

The 'Civil Society'
Problematique

*Deconstructing Civility and Southern
Nigeria's Ethnic Radicalization*



Adedayo Oluwakayode Adekson

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Dedication

To my mother and brother

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I accept full responsibility for the views contained herein, except where otherwise noted, and any errors apparent to the reader.

Preface

HOW DOES ONE REACT TO THE GNAWING FEELING THAT ONE'S PERSON, kin, religious beliefs or even intellectual predilections do not belong? How does one deal with a lack of awareness and concern emanating from governmental, societal and related sources? These contemplative questions and others like them undoubtedly are related to the substantive focus of this study. For anyone who has experienced marginalization, whether it is *de facto* or relatively benign, or far more egregious and *de jure* in nature, the answers to the previously-posed questions are not easily found.

Certain individuals, regardless of the enormity of the injustice meted out to them, employ 'mainstream' strategies that do not overly defy those in authority, choose to be passive and do not directly challenge their seemingly-inferior position. Conversely, others operating in similar or divergent milieux select more confrontational, radical or violent stratagems to achieve their objectives, make themselves known, and confront entrenched, resilient and hostile power structures whose very existence is antithetical to their progress.

In this vein, they become vocal on matters that the larger community considers sacred, organize themselves to promote the good of people just like themselves, and become the 'sacrificial lambs' that state authorities literally or figuratively sacrifice in their quest for order and control. This is not to justify the utilization of radical tactics but to simply reiterate the rather obvious point that, if colorism, deprivation, ethnicism, racism, genderism, exclusion, disenfranchisement, elitism, xenophobia, other forms of marginalization, censorship and authoritarianism prevail at the macro or micro level, reactions to such ills potentially could range from passivity to violence.

In the main, the ensuing discussion unravels the presumed mystery surrounding 'insolent' civil society through an in-depth elucidation of the reasons for the radicalization of three militant and ethnically oriented organizations operating in Southern Nigeria: the South-South's Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), South-East's Movement for the

Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and South-West's Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC).

Undergirding this investigation is my conviction that manifestations of radicalism in the African context ought not to be lazily or pejoratively 'tribalized'. Instead of taking this well-trodden but intellectually-slothful path, my project is situated within the broader context of state-society relations on the Continent and concomitantly informed by references to similar occurrences outside Africa, whenever applicable.

Nonetheless, I celebrate, demystify, deconstruct and approach Nigerian (and by implication African) civil society on its own terms, without the obtrusive presupposition that European or American civil society is unquestionably more advanced and coherent. Consequently, I do not regard the former as always being a 'step or two' behind the latter or believe that African civil society must wholly or partially subsist on the receiving end of lessons and stratagems originating from the North.

THE 'CIVIL SOCIETY'
PROBLEMATIQUE

CHAPTER I

Introduction

RECENTLY, THE NOTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY HAS BECOME POPULAR IN THE discipline of political science in particular and public discourse in general. A review of literature produced in the sub-fields of Comparative Politics and International Relations reveals burgeoning, substantially varied and intellectually profound analyses that grapple with the applicability and utility of civil society in diverse contexts. Although the concept appeared to have been abandoned for decades, if not centuries, and seemingly re-emerged in the post-Cold War era, a closer review of scholarship generated outside the 'West' shows, surprisingly enough, that the idea has influenced theory and practice in areas as far-flung as Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe (Mengotti 1998; Coutinho 1986; Lechner 1986; O'Donnell and Schmitter 1986; Uchida 1967; Hirata 1969 and 1971; all cited in Keane 1998; Lewis 2002).

Arguably, the contemporary rediscovery of civil society could be traced to adherents of the Civil Society School of Japanese Marxism, such as Yoshihiko Uchida and Kiyooki Hirata, who published extensively on the concept in the 1960s and beyond (Keane 1998; Hirata 1969 and 1971; Uchida 1967). These two authors articulated a neo-Gramscian view of civil society which emphasized three themes, including the 'importance of breaking the bad habit of relying upon European social science and methods that were seen to be wooden', and the manner in which Japanese capitalism hitherto had been devoid of a civil society (Keane 1998). Moreover, the renewed emphasis on civil society in North American intellectual circles also must be squarely situated within the context of the decade-long opposition to and eventual demise of the communist epoch in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the correspondingly important process of democratisation on the African Continent and the critical role that non-state actors assumed in this regard.

The aforementioned developments and other attendant events elsewhere spurred a marked shift from analyses wholly rooted in state-centred theories to those informed by society-driven

explanations. Relatedly, and perhaps more importantly, the seeming triumph of neoliberal ideology, as forcefully articulated by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain and President Ronald Reagan of the United States of America, and exemplified in the policies of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, undeniably contributed to an emphasis on the merits of civil society and the concomitant flaws of state institutions.

Nowhere was this society-centred 'project' more fully codified than in the 'developing' world, especially Africa, where the state was regarded as an impediment to the process of development and thereby described as 'patrimonial', 'prebendal', 'predatory' and 'personalistic' (Bayart 1986 and 1993; Fatton 1992; Bratton and van de Walle 1994; Medard 1982; Joseph 1987 and 1998; Jackson and Rosberg 1982). Consequently, despite the tendency in literature either to denigrate the efficacy of civil society as an explanatory tool or unreservedly imbue it with positive characteristics, we must realize that the codification of civil society has been both a natural process occurring within specific countries and regions, as well as a venture that has received a great deal of attention in donor discourse and funding.

Owing to this reality, the concept of civil society has been vigorously contested and subject to numerous debates in recent years. For most of the 20th Century, civil society was hardly utilized as a pivotal referent in academic or popular treatises generated within Europe and North America; it was not until the late 1970s and early 1980s that Western theorists and practitioners alike supposedly 'rediscovered' it. Undeniably, due to the divergent intellectual, philosophical, cultural and ideological backgrounds of the individuals and organizations whose musings and activities are dependent upon the civil society paradigm, and the concomitant purposes for which this notion is employed, the whole discussion surrounding this concept is fraught with innumerable quandaries that cannot easily or definitively be resolved.

In the main, this undertaking is borne out of the shortcomings apparent in the scholarly literature as it pertains to Africa and other parts of the Global South.¹ In order to show how this project markedly differs from many prevailing but obviously not all analyses of the African experience that I reference in ensuing chapters, and other similar realities outside Europe and North America, it is worthwhile to briefly highlight the qualms that Said (1979), who grapples with the manner in which supposedly-objective disciplines in fact are biased and flawed in their views of the area loosely termed the 'Orient', raises regarding the pervasive influence of Orientalist discourse in the West.

Specifically, he reveals how certain Western scholars create frameworks that suit their preconceived notions concerning the non-Western world: 'The Orient was almost a European invention, and has been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, [and] remarkable experiences'² (Said 1979, p.1). This problematic reconstruction and perception of the Orient (and other parts of the world, especially Africa), as the alien and backward 'other' has prominently featured in European writings for centuries. By virtue of its assumed 'otherness', the Orient is habitually juxtaposed with the Occident (or the West); the former is perceived in varying ways as exotic, primitive, backward, traditional and strange, whereas the latter is imbued with opposite but obviously-positive characteristics.

Orientalism proceeds from and is largely based on this notion of 'difference', which in turn is magnified, refined and accentuated by academicians and non-academicians in whatever manner that they deem fit. The Western experience therefore becomes normatively reified and *ipso facto* the standard by which all the ensuing experiences of other regions are evaluated. Where non-European experiences diverge from this 'standard', they nowadays are benevolently but nevertheless pejoratively described as 'underdeveloped' or 'ill-developed'. Hence, in order to fully understand the pervasive theories and undeniably-influential perspectives that arise from analyses impacted by this school of thought, one must directly confront the folkloric idea of difference that serves as an important referent throughout Orientalist discourse.

Historically, on one broad but nonetheless-discernible level, Orientalism represents a worldview that certain scholars reproduce and build upon. In this sense, Orientalism could be described as a field with basic tenets that certain academicians adhere to and perpetuate either implicitly or explicitly. Given its tendency to make sweeping, seemingly-authoritative and overly-psychologised statements concerning the Orient and its inhabitants, Orientalism (and discourses that are influenced by its precepts) neither lends itself well to nor does it particularly rely upon empirical evidence.³

Over the past decades, modern Orientalism, in contrast to its antecedent, which was codified and refined in North America, expanded both the tools it employed to describe the Orient and the functions that its scholarship performed within society *writ large*. Accordingly, disciplines that comment on the divergent realities in the Global South are not always, *inter alia*, value-free, naturally evolving, unproblematical, evidence-driven and objective. On the contrary, they simply are '...mode[s] of discourse[s] with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery [and] doctrines' (Said 1979, p.2). As

implied above, Orientalism is predicated on the belief that the West is the authority on the Orient, which it created and somehow manages intellectually, economically, politically and sociologically.⁴ Despite the foregoing discussion, it should be noted that this project is not an *ad hominem* diatribe against Western scholars or a futile exercise in textual analysis *a la* Michel Foucault.

This volume theoretically investigates the problems associated with restricted, Eurocentric and normative assessments of African civil society. In a more empirical fashion, I concurrently analyse the manner in which radical civil society emerged and is presently codified in Southern Nigeria. Civil society, as employed herein, is defined as *that part of society that is distinct from and largely independent of the state or public sphere*. This definition, however, does not presume an innately conflictual or consensual relationship between the state and civil society interests as is assumed in literature. From this vantage point, my conceptualization is informed by the belief that 'a one-sided anti-state romanticization of civil society' (Mamdani 1995, p. 603), which is replete throughout the discourse on this topic, is unduly stifling and simplistic.

Such a naïve characterization of civil society or the state for that matter does not reflect reality, either within African countries or outside the Continent. Thus, when one speaks of a state that is 'poor, militaristic, weak, excessively oppressive, unresponsive to the needs of citizens and/or an instrument for the neo-colonial exploitation of Africa by the West', one must, in the same breath, allude to a civil society that has been riven with complacency, lethargy and factions that have made it near impossible to 'undermine the excesses of an irresponsible state' (IFRA 1997, p.27).

Based on the foregoing, this analysis is undergirded by the belief that *civil society contains seeds of incivility not only in the 'developing' world but in 'developed' countries as well*. The propensity for civil society in Nigeria or other countries in the Global South to be 'uncivil' at certain junctures in its history does not *matter-of-factly* portend that it is not akin to its counterpart in the West. As repeatedly mentioned throughout this project, corrosive interests and instances of incivility abound in both Africa and the Western world.⁵

A second general limitation of the civil society literature concerns its inability to link events in the 'developing' world with those in Europe and North America. Stated another way, the 'balkanization' in the civil society literature has created an untenable situation in which scholarship on the deviant elements of Western civil society rarely, if ever, 'speaks to' or draws from analyses of non-Western civil society. As a result, there irrefutably is a paucity of comparative analyses that incorporate discussions concerning civil society crises in the West,

with the usually *taken-for-granted* malignancies of the Global South's non-state sphere.

Unfortunately, the failure to undertake such holistic analyses has resulted in the generation of two groups of scholarship produced in the West and Global South that are very limited in their comparative scope. Furthermore, such narrowly construed and *ethnocentric* discussions fail to grasp the manner in which events in the 'developing' world are mirrored in the 'developed' world and vice versa; a development that is reflective of enhanced cultural, economic, political, religious and social interactions that transcend fixed borders (i.e. globalization).

Thirdly, as would be expected and on account of the increasing importance attached to civil society, commensurate attention has been paid to the marvellous *functions* that the non-state realm should perform in the 'developed' world and by suggestion elsewhere. The conviction that civil society promotes mutual respect is found in the works of Hobbes, Locke, Kant, Mills, Rawls and other Liberals, wherein mutual respect, as a means for securing the basic rights of others, connotes the idea that people, in formulating their own views of life and in determining the best basis for fulfilling their objectives, must understand and accord regard for others' opinions and values⁶ (DeLue 1997). In a similar vein, several contemporary authors affirm that civil society generates civic virtues that ultimately are beneficial to society and the polity at large.⁷

Nonetheless, a small number of scholars forcefully contend that American civil society, instead of realizing its indispensable potential, is on the decline; others strongly disagree that such stagnation is evident in the United States. Writing from the former vantage point, Putnam (1995 and 2002) opines that there has been deterioration in the level of social capital generated in the United States, owing to a decrease in associational activity amongst Americans.⁸ Authors⁹ like Gitlin (1990), commenting on the state of American civil society, lament dwindling participation levels¹⁰, whilst others such as Ladd (1999) dismiss such presumed declines as baseless.¹¹

Additionally, attention has been drawn to the emergence of an 'uncivil' society in the United States.¹² Gitlin (1990) maintains that 'civil society in the US is eroding from a far higher plane; in the land of the free market, civil society, the fine mesh of self-organized groups and initiatives, is embattled'. He attributes this decline to capitalism, which allows the 'free enterprise' to dominate the national discourse and corrode civil society, by privileging the interests of a few at the expense of others. In a similar vein, the decline of civility on a typical American university campus has been documented in popular journals (Pinkser 1995). Yet, references to these matters rarely occur

when African civil society is mercilessly dissected and severely criticized for its many failings.

Lastly and following from the foregoing discussion, instead of making *normative* judgements regarding which interests are legitimate and therefore constitute a 'civil' society, scholars should delineate a typology of civil society that encompasses radical as well as benign organizations. In so doing, we will realize that those aspects of civil society that ostensibly appear to be self-destructive or ill-developed, in fact are genuine and undeniable manifestations of this somewhat vaguely-defined but nevertheless-recognisable notion of civil society. This holistic view will infuse the concept with the complexity that it both exhibits and warrants.

On the tendency of incivility to inhere within civil society, Fatton (1995, pp. 71–2) makes the following assertion that is worth quoting at length:

Civil society can indeed be quite uncivil; it is replete with antinomies.... Thus, by generally reflecting the lopsided balance of class, ethnic and sexual power, the organizations of civil society tend to privilege the privileged and marginalize the marginalized. Civil society's plurality does not entail an automatic and equal representation of the whole polity. Civil society is not the all-encompassing movement of popular empowerment and economic change portrayed in the reveling and exaggerated celebrations of its advocates. It is simply not a democratic *deus ex machina* equalizing life-chances and opportunities; crippled by material limitations and class impairments it constitutes at best a very uncertain substitute to what had previously been the corrupt and class-based patronage of a more profligate state. In short, civil society should not be confused with a 'civic community'.

Possibly underlying arguments such as Fatton's is the belief that only African (or non-Western) civil society is characterized by these contradictions and problems. Yet, the proliferation of militia and hate groups in the United States, and their willingness to attract attention through pernicious actions such as the 1995 bombing of Oklahoma City, normally are not addressed when the presence of incivility in the 'developing' world is discussed.

This volume departs from a large number of others (Ronning 1995; Callaghy 1994; Maina 1998; Sogge 1997; Chabal and Daloz 1999) by maintaining that a vibrant civil society does exist in the African context. More importantly, my investigation is underpinned by the premise that civil society is not a phenomenon exclusive to the West,

and that the latter therefore is not its *avant-garde* whose experiences represent the hegemonic and unquestioned referent by which all other realities must be judged.¹³

In sum, the body of literature on civil society, as it is currently constituted, is utterly deficient because it routinely ignores so-called 'primordial' groups, such as ethnic associations and other informally organized entities, or analyses them outside the auspices of civil society. Although 'associational forms of engagement' (like 'business associations, professional organizations, reading clubs, film clubs, sports clubs, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), trade unions, and cadre-based political parties') customarily have been studied by scholars interested in civil society, 'everyday forms of engagement' that are based on loose, ascriptive and informal relationships have been excluded presumably because they do not generate civic virtues (Varshney 2001).

Whilst there is a prevailing belief on the part of influential scholars such as Gellner (1994) and Shils (1997) that ethnically focused organizations represent abnormal manifestations of, and should not be grouped under; civil society because they purportedly engender chaos and undemocratic attitudes, the widespread exclusion of these associations is untenable, based on a privileging of ideal-type norms that are not always attainable in practise and unreflective of the similar or distinct functions undertaken by these entities in comparison with their 'authentic' counterparts (Hutchful 1996; Orvis 2001; Varshney 2001; Kasfir 1998; Ekeh 1992; Barkan et al. 1991; Kawonise 1997; Oyegoke 1998; Walzer 1991; Srebrnik 2000; Tamarkin 1996).

In particular, ethnic associations 'participat[e] in democratic politics, set...up funds to encourage members of the ethnic group to enter newer professions, and facilitat[e] migration of ethnic kinsmen into...occupations and...education' (Varshney 2001, p.368). Following from this critical observation, I demonstrate in succeeding chapters that even the most-extremist ethnic associations provide similarly-positive benefits to their supporters in Nigeria.

SUMMARY

The idea of civil society remains appealing to both scholars and practitioners. Unlike other more complex concepts studied in the social sciences and related disciplines, the dominant conceptualization of civil society inherently connotes and promotes wonderful values that are readily understood by the average layman. Recognizing this fact, practitioners in the field of development studies in particular have enthusiastically embraced the concept owing to increased emphases

on the non-state realm, privatization and devolution of certain government tasks, which have been deficiently undertaken by the state, to the grassroots level.¹⁴

Pursuant to the preceding synopsis, this volume undertakes two broad tasks. On the one hand, it concisely highlights four theoretical anomalies that plague dominant civil society treatises. These include the *myth of civility*, *narrow conceptualization of the non-state realm*, *normative and ethnocentric tendencies evident within certain civil society analyses*. The *civility myth* directly originates from the phrase 'civil society', which mistakably assumes that there is a section of society that is predominantly civil and another that is not. Following from this view, the state is regarded as a monstrous, corrupt and inept leviathan that only could be resisted by a coherent, morally superior and orderly civil society.

Moreover, my analysis exposes the *unduly narrow and arbitrary manner* in which groups are included or excluded from civil society based on whether their *raison d'être* are lauded or despised. If incivility is a feature of several non-state organizations, including those regarded as principally beneficial to society and thus 'valid' expressions of civil society, then combative groups employing fanatical strategies or addressing controversial topics logically cannot be excluded on the basis that they are unworthy of the 'civil society' designation.

Civil society also is imbued with a *normative* value that excessively focuses on the many aims it is supposed to achieve and restricts its operationalization in the same breath. The tendency to describe civil society from a subjective vantage point stems from the prevailing fixation on the benefits that supposedly accrue from the non-state domain and the contemplation of the state of affairs in a perfect universe. However, this view of civil society *a priori* and peculiarly excludes primordial or radical organizations from the dominant debate because they depart from the Western 'norm', and are 'impediments' to modernity and democracy.¹⁵

Lastly, the *Eurocentric* bias in the civil society literature manifests itself in the repeated references to the patent incivility in Africa and the rest of the Global South, as stemming from the presumed lack of civil society or presence of a weak variant in that part of the world, corresponding failure to problematize the activities of Northern civil society organizations (CSOs) in the same discussion, the overall reification¹⁶ of the Western experience and the excessive magnification of the crudeness apparent in the 'developing' world, as instances of the same practice in the West are disregarded or de-emphasized.

Conversely, this study juxtaposes these weaknesses with the radicalization of Nigerian civil society, which I operationalize by reviewing the activities of three militant ethnic associations. This empirical exercise especially seeks to comprehend the factors responsible for the fanaticism of these organizations. In furtherance of these two overarching objectives, the remainder of this analysis proceeds along the following lines.

Firstly, [Chapter II](#) illuminates methodological issues pertinent to my project, including the main hypothesis, which states that regime policy radicalized Nigerian civil society. In [Chapter III](#), I present a detailed review of the civil society concept, including its problematization and applicability to the African Continent. Moreover, the Nigerian experience and the critical concept of ethnicity are described in great detail, with the intention of better grasping the context in which the militant non-state domain emerged and is structured in the country.

In light of the hypotheses presented in [Chapter II](#), [Chapters IV](#) through [VI](#) undertake in-depth profiles of the Ijaw Youth Council (IYC), Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) and Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC). For their part, [Chapters VII](#) and [VIII](#) marry the issues addressed in the empirical and theoretical sections by revisiting the conceptual issues examined in the previous chapters and the evidence thereafter described. Finally, [Chapter IX](#) underscores the repercussions of this study's findings for the state and in view of prevailing concerns with transnational terrorism.

CHAPTER II

Overview of Study

IN THIS CHAPTER, I ANALYZE PERTINENT QUESTIONS, DEFINITIONS, HYPOTHESES, independent and dependent variables, and present detailed information concerning research tools that were employed for the purposes of this study. Previously, I alluded to the shortcomings evident in the theoretical literature on African civil society. Firstly, I argued that Africa and its civil society historically have been studied in the West from a narrow, Eurocentric and consequently problematic perspective. The penchant for inordinately focusing on the malignancies present in the non-state sector in Africa, and an associated failure to concurrently assess the implications of these occurrences in both the North and Global South, were unmasked and roundly criticized.

Secondly and more significantly, I observed that it was simplistic to assume that civil society is a benevolent sphere that wholly promotes positive values and is not riven with divisions. Instead, I advocated an alternative view that is fully mindful of the incivility that occasionally inheres within the non-state realm and does not exclude radical predispositions from civil society. Finally, [Chapter I](#) briefly underscored the weaknesses emanating from the widespread belief that ethnically based and other so-called ascriptive organizations are not viable expressions of civil society.

As a result of this stance, extensive studies have been conducted on labor, professional, non-governmental and other 'bona fide' organizations, to the detriment of ethnic associations. In fact, ethnicity regularly is treated in the African context as a variable that is intrinsically problematic and partly responsible for the 'backward' state of the Continent. Due to this preconception, associations representing ethnic interests typically are branded as primordial, traditional, patently retrogressive and inferior vestiges that must be discarded in order for Africa to achieve 'development'. Yet, as discussed in subsequent chapters, even fanatical ethnic associations need not be demonized in such a blanket fashion, as they generate both positive and negative values.

IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH TO DISCIPLINARY CONCERNS

The post-Cold War era has been characterized by dramatic and numerous transitions from authoritarian to semi-democratic or democratic rule in Africa and other parts of the world. In many respects, these widely celebrated changes, which were spurred by developments in the international arena, including a nascent and largely *de facto* international regime that increasingly rewards democratic polities and sanctions autocratic ones, were chronicled in various democratisation and popular journals over the last two decades (Ihonvbere 1997; Ihonvbere 2000; Clark 1996; Bratton 1998).

In Africa alone, approximately 48 countries implemented crucial political and social reforms in the early 1990s¹ (Monga 1997). Still, like their counterparts elsewhere, African polities are confronted with various problems that may hamper full transitions to democratic rule and the eventual consolidation of such regimes. These include weaknesses of political parties, manipulation of the electoral process, a narrow political field, a constrained civil society and a controlled press; others include the thorough-going absence of civility, privatized violence and politicized armies, and prevalent support for dictatorship within certain African countries (Ibid).

Lately, and in concert with the aforementioned political transformations and crises, a peculiar phenomenon has arisen in many nations, namely the formation of novel ethnically based groups, indigenous NGOs and entities representing other interests. In certain parts of the Global South, newly ascendant non-state groups have been largely effective in challenging *status quo* governments and widening heretofore-restricted public spaces.

Additionally, ethnic associations have drawn a great deal of attention to the importance of ethnicity and religion as valuable tools for group mobilization. Owing to the increasing significance of these organizations internationally, and the global movement towards democratic rule, this research undertaking is important, as it gives agency to the non-state realm and tackles two vital issues in the fields of democracy and governance, namely the potential roles of civil society in consolidating or undermining democracies.

This project also is important because it presents information on the non-state sphere in a part of the world (Africa) that either has been ignored in literature or treated in a dismissive fashion by certain but definitely not all Western scholars (Ronning 1995; Callaghy 1994). In this regard, it challenges and refutes the myth that civil society is weak or non-existent on the Continent. Besides, I problematize civil society and re-examine the notion that the non-state domain

intrinsically is or should be a repository of only democratic values, where neutral or principled ideas prevail. On the contrary, civil society need not be an organized arena where issues are resolved in an amicable or rational manner, as the non-state sphere actually may engender more problems *vis-à-vis* the state than it resolves.

The confrontational tactics employed by several organizations, including those profiled in this study, between 1999 and 2002 serve as a poignant but sobering example of this phenomenon in post-authoritarian Nigeria. Due to the paucity of research on the political implications of a radicalized civil society in the African context, an examination of the potentially beneficial and/or corrosive repercussions of the activities of such groupings for plural societies like Nigeria will yield new insights into this important trend and be relevant to similar occurrences being observed in other countries.

Secondly, this study aspires to make an important contribution to the literature on civil society and social movements because it views the former as an all-encompassing phrase under which the latter, regardless of their strategies or structures, can be subsumed. A cursory review of scholarly output in these two areas reveals that analysts operating in these two 'camps' habitually have made an implicitly tenuous distinction. Civil society scholars have scrutinized Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), NGOs, and other 'positive' associations, whilst excluding 'anti-democratic', 'radical', 'informal' or 'loosely-based' groupings. On the other hand, social movement theorists have dwelt upon the latter organizations, whilst putatively ignoring the important theoretical contributions of the civil society literature.

Hence, I envision civil society as a spectrum of interests, consisting of very radical organizations², a mixed group consisting of somewhat-radical and somewhat-benign organizations³, and a largely benign group of organizations whose role civil society theorists have unduly focused upon. I hope to bridge the divide between these two scholarly literatures by revealing how they both enrich the debate on the non-state realm. Lastly, this study is important precisely because it is bolstered by an in-depth and primary study of the rise of ethnic groupings in Southern Nigeria; this important topic has captured the attention of laymen and the popular press but only has been discussed in passing in several scholarly undertakings.

WHY AFRICA AND NIGERIA?

This volume focuses on Africa because it is one of the most ethnically and linguistically diverse regions in the world. There are probably more languages spoken in Africa than elsewhere in the world and by

implication more ethnic groups than almost all other Continents. Apart from speaking Arabic and the major European languages in large numbers, most Africans speak other languages that can be grouped into five categories.⁴

Nigeria is an excellent laboratory for the study of ethnicity and civil society for several reasons. In addition to being the most populous country in Africa, with approximately 110 million people, Nigeria is one of the most ethnically diverse nations in the world, with more than 250 languages spoken by the same number of ethnic groups (Bell-Gam and Iyam 1999). The major groups, which comprise 65 percent of the population, include the Hausa and Fulani in the North, the Igbo in the South-East and the Yoruba in the South-West. Minority groups include the Edo, Efik, Ibibio, Ijaw, Ogoni, Tiv, Kanuri and the Nupe, which comprise 15 percent of the Nigerian population (Ibid). Furthermore, the vibrancy, fortitude and expressiveness of Nigerian society are very unique and epitomise civil society *par excellence*.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM, HYPOTHESIS, VARIABLES AND DEFINITIONS

Statement of Problem

This analysis attempts to answer the following question: How can we account for the radicalization of civil society in Southern Nigeria? In broad terms, this study is necessary because few comprehensive and primary research studies have been conducted on the manifestations and repercussions of radical civil society groups, such as ethnically based organizations, in the African context. On the contrary, the notion of civil society typically has been studied and described from a largely sanitized vantage point, with the aforementioned groups being largely excluded from dominant musings on this subject.⁵

Owing to the erroneous conviction that ethnically based groups in Europe and North America inherently are more 'advanced' (in terms of their mode of organization, tactics and objectives) than their counterparts in the Global South, proper attention has not been paid to the corrosive elements within such organizations in the West in relation to those found elsewhere. As quite a few Southern countries are recent creations that are not nation-states in the strictest sense of the term, they customarily have not resolved the ethnicity and nationalism *problematicues*. This reality is in marked contrast with the situation in Western countries, where ethnicity seems to the outsider to be comparatively less salient or politicized, because these

nations usually contain one publicly dominant group and other relatively acquiescent nationalities.

As a general rule, there appears to be less of a need in the West to form vociferous ethnic associations to challenge or topple maligned regimes. This could be traced to the seeming ability of 'legitimate' associations in Western countries to transcend racial, ethnic and other societal cleavages.⁶ Consequently, these ostensibly broad-based groups and the perennially favored NGOs, are regarded as requisite for the proper functioning of civil society. In a rather questionable fashion, those groups that promote 'parochial' or controversial interests in the Global South usually are excluded from the conceptualisation of civil society, whilst organizations that perform similar functions in Europe or America are rarely, if ever, discussed when this omission is effected.

In actuality, the fact that particular Western states sanctioned discriminatory and exclusionary policies in the past, largely disputes, if not undermines, the previously made assertion regarding the role of ethnicity in that part of the world. In the American context, color, ethnicity and 'race' always have been important and amenable to politicization precisely because of a history of *de jure* marginalization against minorities, particularly Native-Americans and African-Americans.

Members of the latter group who feel aggrieved and disenchanting with the underlying political, economic and social systems in their country historically have found 'solace' in radical groups such as the Nation of Islam, the National Black United Front (NBUF), the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparation in America (NCOBRA), and old and new variants of the Black Panther Party (BPP). Other disgruntled Americans continue to participate in purportedly primordial entities as disparate as the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), Armed Forces for National Liberation (FALN), Macheteros guerrilla group and several militia organizations, particularly those based in the hotbed states of Montana and Idaho.⁷

In Europe, United Kingdom-based Sinn Fein's Irish Republican Army (IRA) remains active in British-occupied Northern Ireland, Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) in the Basque region of Spain similarly have carried out violent campaigns in their quest for independence and the leftist 17 November organization of Greece resisted military rule in that country between 1967 and 1975, and was implicated in approximately 21 deaths, including those of the Greek state bank governor, four United States diplomats and a United Kingdom shipping tycoon (BBC 2000).

Lately, other organizations have coalesced around specific issues, such as environmentalism⁸, globalisation⁹ and animal rights. Several

of these groups, particularly Ya Basta! (an Italy-based militant organization that is opposed to globalisation efforts), Freie ArbeiterInnen Union (Germany-based anarchist and radical organization), People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty (SHAC), have resorted to confrontational or peculiar tactics in order to publicize their respective causes.¹⁰

Outside North America and Europe, prominent radical groups include Al-Qaeda, Abu Sayyaf in the Philippines, Jemaah Islamiyah of Southeast Asia, Aum Shinrikyo of Japan, the Mungiki Sect of Kenya, Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), Lashkar-i (or 'e') -Jhangvi (also of Pakistan), South Africa's Warriors of the Boer Nation, Egypt's Jamaat al-Islamiyya, Lebanon's Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, and Popular Liberation Army of Palestine, Hamas of the Palestinian Occupied Territories, and the following Jewish extremist organizations: Temple Mount Faithful, the Kahane Movement and Jewish Defence League. Whilst these organizations probably are not building social capital *a la* Robert Putnam, they still fulfill important functions for their members (similar to what more widely-accepted and 'mainstream' groups perform) and sometimes for their societies as well. Therefore, they should not be analyzed outside the civil society motif.

Consequently, this volume's focus is distinctive, as it seeks to rectify the heretofore-described omission in literature by examining the negative and positive roles that three prominent and specifically chosen ethnically based groups, which are representative of the three geo-political zones of Southern Nigeria, assume within the larger polity. In contrast to other more sterile discussions, this analysis is informed by the belief that radical groups are visible expressions of civil society. Reflective of the diversity evident in the non-state realm, this undertaking explores the manner in which Nigeria's experience with authoritarian rule paradoxically resulted in the emergence of an active, energised and vibrant civil society in the Southern region of the country.

Hypothesis

This project is undergirded by the hypothesis that regime policy engendering *repression, economic and social deprivation* (experienced by all citizens irrespective of ethnicity), and *reputed discrimination against or marginalization of specific ethnic groups*¹¹ is likely to radicalize certain organizations and spur them to utilize confrontational and/or violent tactics to achieve their stated objectives.¹² I maintain that these three manifestations of regime

policy, this study's *independent variable*, acted singly or in concert with one another to trigger the radicalization witnessed in Nigeria since the 1990s. The explanatory utility of these sub-hypotheses is tested in Southern Nigeria by wholly focusing on ethnic associations.

I selected ethnically based organizations, as opposed to radical labor, academic or student associations, for several reasons. These include but are not limited to the following: the enduring importance of ethnicity in the Nigerian context; the continuing influence of radically-oriented ethnic associations in the country's political, societal and other realms; the threat that these militant entities pose to Nigeria's territorial existence; and the violence that some of these groups and recurring ethnic conflicts in general have and continue to wreak(ed) on Nigerian society.

Moreover, the study of ethnically oriented organizations is important, as a large number of Nigerians either identify with or behave as *de facto* members of such entities. In contrast, by their very nature, certain, if not all, professional and labor associations paradoxically are exclusive, often elitist and parochial, and therefore represent the interests of a small group of citizens. Hence, whilst studying these associations could be a worthwhile endeavor, such an undertaking will not be as rewarding an exercise at this juncture, in view of this study's broader concern with civil society and radicalization.

Independent Variable and Definitions

To the extent possible, this research principally reviews the actions and policies of successive military¹³ and civilian regimes that governed Nigeria between 1960 and 2002, as revealed in literature and highlighted by interviewees. For the purposes of this undertaking, I define the independent variable, regime policy, as the *official rules and regulations implemented by the Nigerian government, either civilian or military, between independence in 1960 and the year 2002.*¹⁴ Regime policy is conceptualized by addressing issues pertaining to *repression, economic deprivation and social malaise, and marginalization.*¹⁵

In general, state-instigated political violence involves repression, oppression and terrorism.¹⁶ Repression is 'the use of coercion or the threat of coercion against opponents or potential opponents in order to prevent or weaken their capability to oppose the authorities and their policies' or 'government action that grossly discriminates against persons or organizations viewed as presenting a fundamental challenge to existing power relationships or key government policies because of their perceived political beliefs' (Bissell et al., p.6; Stohl

and Lopez 1984; Goldstein 1977, p. xvi). To examine whether repression is present in a particular context, one could explore 'arrests, exiles and executions [,] censorship of the press and other media [,] restrictions on political parties [, and] suspension of constitutional guarantees and other interferences with [the] judicial process' (Duff, McCamant and Morales 1976)

Acting singly or in concert with other variables, repression may spur a dramatic increase in the number of CSOs, the adoption of a fanatical or acquiescent posture by such entities, and a concomitant utilization of militant or non-militant tactics to achieve desired goals. Along the same lines, Tarrow (1994) states the following regarding the potential impact of repression on CSOs:

[A]uthoritarian states discourage popular politics [and] suppress the interaction of collective actors and authorities that is the hallmark of social movements. [Furthermore, however,] the systematic repression of confrontational protest has perverse and contradictory effects. The very success of repression can produce a radicalization of collective action and a more effective organization of opponents.

This description is very apt, as it clearly depicts the manner in which government actions eventually may influence, if not determine, the tactics employed by civil society groups. However, contrary to Tarrow's (1998) subsequent assertion that decreased repression might dramatically reduce organizational radicalization, this analysis explores the possibility that the deleterious effects of previously-undertaken repression may persist or worsen in a democratic regime, where there are, in theory at least, less-restricted avenues for and reduced costs of participation.

I explore the specific relationship between repression¹⁷ and civil society in the context of the Nigerian experience. Organizations such as Human Rights Watch and Freedom House document contraventions of civil liberties and political rights in the West African country; the former entity provides rich descriptive details on the instances and effects of these acts on its website, while the latter ranks Nigeria either as not free or partly free between 1972 and 2001, with the exception of the 1979 to 1984 period when government policies were mostly 'democratic'¹⁸ (Freedom House 2002).

In citing this data and scrutinizing its ramifications for non-state actors, I am cognisant of the many attempts to interrogate the specific ways in which authoritarianism has fostered radicalism in other contexts (Huband 1996; Zoubir 1996; Jauregui 1986; Gray 1991; della Porta 1995). Yet, succinctly elucidating the relationship between

coercion and protest has been and still remains an unresolved dilemma (Hibbs 1973; Jackson et al 1978; Lichbach 1987; Tsebelis and Sprague 1989; Mason and Krane 1989; Muller and Weede 1990, 1994; Karmeshu and Mahajan 1990; Hoover and Kowaleski 1992; Khawaja 1993; Opp 1994; all cited in Francisco 1995).

Certain of the previously-mentioned scholars adhere to the so-called *inverted-U formulation*, which surmises that 'protest is most likely when coercion is moderate, least likely when it is absent or severe'; *the backlash hypothesis*, which maintains that 'extremely harsh coercion accelerates protest'; or *the adaptation model*, which states that 'dissidents will change their tactics over time, especially after defeats' (Francisco 1995). Whilst all three models of rebellion have been corroborated to some degree in Nigeria, this analysis underscores the point that the relationship between despotism and protest is not always linear or singular, and that a country's past experiences with the former are as important as ongoing autocratic practises for understanding the emergence of a 'rebellious' (Ekiert and Kublik 1999) civil society.

From this vantage point, I measure repression by analysing the despotic deeds promulgated by Nigerian governments between 1960 and 2002. Based on respondents' statements and other available evidence, I particularly focus upon the uncharacteristically virulent policies of the Buhari, Babangida, Abacha and Abubakar regimes between 1983 and 1999, and authoritarian tendencies that were apparent during the regime of President Olusegun Obasanjo from 1999 to 2002.

Following from these vital historical and contemporary overviews, I evaluate the level of repression in Nigeria by describing the state's use of excessive force in its many confrontations with fanatical associations, concentration of power at the centre (an indicator which group representatives perceive as symptomatic of the Nigerian state's authoritarian inclinations) and the infringement on the ability of civil society organizations to express their grievances unhindered.

Secondly, I gauge regime policy by investigating issues concerning *economic deprivation and social malaise*, which were spurred by government action or inaction, and offered by the officials of profiled organizations. A review of literature suggests that economic underdevelopment, perceived injustice and unequal distribution of resources, dependence on foreign investment, implementation of neo-liberal reforms and changes in social conditions, including a rise in immigration, have contributed to the recorded increases in both left and right-wing extremist groups, and rebellious acts in many parts of the world (Betz 1993; Moaddel 2002; Gallaher 2000; Kibble 1996;

Freedman 1996; Minkenberg 2000; Rothgeb 1991; Gurr et al., 1993; Scarritt 1986; Scarritt and McMillan 1995).

Based on these related suppositions and in [Chapters IV](#) through VIII, I review the manner in which economic and social deprivation, primarily caused by the state between independence and 2002, determined the tactics chosen by examined ethnic associations, with a view to better ascertaining the role that deteriorations in living standards, and other manifestations of economic and social depression, assumed in relation to ethnically-oriented organizations. In so doing, due references are made to various economic indicators, such as export earnings, exchange rates and gross national product (GNP), and social indices like mortality rates, government allocation to the health sector and education.¹⁹

Finally, I also weigh the explanatory utility of group-specific discrimination with regard to profiled organizations' objectives and stratagems. In several respects, *marginalization* is akin to oppression. However, unlike oppression, the policy of discrimination presented herein is not always overtly *de jure* or methodical; instead, it sometimes reflects a policy of benign neglect that has not been explicitly articulated or executed by civilian and military regimes.

In total, the intent of this exercise is to understand the nature of group-specific marginalization (whether real or imaginary) as described by respondents, newspaper reports and other relevant sources. Furthermore and whenever possible, this project elucidates the relationships, if any, between seemingly-prejudiced governmental actions targeted toward specific ethnic groups on the one hand, and the tactics utilized by organizations representing such groups to alter the prevailing situation. The specific indicators of marginalization repeatedly alluded to by the representatives of profiled organizations include, among others, the quantity and quality of political representation at local, state and national levels of government; the presence of federally-owned institutions within their respective communities; and the state's responsiveness to their economic, social, infrastructural and related demands.

Dependent Variable and Definitions

The process of *organizational radicalization* sometimes ensues when there has been a history of government callousness, indifference to the plight of citizens and autocratic rule.²⁰ Despite the fact that authoritarian regimes are not democratic, their policies can either be benevolent (largely developmental states) or corrosive in nature.²¹ It therefore should be expected that corrosive and benevolent autocratic regimes would impinge upon civil society in radically different ways.

Due to the fact that Nigeria underwent a particularly virulent form of authoritarian rule, which also stifled economic, political and social life in the 1980s and 1990s, I focus upon its experience as an example of corrosiveness.

Years of repressive rule, corruption, economic and social underdevelopment induced by bygone military *junta* all combined to corrode civil society and trigger an unprecedented increase in crime, religious and ethnic conflicts. At the same time, an animated civil society that pressured consecutive authoritarian governments and challenged their problematic policies emerged from the ruins of Nigeria's experience, just as the country's post-1998 dictatorial democracy²² also triggered or worsened the radicalization process. The implications of this authoritarianism inhering within the country's polity are featured in later chapters.

In order to undertake a comprehensive review of the extremist ethnic associations profiled in this study, duly account for the process that contributed to their emergence and appropriately categorize their actions, a relevant explanatory model of some sort was needed. Yet, an exhaustive review of civil society and social movement literatures did not yield pertinent information concerning radicalization typologies that would be useful in the Nigerian context. Following from this deficiency and for the purposes of this study, I detail *radicalization* as a spectrum of tactics that frequently comprises one or more of these three broad elements:

1. Actions that result in physical confrontation with state security agencies and often in loss of life on both sides: Organizations that directly engage the state usually are the *most radical and dreaded*.
2. Actions that involve the use of inflammatory or incendiary rhetoric: *Moderately radical* organizations typically employ language that is disconcerting and threatening to the 'powers that be' in a manner reminiscent of a verbal battlefield.
3. Actions, such as demanding civil, economic, political, religious, social and other rights, which conservative elements within society deem controversial: *Less radical* organizations belong in this category and are less radical than those classified under (1) and (2) above, although their goals could still pose serious threats to entrenched interests. These groups could, as time progresses, become more radicalised if their original demands are not met or if objectives change. Moreover, if disagreements arise concerning a group's goals or tactics, factions might arise, with one bloc becoming more fanatical than the other.

Disparate groups that articulate similar objectives and operate in similar milieux usually do not employ the same strategies. Undeniably, they have the option of choosing mainstream or contentious tactics; if they have not been radicalized in any manner whatsoever, they might seek to operate within existing structures and not overthrow them. The specific tools available to non-radicalized CSOs engaging in collective action include but are not limited to the following: ‘...working within the rules of the polity through propaganda, interest group pressures, elections, legislative processes [or] judicial litigation...’ (Esman 1994, p. 38).

If such groups have been radicalized, however, they might employ a wide variety of unpopular stratagems to fulfill their purposes. In concert with violence, fanatical entities could demand regional autonomy or outright secession from the existing polity, and redress for past injustices committed against specific ethnic, religious, regional and other collective interests. In general, such militant groups may rely on stratagems that ‘...involve the deliberate flouting of [polity] rules [; these range from] civil disobedience and nonviolent disruptions to terrorism and insurrectionary violence’ (Ibid, p.39).

Nevertheless, radicalization does not always connote confrontations with security operatives and the remainder of society or violence for that matter. In fact, it simply could entail the empowerment of non-state actors who have not been co-opted by the political centre; this form of radicalism could be placed under number (1), *minimal radicalization*, in the typology presented above. In turn, this enabling could spur a marked proliferation of ethnic, non-governmental or other CSOs, and increased requests for political, economic and social reforms. Conversely, less-radical groups could demand ‘deliberalization’ or a return to the *status quo ante*, especially if ameliorative government policies hinder the progress of their leaders and constituencies or have deleterious effects on the populace at large.

Other related manifestations of radicalization include concerted efforts to reverse the problematic policies of authoritarian regimes or erode the legitimacy of such administrations. If attempts to topple autocratic governments do not succeed or if public institutions fail or are unable to act in a manner commensurate with their *de jure* authority, certain entities, individuals or organizations may appropriate their roles by providing security and social services traditionally associated with the state.

There are several implications of a radicalized civil society for a democratising polity. At the outset, it is important to note that such a civil society may be vigilant, capable of preventing democratically elected governments from slipping into a morass of corruption and

Table 1: Profiled Ethnically Based Groups in Southern Nigeria

GROUPS	SUB-REGIONS	TACTICS
Ijaw Youth Council	South-South	Radical
Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra	South-East	Radical
Oodua Peoples Congress	South-West	Radical

lack of accountability, or returning to autocratic rule. Both recognized and unrecognized CSOs thereby may contribute to the consolidation and sustainability of democratising polities. Alternatively, certain agents within civil society may be unwilling to compromise, further factionalize society along class, ethnic, religious or regional lines, and hamper the effectiveness of newly-democratic regimes. Hence, the mobilization of civil society possibly could be positive or negative depending upon the broader environment in which it occurs.

Following from the foregoing brief overview of key concepts and definitions important to this study, the dependent variable, *radicalization of ethnically based organizations*, is operationalized by assessing the tactics of the ethnically based groups listed within [Table 1](#) below.

These associations were chosen from a list of organized ethnic entities operating in Southern Nigeria to reflect its ethnic, cultural and regional diversity. This research endeavor concentrates on the Southern region due to the fact that, notwithstanding the sizeable population of the North and its commensurate ethnic and cultural diversity, it has not witnessed the same level of marked explosion in militantly-oriented ethnic associations found in the South. The only exception to this observation is the existence of the Arewa Peoples Congress²³ (APC), a radical group that was formed as a direct reaction to the OPC's and Obasanjo administration's presumed anti-Northern activities.

The lack of vigorous, forceful, visible and confrontational (*vis-à-vis* the state and societal interests) ethnic associations in the North, similar to those found in Southern Nigeria, is partly reflective of the myth of Northern unity, which has been promoted by mainstream Hausa-Fulani dominated groups like the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF). Other reasons include the seeming pacification and acquiescence of Northern minority groups, the central role that radical religious expression (particularly Islam, which is the faith of choice for a majority of the North's teeming population²⁴) and not ethnicity assumes as the main tool for mobilizing the North's diverse peoples, and the fact that Northerners, regardless of their incongruent

economic, ethnic and other backgrounds, felt psychically connected to the central political apparatus because, until 1999, ‘one of their own’ ruled from Lagos and later Abuja.

Reflective of this reality, radical and ethnically oriented organizations have not been as prominent in Northern Nigeria, when compared to the South, because the former region traditionally did not claim that it was being marginalized by the political centre. The installation of a Southerner (Obasanjo) as the Nigerian president in 1999, however, resulted in widespread and unrelenting contentions by Hausa and Fulani elites that the Federal Government was deliberately ignoring and disenfranchising the North. Altogether, for the previous reasons; the fact that Nigeria can aptly be described as at least ‘two countries in one’; and the desire to present in-depth profiles of selected associations, this study intentionally focuses on Southern Nigeria on the whole and three ethnic associations specifically.

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH AND LOCATION OF FIELD WORK

Between 2000 and 2002, I undertook a comprehensive review of literature in the following and other pertinent areas: civil society, NGOs, social movements and their variants, the effects of political repression, and Nigerian and African politics. Compiling this background information was important because this study, as shown above, is undergirded by and somehow departs from existing theoretical concerns in the democracy and governance literature. Additionally, I assembled information on the activities of Nigerian and other non-state groups since their inception, and the reported effects of radical CSOs on the polity. In order to undertake this task, I periodically searched well-known web-based engines, and reviewed Internet- and paper-based news sites and magazine reports to document the issues of concern to this analysis.²⁵

During the summer and autumn months of 2001, I obtained contact information for the leaders of the associations listed in [Table 1](#) from several sources, including Nigeria-based journalists who had interviewed these individuals in the past. Once these details were obtained, I contacted such persons to describe the purposes of this study and schedule in-person interviews. I also relied extensively on Nigeria-based contacts to arrange these visits. Once the necessary appointments were made, I travelled to Nigeria in January 2002 to conduct interviews regarding the formation of these ethnically based organizations, their tactics and the objectives that they wanted to

achieve within the Nigerian federation, or in a newly-created state, if secession were their ultimate aim.

To better understand the manner in which Nigerians organize along ethnic lines, and the repercussions of such actions for the society at large, I visited several cities across Nigeria. If the complexity of Southern Nigeria were not accounted for by visiting sub-regions with different societal dynamics, the findings derived from this analysis undoubtedly would not be generalisable to the Nigerian society and other plural societies within and outside Africa. To ascertain how the issues probed herein have manifested themselves on the ground, my field and accompanying research were cognisant and reflective of the multicultural character of Southern Nigeria, and by extension, other diverse areas within and outside the Continent. Consequently, trips were made to Lagos, the country's economic and erstwhile political capital, and Port Harcourt, the hub of the country's oil industry, to interview individuals affiliated with the IYC, MASSOB and the OPC.²⁶

Prior to leaving for Nigeria in 2002, I anticipated that it would be extremely difficult to secure appointments with organizations that were more extremist or from regions outside my ethnic base in the Yoruba-speaking Southwest. Consequently, I assumed that if certain interviews could not be conducted, owing to the sensitive nature of this undertaking, I would rely on newspapers and journals to better understand the grievances of profiled groups.

In case such appointments were not obtainable, I planned to interview journalists, who may have extensive knowledge of radical CSOs and previously spoken with leaders of such groups; other possible remedies for this expected difficulty included collaborations with Nigeria-based scholars or postgraduate students. Yet, I clearly understood the innumerable biases that these solutions could have introduced into this project, including the chances that information elicited through these sources might not be entirely accurate. Fortunately, since I eventually was able to speak with group officials in Southern Nigeria, it was not necessary to interview Nigeria-based journalists for this project.²⁷

Initially, I intended to profile at least eight groups, with a minimum of two (one radical and one non-radical) from the country's four main regions of the South-South, South-East, South-West and the North.²⁸ I believed that this comparison would shed light on the reasons why certain organizations, operating in similar milieux and with comparable objectives, utilized divergent tactics, and consequently reduce, if not eliminate, the 'selection on the dependent variable' conundrum, which Geddes (1990), King, Keohane and Verba (1994), and others address in their respective volumes.

Table 2: Other Ethnically Based Groups in Nigeria

GROUPS	SUB-REGIONS	TACTICS
Choba Youth Association	South-South	Unknown
Itsekiri Youths Vanguard	South-South	Unknown
Supreme Egbesu Assembly	South-South	Radical
South-South Group	South-South	Non-Radical
Urhobo Progress Union	South-South	Unknown
Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni Peoples (MOSOP)	South-South	Non-Radical + Radical
Igbo Peoples Congress	South-East	Unknown
Igbo Youths Movement	South-East	Unknown
Ohanaeze Ndi-Igbo	South-East	Non-Radical
Odenigbo Forum	South-East	Non-Radical
Pan Ndi-Igbo Foundation	South-East	Unknown
Arewa Consultative Forum	North	Non-Radical
Arewa Peoples Congress	North	Radical
Southern Kaduna Peoples Union	North-West	Minimally Radical
Egbe Afenifere	South-West	Non-Radical
Oodua Liberation Movement	South-West	Radical
Oodua Redemption Alliance	South-West	Non-Radical
Oodua Youth Movement	South-West	Radical
Yoruba Council of Elders	South-West	Non-Radical

Essentially, such a problem arises when researchers ‘...choos[e] some phenomenon of political interest, gather...data on occurrences of the phenomenon [and] then determine what characteristics the occurrences have in common’ (Dion 1998, p. 127). Nevertheless, since this project is investigating the explanatory utility of *necessary*, as opposed to *sufficient*, conditions (Dion 1998), and I was unable to implement the originally developed research programme, the selection of cases on the dependent variable is perfectly justifiable and useful for the purposes of this venture.

During the course of research, the profiled groups listed in [Table 1](#) and others²⁹ were chosen from amongst the suitable ethnic associations listed within [Table 2](#). Interviews were then undertaken with officials of the following radical organizations: MASSOB (South-South), MOSOP (South-South) and the Ijaw Youth Council (South-South). I later excluded MOSOP from this study for the following reasons: for the sake of consistency; to ensure that the South-South

was not overly represented; because the Ogoni entity was no longer a truly radical organization in the vein of MASSOB, IYC and OPC; and because the interviewed MOSOP official, who purported to be the organization's legitimate leader, was a factional leader who was not particularly forthcoming with additional information needed for this project.³⁰

Despite repeated communications with Aka Ikenga, ORA and OPC officials via electronic mail, and notwithstanding promises from these individuals, they failed or were unable to furnish the requested information. This was probably due, in part, to the difficult political, social and economic terrain in Nigeria during this period and afterwards, including a destructive bomb explosion that rocked Lagos in January 2002 and claimed approximately one thousand lives. Based on the extensive secondary materials available on the OPC via the Internet and elsewhere, and its importance as a militant grouping, information pertaining to its activities, objectives and tactics was obtained from these sources and is presented in [Chapter VI](#).

This study significantly relies upon newspapers and other secondary sources to supplement and/or counter the various accounts offered by interviewees. Admittedly, this dependence on outside information has the potential of introducing certain biases into this study, including the possibility that Nigerian journalists might have deliberately or unknowingly exaggerated (or understated as the case may be) specific occurrences summarized in later chapters.

In order to minimize the effects of these and other germane problems, I reviewed various publications' reports of the same events. In so doing, when newspaper descriptions of a particular occurrence clearly differed for example, I cite the conflicting accounts to show that there was not specific agreement on the reasons for and outcomes of the events under consideration. Whilst the reader must exercise some caution when reviewing the case studies, they still are useful in augmenting our understanding of the process of civil society radicalization in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES

As a project of this sort does not readily lend itself to a quantitative research methodology, this analysis is informed by a rigorous and qualitative approach.³¹ King, Keohane and Verba (1994, p.6) argue that 'since many subjects of interest to social scientists cannot be meaningfully formulated in ways that permit statistical testing of hypotheses with quantitative data, [they] do not wish to encourage the exclusive use of quantitative techniques'. In quantitative method's

stead, the authors propose a 'rule of inference' method, which provides researchers with an empirical tool for ascertaining important phenomena.

A case study is 'an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident' (Yin 1994, p.13). Additionally, case studies, by virtue of their reliance on 'multiple sources of evidence', facilitate triangulation; this approach is one of five legitimate methodological 'arsenals' available to the scholar (Yin 1994; Peters 1998).

In addition to case studies, other appropriate research tools include experiments, histories, surveys and analysis of archival data. Concerning the applicability of the case study approach, 'how' or 'why' questions especially are amenable to this sort of analysis because the researcher usually possesses minimal control over the phenomena being investigated (Ibid). Also, case studies allow the social scientist to explore contemporary phenomena in their 'real-life context'.

To improve our understanding of the factors responsible for the radicalization of Nigerian civil society, I employ an embedded case study methodology that is purposely driven by historical analyses and buttressed by information provided by primary sources whenever possible (Ibid). This approach also has been described as 'within-case comparison' elsewhere and is instructive because it enables the researcher to increase the number of cases and consequently strengthen causal analysis (Collier 1993).

Within-case comparison also 'protect[s] the analyst from a problem that arises in the most different systems design, in which countries are matched on the dependent variable and differ in terms of a series of background variables' (Ibid, p. 112). Other writers also have, either explicitly or otherwise, advocated this form of comparison. For example, Rokkan (1996) maintains that 'comparisons of all units, smaller as well as larger, within one cultural area', represent an important form of macrocomparison and is holistic, as it combines both the strengths of the method of agreement with that of the method of difference.³²

Nevertheless, case studies of this kind present one problem, namely the lack of a large n. Collier (1993), Verba (1967), Lijphart (1971), Przeworski and Teune (1970), Sartori (1994), and Dogan and Kazancigil (1994) discuss the repercussions of this difficulty and analyze how they could be ameliorated. Collier (1993), in reviewing some of the previously cited authors, discusses several justifications for small-n studies, and Verba (1967) stresses the difficulty of 'assessing [hypotheses] adequately, except through a close command of the cases' (Collier 1993; Dahl 1966).

While small-n studies are practicable because resources to conduct larger studies often are lacking, larger-n studies often are not attainable or feasible because the issues of concern to political scientists have become more complicated in recent years (Lijphart 1971; Collier 1993). Peters (1998) also expressly submits that single-case studies enable the researcher to focus on a phenomenon vividly demonstrated by one case in the hope of clarifying or refining existing theories; Rose (1991) refers to this type of research endeavor as 'extroverted case study'. Moreover, a single-case research design is instructive, owing to its ability to show the potential applicability of a theory in other contexts, if it is applied in rather different or difficult milieux.³³

In summary, while I would have preferred to probe the phenomenon of interest to this analysis across the length and breadth of the vast and complicated terrain known as Nigeria, and in several countries within or outside Africa, the factors cited above precluded the conduct of a large-n study. As an antidote for this limitation, the 'within-case' approach, which I employ in this analysis, divides Nigeria into numerous zones.³⁴

Lastly, this project primarily relied on interviews, documentation and additional information obtained from respondents (Yin 1994). I employed an open-ended question format and administered written surveys to individuals affiliated with IYC and MASSOB.³⁵ In broad terms, I posed questions concerning the formation, objectives and strategies of these groups, including their respective histories, sources of funding and successes or failures in realizing their goals. The results of these interviews and reviews of Nigerian newspapers are summarized in Chapters IV, V and VI. Upon termination of these conversations, if additional questions arose, they were sent to the respondents in Nigeria via electronic mail. On the following pages, I analyze civil society and the Nigerian experience in great detail in relation to my focus on organizational radicalization.

CHAPTER III

Review of Literature

AT THE OUTSET, CHAPTER III OFFERS A REVIEW AND CRITIQUE OF THE civil society literature. The major part of this discussion traces the concept's evolution and the sundry manner in which it has been analyzed since the 1700s through a delineation of the tenets of the Classical/Neoclassical, Liberal, Hegelian, Marxist and Gramscian variants of civil society. The second section concentrates on contemporary discussions of civil society, including the controversies surrounding its definition and efficacy as an explanatory tool.

In subsequent overviews, my assessment shifts to select analyses of the pro and anti-civil society arguments presented by a few Africanists.¹ It is hoped that this summation would enhance the reader's understanding of conventional and radical reflections on civil society, the diverse nature of Africa's non-state sphere and the limitations of the dominant views of civil society. Equally, due to the continuing importance of ethnicity in the Nigerian context and the habitual disbarment of ethnically oriented organizations from the civil society paradigm, the fourth segment of Chapter III briefly summarizes the literature on this critical motif. Finally, to better understand the context in which profiled groups were formed, I pinpoint the factors that are responsible for the observed militancy of Nigerian civil society, as per the hypothesis outlined in Chapter II.

In order to succinctly account for this process of radicalization, due reference to the underpinnings of the independent variable, regime policy, is compulsory. As mentioned in the methodology discussion, regime policy is employed in this volume to encompass the *repressive activities of the Nigerian State since independence*², the *marginalization of specific ethnic groups*, as perceived by organizations representing these interests, and *economic and social underdevelopment that arose from direct government behavior or apathy*. At the end of this chapter, I present the following themes from Nigeria's experience between 1960–1999³: *State corruption, repression*

and violence, economic and social deprivation, and the emergence of a vibrant civil society.

PRELUDE TO CIVIL SOCIETY DISCUSSION

The treatment of NGOs and related groups as urbane, unproblematical and noble archetypes of civil society *par excellence* that are preferable to other non-state actors and the state, and are innately wonderful organizations that possess the antidote for all that afflicts society, is debatable and not supported by existing evidence.⁴ In fact, this contention only reifies the benefits that the analyst regards as important, ignores the negative deeds of widely-respected entities and concurrently overlooks the positive purposes served by MASSOB, IYC, OPC and others like them.

These groups are normatively excluded from civil society simply because 'we' neither like them nor what they represent. This exclusion of militant entities is attributed to their undemocratic attitudes, controversial tactics and objectives. Nevertheless, membership-based CSOs exhibit tyrannical inclinations, along with the psychic and concrete advantages that they offer to their adherents. The actions of the IYC, MASSOB and OPC overtly show that non-state actors can be confrontational, abrasive in their rhetoric, contribute, either wittingly or unwittingly, to the deaths of their members, government security forces and other 'innocent parties', wreak havoc throughout their respective domains, and cultivate the reputation of a feared, respected, maligned or mythical organization.

Therefore, the quest for thoroughly-magnanimous, democratic and otherwise-perfect organizations is instinctively futile and perhaps unrealizable, as widely-acclaimed groups create problems of their own for society and ostracised ones, like the subjects of this study and with all their untold problems, offer tangible benefits to their members and thereby satisfy one of the main requirements of a 'valid' CSO.

In contrast, the non-state realm could be envisioned as comprising formal and informal associations that are radical or non-radical in outlook. A useful scheme for understanding and categorizing civil society groups is offered below.

1. *Formal and Radical/Non-Radical Groups*: Consist of Ethnic, Religious, Political, Issue-Centred, Labor, Trade, Non-Governmental and related organizations
2. *Informal and Radical/Non-Radical Groups*: Consist of Social Movements, Ad Hoc, less-hierarchical and other loosely-structured organizations prevalent in all parts of the world

This project is principally concerned with entities grouped under number (1) above and does not precisely compare the evolution of the non-state domains in Africa and the West, because contexts matter and the histories of the two areas greatly differ. Still, a brief word concerning radical groupings is necessary at this juncture to underline the observation that fanaticism simply is not a feature of the West's past, a problem that has been satisfactorily resolved there to everyone's satisfaction or an anomaly only evident in Nigeria or other parts of the Global South. In like manner, I allude to the strengths and limitations of the protest movement literature below.

By studying both non-radical and radical movements, social movement theorists⁵ traditionally have operated in a universe separate from many of their civil society counterparts. Typically, social movements are examined using one or more of the following frameworks: the *political opportunity* model evaluates 'the political opportunities and constraints confronting a given challenger' in a particular milieu; *resource mobilization*⁶ examines 'the forms of organization (informal as well as informal) available to insurgents as sites for initial mobilization'; and the *framing* model involves the 'collective processes of interpretation, attribution and social construction that mediate between opportunity and action' (McAdam 1999, p. ix).

Ad hoc, loosely based and anti-establishment pressure groups have always featured in the Western experience. Prior to the 1960s, when most of these entities became very visible in their respective countries, protests revolved around issues such as enfranchisement, with American women employing 'adjustive' tactics and their British counterparts being more militant in their stances (Kowal 2000). Over the last forty years, movements which '...represented a loose coalition [and were] often defined by shifting alliances, attack[ed] almost every institution, from the armed forces, from business to government'⁷ (Hunt 1999; Anderson 1994, p.xvi).

Irrespective of its laudable contributions, the social movement literature is unable to fully account for the actions of MASSOB, OPC, IYC and other extremist CSOs in Nigeria. This deficiency partly stems from many protest movement scholars' excessive focus on radical expressions in the West (Tarrow 1994; della Porta 1995; Banaszak 1996) and scarcely elsewhere⁸; the codification of theories that are best applied to some but certainly not all movements in the former region; and the preoccupation with the availability of an appropriate level of resources and opportunities as requisite for effective group mobilization.⁹ Moreover, hegemonic social movement frameworks reportedly suffer from reformist and class biases, as they

primarily were developed to explain movements that want to be incorporated into existing economic and political systems.¹⁰

Yet, even more 'progressive' typologies that aim to rectify these inadequacies, such as the Radical Social Movement Organization model developed by Fitzgerald and Rodgers (2000), are not particularly beneficial to this project given their submission that extremist movements tend to be non-hierarchical, democratic, egalitarian and non-violent. These and other deficiencies necessitated the development, under the preferred aegis of the progressively ascendant civil society explanatory motif, of a dynamic radicalization typology, which is directly applicable to Nigeria and possibly other milieux, and demystifies the idealism evident in both the social movement and civil society literatures.¹¹ On the next pages, I delve into the varied manner in which civil society has been employed since antiquity.

EVOLUTION OF CIVIL SOCIETY

The notion of civil society 'entered Western usage in the Latin translation for Aristotle's *politike koinonia*, with its assumptions of a basic identity between governed and government, society and state' (Foley and Edwards 1998). According to the *classical* view, *societe civilis* was synonymous with the state and regarded as a 'type of political association, which placed its members under the influence of laws and ensured peaceful order and good government' (Fawehinmi 1999).

Eventually, the extrication of civil society from the state in political theory occurred, as the former was now seen as existing in opposition to the state (Keane 1988; Mamdani and Wamba-dia-Wamba 1995). This next phase in the evolution of civil society, the *neoclassical* period, emerged at the end of the 18th Century (Keane 1988). It posited a marked differentiation between the non-state sphere and the state, viewed the state with deep suspicion and surmised that civil society only could survive if it were autonomous.¹²

Undeniably, the *Liberal* variant is the hegemonic conceptualization of civil society in literature. It defines civil society as '...a social space independent of the state...' (Woods 1992, p. 80) and considers the non-state domain as a naturally occurring realm that is based on common interests. The Liberal version, espoused by Thomas Paine and Adam Smith, privileges individual rights and liberties, as well as the market, and sees the non-state sphere as operating in constant conflict with the state. In a manner akin to Locke, it conceives of society as 'a self-regulating realm...and a body that must be protected against incursions of the state'¹³ (Seligman 1992, p. 11).

For Liberals, the ‘animated spirit of society may need to be defended against political power’ (Keane 1988, p. 44). Hence, the state is regarded as a behemoth whose power has to be checked; for the state therefore to remain legitimate, it must be limited in its scope and not infringe upon citizens’ rights. Liberals particularly bristle at the state’s propensity to overstep its bounds, assume unlimited powers and trap individuals ‘in an endless labyrinth of political institutions which prevent them from scrutinizing the principles, good or bad, upon which existing laws are founded’ (Ibid, p. 45). In order for a state to be legitimate, its actions must be underpinned by natural rights and the consent of those whom it governs.

For its part, the *Hegelian* conceptualization defines civil society as ‘a...sphere of interests existing outside the state [where]...individuals pursue their self-interests often without regard for obligations and duties that are considered essential for protecting the rights that all members are to be accorded’ (DeLue 1997, p. 182). G.W.F.Hegel views civil society, not as a natural condition requisite for freedom, but as a ‘historically produced sphere of life’ that emanated from a multifaceted process (Mamdani 1995; Fawehinmi 1999).

In contrast to the Liberal model, Hegel does not imagine a marked distinction between the state and society. On the contrary, he avows that civil society overlaps with the state, and that the former is in fact an extension of, if not a ‘phase in [,] the actualisation’ of the latter (Woods 1992, p. 81). Therefore, *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* is engaged, not in a contradictory or an antagonistic relationship with the state, but in ‘an organic or dialectical relationship, where they are overlapping, interdependent or complementary, and where civil society serves, or should serve, as a site of policy input or discourse ethic’ (Kunz 1995, p. 182). Hegel’s analysis is very statist because he contends that the state is needed to liberate the individual from civil society, which is the repository of selfishness and illusion (Sedogo 1998).

The Hegelian School neither idealizes civil society nor regards it as unproblematical. Indeed, it treats civil society, not as a perfect realm, but as an intermediary stage that is typified by instability, ‘movement, rupture and...transform[ation]’ (Ibid, p. 112). Accordingly, Hegel compels us to be aware of the following contradiction:

Civil society should not be romanticised or idealised as standing for one altruistic goal of fighting for the freedom of the larger society. Civil society is ridden with conflicts- conflicts within individual component organizations and conflicts between groups and classes.... [and] civil society is not a harmonious body that

exists in opposition to capitalist state despotism (DeLue 1997, p. 185).

Civil society thus may be uncivil if 'it is [not] ordered politically and subjected to the higher surveillance of the state'¹⁴ (Hegel 1952).

Fourthly, the *Marxist* version of civil society denigrates the 'ideological claim to universality' that underpins the Liberal and Hegelian conceptualizations of civil society (Woods 1992, p. 81). Above all, Karl Marx chides Liberals for their rather naïve view of civil society as a realm that operates independently of, and unencumbered by, the whims and caprices of the capitalist state, as 'the consolidation of capitalist class interests [lay] behind ideological claims of reason and universality' (Ibid). Unlike Liberals, Marx does not regard civil society as a neutral or largely altruistic realm that is unaffected by inherent contradictions:

...[C]ivil society is an illusion that needs to be masked. The apparent freedom of action it grants to the individual serves in reality to disguise underlying realities of class exploitation. The capitalist state, instead of resolving the tensions of civil society, merely cements the power of the ruling class. Citizens are hopelessly fragmented, alienated from each other and from their 'species-being', as well as from the means of production and the product of their labor (Hann 1996, pp. 4–5).

Similarly, whilst it appears that the Marxist account of civil society would find resonance with the Hegelian School, Marx is equally disdainful of the claims of this 'retrograde' perspective.

Surprisingly, Marxists perceive the Liberal version as being more progressive in comparison with the Hegelian perspective.¹⁵ They are scornful of the Hegelian belief that the state and civil society are inextricably linked, and that the latter is a realm characterized by the unfettered pursuit of self-interest to the detriment of the common good, but which, with the intervention of the state, ultimately could lead to the promotion of a sense of community. In a manner similar to Adam Smith, Marxists identify civil society primarily with economic interactions in the market place, and regard the distinction between civil society and the state as emanating from the unique manner in which the capitalist economic system evolved in the 19th Century (Hann 1996).

Finally, the Marxist view of civil society has been challenged and revised by scholars sympathetic to Marxism. For instance, Antonio Gramsci contends that 'the struggle to transcend the inequalities of class society can only proceed following careful analyses of culture and

ideology among masses of civil society' (Hann 1996, p. 5). Generally, Gramsci regards civil society as incorporating more than a social manifestation of bourgeois domination of economic relations (Woods 1992). For him, class and national identities are constituted within civil society, where 'a conflict [ensues] over which social class or group [will] succeed in imposing its norms and economic interests on society in general' (Ibid).

In the *Gramscian*¹⁶ scheme of things, civil society is an hegemonic project, as the dominant class marshals all of the resources at its disposal to impose its worldview on the remainder of society, through the use of both ostensibly harmless associations and the state apparatus. Eventually, Gramsci believes that a 'protracted "war of position" for control over civil society would be the most effective way of politically undermining the domination of the bourgeoisie in its home territory of the economic and the coercive state' (Keane 1988, p. 23).

In essence, from the moment that civil society entered popular usage, it has been fraught with disagreements concerning its conceptualization, functions and relationship with the state.¹⁷ Yet, in spite of the proliferation of many versions of civil society in the 18th century and beyond, the apparent triumph of the Liberal ideology in the 20th century virtually banished radical assessments of the concept, provided by the Marxist School for instance, to the periphery of the civil society literature. Not only has this development robbed the literature of much-needed depth and multiplicity of perspectives in several cases, it has created a situation in which popular perceptions of radicalism, democratic aspirations, and the roles of state and non-state actors, have been adopted wholesale with scant problematization and reflection. Keeping these critical issues before me, I devote the next pages to the present-day issues that a civil society analysis provokes.

CONTEMPORARY MUSINGS ON CIVIL SOCIETY AND AFRICA

Contemporary Conceptualization

Literature is replete with references to the increasing popularity but contested nature of civil society. Like their 'ancient' counterparts, contemporary scholars have not particularly integrated the divergent views of civil society into a coherent whole. The customary utilization of civil society raises several issues. One pertains to the definition of the phrase itself. Not surprisingly, there is little consensus on

whether the concept of civil society should encompass business, economic and voluntary organizations, or whether the latter should be treated as a distinct sphere (Foley and Edwards 1996). In broad terms, the inability of scholars to agree on a lucid and parsimonious definition of civil society engenders a quagmire that cannot be ignored.

Furthermore, there is little accord on how state-civil society relations should be categorized. One group of Gramscian authors finds the widely-made distinction between civil society and the state tenuous 'either because it is assumed to be the property of th[ose on the] right, or because it is said to fudge the crucial problems of property, class and conflict' (Keane 1988, p. 13). Other scholars substitute civil society for the market 'and other forms of "private" life that are supposed to be good because of their opposition to state power' (Ibid).

The sheer difficulty of effecting a systematic conceptualization of this deeply-ambiguous concept is apparent and widely acknowledged. In part, this is due to the varied and loose manner in which civil society is used in academic and popular discourses. In recent years, it has been employed journalistically and ephemerally as a slogan that regards the non-state domain as naturally in opposition to the state (Hann 1996; Seligman 1994). Therefore, it has become '...diffuse, hard to define, empirically imprecise and ideologically laden' (Allen 1997, p. 329).

Customarily, civil society is utilized as a 'positive, analytic term for the social sciences, with concrete referents that can be investigated through empirical research' (Seligman 1994; Hann 1996, p.2). Its normative underpinnings are evident because it espouses ideals that are not always realizable in practise (Tester 1992; Seligman 1992):

'Civil society' sounds good; it has a good feel to it; it has the look of a fine old wine, full of depth and complexity. Who could possibly object to it [or] not wish for its fulfillment. Fine old wines can stimulate but they can also make you drunk, lose all sense of discrimination and clarity of purpose. What is the case for reviving the concept of civil society? What is its theoretical reach, and how far can this be translated into practice? (Kumar 1993, p. 376)

Owing to these and other reasons, it is almost impossible to articulate 'a strict or empirically-valid definition' of civil society because of its inherent seductiveness and speciousness (Kumar 1993). Thus, any unproblematical discussion of civil society's utility and validity in the social sciences and beyond must be met with an underlying sense of scepticism.

Towards this end, another group of scholarship problematizes civil society and examines the manner in which it is instrumentally employed by Western and non-Western interests alike to achieve flawed ends.¹⁸ Such authors squarely place the discussion of civil society in broader political, economic, social and international contexts, and probe how external interests appropriate and manipulate it to further their specific agendas. From this perspective, Beckman (1993) regards civil society as an 'arena for ideological contestation' and analyses the implications of what he terms the civil society 'project' thusly:

[B]y pretending to be civil society's best friend and by assigning the state the role of the enemy of civil society, the neo-liberal project conceals its own massive use of state power, transnational and local, for the purpose [of] constructing a civil society according to its own image. In so doing, it is busy suppressing and disorganising much of civil society as it actually exists, with its aspirations and modes of organization centred on influencing the use of state power. *While pretending to act on behalf of all civil society—NGOs, social movements, grassroots— by a definitional trick, groups which are not supportive of its own project are defined out of civil society* [emphasis added]. They are 'vested interests' benefitting in one way or the other from the state and therefore not truly civil society in the way the polarity has been falsely constructed.

We can begin to unmask the discrepancies, ambiguities and inequities that accompany civil society theory and practise, and work towards a more systematic and holistic definition, by subjecting the idea to vigorous and unrelenting empirical tests in specific contexts, and confronting our narrow-mindedness in the process. It is in this spirit that I review the African experience below and investigate three CSOs in later chapters.

African Civil Society

African organizations' utilization of inflammatory or violent rhetoric or tactics does not naturally signify that the Continent lacks civil 'societies'. In reality, the problems evident in the non-state realm in Nigeria are not particularly unique; organizations in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Near East and North America have advocated beliefs and exploited devices comparable to those apparent within MASSOB, IYC and OPC. Thereby, instead of analyzing non-state actors in Africa from a detached, ethnocentric and 'superior'

perspective, we must realize that the seeming crises engendered by African CSOs, whether deemed legitimate or illegitimate, are in so many unacknowledged or ill-understood ways, similar to those evident in so-called advanced industrial countries.

In spite of this assertion and due to the widespread view of Africa as a cultural, economic, political and social 'backwater' within the comity of nations, Eurocentric theorists and analysts alike sometimes resist efforts to categorize the Continent's divergent organizations within the civil society framework, as they believe that the concept only embodies reality within their respective countries. Still, available evidence suggests that CSOs are not post-1970s phenomena in Africa. The colonial epoch, by its very nature, was authoritarian, repressive and sought to control, if not destroy, all forms of independent groups that potentially could mobilize the oppressed against the malignancies of colonialism.¹⁹

Regardless of the propensity of certain theorists, including those cited below, to maintain that an independent and astute non-state sphere does not exist or is under-developed in Africa, civil society innately is not a Western phenomenon. Those aspects of African civil society that ostensibly appear to be self-destructive or ill-developed in fact are genuine manifestations of this rather vague but still recognizable concept. The non-state realm, with all its crises and potentials, is thus alive and well in Africa.

Accordingly, commensurate attention must be paid to the political and social repercussions of heterogeneous problematizations of civil society that view the non-state realm everywhere, not necessarily as a coherent and unproblematic arena, but as an often disorganized domain. To fully grasp the character and manifestations of civil society in African countries, untenable and flawed blinders must be abandoned in favor of a holistic paradigm that expands our understanding of both the promise and peril of civil society across different contexts.²⁰

Regarding the applicability of civil society in the African context, two broad trends are noticeable in literature: certain scholars perceive civil society as either not present or weak at best, if indeed it is indeed discernible, whilst a second group believes that it is wholly relevant to the African experience. The main arguments presented by a sample of these treatments of civil society are presented in turn below to document the differing views on its specific contours and illuminate the complexity of the region's non-state arena.

Pro-Civil Society Arguments

A sizeable number of Africanists regard associational life on the Continent as a viable and undeniable expression of a resilient civil society. Some of these authors do not evaluate the emergence and persistence of African civil society solely in light of the specific manner in which the non-state realm materialized or is constituted in the West. From this vantage point, their intent is not to present a sanitised rendering of civil society, but to celebrate how it has flourished in Africa despite all odds. Still, such analysts reflect the hegemonic view of civil society in how they define the concept and the organizations that they classify as part of this domain. Unlike this volume, there are relatively few frameworks that I am aware of which include radical and 'ascriptive' groups as part and parcel of African civil society.

Whilst certain pro-civil society theorists definitively include political, religious, trade unions and professional organizations within their respective civil society models, they usually exclude radical and/or ethnic associations. This pervasive custom reflects the belief that a corrupt and repressive state can be effectively undermined by a 'democratic' civil society, and that democracy in turn can be sustained on the African Continent in the presence of such a 'liberal' realm. Where non-state organizations deviate from this ideal-type, they are classified as anomalous and thus unworthy of the label of 'civil society'. Despite these and other problems apparent even within the pro-civil society camp, a synopsis of the musings of certain authors is presented in the hope that it would enhance the reader's understanding of Africa's complicated non-state domain.

In referencing the numerous transitions from authoritarian to democratic rule in Africa, Gyimah-Boadi (1998) pinpoints the Continent's flourishing civil society and the manner in which it spurred urgently needed political reforms. He regards Protestant and Catholic groups, with their innumerable financial and organizational capacities, as veritable expressions of a fully-developed, effective, autonomous, liberal and civic-minded civil society. Yet, Gyimah-Boadi (1996) observes that the remainder of Africa's civil society reportedly has been unable to contribute to the enthronement and consolidation of democratic regimes because of its inability to 'transcend ethnoregional, religious and other cleavages', and dependence on domestic and international agencies for financial wherewithal, vulnerability to repression and cooptation by state actors, and weak organizational capacities.

Monga (1995, p.363) also wrestles with the unique nature of African civil society, which he defines as 'those birthplaces where the

ambitions of social groups have created the means of generating additional freedom and justice'.²¹ Irrespective of his qualms about the utility of applying the concept of civil society 'across time and space', Monga (1995, p.360) describes the Continent's starkly-evident and vibrant non-state realm in the following manner:

People are becoming more and more aware of belonging to specific, defined groups, and increasingly express the desire that their interests should be organised in both civil and political arenas. From political courtiers to financial marabouts, from unemployed youths of the suburbs to the intellectual and religious elites, right across the political spectrum there is hardly a social group which has not felt the need for its members to communally articulate their daily concerns.

According to Monga, during the 1990s, Africans re-appropriated the right to express themselves through the multiplication of both formal and informal civil society groups, which challenged the region's many authoritarian regimes. Nonetheless, in keeping with the spirit of the enterprise presented herein, Monga (1998; 1995) is not seduced by the civil society 'fetish' that observably has gripped some in the West and beyond. From this vantage point, civil society is not depicted as a realm that always generates positive 'karma' and will lead to an eventual utopia. Furthermore, Monga notes that, although the explosion in the number of associations is a positive development that ought to be welcomed, civil society's deleterious effects on African politics and communities also must be discussed.

In addition to the propensity for newly-formed movements to replicate the hierarchical structures that typify the state's relationship with societal interests, a possibility that Michels (1978) codifies in his 'iron law of oligarchy', Monga (1995, p. 362) raises many questions regarding the self-destructiveness that may inhere within CSOs.²² At the core of this alternative view is the 'anthropology of anger', which stresses 'the emotional dimensions of protest movements' (Ibid). African civil society is not always civil or 'civilised' because the authoritarian experiences of certain countries apparently have radicalized civil society and driven non-state groups to exhibit 'indiscipline as a method of popular resistance' (Ibid).

Thirdly, Makumbe (1998) asserts that African civil society²³ is spirited and, like Monga and Gyimah-Boadi, includes trade unions, professional groups and religious organizations as part of civil society. In his view, civil society was instrumental in the toppling of autocratic governments on the Continent in the early 1990s, through concerted and widespread political protests that eventually resulted in

competitive elections in erstwhile military or one-party polities in Benin and Zambia, for example.

Regarding the innumerable problems confronting African civil society, which have been discussed *ad infinitum* by Western and other commentators, Makumbe concedes that whereas these difficulties exist, they must be evaluated in light of the region's historical experiences, especially colonialism, that stifled and decimated African civil society. Not surprisingly, the agents of European powers 'made strenuous efforts to ensure that no civic groups would emerge in their colonies to challenge them for violating people's rights, imposing authoritarian governance and pillaging Africans' human and natural resources'²⁴ (Makumbe 1998). Still, he presents the now-familiar litany of problems purportedly confronting African civil society, including intense conflict, 'poverty, corruption, nepotism, parochialism, opportunism, ethnicism, illiberalism and the willingness to be coopt ed' (Ibid; Diamond 1993 and 1997).

Fourthly, Comaroff and Comaroff (1999, p.2) 'interrogate the paradoxes, problems and emancipatory possibilities presented by the idea of civil society in various African contexts [, and] explore the diverse meanings and deployments of [civil society]'. Civil society is particularly 'slippery' because Africanists simultaneously employ it as 'an analytic construct, a political cliché, a Utopian idyll, a grassroots cry for change [and] an article of faith' (Ibid).

Due to the lack of clarity in the use of this increasingly employed idea, it is imbued with sometimes contradictory and normative ideals. A dilemma thus ensues precisely because a review of literature fails to yield a cogent definition of civil society. Consequently, it is not clear whether African civil society should be conceptualized as existing in the interstices between the state and the individual, or between the state and family:

[Should the non-state domain be defined as] relations of production, family and kinship? The market? Are religious organizations, the media, expressive culture, and the politics of consumption in or out? Does civil society exist as the antithesis of the state, in struggle with it, or as a condition of its possibility? Is it coterminous with, or distinct from, the public sphere? What about these legal-jural apparatuses that regulate interpersonal conflict? And the diffuse aesthetics, norms and sensibilities that constitute 'civility'? (Ibid, p. 7).

Also problematic is the manner in which African civil society is characterized, analyzed and described in Western scholarship through the utilization of 'the orthodox terms of Western political science' (Ibid,

p. 16). Particularly flawed is the equation of civil society with specific Western institutions, and the concomitant exclusion of its authentic expression on the Continent, such as 'African relations of production and exchange, codes of conduct, or styles of social intercourse; African markets, credit associations, informal economies, collective ritual, modes of aesthetic expression, [and] discourses of magic and reason'²⁵ (Ibid, p. 23).

Other Africanists who regard civil society as being present in Africa often are more cautious in their description of this realm. For Fatton (1995, p.73),

[African] civil society [presumably in contrast with Western civil society] is conflict-ridden and prone to Hobbesian wars of all against all [and].... the prime repository of 'invented' ethnic hierarchies, conflicting class visions, patriarchal domination and irredentist identities fueling deadly conflicts in many areas of the continent.

Moreover, he notes that African civil society only can be conceptualized in the plural by looking at the following three 'ideal types' jostling for influence on the Continent: *predatory*, *quasi-bourgeois* and *popular* civil societies.²⁶

*Anti-Civil Society Arguments*²⁷

In recent years, the perception of Africa as a cesspool of AIDS, corruption and lawlessness, and a Continent that is 'backward', perhaps foreverdoomed and utterly-hopeless, unless it is 'rescued' by humanitarian 'masters' who ironically exacerbated, if not created, some of these problems in the first place, has been aptly termed 'Afro-Pessimism' and roundly criticized by African leaders, such as President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa. Regrettably, this view influences the analysis of Africa's undeniably rich and imaginative culture and society.

Largely dismissing the inter-relatedness of the African experience to global trends conspicuous in the non-state arena, including the obvious fact that civil society abnormalities are not just apparent on the Continent, a second cohort of writers, mostly concentrated in the West, sees civil society in Africa as non-existent, in the process of being formed or too fragmented to assume any central role in the enthronement or consolidation of democracy, a task that they regard as vital for authentic CSOs. Because their views of African civil society are rarely based on detailed empirical case studies or comparisons, 'anti-civil society' scholars usually de-emphasize or

overlook instances of incivility, which they use to harshly judge African organizations and society, amongst comparable entities within their own (Western) countries.²⁸

Most of the authors in this camp regard the European experience as constituting the *de facto* or even *de jure* exemplar against which ensuing experiences must be judged or legitimated. Ronning (1995), for instance, is not totally convinced that the notion of civil society, as it evolved and is defined in the West, can be wholly applied to Africa. He submits that, although 70 percent of the African population supposedly is subject to an alien regime, the Continent lacks the organizations requisite for challenging the hegemonic policies of the state. Ronning (1995) therefore surmises that the concept of civil society may be relied upon to describe the African experience only if extensive modifications are made to accommodate the Continent's peculiarities.²⁹

Other authors are even less willing to describe Africa's societies as completely 'civil' in the Western mold (Callaghy 1994; Ronning 1995; Maina 1998; Sogge 1997; Chabal and Daloz 1999; Darnolf 1997; Lemarchand 1992; Lewis 1992; Lewis 1995). Callaghy (1994) notes that Africa's 'resurgent societies', a term he prefers to civil society, cannot be conceptualized as 'civil' basically because they are different from those in Europe and North America. Regarding the relationship between the non-state realm and the numerous political transitions that occurred in the post-Cold War era, Lewis (1992) asserts that the 'reassertion or invigoration of civil society' in East Asia, Latin America or East Central Europe should be separated from civil society 'formation' in Africa, which is a post-1980s process that is in its incipient stages.

In closing and notwithstanding these debatable but widely-prevalent postulations, the perception of civil society as a 'Eurocentric index of accomplishment' (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999) is an utterly-flawed idea that magnifies the difference between Africa and the West, and presents a mythologized and simplistic description of the West as a readily-distinguishable, logical and unified entity.³⁰ This bias ensues from a process in which the 'provincialism of the European experience becomes the universal history of progress' (Chatterjee 1990, p. 131).

The emphasis on civility, which is used to evaluate the efficacy and strength of African civil society, also must be decried (Comaroff & Comaroff 1999). In actual terms, it simply privileges mundane activities such as queuing 'for one's turn' as a barometer for gauging society's civility (Azarya 1994), whilst failing to understand that Western society is a contradictory sphere that is undergirded by 'white' and 'light skin' privilege, exclusion, inequity, divisiveness, and pockets of violent and impoverished 'no-go areas', amidst oases of

comfort. Overall, the civil society debate suffers from the following anomalies:

By insisting on a definition of civil society that is an idealized and rather narrow vision of civil society in the West, neither optimists nor pessimists have portrayed African civil society accurately. Insisting that civil society can and is producing democratic transition, the optimists have confused conjunctural for structural phenomena, setting impossibly high expectations for African civil society. To provide a more realistic analysis, we must focus on the broad array of collective activity and norms, whether “democratic” or not, that constitute actual existing African civil society. This approach will demonstrate that African civil society is more rooted in and representative of African society as a whole than the pessimists have admitted, but also less internally democratic and less likely to support liberal democracy than the optimists assert (Orvis 2001, p. 18).

The next section broadens our understanding of civil society by evaluating a related idea, ethnicity, theoretically and in the Nigerian context.

OVERVIEW OF ETHNICITY

I operationalize the overarching referent supporting this analysis, civil society, by reviewing the activities of three militant and ethnically oriented organizations in Nigeria. At its very core, ethnicity³¹ essentially connotes ‘aspects of relationships between groups which consider themselves, and are regarded by others, as being culturally distinctive’ (Eriksen 1993, p.4), whilst an ethnic community refers to ‘a group of people united by inherited culture, racial features, belief systems (religions), or national sentiments’ (Esman 1994, p.26).

Regardless of the ancient nature of ethnic clashes and the fierce competition rife within several diverse nations, ethnic conflicts are not inevitably created or magnified by inherent factors specific to particular areas of the world nor are they unique to Africa.³² Admittedly, conquest, colonization, decolonization and migration exacerbated ethnic and other attendant differences, and undermined the coexistence and tolerance that had long prevailed within plural nations (Esman 1994).

Owing to this reality, it is widely believed that ethnicity negatively impinges upon newly democratizing societies such as Nigeria, which have routinely vacillated between military and civilian rule. This

belief derives from several observable facts, including the politicization of ethnicity in many diverse societies and the mode in which it engenders 'waste' because politicians have to ensure that all ethnic groups are pacified (Nnoli 1994).

Moreover, ethnicity is 'seen as promoting the use of violence in multiparty competition because of the absence of restraints within the group against the expression of hostility and violence toward outgroup members' (Ibid, p. 11). Still, ethnicity need not be naturally problematic or negative. Indeed, increased ethnic awareness could be beneficial to a democratic polity in several ways.³³ In the long run, ethnicity is not necessarily antagonistic to democratisation or liberalization efforts (Smith 2000; Glickman 1995; Bowen 1996).

Ethnicity generally has been analyzed from two vantage points. The first perspective, also referred to as the *existential approach*, is preoccupied with '...the conditions under which and the processes by which ethnic identities and solidarities become activated and converted to political conflict, the kinds of issues such transformation raises for ethnic competitors and for the state, how conflicts thus engendered are waged, and how their outcomes can be mitigated, managed, and eventually settled' (Esman 1994, p.9). Conversely, the second typology, *essentialism*, could be further subdivided into the instrumentalist and primordialist camps³⁴; ethnicity also can be studied from a *constructivist* vantage point.³⁵

In the final analysis, instead of employing a widely used but nonetheless discredited and patently-racist 'tribal'³⁶ model [which regards ethnic conflicts in Africa as symptomatic of the 'inferiority' and 'primitivism' (Brantlinger 1986, p. 206) of the diverse peoples of the Continent], we must adequately understand the faulty manner in which ethnicity was reified during colonial rule. Particularly, we must be mindful of how 'the distance between the Europeans and Africans was confirmed and made scientific through the anthropological gospel of cultural evolutionism'; how 'every ethnicity has a social history, and is in a continuous process of being made and remade'; and how ethnicity has been continually refined and politicised in the post-colonial era (Braathen, Boas and Saether 2000, p. 4; Young 1995; Mamdani 1996, p. 185; Chabal and Daloz 1999).

Ethnicity in Nigeria

Constructivism in general and instrumentalism in particular best describe the manner in which ethnicity has been exploited in Nigeria to serve individual and sectional interests. Although in the quest to advance these parochial objectives, ethnic groups and their spokespersons appeal to sentiments and experiences readily

understood by members, the primordial account of ethnicity is somewhat tainted by its fixation on ethnicity as a biological and intractable fact that predominantly holds sway in the non-Western world, especially Africa. Its related articulation of a 'tribal model' has practically ensured that the functions and nuances of ethnicity, if considered at all, are rarely, if ever, problematized or analyzed in great depth.

In post-independence Nigeria, ethnicity remains an important variable, as 'the ruling elite, whether constituted in the military or civil society, [has] consistently used ethnicity to secure its own class domination in the absence of a coherent class ideology' (Badru 1998, p. xii). Undeniably, this legacy is reflective of policies developed during the blatantly racist and unapologetically-authoritarian period of British rule, which engendered fundamentally-flawed policies. The colonial epoch not only magnified and concretized ethnicity (and presumed ethnic 'differences') in order to ensure dominance and control over the population, it eventually resulted in the 1914 amalgamation of Northern and Southern Nigeria (and approximately 250 disparate ethnic groups) into a single geographical entity. Since independence in 1960, these groups have jostled for increasingly shrinking economic, political and social advantages.

Traditionally, this vociferous competition has been the preserve of the Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa populations. Yet, in the recent past, minority groups, such as the Ijaw, Ogoni and Tiv communities, became especially vocal *vis-à-vis* the state and other ethnic nationalities. As a result, thousands of lives were lost in seemingly obstinate conflicts in Nigeria. Between 1967 and 1970, the country experienced a Civil War that claimed millions of lives in the aftermath of Igbo secession efforts, and starting in the early 1980s, untold numbers of ethnic and religious strife plagued the West African nation. More significantly, after retired General Olusegun Obasanjo was inaugurated as the country's civilian president in May 1999, inter and intra-ethnic conflicts spontaneously erupted amongst many groups across the length and breadth of Nigeria.³⁷

Not surprisingly then, no discussion of Nigerian affairs would be complete without due reference being paid to the manner in which ethnicity is viewed by the larger society, and manipulated by current and aspiring members of the political class to maintain and advance their economic, political and social privileges. What makes ethnicity especially volatile in Nigeria is the manner in which it is inextricably linked with and delicately superimposed upon Indigenous Religious Traditions, Christianity and Islam. Nevertheless, as is routinely the case in academic and popular discourses, great care must be taken not

to pejoratively ‘tribalize’ ethnic politics in Nigeria and other parts of Africa.³⁸

Fundamentally, we should not be hoodwinked by the widespread but rather unsophisticated belief that ethnicity is more than a manipulable and readily available artefact utilized by Nigerian elites to galvanize existing and potential followers, and concomitantly undermine the opposition. To the extent possible, subsequent analyses of ethnic associations adhere to this very high standard. In the interim, the next section elucidates the way in which these policy preferences and tools of statecraft manifested themselves in the Nigerian context.

THE STATE, POLITICAL VIOLENCE, ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION AND SOCIAL MALAISE IN NIGERIA (1960–1999)

In order to understand how the process of radicalization evolved within profiled and other extremist associations in Nigeria, a great deal of attention must be accorded to the underlying problems that bedevilled the country once it gained independence from British rule. As would be expected, extremism does not occur in a vacuum but is deeply reflective of both historical and contemporary conditions. I thereby review Nigeria’s pre-1999 history to underscore the role of environmental conditions in encouraging ethnically based organizations’ *delineation of disharmonious goals, use of schismatic language and physical violence*. Because MASSOB, IYC and OPC were formed in the late 1990s in response to ongoing authoritarianism, underdevelopment and perceived discrimination, I provide a direct link between these contemporary manifestations of regime policy and radicalization in Chapters VII and VIII.

Generally, the issues that undergird this undertaking are numerous. One revolves around the devices through which Nigeria’s economy was progressively underdeveloped over the years, such that its economic situation in 2002 was precariously worse than decades ago. Some of these mechanisms include but are not limited to wholesale corruption, view of the state apparatus as a means of garnering resources for personal advancement and maintaining high standing within society, and failure to formulate and/or adhere to appropriate development plans and reforms.

Other clearly evident issues include intra-polity rivalries, which resulted in civilian-led chaos and endless military interventions, and perennially present societal conflicts that manifested themselves via ethnic and religious melees, increasing mayhem and crime in major Nigerian cities, and thoroughgoing disregard for the rule of law. I subsume the discussion of these and other matters under three broad

themes, *Emergence of a Vibrant Civil Society, State Corruption, Repression and Violence*, and *Economic and Social Deprivation*, that cogently capture the expressions of my independent and dependent variables.

Theme I—Emergence of a Vibrant Civil Society

Even though this project is preoccupied with radical demonstrations of civil society, my country of interest by no means lacks 'orthodox' non-state entities. Indeed, Nigeria undoubtedly possesses one of the most vigorous and resilient civil societies on the African Continent and surely the world. During the 1990s, its non-state sphere became especially vocal, notwithstanding the fact that it was almost decimated by successive military regimes, and the dysfunctional economic and social conditions that their policies wrought. Although all Nigerian military regimes were, by their very nature, authoritarian, the Muhammadu Buhari, Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha eras in particular were the most tyrannical and exploitative.

As described under Theme II, the Buhari government was effective in suppressing dissent and quashing opposition originating from civil society. Still, the gradual reawakening of non-state organizations with radical and non-radical predilections began but was not consolidated during his tenure. Unlike his predecessors, Babangida proved to be a skilled tactician and military politician who initially sought civil society's backing to shore up his regime's weak legitimacy; it especially needed the middle class' support for the widely-unpopular Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). Yet, CSOs became more emboldened and resisted SAP's deleterious effects and the General's 'foot-dragging' on political liberalization initiatives.³⁹

Moreover, whilst the 'militancy of sub-national actors in Nigeria must be put in the context of the hardship precipitated by [the] belt-tightening [SAP] and Babangida's authoritarianism' (Kwarteng 1996),⁴⁰ the annulment of the 12 June 1993 elections proved to be the rallying cry for some CSOs, which became radicalized and sought to dislodge the military from power. Understandably, there were diverse reactions from organized entities; 'it provoked widely-varying responses..., ranging from an aggressive "proJune 12" stance on the part of human rights groups and some unions to the more non-committal position adopted by business groups and traditional leaders outside of the southwest' (Lucas 1998). In line with these varied postures, certain organizations used 'mainstream' methods, whilst others employed more confrontational stratagems.

Particularly, the election annulment '...provoked societal disharmony and crisis, [and] heralded different degrees of terrorism'

(Uwazie 1999, p.115). During the post-1993 period, those opposed to military rule launched bomb blasts at the unveiling of the Family Support Programme in Ilorin, Kaduna-based Durbar hotel, Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport, Lagos Naval Air Base and Bauchi Police Headquarters. From 1990 to 1992, through acts of 'political terrorism', Nigerians routinely resorted to actual or attempted assassinations of political opponents (Uwazie 1999).

In broad terms, 'corruption, factionalism, social discontentment and economic frustration provide[d] the basic socioeconomic reasons for [these] acts of terrorism' (Ibid, p. 116). As such, the deprivation of rights and needs, and the inability to constructively express political grievances are some of the reasons why the Nigerian populace became radicalized in the last two decades (Ibid). In concert with the activities of profiled and other ethnic associations, the increasingly-vocal and assorted Nigerian civil society landscape is best exemplified by the actions of the country's media, pro-democracy and human rights groups, professional and labor associations whose roles are briefly explored on succeeding pages.

The Media

The Nigerian press is one of the most free and vocal anywhere. This freedom is reflected in the ever-expanding and ingenuous media organizations that presently operate in the country. As the independent press agitated for change under military rule, successive regimes utilized repression to maintain control and stifle dissent. Above all, Babangida, Buhari and Abacha periodically closed several media houses, seized copies of materials that they deemed offensive, repeatedly harassed, imprisoned and even allegedly executed journalists, such as Dele Giwa of Newswatch magazine.

Paradoxically, this repressive atmosphere did not deter the press, as the number of media houses dramatically increased; there was a twofold increase in the number of private newspapers and weekly magazines alone between 1985 and 1993 (Afolayan 2000). The press also learned to elude state control by going underground and routinely changing its printing format. In sum, during a period of uncertainty when transitions to civilian rule were repeatedly postponed, dissent was muzzled and election results were whimsically nullified, the independent media in Nigeria 'took on the responsibility of articulating and giving expression to the will of the people...[and] bec[oming] the main vehicle for the dissemination of ideas of the pro-democracy groups'⁴¹ (Afolayan, 2000, p. 144).

*Pro-Democracy, Human Rights and Professional
Organizations*

The empowerment of Nigerian civil society cannot be divorced from the effects of authoritarian rule that endured in one form or another prior to and after 1960, and the parallel but nevertheless drastic decline in the living standards of most Nigerians from the 1980s onwards. The post-independent Nigerian State, like its colonial predecessor, muffled demands for change emanating from civil society. The increasing repression of the 1980s, coupled with severe economic crises and the incessant postponement of the transition to civilian rule, spurred a reawakening of civil society during the last two decades. Although it is not clear whether the absence of *authoritarianism*, *perceived marginalization* and *maldevelopment* would have triggered apathy and disinterestedness in politics on the part of Nigerians, the presence of these variables, in one form or another, contributed to the formation of an effervescent civil society.

Starting *circa* 1986, civil society resurgence resulted in the marked proliferation of new groups and revitalization of old ones in a manner that had not been witnessed in Nigeria since the post-World War II period, when the country was in the throes of its struggle against colonial rule (Olukoshi 1997). A large number of CSOs that emerged or regrouped in the post-1986 period were concerned with enthroning 'democracy, [respect for] human rights, the rule of law and public accountability' (Ibid, p.379)⁴². These groups challenged existing authoritarian regimes for their problematic policies and failure to recognize the will of the people, by stalling the process of political liberalization, 'through press releases, pamphlets, hand-bills, public rallies and demonstrations...' (Afolayan 2000, p.141).

Although many of these entities were largely mainstream in character, other radical pro-democracy organizations⁴³ surfaced in the mid-1980s and in later years. The appearance of militant ethnic associations also occurred during or in the aftermath of this critical era in Nigerian history. Like their counterparts in other sectors of civil society, fanatical groups demanded the withdrawal of the military from public life, and termination of the state's despotic, discriminatory and economically stagnant practices. In pursuit of these purposes, however, such groups relied upon extremist tactics that intriguingly persisted and worsened in the post-military era.

Theme II—State Corruption, Repression and Violence

One of the main themes that should underlie any discussion of the Nigerian experience is the incessant and tortured vacillations between

civilian and military rule, and the attendant corruption, repression, underdevelopment and radicalization that these changes produced. For most of its independent life, Nigeria contended with military rule interspersed with brief periods of aborted civilian epochs. In fact, Nigeria witnessed at least eleven military coups between 1966 and 1998, with two allegedly contrived by disgruntled officers and six of them being successful (Ojo 2000). Given this chequered history, the radicalization of ethnic associations is hardly surprising.

At the root of Nigeria's political underdevelopment is a friction that inheres in all polities, namely the tension between despotic and infrastructural power⁴⁴ (Lucas 1998). Historically, the Nigerian State, like its contemporaries, was weak in certain respects, and therefore desirous and in dire need of societal support. Ironically, successive regimes promulgated policies meant to enhance their legitimacy, *pari passu* with repression, because of unequivocal disdain for non-state actors.

The exercise of despotic power (or 'negative' power over society) was particularly acute, as the Nigerian state insulated itself from societal and constitutional restraints (Lucas 1998). Over the years, the state not only resorted to coercive measures to implement reform initiatives (Herbst 1990), it routinely attempted to maintain a semblance of control in an environment replete with radicalized and increasingly restless CSOs. Yet, increased autonomy from society reduced the state's infrastructural power in Nigeria⁴⁵ (Lucas 1998; Mann 1993).

Owing to the fact that unabating allusions to Nigerian history remain central to the grievances articulated by the IYC, MASSOB and OPC, I cur sorily assess the country's experience to fully grasp the manner in which political exclusion, authoritarianism, marginalization and violence influenced the course of events in the public arena between 1960 and 1999; the post-1999 era is discussed in later chapters. In so doing, I situate adherents' dormant and discernible hostilities toward and suspicions of the state in the proper historico-political context.

When the West African country gained independence from British rule on 1 October 1960, it adopted a Westminster-style system, with a bicameral Parliament.⁴⁶ Unlike such systems elsewhere, the unique federal system that obtained during the First Republic (1960–1966) granted substantial autonomy to provincial governments, which also operated their own parliaments, and reflected the country's ethnic and regional diversity. Between independence and 1963, three parties dominated the political landscape and government consisted of a coalition between two parties.⁴⁷ However, starting in the mid-1960s, things took a dramatic turn for the worse. From 1964 to 1965, provincial and parliamentary elections were characterized by

widespread violence, massive rigging, and the factionalisation of the three key political parties into new alliances and splinter groups.⁴⁸

Citing the-then tense political atmosphere, the military made its first but certainly not last foray into politics by staging a *coup d'état*.⁴⁹ As a harbinger of things to come, the new military junta promised to quickly transfer power to a civilian government. However, the Aguiyi-Ironsi regime suppressed civil liberties and exacerbated ethnic divisions within Nigerian society. Following on the heels of the bloody coup, there were widespread riots in the North to protest Igbo officers' (who constituted the majority of the coup leaders) execution of Tafawa Balewa and Ahmadu Bello; brutal reprisals were subsequently meted out to Northern-based Igbo citizens. In response to Fulani elites' fear that Ironsi would institutionalize and consolidate Igbo control over Nigeria, Lieutenant-Colonel Yakubu Gowon, a Northern Christian, toppled the Ironsi regime in 1966 (Amadife 1999). By 1967, the country teetered on the precipice of a full-scale 3-year civil war.

True to its military character and in keeping with the strategies employed by some of its successors, the Gowon era 'impos[ed]....severe authoritarian measures, including strict controls on trade unions, a ban on strikes [and] restriction[s] on the mass media...' (Ibid, p.625). Furthermore, Gowon announced after the cessation of hostilities in 1970 that he would transfer power to a civilian government within six years but later maintained that the 1976 date was 'unrealistic under the circumstances [as] such a hasty disengagement would certainly plunge the country into...chaos' (Ibid, p.626). This announcement generated feelings of discontent amongst certain military officials and resulted in the 1975 toppling of the Gowon government.

Unlike the majority of Nigerian military rulers, Brigadier-General Murtala Muhammed, a military man of Fulani extraction, was regarded as a reformist and thoroughly-professional army officer because he sought to 'weed out' corruption at the highest levels of government. More importantly, he promised to unfailingly transfer the reins of power on 1 October 1979 and noted that 'the present military leadership does not intend to stay in office a day longer than is necessary, and certainly not beyond this date' (Kirk-Greene 1981). Unfortunately, the Muhammed regime was abruptly terminated, when he was executed during an unsuccessful coup attempt on 13 February 1976. Irrespective of this development, his successor, General Olusegun Obasanjo, continued with some of these reforms, including the eventual handover to a civilian government on 1 October 1979.⁵⁰

Although the transition programme appeared organized and orderly (Phillips 1980), there were several problems with the election process itself, many of which were largely outside the government's purview.

Expectedly, a large number of politicians from the failed 1960s era regrouped to participate in the Second Republic.⁵¹ More significantly, ethnic rivalries were resurrected, and massive irregularities and widespread electoral misconduct became the order of the day. At the time, many believed that certain winners of the nationwide elections, including the Fulani NPN presidential candidate, Alhaji Shehu Shagari, had won through fraudulent means.⁵²

Shagari's apparent lack of legitimacy amongst supporters of other political parties was not the only problem plaguing the NPN-led government. His administration was unscrupulously corrupt and heavy-handed⁵³ (Amadife 1999). The ineptitude of the Shagari government resulted in a doubling of the national debt, 'gross mismanage[ment of] the economy and aliena[tion of] the Nigerian public', and so irritated the public that the 'military intervention of Generals Idiagbon and Buhari in December 1983 was welcomed by most Nigerians with great fanfare' (Ihonvbere and Vaughan 1995).

The Buhari/Idiagbon era (1983–1985) was unabashedly despotic and inflexibly unresponsive to societal interests and needs. To its credit, the regime attempted to address certain cankerworms deeply embedded within Nigerian politics and society by instituting anti-corruption and social mobilization crusades *a la* Muhammed. Additionally, Muhammadu Buhari, a no-nonsense Fulani man, inherited a floundering economy, and a society contending with drastic declines in its standard of living and on the verge of moral collapse (Ihonvbere and Vaughan 1995). However, this era is more remembered for its sheer brutality, total disregard for public opinion and Buhari's problematic attempt to run Nigeria like an army barrack.⁵⁴

As a result of a division between hard-line and reform-oriented military officials, Buhari was overthrown via a palace coup instigated by his own army chief-of-staff, General Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida (IBB), from the Hausa ethnic group (Amadife 1999). He assumed power on 27 August 1985 and promptly instituted desperately required reforms to stem economic malaise and prepare the country for civilian rule. Toward these ends, IBB made the following unambiguous 'promise' to the Nigerian citizenry in a national address: 'Since the purpose of military intervention in politics is to save the nation from anarchy and disintegration, once that mission is accomplished, the military would have no reason to remain in power' (Agbese 1990, p.31).

During the beginning of his tenure, IBB juxtaposed his supposedly 'democratic' character with Buhari's authoritarian credentials. He revamped the secret service, 'denounced the harsh repression under Buhari and Idiagbon, repealed many of their most obnoxious decrees,

vowed respect for human rights, released political detainees, and shrewdly launched a freewheeling public debate on the issue of whether to accept (with all its painful conditionalities) an International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan⁵⁵ (Diamond, Kirk-Greene and Oyediran 1997, p.4).

More specifically, Babangida, who 'was initially perceived as a benevolent military dictator, a soldier/democrat and a man of great vision and unbending commitment to democracy' (Ihonvbere and Vaughan 1995, p.76) but later stymied liberalization efforts, stated that civilian rule would commence in 1990. To realize this goal, he instituted 'one of the most ambitious, imaginative, complex, and expensive transitions from authoritarian rule that has ever been attempted anywhere' (Diamond, Kirk-Greene and Oyediran 1997, p. 1).

In order to 'sanitise' (Agbese 1992) Nigerian politics and ensure that only 'new breed' individuals were involved in the transition, the General banned previous political officer-holders from participating in his transition programme. He also lifted the ban on partisan politics in May 1989, established the National Electoral Commission (NEC) and vowed to 'monitor every move and follow every action to ensure that everything is done according to the rules of the game' (Babangida 1989, p.83). In line with this thinking, IBB single-handedly created two political parties, the Social Democratic Party (SDP), which was ideologically 'left-of-centre', and the National Republican Convention (NRC), which was 'conservative'.⁵⁶

This excessively regimented political transition programme bolstered the state's power as it sought to silence or eliminate its opponents.⁵⁷ The junta ensured that only his version of 'democracy' was imposed from the top, regardless of CSOs' qualms concerning the unsound process⁵⁸ (Ihonvbere and Vaughan 1995). Nevertheless, the state's creation of parties by fiat and the excessive power it wielded over the transition programme created several problems, including the 'lack [of] clear constituency support, political focus, direction and mass orientation' (Adejumobi 1998, p.134).

Despite the adoption of several problematic 'reforms', including the controversial 'open voting' system, the two parties presented two politicians to stand for the hotly contested presidential elections. The SDP's candidate was late Chief Moshood Abiola, a Yoruba-speaking, Muslim and wealthy businessman, and the NRC's candidate, Bashir Tofa, was a well-off Northern Muslim. The presidential elections eventually were held on 12 June 1993.

Although the race, which Abiola presumably won, was adjudged to be free and fair, the result was annulled by the Babangida regime. Many Nigerians believed that the cancellation was predicated on

Abiola's ability to transcend the ethnic divide, overwhelmingly carry Northern states and concomitantly challenge Northern political hegemony. As a result, the 12 June debacle precipitated a crisis in the country, Babangida was forced to step down and an 83-day old interim civilian government was installed in 1993.

In the wake of the annulment and the instability it engendered, Defence Minister Sani Abacha seized power in November 1993. Unlike IBB, Abacha did not pretend to be a democrat nor was he particularly desirous of domestic or international legitimacy.⁵⁹ In spite of this, he included the late Abiola's running mate and other politicians in his cabinet. Besides, many people originally believed that the late Abacha was a 'professional soldier who would restore order to the country and resolve the crisis generated by the June 12 annulment' (Lucas 1998). Yet, his rule arguably was the most corrupt and autocratic in the nation's history; once he assumed office, he banned all political activity, disbanded elected Federal and State legislatures, and replaced civilian state governors with military administrators (Carver 1996). Abacha also employed the same delay tactics used by his predecessor and refined the use of autocratic tactics such as torture, detentions and military tribunals to extend his tenure (Lucas 1998).

He commenced a reign of terror which forced key civil society figures into exile and imprisoned others, including Obasanjo and Abiola⁶⁰, executed key dissidents like Ken Saro-Wiwa, and 'settled' (in Nigerian parlance) foremost societal leaders by offering them influential positions in his government and other emoluments (Kwarteng 1996). It was Abacha's mysterious death in 1998 that finally paved the way for a civilian dispensation, as his successor, General Abdulsalam Abubakar, formally transferred the reins of power to President Obasanjo on 29 May 1999. As would be empirically demonstrated in later chapters, this authoritarian legacy, along with the economic and social factors addressed below, provided the context in which disaffection festered and was freely expressed via the proliferation of fanatical CSOs.

Theme III—Economic and Social Deprivation⁶¹

The final theme, which directly contributed to the extremist postures of profiled ethnic associations, is economic and social underdevelopment. Yet, this had not always been the case. Starting in the 1970s, the Nigerian economy 'experienced rapid and uneven growth under the aegis of oil-based accumulation' (Tuman 1994). The oil boom of the 1973–74 period enabled the state, which controlled the petroleum industry, to assume control of 'several key manufacturing

sectors, to invest heavily in infrastructure and urban development, and to begin a process of import-substitution industrialization through an overvalued currency and subsidies to domestic manufacturers' (Ibid).

Owing to these investments, between 1974 and 1979, '... construction and manufacturing output gr[ew] at rates of 20 percent and 15 percent, respectively...' (Ibid). The country's export earnings increased more than sixfold from US\$4 billion in 1975 to approximately US\$26 billion by 1980 (Ugorji 1995). Despite these impressive developments, there was widespread corruption, lack of diversification into non-petroleum concerns and a maintenance culture, and construction of non-functioning 'white elephant' projects, such as the largely-moribund Ajaokuta Steel Company Limited, which has gulped more than US\$5 billion since it was established in 1979 (Gire 1999).

Also, the origin of the economic crisis could be traced to the oil bust of the 1980s. The sharp drop in oil prices in 1982 was devastating to Nigerian economic and social life, as the country recorded a sharp drop in the size of its middle class. From 1980 to 1983, revenues accruing from the export of oil, which 'accounted for an average of 80 percent of state finances [...] decreased from US\$27.4 billion to \$11 billion, result[ed] in a depletion of external reserves and a surge of foreign indebtedness'⁶² (Graf 1988; Watts 1987). The resulting economic malaise forced the Nigerian government to institute 'home-grown' austerity measures that entailed a drastic reduction in imports and capital expenditures, imposition of wage controls and retrenchment in the public sector. In turn, these actions triggered massive inflation, hoarding, layoffs⁶³ and operation of the industrial sector at 30 percent of its capacity.

In response to the economic woes plaguing the country and disproportionately affecting the poor citizens that CSOs later claimed to represent, the Babangida regime introduced SAP in June 1986. Yet, this reform did not yield the desired effects (World Bank 1994); in many respects, Nigeria's economic and social situations worsened. Plant capacity continued its downward spiral, from 41 percent in 1988 to 33 percent in 1991, unemployment levels continued to increase in the late 1980s and beyond, average real wages [fell] and a number of worker benefits [were either] cut or eliminated' (Ejiofor 1986; Mosley 1989; African Business 1990). The Naira's exchange rate to the Dollar drastically plunged from US\$1 to N2 in 1986 to N85 by 1998 (Afolayan 2000, p.133). A review of other important economic indices reveals that Nigeria's situation remains very stagnant, if not precarious, at best.

As of 2001, its GNP per capita was \$US310, compared to \$1000 in 1980, and the proportion of Nigerians living below the poverty line

increased from 43 percent in 1985 to approximately 70 percent by the year 2000 (World Bank 1989; World Bank 2001). The economic situation within specific communities in Nigeria is even more telling. In certain Cross River State (South-South) villages, cash incomes decreased 'from over \$800 per capita in the early 1980s to \$160 in the late 1990s and \$66 (and less) in the poorest households...' (Ifeka 2000). Along the same lines, Nigeria's gross domestic product (GDP) recorded a glaringly precipitous decline from \$US93.1 billion in 1980 to around US\$40 billion in 1997 (Adedeji 1999). Lastly, 'the index of urban consumer prices jumped from 100 in 1980 to 1,160.9 in June of 1990' (African Business 1991, p.39).

Overall, the social ramifications of these and other data provoked devastating consequences in Nigeria, as education, health, transportation and other related sectors suffered untold neglect. Firstly, the nation's educational system, once among the best anywhere, drastically deteriorated during the late 1980s, as '... universities became stripped of [lecturers], library resources, technical equipment, and even such basic materials as paper, chalk and exam books...[and] students lived in appalling conditions, grossly overcrowded and undersupplied' (Diamond, Kirk-Greene and Oyediran 1997, p.8). The salary of a full professor, which was approximately N27,000 (equivalent to US\$30,000) when Babangida became Head of State in 1985, had decreased in value to US\$1,500 by 1991⁶⁴ (Diamond, Kirk-Greene and Oyediran 1997, p.8). In response to this general decline, lecturers, students and non-academic workers became stridently militant, and strikes, protests and university closures became regular occurrences.

Secondly, the situation in the health sector was not altogether different, as the per capita allocation devoted to the health sector stood at a mere US\$0.62 by 1990 (Afolayan 2000, p.134). As a result, public hospitals became nothing more than glorified 'consulting clinics' and 'death chambers', lacking even the most basic drugs and other supplies, and many medical personnel, like their counterparts in education, emigrated to Europe, the Near East and North America in search of greener pastures. A glance at vital health statistics further reveals the country's precarious situation. The mortality rate for cholera increased from 136 (1979–1983) to 315 deaths (1984–1988), the number of Nigerians killed by measles rose to 7480 (1984–1988), whilst the reported number of deaths attributable to yellow fever increased from 5 in 1984, to 599 in 1987 and 1531 by 1988 (Ibid).

In closing, the previously cited and other indices referenced throughout this volume clearly shows that fanatical CSOs emerged in an environment that was replete with stagnation and penury. As is amply demonstrated in ensuing synopses, the fact that economic and

social deprivation perilously coexisted with, was precipitated by and worsened under repressive rule, radicalized non-state actors and made their demands more palatable to disgruntled Nigerians who otherwise lacked a 'legitimate' means to convey their discontentment and reservations with the increasingly-worrisome state of affairs in their country. It is this dangerous combination of economic, social and political difficulties that made the radicalization of certain Nigerian CSOs particularly potent, potentially destructive and thus worthy of note.

Bearing the fundamental issues that were raised in this chapter in mind, I investigate the radicalization of the IYC, MASSOB and OPC in succeeding sections. In so doing, I describe the statements made by their officials to amplify our understanding of the relationship between authoritarianism, group-specific discrimination and underdevelopment on the one hand, and civil society militancy on the other. Moreover, in Chapters VII and VIII, I present additional analytical assessments of the radicalization process and its repercussions, and scrutinize the manner in which they distinctively figure within the three entities under consideration.

CHAPTER IV

Summary of Results—Ijaw Youth Council

ETHNIC ASSOCIATIONS FIRST SURFACED IN NIGERIA DURING COLONIAL RULE. Prior to the 1920s, they functioned as ethnic improvement unions, which served as havens for individuals who migrated to Lagos and other major cities, and felt alienated by the unfamiliar conditions that they found within them (Library of Congress 1991; Nnoli 1995; Ahanotu 1982). As Southern Nigerians became more educated and travelled abroad, the composition and focus of a new wave of associations¹, which emerged between 1928 and 1948, considerably changed.

From independence until approximately the early 1980s, a definable number of ethnic associations served crucial roles within Nigerian society, albeit in an overtly political manner. Organizations representing the Hausa, Fulani, Igbo and Yoruba ardently fought for political supremacy in a battle that seemed to continually favor Northerners. It is precisely because of this supposed injustice, along with the unique problems created by military rule from the mid-1980s to late 1990s, that ethnicity became more politicised and regional-based movements proliferated throughout the country. What is therefore new and significant is the emergence of a large number of novel organizations (or 'old ones in new skins') that came to the fore or became strident in the 1990s, and the surprisingly-radical tactics that some but certainly not all of them relied upon to attain their goals.

Nowadays, there is an admixture of two kinds of ethnic associations in Nigeria. The first, which are conventional in orientation, generally claim to speak for the majority of their ethnic brethren and frequently are led by learned, affluent and otherwise-prominent persons.² Although it is difficult to determine the exact number of these organizations presently operating in Nigeria, due to its vast terrain and attendant diversity, some of the more visible ones are listed in [Table 2](#).

In the South-West, the *Egbe Afenifere* remains the dominant non-militant ethnic organization and is directed by eminent individuals who doggedly challenged military rule in the 1990s. In addition to

supposedly guarding Yoruba interests at the national level, *Afenifere* was directly affiliated with and essentially operated as an advisory arm of the Alliance for Democracy (AD), the party that was dominant in this area of Nigeria until the 2003 elections, when it suffered a crushing defeat throughout this subregion, except Lagos State. The Yoruba Council of Elders, another Western-based entity, materialized as a rival of sorts for the *Egbe Afenifere*. In the South-East, *Ohanaeze Ndigbo* holds sway, consists of key intellectuals and portrays itself as the main defender of broadly-construed Igbo rights. However, unlike *Afenifere*, it is not detectably linked to any of the country's three main political parties, the AD, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP).

More disturbingly, after Nigeria installed a democratically elected government in 1999, militant ethnically oriented organizations suddenly and peculiarly became prominent in the nation's affairs. A review of available evidence suggests that these groups were established in light of 'general disenchantment with a[n] oligarchy which toyed with the welfare of the people, acute unemployment, comatose infrastructures, general insecurity [of] life and property and decay in [governance]' (Bankole 2000). The upsurge in fanatical associations' influence followed the liberalization of the country's erstwhile unresponsive and autocratic polity, which provided an opening for aggrieved ethnic groups to express their 'pent-up' anger with successive regimes' policies that engendered *economic and social malaise, marginalization and repression*.

In the recent past, Southern Nigeria became a hotbed of radicalism and violence in a manner that was unprecedented in the region's and indeed the country's history. Extremist organizations, which are household names throughout the country, professed that they represented specific ethnic interests across the South. In furtherance of this overarching purpose, they articulated more contentious objectives, used polarizing rhetoric, and participated in confrontations with both government and non-state actors.

Those situated in the South-East, South-South and South-South unremittingly demanded a conference of ethnic nationalities, became embroiled in unending clashes with security forces, with disastrous consequences for police officers, followers of ethnic organizations and other citizens, and even verbalised their intentions to create a state independent of the reputed contraption called Nigeria. As a result of their often-disharmonious utterances, ethnic entities of the radical ilk were objects of admiration in certain quarters and derision elsewhere.

The three organizations evaluated in this project, which arguably represented the most-radical ethnic associations in their respective areas in 2002, established their extremist stances almost immediately

after their formation and progressively got more fanatical as time passed. The South-West's OPC sought to advance Yoruba interests within an increasingly fractured polity. Elsewhere in Southern Nigeria, the South-East's MASSOB and the South-South's IYC promoted the concerns of their respective constituencies either by undermining the existing political framework or working within its constrained confines.³

In the next three chapters, I present detailed profiles of their divergent but yet comparatively similar conduct. Whilst the reviews of the first two groups are roughly equal in length, I devote more pages to the OPC because of the entity's notorious reputation, corresponding abrasiveness, and the extensive information available on its relationship with the state and Nigerian civil society. These exhaustive summaries, which are broadly divided into four sections, *background information*, *objectives and contextual information*, *tactics* and *activities of the groups between the late 1990s and 2002*, have two main aims.

Firstly, they chronologically chronicle these organizations' activities between the period under consideration, and compile information elicited from primary and/or secondary sources. Secondly, by employing a microlevel approach, these chapters accentuate the relationship between the independent variable of interest to this study, *regime policy* or state actions that promoted repression, marginalization against specific ethnic groups and underdevelopment, and the dependent variable, *civil society radicalization*.

Underlying this interesting exercise is my submission that interviewees in particular and profiled organizations in general must be allowed to 'speak for themselves' in their own words with minimal interferences and conjectures from external sources. This research also is underpinned by my vision that the researcher should fully interrogate and not be bound by conventions⁴, be overly concerned with the theoretical at the expense of the practical, or vice versa⁵, make giant intellectual leaps based on scanty facts and be untrue to information gotten from individuals, newspapers, the Internet or academic journals. Thus, to the extent possible, the ensuing chapters quote extensively (either verbatim or through paraphrases) from leaders of profiled groups based on interviews undertaken by the researcher and Nigeria-based journalists.

Even though this approach might seem rather tedious to the reader, it vividly illuminates the various facets of the organizations' establishment, actions, strategies and goals in a manner that does not embellish or detract from reality as perceived by the officials of these groups or reported by secondary sources. Such an exercise also ensures that the hypothesized relationship between regime policy and

Table 3: States in Southern Nigeria

STATES	SUB-REGIONS
Abia	South-East
Akwa Ibom	South-South
Anambra	South-East
Bayelsa	South-South
Cross River	South-South
Delta	South-South
Ebonyi	South-East
Edo	South-South
Ekiti	South-West
Enugu	South-East
Imo	South-East
Lagos	South-West
Ogun	South-West
Ondo	South-West
Osun	South-West
Oyo	South-West
Rivers	South-South

civil society fanaticism is plainly apparent to all, and based on concrete, contextually and historically-informed empirical evidence. Towards this end, a requisite analysis of the implications and repercussions of the presented findings is offered in Chapters VII and VIII.

IJAW YOUTH COUNCIL (IYC)

On the following pages, I summarize information concerning the IYC's history, endeavours, purposes and pronouncements from the time it was formed in 1998 until May 2002, and its convoluted dealings with the Nigerian government, armed forces, federally-controlled police departments and multi-national corporations (MNCs) based in the South-South. This necessary synopsis reveals that the organization manifested three facets of the radicalization process that are revisited in greater depth in Chapter VII. Therefore, based on a perusal of available evidence and for the purposes of this study, I classify the IYC as an extremist organization.

The first evidence of the IYC's radicalization pertains to its persistent delineation of certain objectives, which appear harmonious but regularly are supported by more radical underpinnings. On the surface, the two main ends advocated by the IYC, resource control and

self-determination, appear to be very noble and uncontroversial. Nonetheless, a closer look at the Council's peculiar operationalization of these ideas proves otherwise.

Resource control essentially connotes decreased state control over Ijaw lands, and total cessation of government and MNC-dominated petroleum exploration activities. In an equal fashion, *self-determination* entails increased sub-regional autonomy for the South-South in general and the Ijaw in particular, and a simultaneous reduction in the national government's functions, relevance and authority. Understandably, the centre energetically resisted these two goals, and the related demand for a conference of ethnic stakeholders, because they probably could, if they were successful, effect a redistribution of its power and privileges to the sub-national level.

The succeeding description also corroborates the observation that the IYC is an extremist organization because it employed stirring language, the second feature of the radicalization model specifically developed for this project, in the public realm. In so doing, IYC officials vociferously rejected the existing economic, political and social conditions obtaining in Nigeria, accused leaders affiliated with majority ethnic groups of being exploitative, repressive and neglectful in their dealings with the South-South, and claimed that public officials were corrupt, uncaring and cruel.

Perhaps more significantly, Council representatives used belligerent rhetoric to describe the plight of the Ijaw in the Niger Delta, marshal support amongst Ijaw youths and other interested parties, including the international community, and issue impassioned threats and ultimatums to government and business concerns. As would be expected under such circumstances, these two elements of the IYC's radicalism were actualized in the form of anarchistic actions. Certain Council supporters kidnapped oil workers operating in their communities, captured and executed police officers and other security agents, invaded the premises of major petroleum companies and disrupted their activities, and caused utter mayhem in other ways.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION⁶

Members of the Ijaw ethnic nationality primarily reside in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, Edo, Rivers and Ondo states (See [Table 3](#) and [Appendix C](#)). The Ijaw, which constitute the largest ethnic group in the Niger Delta and the fourth largest in Nigeria, believed that they suffered untold injustices initially from the British, who 'used all forms of instruments including gunboat diplomacy and warfare to achieve their goals', and later the Nigerian State, which first suppressed the

Ijaw-led Isaac Boro Revolution uprising 6 years after the discovery of oil in Oloibiri in 1956 (Tuodolo 2001).

The Ijaw Youth Council was established in 1998 to protest the degradation and exploitation engendered by the Nigerian state and petroleum companies operating in the sub-region. It is a broad-based entity that is affiliated with many organizations operating in the Niger Delta.⁷ In broad terms, the IYC is 'involved in community mobilization against the injustices of the Nigerian state in alliance with [MNCs]' (Ogon 2002). Owing to the 2002 unfavorable ruling on resource control by the Supreme Court⁸, the IYC promptly 'return[ed] the struggles to the creeks' (Ogon 2002). Following this development, it renewed its focus on 'oil production stop-page' in the Delta by issuing an ultimatum for MNCs to vacate the region by 31 May 2002.

During January 2002, I interviewed Mr Patterson Ogon, Director of the Ijaw Council for Human Rights (ICHR), the IYC's human rights affiliate, in the city of Port Harcourt, the capital of Rivers State and hub of Nigeria's oil industry.⁹ This young-looking individual took a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from the University of Port Harcourt, where he was a student activist. As one of the founders of the ICHR, Ogon had supervised the human rights department from 1998 when two political scientists, two lawyers and a geography lecturer founded it in Port Harcourt.¹⁰

Although the Council's *de facto* human rights division did not have any overseas offices in 2002, it is affiliated with several NGOs and other social groups based in Nigeria and elsewhere, including the Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO), a prominent Nigeria-based human rights group, Human Rights Watch (HRW), Friends of the Earth, Environmental Rights Action (ERA) and the Public Interest Lawyers League (PILL). The ICHR also maintained relationships with key actors within other sectors of Nigerian society, such as the Ecumenical Council for Social Responsibility (ECSR).

Whilst the relationship between IYC members and law enforcement authorities could best be described as awkward, owing to the constant harassment and intimidation referenced in the next sections, the organization considered the Nigerian judiciary, which provides support 'for the most part', as an unlikely ally¹¹ (Ogon 2002). The aggressive Nigerian media also was perceived as an important partner because of its reports on key issues affecting the Ijaw ethnic group and the organizations that represented it, and revelation of the purportedly hidden agenda behind government and corporate decisions.

In 2002, the Council remained unaffiliated with members of the political class because it believed that this route would not yield the desired results. Although the organization was closely interested in the

underlying but occasionally hidden structures that regulated the policies of those in authority, its officials apparently did not maintain political aspirations or desire a direct involvement in the political terrain. Furthermore, the IYC depicted itself as an apolitical entity that recognized the futility of becoming embroiled in politics.

To buttress this point, Ogon alluded to the defunct National Solidarity Movement, a party that eventually lost direction and ‘fizzled out’ because it was unable to garner the necessary support and votes, owing to its status as a grouping of minorities. Hence, the Ijaw entity insisted that parties from non-majority areas characteristically would have little or no impact on national politics in Nigeria. Still, the Council regarded the federal government on the whole and politicians especially as its main audiences. It further cited multi-national oil companies as its next prime target, by virtue of their towering influence, problematic activities, economic leverage and collusion with the state.

As a whole, the Ijaw Youth Council is funded via contributions from members, prominent Ijaw indigenes and government functionaries (House of Representatives 2000). Since its inception in 1998, it has relied almost exclusively on individual donations and membership fees. Although the size of the Council’s budget could not be quantified as of January 2002, its budget incessantly fluctuated and was somewhat limited.

Concerning IYC’s membership, the group did not formally recruit prospective members and there were no major restrictions on who could participate, as long as the person was a young person from the Ijaw ethnic group. Members were apprised of Council activities and initiatives through Parliamentary Sessions, which were open to all members, and usually were convened on a biweekly and rotational basis in different Ijaw communities.

In addition, the organization communicated with its members through *Ogele*, the IYC’s bulletin that was launched in December 1998 (Ijaw Youth Council 28 December 1998). Specifically, this medium enabled the group to sensitize its members, disseminate information concerning important issues as they arose and record group activities. The Council maintained a member roster, which listed approximately 25,000–30,000 persons in January 2002, compared to 5,000 in 1999. Even though the IYC’s membership level frequently changed, only 5 percent of its members were women.¹² The subsequent overview outlines the IYC’s objectives and the context in which it and the larger Ijaw community operated, as described by Council officials to the researcher and Nigerian journalists.

OBJECTIVES AND CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Ethnicity promptly assumed a central role within the Council and was employed as a critical referent because, over the years, successive federal regimes reportedly treated members of the Ijaw community unfairly, unjustly and unequally. To remedy this injustice and reverse years of despotism, social deprivation, economic underdevelopment and marginalization, all IYC members must belong to the Ijaw ethnic nationality and be committed to the organization's twin objectives, which are grouped under the rubric of self-determination and resource control. The former refers to the ability to realize one's goal, protect one's culture and the future of one's progeny (Uwugiaren 1999); resource control is based on the premise that local people ought to control their environment, particularly the land, and directly obtain whatever accrues from it in the form of tangible benefits.

The Council also brought Ijaw human rights matters to the fore domestically and internationally, and ensured that 'people d[id] not dissipate their energies in fighting meaningless battles' (Ogon 2002). Furthermore, the IYC was interested in corporate accountability and responsibility, and its activities thereby were 'aimed at ensuring that local populations understand social and economic [realities in the sub-region] with a view to changing the impoverish[ed] relations with corporate citizens, the governors and other elected officials' (Ogon 2002).

In general terms, the pan-Ijaw group and its contemporaries in the Delta desired a 'true Nigerian federation...that recognises the ethnic nationalities; the dignity of the people, a federation that will defend us when we are harassed in any part of the world, a federation that will provide free health, education, housing, employment opportunities to our people' (Uwugiaren 1999). In pursuit of these goals, the IYC and the Chikoko Movement¹³, like organizations elsewhere across Southern Nigeria, wanted the convocation of a Sovereign National Conference (SNC):

...[T]he clamour by Nigerians is for a discussion. We need to go to the dialogue table to discuss the best way, the best structure through which this country can stay together. That can only be done through [the SNC]. It is the will of the Nigerian people. It can only be done through grassroots work. The conference will be composed of ethnic nationalities, peoples and pro-democracy movements, labour etc. We must decide the country we want. It cannot be run through the 1999 constitution, which is dictatorial, ...unjust and must be thrown into the dustbin (Uwugiaren 1999).

Equally, the IYC was not favorably disposed towards the political system obtaining in Nigeria, as one of its officials asserted in the quote reproduced below.

The present political order is not what we crave. We reject a Niger Delta Commission that is premised on an acceptance of the present Nigerian state, which does not recognise the need for a genuine federalism that will allow ethnic nationalities the right to self-determination to determine and control their destiny (UNIRIN 13 July 1999).

Chikoko leader Oronto Douglas also highlighted the lack of federalism, a perceived feature of repression, and other attendant flaws evident in the country at great length:

The National Assembly is a reflection of the unfederal nature of the Nigeria federation. Let us take a look at the various Houses of Assembly. First, the Senate. How many people from the minority Niger-Delta are there? In a vote on the aspiration of the Niger-Delta, will their aspiration be protected? For example, throughout the area there is a clamour for resources control; there is agitation for environmental protection; there is agitation for self-determination and autonomy. Now, if the Niger-Delta presents to the House and knowing fully well that the House is composed in a skewed manner, in a manner that continues to perpetuate the unjust nature of this country, will they not vote against this position? The answer is 'they will'. The signposts are there to see. Look at the President Olusegun Obasanjo Niger-Delta Commission bill.... [T]here is nothing creative about that bill. It shows clearly that the government does not know how to resolve these problems in a creative way. They only went back to history, dug up the Niger-Delta Development Commission. This board, as proposed by Willick is even better than Obasanjo's Niger-Delta Development Commission. But, of course, that bill died because of the unjust nature of the Nigerian federation. Of course, that followed the so-called Niger-Delta Basin Authority, which was followed by OMPADEC which was starved of fund and which was, in case, corrupted. We later found ourselves in the mooky [sic] water of deprivation. We are saying that the way and nature they are going about it is pushing us to the precipice of the destruction of this country. We know that those who are shouting 'One Nigeria, One Nigeria' are only interested in their pockets. They are not nationalists, not Nigerians and in the true

sense of the world, they think of themselves and their ethnic nationalities (Uwugiaren 1999).

In relation, Douglas and a Council Statement depicted the Obasanjo regime thusly:

What we have now, however, can only be described as dictatorial democracy. That's a democracy fashioned by dictators being run by exdictator for the benefit of friends, hangers-on and pretenders in the country. Be that as it may, we believe that the best way to go about it right now is to expel dictatorship in [sic] our democracy. We can only do this by taking a look at our constitution which contains draconia[n] provisions which do not augur well for the dream of our democracy. We also have to look at the relationship and the kind of structure we have on the ground right now that has brought about the state of affairs. I am talking about the not-so-federal nature of the Nigeria federation, the diabolical federation that we have today. The people of the Niger-Delta, as usual, have been in [sic] the forefront of the struggle to bring about this democracy (Uwugiaren 1999). [His] administration [has been] most unpleasant and undemocratic for the Ijaw of the Niger Delta.... [U]nder your [Obasanjo's] hand and direction, military operations were carried out against our people all in the name of maintaining "law and order," where fair political reaction was required, you had voted for a brutal military option, which predictably led to "barrels of blood" flowing from Odi to Brass. These testaments of sweat and blood, is not restricted to the Ijaws alone, the Isoko (Oleh), Urhobo (Ewvreni) and Ogoni (Ogala-Elemé) also have tales of military and para-military attacks to testify. Our reading of these authoritarian activities is that your government may not be interested in addressing in a very imaginative way the democratic grievances of the peoples of the Niger Delta for environmental protection, resource control and true federalism. Your government's understanding and interpretation of the on going struggles for environmental social justice seem cast on oily, feudal and dictatorial stereotypes' (Oyadongha 24 July 2000).

In the same spirit, Ogon noted that after independence, Nigeria witnessed varying degrees of authoritarianism in its political life, regardless of the type of regime that was in place at a particular point in time. The group especially suffered innumerable casualties precipitated by General Abdulsalam Abubakar's repressive resolutions. He stated that once the Obasanjo-led Peoples Democratic

Party rose to power in 1999, the situation in this regard did not change and Ijaw concerns were not squarely tackled. On the contrary, there were extrajudicial executions, unlawful detentions and arrests of IYC members across the Niger Delta.¹⁴

Along the same lines and in the Council's view, the militarization of the petroleum industry (and the manning of oil installations and adjoining towns by military personnel) is yet another major crisis facing the South-South. Moreover, MNCs operating in the Niger Delta routinely colluded with the state to wreak environmental damages, and entrench their control over impoverished and increasingly restive communities.¹⁵

Equally, regarding the existence and ramifications of corruption, the IYC's official stance is that it has been and remains an integral part of Nigerian political, economic and social life. While Generals Buhari and Idiagbon tried to re-orient Nigerians in the 1980s because of the endemic nature of dishonesty in the country, this intended reformation did not result in systemic, far-reaching and sustainable changes in the Nigerian 'psyche'. Despite the fact that Sani Abacha was one of the most corrupt leaders in Nigerian history, Ogon remarked that the Obasanjo administration and the respective post-1999 state governors were tainted by the curse of corruption as well. Another IYC official blatantly accused Obasanjo of malfeasance in this regard:

How did President Obasanjo become the president? Where did he get the N130 million donated to the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP? Where did he get the money to build his Ota Farm? What became of our N2.8 million of oil that allegedly disappeared during his regime? (*Post Express* 9 July 2000).

Irrespective of official rhetoric to the contrary and the presence of an anti-corruption panel that did not really punish any politically influential persons, it was 'business as usual' in Nigeria under Obasanjo. To bolster this argument, Ogon gave the examples of the US \$12 billion scandal that rocked the state-owned Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and the cases of several individuals who were sacked or convicted for being corrupt by special military tribunals in the past but were serving in the Obasanjo government in 2002. The cited cases of several public officials embarking on wild and lavish 'spending sprees' offered incontrovertible proof that corruption remained inextricably linked to Nigerian political affairs.

Predictably, the IYC was impacted by these state-sanctioned measures and behaviors. Owing to the corrosive climate fostered by MNCs and the Nigerian government, the Council was established to

confront the perceived indifference of, and the economically, politically and socially discriminatory policies promulgated by, consecutive governments. In addition, the failure of government officials to dialogue with the IYC necessitated, from the entity's vantage point, the Council's seemingly confrontational stance in its dealings with the state and MNCs.

Notwithstanding the rather harsh environment under which the Ijaw Youth Council operated, it recorded three key accomplishments after 1998. Firstly, the IYC united Ijaw-speaking peoples under a common umbrella and concurrently revealed the importance of 'struggling as a group.' Secondly, the Ijaw organization increased awareness amongst its followers regarding the degradation of their environment, engendered by unsustainable oil production practises, the urgent need for a prompt reversal of this situation and protection of local habitats. Lastly, due to the fact that certain members of the movement were embroiled in conflicts with petroleum companies and the state, the Council's human rights division provided free legal services to Ijaw youths.

Regardless of these successes, the Council faced several problems or setbacks that hampered its effectiveness, including the perception of the IYC as an adversarial and therefore problematic entity, and the attendant implications of such an opinion for the safety of its officials. Structural problems engendered by the IYC's infiltration by agents purportedly representing petroleum and government interests also curtailed the accomplishments of the pan-Ijaw organization. On the following pages, I briefly examine the entity's strategies from Ogon's vantage point.

TACTICS

According to Patterson Ogon, the Ijaw Youth Council reacted to the violence reportedly perpetrated against the Ijaw in very vocal ways through the use of inflammatory rhetoric. Moreover, individuals who belonged to the Council's militant factions, like the dreaded Supreme Egbesu Assembly, engaged in deadly struggles and confrontations with government officials and other parties. Yet, the IYC as a whole allegedly moved away from this aggressiveness in late 2001 and early 2002, as it employed divergent strategies across issues. For example, on resource control issues, the Council apparently relied on enlightenment campaigns, symposia, engagement with relevant actors on the need for environmental sustainability, legal stratagems and direct collaborations with organizations representing other ethnic nationalities in the South-South that had similar concerns.

To empower its constituency, and promote and defend their rights, Ogon claimed that the IYC's human rights arm depended upon advocacy, education and governance campaigns; provision of free legal services, symposia and training workshops for the Ijaw community, irrespective of whether they were IYC members or not; and conflict mitigation and management at the intra- and inter-communal levels. Specifically, the group educated Ijaw peoples regarding their rights *vis-à-vis* the state and oil companies, assisted in defending these rights, held oil companies operating in the South-South liable for their actions and demanded the promulgation of laws to protect the fragile Niger Delta environment, which had, over the years, been decimated by the wanton carelessness of MNCs in collusion with the Nigerian state. Notwithstanding the fact that the Ijaw movement's objectives probably would not change, Ogon noted that, in future, group tactics could be characterized by more cooperation and less altercations.

Nonetheless, there were disagreements within the Council on issues pertaining to its leadership, goals and methods, and relationship with the state, MNCs and other relevant actors. As of January 2002, there were two factions within the IYC: the pro-State faction that allegedly accepted donations from and was desirous of a closer relationship with the state, and a radical bloc that was not interested in a dialogue with the Nigerian government. Within the Niger Delta, tactics utilized by other ethnically oriented groups tended to be similar simply because their purposes and the conditions under which they functioned were analogous. Consequently, several of the most extremist organizations are based in this part of Nigeria.

Still, Ogon made a sharp distinction between IYC strategies and those of non-Niger Delta groups like MASSOB, which supposedly were more militant. Without specifically mentioning the Council, he averred that certain radical groups resorted to violence under certain situations because of 'events on the ground'. Thus, if certain groups, in their clashes with the state, persistently appeared to be on the 'losing side', they might be apt to react violently in order to gain some ground and stave off additional losses (Ogon 2002). In turn, this reaction will provoke the state to react more vociferously and clamp down on perceived domestic terrorists, with this unending cycle only resulting in greater casualties for the weaker party, which usually was the ethnically oriented organization (Ogon 2002).

Finally, on the use of non-confrontational, mainstream and non-seditious rhetoric to accomplish delineated aims, Ogon surmised that largely pro-status quo groups were inclined to be very conservative, not vocal and undesirous of ruffling any feathers. Since members of these associations jealously guarded the economic, political and social advantages that they freely enjoyed in the past, they rarely were

deemed militant by the state. Accordingly, he submitted that the IYC lied somewhere between extremist associations, such as the OPC and MASSOB on the one hand, and relatively mild organizations, such as the Northern-based Arewa Consultative Forum.

IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES AND STATEMENTS (1998–2002)

In the following paragraphs, I present a sequential summary of reported IYC activities between December 1998, when the group was officially formed, and May 2002, with a view to understanding the relationship between regime policy and radicalization that is analyzed in [Chapter VII](#), and the specific manner in which the organization embodied minimal, moderate and explicit radicalization, which are thoroughly assessed in [Chapter VIII](#). In so doing, I clarify how reputed discrimination, deprivation and authoritarianism radicalized the IYC through the espousal of unfavorable goals and rhetoric, and reliance upon actions that ranged from civil disobedience to outright violence against economic, political and security agents. Additionally, I divulge data and statements culled from Nigerian newspapers and other secondary sources to reinforce (or contradict) the previously summarized information supplied by Patterson Ogon.

On 11 December 1998, approximately 5000 Ijaw youths from 500 communities and 40 clans gathered in Kaiama, Bayelsa State to 'deliberate on ways of finding solutions to the problems associated with [their] present enslavement in the fraudulent contraption called Nigeria' (Ijaw Youth Council 11 December 1998). This historic meeting, convened under the auspices of the newly established Ijaw Youth Council, featured representatives from many of its affiliated entities.¹⁶

The Declaration's pronouncements were based on reports issued by the Council's Resource Control, Inter and Intra-Ethnic Conflicts, Education & Culture, Self-Determination and Federalism working groups (Ijaw Youth Council 11 December 1998). As a prelude to the Declaration, the Conference made the following observations:

1. That it was through British colonisation that the Ijaw Nation was forcibly put under the Nigerian State;
2. That but for the economic interests of the imperialists, the Ijaw ethnic nationality would have evolved as a distinct and separate sovereign nation, enjoying undiluted political, economic, social and cultural autonomy;
3. That the division of the Southern Protectorate into East and West in 1939 by the British marked the beginning of the balkanisation

- of a hitherto territorially contiguous and culturally homogenous Ijaw people into political and administrative units, much to our disadvantage;
4. That the quality of life of Ijaw people is deteriorating as a result of utter neglect, suppression and marginalization visited on Ijaws by the alliance of the Nigerian state and transnational oil companies;
 5. That the political crisis in Nigeria is mainly about the struggle for the control of oil mineral resources which account for over 80% of GDP, 95% of national budget and 90% of foreign exchange earnings;
 6. That the unabating damage done to our fragile natural environment and to the health of our people is due in the main to uncontrolled exploration and exploitation of crude oil and natural gas which has led to numerous oil spills, uncontrolled gas flaring, the opening up of our forests to loggers, indiscriminate canalisation, flooding, land subsistence, coastal erosion, earth tremors etc;
 7. That the degradation of the environment of Ijawland by transnational oil companies and the Nigerian state arises mainly because Ijaw people have been robbed of their natural rights to ownership and control of their land and resources through the instrumentality of undemocratic Nigerian State such as the Land use Decree of 1978, the Petroleum Decrees of 1969 and 1991, the Lands (Title Vesting etc) Decree No. 52 of 1993 (Osborne Land Decree), the National Inland Waterways Authority Decree No. 13 of 1997 etc;
 8. That the principle of Derivation in Revenue Allocation has been consciously and systematically obliterated by successive regimes of the Nigerian state;
 9. That the violence in Ijawland and other parts of the Niger Delta, sometimes manifesting in intra and inter ethnic conflicts are sponsored by the State and transnational oil companies to keep the communities of the Niger Delta area divided, weak and distracted from the causes of their problems;
 10. That the recent revelations of the looting of national treasury by the Abacha junta is only a reflection of an existing and continuing trend of stealing by public office holders in the Nigerian State. We remember the over 12 billion dollars Gulf war windfall, which was looted by Babangida and his cohorts. We note that over 70% of the billions of dollars being looted by military rulers and their civilian collaborators is derived from our ecologically devastated Ijawland.

Pursuant to these observations, participants at the Conference issued the momentous Kaiama Declaration, excerpts of which are provided below.

1. All land and natural resources (including mineral resources) within the Ijaw territory belong to Ijaw communities and are the basis of our survival.
2. We cease to recognise all undemocratic decrees that rob our peoples/communities of the right to ownership and control of our lives and resources, which were enacted without our participation and consent.
3. We demand the immediate withdrawal from Ijawland of all military forces of occupation and repression by the Nigerian State. Any oil company that employs the services of the armed forces of the Nigerian State to 'protect' its operations will be viewed as an enemy of the Ijaw people.
4. Ijaw youths in all the communities clans in the Niger Delta will take steps to implement these resolutions beginning from the 30th of December 1998, as a step towards reclaiming the control of our lives. We, therefore, demand that all oil companies stop all exploration and activities in the Ijaw area. We are tired of gas flaring; oil spillages, blowouts and being labelled saboteurs and terrorists. It is a case of preparing the noose for our hanging. We reject this labelling. Hence, we advice [sic] all oil companies staff and contractors to withdraw from Ijaw territories by the 30th December 1998 pending the resolution of the issue of resource ownership and control in the Ijaw area of the Niger Delta.
5. Ijaw youths and Peoples will promote the principle of peaceful coexistence between all Ijaw communities and with our immediate neighbours, despite the provocative and divisive actions of the Nigerian state, transnational oil companies and their contractors.
6. We express our solidarity with all peoples and organisations and ethnic nationalities in Nigeria and elsewhere who are struggling for self-determination and justice. In particular, we note the struggle of the Oodua Peoples Congress (OPC), the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), Egi Women's Movement etc.
7. We agreed to remain within Nigeria but to demand and work for Self-Government and resource control for the Ijaw people. Conference approved that the best way for Nigeria is a federation of ethnic nationalities. The federation should be run on the basis [of] equality and social justice (Ijaw Youth Council 11 December 1998).

As the deadline for the cessation of oil exploration in the Niger Delta approached, the Ijaw Youth Council publicly launched 'Operation Climate Change' on 28 December 1998, which was intended to last from 1 to 10 January 1999. Towards this end, the IYC directed its members to 'commence and intensify the hijacking of oil workers in Ijaw land, seiz[e]...oil [plat]forms and flow stations, disrupt...oil exploration and exploitation...in the area,...take over Government House Yenagoa, attack police stations and disarm security agencies' (House of Representatives 2000). According to Chikoko leader Oronto Douglas, Operation Climate Change was meant to expose and halt the negative impacts of the oil industry on the South-South:

We have just taken a decision to extinguish the fierce flames of hell called gas flares on our land. We have done so because of its negative impact on our people, on our environment. The noise, the soothes [sic] and the heat. The permanent day light and the deaths of animals and plants. These sorrowful matters are far removed from ASO ROCK (Nigeria's Seat of Power), Kaduna, Ikoyi, Victoria Island, [T]he Hague and San Francisco where the directors and share holders of the companies live. Our people are on the receiving end of ecological violence. By this our symbolic gesture we hope the Nigeria [sic] State and the oil transnationals will appreciate that the issues goes [sic] beyond the price per barrel and that it is about life on planet earth. The Ijaws and all other nations in the Niger Delta deserve a protected biosphere¹⁷ (Ijaw Youth Council 28 December 1998).

On 30 December 1998, the deadline set by the IYC for the withdrawal of MNCs from Ijawland, military men acting at the behest of the Abubakar regime allegedly executed or wounded several individuals participating in peaceful processions in several Ijaw communities (Ijaw Youth Council 18 January 1999). Approximately 1500 soldiers who were drafted to Yenagoa and its environs reportedly killed at least 11 Ijaw youths and injured hundreds of others in front of Government House (Ijaw Link 1999; Tuodolo 2001). A day later, additional truckloads of soldiers arrived in the area, murdered 4 other youths and wounded several others (Ijaw Link 1999). Patterson Ogon described what ensued in the following manner:

As the ultimatum drew close, the junta deployed combat-ready troops to Yenagoa, Warri, Kaiama and other communities in the Niger Delta. On December 30, youths trooped out in their hundreds in Yenagoa to honour the call for a peaceful procession. What was supposed to be a day of sober reflection became a

reminder of sorrow and mourning as soldiers acting on the orders of the military junta opened fire on unarmed youths, sending an official under estimate of seven persons to their untimely graves. The harassment, intimidation and assault on law abiding citizens took a dramatic turn when the soldiers set up barricades at every kilometre to subject commuters to thorough and undignified search for the much dreaded...marks which were wrongly interpreted as marks of Egbesu (a powerful Ijaw cultural sect). Both men and women were stripped naked and all those found to have marks on their bodies were summarily dealt with. The shooting and intimidation led people to desert their homes to opt for a safer haven in the forests. No fewer than 20,000 people within the communities in the Epie/Atissa axis of Bayelsa State deserted their homes. On December 31, soldiers and mobile policemen started random shooting following speculations that youths were planning an attack on Government House. This resulted in...the shooting of a police corporal Mr Gideon Lagumo assigned to the Mile one Police Station, Port Harcourt, Rivers State who was on his way home to celebrate the new year. On the same day, the military administrator in the state, Lt. Col Paul Edor Obi announced a state of emergency and a dusk to dawn curfew'.... [N]o fewer than 30 persons have been killed either by the reckless shootings and/or the psychological trauma that running away from home to live in the forest has caused. The action of the soldiers drafted to ensure that the "Ijaw rebellion" is quelled took a rather bizarre turn when some soldiers and policemen broke into the houses of some couples, threw the husbands out, tortured them while some others raped the women. Owing to the courage of some of the women who insisted on justice, three of the armed personnel who took part in that indecent act were identified and subsequently arrested (Environmental Rights Action 1999).

During the early part of January 1999, the lethal fracas between the Council and security forces continued unabated. Certain reports claimed that the December and January clashes resulted in the deaths of approximately 240 Ijaw, arrests of scores of others and displacement of thousands of people from many Niger Delta communities (Sustainable Energy and Economy Network 1999; Tuodolo 2001).

On 11 January, soldiers and mobile police (MOPOL) officers 'violently dispersed over one thousand Ijaw women who were protesting peacefully in...Port Harcourt against the...killing of Ijaw youths and the raping of women [in] Yenagoa, Kaiama and other Ijaw

villages' (Ijaw Youth Council 11 November 1999). This demonstration, organized by the IYC and Niger Delta Women for Justice, led to the capture of 34 Ijaw women, including Annie Brisbie, the Council's Secretary-General, who was 'arrested, detained and tortured by the state security in Port Harcourt for staging a peaceful protest against the government of Abdulsalam Abubakar and the oil companies' (Niger Delta Women for Justice 2001).

Meanwhile, in mid-January, IYC officials again postponed 'Operation Climate Change', owing to the 'refusal of the MNCs operating in Ijawland to respect the will of the Ijaw people, as contained in the Kaiama Declaration, and cease operation in the Ijaw area pending the resolution of the issue of resource ownership and control within the Nigerian state' (Ijaw Youth Council 16 January 1999). Council officials also declared a 2-month period of mourning for Ijaw Youths who were killed between 30 December 1998 and 6 January 1999, and admonished Ijaw elders not to participate in a proposed rapprochement with the Abubakar regime.

In late January, General Abubakar implored Ijaw Youths to release the bodies of 80 soldiers who were killed during the uprising in the Delta, as approximately 200 foreign organizations, including Polaris Institute and the Green Party, expressed support for the Ijaw struggle (Ijaw Youth Council 23 January 1999). Between February and March, at least one Ijaw youth was killed in Port Harcourt by policemen; another youth was killed in the town of Odi by a combined team of MOPOL and soldiers, who also injured 5 individuals and arrested 8 others (Tuodolo 2001).

At its 7th parliamentary meeting in March, the IYC ended its mourning for members who died in previous protests and reached the following resolutions:

- Council empowered the collegiate leadership to engage in genuine dialogue [with government and multi-national oil companies] that would lead to:
 1. *The release of all bodies of Ijaw youths killed between December 30th and February 28th for proper burial*
 2. *Realisation of all aspects of the Kaiama Declaration*
 3. *The de-militarisation of Ijawland*
 4. *Peaceful co-existence among the Ijaw people and also between the Ijaws and their neighbours*
 5. *Development and for our collective self-actualisation*
- Council vigorously kicked against the rumoured implementation of the Revenue allocation formula

- Council challenged the Abubakar regime and the incoming “civilian” government to put all the issues concerning control of resources; obnoxious decrees; Environmental protection; Revenue formula; type of federation to a referendum in the Niger Delta.
- Council commended the unity of the Ijaws in their demand for justice from the federal military dictatorship and the oil transnational companies. Council particularly commended the role some of our elders have played in the ongoing struggle for self-determination of our nation
- Council called for investigation into the submissions from Ijaw scholars, historians and nationalist[s] to the effect that the British betrayed, abused and ignored the pacts the Ijaws had with them to let us be
- Council once again dissociated itself from the alleged incidents of kidnapping, hijacking and hostage takings, noting that undue emphasis has been placed on these criminal acts ostensibly to discredit the legitimate struggle of the Ijaw people for self-determination (Ijaw Youth Council 20 March 1999).

An April Council statement decried the Bayelsa government’s deployment of military troops under the banner of ‘Operation Salvage and Operation Flash’ to exterminate Ijaw communities. From then until mid-May 1999, a total of 12 Ijaw youths were shot dead and several others were hurt; 8 of these individuals were purportedly killed at the behest of Agip Oil Company, 2 youths were shot in another town by soldiers and the remainder were executed by soldiers escorting a Shell barge at Okokodiagbene (Tuodolo 2001).

Meanwhile, on 11 June 1999, 12 days after his inauguration, President Obasanjo travelled to Port Harcourt to meet with representatives of the IYC and other Niger Delta-based organizations (Igbokwe 21 June 1999). The Council, led by Messrs Oronto Douglas and Felix Tuodolo, specifically demanded the withdrawal of all military forces occupying communities within Ijawland and the revocation of the so-called 13 percent derivation formula: ‘The [formula] has implication for our survival and we urge you to withdraw it and consult with us. What the Kaiama Declaration said was that we want to control our God-given resources’ (Igbokwe 21 June 1999).

The following month, the Ijaw youth movement rejected a Niger Delta Bill that President Obasanjo presented to the National Assembly on the grounds that it was reflective of a flawed and ‘lopsided federal system’ (Igbokwe 9 July 1999). On another note, 10 Ijaw youths, who were arrested by soldiers patrolling the Benin River, remained missing (Tuodolo 2001).

During the remainder of 1999, the Ijaw Youth Council continued to, attract sustained attention in the Nigerian media, albeit not as regularly as OPC and MASSOB, react to and direct the public's attention towards the state's repressive, discriminatory and socially stagnant deeds. In September, approximately 51 Ijaw, including women and children, were reportedly executed in Yenagoa and Okrika by soldiers, MOPOL and naval officers, even as 'an expatriate staff of Shell-operated Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas Company joined Mobile Policemen to shoot [at] protesting Ijaws in Bonny [, wounding] several persons [in the process]' (Tuodolo 2001).

Several weeks later, Ijaw youths kidnapped 7 police officials, including the Area Commander of Police, in Yenagoa (Igbokwe 8 November 1999). The policemen, who would have been killed save for Felix Tuodolo's intervention, were seized whilst on patrol as a protest against OPC members' execution of Ijaw citizens in Lagos. Meanwhile, soldiers reportedly killed 13 Ijaw, including a Councillor in Warri, Obama, Akamabogu and the Port Harcourt-based Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) Wharf (Tuodolo 2001).

At least 200 individuals, including women and children, were slaughtered during the infamous November 1999 massacre in Odi, Bayelsa State (Project Underground 9 November 1999; Igbokwe 30 November 1999). This mayhem evidently ensued when Ijaw youths abducted and executed 12 policemen, and security forces engaged in reprisal attacks (UNIRIN 7 February 2000). In response, IYC officials condemned the destruction of Odi and its environs by the military, and the loss of hundreds of lives, and reiterated their call for the total withdrawal of all oil companies from Ijawland:

We are opposed to the situation where mass murder of Ijaws by Nigerian soldiers will be ordered by the government to protect oil activity.... It is clear to us that the whole operation was designed to instill fear on [sic] the Ijaw and stop the mass of our suffering people from continuing our peaceful struggle to end the degradation of our lands and creeks by transnational oil companies and the Nigerian state. We insist that oil companies should not continue to operate in our communities under the cover of soldiers of occupation (Ijaw Youth Council 24 November 1999). [It] is only in contemporary Nigeria that an entirely defenceless and peaceful population, men and women, young and old, children and infants are slaughtered like beasts through heavy artillery shelling/mortaring with an intent of annihilating them. This is not the outcome of a momentary outburst of hatred but the result of a calculated decision and careful planning: a criminal conspiracy not against perpetrators of an alleged killing

of police officers but against the entire Ijaw people. The Odi incident is an act of genocide against the Ijaws (Ebelo 1999).

On account of the Odi atrocities, the Council alerted the United Nations (UN) to purported plans by the Nigerian government to 'silence the Ijaw and truncate their peaceful campaign for self-determination and environmental protection' (Igbokwe 30 November 1999).

In December, a militant wing of the IYC, the Kalabari Territorial Security and Defence Council, shut down three flow stations belonging to Shell Corporation in the community of Elem Kalabari (Ofiebor 3 December 1999). Youths also staged demonstrations in the area and seized boats belonging to three companies. By the end of 1999, approximately 400 Ijaw '[had been] killed...due to police brutality and violence during protests against Shell, Chevron and other oil companies operating in the Niger Delta' (Project Underground 9 November 1999; Igbokwe 30 November 1999).

In January 2000, the Council condemned a statement attributed to the Foreign Affairs Minister, which stated that the federal government would prosecute the leaders of ethnic associations (Igbokwe 14 January 2000). On another note, the IYC blamed the prevailing situation in Nigeria on the ruling class' distortion of the federal system and corruption, and consequently called for the convocation of a national meeting. In a separate development, Patterson Ogon pledged that militant members of the IYC and other Ijaw activist organizations in the Delta would cease their acts of 'hostage taking, kidnappings and piracy' (UNIRIN 18 January 2000).

The aforementioned events and pronouncements indicate that group members' belief that the Nigerian state traditionally had been, regardless of the route through which it came to power, unabashedly despotic and discriminatory in its policies and actions toward the Ijaw community in particular and the South-South as a whole, determined their radical stances in relation to government forces. In the remainder of this chapter, I proceed with a summary of the IYC's activities to further document the nature and extent of its grievances, and the often-fanatical reactions undertaken to express them.

At the IYC's 12th Parliamentary session, which was attended by 2000 members, several issues were discussed, including the proposed Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC):

We want to once again draw the attention of the whole world to the fraud that this proposal represent [sic]. First the commission as proposed will not address our cardinal request for resource control and self-determination in the manner as democratically

advocated by the nations of the Niger Delta. The Commission is not going to be a development agency as it is being touted by its advocates because you cannot impose development on any people or society. It is another avenue for party patronage and elitist development abracadabra to flourish. Our people, parliament concluded, will be worse off. Development such as this is not sustainable. Grass roots developmental initiative is what is needed to [guarantee] that it falls in line with the bottom-up development direction that is now favoured by specialist [sic] on the matter. We here reaffirm our belief in the Ijaw Development Commission where resources will then be allowed to go down to communities or Clan Development Boards to be controlled by the people and cultural structures at the community levels. We must be allowed to live our lives the way we want it. We want justice (Ijaw Youth Council 5 March 2000).

Meanwhile, in May 2000, officials of the IYC's Central Zone enjoined Obasanjo to promptly sign the NDDC bill or face retribution (Iwori 28 May 2000). Also, it specifically implied that if the legislation were not enacted, group members and other Ijaw citizens would engage in deadly skirmishes with state officials and attack key oil installations in Ijawland (Nwankwo 28 May 2000). Furthermore, IYC President Felix Tuodolo threatened that if compensation were not duly paid to the families of Ijaw youths killed by naval personnel at the Nigerian Agip Oil Company site in Brass, Bayelsa State, the Council would disrupt activities at the facilities (Post Express 17 June 2000; Vanguard 30 June 2000). Apparently, the deceased youths were participating in a peaceful demonstration at the Agip installation to pressure the company to 'fulfill its obligations to the people, as agreed in a Memorandum of Understanding it signed with the community in 1994' (Post Express 17 June 2000).

In July 2000, the IYC restated its desire for the actualization of the Kaiama Declaration:

Some persons do not seem to understand what the Niger Delta struggle is all about and what causes the ethnic conflicts in the oil producing communities. For more than 80 years (during colonial and independent Nigeria) we allowed others to control and manage resources belonging to us. Our resources were mismanaged and our people are today worse off. The evidence is irrefutable poverty and disease are everywhere, underdevelopment, environmental degradation. Only the "bad effect" of our resources are thrown at us while good things are not meant for the Niger Delta. It is disheartening that Nigeria is

one of the richest countries on earth and that Ijaw who were forced into this unpalatable amalgam is one of the richest nations but have remained the most backward, neglected and most undeveloped part of the Niger Delta and also perhaps of Nigeria (Oyadongha 19 July 2000).

For the rest of July, the Pan-Ijaw entity welcomed the decision of South-South politicians to support the organization's quest for resource control, charged state assemblies to enact legislations accordingly and petitioned the President to create an environment that 'would encourage justice, greatness and wealth creation for all citizens' (Chukwu 2000; Onwuemeodo 21 July 2000; Igbokwe 26 July 2000). In the meantime, Ijaw youths closed the Oloma Flow Station owned by Shell in July to reduce 'the production and transmission of crude oil and gas [...],...end gas flare and...protect our climate' (Ijaw Youth Council Circa 22 July 2000; Obi 2000).

Between the 19th and 20th of August 2000, the Council's so-called Mobile Parliament convened in Rivers State and issued a Communiqué that derided the continuing militarization of Ijawland, particularly the presence of military forces in several Ijaw communities and their unseemly activities in the sub-region:

We have confirmed that the soldiers have continued to terrorise the Ijaws of the Niger Delta. Life has remained unsafe, unsure and deadly for us citizens in this part of the world. The Nigerian Navy in collaboration with the oil companies regularly organise raids on villages and fishing settlements. Some of the communities that have been most recently invaded includes [sic]: Okigbene; Ferebaghabene; Akamabubou; Brass; Obama; Azuzama; Olugbobiri; Epebu; Ologoama; Ogodobiri and Tugogbene. The Navy justified these raids and attacks on defenseless Ijaws on the excuse of maintaining Law and Order and to ensure the uninterrupted flow of oil. The IYC said that the only law and the only order in the Niger Delta are that [sic] which nurtures injustice, environmental despoilation and corporate rule. And that the demands of the Ijaws to control their resources is [sic] sanctioned and supported by God the Almighty. Parliament affirmed its determination to struggle for the democratization of the Niger Delta in the way and manner the people of the Niger Delta especially the Ijaws have worked for the emerging democracy in Nigeria (Ijaw Youth Council Circa 20 August 2000).

During the remainder of 2000, the Ijaw Youth Council intensified its call for the realization of the association's cardinal objectives. In September, it threatened to recall 'erring members' if the Bayelsa State House of Assembly did not pass a suitable resource control bill (Oyadongha 13 September 2000). In the IYC's bid to present its version of the bill to state legislators, approximately 5,000 Ijaw youths marched to the State Assembly and paralyzed economic and social activities in Yenagoa (Comet News 15 September 2000; Etim 2000).

In October 2000, Ijaw Youth Council leaders responded to the federal government's ban on ethnic militia groups by contending that '...it would be futile for the government to attempt to ban or decree IYC out of existence', because the Council '□ha[s] no link with the government [; instead it] derive[s] its legitimacy from the people (Pedro and Obari 2000). Around the same time, 8 unarmed youths were killed at an Agip installation near Olugbobiri when they, along with 43 other individuals, sought to close the facility because of the company's failure to 'adhere to a memorandum of understanding it reached with the communities a few years before' (UNIRIN 8 November 2000). In the meantime, the IYC's human rights affiliate, Ijaw Council for Human Rights, represented 10 youths who were charged to court for murdering 10 policemen in Odi the previous year (Azuatalam 2000).

In anticipation of the planned visit of President Obasanjo to Bayelsa State in March 2001, Ijaw youths made the following declaration:

[We wanted him to] see the level of destruction his regime has caused in the Ijaw territory. [We also wanted Obasanjo] to see the level of hunger and poverty in the area that produces the bulk of the nation's wealth and whose resources are being ungratefully exploited to sustain his government. Let Obasanjo come and breathe the air of pollution instead of locking himself up at Aso Rock only to send soldiers to kill, maim and destroy at the slightest protest by the people. Since Obasanjo came to power, the Ijawland has seen the worst killings and destruction. But we want to state categorically that despite all the atrocities of Obasanjo against the Ijaw people, we will not stop him from visiting Bayelsa State. The case of the genocide at Odi is still fresh in our memory. And to show his avowed hatred for the Ijaw people, the Obasanjo government promoted the military officers that destroyed Odi. He has presided over the death of over 500 Ijaws in the past 22 months. The Ijaw people have not forgotten that Obasanjo's Land Use Decree of 1978 deprived us access to our land and our resources. Since the assumption of office, Obasanjo has shown an avowed hatred for the Ijaw people. Some

of these dastardly acts were carried out in collaboration with the multi-national oil companies. To show Obasanjo our anger, we will all wear black attire on March 15, 2001 when he will arrive Yenagoa (Onwuemeodo 13 March 2001).

A few months afterwards, the Youth Council and other Nigerian CSOs rejected a proposed \$15 million credit facility because of its presumed deleterious effects on the environment (Amaize 2001). A month later, IYC Chairman Oko Maxwell chided lawmakers for instigating the disturbance between the executive and legislative arms of Bayelsa State, and demanded that the Bayelsa House pass the resource control bill placed before it in the year 2000; the Council also asked other State Assemblies in the South-South to enact resource control and self-determination legislations (Oyadongha 13 July 2001; Onwuemeodo 20 July 2001). In a separate development, Council leaders vowed to resist attempts by MNCs and the State to destabilize the Council through infiltration, the encouragement of leadership tussles and factions (Oyadongha 21 July 2001; Onwuemeodo 9 August 2001).

From June to August 2001, the IYC accused government officials of several repressive actions. Undercover security officials allegedly arrested two male members outside the group's office in the Niger Delta; Ijaw youths also charged state agents with invading the home of its Secretary-General and seizing her siblings in Port Harcourt (Niger Delta Women for Justice 2001). In mid-August, MOPOL officers shot a secondary school student who was in his early twenties in Bayelsa State (Iwori 13 August 2001; Oyadongha 13 August 2001). Oko Maxwell narrated what transpired in the manner reproduced below.

It all happened between the hours of 3.00 p.m. and 4 p.m. Thursday when a team of 15 persons comprising of Shell, Dec Oil and Gas (the clamping contractor), twenty four mobile policemen from the Bayelsa state police command and 10 youths from Oporoma community passed through Angiama creek off River Nun to Akanbuo bust of Aguobiri in Southern Ijaw Local government. Without the consent of Aguobiri Community and Bayelsa State Ministry of Environment, for a spill that occurred in June/July 2001, the said team in their clamping process were seen by women returning from farm. On arrival home, these women reported what they saw in the bush to the community. The youths were then sent into the bush to stop work and bring the said team into the community for dialogue. The youths who went into the bush unarmed to stop the work as instructed by

the community were rather attacked by the mobile policemen with the deceased shot dead. Yesterday it was Nigerian Agip Oil Company, today it is Shell and tomorrow it will be the turn of another multinational if immediate steps are not taken to resist this. Ijaw youths have been pushed to the wall and we must go back and mobilise by any means necessary for resistance (Oyadongha 13 August 2001).

In September 2001, an IYC official demanded the creation of an Ijaw State within the boundaries of Nigeria that would rectify the injustices suffered by the Ijaw community over the years (Olaleye 2001). He postulated that the ‘Toru-Ibe’ state would spur grassroots development, unite the Ijaw people, ameliorate their marginalization and guarantee adequate representation of their concerns at all levels of government. In a separate development, the Council’s National Executive Council was dissolved to arrest the group’s ‘...rudderless drift, [prevent it from] being hijacked by unpatriotic citizens and [ensure that it is not] diverted from its primary assignment of protecting, defending and promoting the historic Kaiama Declaration’ (Ebiri 2001).

Not surprisingly, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) continued to elicit strong reactions from IYC officials and members alike, who especially resisted the appointment of South-South Governors into the Commission’s Supervising Body in December 2001, and saw the NDDC¹⁸ as being diametrically opposed to the ‘actualization of true federalism in Nigeria’¹⁹ (Adebayo 17 December 2001). Between February and March 2002, Ijaw youths ordered the Federal Government to withdraw all MOPOL forces from all Ijaw towns (Onwuemeodo 7 February 2002). In a Communiqué produced after their meeting in Akwa Ibom State, the Council noted that:

[The] militarization of the towns today encourages acts of extortion, rape and violence against the people of the areas. [Moreover, the group asked] all indigenous and expatriate worker [s] of multinationals [o]n Bonny Island to quit before the expiration of our ultimatum no matter whatever assurances of security because we shall never fail in our duty to once and for all, settle the injustices facing the Ijaws in Bonny. [On the issue of employment, the group sought the] immediate employment and empowerment of Ijaw youths by multinational companies and other firms operating in any part of Ijaw land including Port Harcourt, Warri and Yenagoa metropolis. IYC denounced the claims by companies and capitals that the Ijaws lacked the

required man-power [and] therefore urge[d] all qualified Ijaw youths to submit their credentials and 2 passport-size[d] photographs at the national secretariat of the council (Onwuemeodo 7 February 2002).

Moreover, at a demonstration in Port Harcourt, the Council gave MNCs, the state-owned NNPC and contracting firms until the end of May 2002 to 'employ and empower' their members or expect their wrath to be visited upon field workers who were advised to vacate the area before the impending deadline (Yakubu 2002). In an unrelated occurrence in March 2002, the IYC's Lagos Chapter held a job rally for Ijaw Citizens resident in the metropolis. On another occasion, Council members disrupted activities at NDDC Head Office in Port Harcourt to protest a reported assault on their Vice President by the Commission's security guard (Vanguard 14 March 2002; Oji 2002).

Finally, during April 2002, the IYC vowed to resist attempts by the Bayelsa State Government to obtain a loan of N15 billion on account of its propensity to 'economically and socially enslave Bayelsans', even as it affirmed its resolve to conduct a plebiscite on 30 December 2002 to ascertain whether the Ijaw nation should remain within Nigeria (Oyadongha 16 April 2002; Ighodaro 11 April 2002; Ighodaro 21 May 2002). In the ensuing weeks, IYC members demonstrated against Agip's alleged 'unfavorable employment policies' at the company premises, despite sporadic shootings by armed policemen (UNIRIN 9 May 2002). Presumably based on these and previous actions, the Chief of Naval Staff threatened to 'counter any attack by the [IYC] to disrupt the operations of oil companies in the Niger Delta' (Ighodaro 21 May 2002).

SUMMARY

Based on information gleaned from primary and secondary sources, the previous synopsis described the Ijaw Youth Council's fanatical predilections and disaffection with the economic, political and social conditions in Nigeria, through a reliance on aims, such as resource control, self-determination and the convocation of an ethnic nationalities' conference, that outwardly appear noble but inherently are problematic from the state's and certainly elites' particular vantage points. Since the IYC desires increased control over its oil-rich environment and the wealth derived from it, enhanced self-determination and political enfranchisement for the Ijaw, influential Nigerians and outsiders with a stake in Nigeria's economy or politics, if not ordinary citizens, believe that the actualization of these goals

could result in the loss of important privileges and authority that they deeply cherish.

Moreover, the IYC utilized antagonistic words and physically disruptive strategies to formalize its grievances with MNCs, the Nigerian government and other pertinent parties, attract local, national and international support, and realize its goals. I revisit these issues in an analytical fashion in Chapters VII and VIII. In the interim and emulating the same pattern sketched in this chapter, I present a detailed profile of MASSOB on the ensuing pages in order to better understand how regime policy contributed, over the years, to the unique evolution of the radicalization process within this South-Eastern organization's experience.

CHAPTER V

Summary of Results—Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB)

IN CHAPTER V, I REVIEW THE ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL CONTEXTS in which MASSOB was formed in 1999, the ends that it attempted to attain afterwards, the statements which its representatives publicly issued to myself and Nigerian journalists, the direct manner in which members clashed with and undermined constituted authority, and the state's often heavy-handed reactions to this perceived insubordination. In a manner akin to the other examined ethnic associations, I categorize MASSOB as an overtly militant and non-mainstream group that exemplifies radical civil society *par excellence*. This classification derives from the group's expression of the three features of this study's radicalization model, which I describe in turn below.

At a minimum, the organization's main objective, *disengagement*, predictably threatened traditionalists and others desirous of a unified Nigeria. Unlike the IYC and OPC, MASSOB consistently affirmed that its members wanted to secede from the country and establish an independent Biafran homeland because of the injustices they suffered prior to and after Nigeria became an independent state. Therefore, the Movement did not seek a reformation of the country's economic, political and social conditions, as it supposed that the Nigerian government could not spiritedly or perhaps quickly reverse years of inattention and discrimination. To achieve its overarching aim, the Biafra Movement requested a meeting of the country's ethnic stakeholders and an Eastern-only plebiscite that would gauge Igbo support or lack thereof for secession.

Resulting from the emphasis on Igbo withdrawal from the Nigerian federation, MASSOB officials used *inflammatory rhetoric* in a manner reminiscent of the OPC, IYC and indeed other fanatical organizations elsewhere. As shown in the subsequent section, movement leaders consistently depicted Nigeria as a monstrous entity, described politics as a sleazy enter prise, and castigated the Obasanjo government and past administrations for being anti-Igbo, corrupt, effecting discriminatory policies and underdevelopment.

Lastly, despite MASSOB's claims that it was not a violent or militant ethnic association, its members instigated or otherwise participated in *clashes* with state security agents that led to the loss of numerous lives, the wounding of many others and the constant arrests of several promoters of the Biafra cause, including MASSOB president Ralph Uwazuruike. Moreover, the organization's followers engaged in actions that deliberately flouted Nigerian law.

Examples of such rebellious behaviors are as follows: various successful and unsuccessful attempts to hoist the Biafra flag, invasion of the venues of high-level intergovernmental conferences, robberies, illegal abductions, extortions, seizures of merchandise from vendors without paying, and the dissemination of unrecognized currencies as payment for goods and services. In the balance of this chapter, I detail these and other idiosyncratic MASSOB behaviors under the sub-headings of *background information*, *objectives and contextual information*, *tactics*, and *important activities and statements (1999–2002)*. Except where otherwise noted, these summaries are based on my conversations with Charles Okwara.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION¹

The Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra was established on 13 September 1999 in Lagos to promote the interests of 'Biafrans' or Igbo-Speaking Nigerians who constitute one of the three main ethnic groups in Nigeria, are mostly concentrated in the South-East and the South-South, and fought a disastrous war of secession between 1967 and 1970. It also was formed in direct response to Nigeria's 'strategic nexus of high level corruption, a militarized democracy and state complicity in civilian massacres', and the failure of consecutive governments to protect Igbo civil rights (Biafraland 2001). Consequently, the quest for Biafra is depicted as 'a response to the terrorism, cruelty and utter lack of humanity represented by the Nigerian State' (Biafraland 2001).

In January 2002, I interviewed² Charles Okwara, who, at the time, served as Secretary of MASSOB's Lagos Chapter, Assistant for International Affairs, Treasurer and Deputy 'Ambassador' for the South-Western Zone, at the Lagos' chambers and home of President Ralph Uwazuruike.³ The MASSOB leader was born around 1958 in the South-Eastern town of Okwe, undertook his primary and secondary education in Okwe and Umunna, and was 8 years old when the Nigerian Civil War commenced in May 1967 (Eguzozie, Nwafor and Ibereme 2000; Nwajah et al., 2000). During this time, he reportedly 'experienced the ravages of Kwashiokor [malnutrition] and death', and lost his younger sister to malnutrition:

[On 27 May 1967], I was a kid in the East. I went to register into the boys' company of the Biafran army, twice, but due to my tender age, I was not taken. I have a very ugly memory of the Biafran war, because my kid sister, Mary, died in my arms—she suffered from Kwashiokor. Then, there was this routine check by our parents. In the morning, they would leave their houses for the bush to search for the enemy. We called it 'combing' during the war. So, that fateful day, my father went for combing and my mother ran to the market to buy drugs. She was on her way when Mary died in my arm [sic]. I cried out and neighbours came out and helped. I felt I should revenge [sic] the death of that child. So many families lost people through that way. And the death of such innocent people will not go unpunished. So, ab initio, I knew I would fight the cause of Biafra from then (Nwajah et al., 2000).

Uwazuruike is an Indian-trained barrister who took a first degree in Political Science from India's Panjab University, a degree in the field of Law from Bombay University, attended the Lagos-based Nigerian Law School and was called to the Nigerian Bar in June 1991 (Eguzozie, Nwafor and Ibereme 2000). In addition to obtaining academic qualifications in India, he purportedly studied the Gandhian philosophy of non-violence (Uchendu 28 April 2000).

Although the MASSOB leader is held in high esteem amongst his ardent followers, President Obasanjo's Special Assistant on Media and Publicity described him thusly:

The leader of MASSOB was somebody engaged in 419 [criminal activities] before now and this (MASSOB) is an extension of his 419 activities, and for that reason, the government could not give any serious consideration to such spurious disposition by people of questionable character (Okocha 2000).

In the same vein, the reincarnated Biafra Movement is regarded as 'the devilish machination of a selfish individual with a handful of criminals who were on the run from Onitsha and Aba during the purge of those areas of criminal elements' (Olorok 2000). MASSOB members also have been depicted as 'angry and uniformed youths' and 'stern-looking able-bodied men' (Eke 4 June 2000).

Nevertheless, Okwara declared that MASSOB officials were not self-interested or otherwise perverse individuals who harboured any political or dubious aspirations, except a calculated desire to actualize their dream of a sovereign Biafran State, in light of Nigeria's history of underdevelopment, repression and discrimination. Additionally,

MASSOB ostensibly did not plan to launch its own political party or maintain relationships with existing parties because of the organization's focus on secession from the Nigerian federation and a concomitant lack of interest in the country's political system.

This attitude is hardly surprising, as MASSOB leaders regarded politics in the year 2002 and possibly beyond as a 'dirty game', and politicians as self-absorbed individuals who were principally preoccupied with realizing their personal ambitions. Since Nigerian politicians, like their counterparts elsewhere, vacillated a lot in their positions and perpetually promoted personal interests, the CSO was unable to maintain close affiliations with influential members of the country's political class.⁴

In addition to allowing individuals who were keenly interested in MASSOB's *raison d'être* to become fully involved in the Biafran 'struggle', the organization provided job opportunities to certain members within its zonal offices. In broad terms, these offices performed two main functions: the registration of new members, and distribution of information regarding arrests and proposed events to members in countries like Ghana, Togo, Cote d'Ivoire and Senegal. Also, MASSOB officials attended monthly meetings in different parts of Nigeria, disseminated appropriate information to their underlings, and apprised them of relevant developments that could affect the organization and its constituency.⁵

Irrespective of its impressive growth, MASSOB did not directly target or recruit potential members when my interview with Charles Okwara was conducted. Instead, given the high level of exposure it enjoyed within Nigeria and to a limited extent abroad, individuals typically approached group officials if they were interested in membership. In January 2002, the Movement had approximately 6 million followers, compared to the 50 it started with in 1999; 80 percent of them resided in Nigeria and the rest were based abroad. Furthermore, approximately 60 percent of the organization's registered supporters were between 18 and 30 years of age, whilst 15 percent were women.⁶ Yet, every Biafran was regarded as a MASSOB member and any person from the so-called 24 'provinces' of Biafra was qualified to become an enlisted devotee.⁷

In September 2001, MASSOB opened its Biafra House in the District of Columbia, United States. The original aims of this entity and other international offices were to forge relationships with 'Biafrans' in the Diaspora and the international community, and provide exposure concerning the organization and Igbo activities, demands and experiences within the Nigerian federation. The Movement also maintained affiliations with several Igbo organizations in Europe and North America, including the World Igbo

Congress, the United States-based Biafran Foundation and the United Kingdom-based *Nzuko Ndigbo*. These entities enhanced MASSOB's existing relationships with well-wishers, other interested parties and potentially-sympathetic targets like the UN.

In concert with the international community, MASSOB saw the federal government, which unwittingly provided exposure for the group within and outside Nigeria, as its audience. It also interacted with other ethnic associations based in the South-East and South-South, religious groups that condemned government 'killings' of its officials throughout the country, NGOs which demanded that government officials dialogued with the Movement and denounced government abuses, and business elites and entities that offered assistance to the organization. Besides, the group was in constant communication with the Nigerian public through the media.

Finally, regarding funding issues, the group garnered its financial resources from Nigeria-based individuals, particularly registered members who paid a one-time fee of N2000.⁸ Periodically, the organization received donations from supportive individuals, including those based abroad; however, the source and quantity of the Movement's funding did not change between 1999 and 2002.⁹

OBJECTIVES AND CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

Reportedly, there were no factions within MASSOB but complete agreement regarding its leadership, objectives, tactics and relationship with the state. The two main purposes of MASSOB entailed *pressuring federal, state and local authorities to convene a plebiscite in the South-East regarding whether Igbo-speaking peoples should secede or remain within Nigeria*, and the *ultimate creation of an independent state*, if the referendum were successful.¹⁰

Like the Oodua Peoples Congress, MASSOB was desirous of a meeting of ethnic nationalities, albeit with a different focus, and eventually an independent Biafran state:

A Sovereign National Conference where people will come to speak about autonomy, restructuring and true federalism is not what we want. We said that the conference must be one that will discuss the dismemberment of the entity called Nigeria [which] ...is a whole gamut of injustice. The name Nigeria is synonymous with injustice. Nothing good can ever come out of Nigeria. What you hear are power outages, shortage of water, armed robbery and other evils. We don't want to be part of that evil. Nigeria to me [Uwazuruike] is evil (Nwajah et al., 2000).

Fervent appeals to ethnic sentiments clearly assumed an important role in the attainment of the CSO's objectives. Since the group wanted to secede¹¹ from Nigeria and create an autonomous nation, it employed ethnicity as a critical referent. Additionally, because MASSOB was principally concerned with the plight of the Igbo population in Nigeria, it did not, as of 2002, allow members of other ethnic groups to participate in its quest for independence. Nevertheless, once a Biafran nation was established, 'outsiders' allegedly would be given an opportunity to naturalize and become residents of the independent state.

MASSOB's disengagement efforts stemmed from the corruption, despotism, discrimination, deprivation and underdevelopment that were precipitated by government policies. Concerning the utilization of *corruption* as an art of statecraft by successive military and civilian regimes, MASSOB leaders believed that fraud was endemic throughout Nigerian political, judicial, economic and social life. Owing to the fact that the organization was formed after the 1999 installation of a democratically elected government, Okwara commented extensively on the situation in Nigeria from then until 2002. Whilst acknowledging the fact that corruption was present during the military epoch, he affirmed that things did not markedly change after the demise of military rule.

In general, corruption frustrated MASSOB's supporters and hampered the association's ability to realize its key objectives. More particularly, dishonesty within the judiciary and police force prevented detained members from receiving fair trials. For example, certain court officials, government workers and police officials demanded bribes of up to 150,000 Naira from arrested MASSOB members before dismissing or lessening charges leveled against them.

Regarding the extent of *authoritarianism* and *human rights abuses* under previous civilian and military rulers, the MASSOB official submitted that repression was routinely employed by past administrations in the country. Notwithstanding the formal withdrawal of the military from politics, agents of the state still resorted to despotic practices. Heavy-handed police and other government security agents unnecessarily harassed and detained adherents, executed approximately 60 MASSOB followers in Aba, Obigbo, Onitsha, Okigwe and Umuahia, and declared other Biafra movement representatives as wanted fugitives.¹² These occurrences made the group wary of remaining within the existing 'contraption' called Nigeria.

Okwara insinuated that widespread hatred for the Igbo in Nigeria was traceable to the British, who supposedly viewed the Igbo as 'devious and wicked' because notable leaders of the ethnic group, such

as Sir Nnamdi Azikiwe and Michael Opara, vigorously agitated for independence. Once independence was achieved in 1960, the *federal system* that guaranteed the independence of the South-East and other politico-administrative zones of the country was gradually undermined. The encroachment into the rights of the respective regions, particularly the East, eventually culminated in the Civil War of 1967.

He proclaimed that after 1970, the Igbo predicament was largely ignored. Once the Biafran conflict ended, General Gowon initiated the three Rs, viz.: Reconciliation, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction. 'Biafrans' therefore expected substantial developmental schemes to be instituted in the South-East. But this did not materialize as successive regimes, with one notable exception, failed to implement the three Rs and other revitalisation programmes, but entrenched and institutionalized the marginalization of Igbo communities throughout the country.

Unlike his predecessor, the Murtala Muhammed regime resolutely attempted to address Igbo concerns by adhering to post-Civil War initiatives. However, the brevity of his administration prevented far-reaching reforms from being executed. MASSOB officials suggested that Obasanjo failed to continue on this path during his first and second incarnations as Head of State. Instead, from the Igbo vantage point, he presided over the widespread marginalization of South-Eastern Nigeria. Whilst secondary schools were converted to polytechnics elsewhere in the country, the East was neglected. Moreover, infrastructure damaged during the war was hardly reconstructed and the region continued to hopelessly lag behind other sub-regions. Thus, in comparison to the rest of Nigeria, bad roads and poor infrastructure plagued the East.

Okwara insisted that Obasanjo continued to let them know, through his actions and inactions, that they were 'defeated and vanquished peoples'. In the same vein, Uwazuruike described Obasanjo's alleged ill feelings toward the Igbo:

Obasanjo is a natural hater of Igbo people. When he was the head of state in the late '70s, Igbo were the worse for it. In fact, when this issue came up in Enugu, we resolved to vote for him because we thought a civilian Obasanjo will be different from the soldier of 1976. Now, we voted for him and he is doing the same thing he did then. Obasanjo was in prison, he never knew when PDP was formed. The powers-that-be brought him to deny the Igbo the chance of ruling Nigeria. They saw Ekwueme's chances and brought Obasanjo against him. Look at the Jos convention, it was rigged. Babangida was openly distributing money to

people to vote for Obasanjo but we still participated. He thinks we are fools, but we are not. He thinks if he took our surrender [sic] in 1970, he will still take our surrender in the year 2000. He is dreaming. [H]e is the head of state and responsible for anything that happens to Nigeria today. He is the head of state and it is through him that all these things are happening. He was in prison and somebody brought him out and made him president. People are even saying that he was brought out to be a stooge. But we voted for him. Why must he now bite the finger that fed him? He who pays the piper dictates the tune. This is politics. In politics, the person who wins takes care of his people. You don't reap where you did not sow. Our people suffered for Obasanjo. We put him there and all we are asking for is our due. We are not saying give us what belongs to the Hausa or the Yoruba or that of the minority. We are not saying the Yoruba did not vote for you, so don't give them a place in the security council. No, more so, it's a constitutional matter. He breached the constitution, they should have impeached him, but the senate did not do that. Obasanjo breached section 14(3) of the constitution (Nwajah et al., 2000).

The 2002 remarks attributed to Nigeria's former Minister of State for Defence, Mrs Dupe Adelaja, in which she referred to veterans of the Biafran War as 'traitors' undeserving of pension payments from the federal government, presumably was another reflection of Obasanjo's negative perception of the Igbo.

Equally, MASSOB was created in reaction to the perceived *economic exclusion, disenfranchisement and marginalization* of the Igbo 'race'. During several newspaper interviews, Uwazuruike echoed the oft-heard sentiment that members of the Igbo ethnic group were being marginalized in Nigeria. Examples given included the alleged lack of an Igbo police commissioner throughout Nigeria's 36 states in 2000 and the allocation of 'nonsensical ministerial appointments' to Igbo citizens (PM News 2000). In a rather lengthy fashion, Uwazuruike outlined the alleged marginalization of his ethnic group:

Marginalization as it is, was a conspiracy reached between the Hausa and the Yoruba immediately after the war. You remember abandoned property? Remember the giving of 20 [Pounds] to each account holder? These were government policies. There was the conspiracy also to exterminate the Igbo after 50 years. We are in the 30th year. In the next 20 years, according to their plans, may God forbid, Igbo would have been annihilated in Nigeria. It is almost happening. In the West, you

see OPC going to war, killing the Igbo at Tin-Can and Apapa Wharf [sic]. What have we done? You see Egbesu fighting OPC in Ajegunle, Igbo were killed. Go to the North, whenever they want to hold a festival, they use Igbo as sacrifice. If Hausa Muslims and Hausa Christians are fighting, Igbo are killed. Look at the Sharia crisis in Kaduna, do you want to tell me that Hausa Muslims don't recognise Hausa Christians? What is the essence of killing an Igbo in the Sharia riots? It's part of the process of annihilation. [Moreover, Uwazuruike noted that t]hroughout the military regimes, we [the Igbo] were shouting that we would like to be embraced and governed as part of Nigeria. Nothing was done. Then, we felt that during the Abubakar regime and the transition programme, we would embrace the programme and participate actively. We encouraged our people, we held meetings at Enugu and told our people to participate massively and they agreed. Even when Dr. Alex Ekwueme who was one of the brains behind PDP was about to win the presidential primary and was kicked out by the powers-that-be, we still went ahead and participated, voting massively for Obasanjo. The whole thing is history now. Obasanjo scored the second largest bloc votes in Igboland. We gave him 70.2 percent of the total votes cast in Igboland, the highest being from the South-South. And after he got elected, what happened? Look at the constitutional provisions in section 14(3) of the 1999 constitution; it says that some appointments like those of service chiefs and the security council should reflect the six geo-political zones. Obasanjo represented all the zones, except the South-East (Nwajah et al., 2000).

In relation, mandatory exclusion and continuing deprivation of predominantly-Igbo and adjoining oil-producing areas, regardless of who was in power, were chiefly responsible for MASSOB's establishment.¹³ Still, secession efforts proved rather difficult and were met with stiff resistance from 'the powers that be' simply because of the presence of oil reserves in peripheral sections of 'Biafra'. As a result, the economic ramifications of potential or real threats to the nation's oil industry complicated MASSOB demands for an independent state.

The situation under other civilian and military regimes between 1979 and 2002 was not, in MASSOB's view, markedly different in this regard. Instead, ongoing *discrimination* targeted towards the Igbo community occurred in a milieu that was characterized by *economic maldevelopment* and *underdevelopment*, a *crisis of political leadership* in Nigeria and the desire of the Northern elite, which had practically

ruled Nigeria since independence, to regain the reins of power peacefully transferred to Olusegun Obasanjo, a Southerner. Indeed, the interviewed MASSOB leader vowed that nothing had changed in light of the persistence of the Nigerian government's problematic Eastern policies.

Although roads in other parts of the country were dualized, major thoroughfares in the South-East and South-South remained in deplorable conditions. Resources, facilities and infrastructure were disproportionately distributed to benefit other communities at the East's expense. Examples of this neglect included the epileptic telephone system in the sub-region, the failure to dualize the important Onitsha-Owerri road as of January 2002¹⁴ and the lack of a viable international airport in the entire South-East.¹⁵ In order to rectify this latter discrepancy, locals single-handedly constructed the Owerri Airport, the only one of such facilities in the country, without government assistance.

Furthermore, Charles Okwara insisted that there were few opportunities for Igbo citizens in education, business and other key areas, as they constituted a disproportionate number of the underclass in Nigeria, irrespective of the particular sub-region where they resided. Given this reality, although the Igbo waited for their lot within the country to markedly change, only the *status quo* prevailed; hence the formation of MASSOB and the call for secession from Nigeria. In this vein, the group viewed the 'liberation of the land' as paramount for securing the future of Igbo children. The next paragraphs spotlight the Movement's perception of its strategies, as described by Okwara and Ralph Uwazuruike.

TACTICS

The interviewee portrayed MASSOB as a non-violent group that did not engage the government in war, had purportedly learnt from ongoing and settled struggles in other countries¹⁶, realized that it would not receive international support or recognition if it employed aggression to achieve its purposes, and considered the utilization of non-violent stratagems as emblematic of an organization's 'wisdom' and 'maturity'.

The group's tactic, which Okwara categorized under the rubric of *total resistance*, supposedly had been employed across issues from 1999 and referred to non-violent resistance; members were admonished not to use any weapons or ammunitions and to flee when security forces shot at them. On two separate occasions, the MASSOB leader also opined that the organization was largely peaceful:

Our system is through non-violence. We are using the Indian method of passive resistance. It has worked in India, even in the Soviet Union. I don't just believe that people can overthrow the government without arms. But in all the places I have seen revolution carried out, it has not really worked out through fighting. At the end of the killings, people still go back to the round-table for discussions (Nwajah et al., 2000). [That] MASSOB and Ralph Uwazuruike are non violent does not mean that I should pretend that we don't have problems. And that I am non violent does not mean that one should stay in his house and someone comes in and takes away his children, or carry his mother or take his wife. Will you leave such a person simple [sic] because you don't want trouble? We (MASSOB) are not going to attack anybody first, that's what we mean by nonviolence. We are not going to be violent towards anybody. But if you attack us, we will respond swiftly (Uchendu 28 April 2000).

In this latter vein, Okwara claimed that there was a likelihood that certain members reacted in zealous ways in pursuit of the group's cause. Nonetheless, this 'minority' was often seriously warned concerning the consequences of its actions; if such erring individuals refused to change, they eventually were expelled from the organization. Additionally, MASSOB's public position was that violence was never justified in the pursuit of one's objective.¹⁷

Okwara vigorously maintained that neither repression nor human rights abuses would force MASSOB members to engage in armed struggles with government troops. Yet, he averred that if care were not taken, the group would alter its existing tactics *vis-à-vis* the Nigerian government. Thus, if members of the Igbo community *writ large* were allowed to express their views via a referendum and they chose not to secede from Nigeria, then MASSOB would adhere by their wishes. Whilst the organization emphasized that it preferred to engage in a dialogue with the federal government on this critical matter, Okwara surmised that the South-East's secession from Nigeria ultimately would occur.¹⁸

Not surprisingly, MASSOB distinguished its stratagems from those employed by the IYC, OPC and APC because it supposedly did not engage in armed clashes with government agents, CSO representatives or other individuals. It also perceived violent groups as very expressive, succinctly articulating their objectives, possessing the support of political and other elites, and despised by certain influential forces within Nigerian society, especially the Northern oligarchy. Thus, it is believed that one of the most fanatical CSOs in Nigeria, the OPC, had remained visible because of the support it received from

notable ‘godfathers’ at the state and federal levels, including Obasanjo.¹⁹

Okwara argued that if a president from another ethnic group, such as Hausa or the Fulani, had been in control, extremist civil society entities probably would not have operated as freely as they did after 1999. In contrast, since MASSOB ostensibly lacked the support of high-ranking persons, it could not afford to utilize the same aggressive strategies. Likewise, the purported failure of MASSOB to engage in armed resistance was attributed to the UN’s refusal to legitimate violent and independence-seeking entities, the Biafran Movement’s desire for international recognition, the futility of engaging in bloody skirmishes with the state, which obviously possessed more weapons, and the corresponding lessons learnt from the Biafran war.

Finally, despite Nigeria’s rather tortuous environment, MASSOB achieved several landmark accomplishments between 1999 and 2002. In particular, its leadership perceived the achievement of ‘stages’ 1 and 2 out of the 25-stage evolution towards the realization of Biafra as gratifying.²⁰ Although Okwara only discussed the first three stages because of the plan’s clandestine nature, the formation of the group itself (stage 1), the mobilisation and declaration of a Biafran state, attempted or successful hoisting of its ‘state’ flag in several Eastern cities (stage 2), public exposure that the group received and the attendant increase in its membership level represented key achievements. In another interview, Uwazuruike seemed adamant that MASSOB would achieve the 25 stages and alter its reputation as a ‘noise-making’ organization:

The critics are free to say whatever they like. But the men behind the struggle for Biafra are determined. We are absolutely determined. We are very sure that Biafra will be achieved irrespective of what the critics are saying. For, the critics are not the people who have outlined our programmes. They don’t meet with us. We have put our programmes on stages. We know what they are and we know that there is no way Nigeria can escape it. Whatever you do, there must be critics (Eguzozie, Nwafor and Ibereme 2000).

IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES AND STATEMENTS (1999–2002)

In this section, I sequentially describe MASSOB’s actions from its inception in 1999 to May 2002, to ascertain whether the aforementioned rhetoric of non-violence and non-confrontation is supported by descriptions offered by secondary sources such as the

media, security forces and the Nigerian government.²¹ More significantly, the summarized activities show the process through which regime policy gradually radicalized the Movement. The overall objective of the succeeding exercise is to present as balanced, impartial and exhaustive an overview as possible.

After emerging from obscurity in late November 1999, MASSOB and its President, Chief Uwazuruike, were constantly in the news, although not to the same degree as the OPC. Not only did Uwazuruike repeatedly make himself available to journalists for very illuminating conversations, he changed the common perception, at least in certain quarters, of MASSOB members as restless youths and rabble-rousers who should not be taken seriously.

In one of his first confrontations with Nigerian security operatives, the State Security Service (SSS) briefly detained Uwazuruike in March 2000, presumably on account of his struggle to secede from Nigeria and create an independent state (Anyatonwu and Adeyemi 2000; Bamidele Johnson 2000; Nwajah et al., 2000). He narrated what transpired in this quote:

Immediately they took me to their Abuja head office, I was confronted with a battery of heavily armed officers, brandishing their guns as if I have just announced a take-over of government. Later, I was interrogated by a senior officer and detained afterwards for five days. They even made some overtures regarding how I will be compensated if I abandon the struggle. What actually surprised me was the series of phone calls that trailed my sojourn in Abuja. I have no doubt that they contacted the head of state regarding my arrest (Anyatonwu and Adeyemi 2000).

Upon Uwazuruike's release from a five-day detention, MASSOB intensified its efforts to revive the heretofore-defunct Biafran project through a planned hoisting of the Biafran flag on the 27th of May 2000, and the ensuing launching of its national anthem and coat of arms. Concerning the likelihood that the path to the realization of an independent Biafra could lead to bloodshed, the MASSOB leader made the remarks reproduced below.

It cannot lead to violence if government understands. During the process of declaring Biafra, nobody is ready to fight. We do the normal ceremonies and everybody goes. The declaration of Biafra on the 27 May, is basically to tell the whole world that we have just started, we have kicked off the struggle for the independence of Biafra. That is the main purpose. It does not really mean that

on that day Biafra would be an independent state, no. We don't have police, we don't have army, we don't have the paramilitary. So, on that day, we shall start putting up all the necessary things that a sovereign state should have. If the government stops the declaration, it does not stop the struggle for Biafra, so the struggle must continue. Government is a reactionary body. We know they will do something funny. That will not, however, take us back from what we want to do (Eguzozie, Nwafor and Ibereme 2000).

A month prior to the planned hoisting of the flag, Igbo residents in the Northern city of Kaduna fled *en masse*, as they believed that Hausa residents would attack them (Ademoyo 2000). Around the same time, undercover policemen captured approximately 10 'Biafrans' who were attempting to launch their flag in the Mushin district of Lagos (Orok 2000). Relatedly, security forces briefly detained the MASSOB Chief and approximately 55 other participants at a Lagos rally (Ukeh and Nwokem 2000; Ulelu 2000).

In early May 2000, police dispersed a Lagos gathering organized by the Biafran Youth Congress, a MASSOB affiliate (The Guardian 5 May 2000). More importantly, Uwazuruike launched what he termed the 'New Biafra' on 22 May 2000 and hoisted its flag in city of Aba before approximately 10,000 people (Ujumadu 2000; Uwazuruike 2000; Olori 2000). 2 youths were killed when police clashed with MASSOB adherents and attempted to seize the Biafran flag; several other members also were arrested (Amnesty International 2000). At the Aba rally, Uwazuruike delivered a defiant and unyielding speech:

MASSOB has...packaged about 25 stages for the actualisation of the sovereignty of the new Biafra State through Non-Violence and Non-Exodus. By this process, no single life is expected to be lost in the realisation of our new Biafra State. This method has worked in various countries, including India. The process admits of negotiations, dialogue and consultation. It also admits of non co-operation and passive resistance to oppressive and obnoxious laws of the authorities. Having hoisted the flag of our new Biafra today, we wish to declare our resolve to demand and pursue the realisation of our sovereignty from the Federal Government of Nigeria to open up negotiation with MASSOB without any further delay for the realisation of the sovereignty of the new Biafra State. No amount of threat, intimidation or divide and rule tactics can change our resolve. It was through a struggle like ours that Nigeria, Ghana, India, South Africa, East Timor etc gained their independence. Ours will not be an exception.

MASSOB shall commence the establishment of necessary structures that may sustain the sovereignty of the new Biafra State, if after 30 days from today the Federal Government of Nigeria fails to initiate the expected negotiations. Perhaps it might be necessary to state that our desire to be Biafrans is our fundamental right. In as much as we do not interfere with the right of any one in choosing his nationality, no one should interfere with our own rights, to chose [sic] our nationality. More so, there was no time in our history when our various ethnic groups discussed the formation of an entity called Nigeria (Uwazuruike 2000).

In July 2000, the MASSOB leader was arrested in the Togolese capital for storming the 36th Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Summit without an accreditation badge; he was in Lome to secure international recognition for the Biafra cause (Eze 2000). The following month, 65 detained MASSOB members were arraigned before an Umuahia Magistrate Court and charged with 'breach of peace by an unlawful assembly and a conspiracy to overthrow the President, Olusegun Obasanjo [, with the latter being an act of]... treasonable felony' (Vanguard 16 August 2000).

In the wake of this development, several prominent individuals, including *Ohanaeze Ndigbo* officials, requested the nullification of the charges against MASSOB and attributed their actions to 'youthful exuberance':

From what one read in the national dailies about MASSOB, one would not be in doubt to believe that it is a pressure group made up of youths who feel bad about the treatments given to their people in the past, among them, the pogrom which gave rise to the declaration of the then Republic of Biafra, the recent killing of their people (Igbos) in the name of Sharia and the neglect of the interest of their people in the scheme of things by the past Federal Government administrations, which make them feel that they (the Igbo youths) have no future in Nigeria (Eze and Nwosu 2000).

Around the same period, Uwazuruike, his pregnant wife (Ngozi) and 85 other individuals were charged to a Lagos Magistrate Court and subsequently released on bail for organizing an unlawful demonstration at the United States Consulate (Comet News 29 August 2000).

In late September 2000, the sensational trial of 54 MASSOB arrested members commenced in the city of Umuahia (Aham 2000).

The specific charges against the individuals, who faced a minimum jail sentence of one year, were as follows:

Count 1: That you...[o]n the 24th day of May 2000 at an uncompleted storey building along Faulks Road, Aba in the Aba North Magisterial District, did conspire amongst yourselves to commit felony to wit: treasonable felony and thereby committed an offence punishable under section 516 A (a) of the Criminal Code Cap. 30 volume 11, Laws of Eastern Nigeria, 1963, as amended by section 3 (a) of the East Central State Criminal Code Amendment Edict No. 5 of 1971 as applicable in Abia State'. Count 2: That you...on the same date and place in the aforesaid Magisterial District did form an intention to depose the president from the style, honour and name of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria through the formation of the Movement for Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra whose recruits carried out violent actions while hoisting the Biafra Flag in actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra from the Sovereign State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and thereby committed an offence punishable under section 41 (a) of the Criminal Code Cap. 30 Vol. 11, Laws of Eastern Nigeria, as applicable in Abia State²² (Aham 2000).

During the month of November 2000 and in a manner evocative of the OPC's radicalization experience *vis-à-vis* regime policy, MASSOB members attempted to coordinate the vending of petroleum products in Okigwe (Akpan 2000). This enforcement soon resulted in a ruinous clash between group members and security forces. Government vehicles were damaged in the aftermath of a raid on the Okigwe residence of Uwazuruike, who successfully eluded capture and fled to an unknown destination, as MASSOB adherents forcefully resisted police attempts to effect their arrests (Akpan 2000).

On 1 December 2000, 30 MOPOL invaded Okigwe in a separate convoy of 2 trucks and an armoured personnel carrier, whilst soldiers arrived in another convoy of 4 military trucks (Ikwunze 30 November 2000). They allegedly 'fired sporadically into the air', ransacked Uwazuruike's house and manhandled his elderly father (Ikwunze 30 November 2000). The security team also caused mayhem throughout Okigwe, terrorized its citizens, ransacked a popular hotel where Uwazuruike was believed to have hidden, detained its workers, shot at 6 vehicles parked on the hotel premises and detained 20 suspected MASSOB affiliates (Ikwunze 30 November 2000; IRIN 4 December 2000). After the dust had settled and property worth millions of Naira had been destroyed, 50 individuals were wounded, including a 45-

year-old mother of 3, and 2 individuals were killed (IRIN 4 December 2000; Ikwunze 5 December 2000).

Uwazuruike emerged from hiding in a defiant and unrepentant mood. In January 2001, he threatened to disrupt the 2003 elections if the Federal Government failed to redress the South-East's poor economy and infrastructure, which had existed since 1970 (Ujumadu 30 January 2001). Moreover, he made the following point:

If there had been equity since the war ended, nobody should have been worried. But there is no equity. Rather, the slogan—reconstruction, rehabilitation and reconciliation—coined after the war was ignored by the powers that be. When the Federal Government failed to respond to our ultimatum to set machinery in motion for us to go into negotiations, we moved into the next stage of our struggle. That stage [involves] the presentation of the Biafran Bill of Rights before the United Nations (UN) which made it possible for us to be granted an observer status at any international meeting, the formation of the Biafran security agency which is not in place and holding of rallies constantly to create more awareness among the people (Ujumadu 30 January 2001).

Shortly thereafter, security operatives renewed their assault on MASSOB national headquarters; 10 group members were slaughtered and scores of others were wounded when 150 heavily-armed MOPOL officers surrounded the organization's one-storey uncompleted building where Uwazuruike and 300 adherents were hiding, and opened fire at around 4.30 a.m. (PM News 2001). Reports indicated that Uwazuruike was tortured, beaten in custody but later released, and he could have been killed during the police invasion (Igbo Defense Organization 2001; Post Express 2001; Vanguard 16 February 2001).

Governors of South-Eastern states and NGO officials condemned this bloody clash and the arrest of Uwazuruike and his compatriots, and demanded his immediate release, whilst former Head of State Buhari warned that if MASSOB's activities were not promptly checkmated by the Obasanjo administration, it could cause another civil war (This Day 12 February 2001; Post Express 12 February 2001; CLO 8 February 2001; CLO 13 February 2001; Abubakar 2001; Ogbodo 2001).

Meanwhile, in March, the police justified its attacks on the Igbo group and publicly paraded 14 MASSOB members for 'alleged harassment and intimidation of innocent citizens, refusing to pay after buying fuel at filling stations, kidnapping petrol attendants, demanding monetary gratification from fuel dealers and using the

defunct Biafran currency to make purchases' (Ujumadu 1 March 2001). It also was reported that MASSOB members threatened to attack petroleum tankers headed for the North because they believed that this 'diversion' was responsible for the shortage of fuel in the South-East and other parts of Southern Nigeria (IRIN 4 April 2001). In April, 4 members of MASSOB were arraigned in Owerri for 'invading two petrol stations and dispossessing the operators of their proceeds amounting to N57,000'²³ (Okusan 2001).

In early May 2001, the General Secretary of MASSOB's Umuahia Branch declared that the Movement's quest to establish an independent state of Biafra was on course and that the organization had opened new branches throughout the South-East and Niger Delta, notwithstanding relentless police intimidation (Ubani 2001). He further declared that approximately 2,500 members of the group were languishing in detention throughout the country and hundreds of others had been killed, and swore to 'deal ruthlessly with public office holders of Igbo extraction who work against the interests of Ndigbo [the Igbo community]' (Ubani 2001).

Also in May and in yet another example of the state's confrontational policies, the Nigerian Police Force in Imo State intensified its search for several MASSOB members, who previously had been arrested but subsequently released, for allegedly terrorizing state residents (Aham 2001). Additionally, they apprehended 22 persons for planning to celebrate the 'new Biafra independence anniversary in the former Eastern region capital [of Enugu]' (Mamah 2001).

Movement followers further sparred with police officers when the former attempted to display their flag in the border town of Obigbo, near Port Harcourt (This Day 24 May 2001). After police officers supposedly opened fire, MASSOB lost 3 members and 2 policemen were injured²⁴ (This Day 24 May 2001; Iwori 2001). Meanwhile, a Kaduna-based newspaper reported that MASSOB members in Aba constantly attacked Northerners and wantonly damaged their possessions (Abubakar and Oduobuk 2001; Weekly Trust 25 May 2001; Sani 2001).

In a separate but significant development, the organization took 'its campaign to the UN, asking the world body to compel Nigeria to pay a sum of one trillion dollars as compensation to Igbo people' (Vanguard 28 May 2001). This payment was intended to serve as compensation for the destruction caused by the Nigerian Civil War, and the monies and properties reputedly stolen by the federal government during this period.

In the latter part of May 2001, police authorities across the South-East renewed their offensive against MASSOB. In Imo State, 5 group

members *en route* to Okigwe to honour Uwazuruike were purportedly killed when a police bus overtook and fired gunshots at them (Ogugbuaja and Oji 2001). Reacting to this event, the Assistant Co-ordinator of MASSOB's Anambra State Chapter promised that the Movement would renege on its 'non-violent' posture if the attacks on its members persisted.

Around the same time, 126 MASSOB members languished in detention in May, including those charged with conspiracy and treasonable felony in Enugu, others arraigned before an Oyigbo Magistrate Court for treason and a MASSOB adviser whom security operatives reportedly kidnapped in Okigwe. Police officers further attacked Oyigbo and unleashed terror on its residents under the pretext that they were MASSOB supporters (Ogugbuaja and Oji 2001; Ujumadu 29 May 2001; Idika 30 May 2001; Idika 31 May 2001; Aham 30 May 2001).

In an interview with Lagos-based *The News*, Uwazuruike professed that the Biafran project remained on track and that, as of May 2001, the group was implementing the 3rd phase in its 25-stage secession programme (Aham 30 May 2001). Unrelenting in his rhetoric, Uwazuruike expounded upon the belief that Obasanjo had *marginalized* and *repressed* Easterners:

It is gross marginalization. If the government was [sic] sincere, it would have declared the entire East a disaster area. A special provision was supposed to have been made in the budget for the Eastern zone because in the whole country of Nigeria, the East is the only major casualty in terms of road network, in terms of infrastructure, in terms of provision of amenities. Look at our roads in the East. You can never compare them with the roads in the North or in the West or in any part of Nigeria. But what do we get? The least allocation was given to the East, the South-East in particular. All these things are good in the sense that they are a pointer to what we are saying, that the marginalization of Ndigbo [Igbo peoples] is a state policy to eliminate and annihilate the Igbo. Even people from other [ethnic groups] like Gani Fawehinmi, Abubakar Rimi, Balarabe Musa, Abraham Adesanya and so on are shouting that the Igbos [sic] are marginalised. [On the Obasanjo administration, i]f the assessment is based on wandering from one country to the other or making false promises and all that, maybe, he would have gotten about hundred per cent. But if it is assessing him with what is on the ground or what he has achieved by way of making the people happy or by way of lessening the sufferings of the people, it is zero. [Moreover,] Obasanjo's human rights records

[sic] in the two years he has been in office is worse than Abacha's five-year record. Throughout the five years Abacha ruled, he did not send soldiers into any part of Nigeria to destroy innocent people. But, within the first year Obasanjo was in office, he sent soldiers to Odi and annihilated the city. In two years, he sent soldiers to Okigwe and killed not less than 20 people, and tried to wipe out the city. So, for Obasanjo to set up a panel to investigate past misdeeds of another person, is hypocritical. He has no programme. He has nothing to offer. Oputa Panel has no powers. It is irrelevant. [Lastly, on the appointment of an Igboman as the Head of the Oputa Panel, also known as the Human Rights Investigation Commission, the MASSOB Chief contended that y]es, that is the type of headship or positions he [Obasanjo] can give to the Igbo. You know, minister of cat and rat, minister of cockroach and chicken Oputa panel without teeth. Then, he will corner [reserve] the presidency, corner the petroleum ministry, corner the internal affairs for the Yorubas [sic], corner the Inspector General of police, then, the daughter of Adesanya [leader of Afenifere, a major pan-Yoruba organization] will be second in command in the Defence Ministry. To the Igbos, he gives irrelevant positions like the Oputa Panel.... [T]he most important body in Nigeria today is the security council because the security of every nation is the heart of that nation. Once an Igbo man is not a member of the security council, every other appointment Obasanjo gives to the Igbo is nonsense. If the security of Nigeria is to be discussed today, Igbos are not represented (Aham 30 May 2001).

During the month of July, the Governor of Abia State banned MASSOB from operating in his state because its members caused 'wanton molestation of innocent citizens and disruption of business activities in the state'; this occurred as SSS officials yet again arrested Uwazuruike and 6 of his supporters (The Guardian 7 July 2001; IRIN 7 July 2001; Muanya 2001 and Biafra Foundation 2001). Uwazuruike ultimately spent 10 days in an Abuja detention centre and was released in early August 2001, as MASSOB celebrated the one-year anniversary of the release of 54 members in Aba (Atobatele 2001 and Ujumadu 28 August 2001).

Throughout the remainder of 2001, the Igbo secessionist movement continued to clash with security forces and heartily reaffirm its goal to secede from Nigeria, despite frequent arrests and casualties. In October 2001, security operatives purportedly kidnapped a MASSOB chieftain; two months later, Uwazuruike, who was briefly detained in the latter part of this month, declared that his group had established

a radio station, the Voice of Biafra International, and would boycott the 2003 general elections (Okoro 2001; Oisa 2001; Madugba 2001; Ikokwu 2001; Francis 2001 and Personal Communication with Charles Okwara). Also, police officers killed 3 MASSOB members in Okigwe; the Movement's spokespersons claimed that the deaths occurred when officers shot members at Uwazuruike's house. For its part, the Imo State Police Command declared that MASSOB members attacked police officers stationed outside the group's secretariat (Yornamue 2002).

In January 2002, Uwazuruike's Okigwe-based residence, which also served as MASSOB headquarters, was razed to the ground whilst he was in detention in Abuja (Aham 2002). He narrated what occurred at great length:

I was in detention when I heard the news that the Biafran House that's my personal house had been burnt. I was detained at the NICON Hilton Hotel. I was taken to the SSS office in the morning. I was in their car when I saw newspaper reports saying that my house in Okigwe had been razed. I asked the driver to take me back to their secretariat. When I got to their office, I told them that they had accomplished their design. 'You've burnt my house at Okigwe and is this why I was arrested?' They denied that they didn't know about it. They called Owerri and came back to tell me that their Owerri office said it was true and I was uncomfortable and I told them that I was not going to answer any of their questions again. They released me the next day. I personally went to Owerri and met neighbours and people and they told me that a truck loaded with about 25–30 policemen came in the midnight. About two policemen came out of the vehicle and climbed over the fence of the desolate compound because no one lives there since the police invasion last year. They climbed upstairs with the jerry cans of fuel they were carrying and poured the fuel inside the rooms and around it. They then came down and shot into the place and the entire place was up in flame [sic]. I heard they shot into the air so that passers-by and neighbours won't come out to help quench the fire (Iwenjora 2002).

By March 2002, approximately 63 MASSOB members had been killed and 1000 had been detained since the group emerged in September 1999 (Emewu 16 March 2002). In a more curious occurrence, the MASSOB Chief engaged in a street fight with an individual whose automobile was being repaired near his Lagos residence (Abah 25 March 2002). He reportedly participated in a 'shouting match' with

the car owner, flung his shirt into the gutter and ‘challenged the owner to a duel’ (Abah 25 March 2002).

Lastly, between April and May 2002, Uwazuruike asked the Inspector General of Police to release detained MASSOB members who had not been charged to court (Vanguard 5 April 2002). Furthermore, he also threatened to sanction and ‘strip naked’ prominent Eastern citizens opposed to the election of an Igbo president in 2003 or who were undertaking other ‘anti-Igbo activities’, whilst warning that the group would disrupt 2003 elections in the South-East if the next presidency were not zoned to that sub-region (Anucha 22 March 2002; Ibemere 2002; Anucha 8 May 2002; Udejah 2002; Emereuwa 2002 and Ujumadu 29 May 2002).

SUMMARY

In this chapter, I examined the activities of MASSOB with the intention of understanding how its spokespersons viewed the economic, political and social policies of specific Nigerian governments, and how such perceptions stimulated the group’s radicalization. The above chronicle clearly indicated that militant ethnic associations like MASSOB regard the state with much suspicion because its explicitly-codified or informal policies generated, in their view, economic and social underdevelopment, group-specific discrimination and despotism.

As such, MASSOB’s radicalization, which involved the championing of divisive aims, excoriation of non-Igbo and unsympathetic Igbo persons, and involvement in public battles, all originated from the state’s inadequacies and failures. Unlike the IYC, MASSOB was wholly obsessed with withdrawing from the Nigerian federation and creating a separate homeland for the Igbo population. To realize their incompatible goals, the two organizations were associated with destructive and subversive stratagems.

Chapter VI continues with a probing of these and related themes, through an investigation into the peculiar circumstances under which the OPC was formed and operated. This overview follows the same format utilized in previous summaries, i.e. it analyzes the organization’s background, goals, stratagems and activities from 1998 to the year 2002. As is the case with the overviews of IYC and MASSOB, the views expressed in **Chapter VI** are solely those of the quoted parties and do not necessarily those of the author.

CHAPTER VI

Summary of Results—Oodua Peoples Congress

IN A FASHION SIMILAR TO PRECEDING CATEGORIZATIONS, I CLASSIFY THE Oodua Peoples Congress as a blatantly radical, antagonistic and non-mainstream entity because it *articulated polarizing objectives, relied on scathing rhetoric, and partook in deadly clashes and other untoward behaviors*. Compared to MASSOB and the IYC, the OPC exhibited these three characteristics in the most extreme and detrimental manner from 1999 to 2002.

On the surface, it appears that the Congress¹ stated desire to uphold Yoruba culture, rights and interests, preserve their unity, promote their welfare, and ensure that existing economic, political and social problems were resolved to the South-West's liking, is laudable and incontestable. Nevertheless, the manner in which these and other germane goals were defined and linked to other more disputed ends clearly disputes this observation, and squarely situates the OPC within my radical civil society model.

In actuality, the OPC called the very existence of Nigeria, which it regarded as an artificial construct, into question and thereafter demanded that the privileges enjoyed by the central government be devolved to the country's ethnic nationalities. Unsurprisingly, the Obasanjo administration resisted OPC demands for a Sovereign National Conference that would institute these and other associated reforms. Whilst some of the Congress' purposes seemed constructive, they naturally necessitated a fundamental alteration in Nigeria's existence as a unified entity and constituted authority, and the possible creation of an independent Yoruba nation that would erode its sovereignty.

At the same time, Congress' spokespersons carelessly and frequently employed divisive words. They accused Northerners in particular and other non-Yoruba Nigerians in general of frustrating the group's pursuit of economic advancement, political enfranchisement and social improvements for its peoples. The numerous quotes offered on the following pages capture this penchant for personalizing the differences of opinion amongst the country's

ethnic stakeholders, denouncing civil society and government officials, and forcefully characterizing Nigeria as a hopeless, corrupt and unjust republic that must be resisted at every turn. As a result of these incessant tirades, it is scarcely startling that passionate OPC followers regarded members of other ethnic groups, security agents and many government officials as evil and despicable, and thereby acted upon such feelings in very observable ways.

Understandably, these supporters directed their anger towards civilian Hausa, Ijaw and other non-Yoruba persons residing in their immediate vicinities. As shown below, Northerners, Easterners and 'Deltans' living in Lagos state were subject to incalculable aggravations, assaults and executions simply because of their ethnic backgrounds. In addition, police officers and innocent civilians, including those of Yoruba persuasion, were subject to similar treatments. More peculiarly, OPC members turned their resentment inwards by attacking individuals associated with contending intra-Congress factions. These and other uninhibited actions made Lagos and other parts of the South-West essentially ungovernable and undesirable in several respects after May 1999, and justified an enquiry into the nature of this phenomenon. In the next section and in relation to my preoccupation with the factors responsible for civil society radicalization, I reiterate the aforementioned and related matters in search of the concealed meanings behind the OPC's objectives, strategies and unbridled statements.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Yoruba predominantly reside in Ekiti, Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo states, neighboring jurisdictions within Nigeria and the Benin Republic. One of the South-West's major ethnic associations, the Oodua Peoples Congress, was established on 29 August 1994 during the dictatorial Abacha regime. The OPC supposedly was the brainchild of Dr Frederick Fasehun² and other prominent Yoruba citizens³ (Adekeye 2000). In its early days, it maintained an Elders' Council, a think tank, a subgroup of foot soldiers and a pseudo-guerrilla arm that reportedly was dismantled around the 1999 elections (Aderibigbe 2001). Before further delving into the organization's history, a brief word concerning Fasehun is in order.

Dr Fasehun, a soft-spoken man in his 60s, who is rather diminutive in size, was born in Ondo town and mostly lived with his grandmother (Olowu 2002). His father converted from Islam to Christianity and was the 'first verger of St Paul's Church Breadfruit Lagos' (Olowu 2002). Fasehun attended Lagos-based Methodist Boys High School and later trained as a medical doctor in the United Kingdom (Olowu

2002). He practiced medicine in Lagos for approximately 40 years, managed his own hospital in Mushin and taught at a Nigerian medical school that he subsequently left in frustration (Kalu 1999). General Abacha imprisoned the OPC leader for around 18 months between 1996 and 1998; an experience he later described as traumatic and hellish⁴ (Obaaro 2002).

The Congress established its credentials as a formidable group in 1994, when it 'escorted [Moshood] Abiola to Epetedo, Lagos to declare him [P]resident and commander-in-chief of the Nigerian armed forces' (Adekeye 2000). As the organization became associated with inexplicable murders and extra-judicial executions, it was forced to operate clandestinely in the mid-1990s (Adekeye 2000).

In January 2002, I visited OPC 'headquarters' on several occasions in a bid to interview Fasehun.⁵ However, this proved particularly difficult, as there were several individuals, including journalists and OPC adherents, also waiting to see him.⁶ Although these visits did not yield the desired results, they afforded me a first-hand opportunity to observe the OPC's premises, members and supporters at a very close range. A superficial glance at these individuals' mannerisms and mode of speech revealed that they mostly were from working-class backgrounds.

In a more irreverent vein, Fatade (1999) opined that the OPC was a 'group of street urchins, thugs and others of low status'. Others were even more derisive in their descriptions: '[Since] almost 95% of OPC members are illiterates, it is most difficult to fashion anything delectable out of them as most of them are hoodlums, miscreants, blood-thirsty, [trigger-] happy human beings ever ready to cause pandemonium in the society'⁷ (Amebo News 2002).

In a 1999 interview, Fasehun disparaged the notion that his organization consisted of a group of hooligans, known as 'area boys' in Nigerian parlance (Kalu 1999). Instead, he noted that the OPC 'cut across the social strata available in Yoruba land, the rich, the educated and uneducated' (Kalu 1999). In the same vein, factional leader Ganiyu Adams remarked that individuals of 'unquestionable character' were not allowed to participate in the Congress because members have to 'swear to an oath to be of good behaviour'⁸ (Adekeye 2000).

The ethnic association saw 'every Yoruba person on earth [a]s a potential member...' (Adekeye 2000). Starting in 1994, it embarked upon a massive recruitment of members throughout the South-West⁹ (Adekeye 2000). The OPC is divided into local, state and national councils; by March 1999, the group claimed to have 2.4 million members and by September 2000, it had over 4 million registered supporters (Fatade 1999; Obaaro 2000). A large number of these

individuals were located in Lagos and adjoining South-Western states.¹⁰

It was widely speculated in the Nigerian media that the OPC's success in attracting such a huge following, and its concurrent capacity to operate undeterred, despite having been repeatedly 'banned' by the federal government, was due to the connivance and implicit support of prominent government officials, including the Lagos State Governor, Ahmed Bola Tinubu, members of the State's House of Assembly and even President Obasanjo. Although there was no independent confirmation of this conjecture, Tinubu's repeated declaration in June 2001 that he would invite the OPC to curtail Lagos' uncontrollable crime situation, proved, in certain people's minds, that he sympathized with the group's objectives and/or *modus operandi*.¹¹

Apart from the group's founders, several notable Nigerians actively participated in the affairs of or expressed varying support for the OPC, or even served as members of its board of trustees¹² (Adekeye 2000). Fasehun revealed that Nobel Laureate Professor Wole Soyinka also was a member of the OPC's 'intellectual vanguard' (Obaaro 2000). In fact, in a letter to President Obasanjo, Soyinka appeared to confirm his leanings as an OPC patron, if not a member, by decrying the gradual annihilation of Congress' members:

What has become apparent and undeniable is a systematic project of decimating this organisation through acts of intimidation, brutalisation and extra-judicial killings. The recent incident does not ameliorate the unsavoury Kill-and-Go reputation of the police, neither does it enhance the Human Rights obligation of your office that set these killings in motion. Events in the past few months reveal clearly that the person of Dr. Frederick Fasehun is specifically targeted for elimination. I know that this accusation will be followed by a flurry of denials. So be it. Let those denials be taken as already made; we merely insist that they be translated into reality. The person of Dr. Fasehun should be subject only to the imperatives of the law (Akande 2001).

As of 2002, the OPC reportedly did not rely on funding from external sources. However, immediately after it was established, the organization wholly relied on Voluntary donations' from its pioneer members (Adekeye 2000). The Congress also putatively received support from government officials and Yoruba businessmen in the 1990s and possibly beyond.¹³

OBJECTIVES AND CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

In the beginning, the OPC's objectives seemed very specific and concrete:

[W]hen it appeared on the nation's landscape in 1994, OPC had a clear-cut aim of fighting for the actualisation of the June 12 presidential election won by late Moshood Abiola. The popular opinion that gave rise to OPC then was that the June 12 election was cancelled because a Yoruba man had won a landslide victory. The northern politicians and the military government then were said to be against the shifting of presidential power to the south (Adekeye 2000).

In general terms, the Congress apparently was intended to be a sociocultural and apolitical organization that protected the interests of Yorubaspeaking peoples and 'challenge[d] the forces responsible for the massive *repression, injustice, victimisation* and *gross underdevelopment* [emphasis added] of Nigeria' (Dada 2002). From this vantage point, Fasehun described the aims of the association thusly:

The main purpose of the OPC is to defend the rights of every Yoruba person on earth. It is an umbrella organisation of the Yoruba to articulate our stand on issues that affect our interest. It is also aimed at helping to get the Yoruba to articulate our stand on issues that affect our interest. It is also aimed at helping to get the Yoruba together to speak with one voice instead of fighting ourselves over disagreements on issues. Defending the rights of the Yoruba entails: propagating and projecting positions that will bring about an enhancement in the welfare and well-being of the Yoruba. It is our responsibility to identify those interests that will bring about this enhanced welfare and well-being and take necessary steps to pursue and bring about their actualisation. By this, we're not talking about undue violence and wanton destruction of lives and property. Here we're talking about a socio-cultural organisation which exists to promote the interest of the Yoruba man and Yoruba woman wherever they may be (Adekeye 2000).

The OPC's objectives, as enshrined in its constitution and bill of rights, are listed below:

- a) To gather all descendants of Oduduwa all over the earth for a profound, all-embracing and absolutely unflinching unity
- b) To identify with Yoruba history and cultural origin with a view of reliving the glory of their past for the purpose of posterity
- c) To educate and mobilise the descendants of Oduduwa for the purpose of (b) above
- d) To integrate the aspirations and values of all the descendants of Oduduwa into a collective platform of an Oodua entity
- e) To monitor the various interests of descendants of Oduduwa, by whatever name called, anywhere on the face of the earth and struggle for the protection of these interests
- f) To ensure maximum self-determination of the people of Oodua
- g) To further the progress of Oodua [i.e. Yoruba] civilization by protecting and promoting the Yoruba value, and the inter-generational transmission of same
- h) To locate a bearing for an Oodua worldview and establish [its] place in the world
- i) To mobilise the people of Oodua for the national cause (House of Representatives 2000).

Furthermore, the OPC's bill of rights also seeks to attain the following goals:

- a) To ensure [that] the Yoruba people in Lagos, Oyo, Ondo, Osun, Ekiti, Kwara and Kogi states are brought together
- b) To ensure that Nigeria is administered as a Federal Republic where the Federating units are allowed to develop their own resources
- c) To defend the fundamental rights of the Yoruba people including their right to self determination
- d) To struggle for the restructuring of Nigeria on the basis of equality of ethnicity and to resist domination of other nationalities by any group or section of the country
- e) To adopt any method or strategy deemed for the realisation of the Oodua Bill of Rights (House of Representatives 2000).

Proceeding from the foregoing ends, the Congress canvassed a SNC¹⁴ that would enable representatives of ethnic nationalities to debate issues pertaining to the country's future:¹⁵

[The SNC] should provide a forum for all the different ethnic groups and other legitimate interest groups to confer with one another to find a lasting solution to this seemingly perpetual problem of instability. Forty years after independence as a

political nation, 30 years after a civil war which claimed more than a million lives, we are still as divided as ever. So, the problem is very fundamental. It was British colonialism which gave Nigeria its name and its territorial definition. We aren't a nation. We are diverse peoples lumped together in a forced political union (The African Courier 2001). [T]he multifaceted problems that bedevils [sic] the nation could be sorted out through the SNC as the interests, perspectives and the general situation of the various groups making demands on the polity and its leadership, could take far-reaching decisions for an enduring political order. Some of such problems would serve as inputs to the constitution awaiting completion at the National Assembly, as politics and economics are possible in peaceful human environments (Ogunmodede 2000). The idea of one Nigeria will remain an illusion until the ethnic nationalities that make up Nigeria sit down in a round-table conference to discuss issues of vital interests in this nation and find solutions to our problems. We know these problems. They are identifiable and they stare at us in the face. When our colonial masters were about to go, they sat down with us and they discussed with us before we were granted independence. Why are Nigerians shying away from sitting down and tabling our problems to find solutions? I was part of the leaders of thought conference where a big majority accepted that there should be a national conference. If such a large number will agree to that, let us then plan for that conference so that Nigeria will come out of it stronger and more united. If we fail to do that, I'm sorry, the idea of one Nigeria will never be a reality but an illusion. We don't want Nigeria to disintegrate. We want a stronger Nigeria and that's the whole idea of a national conference (Anyagafu 2001).

On why efforts to convene a national conference were frustrated, Kayode Ogundamisi, the Congress' Secretary-General, made the remarks quoted verbatim below.

The problem is this Fulani traditional power establishment in the far north which is responsible for the resistance to a constitutional conference. The traditional power structure they built through conquest nearly two hundred years ago is unjust. The present status quo suits them because it enables them to extend their subjugation of that area to the whole of Nigeria. And they have been very clever to construct this identity around religion in the far north, which helps them to arrogate the

representation of the whole region to themselves¹⁶ (The African Courier 2001).

On a separate issue, the OPC's official stance was that Yoruba-speaking peoples had been and continued to be *marginalized* and *oppressed* within Nigeria. In a manner similar to MASSOB, the Congress vowed to 'liberate the Yoruba from political marginalization, economic strangulation, cultural erosion and social injustice' (Elumoye 2000). During an insightful 1999 press conference, factional leader Ganiyu Adams offered specific examples of occurrences that proved the group's *marginalization* postulation. In this spirit, he described the debilitating crises confronting Nigeria, including the *ethnicisation* of daily interactions, rampant *allusions to discrimination* by representatives of Northern-based and other non-Yoruba ethnic groups, and the attendant *violence* that erupted throughout the country.

A great deal of importance was accorded to several historical antecedents that impacted the Yoruba ethnic group, contributed to Nigeria's malaise and the OPC's radicalization:

- a) The denial of Chief Obafemi Awolowo (who fought for the [sic] united Nigeria during the 1967/1970) civil war) of the leadership of this country during the 1979/83 general elections was an avoidable tragedy.
- b) The annulment of the June 12 1993 Presidential Election won by Bashorun M.K.O Abiola, by the military wing of the Hausa-Fulani collaborators was also an avoidable tragedy.
- c) The murder of Chief M.K.O. Abiola and his wife Alhaja Kudirat Abiola, Pa Alfred Rewane etc in the hands of military [sic] wing of the Hausa-Fulani oligarchy were all avoidable tragedies (Adams 1999).

Congress adherents assumed that these incidents of marginalization undeniably 'proved' that the position of the Yoruba people was precarious within the existing Nigerian state:

The above [a-c] brutal injustice and several others [sic] instances of organized harassment and slave-treatments meted on [sic] the Yorubas [sic] and other nationalities who have contributed in so small measure in terms of their God-given resources, manpower, sacrifice of their precious lives etc for the unity of this country has dampened our hopes and our confidence, too, is lost in the current state of Nigeria. There is no doubt that we live in a country where the ruthless and unrepresentative nature of the

state has been brought to bear on us, so much that we cannot deny the fact of the existence of varying degrees of domination, brutal repression and inhuman exploitation of many ethnic nationalities by the Hausa-Fulani hegemony, which is now posing a threat to continued [sic] existence of Nigeria. We note with utter dismay the hue and cry of some selfish, and mischievous people whose political machinery has for long has been exhausted [sic]. This gang of self-centered people always hide under the needless fear of disintegration to oppose restructuring the nation. This same set of criminals are the first to complain of being marginalised when the Head of the civil rule [sic], Chief Olusegun Obasanjo was ensuring fairness in Federal appointments, which likely may be reversed at the expiration of his regime (Adams 1999).

Moreover, the OPC held that a large number of Nigerians, especially those based in the South-West, suffered under 'the yoke of unemployment, hunger, squalor, disease, poverty [and] homelessness' (Adams 1999). Contrary to the statements of MASSOB and other ethnic associations, the OPC affirmed that the lot of the Yoruba people under their kinsman, Obasanjo, did not necessarily improve after 1999. Specifically, Adams (1999) mentioned 4 areas in which consecutive governments woefully failed the Yoruba: *corruption, resource allocation, development and federalism*.

On the pressing issue of *corruption*, which IYC and MASSOB officials pinpointed as the bane of Nigerian society, Adams (1999) declared that:

Massive corruption and reckless stealing of public funds have been identified as one of the major reasons for the insatiable craving for political power by the Nigerian military officers and their civilian acolytes. The few occasions when punitive measures were taken, such have been known to have either been a far cry from the magnitude of the offences committed or were later reversed in favour of the culprits. There is no better way of encouraging corruption.

Additionally, the Obasanjo administration, which portrayed itself as wholly committed to enthroning a corruption-free society, was chided for only investigating the looting activities that occurred under the late Abacha, and not probing other military rulers and their respective administrators.

In the same vein and on Transparency International's ranking of Nigeria as one of the most corrupt nations in the world, Fasehun made the following contention:

Is there any Nigerian that will dispute that? I think their assessment has the backing of God. God must yield [sic] Nigeria as the most corrupt nation in earth. It is a very corrupt nation and that is why, the country is not growing. That is why it is not developing in anyway. Just now, you have the leadership of this nation that want [sic] to fight corruption and see how much hostilities he [Obasanjo] has generated from those who don't want him to fight corruption. S[ee] what happened in senate. The senators have been acclaimed as some of the most corrupt characters you can find in any country. They deceived the nation, saying they were taking 3.5 million [Naira] for furnishing their accommodation quarters and they took 5 million. They did not tell us they were taking 5 million, they told us they were agitating for 3.5 million and the nation reluctantly kept quiet on that colossus amount of 3.5 million, per head and yet, these characters took 5 million each. What is that if it is not corruption? And look at all the releases emanating from the Kuta probe. And I am sure if it was [sic] an independent probe, not carried out by the senators themselves, a lot of skeletons would have been discovered from their various contracts. They [legislators] probe themselves; obviously, they swept certain things under the carpet. If the people probed more they would have found more dirty things in their cupboard. So if our legislators could be this corrupt and these are the representatives of the people, we voted them in but see how they have gone to misrepresent us, in the presence of the whole world, looting our treasury and smiling to their individual banks daily. We did not send them to the National Assembly to go and steal. They turned the National Assembly into Kalokalo [Gambling] and started misbehaving all over the place. What have they achieved for almost one and half [sic] years? I have always said that PDP [Peoples Democratic Party] has become an opposition to its own President, Obasanjo. Is that not corruption [?]. Obviously that assessment that Nigeria is the most corrupt nation on earth I perfectly agree with. If you go to the street, see our policeman, go to their stations and see what they do. Go to our courts; see what goes on there. Go to our banks; see the amount of fraud that goes on. Go to our parastatals; see the level of embezzlement that goes on. Go to our schools and see teachers

taking bribes. You cannot beat Nigeria when it comes to corruption (Vanguard 23 September 2000).

Regarding the *resource allocation, federalism and underdevelopment* controversies that the IYC also raised, Congress' officials asserted that the North as a whole frequently obtained higher subventions than the South-West. In October 1999, Lagos State reportedly obtained N507.524 million, while the North-Western State of Kano received N937 million (Adams 1999). Hence, a system that 'rewarded' states based on their landmass was thought not to augur well for genuine federalism', a state of affairs that the organization desired.

More broadly, Nigeria's *centralised system of governance* was implicated for inhibiting the development of the South-West, a sub-region whose economy ostensibly was more developed than those of Malaysia, Indonesia and South Korea in the 1960s (Adams 1999). He blamed this undesirable situation on the backward state of the country's educational sector, including the failure to regularly and adequately remunerate teachers, and the existence of a problematic quota system that disproportionately benefited the North at the South's expense. At the core of the Congress' critique of the existing Nigerian polity is the excessive control wielded by the centre and the concomitant lack of complete adherence to the tenets of federalism.¹⁷

Lastly, even though Fasehun demanded the registration of additional parties in other fora, he repeatedly affirmed the Congress's non-political stance on other occasions:

OPC can never transform into a political party and we have said it over a million times. OPC is not partisan, it is not political. But if we are confronted with issues that bother on Yoruba interest, we would make comments. In other words, we are a social cultural [sic] organisation but we do not shy away from making comments on political issues as they affect the Yoruba People. We do not have it in view to transform to a political organisation. But when we find a good material in any party we would support that material (Vanguard 23 September 2000).

After 1999, the group apprised its members of the need to dissociate themselves from the 'web' of politics and refrain from being used as mercenaries by various political interests. More pointedly, the group 'warned its members against being used as instrument[s] of political thuggery in contravention of its objective of fostering the unity and progress of the Yoruba race'¹⁸ (Ezomon 2000).

On the following pages, I underscore the existence and repercussions of the OPC's two rival factions, as perceived by group

officials. I further present a sequential overview of Congress activities from the late 1990s to 2002 with a view to explicitly delineating a direct and observable relationship between *regime policy* and *radicalization*, ascertaining the goals it championed, the strident language its officials used in the public domain, and the nature and extent of the many altercations that group members participated in.

Many of the furnished excerpts, figures and stories strongly illuminate, in more ways than one, the fanatical actions manifested by members of the Oodua Peoples Congress, the apparently-despotic practises undertaken by the Nigerian state in its dealings with these supporters, and group officials' repeated references and reactions to instances of political authoritarianism, economic deprivation and underdevelopment, and social discrimination.

FACTIONS¹⁹

Beginning in the epochal year of 1996, the OPC split into 2 major factions: a comparatively-mainstream and less-militant splinter group headed by Dr Fasehun and a fanatical bloc led by Ganiyu Adams.²⁰ This factionalisation occurred when Fasehun was imprisoned by the Abacha regime and Adams emerged as the organization's *de facto* leader (Adekeye 2000). During this time, Adams greatly contributed to the OPC's militancy²¹ by creating a resistance wing known as the Revolutionary Council of the Oodua Peoples Congress (Adekeye 2000).

Upon release from detention in 1998, Fasehun decried the negative changes that Adams had effected:

Adams threw the gates of OPC open and admitted all manners of people. 'I never nurtured an organisation that believes in hooliganism and Ganiyu Adams would not have qualified for admission into OPC, if I was [sic] around. He joined OPC when I was in detention. If he is not a hooligan, then who is? Hooligans are very bad people. He has been involved in destroying police stations and killing people, I wonder what hooliganism is, if not that'. Fasehun [further] described Adams as a '28-year-old Okada [commercial motorcycle] rider who failed to make headway in carpentry' (Adekeye 2000).

To rectify this perceived anomaly, Fasehun proposed several reforms²² to re-establish his control over the organization and diminish Adams' influence. The changes planned by Fasehun never transpired; instead, in 1999, the Adams-led faction convened an emergency gathering in the city of Ibadan, 'where members reportedly removed Fasehun as

OPC national leader and affirmed support for the leadership of Ganiyu Adams' (Adekeye 2000). This event singularly strengthened the most-extremist bloc of the organization and emboldened its leader, who verbally assailed Fasheun, accused him of accepting a bribe from Obasanjo, branded him a 'sell-out' and thereafter challenged his leadership:

Fasehun deviated from our objective. He is a wayward leader. I [Adams] have been close to him since 1993 and I know him very well. Fasehun collected N20 million from General Olusegun Obasanjo to destroy OPC; and another N5 million from Chief Olu Falae [the second presidential candidate during the 1999 elections] to suppress our activities so that we won't disrupt the transition programme. We don't believe in the transition; we believe it will fail. You don't build skyscrapers in the sky'. He also accused Fasehun of buying two expensive cars (a Jeep and a Lexus) and two plots of land in Ejigbo, a Lagos suburb. Fasehun was equally said to have collected \$1.3 million from some foreign governments and N5 million each from Akanni Okoya, Chairman of Eleganza Industries, Sam Adedoyin, Chairman of Doyin Investment and Iyanda Folawiyo. 'We cannot be struggling against corruption and dictatorship and yet condone and nurture same in our organisation', Adams said. [He] also alleged that Fasehun had resorted to blackmail, portraying genuine OPC members as dissidents and hooligans forcing them to carry identity cards exclusively signed by him after the payment of N500 zonal registration fee (Adekeye 2000).

In response, Fasehun's supporters denied these allegations and maintained that membership cards were issued to dissuade infiltrators from entering the organization. Beginning in April 2001, attempts were made to reconcile these factions and restructure the organization, as 'the bad eggs [had] been shown the way out' (Adebayo 2001; Anyagafu 2001). In the next section and following from these remarks, I present detailed contextual evidence that shows how the Congress became more radicalized in the aftermath of supposedly flawed government actions.

IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES, TACTICS AND STATEMENTS (1998–2002)

During several interviews, the legitimate OPC chief unequivocally affirmed that the OPC was not a violent organization:

We are not a violent group, as I cannot be associated with violence at my age. Violence does not achieve anything. Most of those clashes were blown out of proportion and in some of them, we were not involved (Fatade 1999). The OPC is a law-abiding organisation. The members are good citizens of their nation. But unfortunately, they get provoked by the police. The police find it very comfortable to provoke the OPC. We have had to do a lot of work restraining members of the OPC from responding to police provocation²³ (Vanguard 22 July 2000b).

Nonetheless, the Congress routinely resorted to 'hooliganism, harassment, extortion, arson, intimidation, open defiance of constituted authority and confrontation with law enforcement authorities' (Kalu 1999). In order to undertake their dangerous activities, OPC supporters attacked police stations to acquire ammunitions and guns, obtained weapons from individuals licensed by the Police Inspector-General to bear arms and relied on charms, as Fasehun and Adams readily admitted (Adekeye 2000). Also, in certain lower-class suburbs of Lagos, where unending crime and crushing poverty supremely reigned, the OPC established *ad hoc* courts to try, acquit, and/or punish offenders of all sorts (Ayoola 2001). To fully grasp the scope and magnitude of the OPC's tactics, the ensuing paragraphs chronologically delineate the Congress' activities and relationship with the state, and other actors, from November 1998 to June 2002.²⁴

One of the first reported OPC-police clashes occurred in Lagos in early November 1998 when 5 members were killed after the police allegedly stormed their meeting venue (Immigration and Nationality Directorate 2002). Between 1999 and 2000 alone, the Congress became embroiled in more than 53 attacks mostly in Lagos (Nnadozie et al 2000). In February and March 1999, OPC youths clashed with police officers after they raided Lagos and Ogun State police stations; six months later, approximately 50 people died when Ogun-based Hausa residents sparred with the OPC²⁵ (Babawale 2001).

In early September 1999, OPC adherents were involved yet again in quarrels at two Lagos ports (Immigration and Nationality Directorate 2002), which they pillaged in support of sacked factional members of the Dock Workers Union of Nigeria. On this ominous day, OPC members came by bus, boats and canoes, while others made their way into the ports the previous night, promptly and efficiently seized control of the facilities, brandished 'axes, knives, guns, charms...and fetish white handkerchiefs [,and] invaded the police station at the Apapa port from where they removed armouries and freed some

inmates of the cells. In the process, one policeman [w]as injured and another killed' (Post Express 19 September 1999).

After these tasks were completed, Congress members armed with police weapons attacked rival dockworkers and caused mayhem throughout the ports, which are located along a major thoroughfare. Gunfire also was freely exchanged and people were caught in the resulting confusion and chaos, and at least 16 people, including several policemen, died²⁶ (Post Express Wired 16 September 1999).

Fasehun justified this invasion on the grounds that it was meant to rectify alleged discrimination against Yoruba workers: '[W]e felt that our fatherland was being taken away from us. The OPC had to invade the ports to show solidarity and assert the rights of the marginalized Yoruba at the ports'²⁷ (Post Express 16 September 1999). Interestingly, Adams denounced the invasion as an 'ugly incident which was not only unnecessary but also unpatriotic and undemocratic' (Post Express Wired 16 September 1999).

Around the same time, the OPC demanded that a Lagos radio station stop relaying the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Hausa News Service or face its wrath (Lawal 1999). It 'accused the management of Raypower of cultural imperialism which undermine the culture of Yoruba people'; unlike other instances, the threat did not lead to a confrontation. However, in October 1999, the militant group was involved in a fracas that led to the torching of 12 houses and 15 cars, and the declaration of 6 individuals as missing (Elesho 1999).

A month later, the OPC sparred with Lagos-based members of Egbesu Boys, a militant Ijaw youth group²⁸ (Vanguard 1 November 1999). Certain eyewitnesses claimed that 7 OPC members and 10 others were killed; others reported that 5 individuals were macheted to death²⁹ and 10 properties, including a hospital, were destroyed (The Guardian 2 November 1999). When police officers intervened, 2 automatic rifles were stolen and an officer was wounded; in response, a dusk-to-dawn curfew was imposed and 56 persons were charged with 'felony, murder, arson and looting'³⁰ (Ajani 1999).

Also in November 1999, yet another skirmish involving Congress members erupted when Ijaw youths attempted to torch a Fasehun-owned hotel (Akparanta and Uwaleke 1999). This disturbance resulted in at least 7 deaths, including those of 2 policemen. In late November, Congress members engaged in other ferocious confrontations with Hausa-speaking mer chants at a popular Lagos market that caused the deaths of at least 60 people and the destruction of property worth millions of Naira (Ehigiator and Ighodaro 1999). Reacting to this situation, President Obasanjo 'ordered the police in Lagos to shoot-at-sight any member of the

Oodua Peoples Congress found disturbing public peace' (Efararo et al 1999).

The following month, OPC members and college students clashed over the manhandling of 3 students who were branded as thieves; 9 students reportedly went missing and 3 others were admitted to a nearby hospital (Adeloye 1999). In a surprising move, the Adams faction attacked Dr Fasehun's hospital and caused damages worth 4 Million Naira³¹ (Ighodaro and Akinyemi 1999).

In January 2000, the OPC factions fought in Lagos, killing 6 people, and violent disturbances in Ibadan resulted in at least 10 deaths and the destruction of 30 houses (Immigration and Nationality Directorate 2002; Egunjobi 2000). During the same period, the Adams' faction, which regarded itself as a 'self-appointed scourge to crime', invaded Mushin, to extricate dangerous criminals from the area (UNIRIN 2000). This invasion triggered 2 days of intense fighting in which approximately 20 people, most of whom had been set ablaze, eventually died, and more than 40 houses were torched. Furthermore, the Adams faction allegedly kidnapped and executed a Lagos Divisional Police Officer (DPO) and dumped his body into a lagoon in order to free an OPC robbery suspect. The subsequent police-OPC altercation resulted in 100 deaths and 200 arrests.

In the wake of these events, President Obasanjo issued a terse January 2000 letter in which he threatened to declare a state of emergency if the Lagos State Governor failed to arrest the worsening security situation (Nwankpa 2000; Immigration and Nationality Directorate 2002). Additionally, the House of Representatives proscribed and security forces increasingly clamped down on the Congress (Ojeifo and Agande 2000). These misguided policies and the state's escalating vigilance did not temper the group's radicalization; in fact, they probably worsened it.

Two months later, OPC affiliates intercepted 'two truckloads of arms and ammunition' destined for the town of Ore (Alabi 2000). The organization repeated the same feat in April 2000 when members 'arrested' 5 Northerners who 'allegedly stormed [Ibadan] with lethal weapons including Dane guns, cutlasses, arrows and charms'³² (Ogunyemi 2000). Also in April, 10 key officials of the Adams faction were remanded at the Lagos-based State Criminal Investigation Department (SCID), as their leader was declared wanted with a monetary reward offered for tips leading to his arrest³³ (Abawuru 5 April 2000; Coffie-Gyamfi 28 September 2000).

The otherwise-calm Federal Capital Territory was not spared from OPC-instigated violence. On 9 June 2000, there was a clash between Congress supporters and other persons (Abba-Ogbodo and Onwubiko 2000). The confrontation began when 100 youths 'carrying

machetes, broken bottles, sticks and various abandoned motor parts', invaded a Mechanic Village in the capital city, obstructed traffic, looted shops and wrested money from their owners.³⁴

Meanwhile, in Lagos, Congress members participated in deadly fights with 'hoodlums' between 10 and 14 July 2000; two people were allegedly beheaded after the clash was over (Nnadozie, Akpor and Akoni 2000). Turbulence also erupted elsewhere in the metropolis when police officers fought with OPC supporters (Akparanta 2000). The conflict reportedly began in Mushin when Adams' supporters ambushed a patrol team, executed 2 policemen and seized their weapons; 8 other policemen were wounded and approximately 27 OPC members were killed in other Lagos neighbourhoods³⁵ (Akparanta 2000). Around August 2000, suspected Congress members killed 3 civilians and a police corporal in a Lagos suburb³⁶ (Amanze-Nwachukwu and Adams 2000). In the interim, police officers arrested 4 Congress devotees for killing 2 individuals and thereafter discovered a mass grave, which contained the bodies of several OPC victims (Comet News 30 August 2000).

In early September 2000, a Nigerian Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO) official accused the OPC of persistently attacking tanker drivers of Northern descent on a major highway and extorting money from them; 'any refusal to yield to those demands often resulted in beating, smashing of wind screen [and] deflation of vehicle tyres...' (Nwankwo 6 September 2000; Nwankwo 2000). Also, burnt corpses of alleged armed robbers executed by OPC sympathizers littered Lagos' streets, as Congress associates killed several Northerners in Oyo State and stole their cattle (Gbadamosi 2000; Lawal 2000).

On 27 September 2000, the Adams faction assaulted Fasehun supporters because approximately 200 individuals from the latter group had decamped to the Fasehun bloc; the ensuing brawl lasted for two hours in Abeokuta and resulted in the kidnapping of 2 men from the main faction³⁷ (Orisajo 2000). Relatedly, OPC followers 'invaded a Lagos police station to release [2] detained members with [2] double shot-guns' (The Guardian 29 September 2000). This invasion resulted in the deaths of at least 4 individuals and the wounding of several others.

In another development, police arrested 9 OPC affiliates with machetes, charms and other 'strange objects' in different parts of Lagos metropolis (Fagbemi, Odita and Yornamue, 2000). Also, OPC devotees burnt 31 alleged armed robbers in different parts of Lagos in early October 2000 (Abawuru 4 October 2000). Police officers declared that the remains of these suspects, the majority of whom were presumably innocent, littered Lagos streets.³⁸

In a new development, the OPC moved its campaign for Yoruba self-determination to Ilorin in Mid-October 2000.³⁹ OPC activists allegedly invaded the city in a convoy of approximately 60 vehicles and shot into a barricade of 10 mobile police squads ‘to clear the way for their passage’ (Fagbemi 2000). In the resulting row, at least 6 OPC militants lost their lives, and scores of other members and 3 policemen were injured⁴⁰ (Fagbemi 2000).

Meanwhile, in a manner evocative of 1999 events, at least 24 people were killed when Northerners confronted OPC members in October 2000 (Kehinde, Nwachukwu and Popoola 2000). The brawl began on a Sunday evening when OPC militants apprehended 3 purported Hausa robbery suspects and burnt two of them alive; others claimed that it was a ‘spillover of the [aforementioned] uprising in Ilorin’ that resulted in the deaths of Congress activists (Kehinde, Nwachukwu and Popoola 2000). Regardless of what caused the Ajegunle imbroglio, it subsequently resulted in the loss of several lives, destruction of approximately 21 petrol tankers, 2 warehouses, 8 shops, 15 commercial buses and 4 cars⁴¹ (Kehinde, Nwachukwu and Popoola 2000).

In response, the Information Minister reiterated the federal government’s proscription of the OPC, and ‘ordered the arrest of its leaders or anybody who claims to be a member’ (Nwankpa et al 19 October 2000). The Senate also condemned the OPC’s violent activities, and mandated its Intelligence and National Security committees to investigate the cause of the unending clashes and submit a report within one week (Eluemunor and Abu 2000).

Additionally, in a move widely criticized and condemned by the Lagos State Government and other Southern interests, the Senate granted the Presidency emergency powers to act decisively and concertedly to arrest the deteriorating situation in Lagos (Ogbodo and Adeniji 2000). Understanding the gravity of the situation, the police announced that it would establish a special unit expressly charged with combating the Congress’ nefarious activities through intelligence gathering, ‘purchase of sophisticated weapons’ and other proactive measures⁴² (Ojeme 2000).

Fasehun described the ethnic melees as the handiwork of unkempt ‘hoodlums’ who were pretending to be OPC devotees (Akoni 2000). He emphatically denied that his association was responsible for the executions of innocent citizens. Instead, Fasehun declared that the Congress had sought to control the disreputable activities of non-OPC hoodlums and ensure that the group’s *raison d’être* was realized. Whilst he did not express any regrets for these occurrences, Fasehun clearly understood the gravity of the situation at hand.⁴³

On 19 October 2000, Dr Fasehun and other Congress officials were arrested for 'the ethnic conflagration which had thrown Lagos metropolis into confusion for four consecutive days' (The Guardian 20 October 2000). He was quizzed on the mayhem and the OPC's role in spurring it. Based on the Magistrate's orders, Fasehun was remanded in custody and the hearing of the case was fixed for 17 November 2000.⁴⁴ In a rather dramatic development two days later, he was released and acquitted of all charges leveled against him. The Chief Magistrate also 'granted him leave to...bring a charge of contempt against [the] Lagos State Police Commissioner [and] Attorney General of the Federation'⁴⁵ (Dadzie 2000).

Besides, police officers were keen on capturing Adams and Kayode Ogundamisi, who escaped in a rather dramatic manner to Europe and was oblivious to the plan to arrest him.⁴⁶ Ogundamisi commented at length on such plans, Fasehun's detention and the OPC's 'proscription':

I was at the airport to pick [sic] a flight out for a two weeks [sic] conference in East Africa and I never knew the Obasanjo security hawks were after me. They had been ordered to get me dead or alive. They picked me up right inside the aircraft and bundled me to the departure area of the airport. It was a terrible moment as foreign passengers were shocked at this action. Luckily, I told them I needed to get my luggage before the aircraft departed that I left my laptop valued at about \$2000 and my travelers cheque of N500 and \$1500 cash behind. They then detailed an officer to follow me. This officer was kind enough to allow me into the arrival hall toilet and since he underestimated my knowledge of airport, I outsmarted him and bolted away. I got out, mobilized 150 OPC comrades and today we are out of Nigeria having passed through five African countries. I was in Cote d'Ivoire to monitor the presidential election and mobilize support for the OPC and the Yoruba cause. I hope to meet with the Ivorien, Burkinabe and other African leaders in South Africa. I am not afraid of facing trial in Nigeria, but I strongly believe that an Hausa-Fulani-dominated security apparatus is not competent to try me. [G]overnment was desperate to get me because they believe that after Dr. Fasehun, I could be the next in command, but they are making a big mistake because every OPC member is capable of leading the OPC (Patinvoh 2000). Dr. Fasehun is ready to face any court and the law of the land. He has said that if found guilty, he will accept the penalty. But what we are saying is that government must stop giving the whole world the impression that this man actually killed the persons [sic]. We want to assure them that if this man is wrongfully

executed, wrongfully jailed or wrongfully charged, Nigeria will erupt, and that is sure because we don't want a situation where an innocent man will just be made to pay the price of the *genuine anger of a population of masses* [emphasis added]⁴⁷ (Ehigiator 2000).

No government, no dictator, no president, no individual, no group in Nigeria can ban Oodua Peoples Congress. The OPC did not derive its legitimacy from government; the OPC did not apply to government for registration. We have right of association, the United Nations Charter is very clear on this. OPC is the mouthpiece of Yoruba [sic]; it speaks for the Yoruba. OPC is the nose of the Yoruba, the future of Yoruba and no government can declare the OPC or the Yoruba banned (Ehigiator 2000).

In an unrelated development, the Adams faction responded to a threat purportedly issued by the governor of Nasarawa State that the North would retaliate if OPC fanatics again attacked 'its' citizens in Lagos (Olaniyonu 2000). The organization promised to 'counter any aggression from any part of the country, especially the North, since the sing-song from the North in recent time [sic] had been that of war' (Olaniyonu 2000). Fasehun further asserted that if the police continued its assaults on and rampant killings of OPC members, 'another round of violence would soon burst open in Lagos' (Akintunde 2001). During his speech at the hearings into the Lagos conflicts, Fasehun contended that police officers slaughtered approximately 800 Congress members between 2000 and 2001, and illegally detained others because of their inability and/or refusal to bribe its officials, despite the fact that the courts had released them.

The devastating events of 1998 through 2000 proved that the OPC was a radical CSO that perpetrated destructive deeds and, in turn, was impacted by the state's lethal and overbearing policies. Furthermore, these activities revealed that the OPC was a terrifying entity whose extremist proclamations and actions were indicative of its unrelenting 'inner demons' and organizational deficiencies. The additional descriptions reviewed below do not deviate from, but powerfully support, this general observation.

In early January 2001, the leader of the OPC's Kwara State Chapter was apprehended for the October 2000 Ilorin disputes (Oyeleye 9 January 2001). Unrelatedly, an Ibadan-based OPC official and another individual whose affiliation could not be readily ascertained, were charged to court for 'allegedly killing a [21-year old] farm help...with a dane gun in the persistent hostility between the Fulani Bororo cattle rearers and Oyo farmers' (Comet News 9 September 2001). In the succeeding month, 2 individuals were

executed in a Lagos suburb and several police officers were wounded when the latter invaded their meeting venue (Akparanta, Akintunde and Idika 2001).

More pertinently, Fasehun 'caused a stir when he arrived at the sitting venue of the panel investigating civil disturbances in the state with a corpse he claimed to be that of a victim' (Akparanta, Akintunde and Idika 2001). The OPC leader blamed the death of this individual on 'police brutality' and further claimed that he personally could have been killed:

Police contingent led by Taiwo Adeleke had at about 10 a.m. this morning [27th of February 2001] broke[n] into our meeting at our National Secretariat at Agodo and launched another attack on us, despite the last one that was denied by the Lagos Police Commissioner. Two of our members were again killed by the police this morning while no fewer than 30 sustained heavy injuries from police gun shots. They also carted away one of the two corpses. And we have decided to come and narrate this to peace loving people, because this attack on the OPC could have set the whole of Lagos on another fire, if I was not there to calm them (OPC members) not to retaliate. I am for peace...but for how long shall we wait for the police to stop all these extra-judicial killings of our people⁴⁸ (Akparanta, Akintunde and Idika 2001).

On 2 March 2001, Fasehun sued the Federal government, the Attorney-General of the Federation, Lagos State Attorney General and Police Commissioner for the seemingly-wanton arrests and killings of OPC members, which he blamed on Obasanjo's 'shoot on sight' order⁴⁹ (Dadzie 2001). A fortnight after filing this suit, Fasehun went underground because Lagos policemen had allegedly threatened his life and those of other Congress officials⁵⁰ (The Guardian 8 March 2001).

The six months of relative calm that had prevailed in Lagos was shattered, as Congress adherents vociferously clashed with Lagos police on 10 April 2001 (Benson et al., 2001; Ifijeh et al., 2001; Vanguard 12 April 2002). When the melee subsided, approximately 3 individuals had been shot dead, 3 policemen had been critically injured and 13 OPC members had been arrested. In order to stem the spate of robbers' activities in Lagos, Congress affiliates pursued approximately 9 suspected thieves, stripped their girlfriends naked and paraded them on Mushin streets, and eventually macheted and burnt 6 of the alleged robbers (Akparanta et al., 8 May 2001).

Furthermore, a Lagos court released 20 individuals out of the 72 alleged OPC members who were arrested and charged to court in late 2000 with Fasehun (Adeyemo 2001). These individuals originally had been charged with ‘murder and armed robbery’; charges that were later reduced to ‘conspiracy and unlawful assembly’ (Adeyemo 2001). In a different development, 19 group members were arrested in early June 2001 for attacking a robbery suspect, amputating his right arm with a machete, randomly attacking passers-by and residents, and invading their homes in search of ‘criminals’ (Akparanta and Oliseh 2001; Akpor 2001).

For the remainder of June and July 2001, the Congress was in the news for several reasons. Firstly, at least 6 members were arrested and paraded before the public for possessing ‘illegal firearms and dangerous charms’ (Nnadozie and Akoni 2001). Secondly and more significantly, Adams appeared more frequently in public, irrespective of his status as a ‘wanted man’. In a defiant move, he eluded formidable security networks and delivered a speech before approximately 2000 OPC members, 400 metres from a police station and apparently unmindful of the N1 million ransom placed on his head⁵¹ (Oni 2001; Akinyemi 21 July 2001).

At the end of July, Adams participated in a four-day rally of Congress members (Ajibola 2001). Notwithstanding the presence of more than 2000 police officers, the Adams’ faction still managed to hold several gatherings and injure 10 policemen⁵² (Alabi and Fagbemi 2001; Alabi 2001). About 22 OPC members were arrested in a separate battle with police officers; in mid-August 2001, another police-OPC deadly confrontation in Ogun State began ‘when fully armed policemen, acting on a tip-off, stormed the venue of the militia group’s meeting...’ (Coffie-Gyamfi 2001; Nigerian Tribune 2001). In the ensuing one-hour melee, gunfire was freely exchanged, 2 lives were lost and 8 individuals, including 3 police officers, were hurt. Around the same period, members of the Adams faction crucified an alleged 25-year old armed robber and set him alight (Vanguard 17 August 2001).

After months of taunting security forces, Adams was finally arrested without much incident in late August 2001. The factional leader, who was paraded before the public, retorted that he was not guilty of the charges leveled against him.⁵³ His detention generated varying reactions; some welcomed the arrest and others demanded that Adams be granted a fair hearing. Also, certain OPC officials and the public at large requested that he should be released⁵⁴ (Nnadozie, Akpor and Akoni 2001; Vanguard 27 August 2001; Larewaju 2001; Nwakamma 2001; Ahiuma-Young and Oisa 2001; Adekolajo et al., 2001).

Around the same period, one of Adams' principal accusers disputed police officers' claim that the factional leader and his supporters assailed him. Instead, he blamed Fasehun and his supporters for his serious injuries:

On November 14, 1999, I was attacked by about 500 OPC men carrying swords, guns, cutlasses and other dangerous weapons. These men were wearing white OPC T-shirts. At about 4.20 p.m., I had just finished lunch in the company of my secretary, Mr. Sesan Oladimeji and my elder brother's wife when I suddenly heard shouts downstairs, and on looking down from the window, I saw OPC men carrying dangerous weapons and looking at my office. On sighting me, they shouted that I should come down and by then, the adjacent street had been barricade [sic] by their men. They subsequently threw stones, bottles and other missiles at my office, damaging the louvres in the process. They later entered my office and attacked me by dealing cutlass blows on all the parts of my body and hitting me with various charms. These men brutalized and almost killed me.

They later took me to Okunola where we appeared before Dr. Frederick Fasehun while he was addressing his members. He confirmed that he asked his boys to bring me before him but he could not state the reason. When I asked him why I was so brutalized, my vehicles damaged while my office and all the vital documents were burnt, he simply told his boys, 'I told you to go and bring this man and not to go and brutalize him. But since you have done it that way, you should leave him. I was pushed into a gutter after they poured acid on me and left me for dead. Some passers-by rescued me and took me to the hospital where I spent close to N.3 million on extensive medical treatment. I later wrote to the Inspector-General of Police complaining about my ordeal but up till now, I don't know [sic] what happened next. For now, I have left everything in the hands of God but I was annoyed when I read my name as one of the principal accusers of Mr. Gani Adams who was recently arraigned in court. That is why I deemed it necessary to put [sic] the records straight (Nnadozie 2001).

Adams was arraigned in late August 2001 on a '23-count charge of murder, treason, armed robbery and arson, all of which are capital offences'⁵⁵ (Anaba 2001). In a concurrent development, the federal government charged Fasehun, Adams and other OPC members to court on 7 counts (Kayode 2001). Some of the fresh charges against Adams and Fasehun read as follows:

That you Ganiyu Adams [male] of 19 Olusoga Street, Mushin Lagos and others at large on or about the 23rd of August 2001 along Ikorodu Expressway Lagos within the jurisdiction of the Federal High Court of Nigeria without license granted by the President had in your possession a Bryco Model English automatic pistol number with serial number 214700 in your Honda Accord Saloon car with registration number CF 727 LSR driven by you and thereby committed an offence contrary to section 3 of the Firearms Act Cap 146 of the Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990, punishable under section 28(1)(a) of the same Act (Uwaleke 2001); [Adams]...[a]cting as a leader of Oodua Peoples Congress has been managing the said Oodua Peoples Congress an unlawful society that has been killing and destroying individuals and public property and you therefore committed an offence contrary to section 63 of the Criminal Code Act Cap 77 of the laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990, punishable under the same section of the Act (Uwaleke 2001); [It] accused Ganiyu Adams and Dr. Frederick Fasehun of committing an offence on November 14, 1999 by being members of Oodua Peoples Congress an unlawful society, and thereby committed an offence contrary to section 64 of the criminal code Act cap 77 Laws of the federation of Nigeria 1990 and punishable under the same section of the Act (Kayode 2001); [Y]ou Dr Frederick Fasehun of Best Hope Hospital Araromi Street Mushin between November 1999 and July 2000 being the leader of Oodua Peoples Congress was managing the said OPC an unlawful society that has been killing and destroying individuals and public properties and thereby committed an offence contrary to section 63 of the criminal code Act cap 77 laws of the Federation of Nigeria 1990 (Kayode 2001).

They were later released on bail of N1 million each and the initial 23 criminal charges filed by Lagos Police against Adams were dismissed in October 2001; although he also was arraigned by an Ogun State court on a 4-count charge of attempted murder, stealing, armed robbery and illegal possession of firearms, Adams was released on bail and acquitted (Adelanwa 2001; Bajulaiye 2001; IRIN 2001; Daily Trust 2001; Uwaleke 2001).

After the previously described events transpired, the ethnic association started handing suspected robbers directly to the police, instead of dispensing 'jungle justice' on the spot⁵⁶ (Akparanta, Sotunde and Obari 2001). In November 2001, it appeared that the OPC was altering its other tactics. Firstly, in a very significant development, the organization's mainstream and militant factions

reportedly were reconciled in Ibadan (Olaleye and Adeyemo 2001). Secondly, Adams promised that the Congress would employ non-violent tactics to achieve articulated objectives (Lawal 6 November 2001). Thirdly, contrary to his previous stance on the organization's vigilante mandate, Adams proposed a joint OPC-police anti-crime squad (Adeyeye 7 November 2001).

Yet, in a separate development, 15 OPC members were allegedly detained and 10 were arrested for various offences⁵⁷ (Bajulaiye 19 November 2001; Akoni 27 November 2001; PM News 2001). Between December 2001 and January 2002, several events concerning the Oodua Peoples Congress and worthy of note occurred. The first pertained to the suspension of 8 OPC members for 'unethical behaviour and anti-congress activities' (This Day 2001). Also, the brutal murder of Justice Minister Bola Ige elicited a strong response from the OPC, including Kayode Ogundamisi.⁵⁸

In the meantime, members of the OPC's militant faction, who had supposedly reconciled with the main bloc, were involved in a scuffle with MOPOL and Palace Guards *en route* to Ige's funeral (Bello 2002). The disturbance allegedly began in early January when the OPC's convoy sought to pass in front of a King's Palace; in the resulting fracas, approximately 63 individuals, including at least 40 Congress affiliates, died (Bello 2002; Omonijo 2002; Adedoja 2002; Ahanihu 2002, Adebayo 2002 and Oladipupo 15 February 2002; Jaiyeola 2002).

In early February 2002, OPC militants became embroiled in deadly discords in several Lagos districts (Olajide and Ojo 2002). Approximately 55 lives were lost, 200 residents were wounded (57 of them very seriously) and innumerable Lagosians were displaced from their homes (Olajide and Ojo 2002). In the Idi-Araba neighbourhood, more than 50,000 Hausa residents sought refuge in local military barracks (Olajide 2002; Ojo 2002). After the fighting subsided, more than 100 houses and N10 billion worth of goods were destroyed⁵⁹ (Egwim 2002; Olajide 12 April 2002; Babalola 2002).

In March 2002, an Akure Court 'restrained the state Commissioner of Police from arresting factional leader of the Oodua Peoples Congress Ganiyu Adams [who] had [again been] declared wanted following the January 11, 2002 clash between suspected OPC members and the police in which about 35 people were reportedly killed' (Anaba 2002). Additionally, certain Lagos residents demanded that the ban on the organization be rescinded and that it be allowed to undertake anti-crime activities in response to the state's rising crime wave (Ogunwusi and Orok 2002). Following the deaths of scores of policemen, including the execution of at least 8 officers and an

unprecedented increase in armed robberies across Lagos, the Congress renewed its vigilante activities (Lawal 2002).

Three alleged thieves who were caught in a Lagos suburb and had reportedly been ‘terrorizing the area for weeks’, were doused with petrol and burnt (Okoro 2002). Yet, in a rather ironic twist, several OPC members were arrested along with 350 robbery suspects, as 2 OPC members who were previously arrested and charged to court for various robbery-related offences languished in Lagos prisons (Orok 2002; Busari 2002).

For the remainder of March and April 2002, the rhetoric from the OPC leader and government officials became more strident and controversial. In this vein, Fasehun made the following utterances regarding Northern elites:

A Hausa-Fulani man is a very nice person but the moment he is highly educated and goes into Nigerian politics, certain things change him. He becomes arrogant, even to his own people. He doesn’t think of his pedigree but his geographical zone where he hails from. An illiterate Northerner is a nice person. He doesn’t bother where you come from, your religion etc, but the elite are the problem. Their thinking is that the Hausa-Fulani are born to rule while others are born to follow (Okoro 27 March 2002).

Moreover, the Inspector-General of Police vowed to ‘clamp down’ on the Congress and other ethnic militias because of their illegal and unlawful acts:

Since the Nigeria Police Force is the force in charge of internal security in addition to the efforts of the military, no other force or semblance of it shall be allowed to exist. The limit of legality of association is eroded the moment an association goes into illegality and unlawful act. Possession of offensive weapons is a criminal offence and they [certain ethnic associations] go about carrying offensive weapons here and there. Also, what do you say to the illegal trials to which they subject citizens even to the point of killing people they suspect to be armed robbers. You cannot even rule out the instrumentality of vendetta. Some use Bakassi [another ethnically-based and vigilante organisation in the South-East] instrumentality to settle scores, either traditional scores, political scores or even economic scores (Edike 2002).

In furtherance of this objective, President Obasanjo presented a bill on ethnic militias to the National Assembly, which prohibited the OPC and other similar groupings operating in Nigeria, and ‘...prescribe[d] a

punishment of five years for individuals who violate[d] the provisions of the proposed law [, with] corporate organisations charged a fine of N500,000.00⁶⁰ (Erike 2002; Aziken 2002). Expectedly, this proposed bill elicited strong reactions from various Nigerians, including Fasehun who sued the President and the National Assembly⁶¹ (Emewu 30 April 2002; Babasola 27 May 2002).

Finally, in April, 5 Congress members were remanded for murdering a 37-year old man in the Ikorodu area of Lagos (Abah 12 April 2002). The OPC militants were hired by a Lagos Chief who offered them N14000 apiece to murder his nephew, with whom he had been engaged in a feud. In June 2002, the OPC increased its profile as an organization offering vigilante services by attempting to curtail cult attacks plaguing a tertiary institution (Ogunwusi 2002). Around the same period, Adams claimed that Lagos belonged solely to the Yoruba and therefore would not have an Igbo governor or deputy governor; he vowed to forcefully resist any attempts by the Igbo to 'infiltrate' Yorubaland (Babalola 17 June 2002). On the thorny issue of ethnic militia proscription, Adams asserted that attempts to ban the Congress would be heartily opposed, as the federal government did not register it upon inception⁶² (Yusuf 2002).

SUMMARY

In this and the previous two chapters, I traced the evolution of three prominent, radical and ethnically oriented organizations operating in the South-South, South-East and South-West. Prior to undertaking this task, I postulated that by providing extensive information on these associations, and allowing their officials and actions to largely speak via their own words and deeds, our knowledge of the inner-workings of radical civil society would be further enhanced. Hence, quoting extensively from group leaders, I made comprehensive references to the economic, political and social milieux in which these organizations were formed, their relationships with the state, non-state actors and the public, and the factors that contributed to their militancy. In so doing, I elucidated the reported actions of the IYC, MASSOB and OPC between the late 1990s and 2002.

More significantly, I revealed the manner in which previous and ongoing instances of authoritarianism, deprivation and maldevelopment radicalized these ethnic associations. Through this exercise, I discovered that the themes of *repression*, *marginalization* and *underdevelopment* continually recurred in interviews that Nigerian journalists and I undertook. As such, these comprehensive summaries suggested that a militant civil society, whose radicalization encompassed the promotion of discordant goals, reliance

on inflammatory rhetoric, and instigation of disruptive and illegal acts, existed in Nigeria. Further developing the theorized relationship between the components of government action (or inaction) and radicalization, the following chapters link these empirical facts with my broader preoccupation with regime policy and the deficiencies of prevailing civil society analyses.

CHAPTER VII

Analysis of Theoretical Anomalies and Regime Policy

THE FIRST THREE CHAPTERS OF THIS VOLUME COMPREHENSIVELY scrutinized several issues pertinent to this project, and hypothesized that *underdevelopment, repression* and the *marginalization* of specific ethnic groups were apt to radicalize CSOs if all three elements co-existed. To ascertain the nature of this inferred relationship, I defined regime policy as actions undertaken by the Nigerian government between 1960 and 2002, and broadly depicted radicalization as a process encompassing one or more of the following and other associated stratagems: *physical confrontations that eventually resulted in extensive injuries and/or loss of lives, use of provocative rhetoric and articulation of goals that threatened, in any manner whatsoever, the state of affairs within or the corporate existence of a nation.*

After laying this preliminary but critical groundwork, I appraised the postulated correlation between regime policy and civil society radicalization by describing the activities of three militant CSOs operating in Southern Nigeria between 1998 and 2002.¹ The goal of this rather lengthy exercise was to reveal how government action and fanaticism manifested themselves in the context of these associations agitating for change, and the compelling statements uttered by their leaders. In so doing, I alluded to the repeated references that IYC, MASSOB and OPC officials made to the purported marginalization of their respective ethnic groups, the state's repeatedly-repressive actions from 1960 until 2002, and the economic, political and social underdevelopment that characterized Nigeria's experience during the same period.

In this analytical chapter, I undertake two broad tasks. At the outset, based on the premise that civil society is not a sacrosanct arena that is distinguished by perfection, and as an important prelude to my analyses of regime policy and radicalization, I succinctly revisit two glaring and overlapping theoretical anomalies that are evident in literature, were cursorily examined in [Chapters I](#) through [III](#), directly follow from and are particularly illuminated by previous

empirical discussions. Whilst alluding to the specific examples of the investigated CSOs, I expound upon the nature of the following irregularities: *prevailing myth of civility* and *narrow conceptualization of civil society*.

The core part of this analysis integrates the theoretical and empirical evidence offered in preceding chapters into a coherent whole, by re-examining this study's presupposition concerning regime policy and radicalization in view of the detailed facts presented in Chapters IV, V and VI. Such an investigation is undertaken through explicit references to underlying economic, political, religious and social conditions identified by respondents and other representatives of profiled ethnic entities.²

CIVIL SOCIETY AND THEORETICAL ANOMALIES

Firstly, it is worth reminding the reader, in light of recently presented evidence, that I do not subscribe to the *myth of civility* that pervades the civil society literature. In part, this myth originates from the phrase 'civil society', which mistakably assumes that there is a section of society that is pre-dominantly civil and another that is not.³ In very general terms, the civility premise privileges the non-state sphere, sees the *modus operandi* and objectives of its reputedly-authentic expressions as primarily, if not entirely, distinguished by graciousness, and sometimes ignores (or downplays) civil society's transgressions in all parts of the world.⁴ However, reality in Nigeria or elsewhere for that matter does not bear this utopian conviction out. Before addressing the perceptible failings of Nigerian civil society in view of the notable actions of its radical elements, a brief reference to the state's deficits is in order.

The Nigerian experience especially shows how consecutive governments robbed citizens of the nation's collective wealth, perfected corruption as an art of statecraft, exacerbated religious, ethnic and other differences to advance rulers' parochial interests, resisted demands for political liberalization, mismanaged the economy, systematically decimated the middle class, repressed the aspirations of and marginalized innumerable individuals, corroded their collective psyches, wantonly executed and imprisoned opponents, and drove countless others into exile.

All of these factors fostered disillusionment amongst the populace and the dangerous withdrawal of a sizeable number of Nigerians into fanatical enclaves. Consequently, regardless of the seriousness of the crises confronting the state in Africa and certainly other parts of the world, disorderliness, chaos and tyranny are not its sole preserve. In several respects and as repeatedly demonstrated in the OPC, IYC and

MASSOB reviews, these problems are mirrored within and duplicated by the non-state realm, which also is a repository of violence and incivility. This is not surprising, as the state and civil society do not exist in a vacuum; in actuality, the former has impinged upon the latter and vice versa.

There usually is not agreement within the non-state sphere, as controversies, contending blocs, disparate ideologies, desire for control and divergent interests literally have threatened to tear many a CSO apart. Relatedly, within this sector, stated objectives and tactics employed to achieve them are not always civil or noble. Instead, several interests vying for personal, political and other forms of 'power', seek to predominate and undermine the efforts of competing camps. In fact, the seeds of disagreements and rancour are not only apparent within militant groups like the OPC, they periodically are present within several organizations that 'hardcore' civil society adherents regard as promoters of 'social capital' and purveyors of democratic ideals.

Investigations into the activities of CSOs, whether esteemed like NGOs (an undertaking that is beyond the scope of this project) or despised like extremist organizations found in Southern Nigeria and elsewhere, also reveal instances of corruption, corporate malfeasance, mismanagement, fraud and leadership tussles that are not, in certain cases, readily discernible on the surface. Therefore, to the extent that we as analysts sanitise our discussions, and concomitantly ignore the unfortunate but nonetheless prescient reality that factionalization is rife throughout public discourse and associational life, the anti-statist myth of order within beloved CSOs and the market in particular, and the non-state realm in general, will persist.

The distinct experiences of the IYC, MASSOB and OPC unquestionably expose malignant tendencies that cannot be whitewashed or ignored. Following from the evidence summarized in [Chapters IV](#) through [VI](#), and analyzed in ensuing sections, it is apparent that members of these ethnic associations engaged in violent confrontations with non-members, attacked and killed security forces, frequently flouted state rules, articulated controversial objectives, and/or initiated verbal combats with state and non-state actors alike. Still, whilst these actions admittedly are corrosive and destructive, they reflect the incivility within the broader Nigerian society. They also are reflective of the coarseness that is apparent in other societies within and outside Africa.

In total, incivility is not only apparent within overtly militant organizations or the 'developing' world for that matter. Unfortunately, it is an integral part of many societies, cultures and polities irrespective of their economic, social and ideological backgrounds. To

deny this reality, either within the established social order or parochial associations, which are microcosms of society, is to adhere to an untenable myth of civility that overly influences how political and social actualities in different parts of the world are analyzed *vis-à-vis* the West, and how organizations are classified (whether as belonging to the civil society realm because they are supposedly civil or completely undeserving of the label because of their militant postures). *Whilst the world, including Nigeria, is littered with uncivil 'societies,' there comparatively are few civil 'societies' in the fullest and strictest sense of the term.* This and other related points are considered in the next paragraph.

Pursuant to the foregoing discussion and as evidenced by a thorough reading of this volume, I do not subscribe to the *restrictive* and *subjective* exclusion of groups based on whether their ambitions are revered or loathed. If radicalization were conceptualized, as done in this project, to connote a spectrum of tactics that includes not merely physical aggression but a reliance on uncivil and inflammatory expressions, and the verbalisation of objectives that are deemed divisive by political, economic, religious and other elites, then many groups viewed as justifiable manifestations of civil society might be reclassified as *less radical*, *moderately radical* or *most radical* depending on where they fall in the radicalization typology referenced throughout this discussion.

Broadly speaking, a narrow conceptualization of civil society not only bars militant CSOs because of their manifestly-belligerent stratagems, rhetoric and objectives, this arbitrary taxonomy does not reflect reality either in Africa or the West, where organizations representing 'ethnic' interests predominate, are prominent and serve critical functions in the political, social and economic spheres of their respective countries.

On the surface, it might seem that my rather-peculiar decision to study radical organizations explicitly negates the broader theoretical argument that a large number of civil society theorists have tended to concentrate on the incivility and imperfections of so-called 'uncivil' associations in Nigeria and other African countries. Yet, the selection of perceived fanatical groups was *deliberate* and meant to vividly illustrate, using the most extreme cases available, that even utterly-loathed organizations and the individuals that lead them are not altogether worthless, unimaginative and deserving of extinction or banishment to the margins of society (or scholarship).

Unlike conventional political parties, ethnic and other associations, radical organizations of any sort are not always concerned with cultivating or maintaining immaculate reputations, or remaining in the 'good graces' of prominent persons or authorities. As such, they

are not particularly afraid of underlining issues that are considered taboo or otherwise unmentionable by uncourageous, exploitative, self-centred and opportunistic leaders who mostly are preoccupied with individual or family aggrandisement, and ultimately frustrating, if not muzzling, 'extremists' who have the temerity to resist repression, marginalization and discrimination of any sort. Even though fanatical associations should not be romanticized, it is their fearless disregard for established standards that distinguishes them from their more 'status-conscious' brethren.

In the Nigerian context, ethnic organizations fulfill tasks that are in certain ways similar to but yet distinct from 'mainstream' CSOs. Compared to the latter groups, radically-oriented associations of the ethnic ilk provide a sense of belonging for members who otherwise might feel disenfranchised, marginalized, unable to publicly express their grievances and participate either in broad-based but conventional groups or other facets of societal life. They further ensure that the concerns of these aggrieved individuals are articulated and formalised by a visible and numerically-strong organization, and consequently accorded the importance that they deserve by powerful interests who sometimes are forced to respond either symbolically or based on a principled stance to these voluble complaints.

The IYC, OPC and MASSOB fulfill this major role of empowering poor, maligned and outcast individuals. In fact, a large number, if not the vast majority, of their members come from economically and socially impoverished backgrounds or ethnic groups that have been consistently marginalized, from their perspective, by the state. It therefore is not surprising that an overwhelmingly-significant number of their supporters are comparatively deprived, not gainfully-employed in the formal sector, or subsisting in the largely-invisible interstices between the formal and informal sectors, and thus survived on the margins of Nigerian society.

Owing to this observable fact, many of these groups' demands revolved around enfranchisement, health, education, housing, employment and environmental protection. In concert with conveying these concerns on every possible occasion to the 'powers that be', one or more of the aforementioned organizations held the state and non-state entities accountable for their deeds, demanded economic, political, environmental and social improvements, and empowered their members and the public at large through advocacy, increased awareness concerning Nigeria's many problems, education, provision of free or subsidized services (such as legal clinics, employment workshops, vigilante services in crime-ridden neighborhoods and conflict mitigation and management programmes), and employment opportunities.

Above all, extremist and/or ethnically oriented groups should not be summarily banned from the civil society ‘family’ simply because they are different from purportedly moderate organizations. If the intent is to review the manner in which the former entities benefit the remainder of society, we will discover that their radicalism and ‘primordialism’ do not preclude them from making meaningful contributions, along with the undeniable problems that they produce whilst undertaking their activities. Still, this emphasis on benefits is problematic because it transforms analyses of either unacknowledged or accepted CSOs into nothing more than a vexingly-normative exercise, as what one individual regards as a personal or collective benefit could be defined as an impediment or detriment by yet another person examining the same facts.

With this important theoretical foundation having been re-established, the following section reviews the relationship between government actions and civil society fanaticism detectable in the Nigerian experience. In this spirit, I principally review the manner in which the OPC, MASSOB and IYC defined repression, underdevelopment and marginalization on ensuing pages, and later assess the strategic responses that they embraced to tackle these perceived ills in [Chapter VIII](#). Even though this project scrutinizes these three variables whenever possible, by presenting examples that support or refute the statements made by group representatives, I do not non-chalantly dismiss strongly held feelings expressed as being irrational or unimportant.

EVALUATION AND PROBLEMATIZATION OF REGIME POLICY

In [Chapter II](#), I hypothesized that the radicalization of Nigerian civil society was primarily spurred by the policies instituted by successive regimes.⁵ To bolster this postulation, I presented evidence that suggested that both explicitly-articulated and *de facto* government policies provoked the extremism witnessed amongst Nigerian CSOs in the 1990s.⁶ More significantly, I contended that the conditions aggravated by such actions influenced civil society militancy in Nigeria. In succeeding deliberations, I briefly introduce the manner in which the three concepts under consideration featured in the country’s affairs and subsequently analyze how they were viewed by and influenced the IYC, OPC and MASSOB, and, by implication, the ethnic collectivities that they purported to represent.

Repression⁷

The summaries provided in preceding chapters indicated that Nigerian regimes, irrespective of whether they were civilian or military, stifled demands for liberalization, federalism and local empowerment emanating from the country's ethnic associations, and other sectors of 'legitimate' or 'illegitimate' civil society.⁸ Towards this end, successive governments relied upon tyrannical measures to advance their interests and further consolidate their control over the non-state realm. Authoritarianism and human rights abuses thus incessantly featured in the Nigerian experience.

Repression is not instantly expunged from a polity when it formally transits from authoritarianism to democratic rule. Despite the fact that Nigeria's political situation measurably improved after 1999, President Olusegun Obasanjo continued to manage a regime that was, as of early 2003, characterized by benign, if not corrosive, authoritarianism and lingering mistrust on the populace's part. In part, this actuality is emblematic of the deep-seated nature of tyranny that pervaded the nooks and corners of Nigerian society. Consistent with the enterprise presented herein, when examining the actions of a 'democratically-authoritarian' state such as Nigeria, one finds that the broader society also imbibed and was infused with vestiges of despotism; hence this study's focus on 'illicit' civil society.

In the post-1999 era and as shown below, the police, other security forces and even government administrators promulgated policies that were best suited for a non-democratic regime and thus might be construed as dictatorial. These included unconstitutional executions of innocent civilians under the pretence of crime prevention and control, sheer disregard for the masses' demands, treatment of political office as an extension of royalty, endemic human rights abuses at the local, state and federal levels, irrespective of official declarations to the contrary, general flouting of rules that ordinary citizens must obey, and prevalent absolutism and interference of government in the Nigerian judiciary.

Individuals affiliated with militant ethnic associations and the communities that harboured them bore the brunt of many of these actions. In recent years, the state utilized divergent repressive devices that entailed but were not limited to routine arrests of radical CSO members and officials, extra-judicial killings during group confrontations with security operatives and under other circumstances, overall heavy-handedness of the police force and military, literal declarations of war and gratuitous attacks on civilian communities through the indiscriminate use of missiles and other sophisticated weapons, and the excessive militarization of various

spheres within the country, especially the jurisdictions that hosted major petroleum companies.

Moreover, members of the national legislature, who were constitutionally charged with protecting the rights of their constituents, did not adequately perform their duties. As of 2002, the Nigerian Parliament remained a thoroughly provincial, somewhat corrupt, self-serving, detached and incompetent body that was preoccupied with mundane matters rather than urgent affairs confronting the nation. Due to its fondness for viewing issues before it through parochial lenses, the National Assembly failed to model democratic norms in the conduct of its activities. Yet, regardless of its own conspicuous failures and autocratic inclinations, the Federal House of Representatives and Senate, which aptly are 'theatre[s] of political intrigues' (Ogbodo and Ayeoyenikan 2002), commenced a third impeachment proceeding against the Nigerian President in August 2002.

In addition to citing ineptitude, corruption and financial recklessness as the chief reasons why Obasanjo should be promptly removed from office, certain legislators mentioned the President's predilection for bypassing and not consulting Parliament before making critical decisions, unilaterally amending laws, such as those governing the revenue allocation suit that was before the Supreme Court, embarking upon extra-budgetary and unapproved expenditures, and initiating other constitutional breaches. This labyrinthine and paralysing disagreements sprung from the political, regional, ethnic and religious divisions within both chambers of the legislature; expectedly, a large number of lawmakers at the forefront of the impeachment farce were non-Yoruba and Northern Muslims from the ANPP, and to a lesser extent AD, political parties.

More notably, at the very heart of the enduring rift between the National Assembly and the Executive was a pronounced struggle for hegemony and control between two parties (read blocs) that imbibed or were affected by Nigeria's autocratic past. Whilst the principle of reciprocal submission, wherein the actions of the Executive are constrained by the Legislature and vice versa, is difficult to achieve in any milieu regardless of the superiority of the existing political system, it is fundamentally alien to the Nigerian experience, where the Presidency or the Office of the Head of State conventionally dictated to the other two organs of government and the remainder of society.

The persistence of tyranny in Nigerian political life also revolved around the powerful influence of the armed forces in the post-military regime of Olusegun Obasanjo.⁹ This refusal of erstwhile military leaders to absolutely vacate the public realm and bequeath the business of governance to presumably more urbane and democratic

Nigerians, virtually guaranteed that measured political improvements made under a supposedly-democratic regime were not as far-reaching as they could have been in the absence of such persistent intrusions into the country's political life.

Even though Nigeria began as a federal republic with somewhat autonomous provinces, repeated infiltrations by the military into the political sphere eventually culminated in the creation of weak politico-administrative units called states. This action diluted the collective strength of the regions and practically institutionalized their dependence upon the centre (with its penchant for control) for financial wherewithal and their very existence.

Saddled with few resources but numerous impediments and unremitting demands, a large number of Nigerian states are not viable and independent entities, and equal partners with the federal government.¹⁰ The situation had been such that state officials repeatedly visited Abuja, with their 'begging bowls in hand', to request funds needed to maintain centrally owned infrastructure in their respective parts of the country. Federal government officials seemingly relished the inordinate control that they wielded over the states.¹¹ This disparity between the national government and the country's hinterlands created resentment in several quarters and was partially responsible for the radicalization of fanatical ethnic associations in Nigeria, which regarded the lack of federalism as a vivid example of repression.

In succeeding evaluations of manifestations of repression, I refer not merely to the effects of these actions that were experienced by a great deal of Nigerians, notwithstanding their ethnic or related affiliations, but to policies particularly targeted toward the Ijaw, Igbo and Yoruba, as reported by the associations representing these communities. The exhaustive substantiation culled from various sources and offered in previous chapters divulged how authoritarian actions that were instituted by mostly-illicit and unaccountable governments over a 42-year span, influenced the formation of the profiled groups, formulation of their expressed objective, and codification of fanatical and non-fanatical schemes to realize these goals.

Whilst the IYC, OPC and MASSOB all were impacted by repressive actions emanating from the country's centre and corresponding politico-administrative outskirts, such conduct demonstrably affected the South-South, South-West and South-East in very dissimilar ways. In general, the Nigerian government's gradual securitization of society and the concomitant destruction of civilian lives through unrestrained but systematic incursions into their respective communities, spurred the militant CSOs' fervent resistance against the Nigerian State and

their corresponding agitations for change. Below, I investigate the specific nature of the relationship between the state and these organizations from 1998 to 2002, in the case of the IYC and OPC, and 1999–2002 for MASSOB.

Ijaw Youth Council

The Ijaw Youth Council and its affiliate organizations viewed post-independent authoritarianism in Nigeria, which was distinctively experienced by the Ijaw community, as intricately linked to colonial rule that was predicated on the use of repressive tactics to further the British imperialistic agenda. Moreover, IYC officials blamed the colonial epoch for haphazardly lumping disparate ethnic groups together under the grouping hastily termed ‘Nigeria’.¹² In this vein, they contended that Nigeria’s political and other problems originated from this flawed amalgamation policy.

From its inception, the Nigerian state methodically repressed the aspirations and demands of the Ijaw nationality. Lately, security forces and MNCs continuously harassed, intimidated and infiltrated the IYC and precursor organizations operating on behalf of the Ijaw community, and encouraged, either knowingly or unsuspectingly, ongoing intra- and interethnic rivalries in the country’s oil-producing areas. These actions, and the persistence of authoritarian decrees and policies, all reflected the Nigerian government’s bid to maintain control over the South’s lucrative oil fields, which generate more than 90 per cent of the country’s foreign exchange earnings.

One of the first repressive actions directed toward IYC members and supporters occurred in December 1998, shortly after it emerged as a broad-based organization. According to eyewitness accounts quoted extensively in [Chapter IV](#), soldiers who were deployed to the Delta by the Abdulsalam Abubakar administration invaded a peaceful procession of Ijaw citizens in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State, practically sacked this and other neighboring towns, raped defenceless women and executed approximately 240 Ijaw between December 1998 and January 1999. During the remainder of Abubakar’s tenure in office, from January 1999 to May 1999 to be exact, at least 14 additional Ijaw youths were killed, scores of others were wounded and at least 42 Ijaw citizens were arrested, including 34 women who reportedly were protesting the killings in Yenagoa and its environs ([Table 4](#)). Unexpectedly, this use of excessive force did not dissipate with the demise of military rule.

Between May 1999 and August 2001, under the democratic regime of Olusegun Obasanjo, mobile policemen, naval personnel and other security forces executed over 273 Ijaw citizens, including women and

children. Around the same period, countless numbers of other Ijaw were arrested and injured throughout the Niger Delta. Due to these actions and considerably deadly assaults on the town of Odi in November 1999 that resulted in approximately 200 deaths and the violation of women's rights by armed government operatives, South-South citizens saw the Obasanjo administration as nothing more than a dictatorship masquerading as a democracy.

As such, the post-1999 democratic dispensation did not particularly yield comprehensive rewards for the Ijaw or many parts of the South-South for matter; in fact, it resulted in ill-devised attempts to forcefully suppress their genuine but albeit vocal complaints via undemocratic and lethal means. In several respects, as the unfortunate but clearly-conservative estimates cited in [Table 4](#) indicate, Obasanjo's 'democratic' regime utilized and even sharpened devices that spawned the unconstitutional slaughters, arbitrary arrests and devastation of the Ijaw and their community.

Apart from the specific acts of repression which permeated Nigerian political life during the period under study, the overly-centralized system of governance, with its attendant concentration of excessive power in the person of the President, the remainder of the Executive and to an insignificant degree the National Assembly, to the utter detriment of the six sub-regions that comprise Nigeria, is defective and further symptomatic of the innate despotism afflicting the country. This lack of federalism overly strengthened the capacities and resolve of the centre to systematically suppress regional and grassroots protests through the use of constitutional and extra-constitutional mechanisms.

In order to de-institutionalise the endemic despotism that observably ran amok in the nation's political structure, notwithstanding its democratic pretensions, and concomitantly ensure that critical decisions affecting approximately 120 Million Nigerians were not always made in a shroud of secrecy in Abuja, a city whose pace and lifestyle is far divorced from reality in other parts of the country, the Ijaw Youth Council incessantly demanded a Sovereign National Conference that supposedly would empower the Ijaw and grant them increased autonomy and self-determination.¹⁴

Although this meeting largely could be symbolic and quickly degenerate into squabbles between competing interests, as is regrettably typical of similar events in the Nigerian context, it could stimulate a national dialogue on the critical issues raised by examined and other civil society organizations. Even so, it must be noted that federalism, irrespective of its unqualified celebration by the IYC, is not without its problems. The tendency to conceive of decentralisation as a quick panacea for all the country's severe political, economic and

Table 4: Ijaw Casualties, Injuries and Arrests (1998–2001)¹³

MONTHS	DEATHS	INJURIES	ARRESTS
December 1998/			
January 1999	240	Not available (N/A)	N/A
January 1999	N/A	N/A	34
February 1999	1	N/A	N/A
March 1999	1	5	8
April 1999	12	Several	N/A
July 1999	N/A	N/A	10
September 1999	51 (including women and children)	Several individuals were wounded when an expatriate Shell staff member fired at Ijaw protesters in Bonny	N/A
November 1999	213	Several	N/A
June 2000	Several	N/A	N/A
October 2000	8	N/A	N/A
June-August 2001	1	N/A	At least 3
Total	At least 476	Several	At least 55

social ailments is fairly simplistic because the transfer of central functions and commensurate authority to Nigeria's six geo-political zones will not inevitably resolve the aforementioned predicaments and encourage a more efficient system of governance.

The petty misunderstandings and serious shortcomings at the sub-national level, including but not limited to inter and intra-ethnic disputes, debilitating governor-deputy governor schisms, state legislatures' penchant for initiating relentless impeachment measures against their Speakers at the slightest provocation, the emulation of other political conflicts evident in the federal capital, and weak institutional capacities and inadequate resources, all reveal an entrenched fragility that will not soon disappear.

Equally, the *Sharia* debacle in the North is a clear indication that unbridled regional autonomy in the hands of the wrong politicians certainly could go awry. Leaving the various geo-political zones to their own improvisations could produce other aberrant laws and policies that potentially may drive wedges between the country's delicately-balanced ethnic, religious, business and ideological interests, and provoke sporadic and deadly implosions. Hence, if Nigeria's underlying structures were not reformed and a considerable reorientation of citizens' attitudes effected, sub-national governments,

like those desired by the IYC, will persist on the well-trodden path of stalemate with little meaningful and observable political improvements.

On the whole and in spite of the fact that Nigeria ostensibly was under democratic rule from 1999 to 2002, security forces frequently exploited autocratic measures, which were perfected and routinely employed by agents of the country's despotic *ancien regimes*, across the Niger Delta and elsewhere (as would be demonstrated below in the cases of MASSOB and OPC) with or without the explicit consent of elected officials. Nonetheless, due to the reality that such questionable government policies were not necessarily one-sided (i.e. group members often-times adopted provocative stances in relation to the state), the specific actions and/or statements of examined organizations that probably triggered the excessive and inexcusable responses of demoralized, thoroughly autocratic, and poorly remunerated, equipped and trained armed government operatives also must be recognized.

Since the cautious casualty and injury figures presented in [Table 4](#) were solely based on newspaper reports and group statements, it was difficult to ascertain whether accounts that CSO members were unharmed or generally submissive when government forces attacked them, for instance, were wholly accurate. Whilst the state customarily responded to protests and demonstrations in the Delta through despotic means, it must be stated in the interest of fairness and objectivity, that the IYC was not particularly 'civil' in its pronouncements, activities and rhetoric between 1998 and 2002. Still, this assertion is not intended to justify the ruthless responses of the Nigerian government to situations of legitimate protests identified in this project. The actions engendered by the IYC, MASSOB and OPC are subsumed under the heading of radicalization in [Chapter VIII](#). In the mean time, the subsequent paragraphs analyze MASSOB and OPC's experiences in relation to state-induced repression.

Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra

MASSOB officials traced the collective repression of their ethnic group to imperialists' corrosive vilification of the Igbo and their subsequent treatment as 'sacrificial lambs'. The Biafran Civil War, which decimated scores of civilian property and lives after its demise, further cemented and some-what legitimated, in the state's view, the excesses against the Igbo in its South-Eastern misadventures. The lot of the Igbo community *vis-à-vis* the state putatively worsened after this period.

As evidenced by previous discussions, enduring repressive policies implemented by the state were not particularly directed toward the Igbo alone. Nigerian governments, at one point or another in their existence, exhibited autocratic tendencies in their dealings with the Igbo and certainly other Nigerians. Nevertheless, the interviewed MASSOB spokesman especially faulted the Obasanjo administration for its rampant authoritarianism and anti-Igbo human rights abuses.

The now-familiar but unfortunate litany of complaints uttered in support of the previous assertion should by now be recognizable to and easily recalled by the reader. They consisted of a specific failure to respect the human, economic, political and social rights of the Igbo, gratuitous murders of civilians in the quest for order, existence of a 'militarized democracy' in the country and state agents' disproportionate arrests of group members. Although the Biafra Movement derided the country's overly-centralized mode of governance, it emphatically rejected any form of MASSOB participation in federal or regional arrangements that might arise out of a SNC on several occasions, given its ultimate desire to dismember the presumed Nigerian 'contrivance' into separate nations, including Biafra.

MASSOB first clashed with security forces shortly after its formation in 1999 and approximately four months after President Obasanjo was sworn into office. Specifically, in March 2000, the country's notorious SSS arrested the group's leader, Ralph Uwazuruike, and released him thereafter. Between the months of March and June 2000, Uwazuruike and his followers were arrested several other times (Table 5). According to numbers released by the organization, approximately 1000 members were detained in different parts of Nigeria from 1999 to 2002; a large number of these individuals were captured via violent seizures and kidnappings.

Group members were regularly apprehended for varying offences¹⁵ but as is customary with cases like these in Nigeria, MASSOB members typically were detained for lengthy periods of time without speedy trials or the release of information to family members concerning their whereabouts. In addition, supporters contended with sadistic security agents, authoritarian, corrupt and idiosyncratic judges, and other recalcitrant government officials who made it almost impossible for group members to be freely, fairly and impartially tried. Government forces also executed at least 63 supporters of the Biafra Movement during a 3-year period, with the actual numbers expected to have been much higher¹⁶ (Table 5).

One of the first reported executions of MASSOB adherents occurred in May 2000, when the group's flag was hoisted in the city of Aba; approximately 2 youths died during resulting scuffles with the police.

Table 5: MASSOB Casualties, Injuries and Arrests (1999–2002)

MONTH	DEATHS	INJURIES	ARRESTS
March 2000	N/A	N/A	1
April 2000	N/A	N/A	56
May 2000	2		65
July 2000	N/A	N/A	1
August 2000	N/A	N/A	87 members, including Uwazuruike's pregnant wife, charged to court
December 2000	2	50	20
February 2001	10	Scores wounded	1 (Uwazuruike tortured and beaten in police custody)
March 2001	N/A	N/A	14 arrested members paraded before the public
April 2001	—	—	4 members arraigned
May 2001	8	N/A	MASSOB claimed that 2500 members were languishing in detention; Others claim that this number was 126. 22 other members were arrested in May.
July 2001	N/A	N/A	7
October 2001	N/A	N/A	1
December 2001	3	N/A	1
January 2002	N/A	N/A	—
March 2002	MASSOB claimed that 63 members were killed between 1999 and 2002	N/A	MASSOB claimed that 1000 members were detained between 1999 and 2002
Total	At least 63	At least 50	At least 1000

From then until 2002, security agents repeatedly invaded the Okigwe home of the MASSOB President, assaulted his immediate family members, and killed or wounded hundreds of supporters in a strong show of military might. Moreover, innocent civilians who were presumed to have sheltered Uwazuruike or any MASSOB member within their premises were harassed, whilst their businesses, vehicles and other belongings were attacked. This was especially evident in Okigwe in December 2000, when 50 individuals were injured and 2 persons were killed during a botched raid on MASSOB headquarters.

Evidently, the relationship between the state and MASSOB from its establishment in 1999 to the year 2002 was characterized by terror, indiscriminate arrests and killings, excessive use of force and general lack of regard for the sanctity of human lives. Paradoxically, this increased repression of group members further radicalized MASSOB, as shown in [Chapter VIII](#).

Oodua Peoples Congress

Recent events and statements insinuated that certain segments of the Yoruba population in South-Western Nigeria were deeply suspicious of the Nigerian state, principally because of the perceived authoritarianism of military rulers who belonged to the North's Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups. In this vein, OPC leaders intimated that the Yoruba were harassed and repressed by past regimes primarily because of the latter's undemocratic proclivities and the presence of a unitary model of government, which strengthened the state in relation to the country's periphery. Yet, despite the detailed chronological overview presented in [Chapter VI](#) concerning the OPC's activities from its inception in 1994 to 2002 in general, and 1998–2002 in particular, ascertaining the exact nature of its tortuous relationship with successive Nigerian governments remained near-impossible to the outsider.

This shortcoming was due to the complicated and frequently-vehement character of these clashes, and the inconsistent reports that eyewitnesses, police officers and OPC officials offered on the factors that precipitated the disturbances, the parties responsible for initiating them, and the number, affiliations and identities of wounded, arrested, missing and killed persons. Thus, it was difficult to accurately quantify or even roughly estimate the number of deaths, injuries and detentions directly stemming from clashes between OPC members and the police, as was conveniently done for the IYC and MASSOB within [Tables 4](#) and [5](#) above.

Regardless of these limitations, the evidence presented in [Chapter VI](#) unequivocally indicated that OPC devotees' relationships with the Nigerian government and security officials were fraught with hostility. Although concrete numbers could not readily be obtained as of this writing, there is very little doubt that police officers were unduly harsh in their dealings with OPC members. This ruthlessness was expressed through the arbitrary arrests of group supporters, intimidating tactics, persecution, and planned and/or successful executions of other members. Police officials repeatedly used deadly force during their confrontations with Congress members and habitually arrested OPC officials, including Fasehun and Adams, for

the smallest breach. This brutality was blamed for the deaths of several OPC members at their meeting venues within private premises, in police custody and other locations.

In one of the OPC's first melees with state agents, police officers executed 5 of its followers in November 1998 when they invaded their meeting site in a Lagos district. From then until the year 2002, countless OPC lives were lost; a notable example was the killing of 27 group supporters in July 2000 during a confrontation with officers of the Lagos Police Command. Moreover, a confrontation between Congress supporters and police officers in January 2000 resulted in the arrests of approximately 200 group members and the deaths of 100 people whose affiliations were not specifically reported in Nigerian newspapers. In another deadly clash two years later, the police killed at least 40 OPC militants.

On the surface, it could be stated that the virulent radicalization of the OPC and other profiled groups makes it difficult to completely condemn the state's repressive actions. Given the extent of the destruction apparently precipitated by the OPC throughout Lagos and other parts of the South-West, it appears that the government's use of unnecessary force to quell group-induced pandemonium was justified. *Yet, even in a situation where so-called domestic 'terrorists' are bent on causing mayhem throughout the land and/or ultimately toppling a legitimately-chosen government, a delicate balance must be struck between safeguarding the country's sovereignty and protecting its law-abiding citizens on the one hand, and ensuring that the rights of even the most despicable and irreverent citizens residing within its borders are protected at all costs.*

By methodically invading groups' meeting places and offices, disrupting their gatherings, provoking their supporters in the process, issuing inflammatory statements, habitually arresting and threatening the lives of radical CSO adherents, torturing detained members, proscribing so-called ethnic militia groups and impeding their ability to freely operate, demanding bribes and other emoluments, stalling the trials of arrested members and failing to concertedly engage the OPC and other fanatical organizations in genuine dialogue and possibly accede to some of their demands, albeit in a symbolic, if not substantive, manner, the state (and its constituent parts) deviated from its central role as an egalitarian 'protector of all sorts'.

Consequently, the Nigerian government's re-appropriation and/or enhancement of certain problematic tactics used by fanatical entities weakened its ability to win the 'moral' campaign being waged against the OPC and similar groups in the public domain, granted that it may have won certain physical battles along the way, owing to the

preponderance of the lethal hardware and ammunitions on its side. It therefore was no wonder that profiled associations and other militant organizations in Nigeria viewed their country's political system with utter disdain and were not at all interested in handling their complaints through expressly legal means.

The state's established record, regardless of the particular form of government in place, as a vigorous resister of legitimate and/or illegitimate challenges to its authority and policies, and its regular propensity to effectively silence those who opposed it (or at least endeavor to do so), made certain that sectors of the Nigerian public would become wary of, and not be favorably disposed towards, the repression of radically oriented ethnic associations. This is notwithstanding the evident reality that these acute onlookers recognized that these groups were not particularly docile and innocent interests that could totally be absolved of blame for the outcomes of their devastating confrontations with the state. Paradoxically, instead of successfully moderating civil society's zealous affinities, as discovered in [Chapter VIII](#), this militancy on the state's part had the opposite effect.

In the following segment, I investigate two other facets of government action that triggered fanaticism amongst Nigerian CSOs, namely *marginalization* and *underdevelopment*. I first generally evaluate the two concepts under consideration and systematically interrogate how representatives of examined groups perceived them. As with the just concluded appraisal of the manifestations and effects of authoritarianism, the following discussions deliberately delve beyond the surface into the assorted issues that underlie these twin variables.

Marginalization

In concert with the state's perpetual fondness for dictatorship, which was directed towards almost Nigerians irrespective of their ethnic, religious and class backgrounds, IYC, MASSOB and OPC officials explained that their respective communities consistently were economically, politically and socially marginalized. Even though the *ad nauseam* reference to marginalization by all ethnic groups, including members of the dominant Hausa-Fulani ethnic groups in the North, was a relatively-recent phenomenon, available evidence suggested that certain sections of the country definitely were excluded in the distribution of infrastructure, government resources and political representation at the state and federal levels.

Unlike repression and underdevelopment, *marginalization* is fundamentally difficult to 'prove' in the Nigerian context because it has

tended to be *de facto*, implicit in orientation and not always quantifiable. Whilst it is possible to isolate specific policies that induced despotism, malaise and eventually civil society radicalization, one would be hard-pressed to locate particular government documents in the public domain resembling those most likely obtainable in South Africa or the United States, which explicitly delineate the forms of exclusion allegedly visited upon Nigerian ethnic, religious or social groups. Establishing a definitive pattern of causality between government actions and marginalization on the one hand, and non-state extremism, also is onerous due to the manner in which power is distributed in Nigeria.

As mentioned in passing throughout this volume's overview of Nigerian politics and alluded to in a detailed fashion by CSO leaders in previous chapters, political power inordinately has been concentrated in the hands of Northerners, especially those of Fulani and Hausa stocks. Based on this reality, educated members of these latter groups usually are overly represented in the upper echelons of influential government departments, directorates and ministries. Still, owing to the relative economic and educational backwardness of the North, and the extractive rather than productive nature of actions undertaken from positions of political supremacy in Nigeria, the majority of Northerners remain overwhelmingly-poor and destitute, and have not particularly benefited from having 'one of their own' in power.¹⁷

In contrast, economic and other non-political advantages are concentrated in the hands of Igbo and Yoruba citizens. As a whole, the South is more developed economically and industrially than the North, regardless of the fact that the former region produced very few of Nigeria's national rulers since independence. *Political* marginalization effected by Northern rulers therefore must be distinguished from other forms of marginalization, which are more complex and not readily discernible on the surface.

Curiously enough, Northern elites, who themselves resided in palatial mansions, immensely gained from their links with previous discriminatory regimes and periodically traveled to Saudi Arabia and elsewhere overseas for the lesser 'hajj' and other reasons, unconvincingly contended after 1999 that the Obasanjo-led government was deliberately marginalizing their communities. The same observation applied to prominent Nigerians from the country's two other dominant groups, the Igbo and Yoruba, who were richly rewarded by their associations with former rulers but recently jumped on the potentially profitable marginalization bandwagon as well.

Following from the foregoing, to the extent that marginalization exists in Nigeria, it must be viewed through class, as opposed to

strictly ethnic or religious, lenses. Elites from across Nigeria, regardless of their back grounds, profited from the largesse provided by consecutive military administrations and still were, to varying degrees, deriving personal rewards under the democratic dispensation that commenced in 1999.

Also, when analyzing the phenomenon of marginalization in the Nigerian context, great care must be taken to extricate self-serving rhetoric and the proclamations of elites who were bent on preserving their privileges by all necessary means and possibly metamorphosing into future politicians, from real or perceived marginalization as experienced by a large number of Nigerians who practically live as destitute refugees in their own country. In many respects, the post-1999 marginalization 'hue and cry' was nothing more than a mantra used by discontented citizens to advance selfish ends, settle personal scores and undermine, if not truncate, Nigeria's as-yet-unfinished democratic experiment.

This having been said, the spectre of marginalization in reality has been more apparent and eloquently articulated in the South-South than almost anywhere else in Nigeria. The oil-producing zone, unlike the South-West, South-East or the North as a whole, is a ticking time bomb perched atop an ecologically damaged environment that is replete with a restive, radicalized and unemployed population, and contends with dearth of electricity, tarred roads, potable water, quality health care services, and functional educational institutions.

On the surface, the federal government's neglect of the South-South and other minority areas appeared wilful, deliberate and resolute. This exclusion, presided over by repeated Northern-led administrations in connivance with MNCs, ensured that the majority of Nigerians resident in the Niger Delta geo-political zone subsisted on the periphery. Based on the foregoing and in subsequent paragraphs, I summarize the three forms of marginalization, economic, environmental and/or political, explicated by OPC, IYC and MASSOB officials, and offer a brief overview of economic and social underdevelopment below.

Underdevelopment

Although Nigeria possesses an entrepreneurial and educated citizenry, a resource-rich landscape and the largest internal market on the African Continent, it has been unable to efficiently harness these endowments for the purposes of economic, social or even political development. Whilst investments undertaken by the Obasanjo administration in education, health and general infrastructure somewhat increased, especially when compared to the stagnant and

distorted expenditures of previous decades, they failed to translate to marked improvements in these sectors, at least in a manner felt by ordinary Nigerians and visible to keen observers, by early 2003.

The latter portion of the 20th and beginning of the 21st Centuries could be characterized as Nigeria's era of malaise because the country's foreign exchange earnings steeply dropped on account of the vagaries of the global oil market. Even though the discovery of vast petroleum reserves in the Niger Delta dramatically catapulted Nigeria into the elite league of oil producers, the decrease in the country's reserves had the expected negative ripple effects on economic and social sectors. Due to this reality, there was a noticeable decline in funds available to the state to sustain the massive investments previously made in manufacturing and infrastructure.

Accordingly, the Nigerian government heavily borrowed from external sources; as the country's economic situation worsened, it increasingly became unable to meet its pressing financial obligations. In the post-1990 era, Nigeria recorded a burgeoning increase in its population, percentage of its citizens subsisting below the national poverty level, infant mortality and malnutrition rates, and overall level of indebtedness (Appendix E). If reports coming out of Nigeria are to be believed, then 70 out of every 120 Nigerians wallow in abject poverty, with 70 percent of the poorest of the poor being women (This Day 12 August 2002).

In a parallel fashion and when compared with more prosperous periods, conspicuous deteriorations in the country's GNP per capita, GDP, share of manufacturing as a percentage of GDP and export volume lingered. Yet, Nigeria's precarious economic and social conditions were caused not only by the larger international context, but by a domestic culture and tradition that tolerated corruption, mismanagement, myopic policies, flamboyant consumerism buttressed by massive product importation, and the funding of inefficient and unproductive state-owned enterprises (SOEs) whose only obvious benefit was the provision of employment to millions of citizens who somehow felt entitled to and deserving of such state generosity.

Although *corruption and mismanagement* are not only apparent in Nigeria, they have been more prevalent and destructive there than almost anywhere else in the world. Civilian and military rulers at all levels of government regularly raided public coffers and stockpiled billions of plundered money in foreign banking institutions. Predictably, due to the extortionary dispositions of consecutive governments, mismanagement and fraud were rife throughout the public sector.

After a considerable proportion of public funds had been stolen, the remainder was squandered and not judiciously spent on rural and

urban development, education, health, infrastructure and other critical areas demanding immediate and sustained attention. Instead, non-productive adventures, such as military excursions in Liberia and Sierra Leone, consumed an inordinate share of government expenditures. Ironically, as the country's economic situation rapidly declined, corruption and graft spiraled out of control.

Myopic and short-sighted policies also contributed to the economic doldrums that plagued Nigeria. Unlike dynamic governments in East Asia, for example, that had a clearly delineated development plan, Nigerian political elites did not appear to possess an assiduous vision for their nation's economic and social sectors. Where such foresight existed amongst the country's intelligentsia and technocrats, a lack of commensurate commitment on the part of policy-makers promptly ensured that this creativity was stifled and not encouraged. This preoccupation with the immediate rather than the long-term resulted in a lack of diversification into non-petroleum sectors, failure to massively fund viable manufacturing and consumer goods' industries, and the paucity of policies that would create an enabling environment for domestic and external business concerns.

As a result of economic and social deteriorations that abounded from previous decades and persist until today, life in Nigeria became and still is very brutish, as citizens contend with a rapidly increasing population, dilapidated infrastructure, increasingly epileptic power supply, lack of clean drinking water and rise in violent crime. The situation in Lagos is very telling in this regard. With the exception of proportionally few affluent suburbs, the metropolis and its environs are a cesspool of chaos, blighted slums, filth and utter lawlessness. In the remainder of the country, the majority of Nigerians continue to toil under similarly difficult conditions.

Deriving from this reality, non-state actors became increasingly mobilized and strident in response to the crisis that engulfed Nigeria, and depicted a country in the throes of economic and social catastrophe. Through several public statements and interviews, IYC, OPC and MASSOB representatives enunciated one or more of the following manifestations of marginalization and underdevelopment: *economic, environmental and social, and political*, which are examined below.

Ijaw Youth Council

At the core of the IYC's campaign is the contention that consecutive administrations, in tandem with MNCs and other relevant actors, specifically discriminated against the Ijaw community and the entire Niger Delta. The Ijaw, like other ethnic groups, pinpointed the

prevailing culture of underdevelopment that gradually worsened in the 1990s and beyond. In the Niger Delta context, ethnicity was a valuable artefact for drawing the attention of the privileged to this perilous state of affairs and concurrently mobilising the deprived concerning their precarious plight.

However, this use of ethnicity must be conceptualized as largely instrumental and not, at the very least, primordial. In order to sensitize their constituency to the conditions existing in the South-South, the Ijaw Youth Council repeatedly appealed to ethnic sentiments, including the collective sufferings visited upon the Ijaw people, in its quest to rally a restive community. The IYC thus was at the forefront of the political, economic and social empowerment of Ijaw-speaking peoples who, irrespective of their location in one of the most endowed parts of the world, suffer from untold hardships, deprivation and penury.

Economic discrimination in the South-South essentially connotes a concerted effort by the state and its cohorts to impede the ability of ordinary people to reap benefits from the wealth obtainable from their lands. Hence, the Ijaw Youth Council's agitation was predicated on the conjecture that repeated Nigerian governments calculatingly (mis) appropriated the revenues derived from the Delta's oil-rich land to inordinately develop the country's other regions at the South-South's expense.

Not only do residents of the area essentially lack control over their land, the Delta's development stagnated in comparison with the rest of Nigeria. This marginalization stymied the economic interests of the Ijaw, which revolved around the ability to obtain gainful employment with their province's many oil companies if they so desired, engage in sustainable livelihoods, specifically benefit from and participate in the profitable export of petroleum products, contribute to urgently-needed diversification into other sectors, increase indigenous control over the economy, invite external investments on their own terms and/or concurrently diminish foreigners' undue domination. In fact, the domination of the management of MNCs and related companies by foreigners and other non-Delta indigenes alike represented one of the most conspicuous examples of *de facto* economic discrimination in the South-South.

Relatedly, the Ijaw Youth Council unceasingly accentuated the deleterious effects of *economic underdevelopment* that had been experienced by all Nigerians, on their constituency. From this vantage point, the apparent manner in which corruption permeated Nigerian society, widened the chasm between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots', stifled development initiatives and practically guaranteed that political office was offered to the highest bidder, who frequently was

supported by rich patrons (or 'godbathers') such as former military rulers and wealthy civilians, was widely acknowledged. Hence, funds that could have been expended on economic, social and environmental improvements across the Niger Delta and certainly the remainder of Nigeria, were utilized for frivolous and unproductive purposes.

In the IYC's view, corruption represented one of the key factors that hampered the ability of Nigerians to enthrone economic and other forms of sustainable development. Despite the half-hearted, anti-corruption posture of the Obasanjo democratic regime and serious but autocratic attempts to eliminate corruption from Nigerian public life, fraud continued to influence a great deal of the country's endeavors after 1999.

Environmental degradation and social stagnation within the Niger Delta also presented another incontrovertible proof that the particular interests of the Ijaw had been ignored. As repeatedly mentioned by IYC officials, the extent of the ecological destruction wreaked in the South-South's oil producing areas is extensive and overwhelming. In successive governments' and MNCs' quest to maximize earnings at all costs and export valuable crude oil to Europe and North America, they customarily flouted the most fundamental tenets of sustainable development.

Instead of carefully evaluating the fragile and unique nature of the Delta's ecosystem, Western-owned oil companies operating in Nigeria, namely Agip, Chevron, Elf, Mobil, Shell and Texaco, and their Nigerian accomplices, engaged in oil extraction and exploration activities that harmed delicate wetlands, agricultural lands, waterways and air quality through persistent and indiscriminate gas flaring, oil spills and leaks.

There has been widespread and systematic destruction of unique habitats, especially the South-South's mangrove forests, which are the largest in Africa, the third largest in the world, contain endangered animals such as the 'Delta Elephant, the white-crested monkey, the river hippopotamus and crocodiles' but yet are in severe danger of extinction from unbridled and reckless oil-related activities (Essential Action 2000). Local rivers, streams and lakes also were polluted in the process, despite the state and MNCs' repeated promises to institute a more environmentally friendly exploration system.

Pollution engendered by petroleum-related concerns precipitated severe ecological and health-related problems, including unacceptably-high levels of carbon dioxide and methane gases, lack of natural darkness owing to constant gas flares and acid rain, which in turn negatively impinged upon the water supply and crops (Essential Action 2000). This calculated but gradual obliteration of available farming lands, through the controversial 1978 Land Use decree, which

in effect reserved the most desirable lands for the petroleum industry, and the harmful repercussions of oil exploration, exacerbated poverty amongst the Ijaw, who depend upon fishing and farming for their subsistence. Additionally, IYC spokespersons enumerated instances of indiscriminate logging, canalization, flooding, erosion and earth tremors as confirmation of the environmental catastrophe currently looming in their towns and villages.

Likewise, *social marginalization* of the Ijaw and other ethnic communities in the Niger Delta was blamed on the Nigerian state in particular and MNCs in general. This neglect manifested itself through the precarious existence of the Ijaw in towns without adequate amenities and healthy food supply, and the worsening conditions of women, children and the most vulnerable populations. In contrast, within several oil-producing communities, the mostly-expatriate staff members of Shell and other foreign-owned companies live and work, in an apartheid-like fashion, in havens of luxury and privilege amidst the clearly-evident squalor that is the lot of the Ijaw.

In addition to the figuratively incestuous and unequal relationship between MNCs and the Nigerian state, the South-South is notorious for literal and rampant prostitution, where girls and women provide sexual 'services' mostly to Western and other workers affiliated with the petroleum industry (Essential Action 2000). The researcher observed such unwholesome activities at a South-South hospitality establishment in January 2002. These loathsome acts occasionally resulted in the conception of 'mixed race' children who later were abandoned and disowned by their fathers. Not surprisingly, social relations within the Niger Delta have been dramatically altered and incidences of sexually transmitted diseases have rapidly grown. These dire actions, and the prevalent rape of women and girls by government security forces stationed in the Delta, reflect the desperate conditions confronting the Ijaw and their immediate neighbors in the South-South's hinterlands.

IYC officials also underscored the manner in which their ethnic brethren were marginalized in the political arena. This *political marginalization* is traced to the British's dilution of the Ijaw community's territorial cohesiveness through the arbitrary creation of 'political and administrative units' in the 1930s. From that period onwards, Nigerian governments did not alter this situation; in a further reflection of their centralizing tendencies and in a manner akin to the illogical conception of the territory of Nigeria by colonialists with very little regard for existing realities, newlycreated states did and still do not reflect the natural and historical distribution of ethnic groups.

Thus, any potential for effective and collective political, economic and social influence by the Ijaw at state and federal levels was diluted by their presence in the diverse states of Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, Edo, Rivers and Ondo. Undoubtedly, such a random dispersal made group organization and cohesion difficult. Moreover, apart from other ethnic groups, the South-South's concerns were not always fully represented in the Federal Capital Territory because non-Deltans historically dominated the majority of the country's federal government agencies.

As a result of the discrimination presumably inherent in Nigeria's political system, the IYC appeared distrustful of politics in general and did not desire to actualize its stated objectives through formalized and 'sensible' means. Naturally, this wariness partially sprung from the exclusionary manner in which politicians from the South-South had been treated. Also, the IYC's apolitical stance probably was attributable to the failure of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to grant the obsolete NSM, a party established to represent the sub-region's particular interests, final registration in 1998 because it lacked the requisite 10 per cent of total votes cast in local government elections in at least two-thirds of Nigeria.

It is believed that a party of minorities stood very little chance of gaining the support of persons from majority areas and eventually winning the presidency or other national elected positions.¹⁸ Therefore, if the political terrain were truly open to individuals and political organizations from outside the dominant Hausa-Fulani-Igbo-Yoruba bloc, then groups that of late became radicalized could have expended their post-1998 energies via less-controversial and more institutionalized channels. Nonetheless, the rancor evident at the local, state and national levels implied that if militant civil society organizations were involved in politics, the state might become a locus of unending crises, as such groups indiscriminately transferred their radical stratagems to the political realm.

Moreover, owing to the fact that Nigerian democracy was largely in its incipient stages in 2003 and certain individuals who participated in it, such as Obasanjo, were viewed with scepticism, if not contempt, for their policies, the Ijaw felt that politicians were not particularly responsive to their needs. Overall, although the verdict on the Obasanjo administration's attempt to address the distinctive problems of the South-South through the newly-established Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) was still out as of 2003, its forerunner, the defunct Oil Mineral Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC), was an utter failure because of the widespread corruption and financial recklessness that typified it. Many observers, including this writer, remain unconvinced concerning

the ability of nationally devised and controlled programmes to wholly remedy the economic and social problems in the Delta in the immediate future.

*Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State
of Biafra*

On one level, the concerns of MASSOB and the Igbo as a collectivity between 1999 and 2002 were somewhat different from those expressed by the IYC; in other respects, they overlapped. Like their South-South contemporaries, MASSOB officials specifically reiterated the manner in which corruption invaded the length and breadth of Nigerian society, and consequently underdeveloped the entire country. Furthermore, Biafran Movement spokespersons also submitted that the Obasanjo administration lacked the political will and was ill equipped to frontally attack the menace of mismanagement in Nigeria.

Apart from the stagnation apparent in the South-East and the remainder of Nigeria, MASSOB officials held that their organization was established to remedy the explicit disenfranchisement and exclusion of the Igbo. The origins of this mandatory exclusion and continuing deprivation of the Igbo were traced to unsound colonial policies. Besides, they remarked that consecutive federal governments in Lagos, the former capital, and Abuja, the current seat of government, conspired to marginalize members of the ethnic group. Additionally, leaders of the Movement affirm that non-Igbo individuals and interests from outside government circles were to blame for the discrimination being experienced by the Igbo.

The alleged and methodical exclusion of the Igbo purposely manifested itself through the failure to fully rebuild the East after all these years, notwithstanding the institution of reconciliation, rehabilitation and reconstruction schemes to effect comprehensive development in Igbo-speaking communities. From the perspectives of MASSOB and certain outspoken Igbo persons, the paucity of a strong and visible federal presence in the South-East, typified by the availability of functioning digital telephone services, nationally-owned educational establishments, well-paved roads and quality health care institutions, among other amenities, confirmed the marginalization of their ethnic group.

Irrespective of the reality that this desire for enhanced federal presence in the South-East sharply contradicted the lack of federalism that MASSOB, and indeed the OPC and IYC, consistently condemned, it is not at all unexpected. Ironically, since economic, political and even cultural advantages are exceedingly concentrated at the centre, the respective states that constitute Nigeria literally have been

mostly, if not fully, dependent upon the federal government in the aforementioned and other spheres.¹⁹

With the exception of a few resourceful governors who independently raised revenues from external sources, whilst becoming severely indebted in the process, Nigeria's politico-administrative units still operated based on the whims and caprices of federal agencies and ministries. It was not uncommon for 'federal' roads, hospitals and polytechnics outside the national capital to be in deplorable conditions simply because of the reticence of, or feelings of indifference exhibited by, the centre. In response, certain South-Eastern (and indeed other) governors frequently issued strident pronouncements concerning the perilous conditions of these facilities or implored the concerned ministries to rehabilitate them, whilst at the same time demanding increased regional autonomy. Furthermore, certain Nigerians viewed the presence of one or more centrally owned establishments as a noteworthy mark of development. Predictably, a vigorous competition for such amenities between contending communities remained the norm in the country.²⁰

Due to the likelihood of potentially damaging occurrences, government officials typically must carefully weigh the manner in which they distribute central resources and institutions, not only between the different states but also within states, in order to forestall inter and intra-ethnic conflicts. They also must be willing to explain the reasons for their actions to concerned parties lest they become entangled in the ever-present marginalization web. In a country where existing resources sometimes were squandered and limited to begin with, in relation to the expansive nation of Nigeria and its seemingly countless problems, achieving this sensitive balance is an even more difficult or possibly unattainable task in the near or long term.

Based on the foregoing belief, MASSOB leaders repeatedly contended that allocation of federal resources to the East was disproportionately low when compared to Nigeria's other geo-political zones. Apart from discrimination that was measurable in physical terms, MASSOB officials stressed the idea of purposeful political marginalization, which reputedly pertained to the manner in which political and other federally-made appointments excluded the Igbo, and the inability of Igbo politicians to secure and/or maintain the reins of the presidency, and other coveted elected positions in the Executive and Legislative branches of the national government.

Reflective of the country's diverse landscape and the continuing salience of ethnicity (and religion) in its daily life, the selection of certain individuals to occupy the plum posts of minister, permanent secretary or agency director, which would not be as important in other

less plural contexts, is very important and symbolic in Nigeria. Owing to this stark and unavoidable reality, repeated administrations in the country, regardless of their authoritarian or democratic credentials, customarily appointed officials from the various states, not necessarily based on merit, stellar qualifications or appropriateness of their backgrounds to the positions that they filled, but because of the pressing need to placate inter, intra-ethnic and other pertinent interests. The actuality that supporters and their family members also must be 'settled' makes the seemingly-innocuous undertaking of selecting a federal appointee all the more arduous, complicated and sensitive.

Whereas the Igbo, unlike the Yoruba of the South-West, overwhelmingly voted for President Obasanjo in 1999, they avowed during my interviews that he failed to reward this unalloyed support with a dogged determination to remedy injustices and marginalization committed by past administrations. Instead, in MASSOB's view, the Obasanjo regime systematically neglected the Igbo, their concerns and representatives.²¹

MASSOB officials reported that amongst federally appointed police commissioners in Nigeria's 36 states, Obasanjo did not choose a single officer from the Igbo ethnic group between 1999 and 2002. Additionally, although this government picked widely respected Igbo persons to serve as heads of the influential ministries of Aviation and Transportation for example, MASSOB Chief Uwazuruike described such appointments as not far-reaching enough. He also noted that, despite the provisos of the 1999 Constitution, which claimed that certain appointments to the National Security Council and the armed forces divisions should be allocated to candidates from the country's six geo-political zones, only the South-East was excluded. MASSOB condemned the allotment of key Petroleum, Internal Affairs, Defence and Police Affairs ministerial posts for non-Igbo groups, whilst affirming that the ouster of Senate President Chuba Okadigbo in 2000 exemplified the alleged conspiracy against the Igbo.

The second manifestation of political marginalization concerned the manner in which the aspirations of high-ranking Igbo politicians like Dr Alex Ekwueme, former Vice President during the aborted Shagari era of the early 1980s, to capture the presidency were frustrated by their political parties (in Ekwueme's case, the Peoples Democratic Party) and other entrenched interests. This situation is blamed on segments of the Northern elite, which were not favorably disposed to having a Southern, let alone an Igbo, President. As a result of perceived Hausa-Fulani hegemony, Igbo demands for an Easterner to stand for the 2003 presidential elections and MASSOB's boisterous clamor for secession tremendously increased after 1999.

Lastly, MASSOB was formed in response to corruption, unbridled mismanagement of the Nigerian economy and concomitant stagnation in key development indices. One of the prime reasons for the dismal state of the country's economic, judicial, social and political spheres is the pervasiveness of corruption. As reported in [Chapter V](#), not only did this malfeasance directly impinge upon MASSOB's dealings with relevant state officials, it corroded the group's faith and belief in the Nigerian state and society. More broadly, the country's maldevelopment could be traced to a 'crisis of political leadership', which in turn was characterized by an excessive obsession with the personal at the expense of the collective good of Nigerian society, and the general 'muckiness' that pervaded the nation's political realm.

Oodua Peoples Congress

Finally, the Oodua Peoples Congress was established to draw attention to perceived marginalization of the Yoruba climaxing in the political crises of the 1990s. Also, the organization directed its energies toward an analysis of the problem of underdevelopment that bedevilled the country after the 1980s, when malaise became the order of the day. For radical Yoruba citizens in general and OPC supporters in particular, and unlike IYC and MASSOB adherents, the marginalization of the Yoruba was mostly political in disposition.

This is hardly surprising, as residents of the South-West, especially Lagos, the country's economic powerhouse enjoyed, in theory at least, certain benefits not available to relatively-poor Nigerians in other parts of the country.²² The concentration of major industries in Lagos and adjoining parts of the South-West therefore did not stimulate the articulation of a 'theory of economic marginalization' by the OPC or the Yoruba for that matter, at least in a manner comparable with the other two ethnic organizations.

One of the first evidence of political marginalization recounted by OPC officials concerned the excessive concentration of power in the Executive and Legislative branches of government. Like its South-South and South-East counterparts, the OPC disparaged the lack of a genuine federal system that would allow the respective geo-political zones to maintain a measure of independence and autonomy.

In tracing the artificial nature of the Nigerian state to British rule and the country's marked departure from a territorially-contiguous nation-state that obtained in specific areas outside the Africa Continent, the Congress forcefully maintained that only a national meeting of all ethnic nationalities could ameliorate, if not eliminate, intra-society rivalries, hold the state in check by lessening its penchant for despotism, ensure that all citizens feel that they

completely belong and that their interests matter to all and sundry, totally revamp the federal constitution hurriedly drawn and approved by the military, and debate issues of 'nationness', citizenship, the essence of Nigeria as a whole and the manner in which myriad groups should relate to the state.

Based on this reality, the Congress saw a six-zone confederation as the only practicable way of reforming Nigeria's political system and equalizing the existing power imbalances between the centre and the states, as they had been constituted. OPC officials described this system as 'ethnic federalism', which allowed the respective ethnic groups to 'exist as separate polities with an overarching central authority, a combination of self-rule and shared rule'. The Congress asserted that if the country's diversity 'cancerworm' were not adequately addressed, it could provoke another civil war that might claim millions of lives.

Following from previous statements, it is not evidently clear whether the SNC would yield substantive benefits, and not simply become a symbolic act on the federal government's part or a cathartic event that might quickly degenerate into a 'free-for-all' shouting match between representatives of the country's ethnic groups and other interested parties. The complexity of Nigeria's ethnic terrain, including the presence of intricate intraethnic divisions superimposed upon contending religious and other politicized alliances, makes the capacity of such a national meeting to effect outcomes agreeable to all parties highly questionable.

Irrespective of these general qualms, if the SNC convened under the auspices of the central government indeed were successful in assuaging deep-seated grievances emanating from ethnic pressure groups, it actually might embolden other organizations, particularly those of a fanatical ilk, to place more demands upon the state. In the end, vociferous and crippling calls for secession *a la* MASSOB could emerge from potentially unviable but yet-determined 'nation-states'.

Secondly and perhaps more significantly, OPC officials traced Yoruba marginalization to the extensive hegemony of Northern rulers, who seemingly frustrated the desire of Yoruba leaders such as Obafemi Awolowo and Moshood Abiola to assume the presidency of Nigeria, through exclusion and/or elimination. In this vein, repeated regimes dominated by individuals of Hausa-Fulani extraction reportedly treated the Yoruba as virtual slaves within the Nigerian federation, essentially guaranteed that one of their brethren was always in charge, strived to institutionalize this hegemony, and presided over an unequal and unrepresentative state. Even though their Yoruba kinsman, Obasanjo, assumed the reins of the presidency in 1999 and was assured another 4-year term in 2003, the underlying

conviction amongst certain Yoruba citizens that he was nothing more than the lackey of influential Northern elites from the military and other circles failed to completely evaporate.

Like other forms of reported marginalization, advantaged but disgruntled individuals from all the country's ethnic groups regularly referenced instances of alleged political discrimination to bolster their support base, undermine the legitimacy of those in authority and ultimately displace them, if at all possible. Consequently, the marginalization 'project' must be perceived as yet another example of the politicization of ethnicity (and religion) to advance particular ends. Still, the fact that most Nigerian rulers hailed from the Hausa or Fulani ethnic groups revealed a broader agenda on the part of a small group of Northern Muslims, in partnership with other interested parties, to maintain their political hegemony at all costs.

This domination was apparent not only to Southerners from Yoruba, Ijaw and Igbo backgrounds, but to Northerners from non-Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups as well. Even where non-Northerners such as Obasanjo successfully surmounted the aforesaid political impediments, they were viewed with deep misgivings and concomitantly lacked a requisite multi-ethnic legitimacy because of their association with presumed Northern 'kingmakers', who mostly operated in a clandestine manner, and the belief that they, as 'token' leaders, were beholden to these powerful interests. It is this pervasive Northern influence, regardless of the ethnic or religious background of those in power, which the OPC heartily resented and resisted.

Lastly, the OPC was formed in response to massive corruption, general underdevelopment and presumed distortions in the allocation of federal resources. On the first point, Congress leaders maintained that resource allocations made by the central government profited Northern states at the expense of those in the South-West, because of the former's substantial landmass in proportion to the latter. It was argued that this distorted distribution mechanism obstructed the development of South-Western states. In relation, the OPC opined that Northerners excessively benefited from preferential quota systems within Federal Universities that reserved select slots for students from educationally disadvantaged states. This latter assertion, however, is not necessarily supported by available facts.²³

The resource allocation controversy is a bit thornier to describe and resolve. On the surface, Northern states traditionally obtained higher subventions from the centre, owing to their pronounced size in relation to the South. More seriously, the decision to devote more resources to the North was an example of subtle neglect, if not purposeful discrimination. In this vein, the Petroleum Special Trust Fund, which was established by the Abacha regime in the 1990s and

funded from revenues derived from the oil sector, apparently was mostly directed towards infrastructural development in the North. Whilst this could not be independently proved as of this writing, it would not be unanticipated given Nigeria's history.

Since the most formidable resistance to authoritarian rule emanated from the South, the military *juntas* of this period routinely punished and effectively 'starved' the region of badly needed funds. Babangida's 1992 decision to hastily relocate the federal capital from Lagos to the still-uncompleted territory of Abuja, and the concomitant deterioration in federal properties and facilities in Lagos, the former capital, also substantiated this negligence. Nevertheless, if the North were disaggregated into its constituent parts, namely the North Central, North-East and North-West, and the myth of Northern unity were thoroughly jettisoned, then a more holistic and contextually-informed analysis of these critical issues, which was cognisant of the region's diversity, would emerge. In this manner, one would discover that these three zones of the North were not relatively well off; in several respects, they actually were and still are worse off than their Southern counterparts.

On a separate issue and in [Chapter VI](#), Frederick Fasehun and factional leader Ganiyu Adams alluded to several examples of corruption within the upper echelons of Nigerian society. The looting of public funds was blamed for the widespread malaise that gripped the country over the past decades, and military and civilian politicians' increased interest in and uncontrollable appetite for political office. Instances of corruption were not only found within military regimes, they were, between 1999 and 2002, noticeable in the country's National Assembly wherein legislators consistently contravened fundamental principles of probity, financial prudence and accountability that ought to characterize a transparent democratic regime, and audaciously resisted attempts by Obasanjo to institute a corruption-free society.

Moreover, the OPC contended that the Obasanjo administration miserably failed to overhaul Nigeria's public sector after it assumed office. Not only did the Executive and Legislature essentially ignore offending officials accused of bribery and inflated contracts, they tolerated such actions and failed to sanction political 'bigwigs' caught in the web of such unseemly scandals.

Fasehun, in describing Nigeria as 'the most corrupt nation on earth' and acceding to Transparency International's ranking of the country in this manner, conceded that bribery and embezzlement were widespread throughout all facets of Nigerian society, including SOEs, financial institutions, law enforcement agencies and tertiary institutions. Overall, the OPC's official position in the late 1990s and

beyond was that this culture of corruption contributed in no small measure to Nigeria's underdevelopment. Strangely, in a case of civil society mirroring the state's imperfections, the accusations of corruption leveled against the OPC itself was very interesting to say the least.²⁴

In closing, the OPC articulated a 'theory of underdevelopment' that was rooted in the presupposition that the political centre traditionally neglected the economic and social welfare of Yoruba citizens. In the group's view, the Nigerian government instituted and promoted policies that precipitated 'unemployment, hunger, squalor, disease, poverty and homelessness'. The continuing declaration of this plain fact remained one of the OPC's central missions when I undertook this study. Indeed, the organization sought to sensitize the Yoruba concerning their predicament in this regard, challenge the government to redress issues of underdevelopment and marginalization, and ultimately ensure that the obtained outcomes were advantageous to 'its' people.

SUMMARY

In this analytical portion of my project and proceeding from prior descriptions of the IYC, MASSOB and OPC, I reviewed two deficiencies evident in literature, namely the denial or underestimation of the presence and ramifications of ingrained incivility within recognized civil society organizations, and the excessive focus on a narrow conceptualization of the non-state domain, which were illumined by the case studies. On the first weakness, I maintained that an unwarranted emphasis on the civility that supposedly symbolizes CSOs is misplaced and half-hearted, as it does not encapsulate the (minor or major) annoyances that these organized interests also effect.

Similarly, I surmised that, instead of normatively exempting extremist or ascriptive associations because of their reputed dysfunctions and inability to advance constructive benefits, a more holistic treatment of these and other entities presumed to rightly belong within civil society would reveal that they make both laudable and dishonorable contributions to society. Even though I principally dwelt upon and interrogated the latter idea, it must be noted that radical organizations, in their own idiosyncratic ways, create 'safe spaces' for their members, hold the state's 'feet to the fire', expose its despotic practises, and ensure that instances and consequences of economic, political and social problems remain 'part and parcel' of the public discourse.

Secondly, in order to reveal the ways in which regime policy impelled civil society fanaticism in Nigeria, I explored the relationship between authoritarianism, discrimination, and economic and social underdevelopment, and radicalization. From this vantage point, the main part of this chapter answered the following and other important questions:

1. How did MASSOB, IYC and OPC define repression, marginalization and underdevelopment?
2. Are these definitions valid and what underlying issues influenced them?
3. What general economic, political and social policies combined to conceive the environment within which these groups materialised, were radicalized and remained active in a supposedly democratic and responsive epoch?
4. Beyond the pre-1999 policies that triggered the proliferation of these and other fanatical entities in Nigeria, how did the state relate to the OPC, IYC and MASSOB between 1998 and 2002?
5. What are the implications of the state's largely irreverent posture for itself and civil society organizations at large?

Now that I have, to the extent possible, sketched a direct link between regime policy and radicalization of these organizations, in [Chapter VIII](#), I assess how they reacted to the economic, political and social conditions heretofore shown, expressed their myriad complaints and attempted to rectify these grievances in a speedy but frequently-militant manner. To undertake these indispensable tasks, I wholeheartedly delve into the *minimal*, *moderate* and *explicit* radicalization that all profiled associations experienced during their short histories.

CHAPTER VIII

Analysis of the Process of Radicalization

HERETOFORE, I REVIEWED CONTEXTUAL EVIDENCE, WHICH SUGGESTED that the radicalization of Nigerian civil society on the whole and profiled organizations in particular was directly attributable to repression, underdevelopment and apparent or reputed instances of marginalization that occurred under both military and civilian governments in Nigeria from independence to 2002.¹ Due to the inherently difficult task of independently and painstakingly delineating the contours of regime policy in a fractured polity like Nigeria, and the subjectivity that naturally underlay constructive discussions of purported discrimination undertaken by state or societal institutions, preceding analyses evaluated these three facets of government behavior mostly from the vantage points of the IYC, MASSOB and OPC. Nonetheless, to the extent possible, the previous chapter problematized group perceptions of inequity, authoritarianism, social and economic malaise, with the intention of better ascertaining their authentic underpinnings in relation to group militancy in Nigeria.

In general terms, the process of radicalization and corresponding state of radicalism in Nigeria commonly were outgrowths of a rational and concerted effort to achieve outlined aims. As such, the dependence on extremist devices was not simply or primarily an emotional, irrational, irascible or primordial response to the apparent or speculated ills plaguing society at any given point in time, even though group 'outbursts' at times were haphazard and disjointed. Organizational radicalization also was not an event that was finalized with the adoption of one or more militant tactics. Instead, it was a complicated process through which groups periodically refined their strategies, in light of changing internal and external developments.

The decision to utilize fanatical, as opposed to more mainstream, stratagems thereby was carefully weighed by the actors involved based on the milieu in which they were situated, the state's reaction to previous or ongoing rebellious activities by their and other associations, and underlying characteristics that were not always

visible to the outside observer. Consequently, radicalization in any context could be visualized as a process that is stimulated by a convergence of one or more of the following variables: *individual, organizational, extra-organizational/domestic* or *international*.²

To sufficiently comprehend the reasons why fanatical entities arose and the factors that predisposed them to extremism, *individual-level variables*, such as leaders' and supporters' ages, employment status, gender, dispositions, backgrounds³, ambitions, and parochial interests, and the presence of a 'copy-cat' syndrome, wherein certain militant associations assumed positions, objectives and approaches similar to those employed by related entities, must be critically studied and examined.

Nevertheless, even if I had interviewed the founders of Nigerian radical groups, an undertaking that proved unattainable for the purposes of this study, fully understanding the relationship between their personal experiences and idiosyncrasies on the one hand, and radicalization, would remain a complicated endeavor.⁴ Accordingly, even though I made allusions in [Chapters IV](#) through [VI](#) to these matters, only speculative and superficial comments at best could be garnered regarding their obviously-important but outwardly-imperceptible influence on the dependent variable of concern to this research.

Conversely, the larger *extra-organizational or domestic environment* in which an entity is located, the level of analysis upon which this text exclusively focuses, also fans the embers of organizational fanaticism. As demonstrated in [Chapter VII](#), if economic underdevelopment, political exclusion and state despotism excessively feature in a particular nation, then certain organized entities of the religious, ethnic, political or social mold are inclined to enunciate contentious objectives, rely upon strident declarations to define such goals and gain public approval or support, and ultimately participate in lethal disagreements with other civil society associations or eventually the state, which for many a CSO is the ultimate prize and target.

In addition, if government officials are extremely acerbic in their rhetoric concerning radical entities or the ethnic groups that they 'represent', ignore or seek to stifle their aspirations and yearnings, or are altogether oppressive, then there is a higher likelihood that societal radicalization would ensue and become worse if circumstances do not improve. Undeniably, this was the situation in post-1999 Nigeria, as the state erroneously believed that it could rid itself of the ethnic militia 'nuisance' through the use of inordinate force and unrefined language, and the reactions of the democratically-elected

Obasanjo administration to perceived destabilization efforts were not markedly different from those of erstwhile military regimes.

In many respects, a democratic government functioning in an environment replete with agitated militant associations is confronted with a major quandary. On the one hand, if it uses unwarranted force against such organizations, it unwittingly could radicalize them, legitimate their activities, broaden their support base, and damage the state's reputation in the eyes of domestic and international observers. Paradoxically, if a civilian administration, or its military equivalent for that matter, totally ignores fanatical entities, it does so at its own peril, as these groups basically could undermine its authority and control over society, and contribute to an increase in the number of similarly-organized interests seeking to make the state irrelevant in the final scheme of things.

Achieving a thoughtful policy equilibrium between these two extremes thus becomes critical and imperative for the state, as its very survival, and that of the polity which it governs, plainly depend upon it. As mentioned elsewhere in this volume, civil society militancy regularly is a reflection of state corrosiveness and radicalism; non-state actors routinely learn from the state concerning how to handle genuine or ill-advised demands. In essence, it hardly should be surprising if ethnic, religious and social organizations embrace uncivil tactics that succeeding governments resorted to in their dealings with bona fide or invented opponents.

Even if MASSOB, OPC and the IYC had never engaged in physical combat with the state or relied upon inciting words to galvanize their respective constituencies or effectively 'fight' the state, they still would be classified as radical groups by the Nigerian state and other informed actors. This is owing to the fact that articulated aims, like redistribution of economic, political and social privileges, are extremist, at least from elites' vantage points, and routinely require the espousal of correspondingly inclined tactics.⁵ All of these features were apparent in the Nigerian experience and are not totally divergent from those observed elsewhere in the world.

PRELUDE TO RADICALIZATION OVERVIEW

Unavoidably, the observed militancy of Nigerian's non-state sphere spurred a dramatic expansion in the number of CSOs, an analogous increase in their vocalism and a patent reliance on aggressive strategies to realize their goals. In spite of the common tendency to equate radicalism with physical violence, group militancy does *not* always connote deadly clashes between state and non-state actors, or within civil society for that matter. In actuality, the process of

radicalization could be envisioned as entailing an overlapping continuum that comprises tactics that are less-radical, moderately-radical or most-radical in orientation.

The three entities examined in this study are fiercely militant, as their members engaged in or were entangled in virulent confrontations with state security operatives and/or other parties, which resulted in countless casualties and injuries on all fronts. In several instances, these disturbances were initiated by the deeds or declarations of these ethnic organizations. Furthermore, in order to challenge perceived government unresponsiveness and callousness to their predicament, these radical CSOs utilized caustic rhetoric that overly inflamed passions within their specific groups, triggered the formation of fanatical entities by similar and other ethnic groups, and resulted in the usage of equally or more damaging language by state and non-state actors alike.

In a further reflection of the heightened 'state of war' between radical organizations and the government, the two main protagonists also routinely manipulated casualty, injury and arrest statistics that were presented in the Nigerian and international media, and exaggerated the extent of the damages caused by their opponents, whilst concomitantly minimising the destructive effects of their actions with the purpose of presenting the other party in as unfavorable a light as possible.⁶

In ensuing analyses, I investigate how the IYC, MASSOB and OPC perceived and reacted to reputed *repression* undertaken by security forces with the tacit or explicit approval of one or more of the federal (or state) government's three branches of governments, *marginalization* that in their view was concertedly and maliciously targeted towards them merely because of their ethnicity, and *underdevelopment* instigated by government action or inaction. A careful, close and complete reading of the remainder of [Chapter VIII](#) suggests that, whilst the previously-cited facets of regime policy radicalized these organizations as a whole, each entity responded to the crises evident in the Nigerian milieu in its own unique ways.

Based on this submission, I broadly examine the three variants of my radicalization typology that the groups exploited in furtherance of their specific purposes since their inception in the 1990s. The first step of this process of radicalization entails the expression of controversial goals; the second involves a reliance on deprecating rhetoric; and the third element occurs when organizations resort to or otherwise become associated with violent or disorderly behaviors. Under each theme and as has been customary thus far, I introduce the radicalization feature under consideration and then assess how it is

detectable within the particular experiences of MASSOB, IYC and OPC.

MINIMAL RADICALIZATION

The less radical variant of group fanaticism involves actions like organizing and demanding civil, economic, political, religious and social rights, which threaten the extant situation within a country, region or even the global comity of nations, and in turn are considered controversial by the state and conservative elements within society. In the case of Nigeria, government officials and other concerned parties vigorously resisted militant ethnic associations' forceful call for *secession, convocation of a national meeting of ethnic groups, federalism, self-determination and resource control*.⁷

Less radical organizations are not usually as vocal as moderately or overtly-radical groupings, although they still could significantly pressure established interests within and outside state structures. Given the fact that group tactics are constantly in flux, and being refined based on immediate and future exigencies, minimally-radical CSOs could, as time progresses, become more fanatical or even evolve in the opposite direction by tempering their extremist stances.

Furthermore, increased militancy could be prompted by the state's failure or refusal to meet group demands; internal changes such as factionalization caused by disagreements regarding group goals, tactics or leadership and external transformations, including but not limited to regime change (from dictatorship to democratic/semi-democratic rule or vice versa); alterations in policies toward radical groups; and changes in prevailing political, economic, social and religious conditions.

Moreover, certain old-fashioned or moderate elements might construe the mere act of demanding certain rights as an expression of fanaticism. If these contentious demands principally imperil the established order and potentially could attenuate, if not eliminate, privileges enjoyed by a relatively small group of people, then it might be in their best interest to label 'uncouth' organizations that peddle them as terrorist or subversive. They need not necessarily be seditious; the simple fact that entrenched interests view particular objectives and those who espouse them with disdain instinctively makes them radical.

Consequently, the branding of groups as 'militant' by the state is a consciously political act that placates powerful interests, maintains the *status quo* and seeks to forever silence 'wayward' organizations and their mandates; a reaction to objective appraisals of their remarks and deeds; and a concurrently-subjective decision that is

based on the whims and caprices of those involved, hence the following truism: 'one person's terrorist, is another's freedom fighter'. In the next paragraphs, I detail the ways in which MASSOB, IYC and OPC reacted to the three facets of regime policy highlighted in [Chapter VII](#) through the employment of less-radical strategies during the course of their dealings with individuals, government and CSO officials from the 1990s onwards.

Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra

The brutal suppression of previous Igbo secession efforts practically increased the costs of resisting the Nigerian state and essentially assured the outward compliance of groups that afterwards might have nursed similar ambitions. Thus, between that period and the late 1990s, when the ghosts of Biafra were publicly revived, the Igbo did not maintain any visible and confrontational organizations like MASSOB. In actuality, if there were any post-Civil War and Igbo-dominated pockets of resistance in the South-East or elsewhere in the country, they remained negligible and subsisted on the utter fringes of Nigerian society.

As an ethnic group reportedly treated as a 'defeated and vanquished people', the Igbo as a collectivity were largely quiescent and conciliatory prior to 1999. They freely participated and were visible in the country's political, economic, social, religious and intellectual spheres. This relatively-dispassionate and predictable stance changed, albeit metaphorically in certain minds, with MASSOB's establishment in September 1999; a seminal occurrence that reminded all observant observers of the powerful manner in which communal experiences and myths mold the past, present and eventually the future in plural and divided societies.

The experiences of MASSOB's leader, Ralph Uwazuruike, and other Igbo citizens incontrovertibly were shaped by the Civil War of the late 1960s, which resulted in the loss of approximately 1 million lives. Not only did the defeat of the Odumegwu Ojukwu-led secessionist movement by the Nigerian Armed Forces linger within Igbo collective memory and practically assume 'a life of its own', references to the carnage and destruction it engendered throughout the South-East served as a rallying call, and mobilizing and radicalizing tool, both for those who vividly recollected the experience and those who were born thereafter.

Even though certain Igbo citizens might have forgotten the past, others clearly did not. As cited in [Chapter V](#), Uwazuruike was apparently impacted by the perceived injustices perpetrated against

innocent lives by the Nigerian 'side'; hence his resolve to avenge the gruesome deaths of his immediate family members and ethnic brethren, and redeem the image of the Igbo at all costs and by all necessary means. Therefore, MASSOB's formation is both a personal and a collective response to the seeming authoritarianism, discrimination and underdevelopment embodied and caused by the Civil War.

The fact that the country *writ large* was faced with economic and social decline for most of the last three decades, and that the East's physical condition seemed to lag, at least in the thoughts of impassioned supporters of the Igbo cause, behind those found in other parts of Nigeria, also did not help matters at all. Such an underlyingly-dysfunctional environment made it easier for entities like the Movement to tactfully revert to the past with the aim of dealing with existing problems in the here and now, and capitalising upon the growing displeasures of the young and old alike with the state of affairs in their country.

In this instance, references to ethnicity appeared to be the easily-accessible choice. Under other circumstances within and outside Nigeria, the politicization of color, religion, ideology, race, class and caste have been relied upon to express equivalent disaffections with local conditions or even international realities. Yet, MASSOB's voluble reaction to these problems was not primarily rooted in provincial or ill-mannered ideas; it actually reflected a deep-seated failure by the Nigerian state to create a conducive environment for all citizens, irrespective of their ethnic, religious and social leanings, to participate in political and social affairs, provide for their families and plan for the sake of posterity.

Notwithstanding official rhetoric to the contrary, MASSOB was an uncivil and blatantly militant civil society group from the moment it was conceived, even if was not ridden with the visible factionalization and riotous in-fighting that was the OPC's lot. By its very nature, MASSOB's desire to establish an independent Biafra State was a treasonable act that the federal government naturally opposed and denounced, and ensconced domestic interests, including those from the Igbo ethnic group, condemned.

Nonetheless, the Movement's extremist posture stemmed from its obvious disenchantment with the pervasiveness of the militarization of Nigerian public life, authoritarianism, corruption, underdevelopment and state-sanctioned discrimination reportedly administered in predominantly-Igbo areas. Because of these deficiencies and the presumed failures of repeated Nigerian governments to safeguard Igbo rights and interests, the Movement consistently expressed its intention to secede from Nigeria after it was established in 1999.

To achieve this overarching objective, MASSOB officials continually challenged the federal government to engage in a dialogue that would hasten what they regard as the inevitable, namely the eventual emergence of an independent Biafra in the coming years. They envisaged that such a meeting, convened under the auspices of the SNC or similar fora, would enable the Igbo to peacefully but speedily withdraw from Nigeria. Curiously enough, the Movement affirmed that if the federal government allowed the Igbo to express their wishes via an Eastern-only plebiscite, the organization would abide by the outcome of the referendum, regardless of whether it was favorable to its cause or not.

Yet, with secession being intimately tied to the group's essence, identity and public reputation, it is improbable that MASSOB would be able to swiftly metamorphose either into a radical entity with an alternative and less-disparaged aim or a more mainstream association that would express minimally-controversial objectives.⁸ It is doubtful that such a reinvention would be in the immediate or even long-term interest of an explicitly-radical association such as MASSOB. The obvious reality that the group repeatedly declared that politics was an acrimonious and unpleasant enterprise that was practiced by selfish individuals cursorily portended that it might not necessarily or easily evolve into a political party if its secession aim failed for whatever reasons.

If MASSOB were absorbed into a successful, anti-elite, populist and progressive political party with a fair chance of securing numerous seats in National or State Legislatures, a situation that is sorely lacking in Nigeria at the moment, and members of MASSOB or the broader Igbo ethnic nationality were mollified with coveted ministerial, vice presidential or ideally presidential appointments, the incidence of organizational or individual radicalization in the land might measurably decrease.⁹

The experiences of a prominent South-South ethnic association, MOSOP, certainly suggest that it is possible for a group to undergo a reverse metamorphosis from an explicitly-fanatical entity to a relatively less-radical and unobtrusive one.¹⁰ Although it is not evidently clear what factors precipitated this fundamental change, probable explanations include the death of MOSOP's charismatic leader (Ken Saro-Wiwa), pragmatism and weariness or a state of affairs akin to battle fatigue on the part of the existing leadership regarding the group's relationship with the state, business and civil society organizations, internal disarray, and modifications in the broader political landscape that concluded in a momentous and long-awaited transition to civilian rule.

In the interim and barring such a fundamental internal transformation, MASSOB officials codified a 25-stage project that putatively would terminate in the official launching of a new Biafran state. As summarized in [Chapter V](#), the following three phases of the evolutionary programme had already been completed in 2002: establishment of the Biafra Movement, initial declaration of the unambiguous intent to establish a Biafran state, and the hoisting of the 'nation's' flag within important cities and towns in the South-East. If the programme stays on course, the group will formalise its own independent agencies by launching Biafran police and armed forces, and other institutional accoutrements compulsory for the proper functioning of any sovereign state in the nearest future.

Due to the expected secrecy under which MASSOB operated since its formation, it was not clear whether the critical stage or stages of establishing these institutions had begun in 2002. However, there was little doubt that if these and similar projects were implemented in a noticeably splintered environment characterized by a 'battle of provocative rhetoric' fearlessly waged by the state and MASSOB, the already-tense relationship between these two tenacious entities would terribly worsen.

Ijaw Youth Council

The experiences of the Ijaw in general and the IYC in particular are different from those of the Igbo described above. Unlike their South-Eastern brethren and by the year 2003, none of the Niger Delta ethnic groups had conveyed any aspirations to secede from the Nigerian federation in a very sustained or visible manner, or consequently lost millions of lives in the process. Moreover, the Ijaw existed in a milieu that was singularly characterized by decay, deterioration, despair and disengagement from the state, unlike the comparatively more developed South-East, notwithstanding MASSOB's contention that the latter geo-political zone was the most marginalized in Nigeria. That such a dangerous combination of social conditions in the South-South gradually or perhaps quickly evolved into the nation's pre-eminent hotbed of ethnically-oriented fanaticism, with the potential of eventually destabilizing Nigeria in its entirety if ignored, is scarcely astounding or extraordinary to anyone familiar with this part of the country.

With very notable exceptions, minority groups in the South-South and certainly the remainder of Nigeria generally existed on the margins of the broader public consciousness. In fact, before the increased agitation for change in the Niger Delta that commenced with the formation of the then-radical but now mostly-mellowed

MOSOP in 1990, it is safe to assume that most Nigerians resident outside the sub-region, including policymakers, were neither keenly aware of nor particularly sensitive to the unique conditions that existed there. However, this ignorance regarding the latent subversive capabilities of the Delta apparently waned with the proliferation of new, dynamic and militant organizations, like the IYC, during the past decades that were somewhat but not totally immune to state and MNC cooptation.

The South-South's oil-producing communities first became economically and strategically important with the discovery of vast petroleum reserves in Oloibiri and neighboring areas in 1956. Whilst this development ought to have been a development boost for the Niger Delta and Nigeria at large, it had the opposite effects. Nigeria's oil riches proved to be a curse, particularly for the impoverished communities in which they were located, if not for the rest of the country. Not only did the zone's oil wealth not benefit the South-South, its environmental, social, economic and political conditions deteriorated in relation to other communities within Nigeria.

In response to these perceived injustices, ethnic groups in the South-South strove to redress the professed imbalances produced by the Nigerian state and its international collaborators, especially MNCs. Over the years, and by virtue of its numerical strength, the IYC concretised Ijaw complaints against the Nigerian state, MNCs and other actors. To date, the Ijaw Youth Council, which in many ways maintained affiliations with disparate entities with similar objectives, is reviled in many quarters, but lauded elsewhere, including overseas where it is regarded as environmental injustice's *cause celebre*.

Hitherto and in a manner reminiscent of the 'copy cat' syndrome mentioned earlier in this analysis, militant ethnic associations commonly imitated the goals articulated by other groups. Whilst the IYC traditionally was preoccupied with the two core aims described below between 1998 and 2001, it lately imitated MASSOB by expressing a desire to institute a secession referendum on 30 December 2002.¹¹ As such, there seemingly was a conflict between strongly-held beliefs and the pragmatic use of such principles for other less-salient purposes; this struggle is evident within many organizations that are undergirded by religion or ethnicity, and is not a malady afflicting the Ijaw Youth Council alone.¹²

At the heart of the IYC's tactics is the articulation of two contentious goals, namely resource control and self-determination. On the surface and when compared to MASSOB for example, these objectives seem mostly innocuous and uncontroversial. Notwithstanding this observation, the state did not support the desire of the Ijaw to augment their control over the lands within the South-

South's towns and villages, particularly those rich with petroleum and gas deposits, and to derive some, if not the majority, of the rewards accumulating from exploration activities undertaken within their communities. This is mostly due to the potentially devastating effects of any IYC-led disruption activity on the Nigerian economy, which is wholly dependent on the export of petroleum products for its survival.

More specifically, IYC's aims could be subdivided into economic, political, environmental and social purposes. The political objectives of the organization revolved around federalism, and increased Ijaw representation in the national capital and within local government bodies. In very general terms, the verbalisation of these two goals seemed like a contradiction in terms because the IYC also was at the forefront of the call for substantial authority devolution from the centre to Ijaw jurisdictions in the states of Ondo, Rivers, Edo, Delta, Bayelsa and Akwa Ibom.

On the one hand, the Council persistently lamented the centralisation of authority in Abuja. Like its contemporaries in the South-West and South-East, the Council demanded a SNC in order to formulate the specific roles that these ethnic interests, as well as federal, state and local government authorities, would assume within the self-styled (un)Federal Republic of Nigeria. In the IYC's view, only a National Conference could accord the Ijaw and other ethnic groups in the South-South commensurate autonomy and self-determination, and discard undesirable aspects of the 'dictatorial and unjust' 1999 Constitution. The organization thus affirmed that only a genuine federation of ethnic nationalities, undergirded by equality and social justice, would be acceptable to its constituency.

Oddly enough, in addition to insisting upon a political system based on financially, politically and socially empowered and viable geopolitical zones, the IYC bemoaned the lack of sufficient representation of Ijaw interests at the federal level. In like manner, the Council drew attention to the inability of the dominant political parties in the land to present Ijaw candidates for non-legislative national positions, including the Presidency. In a similar vein, it alluded to the innate bias evident in a party-registration and voting system that 'penalised' and excluded, for all intents and purposes, minority parties because of their inability to obtain extensive pre-election and subsequent support across the length and breadth of Nigeria¹³, and the paucity of Niger Delta citizens in the Executive and other branches of the federal government. This distorted representation of their interests ostensibly is responsible for the unfavorable position of the South-South relative to other parts of Nigeria.

In the economic realm, the Council exposed the lack of employment opportunities for Ijaw citizens in the Niger Delta and the lopsided

appropriation of existing or potential job prospects by non-indigenes, including other Nigerians and foreigners alike. The IYC also canvassed improved environmental accountability and responsibility, enhanced living and social conditions within the South-South's cities, towns and villages, immediate cessation of unsustainable oil exploration ventures and a corresponding withdrawal of MNCs undertaking such activities from the sub-region.

On the whole, whereas Nigeria is completely reliant upon the export of petroleum products for its continued existence, government attempts to address the aforementioned difficulties conventionally ranged from half-hearted to non-existent. No comprehensive economic programmes that would create sustainable and productive jobs for the Niger Delta's unemployed youths, empower others to start their own businesses, or compel the multi-national and Nigerian-owned companies in the South-South to reserve a higher proportion of their vacancies for residents of the communities in which they were located, were instituted to any apparent, lasting or successful degree.

In the same vein, projects inaugurated to ameliorate social and environmental degradation typically were slow and relatively ineffective, whilst the political representation of the Ijaw and other South-South minority ethnic groups within the Executive Branch were rather appalling in 2002. The relentless radicalization of the IYC portrayed on these pages conclusively emanated from the dismal economic, political and social conditions that obtained in the cities, towns and villages of the Niger Delta. Below, I examine the process of minimal radicalization within the OPC.

Oodua Peoples Congress

Until recently, there were very few, if any, visibly militant organizations that purported to represent the myriad interests of the Yoruba ethnic group. This ostensible capitulation in the face of despotic military regimes, and an outlandishly corrupt and inept civilian government, probably was due to the economic prosperity that prevailed in the country after independence. However, as the state progressively became more authoritarian, the economy collapsed and social conditions degenerated, organizations like the OPC emerged and proved to be effective at mobilizing disgruntled Yoruba citizens, defying government incursions into the private realm and illuminating the state's general incompetence.

Pursuant to this extensive radicalization of civil society and a simultaneous rise in the number of ethnic, religious and social organizations, was a noticeable increase in the politicization of ethnicity in the South-West in particular. Foregoing discussions

revealed the manner in which government policies provoked the belief that the state must be forcefully destabilized because it calculatingly discriminated against Yoruba and other non-Northern ethnic groups in the political, social and economic arenas.

In a fashion similar to its 'colleagues' in other geo-political zones of Nigeria, the OPC articulated goals that government and non-governmental interests considered sacrilegious. Not only was the OPC concerned with actualizing the Abiola presidency at the outset of its existence, it presented itself as the pan-ethnic group that could ensure that the cultural, economic, political, social and religious welfare of the Yoruba was reclaimed from a hostile government and society, and safeguarded against future desecration.

From this vantage point, the Congress endeavored to protect the rights of all Yoruba peoples, unify them under a common ethnic umbrella, educate them concerning their glorious civilisation, monitor the treatment of the Yoruba worldwide, assure that they achieved self-determination and were mobilized for the 'national cause', and liberate them from 'political marginalization, economic strangulation, cultural erosion and social injustice'.

Not surprisingly, these rather ambitious aims appeared to be worthwhile but somewhat innocuous, vague and unattainable, given the OPC's serious institutional, intellectual and moral limitations. The patent fact that the organization was unstable, bereft of a discernible vision, morally compromised and plagued with crippling leadership tussles, made the realisation of these noble goals all the more difficult. Therefore, it was not surprising that the OPC vacillated between various articulated goals, proved unable to articulate a clear and consistent message, and largely failed to attract certain Yoruba and non-Yoruba support both within and outside Nigeria.

This lack of coherence and focus was further revealed in the sheer number of objectives described in the OPC's Constitution and reproduced in [Chapter VI](#), and the divergent activities that the group undertook after 1999. This situation sharply contrasted with the experiences of IYC and MASSOB, which, from the very beginning, presented comparatively unambiguous, definite and limited goals that they religiously adhered to, for the most part. Unlike these groups, the OPC, on the face of it, had a penchant for concocting objectives *du jour*; depending upon internal organizational realities, the current preferences of its leaders when making purportedly official declarations, prevailing conditions in the broader society at the time such statements were made, and the actions or pronouncements attributed to potential 'competitors' (read 'other groups') and government officials.

More peculiarly and in a further reflection of its lack of foresight and direction, and the inability of the overwhelmed, corrupt and ill-equipped Nigerian Police Force to adequately tackle the menace of crime in particular, the OPC routinely appropriated unto itself functions that were the preserve of the law enforcement authorities. These included the initiation of crime control and prevention programmes, authority to identify and detain robbers, and the general maintenance of law and order.

Nevertheless, in the public realm, the OPC stressed two core purposes, the convocation of a SNC and inauguration of an authentic federal system in Nigeria, far above the others referenced above. Although members of the organization also demanded an independent Oduduwa Republic, the Congress did not singularly or staunchly focus on secession as its definitive objective, like MASSOB, between 1994 and 2002. Still, on certain occasions, particularly when discussing the Northern *Sharia problematique* and other presumed instances of Northern-induced malaise, Fasehun and certain OPC leaders implied that a 'dissolution' of Nigeria indeed was possible and inevitable in the absence of a national dialogue on these matters. Similarly, OPC officials highlighted the centralization of power in the executive, legislative and judicial branches of the federal government as a serious problem that must be resolved before underlying political, economic and social difficulties could recede.

In order to correct this anomaly and guarantee that the nation did not disintegrate, OPC leaders routinely called for a National Conference. By this time, arguments for such a meeting of Nigerian nationalities, which the OPC, IYC, MASSOB and a large number of other ethnically-oriented organizations unfailingly espoused, should be familiar to the reader and need not be revisited in great depth in this section.¹⁴ One of the expected outcomes of a national conference was the return to a confederal system of governance, which appreciably empowered the six geo-political zones. Accordingly, authority would be equitably decentralized from the center to the periphery and the perceived Northern political hegemony over the rest of the country would considerably be lessened.

In closing, the examples referenced in this overview revealed that the militant responses of MASSOB, IYC and OPC to broadly-defined occurrences of discrimination, authoritarianism and underdevelopment commenced with the delineation of certain objectives; the process of radicalization amongst these three ethnic associations usually began with such an exercise. In relation, and not surprisingly, state depictions and classifications of radical groups' stances habitually started with a reference to their goals. Hence, to understand the nature of an association's objectives is to comprehend

its fanatical bent or lack thereof, what declarations it is capable of issuing and what activities it is capable of undertaking.

In the next section, I underscore another variant of the radicalization process, the reliance on moderately-fanatical stratagems. This second element of my typology builds upon, and is intricately linked to, the first and third features described here and in subsequent paragraphs. Thus, many entities, which initiate their operations with the expression of divisive purposes, frequently 'graduate' to the next level as they become more radicalized *vis-à-vis* their 'enemies'.

MODERATE RADICALIZATION

Moderate radicalization entails the employment of provocative and seditious language that is principally directed towards professed adversaries, like agents of the state and local or foreign representatives of ethnic, economic, social or religious entities. Undoubtedly, the use of incendiary rhetoric clearly shows that words, whether emanating from governmental or societal sources, are very powerful, emblematic of ingrained philosophies, endure within a group's collective memory, and later could be harnessed to incite hatred, chaos and physical defiance.

There is no doubt that words can empower, embolden and enlighten the down-trodden and despised, who sometimes feel that elites' elaborate rhetoric is purposely used to exclude them because of their lack of education and 'exposure'. Within the context of profiled groups, words generally had two main purposes. In one respect, they educated group members and the public at large regarding organizational objectives, demands, and dissatisfaction with particular economic, political and social conditions.

As revealed in Chapters IV, V and VI, the IYC, MASSOB and OPC, in one way or another, successfully exposed the problems facing the Nigerian political realm and society, and proffered imaginative solutions, no matter how derided or simplistic that they appeared to 'non-believers', to such difficulties. At the same time, they used explicitly divisive and potentially destructive rhetoric. A brief exegesis of the inflammatory statements expressed by the associations under consideration, which periodically migrated from the abstract realm of words to one of definite action, is the preoccupation of the following discussion.

In Nigeria, officials of these radical ethnic associations in particular routinely demonized members of other groups and government administrators, and encouraged their supporters to do likewise. Despite the propensity for disconcerting, threatening and antagonistic

utterances to 'come alive' and escalate into fully-fledged rhetorical or even physical wars, groups like MASSOB, at certain junctures in their short histories, deftly insulated their members from undertaking bloody rows with non-adherents to their cause and security forces; acts that logically followed from the issuance of polemical statements. More often than not, organizations like the OPC, which were moderately radicalized, succumbed to the vehemence of their pronouncements and inevitably metamorphosed into a most-militant civil society entity whose actions are probed in the final section of this chapter.

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MASSOB exhibited this second element of militancy, which principally entailed the usage of acerbic expressions, to attain its objectives. In this vein, statements attributed to its representatives by the media and other sources, signalled the group's resolve to secede from Nigeria at all costs because they believed that only this act could save the Igbo population in the country from being subject to further decimation.

Like their counterparts within other ethnically oriented organizations, MASSOB officials, including the one interviewed for this project, were learned, extremely articulate, and appropriated powerful, symbolic, carefully-chosen and sometimes-flowery language to express their entrenched misgivings concerning the Nigerian state and the broader society in which it was located, and their fate within a nation that they depicted as a convoluted arrangement. Along these lines, they incessantly alluded, via excoriating polemics, to Igbo experiences prior to and after independence, including the exclusion, marginalization and underdevelopment of the East and her peoples, and the incalculable personal and collective devastation wreaked by the Civil War on the South-East.

Generally, the adoption of belligerent language in Nigeria was a two-sided project that both state agents and MASSOB superintended in order to realize parochial purposes. On the one hand, government representatives frequently demonized the Movement, and caricatured its supporters and leaders as rogues, selfish and devilish individuals whose ulterior motive was to exploit the association's renown and finances for personal gain. Additionally, they described MASSOB members as angry and illiterate youths with criminal backgrounds and intentions. In line with this belief, federal, state and local government authorities pilloried the group in the Nigerian media,

largely dismissed its claims and *raison d'être*, and concomitantly wanted to effect its proscription.

Faced with a determined and fanatical entity bent on realising its defined goals regardless of the personal, financial and human consequences that such a course might engender, it was easier for the state from 1999 to 2002 to embark upon a vituperative rhetorical campaign that only was surpassed by MASSOB's passionate proclamations, and institute a deliberate effort to suppress the Movement through the despotic devices investigated in preceding analyses.

Ironically, these actions largely were counter-productive; not only did they strengthen MASSOB's unwavering resolve to continue its quest for a new Biafra, even if the chances of such a large Igbo exodus appeared uncertain and probably unlikely, the state unwittingly provided the association with a national, and indeed international platform, to assume widespread notoriety and consequently attract followers within Nigeria and its vast Diaspora in Europe and North America, who felt that the state was unduly targeting a comparatively-miniscule entity, and proving what they had known all along regarding its shortcomings and nefarious plans.¹⁵

As a result, the state contributed to MASSOB's fledgling post-1999 expansion, more so than certain mainstream and other militant Igbo entities that heretofore had operated in the country. The state's flawed decision to descend to MASSOB's level and match the organization's 'uncivil' statements with equally-provocative assertions radicalized the Biafra Movement, and weakened the state's reputation in the eyes of MASSOB officials and ardent sympathizers.

The evidence presented in [Chapter V](#) explicitly demonstrated that MASSOB also engaged in a vociferous 'war of words' that pitted it against agents of government, members of other ethnic associations and the non-Igbo community within Nigeria at large. Furthermore and as a direct reaction to prevailing economic, political and social difficulties in Nigeria, the Movement employed fiery words to animate and incite current and potential members regarding the justness, efficacy, urgency and validity of its 'noble' disengagement cause. In order to obtain international recognition and legitimacy, the group also shrewdly appealed to internationally recognized sentiments concerning civil rights, sovereignty, human, political, economic and social rights, enfranchisement, power devolution and decentralisation, non-violence and the right to self-determination.

In more specific terms, MASSOB consistently denigrated the Nigerian state apparatus, and the authoritarian, stagnating and discriminatory effects of its policies, in the popular press and other fora. From this vantage point, it referred to the country's political

system, irrespective of its democratic characteristics, as militarized, unjust, corrupt, terroristic and inhumane. In the same vein, the Movement consistently made unending references to alleged and unfounded conspiracies involving the state's desire to impede the ability of the Igbo to hold any prominent political positions in Nigeria, concomitantly impeach national leaders from the East simply because of their ethnicity, and in due course exterminate the Igbo if extant or future conditions were favorable enough.

Relatedly, MASSOB representatives vilified government officials, especially Obasanjo, whose decisions during and in the aftermath of the Civil War, his first incarnation as military Head of State, and his second materialization between 1999 and 2003 were held liable for the singularly-precarious condition of the Igbo and their communities. Based on this contention, Obasanjo was branded a 'natural hater of Igbo people who breached the constitution and should have been impeached'.

On the whole, MASSOB representatives realized the importance of words, its symbolism and capability to effect change, even in the absence of a physical war with the Nigerian government; a state of affairs that the group apparently did not desire due to the preponderance of economic and military might on the state's side. As a result, the organization solicited and garnered materiel support from Igbo people based in the South-East and worldwide through its use of freely-accessible statements obtainable via the Internet, Nigerian and international media, and its own radio station. MASSOB's ability to draw vast support outside the country within a relatively short period of time attested to its success in the public relations offensive that became the highly-valued domain of this and other ethnically-based CSOs in Southern Nigeria.

Ijaw Youth Council

During the course of its radicalization, which was initiated and sustained by government unresponsiveness or misconduct, the Ijaw Youth Council also recognized the importance of purposely-worded propaganda in its battle against the state and MNCs with major stakes in the country's petroleum industry. In this manner, the radical CSO consistently elucidated the South-South's peculiar situation in great depth and with much clarity. Unlike MASSOB and the OPC, the Council attracted international non-Ijaw support primarily because of its impressive capacity to situate its two principal objectives, self-determination and resource control, within the confines of predominant international discourses on democratization, local autonomy, the environment and human rights,

which privileged the civil liberties of indigenous groups such as the Ijaw *vis-à-vis* domestic and external 'leviathans'.

Precisely because its campaign coalesced around environmental concerns, was not fully ethnic in orientation, raised problems that were evident in other milieux, and deeply resonated with both influential Nigerian and Western civil society groups like the Civil Liberties Organisation and Friends of the Earth, the Council finessed and refined its rhetoric in a manner that was scarcely found amongst ethnic associations outside the Niger Delta. The presence of several passionate but somewhat reasoned, articulate, well-travelled, educated and cosmopolitan leaders also sharpened the quality of the IYC's debate with its opponents within Nigeria and abroad.

Overall, the Council's engaging collaboration and relationship with NGOs and similar entities, coupled with IYC officials' impressive academic qualifications in Law and Political Science for instance, enabled the organization to transmit both practical and intellectually-informed proclamations via various fora, and through its numerous public statements and publications. From this perspective, the group employed sometimes-ennobling words to instruct the Ijaw concerning their deplorable economic, human rights, political and social conditions within Nigeria, and outline the Council's plan to continuously bring these problems to the fore and remedy them. As a result, they sensitised well-meaning Nigerians and indeed the international community to these critical matters.

Nonetheless, irrespective of the IYC's outwardly-refined stance on self-determination and resource control matters, and the constructive manner in which it used highly-crafted language to its advantage, the IYC regrettably capitulated to the caustic rhetoric that other militant groups in the country relied upon to rally existing (and potential) supporters and involve the state in a combative 'duel of words' in the public realm.

The Council's repertoire of words was abounding in emotive and seditious statements that demonized successive Nigerian governments, their policies and representatives, MNCs, and other parties held responsible for the backwardness and underdevelopment of Ijaw communities and the broader South-South zone. In general, the youth movement accused politicians like Obasanjo of corruption, exhibiting dictatorial tendencies, insensitivity to Ijaw affairs and callous indifference. Council officials also directed intimidating and threatening utterances toward both the Nigerian government and oil companies operating in the Niger Delta.

As revealed in foregoing synopses, the IYC pinpointed the lack of genuine federalism as one of the key reasons for the South-South's precarious situation in relation to the remainder of the country. Based

on this strongly-held belief, leaders of the group lambasted Nigeria's political elite for the asymmetrical composition of the country's National Assembly and other organs of government, and gross insensitivity to the Niger Delta zone and its peoples. Additionally, the Council blamed government and business concerns for promoting inter and intra-ethnic strife within Ijaw and nearby communities because of their desire to ensure that such groups remained 'divided, weak and distracted from the causes of their problems'.

During the course of issuing its many public statements, the pan-ethnic organization stated that military and police assaults on Odi and other largely-Ijaw towns were not isolated incidents but part of an imagined genocidal plan (or 'a criminal conspiracy') methodically hatched in the corridors of power across Nigeria to decimate and silence the Ijaw people. Along the same lines, the Ijaw Youth Council issued strident ultimatums to multi-national oil companies and associated concerns, asking them to promptly withdraw from Ijawland or face the wrath of the respective towns and villages in which they were based. Between 1998 and 2002, the group outlined several oil production stoppage schemes¹⁶ with the hope of altering the South-South's dismal conditions.

In total, the usage of divisive rhetoric was counter-productive and did not necessarily enable the IYC to achieve its delineated objectives. On the contrary, it undermined its 'rational' reputation and legitimacy amongst certain supportive non-militant organizations within Nigeria, and made it somewhat difficult for it to garner the support of non-radical Ijaw youths and elders. A review of the IYC's vitriolic statements signified that the radical group did not grasp the manner in which such remarks animated its adherents and others, who might not even be card-carrying members, to engage in the devastating actions described throughout this volume. This seeming lack of control over its corporate speech and attendant inability to understand how intense words could become formalized, represented a serious and dangerous flaw with ramifications that reverberated far beyond Ijaw communities.

Unlike the OPC, which did not attract significant non-Nigerian international support by virtue of its unacceptably-high and incessant quarrels with innocent bystanders, members of other ethnic groups and the Nigerian Police Force, the IYC projected itself to the outside world as a non-violent organization that was unfairly targeted and victimised by the Nigerian government and the MNCs. Pursuant to this craftily-constructed stance, which had little bearing on reality as a detailed review of Nigerian newspapers divulged, the Council customarily used provocative language that probably encouraged Ijaw youths to engage in damaging behaviors.

Whilst there was a measure of truth to the claim that MNCs, defence forces and the government at large commonly oppressed, repressed and marginalized IYC members and supporters, the organization consistently failed to allude to the ways in which internal (read organizational) frailties were partly responsible for its ultimate transformation into an overtly-fanatical entity, and the corresponding and recurring radicalization of its members.

The Ijaw Youth Council's utterances thereby revealed the inner-workings of a thoroughly confused but yet astute organization. In one respect, it became enmeshed in a strident domestic and public war of words, which unfortunately did not terminate in the realm of mere rhetoric. In a parallel fashion, the group managed to cultivate the reputation of an urbane, insightful and subjugated entity abroad. The language that the IYC occasionally used overseas to document and describe the injustices visited upon the Ijaw peoples generally was less controversial and did not reference the ways in which the organization contributed, through its words and actions, to the many disturbances in the South-South, and provoked ill-trained and ill-mannered security agents to use unwarranted force to quell such disputes.

Oodua Peoples Congress

Lastly, the evidence presented in [Chapter VI](#) indicated that the Oodua Peoples Congress was not only a fanatical ethnic interest group because of the inestimable melees it was involved in or directly initiated following the Peoples Democratic Party's ascension to power in 1999. Whilst commensurate attention was paid to the impacts of these fracasas on Nigerian politics and society, little consideration has been given to the nature, effects and ramifications of the Congress' many statements during the same period.

Apart from outlining objectionable and seditious aims, the OPC employed corrosive language to educate, sensitise and/or chide various publics concerning the importance of its objectives. As a matter of fact, words utilized by group representatives do not just reveal an organization's corporate state of mind, beliefs, resolve and malignant predispositions, they foreshadow possible actions that might be undertaken thereafter.

Contemptible declarations influenced the behavior of Congress' adherents and spurred them to commit heinous crime against innocent or 'deserving' individuals, regardless of whether leaders merely intended their either temperate or acerbic remarks to be symbolic and not actually followed to their logical conclusions. When a group apparently contained a sizeable population of unemployed,

'undiscerning' and/or despondent persons, as the OPC did from 1994 to 2002, it should not be unexpected if its members decided to unilaterally or collectively act upon what they heard

from their chieftains concerning other ethnic groups or government agencies.

The Congress' public statements were replete with both regular and inciting rhetoric. To its credit, during interviews with Nigerian journalists, press conferences and in other fora, the OPC, like MASSOB and the IYC, isolated the features of the economic, political and social crises confronting Nigeria in its own peculiar fashion. In so doing, Congress' leaders explored issues of concern to Nigerians at large, which could be subsumed under the three themes of authoritarianism, discrimination and underdevelopment, and were responsible for the organization's radicalization, in ways that especially resonated with many Yoruba citizens who appeared keen on hearing the 'truth', regardless of its source and how it was framed.

Throughout its short existence, the OPC demonstrated an ingenious ability to problematize the previous matters and reveal how these variables inter-related with one another. On the issue of despotism, Congress officials discussed the all-encompassing manner in which it invaded the nooks and crannies of Nigerian politics and society, stymied the country's development and even justified the creation of the Pan-Yoruba organization.

The same level of simple understanding was shown regarding the relationship between repressive actions, and Nigerian's economic and social life. More importantly, a detailed review of OPC pronouncements suggested that the group was aware of how the presence of the three features of regime policy singularly determined its tactics and focus, and consequently contributed to its radicalization. Overall, the peculiar examination of Nigeria's problems and thoughtful elucidation of specific remedies to combat them illustrated the OPC's keen knowledge of the country's tortuous landscape, a situation that obviously contributed to its establishment.

In the same breath, however, the Congress maligned members of other ethnic groups, problematically 'ethnicised' and magnified the differences between the country's various nationalities, depicted the Yoruba as a maligned and martyred 'race' whilst ignoring, minimising or essentially dismissing the obstacles encountered by other groupings within Nigeria, and presented a very simplified account of the myriad crises confronting the country. More specifically, Frederick Fasehun and other OPC representatives berated privileged Northerners, past and present rulers, accused them of being hegemonic, corrupt, self-centred, repressive and exploitative, and threatened media houses, politicians and other Nigerians. Whilst these non-Congress interests sometimes responded in kind, unexpectedly, OPC members utilized

similarly strident language and levelled similar charges against their leader, Fasehun. Given this situation, it is little wonder that the OPC was one of the most fanatical groups in Nigeria in 2002.

In closing, the OPC's unbridled and inflammatory assertions exposed an organizational state of mind that was laden with provincialism and narrow-mindedness. The Congress' ostensible lack of understanding of the power and importance of polished rhetoric prevented its message, if indeed there were a coherent and readily discernible one, from reverberating beyond its limited base in the South-West. Several factors accounted for this stunted condition, including contending loci of authority, lack of a visible intellectual vanguard committed to projecting the unique vision of the organization in a lucid manner and the articulation of potentially-conflicting purposes.

This overview of MASSOB, IYC and OPC's formal declarations intimates that these radical organizations used considerably negative words for several reasons in their combats with other civil society groups and the state. Even where their statements were simplistic, mostly couched in ethnic terms and rooted in a lack of understanding of the multi-faceted nature of the problems facing Nigeria, proffered prescriptions, such as federalism, seemed parochial, unduly personalized, and not based on a thorough and objective problematization of such matters. On a separate note, although I recognize that many radical organizations choose to remain in the realm of words interrogated above, a painstaking examination of these three associations indicates that words and deeds were, more often than not, inextricably linked. When the former were markedly cantankerous, the destructive activities described below periodically were bound to follow.

EXPLICIT RADICALIZATION

In this final scrutiny of the third variant of the radicalization process, I concisely probe Nigeria's underlying culture of violence and disorder, and enquire into the character of the militant devices used by the OPC, IYC and MASSOB to express their frustrations with government-induced marginalization, despotism and underdevelopment.¹⁷ Explicitly-radical organizations commonly are the most vilified, dreaded and feared amongst all groups. This is because the actions of their followers result in direct altercations with state security agents, supporters of other organizations, members of contending factions within the same entities or innocent individuals who unluckily happen to be in the 'wrong place at the wrong time'.

Expectedly, these quarrels generate untold arrests, injuries and ultimately casualties on both sides. They also provoke an upsurge in the radicalization of other ethnic associations who desire to obtain the same level of domestic and international attention and recognition that established entities enjoy, vigorously protect the interests of the members of their groups and/or attack individuals who have brutalized their supporters in the past.

Since the outsider is not privy to group meetings and discussions, it is difficult to definitely ascertain why fanatical entities resort to the virulent radicalism that was documented in Chapters IV, V and VI, and problematized below, instead of simply confining their tactics to minimally or moderately-radical activities. Still, we could speculate that the gradual or speedy movement from a less to a totally-militant association, in the presence of political, economic and social underdevelopment, is borne out of a rational belief that such a transformation is in the best interest of the organization, however it is construed. Conversely and as recently happened, such a reaction could be reflective of the inability of a radical association to control its members' deliberative, 'spur of the moment' or instinctive reaction to perceived government justice based on group representatives' intolerant remarks.

More specifically, individual or group militancy unquestionably mirrors government repression and militarization that ethnic and other organized interests ironically decry but nonetheless emulate. Although state authoritarianism measurably impacted Nigerian politics, economy, religion and society, it also permeated the psyches of the populace at large in not so obvious ways.

Successive governments, in methodical or random outbursts of frustration against opponents, and in moments of weakness and callousness, used brute force to unify a splintered polity. Following from this reality, non-state actors, in their interactions with one other, depended upon comparable strategies to dominate and maintain control. Correspondingly, no sector of Nigerian society was spared from this onslaught of violence. Three broad examples in the religious, educational and social arenas should suffice for the purposes of the discussion at hand.

In the religious realm, incivility and brutality were the order of the day for the latter part of the 1990s and beyond. No where was this fatal 'cancer' more apparent than in the North, where the politicisation of Islam, the predominant faith in most of the region's geo-political zones, resulted in the institution of *Sharia* law within key states after the transfer of power to a civilian government in 1999. This rather archaic (at least in the distinctive manner in which it was interpreted and implemented in Zamfara and other Northern States)

code of conduct led to the passing of death sentences on adulterers and rapists, and the dissemination of cruel punishments, such as limb amputations, to desperate thieves accused of stealing livestock and other seemingly-inconsequential items.

Naturally, the *Sharia* 'project', which debatably was the peculiar reaction of a segment of the Northern elite to the enthronement of a Southern-led democratic regime, and their resultant loss of privileges and desire to obtain local support, unreasonably harmed women and the poor, whilst wealthy citizens who obtained their fortunes through illegal avenues and committed worse acts went unpunished.¹⁸

In essence, the violent application of a narrowly defined version of *Sharia* law was enthusiastically co-opted by influential Northerners, who themselves were somewhat irreligious, to express deep-seated anger and resentment at the expense of their less-prosperous brethren. Unfortunately, this decision to institute a draconian Islamic ordinance influenced the course of events and precipitated intense reactions in Southern Nigeria, which was even more religiously diverse and multicultural than the North.

Nigeria's culture of violence also was evident in its dysfunctional educational sector. Several of the country's public tertiary institutions, particularly those in the South, were war zones and bastions of illiberalism, chaos and gratuitous destruction during the period under evaluation. A sizeable number of students who gained admissions into these establishments using forged documents and other illegitimate means, or only had known the instability and deprivation engendered by military rule, terrorized their respective campuses, kidnapped, and even executed lecturers and fellow students.

Student-led cults and gangs basically controlled designated turfs within many of the country's government-owned polytechnics, universities and specialized colleges. Likewise, Nigeria's major cities continued to languish under a cloud of fear and uncertainty, as crime, gruesome murder-for-hire schemes, utter recklessness and disregard for human lives flourished. The audacious assassination of the country's Federal Attorney-General and Minister of Justice, Chief Bola Ige, in his Ibadan home offered ample proof of the enormous scale of Nigeria's malaise.

Operating in such an unhealthy economic, political, religious and social environment, one or more of the three fanatical groups examined in this study dispensed ruthless sentences to opponents, alleged thieves and others regarded as worthy of such treatment, acted as unaccountable providers of security and vigilante services, judges and promoters of their version of the common good, invaded police stations and freed detained sympathizers, stole ammunitions

and weapons from such stations, and kidnapped and executed police officers or doused them with corrosive acid. Based on my contention that organizational radicalization in Southern Nigeria is correlated to flawed regime policies, I explore the specific nature of the unruly actions undertaken by MASSOB, IYC and the OPC on the following pages.

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In a rather interesting fashion, MASSOB publicly portrayed itself as a non-violent organization, whose 'total resistance' posture supposedly did not entail the use of dangerous weapons or physical confrontations with the Nigerian Police Force, the Armed Forces and the public. It compared its collective philosophy with those espoused by India's Mahatma Gandhi and America's Martin Luther King Junior, and dissociated itself from the actions of other radical entities operating in Nigeria, which, in its view, traversed the sharp divide between violence and non-violence.¹⁹

In reality, MASSOB demonstrated its fondness for radicalism and displeasure with economic, political and social conditions by engaging in explicitly-militant activities and perilous confrontations that, either were initiated by government security forces and other non-MASSOB entities, or induced by the Movement's declarations or other belligerent undertakings. Even if there were no records of clashes between members of the Biafra Movement and other parties, the group's objectives and proclamations alone would earn it the reputation of a fanatical organization.

Notwithstanding the fact that such actions were contentious and deemed illegal by the Nigerian government, MASSOB repeatedly hoisted its flag in several cities or attempted to do so, beginning in April 2000 (Table 6). The group also convened unauthorized assemblies, invaded international conferences under the pretext of advancing the Biafra cause, attempted to spend defunct Biafran currencies from the 1960s in several establishments, harassed innocent civilians and stole from them.

Although it was difficult to ascertain the exact level of injuries, destruction and carnage that MASSOB caused, because they mostly occurred in the South-East outside the purview of the Lagos-based media, and their scope was rather limited, its militancy was apparent to all observers of the Nigerian scene. Available evidence summarized in Table 6 on the Movement's activities after its emergence in 1999, plainly showed that it continually embarked on destructive melees

with security operatives and members of the public, which resulted in numerous casualties on both sides.

One of the first reported confrontations occurred in April 2000 when approximately 65 group adherents were jailed for convening an unauthorized rally and committing the treasonable act of hoisting the 'Biafra' flag on Nigerian territory. Between then and June 2002, scores of additional individuals were arrested or briefly detained for conduct ranging from various unlawful actions, including attempts to forcibly regulate the sale of petroleum products. Members of the Movement reportedly killed and/or injured police officers, failed to pay for fuel products, kidnapped petrol attendants, demanded bribes from various vendors and committed acts of invasion.

They also damaged government vehicles, attempted to hijack petroleum supplies bound for Northern states, attacked Northerners based in the East and established a renegade radio station, Voice of Biafra International, to broadcast Biafran propaganda. As a result of these and other essentially criminal acts, hundreds of MASSOB supporters were charged to court, whilst several group members and police officers were killed in the process.

Generally, it appeared that the Biafra Movement's radicalization was somewhat tempered by the failure of its antecedent, the Ojukwu-led effort, to successfully effect a disengagement from Nigeria. If the aspirations of the 1960s had been partially realized, produced substantial inducements for the South-East, like regional autonomy within the framework of the existing Nigerian territory, and not resulted in the loss of many lives, then MASSOB might have been a more militant organization in a manner akin to the OPC or even the IYC. The seeming contention by MASSOB officials that any form of untoward resistance on their part would have resulted in the total annihilation of their members because 'one of their own' was not President or Vice President, also was responsible for their relatively-moderate fanaticism.

Ijaw Youth Council

In the same vein, the Ijaw Youth Council had been uncivil throughout its existence, and unequivocally solidified its qualifications as a 'no-nonsense' and aggressive organization promptly after 1998. Towards this end, it engaged in radical behaviors because of a strongly held belief that its communities disproportionately suffered repression, marginalization and underdevelopment. In several respects, the Council's utilization of incontrovertibly militant tactics was an explicit

Table 6: Summary of MASSOB's Acts of Defiance (1999–2002)

MONTH	SUMMARY
APRIL 2000	MASSOB members convened an unauthorized rally in Lagos' Mushin neighborhood and attempted to hoist their flag. Uwazuruike and other MASSOB adherents made a similar effort in another Lagos district.
MAY 2000	A MASSOB affiliate, the Biafran Youth Congress, organized an illegal gathering at Lagos' Alaba International Market. Uwazuruike and 10000 sympathizers also hoisted the Biafra flag in the South-Eastern city of Aba.
JULY 2000	MASSOB leader invaded the venue of an Organisation of African Unity (OAU) meeting in Lome, Togo.
AUGUST 2000	MASSOB members were charged with 'breach of peace by an unlawful assembly and a conspiracy to overthrow the President'; Uwazuruike and other members also were charged with organizing an unauthorized assembly at the United States Consulate on Victoria Island, Lagos.
NOVEMBER 2000	In their attempt to regulate the sale of petroleum products, MASSOB members clashed with security forces in Okigwe.
JANUARY 2001	Uwazuruike threatened to disrupt the 2003 elections if enduring problems in the South-East were not addressed.
MARCH 2001	14 MASSOB members were charged with harassment and intimidation of innocent citizens, refusal to pay for fuel purchase, kidnapping, extortion and using defunct Biafran currency to procure goods. MASSOB members also allegedly attacked Northern-bound petroleum tankers and stole N57,000 during the same period.
MAY 2001	Police reports claimed that MASSOB members terrorized residents of Imo State. Also, 22 members planned to hold an illegal celebration of the 'new Biafra' in Enugu, whilst other group supporters sought to display their flag in a border town. Thirdly, Aba-based MASSOB members reportedly attacked Northerners and vandalised their belongings.
DECEMBER 2001	Uwazuruike again vowed to boycott the 2003 elections. Moreover, MASSOB members allegedly attacked police officers in Okigwe.
MARCH 2002	Uwazuruike engaged in fisticuffs outside his Lagos home.
APRIL-JUNE 2002	Uwazuruike promised to interrupt 2003 elections in the South-East.

response to the climate of repression especially apparent in the South-South.

The twin policies of negligence and undue interference that typified the Nigerian government's attitude towards the Niger Delta created a

tense environment replete with uncertainty, anger and hopelessness. Under normal circumstances, if fanatical groups like the IYC were always being short-changed in their transactions with the state, they were more apt to become more militant in their stances. What then resulted was a cycle of violence or a 'quid pro quo' condition, in which one act of violence simply begat another.

In this respect, the state did not help matters at all through its reliance on excessive force in the Niger Delta to protect the sub-region's oil installations at all costs and maintain a façade of order in a difficult terrain. Yet, the actions of the IYC, precursor and existing organizations contributed to the recorded escalation in the militarization and securitisation of the South-South's daily existence. As security officers and their heavy ammunitions became more visible on the streets, suppressed rebellious tendencies erupted on the part of the IYC's constituency. The Council's internal characteristics, including the obvious reality that it consisted of mostly young and alienated men, were to blame for the observed fanaticism of group members.

The IYC's partial preference for physical violence, at least on the part of a significant number of its supporters, to achieve its resource control and self-determination pursuits proved that it espoused an explicitly militant agenda. In more specific terms, certain IYC members commandeered oil platforms and flow stations, invaded other petroleum facilities in the South-South and effectively impeded exploration activities, at least in the interim. They also engaged in outwardly peaceful but yet innately provocative protests that speedily degenerated into more detrimental commotions. More troublingly, members of the group kidnapped oil workers affiliated with MNCs, attacked and even executed police and other officers of the law stationed at various oil sites in predominantly Ijaw areas.

Although it was difficult to accurately and fully summarize the number of police officers and other non-Ijaw persons killed between 1998 and 2002 as a result of IYC-instigated disturbances, in 1999 alone, Ijaw youths reportedly executed approximately 92 police officers during the ferocious mayhem that gripped Yenagoa and adjoining communities in late 1998 to early 1999 (Table 7). Moreover, Ijaw youths kidnapped at least 7 policemen, including the Area Commander and another senior officer in Bayelsa State, who narrowly escaped death.

Not only is the Ijaw movement a radical civil society organization, it was beleaguered with disagreements from 1998 to 2002 regarding its objectives, leadership, tactics and relationship with the state; certain factions reportedly favored amicable dealings with government officials and petroleum concerns, whilst a second group was bitterly

opposed to any rapprochement with the state or MNCs. Such a state of affairs made it difficult for the Council to coordinate and oversee the responses of its members.

The evidence summarized in [Table 7](#) implies that certain Council members unilaterally embarked upon these deleterious activities without the express consent of their leadership. This situation probably was due to members' lack of confidence in the Council's authentic representatives and their respective stances on critical matters of concern to the Ijaw community. Another related factor pertains to the IYC's membership and organizational edicts.

Unlike MASSOB, which was relatively more disciplined and able to shield bitter intra-group disagreements from public view and scrutiny, the IYC was practically open to any Ijaw youth, regardless of their ideological or criminal backgrounds, and, in all probability, lacked specific codes of conduct that governed their behaviors upon attaining membership. These organizational characteristics, in addition to the more central elements of regime policy of precise interest to this study, enhanced the IYC's radical posture.

Regardless of this observable reality, the IYC saw itself as a non-fanatical organization that unfairly shouldered the brunt of the Nigerian government's oppressive and repressive activities, even though it acknowledged the presence of a 'small' pocket of very militant youths within its ranks. Although the collective behaviors of the IYC and many of its affiliates suggested otherwise, group officials, like their counterparts elsewhere in the country, repeatedly denied that they were 'ethnic militias'; a phrase that is synonymous with lawlessness.

This curious refutation of a plain fact is not an act of delusion. On the contrary, it reflected a desire of group representatives to distance the organization as a whole from the acts of sabotage committed by a wayward faction. In the same vein, it reflected the reality that militant entities, regardless of whether they are ethnic, religious or social in nature, find it extremely difficult to monitor and restrain their members at all times. When membership is practically open to all peoples and the desire to realize a 'gallant' goal overshadows the need for internal order, unorganized and uncontrollable pandemonium is bound to surface. Finally, because a group like the IYC essentially thrived on and benefited from domestic and/or international legitimacy, in the skewed eyes of itself and supporters, it was as a non-violent organization that employed civil disobedience stratagems in its struggle against an unjust state. It thereby denied committing any acts of sabotage such as those summarized in [Table 7](#).

Table 7: Summary of IYC's Acts of Defiance (1998–2002)

MONTH	SUMMARY
DECEMBER 1998	The IYC directed its members to hijack oil workers, seize oil platforms, flow stations and Government House, attack police stations and disarm security agencies. In late December, IYC members organized 'peaceful' protests within major Ijaw strongholds.
JANUARY 1999	Ijaw women participated in 'peaceful' protests in Port Harcourt. The Council also extended OCC, as the Abubakar regime demanded the body of 80 soldiers during bloody clashes in the Delta. This Odi clash began when youths executed 12 security operatives.
JUNE 1999	IYC officials asked Obasanjo to withdraw all military forces from Ijawland and revoke the 13 percent derivation formula.
JULY 1999	The IYC rejected a federal Niger Delta bill because it was flawed.
NOVEMBER 1999	Ijaw youths kidnapped and almost killed 7 police officials.
DECEMBER 1999	IYC's militant wing closed 3 Shell flow stations. Youths also demonstrated and seized 3 company boats.
MAY 2000	The Council threatened to embark upon deadly campaigns and attack oil installations if a bill were not signed into law.
JUNE 2000	IYC President Tuodolo threatened to invade Agip's facilities if it did not compensate the family members of Ijaw youths killed by naval forces.
JULY 2000	Ijaw youths closed Shell-owned flow station.
SEPTEMBER 2000	IYC members vowed to recall erring members from the Bayelsa House of Assembly if it failed to promulgate a resource control bill; 5000 youths paralyzed the capital in the aftermath of this threat.
FEBRUARY- MARCH 2002	Ijaw youths asked government to withdraw all military forces from their towns.
MARCH 2002	The Council gave oil companies until end of May 2002 to withdraw from their towns and villages; they also disrupted activities at NDDC's Port Harcourt Office.
MAY 2002	IYC members demonstrated at Agip's premises.

Oodua Peoples Congress

In several respects, the Oodua Peoples Congress was a puzzling and 'difficult-to-unravel' enigma for this researcher and possibly other observers because of its reputation as one of the most radical organizations, ethnic or otherwise, operating in Nigeria. In a manner

probably unprecedented in recent Nigerian history, the seminal political changes witnessed during the latter part of the 1990s, widened a hitherto-restricted public space and emboldened the OPC, whose adherents retained dormant anger, irrepressible concerns and age-old disillusionment concerning specific regime policies, to openly express their feelings, irrespective of the attendant economic, political and social repercussions for the larger society.

This freewheeling exercise contributed to the transformation of the Congress from a marginal and relatively minor irritant in the pre-1999 period to a formidable and fundamentally homicidal CSO organ afterwards. By operating in a thoroughly reckless manner and arrogating unto itself tasks that were traditionally reserved for legitimately constituted authority, the pan-Yoruba group metamorphosed into a despised and dreaded organization.

When compared to the post-1998 period, the OPC was not particularly associated with explicit and widespread violence in its early years. Prior to this time, the Congress did not pose major threats to the military regimes of the 1990s in particular or the viability of the Nigerian polity as a whole. Since it began as a relatively quiescent and comparatively mainstream association, albeit under very difficult circumstances in which ethnicity and to a lesser extent religion became ascendant motifs *du jour*, the group did not concertedly or violently challenge the military in any sustained manner, at least in a way comparable to post-1999 actions.

Oddly enough, upon the advent of a democratic regime in 1999, the OPC became indisputably vocal and confrontational. Once Obasanjo became Nigeria's civilian ruler after years of psychically-demoralising authoritarian rule, OPC devotees started engaging in many of the destructive clashes that would later earn it the reputation of a loathed, maligned and violent organization. As group sympathizers attacked members of other ethnic nationalities, new fanatical groups proliferated and their handiworks became equally corrosive.

This metamorphosis of the Congress from a minimally or moderately offensive organization into a despised and feared entity, and its problematic stance in relation to the Nigerian state and society, were in keeping with goal (e) of its objectives that were outlined in [Chapter VI](#), which stated that the group would employ whatever means necessary to attain its objectives. Although the Congress' Bill of Rights did not explicitly allude to hostility, based on the group's tortured actions, its repertoire of strategies included brute force, intimidation and unequivocal threats.

As a faction-ridden group, the OPC engaged in caustic and brazen confrontations with security forces, imposed severe punishments, including extra-judicial killings, on suspected robbers and exhibited

unjustifiable disregard for the rule of law (Table 8). This factionalization and eventual adoption of uncivil tactics began when the group's leader, Frederick Fasehun was imprisoned, and a young and ambitious OPC member, Ganiyu Abiodun Adams, basically assumed control of the organization in his stead and created a sizeable following of disenchanting 'hooligans' who were determined to express their disaffections with existing conditions.

Adams, with the assistance of his devoted cohorts, ostensibly and single-handedly contributed to the OPC's caustic militancy by terrorizing innocent citizens, attacking OPC members who belonged to the more mainstream Fasehun faction and executing alleged robbers across Lagos. In several respects, from 1999 until 2002, the Adams factions of the OPC practically held the citizens of Lagos and other parts of the South-West hostage by operating as an uncivil, unaccountable and terror-inducing entity that defied all possible solutions proposed by political, business, religious, security and social elites, and eventually resonated and had consequences beyond its main base.

Generally, the Adams faction and the OPC in general became a parallel and loathed entity that inflicted violence on members of various ethnic nationalities and other 'opponents'. Group members thereby were blamed for the carnage, destruction and deaths witnessed in many parts of Nigeria, especially Lagos State (Table 8). At the same time, Fasehun purposely or implicitly encouraged the radicalization of the OPC through his passivity, acquiescence and desire not to alienate the militant base within his organization. Fasehun thus is as culpable as Adams for the OPC's venomous distaste for tranquillity, and the overall explosion in the formation of similarly confrontational ethnic entities across the length and breadth of Nigeria.

SUMMARY

In this overview and following Chapter VII's discussion of policies that engendered adverse effects within the Ijaw, Igbo and Yoruba ethnic communities, Chapter VIII sought to answer this main question: how did profiled civil society organizations respond to perceived government failure, indifference and callousness in the economic, political and social arenas? To address this concern, I delineated three manifestations of the radicalization process in Nigeria, and submitted that they dominated the range of tactics employed by the IYC, MASSOB and OPC after they were formed in the 1990s.

Whilst acknowledging that radicalization theoretically need not originate with or terminate in the use of violence, I claimed that in the

specific cases of the IYC, OPC and MASSOB, the process encompassed an agenda characterized by contested goals (minimal radicalization), a corresponding dependence upon belligerent language (moderate) and the transformation of these two figurative but yet persuasive elements into rebellious and malignant actions (explicit).

In order to further enrich the discussion, I especially revealed the context in which these associations expressed discordant objectives, publicly engaged in verbal battles with the state and other more disruptive activities, and linked my analyses, whenever feasible, to other broader issues that were manifest in Nigeria during this time. Building upon these remarks, I pinpoint the repercussions of these findings for Nigeria and the international community as a whole in the penultimate chapter.

Table 8: Summary of OPC's Acts of Defiance (1999–2002)

SUMMARY OF OPC'S ACTS OF DEFIANCE (1999-2002)			
MONTH	NATURE OF CLASHES/EVENTS	NON-OPC INJURIES	NON-OPC CASUALTIES
FEBRUARY/MARCH 1999	OPC youths attacked police stations in Lagos and Ogun States.	None reported	None reported
JULY 1999	Congress militants clashed with Hausa residents in Ogun State.	Several	Approximately 50; majority of these individuals presumably were from the Hausa ethnic group
SEPTEMBER 1999	Heavily armed OPC members invaded 2 Lagos Ports to protest non-Yoruba dominance, later sacked a police station within one of the Ports, seized armouries and freed detained inmates.	Several policeman and innocent bystanders were injured.	Several lives were lost, including those of many police officers.
OCTOBER 1999	Congress members engaged in a disturbance in Osun State that resulted in the destruction of 12 houses and 15 cars.	None, although 6 people went missing	None reported
NOVEMBER 1999	Group supporters attacked adherents of the fanatical Egbesu Boys with dangerous weapons in Ajegunle, Lagos. 10 properties, including 1 hospital, were destroyed.	Several	According to one report, 10 individuals were killed; another claimed that 5 people were macheted to death.
NOVEMBER 1999	OPC militants clashed with Ijaw youths in Lagos; Congress members also blamed for violent confrontations at the Mile 12 Market in Lagos that destroyed property worth millions of Naira.	Several	7 individuals, including 2 policemen, were killed; it is not clear whether the remaining casualties were non-OPC members. The Mile 12 disturbance claimed approximately 60 lives; accounts did not specify whether the majority or all of these persons were non-Congress members.

CLASHES, INJURIES AND CASUALTIES INSTIGATED BY THE OODLA PEOPLES CONGRESS (CONTD)			
MONTH	NATURE OF CLASHES/EVENTS	NON-OPC INJURIES	NON-OPC CASUALTIES
DECEMBER 1999	OPC members fought with College students over the maltreatment of 3 'thieves'. In a separate development supporters of the Adams faction, damaged Dr Fasehun's hospital (causing damages worth N4 million) and attacked Isokoko based Policemen with acid.	9 students went missing and 3 others were admitted to a local hospital; 2 policemen hurt in the acid attack	None reported
JANUARY 2000	2 OPC factions clashed in Lagos and Ibadan, destroying 30 houses; Adams faction also invaded Mushin district to expel notorious criminals from the slum, set several suspected robbers alight and burnt more than 40 houses. During the same period, supporters of Ganiyu Adams kidnapped a Senior Lagos Police Officer, DPO Amao, whilst trying to free detained OPC members charged with robbery.	Several	At least 16 were killed during the Lagos and Ibadan disturbances. Approximately 20 people were killed during the Mushin fracas. Amao's body was dumped into a lagoon; the ensuing conflict between the OPC and Police Officers claimed at least 100 lives (it is not clear how many of these casualties were policemen)
MARCH 2000	OPC members 'arrested' 5 Northerners who allegedly possessed lethal weapons in Ibadan; in Ondo State, Congress members demanded that taxi and commercial vehicle drivers return to the roads and not increase their fares. OPC militants also enforced official fuel prices in Lagos, Ondo and Ogun States.	None reported	None reported
APRIL 2000	Police seized documents from OPC members that detailed plans to attack former supporters who had renounced their membership.	None reported	None reported

CLASHES, INJURIES AND CASUALTIES INSTIGATED BY THE OODUA PEOPLES CONGRESS (CONTD)			
MONTH	NATURE OF CLASHES/EVENTS	NON-OPC INJURIES	NON-OPC CASUALTIES
JUNE/JULY 2000	Congress supporters and 'Igbira Boys' clashed in Abuja; approximately 100 youths brandishing deadly weapons overran a Mechanic Village, obstructed traffic, looted shops and stole money. In a separate confrontation, OPC militants vandalised petrol tankers, private vehicles and other items in sight when they invaded a state-owned petroleum depot.	Several	At least 1
JULY 2000	Congress members engaged in violent confrontations with 'hoodlums'. In Mushin, the Adams faction ambushed a patrol team and seized their weapons.	8 policemen were wounded	2 civilians were beheaded; also 2 policemen killed in Mushin
AUGUST 2000	OPC militants clashed with police officers and other individuals in Lagos.	Several	4 persons, including a police corporal, were killed. 2 other brothers, alleged to be armed robbers, also were killed in Lagos. Police discovered a mass grave containing several victims of deadly OPC campaigns, including 1 decapitated body.
SEPTEMBER 2000	Group members attacked Northern tanker drivers on a major highway, extorted money from them before allowing them to proceed, beat 'erring' drivers, smashed their windscreens and deflated their tyres. Also, the Adams faction attacked 200 Fasehun supporters. OPC sympathisers also were blamed for the deadly invasion of a Lagos police station in their bid to release 2 detained members.	The Adams-Fasehun imbroglio lasted for 2 hours and led to the kidnapping of 2 Fasehun supporters and the wounding of several others. Furthermore, several individuals sustained severe injuries on account of the OPC attack on a police station.	Unspecified number of Northern cattle rearers and merchants of Fulani extraction were executed in Oyo State; their cattle was stolen as well. The police station invasion resulted in the deaths of at least 4 individuals.

CLASHES, INJURIES AND CASUALTIES INSTIGATED BY THE OODUA PEOPLES CONGRESS (CONTD)			
MONTH	NATURE OF CLASHES/EVENTS	NON-OPC INJURIES	NON-OPC CASUALTIES
OCTOBER 2000	OPC devotees 'punished' alleged armed robbers in Lagos; eyewitnesses claimed that most of them were innocent. Around the same time, OPC members descended on a Lagos town and destroyed stalls belonging to artisans and beer parlor owners. Relatedly, Congress members invaded Ilorin to oust its ruler and install a Yoruba king.	None reported in Lagos; 3 policemen were injured in Ilorin	31 individuals were burnt to death in the Orile, Agege and Ajegunle subdivisions of Lagos. The Ojo mayhem resulted in the lynching of at least 7 persons, including 2 women.
OCTOBER 2000	OPC militants clashed with individuals from Fulani and Hausa ethnic groups across Lagos. Petrol tankers, warehouses, shops, commercial buses and cars were damaged.	Several	The melee was spurred by the Congress' execution of 3 Hausa 'robbers'. At least 24 other people were killed in Ajegunle alone; the total number of casualties was put at more than 100.
JANUARY 2001	OPC official charged to court in Ibadan		21-year old farm help killed
FEBRUARY 2001	There was a violent Congress-OPC clash in a Lagos suburb	Several police officers were wounded	Could not be ascertained
APRIL 2001	Another Police-OPC confrontation occurred in Lagos	2 Police officers were critically injured	Could not be ascertained
MAY 2001	Congress affiliates traced at least 9 alleged robbers to Mushin; their girlfriends were paraded naked on the subdivision's streets.	None reported	6 'robbers' macheted and burnt to death
JUNE 2001	OPC members attacked a robbery suspect	His right arm was amputated; innocent residents and passers-by terrorized	None reported

CLASHES, INJURIES AND CASUALTIES INSTIGATED BY THE OODUA PEOPLES CONGRESS (CONTD)			
MONTH	NATURE OF CLASHES/EVENTS	NON-OPC INJURIES	NON-OPC CASUALTIES
JULY 2001	Congress supporters and Police officers clashed in Ondo State.	10 police officers injured	None reported
AUGUST 2001	Another OPC-police brawl occurred in Ogun State.	3 officers injured	In a separate occurrence, the Adams faction crucified and burnt an alleged armed robber
JANUARY 2002	The Adams faction sparred with mobile police officers and palace guards in Ondo State.		Approximately 23 non-OPC members feared dead
FEBRUARY 2002	Clashes occurred between OPC sympathizers and Northerners in Lagos State; 50000 Hausa residents displaced, 100 houses and N10 billion worth of goods ruined. Also, in February, OPC members sealed a Lagos street because residents failed to remunerate the organization for its anti-crime activities.	200 wounded, 57 of them critically	55 lives lost; it remains unclear how many of these people were non-OPC members.
MARCH 2002	Alleged thieves burnt	None reported	3
APRIL/JUNE 2002	In April, 5 Congress members charged to court for murder. In June 3 OPC devotees and 3 other persons were arrested in Ibadan on robbery charges.	None reported	1

CHAPTER IX

Implications of Findings and Conclusion

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

BASED ON DETAILS AMASSED THROUGH INTERVIEWS, OBSERVATIONS AND secondary sources, this volume focused on two broad tasks. The first pertained to a critical problematization of the civil society literature with the object of exposing a restricted definition of the concept, its normative uses by theorists and practitioners alike, an inordinate preoccupation with civility and a reified Western experience that bears little resemblance to reality. In so doing, I specifically maintained that varying degrees of incivility, which inhere in almost all manifestations of civil society, including well-beloved NGOs, are apparent within the state and non-state realms of both the 'developing' and the 'developed' worlds. More significantly, I argued that the exclusion of fanatical ethnically-oriented entities in the Global South, because of their presumed primordialism, provincialism and radicalism, stifles our understanding of civil society as it is constituted in a world routinely typified by anarchy, complexity and disarray.

Secondly, in the main body of this project and based on my submission that all facets of CSOs' materialization, declarations, constructive contributions and adverse deeds must be investigated, I provided, to the degree feasible, a balanced and objective analysis of the posited relationship between government behavior, whether formally codified or implicit, and the radicalization of the South-South's Ijaw Youth Council, the South-East's Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra and the South-West's Oodua Peoples Congress. I defined regime policy as practises that embodied *repression*, *discrimination*, and *social* and *economic underdevelopment*, and radicalization as a flexible, overlapping and multi faceted process that involved the adoption of minimal, moderate and/or explicit devices.

As presented herein, minimal radicalization entailed the articulation of goals that conventionalists reckoned to be litigious, regardless of the seemingly innocuous manner in which they manifested themselves to the outsider. Equally, moderate radicalization denoted a constant exchange of polemical rhetoric between CSO representatives and government officials, whilst explicit radicalization was spurred by an espousal of the preceding tactics, and included dangerous and potentially destabilizing confrontations with public or private security agents and/or members of other ethnic groups.

Unlike conventional thinking on the character of radicalization, I propounded that it was not necessarily synonymous with violence, as the mere acts of advancing combative ends and corrosive speech were, in and of themselves, fanatical exercises. Yet, the facts offered in earlier sections intimated that when the aforementioned features of minimal and moderate radicalization surfaced, explicit radicalization (or violence) was more likely to ensue, particularly when the individual and organizational variables pinpointed below were present.

Based on a detailed review of MASSOB, IYC and OPC activities between the late 1990s and 2002, I established that allusions to a confluence of authoritarianism, purported marginalization and underdevelopment repeatedly influenced these groups' formation, corporate beliefs and endeavours (Table 9). Moreover, I also discovered that, to some extent, two other variables whose roles were not directly evaluated in this study, individual and group characteristics¹, occasionally accelerated the movement towards a militant stance *vis-à-vis* the state or non-state actors. Key traits referenced in this regard included the composition of extremist organizations by age, gender, employment and income status, presence of organizational discipline, degree of internal cohesion and calibre of leadership (i.e. their dispositions, ability to manage conflicts, ambitions and previous experiences).

Where group members were mostly-young men, financially poor and not gainfully employed, suppressed radical tendencies were apt to be aggravated. Additionally, if an ethnic or similar entity was devoid of (1) precise principles concerning the goals which were of utmost importance to it; (2) restraints and strictly-enforced regulations concerning public utterances, temperaments and backgrounds of prospective members and/or leaders; and (3) a threshold that would not be traversed in the organization's bid to attain stated objectives, then group militancy, when present, might prove very adverse to the polity. Altogether then, whilst extra-organizational (or regime policy) variables fueled civil society radicalization in Nigeria, it worsened

Table 9: Summary of IYC, MASSOB and OPC Background Data

	IYC	MASSOB	OPC
YEAR ESTABLISHED	1998	1999	1994
HEADQUARTERS	Port Harcourt (SS)	Okigwe (SE)	Lagos (SW)
CORE OBJECTIVES	Resource Control & Self-Determination	Secession	Empowerment
FUNDING	Membership fees; Donations	Membership fees; donations	Membership fees; donations
CONTRIBUTIONS	Unite Ijaw-speaking peoples; increase awareness concerning environmental degradation, repression, marginalisation & underdevelopment; provide free legal services to Ijaw youths; hold oil companies liable for their actions; demand environmentally-friendly laws	Provide job opportunities to members; sensitize members & other Igbo people regarding the South-East's economic, political & social conditions	Provide vigilante services; sensitize Yoruba concerning the country's problems
MEMBERSHIP	No recruitment undertaken by group; no restrictions on who could participate as long as they were Ijaw youths (30,000 individuals were on the IYC roster in Jan. 2002, of which 5% were women)	No recruitment undertaken; only Igbo people could participate (in 2002, 60% of members were between 18 and 30, and 15% were women)	Undertook massive recruitment in the past; claimed to have over 4 million registered supporters in September 2000

and was sustained by MASSOB, OPC and IYC-specific idiosyncratic factors.

Proceeding from the foregoing results and broadening our focus to suitable concerns in the domestic and international arenas, the remainder of [Chapter IX](#) raises the following questions, which either were superficially addressed in prior chapters or not mentioned at all²:

- a) How should the Nigerian (and by implication other) state react to non-state fanaticism? Relatedly, how should it treat underlying economic, political and social conditions beneath which extremism usually fester?
- b) What is the relevance of this study's findings to international discourses on terrorism, in light of the recent focus on so-called fundamentalist Islamic-based organizations in the Middle East and related events elsewhere?

- c) What should be the exact response of a hegemonic state like the United States to trans-national terrorism undertaken on its shores or against its interests worldwide?
- d) What role, if any, should the UBN assume in anti-terrorism efforts?

IMPLICATIONS OF FINDINGS FOR THE NIGERIAN STATE

The results of this project have three main implications for the democratic³ Nigerian state, as well as others like it. Firstly, in its battle with fanatical associations, government officials must employ rhetoric that defuses and does not exacerbate the already-intense antagonism between these warring entities. Although this point appears to be very elementary, it is very profound. The Nigerian experience illustrates that radical groups learnt a great deal of unfortunate lessons from successive governments' dealings with reputed enemies, including how to wage a vociferous and successful 'war of words' in the public sphere.

The state disparaged perceived opponents and attempted to destroy their reputations in the court of public opinion so as to silence its adversaries, especially those affiliated with radical CSOs. Yet, these verbal altercations did not lessen extremist propensities in the country; in fact, they actually corroded the psyches and sensibilities of Nigerians as a whole. In one respect, they increased the 'decibel level' of the harsh exchanges conducted in the public sphere; conversely, they further radicalized heretofore-zealous associations.

For the Nigerian state to model democratic practice first within its borders and later to the outside world, and enable its citizens to personify such values in the conduct of their affairs, government representatives ought to use language that exhorts all persons, and does not demonize or subjugate any ethnic, religious, social or political collectivity, or the many entities that putatively 'fight' on their behalf. Consequently, even fanatical Nigerians, with the many problems that they unmistakably create, deserve to be treated with respect by virtue of the fact that they are human beings. Whilst extremism should be condemned (and rightly so) for what it is, an act of despondency and thuggery, the Nigerian government's response should not be to inordinately personalize the disputes between it and militant civil society organizations through a public attack on the latter's leaders and disciples. The state thus needs to operate in a mature and restrained manner by not descending to the level of radical CSOs who are always ready for verbal combats.

Secondly, in order to diminish, if not obliterate, the proliferation and accompanying combativeness of associations like those examined in this research, the Nigerian state must not extract the most brutal stratagems from its vast inventory of probable responses. As especially revealed in [Chapters IV](#) through VIII, a reliance on savage public campaigns to forcefully eliminate the militia ‘problem’ once and for all went awry in so many ways and will continue to do so. Such imprudent actions alienated moderate elements within fanatical organizations, as well as the rest of society, generated manifold casualties and injuries on the government’s as well as associations’ sides, and transformed the disagreements between these two constituencies from one of disagreeable language and fairly-discordant objectives to institutionalized physical conflicts.

Other repercussions of the Nigerian government’s use of excessive force included a rise in the number of organizations advocating militant approaches, simultaneous intensifications in intra-society and state-society disturbances, and a diminished reputation of the Obasanjo administration both domestically and internationally, on account of its unwarranted policies in this regard. By and large, the use of excessive force by state security agencies is counter-productive not only in Nigeria but elsewhere as well.

However, this is not to say that the Nigerian government should be passive and callously indifferent in the face of subversive attempts to usurp its authority, destroy innocent lives and properties, and cause general unruliness in the country. To forestall these and other outcomes, the state must be firm in its commitment to preserve the rule of law and order. It therefore is obliged to declare and adhere to its affirmation to all and sundry that acts of sheer hooliganism would not be tolerated. At the same time, it ought to be judicious in the reliance on its military might when government representatives, public and private institutions, and civilians are under attack.

As a general rule, police and military officers should never invade the meeting venues of militant organizations, initiate or provoke other direct confrontations with such groups, serve as the personal bodyguards of private companies operating in the Niger Delta, for example, be excessively concentrated in any one community or geographical zone simply because of their restive nature or past actions, or assault residents of agitated areas because of their support for organizations akin to MASSOB, IYC and OPC.

Also, law enforcement agents must not detain suspected supporters of radical groups without solid (and corroborated) evidence that they committed any unlawful offences or pose a specific threat to the public or nation, harass, intimidate or torture them in any way, or impede their fundamental right to prompt, open and fair trials. Furthermore,

a truly democratic government would not attempt to completely proscribe these associations because of their extremist bent, knowing full well that such a decision could alienate certain individuals, turn persecuted members into accidental martyrs and inadvertently expand their support base in the process.

In the same spirit, there needs to be a comprehensive reorientation of the Nigerian Armed and Police Forces. Although the Obasanjo administration began this systematic reform shortly after it assumed office, the situation as of 2002 was still far from ideal due to the magnitude of the rot and neglect that these two security branches suffered under previous governments, and the manner in which they contributed to the militarization of Nigerian society during the same period.

Any serious reorganization thereby must frontally tackle instances of internal corruption, low morale, poor emoluments, human rights abuses, and lack of adequate equipment and training that police and military forces experienced or instigated. More specifically, enlistees should be trained in the use of non-lethal responses to rebellious actions, negotiations with radical entities whenever appropriate and other neutralizing stratagems in their interactions with members of the public.

To demonstrate the Nigerian government's publicly-stated commitment to accountability, probity and transparency, erring police, army, air force and naval personnel must be court-martialed, imprisoned, fined, dishonorably charged or punished in other visibly-severe ways for wrongdoings ranging from brutality against any citizen, regardless of their fanatical postures, to murder. These and other concrete steps would make certain that existing treacherous conditions do not deteriorate.

Thirdly and perhaps more notably, the extensive substantiation presented throughout this text confirms that the majority, if not all, of the radically-oriented ethnic organizations operating in Nigeria were formed as a deviant but direct reaction to corruption, discrimination, marginalization, repression and unemployment, as defined by them, granted that other less-apparent variables like leaders' personal ambitions also could have been responsible for the observed upsurge in the post-1998 radicalism of these entities. Consequently, the state would be best served to address these matters either directly, if possible, or symbolically. Some of the above problems have exact and easily obtained solutions; resolving others, however, would prove a bit more difficult because of their complicated natures.

On the one hand, owing to the national government's continuing significance in the Nigerian context, political office holders and appointed administrators have to devise novel ways of addressing

many of the problems raised by the IYC, OPC and MASSOB. Concerning the issue of political disenfranchisement, the Nigerian Constitution should be explicitly revised to ensure that Presidential, Vice Presidential, Ministerial, House of Representatives and Senate leadership, Governorship, Deputy Governorship and other major slots are not repeatedly occupied by individuals from the same ethnic or religious group, community or geo-political zone.

This difficult task could be achieved by limiting the President's tenure in office to one 5-year term, as opposed to the two 4-year terms that obtained in Nigeria as of 2003⁴, stipulating that all political parties consult with representatives from the zone whose turn it is to produce the next candidate, and ensuring that there is gender, regional, ethnic and religious equity in the appointments of Ministers, Permanent Secretaries, heads of major directorates, SOEs and other related establishments.

On the whole, the distorted situation in which members of certain ethnic groups are enormously dominant at the expense of others, and problematically demand that influential federal departments like Defence, Finance or Petroleum be 'reserved' for their region, is a recipe for disaster and so must be avoided. Fairness in the selection of suitable persons must extend to appointments made at the state and local government levels to reflect both inter and intra-ethnic, religious and cultural differences. Whilst such an undertaking appears monumental and complex, it would go a long way in ameliorating the concerns of distressed organizations.

Interestingly enough, it appeared that the Obasanjo administration had gotten part of this message, as was substantiated by federal appointments made over a three-year period. This official compilation provided the names of 'ministers, special advisers, special assistants, permanent secretaries, chairman of boards of parastatals, governing councils and commissions, as well as heads of government agencies and other top government positions' (The Guardian 10 October 2002).

Of all the country's six geo-political zones, South-East, South-South, South-West, North-Central, North-East and North-West, the South-South dominated the aforementioned list with 246 federal appointees. Indigenes of the latter sub-region filled the posts of Attorney-General of the Federation and Justice Minister, Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Ministers of Works and Housing, and Culture and Tourism in 2002.

Following the South-South was the South-West with 242 appointees, North-Central with 229, North-East with 221, North-West with 219 and South-East with 215. These figures partly weakened the marginalization arguments that lately were bandied about by the country's ethnic groups. Still, a more cautious reading of this list

portended that the most prestigious ambassadorships, ministerial and other federal posts in essence were retained for Northerners, who headed these major departments and associated directorates: Foreign Affairs, Petroleum, Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), Nigerdock Nigeria Limited, Nigerian Deposit Insurance Company (NDIC), Nigerian Security Printing & Minting Company (NSPMC), Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), Communications and Finance.

Additionally, the Nigerian Ambassadors or High Commissioners to India, Egypt, Zimbabwe and the United States all hailed from the North in 2002, with the majority of these officers and ministers coming from the dominant North-West quadrant. In contrast, Easterners were relegated to the comparatively less-important and somewhat 'softer' Ministries of Health and Transport, and Westerners to the federal departments of Education, Internal Affairs and Solid Minerals, to name a few. As such, the grouse of militant organizations pertained not only to the quantity of selections made by the Nigerian government, but the quality thereof.

On the social front, the distribution of government resources ought to follow the same pattern outlined above. If federal roads, educational institutions and health care facilities, to name a few amenities, are abundant and in relatively-great shape in one geopolitical zone, even though similar establishments in another part of the country are limited in number and in deplorable conditions, feelings of resentment are bound to surface and become institutionalized over time. This professed disparity in the allocation of government funding and allotment of tangible entities prominently figured in the idea of social abandonment that profiled organizations espoused.

To address this prevalent belief, government officials must redouble their efforts and seek to maintain a semblance of impartiality throughout the country. In so doing, they have to pay close attention to both the number of facilities in one sub-region in comparison with the others, and the corresponding conditions of these institutions. In more concrete terms, the presence of federal establishments in one area, which is measured in terms of the amount and 'worth' of national universities, hospitals and roads for example, must not be markedly noticeable somewhere and totally unapparent elsewhere.⁵

The national government, in concert with its sub-national equivalents, has to deal with other more serious social conditions, especially violent crime, lack of physical planning, environmental degradation, unfettered expansion, unending traffic 'jams', lack of access to potable drinking water, health care, sanitation and uninterrupted electricity, and rural poverty, which remain the bane of Nigerian towns, villages and cities. If prompt and enduring solutions

are not formulated for these social crises and others like them, then the dysfunctional milieu that fostered ethnic and religious radicalism in the country will continue to produce more insurrectionary movements that eventually might trigger the dismemberment of Nigeria, as we have known it.

Similarly, Nigeria's economic sphere has been in a state of utter doldrums since the 1980s. To avert its total collapse, government policies have to generate employment for the country's teeming youths and encourage domestic and foreign investment, which is not exploitative of Nigeria's environment and plentiful labor, will not repatriate badly-needed revenues to benefit overseas conglomerates and lifestyles, but will create positive synergies that ultimately reverberate throughout the nation. If domestic, foreign and multi-national companies continue to flout labor laws and exploit the relatively-small number of formally-employed Nigerians, even as the country's tertiary institutions produce some mediocre and unemployable graduates, then these embittered and/or unoccupied individuals could become easy converts to new strains of radicalism, which are always lurking in the background, in the coming years.

Moreover, policy-makers have to harness the country's as-yet-undeveloped physical, geographical, cultural and human endowments for the furtherance of sustainable, equitable and just development that benefits all Nigerians. The era of an unimaginative reliance on one sector, petroleum, for foreign exchange naturally cannot persist forever. Furthermore, there has to be a keen understanding of the fact that solutions to Nigeria's many difficulties will not chiefly come from outside institutions, think tanks or governments, which are not always knowledgeable concerning the country's history, diversity and potential, and regularly retain their own distinctive agendas.

All told, the solutions to these and associated economic, political and social matters ought to be thorough and reflective of the concerns of Nigeria's many stakeholders. In this vein, the Nigerian government obviously has to involve them in the formulation and promulgation of appropriate and successful remedies. The sheer level of these problems also evinces that the state cannot effectively solve them on its own.

Resultantly, it must actively welcome suitable external support, persuade wealthy Nigerians to imbibe a spirit of philanthropy, create an enabling environment that will impel private companies to do likewise, expunge corruption from its ranks, and endeavor to minimize the ubiquitous feelings of personal and collective entitlement amongst the country's divergent interest groups, and inordinate reliance on the Nigerian government. These and other specific or symbolic policies will rectify actual neglect and

discrimination caused by past regimes, whilst eroding problematic claims of 'marginalization' that are intended to settle personal or collective scores rather than actually improve people's lives.

RELEVANCE TO CONTEMPORARY DISCOURSES ON TERRORISM

The destructive bomb attacks on the New York City-based World Trade Center in 1994 and 2001, and United States Embassies in Dar-es-Salaam and Nairobi in 1998, signaled a new phase in the perception of non-state terrorism the world over. Prior to this time, the most visible terrorist activities, like the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, occurred at the domestic level and specifically targeted local but scarcely external interests. From this vantage point, prevailing discourses traditionally viewed terrorism as actions undertaken by extremist groups, like Nepal's Maoist Rebels, to topple a dictatorship, monarchy or legitimately constituted regime. Although these revolutionary movements frequently obtained international support and maintained formal or informal affiliations with comparable entities operating in other environments, their disturbing activism habitually was confined to one country or locality.

However, this view is no longer tenable in light of the Cold War's demise, the dormant hostilities that it engendered and events of the past decade, which especially revealed the dramatic and sudden obliteration of the divide that formerly demarcated, at least in intellectuals' minds, domestic from international affairs. This situation is attributable to globalization that has markedly shrunk the sizeable distance between nations and turned the world into a small global village.

In several respects, increased interdependence and internationalization have generated a rise in economic, cultural and indeed social interactions. At the same time, globalization, which is derided and equated with Westernization in certain quarters, and wholeheartedly extolled by others, also has generated negative consequences with a global reach and similar to those conspicuous in the Nigerian context. Accordingly, states like the United States, which heretofore had been shielded from devastating terrorist acts planned or even executed on other soils, appeared to be very vulnerable to non-state attacks undertaken by trans-national radical organizations against their local and overseas interests.

In a similar fashion to MASSOB, OPC and the IYC, trans-national militant organizations, such as Al-Qaeda, accused the Western world in general and the United States in particular of economic, political and social marginalization of Arabs in the Near East, and the Muslim

Umma, general underdevelopment and global dominance or authoritarianism on an international scale. In response to these reputed inequalities, such movements employed less, moderately and explicitly fanatical strategies to attain their purposes.

They delineated truculent objectives, expressed venomous hatred for Western leaders, and ultimately took codified zealous views to their logical extreme by attacking symbols of alleged American hegemony on the country's own terrain and elsewhere. If adequate care is not taken, radical actions begun or planned in one country eventually could envelope other regions and become a recurring phenomenon. Given the complexities that colour perceptions of intercontinental fanaticism, how should individual countries and the comity of nations react to these dastardly occurrences and others that unfortunately might arise in future?

Hypothetically, reactions to terrorism could be offensive, defensive or reflective in nature. Since global terrorism by its very nature is not amenable to a diplomatic solution, the use of force against members of organizations who previously attacked, injured and/or killed innocent civilians, and/or the nations who harbor them, ideally ought to be rational, unemotional, concerted, carefully weighed against all other available options and overseen by a team of international observers. In a similar vein, hegemonic states must refrain from utilizing unjustifiable and arbitrary force when attempting to uproot instances of international fanaticism that negatively impinge upon their citizens or territories.

Whilst there is a tendency for powerful nations to 'go it alone' and utilize the most virulent weapons in their arsenals to quash cross-border militant organizations, this overwhelming reaction is not necessarily going to resolve the terrorism problem in the long run. As mentioned in the analysis of the Nigerian experience, even though this potent reaction might temporarily cripple the 'offending' trans-national fanatical entity and annihilate its key leaders, it could further embolden survivors in the long run and create an unmanageable problem that is far worse than the original one.⁶

Countries faced with insurrectionary movements that transcend national boundaries must be mindful of the advice offered above in cases of localized extremism. Equally, responses to trans-national terrorism must be underpinned by the commonly accepted tenets of international law, which customarily stipulate that states should attempt to peacefully resolve their disputes under the aegis of the UN. Yet, as contemporary debates indicate, the UN itself has been under tremendous attack from all corners for its failure to decisively proceed on the matters before its Secretariat. Although this alleged incompetence could be attributed to the unwieldy bureaucracy under

which the body has groaned for most of its existence, the UN has been hampered by other problems that revolve around a lack of funding, and the United States' undue interference in and essential bullying of the international organization.

For the UN to remain relevant in the final scheme of things, several revitalization programmes must be developed. These include the empowerment of the body with the obligatory wherewithal and authority to censure (and punish in other visible ways) countries that violate its resolutions. Correspondingly, the UN as a whole must continue to be independent and impartial, its committees and organs, especially the powerful Security Council, must be democratized to reflect post-Cold War concerns and realities, and research into the causes of and likely solutions to terrorism, and appropriate interventions, have to be accorded priority through a visible and well-funded international agency.

As trans-national terrorism and other ongoing security crises are not confined to Asia (China), Europe (France, Russia and the United Kingdom) and North America (the United States of America), permanent membership on the Security Council must, as a matter of necessity, be expanded to incorporate the inputs of countries in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and South Asia.⁷ This decision will infuse the rather-staid Council with much-needed vigor, vitality, diversity of perspectives and openness, and guarantee that the solutions devised to tackle domestic and international terrorism would be the most proper.

Finally, an understanding of the issues that precipitated cross-border militancy in the first place should undergird any holistic response to international terrorism. In general terms, powerful Western policy-makers and institutions have to reflect upon the manner in which their economic, political and social decisions affect not only the citizens of their countries but also those of other lands. Due to this fact, they must overhaul and democratize their foreign, economic and social policies in order to engender domestic equity and fairness.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

Even though this concluding chapter showed that a text on ethnic radicalization in one country, Nigeria, had general implications for domestic and international radicalism, more research needs to be undertaken to sharpen this link. In closing, I list areas in which additional analyses into the causes and ramifications of, and responses to, various forms of extremism are very much required. Some promising research questions are listed below.

- a) How does domestic militancy differ from its trans-national manifestation? Are there any connections between the two phenomena? If so, what is nature of this linkage?
- b) How is the process of radicalization in one context with a political history similar to Nigeria, say Indonesia, different from what has occurred in the Middle East for example?
- c) Are there any similarities or variations between ethnic, religious, labor or other forms of radicalism?
- d) Are there states whose constructive policies successfully and non-violently moderated instances of radicalism in their respective countries? If so, how did this process of 'deradicalization' occur and what lessons could be garnered from these experiences?
- e) Which is more important in accounting for individual or organizational radicalization, internal group characteristics or external realities/developments?
- f) Why do certain groups, which employed violent tactics during an authoritarian era, continue to do so under a democratic dispensation? Conversely, could the 'softening' and modifications in MOSOP's stance *vis-à-vis* the state be explained primarily (or wholly) in terms of changes in political incentives?
- g) Apart from the obvious influence of personal and internal characteristics, are there any other reasons why organizations which exist in the same milieu and thereby experienced similar difficulties stemming from state action (or inaction), react differently, with some choosing a more radical path and others selecting comparatively less-extremist strategies?
- h) What do detailed empirical case studies reveal concerning instances of corruption, incivility, chaos, discrimination and marginalization amongst 'reputable' CSOs? How pervasive are these problems, and what are their repercussions for the groups and society at large?

It is hoped that detailed enquiries into these and other related questions would improve our understanding of the emergence, contours, repercussions, and possible reversals of domestic and international extremism.

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Name of organization:
2. Date of founding (day/month/year):
3. Where was it founded? (within or outside Nigeria?):
If within Nigeria, what city and state?
 - a) Do you maintain offices in Nigeria?
 - b) If so, how many and where?
4.
 - a) Do you maintain offices abroad?
 - b) If so, how many and where?
5.
 - a) Do you maintain any relationships with other organizations in Nigeria or elsewhere?
 - b) If so, which ones, where are they based and what is the nature of these relationships?
6. What functions do your Nigeria-based offices perform?
7. What functions do your international offices perform?
8. Who founded your organization?
 - a) Name(s):
 - b) Profession(s):
9. What is the name of your current leader?
10. What is his/her official title?
11. How many leaders have you had?
12. What are the titles of other key leaders within your organization? (eg vice president, spokesperson, publicity secretary, treasurer etc)
13. How has your leadership structure changed since the demise of military rule, if your organization was formed in or prior to 1999?
14. Who can be a member of your organization (are there any restrictions?)
15. How many members do you currently have?

16. How many members did you start with?
17. a) How do you communicate with your members?
b) Do you have any publications? If so, could you name them and the functions they perform?
18. How do you recruit your members?
19. Do you have a list of members?
20. What percentage of your members are women?
21. What percentage of your members is between 18 and 30 years of age?
22. Do you have a constitution and/or bill of rights?
23. What was your initial source(s) of funding? Domestic or international? Individual, membership fees etc
24. a) Has your source of funding changed since the organization was founded?
b) If so, how has it changed?
c) What is/are your current source(s) of funding?
d) What is the size of your budget?
e). What changes have occurred in the quantity of your funding?
25. a) Do you possess Internet access?
b) If so, what year did you obtain Internet access?
c) Website?, if so, what year did you obtain it?
d) Telephone?, if so, when did you obtain it?
a) Facsimile?, if so, when was it procured?
b) Other facilities (eg library)?
26. What are the broader aspirations, if any, of your organization and/or its leaders/spokespersons?
27. Do you hope to launch your own political party single-handedly or in collaboration with other organizations?

OBJECTIVES/TACTICS/RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER GROUPS

1. Does ethnicity assume any role within your organization?
2. If so, what is the nature of this role?
3. Do you think there was corruption under successive military (and civilian) regimes?
4. Do you think there was repression under successive military (and civilian) regimes?
5. Do you think there were human rights abuses under successive military (and civilian) regimes?
6. How, if at all, did these occurrences influence your organization (its formation, objectives, strategies and relationship with government)?
7. What are your organization's objectives?

8. Have your objectives changed since your organization was founded?
9. If so, why have they changed?
10. What would you consider to be your organization's main accomplishments?
11. What would you consider to be the problems or setbacks that are currently facing or have confronted your organization in the past?
12. Who is your main audience? (the federal government, states or local governments, business elite, political class or ethnic groups, the international community etc.)
13. What services do you provide to your members?
14. What specific tactics do you currently employ to achieve your objectives under the new democratic dispensation?
15. Why did you choose the tactics that you currently employ?
16. Have your tactics changed over time? Do your strategies differ across issues? If so, why?
17. Are your tactics similar to or different from groups formed within the same period and with similar objectives?
18. Why or why not?
19. Do you portend that your tactics, focus and/or objectives will change in future?
20. a) If not, why not?
b) If so, why and what would be the nature of this change?
21. Is there agreement or disagreement within your organization concerning the:
 - a) leadership of your organization?
 - b) its objectives?
 - c) tactics utilized to achieve these objectives?
 - d) relationship with the state etc?
22. How many factions are there within your organization?
23. Do you consider the tactics employed by some of your members to be radical and/or violent?
24. How do you personally feel about the use of inflammatory rhetoric and violent strategies to achieve your stated objectives?
25. How do you feel about organizations that employ the aforementioned strategies to achieve their objectives?
26. How do you feel about the use of 'mainstream' or non-violent rhetoric/tactics to achieve your objectives?
27. How do you feel about organizations which utilize such strategies to achieve their objectives?
28. If applicable, how do you view and how would you characterize your relationship with:
 - a) The Shagari regime?

- b) The Buhari/Idiagbon regime?
- c) The Babangida regime?
- d) The Shonekan regime?
- e) The Abacha regime?
- f) The Abubakar regime?
- g) The Obasanjo regime?
- h) Religious groups?
- i) Social groups?
- j) Business elite and organizations?
- k) The Police and other law enforcement authorities?
- l) The judiciary?
- m) The media?
- n) Political class?

APPENDIX B

Summary of MOSOP Interview

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

KEN SARO-WIWA (WRITER, ACTIVIST, POET AND PLAYWRIGHT), WHOM Sani Abacha hanged on 10 November 1995, established MOSOP in August 1990 in Bori, Rivers State, Ogoniland's *de facto* capital. In order to better ascertain the group's *modus operandi*, I interviewed MOSOP's factional President in Port Harcourt in January 2002. This US-based individual headed one of two MOSOP factions; unfortunately, I contacted but was unable to interview the Nigeria-based MOSOP leader. What follows is a summary of my conversation with the MOSOP 'President'.

MOSOP's bill of rights pinpoints the economic strangulation, political marginalization and economic deprivation of the Ogoni, and the ecological devastation of their communities. Due to its high profile nature, MOSOP has its headquarters in Bori and a satellite office in Port Harcourt. These two offices coordinate MOSOP's activities in Nigeria and abroad, and organize rallies and conferences. The Port Harcourt office possesses Internet access, although it often is not available or reliable; its office also obtained telephone and facsimile access in the 1990s (Bori lacks telephone and Internet facilities).

The group maintains offices in Canada, Denmark, Italy, Ireland, the United Kingdom and the United States (St Louis, Atlanta, Chicago, Houston and Washington, DC). These overseas chapters coordinate the group's activities and disseminate important information. MOSOP also collaborates with other organizations within and outside Nigeria, which propagate information and create worldwide awareness regarding the Ogoni predicament. These partners link MOSOP with other social groups and NGOs with similar functions in Nigeria and abroad, including those that can fund its myriad campaigns, rallies, symposia and conferences. For example, the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) and the Sierra Club accompanied MOSOP members to the White House in 1997 and 1998 for advocacy purposes,

and organized speaking engagements for MOSOP officials in the U.S. Other partners include Amnesty International, Civil Liberties Organisation, Environmental Rights Agenda, Greenpeace, Missouri Coalition for the Environment, and the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization.

MOSOP initially relied on domestic donations, levies and other sources (excluding membership fees). In recent years, the group received donations from the AFSC and other overseas-based entities. The size of the organization's budget fluctuates rapidly; as of January 2002, the size of the Bori office's budget was approximately N500,000. Ogoni people scarcely 'link' with business elites and organizations, as their deprivation has stifled any entrepreneurial talents that they may possess. The group's relationship with the state media was problematic in the past because the latter did not portray the organization in a positive light or succinctly address the issues that were important to its constituency.

Since its inception, MOSOP has had four leaders, including the late Ken Saro-Wiwa; the organization's first set of leaders resigned and Saro-Wiwa was elected president. Its leadership structure includes a president, vice president, deputy president, treasurer and organizing secretary. More specifically, whilst the group had witnessed a change in its leadership since the demise of military rule in May 1999, the structure has virtually remained the same and there were disagreements concerning its leadership.

As MOSOP is a socio-cultural, non-partisan, non-political, non-religious and non-governmental organization, its leaders reportedly do not have any broader political aspirations, such as running for political office or metamorphosing into members of Nigeria's elite political class. In a similar vein, the group does not maintain any affiliation or relationship with the state because the plight of the Ogoni people is not at the forefront of the country's political agenda. Also, the group perceives efforts at ameliorating the deplorable environmental degradation, economic marginalization and underdevelopment that currently persist in the Niger Delta, such as the Niger Delta Development Commission, as flawed and half-hearted because they will not eventually benefit the Ogoni people. In sum, MOSOP does not have any official 'sponsors' in the political sector and therefore lacks the support that other Nigerian ethnic associations enjoy or have benefited from in the past. Regardless of these qualms concerning the effectiveness of previous and existing governments, the Nigerian government is MOSOP's main audience, due to the simple fact that it 'manages' the constitution of the republic.

Membership in the Movement is open to every Ogoni person, regardless of gender. Furthermore, non-Ogoni individuals who

support MOSOP's *raison d'être* participate in group activities and attend meetings. In spite of the fact that the group does not provide any tangible services to its members, MOSOP's influence and reach is reflected in its membership level. Although it started with approximately 200 members in 1990, it had about 100,000 members within and outside Nigeria in early 2002. As would be expected, the organization maintains a long list of members, which consists of approximately 50 percent women, who constitute the 'committed core members' of MOSOP, and 30 percent of youths between the ages of 18 and 30. There apparently is not a concerted campaign to recruit potential members, as the group is very well known and regarded throughout the Niger Delta and beyond. Still, individuals interested in becoming members frequently attend rallies held throughout the Ogoni Kingdoms.

MOSOP's leadership communicates to its registered members and other interested persons via its 'steering committee', which consists of vice presidents (VPs) who represent each of the chapter in the six kingdoms of the Ogoni nation. In turn, these VPs travel to their respective kingdoms to orally relay information regarding MOSOP to their members. Overseas chapters frequently use electronic mail, telephone and letters for the same purpose. The group also relies on its key newsletter, the *Ogoni Review*, which was established in 1993 and has been published intermittently from Port Harcourt since then; Abacha proscribed the Review in the 1990s because of its perceived threat to his military regime. The Review customarily publicizes events, educates members and the public on government actions, pronouncements and strategies, and similar activities undertaken by MNCs such as Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited, which possibly could affect the Ogoni people. Finally, private, as opposed to government-owned, media in the sub-region and Nigeria as a whole often disseminate pertinent information, wittingly or unwittingly, to the group's constituency within and outside the country.

OBJECTIVES AND CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION

MOSOP appeals to ethnic sentiments to highlight issues associated with the rights, existence and deprivation of the Ogoni people. The group's specific objectives, which have remained unaltered since 1990, entail a desire for full autonomy for the Ogoni people within the existing Nigerian federation, resource control and local control of the environment. MOSOP was formed to formalize and accordingly address the Ogoni peoples' disappointment with the existing *status quo* (personified by the political establishment and Shell), as the

interests of the Ogoni nation were not represented in the agenda of the military-led government of Ibrahim Babangida and his predecessors. Instead, they were perpetually marginalized, and their environment was exploited and degraded by successive regimes and oil companies. Still, there is not universal agreement within the organization on the utility of pursuing its goals, as a small minority of members is conservative, pro-Shell and concomitantly pro-government in their stance, while the majority is not.

To further understand the environment in which the organization operated and was formed, I posed questions relating to the prevalence of corruption, repression and human rights abuses under successive regimes in Nigeria, to the factional president. Firstly, he maintained that corruption is a tradition in Nigeria and endemic throughout the country's political life. On the thorny issue of repression and human rights abuses, he claimed that it had existed and is still prevalent in Nigeria. Despite Nigeria's democratic government, the situation in the country has not markedly changed. Thus, citizens resisting Shell's actions in Ogoniland are still being attacked and unnecessarily shot by members of the mobile police force. The judiciary also routinely hampers the rights of group members to receive speedy and fair trials.

Moreover, the conspiratorial relationship between the state and Shell has engendered repressive actions in the region, as there have been indiscriminate arrests and imprisonments without any formal charges being leveled against the individuals concerned. Along the same lines, state agents still monitor MOSOP officials and threaten members whenever they participate in group activities. Also, problematic laws that are detrimental to the survival of the Ogoni people, such as the Land Use Decree that was promulgated by President Obasanjo in the 1970s, had not been expunged from the Nigerian constitution.¹

During the Shagari era, this decree was utilized to pollute the environment and disenfranchise the people. Additionally, although the Ogonis canvassed increased political autonomy via the creation of a new state from the existing Rivers State, the Shagari administration largely ignored their demands. The economic marginalization and deprivation of the Ogoni people continued unabated during the Buhari/Idiagbon and the Babangida regimes; it was during the latter period that MOSOP was formed to 'force government to change its *modus operandi*, and arrest the pronounced and widespread environmental degradation instigated by Shell. The group witnessed severe and virulent opposition to its existence during the Abacha era. During this time, group members were forced to meet clandestinely in the 'bushes' and approximately 200,000 Ogoni activists were forced into exile, as tortures, detentions and executions of key MOSOP

officials (most notably Saro-Wiwa) became the order of the day. As of 2002, the second political incarnation of President Olusegun Obasanjo (now retired from the military and duly elected) has not changed the lot of the Ogoni people. Instead, Obasanjo has allegedly displayed utter indifference and callousness toward the Ogoni people; he reportedly asked them to petition the 'Queen of England' if they wanted the federal government to actualize their bill of rights.

Despite these constraining factors, the interviewee underscored several goals that the organization has accomplished since its inception. These include exposure of the predicament of the Ogoni people to the outside world; resource control (MOSOP brought this critically-important issue, which was recently heard and decided upon in the Nigerian Supreme Court, to the fore); fighting for democracy under the authoritarian regimes of Generals Babangida, Abacha and Abubakar; education of all Nigerians, irrespective of ethnicity and state of origin, regarding their rights; and empowerment and education of women regarding their marginalization: Women are now an integral part of the organization and the 'struggle', as they can now boldly express their views and are fully aware of major issues facing their communities.

MOSOP confronted several obstacles that made the group susceptible to internal divisions. Firstly, the death of Saro-Wiwa, a charismatic leader, at the hands of the Abacha regime, caused 'problems' and disruptions, such as the creation of new factions and exacerbation of existing ones, within the organization in the post-1995 period. Relatedly, MOSOP's infiltration by people with 'pro-Shell' agendas revealed Shell's 'divide and conquer tactics'. The organization is currently split into two factions: an allegedly 'Pro-Shell' faction and an 'anti-Shell' faction supposedly led by the interviewee. Lastly, the group has been faced with repressive policies emanating from the state that seek to silence MOSOP; these actions, in the interviewee's view, have created tensions between elected MOSOP officials and other group members.

TACTICS

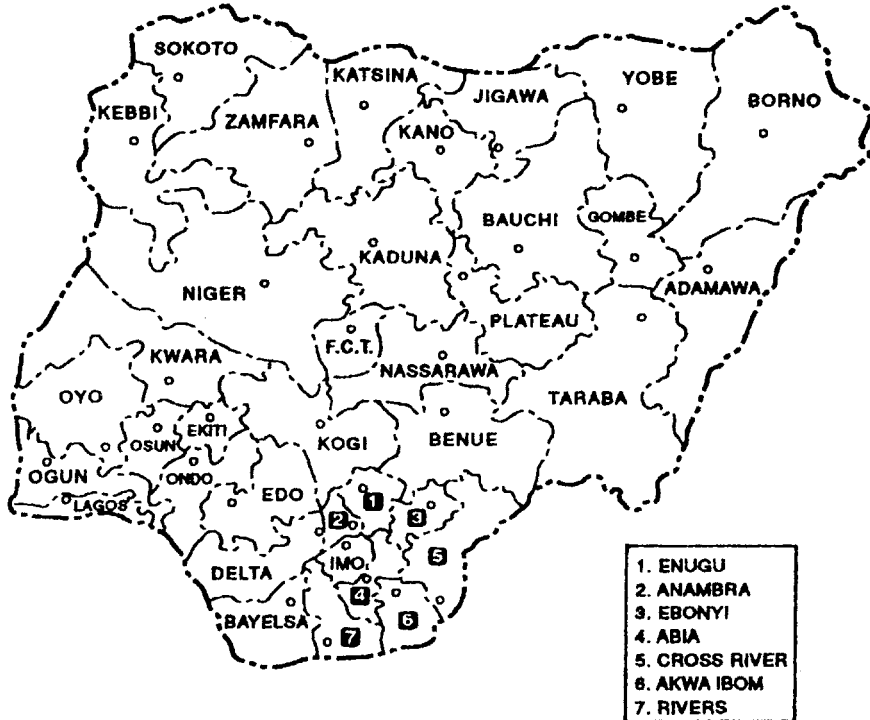
I classify MOSOP as a group that has largely metamorphosed from a confrontational entity into a relatively less radical organization. In recent years, it reportedly has become a non-violent and non-confrontational organization that adheres to the tenets of civil disobedience (*a la* Gandhi and the United States civil rights movements) and is not eager to achieve its objectives through armed struggle. Apart from the fact that non-violence attracts 'sympathy' from the international community, the respondent furnished two

other reasons why MOSOP has chosen this non-confrontational stance in its dealings with the state over the years; MOSOP does not possess the wherewithal to fight the state in order to realize stated goals. Along the same lines, 3,000 people lost their lives to state forces in the South-South alone in the last two decades. Moreover, he acknowledged that violent tactics might impede the organization's ability to be successful, as non-violent groups often are respected and held in high esteem.

In the end, MOSOP has not altered its tactics over time nor changed its strategies across 'issue areas', owing to the fact that it has to confront the same actors (Shell and the government) regardless of the matters of interest to the group at a particular point in time. Still, its current tactics might change if things markedly improve for the Ogoni in the coming years and the Nigerian political establishment addresses their concerns. Although the respondent did not feel comfortable comparing MOSOP with other group, he noted that MOSOP's *modus operandi* was similar to the stratagems adopted by *Afenifere*, because they both act within the boundaries and constraints of the nation's constitution.

APPENDIX C

Map of Nigeria



Thirty-six States, 1996

Source: Eghosa Osaghae, *Crippled Giant: Nigeria Since Independence*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998. Map reprinted with the permission of Indiana University Press.

APPENDIX D

Location of Major Ethnic Groups



Source: Eghosa Osaghae, *Crippled Giant: Nigeria Since Independence*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1998. Map reprinted with the permission of Indiana University Press.

APPENDIX E

Economic, Political and Social Data

Poverty and Social Indicators

Population (2001) millions	129.9
Average Annual Growth of Population (%) 1994-2001	2.6
Labour Force (%) 1994-2001	2.7
Urban Population (% of Total Population)	45
Life Expectancy at Birth (Years)	47
Infant Mortality (per 1000 Live Births)	84
Child Malnutrition (% of Children Under 5)	27
Access to an Improved Water Source	57
Illiteracy (% of population age 15+)	35
Gross Primary Enrollment (% of school age population)	82
Male	89
Female	74

Source: World Bank (2002), 'Nigeria at a Glance', <http://www.worldbank.org>

Key Economic Ratios, Long-Term Trends and Economic Structure

	1981	1991	2000	2001
GDP (US\$ Billions)	59.9	27.3	41.1	41.2
Exports of goods and Services/GDP	22.5	37.2	52.3	48.3
Interest Payments/GDP	1.1	7.5	5.0	N/A
Total Debt/GDP	19.1	122.8	83.1	77.9
Total Debt Service/Exports	9.1	23.4	15.5	20.4
Agriculture (% of GDP)	26.9	30.4	29.5	N/A
Industry (% of GDP)	37.6	45.6	46.0	N/A
Manufacturing (% of GDP)	9.2	5.9	4.1	N/A
Services (% of GDP)	35.5	24.0	24.5	N/A
Imports of goods and services (% of GDP)	26.6	31.3	41.1	49.0
Total Exports (US\$ millions)	17718	12127	20441	18700
Total Imports (US\$ millions)	22013	8736	13718	15544
Exports of goods and services (US\$ millions)	18511	12324	21409	19694
Imports of goods and services (US\$ millions)	21839	10376	16813	18327
Total debt (US\$ millions)	11421	33528	34134	32130

Source: World Bank (2002), 'Nigeria at a Glance', <http://www.worldbank.org>

For additional economic, political and social data/information, refer to the following websites: Africa Action, <http://www.africaaction.org/index.php>; Amnesty International, <http://www.amnesty.org>; Civil Liberties Organisation, <http://www.clo.org.ng>; Constitutional Rights Project, <http://www.crp.org.ng>; Human Development Report, http://hdr.undp.org/reports/view_reports.cfm?country=NIR&countryname=NIGERIA%20; Human Rights Watch, <http://www.hrw.org>; Nigerian Data Bank, <http://www.nigeriandatabank.org>; World Health Organisation, <http://www.who.int/country/nga/en/>; International Monetary Fund, <http://www.imf.org>

Allocation to Nigerian States

STATE	ACTUAL 1999	ACTUAL 2000	ACTUAL 2001
Abia	2268.5	6184.5	8845.1
Adamawa	2695.7	6929.6	8592.2
Akwa Ibom	3161.1	5979.6	26714.4
Anambra	2632.3	5012.1	8607.5
Bauchi	2479.7	7289.5	9154.6
Bayelsa	2666.4	6250.0	21764.6
Benue	3081.5	5652.2	9754.6
Borno	2841.9	6925.8	10007.0
Cross River	2786.4	6784.0	7921.8
Delta	3382.8	6633.6	33934.2
Ebonyi	2074.8	5106.5	7597.3
Edo	2644.2	5558.6	8475.8
Ekiti	2148.9	5490.6	6677.5
Enugu	2292.6	5013.5	7938.2
FCT	4044.3	10538.7	12780.1
Gombe	3260.5	5108.5	7020.5
Imo	2526.5	5681.2	10300.8
Jigawa	2816.6	7047.6	8698.2
Kaduna	3231.6	7550.0	10317.0
Kano	3649.3	7749.2	12672.8
Katsina	3345.2	7285.5	9722.9
Kebbi	2547.2	6289.1	8180.8
Kogi	2588.7	6150.0	8622.1
Kwara	2497.4	5845.5	7495.0
Lagos	3880.6	9192.4	11728.2
Nasarawa	2175.5	6498.6	6938.5
Niger	3082.7	5230.0	9298.2
Ogun	2786.3	6452.7	8287.7
Ondo	2621.2	5603.7	13926.4
Osun	2252.5	6749.8	7716.0
Oyo	3172.3	7561.0	9831.3
Plateau	2510.5	6002.5	7977.4
Rivers	3196.5	9461.5	24128.4
Sokoto	2648.5	7322.4	8203.1
Taraba	2552.8	5517.1	7984.1
Yobe	2633.3	5100.0	8430.8
Zamfara	2480.6	5328.0	7848.9
Total	103657.40	240075.1	404094.0

Source: V.O.Akinyosoye, National Data Bank, Lagos

Notes

NOTES TO CHAPTER I

- 1 The Global South refers to countries outside Europe and North America, the West refers to countries in the latter two regions, while, except where otherwise noted, the North and South are used to distinguish the two main regions of Nigeria.
- 2 Also see Amin (1989) for a discussion of Eurocentrism as a codified system of knowledge that is underpinned by the West's history, material interests and quest for hegemony. The importance of evaluating Africans on their own terms, rather than as 'subjects' in the European narrative, is found in the works of Molefi Kete Asante and other Afrocentric scholars.
- 3 '[Such] evidence about the Orient or about any of its parts count for very little; what matters and is decisive is the Orientalist vision, a vision by no means confined to a professional scholar, but rather the common possession of all who have thought about the Orient in the West' (Said 1979, p.69). In this regard, Orientalism is a mythologized discourse, as it is 'self-containing [and] self-reinforcing', and not chiefly concerned with accuracy, rigour or evidence that may refute its supposedly sacrosanct assertions.
- 4 In order to retain this control over the 'developing' world, the West and some of its scholars (consciously or unconsciously) project themselves as the sole authority over existing 'reality' (as they perceive it) in that part of the world. Whilst this personal and historical authority appears to be all-encompassing, mysterious and natural, it actually is not. The flawed language employed by Orientalists, coupled with their vivid descriptions and imageries, reveal a reductionist, simplistic and subjective underpinning that cannot be denied or ignored, as words are employed not necessarily to inform or educate, but to subjugate or demonize the other, widen the chasm between the Orient and the Occident, as opposed to critically investigating and exposing hegemonic beliefs concerning the inherent superiority of the latter (and its history, culture, experiences and institutions), and the concomitant and assumed inferiority of the former.

- 5 In the American context, acrimonious debates surround divergent concerns like abortion, gun control, school prayer and the death penalty. More profoundly, the unabashedly-violent tactics employed by militia groups further signify that civil society in the 'bastion of liberalism' does not simply consist of bowling leagues or similar groupings that always generate 'mutual respect and toleration', and other 'civic virtues' (DeLue 1997; Putnam 2000; Putnam 1993; Snow 1999; Cozic 1997; George and Wilcox 1996; Dees 1996; O'Brien and Haider-Markel 1998; Hamilton 1996; Sargent 1995).
- 6 In addition to mutual respect, Liberals affirm, in differing ways, that toleration and autonomy are noble virtues that derive from civil society.
- 7 For example, Putnam (1993) contends that there is an observable relationship between democracy and associational life. In describing the Italian experience, he specifically notes that the Northern region of Italy is characterized by higher levels of civic engagements and a concomitantly more developed civil society than its Southern counterpart.
- 8 Social capital refers to 'features of social organization such as networks, norms and social trust that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit' (Putnam 1995). This concept also prominently features in Putnam (1993), where he posits a clear relationship between the level of participation in associations and social capital.
- 9 In a manner analogous to the detailed appraisal offered in Chapter III, Whitman 2000; Sampson 1999; Boice 1996; Moffat 2001; Tannen 1998; Carter 1998; and Caldwell 1999 evaluate the concept of or instances of incivility in American life. Also, Blaney and Pasha 1993; Kumar 1993; Hann 1996; Monga 1995; Comaroff and Comaroff 1999; Azarya 1994; Allen 1997; Tester 1992; and Young 2000, in their own unique ways, expose the flaws intrinsic in a search for a wholly 'civil' society.
- 10 Since the mid-1960s, American participation in civic and fraternal organizations, religious congregations, labor unions, the Boys Scouts, Red Cross and PTAs reportedly has waned (Putnam 1995). Proffered reasons for this decline in associational life and social capital include the 'movement of women into the labor force', 'mobility and other demographic transitions' and the technological transformation of leisure' (ibid). In the final analysis, decreased levels of participation are primarily, if not solely, attributed to television, which supposedly has made American life 'wider and shallower'.
- 11 Ladd (1999) disagrees with Putnam's assertion that associational life in the US is stagnating. Instead, he notes that whilst memberships in certain organizations have declined, there has been an increase in participation within faith-based organizations in recent years.
- 12 In contrast, other commentators dismiss the purported decline in civility. Hall and Lindholm (1995), for example, do not believe that the observed politicization of cultural, ethnic, racial and religious identities *a priori* signifies that the United States is becoming a 'nation of warring factions'; also see Rubin (1999).

- 13 This observation is irrespective of the fact that the global community is partly indebted to the 'West', a constructed term that is not without its own flaws, for articulating the concept of 'civil society'.
- 14 This seeming 'hollowing out' of the state apparently derives from the presumed deficiencies of several governments in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East, and the simultaneous belief that non-state actors are more efficient, reliable and trustworthy. Although state policies the world over have engendered repression, corruption, economic underdevelopment and social malaise, the recent accent on civil society, and treatment of the non-state arena in academic and popular discourses as a wholly-positive sphere, must be thoroughly investigated and queried.
- 15 This restrictive view does not particularly advance our understanding of the non-state arena's inner-workings, as civil society becomes nothing more than an ideological tool or *pièce de résistance* deployed in the whimsical or real battle being waged against the state. Consequently, instead of relying upon empirical evidence, the superseding stance generally is resistant to contrary facts. Along these lines, the normative colouration of civil society stifles the debate by not being cognizant of the concept's variety. In contrast and irrespective of evidence to the contrary, widely-accepted CSOs are presumed to counter state incursions into the private domain, engender social capital, liberalism, respect for democratic norms, human rights, tolerance and other gallant values. Yet, haphazardly attributing these benefits to CSOs is subjective and unscientific, as such an exercise normatively reifies the specific benefits that the analyst perceives as important, whilst in tandem denigrating those offered by organizations designated as 'unworthy'. Thus, 'admired' groups are classified under civil society and those whose strategies are disliked are summarily excluded. Also, the normative view makes a lucid codification of civil society utterly difficult, if not near impossible, to achieve. In several respects, civil society has been used rather carelessly. For certain analysts, the main task of the non-state sphere is to sensitize and empower the public; for others, this realm must be 'anti-state' for it to fulfill its reputed primary function of preventing unwanted expeditions into the societal domain. Paradoxically, whilst civil society is used in an unrestrained manner in academic discourses, its operationalization has not become more inclusive or democratic. The moral of this analysis of the underlying 'normativeness' of existing civil society discussions is twofold. If civil society's benefits are relied upon to extol this realm's unending possibilities, then its problems and absurdities also must be referenced in the same breath. In this manner, the tendency to unreservedly celebrate civil society will be replaced with a more sceptical, balanced and hopefully more-objective perspective. Moreover, in order to present analyses that are theoretically grounded and contextually informed, scholars must rely upon exhaustive empirical evidence when establishing *taken-for-granted* relationships between civil society and its presumed benefits. In this manner, our grasp of civil society will be sharpened.

- 16 Although history occasionally is an accidental occurrence that is informed by the context in which it occurs and thus is not automatically or entirely transferable to other regions, analysts have used European and North American experiences to buttress the often-made assertion that a developed civil society cannot or perhaps would never be found in Africa because its historical trajectory has not closely paralleled the Western path of development. Accordingly, Africa is portrayed as a Continent that is intrinsically deprived of 'high culture', has not made any meaningful contributions to global civilization and unfailingly must depend on the West for enlightenment if it is to emerge from the morass it is currently experiencing. This discussion of presumed European superiority hardly references how colonial rule decimated indigenous cultures, single-handedly created confused, unviable, alien and haphazard 'nation-states' that were superimposed upon and have no bearing whatsoever on pre-existing ethnic, religious, cultural and economic realities, resisted demands for independence by violently quashing grassroots movements and provided unalloyed support to authoritarian governments who simply continued with and enhanced the colonial projects of repression, underdevelopment, exclusion and marginalization, albeit under a new guise. Overall, by perceiving civil society as an unproblematical outgrowth of Western 'modernity' and European history as an altogether-laudable epoch, the deliberation in literature has become nothing more than an explicit or implied juxtaposition between the North's alleged superiority and the accepted inferiority of the Global South. Expectedly, such an exercise does not yield any valuable insights into the foremost underpinnings of civil society.

NOTES TO CHAPTER II

- 1 Countries like Benin, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and most notably Nigeria, embarked upon dramatic democratisation efforts during the 1990s and beyond.
- 2 Research into the behavior of radical groups has been the purview of social movement analysts.
- 3 Certain social movements and ethnically based entities could be placed in this quadrant.
- 4 Austronesian Languages (spoken in Madagascar and adjacent islands); Hamito-Semitic languages (spoken in Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia); Khoisan languages (consist of approximately 90 languages spoken in Southern Africa and Tanzania); Niger-Congo languages (consist of approximately 900 languages spoken in a large number of African countries); and Nilo-Saharan languages (include languages spoken in Western Sudan and other sub-regions of the Continent) (Yakan 1999).
- 5 This is due to the mistaken belief that so-called parochial, primordial and militant groups cannot be studied under the aegis of civil society.

Thus, many analysts unfortunately have been seduced by the belief that the non-state realm is exemplified by noble values and that 'civil' organizations that appear to transcend class, race, gender, ethnicity and religion are inherently superior and engender mostly-positive benefits (political, cultural, social etc) that accrue to society at large. One notable exception to this widespread practise is Ndegwa's (1996) problematization of NGOs in his study of the Undugu Society and Green Belt Movement in Kenya. But even there, the focus is not on radical groups in general or ethnically based organizations in particular, but on another manifestation of civil society, conventional NGOs. Therefore, one would be hard-pressed to locate studies that regard militant and ethnically oriented organizations as legitimate expressions of civil society.

- 6 The fact that people join outwardly pan-ethnic, racial or religious organizations does not negate the continuing importance of colour, ethnicity, race, religion or class in divided societies. In reality, these and other variables continue to influence the course of events within such entities either overtly or behind the scenes, irrespective of the 'myths' of colour-blindness, pluralism and gender neutrality that are often bandied about by policymakers and others in position of authority.
- 7 Some of these organizations have employed avowedly-violent stratagems to achieve their objectives. See Sargent (1995) for a discussion of extremism in the American context.
- 8 See Taylor (1995) for a probing of radical environmentalism in the West.
- 9 See BBC (2001) for an overview of radical, anti-globalisation groups.
- 10 One noteworthy radical group in the United States is the Earth Liberation Front (ELF), which routinely 'inflicts damage on those profiting from the destruction and exploitation of the natural environment' (ELF 2001). This organization was responsible for a \$200,000 fire on 23 January 2000 at a property being developed by Sterling Woods Development in Bloomington, Indiana, a \$400,000 fire at Michigan State University on 31 December 1999, 'burning of Boise Cascade's northwest headquarters in Monmouth, Oregon on 25 December 1999 and the \$12 million destruction suffered by Vail Resorts, Inc. in Colorado in October 1998' (Freedom.Org 2000). In relation, the Oklahoma City Bombing of 19 April 1995 by other militant parties is a poignant and glaring example of the destructive effects of domestic terrorism in a country with a presumably well-developed civil society.
- 11 This is similar to Gurr's (1970) notion of relative deprivation.
- 12 In addition to the highlighted sub-variables, which I mainly focus upon and are evident at the extra-organizational level, other possible explanations for civil society fanaticism include individual-level variables, such as the ambitions of group leaders who may have been excluded from participating in governing and sharing the 'spoils of power' (the explanatory utility of this hypothesis will not be thoroughly explored in this study, owing to the inherent difficulty of ascertaining

the true ambitions and feelings of the leaders of profiled groups); organizational characteristics, such as the composition of extremist organizations by age, gender, employment and income status, presence of organizational discipline, degree of internal cohesion and calibre of leadership; and international variables like the availability of external support for domestic organizations.

- 13 Although military officers generally claimed that they terminated democratic rule due to anarchic conditions triggered by civilian rule, the consideration of politics as a 'means to an end' also impelled their excursions into this lucrative world outside the barracks. The military's politicisation thus is reflective of the view that politics is a relatively-effortless means of securing advantages for one's self, kin and coterie of supporters. Since the military was not particularly adept at managing a complex society riven with ethnic, religious, class, regional and ideological divisions, it gradually lost its professionalism, became nothing more than an assemblage of 'politicians in uniform' and resorted to repressive strategies to perpetuate itself in office. Whilst officers miserably failed as efficient administrators, they were able, during the height of their supremacy, to maintain a semblance of order throughout the length and breadth of Nigeria; the specific manner in which they achieved this calculated but fragile control is described at length in [Chapter III](#). It would suffice to say, at this point in time, that the ban on societal groups could not be sustained for too long. Not only were there factions within the military itself, consisting of reformers and hardliners who advocated and discouraged political changes respectively, many CSOs resisted attempts to rule by obnoxious decrees, delay transitions to civilian rule, preside over a regimented political system and install a ruler under the pretext of democratic elections, who was palatable to the armed forces and conservative elements within the core North, an area from which influential officers usually were drawn. The military permitted civilian rule not because it was completely desirous of a power transfer, but owing to sustained pressures for political liberalization. Hence, in the process of grudgingly acceding to these demands, the military protected its myriad interests and ensured that they remained at the forefront long after its departure. More perplexingly, it drafted constitutions that were not fully cognisant of the complexities of the Nigerian landscape. Such actions made certain that succeeding civilian regimes would be incapacitated, weak and ineffective. All of these political factors, and the erosion of the military's support-base due to economic and social maldevelopment, resulted in the decline, at least for now, in the military's favorability ratings and the decisive 1999 installation of a democratically elected government.
- 14 As the economic, ethnic, political and social problems plaguing Nigeria were precipitated by policies instituted by colonialists, IYC, MASSOB and OPC profiles allude to British rule whenever necessary.
- 15 Because government behavior on matters like alleged marginalization sometimes is subjective, arbitrary and largely invisible to the outsider, I

evaluate and problematize its implicit and underlying foundations as well.

- 16 Oppression occurs when 'social and economic privileges are denied to whole classes of people regardless of whether they oppose the authorities' (Bissell et al., 1978, p.6; Stohl and Lopez 1984). Terrorism is 'the purposeful act or threat of violence to create fear and/or compliant behavior in a victim and/or audience of the act of threat' (Stohl and Lopez 1984, p.7);it specifically encompasses: Purposive behavior or intention on the part of the 'terrorist actor'; Act or threat of violent harm to a victim(s); Altered behavior ('compellence') or abandoned behavior ('deterrence") as a direct result of the terrorist demonstration; Identification by the target with the victim; Observation of the effects of the act or harm by some ultimate target(s); Some degree of terror induced in the target(s) through a 'demonstration effect' and the act of identification (Stohl and Lopez 1986). Also see Walter 1972; Bushnell et al 1991; Stohl and Lopez 1986; and Welch 1980 for other definitions of repression, or a discussion of repression and rebellion in other contexts.
- 17 Although I am explicitly concerned with the relationship between repression, marginalization and underdevelopment, and civil society radicalization, I recognize that the three variants of political violence described above are intimately linked to one another.
- 18 I list additional sources of political data in [Appendix E](#).
- 19 See [Appendix E](#) for additional information on Nigerian economic and social data.
- 20 The latter is present when the majority of the populace does not periodically elect the ruling elite, unencumbered by interferences from the centre. Such a regime usually consists of either military or civilian rulers who come to power via *coups d'état*, elections (they may have been elected but thereafter chosen to suspend or manipulate widely-accepted democratic procedures to further their own ends) or the blessings of a previous leader who appoints the heir to the throne.
- 21 Rulers as diverse as the late President Felix Houphouet-Boigny, who ruled Côte d'Ivoire from 1960 to 1993, and Lee Kuan Yew, who was Singapore's Prime Minister from 1959 to 1990, perfected benevolent authoritarian rule. Unlike other corrupt 'dictators' in Africa and Asia, whose regimes engendered policies that were economically, politically, socially and otherwise pernicious, ostensibly-beneficent authoritarian dictators immensely contributed to the remarkable economic development witnessed within their respective countries, albeit at the expense of critical environmental, human, civil and political rights.
- 22 The political centre under President Obasanjo appeared largely inflexible and somewhat unresponsive to public demands on certain occasions. Unlike other polities where the actions of the President are somewhat constrained by the electorate, Obasanjo often acted, especially in the early days of his term, in ways akin to a military statesman rather than an elected official. For discussions of 'authoritarian democracies' and 'democratic authoritarianism' in other contexts, see Vilas 1997; Simensen 1999; Jalal 1995.

- 23 Irrespective of the APC's sporadically-expressed and virulent rhetoric, not a great deal is known concerning its objectives and tactics.
- 24 For a discussion of Islamic radicalism in Northern Nigeria, see Watts (1997).
- 25 Some of the Internet-based newspaper sources that were regularly reviewed are: All-Africa, <http://www.allafrica.com>; Champion News, <http://www.championnewspapers.com>; Cable News Network, <http://www.cnn.com>; Comet News, <http://www.cometnews.com.ng>; Daily Independent, <http://www.dailyindependentng.com>; Daily Times, <http://www.dailytimesofnigeria.com>; Gamji, <http://www.gamji.com>; New Nigerian, <http://www.newnigeria.com>; Newswatch, <http://www.newswatchngr.com>; Post Express Wired, <http://www.postexpresswired.com>; The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), <http://news.bbc.co.uk>; The Guardian, <http://www.ngrguardiannews.com>; The Nigerian Tribune, <http://www.nigerian-tribune.com>; The Vanguard, <http://www.vanguardngr.com>; and ThisDay, <http://www.thisdayonline.com>.
- 26 I also visited Kaduna, one of the North's pre-eminent cities and Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory, in order to assess the activities of Northern ethnic associations and obtain a copy of the report being prepared by the Human Rights Investigation Commission (widely known as the Oputa Panel). The voluminous report was not available to the public in early 2002.
- 27 Regardless of this 'sheer luck', this project draws from relevant Nigerian (Internet-based) newspaper articles, due to my peculiar inability to interview OPC officials, and the overall desire to present balanced and dispassionate assessments of the three organizations under review.
- 28 Given the widespread belief in Northern unity in that part of the country, I did not disaggregate the North into its constituent sub-regions.
- 29 Aka Ikenga (South-East/Tactics Unknown), Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) (North/Non-Radical), Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni Peoples (MOSOP) (South-South/Somewhat Radical), Oodua Redemption Alliance (ORA) (South-West/ Non-Radical) and Southern Kaduna Peoples Union (SOKAPU) (North/Non-Radical).
- 30 A summary of my interview with this MOSOP official is presented in [Appendix B](#).
- 31 King, Keohane and Verba (1994) rightfully argue that it is possible to conduct qualitative research that is both systematic and scientific. Pertinently, I am mindful of Dogan's (1994) overquantification *problematique*.
- 32 For a discussion of these two methods, see Van Evera 1997; Peters 1998; and Collier 1993.
- 33 Single case studies are beneficial because they can be 'proto-theoretical' (Peters 1998, p. 64). Another important defence for small-n studies concerns the issue of 'conceptual stretching' (Sartori 1970; Collier 1993). The desire to evaluate the presence of a phenomenon in more than one setting possibly could result in the stretching of concepts that may be

applicable in one setting to explain developments in totally different contexts (Sartori 1970).

- 34 Hence, instead of looking at Nigeria as a single geographical entity, we can instead disaggregate it into North and South, which in many ways, are at least ‘two countries in one’, because of the marked historical, cultural, religious and language differences between the two areas. This project further divides the South into the South-West, South-East and South-South, and examines organizations representing vital ethnic interests in these three areas.
- 35 A copy of the questionnaire is provided in [Appendix A](#).

NOTES TO CHAPTER III

- 1 For analyses of civil society in other parts of the Global South, see Norton 1995 and 1996; Morales 1999; Bernhard 1993; Wedel 1994, Hann 1992, 1993 and 1995; Buchowski 1996; Yin 1998; Hsiao 1995; Frolic 1997; Haynes 1997.
- 2 Yet this project is deeply cognisant of the fact that the authoritarian nature of the post-independent Nigerian state is, in very many ways, reflective of its colonial antecedent.
- 3 In Chapters VII and VIII, I mostly focus on the relationship between civil society radicalization and post-1999 economic, political and social conditions in Nigeria.
- 4 Although commensurate attention has been devoted to the activities of NGOs, comparatively fewer studies have problematized their apparently innocuous objectives and actions. If this task were performed, it would be apparent that NGOs exhibit the same inconsistencies, corruption and obsession with personal or organizational advancement, among other flaws, that plague other ‘less-qualified’ civil CSOs. Indeed, if civility were a *sine qua non* of civil society, many a PTA, NGO, and Reading Club simply would be excluded for being uncivil, exclusionary, prejudicial, divisive and rancorous at certain junctures in their respective histories. Whilst researching this subject is a worthwhile one, it is beyond the scope of this discussion. For cogent analyses of NGOs, see Hancock 1992; van Rooy 1998; Eade 2000; Hudock 1999; Lutabingwa and Gray 1997; Tandon 1996; Marcussen 1996; Yash 1996; Stewart 1997; Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith 1992; van Ufford, Kruijt and Downing 1988; Monga 1995; Clark 1992; Edwards and Hulme 1992; Fowler 1992a and 1992b; Howes and Sattar 1992; Carroll 1992; Uphoff 1986; DANIDA 1994.
- 5 In addition to militant and ethnically oriented groups, social movements also have been excluded from civil society presumably because they are ad-hoc and informal. For varied discussions of social movements, see Zunes, Kurtz and Ascher 1999; Sachikonye 1995; Scalmer 1999, Zald and McCarthy 1987; Tilly 1978; McAdam 1999; Kornhauser 1959; Chong 1991; Hardin 1995; Kiser and Hechter 1998; Lichbach 1995 and 1998; Lichbach and Zuckerman 1997; Fantasia 1988; Goodwin and

Jasper 1999; Hart 1996; della Porta 1995; McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996; Tarrow 1991, 1994 and 1998; and Tilly 1978. The burgeoning protest literature generally has sought to answer the following questions: How do ordinary people combine to make demands on the powerful? Why does this occur at certain historical moments? How have the methods of ‘contentious collective action’, that is, action on behalf of people who lack regular access to institutions, who act in the name of new or unaccepted claims, and who behave in ways that fundamentally challenge others and authorities, developed over the last two centuries? When does this action mature into a sustained, collective challenge authorities—a social movement? (Scalmer 1999, p.32).

- 6 Scholars as disparate as Zald and McCarthy (1987) and Tilly (1978) employ the concept of resource mobilization in their volumes.
- 7 Movements that emerged in the 1960s include ‘civil rights or black power struggles, the antiwar movement, the New Left, student power groups, feminism, and other political, cultural or minority activists’ (Hunt 1999, p. 147). Since then, leftist and right-wing groups based in the West and representing concerns as varied as animal rights, the environment, globalisation and white rights occasionally have used violent tactics in their confrontations with state and non-state actors (Schneider and Schneider 2002; Guither 1998; Panitch 2002; Green and Griffith 2002; Monaghan 1997; Betz 1993; Gallaher 2000; Minkenberg 2000; della Porta 1995).
- 8 Notable exceptions include Sachikonye 1995 and Okonkwo 1998.
- 9 The experiences of profiled organizations unambiguously suggest that their ability to obtain recognition or success is not essentially dependent upon the availability of the most-suitable opportunities or abundant resources within the groups or the larger locale in which they are based.
- 10 These models also utilize a ‘narrow rational choice perspective...ignor[el] social psychological factors and [employ] an overly quantitative approach’ (Fitzgerald and Rodgers 2000, p. 574).
- 11 This model was superficially explained in [Chapter II](#) and will be fully examined in [Chapter VIII](#).
- 12 In particular, Ferguson (1767) grappled with the dilemma inherent in the development and maintenance of a virile civil society, and the importance of establishing independent associations.
- 13 In the Liberal scheme of things, civil society’s *raison d’être* is to ‘keep the state at bay’ by ensuring that citizens’ political and economic rights, including their ability to own property, are judiciously guarded. In many respects, this version of civil society, which idealises the non-state realm and concomitantly denigrates the state, still persists, albeit under a reformed neoliberal variant.
- 14 In this archetype, the state is requisite for the maintenance of order and civility within society, and the transformation of civil society from a sphere beholden to and encumbered by self-interests, to a domain in which all citizens respect the common good. It ‘stands over civil society, which is a setting of competing interests, and gives to civil society

necessary moral parameters that [control, if not prevent]...social fragmentation or destructive competition' (DeLue 1997, p. 263).

- 15 However, despite this partial affirmation of the Liberal view's merits over its Hegelian counterpart, Marx still insists that 'the principles underlying a bourgeois civil society were nothing more than an ideological screen that hid its true class character' (Woods 1992, p. 82).
- 16 The Gramscian view has been described as a way of reconciling the disparate prescriptions of the Liberal, Hegelian and Marxist conceptualizations of civil society precisely because it regards '...civil society as something more than class domination and something less than an ideal social environment in which individualised self-interest can be realized; or, the Hegelian view as an essential phase in the unfolding of a universal ethical reason. Gramsci, instead, allows us to look at it in a developmental perspective that is shaped by the economy, ethical claims and specific historical conditions' (Woods 1992, p. 83). In total, Gramsci, like Marx, envisages a stage in which the divisions between state and civil society ultimately will be obliterated.
- 17 Ironically, despite the racist views contained within Hegel's writings, which are referenced below, his stance partially approximates the typology presented herein. Specifically, I do not regard the non-state sphere as naturally embodying harmony, homogeneity, stability, uniformity and perfection. Instead, I perceive civil society as a minefield that is laden with destructive, parochial and particularistic tendencies that tower above the common good (Delue 1997, p. 185). Notwithstanding the strengths of this perspective and the chaos evident within the civil society domain in Nigeria and elsewhere, I completely reject the Hegelian assertion that the state somehow could transform the non-state realm into a 'civilised', dispassionate, disinterested, stable and harmonious sphere. This is somewhat due to the fact that the state itself is not without faults in many areas of the world. Also, where the state has attempted to regulate and manage civil society, its contrived efforts have simply backfired, resulted in repression and sustained resistance from non-state actors. In Nigeria, the state has miserably failed in its duties as a protector of the vulnerable; an impartial arbiter; a promoter of sustainable and equitable development; a respecter of citizens' economic, religious and social rights; and an advocate of intrinsically-noble values. On the contrary, the political apparatus has become a means of personal enrichment, acquiring ill-gotten gains, punishing opponents and rewarding supporters. Within Western countries, where citizens elect their leaders and democratic norms are enshrined within long-established constitutions, the political arena is typified by the inordinate influence of special interest groups, corruption, superficiality, virtual *de facto* exclusion of women, ethnic minorities and/or the poor, decline in decorum and conspicuous moral failures. Other problems evident in this domain include the undue politicisation of various issues, tyranny of the majority' (Guinier 1994), presence of a 'winner-take-all' and zero-sum mentality, arrogance, policy inconsistencies, excessive preoccupation with future elections rather

than critical 'matters of state' and pursuit of political office as a lifelong career.

- 18 Civil society is a manipulable tool in the hands of domestic elites bent on advancing their own parochial purposes and international interests which probably are desirous of extending their control over the Continent's affairs. Consequently, the recent emphasis on civil society by particular Western interests is peculiar at the very minimum because the precursors to these 20th-Century organizations were responsible for the decimation of indigenous institutions and groups in the colonised regions of Africa. In essence, civil society is both an ever-evolving but never fully-codified 'project' that is managed by these 'post-colonial' (or neocolonial?) actors and an idea that is tangibly expressed through 'independent' associations. Bearing these matters in mind, Hann (1996) maintains that 'there is something unsatisfactory about the international propagation by Western scholars of an ideal of social organization that seems to bear little relation to the current realities of their own countries; an ideal which furthermore cannot be replicated in any other part of the world today'.
- 19 Paradoxically, 'pre-colonial African political systems recognized the role of popular participation in decision-making and governance. Indeed, some African societies can be argued to have possessed consensual political systems, which required that major decisions be made only after widespread consultations among the people' (Makumbe 1998).
- 20 In this study, I mostly pinpoint civil society's dangerous possibilities partly because recent research has emphasized 'positive' non-state organizations to the detriment of others, and also to demonstrate that even extremely-militant and 'ascriptive' groups visibly serve the particular needs of their supporters.
- 21 Churches and other faith-based movements, political parties, student and other youth groups, independent trade unions, cooperatives, professional organizations and academic groups are included as part of this conceptualization of civil society.
- 22 Will their social structures fit into the 'national project' of each country, and will their ideas and actions draw them into, or distance them from, the official discourse? Are there centrifugal forces that will stimulate and enhance the construction of the state, or will they be swept up into the centralising tendency and simply squabble over the remains of the ruined state? Are they aiming to embody the earnest proclamations of democracy, or to establish alternative spiritual values and impose radically different modes of social exclusion and violence? In relation, he also broaches the following concerns concerning the nature of civil society: Is the form of civil society currently being constructed in Africa democratic? Are its leaders motivated by ethical ambitions or by a desire for revenge against the state and those elements of society accused of not adapting into account the interests they represent? Do they know how to adapt their demands to the socio-economic issues and imperatives of the market economy? Will they abide by the rules of the

- political game if these legitimate their marginalization and appear unfavorable to certain groups?
- 23 He equates this realm with an 'aggregate of institutions whose members are engaged primarily in a complex of non-state activities-economic and cultural production, voluntary associations, and household life-and who in this way preserve and transform their identity by exercising all sorts of pressures or controls upon state institutions'.
 - 24 This reality, coupled with the continuation of the colonial regimes' authoritarian practises in the post-1960s era, made certain that African civil society as a whole remained a shadow of what it could have been otherwise. Makumbe (1998) therefore chides Darnolf (1997) and others who contend that civil society groups in Botswana and Zimbabwe for example are primarily, if not wholly, primordial, as they revolve around the family.
 - 25 Relatedly, on the tendency to basically dismiss African civil society because of its purportedly-uncivil character, Blaney and Pasha (1993, p. 5) make the following assertion: 'Europeans [or Western-based Africanists] who impute to Africa a lack of anything qualified by the adjective 'civil' seldom ground their claims in empirical observation; in the interrogation, 'on the ground', of existing forms of association and aspiration, of participatory politics and public life, past and present'.
 - 26 Likewise, Woods (1992) contends that civil society emerged during the colonial era, when class-based, cultural, ethnic and intellectual associations became prominent throughout Africa. Although Woods submits that there is an African civil society, he asserts that it is devoid of certain characteristics evident in the Western experience, including the presence of social classes, which, when they are present in the African context, 'rarely reflect class principles as the primary mode of economic transactions' (Woods 1992, p. 85). In addition, African civil society supposedly lacks the 'basic normative ideas, which developed along with a bourgeois political economy that justified the autonomy of society from state intervention as part of the African economic tradition' (ibid, p. 85).
 - 27 The belief that Africa lacks a 'civilised' civil society or developed political, social, economic and cultural institutions for that matter sporadically is rooted in the falsity that the Continent, with its presumed lack of a glorious past, has not meaningfully contributed to global civilisation (Hegel 1953) or that the problems evident there are confined to the Global South. In this vein, Hegel makes the following assertion relating to the African 'condition', that is worth quoting at some length: *'He who would like to be acquainted with the horrible manifestations of human nature can find them in Africa. The oldest information that we have on this part of the world tells us the same thing. Properly speaking, Africa has no history* [emphases added]. On this note we leave Africa without further mention.... In sum, what the name 'Africa' signifies is an ahistorical and underdeveloped world, entirely enslaved to the natural mind, and situated at the threshold of universal history' (Hegel 1965, p. 269; Sedogo 1998). Such prejudice

persists and colours a large number of intellectual endeavours that pertain to Africa as further revealed in this quote: '[A]lthough diplomatic courtesy forbids us henceforth to refer to African peoples [in an Hegelian fashion] through exclusively negative terminology ('ahistorical', 'uncivilised', 'without writing', 'without an economy', 'faithless', 'lawless', etc.), the terms that we use to replace these are equally dubious: We speak of 'budding democracies', 'developing countries' and 'subsistence economies'. All this comes down to imposing a Western vision of the world as the only possible end result. It is only when we renounce this hegemonic ambition that we can succeed in penetrating the mystery of African society (Clastres 1974, p. 162; Sedogo 1998). Unfortunately, this erroneous belief has and continues to influence(d) certain but thankfully not all those commenting on the African experience both within and outside the Continent.

- 28 Even though the instruments employed to analyze European (or North American) civil society must be jettisoned when describing the African experience (Monga 1995), before making authoritative remarks concerning the presence or state of civil society in Africa, malignant CSOs operating in the West cannot be ignored or dismissed as irrelevant to the discussion at hand.
- 29 Ronning (1995) states that 'civil society may, consequently, be used in a meaningful way when it is seen as being in embryo in a rural situation, and as a struggling entity consisting partly of a variety of NGOs and more or less spontaneous social movements and relatively weak permanent institutions and organizations in urban areas. It furthermore implies that one of the fundamental political challenges lies in how to unify the various, often spontaneous, peasant movements with the urban movements in a civil society, which covers both the urban and rural sectors of society. One of the most profound challenges in this context is that the formal institutions in what may be said to constitute civil society have failed to capture the informal aspects of civil society, and particularly the informal expression of opposition to the state, which is based on the real political and economic issues that affect the broad sections of society'.
- 30 As an aside, what exactly constitutes the West? Although the 'West' is described as the 'birthplace' of democracy, the nation where this supposedly occurred, Greece, exists on the fringes of the core West, is treated as a 'step-child', if a child at all, and is viewed, along with Portugal, as too Mediterranean (read 'not as refined') in its outlook and culture. Thus, when a predominantly-'white' country within Europe or other locale possesses a specific heritage, history or level of development that is of use to the 'West', or enhances its status, such a place becomes integrated into this elite club; when they, like the cases referenced above, exhibit putative cultural, economic, political or social contradictions that 'soil' the group's reputation, they are treated under other circumstances as outsiders. 'Black' Africans, on the other hand, are not afforded the luxury of laying a rightful claim to Egyptian

- civilisation, alongside those of Western, Eastern and Southern Africa; they simply are cordoned off into their 'sub-Saharan' plantations.
- 31 For additional analyses of ethnicity, ethnic groups, ethnic conflicts and related concepts, see Brass 1985; Brass 1991; Gurr 1993; Gurr and Harff 1994; Horowitz 1985; and Kellas 1991.
 - 32 Whilst not denying the virulence of recent ethnic pogroms in several African countries, it is important to reiterate the apparent point that, in addition to contemporary clashes in the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, ethnic 'problems' largely remain unresolved amongst the Irish and Scottish nations of the United Kingdom, the Flemish and Walloon communities of Belgium, the Quebecois of Canada and several 'ethnic' communities in the United States (Osaghae 1994).
 - 33 Ethnicity contributes to democratic practice by its emphasis on equity and justice in sociopolitical decisions, leads to the appreciation of one's own social roots in a community and cultural group which is essential, not only for the stability of the individual and ethnic group but that of the country as a whole, provides a sense of belonging as part of an intermediate layer of social relations between the individual and the state, [E]thnic identity [can] be instrumental in the promotion of community development in the rural areas, [T]he mobilization of the [diverse] ethnic groups behind the various factions of a nation's ruling class contributes to the decentralization of power in the country which is healthy for democratic freedoms and Ethnicity also served as a tool for mobilizing the Nigerian populace against British colonial rule (Nnoli 1995; Nnoli 1994, pp. 11–12).
 - 34 Instrumentalists treat ethnicity as a tool that is flexible and readily manipulated by a wide variety of societal interests, rather than a fact that is *a priori* given. They also contend that the boundaries of ethnicity are expanded or contracted based on the exigencies of the present. Thus, ethnicity is '...a dynamic [and] not a fixed and immutable element of social and political relationships'. Certain instrumentalists believe that ethnicity is a 'practical resource' that is '...deploy[ed] opportunistically to promote...more fundamental security or economic interests and [could be]...discard[ed] when alternative affiliations promise a better return'. On the other hand, primordialists regard ethnicity as deeply rooted and '...a biological phenomenon [that is] an expression of the powerful drive to extend genetic endowments into future generations'. Not surprisingly, primordialists claim that ethnicity is a largely-innate concept that engenders '...a unique identity, collective memories, language and customs' (Esman 1994, pp.10–11).
 - 35 In the African context, European administrators and Christian missionaries created and invented ethnic consciousness and identity during the colonial epoch (Iliffe 1979; Ranger 1979; Yeros 1999; Young 1994). Instrumentalism could be seen as an expression of constructivism (others include cultural, political and radical historicist sub-schools); in turn, the latter could be sub-divided into empiricist/positivist and normative variants (Comaroff 1996; Markakis 1999; Yeros 1999).

- 36 Unfortunately, several Nigerian and indeed African scholars appear to have been seduced by this model, as they still refer to ethnic groups on the Continent as 'tribes'. The fact that the pejorative word 'tribe' has been used over the years to connote the inherent 'primitivism', 'backwardness' and 'inferiority' of peoples in Africa, Asia, the Americas and elsewhere, while comparatively-sized or smaller groups in the Balkans, for example, are perceived as ethnic groups, makes this all the more troubling.
- 37 Clashes have occurred amongst the following ethnic communities: Ijaw/Itsekiri, Yoruba/Hausa, Ijaw/Ilaje, Kuteb/Chamba/Jukun, Okrika-Elemente, Urhobo/Itsekiri, Ife/Modakeke, Tiv/Alago, Bogoro/Tafawa Balewa, Jukun/Fulani and Apiapum/Ofotura (Ibiam 2002). In the first year of the Obasanjo regime alone, more than 2000 lives were lost in several ethnic and sectarian disturbances, including those associated with the adoption of Islamic *Sharia* law in Northern Nigeria (Phillips and Ibagere 2000). In the year 2001, more than 100 people died in five weeks of fighting between individuals from Tiv and Hausa ethnic groups in the North-Central state of Nassarawa (BBC 17 July 2001). On the whole, from 1999 to 2002, approximately 10000 persons were killed in more than 50 cases of deadly clashes (OMCT 2002).
- 38 In this vein, one must not delineate a reductionist or 'indigenous' model, which sees the many internecine conflicts plaguing Nigeria as a manifestation of the inherent deficiencies of its many peoples and cultures. Instead, a historically informed, comparative, holistic and inclusive framework that regards the role of ethnicity (and religion) in Nigeria as being similar to those assumed by ideology, 'race', color, gender and class in contexts outside Africa, ought to be used.
- 39 In response, he became increasingly resistant to their demands. The specific repressive tactics that the IBB regime employed included 'coercion and intimidation through a growing apparatus of state repression (led by the feared State Security Service [SSS]), arbitrary arrests, detentions and harassment, which fell heavily on the press, trade unions, student associations, human-rights advocates, and other independent interests in civil society, heightened political and social tension, while contradicting the self-proclaimed liberal intentions and democratizing goals of the regime' (Diamond, Kirk-Greene and Oyediran 1997, p. 9).
- 40 Also, see Osaghae (1995). In addition, Olukoshi (1997, p.379) makes a similar observation: '...[T]he introduction of the SAP and its attendant economic and political consequences for the majority of Nigerians, was a major impetus in the flowering of new associations, and the reorientation of old ones, for the purpose of articulating and defending broad democratic objectives'. Lastly, Afolayan (2000, p.130) notes the following: '...[T]he pervasive state of economic crisis and debilitating poverty, the entrenchment of military dictatorship and the failure of democratization in Nigeria are closely related to, and in most cases the direct results of, the strangulating consequences of World Bank/IMF-sponsored imposition and implementation of a structural adjustment

program in the country. The fall-out of all these in the reawakening of civil society, the resurgence of popular culture and the intensification of the struggle for civil liberty, protection of human rights and democracy [is apparent].

- 41 This view of a democratic and activist press has been challenged by Ette (2000), who maintains that the media's coverage of the transition programmes initiated by Generals Mohammed, Obasanjo and Babangida 'did not promote democratization [as,] the editorial direction and presentation of key political actors of the periods were more likely to consolidate military rule than to facilitate democratic transformation'. She further argues that 'the press generally served as an agent of stability for the military instead of being an agent of democracy'. Ette's observation is hardly unanticipated in light of my contention that incivility is apparent within all expressions of civil society. For another perspective on the media's role in relation to authoritarianism, see Olukotun (2002).
- 42 Influential conventional groups formed during this era included the Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO), Constitutional Rights Project (CRP), Campaign for Democracy, Movement for National Reformation (MNR) and the Association for Democracy and Good Governance in Nigeria (ADGN).
- 43 They include the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), established in April 1994 and led by Alfred Rewane, a 79-year old man who was executed by individuals suspected to be state security agents and the National Liberation Council of Nigeria (NALICON), associated with NADECO; it was formed on 16 June 1995 by Professor Wole Soyinka, a well-known radical scholar who fled Nigeria in 1994 because of treason charges levelled against him by the Abacha Regime (Afolayan 2000, p. 148). Established radicalized (but not violent) groups include the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC), the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) and the National Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG).
- 44 The former 'refers to the distributive power of state elites over civil society [and the latter] is the institutional capacity of a central state, despotic or not, to penetrate its territories and logistically implement decisions' (Mann 1993, p.59).
- 45 Migdal, Kohli and Shue (1994); Chazan (1982); and Azarya and Chazan (1997) probe this inverse relationship between state autonomy from civil society on the one hand, and infrastructural power.
- 46 For analyses of the First Republic, see Sklar (1963); Sklar (1971); Mackintosh (1966) and Diamond (1988). The account that follows is based on the author's knowledge of Nigerian history and review of several sources, including those cited herein.
- 47 They included the Action-Group (AG), led by Chief Obafemi Awolowo and based in the South-Western region; National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC), based in the South-Eastern part of Nigeria and headed by Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe; and Northern Peoples Congress (NPC),

- based in the North and led by Sir Ahmadu Bello and the country's first prime minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa. The coalition consisted of the NCNC and NPC.
- 48 The AG split into the Ladoke Akintola-led Nigerian National Democratic Party, which formed an alliance with the NPC to establish the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) and the Awolowo-led faction, which merged with the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC), the Northern Elements Progressive Union and the Borno Youth Movement to create the leftist United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA). The endless infighting and ever-shifting alliances combined with other forces to precipitate violence between the Awolowo and Akintola factions in the Yoruba-speaking South-West.
 - 49 The Major Nzeogwu-led operation resulted in the execution of Akintola, Ahmadu Bello and Tafawa Balewa.
 - 50 Many Nigerians welcomed the arrival of the Second Republic (1979–1983), as the country had languished under military rule since the mid-1960s. Leading up to the transition was the establishment of the Federal Electoral Commission (FEDECO), which oversaw the transition process and duly certified five parties to compete in the elections. They included the Great Nigeria Peoples Party (GNPP), National Party of Nigeria (NPN), Nigeria's Peoples Party (NPP), Peoples Redemption Party (PRP) and United Party of Nigeria (UPN).
 - 51 Notable amongst them were the NPP's Igbo-speaking Dr Azikiwe and the UPN's Yoruba-speaking Chief Awolowo.
 - 52 Shagari's victory was widely disputed and contested, but was still certified by FEDECO and later upheld by the Supreme Court, after an apparently-tortured contortion of electoral rules. Although electoral rules stated that the winner needed 25 percent of the vote in at least two-thirds of the-then 19 states, Shagari won this percentage of votes in only 12 of the 19 states. FEDECO and the Supreme Court simply stated that 12 would be become 2/3 of 19.
 - 53 Specifically, it was characterized by 'increasing violence and disorderliness in [its] first two years'; also, 'public disillusionment continued to be bred by the numerous succession of scandals and embezzlements concerning high-ranking government officials' (Amadife 1999, p.627).
 - 54 The military's attempts to solve problems through '...imposition of new levies and taxes and a crackdown on political expressions did not win the new regime mass support in critical sectors of the Nigerian society' (Ihonvbere and Vaughan 1995, p.75). Additionally, most Nigerians viewed the Buhari regime's introduction of several notorious and repressive decrees with contempt (Olukoshi 1997).
 - 55 The remainder of the description heavily draws from Diamond, Kirk-Greene and Oyediran's (1997) account of this initially promising but eventually-turbulent period of Nigerian history.
 - 56 Their manifestoes and constitutions were curiously drafted by government, which also 'appointed administrative secretaries, built

- their secretariats, funded their conventions and monitored all their activities' (Ihonybere and Vaughan 1995, p.77).
- 57 For instance, Babangida was widely implicated in the killing of a prominent journalist, Dele Giwa, who was blown to pieces by a parcel bomb allegedly delivered from the President's office; IBB also was accused of excessive interference in other facets of civil society, including the academic realm, particularly Universities that harboured radical lecturers, and the abductions of human rights lawyers (Badru 1998).
 - 58 The fact that the regime was concurrently implementing SAP also was significant, as the twin initiatives of political and economic liberalization drastically increased the pressure on the IBB regime to ensure that the latter, if not the former, succeeded. As a result, it resorted to co-optation or outright proscription of opposition organizations.
 - 59 Still, Abacha's forays into Liberia and Sierra Leone could be understood as cunning, costly and desperate ways of procuring international recognition for an unpopular regime.
 - 60 He later died under peculiar circumstances whilst under house arrest during the Abubakar era.
 - 61 For sources of additional economic and social indicators, see [Appendix E](#).
 - 62 The remainder of the description of the post oil-boom era draws heavily from Tuman's (1994) excellent account.
 - 63 Watts (1987) estimates that austerity measures resulted in the loss of 900,000 manufacturing jobs between 1983 and 1984; in total, 2 million jobs were lost during this period.
 - 64 The Obasanjo administration increased the salaries of University lecturers after 1999.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

- 1 The Ibibio Welfare Union (later christened the Ibibio State Union) was established in 1928, the Urhobo Brotherly Society (which eventually became the Urhobo Progress Union) came to being in 1931 and the Igbo Union arose five years later (Nnoli 1995). One of the first post-1920 pan-Yoruba organizations, the Yoruba Literary Society, was established in 1942, whilst well-known Nigerians like Obafemi Awolowo formed the Egbe Omo Oduduwa in London in 1945 (*ibid*). With the seminal year of 1960 approaching, these organizations tenaciously sought to 'wrest political and economic power from the colonial masters' (Bankole 2000).
- 2 The Northern-based ACF possesses a central office in Kaduna and is headed by individuals with strong ties to previous military regimes. Despite Northern Nigeria's ethnic and religious heterogeneity, the ACF maintains that it is preoccupied with and ably understands the myriad concerns of the region's three geo-political zones, the North-Central, North-West and North-East. This elitist and non-extremist organization

dominates the North's civil society, at least in the popular press, and routinely claims to represent 'marginalised' Northerners.

- 3 Yet, the situation in the North is somewhat different from what obtains in the South. Although extremist ethnically oriented organizations like the APC, a lowkey and supposedly radical group formed to counterbalance the OPC, could be found in Northern Nigeria, they are not as aggressive, divisive or perceptible as their Southern counterparts. As mentioned earlier, the source of this marked variation between both regions could be found in the role of religion, Islam, as a unifying force for many Northerners and the belief in a constructed notion of Northern unity. Whilst this observation is intriguing and worth probing, it is beyond the scope of this project.
- 4 Hence, all concepts must be problematized and their underlying manifestations clearly explored.
- 5 As such, I periodically move from the realm of abstract ideas to one of specific contexts, and vice versa, throughout this project.
- 6 Except where expressly noted, these synopses are based on summaries of information obtained from group officials. As such, they do not necessarily reflect my personal views.
- 7 Notable ones are as follows: Elimotu Movement, Kalabar Se Ikpangi, Meinbutu, Movement for Reparation to Ogbia, Movement for the Survival of the Izon Ethnic Nationality in the Niger Delta, Nembe 1895 Movement, Okpolom Imo Engenni and Supreme Egbesu Assembly. These groups, which are mostly radical in nature, are concerned with issues impacting ethnic nationalities based in Nigeria's oil-producing communities.
- 8 In an April 2002 ruling, the Supreme Court 'reject[ed] the attempt by the eight littoral states of Nigeria [mostly based in the South-South] to control natural resources located beyond their seaward boundaries' (Essien 2002).
- 9 Originally, I planned to interview Felix Tuodolo, former IYC leader. However, since he had moved to the United Kingdom for post-graduate studies, he referred me to Mr. Ogon, who was keenly familiar with the organization.
- 10 The ICHR possesses an advisory board, which consists of a Director of Strategy and Tactics, the Head of Litigation, and Campaign and Outreach Officer. Its staff also includes several volunteers who work on a wide array of matters that the organization deems important. Apart from its Port Harcourt office, the Council maintains offices throughout the Niger Delta, including Yenagoa, the capital of Bayelsa State. Whilst the IYC does not possess Internet access or a Website, it maintains telephone, facsimile and library facilities.
- 11 This is because the Nigerian legal system was trying to redeem its image that was battered by years of corrosive authoritarian rule.
- 12 Ogon readily admitted that this number was low but that the participation of Ijaw women had measurably increased in recent years. He cited the participation of several women at the historic 1998 Kaiama

- meeting, during which the IYC's constitution and bill of rights were formulated and ratified.
- 13 Chikoko is a pan Niger-Delta resistance movement that transcends the various ethnic divides in the region and forges a coalition amongst the ethnic nationalities of the Delta, such as the Ijaw, Urhobo and Ogoni, to ensure that they collectively present a common front and make meaningful demands on the Nigerian polity and other actors.
 - 14 Specific examples given include the levelling of Odi town in oil-rich Bayelsa State, the massacre of hundreds of civilians because government forces wanted to isolate the killers of 12 policemen, and reprisal attacks undertaken against residents of the Northern town of Zaki Biam for the abduction and slaying of 19 policemen.
 - 15 In this vein, Ogon cited the example of naval policemen guarding Agip Oil facilities, who shot 8 people, including a 2-year old child, after youths shut down the company's oil wells; the Nigerian Agip Oil Company Limited eventually paid N19 million in compensation to the affected parties. Also, soldiers allegedly gunned down 8 persons within Olugbobiri town in the South-South.
 - 16 Examples include the Movement for the Survival of the Ijaw Ethnic Nationality in the Niger Delta, The Movement for Reparations to Ogbia, Elimotu Movement, Meinbutu, Ijaw Justice Association, Ijaw National Congress in the United States of America, Supreme Egbesu Assembly, Ijaw Peace Movement, Okpolom Imo Engenni, Nembe 1895 Movement, Izon Ebi Dou Ogbo and Ijaw National Youth.
 - 17 Due to the failure of oil companies to accede to the Council's demands, Operation Climate Change was indefinitely extended.
 - 18 Interestingly, in June 2002, the IYC and another group, Izon Democratic Rights Organisation (IDRO), gave the Commission a 'vote of confidence' for its performance. A statement by the IYC-IDRO monitoring team found that: '[A]n appreciable number of jobs which are mainly electrification, health centres, classroom blocks, water schemes, landing jetties, community reclamations and shore protection projects have been completed while many others were at various stages of completion. We commend the chairman of NDDC...the Managing Director...and especially the Delta State Commissioner...for their development strides in this short period and in spite of the financial constraints they have had to face. We wish them to continue with their good works as we pledge our unflinching loyalty and support in all that they do to enable the people have a sense of belonging to the Nigerian nation. They should not allow Ijaw detractors to derail their good intentions for the people they have been divinely sent to serve' (Adebayo 18 June 2002).
 - 19 On the spate of criminal activities and rampant executions across the country, including most notably the assassination of former federal Attorney-General and Justice Minister Bola Ige in 2001, the National Chairman of the IYC's Caretaker Committee blamed this state of affairs on the Obasanjo administration, the proliferation of firearms in and

militarization of virtually all realms of Nigerian society (Oyadongha 12 January 2002).

NOTES TO CHAPTER V

- 1 Apart from its Lagos office, MASSOB maintains a national headquarters in Okigwe, Imo State, 24 offices elsewhere in the South-East and an office in Kaduna. Whilst most MASSOB offices did not possess Internet Access or a Website as of January 2002, efforts were underway to establish a presence on the Internet and connect the offices to the World Wide Web. This is despite the fact that the majority of its offices did not have a telephone, facsimile machine or even a library. A committee was drafting MASSOB's constitution, which would articulate group concerns, in 2002.
- 2 I could not interview Ralph Uwazuruike because the SSS detained him in December 2001.
- 3 The titles of the other key leaders of MASSOB are as follows: Coordinators, 'Ambassadors', Deputies and Secretaries. In 2002, the group had not witnessed any major changes in its leadership structure since 1999.
- 4 One exception is Dr Chuba Okadigbo, former Nigerian Senate president, from whom MASSOB supposedly has gotten tacit support and whose 2000 impeachment allegedly was instigated at the behest of President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration because of the latter's 'anti-Igbo' stance.
- 5 This oral dissemination of information is employed in lieu of a publication, which the group did not produce in early 2002.
- 6 Okwara expected female participation in MASSOB activities to increase in the immediate future.
- 7 Despite Okwara's contention that every Biafran was a MASSOB member and thus an implicit supporter of the group's disengagement efforts, certain prominent Igbo groups and individuals, such as Chief Odumegwu Ojukwu who led the botched secession efforts of the 1960s and Professor ABC Nwosu of *Obanaeze Ndigbo*, roundly criticized MASSOB's quest for a new Biafra and instead proposed the idea of a confederation (Olorok 2000; Eguzozie, Egbulefu and Nwafor 2000; Ajaero 2000; Francis 2000).
- 8 For the Naira's exchange rate to other currencies, see <http://www.xe.com>.
- 9 Although the group's budget fluctuated, it was approximately N5 Million in 2001.
- 10 On a less significant note, the group strongly belittled the perceived desire of so-called fundamentalist Muslims to thoroughly Islamise the country in the vein of Iran, Afghanistan and the Sudan through the imposition of *Sharia* law first in the North and ultimately throughout the Nigerian federation (Biafra Foundation 2001).
- 11 In the words of Ralph Uwazuruike, MASSOB actually is canvassing 'disengagement' and not secession; he believed that the latter implicitly

- connotes violence (Eguzozie, Nwafor and Ibereme 2000). I use both words interchangeably in this chapter, nonetheless.
- 12 Police and military forces used heavy weaponry, including missiles, against residents of Tivland, an area outside the South-East and South-South, and Odi, which is viewed as part of larger 'Biafra'.
 - 13 Core Biafra encompasses the South-Eastern states of Enugu, Anambra, Ebonyi, Aba and Imo, whilst the peripheral regions of Biafra include Igbo-speaking regions of the South-South. Supposedly, since the Igbo do not dominate the South-South, non-Igbo persons would be free to leave and join the remainder of Nigeria, if and when secession occurs.
 - 14 The Federal Government finally awarded the contract for this dualization in July 2002.
 - 15 Nigeria's four major international airports are located in Lagos (South-West), Abuja (Federal Capital Territory), Kano (North-West) and Port Harcourt (South-South). The facility in the South-Eastern city of Enugu was recently designated an international airport; it is not clear whether the formal upgrading of the airport had commenced.
 - 16 According to Okwara, successful and unsuccessful secession movements from which the group had learnt include those in East Timor, Quebec, Sri Lanka, Scotland, Wales, Iraq, Sierra Leone, the Philippines, Palestine, China, the former Yugoslavia and Puerto Rico.
 - 17 Okwara gave the example of Sierra Leone, a country in which this maxim reportedly had been proved beyond any doubt.
 - 18 He quoted the following Igbo proverb to further buttress his observation: 'instead of eating on the same plate and become enemies, we should eat on separate plates and become friends'.
 - 19 Irrespective of Okwara's qualms regarding radical groups' stratagems, he expressed admiration and respect for the OPC and other similar groups, even as he submitted that MASSOB would not adopt 'their system'.
 - 20 Stage 3 will involve the creation of institutions requisite for the functioning of an independent state.
 - 21 I analyze these critical issues in [Chapter VII](#).
 - 22 The trial occurred amidst charges by the defence that there were innumerable 'intrigues and backhand tactics' meant to frustrate the ability of the arrested persons to obtain a free and fair trial.
 - 23 Around the same period, MASSOB vowed to establish a Biafra Police Force (BPF) and Biafra Intelligence Agency (BIA) that would operate in its autonomous nation.
 - 24 MASSOB declined that this clash involved its members.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VI

- 1 Henceforth, the Congress refers to the OPC.
- 2 Although Fasehun's surname is spelled in various ways (Fasheun, Fasehun and Faseun), I employ the most common spelling.

- 3 Fasehun, Moshood Abiola, his wife Kudirat (whom presumed Abacha agents shot in June 1996), Beko Ransome-Kuti (a human rights activist whom Abacha sentenced to a 15-year prison in 1995 but was later released in 1998), Tunji Braithwaite and Baba Omojola allegedly attended the group's first meeting in the Mushin district of Lagos (Adekeye 2000). Ransome-Kuti later professed to be the OPC's National Treasurer during a press conference in October 2000 and dissociated the group from the violent activities described in ensuing sections: 'I would like to repeat that the OPC is a socio-cultural association that protects Yoruba interest in Yorubaland. It shuns violence. I should know being the national treasurer of the organization. I can confirm that in our meetings, no decisions have ever been taken ordering or encouraging the use of violence' (Enyinnaya 2000).
- 4 On another note, Fasehun described himself and his aspirations thusly: 'I am a contented person, I don't struggle to acquire the wealth I would not be able to manage or that would generate tight-fistedness on my part and by God's grace, I don't have any personal regrets as far as my existence on earth is concerned. I have been involved with organizing the common people of Nigeria for a long time, to rescue them from poverty. The only regret that I have is that despite the various attempts I and others have made, majority of our people are still suffering from poverty. Appreciable success has not been registered and that, to me, is a very great challenge. I had thought that by now, people would be relatively comfortable and afford three meals a day, though not necessarily square, but that has not been. Also, that ethnic nationalities would be living in harmony, that their togetherness would promote peace and unity, but it is yet to be so. The struggle definitely continues' (Fatade 1999).
- 5 Irrespective of the inherent dangers associated with such an undertaking, I sought to obtain first-hand information from Lagos and Europe-based OPC officials. Thus, during the course of research, I contacted the group's Secretary-General at the time, who was living in self-exile in Europe, briefly returned to Nigeria in early 2002 and has since formed his own separate [?] radical entity, the Oodua Republic Front (ORF), for the purposes of this study. He promised to phone me to arrange an interview. However, presumably because of his demanding schedule or other reasons, this planned meeting did not materialize, notwithstanding repeated calls to his Lagos number and subsequent electronic mail messages. Instead, the Secretary-General asked me to visit Dr. Fasehun at his modest hotel and *de facto* OPC headquarters in the Okota suburb of Lagos.
- 6 Despite seeking the assistance of several OPC officials, including Fasehun's personal bodyguard, an interview with the OPC head was impossible to secure. As a result, I left copies of the questionnaire with a rude receptionist and an OPC supporter, hoping that the Congress leader would complete it.
- 7 The Oyo State Governor also validated this assertion: 'Oodua Peoples Congress must purge itself of miscreants and hoodlums in order to

- remain relevant in the protection of Yoruba interest. Fish out these social miscreants who migrated from neighbouring states and have mingled with the congress to dent its reputable image' (Babasola 2000).
- 8 Since I was unable to interview OPC officials, exact information concerning the constitution of the group's membership by age, class and gender could not be readily ascertained from a review of Nigerian newspapers and other sources.
 - 9 Upon becoming registered, 'new members were made to take an oath of allegiance and secrecy.... During [the] initiation ceremony, a bowl of water was placed on the ground. Stones, iron [and] palm fronds were placed in the water and initiates were made to swear by Sango, the god of thunder, Ogun, the god of iron or Yemoja, a water goddess, depending on individual preference' (Adekeye 2000).
 - 10 The Otta zone of nearby Ogun State alone had more than 9700 members and the state of Ondo had 500,000 members in 333 zones as of October 2000 (Ogundamisi 2001; Johnson 2000b).
 - 11 Also see Eluemunor 2001; Eluemunor and Sanni 2001; Dadzie and Sanni 2001; Ndujihe, Akeh and Sotunde 2001; Ehigiator et al., 2001; Obineche 2001; and Akparugo Jr 2001; Maduabuchi 2001; Eke 2001; Gwantu 2002. Alhaji Lam Adesina, the governor of neighbouring Oyo State, threatened to utilize the services of the OPC to arrest 'the spate of assassinations and armed robbery in [his] state' (Babasola 2002). Although he did not possess the requisite Federal Government support, Tinubu made the following emphatic declaration in reaction to the unmanageable crime wave that gripped Lagos between 1999 and 2001: 'It (OPC) is one of the options, I won't throw any option away, any means necessary to step down [sic] the crime wave and control it. As long as people will not use them (OPC) for settling quarrels, personal quarrels, eviction by landlords, you know, getting into other things, they can act as OPC vigilance [sic] in the interim until we get the police adequately equipped' (Sanni 14 June 2001)
 - 12 These individuals are as follows: Alani Akinrinade, retired lieutenant-general and former transport minister; Ade Ajayi, Professor Emeritus University of Ibadan; and Subaru Biobaku, former Vice-Chancellor, University of Lagos.
 - 13 In the year 2000, its registered supporters contributed N320 for membership identification cards and paid a building levy of N50 for the planned construction of its Lagos headquarters; OPC members based abroad sent N1000 per month during the same period (Vanguard 22 July 2000b).
 - 14 Ogundamisi threatened that the OPC would disrupt federal elections in the South-West if a Sovereign National Conference (SNC) were not convened, whilst Fasehun maintained that Nigeria would disintegrate in the absence of a SNC: 'Is Nigeria a nation? Earlier...I talked about our need to provide ourselves with a fitting overcoat against the very biting cold wind of our political life. That overcoat is a national constitution, a suitable constitution crafted on the outcome of a spirited meeting of the ethnic nationalities, national conference. This approach has been

suggested times without number. Nigeria's ethnic nationalities must sit around a table and seriously re-negotiate the nature of their corporate relationship' (Djebah 2002; Oladipupo 2002). The OPC leader also views the '[the SNC] as a way out of Nigeria's multifarious problems, such as ethnic clashes and [ethnicism]' (Obaaro 2000). As far as I could tell, these threats did not materialize during the 2003 elections.

- 15 The most extremist factions within the Congress desire the creation of an independent 'Oodua Republic'.
- 16 In response to the adoption of *Sharia* law in the North, Fasehun called for the implementation of a confederation and opined that the '*Sharia* question symptomises the divergent tendencies that are inherent in the Nigerian arrangement and the gross insincerity of the political leadership to proffer final solutions to the national question' (Ndujihe and Kosoko 2000). Along the same lines, in assessing the political state of the nation since independence from Britain, he contended that '[since] the unitary and federal structures have failed to provide viable constitution[al] framework for the meaningful co-existence of the Nigerian nationalities [,] the only realistic alternative to a complete break-up and dissolution of the Nigerian state is the adoption of a confederal structure co-ordinating the six geo-political zones' (Ndujihe and Kosoko 2000)
- 17 OPC officials affirm that 'the unitary system of government has relegated the Yoruba nation and other ethnic nationalities to the background. [They therefore proposed] ethnic federalism, which is a 'system where ethnic groups exist as separate polities with an overarching central authority, a combination of self-rule and shared rule' (African Courier 2001).
- 18 Although another official statement avowed that any member who 'allow [ed] himself to be used as a political thug, mercenary or rented political supporter...[would] be severely dealt with [and]...possibl[y] expelled... from the OPC' (Akinadewo 2000), Fasehun previously nursed the ambition of becoming Nigerian president (Anyagafu 2001).
- 19 Interestingly enough, Fasehun formally refuted the existence of two splinter groups within the OPC: 'There is no faction whatsoever in OPC. What we have in OPC are some dissidents who felt otherwise [concerning] its guiding principles. Also, let me say here that we cannot avoid having infiltrators in an organization as large as the OPC. These hoodlums have taken advantage of this opportunity to unleash their selfish motive [sic]. Why is it that any crisis that occurs in Lagos is quickly linked with the OPC? I mean this is highly ridiculous and unsubstantive [sic]. OPC was drawn, without regret, into anti-crime activities at the request of communities, which frightened by the fearlessness of dangerous and armed bandits, who robbed, raped and killed their members: OPC was organized to fight on their behalf. It has since been doing that. However, the problem between it and the police is simply that of failure in mutual appreciation of roles. Our coming for this seminar show [sic] that the good days of mutual cooperation

between the police and organized civilians is [sic] close at hand' (Akoni 2000).

- 20 Adams was born in the early 1970s.
- 21 In fact, the Lagos State Commissioner of Police, Mike Okiro, speaking before a 2001 panel convened to probe the unending civil strife in Lagos State, conceded that whilst the OPC was a 'child of circumstances' that was established as a 'prodemocracy' organization, its fracture into two contending blocs on the whole and the Adams-led faction in particular were responsible for the chaos witnessed in Lagos and elsewhere in South-Western Nigeria (Lawal 2001).
- 22 Starting in 1999, the OPC's energies were directed toward a new agenda, namely the convocation of a national conference, owing to the fact that democracy had become a reality and power had been peacefully transferred to Obasanjo, a South-Western Presidential candidate. Other planned reforms included the re-registration of members in a bid to extricate 'miscreants' from the organization and the election of a new leader (Adekeye 2000).
- 23 Its Secretary-General, Kayode Ogundamisi, also reiterated the organization's non-violent stance and the purported vilification of the group in various quarters: The OPC does not believe in violence and has always called for a peaceful resolution of the crisis in our country through a Sovereign National Conference. It is ridiculous to attribute these disturbances to the OPC. The organization was formed only in 1994, but the history of ethnic and religious conflicts goes much further back. There was the massacre of hundreds of thousands of innocent Igbo children, women and men in northern Nigeria in 1966. Was the OPC responsible? In the 1980s, there were the Maitasine and Musa Makaniki riots in Kano, and Yola and Maiduguri respectively, when Muslim extremists launched terror attacks on other citizens. Were we responsible? The Southern Zaria conflicts in the 1990s, were we responsible too? You see, the traditional power elite in the far north are masters of deception, and are responsible for this campaign of misinformation. In fact, we can say that the far-north politicians are responsible for the violent ethnic and religious clashes which have taken place since President Olusegun Obasanjo came into office. Immediately the president retired all military officers who have held political office upon assuming office, they started crying marginalisation. This heated the polity up. Their [Northern] media started whipping up an anti-Yoruba and anti-Christian sentiment. When you read some of the article [sic] published in their newspapers, you will feel sickened by their campaign of calumny that is being specifically waged against Obasanjo and Yorubas [sic]. The riot in Sagamu, Ketu and Agege/Apapa and Kaduna can be understood in this context' (The African Courier 2001).
- 24 This is the period for which detailed records were available.
- 25 In response, Hausa citizens in the Northern state of Kano killed 100 Yoruba based there in retaliatory attacks.

- 26 As is customary with conflicts of this type, the actual death toll was much higher because the bodies of certain victims were allegedly tossed into nearby lagoons.
- 27 Yet, in other reports, Fasehun denied responsibility for the attack and stated that notwithstanding the discovery of OPC Identity Cards on the arrested persons, the organization was not behind the mayhem (Fatade 1999).
- 28 One report claimed that the disturbance began when Congress members invaded the funeral of an Ijaw youth; another account stated that the melee erupted over the 'arrest' of robbers by the Egbesu Boys. In response to this latter action, OPC militants allegedly overwhelmed the Egbesu group with axes, cutlasses, iron rods and broken bottles. For its part, the OPC blamed the confrontation on 'armed robbers' who had infiltrated the Lagos community from the South-South (The Guardian 4 November 1999). It declared that a brawl commenced when Ijaw youths ransacked the local police station, freed these robbers and raided the homes of Yoruba citizens.
- 29 The 2 November 1999 edition of *The Guardian* quoted witnesses who affirmed that the death toll was much higher, as certain victims had been burnt to death; Agence France Presse (1999) cited a casualty figure of 19.
- 30 Reflecting on this event, the Lagos Police Commissioner contended that the OPC's actions were 'an outgrowth of military rule where people think they should solve their problem through violence' (Akparanta, Sani and Ebodaghe 1999). Fasehun, on the other hand, did not sound apologetic; instead, he affirmed that the OPC's actions were bent on redressing perceived 'lawlessness and hooliganism' (Vanguard 5 November 1999).
- 31 Members of the Adams faction also were fingered in the Isokoko acid attack on 2 policemen (Committee for the Defence of Human Rights).
- 32 Later, Congress followers demanded that taxi and other commercial vehicle drivers return to the roads and not increase their fares; they also enforced official fuel prices in Lagos, Ondo and Ogun states (Ajibola 2000; Coffie-Gyamfi 2000; The Guardian 30 June 2000).
- 33 In the process, the police confiscated a document that detailed plans to attack former members who had renounced their affiliation with the OPC.
- 34 The following month, OPC members were embroiled in disturbances that resulted in at least 1 fatality, attacks on others, and the vandalization of petrol tankers and private vehicles. The fracas commenced when they invaded a state-owned petroleum depot, 'smashing and destroying everything in sight without a single word on what provoked their action' (Akparanta, Tunji and Onwuemegbulem 2000).
- 35 Meanwhile, in July, the association also assumed control of several crime-ridden areas of Lagos (Abawuru 9 July 2000). On a separate note, when there was a minimum wage impasse between government officials and the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), the Osun State OPC coordinator

- gave them 'a seven-day ultima tum to resolve the lingering...crisis...in order not to incur the wrath of OPC members' (Akinyemi 2000).
- 36 They purportedly invaded these individuals' homes, killed them under the pretence that they were armed robbers, and massacred 2 brothers aged 22 and 26 elsewhere.
 - 37 Individuals from the Adams camp brandished dangerous weapons and inflicted injury on several other members in Abeokuta (Coffie-Gyamfi 28 September 2000).
 - 38 On the 6th of October 2000, OPC adherents also clashed with robbers in the Lagos town of Ojo (Eke 2000). According to eyewitnesses, the scuffle transpired for approximately 6 hours, as 'OPC members descended on the occupants of the make-shift sheds in the place and asked everyone to prepare for screening, while detaining those who did not pass the OPC test' (Eke 2000). Artisans and beer parlour owners claimed that their stalls were destroyed during the attack; approximately 7 persons, including two women, were lynched in Ojo (Nwosu 2000; Eke 2000).
 - 39 The conflict was triggered by the desire of the OPC to invade the Emir's palace, oust the existing ruler and install a Yoruba Oba (or King) in a city where indigenous Emirs (rulers) had been drawn from Hausa or Fulani ruling families since 1814 (Fagbemi 2000). For additional reports on the OPC's role in the Ilorin crisis, see Ogunmodede 2001; Weekly Trust 2001; Akinyemi 9 July 2001 and 21 July 2001; Oyeleye 9 July 2001; Ehigiator 2001; Omotoso and Okwuofu 2001; Sanni 2001.
 - 40 More than a dozen group members were remanded and charged to court over 'unlawful possession of fire-arms, criminal conspiracy...unlawful assembly, being in possession of criminal charms/weapons and attempts to commit an offence contrary to section 3 of Fire-arms Act Cap 146, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 1990 and sections 97, 103, 217 and 95 of the Penal Code' (Oyeleye 17 October 2000).
 - 41 After several days of heavy fighting, the riot spread to other parts of Lagos, as dead bodies littered the metropolis (Akparanta et al 17 October 2000). Although it was difficult to ascertain the exact number of casualties, owing to the widespread nature of the three-day battle, it could have exceeded 100 in total. In the subsequent commotion, approximately 20,000 residents, primarily of Northern extraction, sought refuge in safe havens (BBC News 18 October 2000). These unfortunate events also had economic repercussions on the days following the clashes, as several ports and markets in Lagos either opened late or were closed during and in the wake of these disturbances, and bus fares increased by over 200 percent (Amama 2000; The Guardian 20 October 2000).
 - 42 In concert with federal initiatives, Governor Tinubu instituted a joint police-military patrol and imposed a dusk to dawn curfew in the affected areas (Akparanta, et al., 18 October 2000). He also deplored OPC-induced atrocities, canvassed peace in the state and convened a meeting of leaders representing diverse ethnic interests.
 - 43 'It has happened...but we seem not to have learnt from our previous mistakes. As at now, whether you are Hausa, you are I[gb]bo, you are

Yoruba, you are just a Nigerian, pure and simple. If the Yoruba people were not accommodating, the population of Lagos would not have been over 12 million. But we are accommodating. But we do not appreciate that when people come in here [Lagos], they trample on our culture, abuse us abuse our generosity and accommodating tendency and so on and so forth. It is irregular, it is not desirable to us. I said I would not apportion blame. I personally feel that the police has done their best under the circumstance. They are very badly motivated. I advise the government to look at this problem. The governor has made up his mind to patrol the state using the military and the police. Under normal circumstances, if this was [sic] debated with us we would have said no. We have a reason not to allow the military to come in to police civilian community. This is not casting aspersion on the institution, but if we are in a democratic setting, democracy must be thorough, it must be true, it must be democratic. I will not remind Nigerians what we have gone through for years. I am one of those who suffered terribly under the military and there is no way I would say that the military should come to patrol my area just because the civilians could not sit down among themselves, talk to themselves, listen to themselves and find peaceful co-existence' (Akparanta et al., 18 October 2000).

- 44 Although the arrest of Fasehun was welcomed in certain quarters and meant to prevent retaliatory attacks on the Yoruba in the North, several civil society leaders condemned it (Alofetekun, Musa and Sanni 2000; *The Guardian* 20 October 2000; Adekeye 2000; Onwuemeodo 2000).
- 45 In addition to being cleared of responsibility for the Lagos clashes, charges levelled against Fasehun and a Rabiun Ayinla (presumably also of the OPC) for the group's October 2000 invasion of Ilorin were dropped by the city's Magistrate's Court (Oyeleye 13 April 2001; Akinyemi 13 April 2001).
- 46 Also, in November 2000, the Ondo State police arrested approximately 30 Congress officials during a meeting of more than 500 members of their compatriots (Johnson 2000 b). The following week, 17 of these detained members were 'discharged and acquitted on a three count charge of conspiracy, unlawful assembly and possession of native charm' (Johnson 2000 a). A month later, a 12-year old 'herbalist', who also claimed to be a Congress adherent, was arraigned before an Ibadan Chief Magistrate's Court and later granted bail on a three-count charge (Bakare 2000). These charges included possession of one-barrel gun, conspiracy to commit felony and unlawful assembly, to which the boy pleaded not guilty; 'dangerous charms' were found on the boy's person upon capture.
- 47 In addition to Ogundamisi, other OPC members applied for asylum in Europe on account of being 'hunted down' by Nigerian security forces (Uzor 2001).
- 48 A Lagos State Police Command spokesman later disputed Fasehun's account: Today [27 February 2001] again, the police observed they [OPC members] were holding another meeting and moved in there to

persuade them to disperse. This time Dr. Fasehun was present and he was called out by the police and advised to disperse his men because the OPC had been banned by the government. While an officer was trying to persuade Dr. Fasehun to disperse his men, one of his hard-line followers shot at a police inspector and took the policeman's rifle. Hoodlums joined them and they began shooting at the police. Police had to exchange firing [sic] with them. The police gun they took has not been recovered. Dr. Fasehun is claiming that these people are members of the OPC. It is not true because OPC had long been banned by government and the police will treat any person claiming to be a member as per government directive' (Akparanta, Akintunde and Idika 2001).

- 49 In his deposition, Fasehun specifically cited the cases of 2 individuals who were allegedly beaten to death in police custody and made the demands listed below to a Lagos High Court: [A] declaration that the order made by Obasanjo that 'anybody who calls himself OPC should either be arrested or shot on sight if he resists arrest' is illegal, unconstitutional and a gross violation of the rights of the plaintiffs rights guaranteed by section[s] 33, 35, 38, 39 and 40 of the constitution; [A] declaration that the arbitrary and mass arrests of OPC members is a gross violation of their rights guaranteed by sections 35, 38, 39 and 40 of the 1999 constitution; [A] declaration that the mass arrests of the members at their meetings held within private premises and the disruption of the meetings are a violation of their rights guaranteed under sections 35, 38, 39 and 40 of the 1999 constitution; [A] declaration that the killings of some members constitute violation of their rights guaranteed by section 38, 39 and 40 of the constitution; [A]n injunction restraining the officers, servants and agents of the government from further giving effect to or carrying out the order given by the president on or about 26th of November 1999, directing that any person who calls himself OPC member be either arrested or shot on sight if he resists arrest; [A]n injunction restraining all public officers, servants and agents of the government from further arresting members of OPC at any of their meetings held in private premises or on account of having attending [sic] such meetings or from disrupting or otherwise interrupting or frustrating such meetings; and [A] public apology to the OPC for the breach of its members' fundamental right to personal liberty (Dadzie 2001).
- 50 Around early April 2001, Adams emerged from hiding to address a press conference; he had been declared wanted in January 2000 for the disturbances that claimed innumerable lives, injured others, destroyed commercial and personal property, and instilled fear in residents of the metropolis. More specifically, Adams was blamed for the death of a senior police officer in January 2000 and the Isokoko acid attack on 2 policemen in December 1999 (Comet News 9 April 2001).
- 51 Also see Adekeye 2001; Olajuwon and Ajanaku 2001; AbdulWahab 2001; Fagbemi 18 August 2001; Akinyemi 14 August 2001; Fagbemi 18 August 2001.

- 52 Regardless of his official status as a 'wanted man', Adams also was sighted at the Osun Festival in the ancient town of Osogbo and at his birthday celebration in Mushin (Akparanta 2001).
- 53 His car boot contained 6 snakes, a Bible, three rings, a diary with a driver's licence with the name Abiodun G.Ige, charms, a dead chameleon and N2600.00 in cash (Nnadozie et al., 2001; Akparanta 23 August 2001; Djebah, Fagbemi and Akhaine 2001).
- 54 Fasehun also commented on the arrest: 'You see I have my own personal views about Ganiyu Adams. But his arrest may be said not to be surprising because Police have since declared him a wanted man. But above all, I feel happy that he was merely arrested as against being shot by the police, perhaps while in a meeting with some other people who may also have been victims. However, the police owe it as an obligation to ensure that he is not abused, denied his fundamental human rights or detained longer than necessary in custody. If they have any charges against him, let the competent court try him. The police cannot claim that they have not concluded investigations on him as to warrant longer detention knowing that they must have investigated the charges before now. I'm speaking like that because I have been through that road, where police will claim that investigation is still on while you remain in cell' (Eke 2001).
- 55 His counsel claimed that the Magistrate Court lacked the requisite jurisdiction and authority to deliberate on capital offence cases. In September 2001, Adams' Counsel further challenged the case against his client by asking a Lagos High Court to declare his arraignment, along with those of three other Congress affiliates, 'illegal and unconstitutional' (Anaba, 21 September 2001). Whilst in detention, Adams claimed the sum of N40000 on his person was stolen by police officers, that policemen and inmates alike tortured him and that he was not properly fed (Vanguard 5 September 2001; Ndujihe 2001; Anaba and Nnadozie 2001).
- 56 For instance, 7 individuals 'arrested' by OPC members in two Lagos districts, along with weapons found on them, were handed to the police. Nonetheless, the Congress again became involved in a bloody clash with the men of the joint military patrol in Lagos, in which 2 motor spare-parts dealers were allegedly killed (Aderibigbe 19 September 2001), irrespective of the claim that it had ended its vigilante activities altogether (BBC 2001).
- 57 A Lagos Court ruled that the cases against Fasehun and Adams could not be heard in a Federal High Court and consequently dismissed them; the Federal Government promptly appealed this ruling (Ogbu 2001; Anaba 27 November 2001). Another Lagos-based High Court later dismissed the federal case against Adams in February 2002 for ineptitude and lack of diligence on the prosecution's part (Emewu 2002).
- 58 He professed that 'we have always claimed that this government led by President Obasanjo is impotent and there is nowhere an impotent government can find killers of Chief Ige. And that is why we have told everybody who cared to listen not to be deceived by the information

given by the police and from the first time, they brought out the mad man that said he was the self-confessed killer, we already knew there was a ploy to divert the attention not just of the Yoruba race but the Nigerian people from the heinous plan by the minority cabal who are trying to turn Nigeria into their property' (Akpoy 2002).

- 59 Regardless of the Congress' violent predilections, a Lagos-based aviation firm asked the organization to evict tenants from his residential property, whilst the President of the Luxury Bus Owners Association of Nigeria (LUBOAN) sought the permission of the Federal Government to utilize the protective services of the OPC against robbers who incessantly attack operators of the country's inter-city buses (Abah 6 February 2002; Vanguard 2002). On a related note, OPC supporters barricaded Frederick Fasehun Street in Okota and prevented individuals from leaving or gaining entry into the area because residents failed to pay the organization's 'salaries'. Apparently, residents of the street on which Fasehun's unofficial headquarters and hotel is located, 'contracted the organization to watch over the streets at night when the menace of armed robbery in the area was at its zenith' (This Day 2002).
- 60 The specific aspects of the bill are as follows: No group of persons, association of individuals or quasi-military group shall be formed for any of the purposes mentioned in subsection (1) of this section; The President may by an order published in the gazette, dissolve and proscribe any group of persons, association of individuals or quasi-military groups (in this Act referred to as the association) which in his opinion, is formed for the purposes of furthering the political, religious, ethnic,...cultural or social interest of a group of persons or individuals contrary to the peace, order and good governance of the federation and the provisions of this Act; Any association dissolved and proscribed pursuant to subsection (1) of this section shall cease to carry out any activities, duties or functions for which it was formed (Aziken 2002).
- 61 His suit sought to accomplish the objectives listed below within a Lagos Court: enforce his fundamental human rights to freedom of association, peaceful assembly, thought, conscience and religion, personal liberty and dignity of the human person; pray the court to order that the leave to apply for the enforcement of his human rights should serve as a stay of all actions pertaining to the promulgation into law or otherwise enforcing the bill for the act to provide for prohibition of any group of persons; restrain the respondents from promulgating or implementing the said bill until the determination of the application or until the determination of the merits of the application; declare that the bill providing for the prohibition of any group of persons or association of individuals if promulgated into law and assented to by the President is illegal, unconstitutional as it offends the right to association, peaceful assembly, thought conscience and religion (Emewu 30 April 2002).
- 62 In a separate development, 6 persons, including 3 OPC devotees, were arrested in Ibadan for robbing a pastor's widow (Yusuf 2002).

NOTES TO CHAPTER VII

- 1 Since MASSOB was formed in 1999, I reviewed its actions between that year and 2002.
- 2 Yet, the intent of this exercise is not to simply reiterate the historical experiences delimited in [Chapter III](#) but to expose how disparate post-1999 contemporary conditions combined to radicalize IYC, MASSOB and OPC adherents. Even though this investigation acknowledges that authoritarianism, economic and social malaise, and discrimination have been apparent at certain junctures throughout the Nigerian experience, I problematize these sub-variables whenever possible, and render a holistic and non-superficial account, to show how the organizations' perception and understanding of such occurrences sometimes were deficient. Overall, it is hoped that the reader's understanding of the admittedly knotty character of Nigeria's terrain would be strengthened in the process.
- 3 In light of this customarily-made but tenuous distinction, maybe it is high time that the concept of civil society is replaced with less-laden terms such as 'non-state sphere' or 'non-state realm' that are intermittently employed in lieu of civil society throughout this text. Such a replacement would ensure that assessments of the non-state domain are more balanced and informed by reality.
- 4 It is easy to either acclaim civil society (or the state) or totally denigrate it. What is needed is a circumspect and even-handed view of both the state and civil society, not just in one's country but the world over.
- 5 I mostly, if not totally, concentrate upon the national government and its policies because many Nigerians view it as enormously powerful in relation to the state and local government authorities, which are somewhat dependent upon and mere appendages of the centre, and inordinately wielding economic, political and social 'power'. As disclosed in [Chapters IV](#) through VI, MASSOB, OPC and the IYC channelled their respective energies toward the central government because the country supposedly lacks an authentic federal system. This preoccupation with national actors and their policies is even more imperative, as the repressive actions experienced by these organizations chiefly were undertaken by federally-controlled police, army and naval forces.
- 6 This is irrespective of the fact that I did not interview policymakers or review official documents. Predictably, such interviews would not have necessarily sharpened our knowledge of regime policies because Nigerian and other governments are adroit at minimizing or denying the flaws in their decisions, whilst exaggerating the effects of those apparent within previous administrations. Also, because of practical reasons (including the fact that my subjects are maligned groups; my hypothesis is controversial; meeting with appropriate public officials within different agencies would have proved to be a logistical nightmare; my ability to freely conduct this research might have been severely

hampered by the aforementioned officials/agencies; and I could have been branded a renegade OPC, IYC and/or MASSOB supporter and treated accordingly) I chose not to speak with government officials.

- 7 Correspondingly, ethnic militias and other fanatical groups in the United States have, like their Nigerian counterparts, decried the over-centralisation of power within the branches of the federal government and lamented the gradual erosion of their civil liberties and freedoms, particularly the right to bear arms. To express these and other grievances, which also revolve around repression, marginalisation and to a limited extent underdevelopment, they have sought to emasculate the national government by destroying symbols of its hegemony, like the Oklahoma City-based Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, which was bombed in 1995.
- 8 Yet, the OPC, IYC and MASSOB emerged and somehow flourished under a democratic (or what could fittingly be termed a democratizing) regime, regardless of its many problems. There is no doubt that had these organizations adopted the tactics that are evaluated in [Chapter VIII](#) under the watch of the late General Abacha for example, they would have experienced more repression. Still, the despotic proclivities of the Obasanjo administration must be situated within a broader context. In societies like the United States, which pride themselves on their 'advanced' and 'established' democratic systems, state security forces, such as local police forces, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) have and continue to employ(ed) unwarranted force to abuse members of minority groups, and quash and intimidate rebellious groups at home and abroad, as evidenced by the FBI's 1992 execution of the wife, son and pet of a radical militia leader, Randy Weaver, in Ruby Ridge, Idaho, and 1993 siege on the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, Texas, which led to the deaths of 80 individuals, including the group leader, David Koresh.
- 9 Obasanjo, who initially was regarded as fully pro-North in his outlook (because of the overwhelming support he received from there in the 1999 elections) and a desirable candidate to conservative elements in that part of the country, was subsequently disowned by several of his Northern supporters. He reportedly was 'anointed' by Northern-dominated military cabals to placate South-Western forces that had not quickly forgotten the annulment of the presidential elections apparently won by their kinsman, Moshood Abiola, who died under inexplicable circumstances in government detention. In this vein, it was insinuated that former autocrat IBB bankrolled Obasanjo's 1998–1999 presidential campaign to the tune of millions of Naira. Although I could not independently confirm this rumour, the enduring influence of retired Generals is personified by Obasanjo, who, despite his international reputation as a democrat credited with willingly relinquishing power to a civilian government in 1979, demonstrated through his actions and statements during his first and second tenures that he was first and foremost a military officer. Buhari contested the 2003 presidential

elections on the North's behalf and IBB ostensibly was stealthily involved in the mission to dethrone Obasanjo.

- 10 Information concerning the federal government's allocation to the states, as supplied by Lagos-based National Data Bank, is provided in [Appendix E](#). Whilst Nigeria has 36 dissimilar states, the ever-increasing clamour for new ones by various ethnic interests suggests that the quest for regional, as opposed to group, empowerment will remain elusive in the presence of the concentration of power at the centre through the adoption of an American-style presidential system. However, unlike the United States where the respective politico-administrative units have unique pre-independence histories, divergent factor endowments that somewhat mitigate against total dependence on the national government, and in essence function as distinct nations (albeit within the constraints of a larger union) with relatively disparate laws, regulations and ways of life, the situation in Nigeria could not be any more different.
- 11 As such, during the course of finally performing their legitimate duties, after having shirked such responsibilities for so long and placed the lives of several citizens in danger, they normally are hailed by all and sundry.
- 12 These and other related matters were referenced in great detail during the historic Kaiama Declaration that I summarized in [Chapter IV](#).
- 13 I culled these conservative estimates from [Chapter IV](#)'s chronological overview of the IYC.
- 14 It is hoped that such a national dialogue would enthrone a federal system that respects the inalienable rights of all citizens and jettisons the 'dictatorial and unjust' 1999 Constitution.
- 15 They include the espousal of and support for the Biafran ideal, the launching of their 'nation's' flag in the South-East and Lagos, the convening of unauthorized rallies, conspiracy to overthrow the President through acts of treasonable felony and the disturbance of the country's peace.
- 16 The fact that most of the country's national dailies and news magazines are based in Lagos and not the South-East, made the task of tabulating MASSOB casualties, injuries and arrests all the more arduous.
- 17 The unabating *Almajiri* (or beggar) problem, which I observed during my 2002 visit to Kaduna state, buttresses this observation.
- 18 Although Nigeria presently has 30 registered parties that represent a wide variety of backgrounds and issues, the majority of the presidential and vice presidential candidates who contested the 2003 elections hailed from the Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa and Fulani ethnic groups. See <http://www.inecnigeria.org> for additional information concerning these parties and the results of the much-disputed 2003 elections.
- 19 See [Appendix E](#) for actual subventions to Nigeria's 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) from 1999 to 2001.
- 20 As has happened in the recent past, if the federal government decides to situate an affiliate of the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) or Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) in a neighboring (read

- rival) jurisdiction, for example, indigenes of the 'slighted' municipality will claim that they are being marginalised, issue malignant declarations, or might even engage in verbal or actual 'fisticuffs' with their presumed competitors.
- 21 Also, the President and other senior government officials were accused of issuing potentially inflammatory statements that revealed their anti-Igbo biases. I revisit the nature and importance of the counter-proclamations made by the organization's representatives in the subsequent chapter.
 - 22 Regardless of the serious problems noticeable in the metropolis, including rising crime levels and the inability of existing facilities to cope with the ever-burgeoning increase in the state's population, the influx of Nigerians and other West Africans drawn to the Lagos mystique continues largely unabated.
 - 23 Whilst certain Northern students have gained from an affirmative action-like admissions process, their numbers in proportion to the remainder of other applicants remain rather miniscule. A superficial perusal of the students sitting for the Joint Matriculation Examination (JME) and other nationally administered entrance tests shows that the majority of successful applicants to Nigerian universities hail from Southern states. Thus, it appears that most Northerners of post-secondary school age either do not desire a space in one of the country's universities or are unable to gain admissions into such institutions because of poor marks. This situation is somewhat due to the backward state of the North's educational system, and the inability and/or failure of past and current governments to proffer lasting solutions to the moribund enrollment ratios within Northern primary and secondary schools; the high number students registered in alternative establishments, particularly Quaranic Schools; and the constraints that Northern girls and young women seeking higher education continue to confront.
 - 24 Factional leader Ganiyu Adams accused Dr Fasehun of accepting a N25 million bribe from Mr Obasanjo and his main challenger in the 1999 presidential elections, Olu Falae; this payment allegedly was made to forestall any chances that the OPC might disrupt the polls. Fasehun's character also was maligned by Adams, who charged the legitimate OPC leader with procuring expensive vehicles and plots of land, and obtaining \$US1.3 million from an unnamed foreign government and N15 million 3 Lagos-based businessmen.

NOTES TO CHAPTER VIII

- 1 Yet, I definitely recognize that the effects of post-independence policies cannot be divorced from related actions undertaken during the colonial era.

- 2 Although the IYC evidently received financial and other forms of support from non-Nigerian sources, its radicalization, along with those of MASSOB and OPC, is basically attributable to domestic factors.
- 3 In general, upper-income and older individuals are less likely to employ violent tactics than their less-affluent and younger counterparts.
- 4 The fact that I cursorily estimated the importance of these sub-organizational variables foreshadows that future researchers interested in examined and other Nigerian organizations (regardless of their leanings) may concentrate upon this level of analysis in their projects.
- 5 Hence, if a group like MASSOB seeks to establish its own independent state, it is only inevitable that its actions would understandably follow its public proclamations.
- 6 Thus, the figures cited in this study must be viewed with some caution, as they perhaps do not fully reflect the true extent and nature of the conflicts between government security agencies, ethnic associations and other parties. Nonetheless, these referenced accounts are useful because they roughly approximate the character and consequences of the deadly confrontations that have been the bane of Nigerian society since independence and more noticeably as from 1999.
- 7 Also, addressing the process through which organizations develop the most appropriate combination of tactics for their respective purposes is vital, as it exposes the shrewd ways in which they establish or solidify their radical reputation, increase membership levels and attract equivalent financial support from admirers who might have waited in anticipation for such associations to materialize.
- 8 For instance, if a referendum were unsuccessful, would MASSOB voluntarily make a *volte face and* readily shift its focus to demands for regional autonomy, restructuring or true federalism, or would it simply become a new thorn in the side of the Nigerian government? Also, would the Movement be able to retain its membership level and support if it reneged on its promise to actualize the Biafran dream?
- 9 Since many of these 'renegade' associations, like their mainstream counterparts, are led by individuals with substantial ego needs and gratuitous desire to bask in the limelight, this benign cooptation, in concert with earnest attempts to redress their specific grievances, could temporarily, if not permanently, reduce the ferocious state-society and intra-society disturbances that occurred under the watch of President Obasanjo after 1999.
- 10 See [Appendix B](#) for a summary of my conversation with a MOSOP factional leader in Port Harcourt.
- 11 As far as I could ascertain from my base in the United States, this proposed plebiscite did not come to fruition on this date.
- 12 The IYC, MASSOB and OPC, unlike others not evaluated in this project, appeared, to varying degrees (with the IYC being the most principled and the OPC being the least), to resolutely adhere to certain values concerning the expected role of government in public life, nature of the relationship between the state and society, and the value of local or regional autonomy. Nevertheless, because of the simple reality that

human idiosyncrasies and weaknesses are involved in the picture, CSO leaders occasionally use their respective organizations to achieve fame, financial gain and/or personal advancement at the expense of others. The additional fact that associations exploit their objectives to retard the progress of their rivals and settle personal scores, makes a critical review of their aims, rather than a wholesale acceptance of their reputedly-sacrificial actions on behalf of their ethnic brethren, all the more imperative.

- 13 This is an almost-impossible task, given regulatory, financial and contextual impediments.
- 14 The OPC specifically perceived the SNC as an avenue that would allow intractable issues concerning inter-ethnic and state-society relations, regional autonomy, political instability and development, among others, to be discussed and resolved in a supposedly open and free manner. It also placed a great deal of faith in such a meeting and contended that by allowing ethnic nationalities and other interested parties to air their grievances against the state, the SNC would imbue all ethnic groups with a sense of belonging within Nigeria, something that they presumably hitherto lacked, and ensured that they lived in harmony with their neighbors.
- 15 MASSOB's experience portends that it is sheer foolhardy for political elites to believe that they can smother radicalized civil society organizations by insulting their leaders/members' intelligence, questioning their motives and frustrating them in every way imaginable through the use of demoralising words.
- 16 Although these initiatives, including the December 1998 project christened 'Operation Climate Change', did not have the desired effects, it, at the time, precipitated a violent response by the state. Typically, the Federal Government responded in kind to these verbal threats with equally scathing public relations campaigns.
- 17 The objective of this general allusion to violence is to demonstrate how the occurrences relayed in [Chapters IV](#) through VI are only 'unique' to the extent that they are traceable to specific organizations; 'shadowy' persons and entities unfortunately have and continue to undertake(n) similar deeds.
- 18 Although *Sharia* law initially received a great deal of support from many ordinary Northern Muslims, due to the increase in lawlessness, crime and high-level corruption in Nigeria, the religious code meant to address these ills and serve as a deterrent to 'would be' offenders interestingly became a source of state-sponsored violence against women and the poor (Dr Ayesha Imam, a Nigerian Muslim and feminist, made a similar argument on an American radio station in the year 2002).
- 19 Still, Ralph Uwazurike conceded that MASSOB's non-violence position simply meant that it would not first attack its opponents; he promised that if the group were harassed, it would respond swiftly and decisively. Charles Okwara further agreed that a relatively small number of MASSOB members routinely flouted the organization's civil disobedience stance and presumably engaged in annihilative activities.

NOTES TO CHAPTER IX

- 1 These two analytical levels are the preserve of social movement theorists, many of whom I reference in [Chapter III](#).
- 2 My focus on these contemporary policy implications and clear deviation from the purely academic tone that heretofore characterised this project, originate from my professional inclinations and experiences, which have delicately straddled the divide between the academic and policy 'worlds'. Moreover, I believe that extending my findings beyond the obvious would enrich this project.
- 3 It is assumed that a military or otherwise unelected (and thereby unaccountable) government will not be favorably disposed towards citizens' needs, concerns and inalienable rights. Therefore, its first instinct would be to launch incendiary verbal 'missiles' and physically lethal devices to quell disturbances emanating from any sector of society.
- 4 The House of Representatives seriously debated this reform in 2002.
- 5 Also, due to ethnic nationalities' interminable reliance on the centre for survival and conferment of legitimacy, detailed attention ought to be paid to simple but powerfully-symbolic acts like the award of federal contracts to reputable firms in all zones, as opposed to a less well-known company in certain areas.
- 6 Although the United States dazzled the world with its impressive 'show of force', and the manner in which routed the Saddam Hussein regime from Baghdad and won many other battles in Iraq in 2003, there is the hidden danger that this so-called 'war against terror', whose outcome is still very much undecided, could radicalize estranged populations not only in Iraq itself but across predominantly-Muslim countries in Africa, Asia and the Arab World.
- 7 Possible new members include Brazil/Mexico, Egypt/Iran, Nigeria/South Africa and India/Pakistan.

NOTE TO APPENDIX B

- 1 See <http://www.nigerianlaws.com/frames/dcx:s/review/Art37v100.html> for a discussion of this decree's implications.

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