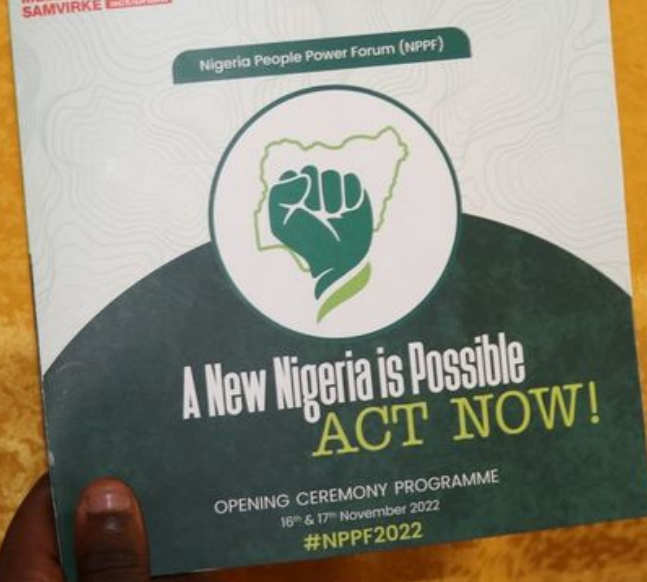# NIGERIA: A COUNTRY ANALYSIS OF HISTORY, POTENTIALS, AND RESTRAINTS FOR SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

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FOR:

ACTIONAID NIGERIA

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1. Introduction

This country analysis of social movements context in Nigeria was commissioned by ActionAid Nigeria, as part of her efforts to deepen her understanding of Social Movements, identify potential social movements to engage with, and outline a strategy for such engagement with social movements, and evolve a process of engagement that while enhancing the effectiveness of social movements, does not undermine and or erode the autonomy of the movement and the legitimacy of the movement with its constituency.

ActionAid Nigeria is a member of ActionAid federation, a global alliance of organisations focusing on rights, poverty eradication and social transformation in 45 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas. ActionAid works with People living in Poverty, the poor and excluded, promoting values and commitment in civil society, institutions, and Government with the aim of achieving structural changes to eradicate injustice and poverty in the world.

The SPAII project is a four-year (2022 - 2025) project funded by Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA). The project aims to improve the realisation of fundamental human and democratic rights and improved, sustainable livelihoods, resilience and protection for young people, especially young women living in marginalisation, including in disaster and protracted crises contexts.

Similarly, AAN is also part of the MOVE, ActionAid's Global Centre for Social Movements that works to holistically support youth activism and social movements and civil society organisations that want to become more movement minded. The centre constitutes of regional partners and works within three key elements (1) Capacity Building, (2) Direct support for action, organising and campaigning and (3) Research, Analysis and Communication.

2. Objectives Of The Study

The overall purpose of this consultancy is to get in-depth context knowledge on social and youth movements in Nigeria and the context that they are fostered and sustained. Specifically, to

- Generate a database of youth and social movements/young women organizations, networks/coalitions/platforms in Nigeria.
- Gather information on programme focus/type of intervention, geographic location and spread; and their strength, weakness, opportunities, and threats (SWOT).
- Improve knowledge on conditions of social movements in Nigeria, the potentials and restraints that exist in the current political, social, and legislative climate for fostering and supporting movements as an NGO

The Task

The tasks set out in order to achieve the objectives include:

- Map, identify and document existing youth, women-led and social movements in project states and nationally.
- Map and document each movements/coalition/network/platform geographic location and spread.
- Identify and examine the focus area(s) and/or interventions each organization or network/movement/coalition/platform focuses on in project states or national
- Assess the spread and scale of their (programme) interventions in project states and national
- To map and identify movements whose political goals and values align with ActionAid's priorities and connect to remarkable struggles
- To assess and identify their experiences, strengths and focusing on their success and achievements, constraints, and limitations

- Examine needs in terms of capacity and kinds of support, identification of factors and interests in mobilization and organizing for peace, climate, and social justice in project states and national
- Analyse, interpret, and categorize the movements in clusters of strength/weakness, focus areas and location/spread
- Based on the categorization, develop movements' engagement strategy for AAN which details recommendations for working with the /movements/coalitions/platforms.

3. Approach And Methodology

This study was undertaken largely through desk review and field visits within the FCT and Lagos State. A framework for mapping social movements and human rights defenders was developed. This framework included itemization of some basic criteria for identifying social movements and human rights defenders; as we as a guidance for retrieving information and data. This guidance consisted of a set of semi structured statements, the responses to which, would provide the information required to map the location, focus area, coverage, scope, etc about the specific social movement. The guidance also includes questions that enable information to be derived to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that face social movements.

To deploy the framework, activists with a history of association with social movements were identified and contacted. These activists were then taken through the framework, and enlisted in undertaking the scoping of social movements and human rights defenders around the specific locations of each of the activists, across all the geopolitical zones of the country.

In addition to this, physical Focused Group discussions [FGDs] was also undertaken with activists and cadres from identified social movements in the Lagos area. A virtual Focus Group Discussion was also undertaken with cadres and activists of some other social movements outside of the Lagos area.

The FGDs[1] concentrated largely on understanding the nature of social movements, identifying criteria for identifying social movements and differentiating them from Non-Governmental Organisations [NGOs], discussing the politics of social movements, identifying Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats facing social movements; as well as identifying challenges faced by social movements, and the types of support that social movements require in order to be more effective. The FGDs also included conversations around defining criteria for delivering support to social movements, as well as criteria and principles that are needed to guide the relationship between social movements and their supporters/providers of support. The FGDs provided practical opportunity to enrich the SWOT analysis of social movements in Nigeria.

It is important to note that given the nature of this study as defined by the objectives, and the approach and methodology, the resultant report may be characterised as a foundational, and therefore preliminary report and analysis of the context of social movements in Nigeria.

This study and report, is also a practical and practice oriented, rather than an academic paper.

[1] The framework, along with the inventories of social movements and human rights defenders are included as appendix in this report.

4.Conceptual Clarifications

One of the key difficulties in undertaking this study is the existing confusion that exist in practice and in the literature about what a social movement is. More often than not social movements are confused and conflated with campaigns, and moments of mass protests; as a result of which every network, alliance and or coalition of Civil Society Organisations, and in particular Non-Governmental Organisations [NGOs], who are engaged in an ongoing campaign are identified as a social movement. Similarly, every outburst of mobilised grievance, manifested in mass protests, and or mass civil disobedience, are also quite often labelled as social movements.

While it is true that social mobilisation and mass organising are at the core of the method and approach of social movements, it is not every instance of mass social organising and mobilisation that is indicative of existence of a social movement.

Given the foregoing, it is important to try to establish what it is that differentiates a social movement from other types of organisations, as well as the difference and relationship between a political moment, and a social movement.

A political moment is a definite or defined period in time, a historical period, short and transient by its very essence. In this sense, the student rebellion of 1986 in the aftermath of the Ahmadu Bello University [ABU] massacre, the Anti-SAP Uprising of May 1989, the January Uprising of 2012 [Occupy Nigeria Protests], and the #EndSARS youth rebellion and uprising of October 2020 are historical, political, and even revolutionary moments.

Central to both the historical moment and the political movement though is the essential necessity for solidarity, for activating, building and enhancing solidarity. Building solidarity however

requires the ability and the capacity to initiate and nurture broad ranging relationships – interpersonal, organisational, and inter-organisational.

A moment may or may not be the outcome of the conscious effort of a movement or of movements, but to have any chance of being sustained till the ends are met, it must spawn a conscious movement; one that will be able to consciously initiate new moments in the course of a more or less uninterrupted prosecution of the struggle and the cause over the long period.

Moments thus can be seen as apogees in the flow and ebb of a struggle for social justice, resistance and or revolutionary struggle. However, for each crest of the wave to be connected to subsequent crests, a movement is essential, otherwise it becomes random and chaotic, without a discernible pathway towards societal transformation.

A social movement is therefore a collective of people working together to demand for and realise a specific change around a specific issue of combination of issues. This issue or combination of issues are essentially around social injustice, social exclusion, and social marginalisation. The quest is thus towards achieving social justice, social inclusion, and social transformation of society.

Implicit in this definition is the fact that a social movement requires an issue or a combination of issues; it requires an organisation to drive it and coordinate its processes and activities, it is organised on the basis of conviction, and with membership being based on voluntarism.

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1. The framework, along with the inventories of social movements and human rights defenders are included as appendix in this report.

5.Social Movement Organising by Historical Epochs2

Historically, every phase of the existence of Nigeria has been characterised by popular mass struggles, many of which were led, and or initiated by various social movements specific to the period and to the issues in contention within that period. A number of such epochal struggles of social movements can be identified as follows;

The Anti-Colonial and Independence Struggle Period

The colonial period in Nigeria witnessed the effusion of mass social organising and mobilisation against colonial domination, exploitation and oppression; and for the redress of the ills of the colonial situation through the attainment of national independence of the country.

The very nature of colonialism, its domination of the lives of subject peoples, its exploitation of their human and natural resources, and its subjugation of the colonized nation, along with the consequent inequalities and ingrained injustices, meant that independence was associated with the social transformation of the colonized society, and the realisation of the end of the struggle for social justice, equality, equity and inclusion.

Various social movements emerged, to prosecute the struggle against specific injustices and for independence.

Workers organised trade unions, which then became the basis of a broad workers and or labour movement, pursuing the objective of securing the rights of workers, expanding the right to work, and the demand for national independence. Similarly, farmers organised farmers associations which then spearheaded farmers movements, such as Agbekoya, among others.

Youths organised the Nigeria Youth Movement [NYM], itself a product of organising among students in the West African Student Union [WASU].

Mass Women Movements were also established famously prosecuting the Aba Mass Women Risings[1] against the exploitative colonial practices, as well as the Abeokuta Women rising[2] against taxation without representation.

The Aba Women's Rising took place in November and December of 1929, and it was led by Market women, food and other vendors who supplied the rising urban populations of Owerri and Calabar in the Owerri and Calabar provinces of Colonial Eastern Nigeria. The direct target of the uprising were the Warrant Chiefs, appointed by the Colonial administration, and who began to impose increasingly oppressive and exploitative measures against residents; measures which had the effect of undermining the livelihoods of people. The immediate trigger was the announcement of increased taxes by the colonial administration. Fearing that this would further compound the burdens placed on women and impact negatively on their livelihoods as traders and vendors, women organised protests against the warrant chiefs and the colonial administration that appointed them.

The Aba Women's rising prompted colonial authorities to drop their plans to impose a tax on the market women, and to curb the power of the warrant chiefs. The women's uprising is seen as the first major challenge to British authority in Nigeria and West Africa during the colonial period.

Similarly, The Abeokuta Women's Revolt was a resistance movement led by the Abeokuta Women's Union (AWU) in the late 1940s against the imposition of unfair taxation by the Nigerian colonial government. The women of Abeokuta believed that, under colonialism, their economic roles were declining, while their taxes were increasing. Additionally, they argued that until they were granted representation in local government, they should not be required to pay taxes separately from men. As a result of their protests, four women received seats on the local council, and the taxation of women was ended. S with the previous Aba Women's Rising of two decades earlier, the Abeokuta Women's revolt, directly led to the Abdication of the Alake, change in the Sole Native Authority [SNA] system, and temporary abolition of the women's flat tax

In the specific case of the Abeokuta Women's Revolt, the leaders of the AWU, in particular, Funmilayo Ransome Kuti were very involved with the anti-colonial struggle, and were leaders in the pro-independence and anti-colonial political formations of the time.

The successful organising by the Women of Abeokuta also led to the efforts to organising and bring together women's unions across the country, and the subsequent establishment of a national federation of the various Women's Unions across colonial Nigeria; a federation that then became an integral component of the anti-colonial and pro-independence Movement.

Nationalist Movements, which were specifically organised to struggle for independence were also organised and led by the emerging elites. These nationalist movements became the first pro-independence political parties, including The National Council Of Nigeria and Cameroons, - later becoming the National Council Of Nigeria Citizens [NCNC];

The Northern People's Congress [NPC]; Northern Elements Progressive Union [NEPU]; and the Action Group [AG], etc. From the ranks of the Nigeria Youth Movement [NYM], and the NCNC, emerged the radical pro-independence, Zikist Movement.

The Anti-Military And Prodemocracy Struggle Period

It can be said that the apogee of the anti-military struggle was in the 90's, and that it eventually became framed and defined by the struggle to revalidate the June 12 1993 election and electoral victory of the so-called progressive faction of the ruling class.

It is interesting to note that radical activists and left progressive forces who had organised and led the social movements against military dictatorship had mobilised against what they termed the fraudulent and insincere transition program of the Military dictatorship of IBB that produced the June 12 outcome, and the consequent annulment by the military of the result of that election. Radical and progressive forces had instead demanded immediate convocation of a Sovereign National Conference [SNC/NC]. The campaign for Democracy [CD] a nationwide coalition of progressive forces had been organised by 1990 to coordinate this struggle.

However, the annulment of the election, and the monumental crisis engendered by the annulment was viewed and taken as an opportunity by the radical and progressive forces to intensify the struggle against military dictatorship and quicken the process of convening the SNC.

Thenceforth there emerged three lines in contention within the mass movement; it revolved essentially around the convening authority of the SNC; Was it to be convened by an abdicating military regime?

Was an abdicating military regime going to revalidate the June 12 election outcome, hand over power to the winner, who was then to establish a national unity government and then convene the SNC? Or was the mass movement to convene through insurrectionary mass struggle, the SNC, which would then establish a transitional government headed by the winner of the June 12 election, thus revalidating that election?

These were the contending lines. And in the final analysis it was the inability to achieve a consensus on which line to take that led to the split of that movement, at the February 1994 convention of the CD in Ibadan, South West Nigeria. The immediate trigger though for the split though was the Abacha coup, which had overthrown the Interim Government which an abdicating IBB regime had put in place in August 1993, when the mass struggle forced the dictator to step aside.

Those who split from the CD in 1994 in Ibadan, after a series of meetings, including the establishment of new political platforms [Democratic Alternative (DA) for instance in 1995], gathered in Lagos in May 1997 to establish a new nationwide coalition, the United Action For Democracy [UAD].

From its foundation, the new coalition launched a campaign of mass civil disobedience, which had by the worker's day events of May 1st 1998 threatened to make the country ungovernable for the despotic regime.

Parallel to the organisation of the Campaign For Democracy [CD], and subsequently the emergence of the United Action For Democracy [UAD], was the Joint Action Congress [JACON], which alongside the CD and UAD, waged the struggle for democracy, and led anti-military and pro-democracy movement of this period.

The women's movement in the shape of Women In Nigeria [WIN]; the Students and youth Movement on the campuses, organised around the Patriotic Youth Movement of Nigeria [PYMN], Labour Militant, and May 31st Movement [M31M]; various left socialist movements, including the broad coalitions – Socialist Revolutionary Vanguard [SRV] and Socialist Congress of Nigeria [SCON]; along with workers organisations and Trade Unions; all played very significant and decisive roles in the organisation of the pro-democracy movements that prosecuted the anti-military and pro-democracy struggles.

Imperialism then intervened. In June it organised the murder of the maximum ruler, and power was transferred to the most senior military officer next in line to him [by this time the hitherto number two person in the regime was already in imprison for a fathom coup plot]; It followed this up in July 1998 with the murder of the imprisoned winner of the June 12 1994 election.

This epochal struggle eventually culminated in the May 1999 return to civil rule, and the inauguration of Nigeria's Fourth Republic.

The struggle by progressive social forces to democratise the polity, and expand the boundaries of political participation and representation continued into the civilian dispensation; and it would reach a new apogee as the January Uprising in 2012.

The Anti-Military And Prodemocracy Struggle Period

The second epochal struggle from that era, was the Resource Control/self-determination struggle of the peoples of the Niger Delta.

Building on, and learning from the experience of the Ogoni struggle and the movement for the survival of Ogoni People [MOSOP] which coordinated that struggle under the leadership of Ken Saro Wiwa; and driven by a sense of urgency, against the background of the internecine inter and intra community conflicts engendered by the state and the International Oil Corporations [IOCs], in the context of the oil exploration and production processes; activists based [not just from the Niger Delta] in the Niger Delta began to hold several multi-layered consultations and meetings to reorganize in the aftermath of the lull forced by the military repression of the Ogoni struggle and movement.

It was understood that there was an urgent necessity to redirect the anger and energy of youths from waging a debilitating war against themselves towards waging a war of national liberation against the common enemy; in this case the Nigerian state and the fractions of the ruling class cohering around it on one hand; and the oil and gas companies and the imperialist interests they represent on the other hand.

It was understood that there was a necessity to amplify the Ogoni experience into a Niger Delta wide experience on the one hand; while properly integrating this struggling into the wider nationwide struggle for democracy and restructuring of Nigeria.

Thus, was established in 1997 the Pan Niger Delta Resistance Movement [CHIKOKO MOVEMENT], which promptly became an affiliate of the UAD.

The Chikoko Movement sought to facilitate the reorganization of mass movements of the respective ethnic nationalities of the Niger Delta; to facilitate the adoption of ethnic declarations as basic demands and mobilisation documents for each of these ethnic movements; to provide a platform to organically link the movements and struggles of the various ethnic nationalities of the Niger Delta through adequate participation and representation in the organs and structures of the CHIKOKO Movement; to establish a fighting unity/united front between workers in the oil and gas sector and the ethnic nationality movements; to convene a Pan Niger Delta Convention [PNDC] which would adopt and harmonise the various ethnic nationality declarations into a Pan Niger Delta Declaration; and to facilitate and coordinate the integration of the Self Determination struggles of the peoples of the Niger Delta into the wider Pan Nigeria struggle for democracy, to democratise all aspects of national life, and reshape/structure Nigeria.

The demand to convene the Sovereign National Conference [SNC] became a core demand of the Chikoko Movement; while the convening of the PNDC was to be a prelude to as well as an integral part of the SNC process.

The Chikoko Movement organising efforts directly led to the organising of the Ijaw Youth Conference, the establishment of the Ijaw Youth Convention [IYC], and the making of the Kiaima Declaration of Ijaw Youths of 1998. Furthermore, it also directly inspired the reorganization of other ethnic nationality formations in the Niger Delta that led to the adoption of various declarations and bills of rights by the various nationality groups. This will include, The resolutions of the Urhobo Economic Summit; The Oron Bill of Rights; The Ikwere Youth Declaration; The Isoko Declaration of Isoko Youths; Aklaka declaration of Egi people; etc.

The birth of the Ijaw Youth Council [IYC] and the kiaiama Declaration was in all respect as much as the establishment of the Chikoko Movement and Launch of its manifesto, a definitive game changer.

The organising and mobilising method adopted was one that actively encouraged mass and often times direct participation and representation through the platform of mobile youth parliaments which moved and convened from clan to clan and from village to village. Every community was encouraged to establish their own youth movement, which was then represented in the Clan youth movement, which was itself represented in the Ijaw nationality youth movement, the IYC.

Similarly, the Chikoko Movement also played a role in the establishment and nurturing of the Niger Delta Women For Justice [NDWJ], which began initially as a network of women activists in the Niger Delta, and then grew to become a movement of women of, and in the Niger Delta for justice, serving to organise and mobilise women participation in, contribution to, and leadership of the Resource Control struggles of the peoples of the Niger Delta.

While coordinating these Niger Delta efforts, the Chikoko movement also coordinated Niger Delta participation in the wider national struggle through nationwide coalitions and mass movements like the UAD. At the same time, it sought to foster specific inter-ethnic harmony by spearheading consultations among and between ethnic nationality groups, including the Odua Peoples Congress [OPC] and other south west groups; Arewa and middle belt youths, and Igbo youth movements from the south east. These consultative forums were christened Coalition For Self Determination [COSED].

The January Uprising Of 2012

The third and most significant epochal intervention of progressive social forces and the mass movements led by them in recent times took place during the January Uprising of 2012; what has come to also be referred to as the Occupy Nigeria Protest Movement.

The uprising was triggered by the unconscionable jerking up of the price of fuel/pms/petrol on January 1st 2012. The anger which had been simmering just under the surface for a long while erupted; and for 10 days, the nation was paralysed, and the holders of state power and their foreign backers and guarantors, jittery and panicked. The coalition of social forces that waged coordinated and provided leadership for the January Uprising was different in its essential composition from the coalitions that waged the Anti-military, pro-democracy; and resource control struggles.

The coalition that gave conscious leadership to the January Uprising was at its core the Labour Civil Society Coalition [LASCO], which comprised of the two labour federations/centers in the country; The Nigeria Labour Congress [NLC] for so called junior workers, and the Trade Union Congress [TUC] for so called senior workers. In addition to these two labour centers were two civil society and citizens' organisations nationwide coalitions; United Action For Democracy [UAD] and Joint Action Front [JAF].

Beyond and around this coalition of four centers, crsytalised, broader and loser coalition of other civil society and citizen organisations, this accepted the leadership of the Labour Civil Society Coalition without being formally affiliated with it. This broader and loser coalition could be called the January Coalition; because it was spontaneous in its formation, and existed just to coordinate broad participation with the Labour Civil Society Coalition led protests. It had no structures.

That uprising became at that time, the most widespread and the most national and nationwide in the post-independence history of Nigeria, covering a minimum of 55 cities and mobilising millions to the streets on successive days for more than five days across the country.

The nature of the coalition, with respect to the conscious involvement of organised labour centers and their acknowledged leaders differentiated this from the other two struggles described, and was the significant factor that turned a protest movement into an uprising.

A very enduring gain of that uprising is the radicalization of significant layers of Nigerians, and in particular, of her youths, who prior to the Uprising were passive citizens, but who since the uprising have become activists and active citizens.

This composition of the leading organs of the mass protest movement was at once the source of strength and weakness; and was responsible for its initial heady success and advance, and its eventual retreat.

The trade union centers are organs of struggle, but they are not political formations to wage decisive political struggles where the objective is to take political power and proceed to reorganize society. For that task, we need additional different structures and organs of struggle. We need political platforms, organising the working class and its allies, playing a decisive role in the organisation and coordination of the uprising.

The core lesson from the January Uprising, and the anti-military/pro-democracy; as well as Resource control and self-determination struggles before it; is that the conscious participation of the working class through its class organisations is the decisive element in any transformative struggle;

yet this participation requires to be a conscious political participation through political formations of the class. To sum up, the January Uprising [of 2012] represented an opportunity; it remains the most significant and preeminent apogee and watershed in the history of popular movements and popular struggles in Nigeria. Within the dynamics of its advance and retreat lies the crucial lesson that should point us to the road to victory and a future that needs to start now.

It has [and its experience continues to] radicalize and polarize a growing and qualitatively significant portion of the active population, literally millions of people. Its history in its making and its unfolding embodied in the most dramatic and intense manner both the finest and the ugliest in the traditions of our popular movements and struggles. It has become the reference point for a new emergent, growing and increasingly assertive generation of activists, transforming hitherto passive citizens into active citizens.

The Generic Workers Struggles

The fourth generic struggle that has been waged consistently over these decades is the struggle of the working class, in formal and informal sectors, organised and unorganized, for increased wages/earnings and improved conditions of working, and of living.

These struggles have witnessed various highs and lows and ended up in defeats, partial successes, and full success on different occasions. The outcomes of these generic struggles have helped to push the bounds of rights [civil, political, social, economic, and cultural], at various levels of government in Nigeria, and thus like the epochal struggles, contributed to redefining politics, politicking and citizenship processes in the country.

Prior to the January Uprising for instance, elements of the regime, had been regularly boastful that policy cannot be made by or as concession to the mob on the streets. Now, regime elements, and the ruling elites in general, in power or in opposition, routinely respond to the mob with policy statements and initiatives.

The residents of suburban neighbourhoods and slums across the country, threatened by demolitions of their homes, the criminalization and destruction of their livelihoods, and their forced evictions from urban centers have organised with progressive social forces major resistances to these actions of power and the elites; and are through such struggles redefining the boundaries of politics and citizenship, affirming their rights as citizens to reside in the urban centers, to have access to social services, and to have access to a means of livelihood.

What is more, such movements of resistance, have become emboldened since and by the January Uprising; they are building alliances with progressive forces and other citizens' organisations, in particular the historic coalitions; and furthermore, the resistance is becoming increasingly political. Since the January Uprising, in the major elections that have been organised, the level of participation in the electoral campaigns, in the voting process, and in the defense of popular mandates have increased and improved tremendously.

The #ENDSARS Youth Rebellion of October 2020

Although the #EndSARS protests in its immediate impact on the psyche of the nation demonstrated the truism of the fact that nature abhors a vacuum, and that to adapt Trotsky, "where tradition is wanning, a striking example becomes pertinent"; nevertheless, the #EndSARS protests did not drop from the sky.

The mass protests though initiated primarily against police brutality, and with the immediate aim of the disbandment of the hated notorious Special Anti-Robbery Squad [SARS], of the Nigeria Police, a number of significant incidences helped to prepare the Youth Rebellion. Among these must be included the deepening economic crisis and increasing impoverisation of the masses; the increasing tendency towards the criminalization of the livelihoods of the poor and the lifestyle of the youth; the deepening political crisis, occasioned by deepening distrust of the state, the government and politicians; the deepening levels of insecurity posing existential threat to citizens and communities; and of course the unconscionable spike in the pump price of petrol and electricity tariff; which compounded by the impact of the pandemic helped to engender a ground swell of deepening popular grievances and anger against the state.

Added to this, and enhancing the instigation of the uprising, is the multifarious series of active mobilisation of the popular masses around the numerous grievances by several groups, central to which are the left groupings and their coalitions, including CORE [Coalition For Revolution], ASCAB [Alliance For The Survival Of COVID 19 And Beyond], JAF [Joint Action Front], the platform around agitation for revolution, some of whom crystalised in the immediate preceding period into MOP [Movement of the People]. And let us not also forget to add the youth led constitutional reform movement, which was essentially political in its character, and which helped to raise popular awareness among young persons about improving the environment for youth participation in governance; the Not Too Young To Run Movement.

These series of mobilisations beginning to deepen from two years previously, culminated into the concentrated 6-week long mobilisation to resist the price hikes in August and September of 2020.

The capitulation of September 28th orchestrated by the Labour bureaucracy, and which was seen as a betrayal of citizen trust by the popular masses, helped to consolidate popular anger and precipitate the break with normalcy, that erupted into and fueled the subsequent #EndSARS protests which lasted about two weeks, and the brutal repression of which helped to unleash the untrammeled anger of the declassed lumpen proletariat, who are also overwhelmingly young persons.

Social Movements And Social Organising And Mobilising Now

In the present context, and during the current historical epoch in Nigeria, social movement organising, continues to be variegated and diverse. And although all social movements are inherently political, not all social movement organising are explicitly political.

Most social movement organising is local and regional, in the context of being operational at community levels, which may then be across several communities in a particular local government area, a particular state, and or across contiguous and neighbouring states in a particular geopolitical zone of the country.

The social movement organising that have a national and pan Nigeria focus and target, are often more explicitly political, and raise and mobilise around issues of democratic and inclusive governance, as well as participatory development.

Ultimately, it is the issue that the social movement is organising and mobilising around, as well as the locale of the power with the authority to tackle, deal with, address and redress the issue at stake, that determines the operational base and focus of the social movement. Thus, those social movements that are seeking to redress issues of exclusion from governance, economic hardships, widespread insecurity, poverty, lack of access to basic services, political oppression, etc, tend to be more nationally present, and more national in their organising and mobilising. Their constituency is Pan Nigerian, and their target is the Nigerian state at all levels.

Youth Movements like Activista, and youth led campaigns like Youth Rights Campaign, and Education Rights Campaign; Women Movements, including The Nigeria Feminist Movement, as well as Women led Campaigns like those around constitutional and electoral reforms, to enhance women participation in governance, Such as Womanifesto; Movements of Small Scale Farmers, including Small Scale Women Farmers Organisations of Nigeria [SWOFON], Association of Small Scale Agricultural Producers In Nigeria [ASSAPIN], Food security campaigns like Voices For Food Security [VSF], among others Environmental and Climate Justice Movements, whose campaigns are led by Civil Society Organisations, such as Home Of Mother Earth [HOMEF], Environmental Rights Action [ERA], Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa [CAPPA], as well as the Green Alliance Network – a network of community organisations and activists for environmental justice; and Pan Nigeria Social Movements focused on governance and development, including The Peoples Alternative Political Movement [TPAP-M] – a coalition of left and left leaning activists and organisations committed to the emergence of a Mass Workers Party, and the Socialist Transformation of Nigeria, and the Labour [Trade Unions] and Pro-Labour Civil Society Organisations led Campaign For Transformative Governance [CFTG]; are all examples of Social Movements and Social
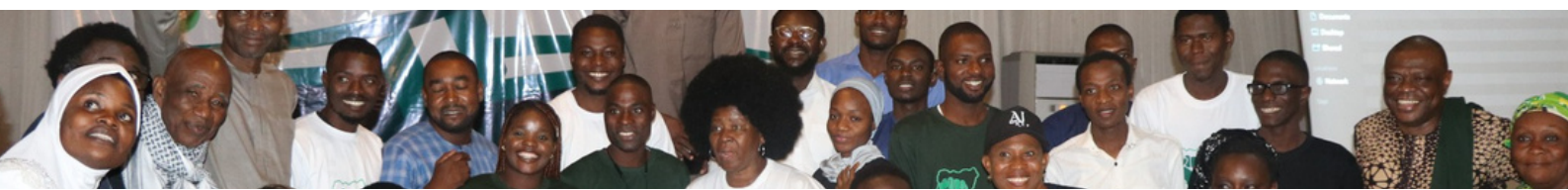
Movement organising currently shaping the socioeconomic and political landscape of Nigeria as national mobilisation and organising efforts, directly targeting the Nigerian state, and with nationwide constituency. Locally, and regionally, that is across particular communities, states and geopolitical zones, Social Movements and Social movement organising tend to be more inward looking, and more dispersed.

Thus, for instance, movements of residents organising and mobilising against forceful evictions and demolitions of so-called slums and so-called illegal structures and shanties, without the provision of alternatives by the state, have been organised across many states of the Federation, including Lagos, FCT, Rivers, Cross River, etc, yet what seems to be lacking is a connection and interaction between and among these local movements. Each is often isolated, whereas there is a huge potential in building and sustaining a network of such movements in order to amplify their voices, build momentum, gain traction, and increase their power.

Community based mass organising and mobilising for improved access to affordable and quality basic social services like for instance water, environmental sanitation, waste disposal, and electricity, are numerous and scattered across the country, nevertheless, they remain largely isolated from one another, and this weakens their ability to achieve their goals, and undermines their resilience.

Given that the fact is that many such communities share the same service providers for these absent and exorbitantly priced services; and that these problems and challenges are present across all service providers, the ability of these movements to link up with one another, build synergy and coordinate their struggles will ultimately enhance and improve their chances of success overall.

Two quick examples will suffice. The Where Is The Light Campaign, which seeks to organise electricity consumers across communities to challenge exorbitant and arbitrarily fixed estimated bills for electricity consumption by the Electricity Distribution Companies [DISCOS], has a huge potential, but it is however hampered by its weakness and lack of capacity to reach out across the country, and bring together all such campaigns, agitations grievances and community disputes, into a single Nationwide Campaign.

The second example is with respect to the community rights and resource control struggles and agitations of host communities of oil and gas exploration activities in the Niger Delta of Nigeria on the one hand, and similar organising against mining of solid minerals elsewhere across the country. The issue here is the same, the debilitating impact on communities of the environmentally destructive activities of the corporations and businesses in the extractive industry and sector of the economy. The culprits in this instance are also the same, the corporations themselves, and the Nigerian state at Federal and state levels.

But alas, though the culprits and issues are the same, there is little or no interaction between and among the mass organising and mobilisation processes going in the solid minerals and oil and gas subsectors of the extractive industry. And because oil and gas extraction is largely restricted to the Niger Delta, while solid minerals extraction takes place mostly outside of the Niger Delta, the struggles have tended to become localized and regionalized, rather than integrated and mutually supportive.

Even across issues, and geography, there is a case to be made for greater synergy, coordination, strategic alliance building and strategic partnerships across the majority of Social Movements and social movement organising in the country,

including with movements continentally and globally. Such active national, continental/regional and international solidarity is not only a necessary, but also a very urgent condition and prerequisite for victory and winning.

For instance, Food Security issues are related to, and affected by Environmental and climate justice issues; Women and Youth issues, though specific, nevertheless also cut across all the other issues; And all issues are present in, derive from, and are driven by the nature and character of governance and the development process.

It stands to reason, that building variegated levels of strategic partnerships and alliances between and among social movements, of different types, will not only serve to improve and amplify the processes and impact of social movement organising, but also enhance the effectiveness of the social movements, and their ability to affect, and significantly influence the quality and trajectory of social transformation of society, in a manner that improves the quality of life and enhances the conditions of living of the people as residents and citizens.

One of the more successful recent efforts in movement building, a type that is explicitly political, and with an active and proactive aspiration towards encompassing and embracing all the various issues, and movements around which social movement organising and mobilising is occurring, is the formation of The Peoples Alternative Political Movement [TPAP-M].

In response to the outbreak of COVID 19 Pandemic in 2020, ASCAB was established as a network, alliance and coalition of mass membership organisations, including workers organisations and left political formations, as well as pro-labour and pro-movement civil society organisations; to ensure equity, social justice and social inclusion in the response to the pandemic. ASCAB was established to fight and mobilise resistance to the inherent injustices in the existing capitalist system, and that will be inherent in the capitalist response to the pandemic.

In August of 2020, ASCAB established a Political Committee to develop a Political Discussion paper to articulate a vision and path towards establishing a broad left political movement, and with which to engage with the wider labour, civil society and left political movements.

By October 2020, an Expanded Joint Planning committee to organise and convene The Peoples Alternative Political Summit [TPAPS]. The Expanded committee included representation from the wider movement. The summit was fixed for March 2021, and was eventually convened in March of 2021. The TPAPS summit went on to establish The Peoples Alternative Political Movement [TPAP-M], at the end of the summit on March 28th 2021.

Since its establishment, TPAP-M has been struggling with processes a building the movement as an expression of a Political Movement of Movements.

With respect to the constraints faced by Social Movements and in the course of Social Organising and Mobilisation, In addition to factors internal to the Social Movements, the major external constraints to Social Movement organising in Nigeria include government policies and legislations, and the practice of politicians, state actors and government personnel.

Policies and legislations are sometimes restrictive and exclusionary, and at other times whereas policies and legislation may exist, they are observed in the breach. The resultant effect is that Social Movements are hampered in their activities, and either fall foul of the law, or are unprotected by the law.

For instance, although the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended, and the Police Act 2020, recognises the right to protest, freedom of association, freedom of expression, the right to assemble, and criminalises unlawful harassment of citizens, nevertheless, acts of police and law enforcement agency brutality against citizens are still rampant, and rallies and protest is often approached by law enforcement agencies as criminal and illegal act.

A second major constraint to Social Movements is the deliberate mobilisation of ethnic, Religious, and Ethnoreligious grievances by some members of the elites, some members of the Political class, and some state actors.

Some of the largest mass membership organisations in the country are either ethnic organisations, religious and faith-based organisations, and or ethnoreligious organisations.

Whereas these mobilisations usually result in large communities of solidarity, it does also result in the undermining of solidarity based on other forms of identities, and the material conditions of living, existing, working and earning a livelihood of citizens.

The mobilisation of ethnic and or religious grievance, have tended to be quite success in breaking solidarity in the ranks of those who face engrained social injustices, social inequalities, exclusion and marginalisation, as well as oppression and exploitation.

The social causes that social movements organise and mobilise around affect people irrespective of their ethnic origins or religious faith; what exclusive ethnic and or religious mobilisation does however, is to weaken the bonds of solidarity among those who are impacted and kept out by social injustices and inequalities, and make it much harder to organise and mobilise against the conditions and structures of power underlying the social injustices and inequalities in society.

An Example Of Sustained Social Organising and Mobilisation

One Particular Example Of Sustained Social Organising and Mobilisation is the example of the annual Social Action Camps, organised over a period of one week every year, and bringing together activists, in particular young, male and female community activists with a sprinkling of older and more experienced activists, from across the country.

Study Centers for active and ongoing political and civic education were established in several locations. The Study Centers met at least once every month for political education purposes, but also to discuss ongoing situations in their immediate context, and plan and review their intervention engagements with the struggles around them. From the ranks of the study centers, and from among other ongoing social organising initiatives across the country, participants at the annual anti-imperialism camps were drawn and selected.

This particular engagement was initiated by Social Action, a pro-social movement civil society organisation in about 2008. In 2016, after 10 such anti-imperialism camps, and 8 years of the study centers, a political audit of the engagement was undertaken. In the post political audit period, the centers were organised into Civil Rights Councils [CRCs], which had local and state level units as well as a national organisation. The annual camps, was also renamed Social Action Camp. Both the CRC and the Camp continue in existence up to the present time.

The study centers were conceived and established as forums for the nurturing and political education of a new generation of left leaning and left oriented activists and revolutionaries. They were conceived and established to serve not only as centers for education, but also to serve as centers for organising and mobilising. And this is inevitable because the purpose of political education is to enable political organising and mobilising for radical, even revolutionary social transformation.

The Anti-Imperialism Camps were conceived and organised to facilitate the physical and pedagogical linking of the processes taking place at the study centers. The camps were to bring together study center participants, and graduates as well as other politically inclined activists and or active citizens, for a period of sustained shared revolutionary pedagogical and organising, that is movement building experience.

The camps and the centers are therefore inseparable component parts of the same dialectical process to educate, enlighten, organise and mobilise a generation of politically conscious left leaning activists and revolutionaries, and integrate them into a common process on Left Mass Movement Building, towards the ultimate goal of engendering the process of revolutionary social transformation of our society.

In addition to the ongoing Mass Social Organising and Mobilisation being undertaken by Social Action, a Pro-Movement Civil Society Organisation, with respect to the Study Centers/CRCs and the Camps; there is also an ongoing effort by YIAGA Africa, around youth organising and mobilisation. YIAGA, was central to the organisation of the Not Too Young To Run Campaign and Movement, which brought together young and youth activists to canvass for constitutional reform to lower the age for youth participation in governance. This was achieved. The movement has also evolved into preparing and supporting young persons to participate in governance, including being instrumental to the establishment of, and providing support for the Young Parliamentarians Forum [YPF].

To concretise this support for young people who are organising, and youth activists, YIAGA Africa, has also established and runs a Community Organising School [COS], for young community organisers and youth activists.

Types Of Social Movements

Movements can be either movements of the poor and powerless or movements of the powerful and privileged.

The issues identified and driven by the movement decides its focus and its interests, and therefore its core and decisive membership. But even movements of the poor are often led by members of the elite in different stages of dissidence with the status quo.

Movements can be progressive or conservative: they are progressive when they are organised to promote positive change. They are conservative when they are organised to defend and promote existing privileges that are standing in the way of needed reforms.

Movements can also be radical or reformist; they are radical when they seek deep rooted structural changes in society; while they are reformist when they seek gradual changes which may not go deep enough.

Thus, essentially, the historical typology of movements in Nigeria can be categorised as follows:

- Progressive Social Movements: Movements that seek the social transformation of society through addressing social injustices.
- Conservative Social Movements; Movements that seek for one reason or the other to preserve the essence of the status quo
- Radical Social Movements: Movements that adopt and prioritise anti establishment methods in the pursuit of their struggles, and seek a fundamental change in how society is organised
- Reformist Social Movements; Movements that prefer gradualist approach to social change, through changes in laws and policies
- Revolutionary Social Movements; Movements that pursue a radical rupture and break with the existing status quo, through a total overhaul of the entire system, and its replacement with a fundamentally different system from the old order

Issues Pursued By Social Movements

Because the issues that Social Movements mobilise around are social issues, of injustice, inequality, exclusion, marginalisation, exploitation, and oppression; social Movements are inherently political, and the mass social organising and mobilisation processes they embark upon are profoundly political processes.

This is because these issues derive from, and are driven by unequal power relations; while their mitigation and or resolution requires altering power relations, and the reallocation of resources. Changing, and or transforming policies. Laws, regulations, institutions, and processes to overcome injustice and achieve social justice, social equity, social inclusion, in order to enable redistribution and reallocation of resources, and opportunities, requires changing and or fundamentally transforming the nature, character, systems and mechanisms, and processes of the state and governance. This is nothing but a political undertaking.

However, it is not all Social Movements that recognise, embrace, and or are conscious of their inherent political nature. The more self-aware of its political nature a social movement is, and the more explicitly political, the more resolute its politics.

Some of the issues that social movements in Nigeria drive and engage with include:

- Inclusive Governance And Participatory Development
- Environmental Justice
- Women's Rights and participation of women in governance
- Youth empowerment and participation in governance
- Livelihoods rights and enhancement; including farmers movements in agriculture, informal sector workers rights

- Minority Rights
- Human Rights Protection
- Social Transformation through systemic change
- Access to Public and basic services in health, education, social housing, transport, energy etc
- Community rights advancement
- Peaceful coexistence and social cohesion
- Inclusive and Transformative Governance
- Participatory Development
- Religious Rights
- Ethnic Rights
- Workers' Rights
- Child Rights

Essentials In Social Movement Organising

From an understanding of social movement organising in Nigeria, it is possible to identify Seven Essential Elements of Political Movement Building For Social Transformation. These may be described as essential criteria for identifying social movements, and as such the essential characteristics of a social movement.

These are Organisation, Mobilisation, Leadership, Initiative, Purpose, Politics, and Autonomy;

Organisation:

The first is organisation, and by organisation in this instance we refer to both the structure in the form of a distinct body or bodies driving the barricade building; as well as process, in the form of how the activities of the barricade building are conducted and brought to life.

Organisation in this twin sense is central and essential to any political enterprise, and particularly one that is mass in nature. The presence of distinct, visible, tangible and conscious organisation is of paramount importance and has significant implication for the cohesion of the various activities and processes of the barricade, and for the ability of the political enterprise to successfully reach out to wider segments of society; and to concentrate, channel and focus its influence and impact on society.

An identifiable and visible organisation behind the movement and responsible for coordinating the effort imbues confidence in potential supporters, and makes it possible to prevent the diffusion of the focus, and mitigate against dispersal of its energy.

Mobilisation

For a barricade to be successfully built, for it to attract and sustain the attraction of wider segments of society to its cause, there has to be effective mobilisation strategy in place. Such a mobilisation strategy will include targeted messaging, clear communication of the rationale for the resistance and clear communication of clearly articulated demands and messages.

Any effective mobilisation is for a targeted purpose and directed at targeted groups. And whereas mobilisation involves communication, effective mobilisation requires active interaction, direct outreach activities and processes.

A political mobilisation process is essentially a process of active dialogue and negotiation with the target audience, with not only members of the movement, but also with the wider society.

For such a process to be successful, it must be organised and structured, and it must be linked to a visible and identifiable organisation, regardless of whether that organisation is organising clandestinely or not.

The negotiation with the rest of society, the active dialogue with citizens, that a political mobilisation entails, is one that requires tangible interaction between the mobiliser and the those who are being mobilised, whose support is being sought.

Effective mobilisation requires effective organisation that can be directly linked to an identifiable organisational entity and structure; otherwise, the mobilisation will become diffuse and dissipated.

Leadership

Leadership is the act of giving direction and guidance, and without direction and guidance the barricade will disintegrate and rapidly unravel and become dispersed, pulled in different directions. Every movement is has a tendency to be pulled and pushed in different, and sometimes even contradictory and mutually exclusive directions, given that a movement is an agglomeration of interests and interest groups; a leadership, that is known, that emerges from the movement, and that is accountable and responsible to the movement is however needed to help to balance between these various interests, and achieve the aggregation of the interests in such a manner that movement is united behind a common purpose.

Without such leadership, a movement can very easily disintegrate, just as the absence of an organisation, leaves any emergent leadership unaccountable to the movement, and thus not subject to the collective discipline of the movement.

An organisation helps to evolve and enforce collective discipline within the movement, helps to ensure the existence of accountable process for the emergence of representative leadership.

A collective of individuals enabled by the structure and culture of the organisation emerges to give leadership to the organisation, while the organisation as a whole, and as an entity, in turn exercises and gives leadership to the movement.

The way that leadership is earned within the organisation is the same way that the organisation earns leadership of the movement and provides vanguardship for the movement, the resistance, barricade, and the revolution.

The diffuse nature of organisation and form of leadership preferred by the celebrity leadership of the uprising, was deliberate, and was intended to prevent the consolidation of working-class consciousness and identity, and provide a bulwark against the movement tending towards the left.

In a social movement, conditions and mechanisms need to be intentionally and deliberately created and established to prepare every member for leadership responsibility, such members are able to exercise leadership at every level, within every organ and structure, and in every area of operation of the movement. In this sense leadership becomes collective, a culture of collective leadership evolves within the leadership and is nurtured, and without prejudice to specific roles and individual responsibilities of specific cadres.

In this sense, while a particular leadership may be indispensable in a specific context, no leadership should be irreplaceable.

Initiative

To possess initiative is to be able and willing to take risks, to be prepared to embark on a bold new process.

We saw rampant individual initiative with the #EndSARS protest and youth rebellion, and at best incipient organisational initiative with respect to individual organisations on their own, and very little organisational initiative with respect to active and actual inter organisational collaborations.

Effective initiative in a mass and political enterprise such as a protest movement, a barricade, an uprising is a function of organisation and leadership.

Without the existence of organisation and leadership conscious of the task at hand, conscious of the moment, conscious of the potential trajectory of the moment, there can be no effective political initiative.

Purpose

Every movement must answer the question of purpose. What is the purpose of the movement? To what end is the protest or uprising? It is the ability to clearly define and understand the purpose, and its changing nature in the dynamics and fluidity of the processes of the barricade, and evolution and development of the movement, that makes it possible for the movement to identify potential allies, build solidarity, build alliances, and take initiative.

Politics

The politics of the barricade and of a movement is informed by its purpose, and in turn informs the types of initiative it will undertake; while the purpose is itself defined by the rationale of and for the movement or barricade, and shaped by the forms of its organisational expression and leadership.

Politics in the sense used here refers to the kinds of relationships, intra and inter organisational, as well as between the movement and the rest of society; as well as subsequent activities flowing from these relationships; entered into and undertaken by the movement, or the barricade with respect to the pursuit of its cause. If there is no definitive, visible, identifiable, tangible accountable organisational entity and leadership, then the ensuing politics will be diffused, amorphous and inchoate. This is why although the movement was driven largely by working youths and the children of workers, nevertheless, its politics was not Working-Class Politics/Workers Politics.

Autonomy

A Movement of Solidarity, a mass social movement for social justice and equality, and one that aims at triggering, initiating and undertaking a process of radical social transformation, must possess Autonomy; Such a movement to be effective and to be successful must acquire the capacity for Autonomy.

And by Autonomy, we mean the ability, capacity, and capability of a Movement to identify, recognise, and act in its own interest; that is in the interest of the movement and the social classes and formations that constitute its base; to act, and be able to act independently of the organisations, institutions and processes, of the social formations and social forces that drive, are the basis of, and that are the beneficiaries of the structures and processes of unequal power relations, of entrenched inequality, of the inherent injustice, exploitation, oppression and repression of the existing system; and against which the

movement and the social base it represents is undertaking a struggle; the defeat of which is a necessary condition for the victory of the movement. Possessing, and acquiring each of the previous [six] characteristics and dimensions, should lead a movement to the acquisition of the capacity for autonomy. However, this is not necessarily automatic, or given. The quest for autonomy must be consciously, deliberately, and strategically pursued.

Dynamics Of Social Movement Organising

The identification and articulation of the preceding essential characteristics, and the dynamics of Social Movements with respect to social organising and social mobilisation, has been undertaken within the context of a comparative analysis of periods of explicit and intense mass self-activity of people, with some specific reference to the January Uprising of 2012, and the Youth Rebellion of October 2020.

The Theme and Dynamic of Resilience And Solidarity

The #EndSARS protests and the movement were by design dispersed, largely coordinated on the social media, primarily on Twitter, as well as on Telegram.

There were no visible and central leaderships and organisation, enabling the protests to spread rapidly like wild fire, and the movement to grow exponentially. The #EndSARS movement became a franchise, with the street protests the produce distributed by the franchise.

As a franchised protest movement with decentralized and shadowy leadership, it could spread quite rapidly, but for this very reason its agenda could rapidly become diffused, with a broadening of focus to the extent of a loss of focus.The slogan becomes the only thing, the message is subsumed under the slogan.

Nevertheless, the resilience of the movement was evident in the way in which the provision and delivery of basic services – medical, legal, food, etc to the protests was organised and sustained all through. This resilience was also manifested in how the movement was sustained as it grew and spread over 14 days.

Essential to this resilience was solidarity, the emergence and evolution of solidarity amongst and within the various protest franchises. The extent of this solidarity however, was directly proportional to the resilient capacity of the movement. The greater the solidarity, the greater the resilience of the movement and vice versa. This is a major lesson to be drawn from the movement. Building Solidarity and acquiring resilience capacity are mutually reinforcing, two moments of a dialectic.

The Theme and Dynamic Of Class Character And Class Struggle

This movement, in this its inceptive phase was largely a movement of the youth, working class youth and the children of the working class. This point is important. Nevertheless, the hegemonic power within the movement was held by the tiny proportion of elite and ruling class youth, who because of their celebrity status and or their leverage and connections with the levers of economic and political control in society, exercised disproportionate authority and power within and over the movement in a most inconspicuous and harmless manner, through their established presence on Twitter as influencers with huge followings.

Thus whereas, Virtual General Assemblies were established for the movement on Twitter and Telegram, those with huge followings, who identified with the movement, became the hegemonic powers within the movement, exercising invisible and intangible authority, shaping the nature and direction of the discourse within the movement, and gatekeeping the engagement of the movement with others outside the movement.

In spite of this however, the overwhelming majority of the active participants and protesters drawn to the movement and the protests were of the working classes, including the huge army of the unemployed youth, with nearly 7 out of every 10 youths unemployed in the country.

If the protests had gone on for much longer, these class tensions would have broken out into a class struggle within the movement and the protests, with this class struggle having significant impact on the trajectory of the movement, its political consciousness, and the nature and character of its organisation and leadership.

And even now, in this period of ebb, and going forward as we approach new resurgence of the movement of resistance to hardship and repression, this class struggle will play a more significant role in shaping the movement. We can say that the politically conscious the movement of resistance becomes, the wider the gulf will be between the classes with respect to the final goal and ultimate outcome of the resistance.

A majority of the ruling class, elite and celebrity component of the movement will very likely break with the movement, retreat from the resistance, or launch an organisation of their own to try to retain hegemonic control over the direction of the movement and its outcome.

The Theme and Dynamic Of Organisation And Coordination

Much has been said about the so-called lack of organisation and coordination of the protest movement. However, this is essentially neither true nor false.

The movement was organised, even if this organisation was dispersed and autonomous. And it was coordinated. The very dispersed nature of the movement meant that it posed the challenge of coordination which the movement had to respond to.

However, the real issue is about the level of organisation and eventual coordination, and the character of this organisation and coordination.

There were organisations, which were autonomous of one another, and whose activities were coordinated largely through informal channels leveraging on and dependent on the extent of loyalty to the franchise, the brand, and the various and competing interpretations of the meaning of the slogan.

This was both a strength and a weakness. For a disruptive movement with no interest in power, with no interest in who exercises power in meeting and realising the demands of the movement, this amorphous character of the organisations and the loose informal coordination among and within them may suffice.

However, for a movement interested in more fundamental systemic and structural changes in society, in the state, and in the governance of society, a more structured, more robust, more accountable type of organisation and coordination is required.

This Organisational and coordination weaknesses have very significant impact on the nature of leadership and the ability of the movement to grow and harmonise its consciousness as a collective.

The Theme and Dynamic Of Leadership And Consciousness

To be sure, let it be clearly stated, there is no such thing as a leaderless and organised movement. What we me have are variations of forms of unaccountable leaderships, and dispersed and atomized organisations and organising.

Some in the movement, incidentally the emergent leadership, have promoted the view within the movement of the necessity not to have leaders and organisations in order to avoid the movement being suppressed through the arrest and harassment or disappearing of leaders, as well as to avoid negotiating and compromising.

In the first instance, a movement does not require to have recognised leaders or known organisation for the movement to be repressed, and for participants in the movement to be harassed, arrested etc. The #LekkiMassacre unfortunately proves this point.

The level of repression a movement suffers is often in direct proportion to the level of threat the movement poses to the state, the legitimacy of the state, and of the regime. This is what determines in the final analysis how repressive of a movement a state, the ruling class and the regime presiding over it may become. This is also often accentuated by how precarious the existence of the regime was before the upsurge of the protest movement, and how much more precarious the ensuing protest movement is making the existence of the regime.

The second point is about negotiation. The state and the regime is not the only entity in society that a protest movement requires to engage and negotiate with. There are other social forces, whose support is essential and vital to the success of the movement, and which the movement needs to proactively and actively engage and quite often negotiate with.

If a protest by the very virtue of its nature and spread and growth is going to disrupt societal life including ability to carry our economic activities, to go to work, to undertake and sustain ones livelihoods, then, organised social forces within those sectors, who are active in society, need to be reached out to, mobilised, discussed with, and negotiated with.

Majority of Nigerians earn their living in the informal sector through daily incomes. A mass protest movement occupying the streets and disrupting or stopping movements etc, considerably disrupts the operations of informal sector operatives and daily income earner.

To earn and retain the support of informal sector workers and workers in the formal sector, a mass protest movement must have a recognised and structured organisation and leadership and accountable and democratic representation to be able to reach out to and engage with these other essential social forces.

In actual fact, the ultimate resilience of the movement, its ability to sustain its rapid growth and spread, its capacity to compel the changes it demands, ultimate depends of building this structured and systemic solidarity with all social forces. And this cannot be achieved without recognizable, accountable, credible, leadership.

But the foregoing is just one side of the coin. The other side of the coin is inherent in the nature of the demand posed by the movement. A movement demanding the scrapping of unit within the structure of the state, and the reform of an agency of the state, will ultimately require to engage with and negotiate with the state. To rule out negotiations outrightly because they might lead to compromise or cooptation of leaders, is not to have any confidence in the movement on the one hand, and amounts to effectively abandoning the demands.

This is because in reality, there is only one way such demands can be met and implemented; and that is by a government, whether the existing or a new government; and either of which will require to be engaged with.

The other component of the necessity and requirement for conscious leadership and organisation, is the issue of consciousness and its development within the movement.

Every movement and protest undergo a period of evolution of consciousness. The less organised and structured a movement is, the more amorphous its evolution, the more diffused consciousness becomes within the movement.

A movement require structured, democratic and accountable organisation and leadership, for the growth in consciousness to be harnessed, and properly channeled towards the achievement of the goals of the movement.

Over the two weeks of the #EndSARS protest movement on the streets, the growth and evolution of consciousness can be tracked, corresponding to the degree of political radicalization of the movement through the nature of the hash tagged slogans. Thus, the slogan moved from #EndSARS at the inception of the movement, to including #EndPoliceBrutality, and eventually by the last two days, #EndBadGovernance.

This represents a clear manifestation of changes in the consciousness and awareness of the movement, from seeing the problem as SARS, essentially just a unit of the Police, through seeing the problem as the nature and character of policing, to seeing the link between this and bad governance. Thus, the demands also changed from demanding that SARS be scrapped, through demanding the entire police be reformed, to demanding for good governance.

The Theme and Dynamic of the Moment and the Movement

The fifth thematic dynamic of social movement organising is that between the Moment and the Movement. As pointed out in the conceptual clarification, the moment refers to a definite historical period of heightened mass organising and mobilisation activities, with an aroused and awakened citizenry, taking explicit direct mass action in pursuit of a goal and or demand.

The movement on the other hand is an organised and structured manifestation of collective will of a people who are bound by a common interest and who act to realise a collective vision.

A moment may be initiated and or instigated directly by a movement, or indirectly as a result of its previous mobilisations and activities; or it may be initiated more or less spontaneously, triggered by an event or occurrence in the polity. The relationship between the moment and the movement is however, one of mutual reinforcement.

A movement can be positioned to gain from a moment, through the further advancement of its cause, influx of new members, and broadening of its support base. A moment can become potentially more amplified, enabled to achieve the demands, and its essence sustained beyond the historically brief period of intense mass activity, through the participation and steering of the movement.

In this sense, a moment can serve to reinvigorate, renew and strengthen the movement, while the movement, enhances the ability of the opportunities inherent in the moment to be effectively tapped.

Context Of Social Movement Organising: The Civic Space In Nigeria

Civic engagement encompasses all the range of activities involving the more or less deliberate, more or less conscious interaction between citizens and the governance process, including intended and unintended actions or inactions between citizens and the institutions of the state, that drive the processes and mechanisms of governance.

The social interactions that constitute civic engagement range across a broad spectrum; from routine daily individual and collective actions between and within state and non-state actors in response to governance processes, through more or less active and more vibrant contestations, to intensified and sustained confrontations between and among the contending social formations and forces.

Social movements constitute a significant part of the process of civic engagement, and their actions contribute significantly towards shaping the nature of civic engagement, and the character of the civic space.

Civic Space

Civic space on the other hand, can therefore be taken to encapsulate the broad context, and environment within which this range of civic engagements take place, and or occur.

It follows thus that civic engagement takes place within a civic space, the nature, character, depth, breadth, scope, scale and quality of which is determined by certain organic, that is changing and evolving parameters.

The degree to which a robust civic space exist is directly dependent on the quality and quantum of the range of interactions that constitute civic engagement in such a context.

Another way of saying this is that the status of the civic space at any point in time is predicated on the actual balance of social forces, the acquired and evolving nature of the equilibrium between, among and within the interacting, and contending social formations.

Understood in this way, the degree to which a grievance exists, the degree to which this existing or emergent grievance is organised and mobilised into a dissent, on the one hand, and the extent to which the state acknowledges the existence of the grievance, the extent to which it is tolerance of the dissent [as the mobilised expression of the grievance], on the other hand, play a significant role in determining the level of contentiousness in the civic space. Thus, the ability of the state, and capacity of the government to tolerate dissent and accommodate dissent, and acknowledge and be ready to redress grievance, is decisive in the determination of the intersection of national security and the civic space in any society.

The less accommodative of differences and dissent a government is, the less tolerant a state is, and the higher the tendency to act with impunity by a ruling class, the more likely will be the deployment of elements of national power in the service of the regime, in the name of national security, towards the end of suppressing and pacifying dissent and opposition.

That said, at this point, it is also necessary to point out that it is not only the state and state actors, through recourse to national security considerations, that play a role in constraining and restricting the civic space; illiberal and uncivil civic forces also play a contributory role in this regard.

For instance, in the Nigeria context, the deepening mutually exclusive and antagonistic narratives and counter narratives of actively organising and mobilising ethnic irredentists and jingoists, are also making it rather difficult and unsafe and insecure for other more tolerant, more expansive, more inclusive, more broad-based and Pan Nigerian civic forces and actors to operate.

Current Context Of Shrinking Civic Space

Nigeria's official poverty rate[1] rose to 42.6% in 2021 from 40.1% in 2020. The implication of this is that the number of people living below the official poverty line is now 95.1 million people. To put this in perspective the number of countries in Africa with a total population above 90 million can be counted on the fingers of one hand!

However, if we were to use the World Bank index of living on less than $1.5 a day, then the proportion living in poverty would reach 71% - that is approximately 151 million people, more than the population of the next most populous countries in Africa. Neither Egypt nor Ethiopia, the next most populous countries in Africa, have a total population above 115 million people!

At another level, unemployment rate[2] in Nigeria is the highest in Africa at 33.3% unemployment rate, and 22.8% underemployment rate, giving a combined 56.1% composite unemployment rate in 2021. The number of persons out of job alone (not counting the underemployed) in Nigeria is more than the populations of several countries in Africa.

Amongst young persons between 18 and 35 Years the rates are even higher, with the figures being 42.5% youth unemployment rate, and over 25% youth underemployment rate, giving a composite youth unemployment rate of nearly 70%.

What is the implications of the above? One in two Nigerians in the general population are unemployed, while nearly four in five youths are out of work.

According to UNESCO report, Nigeria has the highest number of out of school children in Africa, with 20 million children between 6 and 18 years old out of school. Nigeria along with India and Pakistan have the highest figures of out of school children globally.

Additionally, by official estimates[1], Nigeria has a 20 million housing deficit, rising from 18 million housing deficit inherited by this regime at its inception. What this means is that with an average household size of six, there are more than 120 million Nigerians homeless, and or living in poor, inhumane, unhabitable housing conditions across the country.

Complementarily, as of 2021, the global Democracy Index report for 2021, produced by the Economist Intelligence Unit [EIU][2], Nigeria achieved only 4.11 points out of 10, a rating very close to being Authoritarian (at equal to or less than 4 points), and was classified as a Hybrid Regime.

For perspective, there are four ratings: equal to or higher than 8 - classified as Full Democracies; higher than 6, but less than 8 - classified as Flawed Democracies; higher than 4, but less than 6 - Hybrid Regime; and equal to, or less than 4 - classified as Authoritarian.

It is worthy of note that the Democracy Index measures the levels of Electoral process and pluralisms; Government Functions; Political Participation and Culture; as well as Civil Liberties.

Nigeria was ranked 100 out of 169 countries assessed globally; and 26th out of 33 African countries assessed. It is instructive that Africa has the most countries ranked near the bottom, with 23 countries categorised as Authoritarian, and 14 countries categorised as Hybrid Regimes, among which is Nigeria.

Furthermore, In the Civicus global report and rankings with respect to quality of the civic space in 2021, Nigeria was classified in the second to the last category as a Repressed Society, along with 49 other countries, and slipping from the Obstructed category of previous years.

This global index ranks countries on the basis of the quality of their civic space and civic engagements, with five possible categories: Open; Narrowed; Obstructed; Repressed; and closed. As can be seen, Nigeria is just a step away from being classified as having a closed civic space.

Not surprisingly, in 2021 as well, according to the Global Rule of Law Report and Index prepared and published by the World Justice Project (WJP); Nigeria ranked 121 out of 139 countries rated and ranked on the Global Rule of Law Index, slipping three places from her ranking in the previous year.

Freedom House, on the other hand, in its Freedom in the World 2022 report[1], classified Nigeria as partly free, along with 56 other countries. For this classification, there are three categories: Free, partly free, and not free. Of the 195 countries assessed, 83 were classified as Free, while 56 each were classified as Partly Free, and Not Free respectively.

With this picture of a shrinking civic space, the environment for social movements places immense constraints on the ability of social movements to engage effectively within the civic space.

There is a sense though, in which there may be opportunity within this adverse situation. Increasing repression and intensifying suppression of rights, can often also make social movements more determined to overcome adversity and reverse the trend, while also making social movement members and activists more outraged and committed to taking action. Increased levels of hardships, and intensified repression and suppression of rights, can sometimes act as the trigger to let lose an outburst of mass anger, and set in motion a moment of intense resistance and heroic struggle. Nevertheless, deteriorating conditions of the civic space do significantly impair the ability of social movements to operate and function effectively, and qualitative increases the cost of resistance, and the cost to the social movement in its mass organising and social mobilisation processes.

Strengths

- Social Movements are embodiment of experience in the struggles of the people
- Social Movements provide an environment of psychosocial support and mutual support for members
- When social movements are inclusive, they are stronger
- Sense of strong commitment to a cause
- The mass membership base and voluntarist nature of membership
- Socioeconomic diversity of membership of social movements
- Social Movements and their members are highly resourceful
- The very nature of Social Movements is enabling of networking
- Versatility in the use of ICT

Weaknesses

- Development of ethnoreligious polarization and profiling
- Inordinate ambitions of competing leaders
- Inadequate funding
- Inability to sustain agenda
- Inadequate capacity
- Declining levels of consciousness and commitment

Challenges;

- Lack of necessary Funding
- Weak capacity
- Lack of trust
- Despondency on the part of the people
- State of general insecurity
- Access to free legal services
- Political interference/Interference in affairs of the movement by politicians and political office holders
- Will to sustain the struggle after state attack, including incarceration of leading members

Opportunities

- Unity of purpose
- Potential for exposure and networking
- Availability of Platform for better engagement
- Watchdog role against bad governance
- Platform for shared learning
- Leveraging on social media
- Access to diverse information
- The present context of civil rule compared with period under military dictatorship
- Existence of Constitutional guarantee of human rights and international human rights instruments

Threats

- Government harassment
- Deliberate campaigns of defamation of character against movement activists
- Incarceration of activists
- Betrayal of trust by members
- Loss of focus
- Acts of sabotage directed at the movement
- State intolerance
- Anti-people policies, legislations and practices of government and state actors
- Leadership tussles and competition for tuff and unhealthy rivalries among leaders
- The level of poverty in society

Recommendations (A): Supporting Social Movements To Be More Effective

From the overview assessment of social movements undertaken in the course of this study, the following Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats, and Challenges of Social Movements were identified;

The main types of support required by Social Movements include the following:

- Flexible Funding Support
- Capacity development and training support
- Exchange programs between social movements - local, national and international
- Development of internal procedures for the social movements
- Provision of various forms of legal services support
- Enabling Networking, and Alliance and Coalition Building
- Support for Knowledge development, production, dissemination and management systems
- Support with establishment and management of a Leadership And Cadre Development Academy

In order for support to be effective and empowering, it should be guided by certain principles, including:

- Mutual Respect
- Transparency and accountability
- Support must be given without prejudice
- Support must not be for anything outside the objectives of the social movement
- Support must not in anyway undermine the integrity, legitimacy and credibility of the movement
- Support can be in kind, and not necessarily always as funds
- Support must not be a bait

- Support should not take a social movement away from its focus/not lead to loss of focus
- Social Movements should develop and use a mechanism to profile the source of potential support, and vet the support provider

Recommendations (B): A Strategy For Engaging With Social Movements

In order to be able to effectively support Social Movements, it is necessary first to establish criteria for identifying Social Movements.

In this context, a Social Movement must be a Mass membership-based organisation and or coalition of such organisations; Its members work together collectively on a voluntary basis; it will be an organisation undertake mass social organising and mobilising as its method of canvassing its positions, building support, gaining membership, and engaging with power and influencing change.

The issue of interest to the social movement will be a social issue, focused on tackling and ending social injustice, social exclusion, inequality.

It should be committed to the conviction that the realisation of its objectives would contribute to the process of social transformation.

A Social Movement must be an organisation that is rooted in the people, one that organises and mobilises with the people, its constituency.

The leadership of a social movement must be accountable and responsible to its members, and to the constituency of the movement. There must be processes in places for leadership to emerge, to be replaced, and to be removed. Mechanisms for internal democracy need to be in place, and should be routinely reviewed and strengthened.

There should be clear process and opportunity for membership growth, and the development of members. There should be real opportunities for members to be able to aspire to, and become leaders.

In social movement, leadership should be collective in nature, with members able to exercise leadership at different levels, and within different organs and structures of the movement.

A social movement to be effective must invest in building a culture of leadership, and preparing all of its members to exercise leadership.

A social movement should have shared and very clearly defined goals, vision, and narrative of the struggle it is engaged with.

Engagement Strategy

- Identify and select Social Movements to engage with
- Identify and select Pro-Movement Organisations [CSOs, Networks, Alliances, etc] to work with, and through which support to movements may be channeled, and or whose movement supporting initiatives can be enhanced
- Convene a consultative meeting to develop, discuss and agree an engagement plan
- Agree guiding principles to manage the engagement with Social Movements
- Identify, select and convene meeting of young organisers and Youth Activists, with a view to supporting a mutual support and experience sharing Forum of Young Organisers and Youth Activists. This should be a space for youth activists from different movements and organisations to interact, share and debate ideas about their struggles, and share experience and learn from one another. It may facilitate better coordination and synergy between and among their various movements
- Convene regular Social Dialogues with Social Movements and their constituents, at National and regional levels

- Collaborate with social movements to establish and manage a decentralized and accessible Knowledge Resource Hub – this should be both physical and virtual/digital
- Support publication to report and disseminate the struggles and activities of social movements
- Support publication of a Social Movement Discourse Journal
- Support establishment of decentralised regional hubs to provide and deliver technical support [ICT, social media, capacity building, information,] etc to social movements. Local and National CSOs with relations to Social Movements could be identified to host and play a role in the regional support hubs
- Support Social Movements to establish a mechanism for shared learning: Collaborate with Social Movements to learn from one another through exchange programs, Residency programs that bring movement activists and leaders together, and immersive processes
- Mutual learning mechanism between social movements and supporters like ActionAid; This will focus on mutual secondments for immersive hands technical support between Social Movements and their supporters like ActionAid, where movement cadres go on secondments with ActionAid, and ActionAid staff go on secondments with the social movement.
- Facilitate processes that will promote and build capacity for Networking, Alliance and Coalition Building among and between Social Movements across communities, across states, nationally, as well as internationally.
- Collaborate with Social Movements to Establish and run an autonomous Leadership and Cadre Development Academy [LCDA] For Social Movements
- Establish inclusive mechanism and participatory process of mutual peer review between Social Movements; as well as between social movements and ActionAid

Recommendations {C}: Human Rights Defenders [HRDs]

Human Rights Defenders, should be legal practitioners who undertake Public Interest Litigations and give Public Interest legal assistance to defend human rights of people and communities, and promote social justice. Activists, who are not lawyers, but who are interested in and regularly take up public Interest Advocacy in pursuit of legal and social justice, also belong to this category.

These Human Rights Defenders are present across the country. Identifying them, establishing a registry, and building a working and collaborative relationship with them will be key to enabling support to social movements and the causes that they promote.

These HRDs will need support with respect to capacity development, as well as with respect to linking them effectively with social movements.

Strategy For Engagement

The strategy for engaging HRDS should involve the following;

I.Establish a registry of identified HRDs to create an accessible pool of HRDs and PIAs to support social movements and their cadres

J.Facilitate the process of rapid training and deployment of paralegals among social movements, and preferably from among the members of the movement

K.Enable capacity development and other types of support to this pool of HRDs/PIAs

L.Encourage and enable mechanism for secondments of HRDs to social movements, as well as their participation in other immersive processes with social movements

Conclusion

To conclude, movement building is a practical political task, one that unfolds in time and space, and an undertaking that can only be realised in active practice; nevertheless, we can be guided by principles and characteristics thrown up by the practical task itself, and distilled from informed and engaged reflections from, and comparative analysis of this practice.

The dominant narrative about movements in Nigeria, is around ethnic and religious movements; they are the most visible in media coverage, as well as in academic and national discourses. This has helped to create a situation where social movements have come to be largely identified as ethnic and religious movements. This may not be unconnected with the fact that other types of social movements, the ones that are Pan Nigeria and promote the rights of citizens and residents, exist on the periphery of power, even though their focus, and most of their efforts is directed at engaging political power in order to challenge abuses and injustices in society.

What has not helped, is also the confusion caused by the conflation of Social Movements with NGOs and CSOs; as well as with campaigns and mass protests. Whereas CSOs and NGOs can and do sometimes play an enabling role in initiating and or supporting Social Movements, NOGs and CSOs are not Social Movements.

It is important that our intervention does not blur the distinction between Civil Society Organisations like NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, etc, and Social Movements. It is important that our interventions enhance rather than erase the identity, or undermine the autonomy of Social Movements.

It is also clear that channeling support to Social Movements through local and national CSOs who may be closer to the Social Movements, operate in the same specific space as the Social Movement, and

whose personnel may be members and or activists and active supporters of the Social Movements, could be a way to explore to direct targeted, deliberate, intentional, and appropriate support to Social Movements, ensuring a flexible, but coordinated decentralized support mechanism that is easily accessible to Social Movements at the point of need.

Finally, given the current context of Social Movements and social movement organising, it is also necessary that support should not only be cocreated with the social movements, but that it should also include developing capacity for building strategic alliances and partnerships among the social movements.

Finally, Social Movements by their very nature are inherently political, and as such they often tend to be anti-establishment and anti-status quo in their orientation and politics, as well as non-conformist in their organisational forms. These are the conditions best suited to achieving their aims, since they are struggling against entrenched injustices, backed up by entrenched power relations. Even when a movement in not progressive, and seeks to preserve entrenched privileges, gained at the expense of the disadvantage of others, such a movement is still anti-establishment, because the trend in achieving social justice, equity and inclusion, not only undermines the status quo, it also shakes up the establishment.

However, to say that the organisational forms of social movements are non-conformist, is not to say that movements are unorganised, nor should that be taken as evidence of preferred absence of organisational form for social movements.

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