

Literature Review on the Dynamics of Social Movements in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States

Issues Paper

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Executive summary

This literature review makes a preliminary assessment of the available academic and policy-oriented literature on social movements in states in situations of fragility, and affected by conflict. It examines who becomes involved in collective action and why, the barriers to mobilisation and, where social movements do emerge, how these are able to sustain mobilisation and broaden their membership base to reflect the interests of the wider community. In general, it should be noted that there is limited material in the public domain that addresses the issue of social movements with respect to state fragility specifically. There is, further, a dearth of studies that are based on qualitative social research with movement members and leaders in conflict-affected and fragile states, that might give a more evidence-based insight into the dynamics of movement mobilisation and strategising.

The term 'fragility' can be and is applied to a large number of very different states: from those experiencing outright conflict, situations where the state is deemed to have failed, and strong states with authoritarian tendencies. Reflecting this, the countries covered in this review reflect a range of governance situations, with different implications for how social movements engage with and are viewed by the state. For the purpose of this review, social movements are considered to be membership organisations that can draw on a critical mass of supporters who are willing to make public displays of support for the movement's aims. More than ad hoc, uncoordinated protest, social movements display a degree of politicisation and seek to change or defend the status quo. They have generally emerged organically, without financial or other support from external donors, relying instead on small contributions from members.

While this review has a principal focus on movements that organise around progressive social and political change, and that do not engage in armed violence, the relationship between collective action and instability must be acknowledged. For example, peaceful protest in recent months in North Africa has led to the overthrow of a number of governments, previously valued by the West for their stability. However, these revolutions may result in more democratic, development-oriented states.

State-society relations in situations of conflict

While social movements can generate instability, it should be stressed that their emergence does not represent a failure of democracy, but is an essential part of it. In situations where formal channels for people to voice their demands do not function, these may be expressed through street protest or by involvement in local associations. However, this depends on the country context, and where a state is repressive, citizens may withdraw from the public sphere altogether, engaging in self-censorship. In situations of fragility, even where a state may wish to dialogue with its citizens, there are further obstacles for societal engagement with local government, including a difficulty in deploying qualified staff to violent areas, damaged physical infrastructure, and a lack of resources to fund local government institutions. Further, where the central state lacks control over all its territory, organized and competing non-state actors may emerge. Here it may be difficult for social movements to negotiate with one actor, without fear of repercussions from another. In tightly controlled corporatist states, collective action may be discouraged, as individuals who are reliant on state welfare may not wish to risk involvement in activity considered to be oppositional in nature. However, analysts warn against overstating this case, as it discounts citizens' agency.

Conflict and instability can also impact on the individuals' desire or ability to engage in collective action. This requires a 'capacity to aspire' that can be negatively affected by violent conflict. Social relations and networks, which are critical to the emergence of social movements, may also be damaged by conflict, leaving a legacy of fear and mistrust. However, it should be noted that repression and violence can also stimulate people's engagement in human rights and peace movements.

Women's engagement in social movements

The issues around which women mobilise in situations of fragility will, naturally vary from one situation to another, and cultural and religious factors will have implications for how women are able to organise, and their movements' overall aims. Research would suggest that much women's mobilisation during periods of instability starts at the local level and tends to be based around what are typically considered women's issues – such as rape counselling, education, welfare rights and child care. There may be a tendency for women to emphasise their traditional roles, as wives or mothers, at times of conflict, as it is considered less threatening to society generally. However, broader forms of activism may emerge from these activities, as women gain experience of organizing around a common cause. They may also, as this review demonstrates, become the drivers of peace movements.

Peace movements

Research would suggest that social movements can play a key role in calling for peace negotiations or advocating for the inclusion of particular issues into a peace agreement. Social movement activism at the time of negotiations, notably sit-ins and demonstrations, can create alternative spaces of debate outside official arenas. These were used to particular effect by the women's peace movement in Liberia, and an elite-led movement in Nepal. However, while women's organisations' impact on peace negotiations has been documented, women may not be able to capitalize on the empowerment they have experienced during conflict once peace is reached, since patriarchal societies may not be willing to accept changed gender roles.

Socio-environmental movements

Whilst war and human rights abuses can provide the spark that sets off a wave of activism in fragile states, natural resource extraction can also provide the impetus. In these instances, local groups mobilize when they find that their livelihoods are threatened by the activities of outsiders (in particular foreign companies), and where the wealth generated is not perceived to be shared equitably. Some separatist movements have employed environmental discourse as part of their struggle over land ownership. It should be noted that many environmental movements have a strong human rights agenda, and may approach the issue of the environment through the lens of human rights or greater women's rights. Thus justice and the environment are closely linked, as movements seek to denounce the destruction of ancestral lands, or women's marginalization, and assert traditional livelihood strategies.

Organised youth and fragility

The literature on youth involvement in collective action has a primary focus on violence and the activities of armed gangs. Indeed, the presence of a youthful population – often referred to as a 'youth bulge' – combined with high levels of un/underemployment is considered to be a causal factor of state fragility. However, unemployment and a young population do not necessarily lead to violence, and a 'youth bulge' cannot be used to predict war or violent unrest, nor is youth mobilisation necessarily violent. Nevertheless, the literature on social movements in fragile states in Africa is strongly weighted towards the case of violent youth movements in Nigeria. While there is no shortage of grievance amongst well-educated Nigerians with regard to chronic failings of governance, the intricate links between armed militias, decentralized politics and lucrative natural resource extraction prevents the emergence of more ideologically based movements, focused on systemic change. With few alternatives for income generation, young people (particularly young men) may organize to better themselves and their communities through engagement in criminal gangs. Similar patterns of behaviour are visible in other resource-rich states affected by conflict, notably Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Sustaining protest

The review identifies three issues that impact upon how movements mobilise and scale up protest in conflict affected and fragile states: leadership, identity, and globalisation.

The role played by movement leadership in mobilising and sustaining protest is key. Individual, charismatic leaders who show bravery by committing to their cause, despite threats of violence, can draw in movement members, as is the case with the Ogoni in Nigeria or the Kenyan Green Belt movement. Elite leadership can achieve similar results: the presence of high profile members of society at protests and sit-ins was a core part of a Nepali peace movement's strategy. In other cases movements have no clear leader. This can be a deliberate way to avoid repression. A lack of clear leadership was characteristic of the recent pro-democracy movement in Egypt, that evaded the authorities by not presenting particular individuals as key figures in the protest, although leaders later began to emerge. It could perhaps be argued that the use of 'small media' such as text messaging and social networking sites facilitated the growth of a movement that emerged without the need of strong leadership.

Examples of mobilisation that occur around a central figure or as a spontaneous response to a call to action, stand in contrast to DFID funded research that stresses how social movements emerge from years, sometimes generations, of local associational activity. This research emphasises local associations as an important route into more politicised and wider-reaching collective action. Whilst this is not the only way that social movements can emerge, this type of activity can clearly contribute to greater awareness of rights and the potential benefits of collective action, acting as a type of 'school for citizenship'.

The literature reviewed here demonstrates that local place and identity are key issues for the development of social movements. While local organisation and feelings of belonging can encourage people to work together towards a common goal, it can also prevent movements from having traction at a wider scale, and building up a broader support base. In many cases, it is precisely when social actors transcend class or caste boundaries that movements are able to promote more progressive social and political change. Movements in fragile states need to go beyond local identity and encourage members to engage with the state as national citizens, rather than as members of a particular ethnic group. Fragile states are often ethnically fragmented, and individuals may tend to stick to community, ethnicity and local associations. This can reinforce divisions, particularly when the group identifies itself in contrast to another social group that it presents as 'other'. The relationship between the individual and the state may also be mediated through membership of an ethnic group. Social movements can reinforce this problematic relationship by placing an emphasis on narrow, localised identities at the expense of a more inclusive idea of citizenship linked to the national state.

The review illustrates the traction that social movements in conflict affected and fragile states can gain by linking their demands and activities to debates overseas. Activists and their organisations can benefit from linking their demands to international policy debates and laws or agreements so as to gain greater legitimacy. This is a delicate process fraught with the potential to create conflict and contention among the different actors and between different levels. However, linking up to global human rights and environmental debates is regarded by observers to have contributed positively to attempts to raise the visibility of environmental struggles in Africa. Another important aspect of globalisation for social movements in situations of fragility and conflict is the presence of a supportive diaspora, that can undertake advocacy work and keep issues visible within the media, although the diaspora can take on more extremist positions than civil society in the homeland.

Key messages

Evidence from this review suggests the importance of considering the interplay of movement activity and state stability, and of taking into account existing state-society relationships. Depending on the available avenues for participation and levels of state responsiveness to society's demands, social movement activism can have very different impacts on stability. There is a need for careful consideration of likely state responses to social mobilization by donors considering providing direct or indirect support to social movements. Donors will need to weigh up their concerns for stability alongside their aims to promote positive social and political change.

Social movements have the potential to democratize the state and foster a sense of citizenship amongst movement members. Nevertheless, western aid agencies have not historically paid social movements a great deal of attention. There are a number of reasons for this, not least the unpredictable nature of social movement organizing, their often overt politicization, and their tendency to engage in extra-legal activity. A number of problems are thrown up by donor financial support of social movements. It may raise fears of cooption or loss of autonomy; inadvertently create competition around resources; and trigger certain types of behaviour amongst movements, who begin to respond more to donor demands than members' interests and needs.

As such, donors could consider concentrating on creating a supportive environment for movements. This could include:

- Working with governments to avoid the criminalisation of all protest.
- Helping to support a more accepting public sphere where different views can be expressed.
- Promoting avenues for state-society engagement early on at times of peace building.
- Supporting the media to investigate and report human rights abuses to maintain mobilization and draw in support from likeminded movements elsewhere.
- Support social movement members and leaders to use new and old media effectively.
- Encourage and provide specific support for women's participation and leadership in social movements.
- Support movements to improve communications beyond capital cities, including translating key messages into languages and formats that are accessible to less well-educated groups.
- Prioritise rights education, and promote understanding of the judiciary, so that people can recognise an injustice and know how to seek redress collectively.

Introduction

This literature review makes a preliminary assessment of some of the available academic and policy-oriented literature on social movements in states in situations of fragility, and affected by conflict. It seeks to respond to a series of questions set out in the TORs on the nature of social mobilisation in these types of settings. It examines who becomes involved in collective action and why, the barriers to mobilisation and, where social movements do emerge, how these are able to sustain mobilisation and broaden their membership base to reflect the interests of the wider community. Since the definitions of fragility and of social movements themselves are contested, the paper will begin by setting out the understandings of these terms on which the subsequent discussion is based. In general, it should be noted that there is limited material in the public domain that addresses the issue of social movements with respect to state fragility specifically. There is, further, a dearth of studies that are based on qualitative social research with movement members and leaders in conflict-affected and fragile states, that might give a more evidence-based insight into the dynamics of movement mobilisation and strategising.

Definitional issues

It should be noted that the term ‘fragility’ can be and is applied to a large number of very different states: from those experiencing outright conflict, situations where the state is deemed to have failed, and strong states with authoritarian tendencies. Reflecting this, the countries covered in this review reflect a range of governance situations, with different implications for how social movements engage with and are viewed by the state. Drawing generalisations about how social movements emerge and then sustain collective action in situations of fragility is thus fraught with difficulty.

As noted in the GSDRC fragile states topic guide, there is no internationally agreed definition of the term ‘fragile state’. However,

Most development agencies define it principally as a fundamental failure of the state to perform functions necessary to meet citizens’ basic needs and expectations. Fragile states are commonly described as incapable of assuring basic security, maintaining rule of law and justice, or providing basic services and economic opportunities for their citizens (Mcloughlin 2009: 9).

Mcloughlin notes that the term ‘fragile state’ has been considered pejorative, and that there has been a move towards reference to ‘fragility’. She further records that in practice, state fragility is not an ‘either/or’ condition, but varies along a continuum of performance, as well as across areas of state function and capacity (ibid). The debates around the concept are ongoing, but the problems associated with the use of the term have been usefully summarised by Oosterom (2009: 5):

Though the ‘fragile state’ label is widely used, it easily masks the variation in state fragility and how this is experienced at the local level. Often the term is conflated with conflict prone societies, where the state has lost control over large parts of its territory and its monopoly on the use of force (e.g. Democratic Republic of Congo, Iraq). It is important to keep in mind that violent conflict and insecurity are equally experienced in authoritarian, repressive states (e.g. Angola, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe). Here, it is actually a strong state that causes insecurity and fails to deliver on public goods and services. In other cases there will be weak states that lack the capacity to deliver without the occurrence of violent conflict. Furthermore, state fragility can apply to so-called ‘pockets of fragility’ within an otherwise relatively stable and functioning state.

As she goes on to note, fluctuations in state fragility also matter, and it is important to distinguish different types and phases of state fragility, since this will impact on the best way to promote the reconstruction of relations between state and society (ibid).

Defining social movements is perhaps an even more complex endeavour. Debate has raged on how to categorise various types of collective action since the 1960s, and it has generated a huge body of literature.

Perhaps the classic definition is that of Charles Tilly, who defines them as groups that display 'WUNC' - worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment (Tilly 2004). His work has, over the years, had a tendency to focus on the interaction between challengers and powerholders (Diani 2008). However, more recent scholarship emphasises the networked nature of movements. For example, for Whittier (2002: 289):

Social movements are neither fixed nor narrowly bounded in space, time, or membership. Instead, they are made up of shifting clusters of organizations, networks, communities, and activist individuals, connected by participation in challenges and collective identities through which participants define the boundaries and significance of their groups.

Diani (2008) also supports the focus on networks, placing them at the centre of his analysis by arguing that they 'constitute' a movement, as interactions with powerholders can be undertaken by a large number of organisations that are not connected to each other. Thus for a social movement to be categorised as such, it must be more than ad hoc, uncoordinated protest activities. Over time, protest and mobilisation may develop into a social movement organisation, or SMO. This represents the formalisation and institutionalisation of movement organising into a more permanent body. Whilst it is at this point that social movements might appear to resemble other types of civil society organisation, such as NGOs, the former are distinct in that they are membership organisations, and rely heavily on achieving a critical mass of individuals who are willing to make public displays of support for the movement's aims.¹ They also emerge organically, generally without financial or other support from external donors, often relying instead on small contributions from members. Finally, the nature of collective action is important. For social movements to be understood as such, many scholars argue that they must have a degree of politicisation. As Foweraker (1995) points out, not everything that moves is a social movement, and they must in some way be mobilised around change: either challenging the status quo, or attempting to preserve it in the face of a threat.

Attempts to understand social movements through theory are also extensive. These are often grouped into four general categories, as usefully summarised by Diani (2008: 3).

The "resource mobilization approach" has focused on the resources necessary to convert grievances into overt protest behaviour; the "political process approach" has privileged the interaction between protestors and the polity and its impact on the forms and outcomes of collective action; the "framing approach" has investigated how cultural representations of actors' experience develop, which can facilitate the spread of collective action; the "new social movements" perspective has investigated the relationship between structural social change and the emergence of new collective actors.

For Diani, the 'classic social movement agenda' (ibid) involves a focus on the interplay of how resources (time, money, people) are mobilised, the response to changes in the political environment that will impact on perceptions of opportunities for, or costs of collective action, and how movements frame their demands to appeal to the wider public. The post-structural 'new social movement' theory as epitomised by Alberto Melucci and Alain Touraine places a greater emphasis on identity, rejecting class as a mobilising feature for movements and focusing on how actors can 'produce their own society', and bring about change in the way society perceives itself.

However, as Charles Tilly (one of the best known movement scholars) has argued, these theoretical approaches do nothing more than serve as an orientating device for the sorting of observations (cited in El-Mahdi 2009: 1016). While these approaches can be used, retrospectively, to tease out issues around mobilisation and movement success or failure, they have very little predictive power. Notably, it is very difficult to explain why movements emerge in one context but not in another where conditions might be considered as, or even more, favourable. However, this review notes a number of factors that can promote collective action, including charismatic or elite leadership, the presence of and perceived poor distribution of

¹ There is, however, clearly overlap between the organizational forms. Paffenholz (2009) notes a move towards the professionalization and formalization of activist networks, dubbed the "taming of social movements" and the "NGOization of social protest," as they seek funds from international donors. Whilst this is seen to have improved professional performance, it has generated competition between organizations and 'shifted accountability from the societies concerned to the donors themselves' (Paffenholz 2009: 24).

profits from natural resource extraction; perceived discrimination against a particular ethnic group; and persecution and violence perpetrated by the state. However, equally, the review notes that in situations of conflict and fragility, fear of violence and repression may prevent people from organising, and promote mistrust within communities. The literature reviewed here suggests that movements are most successful when they are able to overcome a narrow focus on identity, to reach out to a wider constituency and engage with the state as national citizens.

Organisation of the report

This report is divided into four parts. The first of these presents a discussion of the literature that undertakes general analysis of social movements in contexts of fragility. Part two draws on case study material from a range of conflict-affected and fragile states looking at how and why individuals do, or do not, undertake collective action in situations of fragility. Part three provides some more general analysis of how movements manage to develop, draw in a broader constituency and promote change at the national level, considering issues of leadership, identity framing and globalisation. Part four considers the gaps in the literature, recommendations for further research and analysis, and the potential policy responses for DFID and other donors.

Part 1: Prospects for social movement emergence in conflict-affected states and situations of fragility

The following section draws principally on the comparative literature that addresses political participation and social mobilisation in conflict-affected and fragile states. It begins with a discussion on the links between social movements and instability. It then presents some general arguments about the potential for social movements to emerge in situations of conflict and fragility.

Social movements and instability

For the purposes of this review, and in line with the TORs and discussion with DFID advisers, armed revolutionary movements are not considered. The review is also weighted towards movements that are focused on bringing about progressive social and political change. (It does, however, cover the phenomenon of youth gangs in Nigeria, as the ambiguous nature of their activities, descent into violence and use of identity as a mobilising frame, provide some useful lessons.) The fact that even peaceful social movements mobilised around a desire for progressive change can contribute to instability must also be acknowledged. This is visible in recent organised protests in North Africa, where the Egyptian regime, previously considered stable if undemocratic, was overthrown, leading to current widespread uncertainty as to how the country's governance structures will reorganise. Clearly protest leading to conflict and revolution can bring about more democratic and accountable states. Further, the 'repertoire of contention' which movements draw upon to protest publically may often involve violent aspects, notably destruction of property. But as Hazen (2009: 281) notes,

The majority of social movement groups never engage in violent tactics, and those that do often use limited violent means in a more sporadic manner, rather than opting for a sustained campaign of violence.

It is, therefore, perhaps appropriate to distinguish between types of violence: between direct action that involves infringement of property rights, and acts that purposefully put the lives and safety of the public at risk. However, it should also be noted that governments can conflate these two different types of violence, sometimes labelling both as 'terrorism', and enacting legislation through which protesters of largely peaceful protest find themselves facing prison sentences. There may be a role for donors here to moderate discussions with governments about direct action, so as to avoid all protests becoming criminalised.

Nevertheless, members and leaders of initially non-violent movements can decide to take up arms for a number of reasons, and armed groups may have their origins in broader social movements. These are listed by Hazen (2009:281):

Armed groups have often begun as a smaller subset of individuals within a mainstream social movement who are willing to pursue more radical strategies for political and social change by opting for violent means. Radicalization results from a number of factors: inaction by government to meet popular demands; repressive reactions by government to social protest; an ideology of change that accepts the use of violence as legitimate; threats to the survival of the group; competition for scarce resources from other social movement organizations; and, the perception that other social movement organizations are too weak or timid in their efforts to achieve change.

Equally, resistance movements can lay down their arms and become integrated into political processes – for example the Maoist movement in Nepal. Similarly, in El Salvador, the revolutionary movement, the FMLN, became a political party and in 2009 won the presidential elections. It is now considered to be pursuing a social democratic agenda. These examples demonstrate the fluid nature of social movements, that can take up arms but also then evolve into a political party that competes in democratic elections.

Quantitative research on social movements by Norris (2006) argues that it is a mistake to assume that mass political activism in fragile states (as expressed through street protests, demonstrations, boycotts or political strikes) necessarily contributes to government instability. Her research is based on analysis of data produced in the World Values Survey, and compares 27 fragile states (16 democracies and 11 autocracies) with 49 states

considered stable.² Analysis of the attitudes of people engaged in protest in fragile democracies show that they are very similar to their counterparts in stable democracies. The fact that their profiles are so similar leads her to suggest that,

Protest in fragile democracies does not represent a backlash against democracy or even the government in power, but rather it is similar in many regards to the background and motivation of activists in stable democracies. Fragile democracies face multiple challenges in consolidating and institutionalizing the regime, and deepening the quality of democratic institutions. But the profile of protestors suggests that this should function as a positive channel of expression and mobilization of civil society (Norris :14).

She does note, however, that protesters in fragile autocracies are likely to be more politically polarized, with slightly greater numbers of people expressing a desire for radical change and being disapproving of democratic ideals. Noting the need for more analysis of these attitudes, she remarks that 'it remains unclear whether these results form a consistent and coherent orientation' (ibid:15). In general, the tenor of the research synthesis is positive,

Although political protest was once regarded by some theorists as dangerous for the health of democracy, if it generated an over-loaded state and if it undermined traditional sources of authority, the evidence presented here and elsewhere strongly suggests that demonstrations, petitions and boycotts encourage a vibrant and active democratic state (ibid: 16).

She concludes that in autocracies, greater levels of protest are associated with greater political instability, but that 'protests are more likely to engage democratic sympathizers pressing for reform, rather than to be plebiscitary acts designed to maintain the power of the rulers' (ibid).

It should be acknowledged here that not all social movements are necessarily progressive, and even those that may provide some benefits locally, may not be stimulating democratic values, as understood by Western governments.

Donors should not assume that all opposition movements are articulating the voice of the most oppressed and marginalised, particularly when they turn to violence. In the Delta region of Nigeria, an area of huge resource wealth, gangs of young men sabotage flow stations in order to be paid off by oil companies and form paramilitary groups to act as arbitrary 'law enforcers' on behalf of politicians. At base, the violence is the articulation of a demand for a greater share of the oil revenue. Yet violence does not open up spaces for participation by others, women for example; rather, it closes them down by negating the due process of the rule of law (DRC-Citizenship 2006: 16).

Opportunities for state-society engagement

As pointed out in a recent synthesis of ten years of work by the Development Resource Centre on citizenship, participation and accountability, 'Social movements and other forms of collective action are not a failure of democratic politics but are an essential component of it' (DRC-Citizenship 2010: 13). They should thus be seen as an indicator of a growing sense of citizenship: individuals are sufficiently motivated to engage in a type of political space, have some perception that an injustice or a violation of rights is being perpetrated, and can find common ground with other people who they may begin to see as fellow citizens. The DRC-Citizenship involved research across 25 different countries, a number of which can be classified as fragile. The synthesis report notes the different ways in which collective action may be channelled, depending on the extent to which the state provides spaces for societal engagement. Thus in Brazil, at one end of the spectrum, 'invited spaces' for participation of social movements and other civil society actors are constitutionally mandated. In this context, social movements also engage with the law in an attempt to bring about change – appealing to constitutional legislation, for example, to critique the state for failing to provide basic services. In situations of fragility and conflict, powerholders may demonstrate less political will to open up debate to representatives of society, or

² Classifications of stability and fragility are taken from the Political Stability Index designed by Daniel Kaufman and his World Bank colleagues.

state institutions may not have the capacity to operate in this way. Researchers from the DRC-Citizenship note that in cases where formal mechanisms for state response to society are 'weak or non-responsive, citizens use street protest to claim perceived rights to service delivery' (ibid: 11). They also stress the importance of local associations in countries where the state is weak, noting that 'citizens use their own local associations not only to deliver support to one another, but also as vehicles for negotiating with local governments' (ibid) and that these associations strengthen a culture of citizenship and can make the state more responsive. The research also notes that in countries where violence is prevalent, individuals may choose not to engage in collective action, withdrawing into 'partial citizenship or self-censorship' (ibid: 15).

Given the debates recorded above on the wide variance in states that can be defined as 'fragile', it would be unwise to make generalizations on the nature of state-society relations in situations of conflict and instability. However, a number of shared characteristics can be suggested.

Societies in fragile states are often polarised in ethnic, religious or class-based groups, often as a result of a legacy of conflict, or, some argue, colonialism. Critically, these societies are often dislocated from - and ambivalent towards - the state. Some argue identity fragmentation results in fragile states lacking the virtuous cycles of cooperation, trust, reciprocity and collective well-being that are vital in forming the social contract. Others argue states work best when they are structured around cohesive groups that can capitalize on their common institutions and affinities (McCloughlin 2009: 23).

It can be assumed that where societies are fragmented along ethnic and/or religious lines, the ability to mobilize broad swathes of society in pursuit of common interests may be more problematic. As Diani (2008) notes, where strong social cleavages are apparent, it is hard to form broad-based coalitions and social movements. How people perceive themselves in relation to the state is also critical for how they will mobilize. Kaplan (2008) has argued that in many fragile states, as a legacy of colonialism, geographical borders ignore socio-political and economic differences amongst different groups within these borders. It is thus hard to incorporate the informal norms of these groups into the formal bodies of the state. Further, in situations of fragility, the fact that there is often a small number of people controlling the institutions of the state, and benefitting from this, leads to a situation where the majority of citizens feels little loyalty towards the state, or any incentive to obey its laws. Thus fragile states are characterised by the fragmentation of political identity, combined with weak national institutions. Both of these factors may prevent the emergence of broad-based popular movements focused on bringing about change at a national level. Further discussion on the interplay between national and other identities and social mobilization is provided in section three.

There is relatively little written about state-society engagement at the local level in situations of fragility. As noted by Oosterom (2009: 5),

State fragility at the local level is an area that has received very little attention in both academic and policy circles. A particular knowledge gap is the interface between citizens and the local state; how the state-citizen relationship can be rebuilt in an environment where social and political trust is minimal and where the threat of violence persists.

She underscores conclusions drawn by the DRC-Citizenship that a failure to address local state-society relations 'may hamper the consolidation of viable local democracies and undermine state legitimacy in the long run' (ibid). Oosterom goes on to outline some of the logistical difficulties for societal engagement with local government in conflict-affected societies, noting that it may be difficult to attract qualified staff into areas affected by violence, physical infrastructure may be damaged, and there are fewer resources generally to fund the institutions of local governance. In the specific case of women's participation in Sierra Leone, Castillejo (2008: 5) notes that 'the capacity of state institutions to implement government policy and uphold state authority is very limited', as a result, the state is unable to deliver the opportunities for participation it has formally provided to women because of limited capacity, corruption and lack of political commitment.

Also critical are the political factors that may impede state-society relations in situations of conflict and instability. Where the central state is not in full control of its territory, organized non-state actors may emerge, and compete for authority (Oosterom 2009). In such tense local situations, negotiation by social movements with one actor may lead to repercussions from another. In her introduction to a review of the literature on

state-society relations in situations of conflict and fragility, Haider (2010: 6) has pointed out that in such situations,

The prominence of informal institutions and relationships and unofficial processes result in divergences between formal systems and rules and actual practice. Political elites, who benefit from patronage and income from natural resource rents and criminal activities, often have little incentive to engage with citizens and to build effective public authority.

This would suggest that the nature of fragile states places specific barriers to the ability of organized social movements to engage with the state. Thus where donors are working on governance reform in fragile states, they should consider how to create platforms for social movements and government to engage with each other, potentially promoting stability through greater responsiveness to society's demands.

Although not previously considered fragile states, analysis from the past decade of authoritarian regimes in the Middle East provides a useful insight into the way that scholars have viewed the impact of this type of state on social organisation. Diani (2008) argues that collective action in authoritarian regimes is mainly based on the community and embedded in non-political forms of organisation. Further, 'instances of collective action, taking the form of formal organizations or national social movements will be far rarer than in Western societies, while coalitions – especially cross-ideological coalitions – will tend to develop mostly on non-controversial issues' (ibid: 2-3). Examining the case of Egypt, and of a social movement that was a forerunner to recent protests, Bayat (2000) stresses how authoritarian, populist regimes with access to rents can shut down avenues for protest, by integrating large swathes of the population into a corporatist regime of dependency. Where many millions of families are dependent on the state for their livelihoods, it is difficult to mobilise them into an opposition force. With reference to Egypt and Iran, he further stresses the fact that few civic organisations that operate outside of kinship networks have been allowed to develop.

However, El-Mahdi (2009) while noting the impact of a controlling regime on the Egyptian population, goes on to argue that too much weight has been placed on the structural barriers to mobilisation in the literature on the Middle East, overlooking the potential for agency amongst its populations. Recent events in the region would appear to support this thesis. Thus while Diani (2008: 4) points out that 'neither social movements nor coalitions develop easily even in democratic, affluent countries [...] they are even more problematic to find in less democratic settings, with limited resources' and Oosterom (2009) makes a similar point about achieving accountable states in stable democracies, it is important not to discount citizens' agency, even in the most unpromising of settings. As Pearce and McGee (2011: 12) note, 'democratic civil participation is possible even in violent contexts and is a foundation for new kinds of responses to the problem'. In the case of current unrest in North Africa and the Middle East, there are clearly limits to the extent to which corporatist systems, and those based on the distribution of oil rents, can keep populations acquiescent. High unemployment and the youth bulge are seen to have been important factors in the revolution in Egypt. The 'capacity to aspire' to, and greater knowledge of, more democratic governance systems, through the spread of television and internet news media, may also be a factor behind growing opposition to autocratic regimes in the region.

Individual responses to violence and instability

At the individual level, citizens' personal responses to situations of conflict and fragility will impact on their likelihood of engaging in collective action. Kabeer (2009), following Appadurai, has discussed the notion of the 'capacity to aspire' as essential for poor people in Bangladesh to assert their citizenship by engaging in collective action. In situations of entrenched social inequality, in order to become citizens, she argues, individuals must 'transcend the constraints of birth and ascribed status, to acquire the capacity to question, to challenge and to aspire – as well as the capacity to make changes that reflect these aspirations' (Kabeer 2009: 8). The ability to do this may be severely circumscribed in situations of conflict and violence. 'In fragile settings, many factors are at play that pose a threat to developing a sense of agency and citizenship' (Oosterom 2009: 14).

Violent conflict shapes peoples' perceptions of the self as a citizen. Fear, insecurity, violent attacks, and numerous other events associated with conflict and repression result in feelings of powerlessness, marginalisation and humiliation. This has devastating consequences for a sense of civic agency, because the

necessary capacities cannot be developed. People will fear to challenge powerful actors and the people that dare risk violent repercussions. Compliance or even support to the status quo is in many cases an important coping strategy. The capacity to aspire will be diminished. Even when stability returns, people cannot be expected to develop civic agency instantly (Ibid: 15).

Social relations and networks are also often damaged by conflict: 'In situations of violent conflict, processes of 'othering' and dehumanisation destroy social relations and networks and leave a legacy of deep mistrust and fear of others' (Haider 2010: 16). This is also noted in Pearce's (2007) work on Colombia and Guatemala, and by Paffenholz (2009:22) who summarises the issue thus:

Violence destroys and disrupts existing forms of social organizations and social networks by spreading fear, distrust and intimidation. It is important to note that violence-induced changes not only affect the possibilities of civil society peacebuilding at a particular moment, but may also change the very structure of civil society. Second, violence limits the possibilities of civil society actors to fulfill their roles, as many become targets of violence.

However, clearly, violence can also motivate people to engage in collective action – in peace or human rights movements. Paffenholz (2009) makes this point, noting the motivation for mobilization generated by the spill-over of violence into everyday life.

Social movement engagement in peacebuilding

Research would suggest that in states where violence and conflict are nearing an end, and peace negotiations have started, social movements may emerge, or start to take on a great role in the public sphere. This issue has been researched in comparative perspective by Paffenholz (2009) and the Geneva-based Centre on Conflict, Development and Peacebuilding. Unfortunately, the research synthesis report refers in general terms to 'civil society' and does not give more nuanced analysis of which types of organization engage in specific peacebuilding activities. They note that, 'during a window of opportunity for peace negotiation, civil society can take up very important – and in some instances – crucial roles in facilitating the onset of negotiations, or in advocating for the inclusion of pertinent issues into a peace agreement'. The report describes two different types of advocacy: mass mobilization including street protests, and more targeted lobbying work. The former, which is a strategy closely associated with social movements, is considered to have had a positive effect in Nepal, Northern Ireland and Cyprus. More formal advocacy campaigns were highlighted as important for the inclusion of specific issues into peace agreements – Guatemala and the DRC are cited as examples of this. It also notes that women's groups are often successful in getting gender concerns on to the agenda when undertaking targeted advocacy at this time. The findings suggest, however, that the most effective form of advocacy is 'mass mobilization for large-scale change, such as the end of war or authoritarian rule' (Paffenholz 2009: 19). The key barriers to this type of advocacy are listed as (i) shrinking space for civil society to act; (ii) lack of specialized knowledge amongst activists (iii) a highly restricted media. The issue of media – an area in which donors have been able to engage – is discussed in part three.

Part 2: Case studies of social movements in conflict affected and fragile states

This section takes up some of the general arguments presented in part one, and examines them in light of country-specific case studies, presenting examples of the drivers of and barriers to individual engagement in social movements in situations of conflict and fragility. It is organised thematically, around the various types of social movement that emerge in such situations – peace activism, environmental movements, identity-based movements, faith-based movements and organised youth. Part two ends with a special discussion of youth gangs in Nigeria, reflecting the large amount of literature available on this type of collective action.

These thematic sections are preceded by a separate discussion on the particular issues surrounding women's engagement in collective action. However, as women are central actors in many different types of social movement, there is no separate section on 'women's movements'. These are discussed throughout the review, according to their thematic content.

The TORs for this literature review set out a series of questions around the type of individuals who engage in social movement activity:

- What motivates and enables individuals and communities to join together, i.e. by becoming members of local associations or other community based organisations, social movements, etc?
- What are the gendered difference between motivations, ability to join etc?
- What generalisations can be made about the type of change citizens seek through collective action at local level?

The ability to provide detailed answers to these questions rests on the availability of in-depth ethnographic studies with movement members and leaders. These are in short supply, as many case studies of movement activity appear to rest on analysis of public events such as protests, and state reaction to these, rather than qualitative social research with individuals taking part in and/or organising these activities. The following analysis is, therefore, necessarily partial, based as it is on a very limited number of research studies.

Women's involvement in social movements

Research from Latin America would suggest that women are often over-represented among the rank and file of social movements. This is, in part, because women are less likely to be working in the formal economy, and are thus perceived as having more time to go to meetings or take part in protest activities. This is particularly the case where social movements are organised around issues linked to the domestic sphere, such as housing and service delivery (Molyneux 2002). However, the extent to which women will be willing or permitted to engage in protest activities in public elsewhere in the world will depend on cultural and religious factors. Norris' (2006) analysis of quantitative data on participation in protest discussed above suggests that men are more likely to be engaged in protest in fragile democracies. Those involved were also more likely to be amongst the better educated, and younger members of society. No discussion of gender difference in participation in fragile autocracies is given.

However, women's movements are often very important in situations of conflict and fragility, and a number of studies of such movements are available. Clearly the issues affecting women will vary from one situation of fragility to another, and cultural and religious factors will have implications for how women are able to organise, and their movements' overall aims. However, Fallon (2008) draws some general findings about women's relationship to the state in sub-Saharan Africa, which provides a useful backdrop to investigation of women's movements in the region. Writing principally on Ghana, she notes common characteristics that are quite specific to the continent, namely that (i) women were systematically excluded from formal political institutions during the colonial period, and that the systems that have replaced these with independence tend to be 'masculinist' in nature, 'preventing women's equal participation in politics' and (ii) many states that are in transition from authoritarian regimes have large state-run organizations that coopted women's groups and

prevented them from direct engagement with the state. Noting that these organisations may continue to behave in this way, she argues 'Women's previous negative negotiations with the state may thus prevent them mobilizing with democratization' (Fallon 2008: 35). She further argues that even where women's movements have managed to bring attention to a cause, and are lobbying for changes to the law, they may not be successful in 'getting it through the legislative branch if men dominate the floor and do not see the policy as relevant to their own lives' (ibid: 99). She cites the example of a coalition around domestic violence in Ghana, and the introduction of legislation around this issue has been a rallying cause for women across the continent. However, achieving mobilisation around the introduction of legislation is reliant on a belief that the law can actually promote social change, and knowledge of the workings of the judiciary may be limited to elite women. For example, Gbowee (2009) refers to an advocacy movement led by the Association of Female Lawyers of Liberia, that successfully lobbied to formulate a new rape bill for the country. Similarly, in Sierra Leone, Castillejo (2008: 13) notes, with reference to advocacy for the adoption of 'gender bills', as women's education levels are low, it is 'perhaps unavoidable that many women activists are members of an educated, English-speaking elite'.

Kaufman and Williams (2010) echo Fallon's concern that the patriarchal nature of political and social systems can prevent women from being engaged in formal political process and effecting change through these forums. Focusing on women's activism, they note that there may be a tendency for women to emphasise their traditional roles, as wives or mothers, at times of conflict, as it is considered less threatening to society generally. However, the absence of men from local communities during conflict can also force women to take on new roles. The political and social empowerment that can take place during conflict 'emboldens women to take political action not only during the conflict but subsequently' (Kaufman and Williams 2010: 6). However, while there are some examples (discussed below) of organized women's movements having an impact on peace negotiations, the authors note that women may not be able to capitalize on the empowerment they have experienced during conflict once peace is reached, since patriarchal societies may not be willing to accept changed gender roles. This is noted in the specific case of Sierra Leone, where women's activism is seen to have stalled in the post-war environment (Castillejo 2009).

Kaufman and Williams (2010) argue that much women's mobilisation during periods of conflict starts at the local level – reflecting the findings of the DRC-Citizenship in this regard. It also tends to be based around what are typically considered women's issues – such as rape counselling, education, welfare rights and child care. However, the authors see broader forms of activism stemming from these activities, which give women,

..the experience of organizing and uniting for a common cause, often among groups that would otherwise be in conflict. With participation in grassroots activism women also gain leadership skills. Furthermore, it is this community-based activism that often provides the common basis for women working across divisions for peace (ibid: 103).

Nevertheless, they caution that women's focus at the grassroots level remains outside the formal political process, and whilst they may manage to achieve some successes in the areas that are most important to them,

Almost of necessity it also means that they are excluded from more formal politics, that is, the area of national decision-making. Thus, women political activists are often forced to make a choice: to work in the areas that they are most familiar with and where they feel they can have the most immediate impact, or to try to break into the large political decision-making structure and hope that their voices will be heard (ibid: 117).

In the case of Sierra Leone, Castillejo (2009) notes that women face less resistance from men when they limit their activism to the sphere of civil society – greater hostility is experienced when women activists attempt to engage in formal political processes. She argues that as women generally access rights and participate in governance within the domestic and community spheres, conceptions of citizenship should be extended beyond the narrow focus on the relationship between the individual and the state. This would help to understand 'how women operate as citizens within the social groups of which they are members' (Castillejo 2008: 2). Nevertheless, there is a danger of confining women's activism to these localized spheres – a point that she does acknowledge.

Examples of where women have managed to organize across class and ethnic boundaries and to move beyond the community level are discussed in part three of this report.

Peace movements

Castillejo has examined women's engagement in peace activism in Sierra Leone in a series of articles. She argues that women became involved in political action on an unprecedented scale as a result of their experience of conflict, and that this influenced their demands for greater rights following the conflict (Castillejo 2009). She notes that rural women who were displaced to the capital, Freetown, became more aware of the relative autonomy and influence of women there, opening their eyes to the possibility of greater gender equality in their home communities. The importance of rights awareness for mobilization is implied in a second article (2008). She notes that 'Many women, especially in rural areas, do not know their rights, are unaware that domestic violence is a crime, and have no knowledge of how the justice system functions' (Castillejo 2008: 11). While the author is principally concerned with how individual women access the justice system, a lack of rights awareness will also impact on the potential for women to perceive an injustice and act upon it collectively.

Press (2010) has examined the Liberian Women's Initiative (LWI) that was founded as a response to the stalling of peace negotiations in 1994, and went on to organize rallies, protests, vigils and sit-ins. Whilst initially spearheaded by educated women with links to the church and based in the capital, his interview respondents draw attention to the fact that participants were drawn from different social and economic backgrounds. A larger network, WIPNET was formed in the 2000s, and although it is very difficult to assess the impact of its activities, members carved out an informal space for themselves at peace negotiations by sending representatives to the venues where talks were held, and rallying women from the diaspora. WIPNET's strategies included holding impromptu meetings with delegates (almost always men) in hallways, using the media to highlight their presence, insisting on being allowed to read statements to delegates and on one occasion blocking them into a room to encourage them to reach agreement.

Press's work highlights the fact that women were involved in peace activism during conflict and then attempted to influence peace negotiations. Similarly, Kaufman and Williams (2010: 87) assert that 'women's political activism typically starts during the period of conflict'. However, the exclusion of women's concerns from peace negotiations and agreements can also spur women's activism, as noted by Gbowee, who also examines the case of WIPNET in Liberia, and makes bolder claims than Press (2010) on their influence over the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in 2003.

In the case of Nepal, a non-violent social movement emerged at the time of peace negotiations, standing as a contrast to armed movements in the country – notably the Maoists and the Madhesi of the Terai. The Nepal Citizens' Movement for Democracy and Peace (CMDP) drew high profile national figures to its ranks, and held highly visible events – for example, sit-ins outside meetings of the Constituent Assembly – to call on the different parties involved to take the movement's aims into consideration. They also protested against privileges being granted to the former King and his family. Shrestha and Adhikar (2010) argue that rather than attempting to gain political control, the movement sought to present itself as apolitical, and to galvanise already existing political parties to engage more closely with the populous and to take on a democratic agenda. Ultimately, it aimed to create a more egalitarian, socially united Nepal. The authors note that although the core of the CMDP was and remains dominated by high caste and middle class professionals based in the capital,

It did, however, attract and mobilise a much broader constituency and established linkages with groups outside of the capital, which began launching their own, no less daring, protest programmes (ibid 300-301).

Evidence from Nepal, and elsewhere, would suggest that elite leadership does not necessarily delegitimize social movement activism, and may help to mobilize members at the grassroots.

Alongside his work on the Liberian Women's Initiative, Press (2009) has also examined the broader peace movement in Liberia. This work is interesting in that it engages with social movement theory around political opportunity. This body of work has argued that collective action increases as the political space for

participation opens. Based largely on studies from Western Europe and North America, it is clearly problematic when applied to conflict-affected and fragile states, where in some cases, repression has generated greater resistance. In the case of the Liberian peace movement, Press describes the movement as 'micro-resistance': its fluid nature and lack of clear leadership made it less of an obvious target for the regime. Its participants appear to have been largely drawn from the professional classes: Press notes lawyers, journalists, clergy, leaders of some nongovernment organizations, students, teachers and opposition politicians as amongst its ranks, using tactics such as lawsuits, critical published reports, clerical condemnations, strikes, and protest marches, in order to push for its goals of democracy, human rights, and peace (Press 2009).

Socio-Environmental movements

Whilst war and human rights abuses can provide the spark that sets off a wave of activism in fragile states, natural resource extraction can also provide the impetus. In these instances, local groups mobilize when they find that their livelihoods are threatened by the activities of outsiders (in particular foreign companies), and where the wealth generated is not perceived to be shared equitably. Obi (2005:4) notes the broad reach of environmental movements: in their struggle to contest the monopolization of environmental resources and its 'attendant abuses and corruption, environmental movements have also adopted political, ethnic, national and gender identities in Africa'. Some separatist movements have employed environmental discourse as part of their struggle over land ownership (ibid). It should be noted that many environmental movements have a strong human rights agenda, and may approach the issue of the environment through the lens of human rights. Thus justice and the environment are closely linked, as movements seek to denounce the destruction of ancestral lands and of traditional livelihood strategies.

One of the most well-known environmental movement in sub-Saharan Africa is the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) in Nigeria. Obi (2005: 8) describes its aims as follows:

It sought to contest and block further exploitation, pollution and marginalization of Ogoni oil-rich lands and the Ogoni people by the state-oil business alliance, and to assert Ogoni rights to claim and control their own resources. Essentially, the Ogoni struggle was one of identity in order to claim power over land.

The movement sought to engage the state through the production of a bill of rights, that was adopted and signed by local leaders after 'massive grassroots mobilization' and in which the Ogoni set out their demands for political autonomy. Writing on the same movement, Mochizuki (2009) notes that the government essentially ignored these demands, and that power relations between the Ogoni and the alliance of the state and oil companies remain unchanged. Indeed, MOSOP was severely weakened by the killing of its charismatic leader, Ken Saro-Wiwa (Obi: 11).

A second well-known environmental movement in sub-Saharan Africa that mobilised followers both around natural resource depletion and wider goals is the Green Belt Movement (GMB) of Kenya. Led by Wangari Mathai, who was at one point beaten by police for her activism (Fallon 2010), the movement is described by Obi (2005: 11) as a 'grassroots women's movement for the sustainable management of the environment and the economic empowerment of women'. The movement managed to link up the themes of poverty, environmental degradation and women's marginalization, and advocated for a central role for women in local development through intervention in and control over the environment. Alongside environmental education and the conservation of forest resources, the movement also undertook direct action – planting trees in areas that had been deforested for luxury housing development, in an attempt to counter the private expropriation of public lands. Thus Obi (2005: 11) argues that the GBM 'has confronted existing hegemonies in Kenya, particularly as they affect the ownership, control and use of land [...] its programme of empowering women through tree planting and mobilization for environmental management directly challenges dominant patriarchal relations and the marginalization of women'.

Faith-based movements

The role that religion can have in social movements is a broad and highly complex issue. Secular movements may have religious elements, but religion can also be at the centre of a movement's mission and reason for existence. As noted by Kirmani (2008), religious movements have in the past been overlooked by social movement theorists. This is, however, now changing, as scholars place an increasing emphasis on the role of identity in social movement formation and acknowledge that there is a 'great deal of overlap between the ways in which social movements and religious organizations mobilize around shared values and common ideals in order to assert a sense of collective solidarity' (Kirmani 2008: 27).

The level at which religious movements can operate ranges from the grassroots to the international, and their aims vary widely: from providing relief to the poor and destitute, proselytising, challenging the status quo or achieving political power. These aims may also overlap. In recent years, 'fundamentalist' movements, particularly Islamic ones, have received a disproportionate amount of attention from scholars. However, it should be stressed that religious movements often undertake development related advocacy and have helped to support and mobilise pro-democracy struggles (Kirmani 2008). For example, the Catholic Church played an important role in the democratisation in a number of countries, including Brazil, South Africa, Poland, Spain and the Philippines.

In the Middle East and North Africa, Islamic movements have taken on a considerable role in terms of welfare provision, where government authorities have not been able to provide these. Notable in this regard are the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt (Grynkewich 2008) and Hamas in the Palestinian Territories (Gunning 2007). But while at the local level these movements might be seen to be promoting grassroots development, they are also regarded, in some quarters, as dangerous fundamentalist or even terrorist organisations. Analysts of Islamic social movements have also identified gender relations as a particularly problematic area. As noted by Ladbury and Khan (2008) the Muslim Brotherhood's (somewhat undefined) stance on Shari'ah could have a negative impact on women's rights were they to come to power. Their analysis of women's piety movements in Egypt and Pakistan also illustrates the complexity of religious social movements. In these cases, women are engaged in socially conservative interpretations of the Qu'ran and hadith, and yet are empowered to take decisions over familial and neighbourhood relations based on their greater knowledge of these texts.

In terms of resource mobilisation it is noted that religious organisations and societies can play an important role in providing a space for civil society. For Casanova (2001), Catholic and, potentially, Islamic institutions can provide the public space for nascent movements to organise and mobilise support. Following social network and resource mobilization theories, a number of scholars have pointed out how organized religion provides for frequent contact between members and ready-made networks of believers (Beckford 2001). Religion can also 'contribute to social movements by providing trained leadership capable of motivating and attracting participants' (Smith 1996: 13) and by providing a moral justification for activism. Kirmani (2008: 32) however, cautions against taking religion as a stand-alone factor in social movement organisation, noting that it is often just one of a number of factors that interact 'in order to produce and propel groups towards mobilization and action'.

In-depth research on the issue of religion and social movements is being undertaken by a number of scholarly institutions, as overviewed by the GSDRC.³ Notably, the University of Birmingham has a strong profile in this area, and a number of papers are available on the Religions and Development research centre website.⁴

Organised youth and fragility

The literature on youth involvement in collective action has a primary focus on violence and the activities of armed gangs. Indeed, the presence of a youthful population – often referred to as a 'youth bulge' – combined with high levels of un/underemployment is considered to be a causal factor of state fragility. Indeed, USAID (2006) includes a youth population bulge and youth unemployment as fragile state indicators.

³ www.gsdr.org/docs/open/HD644.pdf

⁴ www.religionsanddevelopment.org

In regards to state fragility, the employment needs and opportunities of youth are particularly important; the literature indicates that grievances by this demographic group are the most likely to be expressed through violent means, if nonviolent political channels are not adequate or responsive (USAID 2006: 5).

They also note urbanization and male secondary school net enrolment as important factors impacting on decision-making by young men, that can 'play a key role in creating or avoiding conflict and state failure' (ibid: 12).

It should be stressed here that unemployment and a young population do not necessarily lead to violence, and a 'youth bulge' cannot be used to predict war or violent unrest (Mclean Hilker and Fraser 2009). Youth mobilisation is not necessarily violent either. Organised young people are playing a leading role in recent peaceful pro-democracy mobilisations in North Africa and the Middle East, for example. However, given the forceful arguments of analysts such as Urdal (2004) who demonstrate a strong correlation between youth bulges and domestic armed conflict (particularly under conditions of economic stagnation), scholarly attention has been turned to finding examples of 'resilience': where young people have chosen not to be involved in organised crime and violence. Summarising these, Mclean Hilker and Fraser (2009) note the importance of 'strong communities' that display high levels of social capital and can employ both incentives and sanctions to limit involvement in violence. UNDP (2006: 29) notes that religious movements, particularly Islamic and Christian Pentecostalist ones, can also provide this type of 'strong community'. Despite their differences, both types of movement perform similar functions in societies, 'providing youth with security, moral guidance as well as education, employment contacts, friendship and alliance networks – in essence, offering survival strategies for increasing numbers of young people as they move away from their families and communities'. In some cases, religious movements can specifically target youth grievances, such as those linked to education and employment. The case of the Hizb ut-Tahrir movement in Central Asia is indicative in this regard (Ibid). UNDP's report also notes that religious movements can provide power and responsibility for young people in societies that are dominated by the elder generation.

However, it should be noted that gang membership can also provide social capital, community, power and social space for young people, and these are aspects of its appeal. Benard (2005) examines how extremist movements can provide for young people's social and psychological needs. She charts the 'socialization' of new recruits, including into terrorist groups, who experience 'an increased sense of empowerment, purpose and self-importance' (ibid: 69). They may also gain a 'tangible sense of acceptance within the group, and in combination with this, the acquisition of real status within the broader community (ibid: 69-70).

Youth, ethnicity and natural resources in Nigeria

The literature on social movements in fragile states in Africa is strongly weighted towards the Nigerian case – where there has been a proliferation of armed youth gangs operating in the Delta region. Particularly critical for youth mobilisation is the high rate of unemployment in the region and worsening socio-economic conditions. As noted in the example from the DRC-Citizenship above, movements in Nigeria that are based around redistribution of resources do not necessarily open up space for participation of broader elements of society in how the local area should be governed. Whilst these movements do not fit the category of those pursuing progressive social and political change, as outlined in the TOR, it will be useful to examine them as the literature on these movements in Nigeria (of which there is considerably more than on other fragile states) helps to explain why more democratic and peaceful forms of collective action do not emerge. These case studies also offer up some important lessons on the role of ethnicity in social movements.

Those writing on the Nigerian and West African experiences note that youth movements were a key part of independence struggles, but that since independence, the space for participation of young people has been in sharp decline, as have opportunities for civil society more generally to influence how the state is run (Sall 2005; Mochizuki 2009). This has been put down, in part, to the desire by newly independent states to concentrate on the project of state-building, modernization and national growth, without the 'distractions' of competing social movements (Obi 2005; Sall 2004), and later oppression during authoritarian rule. Further, Mochizuki (2009: 219) notes the reluctance of young people to engage in national level political debates:

Experiences in the Niger Delta suggest that the present youth movements have a strong inclination to control resources at the community level. The youth could have demanded benefits at the national level through political representation at the centre, like those in the nationalist movement who redirected themselves toward national politics, but they felt that such a move might increase the risk of manipulation by elders closely connected to the government.

Reno (2002) points out that there is no shortage of grievance amongst well-educated Nigerians, with regard to chronic failings of governance. Many people recognize that senior officials in government have little interest in providing services, or even in engaging in social reciprocity associated with patronage. Yet the intricate links between armed militias, decentralized politics and lucrative natural resource extraction prevents the emergence of more ideologically based movements, focused on systemic change, armed or peaceful. Reno argues that Nigeria's misrule lays the basis for the rise of groups that 'do not mobilize lasting popular support, and are unable to control individual predation among members' (Reno 2002: 838). This has considerable impact on the options available for young people in the country. With few viable economic prospects, they organize to better themselves and their communities.

But instead of fighting the entire political order that has done little to serve their interests, most (quite rationally) become reincorporated into existing political networks, perhaps on better individual terms. This poses a formidable collective action problem for potential revolutionaries and reformers, since they must contend with would-be followers who align themselves with politicians who will permit them access to loot, lest others get the goods before them and leave them out (ibid: 852).

Similar patterns of behaviour are visible in other resource-rich states affected by conflict, notably Sierra Leone and the Democratic Republic of Congo (ibid; Sall 2004). Sall (2004: 604) gives the following explanation for the phenomenon in the West African region.

The reasons for the spread of youth movements such as the vigilante group called the Bakassi Boys in eastern Nigeria, that was originally formed to fight criminals but later became 'law enforcers and adjudicators' are quite similar to those behind the enrolment of youth in warring factions in Sierra Leone and elsewhere: in both cases, a demand for recognition and an assertion of power by hitherto marginalized subjects who have taken the responsibility to secure or change their life-worlds.

Hazen (2009) provides an in-depth look at the trajectory of youth movements into violence in Nigeria. Facing competition from other groups, as well as threats to its members, the Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF) came to see violence as,

the only available option to combat a closed political system and repressive military strategy. The threat to the survival of the NDPVF from both armed groups and the Nigerian military acted to reinforce the belief that military action was the only possible action available (Hazen 2009: 293).

Hazen goes on to note that local officials' lack of interest in governing, and the inability of the national government to reign in armed groups, created a void in 'poor, underdeveloped, and ignored' areas of the country, facilitating the entrance of groups of disaffected young men.

Gore and Pratten (2003) also consider collective action amongst young people in Nigeria, looking at the phenomenon of area boys. They highlight the ambiguous nature of their aims and demands, listing their activities as 'vigilantism, screening political candidates, monitoring local government expenditure, checking the award of compensation payments to local chiefs, threatening contractors and parastatals to complete development programmes, and monitoring price controls' (ibid: 213). The question of geographic location and ethnic identity become very important amongst these groups. They note that in Nigeria's southern states, youth movements engage in the 'discourses on marginalization, disorder and crime by drawing on idioms of particularistic community identity and on trajectories of age grades and secret societies' (ibid). Area boys are considered to be a response to an influx of 'strangers' into urban areas, and fear of economic and political marginalization. These groups use ethnicity and belonging to the local area as a 'trump card' and defend, violently, their right to certain resources against other groups similarly mobilized around a particular identity (ibid). Gore and Pratten refer to the 'ambivalent moral space' within which area boys operate, where there is an 'ongoing dialectic between local forms of moral accountability for the benefit of the wider community and

the instrumental means of economic survival for excluded and marginalized youth' (ibid: 229). Other writers have identified the link between this type of behaviour and federal level policy in Nigeria that 'uses ethnic identity as the primary identity for state entitlements and social rights' (Adejumobi 2001:162). The critical issue of individual versus communitarian identity and citizenship will be discussed in the next section.

The Nigerian case demonstrates one of the findings of social movement scholarship, that new forms of collective action do not 'spring fully-formed from nowhere; they are bounded by the cultural and historical contexts in which they develop' (Hayes 2007: 309). In this way, they often draw on knowledge of the strategies and 'repertoires of contention' used by older social movements. As Mochizuki (2009) notes, the example of the Ogoni's organization in MOSOP led to a proliferation of other ethically-oriented movements in the oil-producing states of Nigeria, making similar demands. However, the violent context of the Niger Delta and the availability of arms makes this imitation of social movement repertoires problematic. As Paffenholz (2009: 20) notes, 'once a destructive approach to dealing with conflict has penetrated a society, there is a high risk that other conflict lines will also transform into violence'.

Part 3: Sustaining protest and scaling up to the national level

Given the various ways that states can experience fragility and conflict, it would be unwise to draw any concrete lessons on the nature of collective action and social movements in these situations. There are, however, a number of areas relating to how movements mobilise and scale up protest in conflict affected and fragile states that can be discussed in more general terms. The following section considers the issues of leadership, identity, globalisation and the use of new media by social movement members and leaders.

With reference to the TORs, this section of the report seeks to provide some answers to the following questions:

- How do collective actors engage in action beyond the local level?
- What are the barriers and enablers to social movements developing and progressing?
- What is the role of elites?
- Is new technology a factor in the way social movements develop?

Leadership

In a number of the studies of movements examined above, the authors make reference to the important role played by the leadership in mobilising and sustaining protest. Individual, charismatic leaders who show bravery by committing to their cause, despite threats of violence, were clearly important in the case of Wangari Mathai in the Green Belt Movement in Kenya, Ken Saro-Wiwa in Nigeria's MOSOP (Obi 2005), and the members of the peace movement in Liberia (Press 2010). It should, however, be noted that in these examples, and others discussed above, the original impetus for mobilisation came from members of the elite. In the case of Nepal's citizen movement, the presence of high profile members of society at protests and sit-ins was a core part of movement strategy (Shrestha and Adhikar 2010).

Recent movements emerging in Pakistan also demonstrate the salience of elite leadership. For example, in the Pakistan lawyers' movement, protest coalesced around a single figure, Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry, after President Musharraf demanded his resignation and then suspended him when he refused to stand down. While the movement generated huge public interest and media coverage, Zaidi (2008) casts doubt on whether a movement, which he regards as principally engaged in protecting its own particular institutional interests, could reach out to a broader constituency and be part of a general movement for democratic change.

While the potential of high-profile leaders to dynamise campaigns is clearly an important issue to take into consideration, Obi (2005: 15) cautions that movements built around 'a charismatic or heroic leader' can have limitations, 'including institutional-organizational weaknesses and the factionalism that goes with this, as well as the general lack of transparency in the movements' decision making and management of resources'.

In other cases movements have no clear leader. In the Liberian case, as argued by Press (2009), this was a way of avoiding repression. The lack of clear leadership was also characteristic of the recent pro-democracy movement in Egypt, that similarly evaded the authorities by not presenting particular individuals as key figures in the protest, although leaders later began to emerge.⁵ It could perhaps be argued that the use of 'small media' such as text messaging and social networking sites facilitated the growth of a movement that emerged

⁵ In the case of Egypt, one such leader was the former head of the UN nuclear agency, Mohamed ElBaradei (an internationally recognized, high-profile figure) who returned to the country once the protests had begun. The Muslim Brotherhood also aligned itself with protesters once demonstrations had begun. The relationship between spontaneous protest, elite leadership and organized opposition can be seen in this case to be very fluid.

without the need of strong leadership. The use of internet and mobile phones to organise protest on a large scale (such as in Egypt) is a new phenomena, and there is, as yet, little systematic research on the issue. Commentators have noted, however, that in Egypt, the protest was initiated by young people, who were well-connected through mobile phones and internet sites such as Twitter and Facebook. These protesters were joined later by older generations and those without access to new technologies (Roy 2011). Both Roy (2011) and Sreberny (2011) stress that internet penetration rates are not high outside urban centres in the Middle East and North Africa, and that they vary enormously from one country to another. For example, in Yemen internet connectivity reaches less than 2% of the population, while in Bahrain this figure stands at 88%. Sreberny (2011), a leading scholar on media and communications cautions that new media do not produce change in and of themselves, and that Twitter, in itself, cannot explain the emergence of movements in Iran or Tunisia. Further, she argues that members of emerging social movements in the Middle East have employed a mix of face-to-face politics and contemporary small media.

These examples of mobilisation that occur around a central figure or as a spontaneous response to a call to action, appear to stand in contrast to the findings of the DRC-Citizenship that stresses how social movements emerge from years, sometimes generations, of local associational activity. This research emphasises the role of local associational activity, as one of the most important routes into more politicised and wider-reaching collective action. Whilst this is not the only way that social movements can emerge, this type of activity can clearly contribute to greater awareness of rights and the potential benefits of collective action, acting as a type of 'school for citizenship'. Studies from Bangladesh noted that citizenship 'may not develop initially through engagement with the state' but begin with 'citizen-like' engagement for poor women through informal courts, village factions, informal labour and credit markets, informal savings groups and NGO-mobilised groups. Research findings suggest that 'such forms of organisation were vital first steps in developing a sense of self-identity, and subsequently, of citizenship. They allowed individuals to translate their own individual grievances into a sense of collective injustice and then articulate these to those they felt should respond' (DRC-Citizenship 2006: 8). It should be noted that the methodological approach of the DRC-Citizenship work involved in-depth fieldwork which provided insight into the dynamics of collective action at the local level, perhaps bringing this kind of observation to the fore. This qualitative, more ethnographic approach is not a feature of the bulk of studies available in the public domain and which were accessed for the purposes of this review.

Identity

Whatever the nature of social movement organising – whether it is an organic process emerging from the grassroots over time, or a more spontaneous response to calls for action – it is clear that local place and identity are key issues for the development of social movements. While local organisation and feelings of belonging can encourage people to work together towards a common goal, it can also prevent movements from having traction at a wider scale, and building up a broad base of popular support. The delicate balancing act is highlighted by Paffenholz (2009:20),

The specific in-group socialization of particular groups in a conflict situation has proven to be effective in many instances, as a generation of civic leaders have been empowered through training and capacity building (such as Maya activists in Guatemala or Dalith organizations in Nepal). However, the strengthening of group identity has also had negative effects; it can reinforcing existing conflict lines, and sometimes even facilitate radicalization, as demonstrated by some ethnic groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

These examples have echoes of Putnam's (2000) debate on 'bridging' and 'bonding' social capital, in which the former involves the development of networks between socially heterogeneous groups, while the latter strengthens networks within one specific group. In many cases, it is precisely when social actors manage to transcend class or caste boundaries – building Putnam's bridges – that movements are able to promote more progressive social and political change.

The emergence of coalitions and social movements depends to a large extent on the possibilities of forging shared agendas, developing social bonds cutting across clans, factions, and local communities, and creating and reinforcing collective identities. These in turn depend on the possibility of engaging in discourse and communicative action in public spaces. (Diani 2008: 12- 13).

Achieving this often involves a conscious process of 'framing' whereby movement spokespeople attempt to make their ultimate aims applicable to a wider group of people. Thus with reference to the Kifaya movement in Egypt, El-Mahdi (2009) notes that the movement's principal members – middle-class people involved in political action for the first time – failed to make the link between the authoritarian regime and persisting high levels of poverty. By making purely political demands, rather than incorporating a socio-economic perspective, Kifaya lost access to the popular masses. More recently, Egyptian protesters have been able to overcome this problem and have made appeals to a broad Egyptian national identity in the framing of their demands, in an attempt to transcend class divides. The Kenyan Green Belt Movement similarly, can be considered to have gone beyond a discourse centred on environmental protection, to address issues of concern to poor women across the country, as did the Ogoni organisation MOSOP, in Nigeria (Obi 2005).

Kaufman and Williams (2010: 94) highlight the ways in which women's peace movements have been able to transcend ethnic, national and class divisions between women. Drawing on the examples of the Black Sash in apartheid South Africa, the Argentinian Madres de la Plaza de Mayo, the international Women in Black movement and the Israeli Parents against Silence, they note that,

Rather than focusing on the factors that separate groups – ethnic, religious, national tribal, and so on – women were (and are) able to see all the issues that held them together. [In the examples above] women were united in their traditional roles as wives and mothers, which served as a common bond. They were bound together in their opposition to rape and other forms of violence against women that increase during times of conflict and war. They were opposed to discrimination against women, and they favored social justice and equality. They were often brought together by a common desire to improve the situation within their own communities, which is an area over which they felt they could have some impact. They were united in their common desire to knit together a social fabric that has been torn apart way, and to do so in a way that would minimize the risk of violence in the future. And often, they realized that as wives and mothers they had common ideas and dreams, among them, the elimination of violence that was destroying their families.

Thus, as Nerland and Ollek (2009) conclude, women used socialised gender roles to promote peace. However, they also point out that neither women nor their organisations are homogenous, and ethnic, religious and socioeconomic differences may impact upon their ability to find common ground and purpose.

Some social movement scholars are pessimistic as to the ability of movements in the global south to find this common ground, and to work towards a more inclusive society. Thomson and Tapscott (2010: 14) argue that most mobilizations are 'localized, sporadic and discontinuous, implying that their ideological mobilization was (and sometimes stays) shallow or non-existent'. Certainly, the ease with which movements can appeal across class and ethnic difference drawing on broader citizenship identities varies, as does their motivation to do so. The need for movements to transcend local identity and encourage members to engage with the state as national citizens, rather than as members of a particular ethnic group is critical, particularly in fragile states. As noted above, fragile states are often ethnically fragmented, and in such circumstances, individuals may tend to stick to community, ethnicity and local associations. This can reinforce divisions, particularly when the group identifies itself in contrast to another social group that it presents as 'other'.

Osaghae (2010: 39) describes the prominence that communitarian ideas of citizenship have had in the African context:

Proponents of communitarian rights [...] argue that group rights are necessary for dealing with problems of citizenship in multi-ethnic and multicultural societies. [...] The communitarian perspective is more popular in African and non-Western human rights discourses for at least two reasons. The first is the centrality of primary groups in social formations and political relations, which has been reinforced over the years by the ethnic profiling and group-arithmetic politics practiced by state managers...The second [is that] the struggle in Africa has historically been more for collective rights than for individual rights.

It is precisely this construction of citizenship that Adejumobi (2001: 148) blames for much violent unrest in the region.

The construction and nature of the state in Africa, which is rooted in the colonial pedigree, tends toward the institutionalization of ethnic entitlements, rights, and privileges, which create differentiated and unequal status of citizenship. This tendency de-individualizes citizenship and makes it more of a group phenomenon. Rather than the state providing a common bond for the people through the tie of citizenship, with equal rights, privileges, and obligations, both in precepts and practice, people's loyalties are bifurcated.

Adejumobi (2001), echoing Mamdani's work on the legacies of indirect rule in the African post-colony, argues that the issue of non-individualised citizenship is particularly problematic in rural areas, where decentralised institutions have not been democratised. There, the relationship between the individual and the state continues to be mediated through membership of an ethnic group and the system. This reinforces 'local ethnic and political identities, fragments the political process, and undermines the concept of common citizenship for the people in the country' (ibid: 161). He continues,

This tendency undermines the integrity and cohesion of the fragile African state and supplements the principle of territorial loyalty and citizenship with that of ethnic and community loyalty (ibid: 162).

Douma (2006) refers to this situation as the break down of the social contract, where incumbent elites are not responsive to all of their constituents. Social movements can reinforce this breakdown by placing an emphasis on narrow, localised identities at the expense of a more inclusive idea of citizenship linked to the national state. They may encourage violence when they lay the blame for economic and social marginalisation on other ethnic or religious groups. This point is echoed by Paffenholz (2009) who notes the existence of,

radical movements within civil society that openly foster an enemy image against the other group, such as settler movement in Israel or veteran associations in Bosnia, ethnic community associations in Nigeria, Sinhala nationalist organizations in Sri Lanka or the Orange Order in Northern Ireland (Paffenholz 2009:19).

The research of Paffenholz and her colleagues further finds that in very divided societies civil society membership organizations often represent only one group, and can reinforce radical tendencies within societies. This is the case of the Madhesi in Nepal's Terai region, who have used ethnicity to promote their claims for autonomy, and in the process, to demonise other groups and engage in acts of ethnic cleansing (Miklian 2009). The manipulation of identity is also characteristic of the way violent movements act in Nigeria, where the situation is exacerbated by a policy of ethnic federalism.

Globalisation

The research reviewed here highlights the traction that social movements in conflict affected and fragile states can gain by linking their demands and activities to debates overseas. Researchers from the DRC-Citizenship (2010: 13) note how activists and their organisations can benefit from linking their demands, 'to existing national or international policy debates, laws or agreements, in order to gain greater legitimacy for their demands'. They note that this is a delicate process fraught with the potential to create conflict and contention among the different actors and between different levels. However, linking up to global human rights and environmental debates is regarded by observers to have contributed positively to attempts to raise the visibility of MOSOP's struggles in the Niger Delta, and to the success of Kenya's Green Belt Movement (Obi 2005).

Press (2009: 4), writing on the Liberian peace movement, also underlines the importance of international support for activists, noting that 'access to the local media and to international human-rights organizations and interested members of the diplomatic community [...] helped publicize abuses and bring international pressure to stop them'. Although human rights abuses continued in Liberia, he believes that the activities of international human rights organizations secured the release of some activists, and may have prevented more being arrested.

Other important aspects of globalisation for social movements in situations of fragility and conflict is the presence of a supportive diaspora overseas, or in neighbouring countries. Paffenholz (2009:23) stresses the fact that many social movements in fragile states have parallel organisations in other parts of the world, and

that the study of social movements and fragility must look beyond the boundaries of a particular state. 'Near diaspora' across borders can continue to be part of conflict dynamics in their place of origin. Overseas, diasporas undertake advocacy work and keep issues visible within the media. She notes, further, that 'it is not rare that diaspora organizations take on more extremist positions than civil society in the homeland' (ibid) singling out Irish expatriates in the United States and Tamils in Europe and elsewhere. Adejumobi (2001) makes a similar point about organised Tutsi outside Rwanda during the 1980s.

Part 4: Synthesis of findings on social movements and stability, gaps in the literature and key messages for donors

This section includes a synthesis of the findings on social movements and stability that have emerged from this review. This discussion is relevant for how donors might consider supporting social movements in situations of fragility and conflict. Following this discussion, the section includes a brief consideration of the relationship of international donors to social movements, indicates where further research is needed and presents some key messages for donors.

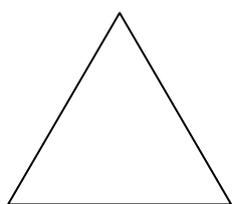
With reference to the TORs, this section responds to the following questions:

- What evidence is there of the impact of donor interventions in this area?
- Where are the gaps in the literature?
- What recommendations does the evidence suggest for the role of donors?

Synthesis of findings on social movements and stability

Given the exploratory nature of this review, and the diversity of types of states and forms of social mobilisation discussed in it, drawing concrete conclusions about the nature of social movements in situations of conflict and fragility is highly problematic. However, some general points can be made.

Evidence from this review suggests the importance of considering the interplay of movement activity and state stability, and of taking into account the existing state-society relationships. Thus, in more stable, democratic countries, relationships between state and society, and the institutions of the state that are in place, allow, to a greater or lesser extent, for responsiveness to movement demands. In these situations, there will be reasonably wide institutionalised channels for participation through which movements can express demands and through which the state can respond. This allows for a relatively stable state – a form of stability that might look something like an **equilateral triangle**:



Stability is illustrated by the broad base, made up of the institutionalized channels of participation, that mean that even when the state is pushed, it will not ‘wobble’ precariously. However, these situations are not necessarily permanent. There are cases in which, over time, the base of the triangle shrinks and so state-society relationships, and the state in particular, become more fragile. This narrowing of the base can happen for many reasons: because of military coups (restricting participation), economic adjustment (restricting resource availability), or the emergence of intra-elite,

ethnic or other conflicts. Examples of such states include Colombia and Peru, where conflicts massively weakened the state during the latter half of the twentieth century.

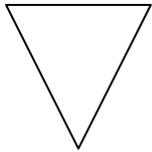
A different form of state-society arrangements can be depicted as an **upturned rectangle**, in which there is very little breadth in state-society relationships, although there are some channels of participation, for example, operating through the ruling party, social programmes or organized clientelistic mechanisms.



If the rectangle were to be pushed, the arrangement would soon wobble. Or put another way, the apparent stability of many such regimes is more a *trompe l’oeil* than a reality – they are really much more fragile than they appear, and their stability derives from cults of leadership, from authoritarian control of the population, and/or from rents that can be distributed through the few channels of developmentalist state-society interaction that exist. Movements unsatisfied with these arrangements might emerge for different reasons. This may be as a result of cultural dimensions of globalization that drive a local capacity to aspire for something more, and/or because of political economy shifts that mean the regime is less able to absorb segments of society through the distribution of

rents. In these situations, movements that are not initially violent become so because the state does not respond to their demands, and/or responds to peaceful protest with violence. Recent events in Egypt and North Africa appear to fit with this model.

At the other extreme are fragile states that might be depicted as an **upturned triangle**:



These states and state-society arrangements are characterized by the existence of few channels of participation, few rents to share (or little capacity to distribute any rents that may exist) and perhaps also authoritarian rule. Such states and state-society arrangements are even more likely to wobble in the face of mobilization.

This analysis would suggest the need for careful consideration of existing state-society relationships, and of likely state responses to social mobilization by donors considering providing support to social movements. Donors will need to weigh up their concerns for stability alongside their aims to promote positive social and political change.

External donors and social movements

Recent events in the Middle East and North Africa, plus the achievements of social movements in improving living conditions for poor citizens – particularly in Latin America and Asia – highlight the potential for collective action to democratize the state and foster a sense of citizenship amongst movement members. Nevertheless, western aid agencies have not historically paid social movements a great deal of attention. There are a number of reasons for this, not least the unpredictable nature of social movement organizing, their often overt politicization, and their tendency to engage in extra-legal activity (protests, civil disobedience, land and building occupations) to draw public attention to their demands. As the DRC-Citizenship (2006: 15) contends, donors may see movements as unhelpful to state-building or concerned that national governments may resent foreign donors supporting groups perceived as the ‘opposition’. However, not only do social movements demonstrate the presence of active citizens, willing and able to engage with the state, ‘they test the state’s practical ability to uphold the constitutional rights of its citizens and demonstrate the maturity of its institutions (police and court system)’ (ibid).

However, a number of problems are thrown up by direct donor support of social movements. Firstly, many social movements will prefer not to take money from outside sources, for fear of appearing to have been coopted and to have lost autonomy (Earle and Pratt 2009). Further, as noted by the DRC-Citizenship (2006) when donors finance movement activities (either directly or through NGOs) they may inadvertently create competition around resources. They may also trigger certain types of behaviour amongst movements, who begin to respond more to donor demands than members’ interests and needs (Earle 2009).

But while direct support to movements appears to have been lacking, as the DRC-Citizenship (2006:9) notes,

The ‘empowered’ poor citizen does not emerge overnight. She or he emerges gradually through local level struggles around livelihoods or access to services [...] This implies that decades of donor support to ‘participation’ and to forms of local level association – micro- credit groups for example – are likely to have had a positive, long term, state building function.

Whilst it is very hard to evaluate donor support to civil society, recent BBC radio 4 debates refer to the American National Endowment for Democracy’s long-term efforts to build civil society in Egypt, and suggest they may have contributed to the recent movement for democratic change in the country. This has echoes of Hirschman’s (1984) discussion of ‘social energy’, where the potential for collective action lies dormant, but can be mobilized at key moments. Other observers place greater emphasis on the activities of political mobilisation and workers’ strikes over the last decade and privilege their contribution to the revolution in Egypt.

Gaps in the literature

The limitations of social movement theory and traditional approaches to the study of collective action in the context of the Global South, in general, has been highlighted by a number of authors cited elsewhere in this review. For example, Thompson and Tapscott (2010: 1) note that where research has been undertaken in non-Western and transitional contexts,

Social movements have invariably been analysed in terms of criteria derived from Northern experience. [...] In the absence of historically grounded empirical research, social movements in these societies and the struggles that underpin them are not infrequently reduced to caricature. This mode of investigation, typified by long-range event analysis, denies the complexity of social formations in the South, and, ignoring any prospect of agency, portrays their members as the hapless victims of tyrannical rulers and traditional culture or the passive recipients of Northern-led actions.

The absence of more qualitative research with social movement members and leaders has already been highlighted in this review. This type of research would allow for greater understanding of individual motivations (or lack of) to engage in collective action.

There is also, in general, very little analysis available of the interactions between states and social movements which result from social movement activity. Beyond descriptions of protests, or analysis of the number and type of activities engaged in, research of this nature would permit insight into the micro-processes of negotiation that occur when movements undertake protests and lobbying activities. Long-range event analysis cannot explain why some movement strategies and activities generate more positive responses from the state and society more generally.

More research is needed on the interplay of social movements, violence and instability. This could help to explain the factors surrounding decisions by social movements to take up arms and the impact of this on their potential to bring about progressive social and political change.

Key messages for donors working with social movements in situations of conflict fragility

Social movements are complex and unpredictable and can be politicized, but joining a movement can also serve as way in which individuals - particularly those from excluded groups - gain understanding of and engage in political society. Donors should not shy away from finding innovative ways to support the emergence and development of movements and should concentrate on promoting a supportive environment for social movement activity.

Social movements may not wish to be directly associated with international donors, and it may be politically complicated for donors to provide direct support. However, donors can play a role in facilitating movements's engagement with the state. This can include reminding governments of their obligations to allow (not to criminalise) collective action.

Social movements can contribute to democracy and progressive change. But they may achieve this by generating instability. Donors must acknowledge the delicate nature of this equation, and support for an enabling environment for social movements should be based on careful analysis of both existing state-society relations, and the potential response of the state to increased levels of collective action.

Civil society activism can contribute to stability and democracy in situations of conflict and at the time of peace negotiations and peace-building. As such, support for a public space in which social movements can engage should not necessarily be deferred until formal democratic institutions and processes have been established.

Support for the media can be critical for peace activism and for human rights movements. The work of journalists and lawyers to investigate and report human rights abuses can help to maintain mobilization and draw in support from likeminded movements outside of the country. It is also critical in ensuring awareness amongst donors and international institutions that can undertake high-level lobbying. This support can be as basic as ensuring that newspaper presses are functioning.

Social movement members and leaders can be supported to make the most of the media to support their aims. For example, training on making statements to the press, bringing out pamphlets that explain their demands, using mobile phones (and internet, where penetration rates make this viable) to exchange information and connect members across geographical areas.

Women's involvement in social movements can be wide-ranging, addressing many different areas of social injustice. Women have been instrumental in bringing about the cessation of conflict and in peacebuilding efforts. Donors should encourage and enable social movements to ensure women's participation and leadership. Donors should recognise that women may need particular support in order to engage in democratic social movements and should recognise that women's social movements take many forms.

Elite leadership does not necessarily delegitimize social movements, and having a dynamic, charismatic figure at the centre of collective action can help to mobilize the grassroots. However, donors should be wary of limiting their support to civil society based in large urban centres or comprised only of literate, European language-speaking men; and should work with partners to improve communications beyond capital cities and their usual interlocutors. This could involve support for translating key messages into languages and formats that are accessible to less well-educated groups or providing funds for child care support to women to participate in movement activities.

Rights education is critical. People must be able to recognise an injustice and know how to seek redress in order to mobilise. This can, again, be a challenge where communications are difficult, and where knowledge of the language of government/officialdom is poor. Donors can learn from UN or NGO partners who have worked on these issues.

Similarly, in countries with a minimal rule of law, social movement members and leaders can benefit from an understanding of the workings of the judiciary and how it can serve their interests. Lessons can be learnt here from movements in Latin America and Asia that have used the courts or leveraged the support of the legal profession to achieve their aims. Donors can help by supporting moves to ensure the independence of the judiciary.

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Social movement case studies discussed in this literature review

Author	Title	Geographical focus	Movement members / focus	Type of publication
Bayat, A.	Social movements, activism and social development in the Middle East	Middle East	Urban mass movements; Labour; Islam; Community Development	Peer-reviewed UN publication
Castillejo, C.	Women's political participation and influence in Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone	Women	Research Institute Working Paper
Castillejo, C.	Strengthening women's citizenship in the context of state-building: The experience of Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone	Women	Research Institute Working Paper
Diani, M.	Social movement theory and grassroots coalitions in the Middle East	Middle East	Non-specific	Conference Paper
El-Mahdi, R.	Enough! Egypt's quest for democracy	Egypt	Pro-democracy	Peer-reviewed journal
Fallon, K.	Democracy and the rise of women's movements in sub-Saharan Africa	Ghana (main focus)	Women's movements	Monograph published by university press
Gbowee, L.	Effecting change through women's activism in Liberia	Liberia	Women; peace	Non-peer reviewed university bulletin
Gore, C. & Pratten, D.	The politics of plunder: The rhetorics of order and disorder in southern Nigeria	Nigeria	Youth (gangs)	Peer-reviewed journal
Hazen, J.	From social movement to armed group: A case study from Nigeria	Nigeria	Youth; resource control	Peer-reviewed journal
Kaufman, J. & Williams, K.	Women and war. Gender identity and activism in times of conflict	Global	Women; peace	Monograph published by academic press
Miklian, J.	Nepal's Terai: Constructing an ethnic conflict	Nepal	Ethnic identity; autonomy	Research Institute briefing paper
Mochizuki, K.	Opposition movements and the youth in Nigeria's oil-producing area: an inquiry into framing	Nigeria	Youth; resource control	Monograph published by academic press
Norris, P.	Political protest in fragile states.	Global	Non-specific	Conference paper
Obi, C.	Environmental movements in sub-Saharan Africa. A political ecology of power and conflict.	Nigeria; Kenya	Environmental	Peer-reviewed UN publication
Osaghae, E.	Social movements and rights claims: the case of action groups in the Niger Delta	Nigeria	Resource control	Monograph published by academic press
Press, R.	Courage, Principle and Ambition: Human Rights Activism in Liberia and Policy Implications for Taming Authoritarian Regimes	Liberia	Women; peace	'Policy and practice note' in peer-reviewed journal
Press, R.	Candles in the wind: Resisting repression in Liberia (1979-2003)	Liberia	Peace; Human rights	Article in peer-reviewed journal
Press, R.	"Guided by the hand of God": Liberian women peacemakers and civil war	Liberia	Women; peace	Article in non-peer-reviewed journal
Reno, W.	The politics of insurgency in collapsing states	Nigeria	Youth; resource control	Article in peer-reviewed journal
Sall, E.	Social movements in the renegotiation of the bases for citizenship in West Africa	Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire	Youth	Article in peer-reviewed journal
Shrestha, C. & Adhikar, R.	Antipolitics and counterpolitics in Nepal's civil society: The case of Nepal's Citizens' Movement	Nepal	Pro-democracy	Article in peer-reviewed journal
Zaidi, S.A.	An emerging civil society?	Pakistan	Lawyers' Movement	Article in peer-reviewed journal