

# CONFLICTS IN NIGERIAN POLITICS: DIAGNOSIS AND MARKETING PRESCRIPTIONS

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## **Abstract**

*Politics is simply the art and science of governance, (Horby, 1974). This art or science of governance is often conducted via political parties which compete among themselves for power in a democratic system. Conflict, on the other hand, is disagreement arising from variations of social and cultural identities among people existing together in a defined setting. Such setting, in our case- the Nigerian political space, creates challenges and opportunities. Thus, managing conflict in our political life means understanding its nature and effects to enable political actors implement behaviours and policies that respond to them in an effective way. The focus of this paper, therefore, is to interrogate the subject of political conflict in Nigeria from the etymological and theoretical perspectives with a view to providing solutions based on political marketing paradigms.*

**Keywords:** politics, power, conflict, marketing, politic parties, political theories.

## **Introduction**

Karl Marx once said that the history of hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggle (or power struggle). That statement presaged the realisation that as long as human civilisation continues, and the state exists, constant struggle for who controls the state, its institutions and resources will persist ad nauseam. Within the political context, there are no permanent comrades but permanent interests, goals and aspirations. Or as Worlu (2012) puts it,

“politics is about power; but the struggle for power results in conflict and competition.” Therefore, political actors or gladiators are locked in a vice-like struggle to outwit one another and gain access to the state and its resources. Mudslinging, political violence and all kinds of vicious methods of intimidation are employed. The Nigerian political environment is not immune to the conflict that characterizes political competition.

The People’s Democratic Party (PDP) and the All Progressives Congress (APC) have abundantly shown how ugly, desperate, Machiavellian, violent and mercantilist politics can be when power capture, and not service, is the driving objective. This paper seeks to interrogate this subject by examining how political theories have tried to explain the presence of conflict as political gladiators desperately quest to control the state and its superstructure.

## **Conceptual Analysis**

**Politics** can be narrowly construed as the activity of government or the governing process (Waylen, Celis, Kantola & Weldon, 2013). Dahl (1984) sees it as the study of power and the powerful. He also says it is “any persistent pattern of human relationships that involves, to a significant extent, control, influence, power or authority.” But Lasswell (1958) argues that politics is “who gets what, when and how?” and Easton (1953) puts it as the authoritative allocation of values.

The question then is, why is there conflict in politics? Conflict exists because of the zero-sum nature of access to the reins of political power and its concomitant values such as prestige, primitive accumulation, security, power, respect and position, among others. Power is exercised in order to cause those who are subject to it to follow the private preferences of those who possess it (Dahl, 1968). Power is the production of obedience to the preferences of others, including an expansion of the preferences of those subject to it so as to include those preferences. Simply put, power is the ability to make somebody do something that otherwise he or she would not have done. Power is also concerned about policy or what Worlu (2012) ratiocinated to be either the desire for change or the desire to protect something against change, leading to conflict between and among actors. Conflict is a social phenomenon/system of competition between actors with incompatible goals, interests, values and expectations (Nwosu & Makinde, 2014).

Recently, a variety of theories and frameworks have been advanced which explore the interface between marketing and political action. There is interesting variation in the focal perspectives adopted across these works, yet each emphasized political processes. Some centre on the government as a regulator (e.g Harris and Carman 1993, 1994; Krapfel 1992, Pearce 1999). Others explore the government as a marketer (e.g, Capon 1991, Mokwa and permit, 1991).

However, there are political theories that serve as causative bases of conflict. A few of these theories are highlighted below.

### **Theoretical Framework – 1**

#### **Pluralist theories of power (Robert Dahl and Seymour Martin Lipset and Charles Lindblom)**

*Political power is fragmented and dispersed among groups such as political parties, pressure groups, interest groups, business groups, military and others. There is competition among this group for the distribution of power and influence.*

Public policy is the outcome of group forces acting against one another. No one group will dominate for every group there will be an equal and opposite.

The larger the group the more influence it will have. Policies are the product of bargaining and compromise, will tend to be moderate, fair to all and conducive to social stability. The state is a neutral arbiter between competing groups in the state.

### **Theoretical Framework – 2**

#### **Elite Theory (C. Wright Mills, Gaetano Mosca, Vilfredo Pareto, Robert Michel)**

There exists a small class of rulers and decision-makers that performs key political functions and monopolises power, and a mass of people ruled by this class. The ruling elite is composed of people from the higher echelons of political office, the corporate sector and the military; power wears a self-perpetuating aristocratic and oligarchic face.

'Democratic elitism' – which introduces modern democratic elections provides an opportunity to legitimise the hegemony of the same elites voted into power by the people to exercise rule over them. Competition between different elites for election, participation by pressure group elites in between elections, interaction with bureaucratic elites, is regarded as mere democratic norms for power struggle or change of the political elite guards.

**Theoretical Framework – 3**

**Ruling Class Theory or Marxism (Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Ralph Miliband, Nicos Poulantzas, Antonio Gramsci)**

This theory contends that power belongs to the owners and controllers of economic production (the bourgeoisie). The dominant class controls not only the means of production, distribution, exchange and communication, it also exercises hegemony over state apparatuses.

The state's function is to protect and perpetuate existing social and economic relations. It is not an unbiased umpire but an octopusal extension of the interests of the dominant class. There are two dimensions of this Marxist theory:

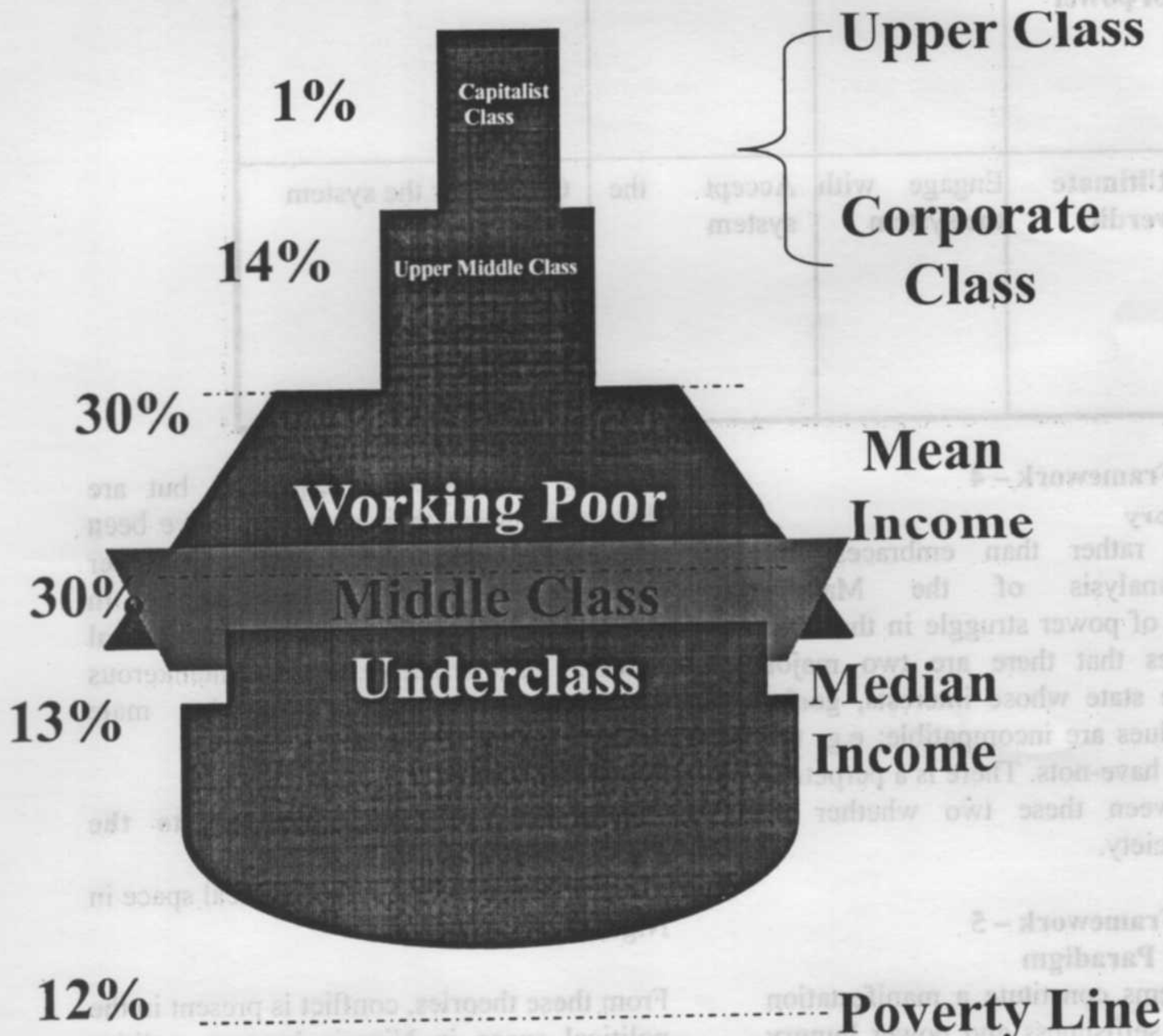
**a. Instrumental Marxism**

It tries to empirically demonstrate the nature of the ruling class domination in society.

**b. "Structuralist" Marxism**

This is associated with the works of Poulantzas and Althusser. This variant of Marxism concentrates more upon the structural arrangements of capitalist society, attempting to show how a Ruling Class is able to dominate the rest of society economically, politically and ideologically without the need for its members to personally oversee the workings of the state.

**Figure 1: Model of Class Structure Under capitalism - 99% versus the 1%**



Source: Urim U. 2015, Determinants of Conflicts in Politics

**Summary**

	<b>Pluralist</b>	<b>Elitist</b>	<b>Marxist</b>
<b>Source of power</b>	Societal interests	Elite grouping	Capitalist mode of production
<b>Nature of power</b>	Dispersed	Concentrated	Concentrated
<b>Analysis of power</b>	Positive	Neutral	Critical
<b>Ultimate verdict</b>	Engage with the system	Accept the system	Overthrow the system

**Theoretical Framework – 4**

**Conflict Theory**

This theory rather than embraces the economic analysis of the Marxist interpretation of power struggle in the state only identifies that there are two major groups in the state whose interests, goals, needs and values are incompatible; e.g. the haves and the have-nots. There is a perpetual struggle between these two whether in industry or society.

**Theoretical Framework – 5**

**The Feminist Paradigm**

Social problems constitute a manifestation of the greed, selfishness and power hungry disposition of men to control and dominate the resources of the state. For feminist theories, women, girls and children are pawns in the hands of men who use them to

achieve their political objectives but are abandoned when their objectives have been realized. They canvass for equality in power sharing, greater participation of women in politics and a feminisation of the political space as an alternative to the cantankerous and bloodletting disposition by male political actors.

**Application of These Theories to the Political Situation in Nigeria**

Why is there conflict in the political space in Nigeria?

From these theories, conflict is present in the political space in Nigeria because politics essentially is akin to a zero-sum game. Political power in Nigeria, as elsewhere, is dominated by the elite minority or dominant class and their apparatchiks, families,

cronies and godchildren. There are limited resources in the state e.g. money resources, prestige, position, respect, military power and social influence which cannot go round. There is a masculinisation of politics and power, leaving out half of the population made of women and girls and this also causes conflict. Party control is tied to political hegemony or political office.

Activities in the policy sphere are dominated by power brokers mostly political actors. There are opportunities that political power brings such as oil blocks, humongous salaries and benefits e.g. international travels, free medical treatments, political patronage, contracts, international recognition, opportunity to become a statesman or woman. Political actors wield immense political and economic influence. In Africa, political actors, even mediocrities, are hero-worshipped. Political leadership confers traditional titles on the holders and prestige for their families. The stakes are high but the rewards are higher.

#### **Theoretical Framework-6 Marketing Perspective**

Decades ago, palamountain (1986) illustrated the "politics of distribution", studying the dynamic interplay among economic and political actions that shaped the emergence and adoption of controversial distribution methods in economic market places. Later, Thorelli (1994) discusses the complex interpenetration of economic and political systems. He advocates the examination of the "political ecology of marketing".

As the analysis of the marketing channel conventionally emphasizes economic issues, values, performance, and institutions, the analysis of the political 'channel' emphasizes political issues, values, and performance, as well as a concomitant network of political organizations and actors. This perspective is consistent with emerging conceptualizations that adopt inter-organizational networks as the most appropriate unit of analysis for exploring marketing channels (Frazier, 1993) and for

studying political organizations and actions (Rainey and Milward, 1993).

While each party in these organizations pursues a partisan interest, working sentiments, and ultimately, rules develop that govern both the nature of inter-organizational reactions and the manner in which change occurs in the political market place (Van de Ven and Astley, 1991; Williamson, 1985; Williamson, Wachter, and Harris, 1985). Consistent with channel theory, the dominant working sentiments in the political network are conflict and cooperation (levy and Zaltman, 1985; Stern, 1981; Stern and Reve, 1990).

Henderson (1981) observes that "a persistent condition underlying social conflict is the different set of subjective assumptions and levels of awareness by which groups perceive the same objective set of circumstances", differing views concerning how the market system operates (Greyser, 1983; greyser, Bloom, and Diamond 1992), how consumers utilize information in decision-making, how much information is enough (Bettman, 1985; Mazis, 1992; Wilkie and Gardner, 1984); All these contribute to conflict in the political market place clearly, new marketing practices, initiatives that alter the consumer information environment, or strategies that raise ethical legal questions can spawn conflict between marketers and political market participants.

The level of activity or exchange that takes place among parties within the political marketplace usually appears to be conflict-driven. This is because the parties channel, aggregate, and express political demands. Political parties play important roles in the management of conflict in societies divided along cultural, linguistic, religious, regional, or other lines. However, the impact that parties have on the actual expression of conflict varies depending on the way in which such cleavages are expressed by the party system (Reilly, 2006). Causes of this conflict are not unconnected with pressures of tribalism and ethnic mobilization,

incompatible political alliance, a restriction of elected members to defect, defection of party members, multiple endorsements of candidates, organizing parties around personalities or narrow political interest like the zoning system in Nigeria, an attempt to reduce political fragmentation, etc (Reilly 2006, Worlu, 2010).

There are essentially two competing paradigms in marketing those situate and resolve hostilities: The marketing mix management (MMM) paradigm and the Relationship Marketing (RM) paradigm (Johenson, 2005). The MMM paradigm is considered by many experts to be theory of marketing, and has dominated marketing thought, research and practices since it was introduced around 1960 (McCarthy, 1960). The theory rests on the notion of four ps i.e. product, place, price and promotion; and largely obscured earlier models such as the organic functionalist (Alderson, 1950), systems-oriented (Fisk, 1967) and parameter theory approaches (Rasmussen, 1955). Some definitions of marketing are based on this MMM thinking (e.g. American marketing Association, 2002; Stanton, 2003; Baker, 1999 etc). These definitions typically see marketing as the appropriation of techniques to get goods across to a market. Marketing is thus, by this approach, managing a set of activities in order to persuade the customer to buy a product. This function is often made the exclusive preserve of certain professionals who are located in a separate department of the firm. Marketing in this paradigm is a profession.

As Johenson (2005) noted, MMM theory is often labeled transaction marketing because its main focus is on facilitating singular purchases, not the maintenance of existing customers' relationships. The marketer tries to win customers over and over again, irrespective of whether they have made purchases before or not. Most importantly this concept is founded on manufactured goods type of logic. MMM paradigm, though originally developed in response to the (then) growing market of fast-moving-consumer goods in 1950s North America,

now informs most of the contemporary political marketing literature.

The other paradigm – Relationship marketing (RM) is more associated with services marketing which started in the 1970s to emerge as a separate area of marketing with concepts and models of its own geared to the typical characteristics of services. The Relationship Marketing paradigm is particularly associated with a group of Scandinavian scholars (Gummesson, 1997). This group of scholars viewed marketing as something that must involve every member of the organization.

One striking feature of the Relationship marketing which is situated in the services industries is that production and consumption are part of the same process. The customers are seen as co-producers of the service offering and they interact with the service provider (and also with one another) in the production process. According to the Relationship Marketing paradigm, the focus of marketing is on value creation rather than the value distribution emphasized by the MMM paradigm, that is, the facilitation and support of a value creating process, rather than simply distributing ready-made value to customers. Gronroos (2000) argues that value for customers is not embedded in products. Products are only facilitators of value. Instead, value for customers is created through the relationship and interactions between the customers and service provider. Thus, from service marketing perspective, there is no gap between production and consumption that needs to be filled by a separate activity or function. Hence, marketing is an integral part of the entire process.

Furthermore, the fact that our customers are seen as co-producers in the value creating processes necessitates the establishment of long-term relationships between the service provider and its customers-otherwise both process and outcome might be seriously jeopardized. This customer retention is of course central to relationship marketing and

explains its growing popularity at the expense of the 'old' paradigm (Payne, 1988; Ferguson, 1991; Gronroos, 2000; Gummesson, 1999).

Although several political marketing analysts view parties as service organizations, they all almost work within the MMM-paradigm. The reason for this is not far-fetched. Besides the longevity of the approach, its concepts are highly technical, more tangible and less sophisticated than those of relationship marketing or services marketing. They are theoretically easier to handle, and equally useful in framing the world of politics, although some scholars have argued otherwise (Carlzon, 1987; Iacoka, 1984; Roggers, 1986; Peters, 1982; Johansen, 2005). For example, Henneberg (1997) and Johansen (2005) have noted that the only P from the MMM-paradigm that really fits well with politics is 'promotion'. In their contention, 'price' and 'place' do not make the conceptual leap all that well. But this discourse, which is essentially premised on the conflict that occurs in the marketing channel (i.e. the place element of the MMM-paradigm), has reasonably debunked that notion.

The importation of marketing channels idea of conflict management into political analysis and points to the evidence that MMM-paradigm can be as useful as the RM paradigm in politics. It depends on the willingness of political marketing scholars to accept the challenge. However, intra-party conflict leading to voter cynicism and low voter turnout is thus a problem that faces all politicians and political parties. Within the commercial spheres, companies promote internal peace by quickly attending to industrial action in order to effectively compete. Political parties differ in that they are reliant on citizen participation in the political process. This participation is now in sharp decline, and raises questions about the legitimacy of the system. Consequently, it is imperative to examine the two main competing paradigms in relation to the contemporary challenges facing democratic politics. The first is the Marketing

Management Paradigm, and the other is Relationship Marketing paradigm.

Arguably the single most important consequence of applying a manufactured goods marketing perspective to politics is that it favours an increasing centralization of power structures (Seyd, 1992; Shaw, 1994; Dalton, 2000). Thus we see political parties moving away from their electorates, and grassroots party members losing their influence over policy and candidate selection processes.

Put in commercial terms, we see a reappearance of the gap between production and consumption. It is in this gap that the issue of conflict is situated because the producer and consumer have to rely on mediated communication which is undertaken by intermediaries. Often times, conflict arises among these intermediaries. In politics, this conflict leads to plummeting voter turnout and political disenchantment. Consequently, people have effectively been deprived of the notion that they have some responsibility for the political outcome and are made to believe that politics is the responsibility of politicians, rather than citizens, and that they are invited to act as 'self-interested shoppers' on the lookout for 'issue-delivery'.

Within this paradigm 'consumer-power' is in actual fact very passive and refers to little more than the customer's freedom and ability to withdraw their purchasing power and channel it into alternative markets or towards other suppliers. Something similar is happening within the 'representational political market' today in that voters are 'refusing to buy' by abstaining. This is one of the consequences of conflict.

To compound the matter, centralized politics invariably requires the increased use of external professional consultants and market research. The problem here is that the marketing function is effectively being separated from the rest of the organization. The dependency on consultants may also be seen as shifting the focus from direct to

mediated communication. Consequently, the potential "sales people" (i.e. party members) that parties could have had actively 'selling' and creating participation in their local markets (constituencies), are discouraged both directly and indirectly by this shift in strategic focus (Shaw, 1994; Seyd, 1992; Scarrow, 2000). Most marketing conscious parties have effectively abandoned their part-time marketers and substituted them with mediated communication, and thereby contributing to the gap between the elected and electors.

The strategic implication of the traditional marketing paradigm is control. Many parties appear to have chosen to be reactive, cut costs and personnel in line with MMM-thinking. This manifests itself as being more about increasing the central control within the party than cost cutting (Seyd, 1992; Shaw, 1994). For this and other reasons, the application of MMM-theory to politics is highly problematic on ethical and theoretical grounds. The model forces itself on politics as though the latter was merely a responsive and reactive exercise, and thus encourages accusations of post-driven politics, lack of political leaderships and opportunism not to mention centralization and barriers to participation (O'Shaughnessy, 2001). Secondly, because it leads to centralization tendencies that do not go well with the participatory aspects that representative democracy is so heavily reliant on. In fact, it further increases the gap between the governed and the governors.

The Relationship Marketing (RM) paradigm as it relates to politics allows us to view the political party as a whole, places it in an interactive societal context, and may correspondingly provide a legitimate rationale for political parties to re-establish their important position, especially in parliamentary democratic systems. In addition, it highlights the importance of every single member of the party both as part-time marketers (promoting the party's values and ideas) and as co-producers of the service offering (policy production, producing new representatives and

encouraging voter turnout). With this concept active participation is not only invited, but also it is seen as a prerequisite of the production process (Johansen, 2005).

To political parties, RM is not entirely new because there has always been the need to maintain a contact with opinion leaders and certain members of the vote market, albeit on casual basis. But the paradigm being advocated here focuses on building and maintaining long-term relationship both internally and externally, and this means member and customer (voter) retention. Both constitute production assets, and a high turnover of them entails knowledge migration and a weakened market position.

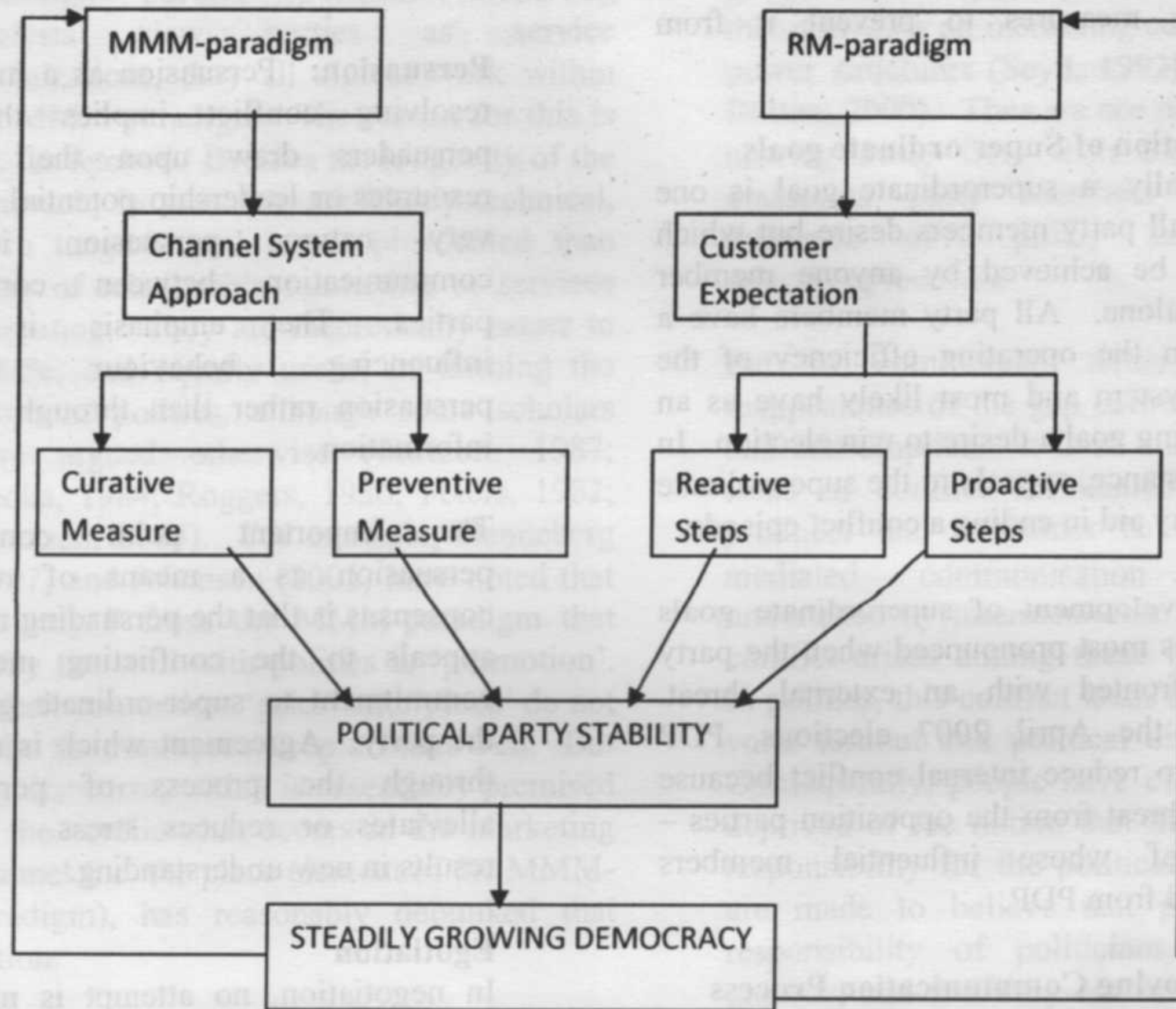
For political actors this means that their main marketing efforts should be directed at members and core supporters – the general idea being that these are the only means by which to efficiently recruit new ones who will stay loyal overtime (Ferguson, 1991). This in turn keeps a decentralized and fragmented organization innovative, dynamic, loyal, together and constantly producing.

Another promising feature of the RM paradigm is its notion of networks. Traditionally, political parties have incorporated within their own networks a number of sub-groups and social movements associated with the overall ideology or vision of the party (Diamond, 2001). This is necessary because collaboration and coalition building are seen as increasingly important to ensuring market success. (Gummesson, 1999).

RM-paradigm is an instrument of conflict management in party politics because it opens up a route back to a more traditional way of seeing political parties and argues that this is still a productive and legitimate way of viewing their role in representative democracy. The assumption that party members have outplayed their role is premature, and so maintaining a relationship with them before, during and after elections is an automatic way of curbing conflict. The

same is true of other stakeholders (e.g. electorate).

**Figure 2: Marketing Model for Conflict Management in Party Politics**



**Source:** Worlu, R (2010) Marketing Management for Political Parties.

Precipitation of a conflict episode with overt hostile behaviour among party members requires some mechanism to bring hostility to an end. The model above is the framework proposed for conflict management in politics. This framework relies on the two competing paradigms in marketing. It is developed on the premise that there is something good in each of the paradigms which party managers can adopt to create party stability.

The MMM-paradigm has donated the idea of conflict resolution often used in channel system while the RM-paradigm has donated the strategies which Relationship marketers adopt in understanding their customers' expectation since this forms the basis of forestalling conflict.

The result of these two approaches is stability in the political systems which ultimately lead to steadily growing democratic system. We shall consider each of these approaches in detail.

**The MMM-Paradigm**

As we have earlier indicated the MMM-paradigm rests on the notion of the four Ps i.e. product, price, place and promotion. The place element is essentially concerned with the channel system and logistical components. The channel system deals with intermediaries that assist the manufacturer in ensuring that goods reach the consumer at the right time, place, price, and form. In the process, conflicts occur and they are often resolved for the benefit of the entire system. It is the approach of resolving these conflicts in the channel system that is being applied to

party politics. This approach is sub-divided into two: curative and preventive.

### **Preventive Measure**

The assumption here is that conflict has not occurred, and the party can take the following measures to prevent it from occurring.

#### **- Adoption of Super ordinate goals**

Essentially, a superordinate goal is one which all party members desire but which cannot be achieved by anyone member acting alone. All party members have a stake in the operating efficiency of the party system and most likely have as an overriding goal a desire to win election. In such instance, appeals to the superordinate goal may aid in ending a conflict episode.

The development of superordinate goals becomes most pronounced when the party is confronted with an external threat. Before the April 2007 elections, PDP strove to reduce internal conflict because of the threat from the opposition parties – most of whose influential members defected from PDP.

#### **- Improving Communication Process**

More efficient flow of information and/or communications in the party will permit party members to find solutions to their conflict based on common objectives.

Many associations have been established by aspirants and their supporters (e.g. Agenda 2007). These associations invite membership from all levels of the party hierarchy. Through their meetings, the party members are able to share information and improve communications. In addition, meetings afford members an opportunity to develop solutions to common problems and thus reinforce prevailing party relationships.

To some extent, all party communications are efforts to decrease or avoid conflict. When communication exists simply for the purpose of delivering information, it constitutes a problem-solving effort.

### **Curative Measure**

There is a presumption here that conflict is already in existence, and the political party is making effort to cure the conflict situation through the following measures:

**Persuasion:** Persuasion as a means of resolving conflict implies that the persuaders draw upon their power resources or leadership potential. By its very nature, persuasion involves communication between conflicting parties. The emphasis is upon influencing behaviour through persuasion rather than through sharing information.

The important point concerning persuasion as a means of reaching consensus is that the persuading member appeals to the conflicting members' commitment to super-ordinate goals of the party. Agreement which is reached through the process of persuasion alleviates or reduces stress. It also results in new understanding.

### **Egotiation**

In negotiation, no attempt is made to fully satisfy a party member. Instead, the negotiation objective is an accommodation halting a conflict episode among party members. Such compromise may resolve the episode but not necessarily the fundamental stress over which the conflict erupted. If stress continues in the party, it is likely that some issues or another will precipitate conflict again at some later time.

Compromise is one means by which consensus can be reached among party members. In compromise situations, each party gives up something it desires in order to end conflict. Often, compromise is necessary to reach consensus in instances when persuasion is ineffective.

### **Politics**

Politics here refers to resolution of conflict by involving neutral party or non-party members in the process of reaching agreement. Examples of such solutions are coalition formation, arbitration or mediation, lobbying or judicial appeal, Laissez Faire.

**Coalition:** The formation of coalitions among party members is, in effect, an attempt to alter the power structure within the party. Even in a wider sense, two or three opposition parties can form a coalition to reduce the chances of the ruling party.

The formation of such coalition of such coalitions represents a political move by party members. Once formed, however, the conflict resolution process may be achieved through problem-solving, persuasion, or negotiation. Again, coalitions may become involved in additional forms of political activity as discussed below.

### **Mediation and Arbitration**

Both mediation and arbitration involve a third party in the conflict resolution process. In mediation, the third party may suggest a solution to the conflict but party members are not required to accept that solution. In arbitration, the solution suggested by the intermediary is binding upon the conflicting parties.

### **Lobbying and Judicial Appeal**

In this case, attempts to influence the legislators and legislative process through lobbying activities are frequent. Court litigation is also a popular means to resolve conflict by drawing outside parties into the relationship.

### **Withdrawal**

An additional method for terminating conflict is the withdrawal of one member from the relationship (party) in order to avoid the hostile behaviour existing in the party. In most cases, such withdrawing member defects to another political party, or voluntarily retires from politics. The withdrawal of Anyim Pius Anyim (the former Senate President) is a good example.

Withdrawal is a relatively common method of resolving political conflict in Nigeria.

### **Laissez Faire**

This refers to a situation where nothing tangible is done about the conflict. This is often with the belief that the conflict will resolve itself. This is true in most cases when cooperative behaviour gradually increases to a level where members even forget that there was conflict in times past.

### **The RM Paradigm**

As we have noted in this paper, the RM paradigm seeks to build and maintain long-term relationships both internally and externally, and this means member and customer (voter) retention. This member and voter retention is only possible when parties understand the expectations of their internal and external markets. Two steps are employed in understanding supporter expectation:

#### **1. Reactive Step**

This step is reactionary or responsive. It depends entirely on the customer (party member or voter) in providing some forms of feedback to help the party understand the expectations of internal and external supporters.

#### **2. Proactive Step**

In this approach, the party executives actively solicit information and initiate feedback from the party supporters and members through a well-structured and deliberate process.

While the reactive approach may provide useful information, the proactive approach is recommended as being more effective in management of conflict.

### **Conclusion**

It is crystal clear in contemporary politics that parties play a crucial role not just in representing interest, aggregating preferences, and forming governments, but also in managing conflict, especially in multi-ethnic society like Nigeria.

The major challenge of Nigerian democracy today is not what determines a citizen's vote but rather why so many 'customers' are choosing not to 'buy' anything. Intra-party hostilities come top among the reasons for this indifference. Party members who can not put their 'house in order' do not seem to hold any prospect for good governance, particularly where instances of corruption among leaders encourage voters to look at politicians with suspicion. Thus conflict in party politics must be addressed.

Addressing conflict situation in party politics with the aid of the proposed model does not suggest a zero-tolerance for conflict. This is because a conflict episode may be functional or dysfunctional. The functional (beneficial) qualities of conflict can enhance the solidarity of a party. In other words, absence of conflict may breed passivity and complacency in the party with a resultant lack of market-orientation.

The framework is therefore put in place to identify and checkmate conflicts that have dysfunctional consequences. Politics, generally, is a zero-sum game. It is sustained by scarcity of resources and incompatibility of goals, interests and values. If well managed, democracy and party politics is yet the best opportunity to popularly change a government through the ballot box. Political conflict can be negative resulting in violence, bloodletting and exploitation of the resources of the people by a tiny elite. It can also be a positive influence to change society for the better. Therefore, political actors in Nigeria must strive to ensure that political competition does yield to bloodletting and intolerance. It must be played by the highest standards of civility, human rights and guided by democratic norms.

#### **Policy and Managerial Implications**

The model and the theories have obvious implications for party building and development. The approach to political party development in conflict-prone societies should be 'top-down' approach,

which carries the expectation that parties can be built to a certain extent, not from below (as is usually the case), but from above. This approach focuses on increasing party discipline and cohesion in parliament as a means of stabilizing party politics in the hope that more disciplined parties will lead to a more structured party system overall.

One way of doing this is to restrict the capacity of members to change parties once elected. This practice, which was once widespread in many Asian countries, has been curtailed in recent years by the introduction of "anti-hopping" provisions in states like India, Malaysia, Thailand, and Papua New Guinea. These have made it difficult for a politician elected under one party label to change allegiance to another party once in office. The absence of this arrangement in Nigeria has disintegrated PDP and other parties. In fact, the rift that existed between president Obasanjo and his vice could be traceable to loose party formation requirement.

The model can also help policy-makers to embark on more ambitious institutional innovation. One such institutional innovation has recently been enacted in Papua New Guinea, one of the world's most ethnically diverse countries. With over 800 indigenous languages and thousands of competing tribal groups, stable government has proved extremely difficult since the country's independence in 1975. However, a package of constitutional, electoral, and party reforms was introduced in 2001 with the aim of stabilizing executive government and building a more coherent party system.

The model does not support the organization of political parties around personalities, narrow interests, and tribal and ethnic loyalties. It is rather intended to support nascent political groupings and help move them towards becoming more coherent, policy-oriented political parties. Parties should follow democratic process in all their activities, particularly in internal elections to reduce the incidence of hostility.

Parties should see the need to provide basic marketing training for their officials to increase their expertise in the application of the model. This is necessary because the framework was deduced from marketing paradigms. Political parties need to commission marketing researchers to ensure the success of the proactive measures.

The framework presumes a continuous exercise which makes it imperative for political parties to engage (on a continuous basis) a team of marketers to complement the marketing efforts of the party.

To reduce the heating up of the polity, political perks, office and rewards should be rotated as it is done by the PDP and APC in Nigeria currently. The need for inclusive government or what is called "unity government" e.g. Obama and Hilary Clinton (Secretary of State) may be a panacea to conflict. Give and take politics should prevail. Meritocracy should reign. Encouragement of independent candidature should be pursued. Reduction of the financial attraction in the centre, and in government, generally is a good idea. There is a functional aspect of political conflict which puts actors and their representatives in check and provides an alternative government. Organisational conflict too can be functional if well managed. To make headway whether in the society or industry, some "politicking" should be embraced. Qualification must be backed by character and the love of the people to stand out.

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