

Power and Protest in a Rural Marketplace: Perspective on Local Governance and Conflict Management in Sokoto, Northwest Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examines the nature and character of rural markets and conflict management by local authorities in northern Nigeria. The central thesis of this paper is that although rural market communities in northern Nigeria are challenged by unequal power relations, their choices are not limited by their powerlessness in negotiating with local authorities. Two conclusions are drawn from paper: First, is that market protest in Sokoto State exposed the limit of predatory use of power by local authorities as demonstrated by peasant capacity to defy coercive mobilization to ventilate accumulated grievances through boycott of official markets and the creation of rebellious ones. Secondly, market protest in Sokoto State has underscored the economic importance of market in rural Nigeria being the only means of converting the fruits of agricultural labor into economic value. The desire of local traders to express resentments against over taxation transformed marketplace from trading avenue to arena of contestation, struggle and resistance.

Keywords: Power, Protest, Markets, Conflict, Local Governance, Rebellion

Introduction

Peasant protest against the state has manifested itself in a variety of ways in northern Nigeria from resistance to austere economic policies or state-led capitalist interventions through the boycott of official markets to creation of rebellious ones. In Nigeria, open air markets are conflict flashpoints because they pool together large number of people of diverse identities in congested areas. Over the years, debates among conflict analyst focuses on the issue of whether marketplace conflicts in rural Africa is driven by structural factors such as official corruption or greed of powerful individuals who capitalizes on informal dynamics to further their interests. It is pertinent to stress that local political and economic elites in rural Nigeria have used markets as center of patronage for the reward and appeasement of political allies, friends and relatives and also as a source of personal enrichment. Power relations in Nigerian marketplaces thus generate not just cooperation but conflicts of varying degrees between local authorities and market unions, indigenes and migrant's traders, buyers, vendors and porters among others. Also, conflict and consensus intersect in a complex ways market place. Local authorities, market unions and influential traders enmeshed in patron-client relation may use their power and energy for fueling conflict just as they can also use it build consensus. Thus, despite open air markets being locus of conflicts and power struggles, they are also potential cooperation and mediation spaces.

The objectives of this paper can be summarized in three-fold: First, is to provide a general overview of conflict dynamics in northern Nigerian rural markets. Second, is to identify, describe and analyze factors and forces behind mass boycott of official markets and the creation of rebellious ones in two local communities of Sokoto State. Third, is to provide critical perspectives on the dynamics of local governance and conflict management in Sokoto northwest Nigeria. Thus, the basic questions to explore are: What are the drivers of conflicts in northern Nigeria's rural markets? What was the role of power and powerlessness in the pattern of rural market protest in Sokoto state? How did the character of local governance in Sokoto state contribute to escalation or de-escalation of market protests? In what specific manner did local authorities reacted to market protests in *Tambuwal* and *Gudu* communities? To what extent did nonviolence tactics employed by market community defied coercive mobilization by local authorities? The rest of the paper is sub-divided into six sections: section two provides conceptual and theoretical underpinning for the paper; section three analyzes socio-economic context of Sokoto examining the dynamics of local governance and rural markets. The fourth section analyzed two cases of market protests. The fifth section examined protest and crisis management strategies adopted by local authorities and the sixth sections concludes the paper.

Power and Protest in Rural Communities: Conceptual and Theoretical Frame of analysis

The concepts of power and powerlessness are crucial to the understanding of rural market conflicts embedded in manipulation, competition, contestation and struggles. Fisher et al (2000) has argued that conflict is centered on the search for more power and the fear of losing it. According Hay, (1997) power is a question of agency and is fundamentally bound up with the idea of the victory of the agent over the subject. Conversely, powerlessness may refer to lack of agency or capacity to transform agency into action. Theoretical debate on the power is generally dominated by two perspectives: the pluralistic perspective hinged on dispersion of power within socio-

economic formations and the critical power perspective which emphasized power reproduction among few. Theoretical views held by pluralists see power as legitimate product of decision making process in a level playing arenas. The works of American political scientist and sociologist Dhal (1957), Polby (1959) and Parson (1963) were concerned with the idea that power is produced or created by civil society and can be expanded through same avenue such that the gain in power by some is not necessarily at the expense of other. Within these constructs, powerlessness is explained as product of apathy, indifference or lack of interest in participating in decision making process. This perspective has been criticized for espousing a narrow aspect of power relationships which fail to ask important questions about winners or loser in a given social context.

From a diversified and critical power perspective, Bachrach and Baratz (1962) have argued that the purpose of power in social relation is to prevent the powerless from participating in decision and to obtain his passive agreement. Gaventa(1989) further stressed that power relations in any given social context only serves to reinforce vulnerability of the powerless who is manipulated to internalize rule of game of the powerful. Theoretical insights stemming from the critical power perspective above explains power dynamics in rural Nigeria. Although agrarian social relations are generally regarded as fairly egalitarian because of communal nature of livelihoods, power asymmetries prevails as part of the social dynamics. Agrarian populace in northern Nigeria is not only confronted with unequal power relations but their choices are circumscribed by weak agency and powerlessness. Understanding agrarian power relations in Nigeria thus requires raising fundamental questions: who does what; who owns what and what they do with it? As Gaventa(1989) wrote, it is necessary to distinguish between owners of agrarian productive forces (those who employ wage labor) from those whose labor is being appropriated; those who have valuable outside options and those whose livelihoods depends solely on local conditions. In Nigerian rural settings, traditional form of power relationship based on land holding still persist yet modern patronage system based on political affiliations and connection with higher elites has become important source of power in contemporary times. Becoming a local politician or affiliating oneself with the ruling political party is one way of gaining from local patronage system. Local elite with productive forces and patronage options often use their power for personal and partisan advantages and towards the social quiescence of the powerless.

Conflict manifests itself in a variety of forms and protest is one of its manifestations. Lipsky (1968) conceptualized protest as “a mode of political action oriented toward objection to one or more policies, a condition characterized by showmanship undertaken to obtain rewards from political or economic systems. Roudier(1977) further specified four conditions under which protest may occur: when normal channels of political communication seem to be blocked, when resources seem inadequate for normal conflict tactics and when additional resources such as public interest is needed to be mobilized through protest. Protest can take the form of direct action, which may manifest itself in violence or nonviolence modes. Direct action, as Fairchild (1977) put it is the resort to demonstrations, rallies, marches, sit-ins, hunger strikes, vigils, strikes, sabotage, and boycott and in extreme cases creation of parallel or alternative economic institutions. Sharp (1973) asserts the efficacy of nonviolent struggle as a means of wielding even greater power if applied cleverly and fearlessly. Earlier, Gandhi(1938) advance the efficacy of non-violence when he opined that “nonviolence begins in the heart where we renounce the violence within us then it moves out with active nonviolence to our families, local communities, cities nations and the world”(Ghandhi,1938:123).

There are divergent views on the degree of protest participation. Political scientists, Verba, Kay and Henry (1995) and Sociologist McAdam(1996) have advanced three explanatory variables on protest participation: “Biological availability, “political opportunity” and “mobilization and framing structure”. Verba et al (1995) argued that whether or not individual participate in protest depends on personal constrain that may increase the cost or participation such as full time employment and family responsibilities. Schussman and Soule (2005) further argued that the youth, irrespective of biographical availability are likely to be active participants in protest. Suffice to argue that events of the last few years from Arab spring in the Middle East through multi-faceted protests in sub-Saharan Africa have shown that people all ages can be active participants in organized protest. Mobilization structure and framing process as McAdam(1996) argued involved the social construction of perception of grievance and optimistic solutions mirrored to appeal to emotion of groups towards collective action. Snow, et al(1980) has argued that even the most motivated, infuriated and risk inclined person can only participate in protest if they are informed and this can only occur through prior contact with a recruitment agent.

Protest, known as ‘tawaye’ in northern Nigeria’s political parlance is regarded as the highest form of disloyalty to constituted authority; an antithesis of ‘biyayya’ (loyalty) upon which the traditional pre-colonial system of governance was grounded. In Nigerian rural communities dominated by a stratum of chiefs, a highly personalized relation prevails in which peasant indifference and loyalty to chiefs or local elite is perceived as the best way of ensuring their day-to-day livelihoods. This subservient nature of social relations has been linked to sub-culture that socialize the rural populace into accepting the legitimacy of elitist political system and deterring meaningful agitation for socio-political change. According to Muhammad (2007) acquiescence of agrarian peasants could be convincingly established by drawing attention to the prevalence of tendency to attribute every

event including the failure of the state to ‘kadara’ (fate). Thus, acquiescence and subservience of ‘talakawa’ (peasants) serves as a safety valve granting legitimacy to existing socio-political systems regardless of their inadequacies. The unequal power relationships and culture of acquiescence makes organized protest a rare phenomenon in rural Nigeria occurring only in dire circumstances. Local elites tend to overcome protesting tendencies that the peasant may initiate by patronizing or interfering with his means of gaining resources and capability. Thus, rural populace in Nigeria have remained chained to local elite exploitative grip who uses their power for partisan and personal advantages at the expense of local public good.

Sokoto State: Context, Local Governance and Rural Markets

Sokoto State is located in the geographical fringe of northern Nigeria and is bordered in the north by Niger Republic, in the west by northern Nigerian states of Niger, Kebbi and Zamfara States. The name Sokoto (Which is a modern/Anglicized version of a local name *Sakkwato*) is of Arabic origin, depicting ‘suk’ or market. The state was created in 1976 metamorphosing from its status as the north-western region encompassing large expanse of areas now split into five states. Being the center of a pre-colonial Islamic Caliphate, Sokoto is an important seat of Islamic authority in modern Nigeria. The Sultan of Sokoto is the spiritual leaders of an estimated 78 million Nigerian Muslims and a very influential person in the Nigerian political and spiritual landscape. The economy of Sokoto is characterized by a large rural, mostly agriculture based sector which is home to about three-fourths of the peasant immersed in agricultural activities. The major ethnic groups in Sokoto includes: the *Hausas* and *Gobirawas* who are largely sedentary and are engaged in farming and commerce; nomadic *Fulanis* who are mostly cattle breeders and the *Tuaregs* who are largely herdsmen rearing camels and donkeys and mostly found in the northern part of areas close to Niger republic. A secondary economic activity in Sokoto includes commerce and transportation. Socio-economic development in Sokoto State is hampered by weak industrial base, untapped agricultural potential, poverty among other human development deficits.

Constitutionally, local government is the third tier in Nigerian federal structure. Yet as the realities of local-central relation suggest, local political and administrative systems in Nigeria are structured as appendage of sub-national states. Since the return to democracy in 1999, the ruling class in Nigeria has implemented a fiscal and legislative policy which rather than enable local governments asserts their autonomy annexes and treat them like fiefdoms instead of autonomous entities. By creating local institutions that are upwardly accountable to the central political forces rather than downward to the local population, the Nigeria ruling class perpetuates a culture of irresponsibility and unaccountability. The failure of Nigerian central ruling class to create local political system with fiscal and legislative autonomy and capacity for harnessing local resources perpetuates poverty and underdevelopment in the rural sector. Governance at local level is not only predatory in nature but makes for the presence of political and administrative elite who are divorced from orientation of rural peasant. Also, politics of “state-based accumulation” has led to the entrenchment of culture that justified the right of those in powers or with access to power to expropriate public resources without being responsible for public good.

Markets in northern Nigeria are often alluded to in a popular Hausa proverb as ‘Tumbin giwa’ meaning ‘elephant tummy’. Allusion to elephant tummy portrays market as arena encompassing all sort of diversity of human beings, ideas, goods and services (Lyon, et al, 2006). In Sokoto state, rural marketing chains are complex networks involving influx of migrants from adjacent Niger republic. Besides being arena for exchange of goods and services, rural markets in Sokoto can be considered as a place where profiteering occurs via both legal and illegal activities including vending, hawking, junk collecting, black marketeering and sale of smuggled goods. Diversity and identity variables such as indigene, non-indigenes, and migrant and settlers dichotomies are brought to the forefront in the struggles over strategic positions in marketplace. Struggles over market power, market access and market space which occurs along commodity chains contributes to conflict (Porter, 2005 et al). As is the case with social relations outside the marketplace, discriminatory practices are entrenched in which traders considered as non-indigenes or migrants are denied or shunted out of access to privileges which are seen as the sole and exclusionary right of indigenes.

As is the case with other regions of Nigeria, rural markets in Sokoto are characterized by informality and patron-client relations between local authorities, market union and traders. The high degree of informality in rural markets elicits avoidance of regulations and elements of illegality and corruption manifested in the self-seeking and rent-seeking behaviors of local authorities, market unions and managers (Porter, et al 2005). As Lyon (2006) et al argued informality in rural markets provides advantages in terms of flexibility in trade, yet it breeds greed, grievances and conflict. Greed and grievance manifest in corrupt processes of revenues collection, plot and stall allocation and management. Greed and corruption are even more manifest in market infrastructural spending and in the manipulation of space allocations. Usman (2006) study of market stalls allocation in 30 markets across northern Nigeria reveal that in almost all markets (even in cases where balloting systems were used) manipulation in favor of those with access to local council patronage prevailed. Poor local government investments in market infrastructure often lead to precarious trading conditions. Thus, trading in rural markets is done in physically uncomfortable settings such as congested spaces, small sized stalls often with leaked roofs,

poor ventilation and unsanitary conditions. Most rural markets in Sokoto remain simplistic and disorganized with large portion being makeshift construction in open spaces posing severe challenges of flood during raining seasons.

Market revenues are significant conduit for greed, grievance and corruption with local authorities treating it as personal booty. While Nigerian local government financial memorandum provides a system of internal control, personalization of governance by local authorities aids the conversion of market revenues into private coffers. Muhammad (2007) reported how a local council chairman in Sokoto state directed revenue officials to supply his household with ten chickens daily and to pay certain individual specific amount of money from the proceeds of market revenues. Informality and lack of effective systems for equitable tax assessments and collections allows revenues officials to operate with great deal of discretion and to engage in fraudulent activities leading to double taxation. Cattle dealers have borne much of the burden of this fraudulence and have paid tax three times on a single animal. They have to pay tax while entering the market; at the animal section of the market (Uraku/Kara) and if they stayed overnight when leaving for another market (Muhammad, 2007). On the part of commodity traders, they often employ three unlawful means to facilitate what Muhammad (2007) termed “disguised tax evasion”. Disguised tax evasion take three- pronged patterns: first, traders pay the exact amount of levy demanded by the revenue collectors but declined to collect the official receipt. Second, they patronize revenue collectors in addition to paying the exact amount of tax in order to influence future tax assessment and collection. Third, they pay less than the amount of tax required by the revenue collectors by indicating willingness to forfeit the right to receive official receipts.

Protest and the Creation of Rebellious Markets in *Tambuwal* and *Gudu*

Sokoto State can arguably be described as inhabited by a religiously inclined and largely acquiescent population. Yet, protests of diverse causation, manifestation, and outcomes dot the history of Sokoto State from the infamous *Bakolori* uprising of 1989 (which led to the massacre of 387 people) to political and religiously inspired protests in Sokoto metropolis. This section provides an overview of two cases of market protest that occurred at different times in *Tambuwal* and *Gudu* local government areas. The former occurred during military regime in 1998 while the later happened in 2011 in a democratic era. On both occasions, peasant traders protested and boycotted official markets in favor of what was referred to as ‘kasuwar tawaye’ - rebellious markets. At the height of Structural Adjustment programme, military governor of Sokoto State directed local government authorities to increase local levies and fees in order to raise revenues for financing recurrent and capital expenditures. As is the case with military regimes, which are hardly rooted in element of choice or social contract with citizenry, the decision to raise taxes was imposed without due consultations with market community.

In line with these directives, most local councils set up revenue mobilization task force. *Tambuwal* local government council responded to the call with the commissioning of a revenue mobilization committee and taskforce. To facilitate the operation of the task force, revenue mobilization teams charged with the responsibility for tax assessment and collection in the markets were formed and deployed to revenue points. All tax concessions were cancelled and levies were collected both at the entrance and exit of *Tambuwal* market. The new tax regime provided revenue officials in *Tambuwal* with opportunity to further engage in fraudulent and extortionist activities threatening non-compliant traders with confiscation of their stalls or trading plots. Some revenue officials resorted to over-assessment and over-taxation in order to get extra cash to keep for themselves. Market community was also subjected to extortion by local security formations en-route to the market. Before reaching the market, local traders had to pass through numerous checkpoints mounted by the police and vehicle inspection officers (VIOs) who intimidate and exploit them at the first opportunity.

As traders in *Tambuwal* market felt that they could no longer afford to make further sacrifices, they decided to complain to a traditional leader and District head of *Tambuwal*. In their interface with the community leader, the traders bemoaned extortionist activities of revenue officials and called on local authorities to scrap the unpopular tax policy and revert to status quo. They also called on local authorities to dismiss all corrupt revenue officials and threatened to boycott official market if the local authorities failed to meet their demands. Local authorities and revenue mobilization committee became factionalized by the grievance of market community. One faction favored the review of the unpopular tax policy and the adoption of a more tolerant policy which will take into consideration the legitimate concerns and grievances of traders. The other faction insisted that since the tax policy enhanced the revenue raising capacity of the local council it should be pursued to its logical conclusion. After series of complaint by market community which fell on the deaf ears of local authorities, peasant traders in official market decided to form a rebellious market in *Maisheku* village which later became known as *Dadin-Kowa* market.

According to Muhammad (2007) the creation of rebellious market in *Maisheku* appeared to be spontaneous rather than a clearly thought out event. Some of the traders provided the lead simply by off-loading and displaying their goods in an open space at the market-less village of *Maisheku* and others traders followed suit. Partisans of rebellious market conducted market activities peacefully and avoided anything which could

flare up conflagration with either the managers of official market or security forces. The rebellious market in *Maisheku* village grew from strength to strength while the official market in *Tambuwal* experiences a serious decline in number of traders. Even the package of incentives offered to remnant traders by local authorities failed to help official market in *Tambuwal* cut its losses. Moreover, the peasant traders in rebellious *Dadin-Kowa* market peacefully resisted attempt by local authorities to coerce them into patronizing the official market.

In 2007, at the peak of electioneering campaigns in Sokoto State, a local politician vying for council chairmanship promised market community in *Gudu* an indefinite tax holiday if elected. When he got elected he declared tax free markets. Contrary to what is obtained in other climes, where tax is integral part of governance strategies for service and development, local councils like *Gudu* with no viable productive base depend largely on intergovernmental fiscal transfers from the federation account. Thus, it was easy for the council chairman to declare tax holiday because 98% of funding for running local governments trickles down in form monthly subvention from the federation account. At the expiration of the Chairman's tenure in 2011, his successor decided to reverse the tax holiday policy. The new council chairman directed the reactivation of all revenue points in *Gudu* market and established a revenue taskforce to enforce the new policy. All tax concessions were cancelled and revenue was collected from traders at officially designated places. Market community resisted the attempt to re-introduce tax collection and for several days they clashed with revenue officials. After 7 days of clash with local authorities and police, traders decided to borrow a leaf from *Tambuwal* experience by creating a rebellious market in *Balle* village. Unlike the case of *Tambuwal* where rebellious market grew spontaneously, local traders met severally to decide on suitable location and date for kick-starting a rebellious market.

Market protest in *Gudu* local government was similar to *Tambuwal* in terms of peasant mobilization for collective action. Yet, the efficacy of peasant protests in both *Tambuwal* and *Gudu* was a product of six complex set of factors: The first one, which relate only to *Tambuwal* was the non-violent manner in which partisans of rebellious markets conducted themselves. A second factor was the use of religion for mobilizing public sentiments against official markets and in giving protest ideological and emotional appeal. In Sokoto and northwest Nigeria, Islamic religion influences public opinion and plays a very important role in shaping people's ideals and actions. Moreover, Islam provides dual symbols of political mobilization in the defense of a regime that is perceived as possessing the necessary legitimacy or in opposition to a regime that is perceived as having forfeited that legitimacy by no longer being Islamic (Jega, 1997). Thus, during the protest in *Tambuwal*, religious proselytization by salafist clerics who described official revenue as 'Maks' (extortion) played a significant role in attracting much sympathy for protest and creation of rebellious markets. Salafist clerics argued that the boycott of official markets is consistent with Islamic institution of Hijrah (severing of relationships) recommended under an overwhelming oppression and exploitation. Thus, many peasant traders in *Tambuwal* boycotted the official markets and support the rebellious markets because they thought it was worthwhile to do so from the standpoint of Islam (Muhammad, 2007).

A third factor is the absence of a viable market in the communities where rebellious markets were established, a factor which according to Muhammad (2007) played a prominent role in their willingness of local traders to rally in its defense. A fourth factor is the simplicity of establishing rural market in northern Nigeria which does not require the building of much complex structure. The most important prerequisite for establishing a rural market is a suitable location. For people to operate in a rural market all that is need is make-shift stalls, using tables that are more or less sheltered or even the display of goods on the ground in sacks, basins or baskets. Finally, one critical factor relating to both *Tambuwal* and *Gudu* protests was the general feeling that local government is disconnected from citizenry and the perception of revenue officials are corrupt. This view is linked to the view that substantial portion of revenues collected from rural markets goes into private pockets rather than local public purse. In *Gudu* an explanation for violent mode of market protest could arguably be sought in the political space provided by democracy and the way and manner local authorities responded to initial resentment by market communities toward re-introduction of market levies.

Protest and Crisis Management by Local Authorities

In Nigeria, decades of military dictatorship has fermented a culture of impunity as part of culture of protest management. Thus, from popular protests that dot the Nigerian political landscape as from late 1960's down to the contemporary times, state response to protest has taken tri-pronged pattern: police repression or crackdown, deployment of retaliatory violence and co-optive and accommodative strategies of pacifying or prevailing over protest organizers. The dynamics of protest management both in the old and new Sokoto State does not diverge from the above trend. With regard to market protest in the two case study communities (*Tambuwal* and *Gudu*) the boycott of official markets presented local authorities with the frightening prospect of losing a viable source of power and patronage. Prior to the boycott of official market in *Tambuwal* local authorities turned a blind eye towards legitimate grievances of market community against unfair taxation and arbitrariness of its collection. Four conflict management measures were adopted by local authorities as local traders overflowed rebellious market and deserted official one in *Tambuwal*.

The first strategy was that of coercive mobilization; local authorities initially characterized rebellious market as illegal and treated its partisans as criminal and subversive. The police and local vigilante groups were deployed as a strategy of intercepting traders and obstructing movement of goods to the rebellious *Dadin-Kowa* market. When it dawned on local authorities in *Tambuwal* that coercive strategy did not deter traders from patronizing the rebellious market, a collaborative stance became a viable option. Local authorities began to negotiate with market union leaders and partisans of rebellious market. Two sticking points emerged during negotiations and crisis talks: first, was the consensus that protests was caused by unpopular tax and illegal extraction of levies. A second issue relates to the question of legality of rebellious markets created. An important aftermath of negotiations in *Tambuwal* was the decision of local authorities to set up a committee to investigate allegations leveled against revenue officials in the official market. At the end of investigations, the committee found all the members of the revenue team guilty. It was recommended that all senior staff in the team be demoted to a lower grade levels. A fourth conflict management style adopted in *Tambuwal* was strategy of conciliation. In their efforts to conciliate, *Tambuwal* local government authorities sought the intervention of Sokoto State Government in facilitating cross community acceptance of consensus reached during negotiations.

Despite the concerted efforts on the part of Sokoto State government to the play the role of a neutral conciliator and to reconcile conflicting interests, the question of illegality of rebellious market continued to be the major sticking point. At the end of the conciliatory meetings, a win-win solution allowing traders to patronize both the official and rebellious market was reached. This win-win solution advanced by the State government was not satisfactory to some section of local elite in *Tambuwal*. They blamed government for treating partisans of rebellious market with kid gloves, insisting that government should have closed and take punitive measures against partisans of rebellious market. According to Muhammad (2007), series of questions arise from this critique of the way the state government managed *Tambuwal* market conflict. First, is whether it was sensible for local authorities to use massive force to clampdown on a non-violent protest. Second, relates to the cost of coercive mobilization which was expensive in terms of number of security personnel, stability, and credibility of local authorities. Muhammad (2007) further shed light on the rationality of Sokoto State government in adopting a win-win approach to the management of *Tambuwal* market conflict:

“...Sokoto state government did what was seen to be in its best interest of all by recognizing both the official and rebellious markets..... there is no evidence that alternative measure would have been more effective in resolving the conflict. The outcome of previous reconciliation efforts was hardening of stands on all sides with each conflict party believing its reputation, pride and credibility were at stake.. the ball was therefore in the court of the critics of Sokoto state government approach to show whether there was any other way of amicable resolving the conflict” (Muhammad, 2007:136).

Protest management in *Gudu* diverged slightly from *Tambuwal*. Local authorities in *Gudu* took a competitive and coercive stance from the inception of the protest, deploying force in the bid to reverse the boycott of official market. They resorted to punitive measures against partisans of rebellious market ranging from arrest, confiscation of farmland and detention of market union leaders. For eight months protesting traders boycotted both the official market and rebellious one patronizing market elsewhere in nearby *Tangaza*. The market conflict in *Gudu* was eventually laid to rest through capacity building activities of USAID/Leadership, Empowerment, Advocacy and Development (LEAD) project. LEAD built capacity of local authorities, provided technical support for the systematization of revenue management, leading to break from old pattern of market management in favor of logic of participatory mode. This was achieved through series of technical trainings and workshops on revenue management and participatory town hall meetings converging local authorities, market unions and community leaders. During these participatory interfaces, the significance of tax as instrument of local development were stressed and some consensus on revenue and market management were reached. First, it was agreed that partisans of rebellious market revert to the official market. Second, local council should invest in critical sections of official market before it should resume tax collections. Thirdly, an inclusive revenue generation committee was established comprising both local official and trade unions. Some visible services improvement in the official market helped in calming frayed nerves and in bringing normalcy to official market in *Gudu*.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This paper revealed how coercive mobilization and predatory use of state power by local authorities in northern Nigerian state of Sokoto was met by resistance of local traders. The desire of local traders to express resentments against over taxation by local authorities transformed marketplace from trading avenue to arena of contestation, struggle and resistance. Although the boycott of official market and the creation of rebellious ones imply *Tawaye*, (rebellion) an unacceptable behavior in eyes of local elite, it created avenue for the ventilation of accumulated grievances that has been long suppressed. The efficacy of market protest in case study communities (*Tambuwal and Gudu*) was a product of interacting factors and socio-political context in which they occurred: the non-

violence tactics adopted by peasant traders, the simplicity of rural market which eased the creation of rebellious ones and the overwhelming influence of religion. Market protest both in *Tambuwal* and *Gudu* had ideological grounding in Islam which permeates every department of life in Sokoto State. Religious proselytization by some Salafist scholars who described official revenue as “Maks”(extortion) gave protest ideological impetus, emotional appeal and direction.

Moreover, in *Tambuwal*, protesters adopted a decentralized and loosely coordinated strategy that undermined the capacity of local authorities to pin-down its leaders. The reverse was the case in *Gudu* where protesters adopted a violent mode that subject it leaders to arrest and detention. Although, nonviolence in *Tambuwal* was based on emotional outburst of aggrieved peasant traders, it could be argued that local traders were conscious of the futility of engaging in violence protest in a military regime that possesses enormous instrument of repression. In *Gudu* an explanatory variable for violent mode of market protest could arguably be sought in the political space provided by democracy and the way and manner local authorities responded to initial resentment by market communities toward re-introduction of tax. Unlike in *Tambuwal*, local authorities in *Gudu* did not offer opportunities for negotiation and dialogue rather it resorted to taking punitive measures against protesters. Both protest in *Tambuwal* and *Gudu* were triggered by perception of corrupt and inefficient local governance system coupled with resentment towards local authorities over higher levies and taxes. Local authorities adopted several conflict management strategies ranging from inaction through coercive mobilization, conciliation, compromise and adoption of participatory market governance processes advanced by donor projects. The first two strategies have their limitations, failings and inadequacies. On one hand, coercive mobilizations are antithetical to the credible mechanism for mediating conflict and seeking enduring solutions to conflicts. On the other hand, repressive tactics increased the cost of governance in terms of the expenditure on the deployment of police and reinforce the perception of a local authority disconnected from the plight of citizenry.

Two conclusions can be drawn from the above: First, is that market protest in *Tambuwal* and *Gudu* exposed the limit of predatory use of state power as demonstrated by peasant capacity to create alternative markets that challenge existing order or ways of doing thing. Secondly, market protest in Sokoto State has underscored the economic importance of market in rural Nigeria being the only means of converting the fruit of agricultural labor into economic value. This paper is concluded by way of the following recommendations: First, there is need for a clean break with the old patterns of conflict management by local authorities involving coercive mobilization in favor of logic of conflict management that entails dialogue, negotiation. Second, participatory modes of market governance exemplified by LEAD project in *Gudu* should continue to drive local market management. Third, local authorities should adopt a client approach to market management one that is tilted towards the conversion of tax payer’s monies into visible infrastructure and services improvements.. Fourth, local authorities should embrace fiscal responsibility and local tax policies that are fair, equitable and driven by mechanisms for checking the excesses of revenue officials.

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