**TRADITIONAL MEDIA AND POLITICAL MOBILIZATION OF WOMEN IN NSIT IBIUM**

# ABSTRACT

This study sought to find out the influence of traditional media in women mobilization of women in Political campaigns in Nigeria 2011. Using a conceptual framework, the study explains the utility and shows the entry-point of traditional media in the mobilization of women in Political campaigns in Nigeria. Through a survey research in Nsit ibium LGA and structured interviews, the study examined ways through which traditional media changes the resource dimension in Political campaign mobilization of women and also whether traditional media is altering the strategic salience of ethnicity in voter mobilization of women in Political campaigns. The findings of the study show that traditional media tools make Political campaigns more expensive and do not change the importance of ethnicity as the primary basis of political identity and mobilization of women in Political campaigns in Nigeria. The study concludes that traditional media makes a substantial a difference in a Political campaign when aggressively used in mobilizing campaign resources and in targeting their bases through bunkum and aggressive Get-Out-The-Vote campaigns.

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**CHAPTER ONE**

**Background to study**

Women are crucial to humanity. According to Umechukwu (2004), women constitute over half of the world’s population and contribute in vital ways to societal development generally.[[1]](#endnote-1) This attribute is apparent in Nigeria where there have been raging debates regarding how women can make their presence felt by participating in politics. Some argue that women as the weaker sex is a social construct owing to social value, norms and beliefs, which neglects their meaningful contributions and places them in a subordinate position with men. The secondary position which women have been made to occupy in the nation’s political history is traceable to colonialism.

Agbalajobi (2010) also notes that the 1922 Sir Hugh Clifford Constitution of pre-independence Nigeria disenfranchised women and limited the participation of adult male to the wealthy.[[2]](#endnote-2) While gender inequality existed in some forms in the various traditional societies in Nigeria, the colonial system, powered from the United Kingdom, formalized it. The colonial onslaught was so strong that it also affected a few cultures that had some regard for women. In the traditional Yoruba states in the country’s southwest, for instance, women held high political offices like the *Iyalode*, *Iyaloja*, *Iyalaje* and even traditional ruler or the *Oba*.[[3]](#endnote-3) But at the establishment of the colonial order, women became estranged to these rights politically. Even though the various constitutions of post independence Nigeria have restored these rights, big barriers still remain in the way of women’s participation in politics.

**Statement of problem**

The Nigerian media, which have existed formally for over 150 years, have a key role to play in educating and informing the citizens on the electoral process and ensuring that they participate in it with credible and acceptable outcome. The media provide perspectives, shape images of candidates and parties help highlight issues around which a campaign would develop, and define the unique atmosphere and areas of sensitivity with any particular campaign (Lang and Lang 1999). This paper therefore seeks to find out how well Nigerian newspapers reported women’s participation in 2011 general elections. In this study, participation here refers to all women issues in 2011 elections whose activities and events, influenced the electoral process.

### Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. In what ways do the traditional media alter the resource dimension in political mobilization of women in Political campaigns in Nigeria?
2. To what extent do the traditional media create new patterns for political mobilization of women in

Political campaigns in Nigeria?

### 1.4 Study Objectives

#### 1.4.1 General Objective

The main objective of the study is to examine the role of traditional media in mobilizing for political support in Political campaigns in Nigeria.

#### 1.4.2 Specific Objectives

1. To determine whether the traditional media is altering the cost of political mobilization of women in Political campaigns in Nigeria;
2. To examine whether traditional media is creating new patterns of political mobilization of women in

Political campaigns Nigeria.

### 1.5 Justification of the Study

This study is a response to the growing popularity of traditional media in Political campaigns in Nigeria by examining whether the increase in the uptake of these traditional media tools make significant changes on the overall financial outlay of a Political campaigns and also whether such uptake alters the existing ethnic patterns of mobilization of women.

The findings and recommendations of the study will be useful for Political campaign organization and execution of campaign mobilization of women and communication strategies by the candidates, political consultants and professional campaign administrators. In a nutshell, the rationale for this study lies the absence of systematic study in this area and its invaluable contribution to the literature on organization of modern hi-tech Political campaigns that incorporate traditional media as tools for communication and mobilization of women.

### 1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study

The study examines the influence of using traditional media in Political campaigns. Specifically, the study focuses on the utility of social networks and mobile handsets, largely grouped as traditional media, in canvassing for political support in Political campaigns in Nigeria. The scope covers the period 2011.

**Theoretical Foundation**

Agenda-setting theory, first developed by Prof. Maxwell McCombs and Prof. Donald Shaw in their Chapel Hill study,[[4]](#endnote-4) posits that mass media set the agenda for public opinion by highlighting certain issues. It states that the news media determine the issues that the public consider as important by the pattern of presentation. This implies that the issues focused upon by the media become the issues that the public accepts as important for attention and discussion (McQuail, 2005:512; Zhu and Blood, 1997).

In studying the way political campaigns were covered in the media, McCombs and Shaw (1972) found that the main effect of the news was to set an agenda, i.e. ‘to tell people not what to think, but what to think about’ as opposed to persuasion or attitude change (Cohen 1963:13). Agenda setting is usually referred to as a function of mass media and not a theory. This term is used by media theorists to refer to the way in which the media set the order of importance of current issues and also set the terms of reference for the debate on those issues. When the media make events seem important, politicians and the populace are likely to comment about them and take action. This enhances the widespread belief in the importance of these events and ensures even more public attention to the events. So, the press does more than bring these issues to a level of political awareness among the public; by setting agenda, the priorities of the press to some degree become the priorities of the public (Baran and Davis 2003).

It thus follows that when Nigerian news media give priority to reporting about women and their involvement in politics, it brightens the hope of gender equity in political process. It is hard to believe the level of women’s under-representation in the country’s politics considering that Nigerian women accounts for 60% of its population (Ajayi, 2007, Adu, 2008:26), constant media engagement on the marginalisation of women will therefore help to project views that will aid greater involvement of women in Nigerian politics

1. In most societies, women assume five key roles: mother, producer, home-manager, community organizer and socio-cultural and political activists. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Sir Hugh Clifford Constitution of 1922 introduced the elective principle for legislative houses for the first time. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. *Iyalode* is a traditional title holder in Yoruba society. *Iyaloja* and *Iyalaje* are women leaders who oversee the market activities in Yoruba society [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. In the 1968, McCombs and Shaw demonstrated a strong correlation between what 100 residents of Chapel Hill, North Carolina thought was the most important election issue and what the local and national news media reported was the most important issue. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)