

The Role of Elite Nigerian Women in the NGO Sector from 1998 to the Present

Uchenna Ezejiofor

Master of Arts in Pan-African Studies, Syracuse University

AAS 610: Seminar in Pan-Africanism

December 16th 2024

On December 15th, 1975, The United Nations General Assembly adopted the resolution of the UN Decade for Women. The United Nations Decade for Women functioned as a ten-year plan (from 1975-1985) to promote policies, and issues that impacted women and girl children (United Nations, 1975). This Declaration led to a robust set of concrete policies, programs, and projects by the U.N created in order to bolster women's issues as human rights issues in various regions of the world. Between 1976 and 1986 the UN listed their first resolutions as establishing research and training projects for the advancement of women in Africa (United Nations 1976; United Nations 1987). Further, section 5 of the UN Report specifically "Calls upon United Nations specialized agencies to give all assistance and advisory services to the development of these centers for the benefit of African women" (United Nations, 1975). In other words, there was an explicit interest and prioritization of directing United Nations resources towards addressing the issues of African women through the latter quarter of the 20th century and contextualizes Western attitudes towards women advancement in the subsequent decades.

In the case of Nigeria, Arum's "Women NGO's and Women Empowerment in Nigeria" traces the UN Declaration of the Decade of the Women as one of the many catalysts for the increased investment in the non-governmental organization (NGO) sector from the 1970s up until the 2010s (2010). Essentially, the women -centered NGO sector in Nigeria grew expeditiously with the intention of "taking concrete actions concerning their plight" to "empower Nigerian women" (2010). Though, these proposed concrete actions by the UN to address women's issues failed to acknowledge the ways that the UN has also worsened the quality of life for Nigerian women historically and contemporarily through Structural

Adjustment Programs in the (Amadiume, 2000). Regardless, various civil society organizations (CSOs) and NGOs have been developed by elite Nigerian women with the financial support of institutions such as the UN to provide technical skills, education, advocacy, and training for Nigerian women (Amadiume, 2000).

Additionally, the democratization of Nigeria in 1998 contributed to an ecosystem of NGO/CSO development as civil society organizations have been cited as a crucial campaign resulting in the ousting of the military rule of Sani Abacha (Walker, 1999). In other words, NGOS/CSOs such as professional associations, youth associations, women's rights organizations, and human rights organizations in Nigeria have grown in prominence as a result of the era of military rule (Walker, 1999). As such, following Nigeria's democratization in 1999, Nigeria had already established a political climate for NGO involvement by Nigerian elites (especially elite Nigerian women) and this climate has persisted to the present day. With this in mind, this paper examines the role of elite Nigerian Women in the period directly after democratization (1998) to the present day.

As NGOs have been upheld as an important part of Nigerian society, it is crucial to remain skeptical of the utility of these organizations as they have been cited with promoting neoliberal interests that maintain western control and influence. With women serving NGOs rising in prominence following UN Decade for Women and the democratization of Nigeria, I argue that since democratization, elite Nigerian women have been deployed within civil society and non-governmental organizations to covertly maintain imperialist control. This deployment happens amongst gender-based organizations that operate under the guise of

“humanitarian” development missions that actually maintain western governmental presence within Nigeria.

Theoretical Approach & [Re]-Defining Key Concepts

In order to begin understanding the ways that imperialist control is perpetuated by the Nigerian NGO sector, one must first discern the ways imperialism functions globally, within the African continent, and within Nigeria. Imperialism has been defined by scholars in a number of ways. The vastness of this definition is described succinctly in Patrick Wolfe’s “History and Imperialism: A Century of Theory, from Marx to Postcolonialism”, stating:

“Many use the term, but few can say what it really means. This imprecision is encouraged by a surfeit of synonyms. Two stand out: imperialism is taken to be interchangeable with colonialism and reducible to the word "empire." Add to these the compounding effects of elaborations such as hegemony, dependency, or globalization and the definitional space of imperialism becomes a vague, consensual gestalt”(1997).

Considering the imprecision used in its definition, imperialism, according to Wolfe, has been considered interchangeable with hegemony, colonialism, and globalization. Contrastingly, imperialism is defined by Lenin as the last and final stage of capitalism (1917). While Okon & Ojakorotu’s *Imperialism and Contemporary Africa: An Analysis of Continuity and Change* states that imperialism manifests in four ways: colony, protectorate, sphere of influence, economic imperialism, Maximillan Forte’s “Force Multipliers: The Instrumentalities of Imperialism examines imperialism as a quest for control over societies through leverage, proxies, and a network of collaborators. (2018). Despite their vague

differences and points of reference, Imperialism for the sake of this essay is understood as the final stage of [monopoly] capitalism rooted in purely economic interests while manifesting in both political and social realms.

With attention to Forte's conception of the force multipliers of imperialism, force multipliers are conceptualized as tools that expand imperial reach such as military alliances, NGOs, and institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, and World Trade Organization (2015). Force multipliers are essential to the advancement of imperial exploitation and are typically listed in official documents as mechanisms like "humanitarianism, "stabilization", and "democracy promotion" (2015). This covert use of language assists in the process of stealth imperialism and is a practice embedded into the US dominated financial institutions and international law organizations (2015). Stealth imperialism has functioned historically but is also a contemporary approach to imperialist domination and assists in the contextualization of Nigerian NGOs as an example of a force multiplier of imperialism,

Within the African continent, imperialism is a direct descendent of the colonial partitioning of Africa from the Berlin Conference of 1884 and functions to economically exploit African countries for the economic and political benefit of Western countries. Rodney's "The Imperialist Partition of Africa" provides a foundational framework to conceptualize the historical and contemporary manifestations of imperialism in Africa by expanding upon Lenin's perspective in his writings in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1970). With this, Rodney explicitly states that partition was not rooted in political or social reasonings, but instead was a manifestation of European capitalism. More specifically, the colonial partitioning of Africa was one component of a monopoly capitalist

plan to gain control of new undiscovered markets – such as the African market (Rodney, 1970). This conception of imperialism positions the imperial process as an inherently negative process that extracts, exploits, and dominates for the sake of capital accumulation.

With the imperialist partitioning of Africa came various forms of imperial domination. According to Rodney, forms of imperial control included economic control, political control, social control, and cultural control (1974). While economic and political control was pervasive and evident in the exploitation of colonialism, the cultural imperatives of Eurocentric ideas like patriarchy created new gendered dynamics within African countries (1974). Mbah's "Judith Van Allen, "Sitting on a Man," and the Foundation of Igbo Women's Studies" illustrates this stating,

- "The images of African women as unintelligent, timid, politically invisible, and subservient beasts of burden, incapable of complex political organization emerged from Western philosophies such as evolutionism, and were articulated primarily by European men through historical processes of Atlantic slavery and colonialism." (Mbah, 2017, p.160).

In other words, there was an intentional investment in the creation and production of images of African women that also aligned with the cultural imperatives of patriarchal social structures.

The colonial and imperialist partitioning of Africa has also been framed and promoted as a "civilizing mission" for African countries to be delivered from their backwards godless ways with the assistance of missionaries and explorers (Rodney, 1970). These conceptions of

imperialism in Africa manifest most clearly through the language that distorts the exploitation and force multipliers that assist in the exploitation. Terms such as *globalization*, attempt to minimize the violent predatory aspects of imperialism by framing it as a harmoniously connected global economy with partners, and collaborators that benefit equally (Forte, 2015; Okon & Ojakorotu, 2018). As stated earlier, force multipliers function as tools that expand imperial reach. In the case of many African countries in the contemporary context– these force multipliers manifest as NGOs, CSOs claiming to “develop” the country (Forte, 2015; Arum 2010).

Development has always been used as a force multiplier especially within the African continent. When institutions use the language of development when engaging with the African continent, they often mean the exact opposite. Walter Rodney’s *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* speaks directly to the inaccuracy of the development paradigm, providing an examination of the ways that development on the African continent actualizes as underdevelopment (1974). Essentially, the term development is a guise for the truth of underdevelopment which occurs via exploitative “capitalist, imperialist, and colonialist” means (Rodney, 1974, 15). Similarly, Campbell’s *Discourses on Development and the Realities of Exploitation: From Aid & Humanitarianism to Solidarity* challenges the global development paradigm due to their tendency to perpetuate exploitative imperialistic relationships that prioritize resource extraction rather than the self-determination of African people (2011).

Tandon’s *Ending Aid Dependence* emphasizes that development needs to be redefined from developing (or underdeveloped) countries perspectives instead of the perspective of

imperialist countries (2008). Tandon continues by stating that development must be a process of self-empowerment that liberates “structures of domain and control” (2008). This means that the development of Nigeria cannot be demarcated by foreign countries based on their exploitative relationships. Development in Nigeria also cannot manifest through foreign aid or foreign investments in NGOs rooted in development. This is crucial to understanding the covert manifestations of imperialism in Nigeria and how they manifest in the NGO sector, reproduced by Nigerian women.

Imperialism in Nigeria emerges from the colonial history of its partitioning in the Berlin Conference and functions contemporarily through a series of stealth imperialist force multipliers. While imperialist partition in Nigeria has manifested in the exploitative and extractive nature of Western presence and control of raw minerals and resources its contemporary manifestations are much more covert. Imperialism in Nigeria in the contemporary context involves force multipliers such as the NGO and CSO due to their ability to conceal the predatory relationships between Western countries and Nigeria (Forte, 2015). NGOs in Nigeria often operate under the guise of the development paradigm and actually operate for the economic benefit for Western countries.

Examining the NGO Sector as an Imperialist Manifestation

As stated previously, the NGO functions as a force multiplier for Western countries, particularly the United States. Glen W. Wrights “NGOs and Western Hegemony: causes for concerns and ideas for change” examines the growth of NGOs since World War II and argues that NGOs function to further western hegemony by promoting neoliberalist agenda as the primary route to development (2012). In Nigeria, NGOs function to perpetuate this

global development paradigm by engaging with western ideas of “good governance” that only further neoliberal ideas. Omolade Adunbi’s “Embodying the Modern: Neoliberalism, NGOs, and the Culture of Human Rights Practices in Nigeria” examines how human rights NGOs are intended to function as alternatives to the state due to the shirking of state responsibilities under neoliberalism (2016). Further, NGOs have grown in prominence in Nigeria following the military regime of 1966 to 1998 to address social issues, yet they still functioned in ways that bolstered the global development paradigm (Adunbi, 2016).

The pursuit of development has also contributed to the development of NGOs in Nigeria that emphasize “human’s rights issues” and “women’s issues” as key barriers to development. In this case, development is synonymous with free-market capitalism that directly benefits western countries and any other agenda that benefits NGO donors. Considering that NGOs in Nigeria depend on Western government funding- they’re operational independence as “non-governmental” organizations is consistently called into question. Wright also names that the bureaucratization of NGOs emphasize technical day today management with little insight into their effectiveness in developing protocol for addressing local issues that impact rural women in Nigerian (2012). Wright proposes that a new model for development be created that does not center neoliberalist goals but rather, emphasizes self-sufficiency, and local participation and grassroots approaches to addressing these apparent “women’s issues” (2012).

Women and Power in Pre-Colonial Nigeria

Contemporary conceptions of disempowered African women contradict the reality of women in pre-colonial Nigeria as they have always been in authentic forms of leadership,

economic enterprise and resistance to varying forms of colonial oppression (Amadiume, 2001). Amadiume's "Bodies, Choices, Globalizing Neocolonial Enchantments" examines traditional African matriarchy in Nigeria (and Zambia) while also critiquing "globalization" (or imperialism) due to its disruption of practices and rituals that originally empowered African women (2002). This distinction between globalization and neo-colonialism or imperialism is made by Amadiume to demonstrate that the advanced capitalist desires within imperialist expansion have directly impacted the roles of African women within their society or community. According to Amadiume, pre-colonial Nigerian societies established power dynamics where women's roles as mothers afforded them significant influence, as their stake in the future of the community was deeply rooted in their role as a mother (2001; 2002). More plainly, the matricentric production unit was fundamental in establishing and reifying the power amongst woman relationships. This is in direct opposition to western ideas of family and power, as these dynamics have been shaped in accordance with their relationship to capital accumulation and religion.

Women inherently gained power in Nigeria due to the matricentric family unit and this power was leveraged within political organizations and communal relationships. Women political organizations were recognized as legitimate and held considerable power in shaping societal governance (Amadiume, 2001). This is exemplified through the pre-colonial Igbo dual-sex political system which governed villages in the southeast of Nigeria (Amadiume 2002). In this instance, titled Nigerian women were key instruments in consensual decision making for the community and controlled the operational and governing aspects of the marketplace (Amadiume 2002). Certain Nigerian societies were also governed by matriarchs

and empowered women through institutions created unmaintained by women (Amadiume, 2002). In other words, Nigerian women were active participants and leaders that enacted tangible change and control of their communities through their inherent power.

Nigerian women have also historically been resistant to colonial exploitation and have leveraged their power in ways that have impacted their material conditions. Ndubeze Mbah's "Judith Van Allen, 'Sitting on a Man', and the foundation of Igbo Women's Studies" examines the way that many historians and academics frame the power of Nigerian women and the dual power system of pre-colonial Nigeria in their writing (2017). Mbah explicates the pedagogical utility in understanding Nigerian women's resistance to colonialism through cultural and sociopolitical instructions that were indirect opposition to colonial and imperial cultural imperatives for women. Mbah writes,

"The narrative of Igbo women's reliance on traditional gendered sociopolitical institutions to enact primary resistance against colonial rule is pedagogically instructive in a number of ways: First, it clearly distinguishes primary resistance to mitigate colonial exploitation of labor and taxes and improve socioeconomic conditions within the imperialist system, from the post-- 1945 nationalist resistance movements. Second, it provides a comparative basis for examining similar primary resistance movements that relied upon traditional ideologies such as the Maji Maji Rebellion." (Mbah, 2017, p.161).

In other words, the dual system of power in precolonial Nigeria created an environment for Nigerian women to leverage their power for resistance.

Colonialism marked a shift in the organic power dynamics of Nigerian women as the colonial introduction of a new capitalist economy, imposition of new government systems and religious laws impacted changes in marital practices, access to property, and gendered dynamics (Amadiume 2001; Amadiume 2002). These colonially introduced gender dynamic shaped power and public space as exclusive only to men and completely augmented the pre-existing roles of women in prominent social spheres (Amadiume 2001). In other words, formal independence from colonialism and following the 1999 democratization process of Nigeria, the impacts of colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, and democratization introduced significant shifts in the Nigerian political economy, thereby altering the roles and influence of women. As a result, power was no longer simply an inherited right that emerges from the matricentric family unit. Instead, power and influence became associated with women's participation and acquiescence into colonial institutions such as church and missionary education.

Despite power and equality ever-present in the historical dynamics of women in Nigeria this empowered spirit of resistance has transcended time and still exists in the contemporary moment. Many Nigerian women exhibit this power in different ways as result of varying factors such as their material conditions and level of education- all determinant on their access to capital accumulation. Ifi Amadiume distinguishes between these orientations by examining these factors in relation to the feminist mobilization of women in Nigeria for local or national issues (2001). According to her formulation, women who organized and engaged in the pre-colonial conceptions of women empowerment that emphasized community and matricentric familial production unit were considered "daughters of the

goddess”. In this sense, daughters of the goddess referred to the goddess of the people of Nnobi that acted as one mother named “Goddess Idemili” (Amadiume 2002). Daughters of the goddess were positioned by Amadiume directly “in contrast to contemporary African women leaders empowered by European imperialism in Africa.” (2001, p.13). These Contemporary African women leaders that harnessed their power to perpetuated imperialism were considered “daughters of imperialism” and consisted of women in the elite class of Nigeria (Amadiume, 2001).

Creating the Elite Class of Women in Nigeria

The creation of the Elite class of Women in Nigeria is linked directly to colonial rule and the importation of Christian and Religious values (Amadiume, 2001). According to Amadiume, “cults of eliteness” were created through churches, schools, and other Christian associations (2001). Take for instance, the prominent Young Women’s Christian Association of Nigeria (YWCA) who’s founding members were British “ladies of leisure” that engaged in philanthropic work in order to combat their idleness within the colonial society. For context, these “ladies of leisure” were often the wives and daughters of European colonial administrators and the ruling elite (Amadiume, 2001). For this reason, Christian associations and their respective “cults of eliteness” functioned as training grounds for Nigerian women to be further indoctrinated into the colonial project. Different branches of the headquarters were built in regions of (what at that time was not) Nigeria by the Christian Missionary Society and other churches (Amadiume, 2001).

The reasoning behind the development of these Christian associations transcends solely the appeal to leisure philanthropic work. As such, these associations promoted

patriarchal gender dynamics of European colonization that promoted men's involvement in spheres of influence such as politics while discouraging that level of involvement from women. Following the creation of these association branches by African born women (such as the creation of the Benin branch by Elizabeth Ighadaro) many association leaders encouraged women to engage in public life in ways that could influence their social conditions (Amadiume 2001). Messages such as these coupled with training rooted in European gender expectations and the nuclear patriarchal family unit appeared to be contradictory but actually established the foundation for the unique lived experiences and role of Elite women in Nigeria.

Christian Associations, churches, and schools intensely trained the young girls that were brought up in the organizations in order to ensure they received a British Christian education. According to Amadiume, these organizations claimed that "their objective was to develop the youth morally, mentally and spiritually" while also providing "leadership training for the home and the nation" (Amadiume, 2001, p.40). In many ways these associations, churches, and schools were genuine in their intention of creating leaders within the home and the nation, but their reasoning for doing so were directly linked to bolstering and maintaining the status quo of colonial rule and exploitation in Nigeria. Contemporarily, this orientation towards feminist mobilization remains influential and sets the stage for the ways that Elite women work on behalf of Western imperialism under the guise of women's issues as distinguished and funded by force multiplying instruments.

This training process was regenerated through the development of other organizations and associations rooted in promoting women to exchange their ideas such as National

Council of Women's Societies of 1958, the Girls Brigade of 1968, and the Women's Cultural and Philanthropic organization in Eastern Nigeria (Amadiume, 2001). These organizations followed the lead of the YWCA and taught Nigerian women how to organize using the methods and frameworks of the British church and educational system (Amadiume, 2001). In doing this they were able to ensure that the training disguised as empowerment for these women could contribute to the preservation of imperialist control. Further, the women that were often indoctrinated into these training programs coordinated by these associations were already benefitting from their class status due to their proximity to colonial rule and administration. The European women that facilitated these trainings within these organizations were the partners of colonial administrators while the Nigerian women were also the wives and daughters of African or European men that capitalized off of colonial rule. More clearly, Elite status was predicated on a young woman's familial relationship to colonialism.

As stated previously, education was also a key component in establishing the elite class of Nigeria. Take for instance the example of Lady Oyinka Abayomi that was schooled in England, moved back to Nigeria and then sought to recreate her English education experience in Nigeria (Amadiume, 2001). As such, Abayomi opened a hostel and groomed future 'ladies' by teaching them housekeeping, home economics and home training in preparation for an adult life as a married woman. Additionally, some elite boys were also trained at the hostel that Abayomi opened. These actions by Abayomi allowed for a budding elite class to be recreated through her. Further and more importantly, these actions were

considered feminist in nature, thereby exemplifying the connections between the creation of a feminist politic that is in alignment with the elite class of the country.

Contemporarily, the elite class is still regenerated through education using international schools that prioritize the British Curriculum, and this has been the leading determinate for upward class mobility. Ruth Cheung Jude's "Starting from Lagos: International schooling and the diverse transnational status-making projects of 'Middling' and 'Elite' Nigerians" examines the creation of the elite class not only through educational attainment but also through engagement with British Curricula and international college prep examinations (Jude, 2023). In this way, contemporary schools function in similar ways to the colonially imposed Christian associations, churches and schools during the colonial era. According to Jude's article, "Top" private international schools are now considered the highest status form of schooling in Lagos, rather than historically prestigious Mission Schools and Federal Government Colleges, which produced earlier generations of political and religious leaders" (Jude, 2023). In other words, while historical feminist leaders such as Lady Abayomi had been creating an elite class of women intended to influence public life through churches, and associations, these international private schools engage in a similar practice in the contemporary era (Amadiume, 2001; Jude, 2023).

The prioritization of international schools in creating a new elite class in Nigeria primed for upward mobility has also contributed to the creation of the "Afropolitan" class. Jude speaks to this stating:

"What is clear is that the way contemporary Nigerians are 'doing class' through education is resolutely transnational. In Lagos, Accra and Dakar, growing

international school markets are shaped by the remittances, demands and innovations of the transnationally mobile and undertake educational projects oriented to transnational futures (Cheung Judge, 2021; Grysole, 2018; Hoechner, 2020; Kea & Maier, 2017), framed by Abotsi and Hoechner (2022) as ‘Afropolitan’: engaged with established global hierarchies, asserting ‘non-western’ values and producing ‘worldly Africans’ (see also Spronk, 2014).” (Jude, 2023, p.6).

In other words, the Afropolitan class is elite and upwardly mobile not solely because their monetary wealth and capital accumulation facilitates this, but because of the class signification that is attached to the worldliness of their education. According to Jude, these Afropolitans were intended to become socially and politically active by engaging in organizations and maintaining a transnational optic within the government and NGO sector of Lagos, Nigeria (2023).

Elite Women’s Deployment into NGOS

As stated earlier, since the latter quarter of the 20th century, many international institutions have demonstrated their allegiance or promotion of women by involving women in international peace initiatives (United Nations, 1998). International Institutions such as the United Nations have stated that the involvement of women in strengthening international peace and eliminating racism (United Nations, 1999). This along with the Commission of the Status of Women 1998 which passed various proposals of actions that were to be taken by governments, NGOS and civil society that create and develop an environment conducive to women’s enjoyment of their human rights and awareness raising communicate an investment in the state of women’s rights in Nigeria (United Nations, 1998). Beyond this example, there

were dozens of agreed upon conclusions that promote the participation of women in development between 1998 – 2018 (United Nations Women).

In Nigeria today, the United Nations' Women's peace and humanitarian fund is currently supporting nine projects implemented by seventeen women-led and women's rights CSOs despite the contradictory nature of this support (Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund). Their project partners include the following: Ambassadors of Dialogue, Climate and Reintegration; the Grassroots Researcher's Association; the Green Concern for Development Consortium; Women and Youth Empowerment Initiative; and the Initiative for the Development of the Needy, Orphans, Less Privileged and Widows. Each of these partnering NGOs or CSOs receive direct monetary support from the United Nations in order to "work to end violence against women and advance human rights and gender equality in peace and security concerns" (United Nations Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund). Though, this humanitarian support is contradictory in nature due to the nature of the United Nations as a force multiplier for imperialism.

As stated earlier (women's rights) NGOs function as force multipliers for imperialism as they decontextualize global issues and covertly maintain imperial power dynamics through the promotion of ideas like feminism and women empowerment. Further, many international institutions develop initiatives such as these in order to address problems that they innocuously created through neoliberal policies and imperial power dynamics. Take for instance, the impacts of the structural adjustment programs from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Amadiume states that the UN structural adjustment programs made the quality of life of women in Nigeria worse and placed constraints on normal economic

activities that could have improved the qualities of lives if women but the un report recommended improvements in women's technical skills, education, training in order to address their concerns (2001). This top-down approach to addressing Nigerian issues is incredibly misaligned with the material realities of the country. Further, the use of Structural Adjustment programs in Nigeria engages in a neoliberal shrinking of the economy that does not positively change any of the material conditions of women in the country.

The International Monetary Fund loan taken by the Nigerian Military regime in 1986 demonstrates the increase in necessity for non-governmental assistance for women's issues thereby leading to the increased deployment of Women in the NGO Sector after democratization (Amadiume, 2001). To reiterate, structural adjustment programs as a result of IMF loans have further solidified economic disparities, often feminizing poverty and widening class-based wealth gaps, therefore creating the conditions for elite women to engage in social issues work with little regard to the origins of the issues. Further, NGOs have been deemed a profitable and respectable venture for women to engage in [western] feminist actions that do not disrupt the status quo of the country. The democratization era following military intensified this reliance on NGOs as a form of social intervention and elite women who were primed through education and class rearing engaged in the NGO sector for its respectability and profitability (Adunbi, 2016).

Pan-Africanism from Below for Nigerian Feminist Organizing

Amadiume's conception of "daughters of the goddess" provides a useful framework in proposing remedies to understanding and addressing women's issues in Nigeria. To reiterate, Daughters of the Goddess women leaders engaged communal forms of leadership

that prioritized the immediate concerns of women within rural community, or village (Amadiume, 2001). Often, the harmful implications of Structural Adjustment Programs manifested within rural communities where NGOs were prescribed to address issues of poverty and access to education. Regardless, the daughters of the goddess approach to feminist organizing is in direct contrast to daughters of imperialism that maintain the harmful structures that created their elite class (Amadiume, 2001). Today, this approach provides a foundation for reimagining Nigerian feminist organizing as it engages in grassroots, bottom-up approach.

Horace Campbell's "Walter Rodney and Pan-Africanism Today" provides a substantial approach to Pan-Africanist organizing that could be employed by Nigerian women to align themselves more closely with a "daughters of the goddess approach" (Campbell 2020; Amadiume 2001). Campbell states, "Pan-Africanism from below is a Pan-Africanism that manifest itself in the daily lives of the people, and that Pan-Africanism from below goes back to the simple definition of Pan-Africanism." (Campbell, 2020). In other words, Campbell cites an approach to Pan-Africanist organizing that emphasizes grassroots issue-based organizing led by rural women who (already) remain at the forefront of addressing the implications of imperialism. Unlike the top-down frameworks of many NGOs, which often prioritize the agendas of donors and neoliberal reformist policies that maintain imperialist control— Pan-Africanism from below centers the lived experiences, knowledge, and inherent power of women as noted in pre-colonial dual power systems

Conclusion

In sum, Forte's conception of force multipliers provides a clear description of the use of NGOs in furthering imperialist control in Nigeria (Forte, 2015). This conception of force multipliers also implies a projection and recognition of limits of the imperial cores' force thereby requiring extensions and multiplies of itself. This projection of power emphasizes the ways that NGOs function as tools to perpetuate the development paradigm through human rights narratives particularly in relation to women's issues in Nigeria. As such, feminist organizing amongst Elite women in Nigeria to address these women's issues has manifested through NGOs.

However, a Pan-Africanist critique examines the creation and monetary support of NGOs in Nigeria and calls for a return to intentional forms of organizing more in alignment with precolonial conceptions of power. Amadiume's conception of "daughters of the goddess" and "daughters of imperialism" provide a crucial framework through which to examine the ways that Elite Nigerian women continue to engage in imperial domination through imperial cultural imperative of Christian-oriented feminist organizing (2001). The daughters of the goddess conception also provide a poignant example of leadership and agency of women devoid of class relations (Amadiume, 2001). This conception alongside the idea of Pan-Africanism from below as stated by Campbell, offers an alternative to the NGO-led, donor-driven approach to development that undermines Nigerian leaders and furthers imperialism. Ultimately, engaging directly with imperialist control and neoliberal development frameworks require creative approaches to feminist organizing—one that draws inspiration from historical legacies and prioritizes local participation over external intervention and exploitation. A Pan-Africanist feminist call to action demands that Nigeria

moves beyond the classed elitist limits of NGOs and embrace the historical and contemporary power of daughters of the goddess, bottom-up approaches that directly counter imperialist control and addresses the needs of women at a grassroots level.

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