the killing of peaceful protesters and the use of the military by the government while 35.4% of respondents believed that the protest was hijacked by hoodlums, hence the violence. It can therefore be concluded that although the protest may have been hijacked by hoodlums, however, the open fire that ensued on peaceful protest sparked outrage to the general public.

**SECTION TWO: Analysis of Focus Group Discussions**

*Demographic information of FGDs Participants*

The Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) through directed and interactive discussions were conducted with five (5) groups of participants who were actively involved with the *#EndSARS* protest in five (5) areas in Lagos: Murtala Mohammed Airport toll gate, Alausa-Ikeja, Ikorodu, Yaba and Lekki-Epe expressway toll gate. Each group was selected from each of these areas. Further breakdown of the FGDs and the participants are as below;

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| s/n | location | fgd NAMES | No of participants | ratio of male/ female |
| 1. | Lekki-Epe Expressway tollgate | FGD-Lekki | 9 | 6/3 |
| 2. | Murtala Mohammed Airport tollgate | FGD-Airport | 4 | 2/2 |
| 3. | Ikorodu | FGD-Ikorodu | 5 | 4/1 |
| 4. | Yaba | FGD-Yaba | 4 | 3/1 |
| 5. | Alausa-Ikeja | FGD-Ikeja | 7 | 5/2 |

As can be seen from the Table 4 above, the size of the participants ranged from 4 to 9 with more male participants than females. The age ranged of the participants also ranged from 18 to 35 with a median of 22 years of age.

**Sampling and Recruitment of Participants:**

With an understanding that getting focus group discussion participants for the study might be somewhat difficult given the circumstances of the eventual end of the *#EndSARS* protest and the reaction of the Nigerian Security apparatus, multiple ‘*Purposive’* recruitment methods were employed to locate willing participants from the five (5) identified protest hotbeds.

Recruitment methods included advertising the study and soliciting participants through networks of online communities on Twitter on the promise of absolute anonymity, contacting some human rights groups who were active during the protests and reaching out to contacts who had physical contacts with persons who participated in the protests on the ground in each of those locations aforementioned.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| s/n | fgd NAMES | No of partICIPANTS | Breakdown of partICIPANTS |
| 1. | FGD-Lekki | 9 | * Human rights activists – 2
* Physical Protesters on ground – 3
* Social Media Influencers – 4
 |
| 2. | FGD-Airport | 4 | * Human rights activists – 2
* Physical Protesters on ground – 1
* Social Media Influencers - 1
 |
| 3. | FGD-Ikorodu | 5 | * Human rights activists – 2
* Physical Protesters on ground – 1
* Social Media Influencers - 2
 |
| 4. | FGD-Yaba | 4 | * Human rights activists – 1
* Physical Protesters on ground – 1
* Social Media Influencers - 2
 |
| 5. | FGD-Ikeja | 7 | * Human rights activists – 2
* Physical Protesters on ground – 2
* Social Media Influencers - 3
 |

**Table 5: FGDs Participants**

**The procedure of the Discussions:**

The interviews at the Focus Group Discussions were conducted using an open, semi-structured focus group method and the responses and views of the study participants were analysed using qualitative content analysis. Based on the content of the participant responses in the transcript, the researcher identified a list of overarching themes.

The entire discussions which were via Zoom video meetings were recorded and saved on a dedicated google drive of the researcher and thereafter transcribed

**Analysis of participants’ views on research questions and the emerging themes**

The FGDs sought to address the 2 major research objectives of this study as stated below;

RO 1: to examine how human rights violations/ police brutality led to the *#EndSARS* protest in Lagos state;

RO 2: to investigate the factors that led to the transformation of the *#EndSARS* protest to a violent one in Lagos state.

The following are the themes derived from the responses of the participants

**Table 6: Themes from Participants’ Responses**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| S/N | Research objectives | Over-Arching Themes  |
| 1. | How human rights violations/ police brutality led to the *#EndSARS* protest in Lagos state; | * Right to protests in a Democracy
 |
| * Respect for Human Rights by Security Agencies
 |
| * Impunity and perception of continued injustice
 |
| 2. | The factors that led to the transformation of the *#EndSARS* protest to a violent one in Lagos state | * Infiltration by hoodlums
* Repressive handling by the government
* Shooting of Protesters
* Arrests of peaceful protesters
* Freezing of accounts of known protesters
 |

***Research Objective 1***: To examine how human rights violations/ police brutality led to the *#EndSARS* protest in Lagos state;

Participants in the five (5) FGD groups, when posed with the question of how human rights violations and police brutality led to the *#EndSARS* protest in Lagos state; expressed several views and responses as represented in the Word-cloud below.

Figure 1: Word-cloud representation of response from participants of the five (5) focus group discussions on how human rights violations/ police brutality led to the *#EndSARS* protest in Lagos state



From this Word-cloud presentation above in Figure 1, words such as “*impunity*”, “*arbitrary killings*”, “*recklessness*”, “*forced evictions”, “extortions”* etc came out prominent in the focus group discussions. The Word-cloud gave greater prominence to these words and they appear bolder than other less prominently used words.

Participants in FGD-Lekki and FGD-Yaba specifically attributed the widespread impunity of the Nigerian Police as a major causative factor leading to the *#EndSARS* protest in Lagos state.

***Research Objective 2***: To investigate the factors that led to the transformation of the *#EndSARS* protest to a violent one in Lagos state

During most of the focus group discussions, several factors were adduced as reasons that led to the transformation of the protest from a peaceful to a violent one. These views are as presented in the world-cloud analysis below;

Figure 1: *Word-cloud representation of response from participants of the five (5) focus group discussions on the factors that led to the transformation of the #EndSARS protest to a violent one in Lagos state*



From this Word-cloud presentation above in Figure 2, words such as “*shooting of peaceful protesters*”, “*arrest of protesters*”, “*repression*”, “*infiltration of the protest by hoodlums*”, “*propaganda*” etc came out prominent in the focus group discussions. The Word-cloud gave greater prominence to these words and they appear bolder than other less prominently used words.

**Section Three: Test of Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis One**

H0: Human rights violations didn’t trigger the *#EndSARS* protest

H1: Human rights violations trigger the *#EndSARS* protest

In Table 7, the correlation result was presented. This shows the nature of the relationship that exists between the independent variable (human rights violations) and the dependent variable (*#EndSARS* protest). It was observed from the table that the variables items have significant correlations with each other with the use of simple correlation analysis displayed above. It was revealed that human rights violations have a significant relationship with *#EndSARS* protest with the correlation coefficient that shows 0.470 at 0.000 significant level. Thus, reflecting the existence of a significant and strong positive relationship between human rights violations and the *#EndSARS* protest.

**Table 7: Correlation Analysis**

|  |
| --- |
| Correlations |
|   | Protest | Human right |
| Spearman's rho | Protest | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .470\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) |   | 0.000 |
| N | 302 | 302 |
| Human right | Correlation Coefficient | .470\*\* | 1.000 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 |   |
| N | 302 | 302 |
| \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). |

In Table 8, the regression analysis shows how much of the variance of the dependent variable (*#EndSARS* protest) is explained by the independent variable (human rights violations). The R-value (correlation coefficient) shows the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The R-value is 0.498. This means that there is a moderate positive relationship between the *#EndSARS* protest and human rights violations. In this case, the R square shows a coefficient determination of about 0.248 if expressed by a percentage will be 24.8%. This infers that a 24.8% variation of *#EndSARS* protest is predicted by the measures of human rights violations. The findings are further supported by Analysis of Variance ANOVA (F test) results that the model or none of the parameters was equal to Zero.

**Table 8: Regression Analysis**

|  |
| --- |
| Model Summary |
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
| 1 | .498a | 0.248 | 0.245 | 0.39288 |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), Human right |

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) is presented in Table 2. The that the p-value (0.00) is significant at 5% probability value. The F value is 98.745 at .000 significance level. The implication is that human rights violations have a significant effect on the *#EndSARS* protest.

|  |
| --- |
| ANOVA |
| Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
| 1 | Regression | 15.242 | 1 | 15.242 | 98.745 | .000b |
| Residual | 46.306 | 300 | 0.154 |   |   |
| Total | 61.548 | 301 |   |   |   |
| a. Dependent Variable: Protest |
| b. Predictors: (Constant), Human right |

**Decision:**

Based on the result of the regression analysis, this study rejected the null hypothesis (H0), while the alternate hypothesis (H1) was accepted. This implies that Human rights violations trigger the *#EndSARS* protest.

**Hypothesis Two**

H0: Repressive handling of the *#EndSARS* protest was not responsible for its transformation from peaceful to violent one.

H1: Repressive handling of the *#EndSARS* protest was responsible for its transformation from peaceful to violent one.

In Table 9, the coefficient result shows that the statistically significant contribution reflected in the model summary expressing the extent to which variables included in the model contributed to the prediction of the dependent variable via the viewing of the sig column in the table and checking for the multicollinearity in the model. From the presented table, it could be inferred that repressive handling of the *#EndSARS* protest does significantly account for the statistical significance of the model. The level of significance was based on a level of 0.05 for a two-sided test, with the absolute value of the test statistics (T) greater than or equal to the critical value of 1.96. The model revealed that the repressive handling of the *#EndSARS* protest is statistically significant in transforming the protest from peaceful to a violent one recording the highest beta value of (*beta* = .683 with t-value= 16.212) higher than 1.96, sig. .000 and .000 p < .05). This means that repressive handling of the *#EndSARS* protest is statistically significant in transforming the protest from a peaceful to a violent protest. Also, the value of the unstandardized coefficients shows that a one-unit increase in the independent variable (repressive handling of the *#EndSARS* protest) will lead to a 20.5% increase in the dependent variable (transforming the protest from peaceful to a violent one protest).

**Decision:** The significance level below0.05 implies statistical confidence of above 95%. Thus the null hypothesis (H0) was rejected, while the alternate hypothesis (H1) was accepted. This implies that the repressive handling of the *#EndSARS* protest is statistically significant in transforming the protest from a peaceful to a violent protest.

**Table 9: Test of hypothesis**

|  |
| --- |
| Coefficientsa |
| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
| B | Std. Error | Beta |  |  |
| 1 | (Constant) | 0.811 | 0.098 |   | 8.284 | 0.000 |
| Government strategies | 0.205 | 0.013 | 0.683 | 16.212 | 0.000 |
| a. Dependent Variable: Criminality |

**Hypothesis Three**

H0: Infiltration and eventual hijack of the *#EndSARS* protest by hoodlums was not responsible for the dimension of the criminality of the protest

H1: Infiltration and eventual hijack of the *#EndSARS* by hoodlums was responsible for the dimension of the criminality of the protest

In Table 10, the coefficient result depicts that the statistically significant contribution reflected in the model summary expressing the extent to which variables included in the model contributed to the prediction of the dependent variable via the viewing of the sig column in the table and checking for the multicollinearity in the model. From the table, it could be inferred that infiltration and eventual hijack of the *#EndSARS* by hoodlums do significantly account for the statistical significance of the model. The level of significance was based on a level of 0.05 for a two-sided test, with the absolute value of the test statistics (T) greater than or equal to the critical value of 1.96. The model revealed that the infiltration and eventual hijack of the *#EndSARS* by hoodlums are statistically significant in accounting for the dimension of the criminality of the protest recording the highest beta value of (*beta* = .588 with t-value= 12.589) higher than 1.96, sig. .000 and .000 p < .05). This means that the infiltration and eventual hijack of the *#EndSARS* by hoodlums are statistically significant in accounting for the dimension of the criminality of the protest. Also, the value of the unstandardized coefficients shows that a one-unit increase in the independent variable (infiltration and eventual hijack of the *#EndSARS)* will lead to a 61.9% increase in the dependent variable (the dimension of the criminality of the protest).

**Decision:** The significance level below0.05 implies statistical confidence of above 95%. Thus the null hypothesis (H0) was rejected, while the alternate hypothesis (H1) was accepted. This implies that the infiltration and eventual hijack of the *#EndSARS* by hoodlums are statistically significant in accounting for the dimension of the criminality of the protest.

**Table 10: Test of hypothesis**

|  |
| --- |
| Coefficientsa |
| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
| B | Std. Error | Beta |
| 1 | (Constant) | 4.165 | 0.282 |   | 14.774 | 0.000 |
| Criminal infiltration | 0.619 | 0.049 | 0.588 | 12.589 | 0.000 |
| a. Dependent Variable: Protest transformation |

**Concluding discussion**

This study, though is country and event-specific, the result supports the research outcome of previous studies on the relationship between violations of human rights and internal security challenges (Cederman, Gleditsch and Buhaug, 2013; Cingranelli, Mark, Gibney, Haschke, Wood, and Arnon. 2019). From the analysis and the findings from the focus group discussions, we found that successive violations and deprivations of social, economic and political rights engender hatred and resentment towards the state. When the social rights of citizens are violated in form of lack of quality and affordable education, lack of equal employment opportunity, an unemployed youth bulge, mobilization for protests and demonstrations become easy. In the case of Nigeria, mobilization was easy because most tertiary students were at home as a result of the prolonged industrial dispute between the tertiary lecturers of government-owned institutions and the federal government. The protest became an avenue to vent their frustration at the government. The hoodlums also seized the opportunity provided by the protest to eke out a living by looting private-owned property. Politicians hired these hoodlums during elections as political thugs and dump them as soon as victory is achieved. We also found that high handedness on the part of the security agencies aggravated the attacks against government properties and the spread of the protest to other states in Nigeria.

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