Title of Article: Collective Behaviour and Social Movements: A Conceptual Review

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