Title of Article: Conflict Management in Nigerian party politics: A Marketing Planning Paradigm.

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Abstract The proliferation of political parties has been described as a conflict-reduction measure in Nigerian politics. As a result, candidates who cannot actualize their ambition in a particular party have defected to other parties where they gain smooth prominence. When candidates refuse to defect, one finds conflicts, and in extreme cases, killings. Consequently, our democracy seems to be witnessing a decline in vitality, in that Nigerian political parties are not able to win the confidence of citizens as in the advanced democracies. Judging from the previous elections, we are facing a decline in civic engagement, voter turnout, and party-membership. This scenario, no doubt, threatens the future stability and representativeness of contemporary democratic system in Nigeria, despite the various reforms that have taken place. The decline in traditional civic and political engagement point to the need for alternative form of conflict management since, as it were, sporadic hostilities in Nigerian politics seem to be one of the factors responsible for the waning interest in politics. This is where the marketing paradigm of conflicts management becomes imperative. The marketing paradigm in specific context of party politics attempts to reduce intra party conflicts or resolve such conflicts where they seem inevitable. This paper introduces a hypothetic-deductive approach which takes into account the relevant aspects of the two competing paradigms in marketing. This combination makes the model more realistic, and tailored specifically for political marketing scenarios in Nigeria. In other words, this paper examines the emerging practices and literature of political marketing through an investigation of underlying theoretical frameworks, as well as panacea to conflict in the Nigerian democratic process. The paper concludes by proposing a marketing model for managing intra and inter party conflicts. This has obvious implications for policy makers and managers of our electoral process.