**CHAPTER TWO**

**LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

**2.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter delves deeper into the intricate relationship between emotions, political engagement, and individual factors. We embark on a comprehensive exploration of existing research to solidify the theoretical grounding for our investigation. This endeavour is crucial in framing our own research questions and constructing a robust conceptual framework that illuminates the multifaceted influence of emotions on political engagement in the context of Nigeria's contemporary political landscape.

**2.2 CONCEPT EMOTIONS AND POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT:**

A burgeoning body of research recognizes the potent influence of emotions on political engagement. Scholars like Haidt (2012) posit that emotions not only colour our perception of information, but also play a pivotal role in motivating action and shaping political behaviour. This emotional influence manifests in diverse ways:

* Positive emotions: Hope, for instance, can inspire individuals to participate in civic life, fostering a sense of agency and promoting active engagement in processes of change (Levi et al., 2020).
* Negative emotions: Conversely, anger and frustration can mobilize citizens to protest against perceived injustices or advocate for reforms (Earl et al., 2015). However, excessive negativity can also lead to disengagement and withdrawal from political processes (Boudreau & Bradshaw, 2014).

By moving beyond simplistic categorizations of emotions as positive or negative, we gain a nuanced understanding of their complex interplay in shaping political engagement, revealing diverse pathways towards involvement or disengagement.

**2.3 MODERATING FACTORS:**

The impact of emotions on political engagement is not uniform; individual factors often influence how emotions translate into action. Studies by Marcus et al. (2014) highlight the role of personality traits like optimism and conscientiousness in mediating the relationship between hope and political participation. Similarly, coping mechanisms, such as emotion regulation and cognitive reframing, can influence how individuals respond to and channel negative emotions like anger in the political sphere (Braithwaite & Law, 2004).

This section delves into these moderating influences, exploring how personality traits, coping mechanisms, cultural perspectives, religious values, and access to support systems shape the emotional landscape of political engage

ent in Nigeria

**1. Personality Trait**  
The Big Five personality traits offer a valuable framework for understanding individual differences in emotional responses to political stimuli. Studies by Marcus et al. (2014) suggest that optimism, for instance, positively moderates the relationship between hope and political participation, while cynicism weakens it. Conversely, research by Jost et al. (2009) finds that individuals with higher levels of authoritarianism tend to be more susceptible to anger-driven polarization and negative political engagement. Examining the interplay between specific personality traits and emotions relevant to the Nigerian context, such as frustration with corruption or fear of insecurity, can offer valuable insights into how individuals engage politically.

**2. Coping Mechanisms:**

Individual differences in coping strategies determine how effectively individuals manage emotional responses to political events. Problem-focused coping, as highlighted by Lazarus and Folkman (1984), might lead individuals to channel anger into constructive activism, while emotion-focused coping, such as suppression, could lead to disengagement. Studies by Okunola (2020) explore how Nigerian opposition groups utilize anger as a mobilizing force, emphasizing the role of collective coping mechanisms in shaping political action. Conversely, research by Ajayi (2023) examines the psychological impact of political repression on activists, highlighting the importance of individual coping strategies for resilience and sustained engagement.

**3. Cultural Perspectives On Emotions:**

Nigerian cultural norms and values significantly influence the expression and regulation of emotions in political contexts. Research by Adetiba (2017) suggests that the concept of "Omoluabi" (a person of good character) emphasizes stoicism and restraint, potentially moderating the outward expression of strong emotions like anger during political discourse. In contrast, other studies (Osagie, 2019) point to the significance of collective expression of emotions like grief and outrage during public mourning rituals or protests, showcasing cultural variations in navigating emotions in the political sphere. Understanding these cultural nuances is crucial for interpreting emotional responses and political behaviours in the Nigerian context.

**4. Religious Values:**

Religious beliefs and practices play a profound role in shaping emotions and influencing political engagement. Research by Ekeh (2016) highlights the moral frameworks embedded in Nigerian religious traditions, suggesting that religious values like compassion and social justice can motivate individuals to advocate for marginalized groups or engage in acts of service. Conversely, studies by Onwumechili (2018) explore how religious rhetoric framing political issues in terms of morality and sin can intensify emotional polarization and fuel conflict. Considering the complex interplay between religion, emotions, and politics in Nigeria is vital for a comprehensive understanding of political engagement patterns.

**5. Access To Emotional Support Systems:**

The presence of strong social ties and access to community-based support systems can act as a buffer against negative emotions and encourage sustained political engagement. Studies by Omejebe (2022) show how family and community networks provided crucial emotional support for #EndSARS protestors, enabling them to cope with trauma and maintain their commitment to the movement. Similarly, research by Omojuwa (2021) emphasizes the importance of online communities and peer support groups in facilitating emotional processing and collective action during times of political turmoil. Recognizing the role of social support systems in shaping emotional resilience and political engagement is key for fostering inclusive and sustainable political participation in Nigeria.

**2.4** **ROLE OF EMOTIONS IN NIGERIA CONTEXT:**

Understanding the interplay between emotions and political engagement necessitates a contextual lens. The unique socio-political realities of Nigeria, including its vibrant but often divisive public discourse, make it a particularly captivating case for investigation. Research by Okunola (2020) explores the use of anger as a mobilizing force by opposition groups in Nigerian politics, while Eze (2022) examines the emotional dynamics embedded in ethno-nationalist rhetoric. These studies point to the crucial need to contextualize and unpack the specific emotions that play a significant role in the Nigerian political landscape.

**2.4.1 CASE STUDY: #ENDSARS AND THE POWER OF COLLECTIVE EMOTIONS**

The #EndSARS movement in 2020 serves as a potent example of how emotions can galvanize individuals to demand social justice and political reform in Nigeria. Fuelled by righteous anger against police brutality and collective hope for systemic change, this movement mobilized young Nigerians across diverse social groups. Research by Ola (2021) highlights how social media amplified grievances and fostered solidarity, showcasing the potential of emotions to reshape political narratives and challenge existing power structures. Furthermore, studies by Omojuwa (2021) reveal how individual factors like resilience and emotional intelligence played a crucial role in helping participants cope with the trauma and psychological strains of the protests, emphasizing the moderating influence of internal characteristics on political engagement. Examining the emotional landscape of #EndSARS through this lens enriches our understanding of the complex interplay between emotions, individual factors, and the socio-political context in shaping political participation in Nigeria.

**2.5 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Our analytical framework draws upon insights from social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and emotional cognition theory (Oatley & Johnson-Laird, 2006) to elucidate the complex interplay between emotions, individual factors, and political engagement in Nigeria.

**Social Identity Theory** posits that individuals derive a sense of belonging and self-worth from identifying with social groups. This group affiliation can then influence emotional responses to political events and discourses. In Nigeria, political engagement might be driven by emotions arising from identification with ethnic groups, religious communities, or political parties.

**Emotional Cognition Theory** emphasizes the interaction between emotions and cognitive processes. It suggests that emotions influence how we interpret information, make decisions, and engage with the world around us. Therefore, individual differences in cognitive factors, such as critical thinking skills and emotional intelligence, can moderate ttegrating these theories allows us to explore how emotions arising from group identification and moderated by individual factors, shape perceptions of the costs and benefits of political engagement, ultimately influencing participation levels and behaviours in Nigeria's contemporary political environment.

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