

# Political Marketing and Democratic Processes in Nigeria: Welfare of Citizens in Perspective

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**Abstract:** *This study is focused on political marketing and democracy in Nigeria: the citizen's welfare in perspective. The objectives of the study are to critically and contextually analyze the role of political marketing in Nigeria's democratic processes; evaluate the impact of political marketing on citizens' welfare; examine citizens' perceptions of political marketing and its influence on their democratic participation, and provide actionable recommendations on how political marketing can better serve democratic values and contribute to citizens' welfare. The study identifies and explores political marketing, traditional marketing mix elements, political parties, foreign relations and media, democracy and overview of Nigeria's democracy, citizens' welfare, and highlights the evolution of political marketing, famous examples of political*

*marketing, application of positioning and branding in political marketing; constraints to political marketing in Nigeria; sustenance of political marketing; democracy in the Nigerian/African context, and the challenges of democracy in Nigeria. The major findings from the study are that political marketing significantly shapes voter perceptions and decisions, with many citizens influenced by campaign messages, media representation and political branding; there is a notable gap between political campaign promises and the actual implementation of welfare policies post-election; many political actors prioritize campaign strategies that secure votes but fail to deliver on welfare commitments once elected; the lack of strict regulations allows for manipulative strategies that mislead voters and undermine democratic values; traditional media (radio, television) still plays a significant role in shaping political opinions, especially in rural areas, and existing laws are often inadequate to address modern challenges in political marketing, especially in the digital space, among others. The study concluded that political marketing is a tool which thrives in a democratic dispensation where the rule of law prevails, and political competition is tolerated or encouraged by the party (ies) in power. We, therefore, recommended that governments, non-governmental organizations and communities should work together to promote citizens' welfare by creating policies and programs that reduce poverty, promote equality and ensure safety and security for all members of society; there should be an increasing call from civil society, media and the electorate for political reforms that ensure transparency, accountability and a focus on citizens' welfare; studies should be conducted to assess how political marketing influenced voter decisions and whether elected officials fulfilled their campaign promises; establish independent committees to monitor the implementation of welfare programs promised during campaigns; provide electoral bodies with the resources and authority to regulate political marketing and ensure free and fair democratic practices; create platforms for dialogue between political candidates and citizens to discuss welfare issues and political strategies, and incorporate political education into school curriculums to foster a generation of informed and responsible voters, among others.*

**Keywords:** Political marketing, democracy, positioning, branding, political leaders, political parties and citizen's welfare.

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## INTRODUCTION

Political marketing is an activity, which is well advanced in the democratic countries of the West, among which are the United States of America, British, France and others. Political Marketing thrives in democratic governments where the views and rights of citizens are taken seriously by both the leaders and potential leaders. It is an activity, which derives its relevance from healthy competition. In most of the advanced democratic countries, political marketing centers on issues, parties, and candidates seeking electoral votes. The major goal of political marketing is to establish connections between the parties, their candidates and the electorate with a view to justifying the bases of their desire to acquire power (Lock and Harris, 2018). This justification is only meaningful

if the electorate would perceive correctly how a given candidate, sponsored by a given party, will make a difference to their lives. This is where political marketing has its greatest relevance. Political marketing in Nigeria is still in its infancy, due to the stunted growth of democracy (Anyanwu,2008). Nigeria gained political independence, over 47 years ago. Out of these years, the military was in power for 27 years and democracy was enthroned for only a little over 19 years. Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe was the first President, from 1963 to 1966. Alhaji Shehu Shagari was the next President for 4 years (October 1, 1979 - December 31, 1983); chief Olusegun Obasanjo came back as the president and was in office for 8years (May, 1999 - May, 2007) having served out the first tenure and second tenure. He, so far, had emerged as the first longest serving democratic president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. President Umaru Musa Yar'adua has only been in office for close to one year. This brief review of the balance of leadership between the military regime and democracy is designed to show why Nigeria has not developed a reasonable appreciation of the role of political marketing (Anyanwu,2008). Military regime is generally autocratic and does not seek the mandate of the people. The military rulers apply force in all they do, with little regards to the feelings and aspirations of the citizens. The fact that the military had been longest in the seat of Power also had a snowballing effect on the enthronement of democratic rule in Nigeria (Anyanwu,2008). In most cases, the military rulers dictated those who should be in power, and the constitution under which they operated or are to operate. The immediate effect is that even when we have democratic government in place, the hands of the former military rulers would be all over the system which frustrates every effort to move forward politically.

### **Objectives of the Study.**

The main objective of the study is focused on understanding the interplay between political marketing strategies and their impact on democratic processes and citizen's welfare in Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

- i). analyze the role of political marketing in Nigeria's democratic processes.
- ii). evaluate the impact of political marketing on citizens' welfare.
- iii). examine citizens' perceptions of political marketing and its influence on their democratic participation.
- iv). provide actionable recommendations on how political marketing can better serve democratic values and contribute to citizens' welfare.

## **LITERATURE REVIEWS**

### **Political Marketing**

Political marketing over the years especially in the USA has acquired different meanings depending on the areas being emphasized by the authors. In some descriptions of political marketing, emphases have been on the positioning process; communication process between the voters and the political parties with their candidates; persuasive techniques in campaigns to promote both the politicians and the policies; evaluation and redesign of policy and electioneering

strategies aimed at reaching out to the electorate; broader consideration of the needs of the electorate so that their desires are sufficiently addressed (Laswell,2020; Lane,2019). Political marketing based on the above description consists of all the marketing related activities designed to position the parties and their candidates in the minds of the electorate with a view to garnering their support during elections. This notion of political marketing limits the application to merely persuading the electorate and that done, the process stops. It is our view that political marketing should go beyond the persuasion of the electorate and obtaining their votes. In its true perspective, the political marketing concept should serve as frameworks upon which parties and their candidates should formulate policies for both electioneering campaigns and governance (Lipset and Rokkan,2019). In its true sense, parties and their candidates on coming into power are expected to practicalize their manifestos. From their viewpoints, political marketing should be based on the traditional marketing mix elements of product, price, place and promotion (4Ps). These marketing mix elements when properly examined and analyzed will provide the essential planks for the parties and their candidates for catering for the needs of the electorate during the campaigns and the citizens on coming to power. We can therefore, describe political marketing as the adoption and combination of the four marketing mix elements with a view to meeting the expectations of the electorate and serving the needs of the citizens in the return for their votes and loyalty.

### **Product.**

Product comes in two forms, namely, goods and services (Kotler,2006).The extent of government involvement in the offer of products in an economy is a function of the degree of deregulation. In a highly de-regulated economy, government's role will be minimal. However, in most developing countries with partial deregulation, the leaders get involved in the offer of both goods and services, to uplift the standard of living of the citizens. .Governments in almost all countries provide infrastructure such as roads, railways, airports, electricity, water, communication network etc, even if at the early stage of economic development before either privatising or commercializing them. These, fall under goods because they are physical in nature. In the area of services, governments offer education, medical services, transportation, banking (Central Banks) among others. The central message here is for government to consider the citizens need before offering these goods and services. Any government that does this is more likely to meet the expectations of the citizens than otherwise.

### **Pricing**

This comes in two ways viz - commercial price, which goes for commercialized government controlled organizations, and subsidized prices (Levy and Kotler,2006). Pricing affords a government the opportunity to use it for policy formulation. In a developing country like Nigeria, price subsidy could be used to encourage agricultural production, or to deflate the level of inflation (Lusch,2019). Any set of leaders worth their salt should keep watch over the movement of prices in the economy, because they represent the strongest indicator of the citizens' standard of living.

### **Place**

In marketing, the term ‘place’ represents the channels of distribution, as well as the physical distribution (Ward and Robertson,2019). On the surface, it does seem that government may not concern itself with this element of marketing. The truth is that government has much to do in order to facilitate the execution of this assignment, which ultimately will determine the spread of goods in the economy. It is true that the government may not get involved in the actual distribution of goods, but it has the responsibility of providing the infrastructure, like good road network, railway lines, waterways, and seaports that will facilitate the movement of goods. The degree at which goods can move from surplus areas to scarcity areas will determine the level of satisfaction enjoyed by the citizens of a given country (Okoye,2019).

### **Promotion**

This is the communication arm of marketing, and consists of advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and publicity (Matron,2019; Anyanwu,2008). With the exception of sales promotion, government requires a good dose of the three other elements to operate effectively in mobilizing the citizens. Government is expected to, and does buy both spaces in newspaper, and airtime in the radio and television stations, to sell certain policies and programmes. In Nigeria, government (Federal and States) have their radio and TV stations, and these serve as added advantage to mass-mobilize the people. It is, however, sad to observe that the leaders do not utilize this golden opportunity available to them. Instead they tend to force their policies and programmes down the citizens’ throat. Personal selling and public relations are more relevant among the three arms of governments, namely, the executive, legislature and the judiciary. Policies are expected to be canvassed and opinions sought with a view to ensuring that the policies succeed. This will happen in an ideal democratic set up where the three arms are relatively independent. The situation is quite different in the Nigeria of today, where the executive arm tends to dictate the pace (Gowa,2015; Herskovits,2015; Milbrath,2019).

### **Evolution of Political Marketing**

Political Marketing dates back to few decades but it has evolved tremendously and holds a great future in terms of growth (Scammell,2019). This has been justified by various political researchers and academicians in their study. In ‘Political advertising and the demonstration of market orientation’, Claire Robinson explores the relationship between market orientation of politics and the achievement of electoral objectives during taking the example of New Zealand elections. Robinson uses an analysis of advertising content to observe the impact of political marketing over the voters and also tries to figure out whether the electoral objectives of political parties are fulfilled or not. In the last two decades political marketing has moved from being the obscure concern of a small group of academic marketers who interested in politics, to a significant area of international research in contemporary marketing. Academicians and practitioners have contributed to both contemporary as well as political marketing. It has also gained the acknowledgement from political scientists that political marketing has something to offer beyond the black arts of propaganda. Political Marketing has also been influenced by cross cultural impacts

and voting systems across the globe. The fragmentation of traditional media and the growth of new ones are also impacting this phenomenon. While political marketing's most visible influence has been in communications during electoral campaigns, it has become increasingly important in the development of long term political strategies and positioning for parties. Marketers' understanding of consumer behaviour has provided particularly valuable insights into voter behaviour which is an important strand in the success of political marketing (Lane,2019). As a theory, it has come a long way and holds a key position in the coming times.

### **Famous Examples of Political Marketing.**

Political Marketing has emerged as a new age way of campaigning for the political parties so as to make themselves known and popularize in the public domain. Off late It has also been observed that as marketers are becoming digital in ways of their marketing, similar is the case in the area of politics. When Barack Obama realized that he would not have the support of the great businessmen to win the elections in 2008, he decided to change and become the first politician. The 2008 Obama Campaign has been hailed as the first to make effective use of the internet. There are few more such instances where we can find out such impact.

#### **i). 100,000 pieces of content in the campaign of Trump**

In the early days of Trump's political marketing campaign, his digital strategist, Brad Parscale, received a small budget with the aim of expanding the database. The strategist made a decision and invested all the money on Facebook ads. To the beginning, it included the names, email addresses and phone numbers of some of Trump followers on the platform. Then, he chose to use the customized audiences to unite these people with their Facebook profiles. Also, with Facebook's "audience segmentation options" tool, ads could take one course or another based on user activity, ethnic affinity, or demographics such as location, age, gender, or interests. Next, the strategist extended his "radar" using the "similar audience," a potent tool that allows finding people on Facebook with common qualities. It means, in this case, possible followers of Trump. Besides, Par-scale also implemented software to optimize the design and delivery of the Facebook ads generated for him. The campaign generated so many ads that 100,000 different landing pages were created. Each one directed to different segments. As a result, more than 100,000 pieces of content were created.

#### **ii). Trump's Twitter strategy**

During the General Assembly of the United Nations (UNGA), citizens from all over the world witnessed how world leaders expressed their ideas. But Trump's communication during this period is one of the most structured and organized examples of political marketing via Twitter. No lousy step is taken. Donald Trump had two official accounts, @realDonaldTrump, with 48.6M followers and @POTUS, with 22.4. Both statements are active and reflect a very different communication behavior. The topics covered in each account are very different. And they are not chosen at random like Natural disasters, Commemorative days, National controversies, Medical attendance etc.

### iii).SMS Marketing in the Obama campaign.

Another of the most prominent examples of political marketing is Obama, who has also given a lot to talk about. The former president of the United States has given several lessons on how to use digital spaces to create strategies. For example, he taught that (Ake,2019):

1. High-performance websites led the user to convert.
2. A/B tests were a base when choosing content and designing different calls to action on your website.
3. He also incorporated his proposals into the thank-you pages, where the public was most receptive.
4. Using email marketing to build user loyalty.
5. Both the social networks and the blog were fully integrated into each step of their digital strategy.
6. All campaigns were segmented.

But there's more, Obama's marketing team knew how to apply SMS to publicize different contents. The website "YouObama" was created referring to YouTube to share videos of its political actions and was one of the first political candidates to take advantage on the functions of social networks like Facebook and Twitter. Even so, currently, their profiles are considered absolute success stories.

### **Application of Positioning and Branding in Political Marketing**

Positioning on marketing seeks to place products in the minds of prospective buyers. Once a product has been adequately positioned in the minds of buyers, repeat purchase is assured and this guarantees savings in promotional expenditure. This is so because what will be required would be a reminder type of promotion. Such buyers do not need persuasive promotion to be able to buy the goods or services. Positioning is used as a marketing strategy and it is difficult to imitate by competitors. To be able to use this strategy, the producer must identify his unique selling proposition (USP), which can be used to differentiate his goods/services from those of competitors. In similar circumstances, parties and candidates are in competition with themselves. Each party and each candidate must strive to position itself and himself in the minds of the electorate (Ake,2019; Ake,2000). As noted by Achuma, Dixon-Ogbechi and Bolajoko (2018), 'Positioning is the process of connecting with the voter. It is the process of developing a campaign theme that consists of convergent policy stances on issues. A campaign theme is the single-centered idea that is sold to the voters to serve as a bridge between the political party and its candidates and the voters. It is clear that the parties and their candidates need positioning and campaign themes. In keeping with our earlier broad approach to looking at political marketing, these positioning and themes apply during both electioneering campaigns and leadership in government. Branding is the process by which an organization uses a name, phrase, design, symbols, or combination of these to identify its products, and distinguish them from those of competitors (Klein et al, 2019). In politics, candidates become brands that can be positioned at the

voters market. As it is in the ordinary product market, the most visible brand commands the largest market. In positioning a candidate through branding, the desire is to cut through the communication clutter, so as to stand out of the crowd. This can be achieved if the messages designed to reach the voting public have the following features (Ojoh,2017; Oluwaseyi,2016);

- i).Promise of value to the electorate
- ii).Catchy and simple
- iii).Believable and appealing offers
- iv).Uniqueness and
- v).Contains dose of emotional appeal.

The candidate who is being branded and positioned must be x-rayed in line with the following attributes (Anyanwu,2008; Pennock and James,2018):

- i).Testimonies about him by others
- ii).Unique experiences in life
- iii).Track records in terms of achievements, among others.

The articulation of these attributes will help the political marketing strategists to package this politician as an acceptable brand in the politics market. This packaging is not limited to the period of electioneering campaigns, but should continue even when the politician succeeds and is in leadership.

### **Constraints to Political Marketing in Nigeria.**

The Nigeria democracy is an emerging one, having spent much of the years after independence with one form of military dictatorship or the other. It is said that the Leopard does not change its skin. It is only being diplomatic to say that the military legacy is to some extent, operative in the present democratic experience. There seems to be the spillover of the funds-looting syndrome of the army days, and the cowering down of people who seemed to be vocal on matters concerning the state and the citizens. These comments, notwithstanding, the constraints of political marketing are numerous to mention but some of them are as follows (Anyanwu,2008):

- i).Ignorance and lack of awareness on the part of most voters
- ii).Long military ruler in Nigeria
- iii).Retired military officers domination of the political landscape
- iv).Poverty among most voters
- v).Government dominated media
- vi).Politics of ethnic groupings
- vii).Poor emphasis on clean records and transparency in the choice of political leaders.
- viii).Supremacy of the political parties over the candidates such that any fool that is presented by any strong party is bound to win

- ix).Irrelevance of party manifestoes in the sale of parties and their candidates to the electorate
- x).Discountenance of people's vote in the declaration of winners
- xi).Thug-ridden political environment
- xii).Intimidation of people and elimination of lives during campaigns and elections
- xiii).Political bribery and money politics
- xiv).No formalized political debates between contestants before elections
- xv).Uncoordinated electoral law
- xvi).Over - dependence of the independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on the government in power

### **Coping with the Constraints**

The list of constraints enumerated above is intimidating but not insurmountable. The Nigeria democracy is an emerging one that is bound to experience these constraints. The only possible way we can cope with these constraints is through political leaders who are conscious of the citizens and the nation and who are prepared to lead by good examples. If a leader is corrupt, he cannot at the same time fight corruption. If a leader rigged election to be in governance, he can do little to stamp out election rigging (Anyanwu,2008).

### **Sustenance of Political Marketing**

Political Marketing will come alive in the Nigeria political scene when we are able to have leaders who (Anyanwu, 2008):

- i).Are selfless and prone to the good of the citizens
- ii).Are interested in improving the image of Nigeria
- iii).Are eager to fast -forward the growth of democracy in Nigeria
- iv).Are not interested only in the treasures of the country
- v).Are fair -minded in the distribution of our natural resources
- vi).See government resources as belonging to the nation and not to them
- vii).See media organs as public property, and therefore available to all contenders for power
- viii).See poverty as an anathema (disease)
- ix).Will fight corruption and bribery to stand - still
- x).Will not pervert Electoral law to suit them but think first of the nation
- xi).Will allow INEC the true independence to discharge its duties, among others.

It is only when such leaders emerge that we can begin to appreciate the role of political marketing in moving the nation forward. Until we have a reasonable number of leaders with some of the above characteristics, every effort at apply political marketing will produce less than optimal result

### **Political Parties**

There are 18 recognized political parties in Nigeria (Laswell,2020). There are a great number of parties as a direct result of corruption and chaos that has ensued in Nigeria surrounding the federal government and elections for years. The vast number of parties has proved to be difficult to

monitor. The two major parties are the Peoples Democratic Party and the All Progressives Congress, both of which have held the presidency and seats in the National Assembly for extended periods of time. As opposed to parties in other nations that represent a slew of political opinions that the public can align themselves with, parties in Nigeria act more so as a means through which prominent figures can gain power and influence, and there are so many because they often switch parties to find the one to give them the best chance of achieving authority. Political parties have been an important aspect of Nigerian government both before and after independence was achieved from the British in 1960. Parties allow for political competition to take place, for the citizenry to find people who represent their ideas and interests in government, and for the introduction of new leaders and perspectives into Nigerian life. Many Nigerians do not understand the political party system because there are so many options and their platforms are unclear to the public. This remains an issue in Nigeria because it marginalizes those who are uneducated or uninvolved in government. Also, there seems to be a tendency for people in Nigeria to support parties based on ethnic or religious divisions, particularly along the Muslim-Christian line of division (Klein et al, 2019). The 18 political parties are: Accord, Action Alliance, Action Democratic Party, Action Peoples Party, African Action Congress, African Democratic Congress, All Progressives Congress, All Progressives Grand Alliance, Allied Peoples Movement, Boot Party, Labour Party, National Rescue Movement, New Nigeria Peoples Party, Peoples Democratic Party, Peoples Redemption Party, Social Democratic Party, Young Progressive Party, Zenith Labour Party.

### **Foreign Relations**

Nigeria currently has better foreign relations with its neighbors, due to its current state of democracy. It is a member of the African Union and sits on that organization's Peace and Security Council. The current minister of foreign affairs of Nigeria is Yusuf Tuggar. Much of Nigeria's foreign affairs, both during the colonial era and post-independence has relied on oil-production. Nigeria's relationships with both its continental neighbors in Africa and throughout the world have improved a great deal since it has transitioned from military rule to a democratic state. Nigeria is hoping to gain a permanent seat on the UN Security Council in the near future. Despite these achievements, Nigeria continues to face challenges in its foreign relations, such as the fight against terrorism and insurgency in the region, the challenge of migration and human trafficking, and the need to increase economic cooperation and integration with its neighbors (Oluwaseyi, 2016)..

### **Media.**

Nigeria's media scene is characterized by state and private broadcasters, popular international brands like the BBC and CNN and more than a 100 national and local print titles state and private broadcasters. Radio and televised media in Nigeria is mostly state-owned by the National Broadcasting Commission. This is often used as a tactic of the government to assert control over and sway public opinion in favor of the incumbent party and his policies. However, most newspapers are privately owned and the internet is not restricted to the public. Given that a majority

(70%) of citizens are under 30, it is fitting that mobile news consumption (84%) is more than twice as high as computer consumption (41%), with tablet consumption trailing at 11% (Ake,2019).

### **Democracy**

Democracy comes from the Greek word, "demos," meaning people. In democracies, it is the people who hold sovereign power over legislator and government. Although nuances apply to the world's various democracies, certain principles and practices distinguish democratic government from other forms of government (Gowa,2015; Ake,2019). Democracy is government in which power and civic responsibility are exercised by all citizens, directly or through their freely elected representatives. Democracy is a set of principles and practices that protect human freedom; it is the institutionalization of freedom. Democracy rests upon the principles of majority rule, coupled with individual and minority rights. All democracies, while respecting the will of the majority, zealously protect the fundamental rights of individuals and minority groups. Democracies guard against all-powerful central governments and decentralize government to regional and local levels, understanding that local government must be as accessible and responsive to the people as possible. Democracies understand that one of their prime functions is to protect such basic human rights as freedom of speech and religion; the right to equal protection under law; and the opportunity to organize and participate fully in the political, economic, and cultural life of society. Democracies conduct regular free and fair elections open to all citizens. Elections in a democracy cannot be facades that dictators or a single party hide behind, but authentic competitions for the support of the people. Democracy subjects governments to the rule of law and ensures that all citizens receive equal protection under the law and that their rights are protected by the legal system. Democracies are diverse, reflecting each nation's unique political, social, and cultural life. Democracies rest upon fundamental principles, not uniform practices. Citizens in a democracy not only have rights, they have the responsibility to participate in the political system that, in turn, protects their rights and freedoms. Democratic societies are committed to the values of tolerance, cooperation, and compromise. Democracies recognize that reaching consensus requires compromise and that it may not always be attainable. In the words of Mahatma Gandhi, "intolerance is itself a form of violence and an obstacle to the growth of a true democratic spirit."

### **Overview of Nigeria's Democracy**

Nigeria gained independence from Britain on 1st October 1960. Like any other British Colony, the country was compelled by Britain to adopt democracy as its system of governance. However, shortly after independence, Nigeria became the first British colony to abandon its colonial constitutional heritage (Herskovits,2015). The country rejected the British parliamentary system of democracy and instead embraced the American (United States) model of democracy. Cloning American model of democracy, the constitution of Nigeria stipulates that a President will serve a maximum of two terms that span eight years (four years per term). The national assembly is bicameral, comprising of the upper house (Senate) and the lower house (House of Representatives), whilst the members of parliament are constituted by representatives from the thirty-six states. In addition, each state has a governor and a unicameral House of Assembly that

consist of representatives from each local government in the State. The appointment of Ministers, Ambassadors and Judges of the Supreme Court passes through parliament's scrutiny and approval. Unlike the United States, Nigeria lacks the necessary pillars to support democracy and help it to thrive, there is an apparent lack of established institutions such as the judiciary and police among others. Thus, Nigerian democracy kicked off on an infertile foundation. In less than six years of independence and practice of democracy, Nigeria experienced a military coup in January 1966, followed by another coup in July of the same year. Other successful coups were carried out in 1975, 1976, 1983 and 1985. Then in August 1993, the then Military Head of State General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida handed over power to an interim government headed by Ernest Shonekan. The interim government lasted for only 3 months before it was toppled by a military junta led by late General Sani Abacha, who remained in power until 1998 when he died. Following Abacha's death, an interim government was formed and headed by General Adulsalami Abubakar until September 1999. On 29 September 1999, Nigeria reverted back to democracy under the presidency of Rtd. General Olesegun Obasanjo. From 1999 till date, Nigeria has witnessed peaceful transition of power from Rtd. General Obasanjo to late Umaru Musa Yar'Adua and from Goodluck Ebele Jonathan to Rtd. General Muhammadu Buhari. Records show that since independence in 1960, Nigeria has been ruled mainly by the military. Ironically, the country's transition to democracy did not change the category of leaders managing the affairs of the country. Observably, the same individuals that truncated the country's democracy are the ones running the affairs of the country under democracy. This obviously raises concern about the future of Nigeria's democracy vis-à-vis the development of the country.

### **Democracy in the Nigerian/ African context**

The continent of Africa has faced tough challenges in its process of emancipation. First, the continent suffered colonization, which exploited its natural and human resources to the benefit of the colonial masters. Second, postcolonial Africa faces the challenge of governance, particularly, adopting a system of governance in line with the needs and aspirations of its people. Observably, the independence given to African States excluded the freedom from making own choice of type and style of leadership/ governance. Instead, the colonial masters imposed on their former colonial subjects the system of governance they presume to be suitable for them. This phenomenon compelled African States and many other countries of the world to adopt "Western democracy" as a system of governance, under the assumption that it will facilitate peace, economic growth and development in their country. According to Ake (2000), the conventional narrative among scholars is that democracy will facilitate Africa's development. However, many African States started practicing democracy in the 1960's, during the decolonization era, and until present they remained underdeveloped and instead riddled with violence and foreign debts. The question now is: why has democracy not been able to facilitate the development of Nigeria and other African States after more than half a century? An important fact to note is that democracy is in twofold: democracy in theory and democracy in practice. An understanding of these two aspects of democracy is important to determine the future of Africa. Ake (2019) argues that why democracy has not translated to development in Africa is because; power tussle has not allowed African leaders to

adopt an effective development agenda in their respective countries. African leaders perceive power as an end in itself, a social artifact, which determines other values to be aspired. Ake's argument underscores the notion that democracy is still a theoretical phenomenon in Africa; its main essence is power grabbing, sharing and rotation. Given that the primary objective of the ruling elites is to acquire political power that will enable them to control State resources, democracy is considered a game of "winner gets all" in Nigeria and most African countries. Thus, instead of democracy resulting in the development of Nigeria, it has been weaponized for ethnic division that repudiates structural and institutional development of the country. After 60years of independence, the practice of democracy in Nigeria has offered little benefit to the population. While democracy manifests quality standard of living, economic prosperity and a secured future in Western countries, it produces the opposite in Nigeria. The practice of democracy in Nigeria is associated with huge cost, yet there is a glaring manifestation of underdevelopment in the country. This is evident in high level of illiteracy, poverty and insecurity. The benefits of democracy to the Nigerian populace is at odd with the realities in Western countries, where the system was adopted from. Accordingly, Nigeria's democracy need to be modified and adapted to suit the needs and capacity of the country in terms of running cost and dividends offered to the population.

### **The challenges of democracy in Nigeria.**

The numerous issues identified to be obstructing Nigeria's democracy include corruption, mismanagement, nepotism and lack of political will among others. Evidently, each of the identified factors has a negative impact on Nigeria's democracy. However, these factors are only symptoms of an intrinsic but often neglected phenomenon. The study identifies two key factors hampering Nigeria's democracy and they are as follows (Kazeem,2019):

a. Imitation of democratic concepts: Democracy in Nigeria and Africa at large, seem to be a house built without first laying the necessary foundation to support it. During the decolonization era in the 1960's, African nations that gained independence were swayed by their colonial masters to adopt democracy as their system of governance. Instead of encouraging the newly independent countries to develop their own system of governance in line with democratic principles; they were influenced in some cases and in other cases coerced to adopt "Western" model and standard of democracy. Consequently, attaining democracy became a goal for most postcolonial African States including Nigeria, even when they lack the necessary pillars that will support democracy to flourish. Instead of cultivating democracy, the strategy after gaining independence was to copy and replicate democracy the way it is being practiced by their colonial masters. The copycat approach has frustrated the practice of democracy in most western colonies to the point where it is difficult to differentiate the system from other political systems(authoritarianism, totalitarianism) that democracy challenged. In Nigeria, the practice of democracy is evidently deficient, politics is practiced not based on ideology, but personal interest. The foundation was not laid for ideology to take foremost interest in politics, but rather personal gain. Theoretically ,democracy is supposed to yield universal result wherever it is practiced, but evidence shows that what works for Washington D.C. may not work for Abuja. This suggest that trumping up

democracy as a homogenous concept is problematic, instead, it should be adaptive, whereby States can adopt and modify democratic principles in way that suit their domestic needs, aspiration and capacity. Another issue with copycat democracy in Nigeria is the huge running cost that is involved. Observably, the practice of democracy is expensive all over the world, but the cost is daring to economically unstable States like Nigeria. Following the footsteps of the United States, Nigeria's National assembly comprises of 109 members for the upper chamber and 360 members for the lower house. At the state level, the office of the governor is entitled to ₦500 million "security vote" every month. Each state has a legislative house (House of Assembly) that comprises of representatives from all the local governments in the state. Also, there is the local government council, which is the third tier of government. Nigeria has 774 local government authorities (LGA's). The local governments are governed by a council that comprises of the Chairman who is the Chief Executive of the LGA, and other elected members referred to as Councilors. The role of the Councilors is to make laws for their LGAs, similar to what the House of Assembly members do at the State level and what National Assembly do at the federal level. Councilors are constituted to represent the electoral wards that make up an LGA. Though the reason behind decentralization of government is to bring governance closer to the people in a way that will recognize and address problems at grassroots, however, reality shows that Nigeria is incurring a huge cost for governance without any significant positive impact on the lives of the population. For example, members of the national assembly earn higher compared to lawmakers in other countries, such as the United Kingdom, and most EU countries including Sweden and Finland. In Africa, they earn much higher than their counterparts in other countries including Uganda, South Africa and Kenya. According to Sahara Reporters, A Senator earns an annual salary of about ₦2, 020,000.00 while a member of the House of Representative receives ₦1,980, 000.00 as annual basic salary. The basic salary of the Senate President is ₦2,480, 000.00 while that of the Speaker of House of Representative is ₦2,470, 000.00. The Deputy Senate President earns ₦2,300,000.00 as annual basic salary while his counterpart, Deputy Speaker earns ₦2,280, 000.00 annually. In addition to the annual basic salary, each member of the National Assembly receives 200 percent of the annual salary for accommodation, 75 percent for vehicle maintenance, 25 percent for Personal Assistants, 5 percent for house maintenance, 75 percent for domestic staff, and 30 percent for both entertainment and utilities. Others are, 25 percent for wardrobe, 15 percent for newspapers and responsibility allowance of between 10, 7, and 5 percent respectively [Sahara Reporters, 2016).

While each senator receives a whopping 250 percent for constituency allowance, member of House of Representative gets 100 percent for the same annually. In all the senate alone numbering 109 senators gulped the sum of ₦1.85 billion in the last one year (2015), while the 360 members of the House of Representatives got ₦4.93 billion. In total, the National Assembly members received salary and allowances of ₦6.78 billion in 2015 fiscal year (Sahara Reporters, 2016). From 1999 when Nigeria returned to democracy, until 2014, the National Assembly received about ₦1.26 trillion from the Federal Government. Between 2011 and 2014, It received ₦150 billion yearly (Kazeem, 2019). The yearly allocation of the National Assembly, which has less than 10,000

employees on its payroll, is higher than the budget of about 21 of Nigeria's 36 States with each of the States having populations of more than four million people. Clearly, the huge cost of practicing democracy in Nigeria is not sustainable with the dwindling available resources. The idea of a wholesale imitation of democratic principles from an established nation like the United States has not paid off in terms of dividends to the population. Though corruption plays a huge role in sabotaging the dividends of democracy, the fact is that even without corruption the cost of maintaining the constitutional arms of governance is exorbitant and unsustainable. Worse still, the idea of making politics a fulltime job is detrimental to democracy in Nigeria. Like the United States, a national assembly member can remain in his position for life. Unlike the United States, where individuals are voted based on performance, in Nigeria votes casted in an election often don't determine the outcome. Summarily, democracy as it is copied and practiced has taken a poignant deep on Nigerian resources, worrisomely, instead of facilitating the development of the country; it has turned to a burden, particularly to the suffering population.

b. Militarized-democracy phenomenon: This is a situation where individuals occupying democratic positions are deeply stocked in military mentality and as a result their behaviors, attitude and countenances represent impunity. Since independence in 1960, Nigeria's democracy has been truncated at different points by the military. The interference of the military in politics contributed greatly in setting Nigeria's democracy backward. Military interference in Nigeria's democracy created a culture of impunity, which manifested in high level of corruption, mismanagement, public malfeasance, nepotism and other social anomalies present in the political system of the country. These social vices are profound and easily recognizable in the political landscape and among elite politicians in Nigeria. Nigerian democracy can best be described as an extension of the Nigerian military, with most of the retired military personnel occupying sensitive democratic positions and swaying public opinion and policies. To contextualize, since Nigeria's return to democracy in 1999, the office of the president has been occupied by more ex-military officers than civilians. Rtd. Gen. Olusegun Obasanjo was the president between 1999 and 2007, while Rtd. Gen. Mohammed Buhari is the current president. Out of 22 years of Nigeria's return to democracy, ex-military officers have occupied the seat of the President for a period of 14 years and counting. Apart from the seat of the President, principal positions in the National Assembly have been frequently occupied by ex-military officers, while the officers who are not occupying political positions lord themselves as political "Godfathers". They are pejoratively referred to as "Godfather" because they sponsor candidates to win office positions for the purposes of protecting their personal interest, which usually is not in the public interest. Perceptibly, the practice of democracy in Nigeria appears to be one which people who sabotaged democratic governance and process at one point through military intervention are recognized as acolytes, champions and celebrities of democracy. These has negatively impacted governance of the country, with terrorism and banditry presenting the greatest challenge to lives and property and aiding escalation of brain drain and economic losses. In 2012, the former Vice President for Africa of the World Bank, Dr. Oby Ezekwesili, revealed that over \$400 billion of Nigeria's oil revenue has either been stolen or misappropriated since Nigeria gained independence in 1960 (Okoye,2019). More-than 70% of the

money was linked to military regimes, meaning that these funds are traceable, yet none of the individuals involved in looting or misappropriating it has been prosecuted. The main challenge of prosecuting those involved in the looting or misappropriation is because some of them are actively occupying public offices, while the others have their protectors in office to shield them from prosecution. The study holds the opinion that the rampant participation of ex-military officers in politics has sustained the culture of impunity in the Nigerian political landscape and thus, it is identified as one of the principal impediments to the development of the country

#### Citizens Welfare.

Citizens welfare refers to the overall well-being and quality of life of individuals within a society. It encompasses the provision of basic needs and services that ensure people can have healthy, secure and fulfilling lives. This includes aspects such as (Russett, 2009):

- i). Economic Welfare – Access to job opportunities, fair wages and financial security.
- ii). Social Welfare – Availability of essential services like education, healthcare, housing and social security.
- iii). Political Welfare – Protection of human rights, access to justice and the ability to participate in democratic processes.
- iv). Environmental Welfare – Access to a clean and safe environment, including clean water, air and sustainable living conditions.
- v). Physical and Mental Well-being- Support for physical health and mental wellness through accessible healthcare services and community support.

#### Findings.

The major findings from the study are:

- i). Political marketing significantly shapes voter perceptions and decisions, with many citizens influenced by campaign messages, media representation and political branding.
- ii). There is a notable gap between political campaign promises and the actual implementation of welfare policies post-election.
- iii). Many political actors prioritize campaign strategies that secure votes but fail to deliver on welfare commitments once elected.
- iv). The lack of strict regulations allows for manipulative strategies that mislead voters and undermine democratic values.
- v). Traditional media (radio, television) still plays a significant role in shaping political opinions, especially in rural areas.
- vi). Existing laws are often inadequate to address modern challenges in political marketing, especially in the digital space.
- vii). Many welfare programs promised during campaigns are either poorly implemented or abandoned post-election, contributing to public distrust in the political system.
- viii). The neglect of citizens' welfare post-election leads to increased poverty, unemployment and dissatisfaction with democratic governance.

## CONCLUSIONS

Political marketing is a tool which thrives in a democratic dispensation where the rule of law prevails, and political competition is tolerated or encouraged by the party (ies) in power. Where the tolerance level of the political party in power is low, political marketing will not experience any growth, but the reverse will be the case if the tolerance level is high. The two major factors hampering the practice of democracy in Nigeria, in terms of dividends to the population are: unhealthy imitation from advanced democracies and the dominance of ex-military personnel in politics, while still holding military mentality. The study made the case that verbatim copying of democratic principles and practices from Washington D.C, London or other economically developed Western States pose a challenge to democracy in Nigeria. Nigeria lacks the resources and functional institutions necessary to sustain the democratic practices that are being copied from advanced democracies. Therefore, Nigeria must redesign its democracy within its reach and capacity, without which the dividends of democracy will continue to elude the population. Again, the idea of electing the same ex-military officials that truncated democracy into top political office positions, with the mandate to solve the problems they created, even when they are upholding the same mentality that created the problems must be challenged. Democracy by implication should reflect a call to serve and not a call to loot as reflected in the present day Nigeria. It is illogical to believe that those who failed the country yesterday could manage to secure its future. It is therefore imperative for Nigeria to have a paradigm shift in its leadership recruitment process. One way out is to reduce the involvement of ex-military officers in Nigeria's politics, through legislative process. Besides, the cost of governance should be reduced to reflect what is relevant to Nigeria as a state and not what is applicable elsewhere.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, we make the following recommendations;

- i). Governments, non-governmental organizations and communities should work together to promote citizens' welfare by creating policies and programs that reduce poverty, promote equality and ensure safety and security for all members of society.
- ii). There should be an increasing call from civil society, media and the electorate for political reforms that ensure transparency, accountability and a focus on citizens' welfare.
- iii). Conducting studies to assess how political marketing influenced voter decisions and whether elected officials fulfilled their campaign promises.
- iv). Establishing independent committees to monitor the implementation of welfare programs promised during campaigns.
- v). Provide electoral bodies with the resources and authority to regulate political marketing and ensure free and fair democratic practices.
- vi). Create platforms for dialogue between political candidates and citizens to discuss welfare issues and political strategies.
- vii). Incorporate political education into school curriculums to foster a generation of informed and responsible voters.

viii). Political parties should prioritize campaigns that focus on real welfare issues, such as healthcare, education, employment and social security.

ix). The government and electoral bodies (like INEC) should enforce regulations that promote ethical political marketing, ensuring that political messages are truthful, transparent and not misleading.

### **Contributions to Knowledge**

The study contributes to knowledge in several important ways, particularly in the fields of political science, marketing, governance, and social development. The study provides a conceptual framework for analyzing how political strategies influence democratic participation and welfare outcomes in emerging democracies. The study contributes to knowledge by identifying weaknesses in Nigeria's regulatory systems regarding political marketing and suggesting areas for policy reforms. Political parties, candidates and campaign managers can use the findings to develop more effective and ethical marketing strategies that resonate with citizens' welfare concerns. The study opens avenues for future research into specific aspects of political marketing, such as the role of social media, regional influences and youth engagement in Nigerian politics. The study provides a basis for comparative studies between Nigeria and other developing democracies, and emphasizes the need for governance structures that hold political actors accountable for fulfilling campaign promises related to welfare. Policy makers can draw from the study to design welfare policies that align with citizens' expectations and the political promises made during campaigns.

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