

## **Democracy, Civil Society and Mass Action in Nigeria: A Case of Imo State General Elections 2011**

Luke Azubuike Amadi  
Department of Political Science and Administrative Studies,  
University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria

---

**Abstract:** Civil society involvement in governance and decision making processes in Nigeria's nascent democracy has been minimal. However, the voting pattern and behavior of the civil society groups in Imo State South Eastern Nigeria in the 2011 general elections, provides an evaluation of mass action. This was phenomenal in historic and comparative terms as it was triggered by the abuse of political power by the state government in the period 2007-2010. The situation was the nexus of a near anarchy, oppression, poverty and inequality. Its crescendo was replicated in the arbitrary increase in students school fees, fall of ethical standards in governance, physical assault, arrogance, abusive language, violation of human rights, absence of security of lives and property, high cost of living, deprivation, non accountability and zero sum politics which had an obvious implication for mass poverty and elite domination. The state largely operated on one form of informal social relationship or linkage rather than a society of citizens. Only a credible election could avail the civil society the opportunity to exercise their civic rights and effect a change of government. This study seeks to examine the mass action by the civil society (formal and non formal) groups in Imo State in the 2011 general elections and its implication for democracy in Nigeria.

**Key words:** Civil society, democracy, mass action, election, political participation, governance, Imo State, Nigeria

---

### **INTRODUCTION**

Liberal democracy has given greater impetus to the issue of civil society. Civil society and democracy interface in the developing countries is apt, especially in plural society like Nigeria. Although, weak political institutionalization and civil society are two major socio-political factors affecting democracy in the developing countries. However, in his book *Democracy in Plural Societies* Arend Lijphart in Joseph (1991) argued that it is difficult to achieve and maintain stable democratic government. He mirrored the views of J.S. Mill-classic theorists of liberal government and Smith (1969) modern social anthropologist to demonstrate assumptions about the cultural barriers to democracy: free institutions are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities: cultural diversity or pluralism automatically imposes the structural necessities for domination by one of the cultural sections. It necessitates non democratic regulation of group relationship (Joseph, 1991). In analyzing democracy-civil society interface, the modernization theorists conceive the developing countries as particularistic rather than universalistic which corroborate the weak civil society thesis as they could not assert meaningful relevance in

governance or influence decision making. In the 60s much of this strand was replicated in the works of Almond and Verber (1965) as they identified three major typologies of political culture namely; subject, participant and parochial. To them, the developing countries fall within the parochial political culture due largely to their non active involvement in major political participation and decisions. The modernization theory has been largely criticized by third world scholars as being misguided in understanding the patterns of politics in multiethnic or plural societies like Nigeria for instance Okwudiba Nnoli argued that the failure of the perspective of modernization theory to explain ethnicity is admitted but its theoretical consequences are not accepted. This failure is not caused by any inherent characteristics of ethnicity but by the inadequacies of the perspective itself. This view point has been unwilling or unable to investigate rigorously the impact of the nature of the socio-economic and political structures of society on the emergence and persistence of ethnicity (Nnoli, 1980). Perhaps a more suitable analysis on pattern of political participation in a plural society which advocates equal representation is the notion on politics as a zero sum game, this finds relevance in the writings of Lewis (1965). When he argued that Plural societies cannot function peaceably if politics is regarded

as a zero-sum game which functions according to the erroneous definition that majority is entitled to rule over the minority (Joseph, 1991). Nigeria since, its nascent democracy in the late 90s, falls within the zero sum classification. The ruling Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) dominates the political landscape.

However, Eastern Nigeria has a long history of non formal civil society groups which predates the colonial contacts, its egalitarian and republican structure gave primacy to associational life such as cooperatives, thrift associations, volunteerism and kinship ties which have been strong. The Umunna (kinsmen), Umuada (daughters), Umuokorobia (youths), Ogbako (central meeting), Ebiri (the age grade), Mmanwu (masquerade cult) and women cooperatives are the nucleus of the society. The Umunna (kinsmen) make the laws in consultation with the oracle priests and elders, the age grades enforce it with the youths either through sanctions or imposition of fines to defaulters.

Post Tocquevillian scholars such as Robert Putnam share similar line of thought when they examine the ways individuals relate to each other and their society in explaining why democratic regimes function well. According to Putnam associations broaden the participants sense of self, developing the I into the we. Networks of civic engagement, meanwhile, foster sturdy norms of generalized reciprocity and encourage the emergence of social trust which help resolve dilemmas of collective action and smooth economic and political negotiations (Putnam, 1993; Berman 1997). For Putnam almost any type of secondary association will serve these functions as long as it is not organized around vertical bonds of authority and dependency.

Such secondary association was found during the Aba women riot in the late 20s which was one of the foremost civil society revolution in Nigeria and the secession of Biafra in the late 60s (The Aba women riot of 1929 was symbolic in analyzing the first female revolution in colonial Nigeria which involved market women who revolted against the colonial government on imposition of taxes to women. One of the leaders of the revolution was Margaret Ekpo a female activist). The 1990s witnessed a significant trend in analyzing civil society activities in post civil war Nigeria. Perhaps Imo State provides one of the most active civil society in recent history following the violent mass revolution in the 1990s known as the Otokoto saga where the civil society revolutionized against the dubious novel rich in Owerri and burnt down several houses and properties including the palace of an influential traditional ruler Eze (Dr.) Onuegwu Nwoke, Ezeoha 1 of Ihitaoha Uratta and a hotelier called Otokoto (In the 1990s there was civil

revolution in Owerri popularly called the Otokoto saga where many houses of the dubious novel rich were burnt down by aggrieved oppressed civil society including the palace of his Royal Highness Eze (Dr.) Onuegwu Nwoke Ezeoha 1 of Ihita Oha Uratta. See Dr. Chucks Osuji's book, Imo; revolution at noon).

However, in the context of electoral revolution, civil society activities have been minimal. The June 12, 1993 presidential election witnessed an enormous civil unrest following the annulment of the election. The outcome of the civil agitation though ineffectual as there was neither a revolution nor enthronement of Chief MKO Abiola acclaimed winner of the annulled elections as President, made a symbolic impact in the annals of Nigeria. Equally there was mass action in 1995 of minority extraction resulting from the execution of the Ogoni environmental activist and MOSOP leader, Ken Saro Wiwa (The execution of Environmental rights activist Ken Saro Wiwa in 1995 under the General Abacha military junta resulted minority tension amongst the Ogoni ethnic group of Nigeria).

Civil society activities is pervasive among the Christian South than the Muslim North. The inclusion of Nigeria in the membership of Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) (The inclusion of Nigeria in the organization of Islamic country in 1986 by the General Babangida Administration, arguably furthered Islamizing the Northern Nigeria. However, as a circular nation, it has been an issue of contention among the Muslim North and non Muslim South) in 1986 perhaps intensified Islamizing the North with Sharia and Boko Haram a sect which further diminish political awareness, citizenship education and political participation in the Muslim North. However, a few informal civil associations exist in the North such as the Hisbah vigilante committees which were set up in the 2000s to promote compliance with Shari'a also the Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) a pro Hausa socio-cultural and political organization among others. In South Western Nigeria civil society groups such as pro-democracy associations like National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), Committee for Democracy (CD), Afenifere, etc. are in existence. Like Hisbah in Northern Nigeria, O'odu Peoples Congress (OPC) was founded in 1994 in the aftermath of the annulment of Abiola's election as president, it quickly grew into a mass movement, promoting and defending Yoruba interests by means that included violence, feelings of alienation ran particularly high in Yoruba land and were reflected in the O'odua Bill of rights which advocated a sort of confederal arrangement within which all Yorubas would form a distinct political unit and called for a national conference to determine Nigeria's future. The OPC was banned in late

1999 when it became clear that the election of Obasanjo, a Yoruba had done nothing to soothe anger over the 1993 annulment. The OPC's organizational strength has ebbed away, though popular support for what is politically promoted as the Yoruba cause remains strong. In the South East, since the turn of the century, an even more radical and overtly secessionist program Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB). Its members use the uniforms of the former Biafran police force, hoist the old separatist flag and circulate maps showing the boundaries of an independent Biafra (Crisis Group Africa Report in 2006). Pan Ibo socio-cultural association Oha na Eze ndigbo, Ibo State Union, etc. In the Middle Belt region there is United Middle Belt Group (UMBG).

In the South/South, minority agitation has given rise to the emergence of civil society groups such as Ijaw National Congress (INC), Ijaw Youth Movement (IYM), Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), there is equally pro militant associations such as Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) (The inclusion of Nigeria in the organization of Islamic country in 1986 by the General Babangida Administration, arguably furthered Islamizing the Northern Nigeria. However as a circular nation, it has been an issue of contention among the Muslim North and non Muslim South).

Recent studies and debates on civil society in pre and post amnesty Niger Delta has shown a rejuvenated drive with the resurgence of groups such as Bakkassi boys in Eastern Nigeria, Ugbesu boys in the Niger Delta region predominantly of Ijaw ethnic group, various militant groups in the oil rich Niger Delta region. Though the militancy in the region has ebbed at the aftermath of the federal government amnesty deal, its ideological underpinnings remain pervasive.

## **MATERIALS AND METHODS**

This research approached the issue of mass action in Imo State by starting with situations related to governance, civil society and democracy in Imo State and traced the origin of the present practices and related problems. It used survey research method and approached the problem by selecting and studying samples selected from the population to discover the relative incidence, distribution and interrelations among the variables. Both primary and secondary sources of data collection were used in this study. Secondary sources included text book extracts, articles, national and state Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

reports, published interviews, journals, newspapers, internet materials and data from Bureau of statistics. While primary source of data collection was through the use of interviews with leaders of civil society groups like MASSOB. The tentative sites of field gathering are the selected polling booths in the three geopolitical zones in Imo State, namely Owerri, Orlu and Okigwe zones.

**The political economy of Imo State:** Imo State was created on February 3, 1976 from the former East Central State. Located in South Eastern part of Nigeria, it covers an area of about 5,530 km<sup>2</sup> (<http://www.imostate.gov.ng>) bounded with Anambra State in the West, Enugu and Ebonyi States in the North, Abia and Rivers States in the South, Cross Rivers and Akwa Ibom States in the East. Imo is from the Igbo extraction which is one of the three major ethnic groups in Nigeria. It is geographically composed of three major senatorial zones namely; Owerri, Orlu and Okigwe zones. It has about twenty seven local government areas. The common language is Ibo. The name is derived from the biggest river in the state, Imo. Largely agrarian with rich vegetation, in places like Ohaji the food basket of the state, Imo is blessed with fertile land the people produce staple crops like yam, cassava, maize, plantain, etc. Before the civil war their major food was pounded yam.

With massive hunger and poverty arising from the aftermath of the civil war, the seed yams were eaten. This transformed the people to major producers of cassava and consumers of garri. There are vegetables and palm produce in commercial quantities through village co-operatives, palm wine is also in abundance in most rural communities. Imo contributes about 2% of national oil revenue. Beyond oil there are other natural resources such as lead, zinc, copper, limestone, fine sand and natural gas, etc. Owerri the state capital is a peaceful and serene city reputed the cleanest city in the federation in the 80s. The work force is predominantly civil servants, a few traders and artisans. Christianity dominates other religion in the state. Imo has a population of about 3,934,899 million persons (2006 estimate in <http://www.imostate.gov.ng>). It is among one of the most politically active states in Nigeria. Major legacies and development strides in the state was set by its second Republic Governor, the late Chief Sam Onunaka Mbakwe (Chief Sam Onunaka Mbakwe remains the pacesetter governor of Imo State. The major development projects in the state are credited to his administration between 1979 till the military coup of 1983 that ousted them in office).

**Civil society and patterns of politics in Imo State:** Nigeria's nascent democracy has not delivered much

dividends due to domination of the state by only one political party namely; the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Ake argued that state in Africa increasingly assumes class character. With weak opposition, economic development has been minimal. This gave rise to under representation, institutional decay, mass impoverishment, decline in GDP per person. Mathew Hassan Kukah has studied civil society in the context of Nigeria's plural and divergent ethnic affinities. In a similar line of thought Samuel Huntington points out that societies with highly active and mobilized publics and low levels of political institutionalization often degenerate into instability, disorder and even violence (Huntington, 1968). This segmented pattern of governance negates popular will. Which J.J. Roseau equated to the will of all in his social contract by Aligning the general will to the will of all. The general will which is the ethical end reflects the true interest of mankind as presented to society and it is an end that society can be forced to embrace as their own real end if in their ignorance they are opposed to the general will (Roseau, 1950). Thus, the dearth of social contract seemingly purport the suppression of the popular will which perhaps negates the ideals of liberal democracy.

Imo at this era provides a correlate of real or imagined elite suppression of the legitimization of active civil society through subtle or obvious co-option, deprivation, intimidation, spoils system, adopted by the elite hegemonic forces. This singular trend was played out by the ruling Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) in Imo State in the period 2007-2010. Which held sway in every facet of the government in power.

### **Operationalization of concepts**

**Civil society:** There are of course, divergent conceptualizations of civil society within the broader literature. However, two major theoretical strands dominate arguments on civil society namely; the Neo Marxist and the Neo Liberal school. A brief on these perspectives and their corresponding relevance to this study is pertinent. From the neo liberal scholars such as civil society refers to that sphere of voluntary associations and informal networks in which individuals and groups engage in activities of public consequence. It is distinguished from the public activities of government because it is voluntary and from the private activities of markets because it seeks common ground and public goods. It is often described as the third sector. For democratic societies, it provides an essential link between citizens and the state. Civil society includes voluntary associations of all sorts: churches, neighborhood organizations, cooperatives, fraternal and sororal

organizations, charities, unions, parties, social movements, interest groups and families. The inclusion of the family among those forms of social interaction between economy and state yields the broadest definition of civil society. The boundaries are defined variously in the theoretical literature and there is profound ambiguity in a critical analysis of this phenomenon with enormous implications for state-civil society relations. The increasing relevance of civil society in modern democracies is worth considering in the broader conceptualizations on civil society. There is for instance the cooperative and collaborative strands of the liberal view which operates within the micro (family/individual level) to the macro (institutional/community/corporative level). Civil society thus operates within formal (NGOs, FBOs, CBOs) and non formal (volunteer, family, associational) basis (Tocqueville, 1945; Walzer, 1969; Schambra, 1994; Diamond, 1994). In fact the basis for civil society according to Walzer is commitment to equality and new forms of state action and support for the building of democratic association (Walzer, 1969). This singular notion becomes sacrosanct in analyzing the resilience of the civil society in Imo State in exercising and defending their civic rights.

The civil reconstructivism theorists an offshoot of the Neo Marxist perspective have advanced their views on the civil society as a critique of the conservative theorist when they argued that it's up to civil society to address the social problems (Schambra, 1994) that the project of the modern progressive liberal state is to eradicate civil society and to transfer its functions to government. It does so in the name of restoring community, understood as national community. This perspective also poses hard questions for conservatives who utilize the argument that it's up to civil society as the conclusion, rather than the beginning of the challenge of how to recreate civil society where it has collapsed, retreated or never formed (Schambra, 1994). The feminist and populist boundaries for expanding civil society and democratic ideals have been advanced in the views of (Evans and Boyte, 1992) in theorizing on seemingly revival of civil society (Cohen and Arato) developed a model for civil society with emphasis on ethics and new Social Movement theory, rather than community building and other forms of civic practice. Also the more radical neo Marxist conceptualizations on civil society predominantly emerged from the works of Gramsci. Their central focus on civil society is articulated on ideological hegemony evolving from the two dominant classes in the society namely the elites and non elites. The basis of their analysis is inequality under which the struggle persists. According to Kabeer *et al.* (2010), the work of Gramsci

offers a more complex account of civil society associations, one that does not view them as inherently democratic. He pointed out that the resilience of the capitalist ruling class lay in its capacity to control through consent as much as coercion. While the state might use coercive tactics to defend the ruling order, civil society was the realm where consent of the ruled was constructed and contested through the struggle for ideological hegemony.

**Democracy:** Whereas the traditional perspective on the concept of democracy and its root meaning as rule by the people evolving from two Greek words *Demos* meaning people and *Cratis* meaning rule, remains relevant to this study, its relationship to African context is not farfetched. In Africa, traditional African democracy was a system of government in which the society or community protected the rights and provided the needs of the people. Due to pattern of social interaction, conditioned by the extended family system, no African could starve while his kinsmen are well off (Alapiki, 2000). At the conceptual level a broader analysis on existing literature on the concept is ambiguous, often profound and multivariate. What we seek to do here is an insight into the relevance of the concept to the subject matter. The Democracy civil-society interface has been found relevant both in the views of Neo-Marxist and Neo-liberal scholars (Marx, Gramsci, Tocqueville, Diamonds, Putnam) among others. The Neo-Tocquevilleans such as Robert Putnam argue that civil society is crucial to making democracy work (Putnam, 1993). Democracy did not need a harmonious civil society to take root but it did require a basic civility of manners in the conduct of everyday life: the possibility of dialogue across divergent if not opposed, ideas and interests and a certain inner acceptance of equality as the basis of social interchange (Beteille, 2000; Kabeer *et al.*, 2010).

Liberal democracy which is most favored in contemporary debates on democracy has been amply evaluated in the works of neo liberal theorists (Locke, 1952; Mill, 1955; Dahl, 1971; MacPherson, 1974; Lijphart, 1965; Diamond, 1994; Joseph, 1991). The common thread of this debate is democratic institutionalization (freedom, equality, constitutionalism, majoritarianism, choice) democratic socialism (associational, consociational, organization), demo-economy (free market, choice, competition, value augmentation, profit maximization, etc.) its fundamental truss is liberalism as demonstrated in the views of C.B MacPherson when he argued that before democracy came to the West, there existed a society and politics of choice, a society and politics of market, a

society and politics of competition, this is the liberal society and the state. However, the fears of majoritarianism in democracy has been expressed in the works of James Mill as he feared so much the abuse of power by those who controlled the weapon of majority rule that he portrayed even elected governments as consisting of potential predators who would govern in their own interest and contrary to that of the people unless they could be kept in check by frequent replacement through elections (Joseph, 1991; Mill, 1955). For De Tocqueville as well (Kabeer *et al.*, 2010) democracy was more than a political system. It was above all a social system whose success depended on good customs as well as good laws. De Tocqueville used the concept of custom to encompass what he called the habits of the heart: these referred to the mores and manners of daily life as well as to the notions, opinions and ideas which make up the character of people's minds. Enacting the right laws would amount to very little if habits of the heart that had evolved in the context of feudal or caste-ridden societies remained unchanged.

Civil society includes voluntary associations of all sorts: churches, neighborhood organizations, cooperatives, fraternal and sororal organizations, charities, unions, parties, social movements, interest groups and families. The inclusion of the family among those forms of social interaction between economy and state yields the broadest definition of civil society. The boundaries are defined variously in the theoretical literature and there is profound ambiguity in a critical analysis of this phenomenon with enormous implications for state-civil society relations. However, there is increasing relevance of civil society in modern democracies and it is worth considering in the broader conceptualizations on civil society. New dimensions of civil society and volunteerism are emerging in the developing countries, the GSM phone and the Information Communication Technology revolution (ICT) has given new impetus to networking and new socialization. Community radios are emerging in the developing countries. According to Robert Chambers an early example is community radio now so wide spread that there reported to be 20 such stations in the Cape Town area alone. Children's radio followed in Ghana (Lamptey, 1998; Chambers, 2010) and elsewhere.

**Election:** The conceptualization of electoral behavior in Nigeria is a complex endeavor due to the complexity of elections in the country. The fact remains that elections are a part of the evolution of the Nigerian Political System (Alapiki, 2000). Election is a component of democracy. Democracy pursues popular participation, a fundamental

means for actualizing this popular participation is election which legitimizes the emergence of a government. The term election has been used in various parlance. Its motive force is the procedural emergence of political office seekers. At the conceptual level it is the process of choosing leaders in an organised political setting. The issue of choice plays central role in election which makes it democratic and non autocratic as well as the aggregation of such choices into effective electoral results. In other words election goes beyond mere choosing of leaders or representatives, it translates to the gamut of processes which the votes under go before final electoral results are released this underscores the nature and classification of election either as free, fair, credible, etc. This is reinforced in the views of (Mackenzie, 1972; Alapiki, 2000). Elections are institutionalized procedures for the choosing of office holders by some or all of the recognized members of an organization.

**Mass action:** In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*: Marx Weber wrote that capitalism evolved when the Protestant ethic influenced large number of people to create their own enterprises and engage in trade and gathering of wealth. In other words, the Protestant ethic was a force behind an unplanned and uncoordinated mass action that led to the development of capitalism. For the purpose of this study, mass action means a general reaction by the civil society (formal and non formal) on policy issues by government or its agencies. It is public opinion acted out either by majority of the civil society or aggrieved section of the civil society. It includes mass protests, demonstrations, strikes, mass voting for or against a party or a candidate in an election, mass apathy (group withdrawal from political participation), election boycott, political mob action, etc.)

It is a reaction to socio-political or economic phenomenon in the society which is not in the majority interest and welfare. Sociologists have used the concept to refer to the situations where a large number of people behave simultaneously in a similar way but individually and without coordination. Mass action demonstrates the collective rejection or acceptance of political decisions, government policy initiatives and programmes by a section or the entire civil society. It could be peaceful or non violent (peaceful demonstrations, strikes, etc.) or violent like mob action, riots, etc. such as violent anti-apartheid protests in the apartheid era in South Africa, the mass action against genocide in Rwanda, Sudan and terrorist attack in Somalia, the mass action against bad governance in Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco and Libya, etc.

**Civil society and operational strategies in Imo State:** Understanding the strategies and mode of operation of

the civil society groups in effecting a change of government in Imo is central in this study. This could be made easier with an overview of an historic analysis on the Ibo politics with its egalitarian and village based feature as demonstrated by one of its scholars Ibekwe Walter Ofonagoro here:

In an egalitarian society characterized by the dispersal of authority among the elders and heads of families of a mosaic of autonomous and sovereign village groups, there was no central machinery for the maintenance of law and order. Within the village itself, effective sanctions existed for the suppression of anti-social behavior other punishment of serious breaches of the law. The power of the village group was not based on the possession of any standing or ad-hoc military machine or even on the rights of the means of coercion but rather on the consensus of the village composing the village group (Ofonagoro, 1979)

The role of this consensus of the village has been central in Igbo politics. Nigerian Sociologist Oshomha Imoagene has amply examined Ibo politics and its uncentralized structure when he argued that the uncentralized political tradition sometimes referred to by scholars as stateless can be further subdivided into three types depending on environmental influence from immediate neighbours. This variant of uncentralized systems which included government by: Segmentary Lineage System; age grade organization; title associations and secret societies (Imoagene, 1990). According to Adiele Afigbo a political community for Ibo was the union of living blood relatives, the dead relatives and the gods of the community a sort of spiritual common wealth (Afigbo, 1973). At the advent of western education, exceptional children were trained through an apparent common wealth replicated in corporative and sell of palm produce through collectivization and distant trades which facilitated highly self reliant republican polity.

Post Tocquevillean such as Putnam promotes the idea of civil society as the social capital of a nation, generating norms, trust and networks that can be harnessed for collective action in the interests of the wider society. Much of these trust and networks necessitated collaborative efforts of the civil society groups in Imo as they used certain strategies including slogan such as the okorokoo (Okorokooo, the cock usually crows at dawn, this onomatopoeic aphorism was used by the members and supporters of the All Progressives Grand Alliance APGA in line with their party

symbol which is a cock) which implies cock crows, complimenting cock, the symbol of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), there were building of alliances and networks for instance MASSOB recruited a greater number of youths in the state who fostered their ideology at the ward, LGA and state levels, there were road shows by Imo Youth Front (IYF) and Imo Students' Union (ISU) in the three geopolitical zones, slogans, mantra, peer group linkages, press conferences, jingles, posters, placards and souvenirs of their party of preference and candidates of choice were flaunted. This tremendously intensified political participation.

All over Owerri okokorokoo (the cock crows) became a popular mantra used mainly by market women and keke (keke this is tricycle commonly used by local commuters in most municipal areas in Nigeria. It is part of the National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP) of President Obasanjo) drivers. Also ardent APGA supporters such as MASSOP claimed to be part of the rescue mission agenda-the political dictum of Rochas Okorocha. Taxi drivers equally brandished APGA posters and stickers on their cars, Imo Students Union had a solidarity demonstration in support of APGA wearing party crested t-shirts, hoisting APGA flag, posters, crest and stickers. Importantly PDP supporters and supporters of other parties were equally visible in the state but not as overwhelming as APGA's.

Putnam successfully argued that not only did the density of local associational life contribute to political stability and good governance but it was as essential to growth as investment, technology and competitive market forces (Putnam, 1993). It is his ideas that underpin a great deal of the positive discourse about civil society that characterize international development (Diamond, 1994; Kabeer *et al.*, 2010).

### **The rise and fall of the Ohakim Administration**

**2007-2010:** The Ohakim Administration was heralded with high expectations having emerged against a seeming background of PDP domination. Although, the administration did well in areas of transportation as it provided keke (tricycle) for local commuters, provided portable water in some areas such as Egbu near Owerri and some rural areas in the state, beefed up the government house and put in place a new multi purpose hall which was near completion in new Owerri, rehabilitated a few roads in the state such as dualization of Egbu, Orji and Akwakuma roads which are the major adjoining suburbs to Owerri municipal. Roads were tarred in new Owerri axis down to the World Bank housing estate. An environmental project called the clean and

green project was introduced by the administration. Feeder roads like Ohaji/Egbema/Oguta roads, however were not rehabilitated.

Subsequently and contrary to popular expectation, Chief Ohakim deflected to the PDP. It is important to briefly explain the pattern of prebendal politics that transpired between Chief Ohakim and the national leader and founder of Progressive Peoples' Alliance (PPA), Chief Orji Uzor Kalu, the political party that gave him the gubernatorial ticket. This will be better understood in analyzing his pattern of political appointment and governance structure.

**Patterns of political appointments:** Shortly on assumption of office, it was alleged that major contracts and civil engineering works in the state were awarded to ZEROCK. Construction Company purportedly owned by Chief Orji Uzor Kalu. Which falls within prebendal politics (Joseph, 1991). However, wary of the majority of the PDP members in Imo State House of Assembly and to avert the imminent danger of impeachment, Chief Ohakim deflected to the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).

In terms of his pattern of political appointments, Chief Ohakim appointed his younger brother Mr. Emma Ohakim, Chief of Staff for the state, In loyalty, Mr. Cosmas Iwu younger brother to the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) Chairman Professor Maurice Iwu from the same zone (Okigwe) with Chief Ohakim was appointed Secretary to the State Government (SSG). Among other similar patronages and loyalty to the hegemonic political elite in Imo State. This could be shown in Table 1.

### **Remote and immediate factors that triggered the mass**

**action (remote factors):** To contextualize the performance of the Ohakim administration into a coherent historical analysis is plausible in appreciating the strategic out play

Table 1: Structure of political appointment of the Chief Ohakim Administration reflecting zero sum politics

Name	Position	Political party
Ada Okwuonu, later	Deputy Governor	PDP
Viola Onwuliri		
Cosmas Iwu	Secretary to the State Government	PDP
Emma Ohakim	Chief of Staff	PDP
Prince Vincent	Commissioner for Industry	PDP
Ibenye Ugbala		
Ken Njemanze	Commissioner for Justice	PDP
Longers Anyanwu	Commissioner for Agriculture	PDP
Aloysius Aguwa	Commissioner for Environment	PDP
Chuma Nnaji	Commissioner for Culture	PDP
Dr. Amanze Obi	Commissioner for Information	PDP
Barr. Okewulonu	Commissioner for Works	PDP
Prof. Nnamdi Obiareri	Commissioner for Finance	PDP
Researcher's analysis		

of mass action by the civil society in Imo elections. This could be categorized industrially, educationally, socially, economically and psychologically. Industrially no capital project was embarked upon, the Imo Wonder Lake Project at Oguta Lake aimed to maximize the tourism potential of the state, failed. Existing industries could not be rehabilitated such as Imo Modern Poultry Avutu reputed the largest in West Africa, the Imo Concorde Hotel could barely generate visible revenue to the state as it was on lease, Adapalm-Imo Palm Produce Company was barely rejuvenated. The Imo leather and shoe tanning industry remained non functional, consolidated breweries (the only brewery in the state) was not in direct management and ownership of the state. This poor state of industries resulted job loss and high unemployment rate. Ironically few months to end of his tenure. The Ohakim administration advertised ten thousand jobs which was largely seen as a strategy for re-election, a major factor was the use of two thousand naira by applicants for online job application (which some analysts argued was exorbitant for unemployed Imo graduates).

Poverty rate rose from 55% in 2007 to 85% in 2009 while unemployment rate rose from 75% in 2007 to 90% in 2010 with 27% drop out from university education in the state (Field Work, 2010). A sharp fall in education ensued due to increase in university students' school fees, its multiplier effect whittled down the standard of education. Imo is among the most educationally developed states in Nigeria. This did not go down well with the students who had a peaceful demonstration and it all fall on deaf ears as the school was later shut down. In the Governor's own words education is not meant for the children of the poor.

To further fuel disgust was the shoddy removal of the Vice Chancellor of the university Professor Anwuka (There was dissension between the former Vice Chancellor of Imo State University Professor Anwuka and Chief Ohakim The Executive Governor of Imo State perhaps due to the increase in students school fees and subsequently the removal of Anwuka as the Vice Chancellor of the University. Also Chief Ohakim renamed the institution after a former Governor of the State Evan Enwerem) from office as he opposed the increment in students' school fees. The salaries of the lecturers were withheld for the period of the closure of the institution. There was avoidable delay in payment of workers' salaries. Imo which is largely a civil servant state faced economic hardship in this regard. Poor economic policy and high cost of living, especially the vulnerable pensioners who were not paid made life difficult. Social welfare was poor as basic amenities were in disrepute, power supply remained epileptic.

The local and national media heightened the awareness of the civil society, prominent was banner headline stories of the leader newspaper a publication of the Owerri Catholic Diocese, the leadership newspaper, the daily trust, national vanguard, etc. Assorted cars and gifts were lavished on Imo PDP elders this further impoverished the Imo mass. Thus, a new agitation emerged between the old and new breeds.

The Ikiri and Ewi episode (Chief Ohakim described himself as Ikiri in a political rally in Emekuku near Owerri and also Ewi in another rally in Ngorkpala and he became popularly known and referred to as same) are most pertinent factors in analyzing the personality and style of Chief Ohakim's politics. Likening himself to Ikiri in Ibo, means a particular kind of animal in the local parlance which does not easily give up on any object it lays its hands. Literarily meaning that there was no vacancy in the government house. In another circle Chief Ohakim described himself as Ewi which in English means bush rat, explaining that he burrows and has alternative routes of escape incase the enemy dares to dig its tunnel. These remarks fuelled disgust as it was not well received by various groups in the state who have been instrumental in the broader Nigerian politics.

**The immediate factors:** The Achilles heel of the Chief Ohakim's administration was perhaps the physical assault on a catholic priest by the Governor's convoy and the subsequent denial of the act by the Executive Governor and Chief Security Officer of the State. This triggered off cynical remarks about the administration. As a reaction and solidarity, the catholic community had a peaceful demonstration around Owerri metropolis against the government with placards and in black attire on a certain Friday evening which became known as the black Friday (Owerri the capital of Imo State is a catholic arc diocese. The assault by security details of Chief Ohakim and Chief Ohakim's denial of same, triggered resentment by the catholic community who voted massively against his administration).

Catholic faithful in neighboring towns such as Orlu and Okigwe (Chief Ohakim's zone) showed similar resentment. Beyond this was the impact of the Catholics from the neighboring states for example the venerated Rev. Ejike Mbaka (Also was Rev Father Ejike Mbaka who has a worship centre in Enugu called the Adoration centre, his sermon contributed in conscientizing the civil society against the Ohakim Administration) who runs a large Catholic Ministry, The Adoration Ministry with well >3,000 faithful, preached a sermon with the incident. Evening masses and novena for a change of government were said. This heightened civil society anxiety and



contributed to the growing desire for a change of government. More importantly was the rise in social awareness as the institutional structure of governance was not faring any better, the opposition to the administration heightened.

For example Mr. Bob Njemanze (The visit of the first lady of Nigeria to Owerri in the electioneering campaign of Chief Ohakim was seen as a strategy to garner the support of Imo people, especially women the already waned fame of the administration. Also at the instance of the elections, Chief Ohakim bought assorted cars and gave to the old breed politicians in Imo State Imo PDP elders which did not go down well with the youths) of Owerri municipal granted press interview and decried the performance of the administration. Also important here was the poor welfare scheme. The Suspension of Capt. Emmanuel Ihenacho as Minister for Interior was a clog in the Ohakim administration. The national assembly election unveiled a peculiar trend among Imo politicians that pointed to an emerging new direction. Governor Ikedi Ohakim of Imo state and Ambassador Kema Chikwe, both of the ruling People's Democratic Party (PDP) had played into the hands of the opposition political parties by either omission or commission through series of perceived political misdeeds, miscalculation and misconception that had set the stage for an inevitable humiliation of the ruling party in the state. For some reasons, Ohakim did not get the spanking many expected but it was not the same for Ambassador Kema Chikwe who was resoundingly trashed in her senatorial bid for Imo East senatorial zone (Leadership Newspaper, April 28, 2011).

Since, this electoral outcome, Ohakim and Chikwe heaped the blame of their loss of the state capital to the All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) on Captain Emmanuel Ihenacho, the Honourable Minister for Interior, now on suspension by the presidency. But many analysts hold this was simply unimaginative buck-passing (Leadership Newspaper, April 28, 2011). Common knowledge that but interestingly, Ihenacho has over the years defined himself. His track record stands straight with long pedigree. It is common knowledge that his nomination for ministerial position was openly contested and antagonized by Imo state government. His present appointment was out of the goodwill of President Goodluck Jonathan himself. Still not done with seeking to upstage Ihenacho, the state government through the Imo State House of Assembly had passed a motion calling on President Goodluck Jonathan to sack Captain Ihenacho from his cabinet for unclear reasons (Leadership Newspaper, April 28, 2011).

During the live monitoring of the National Assembly election by radio Nigeria heartland FM, Owerri Ihenacho

had been interviewed on the adequacy of security arrangement for the exercise. He had assured Imo people that adequate security measures were in place to ensure a hitch-free exercise and enjoined them to go out en masse to vote for candidates of their choice. But unknown to the minister his stamen riled Ohakim who allegedly called the Director-General of FRCN demanding for a stop of the live coverage in the state and for good measures, threw his weight around as the state Chief Executive compelling operatives of State Security Services (SSS) to storm the station and stop the live coverage of the election (Leadership Newspaper, April 28, 2011).

The suspension of Capt. Ihenacho fuelled disgust especially among youths from Owerri home zone of the Minister. Despite denials by Chief Ohakim, irate youths from Emekuku in Owerri North LGA demonstrated in protest and solidarity for the Minister. Ihenacho was believed to be one of the most credible Nigerian Ministers in the federal cabinet, he trained overseas. An analyst captured the scenario this way:

Governor Ikedi Ohakim of Imo State may have shot himself in the foot, amongst other miscalculations with his role in the suspension of the interior Minister, Capt. Emmanuel Ihenacho by the presidency on the eve of the gubernatorial election (Leadership Newspaper, April 28, 2011)

It should equally be observed that Chief Ohakim had a severed relationship with his immediate predecessor Chief Achike Udenwa as recounted here:

It could be recalled that in the recent past Ohakim also led Chief Emmanuel Iwuanwu, the Speaker of the of the State Assembly and a handful of hungry monarchs to Aso Rock to pitch for the sack for the sack then Minister for Commerce, Chief Achike Udenwa. Not too long ago, Ohakim had also prevailed on the Imo State House of Assembly to move a motion urging Jonathan to sack the Minister of Interior. These successive plots had failed until after last Tuesday night when Ohakim cancelled all his appointments in Imo State to celebrate the President's victory at the Presidential Villa (Leadership Newspaper, April 28, 2011)

**The 2011 Imo general elections Ohakim, strategy and alignment:** The conceptualization of electoral behavior in Nigeria is a complex endeavor due to the complexity of elections in the country. The fact remains that elections are a part of the evolution of the Nigerian political system (Alapiki, 2000). The governorship aspirants included; Hon. Emeka Nwajiuba (CPC), Rochas Okorocha-All

Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), Senator Ifeany Ararume ACN, Chief Ikedi Ohakim (PDP) Egbuna Collins. I. ALP, Lemchi Beneth Chukwu ANPP, Scholastic C. Emereole HMP, Samuel Chigozie Uwandu APS, Okoronkwo Ugahi Precious BNPP, Ihenacho Chigozie Gerald CDC, Chukwuemeka Uwa Nwajiuba CPC, Francis Nnanyereugo Onanaji DFPF, Robert Opara PPP, Chikere Chinedu Denis FPN, Ihemadu Ahumonye Nkemdika FRESH, Akomas Benart Chukwudi LP. The major slogan on Chief Ohakim's bill board and poster was lets do more. However, Chief Ohakim devised strategic plans for re-emergence as governor of Imo State in the 2011 elections such as the visit of the first lady (Bob Njemanze is among the Owerri progressives who were dissatisfied with the patterns of governance of Chief Ohakim and was vocal in making his opinion known in public circles) of the federation Dame Jonathan to Owerri and her appeal for support and vote for PDP using Ibo dialect. Chief Ohakim lavished gifts and cars to the acclaimed Imo PDP elders a few days to the election, again the administration organized what they termed ten thousand job which was introduced a few weeks to the end of his tenure for youth employment in the state.

#### **Civil society and mass action Imo general elections**

**2011:** Despite Chief Ohakim's strategies, the civil society was bent on effecting a change of government. Spurred by growing political tensions arising from the pattern of governance in the last 4 years, social organizations helped to lead an unprecedented surge of political participation breaking the administration and escaped the control of bourgeois elites. Having experienced the enormous hardship in the state with the rise of bourgeois society and hijack of instrumentalities of governance by a few was a factor that enhanced the growth of the civil society.

At the peak of the elections, associational groups in Imo had grown in leaps and bounds. Such as Movement for the Actualization of a Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOP), Bakassi boys, Keke (tricycle) Drivers Association, Taxi Drivers Association, Okada (motor cycle) Riders Association, Various Market Women Associations, Town Unions, Thrift Associations, Cultural Associations in areas like Owerri, Mbaize, Ikeduru, Okigwe and Oguta axis demonstrated real or imagined commitment to a change of government others are Orlu Peoples Assembly, Okigwe Development Association, Aladinma women groups (state wide), Mezie Owerre, the catholic knights and Ladies, Umunna wu Ike, Diamond Sisters, Owerri Landlord Association, Imo Mass Movement (IMM), Imo Rebirth Congress (IRC), Imo State Students' Union, Imo Youths Forum (IYF), etc. and to a more formal extent the state chapter of NLC as its deputy

national chairman comrade Ajaero hails from Emekuku in Owerri. All created linkages to assert relevance in the elections. In the voting exercise, they voted and monitored their votes among the polling booths in the various wards and LGA's in the state. This to a large extent checked rigging at the collation point. This significant resilience was summarized:

On the botched national assembly elections of April 2, 2011 youths of Owerri North council area where Chikwe and Ihenacho hail from, suspecting that the People's Democratic Party (PDP) was up to some prangs had violently besieged the INEC office in the council refusing to allow any voting material leave the office without the complete result sheets (Leadership Newspaper, April 28, 2011)

Efforts by political leaders like Amb. Kema Chikwe and Chief Lemmy Akakem to wade into the matter only provoked more angry reactions that clearly aggravated the matter. Chikwe was actually heckled out of the council may be the people wanted a name and a face they can trust to re-assure them of exactly what was the situation. It took the intervention of captain Emmanuel ihenacho who waded into the angry mob amid cheers and clarified to them that it was neither the PDP, Governor Ohakim Kema Chikwe nor the Electoral Officer that were responsible for the unavailability of results sheets (Leadership Newspaper, April 28, 2011).

A similar episode almost played out on the rescheduled election of the 9th April when the community again insisted that accreditation will not commence unless adequate ballot papers were provided by INEC. They explained that INEC had supplied merely 87,000. They therefore expressed fear that the remaining 2000 may have been traded for rigging the election. It took the timely intervention of Ihenacho and long explanations before the angry youths decided to allow the commencement of the exercise (Leadership Newspaper, April 28, 2011).

In the areas the elections did not hold previously, the civil society insisted that their votes must count. Tension soon rose in the affected LGAs: Mbaitolu, Ngor-Okpala, Oguta and Egbema and Orji ward in Owerri North where a PDP chieftain and his thugs allegedly prevented non-natives who registered there from voting. At Umuagwo in Ohaji-Egbema, a prominent community leader was said to have gone round threatening that anyone who would not vote for a particular party should steer clear of the polling booths. In Ejemekwuru, Oguta 2 election materials were allegedly diverted to the residence of a party stalwart.

Three men were arrested by the police in Oguta for being in possession of thump-printed ballot papers (Vanguard Newspaper, May 6, 2011). Importantly, the civil society groups embarked on non violent demonstration in some areas due to unavailability of voting materials. Not fewer than 1,000 voters at Oguta Local Government Area took to the streets to protest the non availability of electoral materials for the supplementary governorship poll. The voters trooped out early in the morning for the registration to enable them cast their votes but after hours of waiting in vain for the arrival of the materials the people took to the streets (Vanguard Newspaper, May 6, 2011). A similar resistance was demonstrated by MASSOP in all levels of the state in Ngor Okapla ward five one of the core PDP areas, Owerri North leader of MASSOP explained the scenario as follows:

As early as 5 am we have left to monitor the election at Ngor Okpala, one of the core PDP areas, on arrival we met a number of young boys who said that they were working for PDP and I immediately introduced myself and asked them if they like how their place is they were startled for a few minute and said no, I told them that they could use the money that was given to them but they should allow elections to hold and not cart away ballot boxes. Immediately they responded that they not cart away the ballot boxes (Personal interview with Comrade Aaron Oguoma Leader of MASSOP Owerri North. Movement for the Actualization of a Sovereign of Biafra (MASSOB) has been active in the region belonging to the defunct Biafra, especially in the core Ibo speaking areas, recently MASSOP launched its uniform in Enugu former capital of East Central State, wearing their uniform and hoisting the flag of defunct Biafra with their Leader Ralph Uwazuruike)

**The voting pattern:** The election was perhaps the most active in the annals of Nigerian politics. In comparative terms with previous elections, the police was distanced from the polling units. With the insistence of the civil society for a credible election, INEC had to make emergency provision for ad-hoc staff from neighbouring Ebonyi, Cross River and River states. This had a telling effect as election materials and personnel were nowhere in many polling stations by 12 noon (Vanguard Newspaper, May 6, 2011). Citizens voted and stood by, till their votes were counted. In Ngorkpala the election did not take place because the civil society opposed rigging by the government in power (PDP) here the incumbent

had major supporters, same was applicable to Orji near owerri where Chief Ohakim's core supporter Chief Lemi Akakem hails from, youths and women in the area resisted the carting away of ballot boxes and in the event the election was cancelled in the area.

Also in Oguta home town of Nigeria's former longest servicing PDP senator, Chief Senator Arthur Nzeribe, election was also inconclusive as youths in the area refused all material inducements. Thus, there was a re-run in Ngor-Okpala, Orji. In places like Emekuku home town of Dr. (Mrs) Kema Chikwe, youths resisted rigging and electoral fraud. Also in Okigwe, Njaba, Nwangene, Ihite Uboma, Abba, Nkwere, Isu and Orlu. Significantly, Dr. (Mrs) Chikwe lost the senatorial seat (Owerri East) to a younger and less experienced senator Chris Anyanwu who had earlier deflected to APGA after losing the PDP election primaries to Dr. (Mrs.) Chikwe. The returning officer of the election, Prof. Enoch Akobundu, declared the Imo governorship poll inconclusive after the electoral body had declared that the APGA candidate, Okorocha and his opponent, Governor Ikedi Ohakim, the flag bearer of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) won in 12 LGAs and 11 LGAs, respectively. According to Akobundu, there was no election in Ngor Okpala, Mbaitoli and Ohaji/Egbema Local government areas while the elections were inconclusive in parts of Oguta Local Government area.

He stated that it would be improper for INEC to go ahead and declare a winner or make a proper pronouncement on the scores of the candidates given the situation on ground. However, some military and police personnel have taken over some streets in Owerri to maintain law and order in the state capital. APGA under Okorocha won in Owerri West, Orsu, Nkwere, Ideato South, Oru East, Owerri Municipal, Orlu, Isu, Oru West, Ideato North, Njaba and Owerri North. While, Governor Ohakim under the PDP won in Ahiazu Mbaise, Aboh Mbaise, Ezinihitte Mbaise, Ihite/Uboma, Ehime Mbano, Isiala Mbano, Ikeduru, Nwangele, Obowo, Okigwe and Onuimo LGAs. INEC Imo State headquarters suspended the announcement of the winner of Ohaji/Egbema, Oguta and Mbaitoli, citing irregularities in the three LGAs for reasons of doing so (Daily Independent Newspaper, April 28, 2011).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The April 26 elections was inconclusive because election did not take place in three LGAs and Orji town in Owerri North, therefore the Imo Resident electoral Commissioner Professor Enoch Akobundu announced a re-run scheduled for May 6. After the rerun, Chief Rochas

Anayo Okorocha, the gubernatorial candidate of the All Progressive Grand Alliance, APGA has been declared winner of the governorship election in Imo State. Okorocha polled a total of 336,859 votes to beat his closest rival of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and governor of the state, Chief Ikedi Godson Ohakim who scored 290,496 to place second in the contest with a margin of 46,363.

Senator Ifeanyi Ararume of the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN) placed a distant third position with a total votes of 107,608 while Chief Chukwuemeka Nwajiuba of the Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) scored a paltry 3,063. Okorocha emerged victorious after the supplementary election which took place on Friday in Ngor-Okpala, Mbaitoli and Egbeme local government areas of Imo State as well as Orji ward in Owerri North. The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) ordered the supplementary election after the April 26 gubernatorial election in the state was declared inconclusive. But the supplementary election also scheduled to hold in Oguta LGA was shelved. President Goodluck Jonathan congratulated the governor-elect immediately after he was announced the winner of election yesterday. Ohakim also conceded defeat. The governor said he would not challenge the outcome of the poll in court (naijan.com).

Owerri, the state capital, virtually stood still as loyalists of APGA stormed the streets of the municipality to jubilate over the declaration of Okorocha as the winner of the governorship election. Motorcyclists who were hitherto banned from plying the streets of the municipality, defied the order and displayed all manner of acrobatics in the process while emergency dancing troops emerged to dance to their rhythmic tunes. Traders, especially around the new market, Owerri, hired several commercial buses and headed for Ogboko, Ideato North local council area, country home of the governor-elect. Many drinking places in the municipality were filled to the brim even as Okorocha's well wishers freely offered drinks to people or eat whatever was available in the place (naijan.com).

Some irate youths went further to dismantle all the campaign posters of Ohakim in Owerri municipality while the posters of Okorocha was hoisted to replace the dismantled ones. One of the APGA loyalists who simply identified himself as Anayo, expressed happiness that all those who ran after cars for allegedly parking wrongly will now disappear from the streets.

Reacting to the result, the national chairman of APGA, Chief Victor Umeh who was at the state INEC headquarters in Owerri, said he was satisfied with the

**Table 2: Imo governorship election results 2011**

Candidates	Political party	No. of votes
Ifeanyi Ararume	ACN	107068
Egbuna Collins. I	ALP	1078
Lemchi Beneth Chukwu	ANPP	3313
Rochas Anayo Okorocha	APGA	336859
Scholastic C. Emereole	HMP	1678
Samuel Chigozie Uwandu	APS	364
Okoronkwo Ugahi Precious	BNPP	234
Ihenacho Chigozie Gerald	CDC	447
Chukwuemeka Uwa Nwajiuba	CPC	3063
Francis Nnanyereugo Onanaji	DFPF	163
Robert Opara	PPP	563
Chikere Chinedu Denis	FPN	101
Ihemadu Ahumonye Nkemdika	FRE	-
	SH	122
Akomas Benart Chukwudi	LP	1549
Victor Ashmole	NPP	790
Ikedi Godson Ohakim	PDP	290496
Uche Nwole	PPA	1698
Bernard M. Nkem	PRP	275
Ike C Ibe	SDMP	1103

Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) in 2011

outcome of the governorship poll in the state. He described the poll as free, fair and credible and commended Imo people for making a wise choice in Chief Rochas Okorocha, stressing that the party will deliver on its electoral promises (naijan.com). Another staff blamed his woe on the recent brush his security details had with a Catholic priest, adding that the governor did everything to assuage the feelings of Catholics but it appears it did not do the expected magic (naijan.com) (Table 2).

## CONCLUSION

This study tried to examine democracy, civil society and mass action in the 2011 general elections in Imo State. Nigeria's nascent democracy is yet to deliver the much expected of democracy. Elite conspiracy and rich-poor gap is pervasive, poverty, unemployment, poor infrastructural development, basic amenities and underdevelopment characterized the state.

In all, Ohakim's governance style and the widely alleged shallowness of his conceptual grasp of real development issues may have to make his efforts at a second term of office a chimera. From all indications his imminent loss to his APGA challenger, Chief Okorocha, to many is failure long predicted (Leadership Newspaper April 28, 2011). However, the mass action by the civil society groups in Imo state provides an insight into national and international discourse on growth of civil society in the developing democracies and further underscores the fact that governance is about the people and their general welfare and not for the few elite.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Active civil society is imperative for sustainable democracy good governance and development in Nigeria. Ironically Nigeria has not evolved active civil society, governance is largely shrouded in secrecy, elections are not transparent, corruption is on the increase, the civil society is divorced from key policy decisions. Governance should be people oriented, participatory, popular and developmental. This study makes the following recommendations:

- Civil society is the nucleus of the wider society. Policy makers should develop and put in place policy initiatives that will accommodate an all inclusive broad based government to check zero sum politics and winner takes it all which has made governance to skew in favour of only one political party. This will stabilize government, check the excesses of the holders of political and economic powers, bridge rich/poor gap and institutionalize development
- Electoral and judicial reforms are imperative in Nigeria to sanitize the Electoral and Judicial System, strengthen democratic ideals and help the system to develop
- Capacity building, advocacy on equality, voter education, accountability, transparency and strengthening of CSO activity in Nigeria is necessary for transformational development and good governance. Through participatory models such as partnership, building of alliances, peer group networking, new media and collaboration with government in policies, programmes and decision making are pertinent
- Strategic overhaul of the political attitude and political revolution is necessary. Change comes through actions. In North Africa and the Middle East, things changed because people acted. Things will remain the same for as long as the Electoral System remains the same. Nigerians from all walks of life and social status should act for the good of the nation
- A sovereign national conference to effectively address issues of national question such as electoral matters and the place of the civil society to synergize on good governance and delineate on functional responsibilities in decision making processes and governance is plausible

## REFERENCES

- Afigbo, A., 1973. The indigenous political system of the igbo. *Tarikh*, 4: 13-23.
- Alapiki, H., 2000. Politics and Governance in Nigeria. Corporate Impressions, Owerri, Imo State.
- Almond, G. and S. Verber, 1965. The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations. Princeton University Press, United States.
- Berman, S., 1997. Civil society and the collapse of the weimar republic. *World Politics*, 49: 401-429.
- Beteille, A., 2000. Antinomies of Society: Essays on Ideologies and Institutions. Oxford University Press, New Delhi, ISBN: 9780195653892, Pages: 297.
- Chambers, R., 2010. Paradigms, poverty and adaptive pluralism. IDS Working Paper No. 344. Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex Brighton, UK.
- Dahl, R.A., 1971. Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition. Yale University Press, New Haven, ISBN: 9780300015652, Pages: 267.
- Diamond, L.J., 1994. Towards democratic consolidation. *J. Democracy*, 5: 4-17.
- Evans, S.M. and H.C. Boyte, 1992. Free Spaces: The Sources of Democratic Change in America. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Pages: 268.
- Huntington, S.P., 1968. Political Order in Changing Societies. 3rd Edn., Yale University Press, New Haven, Pages: 488.
- Imoagene, O., 1990. The Ibo of East Central Nigeria. Volume 3 of Know Your Country Series, New Era Publishers, Ibadan, Nigeria, ISBN: 9789782853035, Pages: 151.
- Joseph, R., 1991. Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: The Rise and Fall of Second Republic. Spectrum Books, Ibadan.
- Kabeer, N., S. Mahmud and J.G.I. Castro, 2010. NGOs' Strategies and the Challenge of Development and Democracy in Bangladesh. Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, UK., Pages: 71.
- Lamprey, S., 1998. Child Participation: Ethical Values and the Impact of Mass Media. In: *Stepping Forward: Children and Young People's Participation in the Development Process*, Johnson, V., E. Ivan-Smith, G. Gordon and P. Pridmore (Eds.). Intermediate Technology Publications, London, pp: 31-34.
- Lewis, W.A., 1965. Politics in West Africa. Oxford University Press, Toronto, New York, Pages: 90.
- Lijphart, W.A., 1965. Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration. Yale University Press, New Haven.
- Locke, J., 1952. The Second Treatise of Government: An Essay Concerning the True Original Extent and End of Civil Government. The Liberal Press, New York.
- MacPherson, C.B., 1974. The Real World of Democracy. The Clarendon Press, Oxford, Pages: 67.

- Mill, J., 1955. *An Essay on Government*. Liberal Arts Press, Willamette Valley, Pages: 91.
- Nnoli, O., 1980. *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*. Fourth Dimension Publishers, Enugu, Nigeria.
- Ofonagoro, W.I., 1979. *Trade and Imperialism in Southern Nigeria 1881-1929*. NOK Publishers International, London, ISBN: 9780883570494, Pages: 429.
- Putnam, R.D., 1993. *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*, Princeton. Princeton University Press, United States.
- Roseau, J.J., 1950. *The Social Contract*. Trans GDS Cole. E.P Dutton and Co., New York.
- Schambra, W.A., 1994. By the people: The old values of the new citizenship. *Policy Review* No. 69, pp: 32-38.
- Smith, M., 1969. Institutional and Political Conditions of Pluralism. In: *Pluralism in Africa*, Kuper, L. and M.G. Smith (Eds.). University of California Press, USA., pp: 27-56.
- Tocqueville, A., 1945. *Democracy in America*. Vintage, New York.
- Walzer, M., 1969. The Civil Society Argument. In: *Dimensions of Radical Democracy: Pluralism, Citizenship, Community*, Mouffe, C. (Ed.). Verso, London, pp: 89-107.