



Voices of Resistance: Protest, Rebellion and the Struggle for Recognition

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ABSTRACT

Since the 1980s, globalisation has swept across the globe, bringing about significant changes in the international landscape. The process of globalisation has continuously shaped new social development changes, including the inequality of economic resources, political power, and cultural identity, leading to phenomena such as social differentiation and marginalisation. Some groups have long been subjected to a series of adverse phenomena for social development, such as unequal distribution of resources, weak social status, and unrecognised identity. This inevitably leads to dissatisfaction among people. To express this long-standing discontent, people will resort to protests/resistance or even rebellion to voice collective demands and strive for social status. This article takes "the voice of resistance" as the core analytical perspective, primarily employing qualitative research methods. It uses the occurrence of historical events and comparative cases as the main supporting materials, and combines thematic analysis, discourse analysis, and process evolution. Based on the examination of social changes caused by globalisation, social transformation Using the literature analysis method, the literature mainly comes from government policy documents, national organization reports, academic works, and news media reports, thereby identifying the causal logical relationship between the collective demands of marginalised groups in the context of globalisation through protests/resistance, seeking recognition, and ultimately achieving social transformation. This article argues that resistance/protest and a series of social movements should be understood within the structural context of the interactions between globalisation, social injustice, and identity politics. This helps to gain a deeper understanding of collective political actions and the behaviour of marginalised social groups, thereby providing a thorough insight into social transformation from a new theoretical perspective.

1. Introduction

Since the 1980s, a wave of super globalisation has swept the globe. During the process of globalisation, the patterns of global economic power and income distribution have changed, leading to economic stagnation in developed economies and the rise of emerging economies, which has also resulted in significant changes in the income and wealth disparities among different social classes and groups. The changes in the global economic foundation during globalisation, namely the shifts in the global economic power structure and the deterioration of income distribution, will have a significant impact on the economic and social foundations of various countries, thereby affecting the superstructure: the dominant ideology and consciousness of the state. The evolution of a country's dominant ideology in the fields of international relations and economic policy will inevitably

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influence its foreign strategy and policy choices, thereby affecting the direction of its economy and even the historical process of globalisation.

2. Literature Review

The Social Transformation and Inequality Caused by Globalisation

Globalisation and accelerated technological innovation have widened the wealth gap, leading to a series of social issues. Elites must view populism with humility and genuinely bridge the wealth gap. Globalisation, especially the development of technology, has led "many people to discover that what is disappearing is not just their standard of living, but also their ability to make a living." (Hawking, 2016)

Since the beginning of the new century, especially since 2010, the income inequality brought about by globalisation has shown a further widening trend.

Globalisation has reinforced existing modes of domination, with the populace being redefined as tourists and wanderers. At the same time, it also foreshadows the trends of fragmentation and conflict in the context of new traditionalism. The privileged classes either fly away or escape; while others retaliate against each other (Bauman, 1998).

The world has entered the decade of action for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, but it is in a state of division, facing severe crises and a collapsing social contract. The era of neoliberal globalisation and its associated policy choices are at the heart of the current challenges, paving the way for the unsustainable hyper-globalization model, which inevitably leads to inequality and crises. There are profound fractures in our society and economy, manifesting in various aspects such as inequality and social issues (UNRISD, 2022).

According to Castells (1999), the current trend of globalisation exacerbates poverty. Individualisation is an inherent characteristic of globalisation, where workers engage in individual competition for production (Jenkins and Wilkinson, 2002).

Castells (1999) warns that the danger of the workforce (especially non-technical and low-skilled workers) being excluded from employment opportunities ultimately exacerbates social inequality and poverty. Adverse working conditions, such as low wages and excessive exploitation, are imposed on vulnerable groups like immigrants and minorities. Social exclusion is closely related to globalisation trends, which hinder individuals or groups from accessing social welfare and resources (Castells, 1999).

Protest and Social Movements

When the socio-economic situation is extremely difficult, protesters are often wealthier and in a more favourable economic position, while the protest rate among the most aggrieved groups decreases. The research results indicate that the importance of economic dissatisfaction lies at the situational level rather than the individual level: people are mobilised based on societal assessments of others' economic suffering, but they react less to their own economic problems (Azedi, 2024).

The popularity of social media and messaging platforms has changed the rhythm of our daily lives, affecting our interactions and communication methods. We are inundated with media information from various platforms, and the rapid and seemingly omnipresent dissemination of this information affects our methods of organization, demands for change, and ways of resistance. In turn, we are monitored, manipulated, and drawn into larger-scale media wars.

In a society saturated with screens, social movements respond to the control and manipulation of narratives by the state and corporations by constructing counter-narratives, which often appear in the realm of visual media. Conversely, the state attempts to divert public attention from the visual narratives of numerous social movements, especially those aimed at challenging core cultural, social, political, and economic ideologies.

The earliest cases of using visual media in digital spaces to conduct large-scale social movements are the 2009 Iranian Green Movement and the 2010 Arab Spring. These movements demonstrate how governments were initially caught off guard when visual media intersected with social movements in both online and offline spaces. However, governments and military institutions in the Middle East quickly caught up with the pace of the social media movements from 2009 to 2011, using their monopoly on violence to suppress uprisings and ultimately launch counter-revolutions, while also employing visual media to construct counter-narratives (Bajoghli, 2019).

In the social movements of the first two decades of the twenty-first century, the internet and social media played an important role for many reasons, the most significant of which are: (a) they allowed news and dialogue to spread, breaking the monopoly of traditional gatekeepers of information; (b) they helped people and activists break through pluralistic ignorance, "which may be the greatest contribution of social movements" (Tufekci 2017).

Although social movements differ in the types and degrees of change they pursue, they often serve as drivers of change, typically orientated towards addressing inequality. One of the best ways to understand the connection between social movements and inequality is to focus on how social movements politicise inequality and use it as a strategy for social change. This chapter focuses on three positive manifestations of how social movements politicise inequality. First, we will explain how this politicisation fosters the formation of alliances between different groups; second, we will discuss how it prompts changes in the mainstream discourse or framework regarding inequality; third, we will elaborate on how the politicisation of inequality by social movements more broadly impacts the responses to inequality issues in national/form (Fadaee, 2024).

3. Research Methods

This article primarily employs qualitative research methods, using the occurrence of historical events and comparative cases as the main supporting materials. It combines thematic analysis, discourse analysis, and process evolution, based on an examination of the social changes brought about by globalisation, social transformation, and unequal power structures and social marginalisation. It addresses Secondly, it analyses how marginalised minority groups achieve identity recognition, articulate collective demands, and maintain common interests through social collective actions. Finally, it examines through various case studies how these actions fulfil collective demands, ultimately gaining social recognition and gradually becoming legitimised with social development.

Using the literature analysis method, the literature mainly comes from government policy documents, national organization reports, academic works, and news media reports, in order to identify the causal logical relationship between the collective demands of marginalised social groups in the context of globalisation seeking recognition through protests/resistance and ultimately achieving social transformation.

4. Findings and Discussion

Protest as a Voice of Resistance

Street Protest

On June 6, 2006, hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets of Madrid to protest against the Spanish government's plan to negotiate with the ETA organization. In order to explore the reasons behind the public's participation in this demonstration, our colleagues from the University of Santiago de Compostela conducted interviews with the relevant individuals.

A total of 400 participants took part in the demonstration. Our colleagues quickly realised that the reasons people participated in this demonstration were much more complex than what could be inferred from the demonstration itself. This becomes clear when considering the political parties of the participants—namely, the People's Party (PP) or the Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE)—and their level of identification with the AVT (Association of Victims of Terrorism), which organised the demonstration. Indeed, many demonstrators had a strong identification with AVT, which explains why they participated in the demonstration even as supporters of PSOE (the ruling party at the time); however, there was also a significant portion of demonstrators who did not strongly identify with AVT but had a strong identification with the People's Party (PP) — the party that unexpectedly lost shortly after the Madrid train bombings. In fact, these demonstrators were not primarily targeting the negotiations themselves, but rather opposing the PSOE government more broadly, accusing it of "stealing" their electoral results. Their responses to other parts of the interview confirmed this hypothesis. In fact, it can be argued that when a protest scales up, its focus has already surpassed the core issues, while also reflecting a more general dissatisfaction with the current government (Zúñiga et al., 2022).

Digital Protest

This article explores how popular culture and digital media shaped youth-led mobilisation during the #EndSARS protests in Nigeria. Although academic research on Nigerian activism often focuses on state violence and the struggle for democracy, this study emphasises the creative cultural practices that inspire participation. This paper combines ethnographic observation, social media content analysis, and interviews with 25 activists, artists, and digital creators to demonstrate how music, memes, performances, and protest art transform protest sites into vibrant spaces of resistance. Hip-hop, African beats, satire, and visual arts amplified public discontent with police brutality while fostering unity among the communities in Lagos, Abuja, and the diaspora. The study also found that platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok have extended protest culture beyond physical spaces, allowing local demands to spread globally. The paper argues that creativity in African urban environments is

both a form of political expression and a survival strategy. Understanding these cultural dimensions is crucial for interpreting contemporary youth activism and democratic transformation.

Case Studies : Voices from Below

The 1857 uprising occupies a central position in the historical chronicle of the Indian colonies. This uprising is often regarded as the first large-scale rebellion against British colonial rule and is also seen as a profound shift in the relationship between the colonisers and the colonised. However, the British initially did not take it seriously and simply classified it as a mere "Sepoy Mutiny"—a rebellion within the ranks of the East India Company's army. The significance of the 1857 uprising lies primarily in its symbolic meaning. The unifying role of this uprising in a diverse community lacking centralised leadership or a unified ideological framework transcended the oppression of colonial rule (Prasad, 2024). The participation of leaders such as Begum Hazrat Mahal and Rani Avantibai Lodhi, as well as the more marginalised Jalkari Bai and Uda Devi, all indicate that this uprising was inclusive and not limited to the elite (Kumar, 2025).

In Argentina, indigenous peoples have not formed an intimate relationship with formal state power, and the core ideologies and discourses of neoliberal multiculturalism from the 1990s still persist. At present, this is crucial for the predatory state project and the real politics of the relationship between the state and the indigenous people. Therefore, Argentina's 1994 recognition of indigenous peoples was also a project of disidentification. This is a scheme to acknowledge a specific politically harmless indigenous subjectivity: the aforementioned "permitted Indian" (*indio permitido*), a culturally essentialised and politically weakened indigenous subject, aimed at negating more politically radical indigenous subjectivities and projects. More importantly, neoliberal multiculturalism is currently intertwined with more overtly reactionary right-wing politics in a complex and seemingly contradictory manner. Therefore, as indigeneity is essentialised and politically weakened, it self-destructs, forming what Anders Burman calls the colonial and political reactionary black hole (Burman, 2020). Citation 2020).

The opposite image of the hegemonic "recognition" project is de-identification; this is not a recollection of colonial exploitation and a historically based critical political remembrance of anti-colonial struggles, but rather forgetting. The persistent politics of deprivation and exclusion attempt to distort reality according to national ideals, covering up the cracks and fissures caused by the steadfast existence of the "other." This is a deliberate, colonial, selective amnesia project, where Indigenous peoples are not only essentialised but also disconnected from the broader political class struggle mobilisation. The punishment for not conforming to the ideal and docile concept of indigenous hegemony is absolute "de-recognition," which means the deprivation of the minimum recognition, re-imposing colonial classifications of foreign invaders and "savage others." However, these projects were not accepted without resistance. For the Mapuche, the aforementioned historical form of Mapuche diplomacy means that engagement with the state can be understood as asserting agency through dialogue, rather than assimilation or submission (Tjamkajornekiat, 2025).

This revolutionary movement, known as the Congo Movement (iKongo), opposed the white nationalist government by establishing an independent state through the fusion of witchcraft and magical means, resisting the apartheid state. There are almost no published studies systematically researching the Mpondo resistance, which is precisely an example of marginalised group resistance, yet it remains widely obscured to this day. In this context, urban anti-apartheid struggles such as the Sharpeville and Langa protests have been widely documented, but rural resistance like the Mpondoland Uprising is largely absent from historical narratives (Milford, 2013).

The Muslim resistance in Mindanao, Philippines, began in the early 16th century when the Spaniards colonised the Philippines. Although most of Luzon and the Visayas—two of the three major island groups of the Philippines—were colonised by the Spanish, Mindanao managed to remain free from Spanish rule, despite the latter establishing a foothold in the northern and eastern parts of Mindanao and the Zamboanga Peninsula (Maj Part of the reason is that the Moros had their own organised political system—the Sultanate—which allowed them to successfully resist Spanish invasion. When the Spanish-American War ended in 1898, the Philippines were ceded to the United States through the Treaty of Paris, and the situation began to undergo dramatic changes. The Philippine Commission, established by the American colonial government, implemented land tenure policies, granting the Philippine state exclusive authority over land allocation, requiring citizens to register land ownership, and restricting the scope of land ownership. This measure dissatisfied the Moros, who believed that the right to own land was based on the right to the products of the land. This marked the beginning of the Moros' land dispossession, igniting the resistance movement within Mindanao (Chen, 2025).

5. Conclusion

The trend of globalisation affects individuals, communities, businesses, and nations, and can potentially lead to poverty.

How globalisation pressures can exclude local communities, preventing them from enjoying their rightful benefits and ultimately leading them into poverty. Under the influence of globalisation trends, how adverse events threaten communities and lead to exclusion, loss of rights, and poverty.

Globalisation is seen as marginalising a large portion of the world's population and exacerbating international inequality. Supporters of globalisation tend to define it more narrowly, often equating it with trade liberalisation or a more open national economy.

Globalisation is defined as the process through which the integration of the world economy deepens via the flow of goods and services, capital, technology, and (to a lesser extent) labour, making economic decisions increasingly influenced by the global environment.

In response to the social transformations and inequalities brought about by globalisation, the power structures and marginalisation, as well as the "silencing" of oppressed groups, people resort to protests, resistance, and rebellion as a means to express their demands, leading to the emergence of confrontational politics. The emergence of confrontational politics is a response to changes in political opportunities and constraints, influenced by various motivating factors: material and ideological, partisan and group-based, long-term and sporadic. Based on these opportunities and utilising known patterns of action, resource-limited individuals can engage in confrontational actions—even if only sporadically. When their actions are built upon dense social networks and connection structures, and draw upon consensus-oriented and action-oriented cultural frameworks, they can persist in conflicts with powerful adversaries. In this context—only in this context—can we see the emergence of social movements; when confrontation spreads throughout society (which happens from time to time), we will see a cycle of confrontation; when such a cycle is organised around opposing or plural sovereignties, the result is a revolution. The solution to the collective action problem depends on shared understanding, dense social networks and connection structures, and the use of culturally resonant forms of action.

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