

Social Protests and State Character Transformation in Nigeria: A Quasi-experimental Assessment

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Abstract

Social protests have remained a critical aspect of the laws of motion of the Nigerian political economy even since pre-colonial times. However, despite their historical organization to induce structural changes in the Nigerian conjuncture, social protests appeared to have done very little in reconfiguring the fundamental character of the Nigerian state. Accordingly, this paper adopted the Social Movement Impact Theory in evaluating the intriguing nexus between social protests and state character transformation in Nigeria. After analyzing available secondary data on social protests in the country from a period spanning the Aba Women's Riots of 1929 to the EndSARS protests of 2020, it discovered that the state's historical reluctance to address protest demands in their entirety elicited an endless cycle of protestations on basically similar issues, with attendant human suffering, death and destruction of property. It further discovered that while social protests effaced certain aspects of state policy at superficial levels, the fundamental character of the Nigerian state vehemently remained the same. Consequently, it validated the null hypothesis that the preponderance of social protests in Nigeria has not fundamentally transformed the character of the Nigerian state. The Ex-post Facto Quasi Experimental Research Design was adopted for the study while its "pre-test-post-test" component represented as O_1XO_2 was used in its multi group form to analyze each pre and post protest environment in a qualitative-descriptive manner to ascertain whether any of the selected major protests under study caused a radical transformation of the character of the Nigerian state. Data collection was qualitative.

Keywords: Nigeria, Political Economy, Social Protests, State Character, Transformation.

Introduction

Social protests are the logical outcome of every oppressive and arbitrary system, as well as the physical dramatization of social class antagonisms. Protests emerge to challenge arbitrariness and are fashioned to effect social change. According to Loya and McLeod (2020),

Social Protest is a form of political expression that seeks to bring about social or political change by influencing the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of the public or the policies of an organization or institution. Protests often take the form of overt public displays, demonstrations, and civil disobedience, but may also include covert activities such as petitions, boycott/boycott, lobbying, and various online activities. (Loya and McLeod, 2020, p. 1)

Protests have occurred globally with extant literature appearing to focus more on the nature, characteristics and behaviour of these protest movements (Turner and Killian, 1993; Williams and Houghton, 2023), their causes (Sen and Avci, 2016), degree of violence unleashed during such protests (Kishi and Jones, 2020) and questions surrounding their sponsorship and funding (Rogers, 2023), rather than to what extent such protests are able to fundamentally transform state character by setting and achieving fundamental objectives, instead of superficial ones. In Nigeria, social protests have been a part of the socioeconomic system since pre-colonial times. According to Adebawale (2020), the earliest form of social protest in pre-colonial Nigeria emerged in the old Oyo Empire where the Alaafin could be presented with a calabash signaling him to commit suicide if he was found wanting in the discharge of his duties. However, despite the litany of protests littering Nigeria's colonial and pre-colonial history, the character of the Nigerian state has fundamentally remained the same, so that even the marginal "successes" achieved by these protests are soon undermined. For instance, the first major protest in colonial Nigeria was the Aba Women's Riots of 1929. Scholars generally agree

that the riot, also known as “Ogu Umunwanyi” or “women’s war” occurred when thousands of women from the Calabar and Owerri provinces of southeastern Nigeria and other parts especially the Igbo-speaking Bende district of Umuahia converged in Oloko, one of the four clans that make up present-day Ikwuano Local Government Area of Abia State, Nigeria to protest what they perceived as a conspiracy between the colonial government and their unilaterally installed warrant chiefs to supplant the women’s hitherto dominant political roles in the pre-colonial society (Anoba, 2018; Evans, 2009). However, according to Adebowale (2020), the last straw that broke the camel’s back was the intolerable direct taxation policy imposed on the market women by the colonial government through the Native Revenue (Amendment) Ordinance. Even though the riots succeeded in getting the colonial government to rescind the policy of direct taxation on the market women, the general oppressive character of the colonial government persisted throughout the period of colonization. Notwithstanding the resignation of some warrant chiefs, the abolition of the warrant chiefs system which was one of the goals of the riots was not achieved. More importantly, the colonial government never abandoned its repressive disposition towards the natives. According to Evans (2009), during the Aba Women’s riot, more than 50 rioting women were killed. Interestingly, the Abeokuta Women’s Revolt of 1946 and others after it generally followed the same path of inability to fundamentally transform the character of both the colonial and post-colonial Nigerian state. The purpose of this research is to validate the null hypothesis that the preponderance of social protests in Nigeria has not transformed the fundamental character of the Nigerian state.

Theoretical Framework

The researcher adopted the Social Movement Impact Theory as the theoretical framework for the study. Deeply rooted in Sociology, the Social Movement Impact Theory (also known as the Outcome Theory) is a subcategory of the Social Movement Theory which is primarily concerned with the assessment of the impact of social movements like strikes, protests, riots and other social agitations on society. The theory was propounded by Gamson (1975) in “The Strategy of Social Protest” which studied 53 social organizations between 1800 and 1945. The study found that organizations which attempted to dislodge certain persons from power were almost never successful. Gamson (1975) further discovered that the success of social protests was not without violence insisting that more radical and violent

approaches to social agitations like targeted violence and general disorder were far more critical to bending the state in favour of the people than the mainstream pacifist approaches like marches, rallies and political lobbying. Further fillip was added to the argument on the impact of social movements with the advent of Piven and Cloward (1977)'s "Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail" later edited in 1979. The work conveyed the authors' positions on the actualization of social change through protests. Using the Unemployed Workers' Movement of the Great Depression, the Industrial Workers' Movement, the Civil Rights Movement and the National Welfare Rights Organization as case studies, the researchers assessed the possibilities and limits of achieving social change through protests. Piven and Cloward (1977)'s work though considered provocative inspired an enduring legacy in the knowledge and understanding of social movements all over the world. Additionally, the work's far-reaching impact was easily discernible from various names given to it at various times by various personalities. In 2019 and 2020, it was called a "classic" by Jannie Jackson and Daniel Devir respectively, while Sam Adler-Bell described it as "seminal." Ed Pilkington was also to describe it as "the progressive bible." Key pillars of the Social Movement Impact Theory include the role of external factors in the success of social agitations, the factionalization of the ruling class in an attempt to create neo-welfarist masses' support, as well as the definitive and overwhelming role of violent disruptive action in achieving fundamental social change.

Accordingly, the Social Movements Impact Theory is best suited for the paper's efforts to effectively explain the historical impotence of social protests in Nigeria at radically transforming the character of the Nigerian state. In addition, the Theory possesses the utility value of further enabling the researcher to make informed recommendations regarding the quagmire of continuing protestations with little or no fundamental impact on state character transformation; especially through forced concessions.

Methodology

The Ex-post Facto Research Design was adopted for the study, incorporating the qualitative-descriptive method of data analysis. Data collection was based on the qualitative method which relied heavily on secondary documentary data from previous research. Accordingly, each major protest movement in Nigeria between 1929 and 2020 was studied on its merit especially in terms of its ability or inability

to radically transform the character of the Nigerian state. This was done by using the “pre-test-post-test” component of the Ex-post Facto research design represented as O_1XO_2 was used in its multi group form to analyze the test environment before and after each protest in order to determine whether there were radical changes in the character of the Nigerian formation especially in the post protest period, and whether or not these changes (if any) were linked to any particular protest, which served as sub-independent variable for each group analysis. In other words, using the pre-test-post-test qualitative-descriptive components of the Ex post Facto Research Design, a keen evaluation of the pre and post protest environments in relation to each selected protest was crucial to understanding the impact and imprint of each protest (if any) in fundamentally transforming the workings of the Nigerian political economy. However, analysis of the pre and post protest environments was centered on certain key indicators of radical transformation like structural changes in the Nigerian political system vis-à-vis the holistic and practical alteration of Nigeria’s fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy, epochal transformations like the movement from petit-bourgeois comprador capitalism to proletarian socialism or its concomitant transition from repressive and malignant crass materialism to populist welfarism, etc. The researcher was not interested in superficial transformations of state character like the mere retraction of a contentious policy pronouncement. What is more, the time frame of 1929 – 2020 is important because not only that the selected major protests in Nigeria occurred during the period, virtually all of these protests were widely documented. Accordingly, the choice of the time frame is also to ensure considerable analytical convenience aided by the preponderance of relevant data. Furthermore, the time frame also exposed the researcher to studying the phenomenon of social protests under colonial and post-colonial milieus which were not markedly different from each other and therefore, preempted the effects of historical “maturation” on the research procedure by not affecting its outcomes in any way. Finally, the main limitations of the research derived mainly from the same limitations inherent in the Ex-post Facto research design. In the case of this research, the researcher could not possibly control or manipulate variables owing to the historical nature of their occurrence. However, this impediment was partly remedied by the fact that historical “maturation” played a minimal role in contaminating research outcomes given the fact that the character of the Nigerian state under colonialism did not differ much from that of its postcolonial successor.

Chronicle of Protests and Other Forms of Social Agitation in Nigeria

As it has been noted by Adebawale (2020), Adisa (2021) and Nsirimovu (2025), protests have existed in Nigeria since the pre-colonial era. A major institutionalized form of protest in the pre-colonial era was the traditional arrangement in the Oyo Empire where the Oba could be forced to commit suicide if he is presented with a calabash as a sign of popular dissatisfaction with his leadership. However, this study shall focus on selected major protests that have occurred in Nigeria since colonial times particularly after the amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates to form Nigeria in 1914. Accordingly, Table 1 provides a list of these selected protests in Nigeria since 1929, as well as their stated objectives.

Table 1: List of Selected Major Protests in Nigeria Since 1929

Protest	Year	Summary Objectives	Achieved Objectives
Aba Women's Riot	1929	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Restoration of women's pre-colonial dominance in politics.* Abolishment of the warrant chiefs system.* Stoppage of direct taxation of market women by the colonial government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Stoppage of direct taxation of market women by the colonial government.
Abeokuta Women's Revolt (Egba Women's Tax Riot)	1947	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Reversal of women's declining economic roles under colonialism.* Stoppage of market women	<ul style="list-style-type: none">* Abolition of the SNA system.* Representation of women at the local government

		<p>taxation by the colonial government.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Abolition of the sole native authority (SNA) system. * Representation of women at the local government level. * Investment in infrastructure. * Taxation of expatriate companies. 	<p>levels commenced with four women gaining seats at the local council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Stoppage of market women taxation by the colonial government. * Investment in infrastructure was mainly in the areas of building railways that transported raw materials from the hinterlands to the ports for exports and a few schools and churches that trained, prepared and conditioned Africans as cheap labour for the colonial enterprise
Ali Must Go Riots	1978	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Reversal of increase in school fees especially accommodation fees and meal tickets. * Poor state of tertiary education in Nigeria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * There was a return to democratization in 1979, which marked the beginning of Nigeria's Second Republic.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The return to democratization. * Genuine independence. * Enhanced quality of life for Nigerians. 	
Anti-SAP Riots	1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Discontinuation of the IMF-imposed Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and attendant austerity measures. * Reversal of the increase in petroleum products. * Abolition of examination fees. * Increased funding for education. * Free healthcare especially for the elderly, women and all Nigerians up to 18 years. * Withdrawal of security agents from Nigerian universities. * Reopening of shut-down universities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Reopening of some universities. * SAP was not discontinued, however, certain palliative measures were put in place to cushion the effects of the policy.

		* Free education for Nigerians up to secondary level.	
June 12 Protests	1993	* Reversal of the annulment of the presidential elections and declaration of Bashorun MKO Abiola as substantive winner.	* Nil.
Occupy Nigeria	2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Reinstatement of fuel subsidy. * Review of Federal Government's budgets. * Reduction of corruption in the then Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and the government in general. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Initial announcement of palliatives to cushion the effects of subsidy removal. * Reinstatement of fuel subsidy.
End SARS	2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Disbandment of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) unit of the Nigeria Police. * Eradication of police brutality. 	* Disbandment of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) unit of the Nigeria Police.

Source: Author's compilation based on data from Omonobi and Erunke (2017), Salaudeen (2017) and many other sources listed in the References.

Table 1 shows that in many instances, a plethora of demands is made on the state by protesters. However, in many cases, only few of these demands are met. The

Table further illustrates that most of the demands often addressed were largely ephemeral, while those with fundamentally transformative implications on state character were usually ignored.

Understanding the Concept of State Character

By the character of a state, we mean the attributes and reputations of that state which are discernible either in the form of the behavior of its government to its people or the attitude of its people to its government; but mostly the former. These attributes often possess key indicators which are usually measurable over a given period, and are either fundamental or superficial. For the purpose of this study, superficial aspects of state character could suffice in the state's level of economic performance, tolerance to criticism, measure of repressive proclivity, extent of indulgence in human rights violations, press censorship and other forms of arbitrariness like the arrest of journalists, shutting down of universities and media outfits, killing of protesters and so on. Alternatively, fundamental aspects of state character could suffice in the type of economic system in practice (feudalism, capitalism etc.) - and therefore, the nature of class-based contentions (lords versus vassals, bourgeoisie versus proletariat), the ownership of state sovereignty (colonialism, neocolonialism, indigenous or self-governance etc.), the nature of the state (fascism, Nazism, monarchical absolutism etc.), the form of government (cabinet or Westminster model, presidential system), and so on. More often, the superficial character of the state is rooted in its fundamental character, so that an understanding of the superficial character of the state is not complete until a comprehensive understanding of its fundamental character is achieved. For example, a feudal state (fundamental character) is likely to be conservative (superficial character) which means that social progress in the form of national development would be slow (superficial character) because a conservative society is usually afraid of innovation which is crucial for rapid social progress or national development (superficial character). However, it is instructive to note that in the case of Nigeria, any meaningful appreciation of the character of the Nigerian state must first begin with the concern as to whether the character of post-colonial Nigerian state was actually different from its character in the colonial era, since post-colonialism or neocolonialism is essentially the continuation of colonialism from outside. Thus, as it would appear, almost all the attributes of colonial Nigeria have been carried over to independent Nigeria.

Fundamental Aspects of State Character in Nigeria

In this segment of the study, effort would be made to identify what constitutes the fundamental aspects of state character in Nigeria - the transformation of which is the primary concern of the researcher. Our point of departure is an era somewhere before 1929, possibly the mid-19th Century when colonialism began to take root in the area now called Nigeria. It is necessary to consider the nature of state character before 1929 in order to better appreciate what fundamental changes (if any) that the Aba Women's Riot of that year was able to impose on the nature of state character in Nigeria. Admittedly, the subsisting political entity called the Federal Republic of Nigeria was not in existence in 1929 however, since government in whatever form is a *continuum*, and given the fact that the colonial political groupings of the period eventually coalesced into what we now call Nigeria, we assume that the history of these groupings is the history of Nigeria. Furthermore, our study of what constitutes the fundamental character of the Nigerian state will be in two phases namely – the colonial and postcolonial phases.

As we have noted earlier, state character in colonial and postcolonial Nigeria was essentially the same. For example, according to Ake (1981), the characteristics of the colonial economy to which Nigeria once belonged were disarticulation, market imperfections and monopolistic tendencies, reliance on few export commodities, dependence, complexities and discontinuities in the social relations of production; while those of the postcolonial economy included disarticulation, monopolistic tendencies, narrow resource base, dependence, as well as complexities in the social relations of production. Reliance on few export commodities is also a prominent feature of the postcolonial economy. These characteristics deserve mention because the character of the state is often a derivative of the character of the market; the state being a *superstructure* of the market – but there are other characteristics of the Nigerian state which may not have direct bearing on the market. For instance, it has the propensity for ethno-religious conflicts and elusive national identity (Agbiboa, 2013; Oduwole & Fadeyi, 2013), its modern administrative structure, federalism and intergovernmental relations are still heavily affected by colonial administrative policies (Onyambayi et al, 2024), it has problems arising from ethnic diversity (Ojie & Ewruhjakpor, 2009), it is confronted by increasing insecurity often linked to terrorist activity (Ait-Hida & Brinkel, 2012), it has a warped federalism (Kirsten, 1996), and political violence

cum voter apathy are often pronounced (Faluyi et al, 2019; Nwambuko et al, 2024; Okoh, 2025). However, this paper is of the view that while some of these characteristics are superficial (that is, not organic enough to constitute an overarching form of state identity), others are fundamental (or serve as the crux of overarching state identity). Accordingly, Table 2 shows the categorization of state character into some of its superficial and fundamental aspects.

Table 2 Categorization of State Character

Superficial State Character	Fundamental State Character
Unending insecurity	Dependence
Poor economic performance	Clientelism
Slow or non-industrialization	Feudalistic tendencies
Underdevelopment	Capitalism
Political instability	Crass materialism
Ethno-religious conflicts	Zionism
Corruption	Theocracy
Poor international image	Authoritarian liberalism
Lack of basic amenities	Rentierism
State-sponsored terrorism and repression	Imperialism
Failing Agriculture	Narrow resource base
Problematic oil and gas sector	Compradorization
Fuel scarcity	Satellite statism
Rising cases of internet fraud	Conservatism
Weak military	Fascism
Tribalism and nepotism	Socialism
Kleptocracy and kakistocracy	Monarchical absolutism
Political patronage and sycophancy	Authoritarianism
Regionalism	Primitive communism (or communalism)
Obnoxious structural adjustment programmes	Apartheid
Unending industrial action in the academic and other sectors	Mercantilism
High cost of living	Democracy
Federalism and confederalism	Bonapartism
Commercial and industrial monopoly	Communism
Election rigging	Nazism

Unemployment and underemployment	Totalitarianism
Endemic poverty and disease	Republicanism
Escalating debts and loans	Serfdom
Increasing economic inequality	Right, center-right, center-left, left wing etc.
Youth restiveness and drug abuse	Liberalism
High emigration (or the “Japa” syndrome)	Welfarism etc.

Source: Author’s categorization.

Quasi-experimentation of the ‘X’ and ‘Y’ Variables

As noted earlier, this study is based on the Ex-post Facto Research Design. More specifically, the “pre-test-post-test” variant of the Ex-post Facto design proved very useful in helping the researcher conduct this quasi-experimentation. The notation is represented as $O_1 X O_2$, where

O_1 = nature of the “pre” environment before a particular protest.

O_2 = nature of the “post” environment after a particular protest.

X = Experimental treatment of the independent variable (social protest) on the pre-test environment.

Therefore, for any given number of groups undergoing quasi-experimentation - say, three or more, the multi group pre-test-post-test notation is given as;

$O_1 X_1 O_2$

$O_1 X_2 O_2$

$O_1 X_3 O_2 \dots O_1 X_n O_2$.

Accordingly, the study’s first quasi-experimentation effort would logically begin with the period before 1929 which would most certainly be dominated by colonialism. As such, the character of the Nigerian state at this period would be vehemently repressive because the very nature of the colonial enterprise is based on domination which expectedly should be opposed by the natives, leading to state-sponsored repression.

Consequently, for the Aba Women’s Riot of 1929, $O_1 X_1 O_2$ is as follows:

Experimental	State	Charater	State	Charater	Fundamental
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Independent Variable (X₁)	Before 1929 (O₁)	After 1929 (O₂)	Changes in State Character
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Source: Author's pre-test-post-test observations, 2025.

For the Abeokuta Women's Revolt of 1947, O₁X₂O₂ is given as:

Experimental Independent Variable (X₂)	State Character Before 1947 (O₁)	State Character After 1947 (O₂)	Fundamental Changes in State Character
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Source: Author's pre-test-post-test observations, 2025.

For the Ali Must Go Riots of 1978, O₁X₃O₂ is represented as:

Experimental Independent Variable (X₃)	State Character Before 1978 (O₁)	State Character After 1978 (O₂)	Fundamental Changes in State Character
Ali Must Go Riots of 1978	* Imperial domination continued despite abolition of the Sole Native Authority (SNA) system and taxation of market women by the colonial government. The representation of women at the local government levels continued until flag independence in 1960 when the imperialists retreated and began to operate	* The return to democratization in 1979 which marked the beginning of Nigeria's Second Republic did not immunize the country against imperial domination through neocolonialism. * Northern Nigerpre-text remained largely feudalistic while Southern Nigeria remained	* Nil.

	<p>from outside.</p> <p>* Sovereignty still did not belong to the people but to the indigenous representatives of the former colonizing power who had inherited the former colonial infrastructure.</p> <p>* Investment in infrastructure by emerging pseudo-reformist military regimes built mainly on previously existing colonial blueprints, thereby reinforcing imperial domination in the neocolonial era.</p> <p>* Endemic poverty persisted owing largely to the compradoziation of the oil and gas sector which had become the mainstay of the economy</p>	<p>largely liberal capitalist.</p> <p>* Sovereignty still did not belong to the people but to the indigenous representatives of the former colonizing power who had inherited the former colonial infrastructure.</p> <p>* Investment in infrastructure either by emerging pseudo-reformist military regimes or their civilian counterparts still built on previously existing colonial blueprints, thereby reinforcing imperial domination in the neocolonial era.</p> <p>* Endemic poverty persisted owing largely to the compradoziation of the oil and gas sector.</p>	
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	<p>following the discovery of oil in 1956.</p> <p>* Northern Nigeria remained largely feudalistic while Southern Nigeria remained largely liberal capitalist.</p>		
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Source: Author's pre-test-post-test observations, 2025.

For the Anti-SAP Riots of 1989, $O_1X_4O_2$ is given as:

Experimental Independent Variable (X_4)	State Character Before 1989 (O_1)	State Character After 1989 (O_2)	Fundamental Changes in State Character
Anti-SAP Riots of 1989.	<p>* Northern Nigeria remained largely feudalistic while Southern Nigeria remained largely liberal capitalist.</p> <p>* Sovereignty still did not belong to the people but to the indigenous representatives of the former colonizing power</p>	<p>* The discontinuation of the Structural Adjustment Programme did not alter the fundamental dynamics of Nigeria's existence especially the fact the her political economy still</p>	* Nil

	<p>who had inherited the former colonial infrastructure now packaged as newly independent Nigeria. The attachment of the Nigerian petit-bourgeoisie to the whims and caprices of the former colonial master and her Western allies made it possible for the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and other obnoxious policies to be easily foisted on the country, with no resistance from the subsisting political leadership.</p> <p>* Investment in infrastructure either by emerging pseudo-reformist military regimes or their civilian counterparts still built on previously existing colonial blueprints, thereby reinforcing imperial domination in the</p>	<p>continued to be directed mainly from outside – a clear attestation to the fact that sovereignty still did not truly belong to the people.</p> <p>* Northern Nigeria remained largely feudalistic while Southern Nigeria remained largely liberal capitalist.</p> <p>* Investment in infrastructure either by emerging pseudo-reformist military regimes or their civilian counterparts still toed the path of previously existing colonial blueprints, thereby reinforcing imperial domination in the neocolonial era.</p> <p>* The reopening of previously</p>	
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	<p>neocolonial era.</p> <p>* Endemic poverty persisted owing largely to the compradorization of the oil and gas sector.</p>	<p>shutdown universities also did not radically transform the nature of Nigeria's educational system which was hardly critical in outlook.</p> <p>* Endemic poverty persisted owing largely to the compradorization of the oil and gas sector.</p>	
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Source: Author's pre-test-post-test observations, 2025.

For the June 12 Protests of 1993, $O_1X_5O_2$ is given as:

Experimental Independent Variable (X_5)	State Character Before 1993 (O_1)	State Character After 1993 (O_2)	Fundamental Changes in State Character
June 12 Protests of 1993.	<p>* Northern Nigeria remained largely feudalistic while Southern Nigeria remained largely liberal capitalist.</p> <p>* Sovereignty still did not belong to the people but to the indigenous</p>	<p>* Despite the protests, the restoration of the June 12 mandate to the winner of the 1993 presidential elections Chief MKO Abiola did not happen; thus, Nigeria was again denied the</p>	* Nil.

	<p>representatives of the former colonizing power who had inherited the former colonial infrastructure.</p> <p>* Investment in infrastructure either by emerging pseudo-reformist military regimes or their civilian counterparts still toed the lines of previously existing colonial blueprints, thereby reinforcing imperial domination in the neocolonial era.</p> <p>* Endemic poverty persisted owing largely to the compradorization of the oil and gas sector.</p>	<p>opportunity of what would have become a new beginning in her affairs, occasioned by radical changes in key sectors, as proposed by Chief Abiola's Social Democratic Party (SDP).</p> <p>* Northern Nigeria remained largely feudalistic while Southern Nigeria remained largely capitalist.</p> <p>* Investment in infrastructure either by emerging pseudo-reformist military regimes or their civilian counterparts still toed the lines of previously existing colonial blueprints, thereby reinforcing imperial domination in the neocolonial era.</p> <p>* Sovereignty still did not belong to the people but to the indigenous</p>	
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		<p>representatives of the former colonizing power who had inherited the former colonial infrastructure. This was to be eloquently confirmed by the emergence of a Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in 1999, without the consent and inputs of Nigerians.</p> <p>* Endemic poverty persisted owing largely to the compradorization of the oil and gas sector.</p>	
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Source: Author's pre-test-post-test observations, 2025.

For the Occupy Nigeria Protests of 2012, $O_1X_6O_2$ is given as:

Experimental Independent Variable (X_6)	State Character Before 2012 (O_1)	State Character After 2012 (O_2)	Fundamental Changes in State Character
Occupy Nigeria Protests of 2012.	* Northern Nigeria remained largely	* The removal of subsidy is often an	* Nil.

	<p>feudalistic while Southern Nigeria remained largely liberal capitalist.</p> <p>* Sovereignty still did not belong to the people but to the indigenous representatives of the former colonizing power who had inherited the former colonial infrastructure.</p> <p>* Infrastructural investments by the political class still toed the path of previously existing colonial blueprints, thereby reinforcing imperial domination in the neocolonial era.</p> <p>* Endemic poverty persisted owing largely to the compradorization of the oil and gas sector.</p>	<p>essential component of external loan conditionalities advanced by the lending Western allies of Nigeria's former colonial master – and willingly executed by their indigenous collaborators, in utter disregard for the biting hardship such policy usually inflicts on the average Nigerian. The eventual reinstatement of same subsidy after the protests reinforced the corruption in the oil and gas sector, initially caused by compradorization. Thus; despite the hullabaloo associated with the Occupy Nigeria protests, the compradorization of the Nigerian oil and gas sector</p>	
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		<p>continued with attendant woes for the economy.</p> <p>* Infrastructural investments by the political class still toed the lines of previously existing colonial blueprints, thereby reinforcing imperial domination in the neocolonial era</p> <p>* Sovereignty still did not truly belong to the people but to the indigenous representatives of the former colonizing power who had inherited the former colonial infrastructure.</p> <p>* Northern Nigeria remained largely feudalist while Southern Nigeria remained largely liberal capitalist.</p>	
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Source: Author's pre-test-post-test observations, 2025.

For the EndSARS Protests of 2020, $O_1X_7O_2$ is given as:

Experimental Independent Variable (X_7)	State Character Before 2020 (O_1)	State Character After 2020 (O_2)	Fundamental Changes in State Character
	<p>* Northern Nigeria remained largely feudalist while Southern Nigeria remained largely liberal capitalist.</p> <p>* Endemic poverty persisted due to compradorization and attendant corruption in the oil and gas sector.</p> <p>* Infrastructural development was still not based on indigenously sociologically-censored radical economic plans for Nigeria, rather, the colonial designs were largely sustained. This reinforced the country's difficulty in transiting from flag independence to economic</p>	<p>The disbandment of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) unit of the Nigeria Police did not obliterate state-sponsored/condoned repression because the EndSARS protests failed to uproot the malignant comprador capitalism which is at the heart of the problem.</p> <p>* Despite the bags of rice and noodles allegedly looted from warehouses by protesters across the country, endemic hunger and poverty persisted due to continued compradorization of the oil and gas sector, attendant corruption.</p>	* Nil.

	<p>independence.</p> <p>* State-sponsored repression borne out of the contradictions of predatory capitalism became prevalent, leading to the EndSARS protests.</p>	<p>* Northern Nigeria still remained largely feudalist while Southern Nigeria remained largely liberal capitalist.</p> <p>* Infrastructural development was still not based on indigenously-conceived radical economic plans for the Country, but mainly followed previous colonial designs. This tended to reinforce the Country's difficulty in transiting from flag independence to economic independence.</p>	
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Source: Author's pre-test-post-test observations, 2025.

Analysis of Findings

From the foregoing, it is evident that successive protests in Nigeria have hardly achieved much in terms of transforming the fundamental aspects of the character of the Nigerian state. A key indicator of this failure is the logical necessity of recurrent protests along the lines of mostly similar contentions due to the persistence of fundamental issues which previous protests could not dislodge. Accordingly, the Aba Women's Riot of 1929 and the Abeokuta Women's Revolt

of 1947 largely followed the anti-women taxation dimension because the former failed to attack and obliterate the very origins of market women taxation which is imperial colonialism, necessitating the occurrence of the latter for similar reason. Thus, had the Aba Women's Riots of 1929 been ferocious and resilient enough to force the colonialists to beat a retreat at that material time, there would have been no need for the Abeokuta Women's Revolt of 1947. Similarly, the Ali Must Go Riots of 1978 and the Occupy Nigeria Protests of 2012 both arose to question the general issues of economic inequality and poor quality of lives of Nigerians occasioned by the perfidy of the political class which thrives under cover of the more fundamental character or structure of colonial authoritarian liberalism, bequeathed to Nigeria's petit bourgeoisie by the departing colonialists. The June 12 Protests of 1993 and the EndSARS Protests of 2020 which challenge government's arbitrariness and state repression also come under this cover.

Fundamentally, these patterns have occurred and would likely continue mainly because successive protest movements in Nigeria are quickly pacified by the achievement of superficial protest demands which hardly challenge the fundamental issues. Thus, the Aba Women's Riots of 1929 ended with the reversal of market women taxation which was epiphenomenal to imperial colonialism occasioned by the contradictions of Western domestic capitalism. A more effective protest movement would have forced the retreat of colonialism at the time, leading to Nigeria's early independence long before the discovery of oil. If this had occurred, it is possible that the country would have been better prepared to achieve economic prosperity because the agricultural sector which was the mainstay before oil could have been further strengthened to withstand the curse of crude oil; thereby severely forestalling the country's current crisis of food insecurity.

Similarly, the EndSARS Protests of 2020 quickly began to lose steam at the mention of the disbandment of the notorious Special Anti-robbery Squad of the Nigeria Police. To complicate matters, bags of rice and noodles allegedly looted from warehouses across the Country tended to give protesters the permanent feeling of immunity from hunger; hence, the futility of further protests. It was therefore not surprising that when news of alleged shooting of protesters at the Lekki Toll Gate began to filter in, every protester saw the opportunity to quickly abandon ship and return to his tent. In point of fact, the EndSARS protests died long before the alleged shooting at the Lekki Toll Gate. Furthermore, the June 12 Protests of 1993 which could have been the most historic of all, in view of its potential capacity at the time to restore Chief MKO Abiola's mandate and finally set Nigeria on the part of economic recovery through radical holistic restructuring became lethargic at what could have been its finest hour. A more effective protest

movement could have leveraged the assassination of Alhaja Kudirat Abiola in 1996 to insist on the restoration of the MKO Abiola mandate or nothing, as *sine qua non* for continued tranquility in the country. That singular insistence could have paved the way for Nigeria's liberation from the stranglehold of international finance and industrial capital which is the fundamental culprit behind many of the country's current problems. What is more, if the June 12 protests could force General Ibrahim Babangida to "step aside," then, there should have been no doubt as to what it could have achieved, and the extent to which it could have achieved it. Unfortunately, the installation of an illegal puppet "Interim Government" and mere promises by the Abacha junta to release Chief MKO Abiola and restore his mandate quickly took the winds off the sails of "June 12," so that by the time sustained state repression in the form of random assassinations set in, the movement was already too weak to withstand the pressure, resulting in key players escaping through the "NADECO route" and others. There were even insinuations about the disloyalty of certain prominent members of the movement suspected to be working hand-in-hand with the Abacha junta to further derail the mandate.

Conclusion

The paper x-rayed the phenomenon of recurring protests in Nigeria especially along the lines of similar contentions. More importantly, it was worried about the inability of these recurring protests to fundamentally transform the character of the Nigerian state in order to vitiate the need for further protests on similar issues. Accordingly, the multi group component of the Ex Post Facto research design was applied in a quasi-experimental method to validate the null hypothesis that successive protests in Nigeria have not fundamentally transformed the character of the Nigerian state. Furthermore, the paper identified part of the causes of this failure to include premature pacification of protest movements following the achievement of superficial objectives, and highlighted the implications of this failure to include the perpetuity and continuous complication of the fundamental issues that engender recurrent protests along similar lines; with attendant negative implications for the wellbeing of the Nigerian state. Consequently, it made salient recommendations that could guide the behavior of future protest movements in Nigeria, with a view to making them more efficient at tackling the fundamental issues that enslave the Country, and render it incapable of autochthonous development.

Recommendations

In view of the foregoing, it is recommended that future protest movements in Nigeria should:

- a. Target and dismantle the fundamental underlying issues behind every social malaise instead of attacking the social malaise itself.
- b. Be resolutely vehement in accomplishing all set objectives.
- c. Take steps to identify and preempt all long and short-term distractions that could weaken the resolve of protesters.

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