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**CO-ORDINATING POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS IN NIGERIA:  
A MARKETING PLANNING PERSPECTIVE**

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**ABSTRACT**

*The institutional context of electoral process in Nigeria is essentially different from the situation in the United States and other European countries. As a result, observers of Nigerian democratic system have argued that given the abject poverty in the country, it would amount to asking for too much, if the electorate is expected to resist monetary inducement. Candidates see nothing wrong in offering the electorate money for their vote and the temptation is always there for voters to take the money offered as an immediate reward for whatever effort is required to go out and vote. This explains why Achumba and Dixon – Ogbechi (2004) concluded that political party campaigns in Nigeria are party centred, non issue centred, capital intensive, money driven and labour intensive. The situation makes marketing planning imperative. Political marketing planning (in the specific context of an election campaign) attempts to identify how to increase a party or candidate's share of the vote and what needs to be done in order to realize the vote - share increase. It is in this connection that this paper advocates the adoption of marketing planning framework by Nigerian political parties in co-ordinating the election campaigns in order to maximize the allocation of their relatively scarce resources. This, of course, is based on a marketing planning framework developed by Baines et al (1999) in the light of changing political environment; together with the development and implementation of marketing models in a wider sphere of economic and social situations. In addition, the framework model has been developed using a hypothetico-deductive approach that takes into account, not only the recent development in American and British campaign management, but also uses depth interview with political strategists to make the model more realistic, and tailored specifically for marketing scenarios (and in this specific context, election) in Nigeria. The paper suggests that Nigerian political parties need to co-ordinate their constituency campaigns in such a way as to de-emphasize 'money politics' which is attempting to institutionalize the hydra headed problem of "political God-fatherism" in our nascent democracy. This co-ordination should begin with a research to determine who the main opposition is, which voters need to be targeted, how to position the party, and what promotional programme will suit the political product. This means that political campaigns in Nigeria can be made cost-effective through constituency research and relationship marketing as well as post-election exercises to determine what went wrong and how in certain constituencies.*

**Keywords: Coordination, Political Campaigns, Nigeria, Marketing, Planning**

**INTRODUCTION**

Political campaign is a central activity in every democratic process, particularly within the concept of party politics. It is defined by theorists as the rush of media items leading up to polling day (Stockwell, 2004). Campaigns are multi-disciplinary entities that are of interest to and draw methods from marketing, political science, media theory and many other disciplines as well. Political campaign originated because the political function of language is embedded deeply in the evolution of human society. The survival of the tribe depends not only on a shared language, but also on its use to arrive at timely decisions. In classical Greek democracies, the sophists applied rational analysis to the magic of language in order to explain what was persuasive in deliberative assemblies (Barrett, 1987). Over the last twenty years, political marketing has sought to colonize the study of the political campaign (O'Shaughnessy, 1990; Newman, 1994, 1999; Maarek, 1995; Johnson, 2001). However, the political campaign uses not only techniques derived from mass marketing and public relations but also game theory and statistical psychology (Blumenthal, 1980). Election campaigns have three stages: Strategy (from candidates/issue analysis to developing the game plan),

Communication (day-to-day development of the message and its distribution via mass and direct media), High gear (locking down commitment and getting out the Vote). While money is a key determinant of impact of the campaign, good organization, innovative use of new technologies, skillful volunteer resource management, and accurate reading of political terrain can cause upset. Modern governments employ campaign techniques to manage their interactions with the public via the mass media not only ensure their re-election, but also to do the work of governance. All forms of political campaigns seek to persuade target audiences by managing the message communicated to them via the media. While debate continues about the political effects of the mass media, campaigners seek to communicate their message via all channels consumed by the target audience: newspapers, radio, television, billboard and the Internet. In seeking free coverage in the editorial portions of the media, the campaign manager monitors the media, prepares press releases, holds press conferences, produces web pages, runs media events and major events including launches and debates but, above all, talks to journalists. For greatest effect, the free media message should be coordinated to complement and cohere with advertising. Paid advertising allows the campaign to bond together the matrix of ideas, images, policies and arguments that make up the message into a moment of emotional exchange directly with the audience. The range of advertising styles for different media, the appropriate combination and media-buying methods to maximize reach to target audiences are important issues to be addressed within the context of the campaign's planning and budget (Achumba and Dixon-Ogbechi, 2004). Though direct contact is still the most persuasive form of political communication, interpersonal contact at meetings, events and in the doorway develops a personal relationship. Finally, audience segmentation and canvassing can generate lists of target individuals who can then be engaged via interactive communication by direct mail, phone banking, e-mail, door knock visit or special purpose meetings and events (Stockwell, 2004). Political campaigns therefore use the obvious marketing techniques of advertising in targeting and segmenting audiences. Thus; it can be seen that political campaigns have driven the understanding of marketing, which is concerned with the identification of consumer needs, and satisfaction of such needs at a profit. In Anderson's (2004) view, election campaign is more about marketing than about politics. Indeed most election campaigns are about marketing, that is making a connection with the electorate and voting public and ensuring delivery of good enough reasons why to encourage people to vote one way or the other. Though both marketing and political campaign use similar techniques to segment audiences and position the things they are pitching, they differ in the following ways:

- Marketing is the performance of business activities, which direct the flow of goods and services from the producer to the consumer (AMA, 1960). It involves selling goods and services that satisfy consumer needs and wants, and also convincing the consumer to engage in a commercial transaction; while campaigning seeks rather to persuade citizens to a point of view,.
- While marketer seeks to attract as many customers as possible, the campaigner is really interested in just those whose support is needed to prevail.
- Most importantly, while marketing is essentially a simple science, political campaigns are complex cross-disciplinary exercises that include not only marketing but also elements of psychology, statistics, military history, game theory, media theory, rhetoric literature and classics.

Furthermore, rather than locking into one position, one audience and one channel, the campaigner is constantly rewriting his message into an array of communications relevant to key segments of the audience, targeting those segments via multiple media channels, tracking their response, spinning a refined version of the position, adjusting the positive/negative mix and sending out another multiplicity of communications before again tracking audience response and creating an event, more refined version of the position. From the foregoing, it can be seen that political campaigns are more than marketing exercises (Stockwell, 2004). The dominant political parties around the globe are beginning to embrace the marketing concept and process. In the UK, for instance, the conservative party used the services of saatchi and saatchi in the 1980's; and the labour party has incorporated focus groups in their 1990's activities. Here in Nigeria, political marketing has steadily gained unprecedented prominence since the second Republic elections (i.e. 1979) till date. All through the period under reference, marketing consultants have been generously hired; advertising and public relations experts have been engaged, and the mass media (print and electronic) have been fully utilized. These efforts have paid off because the level of political awareness improved tremendously judging from the percentage of votes in each succeeding election (Oriavwote, 1999). All this goes to show that political marketing has become an indispensable machinery in Nigeria politics. Nevertheless, marketing planning for political parties has rarely been addressed, as there appears to be little appreciation of marketing especially at the strategic level (Butler and Collins, 1996). In this paper, a research investigation conducted by Baines et al (1999) which focused on producing a marketing planning model for political parties in the UK was replicated in Nigeria to ascertain the validity of its findings in Nigeria's democratic context. The

present research methodology incorporates discussion of campaigning techniques with members of Nigerian National Assembly and senior officials of the dominant political parties in Nigeria. This leads into the presentation of a marketing planning framework for political parties. Discussion of this model relates to: information gathering and constituency identification, competition and voting group determination, party positioning and voter group targeting, and post – election analysis. It is pertinent to note that party dominance in this study is defined in terms of a political party's ability to occupy at least one gubernatorial seat and/or presidential seat in the country.

### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.**

As Baines, Lewis and Yorke (1999) have noted, political marketing is a relatively new and embryonic area of academic enquiry. As a result, much of the current work in this area has applied general marketing principles to the area of election campaigning. Most current definitions of political marketing (Shama, 1995; Lock and Harris, 1996, Wring, 1997) identify the political marketing process as concerned more with the communication process between voter and political entities (either parties or candidates) and often neglect the organizational development perspective (of the political entity) in a way that most commercial marketing definitions do not. The application of particular dimensions of marketing theory for political entities has been illustrated by numerous authors. O' Leary and Iredale (1976) for instance, have indicated the relevance of the marketing mix for political parties. This has been reinforced by Worlu (2005). In the same vein, Yorke and Meehan (1986) have indicated a number of variables to be used as bases for segmenting and targeting voters. In addition, Hayes and McAllister (1996) have pointed out that floating voters can essentially be regarded as individuals with no brand loyalty. Furthermore, Smith and Saunders (1990) maintain that the integrated marketing era (or possibly the future of political marketing) will further identify the target markets' wants and needs and the necessary policy decision-making to satisfy these wants more effectively. The strategic use of marketing techniques for political campaigning is still in its infancy. To bridge the gap between what the voters want in an election campaign and what candidates and parties propose, the use of marketing planning is advocated. The use of marketing planning by a political party is a function of the marketing orientation to which the party subscribes. In other words, parties can alter aspects of their behaviour, including policy, membership, leadership and organization structure to suit the nature and demands of their markets. They can do this by being product, sales or market-oriented (Lees-marshment, 2001). A product-oriented party argues for what it stands for and believes in. It assumes that voters will realize that its ideas are the right ones and therefore vote for it. This type of party refuses to change its ideas or product, even if it fails to gain electoral victory or membership support. A sales-orientated party focuses on selling its argument to voters. It retains predetermined product design, but recognizes that desired supporters may not automatically want it. Using market intelligence to understand voters' response to its behaviour, the party employs the latest advertising and communication techniques to persuade voters that it is right. A sales-oriented party does not change its behaviour to suit what people want, but tries to make people want what it offers. A market-orientated party designs its behaviour to provide voters' satisfaction. It uses market intelligence to identify voter's demands, then design its product to suit their needs. It does not attempt to change what people think, but to deliver what they need and want.

### **MARKETING PLANNING: A Political Perspective**

Several researchers have pointed out the lack of a strategic perspective in the political marketing literature (Butler and Collins, 1996; Farrell, 1996; O' Cass, 1997). Lock and Harris (1996) have suggested that "political marketing as a discipline has to develop its own frameworks adapting those from the core marketing literature and, second, that it has to develop its own predictive and prescriptive models if it is to inform and influence political action." The framework for co-ordinated campaigning put forward by Baines et al (1999) and reviewed in this paper to suit the Nigerian electoral context, is intended to further this course. There are aspects of the political campaigning process which stem more from political science than marketing. A case in point is the traditional, personal and tactical voting behaviour which stems from consumer behaviour perspective; and canvassing and advertising which stem from a communication standpoint. From a competitive perspective, a competitive situation arises more from oligopoly than from the general consumer marketing perspective generally associated with perfect competition. In the light of these apparent differences between the two subject disciplines (Butler and Collins, 1994; lock and Harris, 1996) and the fact that there appears to be a high degree of synergy between political campaigning and marketing (Mandelson, 1988; O'Cass, 1996) the political marketer needs to find the area of commonality between marketing and political campaigning as techniques for informing, communicating with, 'connecting' with, persuading and reaching the electorate. As Baines et al (1999) have noted marketing models which have been adapted specifically for use in political environments include those described by Newman (1994) and



Maarek (1995). However, both models neglect to emphasize the importance of constituency campaigning and its organizational implications (an important process in Nigerian political campaigning) and tend to focus on United States' political campaigning. Both appear to assume that segmentation and targeting take place within a national context. Since the priority is not to get an overall majority of individual votes but to obtain an overall majority of individual seats. Thus, the implication that one constituency (or seat) is more important than another gives rise to the need to target those constituencies that are more likely to switch their allegiance. Niffenger (1989) has discussed this concept from American perspective. In Nigeria, political parties have insufficient funds to effectively wage constituency-marketing campaign because of limited funding by government. And because Nigerian electorate and party supporters expect to be mobilized before they give their mandate, candidates and political parties play into then hands political "Godfathers" who see their sponsorship of candidates and parties as investment for the future. These resources are used to promote constituency activities in a coordinated manner before candidates are selected (in the name of primaries) to run the election. McDonald (1989) described the purpose of marketing planning as "the identification and creation of competitive advantage". Political marketing planning (in the specific context of an election campaign) attempts to identify how to increase a party or candidates share of the vote and what needs to be done in order to realize this vote-share increase. ALMER (1994) states that there are five key functions in the strategic marketing planning process comprising: market position analysis, objective setting, strategic alternative evaluation, strategy implementation, and monitoring and control. One might argue that the winning of an election campaign (since the formalized period is generally, 120days in Nigeria, and only four weeks long in the UK) does not offer sufficient scope for the use of marketing planning techniques. This viewpoint is tenable among Nigerian political parties where electoral campaign planning takes a "fire brigade" approach. For instance, how many political parties out of over 37 parties in Nigeria have so far set up a campaign management team in preparation for the 2007 general elections which is less than 10months from now? But in the UK, the British Labour Party put together a campaign management team in 1985 for the 1987 election (Smith, 1994). From a political marketing planning perspective, palmer's five key functions can be explained thus:

- **The analysis of the current market position of the organization:**  
This requires a determination of how voters perceive the individual candidates standing in each constituency and what their voting position is.
- **Setting objectives for the organization and marketing effort:** It is important to determine which areas (e.g. constituencies, voter groups) require more resources to be allocated to them based on what the party intends to achieve there.
- **Identifying and evaluating strategic alternatives:** Which segments of the electorate should parties communicate with, using what message? Public opinion polling can be used to guide and develop message concept, receipt, and measure or assess segmented groups' stability, accessibility and substance.
- **Implementation of the chosen strategy:** The political strategist needs to allocate the necessary resources to the targeting process. In political campaigns, one major problem occurring is one of uncertainty regarding the flow of donations that will be received by the party. The sources and application of these donations may be questionable, particularly in our context where corruption is endemic. This may lead to party or candidates indebtedness.
- **Monitoring and controlling:** Since the marketing planning process attempts to match organizational resources with market opportunities and threats, while considering the organization's strengths and weaknesses, the process of monitoring the external environment and evaluating a particular strategy's impact upon that environment is paramount.

The framework for coordinated campaigning in Nigeria, put forward in this paper, attempts to incorporate these into a cohesive framework. It is likely that co-ordinated campaigning will become an area of growth in Nigeria, particularly as the nation matures in her democratic experience.

#### **THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: A marketing Planning Framework for political parties.**

Baines, Lewis and Yorke (1996) conducted a study in which they sought to produce a marketing planning framework model for political parties. The setting for the research was UK, and the framework was intended to allow political strategists to determine which constituencies, and floating voters within them are most at risk of switching allegiance from one party to another. The model generated from that study is presented in Figure 1.1 below. It is important to note that a marketing planning framework needs to take into account the realities of the environment and allow for rapid change (e.g. partisan allegiance, changes in public opinion). According to Baines et al (1996), the framework should incorporate the detail of the various political

phenomena (e.g. tactical voting, traditional voting, personal voting, the importance of by-elections, defections, de-selections and immigration / emigration patterns) in order to reflect the reality of the campaigning process.

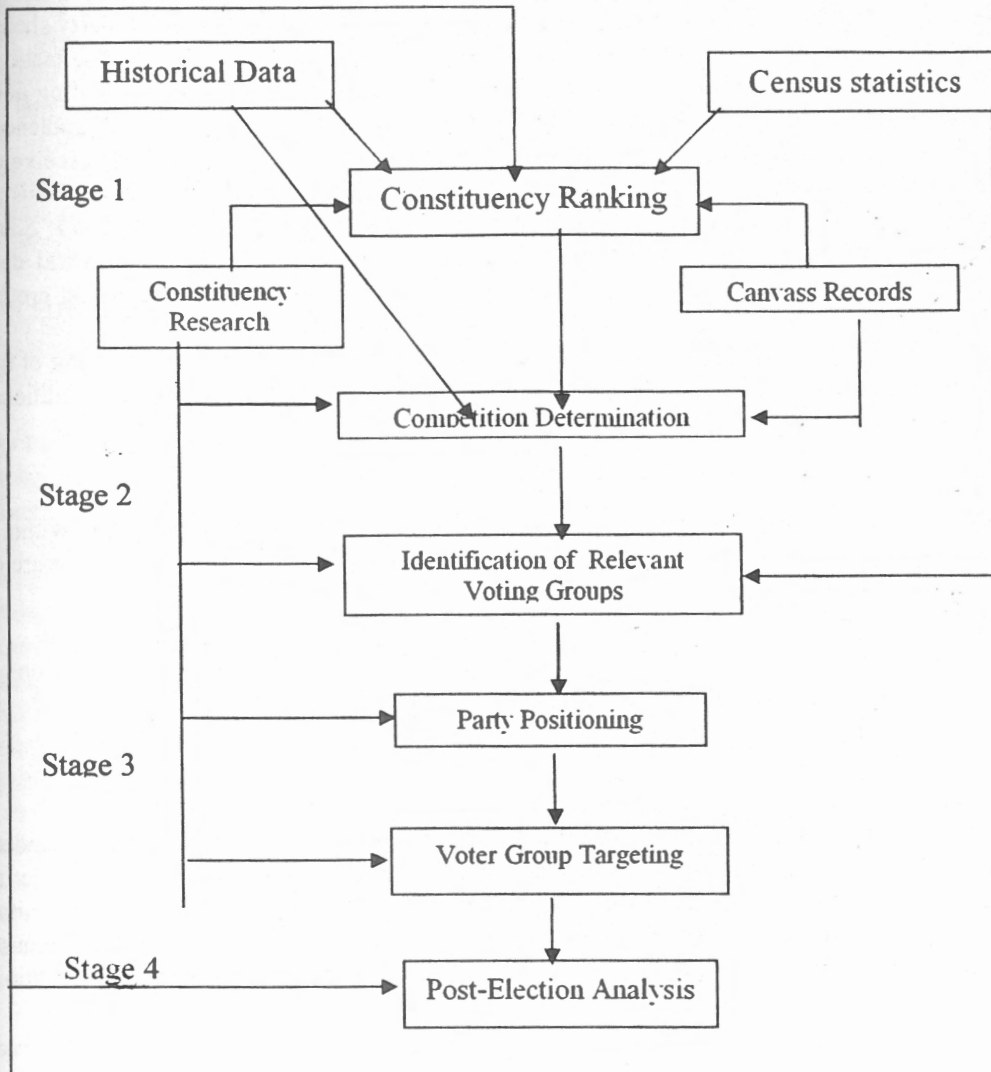


Figure 1.1: Marketing Planning Model for Political Campaigning  
 SOURCE: Adapted from Baines (1996)

**PLANNING MODEL STAGE 1: INFORMATION GATHERING AND CONSTITUENCY IDENTIFICATION**

In this stage, constituencies that are most likely to change their allegiance are identified since such constituencies are particularly important to all the various parties and resources can be targeted more effectively at these constituencies, thereby saving political parties both money and time.

**Historical Data**

Being aware of the party's vote-share and major source of competition at the previous election is important when targeting constituencies and in the determination of how the candidate and party should attempt to persuade the electorate that their message is more appropriate than that of a rival party.

**Census Statistics**

The political strategists needs to monitor the demographic structure of the constituency on an on-going basis so that changes in the constituency's demographic and partisan profile can be identified in order to locate key voters and take appropriate action when it comes to targeting specific voter groups. Thus, census data

statistics are important in determining the location of the relevant voting groups since socio-economic (and other relevant targeting) data may have been mapped in the census.

### **Constituency Ranking**

Baines et al (1996) revealed that in the UK system, a simple majority of seats needs to be gained for a party to form government. Often, these seats can be closely contested and the main opposition party needs to attempt to gain as many as possible from the incumbent party in order to form a majority. Each party should determine the swing needed to gain a seat. Using constituency research and canvass records, the tactical, traditional and personal voting adjustments can then be made to the size of the electorate (excluding non-voters) to give a "perceived audience" for each party and for each constituency. If the "perceived audience" is less than the required swing for a particular constituency, then the constituency should not receive as many resources since it is unlikely to change. The concept of ranking political jurisdictions on the basis of the number of "persuadable voters" has been suggested by a number of authors (Bradshaw, 1995; Shea, 1996). The combination of constituency research, census statistics, canvass records and historical data allows the political strategist to determine the principal competition and who are the relevant voting groups that need to be targeted. Shea (1996) has stated that 'together, demographic research, survey data and prior electoral data merge to form a powerful targeting weapon'. Such data should also give an indication of the level of tactical and personal voting. In addition research should also indicate the proportion of traditional voters, which becomes important in the constituency ranking exercise.

### **Constituency Research**

Constituency research is vital for a full understanding of the current position of the major parties within a constituency since historical voting data does not give any idea of recent changes in the partisan nature of the seat (constituency). Constituency research should focus on:

- The current level of support
- Which voters have changed their support for a particular party since the previous general election
- The electorate's opinion and emotions regarding particular issues and policies.
- The level of tactical and traditional voting.
- Whether or not the personal vote is significant.

Constituency research feeds into every aspect of the political planning process. The party should conduct surveys in the target constituencies, i.e. those that are ranked highest in the ranking exercise in order to provide a current overview of the political situation. This research should determine voters' partisan allegiance in the different constituencies, thus providing an indication of which party is in closest contention while also attempting to determine which messages will 'connect' most with the floating voters within a particular constituency.

### **Canvass Records**

It is important to canvass the electorate since the secondary research only gives a broad picture of what is happening and canvassing helps target individual voters on election day in the get-out-the-vote (or 'knocking up') effort. Canvassing should still be undertaken in order to determine the supporters of the particular parties, e.g. floating voters, so that the constituency organizations can tailor specific messages to the relevant sections of the electorate and solicit funds.

## **PLANNING MODEL STAGE 2: Competition and Voting Group Determination.**

This stage concerns determining the main competition and segmenting the various voter groups incorporating all the recent data, from canvassing and constituency research.

### **Determining Competition**

The political strategist needs to determine which party provides the biggest threat within each individual constituency so that he can then provide an appropriate policy platform to counteract the opposing parties. Generally, the determination of the competition within a seat is best provided by a combination of previous general election voting data and local election result. This information should allow the strategist to determine which wards within a particular constituency are more likely to vote for a particular party. This is an important process since certain wards within marginal constituencies (i.e. constituencies where there have been exceptional circumstances, e.g. scandal, deselections, etc) may contain more or fewer marginal voters.

Thus, the process of competition determination is, to some extent, a by-product of the constituency ranking and research exercises.

### **Voter Segmentation**

In order for the parties to change or keep a seat's (constituency) allegiance, they need to approach those voters who are most likely to change their vote to the main opposition party (except where a third and even fourth, party is in very close contention with the incumbent). Thus, in Nigeria where ANPP is the main opposition, communication might not just be aimed at the potential ANPP (i.e. PDP switchers) but also at other parties' tactical voters as well as consolidating support from previous PDP supporters. Segmentation bases used in the research conducted by Baines and his colleagues were housing type and partisan allegiance. However, constituency research might point out more useful segmentation bases. Those segments that are most important, in either securing a seat or changing a seat's allegiance, would then be targeted using the appropriate media.

### **PLANNING MODEL STAGE 3: Party positioning and Voter Group Targeting.**

In this stage, strategists are concerned with which issues the electorate considers most important and how to disseminate appropriate messages.

#### **Party Positioning**

In order to increase their own support, political strategists typically use policies, issues and reasoned argument, as well as style of presentation to attempt to win the battle for the minds of the voters, positioning is the process of 'connecting' with voters: the process of developing a campaign theme that consists of convergent policy stances on issues. Bradshaw (1995) defines theme as 'the rationale for your candidate's election and your opponent's defeat. It is the single, central idea that the campaign communicates to voters to sum up the candidate's connection with the voters and their concerns and the contrast between your candidate and the opponent'. Party positioning is a crucial aspect of the political marketing process because the strategist uses it to set out the policies which the party applies to persuade voters to vote for them. It is also important to note that parties need to select a theme (e.g. policy on Africa) and aspects of that theme (e.g. specific policies relating to further integration, agriculture, etc), which connect with voters. Selection of this theme becomes paramount because parties can not later attempt to use a theme which is not consistent with their original policies and statements since this may well be picked up by the opposition parties' media spokespeople in a process known as rapid rebuttal which may, subsequently, be picked up by the media or directed at the media by opposition party spin-doctors. Specific policies should be directed at voters in terms of how concerned with the particular policy the electorate is and the extent to which the policy fits the political entity's ethos (Baines 1999)

#### **Voter Group Targeting**

Once the agenda for the constituency has been developed and the political strategist has determined the target contacts, the constituency organization should generally deliver its message through door-to-door canvassing, telephone canvassing, direct mail and local meetings. Different constituencies usually adopt a mix of different methods, for example in a rural constituency, a certain amount of telephone canvassing might occur in order to save time and expense.

### **PLANNING MODEL STAGE 4: POST ELECTION ANALYSIS**

The essence of good marketing planning is to learn from previous successes and failures and to build these into future planning strategy. This stage attempts to determine what lessons can be learned from previous stages.

#### **Post - Election Analysis**

Post-election analysis aims to determine whether or not the correct voter segments were targeted successfully. This requires further research into why the electorate voted the way that they did. In addition, the constituency results may be used to increase the accuracy of the consistency ranking exercise in future election campaigns. This post-election research data may also be used to refine further the segmentation bases that were used in the previous election campaign, in the order that the next general election campaign can incorporate any lessons learned.

### THE LIMITATIONS OF THE MODELS

The marketing planning framework put forward by Baines et al (1996) and presented in this paper is defined by the local consistency environment. Tactical, personal and traditional voting are all considerations, which are taken into account in the model when deciding which constituencies to allocate the available resources and which voters to target within these constituencies. However, such factors are in continual flux. Perhaps the only aspect of the environment that is not considered is the culture of campaigning. The model is primarily developed for a society with politically active and informed citizen (i.e. citizens whose political sense of judgment can not be blurred with meagre offers). In other words, the model was developed for such advanced democracy like Britain, and may not apply exactly the same way to democracies like Nigeria. Furthermore, many politicians feel that marketing has no place in politics, yet the model is built on the premise of marketing orientation. This means that politicians will need to be re-oriented to appreciate the critical role of marketing in the enforcement of democratic ideals and processes. Again the model does not consider the effect of the political corporate culture on marketing planning as well as the extent to which political parties and candidates are prepared to develop a marketing orientation and the effects of the political system on marketing activity. Finally, the model does not articulate the nature of the national campaign and its impacts upon the local (constituency) campaign. In spite of all these limitations, this study explores the applicability of the model to a nascent democracy like Nigeria with a view to introducing some modifications where necessary.

### METHODOLOGY

This study was based on a study conducted in the UK by Baines (1996), and repeated by Baines et al (1999); and the outcome of those two studies was a marketing planning model for political parties in the UK and US. Our present study therefore tried to explore the applicability of that marketing planning model to Nigerian political parties. This framework, once produced, should allow political strategists to determine which constituencies, and the floating voters within them, are most at risk of changing their allegiance from one party to another. Depth interviews were carried out with 6 members of National Assembly and 6 Party Officials representing each of the six geo-political zones in Nigeria, and drawn from the 4 dominant political parties in Nigeria (i.e. APGA, ANPP, AD and PDP) Dominance here was based on the ability of a party to control at least one gubernatorial seat and/or presidential seat. In addition, in-depth interviews were held with 4 senior campaign directors of the 4 dominant parties. The depth interviews were designed to determine the method of campaigning the political parties currently use and to assess whether or not it could be refined into a marketing planning framework model. Thus, a deductive model was devised.

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Analysis of the interviews, from a marketing planning perspective, revealed a number of important points.

- ❖ Though PDP is currently in the majority, it is targeting at least 95% of the seats in the National Assembly, and the control of at least 33 states out of the 36 states in the country for the 2007 General Election. Apart from the ones held by PDP, majority of the seats are held by the main opposition parties (mostly ANPP, and a few others by A.D and APG) and the vast majority need swings of less than 5.0%.
- ❖ ANPP is interested in clinching the presidency but more interested in controlling all the northern states. To ANPP, the allocation of resources (in terms of targeting seats) depends on the importance of the local candidate and patterns of migration in each individual seat.
- ❖ APGA is hopeful but seems primarily keen on consolidating in the south Eastern Zone of the country in 2007 General Election.
- ❖ AD strongly believes that the end of President Obasanjo's tenure will mark the return of AD's dominance of the politics of the southwestern zone.
- ❖ All the respondents stressed the importance of local factors. Each ascribed his or her party's dominance of some constituencies and or state to the existence of a strong, effective local candidate who was in touch with the local issues, and who had build a strong personal following. In areas where the candidate lacked such following, his political Godfather released his own for some tangible returns.
- ❖ In addition to 'renting' his followership, the "Godfather" could also expend some money to secure victory at the polls, and this also would increase his returns.
- ❖ There was general consensus among respondents that Nigerian electorate and supporters find it difficult to resist monetary inducement due to abject poverty in the country and the fear that they might not be remembered after the candidates had secured their mandate.
- ❖ Most candidates do not bother about the need to articulate quality programmes and ideologies since offering money to electorate could give them a leeway. As a result, political party campaigns in Nigeria are party centred, non-issue centred, capital-intensive, money driven and labour-intensive.

- ❖ The central premise of the targeting approach in this research is that the constituencies which are currently most at risk of changing their allegiance can be identified by comparison with constituencies that were in a similar state (in terms of majority and the swing required) at a previous election.

## CONCLUSION

Floating voters amount to a relatively small proportion of the electorate but are disproportionately important in the determination of which party wins the election, and due to the fact that political parties or candidates have limited funds, marketing planning has been put forward as an exercise which can help in resource allocation. For example in 2003 General Election, PDP needed to win the control of South West zone to have a comfortable overall majority in government. Such a group of target voters could be identified using partisan specific segmentation bases, which are able to differentiate between the differing types of floating voters. It has been demonstrated in this article, that in order to reach and communicate with those voters who are most likely to change their allegiance, political strategists need to use a structured and planned approach that includes:

- ❖ Amassing and analyzing constituency data (from various sources),
- ❖ Determining who are the main sources of competition,
- ❖ Identifying and targeting individuals and groups of voters,
- ❖ And then performing a post-mortem to determine where the process could be modified to make it more efficient in future political campaigns.

The model applies to Nigeria, even with an unreliable census data, INEC data and census statistics can at least provide a cue to the political strategist and form the basis of planning. Most times, when candidates are not credible, they tend to ride on the goodwill of their political God-fathers whose conditions for executing the electioneering project are often repugnant to the integrity of the candidate and by extension the welfare of the electorate.

## IMPLICATIONS FOR POLITICAL MANAGERS

Political parties in Nigeria are becoming more organized in their campaigning activities, to some extent. The last 2003 General Election saw substantial co-ordinated activities in key zones and constituencies targeted by the PDP and ANPP. Parties should see the need to provide training for their political marketing planners and researchers, campaign directors, and political strategists to improve their expertise in marketing (particularly in research, telemarketing campaign, segmentation and targeting, etc) and strategy formulation. All the stages of the planning model deduced in Baines et al (1996) were confirmed to be relevant and applicable to Nigeria in the interviews with the different members of National Assembly and party officials. But they did not exhibit the different stages in their campaigns. Therefore, Parties should take steps to monitor and co-ordinate all constituency activities carefully. Parties should be more interested in fielding a credible candidate (in terms of character) and sense of mission than in wealthy candidate who is bereft of credibility. Political parties need to commission marketing research and telemarketing campaigns that transcend constituency boundaries. This increase in activity needs to be financed through more intensive lobbying, and direct mail fund raising campaigns, rather than mortgaging the entire party or candidate to a "Political Godfather". Once the campaigns have been conducted, it is important to determine why the campaigns fared in the way that they did (something that most constituencies and parties neglect to do).

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