

Collective Behaviour and Social Movements: a Conceptual Review

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Abstract

Collective behaviour and social movements have been instrumental in engendering social change, including regime change, and impacting the policy space in many societies. In fact, in the past 200 years, they have become a part of the popular and global expression of dissent. The political class, supported by elite groups and state institutions, most times, does not concede to popular demands until some form of public agitation and ruckus is witnessed. Therefore, social researchers have contemplated the rationale behind social change or social statics. This is because a decipherment of what social change drivers are will help social researchers better understand these “forces”, know how to manage or regulate them and how or when to predict social change or otherwise. In Nigeria, an instance of social dynamics was the role Organised Labour and Civil Society groups played in vociferously demanding the return to democratic rule after many years under statocratic hegemony. This was achieved through the expression of different organised collective actions which forced the military overlords in power to acquiesce and capitulate to democratic governance. Akin to this, the passage of the Freedom of Information (FOI) bill by the legislature in Nigeria was an upshot of years of agitation by the intelligentsia, members of the fourth estate of the realm and the civil society sector. The FOI bill was conceived with the aim to hold the political and economic managers of the state more accountable to the people. This paper seeks to carry out a conceptual review of collective behaviour and social movements with some reflections on the Nigerian experience.

Keywords: Collective Behaviour; Social Movements; Organised Labour; Civil Society; Democratic Rule.

INTRODUCTION

Different social researchers have contemplated the rationale behind social change or social statics. This is because a decipherment of what social change drivers are would help social researchers better understand these “forces”, know how to manage or regulate them and how or when to predict social change or otherwise. This quest occupied the mind of Comte, one of the founding fathers of sociology, who investigated social structure and how it influenced social stability and social dynamics. A modern example of social statics in Nigeria might be the refusal of the legislative arm of government to pass the bill on the legalisation of homosexual marriage in the country. If the bill had been passed, then it means that change has taken place in the social structure and the understanding of family and marriage in Nigeria might now be construed within the context of heterosexual and homosexual unions. However, the legislators, unwilling to draw the flak of many Nigerians whose religious sensibilities and conservative family outlook still remain inveterately pristine, decided to tow the line of majoritarian consensus and to maintain the status quo. Conversely, an example of social dynamics in Nigeria can be related to the role of Organised Labour and Civil Society groups in vociferously demanding the return to democratic rule. This was achieved through the expression of different organised collective actions which forced the military overlords in power to acquiesce and capitulate to civilian administration, especially return to democratic governance. Akin to this, the passage of the Freedom of Information (FOI) bill by the legislature in Nigeria was an upshot of years of agitation by the intelligentsia, members of the fourth estate of the realm and the civil society sector. The FOI bill was conceived with the aim to hold the political and economic managers of the state more accountable to the people.

Therefore, social researchers have been concerned about the role collectivities play in stimulating change through their actions. This is why the subject of collective behaviour and social movements is primal in understanding the whys, hows and whats that guide the expression or evolution of group actions in society and the types and theories that reinforce these. However, the causes and consequences of collective behaviour can be fascinating, terrifying or amusing. They can be violent and deadly or silly and harmless. Episodes of collective behaviour have been reported as long as there has been a written record of human activity. Throughout history, crowds of people have displayed behaviour that struck observers and sometimes the participants themselves as unusual, bizarre, deviant, unexpected or just plain odd (Phongpaichit, 1999; Rootes, 1990). Sometimes, too, there is concern on how collective behaviour maturates into social movements.

According to Christiansen (2009), there have been many social movements throughout history that have dramatically changed the societies in which they occurred. There have also been many failed social movements as well. He reckons that throughout the history of the United States alone, for instance, there have been a number of important and notable social movements. These movements have varied widely in their ideologies; some

movements have been revolutionary in their aims, some have advocated reforms to the existing system, and others still have been conservative in their orientation and have worked to oppose changes in society. Social movements have varied in scope as well. For example, many movements are limited to local policies while others have been international in their focus. Despite all of the differences in social movements though, Christiansen admits that there are important analytic similarities that social researchers have distinguished, especially with regard to the life cycle of a social movement.

Rootes (1990) contends that social movements have led to so many dramatic changes in societies around the globe, prompting scholars to spend a great deal of time trying to understand where they come from, who participates in them, how they succeed, and how they fail. He admits that much of what they have discovered is that social movements do not just happen; they require many resources and have many stages through which they develop. In other words, people do not simply suddenly become upset with a policy or even a ruling system and then instantly form a social movement with a coherent ideology that is capable of holding mass demonstrations or overthrowing an existing power structure. Instead, social movements grow through a phasal process.

In this article, the meaning, forms/types and theories of collective behaviour and social movements have been examined to throw more light on this all-important subject with some reflections on Nigeria.

Conceptualising Collective Behaviour and Social Movements

Like every social phenomenon, defining collective behaviour and social movements may be a handful because of the existing divergence of opinions. However, several good and apt definitions have been identified here. Collective behaviour refers to social processes and events which do not reflect existing social structure (laws, conventions, and institutions), but which emerge in a "spontaneous" way. According to Ginneken (2003), collective behaviour is an action which is neither conforming (in which actors follow prevailing norms) nor deviant (in which actors violate those norms). Tilly (1990) sees collective behaviour as involving the study of crowds, fads, disasters, panics and social movements. He argues that this behaviour may go on spontaneously and unpredictably in many geographical areas and involve very large numbers of people such as in the case of riots. He believes that the use of the terms "spontaneous," "emergent," "groundswell," "outburst," "outpouring," and "explosion" makes it increasingly difficult to study collective behaviour. Taking this argument further, Crossman (2013) sees collective behaviour as a type of social behaviour that occurs in crowds or masses. He identifies riots, mobs, mass hysteria, fads, fashions, rumour and public opinion as some of the forms of expressing this behaviour. He believes that people tend to surrender their individuality and moral judgment in crowds and give in to the hypnotic powers of leaders who shape crowd behaviour as they like. For Oliver (2008), collective behaviour is the relatively spontaneous and unstructured behaviour engaged in by large numbers of people who are reacting to a common stimulus. While she did not clarify what she meant by "a common stimulus", she may be referring to negative social issues that social groups are revolting against. At this juncture, it is important to point out that the common thread that runs through the various definitions is that collective behaviour is a collective action that is spontaneous, may lack organisation, may not be governed by established norms and may even border on the ludicrous.

In contrast, social movements, a type of collective behaviour, is a collective action that has purposeful direction and enjoys a good deal of internal order. Social movement is more or less a persistent and organised effort on the part of a relatively large number of people to bring about or resist social change. Tilly (2004) holds that social movements are a series of contentious performances, displays and campaigns by which ordinary people make collective claims on others. For Tilly, social movements are a major vehicle for ordinary people's participation in public politics. Goodwill & Jasper (2009) argue that social movements are a type of group action. However, they opine that social movements may involve large informal groupings of individuals or organisations which focus on changing, resisting, maintaining or undoing specific political or social issues. Goodwill & Jasper admit that modern movements often utilise technology and the internet to mobilise people globally. Thus, adapting to communication trends is a common theme among successful modern movements and research is beginning to explore how advocacy organisations linked to social movements use social media to facilitate civic engagement and collective action.

According to Freeman & Johnson (1999), social movements are not political parties or interest groups, which are stable political entities that have regular access to political power and political elites; nor are they mass fads or trends, which are unorganised, fleeting and without goals like collective behaviours. Instead, social movements are somewhere in between. De la Porta & Diani (2006, p. 54) add that social movements are social groups "involved in conflictual relations with clearly identified opponents; are linked by dense informal networks; (and they) share a distinct collective identity." Therefore, social movements can be thought of as organised yet informal social entities that are engaged in extra-institutional conflict that is oriented towards a goal. These goals can be either aimed at a specific and narrow policy or be more broadly aimed at cultural change. Put differently, social movements are large groups of people who are usually without political power and influence and so

decide to promote or resist social change through unconventional means. They identify a problem, determine that responsible parties are failing to address it adequately, and therefore take action, themselves. This view is also shared by Jasper (2004) who portrays social movements as sustained and intentional efforts to foster or retard social changes, primarily outside the normal institutional channels encouraged by authorities. "Sustained" implies that movements differ from single events such as riots or rallies. Their persistence often allows them to develop formal organisations, but they may also operate through informal social networks. "Intentional" links movements to culture and strategy: people have ideas about what they want and how to get it, ideas that are filtered through culture as well as psychology. Movements have purposes, even when these have to do with transforming members themselves (as in many religious movements) rather than the world outside the movement. Jasper contends that over the past 200 years, social movements have become part of a popular and global expression of dissent.

Distinction between Collective Behaviour and Social Movements

There are distinctions that stand collective behaviour and social movements apart. One, social movements have a higher degree of internal organisation more than collective behaviour. For instance, there is a difference between groups in Nigeria such as Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the Save Nigeria Group (SNG) and some expressions of collective behaviour such as the protest by students concerning the killing of one of their colleagues by a drunk driver or the gathering of concerned people at the scene of a fire incident or environmental disaster. The former have an element of internal organisation and cohesion while the latter are mere expressions of collective action directed at some stimuli. Two, social movements are typically of longer duration than collective behaviour that are known to be of a fleeting nature. Three, there seems to be a deliberate attempt to reorganise or defend society itself by social movements ala Save Nigeria Group than a spontaneous riot aimed at lynching a drunk driver that just killed an innocent pedestrian. Four, while social movements aim to achieve social or political goals through their group actions, some expressions of collective behaviour are nothing but ridiculous e.g. mob action during fuel scarcity involving the break-in of shops and looting of markets by street urchins or touts. Lastly, collective behaviour is mostly spontaneous while social movements are organised.

Reasons for the Study of Collective Behaviour and Social Movements

Collective behaviour and social movements are studied for the following reasons:

1. An understanding of the why, how and what collective behaviour and social movements are will lead to better crowd management, crowd control and the best way to deal with social movements when they do arise.
2. In more contentious settings such as riots or civil disorders, knowledge of crowd behaviour and social movements can reduce loss of lives and injury and help prevent conflict from escalating in a destructive way. Most loss of lives in Nigeria during riots or organised protests is not a fault of protesters but of control agents who, lacking experience in crowd control and holding discredited or inappropriate ideas about crowds, frequently overreacted.
3. The importance of understanding behaviour in disasters such as floods or fire outbreak is needed to better contain such disasters from affecting a greater number of citizens.
4. Apart from its direct usefulness, knowledge of collective behaviour is relevant to sociologists and other educated people as participants in a democratic society. It calls attention to some of the most basic questions about human beings such as: how is social order possible? How fragile is the social order and what happens when it breaks down, among others?
5. Collective behaviour deals with events of historical significance to a greater extent than almost any other area of sociological inquiry. Factual knowledge of these events is required if we are to know how to interpret, order and compare them.
6. Understanding modern history and the nature of mass industrial society (including the social change dynamics associated with industrialisation, urbanisation, and modernisation) requires some knowledge of, and a perspective upon, mass behaviour and movements.
7. Collective behaviour is a double-edged sword. It may be used for good or ill depending on the context, the goals one holds to be important and one's beliefs about the proper relationship between means and ends. It is intricately involved with issues of freedom and tyranny. While organisation and structure can be enemies of freedom, creativity and adaptability, collective behaviour can mean challenge to unjust authority, liberation and renewal. It may demonstrate humans at their most moral and heroic. But it can also involve destruction, irrationality, barbarism and the most self-serving and least honourable of human qualities.
8. Regardless of one's personal values, where one stands on a left-right continuum, and whether or not one sees oneself as an activist, in order to be an informed and reasonably autonomous citizen of a democratic society, some knowledge of mass behaviour and movements is essential. Society and human

beings within it have been and will continue to be subject to collective behaviour processes.

Forms of Collective Behaviour

The forms of collective behaviour are as follows:

Crowds have been acknowledged as the only class of events which all authors include under the rubric of collective behaviour. A crowd is a temporary gathering of people who share a common focus of attention and whose members influence one another. Herbert Blumer has identified four types of crowds, based in part on their level of emotional intensity. They include: the **casual** crowd, or a loose collection of people who have little interaction; the **conventional** crowd, resulting from deliberate planning of an event and conforming to norms appropriate to the situation; the **expressive** crowd, which forms around an event that has emotional appeal; and an **acting** crowd which is a crowd energetically doing something (Blumer, 1951). Crowds can change from one type to another. A fifth type, or **protest** crowd, not identified by Blumer, is a crowd which has some political goal. Some psychologists have claimed that there are three fundamental human emotions: fear, joy, and anger. Neil Smelser, John Lofland, and others have proposed three corresponding forms of the crowd: the panic (an expression of fear), the craze (an expression of joy), and the hostile outburst (an expression of anger) (Christiansen, 2009). Each of the three emotions can characterise either a compact or a diffuse crowd, the result being a scheme of six types of crowds. Lofland has offered the most explicit discussion of these types.

Mobs and Riots

When an acting crowd becomes violent it is classified as a **mob**, a highly emotional crowd that pursues some violent or destructive goal. Lynching is a notorious example in many Nigerian cities and towns. The inability of the police to arrest and punish violent criminals like armed robbers has resulted in some citizens taking the laws into their hands by lynching such criminals whenever they are caught. Lynching is one way some Nigerians exert social control over these criminals.

A violent crowd with no specific goal is termed a **riot**, or a social eruption that is highly emotional, violent, and undirected. Throughout history, riots have resulted from a collective expression against social injustice.

Fashions and Fads

These types tend to be more trivial in terms of their total impact on individual lives, but they are also included under the umbrella of collective behaviour. Unlike many collective episodes, which tend to be "crowd" phenomena, fads and fashions do not depend upon the physical proximity of participants and can affect the behaviour of individuals in widely dispersed circumstances. A **fad** is an unconventional social pattern that is enthusiastically embraced by a large number of people for a short time. This is sometimes referred to as crazes. While fads are truly "passing fancies," fashions tend to reflect fundamental human values and social patterns that evolve over time. These days it is common for people to use the phrase "As in..." or "Lol..." or "Dah..." **Fashions** tend to have longer duration than fads. However, fashion is a process, which means that it is a continuing state of change. Hemline length, lapel width, hair lengths, the style of eyelashes are some examples. Traditionally, it has been assumed that fashions were introduced by people of high social status and that they then filter downward. In many instances, this is true, but the filtering goes in the other direction as well. For example, some contemporary style of dress, shoes, and foods originated in the lower social classes and then filtered upwards.

Rumour and Gossip

Rumour, or unsubstantiated information spread informally, often by word of mouth, is another example of collective behaviour. Rumour has three essential characteristics: it thrives within a climate of ambiguity; it is changeable, and it is difficult to stop. Sometimes, the death or intimate stories of some celebrities have spread like wild fire among a particular population while such things might not be true. Closely related to rumour is **gossip**, or rumour about the personal affairs of others. Gossip is referred to as being more localised than rumour. Incidentally, it can be an effective means of social control.

Public Opinion and Propaganda

Public opinion is a form of highly dispersed collective behaviour. No one "public opinion" exists on key social issues, but rather is represented by a diversity of opinions. A public grows larger and smaller over time as interest in a particular issue changes. There is strong public opinion favouring a national dialogue involving all the constituent units or their representatives in Nigeria as a way of charting a path for future national engagement even though such is being resisted by the dominant class. **Propaganda** is defined as information presented with the intention of shaping public opinion. It can be accurate or false, positive or negative. Various forms exist from politics to advertising.

Panic and Mass Hysteria

Panic is a form of localised collective behaviour by which people react to some stimulus with emotional, irrational, and often self-destructive behaviour. Generally some threat provokes a panic, as in the case of a fire in a crowded theatre. **Mass hysteria** is a form of dispersed collective behaviour in which people respond to a real or imagined event with irrational, frantic behaviour such as the Bomb Blast that took place in Ikeja in 2001 that

led to irrational fears and killed many innocent Lagosians in Nigeria.

Social Movement Typologies

There are different types of social movements within societies. They can be categorised into the following typologies:

Alternative Social Movements

Alternative social movements are least threatening to the status quo and power structure because they only seek limited change in individuals and are not concerned with changing the system. Examples of such movement include NGOs and social organisations promoting citizen awareness regarding HIV-Aids and advocating safe sex, especially abstinence. Alternative movements tend to have a narrow focus of interest (one type of behaviour) and limit their action to that focus.

Redemptive Social Movements

Redemptive social movements have a limited focus (specific individuals) but by radically altering those individuals' behaviour, they seek to change the whole person. Fundamentalist religious movements and cults are examples of redemptive movements. By seeking to impose strict practice of the Sharia law in the Northern parts of Nigeria and by extension, the entire country, the Boko Haram sect represents a modern example of a redemptive social movement. These movements demand a complete individual transformation of their members or society or a radical inner change.

Reformative/Reactionary Social Movements

Reformative movements seek to change certain limited aspects of the social structure in order to improve society as a whole. Members of reformative movements usually try to achieve their goals and effect change from within the system; they do not try to destroy it. According to Oliver (2008), reformative movements use the legal system to promote their ideas and will try to challenge what they consider to be unfair laws. If they do resort to unconventional social actions (marches, sit-ins, demonstrations), they will try to avoid violence. Reformative movements are quite common in democratic countries because democracies guarantee freedom of speech and assembly and voluntary political participation. Reformative movements can either be progressive (promoting change) or reactionary (trying to resist change or reverse changes already in place). An example of a reformative social movement in Nigeria is the Save Nigeria Group which strongly believes and canvasses that certain reforms need to take place within the political and economic spaces if Nigeria is to make any meaningful progress. They pursue their goals using legal and other peaceful means.

Revolutionary/Transformative Social Movements

Revolutionary movements are not interested in working within the system. For members of such movements, the system itself is the problem and it cannot be fixed. Therefore, the only solution is to get rid of the system and replace it with a system that members think is better. Revolutionary movements are the most extreme of all social movements and they may openly advocate revolution, that is, the violent overthrow of an existing regime and the reorganisation of society as a whole. Again, the Boko Haram sect exemplifies a revolutionary social movement advocating for the division of Nigeria or the emplacement or enforcement of Sharia law on all Nigerians. Other examples of revolutionary movements in Nigeria are the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB). Such demands made by revolutionary social movements are utopian hence they might be described as utopian social movements.

Theories of Collective Behaviour and Social Movements

The need to consider theories of collective behaviour and social movements has raised some dust within the social movement sector. According to Rootes (1990), activists sometimes argue that sociological theories of social movements are mere academic parasitism and that what is needed, if theory is needed at all, is theory *for* social movements or theory for collective behaviour. For these activists, theory fashioned by people committed to social movements and designed to be useful to movement activists are preferred to theories that foster the careers of theorists. However, as Rootes argues, there is no inherent conflict between an interest in understanding the world and a determination to change it; whereas theory may be comfortably remote from action, action which is not informed by theoretical understanding will often be counterproductive. Consequently, the problem for the activist is to decide which of the variety of available theories is most likely to sustain effective action. The type of theory that has given theory a bad name with activists is, in general, a theory that is as unhelpful to social scientific understanding as it is to action. Below is a list of theories that try to provide more paradigmatic rationalisation of why and how collective behaviour and social movements exist in society.

Theoretical Paradigms on Collective Behaviour

The theories that have tried to expound collective behaviour are as follows:

Contagion Theory

This theory was formulated by Gustave Le Bon. In this theory, it is believed that crowds exert a hypnotic

influence on their members. Shielded by their anonymity, large numbers of people abandon personal responsibility and surrender to the contagious emotions of the crowd. A crowd thus assumes a life of its own, stirring up emotions, and driving people towards irrational, even violent action. Le Bon's Theory, although one of the earliest explanations of crowd behaviour, is still used by many people. Nevertheless, the theory has been criticised on the basis that the collective mind has not been documented by systematic studies. In addition, even though collective behaviour may involve strong emotions, such feelings may not necessarily be irrational.

Convergence Theory

Whereas the Contagion Theory states that crowds cause people to act in a certain way, Convergence theory states that people who want to act in a certain way come together to form crowds. It asserts that people with similar attributes find other like-minded persons with whom they can release underlying tendencies. For instance, labour movements, religious groups or some cultural associations may come together to push for change with regard to their vocations or interests. Their theory pontificates that people sometimes do things in a crowd that they would not have the courage to do alone because crowds can diffuse responsibility. Crowds also can intensify a sentiment simply by creating a critical mass of like-minded people.

Emergent-Norm Theory

This theory was promoted by Ralph Turner and Lewis Killian, who believe that crowds begin as collectivities composed of people with mixed interests and motives. Especially in the case of less stable crowds (expressive, acting and protest crowds), norms may be vague and changing, as when one person decides to break the glass windows of a store and others join in and begin looting people's goods. In short, people in crowds make their own rules as they act.

Theoretical Approaches on Social Movements

The following theories have tried to throw more light on what collective behaviour is and why they arise in society.

Deprivation Theory

According to Morrison (1978), the deprivation theory holds that social movements have their foundations among people who feel deprived of some good(s) or resource(s). According to this approach, individuals who are lacking some good, service, or comfort are more likely to organise a social movement to improve (or defend) their conditions. There are two significant problems with this theory. First, since most people feel deprived at one level or another almost all the time, the theory has a hard time explaining why the groups that form social movements do so when other people are also deprived. Second, Jenkins & Perrow (1977) argue that the reasoning behind this theory is circular (not logical) because often the only evidence for deprivation is the social movement. If deprivation is claimed to be the cause but the only evidence for such is the movement, the reasoning is circular. In Nigeria, the debouchment of the Boko Haram sect into the sociopolitical space was said to be a result of the deprivation and lack of education suffered by many northern lower classes. While this may be true, a closer look shows that there are also many segments of the Nigerian population in other parts of the country who are deprived of educational, political and economic benefits but have not chosen the violent and destructive path of the Boko Haram sect.

Marxist Theory

According to Karl Marx, the history of hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggle. Marx believes as long as the economic differentials between the dominant and dominated classes are wide and the dominated classes continue to suffer subjugation of their interests in the hands of the bourgeoisie, the proletariat will be left with no option but to band together to fight their oppressors. Marx proposes a classless society as the therapy for solving society's ills but to reach this utopia, workers or the dominated class need to overthrow the hawkish capitalist class and enforce a production system owned and managed by workers for the good of all. Although, the collapse of communist regimes in Russia and the former Soviet bloc did much damage to this Marxist typology of social change, Marxist approaches still command great influence in understanding and analysing the role of political economy and class differences as key forces in many historical and current social movements. They also continue to challenge approaches that are limited by their inability to imagine serious alternatives to consumer capitalist social structures.

Mass Society Theory

The mass society theory was fathered by Kornhauser (1959). He argued that social movements are made up of individuals in large societies who feel insignificant or socially detached. Social movements, according to this theory, provide a sense of empowerment and belonging that the movement members would otherwise not have. In sum, this theory argues that people join social movements to have a sense of belonging.

Structural Strain Theory

Smelser (1962) developed the social strain theory, also known as value-added theory. He proposed six factors that encourage social movement development:

1. Structural conduciveness; here people believe that their society has problems.

2. Structural strain; people experience one form of deprivation or discomfort or another.
3. Growth and spread of a solution; these same people propose solutions they feel could solve the problems already identified.
4. Precipitating factors; people wait for a catalyst to turn their discontent into a social movement;
5. Lack of social control; for the social movement to achieve its goal, it must operate within a context that would not bridle or repress its activities or isolate its members.
6. Mobilisation; this is when the people mobilise resources of people, money and others to pursue the goals of the organisation.

This theory has been criticised also for its reliance on the deprivation theory and social/structural strain for the underlying motivation of social movement activism. However, social movement activism is, like in the case of deprivation theory, often the only indication that there was strain or deprivation.

Resource Mobilisation Theory

The resource mobilisation theory emphasises the importance of resources in social movement development and success. Resources are understood here to include: knowledge, money, media, labour, solidarity, legitimacy, and internal and external support from powerful members of the elite. The theory argues that social movements develop when individuals with grievances are able to mobilise sufficient resources to take action. The emphasis on resources offers an explanation why some discontented/deprived individuals are able to organise while others are not.

Some of the assumptions of the theory include:

- There will always be grounds for protest in modern, politically pluralistic societies because there is constant discontent (i.e. grievances or deprivation); this de-emphasises the importance of these factors as it makes them ubiquitous;
- Actors are rational; they weigh the costs and benefits from movement participation;
- Members are recruited through networks; commitment is maintained by building a collective identity and continuing to nurture interpersonal relationships;
- Movement organisation is contingent upon the aggregation of resources;
- Social movement organisations require resources and continuity of leadership;
- Social movement entrepreneurs and protest organisations are the catalysts which transform collective discontent into social movements;
- The form of the resources shapes the activities of the movement (e.g., access to a TV station will result in the extensive use of TV media);
- Movements develop in contingent *opportunity structures* that influence their efforts to mobilise; as each movement's response to the opportunity structures depends on the movement's organisation and resources, there is no clear pattern of movement development nor are specific movement techniques or methods universal.

Critics of this theory argue that there is too much of an emphasis on resources, especially financial resources. Some movements are effective without an influx of money and are more dependent upon the movement members for time and labour e.g. the Save Nigeria Group in Nigeria. But this theory has some element of truth as most social movements need resources including the Boko Haram sect to prosecute their agenda.

Political Process Theory

The political process theory is similar to resource mobilisation in many regards, but tends to emphasise a different component of social structure that is important for social movement development, i.e. political opportunities. Political process theory argues that there are three vital components for movement formation: insurgent consciousness, organisational strength, and political opportunities. Insurgent consciousness refers back to the ideas of deprivation and grievances. The idea is that certain members of society feel like they are being mistreated or that somehow the system is unjust. The insurgent consciousness is the collective sense of injustice that movement members (or potential movement members) feel and serve as the motivation for movement organisation. This theory is applicable to the rise of the MASSOB as the movement feels a strong sense of marginalisation of the Igbo people within the Nigerian state. Organisational strength falls in line with resource-mobilisation theory, arguing that in order for a social movement to organise it must have strong leadership and sufficient resources. Political opportunity refers to the receptivity or vulnerability of the existing political system to challenge. This vulnerability can be the result of any of the following (or a combination thereof): (a) growth of political pluralism; (b) decline in effectiveness of repression (c) elite disunity; (d) the leading factions are internally fragmented; (e) a broadening of access to institutional participation in political processes; (f) support of organised opposition by some members of the elite.

Culture Theory

The culture theory builds upon both the political process and resource-mobilisation theories but extends them in two ways. First, it emphasises the importance of movement culture. Second, it attempts to address the free-rider

problem. Both resource-mobilisation theory and political process theory include a sense of injustice in their approaches. Culture theory brings this sense of injustice to the forefront of movement creation by arguing that, in order for social movements to successfully mobilise individuals, they must develop an *injustice frame*. An injustice frame is a collection of ideas and symbols that illustrate both how significant the problem is as well as what the movement can do to alleviate it. In emphasising the injustice frame, culture theory also addresses the free-rider problem which refers to the idea that people will not be motivated to participate in a social movement that will use up their personal resources (e.g., time, money, etc.) if they can still receive the benefits without participating. In other words, if person X knows that movement Y is working to improve environmental conditions in his neighbourhood, he is presented with a choice: join or not join the movement. If he believes the movement will succeed without him, he can avoid participation in the movement, save his resources, and still reap the benefits - this is free-riding. A significant problem for social movement theory has been to explain why people join movements if they believe the movement can/will succeed without their contribution. Culture theory argues that, in conjunction with social networks being an important contact tool, the injustice frame will provide the motivation for people to contribute to the movement.

Framing processes includes three separate components:

- Diagnostic frame: the movement organisation frames what is the problem or what they are critiquing;
- Prognostic frame: the movement organisation frames what is the desirable solution to the problem;
- Motivational frame: the movement organisation frames a "call to arms" by suggesting and encouraging that people take action to solve the problem.

New Social Movement Theory

New social movement theory, a development of European social scientists in the 1950s and 1960s, attempts to explain the proliferation of post-industrial and post-modern movements that are difficult to analyse using traditional social movement theories. Rather than being one specific theory, it is more of a perspective that revolves around understanding movements as they relate to politics, identity, culture, and social change. Some of these more complex interrelated movements include ecofeminism, which focuses on the patriarchal society as the source of environmental problems, and the transgender rights movement. Buechler (2000) suggests that there is need to look at the bigger picture in which these movements arise, i.e. there is need to focus on the macro-level and global analysis of social movements for a better understanding and interpretation.

Phases within the Social Movement Continuum

According to Christiansen (2009), Herbert Blumer was one of the earliest scholars to study social movement processes and he came up with four stages in the social movement lifecycle as follows: social ferment, popular excitement, formalisation and institutionalisation. Since his early work, scholars have refined and renamed these stages but the underlying themes have remained relatively constant. Today, the four social movement stages are as follows:

Stage 1: Emergence

The first stage of the social movement life cycle is known as the emergence or, as described by Blumer, the "social ferment" stage (De la Porta & Diani, 2006). Within this stage, social movements are very preliminary and there is little to no organisation. Instead this stage can be thought of as widespread discontent (Macionis, 2001). Potential movement participants may be unhappy with some policy or some social condition, but they have not taken any action in order to redress their grievances, or if they have it is most likely individual action rather than collective action. A person may comment to friends and family that he or she is dissatisfied with conditions or may write a letter to the local newspaper or representative, but these actions are not strategic and not collective. Further, there may be an increase in media coverage of negative conditions or unpopular policies which contributes to the general sense of discontent. This early stage can also be considered within a specific social movement organisation (SMO). Within the emergence stage, then, an SMO and its members serve as agitators. Agitators raise consciousness around issues and help to develop the sense of discontent among the general population. We see this happen with the Save Nigeria Group and other civil society groups in Nigeria.

Stage 2: Coalescence

At this next stage in the lifecycle, social movements have overcome some obstacles which many never overcome. Often, social unrest or discontent passes without any organising or widespread mobilisation. For example, people in a community may complain to each other about a general injustice, but they do not come together to act on those complaints and the social movement does not progress to the next level. Stage two, known as coalescence, or the "popular stage," is characterised by a more clearly defined sense of discontent. It is no longer just a general sense of unease, but now a sense of what the unease is about and who or what is responsible. Hopper in Christiansen (2009, p. 3), in examining revolutionary processes, states that at this stage "unrest is no longer covert, endemic, and esoteric; it becomes overt, epidemic, and exoteric. Discontent is no longer uncoordinated and individual; it tends to become focalised and collective". Further he states "this is the stage when individuals participating in the mass behaviour of the preceding stage become aware of each other"

(p.3). At this point leadership emerges and strategies for success are worked out. Also, at this stage mass demonstrations may occur in order to display the social movement's power and to make clear demands. Most importantly this is the stage at which the movement becomes more than just random upset individuals; at this point they are now organised and strategic in their outlook.

Stage 3: Bureaucratisation

The third stage is known as bureaucratisation. This stage, defined by Blumer as "formalisation," (De la Porta & Diani, 2006) is characterised by higher levels of organisation and coalition-based strategies. In this stage, social movements have had some success in that they have raised awareness to a degree that a coordinated strategy is necessary across all of the SMOs. Similarly, SMOs will come to rely on staff persons with specialised knowledge that can run the day-to-day operations of the organisation and carry out movement goals. Social movements in this stage can no longer just rely on mass rallies or inspirational leaders to progress towards their goals and build constituencies; they must rely on trained staff to carry out the functions of organisations. In this phase their political power is greater than in the previous stages in that they may have more regular access to political elites. Many social movements fail to bureaucratise in this way and end up fizzling out because it is difficult for members to sustain the emotional excitement necessary and because continued mobilisation becomes too demanding for participants. According to Macionis (2001), formalisation often means that paid staff can fill in when highly enthusiastic volunteers are not readily available. Civil society groups in Nigeria fit this bill very much.

Stage 4: Decline

Finally, the last stage in the social movement life cycle is decline or "institutionalisation." Decline does not necessarily mean failure for social movements though. Instead, Miller (1999) argues that there are four ways in which social movements can decline: repression, co-optation, success and failure. Macionis (2001) adds establishment with mainstream as another way in which they decline.

Conclusion

Social movements continue to be a major force in the world. They are purposeful and organised groups, either with the goal of pushing towards change, giving political voice to those without it, opposing certain obnoxious social issues or gathering for some other common purpose. Social movements intersect with environmental changes, technological innovations, and other external factors to create social change. There are a myriad of catalysts that create social movements, and the reasons that people join are as varied as the participants themselves. Sociologists look at both the macro- and microanalytical reasons that social movements occur, take root, and ultimately succeed or fail. Sociologists also provide important analysis of social movements that helps us to understand both past and present societies, as well as to anticipate changes and trends that may play out in the future. As new movements develop, they can learn from the investigation of prior movements' experience to better prepare for future possibilities. In a world full of resource squeeze, income and class differentials, leadership crises, ethnic rivalries, political convolutions, economic challenges and failure of the democratic system to yield to the demands of all the groups within the society, collective action expressed through various forms of collective behaviour and some even advancing into the birth of social movements will continue in perpetuity. Understanding the mechanics and processual/phasic development of social movements will help the political and economic managers of the state as well as social researchers and the intelligentsia to understand the sensibilities of such group actions and to create a system that addresses such expressions of discontent. Where agitations made are valid and progressive, the establishment should embrace such propositions in order to calm the frayed nerves of its protagonists but where such activism is not only minoritarian but is flimsy and trivial or even utopian, government must still listen to such activists, especially when their means of expressions are peaceful and nonviolent and assuage them by providing close-substitute solutions. As the impact of social media begins to tell greatly on society, social movements have begun to plug into the opportunities, coverage and possibilities that social media inherently provides in selling their programmes to members of the society and fostering their proselytisation efforts.

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