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**CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND DEMOCRATIC  
CONSOLIDATION IN NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT:** This study examines civil society organizations and democratic consolidation in Nigeria. The general objective of this study is to examine civil society organizations and democratic consolidation in Nigeria, while the specific objectives are to: assess the impact of poor cohesion and synergy on democratic consolidation in Nigeria, investigate the role of poor resource mobilization and networking on democratic consolidation in Nigeria; examine the impact of societal attitudinal mind-set towards and distrust for civil society organizations on democratic consolidation in Nigeria and assess the role of interference and exploitation by political parties and government functionaries on democratic consolidation in Nigeria. Four research questions were raised to guide the study and the study adopted case study design and the data utilized were obtained from both primary and secondary sources. While the primary data were derived from focus group discussions, the secondary data were obtained from relevant textbooks and journals. The findings of the study revealed that the critical role which civil societies are expected to play in the democratization process and democratic consolidation in Nigeria is largely constrained by poor cohesion and synergy, poor resource mobilization and networking, societal attitudinal mind-set towards and distrust for civil society organizations and interference and exploitation of civil society organizations by political parties and government functionaries. The study made some useful recommendations including the exigency of genuine cohesion and synergy, resource mobilization and networking and true collaboration between civil society groups and other major stakeholders such as political parties, security agencies, the participating voting public and the judiciary.

**Keywords:** Civil Society, Organization, Democratic, Consolidation.

**INTRODUCTION**

Globally, civil society organizations have been acknowledged as intermediary groups that are not only largely detached from governmental and non-governmental business organizations, but as critical agents that are central to any collective efforts aimed at the actualization of the democratic enterprise and the consolidation and entrenchment of democracy. The above acceptance may not be unconnected with the realization that civil society organizations can potentially serve as indispensable instruments for the limitation of the abuse of state power and the consolidation of democratic political institutions. Moreover, since democracy involves the exercise of authority through formal institutions for public good, the rationality and justification for civil society organizations as far as civil liberty, rule of law and social justice is concerned cannot be over-emphasized.

In Nigeria, civil society organizations, especially human rights and Pro-democracy groups have arguably become a potent force and a viable platform for nurturing civil norms and values through sensitization strategies, civic education and populist mobilization supposedly aimed at facilitating the democratization process. All the same, the efforts of civil society organizations have been bedevilled by sundry factors including poor sense of cohesion and synergy, societal attitudinal mind-set and distrust, poor resource mobilization and networking as well as interference and exploitation by political party and government functionaries. A combination of the afore-mentioned factors have constrained and limited the human organizational and institutional capacity that are needed to play the expected critical role in the actualization of the democratic process and consolidation of democracy in Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In the face of democratization efforts in Nigeria, the dividends of democracy enjoyed by majority of its citizenry since the inception of civil rule in 1999 appear to be below expectation. Besides, the level of social justice that is expected in an entrenched and consolidated democracy is arguably lacking in Nigeria's democratic governance. For instance, despite the multiplicity of government policies and budgets at different levels, programmes, actions and efforts supposedly aimed at reducing poverty, inequality and deprivation does not seem to have achieved the desired results.

A notable reason for the above state of affairs in Nigeria's democratic experimentation is a relatively weak civil society characterized by poor cohesion and synergy, poor resource mobilization and networking, societal distrust and interference and exploitation by government functionaries and political parties. A poorly effective and viable civil society that lacks the capacity and will to hold state officials accountable has consequently constituted a constraint to democratization efforts in Nigeria. As a result, there exists a weak and silent civil society in Nigeria that lacks the efficacy to play its expected indispensable role in the democratic consolidation process. This study therefore examines the impact of the civil society on democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study is to examine civil society organizations and democratic consolidation in Nigeria, while the specific objectives are to:

- 1) Assess the impact of poor cohesion and synergy on democratic consolidation in Nigeria.
- 2) Investigate the role of poor resource mobilization and networking on democratic consolidation in Nigeria.
- 3) Examine the impact of societal attitudinal mind-set towards and distrust for civil society organizations on democratic consolidation in Nigeria.
- 4) Assess the role of interference and exploitation by political parties and government functionaries on democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions will serve as a guide for this study:

- 1) Is there any relationship between poor cohesion and synergy and democratic consolidation in Nigeria?
- 2) Is there any relationship between poor resource mobilization and networking and democratic consolidation in Nigeria?
- 3) Is there any relationship between societal attitudinal mind-set towards and distrust for civil society organizations and democratic consolidation in Nigeria?
- 4) Is there any relationship between interference and exploitation by political parties and government functionaries and democratic consolidation in Nigeria?

### **Civil Society: A Conceptualization Explanation**

The concept of civil society still lacks a universally acceptable definition. The absence of an acceptable definition of civil society dates back to the origin of the concept. Beanu (2010) opined that different writers have explored the complexity of the concept, showing different dimensions of civil society such as material; organizational, and ideological. Attempts to define civil society were also made by scholars in the Greek, Roman, liberal, and Marxist paradigms.

In the Greek paradigm, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle made the most notable contributions. They maintained that the civil form of the society is born when men erect a superstructure of political authority as a means of checking the excesses of the state and obtaining security and protection for all. Keane (2007) posited that the liberal philosophers began to distinguish a discrete form of civil society with a quite different rationale. They defined civil society as a means of defence against potential abuse of power by political leaders, especially given the unprecedented concentration of power at the apex of the modern polity.

Drawing from the Hegelian method, Karl Max and Fredrick Engels conceived civil society as rooted in the material condition of life. According to Brathon (2014), Marx and Engels saw civil society as a set of commodity production and exchange institutions that tilted contractual relations in favour of capitalist entrepreneurs. However, contemporary definitions of civil society have been guided by earlier interpretations. Mutfang (2003) equally asserted that civil society is a wide range of association and other organized collectives capable of articulating the interest of their members, moulding and constraining state power. According to him, their demands provide input for the democratic political process which at times is aggregated by political parties. Their approval or disapproval of what goes on in government contributes to accountability. He further postulates that a country which is well endowed in this respect is well positioned to democratize and ensure good governance. On the other hand, that a weak civil society is often used to explain the failure of democratization processes.

Gold (2010) also posited that civil society is a whole range of social groups that seeks to operate independently of the state and the communist party such as private business, enterprises, labour unions, trade unions, professional associations, religious bodies, student organizations and significant orders. His inference is that civil societies are not only independent of the state, but as interest groups, they fervently press home their demands which might be at variance with that of the government. He differentiated civil society organizations from associational groups which are sometimes used interchangeably. However, a clear point of demarcation between civil society and associational groups is that while the former are more interested in broad over-arching, issues, the latter are more specific in their demands which relate to their members interest.

Hegel (2014), one of the earliest writers on the concept of civil society, places civil society between the family and the state. Hegel believes the state to be the highest form of human society. Below the state, according to Hegel, there exist the family and the civil society. Civil society is therefore a state in the development of the state, a state between the family and the state, the state been the synthesis of the unity of the family and the diversity of the civil society. According to Sabine and Thomson (2013), Hegel views shows that the state depends upon civil society as the means of accomplishing the moral purposes which it embodies and as such it uses the civil society for achievement of its own ends. Hegel bore no contempt for civil society and his account of civil society was a careful and an elaborate analysis of the guilds and corporations, the estates and classes, the associations that Hegel regards as indispensable.

### **Democracy: A Conceptual Exposition**

Democracy does not have a single, unilateral or straight-jacketed perspective to its understanding, hence the necessity, exigency and inevitability of a conceptual discourse. The evident lack of a generally acceptable definition of the term “democracy” is not unconnected with the fact that concepts in the social sciences are confounded by a wooliness of thought and usage that is characteristic of the domain with political science as specie. In the light of the above, democracy could be seen as nothing but different doctrines in different people’s minds or perhaps the most promiscuous word in the world of public affairs and it could be everybody’s mistress. In a similar vein, democracy is a word with many meanings and some emotional color, for it is not an algebraical symbol, but a flag or the call of a trumpet for some; and for others an obsolete mythology which has undesirable connections with capitalism and imperialism (Burns, 2012).

Apparently irked by the gargantuan of conceptualization efforts in the understanding of democracy, Finer (2015) asserted that democracy has come to mean different things, some very hostile to each other, that it needs careful analysis if misunderstanding and idle controversies are to be avoided. Attempting a comprehensive definition of democracy invariably appears elusive and a mirage. And as Eliot (2011) rightly posited, when a word acquires a universally sacred character as the word democracy has, one wonders whether it still means anything at all. Expanding the frontiers of the argument, De Journal (2009) noted that all discussions about democracy, all arguments whether for it or against it, are stricken

with intellectual futility because the thing at issue is indefinite. Therefore efforts by scholars and political theorists across ages, disciplines and societies to define democracy have always founded on the rock of ambiguity and antinomy (Williams, 1999).

The complexity in defining democracy may be due to the fact that political systems are in a continual state of evolution and ideas regarding what ought to be the scope of governmental intervention in the lives of individuals have also changed and are continually changing. No wonder, the complexity in providing a concise and precise definition of democracy is compounded by the fact that historically the concept itself has been a locus or terrain of prolonged intellectual and ideological contestations. Essentially, after centuries of intellectual speculations as to the origin and nature of democracy, the sad conclusion is that it is an ideal towards which many nations strive. By implication, the democratic ideal remains an ideal, a possible explanation for the necessity to see democracy as a continuum where democracies can be placed and gauged in accordance with the extent of their democratization or conformity with acceptable democratic norms and values.

In the face of the diversity of perspectives in the understanding of “democracy”, the term that was derived from the Greek word ‘Demos’ meaning people and ‘Kratos’ implying rule or power refers to government or rule by the people or masses. It therefore follows that in a democracy, government should not only be responsible to the demos (people), political power should also emanate from the popular will of the people and the state should be guided by and bound by the same will. Diamond (2000) also approached democracy as a developing process and added that consolidation is a critical step in building democracies. He further argued that the consolidation process involves three components namely: decentralization that enhances the efficiency, quality and legitimacy of democracy, political culture which is a precondition for democracy to take root, especially as democratic values, beliefs, attitudes, norms and means must be embodied in a democracy and the creation of a civil society that facilitates and enhances public participation in the democratic process and prevents abusive power from becoming concentrated at the centre of society.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Although there exists several theories for explaining facts generated in any research study, this study adopted the group theory of the state. The advocate of the group theory contend that every society includes within it a large number which remained engaged in a perpetual struggle for power and domination over each other. These groups were engaged in a process of balancing and limiting each other, through which harmony between the various interests in society of which groups were the exponents could be maintained. The intellectual root of the group theory lies in the doctrines of pluralism which was developed in the early twentieth century by a number of scholars, why the pluralist had produced some brilliant insight into the group basis of society and recognized a multiple pattern of group affiliations and loyalties, the group theorists saw in this pattern functional basis of government. Bentley (2000), to whom the origin of the group theory in its present form can be traced, introduced the concept of “interest” in trying to answer the question as to what gives direction to group activity. According to him, it is this interest that differentiates a genuine group from a

coincidental collection of people or what he refers to as “castigation group”. However, this interest which is a shared attitude concerning a claim to be made by one group upon certain other group in a social system sometimes are in conflict (Varma, 1998).

The ability or capacity of the state therefore to absorb these various interests which are later expanded on the state as demanded could go a long way to ensure stability and fix the entire system as a whole. Truman (2000), another group theorist introduced concepts like access and other related concepts such as resources, organization, and leadership. According to him, the above concepts include a group’s ability to influence government decisions as a function of the group access is dependent upon the group resources, leadership and organization and so on. On the other hand, these means that a group’s inability to influence government decision could be adduced to lack of resources, poor collaboration and synergy, influence, access which can hinder their effectiveness. Civil society group ineffectiveness in Nigeria’s political system which some of these groups gravitate towards can explain the ability or otherwise standing independently from the state. As a group therefore, there is need not only to define their interests, but also to have access to decision making or influence decision making in the party. The utilitarian value of the group theory in explaining the critical role of the civil society in ensuring democratic governance in Nigeria cannot therefore be over-emphasized.

### **The Historical and Social Evolution of Civil Society**

According to Hassan (2009), the controversial use of the concept of civil society was no doubt at the root of the failure to develop the effective political thinking capable of leading as successful, Arab and Africa renaissance. According to him, a study of the evolution of the concept of civil society indicates that it was conceived in a given historical and social context and has always developed within its social and ideological framework. In Europe, civil society was closely knit with the concept of law and social contract. Politics was removed from the realm of religion and tradition to that of the social and this lies at the root of political modernity.

While political thinking in the 19<sup>th</sup> century gave the concept of civil society yet another function evident in the scholarly works of Hegel and Marx, it was Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) who is believed to have had the greatest impact on the concept. Civil society groups, at this point, encapsulated the super structures such as trade unions, socio-cultural associations, political parties, the media and churches. In the historical and social evolution of civil society, the concept of civil society is today largely based on Gramsci’s definition after shading its Marxist connotations. However, the concept retained only those private social organizations and institutions that are independent of the state in the struggle for the organization and re-organization of society.

In Africa, civil society became a heated concept especially in relation to the issue of democratization. In the African experience, the concept centred on the role of the state in the democratization process (Hassan, 2009). It is in this connection, that the concept of civil society replaced the old framework related to the centralized African state (Labuschague,

2003). The above is clearly an indication that the emergence and rise of civil society coincided unfortunately with the weakening of the role of the state. With the inability of most African states to satisfy the economic aspirations of their people, there was proliferation of alternate structures who were now taking over functions originally located within the confines of the state. This led to mass exit from the state which according to Osaghae (1999) refer to a strategy for coping with a domineering yet ineffective state.

In Nigeria, for example, the exit of civil society from the state reached a high crescendo in the 1980s and 1990s with the extensive emigrations of citizens and an upsurge in the number, activities and significance of parallel and self-governing economic, socio-cultural and juridical groups. In such state of the 'increased inability of the state to provide expected public goods and services, and the authoritarian assault of personal military dictatorships which further alienated the citizenry, various parallel groups including fundamentalist religious movements, ethnic self-help unions, black market networks, the secret cults and the like emerged. The high profile of shadow state activities performed social movements and voluntary self-help organizations in areas that traditionally belong to the state, such as provision of potable water and electricity, maintenance of public schools and security of life and property captures the story of exit from the state as well as the rise and emergence of civil society groups in Africa and Nigeria in particular.

### **Civil Society Organizations and Democracy**

The significance and the role civil society organizations can play in a democracy have been critically and systematically analyzed over the years by scholars. Over the years they have come to be seen as indispensable to the democratization process and democratic consolidation. In fact, civil society organizations are seen as a link that intermediate between the larger society and the government. The recognized role of civil society organizations is a plausible explanation for Mutfang (2003) contention that the civil society is a wide range of association and other organized collections capable of moulding and constraining state power. Essentially, their demands provide a critical input for the democratic process which at times is aggregated by political parties. As a consequence, their approval or disapproval of what goes on in government contributes to accountability and responsibility. Arguably therefore, countries that are endowed with virile and articulate civil societies are likely to be well positioned for democratization and good governance. Conversely, a weak civil society especially one that has been compromised or looped is usually seen or used to explain the failure of democratization. No wonder, Oyovbaire (2000) posited that civil society contains contradictions among its component units as well as within each group and that the full value of civil society in relation to the sustenance of democracy can be related only if it has time to grow and develop the capacity to transcend its own contradictions.

The critical role of civil societies in democratization process in the context of the state cannot be overemphasized. After all, since the origin of the state, the desire of man to live a much more organized life where the common good can be much more assured is a pointer to the fact that civil society has to collaborate with other relevant institutions of the state in order to ensure the efficacy of the democratization process and democratic consolidation.



This is the basis of the emergence of the philosophical state. Strauss (1999), Building on this premise, Strauss 1999, reminds us that the desire for self-preservation is a powerful passion that makes itself the basis of civil society. In other words, Strauss makes natural law a sufficient basis for all rights and duties in society and derives man's civil duties from the right of self-preservation. Here, we can see that rights are made absolute, while duties are condition. The state of nature is the state of man without government. In this state of nature, man's rights are perfect and man owes no duties to the state.

According to Hobbes (2002), life is described as solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short. One way to get out of this dilemma was to view the state as a partnership in duties. In Aristotle analogy, justice is inferior to friendship, when men are friends, as they must be in a state of nature. They have no need for justice, but when men are just, they still have the need for friends (Sabine and Thomson, 2013). The true remedy for the state of nature is therefore the state of civil society. It can in fact be inferred from the above, that a state advances politically, economically, socially and otherwise only when there is a strong civil society it can boast of one.

### **Government's Role and Policies towards Civil Society Organizations**

While the maintenance of law and order is the primary responsibility of government, the government is also expected to create an enabling environment for people and groups including CSOs. Government was perceived to have failed in meeting its role to the people by not creating such a desirable environment for CSOs to effectively perform their expected roles. Moreover, government is guilty of poor policy formation, implementation and evaluation as well as inadequate monetary and fiscal policies towards certain specific target groups including CSOs. Thus, the prevailing political environment has affected the interaction between civil society organizations and the Government so much so that most CSOs are partisan both in outlook and operation (Harrison, 2016).

### **Methodology**

This study adopted a case study design. The use of case study is evident to the fact that the researcher employed exploratory, descriptive and explanatory approach as well as the use of focus group discussion to obtain information from the respondents on the variables under study. Two discussion sessions were conducted with three different groups made up of six (6) participants each. The first group was made up of six (6) civil society activists drawn from six civil society organizations in Delta State; the second group was made up of six (6) civil society activists drawn from six civil society organizations in Edo State.

The two FGD sessions were conducted in two different days (June 7 and June 14) in 2017. Before the FGD sessions commenced, the researcher discussed fully the issues with the participants to ensure they clearly understood them. The discussion was guided by the selected topic: civil society organizations and democratic consolidation in Nigeria by the researcher as the facilitator. Different questions relevant to the above topic were asked and the discussions took place in a friendly and productive manner with an observer in each of

the two focus group discussion sessions. Also, the focus group discussions were recorded in order to ensure that the data captured can be analyzed later. This can be achieved through detailed note taking, although a preferred option is to record the session, so that a transcript of what was said can be written up later.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

In this study, all the notes taken at the focus group discussion sessions were read and transcribed. The transcribed versions of the focus group sessions were compared with the notes taken during FGD sessions to fill the identified gaps. The consensus in the opinions and the commonality in the ideas expressed and presented during the focus group discussion sessions constituted the basis for answering the research questions raised in this study.

Accordingly, several questions were presented to the discussants in the two focus groups in order to generate data needed to provide answers to the research questions in this study. The questions were: How is the cohesion and collaboration among civil society organizations in Nigeria? Have they positively or negatively affected the role of civil society organizations on democratic consolidation in Nigeria? How is the resource mobilization and networking among civil society organization in Nigeria? Have they positively or negatively affected the role of civil society organizations on democratic consolidation in Nigeria?

How is the societal attitudinal mind-set towards and confidence in civil society organizations in Nigeria? Have they positively or negatively influenced the role of civil society organizations on democratic consolidation in Nigeria? How is the interference and exploitation of civil society organizations by political parties in Nigeria? Have they positively or negatively influenced the role of civil society organizations on democratic consolidation in Nigeria?

In respect of the first and second research questions: is there any relationship between poor cohesion and synergy and democratic consolidation in Nigeria? And is there any relationship between poor resource mobilization and networking and democratic consolidation in Nigeria? the data obtained during the focus group discussion sessions with two groups drawn from Delta and Edo States and made up of six (6) civil society activists each, showed that there was convergence of opinions suggesting that the role of civil society organizations in democratic consolidation in Nigeria has over the years been constrained by poor cohesion and synergy as well as poor resource mobilization and networking. These two factors, the two focus group discussants emphasized, have largely affected the unity of purpose and collective strength that are supposed to characterize the activities and operations of various civil society organizations and consequently undermined their efforts in contributing to democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

Concerning the third and fourth research questions: is there any relationship between societal attitudinal mind-set towards and distrust for civil society organizations and democratic consolidation in Nigeria? And is there any relationship between interference and exploitation by political parties and government functionaries and democratic consolidation

in Nigeria? The two focus group discussants agreed that the attitudinal mind-set and distrust by the Nigerian society for civil society organizations and the interference and exploitation by political parties and government functionaries have also hindered democratic consolidation in Nigeria. In this direction, the discussants emphatically noted that many civil society organizations were established by agents of the major political parties and are therefore mere extensions of their principals (political parties) and partisan megaphones in their activities and analysis before, during and after elections in Nigeria. On the whole, the two group discussants stressed that the critical role of civil society organizations in Nigeria in the actualization of democratic consolidation has been sacrificed to a large extent on the altar of the above constraining factors.

In a similar vein, there was convergence of opinion by the discussants that the societal attitudinal mind-set towards and distrust for civil society groups have significantly affected their public image and lowered their morale so much so that they are somewhat passive and consequently cannot actively play the expected enviable role that will check the activities and excesses of the major stakeholders (political parties, security agencies and the participating voting public) in Nigeria's electoral system. Democratic consolidation in Nigeria, the discussants reasoned, as suffered as a result. Also, the interference in and exploitation of the activities and operations of civil society organizations by political parties and government functionaries, the discussants noted, have equally undermined their potency and capacity to meaningfully contribute to democratic consolidation in Nigeria, especially as they have largely become extensions of the major political parties and tools in the hands of their operators and agents.

In sum, the consensus in the opinions and the commonality in the ideas expressed and presented during the focus group discussion sessions constituted the basis for answering the research questions raised in this study. This process corroborated and modestly re-enforced the qualitative data generated in the study through in-depth content analysis of cognate text books and journals premised on the thematic discourse "civil society organizations and democratic consolidation in Nigeria."

### **Discussion of Findings**

The presentation and analysis of data above clearly indicate that poor cohesion and synergy as well as poor resource mobilization and networking among civil society groups have largely weakened the needed collaboration, sense of vision and the desirable level of commitment that will ensure proper monitoring and unbiased communication of the activities of the major stakeholders (political parties, security agencies and the participating voting public) in Nigeria's electoral system. The data presentation and analysis also lucidly reveal that the societal attitudinal mind-set towards and distrust for civil society groups as well as the interference in and exploitation of the activities and operations of civil society organizations by political parties and government functionaries have evidently affected their public image, lowered their morale and undermined their potency and capacity to meaningfully contribute to democratic consolidation in Nigeria.

As a consequence, the answers to the four research questions in this study- is there any relationship between poor cohesion and synergy among civil society organizations and democratic consolidation in Nigeria, is there any relationship between poor resource mobilization and networking among civil society organizations and democratic consolidation in Nigeria, is there any relationship between societal attitudinal mind-set towards and distrust for civil society organizations among civil society organizations and democratic consolidation in Nigeria and is there any relationship between interference and exploitation by political parties and government functionaries and democratic consolidation in Nigeria, shows that there is a relationship between the independent variable (civil society organizations) and the dependent variable (democratic consolidation) in Nigeria. It therefore follows that the direction of the relationship (positive or negative), but in this instant case negative, will be determined by the effects of the identified factors in the environment of the above independent variable on the above dependent variable.

### **Summary of Findings**

This study came up with some valuable findings. Such findings became possible through the use of selective utilization of focus group discussions and in-depth library and documentary sources of information. First and foremost, the study showed that poor cohesion and synergy among civil society groups largely weakened the collaboration and sense of vision that is supposed to produce the common purpose that will drive their genuine concerted efforts towards democratic consolidation in Nigeria. The study also revealed that there is poor resource mobilization and networking among civil society organizations and that they have significantly affected their level of commitment to proper monitoring and unbiased communication of the activities of political parties, the election management body, security agencies and the participating voting public before, during and after periodic elections in Nigeria.

The study further showed the societal attitudinal mind-set towards and distrust for civil society groups have significantly affected their public image and lowered their morale so much so that they are somewhat passive and consequently cannot actively play the expected enviable role that will check the activities and excesses of the major stakeholders (political parties, security agencies and the participating voting public) in Nigeria's electoral system. Finally, the findings of the study indicated that the interference in and exploitation of the activities and operations of civil society organizations by political parties and government functionaries have notably undermined their potency and capacity to meaningfully contribute to democratic consolidation in Nigeria,

### **Conclusion**

Arguably, the activities and operations of civil society organizations are critical to democratization efforts and democratic consolidation in Nigeria and around the globe. All the same, it is no distortion of facts to assert that while the role of civil society groups in the actualization of the democratic enterprise and the democratic consolidation is necessary, it is not sufficient in so far as the roles of other significant stakeholders including political

parties, security agencies, the participating voting public and the judiciary are equally critical to the translation of democratic efforts and experimentation into a concrete reality in the context of democratic consolidation.

### **Recommendations**

To actualize the facilitating role of civil society organizations in the democratic enterprise and democratic consolidation, there is the need for cohesion and synergy, resource mobilization and networking, positive societal attitudinal mind-set towards and trust for civil society organizations and genuine collaboration between civil society groups and other major stakeholders such as political parties, security agencies, the participating voting public and the judiciary. The above position is largely due to the fact that the collective inputs of the above stakeholders are central to and consequently are the heart of the ultimate desirable output (democratic consolidation).

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