

## *Original Paper*

# The State, Market and Citizens' Sector in Post-Transition Societies: Towards an Inclusive Framework of Governance in Nigeria

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### **Abstract**

*The crisis of governance being experienced by states in the continent of Africa since the fourth quarter of the last century has provoked widespread debates on good governance and its requirements. These debates revolve around the premises of welfarism aimed at evaluating the capacity of the state to deliver existential requirements of citizens. The point at issues is that the most significant ends of good governance are citizens and their quality of life. Thus, in connecting government with the society as a whole (to secure this mandate), scholarly preoccupation has been on the changing tripartite relationship among the state, market and the citizens' sector. This paper seeks to interrogate this relationship in Nigeria in terms of what has been achieved and the prospects for improved quality of governance, bearing in mind the constraints imposed by certain tendencies in the democratization process. It argues that the post-transition impact of civil society (broadly referred to as citizens' sector), which constitutes a significant part of the environment in which the state operates has not received sufficient scholarly attention in states of Sub-Saharan Africa. The paper observes that the triumph of market economy and the concomitant shrinking of the state have significantly altered the institutional landscape of governance for the citizens' sector to deepen its engagement with a trimmed government. In other words, outside the formal institutions of the state and market, the citizens' sector has a crucial role to play in the good governance project. In states like Nigeria, liberal political conditions have provided the needed impetus for this inclusive framework of governance to flourish. It acknowledges that though, civil society (operating under a variety of organizations) has established its visibility in the political space, none-the-less, proactive and sustainable engagement with the state on policy issues is*

*required to effectively drive the good governance project. Be that as it may, this paper recommends among others that the legal framework in respect of this tripartite relationship should be strengthened for optimal results, and that in (specific terms), in order to deepen the collaboration between the state and the citizens' sector, the National Assembly should make law to provide a legal framework aimed at institutionalizing the Office of the Senior Special Assistance to the Presidents on Civil Society. This institutionalization will cascade into the role of civil society in the citizen engagement process.*

**Keywords**

*citizens, democracy, economy, governance, market, state, society*

**1. Introduction**

The long spell of colonialism in Africa on the one hand and the contradictions generated by wide spread authoritarian rule in post-colonial Africa are historical fault lines that had and will continue to shape the governance narratives of many states of the continent. The specific implications of these experiences constitute the dominant themes of contemporary discourse on Africa and her development trajectory. However, beyond the discourse on colonialism and post-colonial authoritative rule, scholarly preoccupation shifted to discourses on the globalization of the democratization process (especially the onset of the third wave democratization), in terms of the continuing effort to dissect its governance contours in states of Africa. A significant part of this effort has been devoted to the enviable role of the civil society (broadly referred to as the citizens' sector in the demands and actualization of regime transformation from authoritarian rule to democracy. In Nigeria for example, scholarly reports have acknowledged the primacy of the civil society in the stream of development that provided the leeway for the third wave in Nigeria (Ake, 2001; Aiyede, 2002; Diamond, 1999; Kukah, 2003)).

Thus, civil society became not only what Bratton (1994) describes as the source of legitimating of state power, but also a formidable third sector in the governance project of contemporary Africa, (the state and market) being the first and second respectively. This much was acknowledged by Dagnino (2016), when he observed that in the wake of the emergence of leftist government in Latin America, the citizens' sector ignited social movements that confronted the neo-liberal statism that had increased inequalities, eliminated rights and taken to an extreme the alliance between the state and market. However, in states of Sub Saharan African where the battle for transition to democracy has been won, there remains the urgent need to sustain and consolidate democratic rule and to ensure that government respond adequately to social demands and citizens' expectation through good governance practices. Whereas the third wave is considered as the good tidings, the bad news is that most of the post transition societies are yet to install good governance practices that guarantee significant and continuing improvement in the quality of life for the vast majority of the people. This failure is largely attributed to the lack of state capacity.

Despite the much touted viability of the market in efficient resource allocation that leads to economic development, the state (whose authoritative allocation of values) can help to address market failure and

deepen prosperity for all, remains a significant partner in the development process. To this end, empirical statehood imposes on the state three core functions, namely extractive, coercive and administrative (Hanson & Sigman, 2013) that define the capacity of state institutions to effectively deliver on its mandate. Among these core functions of the state, administrative capacity “is a broader dimension that includes the ability to develop policy, the ability to produce and deliver public goods and services and the ability to regulate commercial activities” (Omotola, 2016, p. 21). The constitutional order of societies in transition has made provisions for this core function of the state. In Nigeria for example, the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic under Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State policy provides that the state shall *control the national economy in such a manner as to secure the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every citizen on the basis of social justice and equality of status and opportunity.*

In discharging the social obligations inherent in the foregoing provision, private individuals are also invited to undertake economic activities. Thus, the constitution provides: *without prejudice to the right of any person to participate in areas of the economy within the major sectors of the economy, protect the right of every citizen to engage in any economic activities outside the major sectors of the economy.* This provision underscores the legal framework for the active participation of the private sector (broadly referred to as the market institution) to undertake economic activities with far reaching implications for national development. The economic order of market capitalism which this provision introduced is ideologically grounded on a set of assumptions the most instructive of which are that: (i) the economy should be the dominant institution in modern society; (ii) a steady increase in productivity is necessary for continued gains in standards of living; and (iii) free market generally results in the most efficient and socially optimal allocation of resources (Xing, 2001).

However, such unqualified faith in the efficacy of the market, only serve to extenuate the enormous challenges that confront developing countries of the global south. Just like the failed state thesis that confirms the inability of post transition societies of Africa to furnish the existential requirements of citizens, the market institution do fail, and it has failed on a number of occasions (the great depression of 1929, the global economic meltdown of 2009 and recently the economic recession experienced by Nigeria between 2016 and 2017). Thus, from Smith’s *Laissez-faire* through Keynesian economics to the euphoria of neo-liberal democracy (with profound rivalry between the market capitalism and the developmental state), the career of the political economy of the modern state has gone full cycle. On this note, (Xing, 2001, p. 80) acknowledged the resilient onslaught of market capitalism and observes that “today, the market defines the limits of state politics...the domestic political and institutional spheres face an inherent contradiction; on the one hand, states are the custodians of society that have obligations to fulfill the role of providing social welfare, on the other hand, the undisputable power of capital mobility reduces their capacity to do so”.

To address this contradiction, the capacity of the citizens’ sector to engage with the state through various means remain an attractive option available to post transition societies of Africa. To this end,

Nigeria offers a good example where the civil society operating under a variety of organizations has established its visibility in the liberalized political space to engage with government on sundry policy issues that border on good governance. Within the broad paradigm of neo-liberal democracy, this paper seeks to interrogate the interaction among the state, market and citizens' sector in an inclusive framework of governance in Nigeria. This inclusive framework takes into account the flipside of statism and the soulless advances of market capitalism while recognizing the potentials of a vibrant citizens' sector to stage the balancing act with prospects for improved state capacity to superintend development and deepen prosperity for all.

## **2. Objectives/Methodology**

In the debates on good governance (especially in transition societies), the relationship between the state and citizens' sector has not been nuanced if only to underscore the primacy of a 'third sector' in the governance project. To this end, the major objective of this paper is to develop an inclusive framework of governance that acknowledges the role of the citizens' sector working in tandem with the state and market to address the vexed issue of good governance. The specific objectives are: (i) to interrogate the tripartite relationship among the state, market and citizens' sector in the light of the democratization process in Nigeria; (ii) to assess this relationship in terms of what has been achieved and the prospects for improved quality of governance; (iii) to examine the constraints imposed by certain tendencies in the democratization process; and (iv) to offer policy recommendations towards optimizing this tripartite relationship. To realize these objectives, the paper adopts a methodology that is both descriptive and analytical. This approach relies on official records and a considerable volume of related literature. In respect of official records, the study examines: (i) the Federal Government policy document on Economic Recovery and Growth Programme (ERGP); (ii) the policy document on Public Private Partnership (PPP); and (iii) reports on the current reality of the state-civil society relations in Nigeria. The review of related literature considered a wide range of scholarly perspectives on the subject matter of the paper.

## **3. Problematizing the Governance Project**

In an effort to interrogate the contradictions that characterize the governance project in transition societies of Sub-Saharan Africa, it might be helpful to first clarify the concept of governance. Governance is seen as a process of social engagement between the ruler and the ruled in a political community. Its components are rule making and standard setting, management of regime structures and outcome of the social pact (UNECA, 1999). In the same vein the UNDP view governance as:

The totality of the exercise of authority in the management of a country's affairs, comprising of the complex mechanisms, processes and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights and mediate their differences (UNDP, 1997a, p. 7).

It is perhaps in view of the foregoing that Olowu (2005), observed that leadership is central to the idea

of governance because it determines the manner in which state power is used or misused to promote social and economic development or to pursue agenda that undermine such goals. It follows that the transition from authoritarian rule to democracy does not suggest a guarantee of acceptable use of state power to promote the common good; rather, regime transformation imposes on the new set of managers of state institutions the obligation to exercise legitimate authority in a manner that is consistent with citizens' expectations and social demands. In another perspective, it has been argued (Adejumobi, 1999; Huntington, 1997) that most states in Southeast Asia have made remarkable growth rates within the context of authoritarian rule. This contention has led to the conclusion that, what is important is not so much the form of government, but its outcome—economic wellbeing, political stability, social order, communal harmony, efficient and honest administration (Huntington, 1997, pp. 11-12).

However, the requirements of good governance should emphasize both structure and outcome. While authoritarian rule may promote good governance, there is the problem of sustainability. On this note, a number of studies have attempted to debunk the fetish of authoritarianism as a desirable political condition to install good governance practices by pointing out the fact that the persistence of authoritarian regimes has been a major impediment to sustainable political and economic development (Randall, cited in ECOSOC, 2013). Thus, there is a strong argument that the liberal political conditions that democracy engenders is critical to enhancing the effectiveness of the state capacity to deepen prosperity and spread the benefits of socio-economic development. In the final analysis, democratic governance seeks in common with good governance, efficient institutions and a predictable economic and political environment that make economic growth possible and public service effective (UNDP, 2006). Therefore, the debates on good governance and its requirements does not consider authoritarian rule as an option, rather, it's about the ideological rivalry between the state and market in post transition societies.

Initially, protagonists of the market dominated the debates on the state-market conundrum. Inspired by the triumph of the market friendly economies of Western Europe and North America, and the subsequent capitulation of socialist command economies of Eastern Europe, this school of thought argues that state intervention has proven to be barriers to economic growth and development. They submit that:

State capacity—its ability to promote and undertake collective action efficiently is over-extended. Therefore, reduction and refocusing of the state's activities are needed to improve macro-economic stability, as well as the implementation of stronger incentives to performance (World Bank, 1989, p. 5). This argument implies a reduced role for the state in national development, insisting that state should be limited to providing the enabling environment by implementing appropriate economic policy reform and furnishing the necessary legal and regulatory framework for market institutions to thrive.

The second perspective favours the retention of the state by its emphasis on effective and efficient public administration working in tandem with the market to promote good governance. Thus, as opposed to a wholesale reversal of state involvement, there is broad consensus in the literature about

the capacity of the state. Through “re-engineering” (Hope, 2002) or “invigorating” (Klitgaard, 1997), public institutions are required to address the human problem in an era characterized by rapid social transformation. This perspective has had profound influence on the discourse about the prospect of establishing and sustaining developmental state in post transition societies of Africa (ECA, 2005, 2011; Edgheji, 2005). Thus, under liberal political conditions, a number of states have demonstrated active involvement in influencing the direction and pace of development. This renewed commitment was a predictable response to the crisis of expectations that accompanied the relative success of the third wave democratization.

However, there are considerable reservations about the capacity of the state and market to install good governance and promote inclusive development. Part of the explanations lie in the fact that states institutions under liberal political conditions are designed to secure the primacy of the propertied class in the governance project. Adejumbi (2004) has argued that the crafting of liberal democracy and the hegemonic interest that it represents is largely that of capital and bourgeois class while that of equality and socio-economic rights are more abstract than real for the majority of the people. Although liberal democracy is anchored on the notions of equality, justice and freedom, these values may be severely compromised by the free market where the state (lacking in administrative capacity) provides an unfettered environment for the market to atomize the rest of society, the consequence being “the empowerment and inclusion of some, while the marginalization and exclusion of others creates political and social contradictions and inequality (Xing, 2001, p. 76). Thus, two decades after the onset of democratization, the Nigerian state is still immersed in poverty, inequality, economic stagnation and social tension. These negative social realities are consequences of the lack of state capacity on the one hand and the mercerization of democracy on the other hand. Although, in the last couple of years, democratic reforms have engendered a semblance of favorable policy environment for modest macro-economic performance, the resulting economic expansion has not contributed meaningfully to the material wellbeing of the citizens (Ozohu-Suleiman, 2018).

With a reputation as the 6<sup>th</sup> largest producer of crude oil coupled with a variety of solid mineral deposits, the prevailing level of poverty and inequality in Nigeria is a stringent indictment on the handlers of state institutions established to manage these enormous resources. It was revealed that between 1999 and 2014, the oil and gas sector raked in 529 billion dollars while the solid mineral sector earned 143.5 billion naira between 2007 and 2014 (NEITI, 2017). Today, with a population estimated at about 200 million people, Nigeria approximates the despair and failure of the continent. This unenviable state of affairs has been captured with a variety of adjectives some of which include; soft, weak, delayed, rentier, predation, criminal, fragile, failing, failed and collapsed, etc. (See Omotola & Alumona, 2016).

However, this despair comes into bold relieve with the emergence of the citizens’ sector and its nascent participation in the governance project. This development partly defines the legitimacy of a state in terms of its ability to allow for strong civil society and a network of non-governmental institutions that

ensure the development of a well-functioning economic system, the strengthening of democratic procedures, and a wide spread participation by people in public life (Weiss, 2000). The intervention of the citizens' sector to counterbalance the state is an interesting (though nascent development) in Nigeria that has not been a major preoccupation of scholars. The question as to how much space has liberal political conditions provided for the citizens' sector to interface with the state, what has been achieved so far and what are the challenges of this third sector in the good governance equation, constitute the foci of this paper.

#### 4. The Triad of Inclusive Governance

A triad by definition is a group of three closely related persons or things. It is commonly associated with musical notes that can be stacked vertically on threesome or triangular support. However, the term can be adapted to describe activities (including social transactions that suggest a relationship among three parts. Thus, governance is here treated as a social engagement among three social structures of the state, market and citizens' sector. To this end, the triad of inclusive governance is a social construct that seeks to establish the functional interrelatedness of the state with the market and citizens (both of which constitute significant parts of the environment of governance).

This social construction is anchored on Gabriel Almond's Model of Structural Functionalism, and therefore draws its inspiration from the underlying assumptions of the model. However, whereas Almond's model identified how structures of a political system (namely, political parties, legislature, executive, judiciary, etc.) perform certain functions meant for them, the triad of inclusive governance considers these structures as given and observes that they constitute parts of the larger structures of the state, market and citizens' sector. Almond's thesis assumes that for a social system to survive and maintain its going concern, certain degree of order and stability is required (Haralambo & Heald, 2003). Thus, imbued with coercive authority, the state institutional capacity to maintain this order and stability is fundamental. Working in tandem with the market institution and the citizens' sector, the state is host to a multiplicity of formal and informal institutions whose activities determine the concrete outcome of governance. The triad of inclusive governance treats the state as the *primus inter pares* in a system characterized by the structural functional attributes of comprehensiveness and interdependence (Varma, 2003). By comprehensiveness is meant the interaction of both formal and informal institutions of the social system and their implications for state coercive authority. Interdependence has to do with the close connection among state institutions, the market and citizens' sector. We proceed to clarify these social structures in order to establish their conceptual fit into the triad of inclusive governance.

Although the concepts of state, market and citizens' sector are value-laden, there is considerable effort towards a generally acceptable definition. A sparing review of some scholarly submission in the literature is imperative. The state in the opinion of (Maciver, 1950) is an association which acting through law as promulgated by the government endowed to this end with coercive power, maintains within a community, territorially demarcated the universal external conditions of political order. In

similar vein, a state is also defined as a sovereign entity with a jurisdictional claim to geographical/spatial, political, demographical, economical and socio-cultural expressions (Omotola & Alumona, 2016). While recognizing coercive power and territorial integrity as essential attributes of the state, Maciver's (1950) definition leaves out the equally important attributes of demography, economic and socio-cultural attributes, which in the opinion of (Omotola & Alumona, 2016), are fundamental to the defining attributes of a state.

Harold Laski, in his book entitled, *The State in Theory and Practice*, sees the state as a society which is integrated by possessing a coercive authority, legally supreme over other citizens or group which is part of society. The society reveals within its boundaries not only citizens but also association of citizens grouped together to promote all kinds of political, economic, cultural, religious object in which they are interested (Laski cited in Obasa & Achugbue, 2004). This broad conception of the state is consistent with the notion of democratic open society where there exist, a robust environment in which all the constituent elements of society interact among themselves in line with formal rules of engagement. One of the constitutive elements of a society is the market institution defined...” as the self-regulating system in which fundamental economic problems (what, how, and for whom) to produce are solved ‘automatically’ through the price mechanism rather than through conscious social decisions” (Fotopoulos, 1997, p. 5). From this definition, it is understood that market institution exists in an economic system in which decisions regarding investment, production and distribution are guided by the forces of demand and supply. In this context, the market is autonomous and self-regulating operating within the broad legal framework created by the state. As an autonomous institution, the framework of control by the state is meant to create stable environment and smooth functioning of the market without affecting its essential self-regulating nature (Fotopoulos, 1997).

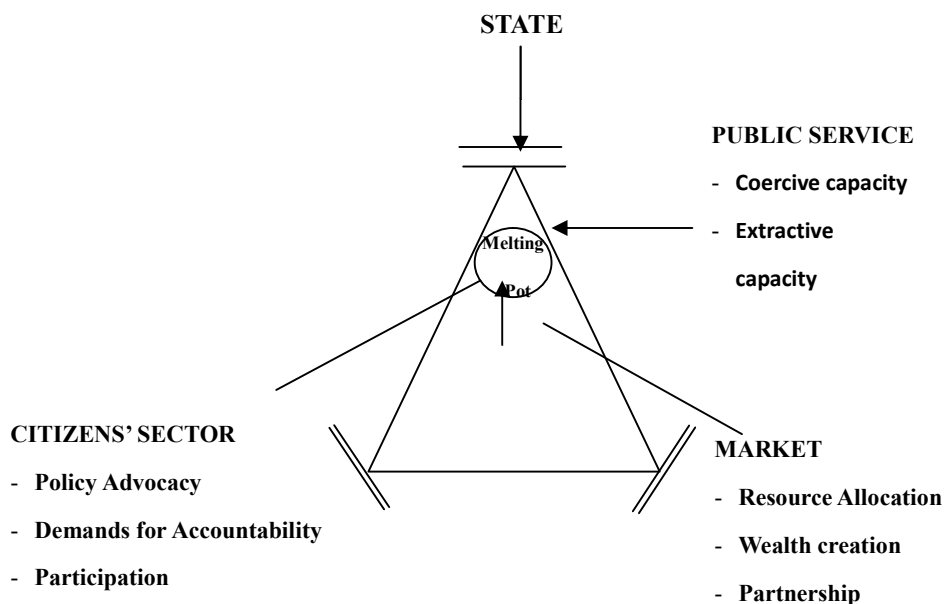
Apart from the market institution, the second element, which constitute a significant part of the environment in which state operates is the civil society and other non-governmental organizations (broadly referred to as citizens' sector). Contemporary articulation of civil society has produced diverse yet closely related definitions. The most commonly quoted definition conceives of civil society as the area outside the family, the state, and the market, which is created by individual and collective actions, organizations, and institutions to advance share interests (CIVICUS, 2011; PRIA et al. cited in Vandyck, 2007). This view of civil society is corroborated and elaborated (taking into account its current evolution, nuances and growing diversity) by the conception of civil society as:

...an ecosystem of organized and organic social and cultural relations existing in the space between the state, business, and family, which builds on indigenous and external knowledge, values, traditions, and principles to foster collaboration and the achievement of specific goals by and among citizens and other stakeholders (VandDjck, 2017, p. 1)

This broad conception of civil society is consistent with our social construction of the triad of inclusive governance. The definition emphasizes the collaboration between the citizens and other stakeholders. These stakeholders are treated here as the state (which provide the locus of public service) and the



market (which provide the locus of a self-regulating system of investment, production and distribution). The diagram below represents a graphic illustration of the system of collaboration between the state, market and the citizens within the framework of a triad of inclusive governance.



**Figure 1. The Diagram**

As the *primus inter pares*, the state stands atop the pyramidal triad in a system of interaction between it, the market and citizens. This system of interaction is rule bound which clearly defines the scope and limits of each stakeholder, and is characterized by comprehensiveness and interdependence. As the diagram illustrates, the state provides the locus of public service with an extensive array of functions categorized under coercive, extractive and administrative capacities. Coercive capacity has to do with the legitimate use of force and other key aspects of the ability of the state to maintain continuity and implement the provisions of the fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy. Extractive capacity relates to harnessing the resources (revenue and information) required to carry out its mandate. These core state capacities are precursor of administrative capacity where there exists “autonomous and professional bureaucracies that legitimize the authority of the state, manage complex affairs and ensure efficiency” (Hanson & Sigman, cited in Omotola & Alumona, 2016, p. 22).

Next to the state is the market institution which furnishes the society with a price mechanism for the efficient allocation of resource. An essential attribute of this mechanism of resource allocation is what we earlier referred to as a “system of self regulation” to safeguard the autonomy of the market. This institutional autonomy is fluid in so far as the state has the overarching constitutional mandate to dictate the direction of the national economy. This is mostly expressed in the form of intervention in priority sectors, including reforms of the public service that call for state-market partnership in the delivery of critical public services. This partnership has gained currency in the wake of the global

transformation of governance and the rise of the global south. In developing economies like Nigeria, this governance reform represents a strategic choice to reinvigorate state capacity. Two fundamental issues serve to drive the emerging partnership between the state and market: (i) resource constraints which has made it increasingly difficult for the state to respond adequately to the existential requirements of citizens; and (ii) the abiding concern to implement the 3Es of Economy, Efficiency and Effectiveness in order to establish greater accountability, legitimacy and credibility.

The citizens represent a “third sector” and (unarguably the most significant stakeholder) in this multi-organization approach to inclusive governance. Similar to our conception of a triad of inclusive governance, Strosbery and Gimbel (2002) have articulated an iron triangle which accommodates: (i) public administrators who manage programmes and implement policies; (ii) the private sector whose initiatives and enterprise propel the engine of development; and (iii) non-governmental organizations and interest groups who focus on particular policy area. At this level of interpretation, governance in the context of liberal democracy is taken beyond the state and market to embrace (to a larger extent) the participation of citizens through a variety of civil society organizations. To this end, citizens are also becoming aware that the social order to which they belong can be transformed, and that a commitment is required to realize this transformation for the general benefit of the public good (Castano, 2010).

Citizens’ commitment is demonstrated through the various engagements with the state on policy issues, participation and demands for transparency and accountability. In the area of policy advocacy, there is increasing awareness that a variety of non-state actors offer a robust market place of ideas. Thus, in engaging with government on policy issues, extensive knowledge and professional competence are brought to bear on the observations they make and the options they put on the table. At the level of public policy implementation, citizens’ engagement with the state is crucial for accountability and efficient service delivery. As a requirement of good governance, the demands for accountability have been the most compelling issue in the interface between the state and the citizens’ sector. This is especially the case in Nigerian where the bane of governance is largely attributed to official infractions and rent-seeking preoccupation of public officials. Closely connected to the demands for accountability is citizens’ direct participation in public service delivery. Olowu (2002, p. 24) has acknowledged that, “increasingly, interest is shifting to the possible roles of voluntary organizations and the communities in improving the delivery of public services”. This volunteering does not only seek to set standard of public service, but also challenge public institutions to live up to citizens’ expectations of the highest standards of accountability in public service delivery.

Although this framework of governance recognizes the collaboration among the state, market and citizens’ sector, a mutually exclusive relationship between the state and market on the one hand, and the citizens’ sector on the other hand cannot be ruled out. Despite the attempt by neo-liberal democracy to draw a distinction between the state and market, where each is able to act upon its goals, values and objectives without subordination or subjection to the other, the *market is a political institution* (emphasis added) that eventually empowers some and marginalize others (Xing, 2001). In the face of

this obvious contradictions, the citizens sector that exists and operates for the common good, steps in to mitigate undesirable alliance between the state and market. In the light of this framework of governance, the discussion of findings is devoted to evidence of concrete manifestations of the collaboration among the state, market and citizens' sector in Nigeria.

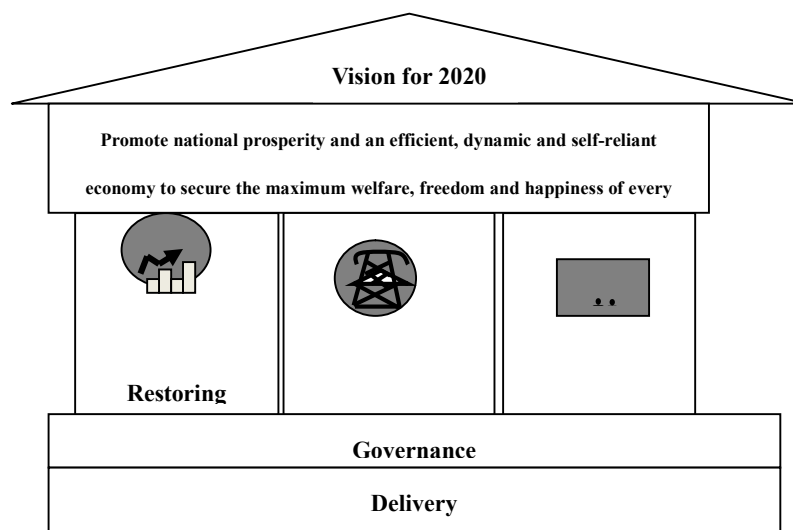
## 5. Discussion

The Nigerian state in transition has recorded a mixed bag of experience. Whereas liberal political conditions have significantly changed the nature and character of state policy and its nexus with the vexed issue of good governance, the expected improvement in the existential conditions of the citizens leaves much to be desired. State commitment to address this challenge is debatable and at best incremental. However, the good news is that the *laissez faire* environment of governance offers many opportunities for stakeholders to collaborate on the governance project. To this end, the state is increasingly becoming receptive to the emerging synergy between it on the one hand, the market and citizens' sector on the other hand. This synergy has produced a range of significant outcomes that have gone a long way to change the governance narratives. The remaining part of the discussion is devoted to concrete evidence of this collaboration.

**The State and Market:** In an effort to provide the legal and institutional framework for this collaboration, the state has developed and activated a number of policy frameworks, the most significant of which are: (i) the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) policy document; (ii) The Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP); and (iii) four Executive Orders (EO Nos. 01, 04, 05 & 08). The PPP represents a significant dimension of the paradigm shift from traditional model of organization and delivery of public service to a market-based public service delivery and management. Given the huge deficit in socio-economic infrastructure, the federal government has acknowledged the urgent need to “make massive investments beyond the means available to government in order to close its yawning infrastructural gap...thus,...The private sector can play an important role in providing some of these investments through Public-Private-Partnership (FRN cited in Ozohu-Suleiman & Oladimeji, 2015). Since its introduction, a number of critical infrastructure projects cutting across various sectors of the economy have been implemented while some are undergoing implementation. These infrastructures include but not limited to; rail transportation projects, airport concession, road construction and rehabilitation, seaport concession, hospital and educational facilities and electricity projects.

Coming close to the very recent times, the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan was developed in the twilight of the economic recession that ravaged the Nigerian economy between 2016 and 2017. The ERGP is a “medium term plan for 2017-2020 developed for the purpose of restoring economic growth while leveraging the ingenuity and resilience of the Nigerian people—the nation’s most priceless assets” (FRN, ERGP, 2017, p. 10). The key principles of ERGP are: (i) focus on tackling constraints to economic growth; (ii) leverage the power of the private sector as strategic partner for economic recovery and transformative growth; (iii) promote national cohesion and social inclusion, bearing in

mind that Nigerians are the beneficiaries of inclusive growth; (iv) allow market to function while strengthening regulatory oversight to minimize market abuse; and (v) uphold core values of discipline, integrity, dignity of labour, social justice, religious tolerance, self-reliance and patriotism as enshrined in the 1999 constitution. These principles are meant to achieve the vision and broad objectives of the plan as encapsulated in the Figure below:



**Figure 2. Vision for 2020**

*Source:* FRN (2017), Economic Recovery and Growth Plan 2017-2020.

As part of government efforts to enforce the overarching principle of (allowing market to function) through regulatory oversight, four executive orders have been endorsed by the president and are being implemented by the state. They are: (i) Executive Order No. 01 on the promotion of transparency in the business environment; (ii) Executive Order No. 04 on voluntary assets and income declaration scheme; (iii) Executive Order No. 05 for planning and execution of projects, promotion of Nigeria contents in contracts, science, engineering and technology; and (iv) Executive Order No. 08 on voluntary offshore assets regularization scheme. The implementation of PPP along with the complementary policy instruments highlighted above have led to a robust and enduring collaboration between the state and market in the provision of critical infrastructure.

The PPP projects are concentrated in the transportation sector (rail, road, sea and air transport facilities), urban and rural electrification, development of new/upgrade of existing health care facilities, development of new/upgrade of existing educational facilities spread across the country. For example, the second Niger Bridge is a PPP project that is significant to the Nigerian economy in many respects. The flagship bridge meant to link the South Eastern Nigeria with the rest of the country is the most ambitious PPP project in recent history and is reported to have reached 50% completion (cdn.ampproject.org). There are 51 PPP projects of various descriptions currently under implementation

across the country (ICRC, 2019). The table below indicates selected PPP infrastructure projects across the six geo-political zones currently undergoing implementation.

**Table 1. Selected PPP Projects in Nigeria**

S/N	Project	Govt. Agency	Concessionaire	Duration	Status	Geo-Political Zone
1.	Concession for the Development, Maintenance, Operate and Transfer of Port Terminal (Apapa)	Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA)	Apapa Bulk Terminal Ltd "A"	25years October 2005-October 2030	Under implementation	South-West
2.	Concession for the Development, Maintenance, Operate and Transfer of Port Terminal (Port-Harcourt)	Nigeria Ports Authority (NPA)	BUA Ports and terminals Ltd	20years May 2006 – 2026	Under implementation	South-South
3.	Concession for Build, Own, and Operate a Container Freight Station of Inland Container Depot (Abia State)	Nigerian Shippers Council (NSC)	Eastgate Inland Container Depot Ltd	30years from 2007– 2037	Under implementation	South-East
4.	Concession for Build, Own, and Operate a Container Freight Station of Inland Container Depot (Plateau State)	Nigerian Shippers Council (NSC)	Duncan Maritime Ventures Nigeria Ltd	20years from 2007– 2027	Under implementation	North-Central
5.	Concession for Build, Own, and Operate a Container Freight Station of Inland Container Depot (Kano State)	Nigerian Shippers Council (NSC)	Dala Inland Dry Port Nigeria Ltd	25years from 2007 – 2032	Under implementation	North-West
6.	Provision of data capture services, personalization, issuance and distribution of general multi-purpose cards (GMPC), development of card acceptances devices (CADs) - Nationwide	National Identity Management Commission (NIMC)	Onesecurecard Limited	10years from 2007 – 2017	Under implementation	Nation-wide
7.	Concession Agreement For The Design, Build, Finance, Operate	Transmission Company	Phase 3 Telecom Ltd	15years from 2006 – 2021	Under implementation	Western Nigeria

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	TCN's Fibre Optic Cable of Nigeria						ion	
	telecommunications							
	Infrastructure for the Western							
	part of Nigeria							
8.	Concession Agreement for the	Transmissio	Alheri	15years	from	Under	Eastern	
	Design, Build, Finance, Operate	n Company	Engineering	2006 – 2021		Implementat	Nigeria	
	TCN's Fibre Optic Cable of Nigeria	Services Ltd				ion		
	Telecommunications							
	Infrastructure for the Eastern							
	part of Nigeria							
9.	Concession for the Design,	Federal	Mabon	25years	2005	Under	North-East	
	Construct, Install, Operate and	Ministry of	Limited	-2030		implementat		
	Maintain the DadinKowa Hydro	Water				ion		
	Dam for the purpose of	Resources						
	Electricity Generation with a							
	capacity of 39MW – Gombe							
	State							

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*Source:* <http://www.icrc.gov.ng/projects-under-icrcs-costudy/>.

The projects listed in the foregoing Table are by no means exhaustive of the scope of infrastructural facilities (cutting across various sectors) that are required to address the huge deficit in the country. They form part of the social overhead capital which provision will facilitates socio-economic activities that ultimately affect the existential conditions of the citizens. It is understood that in the face of severe resource constraints, only an incremental approach is feasible in addressing the humongous infrastructure deficit. However, a conception of governance that is limited to the collaboration between the state and market is problematic for many reasons, some of which were highlighted elsewhere in the paper. However, two of them deserve further clarification here. First, it subordinates the role of the critical mass of citizens while prioritizing that of the propertied class. Secondly, such a narrow conception does not allow for the democratization of governance. Therefore, democratic citizenship requires that non state actors take interest in participating in the policy process that shapes their lives.

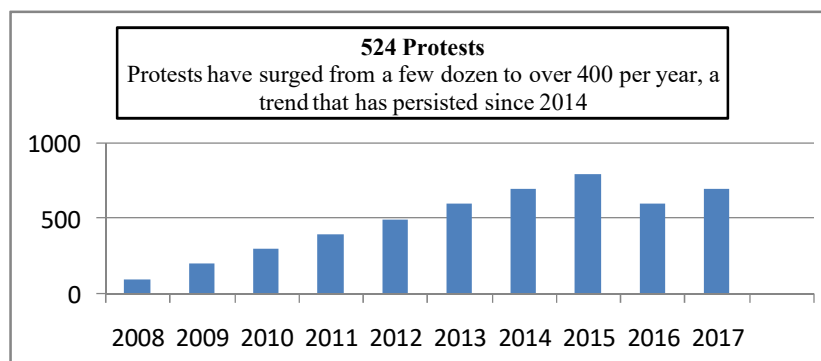
**The State and Citizens' Sector:** Government exists for the people. This statement sounds simplistic but it may well convey the force of revolution. The revolutionary undertone of the statement is underscored by the social obligation of the citizens to hold government accountable for its actions and inactions. In Nigeria, the open society engendered by liberal political conditions has provided the impetus for citizens-state engagement. This engagement has taken many forms including but not limited to dialogue, peaceful protest/negotiation and voluntary participation. Today, the political space is saturated with civil society groups and NGOs of various descriptions such that it is almost impossible

to take a comprehensive census of non-state actors in Nigeria. However, our discussion is limited to a few of them that have made appreciable impact on the governance project.

In the area of policy engagement through dialogue, significant achievements have been recorded, aimed at installing accountability and transparency in governance. The NEITI bill was signed into law in 2003 and its application commenced in 2004. A coalition of CSOs play major roles in the NEITI process, notable among which are #Publish What You Pay and CISLAC. In operationalizing the NEITI process, CSOs are on the governing board of the National Stakeholders Working Group (NSWG). Also NEITI has a civil society steering committee in which CSOs and NEITI board are partners in the various outreach programmes and activities organized by it (Ekhaton, 2014). For example, CISLAC in collaboration with NEITI conducted a public perception survey in 2015 and made its report available to NEITI (NEITI, 2015).

Through the concerted efforts of a coalition of CSOs (namely #BudgIT, SERAP, CISLAC and the National Resource Governance Institute (NRGI), the Petroleum Industry Governance bill which is on the verge of being passed into law. The Whistleblower Protection bill, which clarifies the protections of persons who make disclosures about corruption and other infractions in government was also signed into law in 2017 (Itodo and D'Regan, 2018). The National Assembly was made to create and release a budget of its expenditure in 2017, for the first time in seven years through the efforts of the #Open NASS Campaign launched in 2013 by Enough is Enough with support from BudgIT and other CSOs.

On peaceful protest and negotiation to build pressure on the state for desired change, a coalition of CSOs along with the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress (TUC) have made significant impact in confronting the state to reverse unpopular and anti-citizen policies. One notable example that has united the citizens against the establishment is the fuel subsidy removal strikes. Given that the Nigerian economy is dependent on oil, attempts by government to deregulate the downstream sector have consistently met with disapproval from organized labour. While government decision is usually predicated on the unsustainability of subsidy on fuel, the citizens concern is on the consequential inflation and its severe impact on the existential conditions of the people. This form of engagement has forced government to observe circumspection in the governance of oil resources in Nigeria. The Figure below indicates trends in protest.



**Figure 3. Trends in Protest**

*Source:* Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) [www.acleddata.com](http://www.acleddata.com)

The most memorable of these protests was the January, 2012 mass action against government decision to remove fuel subsidy and the consequential increase in the price of transportation and food items (Jalade & Rafiu, 2014). The spread, coordination and resilience of the nationwide protests by a coalition of CSOs under the aegis of the NLC and TUC (which lasted for one week), took Nigeria to the precipice until government capitulated by reducing the increase from N141 to 97 per litre. In 2016, the government succeeded in increasing the price from N97 to N145. However, the confrontation that ensued led to the signing of MoU between Labour and the government on measures to cushion the predictable effects of such increase on the livelihood of ordinary Nigerians.

Civil society engagement with the state through voluntary participation in public service delivery is also becoming noticeable in some parts of the country. The Niger Delta region presents an exceptional case. Owing to the widespread environmental, developmental and resource distribution challenges, the region has witnessed the emergence of civil society groups of various descriptions, many of which are preoccupied with voluntary participation in public service delivery. CSOs involved in this volunteering are; communal, ethnic/regional civil groups, environmental activists, youth groups and community based organizations. The table below provides a list of selected CSOs and their engagements in the Niger Delta.

**Table 2. Selected CSOs and NGOs engaged in Voluntary Public Service Delivery in the Niger Delta**

Name	Activities	Projects	Funding Support	Partnerships/Collaborations
Ogoni Solidarity Forum	Enlightenment programmes, facilitation of economic empowerment through agricultural production	Enlightenment programmes on Aids/Malaria. Town hall meetings		CBOs in Ogoniland



Niger Delta Wetland Centre	Economic Empowerment through IT, agricultural production training	Natural Park and forest reserves. Training	MacArthur Foundation, EU, USAID, National	State Governments, LNG	Brass
LAPO Development Foundation	Socio-economic empowerment, Health care support, governance issues	Micro-credit projects, project executions, health programme	World Bank, MPP6, Ford Foundation, Oxfam Novib, Cordaid, EED (Germany), Development and Peace (Canada)	State government	
Community Partners for Development	Poverty Eradication/economic empowerment, Health care, Humanitarian assistance, community development	Community Development Projects, Relief for Displaced persons, Malaria/HIV/AIDS/STIs programmes	EU, Actionaid, World Bank, Global Rights, UNIFEM, UNDEV, OSIWA	State governments, Exxon-Mobil. Commission for Refugees	National
Institute For Human Rights and Humanitarian Law	Research/Documentation, Legal Services/Access to Justice, Economic Empowerment, governance, democracy and human rights etc	Councilors for peace programme, para-legal rights groups in Communities	Oxfam GB, DFID, TMG, British Council, MacArthur Foundation, National Endowment for Democracy	NGO/CBOs	
Niger Delta Citizens and Budget	Participation and dialogue in governance, promoting transparency	Training of community activists on	Revenue Watch, DFID,	Other NGO/CBOs	

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Platform	and accountability in governance	in budget execution and control, town hall meetings	USAID, National Democratic Institute
Women	Economic empowerment, health	Baseline studies, women health care awareness/support campaigns, women empowerment programmes micro credit schemes	Global State governments, TNOCs, funds, for other NGO/CBOs foundation, EZE (Germany)

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*Source:* CODEP Profile cited in Ikelegbe (2013), CPED Monograph Series No. 7

One aspect of civil society engagement with the state that has not been properly documented (perhaps because of its novelty) is Town Hall Meeting, which is gaining currency in the wake of the democratization process. A significant number of such meetings have taken place between the citizens and officials of the state at federal, state and local government levels. Specific examples of these meeting cannot be provided owing to paucity of data. However, this form of engagement is outstanding for two reasons. First, it provides an informal platform for citizens of diverse backgrounds and social pedigree to interact with their leaders on a variety of issues of governance that concern their existential wellbeing. Secondly, this form of engagement is not subject to the limitations, which have constrained the operations of organized civil society.

Some of these constraints stem from the argument that the conventional understanding of civil society is rooted in western practices and therefore incompatible with the socio-political realities of Third World societies in transition (Encarnacion, 2000). He maintains that “undeveloped political systems, overburden newly democratic governments and highly politicized populations” (Encarnacion, 2000, p. 3), are some of the obstacles extenuating the capacity of civil society to promote governance reforms. These parlous socio-political conditions have given rise to a general environment of violent conflicts, insecurity and widespread disaffection among citizens, which is not conducive for state-civil society engagement. In Nigeria for example, these constraints are further exacerbated by poor internal democracy, exogenous influence, elite domination, the tendency for CSOs to operate as business entity for economic gains and poor accountability and transparency (Ikelegbe, 2013).

## 6. Conclusion

The increasing involvement of the citizens’ sector in shaping public policy that affects their lives in

Nigeria is an indication that the learning curves in the democratization process have been overcome. Government on its part has come to terms with the reality of a unique feature of democratic governance which provides the institutional platform for citizens to express themselves and ventilate their queries. This interface is the highest form of democratic practice not so much because it offers citizens the opportunity to partake in steering state affairs, but more because of the inherent strength of democratic citizenship to counterbalance the state and (to borrow the words of Ernest Gellar, 1996, p. 1), “prevent it from dominating and atomizing the rest of society”. This inherent power of the citizens’ sector has challenged our conventional understanding of the nuances of governance. Thus, in the light of the rising profile of this third sector, contemporary governance is less oriented towards the state and more oriented to the citizens.

From the analysis and discussion in this paper, the implicit indivisibility of the state and market has been made obvious. While acknowledging the complementarities of their roles in the governance project, the inescapable conclusion is that they represent a dominant class interests that are well protected by the constitutional order of liberal democracies. However, the liberal political conditions that it engenders are enablers for the citizens/sector to project the interest of the rest of society. For Nigeria and many other societies in transition, this third sector has the potentials to change the governance narratives.

### **Recommendations**

In the light of issues discussed, arguments advanced and observation made, the following recommendations are put forward:

- i. An inclusive framework of governance that gives primacy to the citizens’ sector requires a political environment that is safe and secured. To this end, there is an urgent need for the Nigerian state to improve on the security situation in country. The open society that liberal democracy projects is not one populated by subversive elements nor is it one characterized by violent criminality. It is imperative on government to muster sufficient political will to deploy its coercive capacity to create safe and secured environment for citizens to promote governance reforms
- ii. Closely related to the foregoing is the ongoing military campaign against the Boko Haram insurgency in the North Eastern Nigeria. There is an urgent need for a review of strategy in order to de-emphasize the military contents of the counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency efforts of the federal government. The intractable nature of the war and the resilience of the Boko Haram terrorists’ organization require a non-kinetic approach to contain the menace. This approach should be anchored on a compassionate change of attitude and perception towards the insurgents. To this end, the Nigerian military should declare a quarterly amnesty corridor to be followed immediately with a combination of relief materials and moral suasion aimed at winning the hearts and minds of repentant insurgents (which is fundamental to the de-radicalization process).

- iii. The tripartite relationships that characterize this inclusive framework of governance should be governed by legislation. While the relationship between the state and market is regulated by extant law, no such law exists in the case of state-civil society relations. The absence of a governing law has made the interaction between the two stakeholders more adversarial than mutual. Therefore, a legislation is required to furnish the relationship with emphasis on the rights and obligations of civil society.
- iv. The Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on Civil Society is an indication that government is ready to collaborate with the citizens' sector. However, given the progress that has been recorded in the democratization process, the time has come to take this collaboration to the next level by means of an Executive bill for a law to provide the legal framework to institutionalize this collaboration. Such legal framework will spell out details of its operational autonomy, viability and influence within the socio-political environment
- v. Town hall meeting which is currently adhoc in nature should be made a permanent forum with predictable calendar of events. Government should also refrain from the tendency of using town hall meeting as a reactive measure to reach the people. Given its potentials to inform, sensitize and mobilize the people, town hall (in addition to transforming it to a permanent and regular forum), should be proactive to target the critical mass of the people.

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