CONTEXTUALIZED QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN NIGERIA: COERCIVE ISOMORPHIC PRESSURES OF THE SOCIOECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT ON PUBLIC RELATIONS PRACTICES

By

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To my parents—thank you for all your love and support

Also dedicated to the memory of my dear friend Morakinyo Olorunfemi Akinkoye
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH ..........................................................................................................164
This contextualized qualitative research on public relations in Nigeria was conducted between February and March 2007. It builds on Molleda’s (2006a) introduction of the concept of coercive isomorphism to public relations and Sriramesh and Verčič’s (2003) global public relations theory. It does so by analyzing professional opinions and experiences concerning the status of the profession and how Nigeria’s socioeconomic and political environments impact the practice. Twenty top-level public relations professionals were interviewed for an average of 30 minutes each. Nigeria is at a crucial if not breaking point in its history, as the majority of participants explain, due to conflicting political and social forces. Likewise, the impact of conflict is exerting pressure on the public relations profession and professionals.


Nigeria was an interesting choice to conduct this study because it is one of four countries in the world where public relations practice is regulated. Three research questions were formed based on Molleda’s (2006a) study on coercive isomorphic pressures on public relations in Venezuela. The results show that regulation of public relations in Nigeria exerts weak coercive isomorphic force mainly because the socioeconomic and political environments do not facilitate effective enforcement. However, the research does suggest that regulation would be a strong coercive isomorphic force in an enabling socioeconomic and political environment.

This study found that a democratic system of government provides a more enabling environment for public relations practice to thrive. Overall, coercive isomorphic pressures exerted on public relations industry and practice in Nigeria include; the desire for rewards and fear of consequences, desire for professional legitimacy, social conformity, and resource dependence. Finally, the study indicates that public relations practitioners in Nigeria employ different strategies in order to cope with the stress and pressures that come with practicing public relations in Nigeria’s challenging socioeconomic and political environment.

This research answers the call for the expansion of the body of knowledge on international public relations and could serve as a guide to public relations in Nigeria. Also, it could serve as a tool for cross cultural comparison of public relations practices in countries whose socioeconomic and political environments are akin to Nigeria’s.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

Globalization is a powerful 21st century phenomenon characterized by increased interconnectedness and interdependence among nation states (Mody, 2003; Goldein & Reinert, 2006; Berberoglu, 2004). Chua (2004) contends that “[t]o a large extent, globalization consists of, and is fueled by, the unprecedented worldwide spread of markets and democracy” (p. 7). As a result, “the scale and scope of international economic, political, and social pressures that national governments now face is substantially greater than in previous decades” (Henisz & Zelner, 2005, p. 9). Globalization does not play to either extreme of good or bad but “is built on networks which are flat and go both ways, it’s all about what we make of it, how we get the most out of it and cushion the worst” (“For workers,” 2005, n.p.). If countries are to be successful internationally, they must pay particular attention to the political, economic and cultural nuances which form the basis of the developing global system (Wang, 2003).

Supranational organizations like UNESCO consistently review their policies and practices to reflect changes brought about by globalization so that all nations have the opportunity to actively participate in global development. However, in spite of the move towards a single global economy “development continues to be highly uneven” (Heptonstall, 2001, p. 47). Increased foreign trade and investment has not made any marked improvement in the economies and standards of living in developing countries. Goldein & Reinert (2006) contend that “the substantial gap remaining between Africa and even the other developing regions is a cause for great concern” (p. 30). Increased mobility, a hallmark of globalization (Mody, 2003; Durcan, 2001), has done little to help Africa’s plight as its most productive workforce emigrate in search of a better life. However, Guler, Guillen, and Macpherson (2002) indicate that “[w]hile globalization is a powerful isomorphic force in the world, it operates within the constraints and
channels created by institutions” (p. 228). In other words, its strength is contingent upon and determined by environmental factors.

The evolving global milieu calls for increased sensitivity and versatility on the part of professionals as actions or statements could potentially have repercussions extending beyond the expected (Matsuura, 2005) as explicated by Molleda and Quinn (2004) for example. Professionals who are able to “recognize and appreciate the critical importance of a dynamic marketplace of ideas to support and encourage democratic societies” (Starck & Kruckeberg, 2003, p. 39) will have a key role to play internationally.

This thesis is significant in light of the dynamism globalization brings to public relations practice. It answers Sriramesh and Verčič’s (2003) call for the expansion of the international body of knowledge on public relations. Sriramesh and Verčič (2003) acknowledge the lack of and need for a body of knowledge that details the peculiarities of public relations practice all over the world. In their words:

We believe that the body of international public relations is so young that it is very important to have descriptive accounts of public relations practice from individual countries. But we also believe that it is equally important for this body of knowledge to be able to predict the best way to practice public relations in a particular country or region (p. 1).

Molleda (2006a) echoes these sentiments when he indicates that “[d]espite the increasing number and quality of publications on global public relations, there are many countries whose public relations histories and evolving industries have not been systematically documented” (p. 2). Although the practice of public relations differs from one country or continent to the other, the underlying principles essentially remain the same (Anderson, 1989).
The purpose of this thesis is to determine the coercive isomorphic effects on the practice of public relations in Nigeria. It applies Sriramesh and Verčič’s (2003) study on the contextual variables affecting public relations practices to Nigeria and expands on Molleda’s (2006a) research on the international management concept of coercive isomorphism¹ and its effect on public relations practice. It hopes to provide useful information on public relations practice in Nigeria, and could serve as a tool for cross cultural comparison when looking for similarities, differences, or trends in global public relations practice.

¹ Coercive isomorphism - Refers to “how actors that are powerful and legitimate (e.g., a national government) may coerce the adoption of reforms by dependent actors (e.g., state governments and other organizations whose activities are governed by the federal government)” (Henisz & Zelner, 2005).
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

Brief Political History of Nigeria

Nigeria is one of several countries located in Western Africa. It borders with the countries of Niger and Chad to the North, the Atlantic Ocean to the south, Cameroon to the East, and Benin to the West (“Land boundaries,” 2006). It has a territory of 356,700 square miles, approximately the size of California, Nevada, and Arizona combined (“Background note: Nigeria,” 2006). It was formed in 1914 primarily as a result of administrative difficulties encountered by British colonialists (Akinwumi, 2004) and the desire to create a politically viable union of what once was two northern and southern protectorates (Afigbo, 2005). Afigbo (2005), citing Osuntokun (1979), indicates that this decision was the foundation of Nigeria’s trouble as a polity because it lead to “a growing schism in tradition, character and orientation” (p. 238).

Amidst increasing clamor for independence, Nigeria became a sovereign country on October 1, 1960 and a republic in 1963. Barely six years into its budding democracy, General Aguyi Ironsi carried out the first coup d’état in Nigerian history.1 Only months later, General Yakubu Gowon staged a counter coup. He took over as head of state from 1966 to 1975. The events surrounding General Gowon’s coup are believed to have precipitated Nigeria’s infamous civil war which lasted from 1967 to 1970 (Udogu, 2002). General Gowon was ousted in a coup led by General Murtala Mohammed in 1975 who was in power from July 1975 until February 13, 1976 (Chuku, 2004a) when he was assassinated in an abortive coup led by Lieutenant Colonel B.S. Dimka. General Olusegun Obasanjo “who was Mohammed’s second in command, was sworn in as Nigeria’s fourth military Head of State on February 14, 1976 (Nwachuku, 2004,

1 Nigeria is a dynamic political environment. Since its independence, seven military coups have occurred between 1966 and 1990 (“Lists of coups,” 2006). It has been under military rule for 28 of its 46 years of independence.
Alhaji Shehu Shagari became president of Nigeria’s Second Republic in October 1979 when General Olusegun Obasanjo returned power to a democratically elected government (Uzoigwe, 2004). However, another coup in January 1984 saw the country’s return to military rule, ostensibly because of corruption and bad governance, and General Mohammadu Buhari became head of state until August 27, 1985 when he was ousted in a coup led by General Ibrahim Babangida (Osaghae cited in Udogu, 2002, p.334).

General Ibrahim Babangida’s regime “promised to set in motion a transition program to lead to the handover of power to a democratically elected civilian regime” (Dibua, 2004). However, this promise was reneged upon when the military annulled the June 12 presidential elections. Due to growing national and international criticism power was handed over to an Interim National Government (ING) (“Timeline: Nigeria,” 2006) under the leadership of Chief Earnest Shonekan who was considered a puppet in the hands of the more sinister, politically motivated military which overthrew him only months later (Falola, 2001).

General Sani Abacha took over from the Interim National Government on November 17, 1993 at the behest of “a number of groups and NGO’s in civil society” (Udogu, 2002, p. 334). He is considered the most repressive and authoritarian leader Nigeria has ever seen. His ruthlessness and intolerance for opposition were unmatched by past military regimes. His death in 1998 ended his ingenious plans to succeed himself as civilian president (Akinwumi, 2004).

General Abdulsalami Abubakar took over power after Abacha’s death. He released political detainees and conducted successful elections in 1999 in spite of widespread accusations of bribery and voting irregularities (Chuku, 2004b). These elections saw former military ruler General Olusegun Obasanjo emerge as “the leader of Nigeria’s Fourth Republic” (Udogu, 2002, p.334). Obasanjo was re-elected for a second term on April 19, 2003, amidst “serious
irregularities” and protests from the opposition parties (“Timeline: Nigeria,” 2006). In May 2006, the Senate refused ratifying a constitutional amendment that would have made President Obasanjo eligible to run for a third term in office (“Timeline: Nigeria,” 2006). The next general election in Nigeria is scheduled for 2007, and in spite of heightened social and political tensions, Nigerians remain optimistic about the future.

**Brief Socioeconomic history of Nigeria**

Nigeria’s population has consistently been on the rise. It has an annual growth rate of 3.2% and with a population of about 140 million, it is easily Africa's most populous nation (“Nigeria’s population tops,” 2006). Its once buoyant agricultural sector, largely neglected since the discovery of oil, can no longer produce enough food to feed its people. To meet the rising demand for food, the Nigerian government has resorted to importing foodstuff (“Economy overview,” 2006).

English is the official language spoken among more than 250 different ethnic groups. Four local languages; Fulani, Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba are predominant because native speakers constitute a significant majority of the population (“Languages,” 2006). This diversity makes governance a complex task. Ekeh (1975) points out that, “Nigerian ethnic groups developed their boundaries and even their character only within the context of Nigerian politics” (p. 105) thus giving rise to complications resulting from ethnic alliances of “tribalism . . . [a phenomenon] bred by neither tradition nor custom nor sentiment, but by the regional scramble for national resources” (Eames, 1885, n.p.). According to Ekeh (1975), “[t]ribalism arises where there is conflict between segments of African bourgeoisie regarding the proportionate share of the resources of the civic public” (p.109). The 1976 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, intending to emphasize the principle of federal character and to protect, preserve, and promote
diversity in federal institutions (Nwachuku, 2004), inadvertently institutionalized tribalism by deepening already existent ethnic chasms (Eames, 1985).

Nigeria’s economy is centered on oil exploration which accounts for about 95% of its exports, 65% of the federal governments’ revenue (“Economy overview,” 2006), 30% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and 3% of Nigeria’s labor force (Akpobasah, 2004). Its proven oil reserves stand at approximately 25 billion barrels with an estimated 100 trillion cubic feet of natural gas reserves (“Background note,” 2006).

Nigeria is the largest producer of oil in Sub-Saharan Africa producing over 2.5 million of Africa’s 5.9 million barrels of oil per day. It is the fifth largest exporter to the United States, after Canada, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, and Venezuela, (“How oil fuels,” 2006) and is the source of approximately 3% of the world’s oil import (Post, Preston & Sachs, 2002) and 11% of U.S. oil imports (“Background note,” 2006). Analysts estimate that over the next few years, 25%–30% of oil consumed in the United States will come from West Africa, specifically Nigeria (Rowel, 2005), especially as the United States seeks to cut oil imports from the troubled region of the Middle East (‘President Bush Delivers,” 2007). In 1999, private entrepreneurs from the United States invested approximately $5.7 billion into Nigeria’s oil and sector (“Cleaning up oil,” 1999).

With an annual GDP of $50 billion, Nigeria’s is one of sub-Sahara’s largest economies (“Country evaluation: Nigeria,” 2004), but in spite of its enormous wealth, it has a per capita income of about $560 (Economic characteristics, 2006). Wealth derived from oil exploration has created a system where states are heavily reliant on the federal government for subvention (Eames, 1985).

Armed militant attacks on oil installations in the Niger Delta, Nigeria’s oil producing region (“Timeline: Nigeria,” 2006) have cut Nigeria’s daily production by 500,000 barrels.

**Corruption**

Corruption is endemic in Nigeria (“Nigeria Reacts to,” 2006) especially in the oil sector. This has resulted in ineffective institutions and political instability (Mahtani, 2007). In spite of its vast quantities of petroleum Nigeria suffers perennial shortages and escalating prices (Akosile, 2007) which are blamed on “massive pipeline [vandalisation], closure of refineries and more than 80% dependence on product import” (Ezigbo, 2007). Billions of dollars earned in oil revenue has little, if any, impact on increasing levels of poverty. “According to the World Bank, corruption has meant that 80 percent of Nigeria's oil and gas revenues goes to 1 percent of the population, while 70 percent of the country's [140] million people still live on less than $1 a day” (Purefoy, 2005). There is a dearth of basic infrastructure (Last, 2006), and ethnic and religious violence is not uncommon (Index of Economic Freedom, 2006). “Successive and prolonged military rule, spanning a cumulative period of 28 years out of Nigeria’s [46] years of independence, led to the supplanting of constitutional provisions by military decrees and severe economic stagnation” (“Country evaluation: Nigeria,” 2004, p. 56) resulting from embezzlement and misappropriation of public funds (“Nigeria, Switzerland and,” 2006). According to EFCC estimates, Nigeria has lost over $380bn in federal government revenues alone since 1960 (Mahtani, 2007).

The Corruption Perception Index (CPI), “a composite survey reflecting the perceptions of business people and country analysts, both resident and non-resident,” is used by Transparency International (TI) to determine the level of corruption in countries around the globe (“Frequently

President Olusegun Obasanjo’s government has made a “strong commitment to fight corruption and improve accountability and transparency in the use of public resources, and . . . fight against the misappropriation of public funds” (“Nigeria, Switzerland and,” 2006, n.p). He set up the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) to curb fraud, corruption, and other financial related crimes (“Nigeria jails woman,” 2005). Albeit slowly, the EFCCs efforts are making an impact on Nigeria’s image. Investigations by the EFCC have led to arrests and recovery of billions of dollars in stolen funds. In 2005, Nigeria reached an agreement with the Swiss government to repatriate $458 million stolen by the late General Sani Abacha (“Nigeria, Switzerland and,” 2006, n.p). However, the EFCC has been criticized for indicting insignificant players and for being a tool for witch-hunting president Obasanjo’s political opposition (Last, 2006), charges the EFCC denies and attributes to corrupt leaders protecting perpetrators of economic and financial crimes (Ajayi & Mamah, 2006). In spite of receiving a clean bill of health from the EFCC (“Not corrupt,” 2007), President Obasanjo, and his vice president, were indicted on charges of misappropriation of public funds by members of a senate ad-hoc committee in March 2007 (Aziken, 2007).
Economic Development


Public Relations in Nigeria

Nigeria is one of four countries which regulates the practice of public relations (Molleda & Alhassan, 2006). In 1990, the military government under General Ibrahim Babangida “[gave] legal recognition to the public relations profession, instituting educational and certification requirements to be administered by the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations [NIPR]” (Seitel, 1992, p. 518) when it passed a decree into law. The NIPR Practitioners Decree (No. 19) 1990 established the NIPR as a corporate body charged with the “general duty” of “determining what

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2 The EITI supports improved governance in resource-rich countries through the full publication and verification of company payments and government revenues from oil, gas and mining. [http://www.eitransparency.org/section/abouteiti](http://www.eitransparency.org/section/abouteiti)

3 Needs is the overall framework through which Nigeria seeks to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and is directly under the supervision of President Obasanjo.
standards of knowledge and skill are to be attained by persons seeking to become registered members of the public relations profession and reviewing those standards from time to time as circumstance may permit” (Sec. 1, subsection 1a).

NIPR was formed in 1963 (Adebayo, 1992) replacing the Public Relations Association of Nigeria (PRAN) (Offonry, 1985). It was charged with overseeing public relations practice in Nigeria. Common problems facing public relations in Nigeria include misconceptions about the definition and function of the profession and professionals, lack of qualified practitioners with requisite professional skills, low moral and ethical standards, and a barely visible professional organization which lacks the appropriate machinery to effectively monitor and enforce compliance with guidelines (Adebayo, 1992).

Alozie (2004) contends that public relations has long been inherent in Nigerians who have always practiced “traditional forms of public relations [through] consultations, dialogues, and conflict resolution . . . visits, gift giving, festivals, sports events, intermarriage, and the use of town criers and dispatchers to relay messages” (p. 245). Alozie (2004), citing Nwosu (1990), indicates that “organized public relations in Nigeria began with government agencies on January 1, 1944, when British colonial administrators set up the first Public Relations office in Lagos” (p. 244). According to Davis (1977) government agencies in pre and post-colonial Nigeria pioneered public relations by retaining the services of foreign public relations consultants. The initial focus was to pursue and secure British and American interests in investment opportunities, but in time “emphasis shifted to attracting or sustaining diplomatic assistance and military hardware” (p. 1). The United African Company of Nigeria Limited, and Shell Petroleum Development Corporation (SPDC) on the other hand pioneered the advancement of corporate public relations.
There are currently 6782 registered public relations practitioners in Nigeria (E. Dominics, personal communication, January 11, 2007).

Theoretical Framework

International Public Relations

Wilcox, Cameron, Ault, and Agee (2003) define international public relations as “the planned and organized effort of a company, institution, or government to establish mutually beneficial relations with the publics of other nations” (p. 378). For the purpose of this study, however, Molleda and Laskin’s (2005) definition of international public relations is utilized. They delineate comparative public relations into four categories, namely; regional/national, comparative, international, and global public relations. According to their categorization,

regional means affecting a particular region (localized), or related to, characteristic of or serving a region (a broad geographical area distinguished by similar features). . .The term national relates to or belongs to a nation, therefore, national public relations refers to the practice in one single country of the world . . . We use the term comparative (relating to, based on, or involving comparison), as it is defined by Culbertson. That is, when an article compares public relations practices between two or more countries of the world. The term international (relating to, or involving two or more nations or extending across or transcending national boundaries) also derived from Culbertson’s definition, when an article studies public relations practices between nations or concerning several nations or transcending national boundaries. And lastly, global (relating to, or involving the entire earth; worldwide) is used when an article describes public relations practices of supranational organizations or practices concerned with worldwide global issues. (pp. 8–9)

International public relations can be attributed to the spread of business and politics across the globe (Vercic, L. Grunig, & J. Grunig, 1996). It aims to bring about harmonization of interests through mutual adjustment to differences resulting from cultural diversity (Paluszek, 1989). Multinational corporations are increasingly becoming aware of the importance of international public relations especially as a tool for communicating with, and gaining the support of diverse groups within the expanding global market (Schwartz, 1985). Communication
with diverse groups is important especially because globalization has spawned a new kind of public who are more informed about the goings-on in their immediate and extended environment, are aware of their rights as citizens and consumers, and know they have power to impact management decisions (J. Grunig, 1993). This evolution underscores the importance of, and need for, academic research and theory building which will form the basis for international practice (Wakefield, 1996; Sriramesh & Verčič, 2003, Molleda, 2006a). The effectiveness of public relations in the evolving global milieu will be evident in the management of brand equity through activities which form, build, and maintain organizational reputation, the decisive factor for success in international markets (Briggs, 1998), which secures competitive market advantage (Paluszek, 1989).

Globalization has resulted in the spread of businesses and created the need for public relations practitioners to be able to understand the different dynamics of their global publics in order to facilitate seamless communication (Ihator, 2000). This is especially important as success on the global scene is contingent on practitioners’ knowledge of, and sensitivity to, nuances and differences which exist among target cultures and markets (Schwartz, 1985; Burk, 1994; Kruckeberg, 1995; Zaharna, 2001; Briggs, 1998; Ihator, 2000; Hill & Dixson, 2006; Sriramesh & White, 1992). Kruckeberg (1995) recommends that public relations practitioners’ of the future, need to be far more culturally astute and cosmopolitan . . . to assume a far more complex role in their organization and for world society . . . [They] will be called upon to be corporate—that is, organizational—interpreters and ethicists and social policy-makers, charged with guiding organizational behavior as well as influencing and reconciling public perceptions within a global context. (p. 37)

They must be adept at resolving inevitable conflicts that arise from increased interaction in the global environment (Wakefield, 1996; Kruckeberg, 1995) and must employ strategies and tactics which are compatible with, and reflective of their environment (Choi & Cameron, 2005).
As globalization continues to expand, practitioners with these competencies will be in high demand (Fitzpatrick & Whillock, 1993).

According to J. Grunig (1993), “if public relations is practiced according to the principles of strategic management, public responsibility and the two-way symmetrical model, it is an important element of the global communication system—facilitating symmetrical communication that helps build relationships among organizations and publics and to develop policies that are responsible to those publics” (p. 157–158). Similarly, Verčič et al. (1996) contend that the excellent public relations principles are applicable on a global scale. The immutable principles of public relations (Anderson, 1989) ultimately form the framework for applying/modifying strategies to suit environmental peculiarities (Choi & Cameron, 2005).

However, Kent and Taylor (1999) indicate that the global application of the principles of excellence is difficult because necessary factors which support it are not universal, or are at best burgeoning, in many parts of the world. As Sriramesh and Verčič point out (2003),

the Western definition of public relations assumes a democratic political structure in which competing groups seek legitimacy and power thorough public opinion and elections, which is not always the norm in many parts of the world. Particularly difficult to discern are emerging democracies where alternative views may be encouraged in theory but not in practice, resulting in various forms of covert and overt forms of self-, social, and government censorship. (p. 5)

Contingency theorists are quick to point out the impracticality of a single model of public relations practice as the evolving nature of the environment necessitates the flexibility of public relations strategies and tactics (Cancel, Cameron, Sallot, & Mitrook, 1997; Yarbrough, Cameron, Sallot, & Mcewilliams, 1998; Cancel, Mitrook, & Cameron, 1999; Cameron, Cropp, & Repper, 2000; Reber, Cropp, & Cameron, 2003), exemplified in the modification of public relations programs to suit peculiarities of markets in which they are to be introduced (Anderson, 1989).
Contextual Variables

Global public relations education and practice is predominantly western-centric (Culbertson & Chen, 1996) and ethnocentric in outlook. However, according to J. Grunig (1992), identifying opportunities and constraints in any organizations environment is the key to strategic planning and ultimately increased productivity. Practitioners “must be alert to the effect . . . economic and political developments may have on the strategies we propose for our clients, and on the implementation of the strategies they direct” (Stanton 1991, p. 47). It is the job of “[e]xcellent public relations units . . . [to] help the organization recognize or enact the parts of the environments that affect the organizations missions and goals” (Verčič et al., 1996, p. 37) for the purpose of building a social culture which highlights the importance of “collaboration, participation, trust, and mutual responsibility” (Elenkov, 1997, p.17).

Because an organization’s corporate culture is often environmentally defined (Sriramesh & White, 1992; J. Grunig, 1992), knowledge of the economic, political, and social structures helps determine country and cultural profiles necessary for distinguishing between feasibility and effectiveness of intended public relations strategies (Zaharna, 2001, p.141).

Verčič et al. (1996) identified five variables which impact international public relations practice. They are; political-economic system, societal and corporate cultures, extent of activism, level of development, and media. These variables were collapsed into three categories by Sriramesh and Verčič (2003) namely infrastructure, societal culture, and media environment.

Culbertson and Chen (1996) contend that the practice of public relations is shaped by the political system and cultural norms existing within different national boundaries (see also Sriramesh & White, 1992; Kent & Taylor, 1999). “Just as the communication system of an organization does not exist in isolation from its culture, so organizational culture does not exist apart from the culture of the society in which it is found” (Sriramesh & White, 1992, p.597). An
especially important focus for practitioners is the relationship between culture and governmental
decision making processes (Kent & Taylor, 1999). Governments are responsible for negotiating
entry and investment terms (Crespy, 1986; Kent & Taylor, 1999; Kruckeberg, 1995), thus
making them the “critical first hurdle” to be scaled when doing business globally (Crespy, 1986).
At the level of economic development, governments “affect variables such as poverty and
illiteracy” (Sriramesh & Verčič, 2003), and formulate, and implement policies which set national
system of government in the West, states that,

> the political foundations of markets are as essential to their success as the details and
specifications of the market itself . . . markets and limited governments are complementary
aspects of economic development and reform; each enhances the value of the other. (p. 25)

In other words, the level of economic development in any country is inextricably linked
to its political ideology (Sriramesh & Verčič, 2003). To this end, Daniels, Radebaugh, and
Sullivan (2004) recommend extensive research into the economic environment in order to come
up with answers to important questions that could impact business operations. According to
them,

> understanding the economic environment of foreign countries and markets can help
managers predict how trends and event in those environments might affect their
companies’ future performance there . . . economic forces are an important part of the
physical and societal factors that help comprise the external influences on company
strategy. (pp. 105–106)

**Institutional Theory**

Scott (1987) posits that, “[a]ll social systems—hence all organizations—exist in an
institutional environment that defines and delimits social reality” (p. 507). Institutional theory,
therefore, provides the means through which environmental impact on organizations can be
understood. (Davis, Desai, & Francis, 2000; Oliver, 1991; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer &
Rowan, 1977). It “[d]raws attention to the causal impact of state, societal, and cultural pressures,
as opposed to market forces and resource scarcity, on organizational behavior, and to the effects of history, rules, and consensual understanding on organizational conformity to environmental constraints” (Oliver (1991, pp. 147–151). Institutional theory is particularly important because it informs the degree to which organizations acquiesce to institutional pressure exerted on it (Oliver, 1991).

Organizations and institutions can be differentiated on the basis of their structure, functionality, longevity, and expendability (Selznick, 1957). Organizations can be conceptualized as institutional agents because they “are driven to incorporate the practices and procedures defined by prevailing rationalized concepts of organizational work and institutionalized in society” (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 340). However, these definitions are mutable depending on the context in which they are used. They can be understood by studying an organization or institution vis-à-vis “its history and the way it has been influenced by the social environment” (Selznick, 1957, p. 6). As Berger and Luckmann (1967) point out, institutions are products of the history that birth them and can only be understood within this context.

Meyer and Rowan (1977) indicate that “[m]any of the positions, policies, programs, and procedures of modern organizations are enforced by public opinion, by the views of important constituents, by knowledge legitimated through the educational system, by social prestige, by the laws, and by the definitions of negligence and prudence used by the courts” (p. 343). Building on Scott’s (1995) “pillars,” Kostova (1999) proposed the Country Institutional Profile (CIP), as an alternative for conceptualizing social or country-level effects” on institutions (p. 314). Kostova (1999) defined the CPI “as the set of regulatory, cognitive, and normative institutions in [a] country” (p. 314). According to Scott (1995),
in this conception, regulative processes involve the capacity to establish rules, inspect or review others’ conformity to them, and as necessary, manipulate sanctions—rewards or punishments—in an attempt to influence future behavior . . . The normative approach to institutions emphasizes how values and normative frameworks structure choices. Rational action is always grounded in social context that specifies appropriate means to particular ends; action acquires its very reasonableness in terms of these social rules and guidelines for behavior . . . The cognitive framework stresses the importance of social identities: our conceptions of who we are and what ways of action makes sense for us in a given situation. (pp. 35–44)

These “pillars” ultimately lay the foundation for institutionalized thought and behavior.

Kostova (1999) defines institutionalization as “the process by which a practice achieves a taken-for-granted status at the recipient unit—a status of ‘this is how we do things here’” (p. 311). It defines social reality in terms of what is regarded or understood to be suitable behavior (Zucker, 1983, p. 2). “[S]ocial knowledge once institutionalized exists as a fact, as part of objective reality, and can be transmitted directly on that basis” (Zucker, 1977, p. 727). Meyer and Rowan (1977) see institutionalization as “the process by which social processes, obligations, or actualities come to take on a rulelike status in social thought and action” (p. 341). It manifests itself in standardized responses (Berger & Luckmann, 1967) which enhances legitimacy and the thereby enhancing an organization’s “legitimacy and their survival prospects, independent of the immediate efficacy of the acquired practices and procedures” (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 340).

Porter (1990) indicates that institutionalization is such a powerful force that organizations have an aversion for thinking and/or acting outside already established standards unless they are forced to do so. According to him,

firms would rather not change . . . Past approaches become institutionalized in procedures and management controls . . . Personnel are trained in one mode of behavior. Self-selection attracts new employees who believe in the existing ways of doing things and are particularly suited to implementing them. . . Questioning any aspect is regarded as bordering on heresy. Information that would challenge current approaches is screened out or dismissed. Individuals who challenge established wisdom are expelled or isolated. (pp. 580–581)
Once practices become institutionalized, it takes strong, often external, environmental pressures to force organizational change (Porter, 1990). If changes are made, they must be reflective of the institutional context and “facilitate the functioning of markets” (Khana & Palepu, 1997, p. 42). According to Davis et al. (2000), isomorphism is “the primary driver of structural change in institutional theory . . . [as such] organizations must conform to the norms of the local market to be accepted as legitimate entities” (pp. 240–244). Organizations “are affected by their environment according to the ways in which managers or leaders formulate strategies, make decisions and implement them” (Hannan & Freeman, 1977, p. 930), they respond “to culture, to the personalities of the human individuals who participate in it, and to the system of social ecology in which all are involved” (Swanson, 1971, p. 621). In essence, organizations are products of the environments in which they operate (Emery & Trist, 1965).

**Isomorphism**


From an ecological perspective, isomorphism occurs when,

units subject to the same environmental conditions, or to environmental conditions as mediated through a given key unit, acquire a similar form of organization. They must submit to standard terms of communication and to standard procedures in consequence of which they develop similar internal arrangements within limits imposed by their respective sizes. Each unit, then, tends to become a replica of every other unit and of parent system in which it is a subsystem. Since small units cannot acquire the elaborate organizations of which large organizations are capable, they jointly support specialized functions that complement their meager organizations. (Hawley, 1968, p. 334)

Expanding on this definition, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) indicate that,

at the population level, such an approach suggests that organizational characteristics are modified in the direction of increasing compatibility with environmental characteristics; the number of organizations in a population is a function of environmental carrying capacity; and the diversity of organizational forms is isomorphic to environmental diversity . . . The theory of isomorphism addresses not the psychological state of the actors,
but the structural determinants of the range of choices that actors perceive as rational or prudent. (p. 149)

Vadlamani (1996, cited in Davis et al., 2000), disagrees with DiMaggio and Powell’s (1983) idea of isomorphism being devoid of “the psychological state of actors” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p.149) when he indicates that “[i]t is widely believed that among the several convergent forces that reinforces isomorphism within organizations are collective cognitive and social beliefs and agreements” (p. 244).

Hannan and Freeman (1977) indicate that “[i]somorphism can result either because non-optimal forms are selected out of a community of organizations or because organizational decision makers learn optimal responses and adjust organizational behavior accordingly” (p. 939).

organizations are structured by phenomena in their environments and tend to become isomorphic with them . . . Formal organizations become matched with their environments by technical and exchange interdependencies . . . Structural elements diffuse because environments create boundary-spanning exigencies for organizations, and organizations which incorporate structural elements isomorphic with the environment are able to manage such interdependencies. (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p. 346)

Meyer and Rowan (1977) point out that,

isomorphism with environmental institutions has some crucial consequences for organizations: (a) they incorporate elements which are legitimated externally, rather than in terms of efficiency; (b) they employ external or ceremonial assessment criteria to define the value of structural elements; and (c) dependence on externally fixed institutions reduces turbulence and maintains stability. (pp. 348–349)

Oliver (1991) indicates that compliance with institutional pressures is dependent on the organizations perception of “social legitimacy” and “degree of economic gain” (pp. 160–161). In a study of the early phases of organizational development, Aldrich and Fiol (1994) note that fledging businesses are unable to implement strategies that could move them into the realm of major players within the same industry simply “because founders fail to develop trusting relations with stakeholders, are unable to cope with opposing industries, and never win
institutional support” (p. 664). Although isomorphism does little to enhance organizational effectiveness, its purpose is to ensure a “fit into administrative categories that define eligibility for public and private grants and contracts” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 153). In essence, “there is a one-to-one correspondence between structural elements of social organization and those units that mediate flows of essential resources into the system (Hannan & Freeman, 1977, p. 957).

Isomorphism serves as a conduit through which organizations achieve legitimacy (Kostova & Zaheer, 1999). However legitimacy can only be achieved to the extent that organizations are able to enforce institutional requirements (Zucker, 1983; Kostova & Zaheer, 1999). Meyer and Scott (1983) indicate that “[t]he legitimacy of a given organization is negatively affected by the number of different authorities sovereign over it and by the diversity or inconsistency of their accounts of how it is to function” (p. 202). The lower an organization’s autonomy and the higher its level of dependence on other institutions, especially with regards to availability of and accessibility to resources, the fewer choices it has and the higher the likelihood of isomorphism (Davis et al., 2000).

The importance of isomorphism cannot be overemphasized because it serves as “a useful tool for understanding the politics and ceremony that pervade much modern organizational life” (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p. 150) and can be helpful in understanding organizational response to policies when governments resort to “the use of compulsion and inducement to enforce extractive and distributive compliance or otherwise bring about desired behavior” (Almond & Powell, 1984, p. 115).

**Coercive Isomorphism**

Coercive isomorphism is one of the three mechanisms of institutional isomorphic change identified by DiMaggio and Powell (1983). It refers to “how actors that are powerful and
legitimate (e.g., a national government) may coerce the adoption of reforms by dependent actors (e.g., state governments and other organizations whose activities are governed by the federal government)” (Henisz & Zelner, 2005). According to Scott (1987), “[s]ome institutional sectors or fields contain environmental agents that are sufficiently powerful to impose structural forms and/or practices on subordinate organizational units” (p. 501).

Coercion is a strategy at the disposal of governments (Almond & Powell, 1984). Typically, the “domestic policy making process, when not subject to external coercive influences, typically produces emergent institutions whose consequences, procedures and structural type are isomorphic to those of established institutions already deemed legitimate” (Henisz & Zelner, 2005, p. 7). Discussing the use of legal coercion vis-à-vis institutional controls, Oliver (1991) indicates that,

when the force of law or government mandate buttresses cultural expectations, organizations are made more aware of public interests and will be less likely to respond defiantly because the consequences of noncompliance are more tangible and often more severe. Acquiescence best serves the organization’s interest when legal coercion is high, that is, when the consequences of nonconformity are highly punitive and strictly enforced. (p. 168)

According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983) coercive isomorphism “stems from political influence and the problem of legitimacy” (p. 150). They continue,

cooercive isomorphism results from both formal and informal pressures exerted on organizations by other organizations upon which they are dependent and by cultural expectations in the society within which organizations function. Such pressures may be felt as force, as persuasion, or as invitations to join in collusion. (p. 150)

Explaining this further, Scott (1995) points out that, “force and fear and expedience are central ingredients of the regulative pillar, but they are tempered by the existence of rules whether in the guise of informal mores or formal rules and laws” (p. 36). Enforcement of rules “must always involve the state as a source of coercion, a theory of institutions also inevitably involves the analysis of the political structure of a society and the degree to which that political
structure provides a framework of effective enforcement” (North, 1990, p. 64). Henisz and Zelner (2005) imply that coercive isomorphism “points to the consistency of a regulative institution’s formation process with domestic procedural norms as a key determinant of the institutions legitimacy, and implicitly its survival” (p. 8).

Relationships of dependence are usually precursors of isomorphic change (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) and resource dependence is a strong source of coercive isomorphism. Guler et al. (2002) indicate that,

as large organizations that are engaged in transactions with hundreds, even thousands of suppliers, states and multinationals contribute to the rationalization and normalization of production processes throughout the economy. States and multinational firms will be more influential in diffusing practices or standards to the extent that they have a strong presence in the economy as purchasers of goods and services. (p. 213)

According to Guler et al. (2002), “as consumers of goods and services, states may exert coercive pressures by asking suppliers and contractors to conform to certain procedures and standards” (p. 212). Governmental agencies such as the European Union (EU), and indeed many other agencies around the world, exert coercive isomorphic pressures on their contractors by insisting on International Organization for Standardization (ISO) registration and certification as a prerequisite for conducting business. In such cases, organizational survival hinges on the ability to comply with requirements. Zucker (1983) suggests that there is an inextricable link between organizational processes, operational environment, and the prevalent political processes. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) point out that “the expansion of the central state, the centralization of capital, and the coordination of philanthropy all support the homogenization of organizational models through direct authority relationship” (p. 151).

In their analysis of the impact of organizational environments on multinational enterprises (MNE), Rosenzweig and Singh (1991) state that,
to the extent that the state imposes specific regulations regarding pricing policy, labor practices, or other aspects of management, the subsidiary may have little choice but to conform. An MNE may choose not to locate a subsidiary in a given country, or it may seek special dispensation, but otherwise it faces compelling environmental pressures. (p. 348)

According to Tolbert & Zucker (1983),

once legitimated by higher level organizations through legal mandate or other formal means, dependent organizations generally respond by rapidly incorporating the element into their formal structure. This adoption is seldom problematic when the elements have high face validity and there is common agreement concerning their overall utility. (p. 27)

Organizations only comply with laws that are congruent with societal expectations of them “when legal coercion is high, that is, when the consequences of nonconformity are highly punitive and strictly enforced” (Oliver, 1991, p. 168).

According to Covaleski and Dirsmith’s (1988, citing Edelman, 1977),

the potential for coercion always lies behind extant norms of acceptable discourse and behavior . . . [that] is always an intrinsic part of some particular social situation; it is never an independent instrument or simply a tool for description or institutionalization. Although this language is cloaked in the appearance of objectivity and neutrality, it is ultimately directed towards establishing and maintaining hierarchies of authority and status. (p. 587)

Coercive Isomorphic Pressures on Public Relations Practices

In his study of coercive isomorphic pressures on public relations in Venezuela, Molleda (in press) found that “[t]he socioeconomic and political aspects that enable or constrain public relations were class stratification, vicious political culture, pure economics, mismanagement of the country’s resources, influence of transnational corporations, the size and activities in urban and commercial centers, and the personalized nature of government agencies” (n.p.). Because of the volatile political and sociopolitical landscape, public relations practitioners sit on the fence, or at least appear to have ideologies in line with their clients, to ensure survival.

Molleda (in press) also discovered that strategic planning was vital to minimizing social pressures resulting from unusually active civic groups, and that resource distribution affected public relations practice. He noted that “[t]he impact of the socioeconomic and political
environments on public relations also varies depending on the type of organization carrying out the practice” (n.p). While private and non-profit sectors have limited bureaucracy and the discretion to invest only in ventures which impact the bottom line, in the “government agencies and public-sector organizations . . . most of the resources and capital of the country is controlled by the government and public-sector organizations” (n.p) which dictate how resources are distributed.

Research Questions

This study focuses on the following three research questions:

**RQ1.** What are the specific typology of elements of the Nigerian socioeconomic and political environments that enable or constrain in specific ways public relations evolution and practices?

**RQ2.** What are the main public relations strategies developed by practitioners and their organizations in response to the identified typology of elements of the socioeconomic and political environments?

**RQ3.** What are some specific coercive isomorphic aspects of the socioeconomic and political environments of Nigeria?
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

The author conducted qualitative research in Nigeria to determine the socioeconomic and political environment, and coercive isomorphic pressures affecting public relations practice in Nigeria. The author adapted and expanded Molleda’s (2006a) questionnaire for the purpose of the research. The expansion consisted of the inclusion of questions specific to coercive isomorphism. Participants were offered confidentiality of responses through an informed consent form to encourage open and honest responses and to avoid any risk associated with addressing sensitive issues during the interviews.

Population & Sampling Technique

The population used for this study was public relations practitioners occupying management positions in Nigeria. This population was decided upon because the author believed they would have the requisite skills, experience, and knowledge needed to inform this research.

Participants were selected through a purposive sampling technique. Because of the author’s inability to be physically present in Nigeria, he used key contacts in Nigeria and the United States to get recommendations on how best to identify and recruit participants for this study. Initial participants for the study were culled from e-mail addresses provided by a key contact and respondents to an e-mail, from another key contact, sent to members of the International Public Relations Association (IPRA). Participants represented government, private, corporate, and higher education organizations. Lindlof (1995) explains, “Different [key] informants can offer a variety of insights because they have had unique experiences in the scene” (p. 171).

Informed consent forms were sent to participants via e-mail. Participants were required to either fill and e-mail completed forms back to the author, or respond to the authors e-mail indicating their understanding of the contents and their willingness to participate in the research.
Consent forms were read over the telephone to participants who were unable to respond via e-mail. Twenty phone interviews (17 men and three women) were conducted. From the numerous references gathered and final number of participants interviewed, it became evident that there were more men than women occupying management positions in the public relations industry in Nigeria.

Sample Description

Twenty public relations professionals participated in the study. Participants are all Nigerian citizens and represent two main sectors: public/government (eight), and private (12). Five participants work in large corporate organizations, seven in privately owned PR consultancies, and eight in government run organizations (two of whom work in higher institutions). The entire sample claimed to have management responsibilities. The majority (17) of participants occupy the highest position in their units. Nineteen participants (one participant declined giving his age) reported a mean age of 43 (ranging from 34 to 55). The mean years of work experience for all participants was 17, with a mean of nine years working with their current organization. All of the participants have a bachelor’s degree (nine studied mass communication), two have post-graduate degrees, nine attended graduate school, and two have doctorate degrees.

Questionnaire Construction

Molleda’s (2006a) questionnaire was adapted and expanded to include questions specific to coercive isomorphism for the purpose of this study. Questions that did not inform this research were deleted. The questionnaire is divided into four sections (Appendix A). Section one is a modification of Molleda’s (2006a) study. Section two was developed by the author to specifically address some coercive isomorphic effects on the practice of public relations such as those identified by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), Tolbert and Zucker (1983), Zucker (1983),

Section one is divided into two parts of three questions each; part one focuses on the socioeconomic environment in Nigeria. Part two considers the political environment in Nigeria. Section two contains twelve questions on the effect of coercive isomorphic pressures and their effect on public relations practices in Nigeria. Specifically, the questions address the connection regulation and increased social expectation (Oliver, 1991), the connection between regulation and legitimacy of public relations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Tolbert & Zucker, 1983), sources and types of coercive isomorphic pressure (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 1987; Henisz & Zelner, 2005), sources of coercive isomorphic pressure (Zucker, 1983), and resources as a source of coercive isomorphic pressure (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Guler et al., 2002). Section three has one question which aims to address the evolution of public relations in Nigeria. Finally, section four includes demographic questions used to describe sample participants of the study, such as age, years of experience as a public relations practitioner, level of education, and number of years spent in present organization. This information will be useful in analyzing the quality of participants of this study.

**Data Analysis**

“By asking the same questions of all participants in roughly the same order, the researcher minimizes interviewer effects and achieves greater efficiency of information gathering,” Lindlof argues (1995, p. 172). As Wimmer and Dominick (2003) explain, “the most important advantage of the in-depth interview is the wealth of detail that it provides” (p. 127). In addition, the in-depth interview method is based on the belief that experts or specialized subjects, such as those included in this study, are in the best position to observe and understand their own motivations,
attitudes and opinions, values, experiences, feelings, emotions, and behaviors (Austin & Pinkleton, 2006; Broom & Dozier, 1990).

The interviews were conducted in English via Internet telephone, audiotaped, and fully transcribed by the author. Interviews were conducted at times convenient for the participants and lasted between 30 and 60 minutes. The author made second phone calls to participants to get responses to questions that were either left out or inadequately answered. An Excel spreadsheet with a response matrix was created to facilitate the identification of response patterns, that is, agreements, disagreements, and consensus. Moreover, “the research expert discusses the results in terms of general impressions and themes” (Poindexter & McCombs, 2000, p. 270). The answers and comments to each question were grouped according to level of agreement and identified response patterns, such as repeated themes and consensus. Selected verbatim quotes are inserted within the text to illustrate and support the summary of findings.
CHAPTER 4
RESULTS

The tremendous growth recorded in the public relations industry in Nigeria since the advent of democracy is evidence that public relation thrives better in a democratic system of government. According to 16 participants, Nigeria’s transition from Military to democratic system of government has resulted in remarkable growth of the public relations industry in Nigeria. One participant, working with the government, noted:

when you have a military government, you have a downward system of communication; you have an asymmetrical system of communication. But when you have a democratic government, you now have two-way communication, you have a kind of system that allows for consultation, it allows for consensus building, allows for generally trading of ideas.

One participant, working with a government establishment, pointed out that the military deserved commendation for their recognition of PR and for passing legislation regulating the profession. However, three practitioners, one from the private sector and two from the public/government sector, indicated that there was no significant improvement in public relations practice since the transition in government. One participant, running a private consultancy, indicated that one of the trends carried over from the military regime was the governments’ preference for, and use of, foreign public relations consultancies in the planning and execution of public relations programs. While describing Nigeria’s political environment, the participant seemed to express frustration and helplessness at practitioners’ inability to contribute to much needed strategic planning needed for national development. According to the participant:

at a time like this, public relations is supposed to be playing a part in the political situation . . . lending its voice to the discourse, to the public debate and forming opinions . . . very rarely will they [politicians] bring in professional public relations practitioners to be able to sit down, look at strategies, look at issues, analyze issues, then decide the direction forward.

According to another participant working for the government:
the military were using more of the PR people than the civilian administration... most of the PR people prospered under military administration than they are doing now under the civilian administration. The civilian administration has turned out to be a government of patronage, you patronize people not because of who they are and what they can do but for what their relationship is with you.

However, one participant, working for the government, indicated that the transition had both negative and positive consequences for public relations practice. According to him, the transition is “[negative] in the sense that... expectations [are] met in unconventional and unprofessional ways... Positive in the sense that it has made PR to be more appreciated as essential for any organization to survive.”

Under Nigeria’s quasi-authoritarian system, public relations practitioners, especially those in the government, sometimes impose self censorship at the cost of professionalism when discharging their duties. A comment made by one practitioner who runs a private consultancy seems to bring to the fore one possible reason for the absence of public relations and practitioners in Nigeria’s national development. According to him:

the government [politicians] tends to be too powerful, so they control all the machineries of government, and because people want to keep their jobs... they dance to government interest, and most of the time the government interest does not necessarily equate to general wellbeing of the society.

In spite of the odious political environment, words and phrases used by more than half the participants to describe factors enabling public relations practice include not volatile, vibrant, effective judiciary fairly stable, competitive, developing, interesting and challenging, and anticipation and enthusiasm for the next general elections. Words and phrases such as diversification, privatization, “huge inflow of foreign direct investment,” “opportunities for growth,” “debt recovery,” and “macro economic development,” were used to describe positive aspects of the socioeconomic environment.
It is against this backdrop of Nigeria’s political environment that the author sought to find answers to the three research questions identified earlier concerning Nigeria’s public relations industry.

**Research Question One**

**RQ1.** What are the specific typology of elements of the Nigerian socioeconomic and political environments that enable or constrain in specific ways public relations evolution and practices?

After analyzing the participants’ responses, the aspects concerning the country’s socioeconomic and political environments that enable or constrain in specific ways public relations evolution and practices were summarized in four themes: vicious/mindless political culture, psychological struggle, pure economics, and mismanagement. Following is the summary of each theme.

**Vicious/Mindless Political Culture**

Vicious political culture is used to describe the culture of violence in Nigeria’s political environment especially during elections. Mindless political culture is used to describe the lack of strategy and direction in Nigerian politics. Politicians are often not elected based on manifestos or professional qualification but on personal and political affiliation. Nigeria’s burgeoning democracy appears shaky and from every indication Nigerians are anxious about their political future. Eighty percent of participants indicated negative, palpable, and pervasive tension in the political environment and expressed a feeling of uncertainty about the nation’s political direction. Years of military rule seems to have scared the subconscious minds of Nigerians. The present democratic dispensation seems akin to the military in its use and abuse of power and Nigerians, just like during the military era, are fearful of consequences that come with challenging government and those in positions of authority. As one participant, who works for the government, enunciated:
because of the militarized psyche of the leaders in different political parties, it is all politicking devoid of issues, devoid of contest of ideas . . . what we operate is a counterfeit of anything that has to be defined as democracy . . . So, the public relations practitioner has a very serious problem trying to defend what is happening, or trying to market the candidates that have been thrust on the country for the electorate to choose from because quite a number of them [politicians] are not credible, and . . . do not have any idea that can move any person forward or transform the nation.

Elaborating on the impact of politics on public relations, the same participant explained:

[public relations] has been encumbered by [a] climate of confusion . . . uncertainty . . . bravado, and lawlessness . . . There is so much “might is right” syndrome in the political arena. It is quite a challenge to the profession because every profession is predicated on rules and parties’ obedience to rules and due process . . . We are in a political jungle where the mighty must devour the weak and where rationality is thrown to the wind. It is all emotional outbursts . . . Machiavellian treachery and intimidation.

More than three thirds of participants identified the present political environment with words and phrases such as apprehension, volatile, unstable, unpredictable, chaotic, overheated, “polarized polity”, “bereft of sanity and due process”, “history keeps repeating itself,” “the fundamental right of the citizens to choose who their rulers should be is being circumvented by the government in power and even the opposition,” “Nigerian political system cannot be identified on the political continuum of left [or] right,” “we still have this seize and reign mentality,” “the fastest route to making money is in government,” and “politicians are not addressing issues, they are addressing personalities.” One participant, who works with a privately owned corporate organization, explains:

Nigeria is still saddled with the . . . winner takes all philosophy in politics, that is the policy of exclusionism whereby the ruling party believe that having won an election, all other . . . opposition members should keep at bay, and if anything, they should not interfere with the running of government. This mentality has run through the course of the last 27 years . . . the ruling party is at the verge of turning the multiparty democracy into a one party states . . . [as] most of the opposition party members . . . are being coerced through the instrumentality of government agency charged with the responsibility of fighting corruption.

This vicious/mindless political culture has other implications for Nigerians who seem accustomed to abuse characteristic of the military era, which they deal with through self
censorship in order to avoid harassment, intimidation, and sometimes assassination. According to the CEO of a private PR firm: “you have pressure to compromise your professional standing because the government or your boss doesn’t want the truth to be told . . . you now have to parry the truth, you have to be economical with words.” According to one practitioner working for the government:

as a public relations person . . . you might . . . take a position on the evolving political development in the country and decide to . . . advocate certain positions . . . and that could bring you at [loggerheads] with the ruling class and even the security agencies . . . some people were assassinated under very mysterious circumstances which may be as a result of stepping on some toes . . . because some people don’t believe that dissenting voices or views should be expressed or given some prominence.

**Psychological Struggle**

Public relations practitioners, and indeed all other professionals, face psychological stress brought on by the socioeconomic and political environment in Nigeria. Poor infrastructure, insecurity, and unemployment are some of the pressures faced by many Nigerians, and the public relations practitioner is not exempt. The theme of psychological struggle was identified after more than half the participants described the socioeconomic and political environment with phrases such as “socially dislocated,” “families have broken down,” “playing up ethnic sentiments to advance or protect their parochial interest,” “people are skeptic,” “people cannot just freely engage other people in discussing issues, security to life and property are at serious risk,” and, “some of the leaders at the arena do not have the requisite intellectual disposition to appreciate fundamental human rights of the citizens need to be respected.” There seems to be anxiety resulting from the ethnic differences especially as they are propagated by individuals or groups to achieve selfish ends. As one participant in consultancy explained, “a constant threat to the growth and stability of the Nigerian nation is the absence of strong felling of unity and oneness among the various groups, and that could break up the country.” Practitioners are
sometimes forced to make unprofessional and unethical decisions. One participant working for the government pointed out that:

in an attempt to get results, you might . . . step on toes. When you step on the toes of those who wield the power, they will either remove you . . . frustrate you, or get you off the job . . . Sometimes people want to be accepted [at all cost], so they compromise professional standards. They cannot make impressions on their organizations because they don’t want the embarrassment that will come with rejection.

Another participant, working for the government, had this to say about the state of insecurity and its pressures on Nigerians:

the state of insecurity is so high, that the “haves,” those who have it, live under a siege mentality. You can’t go out; you can’t even flaunt what your sweat has given you because of the fear of the reaction of the less privileged [who] the system has completely dehumanized.

Referring to family pressure one participant, working for a large corporate organization, pointed out: “as a public relations person, you are always on the move. Many of us have had to either change our careers . . . because you hear wives complaining that the [husband] is never around.”

**Pure Economics**

At the end, everything seems to boil down to an individual’s ability to make enough money to live comfortably, or enjoy societal and peer recognition that comes with being affluent. The theme of pure economics was identified by 75% of participants who used words and phrases as unemployment, inflation, “high interest rate,” “eradication of the middle-class,” “everything that happens these days revolves around the political scene,” “low per capita income,” “endemic poverty,” “lack of funding,” “cut-throat competition,” and “pressure to make money . . . for your family, gives you enormous responsibility”.

According to one participant who owns a private consultancy:

we have issues that have to do with infrastructural development . . . where the government has not been able to meet the expectations of Nigerians especially in the area of power
generation, poor hospitals, poor roads, even the schools; the standard of education has fallen considerably. So, for you to get the best, or something very good . . . you have to spend a lot. So what has happened is that there is a lot of emphasis on wealth accumulation because it seems that is the only way you can move forward. You have your own generating plant, you have your own [water], you have your own private schools . . . So there is this race to move from the have-nots to the haves . . . to try to accumulate wealth both legally and illegally.

According to another participant who runs a privately owned PR firm:

Nigeria is going through a period of economic recession more or less because the cost of living is quite high and the remuneration of the average person is not up to the level of being able to maintain the basic necessities.

Public relations practitioners are sometimes unable secure adequate funding to purchase tools to practice or execute public relations programs effectively. One participant working in a private corporation noted: ““things don’t come [cheap] in Nigeria because of the level of economy . . . the cost of [buying] some of these things are very high.” One participant working with the government mentioned financial pressures resulting from unpaid client fees. According to him: “even when the client says “this is a good job,” [if] . . . the public criticizes it, [the client] backs down [and] God help you if you have [not] collected your fees.”

**Mismanagement**

Mismanagement is largely connected with pervasive corruption in Nigeria and is used to describe the misappropriation of public funds and underdevelopment of infrastructure in Nigeria. Infrastructural development is a historically a consistent theme in Nigerian government policy because of dismal failure by every administration. The theme of mismanagement was identified by over two thirds of the participants and was described using words and phrases such as corruption, “apathy among the people about the sincerity of government’s commitment to socioeconomic development,” “dwindling economy,” “economic recession,” “poor infrastructure,” and “government has not been prudent in the management of resources.” One participant, who owns a private consultancy, observed that: “[The] government does whatever it
feels . . . is right for [them] to do, and most of the time they don’t actually consider the public relations consequences.” According to another participant who works for the government:

Nigeria is obviously a rich nation rated sixth among the worlds largest producer of petroleum products. But the reality on ground is that the standard of living of the average Nigerian has no direct relation at all with this level of wealth that is ascribed to the nation. Accommodation [housing] is still a huge problem . . . unemployment is still a huge problem, people graduating from schools and can’t find work.

Vast amounts of revenue derived by the federal government from the sale of natural resources have not translated to improved infrastructure or standards of living of the average Nigerian. As another participant who works for the government noted:

when you look at it from the issue of revenue that accrues to the federation account, the government has not been prudent in the management of resources. There is crisis, economic crisis, there is fuel scarcity, there [are] long queues for fuel here and there, at the same time, there [are issues] of inflation.

Most public relations practitioners in Nigeria have come to terms with the reality and difficulty of practicing public relations in Nigeria vis-à-vis the four themes identified above. The challenges that come with working in Nigeria’s dynamic environment has forced most practitioners to think outside the box, especially in terms of how to adapt to environmental constraints, when providing services to clients or organizations.

**Research Question Two**

**RQ2.** What are the main public relations strategies developed by practitioners and their organizations in response to the identified typology of elements of the socioeconomic and political environments?

Public relations practitioners in Nigeria have adopted different strategies to ensure professional relevance and survival in a dynamic socioeconomic and political environment. In the management arena, 40% of participants indicated that public relations is often relegated to the background. This is primarily because of misconception on the part of management,
government, and public on the role, function, and importance of public relations. As a result, practitioners are often unable to make any meaningful contribution to goals in terms of strategy development and execution. However, increased activities in the political and economic arena have led to an equivalent rise in the use of public relations especially in communicating with diverse groups of publics. In the social arena, 65% of participants noted that promoting public relations to the public presents a challenge because of factors such as illiteracy, poverty, corruption, poor infrastructure, lack of credibility on the part of practitioners or their organizations, the flippant nature of the Nigerian public, and the equation of public relations as propaganda. In performing the media relations role, one quarter of participants indicated that they often deal with journalists who make unethical and unprofessional requests of them. Citing an example, one participant, who works for a private corporate organization, said: “some media houses, because you are not placing adverts, will look for a story that is not professional . . . They will tell you that they want to shake the organization so that they can give them adverts.” In general, insufficient public relations budget, in public and private sectors, make it difficult to communicate effectively with the public. On the regulatory front, 85% of participants indicate that the NIPR does a very poor job of enforcing regulation. As a result, public relations practice in Nigeria is infiltrated by interlopers who lack professional qualification and training. They are, in effect, responsible for the negative perception of public relations as a profession in Nigeria as organizations and the public make sweeping generalizations stemming from their inability to provide quality and/or professional service. In general, the main challenge for public relations in Nigeria is the difficulty in measuring and/or demonstrating the value of public relations especially in terms of developing policy and strategy.
The actions and strategies adopted by the participants to deal with the complex socioeconomic environment include (1) organizing seminars and conferences to discuss and promote the need for enforcing regulation, professionalism, and continuous training of professionals in the field; (2) educating management on the role, importance of, and need for public relations as a management function; (3) exhibiting innovation and creativity especially with respect to budgeting; (4) self resignation, trying to make the best of the situation, but still giving the best professional advice possible under the circumstances; and (5) acting as an agent of change by awakening the public and the government, through education, to their responsibility of nation building and protecting democracy. Other actions and strategies mentioned by participants were (6) increased stakeholder engagement and emphasis on corporate social responsibility; (7) emphasis and reliance on research and scientific methods to formulate strategies; (8) setting ground rules with client/management ab initio; (9) engaging in distinctive approach to media relations; and (10) passing the cost to the client.

With regards to educating management on the importance of PR and self resignation, one consultant, who worked for a large private corporation, had this to say: “I tried personally to advise [management], even if [it was] not taken. I insisted on [it]. Where my advise was not sought, well of course I would stay in my own corner and continue to do my job.” Along the same line, another participant, working for the government, said: “if you keep explaining and you are not getting the required understanding, then you look for how to adjust and get your result otherwise.”

With regards to emphasis on scientific methods of data gathering and analysis, the CEO of a privately owned consultancy had this to say: “if you are very scientific in the way you [practice] and you are very professional, then people will begin to need you, if you add value
people will come back to you and that is the only way that they can understand that they have to pay for your services.”

Pointing to the role of the public relations practitioner as a teacher to build confidence of the people in the emerging political system, one practitioner, working for the government, pointed out that:

it is the responsibility of the public relations practice to always dichotomize between illusion and reality and try to give confidence to the people that in spite of seeming apathy, that they should have interest in the political process and use their votes to advance their interest, and good governance, and the rule of law.

Research Question Three

RQ3. What are some specific coercive isomorphic aspects of the socioeconomic and political environments of Nigeria?

For the purpose of this research, coercive isomorphism is understood within the context of how powerful and legitimate actors are able to ensure compliance with reforms that will otherwise be ignored. The coercive isomorphic pressures found to affect the public relations practice in Nigeria include Desire for rewards and fear of consequences resulting from government regulation, professional legitimacy, social conformity, and funding.

Desire for Rewards and Fear of Consequences Resulting from Government Regulation

Seventeen participants indicated that some benefits accrue to practitioners when regulation is followed. Benefits mentioned include enhancing professionalism, enhancing the reputation of the profession, competition among practitioners, keeping practitioners out of trouble, reducing the prevalence of non professionals, and creating an enabling environment for public relations practice. As one participant, representing a federal government organization, stated: “it gives you all immunity to do your job within the ambits of the law.” Three participants, one from the public/government sector and two from the private sector, indicated that there were no benefits
of regulation the public relations industry. The practitioner from the government sector articulated his thoughts thus:

the question I have asked . . . is, if I don’t join the institute, what am I loosing? . . . The truth is that you are losing nothing . . . till date, not a single person has been prosecuted for doing PR with doubtful qualifications . . . The institute has an ethical committee, not a single person has stood before it for the breach of its ethics . . . So, the truth of the matter is those who are not members are even privileged because . . . they are not subjected to any monthly subscriptions, they are not subjected to attending conferences where money is spent . . . they are just there doing their business.

Similarly, 17 participants indicated that there were consequences resulting from non compliance with the NIPR regulation. Some consequences mentioned include: fines, sanctions, prosecution, professional ridicule, infiltration of public relations by non professionals, and imprisonment. On the other hand, three practitioners, two from government and one from the private sector, indicated that there were no consequences to noncompliance with regulation.

The NIPR is plagued with internal issues which have distracted it from its core duty of monitoring compliance with, and enforcing, regulation of the public relations industry. Ninety percent of participants indicated that the NIPR was inefficient in monitoring and enforcing regulations. Phrases such as “nobody even cares whether NIPR exists,” “the Institute has not done enough to sanitize itself,” “NIPR . . . is at best in some comatose state,” “The NIPR at the moment is not a particularly strong Institute and I am afraid that not a lot of practitioners take it very seriously,” and “PR is almost a self regulated profession.” One practitioner, working with a large private corporate organization, had this to say about the NIPR:

the NIPR is populated by people who are embroiled in their own crisis . . . I am a member because I believe I should do the right thing, not because I owe any allegiance to NIPR. My first experience . . . when I went for their congress, I saw the haphazard way the congress was planned and how the election process of the executives was rigged. Even the PR practitioners at that venue did not associate themselves [with the election process].
Public relations in Nigeria is unable to get the necessary support needed to legitimize and professionalize the industry because the federal government is the biggest malefactor. As one participant, representing a government organization, pointed out:

I will say government policies and enactments have been favorable, but the problem lies more with the professionals and to some extent, the government. The government cannot put all this in place and still go ahead to employ charlatans; they cannot enact a law and be the same ones to break that law.

Three participants, one in the private sector and two working with the government, alluded to the “Heart of Africa” project, a public relations image repair campaign aimed at improving Nigeria’s image. One of the participants who works for the government was irked by the amount of money spent on the campaign as well as the government’s ability to insulate itself from the desperate socioeconomic and political reality. The participant from the private sector, who owns a PR consultancy, pointed out that the irony in the non-involvement of the NIPR in planning and/or executing the campaign.

**Professional Legitimacy**

Fifteen participants indicated that regulation of the industry legitimizes the practice of the public relations practice in Nigeria. As one of the participants, representing a large private organization, commented:

any profession that is not regulated is not taken seriously. There must be laws and rules and regulations guiding a profession. The moment people see that this business . . . is guided by rules, and regulations, and ethics [they] will respect it more.

One participant, who worked for the government, said: “I don’t think that they have made much impact other than within their own circles.” Four participants indicated that although legitimacy should ideally be the result of regulation, it was not necessarily the case. According to one of the participants’ who owns a private consultancy:

regulation alone cannot do it. It could help but that alone cannot do it. It would mean that a lot of practitioners would have to rise up to the level of expectation and if they don’t, then
that is going to be a problem. You have a lot of people doing public relations who have no
business being there, and as long as they are there and continue playing at a substandard
level, whatever you do in the market, the regulation is not going to be able to get the
respect for the profession or the practitioners.

Social Conformity

Twelve participants indicated that regulation increases the social expectation of public
relations. Six participants indicated that while regulation should ideally increase social
expectation, it was not necessarily the case. This could mean that although increase in social
expectation should be a natural outcome of regulation, there are other environmental factors
which play a role in enhancing public relations as a profession. Because the public are largely
unaware of regulation or professional standards concerning public relations practice, coupled
with inefficient monitoring and enforcement by the NIPR, they have no basis for assessing
professional output. Two participants, one working in a large private organization and the other
with the government, indicated that regulation of the industry had no impact on societal
expectation of the profession. According to the practitioner working with the private
organization:

if [public relations] is regulated certainly people [will] operate within the bounds of the
law, then we know where we stand with everybody at every time . . . and both the regulator
and the regulated know what they are supposed to do and therefore I don’t think there will
be undue expectations from either party except where there is need to make a change.

Funding

Seventy-five percent of participants indicate that dependence on their clients or
organizations for revenue or funding significantly impacts their flexibility and independence in
executing their professional duties. Twenty-five percent of the respondents indicated that they
had complete and total independence. Forty percent indicated total dependence and no flexibility
in executing their duties. One practitioner, representing the private sector, put it this way: “what
independence are you looking for? A client gives you a brief, you work on the brief, and you
collect your money . . . you have to depend on your clients.” Thirty-five percent of participants indicate that there is some flexibility and independence involved often to the extent that practitioners were able to convince management of their competence. The CEO of a privately owned consultancy said:

if I am paid a fee, then I am expected to earn the fee. So, in that regard, I have to deliver on what I have been paid. On the other hand, one of the challenges is that you are paid and you are not allowed to be effective. You are not allowed to do your job and lead strategy at the level that it should be done because perhaps someone in the client organization does not agree with what you are doing.

Four practitioners, three from the private sector and one from the public/government sector, indicated that the NIPR was funded solely through subvention received from the federal government. As a result, government appointed nominees sat on the council of the institute. However, after a fallout, the government ceased funding the institute. According to one of the participants’ who runs a privately owned consultancy:

there was a time the profession of public relations was under the ministry of information and they took measures which the institute rejected, and they [government] . . . [stopped] giving subventions . . . We found out that it was even in our best interest to stop getting subvention from them because we could go ahead as a special institute and take decisions and make suggestions independent of government input.

One practitioner working in a government institution indicated that: “[the] government has come out with the new policy that as from this year [2007] they will not give them [NIPR] any subvention . . . [and] this is my preferred position because he who pays the piper dictates the tune.
CHAPTER 5
DISCUSSION

Implications for Public Relations in Nigeria

This study provides evidence of how coercive isomorphic pressures are exerted on public relations practice in Nigeria. The socioeconomic and political environment in Nigeria demands a greater use and appreciation of public relations as a tool for promoting and engendering national development and consensus building. Although democracy has resulted in increased liberties and freedom of expression for Nigerians, some things, such as government’s tolerance of criticism and opposing points of view, are yet to change. Participants’ responses to questions, especially regarding the socioeconomic environment, were often tied into the ubiquitous nature of Nigerian politics. Thus, this research validates the link between politics and economic development.

The first question asks “What are the specific typology of elements of the Nigerian socioeconomic and political environments that enable or constrain, in specific ways, public relations evolution and practices?” Participants’ responses are categorized into four themes: vicious/mindless political culture, psychological struggle, pure economics, and mismanagement. These four categories point to the dearth of true democratic principles in Nigeria. Political parties have no ideological foundations and politicians are often appointed on the basis of loyalty, personal clout, and party affiliation rather than on individual or professional merit. Historically, the concentration of power in the hands of the federal government has resulted in the abuse of power, the rule of law, and due process. Akin to the military, the democratic government appears to be covertly, and sometimes overtly, intolerant of criticism and dissenting views. As Kostova (1999) points out, organizations are a product of the institutional environment in which they are situated (Kostova, 1999). Years of abuse under military rule has resulted in isomorphism in the socioeconomic and political psyche of Nigeria. There is still fear of consequences of challenging
the government or those in positions of authority. Survival, a driving force in isomorphism, appears to be the ultimate goal underlying public relations practice, and indeed life, in Nigeria. Successful organizations or professional are those that are able to effectively monitor, learn from, and adapt their structures or behavior to suit the dynamic and challenging environment in Nigeria.

Challenges that come with working in Nigeria could be daunting for practitioners and success is sometimes dependent on the ability to align oneself with dominant powers in order to remain in the “good books.” Practitioners fear losing their jobs and the social and professional ostracism that comes with dissenting from the voice of authority. To avoid this, practitioners sometimes compromise professional and ethical standards by acquiescing to management demands especially when it is perceived that such actions ensure job security. Many organizations in Nigeria do not see the need for including public relations as a management function. This absence results in 1) the common misconception, in public and private sectors, of the role and function of public relations. Practitioners are equated with messengers and public relations with propaganda, 2) inadequate budget for planning and/or executing effective public relations campaigns, 3) absence of strategic planning in the formulation and implementation of organizational policies, and, 4) inconsistent and often conflicting organizational reports resulting in loss of credibility among key publics and stakeholders, a common trend in the public/government sector. The research also suggests that to the degree which the rule of law is established social expectation would be another source of coercive isomorphism.

Laird (1989) indicates that while “[a] situation's context does not determine its outcome . . . it does shape the problem people seek to solve and constrains the range of actions they can take to solve it (p.543). Democracy has brought about a flurry of activities in Nigeria’s
socioeconomic and political environment. This has resulted in a spike in public relations activities because of the increasing complexity of publics and the need to communicate effectively with them. However, in spite of economic reforms, such as those in the banking and insurance industries, there is no indication that there is any improvement in the standards of living of the average Nigerian. This is evident in the eradication of the middle-class and the growing chasm between the rich and the poor. High level of unemployment means that many practitioners are unlikely to find employment in a public relations capacity especially in an environment where it is perceived as overrated and unimportant.

Problems facing public relations practitioners, especially those in the public sector, stem from the government’s inability to efficiently manage resources, inconsistent, ill-interpreted, and ill-enforced government policies, disregard for civil rights, lack of basic infrastructure, and lack of national cohesion attributable to the pervasive ethnic consciousness of Nigerians’. These factors create an atmosphere of chaos and confusion and puts tremendous strain on the psyche of Nigerians’. Economic hardship, coupled with the mistrust of government and organization motives, results in ineffective public relations programs as Nigerians are often unreceptive, unresponsive, and too busy scraping a living for themselves and/or their families.

The second question asks “What are the main public relations strategies developed by practitioners and their organizations in response to the identified typology of elements of the socioeconomic and political environments?” Public relations is still a relatively new profession in Nigeria and although there is general misconception about its role and function, practitioners are optimistic, aggressive, and resilient in their efforts to ensure professional recognition and development. Some practitioners have taken on the roles of counselors, continuously educating management on the need for and importance of public relations to their organizations.
Practitioners also advocate for the elevation of public relations to a management function to assist with policy and strategy formulation.

Practitioners in Nigeria adjust to the dynamism of the environment in which they operate by 1) being creative and innovative in dispatching their duties, 2) resigning themselves to the whims and caprices of management by acquiescing to management demands while making official notations that professional council was given but rejected, and 3) standing up to management and refusing to compromise professional standards. It appears that the last option is available to, and often utilized by, private public relations consultancies which utilize professional discretion in their choice of clientele especially when it involves compromising ethical or professional standards. Utilizing any of the first two options results in a situation where management is vindicated in its decision not to ascribe importance to the public relations as an important function. These options stymie the growth of the profession indefinitely.

The third question asks “What are some specific coercive isomorphic aspects of the socioeconomic and political environments of Nigeria?” Coercive isomorphism in the public relations industry in Nigeria results from the formal pressures, those exerted by government legislation, and the informal pressures, those exerted by the socioeconomic and political environment.

Guler et al. (2002) indicate that “dependent organizations are likely to adopt patterns of behavior sanctioned by the organizations that control critical resources” (p. 212). The centralization of capital by the federal government results in the homogenization of ideas and policies. As a result, the government and its constituents exert coercive isomorphic pressure on all institutions and organizations reliant on them for funding. Also, because virtually all other aspects of the economy are reliant on government expenditure, there are dire consequences for
dissenting voices or points of view. Threats, intimidation, and violence are not uncommonly used to silence opposition. Consequently, public relations practitioners in Nigeria, especially those in government, often align themselves with the reigning government or dominant power in order to benefit from government expenditure and contracts.

This research suggests that the source of funding exerts strong coercive isomorphic pressure on the public relations industry in Nigeria. This pressure is exerted by 1) the federal government of, and 2) by organizations. Until 2007, the NIPR was wholly reliant on the federal government for funding. As a result, the government was involved in its administration. Judging from some participants comments, it would seem that the government influenced, or at least attempted to influence, the direction of policy, strategy, and programs of the institute to its favor. On the organizational side, the research indicates that because public relations is a part of a whole and lends itself to the achievement of a single organizational goal, it is impossible for practitioners to expect the level of freedom they desire especially if management perceives that programs do not contribute to achieving overall organizational goals. The research suggests that the government exerts indirect coercive isomorphic pressures on privately owned organizations to the extent that those private organizations provide goods and/or services to institutions/organizations or sectors of the economy which are reliant on the federal government for funding.

Regulation would ideally be a coercive isomorphic force which enhances professional standards and practice. In this scenario, the benefit to the public relations industry and practitioners becomes evident in terms of reduced turbulence resulting from lack of social and professional legitimacy. However, this research does not reveal any coercive isomorphic pressure with regards to government regulation on the practice of public relations. The legislative
backing given to the NIPR appears to be inconsequential especially because the socioeconomic and political environments do not facilitate its effective enforcement. This may provide an explanation as to the why the public relations industry in Nigeria is yet to gain the recognition necessary to achieve legitimacy. The research does suggest, however, that regulation would be a strong source of coercive isomorphism if the NIPR was able to effectively enforce it.

It is interesting to note that participants, in spite of their diverse backgrounds, qualifications, and area of specialization, were generally in agreement concerning the socioeconomic and political environment in Nigeria and its effect on public relations practice. It is more interesting to note that out of all the participants interviewed, most participants working with the government were more vocal when describing Nigeria’s socioeconomic and political environment.

**Limitations and Future Research**

A limitation of the qualitative method used to gather primary data is the possibility that as rapport and comfort developed between the interviewer and interviewees, the interviewer may have unintentionally communicated information clues that biased the participants’ responses. Also, the length of the questionnaire and the multiple variables included may have caused fatigue to participants affecting the length and quality of their responses. Also, poor reception and dropped calls during the phone interviews may have contributed to the author’s inability to communicate effectively and also his ability to effectively capture participants’ responses.

This study has collected the thoughts, in one time period, of public relations practitioners in Nigeria. However, it would be beneficial to conduct longitudinal studies to observe how the situation unravels within Nigeria’s evolving political and socioeconomic climates. There is also the need for further quantitative research into the contextual variables, coercive isomorphic pressures affecting public relations practice in Nigeria and different countries of the world, on
the evolution and practices of public relations in different countries through comparative studies that uncover identifiable global or regional trends. A study of the roles, perception, and effectiveness of public relations in the Nigerian government may be an area for future study.

The results of this study could serve as point of comparison with other countries with similar socioeconomic and political environments, including coercive isomorphic pressures such as those identified in Nigeria, and could also serve as a guide to understanding how public relations is practiced in Nigeria.
APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

THE IMPACT OF THE SOCIOECONOMIC AND POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT ON PUBLIC RELATIONS

I-A. Contextual Variable: The Socioeconomic Environment

1. Please describe the current socioeconomic environment in Nigeria.
2. What are the socioeconomic issues affecting the public relations industry and practice?
3. How do these issues influence the public relations industry and practice, and how have you responded to them?

I-B. Contextual Variable: The Political Environment

1. How would you describe Nigeria’s present political environment?
2. What political aspects have an impact on the public relations industry and its practices in Nigeria?
3. How do these issues influence the industry, your specific practices and, your public relations responses?

II. Coercive Isomorphism

1. How does government regulation affect public relations practice in Nigeria?
2. What are the benefits, if any, of compliance with regulation?
3. What are the consequences, if any, of non-compliance with regulations?
4. Does regulation increase social expectation of the industry? Please explain.
5. Does regulation increase acceptance of public relations as a profession?
6. What are sources of pressure for the public relations industry in Nigeria?
7. How is pressure exerted?
8. How do you respond to such pressure/s?
9. What are risks associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
10. What are benefits associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
11. What is your departments/organizations source of funding/revenue?
12. How does this affect your departments/organizations relationship with these sources in terms of flexibility and independence?

III. Evolution of Public Relations

1. How has the transition from military to democratic government affected public relations practice in Nigeria?
   If limited response is given, prod with
   • Corruption
   • Regulation and enforcement
   • Increase/decrease in clientele
IV. Demographic Questions

The following demographic information will be only used to describe the sample of participants of this study.

1. Gender: ___Male    ___Female
2. Age: ______
3. How many years of experience do you have as public relations professional? _____
4. How many years in this organization? ________________
5. Main sector in which participant works: ___Public    ___Nonprofit    ___Domestic Agency
   ___Global Agency    ___Higher education    ___Private
6. Specific organization the participant work for: _______________________
7. Do you have a university degree? ___Yes    ___No
8. If yes, what is the highest degree you have achieved? ________________________
9. Specific major: ________________________________
10. According to your job description and the activities you perform, do you have management responsibilities? ___Yes    ___No
11. Do you occupy the highest management position in your unit? ___Yes    ___No
I-A. Contextual Variable: The Socioeconomic Environment

TO: 1. Please describe the current socioeconomic environment in Nigeria.
INTERVIEWEE 1: Nigeria is undergoing a lot of reforms in the socioeconomic and political front. But the most profound is in the economic terrain. We have had consolidation in the banking industry reducing from 97 banks to 25. We have had the monetary policies greatly improved upon in terms of budgeting and in terms of due process in the way business is done such that jobs are competed for. We’ve also had budgeting, trying to reduce deficit budgeting and we have gone ahead to ensure that people just don’t take loans for projects without getting results. One of the biggest things about Nigeria’s economy today is that the government has been able to get debt recovery which is really unprecedented. We have greatly reduced our loan exposure and all our past debt has been greatly reduced. What that will do for the Nigerian economy is to give us opportunity for a new beginning. In the economic front also the exchange rate has been stabilized for over four years now within the range of ₦127 sometime ₦126 to the dollar and not rising beyond ₦129, that is a lot of stability compared with when it was as high as ₦135, ₦140, that has made a lot of difference. Just as the economy is deregulating the government is reducing its influence in terms of business by privatizing a lot of its business. It is the same thing that happened to the foreign exchange. You can pick up the dollar, pound or French franks from any of the banks which was not the case in the past . . . The economy is diversifying and trying to reduce the influence of a mono-economy dependent on oil, go to areas of mineral resources in which Nigeria is well endowed and of course the age-long agriculture which we have been negligent in not promoting.

TO: 2. What are the socioeconomic issues affecting the public relations industry and practice?
INTERVIEWEE 1: when you have a closed economy that is driven by government which is running hotels, running transportation, just about anything, then the dynamism that you are supposed to have in the economy, you don’t have it. And of course that is what happened all the years we had the military. So, the normal routine, every year you have the budget read, nobody does anything until the budget is read, and then everybody will start scampering, people get contracts from ministries, just [inaudible] kind of economy and that doesn’t help and the job of the PR person is affected to the extent that everything that happens in the economy is restricted to government and you know that government has no business in business. You can put it another way, government does business much more poorly than when it is in private hands and you can see that in GSM . . . Nigeria has grown from less than 350 thousand lines to more than 30 million in five years. That is the difference b/w when government is in business, and when it is in the hand of the private sector. Each time you have all these expansions you are definitely talking about PR management and communication . . . that means you are creating jobs for PR, you are recognizing the need for PR. When you have a military govt. the communication is top-down, it is what you call the command and control system of communication. But when you have democracy, then you have reasons to dialogue, to trade ideas to seek for some kind of common ground and a lot of this will have t do with PR practitioners, with communication people who know how to manage issues so that they don’t become crisis and get people to understand your perspective rather than commanding them . . . That way you have a lot more
reason to have PR people to make contribution to the development. You are taking about creation of more jobs, a more serene polity, talking about more development because people can now challenge their leaders. You now have a system where allocations to state and local governments are published in the newspapers. Socioeconomically, under a democratic government you have a lot more communication going on and because of this, chances are that a lot more development programs are carried out because people will ask questions and because people understand the issues more and because most of the time people have to seek for votes from people. Once it is getting to election time, people know that they must give account.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the public relations industry and practice, and how have you responded to them?
INTERVIEWEE 1: In Nigeria we have about 7500 to 8000 PR practitioners. You can find them in the industries, with multinational companies, with government, with tertiary institutions, with the armed forces. You find a lot of members in banking, as a matter of fact we have an association of corporate affairs managers of banks which is a subsidiary of the NIPR we also have PRCAN which is the PR consultants association of Nig. And we are trying to see if we can form an association of public affairs managers in the oil and gas companies. These are efforts being taken to ensure that even beyond having a national body, we also go down to have subsets so that issues of common interest can be discussed and therefore find solutions to them. And of course with the democratic dispensation, a lot more political groups now have to hire PR consultants to do their advertisement or to build their image for them or to package their campaign. You can imagine the kind of reputation war among competing organizations. It is because there is competition, that is why most of the organizations needed PR practitioners, but then the fact that the PR profession is now better recognized and of course you can see the kind of quality of the image that the organizations try to project. They know that if they should have any problems in terms of their reputation in terms of their perception by the public, then they have a long way to go. For example, the issue of corporate social responsibility is being taken very seriously. Today, CSR is becoming an issue for the multinational companies, the big national companies, medium sized companies and even the small sized companies because wherever is your catchments or environmental area for your host communities, there is something that you can do. A lot of these are going on, and most of them are handled by PR practitioners because basically that is our turf. We are the ones to formulate these policies, we are the ones to give effect to it, and we are the ones to also report on them and monitor that these things are delivered.

I-B. Contextual Variable: The Political Environment

TO: 1. How would you describe Nigeria’s present political environment?
INTERVIEWEE 1: I think it is very competitive. The issue of corruption and accountability has really come to the fore. I think it is a positive development although a lot of the political parties don’t discuss issues possibly because they feel that the people are not sensitive to such issues, which is a mistake. One would have expected that right now what we should be having is some of the political parties trading the alternative view. Everybody sort of says, what this govt. has done is good, they want to continue with it. Fine! But are we now saying that there are no other challenges? In that sense, the political scene is still being addressed the way it used to be. We have about 40 political parties, even 50, and that in itself shows that a lot of people are interested
in what is happening. Of course 50 political parties are one too many, but in the end they will possibly coalesce to less than 10. Give and take I believe that this is a positive development because before, what you had when the military was there is they say “you guys compress yourself into two or three parties.” And when that happens, you kill initiatives. Maybe that is why you have people who have been there since the 1960’s. But today you have a lot more young men coming up . . . at all levels, and more serious people are coming into politics. A lot more has changed and there is need for people of quality to come into politics and I believe that will change the terrain.

TO: 2. What political aspects have an impact on the public relations industry and its practices in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 1: The flurry of activities in the political scene, most of the people behind them are PR practitioners. Virtually all the serious candidates have serious PR consultancies working for them. Because really, how do you plan your campaign, how do you strategize, how do you package yourself, how do you reach out to various publics . . . how do you now address those people? The Niger Delta issue is a serious issue that has to be addressed. A lot of these things are aided by public relations consultants who try to help them to project themselves better, to package their messages and campaign strategies and then deliver them. I believe it has created avenues for PR practitioners to excel. And increasingly too, the way government now use PR practitioners or communication is much better than in the past. And a lot more professionals can stand up and tell their principals that “this is the way I think we should go.”

TO: What about in terms of regulating PR practice.
INTERVIEWEE 1: Of course we have the NIPR which . . . was empowered to regulate the practice of PR. And technically speaking, that body is empowered to ensure that you don’t have quacks, and that anybody practicing PR is actually qualified. Most times, this doesn’t happen. You do have cases of journalists, when they retire, they go and set up an organization and say that they are PR consultants. We also have a lot of organizations who feel that the man for the job of PR should be a person who can write very well, or somebody who has worked for a newspaper, or somebody who was a broadcaster. While we recognize that, we also know that the NIPR . . . has been able to insist that professionals are hired for the job and that whenever there are proven cases of indiscipline . . . that such are acted upon. So, the NIPR is actually in charge of ensuring that anybody who is practicing PR in Nigeria is qualified by education, qualified by training, as well as ensuring that they have continuous education.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the industry, your specific practices and, your public relations responses?
INTERVIEWEE 1: Issues of social engineering, economic reforms have positively impacted PR because a lot more of our professionals members get engaged to perform certain jobs either at the organizational level, or at the individual level.

TO: How do you take into consideration the political environment when shaping PR messages or strategizing PR initiatives.
INTERVIEWEE 1: This will mean that they will have different manifestos, so whatever the PR person is going to do for these parties will depend on their manifestos. If a part believes in reform, anticorruption, believes in allowing the private sector to drive the economy . . . generally getting government to revert to the role of providing an enabling environment, those are the
II. Coercive Isomorphism

TO: 1. How does government regulation affect public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 1: I don’t think that govt. is regulating PR. Yes we have the NIPR that regulates the practice of PR, but at the same time the NIPR does not . . . prescribe definitively, “you shouldn’t do this, this shouldn’t be done.” . . . PR is almost a self regulated profession because if and when you work for your client, it is unlikely that you are going to do anything against what your client wants. But then, you will advise your client vis-à-vis the consequences of some of the actions they will want to take. Government . . . has five representatives on the council of NIPR as against seventeen members that are elected. Ideally, those council members who are nominated by government supposed to see to the interest of government, and you find out that the two have divergent views.

TO: 2. What are the benefits, if any, of compliance with regulation?
INTERVIEWEE 1: The fact that those rules are there, it helps you to self regulate what you do. It also encourages you not to break the rules. For example The NIPR has its own code of conduct and that way, every member knows what he/she is expected to do and what is not expected of them. But the government regulation . . . is not pronounced. I haven’t seen anybody that government has had to sanction, or taken anybody to court, neither has the institute been able to do that because really, if you like it is almost a freely subscribed to association of members and so the force of coercion is not pronounced.

TO: 3. What are the consequences, if any, of non-compliance with regulations?
INTERVIEWEE 1: Well, since there are no regulations and since nobody has been taken to court or removed from the practice of PR in Nigeria, I think it is more of moral situation because the institute has a disciplinary committee such that when members have problems . . . the case is taken before the committee and they adjudicate . . . it is highly unlikely that you will have people who will really be deviant, there may be, but they are not going to be many because you will just be out of job. If someone is employing you and you are doing the wrong thing and you misadvise the organization . . . he is going to fire you, so you don’t even allow that to happen. Now if you are a consultant and somebody gave you a job and you couldn’t deliver on it, certainly you will loose that customer, the next time you do it you loose another, and before you know it, you are out of job. I believe that PR thrives more on self regulation . . . self restraint.

TO: 4. Does regulation increase social expectation of the industry? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 1: You know that I have been using the word self regulation . . . Social expectations are natural and because of the self regulation of PR no practitioner will like to be sanctioned or get into trouble for not doing the right thing. By virtue of the profession itself, there is a lot of due care to avoid any untoward happening.
TO: So do you think that the public expect certain standards from PR professionals?
INTERVIEWEE 1: Sure! . . . definitely they react to poor communication when it happens and of course they applaud well packaged programs. There are various reward systems, awards that are given for doing the right thing, while the people who are not performing as per the expectation of the public get knocked for the same.

TO: 5. Does regulation increase acceptance of public relations as a profession?
INTERVIEWEE 1: You know I have said that PR rather than being regulated is more of self regulated profession because by virtue of the tenets of PR, you don’t really need somebody to hold fast to the truth, or to know that truth is non negotiable. So the regulation by the government is just nominal.

TO: 6. What are sources of pressure for the public relations industry in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 1: What may put PR under pressure may be the client/principal relationship. Somebody has a job for you to do, he may have the money to pay but he does not give you in good time. The briefing could be defective . . . the organization that is giving the job may not know exactly what he wants. Then you go ahead and do the job and he says, “No! This is not what I want,” because somebody has criticized it . . . The PR managers works based on the brief, but if the brief is not well received, then the client disowns it. Another pressure is that people want you to work for them but they don’t want to talk about the cost . . . you may not get any consideration for any payment until the outcome of the job is so positive . . . but before the person get there, he must be under a lot of pressure.

TO:Q7. How is pressure exerted?
INTERVIEWEE 1: (Question 7 above)

TO: Q8. How do you respond to such pressure/s?
INTERVIEWEE 1: A PR executive is a businessman. So you weigh your options you try to see if you can get [inaudible] the job, you let it go, or if you believe in it, you put all your being into it and hope that your principal likes the job and therefore will be ready to pay for it . . . Even when the client says “this is a good job,” and it turns out that the public criticizes it, he backs down. God help you if you have collected your fees . . . The most serious aspect . . . in the area of journalists taking all PR jobs because most organizations want journalist related experiences. They want to see their faces on the pages of the newspapers, they want to see themselves on the news, and hear themselves on the radio, and if you cannot do that, you are not competent. That is a big problem for PR practitioners . . . because the level of chief executives we have now believe in newspaper cuttings, footages on the radio or television, that creates a lot of pressure, and even sometimes you find journalists criticizing PR practitioners and vice versa . . . I am one of those people who believes that should a journalist find himself doing the job of a PR officer, it then behooves that practitioner as well as the employer to ensure that he is given adequate training. Because when a journalist goes because he is not grounded in the job, the PR profession is the one that is criticized. The law that says that every PR practitioner must belong to the institute, must be trained and given all the qualification you need to have, also says that any employer that employs a non professional can be tried to court, but nobody has ever been taken to court . . . a lot of people who find themselves doing PR without adequate training . . . feel that they have the right to practice the profession . . . it is because . . . the way people have made PR job look pedestrian, that is why everybody jumps at it. The only thing the NIPR can do is to raise the
standard. When you now have PR practitioners definitely having certain skills that somebody who read English or sociology cannot get unless he gets the training . . . that drops a lot of the quacks.

TO: Q9. What are risks associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 1: (Question 8 above)

TO: Q10. What are benefits associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 1: If a non professional is getting your job, then something is wrong . . . If he hears that an organization similar to his is doing something he immediately knows that it is going to affect his organization and he immediately starts thinking of how to relate to it. These are some of the issues that I believe that the pressure leads one to find positive solutions and creative solutions that can advance the cause of the profession.

TO: Q11. What is your departments/organizations source of funding/revenue?
INTERVIEWEE 1: Government funds my organization.

Q12. How does this affect your departments/organizations relationship with these sources in terms of flexibility and independence?
INTERVIEWEE 1: You cannot talk about independence because a PR dept within an org is set up to achieve the corporate goals of that particular organization. In my organization for instance . . . we still have to get to the various stakeholders and ultimately to the consuming public. So we have to understand the formulation of the policies, the mandate, the basic job of the organization, we have to understand the way the board manages these tasks . . . and manage a way of getting such information to the public. At these various levels, everybody needs funds. It is now left for you in corporate services, in PR, to be able to compete for the limited resources there are with good and viable and result oriented programs. You will not be able to get funding just because you have a department . . . whatever resources that are available is made available to those programs that will project and assist the organization to achieve its corporate objectives.

III. Evolution of Public Relations

TO: 1. How has the transition from military to democratic government affected public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 1: Positively . . . when you have a military government, you have a downward system of communication, you have an asymmetrical system of communication. But when you have a democratic government, you now have two-way communication. You have a kind of system that allows for consultation it allows for consensus building, allows for generally trading of ideas and at the end of the day you get everybody involved. In military, you have one man just gives a command and down the line, everybody must obey. In democracy it does not go that way, you have the legislature, the executive, and the judiciary. These three arms of government are interdependent, but they all have their own powers and they all serve as checks and balances to one another. That does not happen in a military setting, and . . . it gives more challenges to PR consultants and practitioners because you now have to help in this consensus building, you have to help improved communication, you have to help in terms of ensuring that there is communication from the leader down to the grassroots. You have to also ensure that there is
feedback from the grassroots to the leadership. So there is a two-way flow of information in
democracy, in military it is one way, command and control kind of structure.

INTERVIEW TWO
I-A. Contextual Variable: The Socioeconomic Environment

TO: 1. Please describe the current socioeconomic environment in Nigeria.
INTERVIEWEE 2: we are going into an election period . . . I believe that there is a lot of popular
participation and people are really watching the government, seeing what is going to happen,
some people are apprehensive because of the recent development concerning the move by the
government to disenfranchise certain contestants that are trying to go for electoral offices. The
situation is quite calm and people like me are quite optimistic that things will work out fine. The
economy is not performing very well although there is a lot of optimism in terms of macro
economic development, but at the micro level, there is still endemic poverty, there is still the
need for infrastructural development and there is a lot of apathy among the people about the
sincerity of governments commitment to the socioeconomic development concerning the fact
that the government is always embroiled in one controversy or the other. On the issue of hiking
petroleum product prices which is going down everywhere in the world . . . There is a need for
change and we really need it fast, although the change is coming is not what we had envisaged
before.

TO: 2. What are the socioeconomic issues affecting the public relations industry and practice?
INTERVIEWEE 2: PR is about perception management and creating environment for free flow
of information. The reality is that there is this disparity between what is on ground, and what you
are saying. In a situation where the PR profession is in pursuit of only actually glossing over
what is happening all over the country while actually there is a lot of things that should be done
on the ground. I believe that PR profession is not only about changing perception or trying to
change attitudes by saying things, but it is about the kind of behavior that governs the system . . .
because when you are saying something and people can connect with it, it is different from when
you are saying things that you cannot see and I think that is the major problem the federal
government is facing in trying to change the perception of Nigeria. You are saying you are trying
to stamp out corruption, the entire agencies of government and even the communication channels
of government are always saying positive things about government and other development
things, but people cannot really see it . . . Now, within the PR system in Nigeria, there is a kind
of dilemma whether what you are communicating is the truth and an exact reflection of what is
on the ground. That is, there is a kind of credibility crisis in the sense that people cannot
[inaudible] with what the PR profession is saying and . . . what is on the ground.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the public relations industry and practice, and how have
you responded to them?
INTERVIEWEE 2: In the Nigerian situation, there are two scenarios. For example, as a
professional it depends in which sector I play. In the public sector, you will be talking about
government activities; you will be talking about government programs and commitments. In the
private sector you will be talking about how your company or your establishment is trying to be
a partner and the kind of values you are trying to see in the system. In my own situation I don’t
have any problems concerning trying to change attitude or communicate what are the values of my own organization as a professional. . . . I think that the transparency which I am my team bring in the way we communicate with our stakeholders, we engage with them, we demonstrate to them the principles and the values that govern our operations and then they come and see the way things are done on the ground. We have everything as evidence to prove to them that we are living up to their expectations. We have our special reporting process in place, we have stakeholder engagement processes. We don’t have that kind of credibility crisis that for instance professionals within government would have . . . What is happening within the public service sector is completely different from the challenges of PR in the private sector, so it depends on what side of the divide you play in.

I-B. Contextual Variable: The Political Environment

TO: 1. How would you describe Nigeria’s present political environment?
INTERVIEWEE 2: one amazing thing about Nigeria is that history keeps repeating itself. It seems we don’t learn from anything. Here is a situation where we are in an election year. The fight against corruption that they are using the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission to fight is now being undermined . . . by the PDP government to undermine candidates who are hell bent on contesting the election. This is a very dangerous trend . . . The EFCC has brought out the names of people, indicting them without taking them to court and the electoral commission is trying to prevent people from contesting elections and people are apprehensive whether there is going to be an election in truth, or there is just going to be another confusion kind of selection process because you have free and fair election in a situation where every Nigerian who wants to contest political office is given an opportunity to do so and if you have anything against them, then you should take them to a court of law, not just constitute an indictment panel, the constitutional basis of which is doubtful . . . I think the environment is really getting overheated unnecessarily. If only the key players will exercise maturity . . . I am one of the people who has lost complete confidence in the political system . . . I think the dirt and the murky waters of politics and the way they are playing it in Nigeria is so disgusting . . . I feel my vote is immaterial, the person whom they want will emerge as president.

TO: 2. What political aspects have an impact on the public relations industry and its practices in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 2: There is this campaign by the government, Heart of Africa campaign which is a campaign to repackage Nigeria and present it to the world. And then there is the issue of the federal government using their PR professionals to bring the attention of the world to the fact that there is unbalanced reporting in the international media. But the reality on the ground is that we as Nigerians are undermining ourselves. The ability of Nigeria to change the perception of Nigeria in the international community or within the country is limited where the action of the people in power does not actually support what the PR professional is saying . . . I think the fundamental problem of PR in Nigeria, of the way we manage PR is the fact that it is not conceived at the point of strategy. It is conceived as a set of action plans to support the whims of certain people who want campaigns executed . . . for example, there should be a clear line of sight between the vision, the missions and the strategies of government, and the communications objectives that should be supportive of those actions or visions . . . The PR effort into whatever government is doing should be part and parcel of the articulation of that strategy . . . There ought
to be a connection between what you are planning as a PR practitioner and the campaign initiatives to support the initiatives of the government or the establishment where you work and deliver on certain key performance indicators that will support whatever you are going to achieve . . . by projecting whatever business or government initiatives that are within that strategy, the government itself is trying to authenticate the content of the communication received from the public relations officer by making sure that they deliver on those targets . . . they have planned and they have communicated through the public relations officer. That means there is a lot of credibility, there is a lot of understanding because people can connect between the communication and the behavior that translated in the action plans they could see on the ground. . .This is a clear cut example of how not to practice PR, where you are being used as a pawn . . . as a matter of political expediency while their strategy is buried somewhere and the are pursuing it behind closed doors.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the industry, your specific practices and, your public relations responses?
INTERVIEWEE 2: It won’t affect me because I work in the private sector, but it brought to fore the reality that . . . PR practitioners in the government are still living in the dark ages where you can come and tell people sweet things, while your behavior cannot support what you are saying . . . The whole point of it is that packaging alone does not make PR effective . . . the whole attitude about PR being about lies, it is about spin, should give way to a more liberal attitude that PR should be about the truth . . . I think it hasn’t affected my own practice because I am in the private sector but it has actually affected my psyche. I think it says a lot that quacks still thrive in the PR profession . . . and the government is even employing them . . . because it appears they prefer quacks.

II. Coercive Isomorphism

TO: 1. How does government regulation affect public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 2: It doesn’t, not at all . . . nobody even cares whether NIPR exists . . . if you are talking about PR being regulated by the NIPR, forget it. The NIPR is populated by people who are embroiled in their own crisis . . . I am a member because I believe I should do the right thing, not because I owe any allegiance to NIPR. My first experience . . . I saw the haphazard way the congress was planned and how the election process of the executives was rigged. Even the PR practitioners at that venue did not associate themselves [with the process] . . . On the issue of regulation, nothing like that. It’s just on paper . . . I suspect probably because the NIPR expects that you should be called communications manager, director of PR, or PRO, or PR manager or head of PR then maybe you are not a PR practitioner. I think what should define what a PR practitioner is, is not the name of his position but what his own profile contains . . . I think this is a very important aspect of determining who is a PR practitioner in Nigeria, and then bringing the full weight of the law to bear on them. But for the NIPR to be able to see that happen itself should make sure that its house is in order because it has a lot of problems . . . and there is a lot of disillusionment among professionals.

TO: 2. What are the benefits, if any, of compliance with regulation?
INTERVIEWEE 2: There are benefits because this way you will ensure that only professionals, people with the right training . . . practice PR in Nigeria. This way, you will eliminate the use of
quacks . . . Only where there are no regulations will you have a situation where government will be employing quacks who will be lying through their teeth when what is on the ground does not reflect what they are saying, and this attitude seriously brings the profession disrepute because people will continue to see us as professional liars. Why are you a professional if there are no regulations? The main idea of calling people professional is that other people cannot do what you can do.

TO: 3. What are the consequences, if any, of non-compliance with regulations?
INTERVIEWEE 2: (Question 2 & 4).

TO: 4. Does regulation increase social expectation of the industry? Please explain.

INTERVIEWEE 2: in a situation where there is no professionalism, no supporting regulation, then anybody can bring his third cousin to be his public relations officer. The issue is that if you don’t have a regulation . . . it becomes a kind of roosting ground for quacks and you as a professional will loose the respect of the society . . . When there is an enforcement of regulation, people will tend to know that there are certain ethical codes of behavior that should be adhered to which will govern their personal conduct and their professional conduct and in the even of any violation, they could loose their license . . . this way there will be more credibility in PR . . . the challenge is that if you have the law who is going to enforce it? That is the problem. You have to have a very strong body that is well financed that knows everybody who is within that profession, and everybody subscribe to that organization and . . . they respect it . . . In the absence of that kind of regulation, that is why we have this challenge in Nigeria where you have people doing what they like . . . and all of us are bunched into one group . . . I think that is bad.

TO: 5. Does regulation increase acceptance of public relations as a profession?
INTERVIEWEE 2: Yes it does. It gives me a sense of importance . . . There [is] a set of ethical conducts and behavior that govern your process . . . and you possess the necessary competencies that makes you what you are, a professional communications practitioner. The issue is that if you don’t have that kind of system, you are at the risk of public pressure . . . The concept of professional PR practitioner will even cease to exist because everybody can do their PR practice . . . It is only when you have an institute that governs this regulation that you will have a situation where continuing education is encouraged, where there is a think-tank for people to come and share experiences and share learning, where people are conscious of the fact that they cannot behave any way they want to . . . they are professionals and they know that they are being watched by a regulatory agency and there are measures of expectation in terms of personal and corporate behavior that is expected of them. In this way, you will have a very robust system.

TO: 6. What are sources of pressure for the public relations industry in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 2: For the institute, I think it is financial pressure. They don’t have enough money to enforce the regulation and they don’t have a lot of clout. Money and resources matter in these things. When you have resources you will be able to deploy offices all over the country and will be able to monitor what is happening . . . On the personal level, I think everybody who read mass communications think he is an automatic PRO, or everybody who actually went and worked in the newspaper industry thinks he can be a PR practitioner . . . There are presentation skills that if you are going to do anything, you have to present it to your management at length
and you have to do a good job to convince them why they should put so much money into a project. And apart from that, we use to assume that there are intangible benefits of PR management . . . that you cannot manage PR. I discovered that there are other ways to manage tangible benefits in terms of delivery . . . and they don’t even have to be directly related to you . . . . If you speak with 90% of PR practitioners in Nigeria, they don’t know it . . . if there is a really functional NIPR then it would be an opportunity for people who have been out of the country to come and talk at those seminars and share experiences and be facilitators at workshops . . . and one of the major fundamental problems of Nigeria is the ego issue for example you will have 40, 45, 50 year old PR managers who are sitting at the council of NIPR, when they want to call people to come and be facilitators . . . they say “look at this 30 year old guy, why don’t we call his director,” the director is the same generation as they are. It is a kind of ego spree instead of an opportunity to learn . . . maturity and professionalism doesn’t necessarily always come with age, it usually comes with exposures and opportunities that you are fortunate enough to have.

7. How is pressure exerted?
INTERVIEWEE 2: (Question 6).

8. How do you respond to such pressure/s?
INTERVIEWEE 2: As of now, I don't think there are serious efforts being taken to address these issues. However, I believe the best approach is for NIPR and the entire PR community to place a lot of premium on training for practitioners to develop world class competencies. International facilitators should be encouraged to come in and participate in our local workshops with a view to share learning and to promote best practices. [Continuous] education should be strongly advocated. This way, Nigerian PR managers will keep tab with new approaches, processes and systems. Managers working in multinational environments should be empowered to share new ideas with colleagues who are in the employment of local companies or are in government. This is because professionals in multinationals are availed international training opportunities which others do not get. NIPR should practically demonstrate that it's a regulator not some wish-wash institution. A PR competency model should be developed and primary and secondary skill area clearly identified to serve as a guide for aspiring and practicing PR managers, for them to identify key capability gaps, functional strengths and development needs with a view to bridge the bridgeable and reinforce their professional competencies.

9. What are risks associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 2: you will have people like me while I was purely working for Nigerian companies. If I had not had the opportunity to work for multinational companies I would have never had the opportunities for the kind of trainings I went through, I would never have built the competencies that I had built. If you continue to have people in this situation, you will end up continuing to have people who are not well trained, professionals who continue to be ill managed, and the fate of . . . millions of Nigerians will continue to be placed on the shoulders of people who by their ignorance do not know the kind of weight they are shouldering and when people discover, then the credibility of government, the credibility of organizations will crumble . . . Humility to understand that other people could contribute to the way that you do business, because they are stakeholders in your business, is very important and you can only learn this when you have true professionals in the system and if you don’t have them, then I think we will continue to have the problem of lack of professionalism and at the same time, if we don’t have a
serious enforcement of this regulation governing the sector, quacks will continue to infiltrate into the system and continue to obliterate what we cherish in our hearts as a very noble profession.

TO: 10. What are benefits associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 2: there can’t be any benefits when you have problems . . . there are no benefits operating a third world system. I can’t see any anywhere.

TO: 11. What is your departments/organizations source of funding/revenue?
INTERVIEWEE 2: The business of course. We are a business concern and we have a healthy budget like any other strategic business department . . . we are entitled to a budget like any other department . . . it is not about the figures, it is about defending it and proving that what you want to use it for is for the benefit of the business.

TO:12. How does this affect your departments/organizations relationship with these sources in terms of flexibility and independence?
INTERVIEWEE 2: We are completely independent. That is one thing that I enjoy, total and complete independence . . . because there is confidence that I am going to deliver on the objectives. I have completed my communication plan and what they want to see is that I deliver on that and I make sure that I present my key performance indicators and tie it up with the investment that I have . . . there is no limitations . . . only that we have to stick within the regulation that covers our industry.

III. Evolution of Public Relations

TO: 1. How has the transition from military to democratic government affected public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 2: more criticism of government. People are able to question the government . . . The PR practitioner has a more challenging job of trying to change perception and convince people . . . because now people can express their opinions . . . I think it has raised the bar from a situation during the military era when you come on national TV and tell us what the government has said and everybody will keep quiet. Although people will have their own reservations anyway, but you wont see it in the press so nobody will hear anything about it, but now, your own performance as government or as an organization is being measured and you get constant feedback, so you have a more daunting task of trying to change attitude because you continue to really see what people feel . . . you have to create more engagement opportunities with the media people, you have to be able to manage your press better, and there is equally the need . . . to be a little careful about what you say.

INTERVIEW THREE
I-A. Contextual Variable: The Socioeconomic Environment

TO: 1. Please describe the current socioeconomic environment in Nigeria.
INTERVIEWEE 3: [It] has to only be explained within the context of the standard of living of the Nigerian masses . . . We have a democratic government . . . that came in with a lot of promises. What is certain is that the level of poverty . . . you have to base it against certain indices like the standard of living, and the level of unemployment, the provision of social
amenities. Against all these indices, for example, if you take the level of unemployment, you will find out that a lot of graduate and even a lot of able bodied Nigerians could not secure gainful employment. If you talk of where they are supposed to be creating employment opportunities, not just creating employment, the opportunities are not also there because to create a conducive environment for able bodied men to create wealth, you need some basic amenities. They provision of electricity supply is a very important indices of development of any nation where the preponderant majority of the citizenry are living in total darkness almost 24hrs and when you match that against the requirements of people having to be productive, virtually every industry or service provider depends on electricity. In a situation where electricity is not available they have to depend on other sources of power which invariably means that the cost of production and service provisions will be exorbitantly high. Provision of pipe borne water is a very important indices of development of any nation. Where I live water flows maybe once in a week. Look at the security situation in the country. Of recent there have been incessant cases of assassination, armed robbery which shows how low the security situation in the country is. The socioeconomic situation in Nigeria is pathetic. No doubt the government is trying, but the government is also battling with the issue of corruption both in the public service and even in the private sector where there is rampant corruption at all levels, all the resources meant to develop the country are being diverted, this means that not every Nigerian will have access to the basic amenities.

TO: 2. What are the socioeconomic issues affecting the public relations industry and practice?
INTERVIEWEE 3: If the disposable income is low, and businesses are not doing enough to be able to make profit. Public relations practice is still at an intermediate development stage. Quite a number of corporate organizations at the moment don’t seem to have appreciated the need for public relations because they still see public relations as the last resort instead of it being deliberate and planned and sustained effort to enhance their image and the corporate brand. So, if the level of the socioeconomic activities is low, it affects every strata in the society.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the public relations industry and practice, and how have you responded to them?
INTERVIEWEE 3: The first tool is the tool of research, most of the corporate chieftains find it difficult to believe public relations practitioners when they tell them about the current perception of their organization. But by the time you engage in empirical research and make the organization engage a separate agency to handle that and they present an independent report on the current perception of the organization the management will be forced to listen to your strategy for either correcting that perception or enhancing it as the case may be.

I-B. Contextual Variable: The Political Environment

TO: 1. How would you describe Nigeria’s present political environment?
INTERVIEWEE 3: it is supposed to be a multiparty system but Nigeria is still saddled with the kind of problems that virtually all African countries are saddled with, that is the idea of [inaudible] presidency, and the winner takes all philosophy in politics, that is the policy of exclusionism whereby the ruling party believe that having won an election, all other opposition members should keep at bay and if anything, they should not interfere with the running of government. This mentality has ran through the course of the last 27 years the ruling party is at the verge of turning the multiparty democracy into a one party states. Most of the opposition party members are being coerced through the instrumentality of government
agency charged with the responsibility of fighting corruption, that is the EFCC. They are being coerced into either decamping to the ruling party, or out rightly abandoning their own mandate...this is not too ideal for a multiparty system, and it is not too ideal for a country that is still developing because at the end of the day, if the opposition party is silent, it means that the ruling party will have a total hold on the running of government, and at that point, the danger is that they will begin to embark on policies that are in the interest of the majority of the citizens.

TO: 2. What political aspects have an impact on the public relations industry and its practices in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 3: ironically, PR industry...tend to flourish under party politics especially when the elections are drawing nearer because the candidates and their political parties have come to realize that for them to be able to reach out to the masses, they will need to engage the services of public relations practitioners...PR practitioners tend to benefit during the period...I said it is ironical because generally the economic situation in the country is low, but...most of the politicians are people who have made tremendous income from government patronage and to that extent, they have the money to throw around even in situations where most of them are quite aware that...under a true and fair election they will not win, but they still go ahead to spend colossal sums of money running bill boards and doing other below-the-line- and above-the-line public relations activities. PR practitioners in the private sector...tend to benefit a lot under party politics.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the industry, your specific practices and, your public relations responses?
INTERVIEWEE 3: I am in the service industry...I am not involved in all the political campaign and public relations support for political process...But I do interact with colleagues in the field...they are being contacted by politicians to handle one program or the other...By and large, I believe that it has brought a sort of vibrancy in the public relations practice because people now task themselves to come up with the best ideas to sell their candidates. The political situation has actually impacted positively on public relations practice in the country.

II. Coercive Isomorphism

TO: 1. How does government regulation affect public relations practice in Nigeria
INTERVIEWEE 3: public relations practice is not highly regulated...In the NIPR there are council members who are government nominees...if government has anything to add or to push through the PR practice...it has to do that through its representative on the council. Aside from that practitioners are guided by the code of ethics and the other regulations set by the institute...the institute itself is directly responsible to the minister for information and communication...practitioners have their liberty to exercise their right and to engage the practice in the guidelines set by the institute.

TO: 2. What are the benefits, if any, of compliance with regulation?
INTERVIEWEE 3: if standards are set, it means that practitioners will have no option other than to work within the set standard...at the end of the day there will be excellence, and healthy competition among practitioners and it will be good for people who engage the service of
practitioners. It will standardize the practice and make sure that employers of practitioners are not short-changed in the provision of services.

TO: 3. What are the consequences, if any, of non-compliance with regulations?
INTERVIEWEE 3: I believe that the PR practice in Nigeria is not firm . . . It has tended to be on the very liberal side . . . I have not heard of serious sanctions being imposed on practitioners . . . clients are left at the liberty of either proceeding to the court of law or maybe employing other means to get redress.

TO: 4. Does regulation increase social expectation of the industry? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 3: In any service industry, if the people are aware, that there is regulation of the practice of a particular profession, the level of confidence of the practitioner will be higher because people will have the feeling that if anything happens along the line . . . the professional body will be able to discipline their members and bring them back to the path of professionalism. But in the absence of professionalism . . . the expectation is that people don’t really have very high regard for the profession and the practitioners.

TO: 5. Does regulation increase acceptance of public relations as a profession?
INTERVIEWEE 3: if the people are aware that PR professional can be sanctioned by their professional body . . . that there is regulation, . . . the level of confidence will be high . . . and people will want to patronize PR practitioners.

TO: 6. What are sources of pressure for the public relations industry in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 3: [it] cannot be divorced from the state of the economy . . . PR practitioners, especially if you are into private practice . . . you will need to set up a proper outfit where you have a standard library, the IT equipment, have other supporting staff, all these things don’t come cheaply in Nigeria because of the level of economy . . . the cost of procurement of some of these things are very high . . . Another thing is access to quality instructional materials . . . the internet bug has now spread to Nigeria and people now have direct access to latest publications in the field, but in recent past . . . people hardly have current books, you relied on books that were published 10–20 years ago . . . Another thing . . . has to do with the basic infrastructures. You have an appointment with a client and the roads are not good and you cannot time your movement . . . the road infrastructure is not there, electricity is not there.

TO: 7. How is pressure exerted?
INTERVIEWEE 3: (Question 6).

TO: 8. How do you respond to such pressure/s?
INTERVIEWEE 3: a practitioner that is well aware of the socioeconomic conditions of the country will need to adjust . . . if you have an appointment you have to give like one or two hours gap to move from one point to the other . . . Another thing is, you have to pass the cost to the clients, because if you have to generate your own power supply . . . that means you will incur lot of overhead cost . . . all these cost have to be passed onto the client in order for you to continue
to be in business . . . The issue of the books . . . people now hook-up to the internet, searching the web, you get some up-to-date information about new ideas . . . in the PR practice globally.

TO: 9. What are risks associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 3: you tend to make some mistakes either in the area of preparing your briefs . . . or in the implementation of briefs . . . in some cases practitioners do often resort to cutting corners especially of they come under financial pressure . . . the tendency is either to reduce certain things, or change certain things in order to meet up with the execution but not giving real value to the client brief.

TO: 10. What are benefits associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 3: you tend to think faster, you tend to be more proactive, you tend to be at your best. If it has to do with financial pressure, you may have to devise other means to break even, that is, in the area of relying on bank facilities to be able to relieve you of immediate financial challenges pending the time you are paid for services rendered.

TO: 11. What is your departments/organizations source of funding/revenue?
INTERVIEWEE 3: [it] comes from the income of the organization . . . whatever the profit is, a percentage is set aside to . . . project a favorable image of the organization . . . and to attract more customers which adds to the bottom line; that is, the profitability of the organization.

TO: 12. How does this affect your departments/organizations relationship with these sources in terms of flexibility and independence?
INTERVIEWEE 3: if you are engaged by the organization to handle PR services, of course your loyalty will be to the organization. But in doing that, you will have to let the organization know when their image is low or when it is high, you say the truth about the public perception of their corporate image . . . If you do that through the instrumentality of research which could be done by you, or independently by a third party, the organization will have no other choice than to accept that . . . and you also let them know the implication of not executing the campaign the way it should be . . . even when you rely on the organization for money, you can still maintain your independence and also remain as loyal as possible to the client.

III. Evolution of Public Relations

TO: 1. How has the transition from military to democratic government affected public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 3: under military, everything is regimented. Professional practices does not flourish because under military, they don’t see things in the civilian way . . . under democracy, the services of PR practitioners are . . . needed more . . . than under the military. The military . . . have a uniform way of doing things. You cannot make a proposal that will be acceptable unless you go to the highest hierarchy of the command structure . . . PR practice tend to flourish under democracy than under military rule.

Interview Four
I-A. Contextual Variable: The Socioeconomic Environment

TO: 1. Please describe the current socioeconomic environment in Nigeria.
INTERVIEWEE 4: for the past couple of decades . . . [Nigeria] has witnessed harsh periods for low income families in Nigeria, and the harsh conditions can be attributed to economic mismanagement, corruption, high interest rate, inconsistent policies, which collectively has impacted [inaudible] of Nigeria and Nigerians. Some of the policy measures which government has put forward include . . . fiscal measures to inform critical and economic policy, privatization, deregulation in insurance industry and in the banking sector, and collectively they have particularly affected . . . especially the low income group. There is much poverty and life expectancy is shorter now. There are no middle income families in Nigeria now. You either have the few that are exceedingly rich, and the majority of Nigerians are still wallowing in economic poverty.

TO: 2. What are the socioeconomic issues affecting the public relations industry and practice?
INTERVIEWEE 4: corruption and coercion. Corruption in the sense that because of the level of poverty . . . people are apt not to say the truth and public relations thrives on . . . giving the public the accurate information about a given situation . . . I will also identify bureaucracy or lack of bureaucracy . . . Government does whatever it feels, or whoever is in power feels that is right for him to do, and most of the time they don’t actually consider the public relations consequences to the general public . . . They equate personal security or selfish ends with national security.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the public relations industry and practice, and how have you responded to them?
INTERVIEWEE 4: It depends on whom you are intercessing with, some of the government officials, particularly the present politicians . . . believe in brutal force, they don’t believe in persuasion . . . they rather believe in purchasing behavior . . . that is bribing their way through, or using the instruments of government or security agencies to force . . . behavior. The response has been one of apathy. When you know that advise is not taken . . . you still go ahead and make your suggestion . . . and at the end of the day when you believe it is not taken and they believe I brutal force . . . most public relations practitioners resign their fate . . . but it doesn’t stop us from telling the government that whatever they decide to do . . . the consequences must be there.

I-B. Contextual Variable: The Political Environment

TO: 1. How would you describe Nigeria’s present political environment?
INTERVIEWEE 4: It is fraught with threat . . . uncertainty . . . instability . . . selfishness. A constant threat to the growth and stability of the Nigerian nation is the absence of strong felling of unity and oneness among the various groups, and that could break up the country . . . they do play up ethnic sentiments to advance or protect their parochial interest. So, politically, I don’t think we are making much progress . . . unfortunately, . . . 1% of Nigerians, less than ½%, control these powers and they use it selfishly, so we are not actually growing, we are stagnating . . . There is a lot of insecurity, there is political insincerity in the political landscape . . . The government tend to be too powerful, so they control all the machineries of government, and because people want to keep their jobs . . . they dance to government interest, and most of the time the government interest does not necessarily equate to general wellbeing of the society.
TO: 2. What political aspects have an impact on the public relations industry and its practices in Nigeria?

INTERVIEWEE 4: Public relations industry thrives on legitimate information . . . soliciting for understanding of the public for government policies, or for policies of an organization. So, if there is poverty, High level of insecurity, people are not guaranteed of their jobs, the implication is that . . . public relations practitioners . . . will compromise in the advise they give. They will want to doctor it to suit the whims and caprices of . . . the powers that be. So, the implication . . . is that public relations cannot and has never been what it should be . . . an organization that thrives on falsehood especially in terms of crisis will never lack crisis . . . the government dish out false information . . . the people perceive government to be bunch of [rascals] . . . and because people are poor and there is no money in the system, so we accept and we forge ahead.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the industry, your specific practices and, your public relations responses?

INTERVIEWEE 4: it has affected us tremendously and adversely. . .Most people work in the government and they want to tell their government what they want to hear, not the truth. It has affected public relations practitioners in-so-far as they are incapacitated; they are unable to draw up a genuine public relations programs independent of the feeling of higher management. How have we tried to respond to it? We have education sessions. . .seminars. . .workshops, and then we have also learned imperatives to let practitioners appreciate that at the end of the day, even of your advise is not taken, give it, let it be on record that you gave professional advise and it wasn’t taken . . . Most of the top government officers . . . believe that they can bribe situations, even when the situation doesn’t call for bribing tendencies, they believe that once you give a journalist money . . . he does your bidding, so it becomes counterproductive . . . essentially we try, and we encourage the young ones to go ahead and give professional advise.

II. Coercive Isomorphism

TO: 2. What are the benefits, if any, of compliance with regulation?
INTERVIEWEE 4: In any organized society, it is irresponsible not to abide by rules and regulations of that given society because there are made to further the interest of the general population . . . So, if there is a regulation and an institute, or an individual, or a group of individuals do not comply, certainly it does not enhance hegemony as a qualified entity. So, the benefits of compliance with the regulations . . . makes the environment stable, then it makes one able to forecast the future, and it also make one able to know the consequences of actions and inactions . . . It is beneficial . . . as long as it doesn’t stifle the profession.

TO: 3. What are the consequences, if any, of non-compliance with regulations?
INTERVIEWEE 4: you are sanctioned . . . and in Nigeria [inaudible] government patronage is enormous. So if you don’t play ball, if you don’t comply you don’t get no patronage from government and we have very few big private sector players in the industry.

TO: 4. Does regulation increase social expectation of the industry? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 4: Hypothetically, yes . . . It should . . . because if there is regulation and the regulation is in the best interest of the industry, then it should enhance the social relationship of the industry. . . .The major problem is that every “Tom” and “Dick” is a public relations practitioner because of the lax regulation of the practice . . . I think if there is internal regulation [inaudible] then it will actually enhance social interaction. It will also give the public relations practitioner and edge.

TO: 5. Does regulation increase acceptance of public relations as a profession?
INTERVIEWEE 4: Certainly, there is no doubt about it. If regulated . . . it will actually enhance the reputation, the image of the industry.

TO: 6. What are sources of pressure for the public relations industry in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 4: The pressure is dynamic . . . You have pressure to compromise your professional standing because the government or your boss doesn’t want the truth to be told . . . you now have to parry the truth, you have to be economical with words . . . It gives you a lot of mental pressure. How do you strike a balance between telling the truth and massaging the truth so that it doesn’t expose . . . whoever is paying you? . . . Another pressure . . . is trying to put bread and butter . . . on the table . . ., most Nigerians live below average and public relations practitioners are part . . . of the society. So the pressure to make money . . . for your family, gives you enormous responsibility and sometimes you are bound to compromise situations.

TO: 7. How is pressure exerted?
INTERVIEWEE 4: (Question 6).

TO: 8. How do you respond to such pressure/s?
INTERVIEWEE 4: Working harder, working better, trying to be more [inaudible], trying to be more through, and education, making people believe that integrity overrides every other consideration in business . . . You manage. It is not easy given the level of integrity one has to aspire to, one has to cope, it is a challenge, it is not a problem . . . which if you work harder and be more focused, you are bound to overcome.
TO: 9. What are risks associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 4: sometimes you could lose your job when you are not playing ball, you can be socially dislocated . . . Sometimes you can also lose your life when you are out to say the gospel truth . . . then you could step on the toes of some powerful individuals in society . . . Sometime you pay dearly for being honest or for protecting your integrity.

TO: 10. What are benefits associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 4: When you are put under such pressure and you are able to maneuver the situation and come out clean then there is that joy and carnal fulfillment . . . that at least you have done something good. Your conscience doesn’t prick you . . . you come out happier . . . essentially it is that of the mind and knowing that you have put in your best as an individual, you have contributed in making the society a better place for posterity.

TO: 11. What is your departments/organizations source of funding/revenue?
INTERVIEWEE 4: We work for various high profile clients and we do consultancy jobs for them. We also implement their public relations programs and we bill them.

TO: 12. How does this affect your departments/organizations relationship with these sources in terms of flexibility and independence?
INTERVIEWEE 4: Like every other organization, we are in the business of adding value . . . and we make money for adding value. You have to depend on clients, someone has to be interested in the value you have added to a to a particular situation . . . It doesn’t really affect us because we are independent consultants and a consultant is required to give professional advise independent of management favors . . . Sometimes you come across some clients that will want you to massage your opinion. But if you are a consultant, then you tell them, because at the end of the day you have to stand by whatever professional advice you have given. So, having to depend on clients means that most of the times when they find out that you have given them good advice that pays off invariably, irrespective of the internal schemes, they come back to you. But when you compromise your integrity, expectations are short-lived, relationships most of the time are short-lived . . . because invariably, the consequences of bad advise will trail you . . . Sometimes you have skirmishes with your clients, sometimes you disagree . . . but at the end of the day the worth of your advise determines the strength of your relationship in the long run . . . I have had situations where I have lost clients . . . but you hold on to your professional integrity.

III. Evolution of Public Relations

TO: 1. How has the transition from military to democratic government affected public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 4: It has tremendously. You know under military dispensation, they rule by fiat. No questions, you obey the last order, you obey the boss, whatever he tells you to do, just do it. So there is no . . . sentiment of public relations under military dispensation. You cannot challenge the man with a gun. But in a democratic dispensation where you have checks and balances, it is in the best interest of the institution to do something that will not call for barrage of questioning and criticism which at the end of the day does not project the company’s or the institutions image in a very good light. So, under democratic dispensation, public relations
thrives, it’s better because at that point you client has an option of doing the right thing or doing the wrong thing, and whether he likes it or not, he has to face the consequences of the action he or she takes . . . somehow, somewhere, your powers will be evaluated against established norms . . . The only problem . . . is that of corruption . . . poverty, and people doing the wrong thing.

Interview Five
I-A. Contextual Variable: The Socioeconomic Environment

TO: 1. Please describe the current socioeconomic environment in Nigeria.
INTERVIEWEE 5: Nigeria is going through a period of transformation both politically and economically. Eventually there is the belief that the commanding height of the economy should be transferred from the public sector to the private sector . . . The private sector should be the region of growth of the economy, that it is the responsibility of government to provide the enabling environment for business to thrive while the entrepreneurs do their business in line with the law of the land and ensuring that corporate social responsibility is foremost in their mind and of course they play by the rules . . . [which] brings us to the issue of privatization of formerly state owned corporations . . . Some of the major sectors that have been privatized range from the banks . . . Since the privatization exercise has taken place, quite a number of growth and development has been experienced . . . in terms of shareholder funds, in terms of annual profit and generally, their balance sheet has been growing in a very astronomical manner . . . By 1999, after the inauguration of the Obasanjo presidency functional telephone lines in Nigeria were less than 450,000. But with the liberalization and deregulation, quite a number of private telecommunications companies . . . were licensed to provide services and of course the greatest development in that sector was the auction of GSM licenses in . . . 2001 . . . Between then and today, there has been phenomenal growth in terms of number of lines available as at last count by last month, Nigeria had over 34 million lines . . . and of course a number of juicy employment has been generated in that sector. . . .In terms of overall contribution to GDP . . . telecoms sector is an icing on the cake . . . . All the same, there are some structural imbalances that needed to be looked at critically. . . .To a very large extent I would say that the economy is looking up, but looking up does not mean that there are no problems here and there. But if the policy in place is not subverted . . . the dividend . . . accruing to the economy will be much . . . Economic growth and development go hand in hand with political stability and a very predictable and reliable regulatory environment. So, to that extent I would say that there are some major reforms, but some people still have some grouse with the implementation of the process, that is privatization. While people are not averse to the idea that the private sector should be at the drivers seat of any modern economy . . . the way and manner that the privatization is done has drawn some flack from some people in the sense that some persons do criticize the process as not 100% transparent, that some persons who find themselves at certain positions in the public sector . . . have been acting in such a way as to promote the handing over of these formerly state enterprises to their cronies, their friends at a currently devalued buy-over cost . . . we will look at the issue of the power sector . . . in a situation whereby the industrial sector will be energized will be reliable . . . efficient and effective, we must have constant electricity supply . . . irrespective of the fact that so much money had been pumped into that sector . . . there is still epileptic power supply in major cities, towns and villages in the country . . . there is no way the economy can grow . . . without the energy sector being transformed . . . there is this feeling . . . that one of the critical sectors of the economy is energy and it will have been the first in the priority of government in
terms . . . formerly state owned enterprises that should be sold to private businesses that have the technical know-how, that have the financial muscle and the managerial acumen to turn around that sector and ensure that there is steady and reliable power supply without which economic activities cannot be effective.

TO: 2. What are the socioeconomic issues affecting the public relations industry and practice?
INTERVIEWEE 5: one, the perception of the profession . . . they have not been able to come to terms with public relations as a management function. In some organizations practitioners are just seen as errand boys, they are not seen . . . as professionals . . . to the extent that they can hold their own and be part of top management and make very useful contribution to . . . the realization of the set objectives of some organizations . . . two, there is this perception . . . that public relations practice particularly in the public sector is akin to propaganda, and not just propaganda, but pernicious negative propaganda. That public relations is a tool for the deceit of the masses . . . is an art and science of trying package a bad product to look as good, trying to mislead the populace or give an impression that government is achieving so much when it is not doing anything or give the impression that the government is people oriented when in actual fact it ministers to the interest, whims and caprices of the minuitiae group of people, the elites and some . . . influential traditional institution, the clergy and the business class . . . In an economy that is not well diversified . . . that is predominantly not driven by information and communication technology, the public relations practice cannot be as effective as it should be because public relations practice is part of the whole process of globalization. It is not every organization that has been able to provide the necessary tools . . . for effective practice of public relations management . . . public relations management in Nigeria . . . have had some problems of leadership within the national umbrella body of Nigerian Institute of public relations . . . not every practitioner believes that the executive . . . was born under a legitimate process and therefore they have not . . . been recognizing the national leadership . . . we will not lose site of the fact that a democracy . . . whose principle [inaudible] are not essentially professional . . . it has not been easy to manage the image of the country from the point of view of public relations management . . . in the sense that some of the leaders at the arena do not have the requisite intellectual disposition to appreciate fundamental human rights of the citizens need to be respected, that every organization must work assiduously towards ensuring that the publics . . . perceives it in positive light . . . between 1999 . . . till today, it would appear to me that not much recognition has been accorded public relations practice as a management function . . . to a large extent, some of the titles that purport to be public relations advisers to key government officials, are not public relations [inaudible] they are more or less [inaudible], charlatans . . . and foul and loud mouthed individuals.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the public relations industry and practice, and how have you responded to them?
INTERVIEWEE 5: Our response to these issues have been based . . . on our own personal ideology and objective in life . . . I have believed that one of the greatest things any man can do for himself, is to empower himself with the requisite knowledge to remain relevant in his profession . . . From the point of view of the economy . . . the Nigerian economy is an appendage of the global economy . . . [and] unless we take the recourse to revolution, we must at all times try to align ourselves with . . . positive global development. I have come to believe that some of the changes going on in the economy are good, that they can be sustained if the leadership is
committed to it and if the process is free. I have been able, at my personal individual level, educated some Nigerians on the need to change with the times, to appreciate that the economy can never be perfect . . . that our economy can only grow when everybody contributes his or her own quota to the development of the economy, and more importantly, that every citizen imbibes this culture of saving . . . I have come to believe that the capital market is one of the ways through which an individual can accumulate wealth over a long period of time . . . My reaction . . . to the [inaudible] of the economy, is to key myself to the capital market and to make some little investment, believing that overtime I can accumulate some capital either to pursue business on my own as a professional public relations person . . . but you need to have the knowledge, the skills, and the capital to do that, and the capital you just don’t build overnight . . . and I think that the transformation going on in the national economy gives me that opportunity to actively build some wealth over time, from the capital market.

I-B. Contextual Variable: The Political Environment

TO: 1. How would you describe Nigeria’s present political environment?
INTERVIEWE 5: It is chaotic . . . because every game has its rules and people are not playing by the rules . . . the polity is overheated. It would appear to some of us that . . . the fundamental right of the citizens to choose who their rulers should be is being circumvented by the government in power and even the opposition, because even the process of nomination of the candidates is flawed, it is not transparent, it is full of [inaudible] tactics . . . It is bereft of sanity and due process.

TO: 2. What political aspects have an impact on the public relations industry and its practices in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWE 5: Definitely, every profession finds itself within a given political environment and it is quite a daunting challenge to public relations practice in Nigeria because public relations is nothing short of a science and art of building good will among stakeholders in any environment . . . and trying to ensure that there is cooperation and understanding . . . which flows from a situation of even handedness . . . where there are clear cut rules and people play by the rules . . . where there is a level playing field . . . It is quite unfortunate that we are almost going back to the stone-age in terms of political development and democracy, so it is quite a challenge to the public relations practitioners . . . in the sense that the public relations person . . . advises people, he teaches, he tries to show the way forward . . . but unfortunately, because of the militarized psyche of the leaders in different political parties, it is all politicking devoid of issues, devoid of contest of ideas . . . What we operate is a counterfeit of anything that has to be defined as democracy . . . So, the public relations practitioner has a very serious problem trying to defend what is happening, or trying to market the candidates that have been thrust on the country for the electorate to choose from because quite a number of them are not credible, and . . . do not have any idea that can move any person forward or transform the nation.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the industry, your specific practices and, your public relations responses?
INTERVIEWE 5: The practice has been encumbered by this climate of confusion . . . uncertainty . . . bravado, and lawlessness . . . There is so much “might is right” syndrome in the political arena. It is quite a challenge to the profession because every profession is predicated on rules and parties obedience to rules and due process . . . We are in a political jungle where the
mighty must devour the weak and where rationality is thrown to the wind. It is all emotional outburst . . . Machiavellian treachery and intimidation and lawlessness . . . but I think that the public relations practitioner should not become a very militant person trying to fight [inaudible] tooth to tooth, that he will at his own professional level, individual level begin to educate the citizens that they have some fundamental human rights . . . to enlighten them, give them political education that their vote counts . . . and they should vote for candidates that they are convinced . . . that these people . . . have what it takes to deliver, and be trusted and they have the interest of the country and the populace at heart . . . because the public relations practitioner is ipso facto a teacher of the society, a teacher amongst his community and among his people. It is the responsibility of the public relations practice to always dichotomize between illusion and reality and try to give confidence to the people that in spite of seeming apathy, that they should have interest in the political process and use their votes to advance their interest, and good governance, and the rule of law.

II. Coercive Isomorphism

TO: 1. How does government regulation affect public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 5: It makes copious provisions as to who is a public relations practitioner, who is qualified to practice, what are the rights and privileges pertaining to public relations practitioners . . . what are the qualifications the person should have to be eligible to register as a public relations practitioner. The act . . . spells punishment that could be imposed on persons that are illegally practicing public relations management in Nigeria.

TO: 2. What are the benefits, if any, of compliance with regulation?
INTERVIEWEE 5: If you comply, you do what is right and nobody will worry you . . . it gives you all immunity to do your job within the ambits of the law.

TO: 3. What are the consequences, if any, of non-compliance with regulations?
INTERVIEWEE 5: [it] makes you liable to prosecution and imprisonment as the case may be.

TO: 4. Does regulation increase social expectation of the industry? Please explain.

INTERVIEWEE 5: Of course it does. But, you know one thing about an environment like our, for quite a long time there has been a very wrong value system that has been imbibed by our people . . . more or less, people believe that the hallmark of a successful professional is evident in ostentatious lifestyle . . . if you are so knowledgeable in your own chosen profession or calling and you do not have so much money . . . people . . . are bound to look down on you . . . But I think that with time and as the economy grows . . . the profile of public relations practitioner and public relations management will grow . . . In a competitive business environment public relations management is quite useful because you are able to understand the thinking if the internal and external publics of your organization, you are alive to your corporate social responsibility, you carry out routine consumer and stakeholder pools to find out their perception of our organization and their expectations from you and you try to meet them at their time of need and to be seen as being responsible and responsive.
TO: 5. Does regulation increase acceptance of public relations as a profession?
INTERVIEWEE 5: Definitely. Any industry that is not regulated is like a jungle. Regulation is very important in whatever you do because it defines the boundaries, your rights and obligations . . . so that you play within the accepted norms of the profession and of course it provides sanctions for interlopers and all sorts of gatecrashers.

TO: 6. What are sources of pressure for the public relations industry in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 5: In some organizations in the public sector, there is what is called . . . public secrecy, and of course public relations believes in full disclosure of material information . . . there are certain information which ordinarily should be made available to Nigerians about how they are governed, the thinking of government on some issues . . . are never disclosed and that is really a challenge and that is why there is this information bill . . . so that the government will now be run transparently, so that the government will not keep some of this so-called official secrets that really make government non-transparent and ineffective.

TO: What other sources of pressure can you identify?
INTERVIEWEE 5: There are so much . . . even from family. It is not easy as a family . . . person to be in any profession and do it well because sometimes, some certain jobs have their intrinsic risks. If you are a PR practitioner in the public sector, or even in the private sector, there are certain professional responsibilities that you decide that could be predispose you to personal risk . . . risk to your life, risk to your properties . . . As a public relations person who is adept in public communication, you might . . . take a position on the evolving political development in the country and decide to . . . advocate certain positions . . . and that could bring you at [inaudible] with the ruling class and even the security agencies . . . Some people were assassinated under very mysterious circumstances which may be as a result of stepping on some toes . . . because some people don’t believe that dissenting voices or views should be expressed or given some prominence.

TO: 7. How is pressure exerted?
INTERVIEWEE 5: (Question 6).

TO: 8. How do you respond to such pressure/s?
INTERVIEWEE 5: It is two ways, it is either you respond by keeping quiet, or you respond by reiterating the fact that the truth must be told no matter whose ox is gored.

TO: 9. What are risks associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 5: Such pressures could have some health implications for one. It could affect ones source of . . . livelihood, it could alienate you from some of your friends . . . and there are some that believe that if you cant beat them, you join them, and by so doing, you desecrate the ethics of the profession . . . It could lead to a lack of patronage and clientele because some persons will not want to some and brief you or give you a consultancy because you appear to be in the opposition or you appear to have some convictions that you cannot bend or you say it as it is.

TO: 10. What are benefits associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
AUDO: If in spite of the pressure . . . somebody is able to persevere and remain unrelenting and continue to do his job as best as he knows it professionally and transparently . . . it would bring
recognition . . . [and] improved condition of living by improved earnings. It could make one, in certain quarters, appear as a role model, that in spite of the decay and societal degeneration, that some people still see fit to do what is right and doing them irrespective of whose ox is gored. It brings fame; it brings professional satisfaction and exposure because once you excel in your given profession . . . you become a global citizen. Your expertise and services will be required over and above the territorial integrity of Nigeria and beyond.

TO: 11. What is your departments/organizations source of funding/revenue?
INTERVIEWEE 5: We are self sustaining in terms of funding. We generate our own revenue . . . through issuance of licenses and annual levies from operating companies.

TO: 12. How does this affect your departments/organizations relationship with these sources in terms of flexibility and independence?
INTERVIEWEE 5: The law setting us up really makes us independent to a large extent and I think there has been very minimal interference from the political leadership.

III. Evolution of Public Relations

TO: 1. How has the transition from military to democratic government affected public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 5: It has affected it some what positively in the sense that the military government is a dictatorial government . . . that is antithetical to free enterprise and free competition of ideas. It really limits the ability for self expression and independent thought . . . its been quite good, we have been in a fairly liberal environment in terms of people holding opinions and expressing opinions . . . to some extent, some of the problems the public relations practitioners have as a group in Nigeria is self inflicted. We have been bedeviled by a very irresponsible leadership during the immediate past presidency of the Nigerian institute of Public Relations when there was this tendency to sit tight and throw away the rules and the constitution of the institute . . . public relations practices is expected axiomatically to flourish much better in a democracy than in a military regime. But, we must give it to the military people that . . . they recognized public relations quite well and it as during the Babangida era that the decree was enacted that chartered the public relations practice.

INTERVIEW SIX
I-A. Contextual Variable: The Socioeconomic Environment

TO:1. Please describe the current socioeconomic environment in Nigeria.
INTERVIEWEE 6: Nigeria . . . is preparing for the general elections. We have come all the way back from the era of the military and we have practiced democracy going in for about seven years. . .What we have found out is that there is an eradication of the middle-class . . . basically with the economy itself, has grown in some levels . . . we have had a lot of challenges, but the most important thing . . . is the erosion of the middle-class for a very long time which is trying to fight is way to come back to reckoning . . . We have issues that have to do with infrastructural development . . . where the govt. has not been able to meet the expectations of Nigerians especially in the area of power generation, poor hospitals, poor roads, even the schools; the standard of education has fallen considerably. So, for you to get the best, or something very good
... you have to spend a lot. So what has happened is that there is a lot of emphasis on wealth accumulation because it seems that is the only way you can move forward. You have your own generating plant, you have your own [water], you have your own private schools etc... so there is this race to move from the have-nots to the haves. So there is this race to try to accumulate wealth both legally and illegally. People have seen that the fastest route to making money is in government. So there is a lot of move towards people going into government and the whole essence of it is to line their pockets. How ever, the work of the Economic Financial Crimes Commission has abated it... even though people accuse them of being partisan. But at lease there is a fear in the quarters about economic crimes... So what do we have in a nutshell? We have a country that is transiting for the first time from one civilian government to another civilian government... we have a country that is noted for corruption but the govt. is doing a lot through the work of the EFCC to battle that corruption even though there is a lot of corruption and it appears at times that their side is partisan, but at least something is being done. It is a country that is dependent a lot on what you have because there are no provisions... there is a lot of focus on wealth accumulation as a way of you moving forward.

TO: 2. What are the socioeconomic issues affecting the public relations industry and practice? INTERVIEWEE 6: Largely, the development of the country itself, and then... literacy... When the military were in power... they didn’t need to convince anybody about what they were doing or about what they were not doing so PR really suffered. What we had then were propaganda relations officers... because govt. just gave their own view about whatever if was and if you liked it, fine, and if you didn’t like it, that’s your own business. Now with the advent of democracy, PR is supposed to have grown and developed and to some extent, I will say it has... In the other areas such as IT, in telecommunications, in the banking industry, we have witnessed some growth in the profession itself because all these organizations who have become vibrant... have required and have actually utilized the services of PR practitioners in one level or the other. But then it comes to the area of literacy... A lot of us are not still literate in Nigeria and in terms of PR, you need to communicate across board. So the awareness for certain issues are not there and you are dealing with mindsets, so it is a bit difficult for you to engage good PR initiatives. I give you an example... what is happening in [blank] state where you have a godfather and so on and so forth. Now you ask yourself, what kind of PR do you want to do there because the people in [blank] on a daily basis go to [blank] and collect some money, handouts... so they are not interested in the issues that anybody has to put on ground. So if you have an opposing camp that engages the services of PR person and says, “help me to communicate my goals, my ideals, my values... it is lost because the people are just not listening, they are more interested in collecting the N20, N200 or the N1000 that they collect... Over and above that is the machinery, the institution that has been saddled with the responsibility of promoting and managing the practice of or in Nigeria which is the NIPR. That body in itself is at best in some comatose state... in addition to that, the body use to collect subvention from the government and a s a fallout of the squabble that came up, government... stopped subvention. While the key challenges that they have is that the NIPR needs PR for itself, the body does not have much regard in Nigeria. For instance, Nigeria is talking about the Heart of Africa project and there is no input from the NIPR... So, the progress that the profession has witnessed have been individual collective efforts... the efforts of frontline PR consulting firms... and you find out that most of these consulting firms don’t even have anything to do with the NIPR. So it is as if
NIPR itself is living in the 20th century while the practice is in the 21st century so they haven’t had much relevance.

TO: Once again could you just give me a summary of what you think the socioeconomic issues affecting PR is.

INTERVIEWEE 6: I talked about the economy, that it is not as buoyant, like for instance the real sector, its contribution to the total GDP is very low . . . like if we had 40, 50, 60, a 100 factories running, we would have a lot of work for PR practitioners. So now, what are the areas of the economy that are vibrant? We have the oil, we have problems in the Niger Delta which have actually surpassed the . . . dimensions of PR. It is no longer a PR issue, is a national issue, it is a global issue as a matter of fact. Now PR may be one of the things that you use to solve it . . . [but] it is also political . . . we’ve found a declining contribution of PR practitioners in the oil sectors, which was not the case in the past because companies like Shell, Chevron, Agip, they placed a lot of emphasis on their PR but with the problem in the Niger Delta now, everybody is stepping down . . . the manufacturing sector in Nigeria is virtually non existent, so there is not a lot coming out of there. So the vibrant areas you are looking at are telecommunications . . . and then the banks . . . There are not too many areas in which PR practitioners can flex their muscle . . . The level of literacy which makes appreciation of good PR work still on the low side . . . In Nigeria, issues are not so germane in the resolution of things or in us moving forward . . . The body that is responsible for the promotion of PR itself is standing on shaky legs, itself needs to be revolutionized.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the public relations industry and practice, and how have you responded to them?

INTERVIEWEE 6: What we have done . . . is what we can call individual collective efforts. Individual in the sense that there is an individualistic approach in solving them, but the collective approach in solving them. There are about five of six frontline PR consultancies in Nigeria today, and those people have continued to extend the frontiers of the practice through their own singular efforts . . . The prize is more demanding nowadays because everything you do, everything you say, they want to evaluate, they want results . . . the demands of the clients . . . are very high . . . what we have done individually but collectively is to try to extend the frontiers of the practice by looking at the level of practice elsewhere, I don’t want to use developed countries, lest say matured economies, and we try to use those same standards to run the practice here in Nigeria, and you have a few clients who . . . demand that level of work especially the multinationals.

I-B. Contextual Variable: The Political Environment

TO: 1. How would you describe Nigeria’s present political environment?

INTERVIEWEE 6: Democracy for me is a journey it is not a destination and we are working that journey and I guess it takes time to evolve. One of the things one had hoped for because we had seen it done in other countries you want to imagine that that walk should be much faster. But largely we are still ruling by parochial interests be it tribalism, ethnicism, even party politics where the president of the country goes on a campaign and says that this next election is a do or die affair, and it doesn’t all go well for democracy and we are yet to fully appreciate the importance of true democracy. We still have this seize and reign mentality, not governing, so what we are doing right now is that we are ruling . . . we are not governing. Right now in terms
of politics, we are being ruled, we are not being governed. Because we are not taking the people
to task . . . because if we are being governed, people are held accountable for their actions. We
are not playing issues politics, we are playing personality politics, we are playing party politics.

TO: 2. What political aspects have an impact on the public relations industry and its practices in
Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 6: As long as we are still being ruled and not governed, the practice of PR
cannot thrive or it cannot get to the level that we want it to thrive. [Blank] does not see itself
loosing the coming elections, they will do anything including suppressing the constitution if they
have to . . . because there is this power mentality, “when I have power, I must seize it.” And I am
not saying the other political parties that are not in power so to speak are any better, they are not,
if they get there they are probably going to do the same thing or worse. How does it have impact
on PR? When you look at campaigns now . . . most of them are not issue driven, they are
personality driven, they are party driven. What are you then trying to do? Instead of [selling] a
program you are selling personalities. One very key thing you must note is that . . . non of the
parties has any clear-cut ideology, so it makes it difficult for PR to be engaged in selling them.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the industry, your specific practices and, your public
relations responses?
INTERVIEWEE 6: It is not something that one can do on ones own. It is the system. Most PR
organizations that work for politicians and political parties don’t do so on a long stretch so there
are no long-term plans . . . I am not sure we have reacted to it because in itself, democracy is not
yet stable. I don’t think there has been any serious collective effort in addressing it. Within the
confines of where we find ourselves, we try to make the best of it. Whether that is good or bad is
another story altogether.

II. Coercive Isomorphism

TO: 1. How does government regulation affect public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 6: (Question 1A-2).

TO: 2. What are the benefits, if any, of compliance with regulation?
INTERVIEWEE 6: I am not sure there are any benefits . . . In the past, what it meant was that in
the past we could get support of government, recognition from government and so on, and that’s
not happening anymore so I wouldn’t say that there are any benefits. NIPR is not regarded, is not
recognized. The profession may be, but if the collective body is not appreciated I think it will be
very difficult for you to appreciate the constituents of that collective body . . . in the past NIPR
enjoyed a subvention from government, some nominees from government sat on the council of
NIPR and in essence what they were doing was helping to articulate government views to NIPR
and in turn helping NIPR to articulate its own views to government. But . . . there hasn’t been
much benefits for now.

TO: 3. What are the consequences, if any, of non-compliance with regulations?
INTERVIEWEE 6: They are very weak. The decree in itself says that unless you are a member
of the NIPR you cannot practice PR . . . you are liable to a jail term of six months, but it has not
been enforced so there is no bite to it . . . And then again . . . it is not like medicine or accounting
where you have strict entry regulations and strict practice regulations. I can say what I am doing looks like PR but it is advertising . . . movement is very fluid . . . so it is very difficult to enforce. The boarders are not well defined. Enforcement could come with the quality of work we produce. Like for instance if NIPR gets its act together and says “look these are the guys we’ve certified, and make sure that those people are well trained in terms of refresher courses . . . and then I can say to you that if you employ or engage a qualified NIPR practitioner, you are likely to get good work. Because we ensure that we maintain our standards and so-on and so-forth. I think that is the area we can get some level of compliance. If we cant show any difference in the quality of products we have at NIPR and those who are not members of NIPR, I still believe that we are begging the question.

TO: 4. Does regulation increase social expectation of the industry? Please explain.

INTERVIEWEE 6: Yes I believe so because it promotes professionalism so it helps raise the bar in terms of standards . . . For instance, if regulation says that I cannot tell you who to employ as a press secretary, guess what, our govt. will never give business to any PR firm that is not registered with the NIPR . . . If I went for a pitch at [blank] I’m not sure they will ask me if I am a member of PRCAN so I am not sure it has really affected anything. They are more interested in what work I have done . . . and then they can say “based on that and based on your recommendation we think you can do our job?”

TO: 5. Does regulation increase acceptance of public relations as a profession?
INTERVIEWEE 6: It should, and I think I have given you reasons why it has not worked in Nigeria.

TO: 6. What are sources of pressure for the public relations industry in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 6: We have spoken about the economy, we have spoke about illiteracy, we have spoken about the NIPR . . . I don’t want to use the word poverty, but a lot of people who are practicing PR are not as comfortable as they should be. . . . so I think that economic power is also a source of pressure. So, you find people who fifteen years ago they were practicing PR, but the kind of PR they were practicing then is not what is obtainable now, they no longer work in vibrant organizations like they used to do . . . they have not been able to keep up with the demands of modern practice and I think for me that’s an area of pressure.

TO: 7. How is pressure exerted?
INTERVIEWEE 6:

TO: 8. How do you respond to such pressure/s?
INTERVIEWEE 6: I as a person am not there . . . The level of education has also been a pressure point for PR in Nigeria, because you see, we draw from that pool and we have a problem, people don’t want to pay top dollar for the work we do, but they want us to work for the top dollar companies and we pick from the market where they also pick from . . . [We] cannot pay what IT or a bank will pay an individual, so what we’ve done is we go and pick people raw from the universities . . . we find out that even graduates of mass comm.. people who have masters, [are] grossly deficient in the work we delegate to them . . . The banks come after one year and offer six or four times minimum what I am offering and takes the person away so I go back to the
cycle and I start again . . . but the banks don’t want to pay me top dollar for my work so I can retain that staff. So it is somewhat of a strangulating cycle.

TO: 9. What are risks associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 6: A lot of people have exited this business because it is becoming more and more challenging and they are asking “where is the reward” and it is becoming difficult to keep up at the level that we are playing . . . Sometimes it looks like a thankless job. There is the glamour part of it . . . people associate it with financial success, which is all wrong . . . There is that prestige that goes with the work especially if you appear to be successful. But the risk is that if you are not careful, if you do not have your feet on the ground, you may think that that is really success which is not the case. At the end of the day it is a business . . . For me we have a problem in PR. A lot of use that are in this practice are there for the love of the profession . . . some of us stumbled unto it because we went to school to study mass communication and thought that logically we should go into our own area . . . some of us were journalists, and after we have been tired of journalism we think that where is the nest port of call and it looks like PR. The downside of it is that we are all professionals, but we are not all businessmen . . . A lot of us are not so concerned about the rudiments of the business side of it . . . at the end of the day, we are supposed to be making a profit . . . one of the pressures for me is that we are professionals, but we are not good businessmen.

TO.10. What are benefits associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 6: (Question 9)

TO: 11. What is your departments/organizations source of funding/revenue?
INTERVIEWEE 6: Initially from shareholders funds, that’s how we started . . . They way we have been running the business if from the revenue that we have been generating.

TO: 12. How does this affect your departments/organizations relationship with these sources in terms of flexibility and independence?
INTERVIEWEE 6: It is run as a business, I have a board. At the beginning of the year, you map out your plan for the board the board approves it and also approves the expenditure. So, my flexibility is a within the context of what the board has approved for me and of which of course I am a member. If I need to do anything outside what has been approved for me in a year, I need to get my boards permission to be able to go ahead and do it. But in terms of running the company, there are guidelines, so there is no interference at all . . . and as long as the board has approved the way to go it is left to me how to run it . . . the pace of the business is dictated by the client, so it doesn’t give us room . . . for flexibility. It makes it very difficult for us. [inaudible] that have been known to do jobs, that . . . are clearly doing it at a loss but for the fact that they want to show this persons name on their client list . . . it doesn’t make us very flexible.

III. Evolution of Public Relations

1. How has the transition from military to democratic government affected public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 6: The military didn’t have any reason to convince anybody of what they wanted to do, they just did it. But in democracy, you find out that a lot of times, there was need
for the government to explain their position, even though we are still being ruled, we have the
ghost of the military, we can’t be far from that when the present president is an ex military man.
So there is still some militarization of our democracy. Sometimes there is some need to explain
and sometimes, they just probably don’t give a hoot . . . It is supposed to have promoted the level
of practice, I believe in some ways it has, and I believe it could have promoted it much further if
we at NIPR had gotten our act together . . . During the military era, they really didn’t care what
the image of the country was outside, especially during the era of Abacha . . . now Obasanjo
came and one of his cardinal areas was to change the image of the country abroad.

Interview Seven
I-A. Contextual Variable: The Socioeconomic Environment

TO: 1. Please describe the current socioeconomic environment in Nigeria.
INTERVIEWEE 7: Nigeria is going through a period of economic recession more or less
because the cost of living is quite high and the remuneration of the average person is not up to
the level of being able to maintain the basic necessities. There is quite a big divide. You have
those who are very wealthy, and then you have those who are living in a very poor situation. It is
a very difficult situation at the moment which is very difficult for some and quite easy for others.

TO: 2. What are the socioeconomic issues affecting the public relations industry and practice?
INTERVIEWEE 7: It depends on what areas of public relations you are looking at. If I should
address a couple of issues, let's take media relations for instance, when you are dealing with a
media that is not empowered in their day-to-day business, then that leads to a situation of sharp
practices where the journalist trades-in editorials for material benefits. If you look at community
relations where you have, let's say, the oil industry, people in the oil sector in the community
which they operate, you have basically a hostage mentality where you have the local community
leaders making demands of the people operating in the host community. When the demands are
met, these leaders do not necessarily pass on what should be of benefit to the entire community.
It's basically a situation where certain aspects of public relations are not being taken fair and
square, there is a lot of under-handing in certain aspects. I don’t know if that captures the aspects
of the poverty mentality if I should call it that.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the public relations industry and practice, and how have
you responded to them?
INTERVIEWEE 7: I would say that PR is not taken serious at the most professional level that it
should be because it has to contend with so many other issues that make it impossible to practice
in the way that it should be done. How you deal with it, citing earlier examples, dealing with a
corrupt media, you stand up to then if you can and loose out in terms of editorial benefits or you
find ways around it to get a win-win situation, certain practices that do not obtain in other
markets you have to do them here. Gift giving, incentivization that is not done in other markets
you have to do here in terms of media relations. Taking the second example in terms of
community relations and community leaders playing sharp practices with what is supposed to be
investment for the benefit of the community, it then becomes a challenge for the operating
organization to structure community relations activities in such a way that ensures that you do
not deal secretly with individuals but are able to insist that credible community leaders are
appointed, that negotiations are done in such a way that is open and fair for both parties and
basically hope that whatever was agreed is what is going to be implemented for the benefit of the community and not the few individuals who lead the community.

I-B. Contextual Variable: The Political Environment

TO: 1. How would you describe Nigeria’s present political environment?
INTERVIEWEE 7: At the moment we are in an election year, less than three months to elections so it is a very volatile, very uncertain environment where people are basically wondering if the elections are going to be free and fair, is the current government going to hand over, are they going to try to influence the elections. It is an uncertain environment basically because it is an election year.

TO: 2. What political aspects have an impact on the public relations industry and its practices in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 7: If you look at a time like this [election] it is a time when PR is supposed to be playing a part in the political situation. It is supposed to be cleaning up the image of what is going on, PR is supposed to lending its voice to the discourse, to the public debate and forming opinions. I look at it from the point of view that PR has a part to play in the political and socioeconomic life of the country. Whether politics recognizes that PR has a role to play is a different question because I do not think that politics adequately recognizes PR as it is now in Nigeria. A lot of the political institutions and politicians themselves are going about what they are doing without necessarily using professional PR. Yes they will use the services of journalists to try and get their stories out, but very rarely will they bring in professional public relations practitioners to be able to sit down, look at strategies, look at issues, analyze issues, then decide the direction forward. So, I will say that it is a negative relationship with PR.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the industry, your specific practices and, your public relations responses?
INTERVIEWEE 7: I will say that what is happening does not lend itself to the growth of the industry because in a situation like this, public relations should be at the forefront of shaping public discourse. If you leave out the professional practice in this process, then it is stunting the growth of PR for politics, for government, public affairs etc. So, it is not aiding the growth of the industry. Basically it is sort of misleading the industry if you will prefer to use a journalist to put a spin on a story as opposed to getting someone to sit down and do your strategy. In terms of specific practice, we are a consulting company and this should be golden days for us in the sense that there are lots of people out there doing politics and vying for presidency, governors, etc. There is a whole environment where we could be playing in there, but we are not. In my consulting company we do not have one person that we are representing. Again it is a negative. I dare say that in some major consultancies in Nigeria as well, I am not aware that any of them is working consistently for any particular government, candidate or party. Again it is a negative for the industry, for individual consultancy companies and for individual consultants.

II. Coercive Isomorphism

TO: 1. How does government regulation affect public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 7: It is supposed to but it doesn’t. The NIPR at the moment is not a particularly strong institute and I am afraid that not a lot of practitioners take it very seriously. You will find out from the actions of practitioners themselves, they don’t view the institute with very high regard. The role of the government is not particularly sound. One of the issues should have been that you do not allow non-accredited practitioners to operate, but they do. Anybody can be a practitioner here. You do not have to be a member of the Institute; there is no sanction, no kind of regulation at all that affects the industry. I would say that regulation is a bit of laissez-faire.

TO: 2. What are the benefits, if any, of compliance with regulation?
INTERVIEWEE 7: If there was compliance with the regulation it would mean that you would have a stronger profession. It would mean that before you get employed in an organization as a practitioner, it would have to be proven that you are accredited as a PR professional. It would mean that before you set up you would have to be proven to be a professional. It basically would mean that PR would be run by people who know what it is that they are doing, not people who are tired of being journalists or people who do not have work to do, not people who have posts or offices that make them PR practitioners. The benefits would be a stronger profession and professionals [are] the ones doing the work that is supposed to be done.

TO: 3. What are the consequences, if any, of non-compliance with regulations?
INTERVIEWEE 7: It has rendered us a very weak profession and we are basically not regarded as much within the professional circle and even the corporate world, government, and users of PR understand advertising, design management, integrated marketing communication, but they do not quite understand where to place PR. Only a very few of the international, multinational, transnational companies understand PR and use professional PR and a lot of the market is yet to understand what we do and accept it at the level that it is supposed to be. You even have management consultants and other kinds of consultants doing what we should be doing because people do not recognize PR at that level of professionalism.

TO: 4. Does regulation increase social expectation of the industry? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 7: I think so. It would at least . . . ensure that the bar is raised and so expectations and performances would be higher.

TO: 5. Does regulation increase acceptance of public relations as a profession?
INTERVIEWEE 7: Regulation alone cannot do it. It could help but that alone cannot do it. It would mean that a lot of practitioners would have to rise up to the level of expectation and if they don’t, then that is going to be a problem. You have a lot of people doing public relations who have no business being there, and as long as they are there and continue playing at a substandard level, whatever you do in the market, the regulation is not going to be able to get the respect for the profession or the practitioners. It has to be that the people in the business know what they are doing so that they are able to earn the respect at the level that they should have as a profession.

TO: 6. What are sources of pressure for the public relations industry in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 7: I would say that the interpretation sometimes of public relations as spin-doctoring and not something that actually looks at cause and effects and takes the decision and direction there-from. Another one is the constant inability to be able to give PR its due. I think for me the pressure is a lack of understanding of what we are supposed to be doing, both from the people we do it for and those of us doing it in some cases, the inability for some of us to rise up to the occasion and that what is supposed to be our role is being hijacked by other people.

TO: Q7. How is pressure exerted?
INTERVIEWEE 7: When I want to do and propose something to a client and they say “that is not your work” “you are not an advertising company,” “what exactly do you do?” The pressure is exerted for me when what I would call my bread and butter is being threatened and being taken away from me because the people don’t understand what it is that I do.

TO: Q8. How do you respond to such pressure/s?
INTERVIEWEE 7: You keep trying to educate the market.

TO: Q9. What are risks associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 7: You continue to play at a minimal level just to get by, or you totally abandon the practice, or begin to combine it with different things. So constantly instead of growing, you are stagnating if not completely getting out of the practice.

TO: Q10. What are benefits associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 7: Like I said, you keep trying to educate the market, and the more you try, the more professional you get. The more determined you are, the harder you work at it. You up your game and up your ante.

TO: Q11. What is your departments/organizations source of funding/revenue?
INTERVIEWEE 7: We are a fee based consultancy that is fee plus cost. So, for every client we work with, we prefer to work on the basis of a retainer, so we get. The fees covers all of our overhead, and if we have to get them involved in any third party charges, then the client pays for those charges.

TO: Q12. How does this affect your departments/organizations relationship with these sources in terms of flexibility and independence?
INTERVIEWEE 7: If I am paid a fee, then I am expected to earn the fee. So, in that regard, I have to deliver on what I have been paid. On the other hand, one of the challenges is that you are paid and you are not allowed to be effective. You are not allowed to do your job and lead strategy at the level that it should be done because perhaps someone in the client organization does not agree with what you are doing. If this is not the case, then it is a win-win situation where your clientele know what it wants and knows the value that you are adding.

III. Evolution of Public Relations

TO: 1. How has the transition from military to democratic government affected public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 7: PR has very little to do with the govt. and with politics. Where government needs PR is where they come out with information, you know, be your masters voice so to say.
In terms of professional PR I don’t think that that has had any significant impact. Even today, the
govt. might prefer to hire a PR consultancy in the UK to come and do certain things for it here,
but it will not give a chance to local consultancies to do. That is a situation that existed before,
and that is a situation that exists now and it is one that we have not been able to break.

Interview Eight
I-A. Contextual Variable: The Socioeconomic Environment

TO: 1. Please describe the current socioeconomic environment in Nigeria.
INTERVIEWEE 8: it is a lot better than it was before the enthronement of democracy in 1999.
You would say that the economy is a lot better than it was prior to this administration coming in.
A lot has to do with the oil income that has almost doubled in the past few years . . . that has
really improves the economy of the country. That has had a multiplier effect in other aspects of
the economy . . . the average Nigerian worker today is better than [he/she] was before this
administration came in. There was salary review and that means that the average worker has
more money to spend. Of course the downside of it is the problems that come with such
development. There has been the criminality in the Niger Delta which started off as agitation . . .
that has impacted negatively on the economy because it has reduced the production of oil for the
country . . . I wouldn’t want to say specifically if crime has gone up, or if it has gone down, but I
think there has been an improvement in that. The states are certainly doing better than they were
in 1999 . . . I can also talk about advancements in the telecommunications sub-sector of the
economy which has grown in leaps and bounds because of the GSM entering into the Nigerian
economy a few years ago with the number of jobs it has created.

TO: 2. What are the socioeconomic issues affecting the public relations industry and practice?
INTERVIEWEE 8: Because of the prolonged military rule in Nigeria, there were some draconian
laws that restricted the media and public relations in general. Some of those issues have been
wiped out now . . . although the media is not hounded as much as it used to be during the military
regime, we still have a few media houses that are harassed or closed down every now and again
by law enforcement agencies. I don’t know where they derive their legislation from to do such
things . . . I would also say that the industry to some extent is plagued by corruption, the more
money you have, the more impact you make . . . the more you can influence what people will
have to hear on radio, see on television, or read on the pages of newspapers. The more money
corporation is willing to spend on its public relations the more impact they are likely to make . . .
The big conglomerates . . . that really splash money to advertise their product and services seem
to be doing well even though in practice they are not really doing that well, and this is as a
function of the resources they spend to influence what people know about them and that in the
media erodes objectivity. There are also a lot of people in the industry that are not well trained,
and a public relations practitioner in Nigeria is anyone who can just set-up shop and call himself
one even if he has not received any training. It is worse in the media where extortion is the order
of the day . . . or you can get into the business to blackmail people . . . The lack of infrastructure
definitely affects the practice . . . power is very essential.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the public relations industry and practice, and how have
you responded to them?
INTERVIEWEE 8: I did a lot of unorthodox things. Take the issue of communication for instance; I had cases where because of the difficulty of reaching out to people . . . I actually sent out people from point “A” to point “B.” It could be within a city it could be intercity, and it could be interstate. . . . I also initiated a system where we attached personnel to reputable media houses or PR outfit for some kind of training to brush them up. Of course mine was a little different because I was in a government establishment that didn’t believe in spending so much money in training its people unlike what those in the private sector were doing . . . I did that to improve development. [With] corruption, I kept emphasizing on the need for objectivity, on the need for us to approach issues as objectively as we could. But here in Nigeria . . . you can preach as much as you want to preach but at the end of the day, it is the man who is out there on the field who will collect this money and will not make known to you . . . I tried as much as possible from discouraging our personnel from such corrupt practices.

I-B. Contextual Variable: The Political Environment

TO: 1. How would you describe Nigeria’s present political environment?
INTERVIEWEE 8: where we are now, where we are heading to is a lot better than where we were before since the first intervention of the military in the political landscape in 1966. I would say that this is an almost fairly stable political climate we are enjoying. There is a lot of confidence in the democratic dispensation. There is a lot of anticipation and enthusiasm for the next general elections . . . where it will be the first time where a democratically elected president will be handing over to another democratically elected president. There is no talk at all of any kind of other system of government, I mean military intervention, because I believe Nigerians . . . have come to appreciate that this is a better system than military rule . . . certainly it is a lot better than many developing countries, there is a lot of confidence and a lot of anticipation on the [inaudible] of Nigerians that democracy has come to stay.

TO: 2. What political aspects have an impact on the public relations industry and its practices in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 8: I think the major one will be the legislation which has to emanate from the national assembly. If proper laws are put in place that would regulate the practice and protect the practitioners to give them confidence to go out and practice . . . without much fear, I think that will further improve the practice of the profession. I also would say that unless there is a conscious effort on the part of the practitioners to sponsor such bills at the national assembly through lobby groups to get what they want, it is going to be difficult because most of them at the national assembly do not even know what public relations practice is all about . . . Unless the Nigerian Institute of public relations actually goes out to sponsor a bill that will empower it to practice the profession properly, there is still going to be limitations. The political influence could be in terms of adequate legislation and getting the political class to appreciate that the practice is not just about the production of jingles and publicity materials during . . . periods of electioneering.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the industry, your specific practices and, your public relations responses?
INTERVIEWEE 8: I didn’t have as much challenges as my colleagues who were in private practice who had to be worried if they were going to be hounded by law enforcement or not . . . I
basically exploited that advantage I had, in that once it was within reason, I could virtually put out anything . . . as long as it did not border on national security . . . and because I didn’t have restrictions as to how I could respond . . . I could sell the . . . response as to how we were tackling the issue. This is from the media perspective. From the public relations perspective as a whole the issues that really impacted me were lack of resources . . . to execute many of the things that could have been done.

II. Coercive Isomorphism

TO: 1. How does government regulation affect public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 8: Although Nigeria has a very vibrant press . . . where almost anything could be printed on the pages of newspapers . . . The National Broadcast Commission has placed a lot of restrictions on what can be put on air . . . there could be a political directive from the government to the NBC and whether it goes through any kind of legislation or not, NBC will in turn just put out such requirement which will restrict the media on what to put out on the airwaves . . . again it goes back to what I was saying about government influence on the practice of the media and again . . . the government not really appreciating what the industry is all about is ill equipped to enact appropriate legislations on how to promote the practice and make it better than what it is now.

TO: 2. What are the benefits, if any, of compliance with regulation?
INTERVIEWEE 8: That law is there on paper, but in practice . . . I was a director of [blank] public relations, I wasn’t a member of NIPR . . . I wasn’t really trained for it . . . I got many advances from NIPR to attend their meetings to become a member . . . which I did not accept . . . taking myself as an example, there are so many people who are in the industry who are not trained, and who do not understand what NIPR is all about or the legislation or the laws they have . . . a guy could not be in the industry at all and be appointed to one of the big conglomerates in Nigeria to head the outfit either because of political connections or family connections.

TO: Would you say that there are benefits of compliance with the regulation?
INTERVIEWEE 8: The benefits could be in terms of making people understand how the practice should be conducted, in terms of guidance, what to do and what not to do. Again, even those who do not necessarily comply with those directives, I don’t know how they are sanctioned because I really didn’t belong to the body so I wouldn’t be able to comment much on what the benefits or the drawbacks will be.

TO: 3. What are the consequences, if any, of non-compliance with regulations?
INTERVIEWEE 8: (Question 2).

TO: 4. Does regulation increase social expectation of the industry? Please explain.

INTERVIEWEE 8: Just like every other association, by the time a group of people get together to make laws . . . that would guide them, yes, it should be able to guide them and hopefully improve the lot of the body and conversely the society will be better off if the industry is well regulated. But because there are lots and lots of charlatans who are not really members of that body and who the body cannot sanction, they make a mess of it . . . It is unlike some other
industry’s that have enforcement bodies that will go out and say “I am closing sown this shop” . . . it is very much unlike that in public relations.

TO: 5. Does regulation increase acceptance of public relations as a profession?
INTERVIEWEE 8: To be sincere . . . before I became the director of [blank] public relations, I didn’t hear much about NIPR and that I would say is the lot of so many Nigerians who are not directly involved in the industry . . . I wouldn’t say they are very effective. With the tools available for them to make noise as to what they can do . . . I don’t think that they have made much impact other than within their own circles . . . I don’t think they have done much really in educating Nigerians in terms of public relations, in terms of publicizing their activities.

TO: 6. What are sources of pressure for the public relations industry in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 8: Inadequate legislation, poor . . . lack of modern tools of working . . . ill trained practitioners . . . media, especially government interference.

TO: 7. How is pressure exerted?
INTERVIEWEE 8: Physical intervention, sending security operatives to hound the practitioners, media specifically this time. Sometimes the exorbitant cost associated with the practice, the earning power of the average practitioner here is far . . . from what it would be for his contemporary who is in a developed country and the tools for the profession are basically the same whether you are buying digital cameras or you are getting other associated equipment for the profession . . . a good number of the practitioners are not exposed to very good training . . . so, ill trained personnel, corruption, cost of business are some of the issues affecting the industry.

TO: 8. How do you respond to such pressure/s?
INTERVIEWEE 8: Like in the area of training of personnel . . . I sent some people to media houses . . . in the areas of equipment, we tried within our limited resources, but some of them were just beyond us . . . there were other challenges that were not just possible . . . we were able to repackage [our company] . . . newsletter to an international standard.

TO: 9. What are risks associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 8: If you have inadequate legislation, the practitioners will be going through the kind of practice they go through now where anybody can jump in and claim to be, so, you don’t really have the right people in the profession . . . the advantage of that is that there is employment for anyone . . . For training . . . there is no alternative to good training, so, if you don’t have a trained workforce, you don’t get very good output. The advantage . . . is that it offers the public relations department the opportunity to train to improve their skills and to practice their profession better . . . For lack of equipment . . . if you don’t have the appropriate equipment, there is no way you will be able to come out with good output . . . With funding you will be able to achieve much more than if you were not adequately funded.

TO: 10. What are benefits associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 8: Benefits I would say are in terms of devising alternatives to get information out to clients and . . . to Nigerians . . . in terms of equipment we could not afford, we resorted to renting . . . we also engaged consultants . . . because of the [ill] trained personnel.
TO: 11. What is your departments/organizations source of funding/revenue?
INTERVIEWEE 8: Direct from [my organization] . . . However I would add that for the news magazine . . . we had adverts . . . and we charged for such adverts and the money that we realized from such adverts, we used to produce the magazine . . . it was like a self sustaining publication.

TO: 12. How does this affect your departments/organizations relationship with these sources in terms of flexibility and independence?
INTERVIEWEE 8: I had to do exactly what my boss wanted, so the issue of towing another line or giving consideration to another shade of opinion did not arise at all . . . it was strictly what the [organization] wanted. If this was a private organization, yes there would have been an influence.

III. Evolution of Public Relations

TO: 1. How has the transition from military to democratic government affected public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 8: It is like comparing day and night. There is clearly a world of difference . . . because of the liberties we enjoy now in this dispensation where, to a reasonable extent, anything can happen and once you have a good lawyer [inaudible] . . . the practitioners can almost put out anything and get away with it. There are a few inhibitions but it is certainly better . . . you can’t even compare it to what it used to be during the military regime.

Interview Nine
I-A. Contextual Variable: The Socioeconomic Environment

TO: 1. Please describe the current socioeconomic environment in Nigeria.
INTERVIEWEE 9: Evidently an improvement over what it used to be except for the social setting which has been mostly been affected by [inaudible] and poverty . . . there is evidence of encouragement here and there and people are optimistic generally.

TO: 2. What are the socioeconomic issues affecting the public relations industry and practice?
INTERVIEWEE 9: There is so much expectation from the populace that there does not seem to be adequate resources to match . . . When I say social expectation from the public, I think it has to do with their desire to be informed . . . to be carried along with government and organizations activities, which is a major responsibility of public relations setting. But, unfortunately in most cases, the required resources to meet this challenge is often lacking . . . both materially and financially. The only interesting thing is that . . . there is more understanding and appreciation for the need for public relations input both in the industry and in government generally.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the public relations industry and practice, and how have you responded to them?
INTERVIEWEE 9: The challenge is for us to be innovative, To be able to meet the expectations of the organizations and the public that seem to expect so much . . . we need innovations because the resources are never adequate . . . and also understanding, of our organization and of the public, of our limitations. Despite the efforts however, it is clear that this is a need that is always there . . . the only way we can respond is to be innovative, to be creative and with the challenge also of globalization, the expectation has grown, and with that growth, it has demand of our intellectual capacity as well as our material resources to match expectations. Where both come
together, it helps us to be innovative and proactive more than we used to be. Our response . . . has been to train, and to keep appealing to organizations to understand that we need resources to match the global trend now especially in terms of digitalization in every area.

I-B. Contextual Variable: The Political Environment

TO: 1. How would you describe Nigeria’s present political environment?
INTERVIEWEE 9: Both interesting and challenging. Interesting in the sense that the constant development demands that one be informed of all the factors and sentiments of all political parties . . . as well as [inaudible], would-be voters, all of whom are looking forward to the elections, and that election seems to set the stage for everything . . . it is altogether interesting to be on the side watching . . . also interesting because I think it has compelled more of the appreciation of public relations input into campaigns . . . Although it may not be seen outrightly as a public relations function, but . . . to get the public to support them, you need public relations . . . efforts, and they are making the best of it.

TO: 2. What political aspects have an impact on the public relations industry and its practices in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 9: I think campaigns in terms of politicking, decision making at the general assemblies, as well as executive actions of carrying the populace along with their activities. It requires public relations to make input if any of them is to succeed, or be seen as succeeding. I will not say I know to what extent the various authorities are using public relations to achieve the required result, but I know that evidently, the various challenges they confront will continue to demand that they apply public relations approaches if they will get good results.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the industry, your specific practices and, your public relations responses?
INTERVIEWEE 9: I work in a government establishment . . . So, most of the campaigns do not involve me . . . it is only on a personal ground where I want to analyze and understand what their campaign issues are, but that does not have an official outlook in the sense that I am never called upon to give an official response or position apart from monitoring and knowing what is going on.

II. Coercive Isomorphism

TO: 1. How does government regulation affect public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 9: Public relations should be involved in monitoring events and trends and where required, predict their consequences . . . They must realize that role and get its input anyhow, either by people who are designated to perform roles that are public relations oriented, or getting public relations practitioners to do the role. But it is just not possible for them to ignore it and to succeed . . . Unfortunately many practitioners’ do not seem to be very competent . . . or . . . understand their roles.

TO: So how would you say regulation affects the practice then?
INTERVIEWEE 9: The most significant one I can point at is the freedom of information bill which is just being passed. Definitely, that will bring a new dimension to the practice of public
relations in the sense that the liberties it will now give will challenge public relations practitioners to be more forthcoming than being as lazy as they have always been. For instance when they work for government, they cover up everything and call it security reasons and refuse to speak or explain to the public . . . it will no longer be easy to sweep things under carpets and expect the public to be quiet. Every other role of government information machinery will also impact on public relations, for instance, privatization of the various media of government has gone a long way in compelling them to be so commercial that their social responsibility angle has diminished greatly especially when relating with public and government agencies . . . The rate of corruption among journalist I will say is increasing in the sense that the level of integrity [inaudible] has decreased. So many of them want too reduce the public relations role to be that of conveyors of bribe . . . another policy of government is the demand for transparency. I think that causes public relations to be more forthcoming.

TO: How about the NIPR as a body and its regulation of the practice.
INTERVIEWEE 9: The NIPR as a body is in disarray. They have not been able to get their act together. That in itself means that they are not able to make direct input into government . . . the NIPR is not well placed to respond to collectively to regulate practice.

TO: 2. What are the benefits, if any, of compliance with regulation?
INTERVIEWEE 9: It will affect public relations to assert itself as a profession to be taken seriously and respected, but the present socioeconomic situation that makes people want to survive by all means, coupled with the disarray in the organization only means that regulation has been put at the backstage But compliance with it by any means maybe in future, will enhance the respect and impact that public relations can make on governance and society at large.

TO: 3. What are the consequences, if any, of non-compliance with regulations?
INTERVIEWEE 9: Everybody now claims to be a PR practitioner and PR roles are given to anybody who has his way. It appears that there is no regulation for anybody to abide. The calling itself is not a profession. It is rather a thing that anybody who is favored can do . . . at the end it has brought the profession to a high rate of ridicule and disrespect and despise in organizations.

TO: 4. Does regulation increase social expectation of the industry? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 9: Naturally . . . the profession has not even accreted itself yet because from all indications, they have not made it clear that there are regulations to be complied with to make one a professional . . . the only progress the profession ever made was made under the military regime which promulgated the decree that gave backing and birth to the Nigerian institute of public relations. As a profession they have not given a good footing enabling them to be recognized and respected.

TO: Would you say that there is expectation then from the society regarding the industry?
INTERVIEWEE 9: Evidently there is expectation . . . you find that every Dick and Harry claims to employ a PRO, but what roles does he give him? It means they recognize the profession, but they don’t know what it should be doing . . . they see it as a flamboyant term to designate anybody they send on errands.

TO: 5. Does regulation increase acceptance of public relations as a profession?
INTERVIEWEE 9: The failure to establish the regulation or abide by the ones they know is definitely affecting the practice of PR.

TO: Do you think it increase acceptance of public relations as a profession among other professions in Nigeria?

INTERVIEWEE 9: The acceptance has literally become compulsory . . . because of the demands of democracy itself . . . In a democracy if you want to achieve anything, you cant ignore the place of PR . . . The professionals themselves are not asserting themselves. . . . Much as people realize the need for PR, they get that input anyhow, through marketing officers, through journalists . . . anyone who can achieve for them what public relations outfit should be doing.

TO: 6. What are sources of pressure for the public relations industry in Nigeria?

INTERVIEWEE 9: Lack of funding and general ignorance both of the public and of the organization . . . and so . . . innovation is the only way to respond. Most of the time, an attempt to respond had lead too much compromise that has watered down regulations.

TO: How would you specifically explain that . . . it exerts pressure on PR?

INTERVIEWEE 9: Lack of funding in the sense that most organizations will tell you that their priority is to fund the core productive aspects of the organization . . . they don’t see PR as too productive for them to waste resources upon.

TO: How about the ignorance on the part of the society then?

INTERVIEWEE 9: The ignorance makes it more difficult in the sense that when you are trying to get supposedly enlightened people to know that PR could make input into their organization, they tend to resist it because they are either benefiting from the lack of application of PR, so they want the status quo to continue and they keep resisting you for selfish interests.

TO: 7. How is pressure exerted?

INTERVIEWEE 9: (Question 6).

TO: 8. How do you respond to such pressure/s?

INTERVIEWEE 9: If you keep explaining and you are not getting the required understanding, then you look for how to adjust and get your result otherwise.

TO: 9. What are risks associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.

INTERVIEWEE 9: In an attempt to get results, you might be compelled to step on toes, When you step on the toes of those who wield the power, they will either remove you, or they frustrate you, or get you off the job . . . Sometimes people want to be accepted anyhow, so they compromise professional standards. They cannot make impressions on their organizations because they don’t want the embarrassment that will come with rejection.

TO: 10. What are benefits associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.

INTERVIEWEE 9: You are challenged to be at your wits best to be able to convince people and overcome this pressure.

TO: 11. What is your departments/organizations source of funding/revenue?

INTERVIEWEE 9: Completely by subvention [from the government].

TO: 12. How does this affect your departments/organizations relationship with these sources in terms of flexibility and independence?
INTERVIEWEE 9: You must always be at the beck and call of [management] who is not convinced that PR is of any consequences to [them]. [They] just refuses to give and there is nothing you can do you must just obey him and exist for now. So, it affects independence . . . for long, no capital expenditure . . . to acquire equipment for PR. has been collectively for PR.

III. Evolution of Public Relations

TO: 1. How has the transition from military to democratic government affected public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 9: Both negatively and positively. Negatively in the sense that there is now so much expectations that are met in unconventional and unprofessional ways as a way of responding to new attention. Positive in the sense that it has made PR to be more appreciated as essential for any organization to survive. Previously you could say to hell with them, but now it is not easy.

Interview Ten
I-A. Contextual Variable: The Socioeconomic Environment

TO: 1. Please describe the current socioeconomic environment in Nigeria.
INTERVIEWEE 10: everything that happens these days revolves around the political scene . . . On the social side . . . politics is something that everyone takes very seriously . . . you go here a group of people that’s what they are discussing, whether they have a particular candidate that is vying for an office . . . Socially, Nigeria had not had it so good in the sense that the society has been badly hit by lack of socio amenities and lack of even enlightenment. People are just trying to rely on the little information they can get from the news media because in some parts of the country, you can hardly see a situation where television sets can be put on 24hrs or even half of that time in the sense that power generation is very poor . . . Socially it is an extremely appalling situation in the sense that people cant just freely engage other people in discussing issues because sometimes of some kind of fear that you never know who you are talking to and politically, it is the same problem, our governance has not been very well done. Economically also, you discover that the economy has not been properly developed over time. We still don’t generate enough power to industries that can keep people working and keep the industries productive . . . everybody who runs a business in Nigeria . . . has to have a standby power generating arrangement, that is the only way you can continue to do your business . . . so the situation really is not as it should be, but of course, if you compare it with what had happened in the past maybe you can say there has been some slight improvement, and the frustration boils down to the fact that this is a democracy so people thought, in fact expected, that during democracy things should have been better, so the expectations were very high and maybe that is why the achievements are not as much as people expected of

TO: 2. What are the socioeconomic issues affecting the public relations industry and practice?
INTERVIEWEE 10: You find that PR practitioners are not very well paid simply because the economy does not permit them. It is only PR practitioners that operate in specific industries, for instance in the oil and gas industries those PR people, they have it better than in other places. Then maybe also banking is a little better than in conglomerates, than in companies that produce goods and services . . . and the second problem is that PR itself because in my own opinion of
the absence of stiff competition in business you find out that many companies don’t really bother in engaging PR. In many cases they will just have a semblance of PR department. They will just employ one or two people just to be there using them as a clearing house while the top management will make all the decisions and you find that because they are not well positioned in the company, they don’t even sit in management meetings so they don’t have first hand information about what is going on in the company let alone if they tried to advise on the possible consequences of management actions . . . Another problem PR practitioners face in the environment is the problem of getting them to really advise their management, not only because they do not go to management meetings but also because many of them have been appointed based on sentimental reasons. A CEO will just wake up and believe that PR is a like personal thing, is like a personal assistant, he must be somebody that I know very well, somebody close to me personally, and it must be somebody that can be a hundred 100% loyal to me, not professionally loyal but personally loyal, and so they engage such people to work for them and you find that many of those people are not very well qualified to practice PR and to advise professionally . . . Socially there are many factors, jobs are not forthcoming in many sectors of the economy and then there are all kinds of problems in the society, even for a PR person to go down to a community and be able to persuade the community people as to why they should take the company seriously is a big problem because . . . you find that that community may be facing a lot of issues of development, maybe there is education factor, maybe they have infrastructural deficiency in the community or maybe there is hunger there, or maybe crime. And so, all these constitute some kind of stumbling blocks to the practice.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the public relations industry and practice,(Question 1A-2) and how have you responded to them?
INTERVIEWEE 10: While I was practicing as an employee, I tried to do my best. . . . I did what I could within my power, but I can tell you that it wasn’t easy. Any PR practitioner that sets his mind to doing the job as professionally as possible has a lot of hurdles to cross. No. 1, persuading the management that they should pay attention to PR, no 2. persuading the same management to allow you to have a reasonable budget that can take care of the PR problem that the company faces, no 3, persuading even the internal audience that what you are doing is directly relevant to the business of the company. A lot of them don’t understand what really the PR people are doing. Occasionally when they see some bad press about the company they now remember that “there is supposed to be a PR department or a person there, what the hell is he doing?” To some extent they believe that the PR person, if at all he is doing his job, he should be able to stop any negative publications about the company, which is wrong . . . you don’t own newspapers, you don’t own radio and TV stations, your own job is to establish a very good working relationship with the news media and to be able to put across the views of the company to be able to let them know how the company has succeeded in satisfying its shareholders, because he is always answerable to the shareholders . . . often you find that things are happening at the management meeting and you the PR practitioner don’t even know that such things are happening until there is some mistake somewhere and then somebody will start looking for you to explain, that is when they will bring you in to sort of apply the firefighting approach . . . I tried personally to advise, even if my advise is not taken, I insisted on my advise, where my advise was not sought, well of course I would stay in my own corner and continue to do my job. But by-and-large, I succeeded in getting the management to listen to what I was doing and also support our departments.
I-B. Contextual Variable: The Political Environment

TO: 1. How would you describe Nigeria’s present political environment? See above.
INTERVIEWEE 10: (Question 1A).

TO: 2. What political aspects have an impact on the public relations industry and its practices in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 10: Same thing, the economy is not doing . . . as well as it should be doing. There is an absence of competition, because if the factories are not producing at full capacity then it means they are not likely to keep their staff busy and so they are not likely to be making big enough profit to maintain a good PR department, and so you find its relevance can easily wane out in the sense that “since we are not very active business wise, then why should we be spending money on how to manage our PR department or manage the reputation of the organization?” And that also can translate into having CEO’s not getting seriously concerned about the reputation of the company [inaudible] it is only when there is a crisis on ground that they realize that they have PR people that they can call in . . . where you don’t have a good reputation already built outside a crisis, a company will have a lot of problems convincing its stakeholders as to why they are going through crisis, because in crisis you have to come out and let the whole world know what has happened, where it has happened, and why it has happened, and you must answer all questions from the news media.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the industry, your specific practices and, your public relations responses?
INTERVIEWEE 10: (Question 1A-3)
II. Coercive Isomorphism

TO: 1. How does government regulation affect public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 10: The federal government decided, really I wouldn’t just say it decided, but the PR practitioners at that time, it was in vogue to ask the federal government to regulate the practice which PR practitioners saw as a kind of recognition for the profession and so they drafted a [inaudible] in which they indicated that they wanted government to have a say in how PR is practices and so government approved it and this was how the decree . . . came into being. But unsurprisingly, some practitioners are now saying, “wait a minute, should we have in the first place asked the federal govt. to regulate PR practice?” So right now there is a process of reviewing the constitution that set up the NIPR and I am not sure whether or not that committee would definitely recommend that the federal government should stop regulating. Now what it has done is, no 1 yes, it has given us recognition by regulating . . . no 2, it has also sort of protected the institute from non qualified practitioners getting in there. But on the other side, it has also restricted the number of people practicing PR today in Nigeria from being part of the institute because if you are practicing PR . . . but . . . do not posses the basic qualification that will get you registered at the institute, that is a big problem, so you find out that there is a large chunk of PR practitioners operating outside the NIPR which is very worrisome . . . If you relax the requirement of admitting people into the institute a little bit, you can get three times that number registered which means you can get revenue. So, right now, the institute has been deprived of that revenue . . . Until late last year, the NIPR relied solely on subvention from the government
every year, but it has been stopped now, the institute has been told to find its own funding . . . In South Africa for instance where PRISA, the Public Relations Institute of South Africa has been doing a wonderful job especially in the area of training, they do a lot of training outside and they make a lot of money from the training and they have a very good [inaudible] well established, probably the best in Africa that belongs to them, it is not a rented property or that kind of thing. But yet they are not regulated by government, it is a free entry and free exit.

TO: 2. What are the benefits, if any, of compliance with regulation?
INTERVIEWEE 10: Directly to the individuals or to the institute?
TO: To the institute and to PR practitioners.
INTERVIEWEE 10: To the institute there is a direct benefit in the sense that yes it compels people to come to them and say “hey, I am a PR practitioner, can you register me?” . . . It gives them some kind of leverage on PR practitioners across the country. But to the individual practitioner, I don’t see what I get by government regulating my practice because PR practitioners are sort of divided on whether or not PR should be seen as a vocation that anybody who possesses the skills to practice should be allowed to practice without necessarily having to pass through any entrance exam . . . But the other side of it can say “No! It is a profession like any other profession and we should insist that anybody who wants to join us must comply with the regulation . . . must have some educational qualification . . . Hardly . . . do you see anybody’s name registered as a PR practitioner being struck out because the person has defaulted one way or the other.

TO:3. What are the consequences, if any, of non-compliance with regulations?
INTERVIEWEE 10: You can be picked up and prosecuted. But again, the NIPR does not have the capacity to checkmate people who are practicing illegally, they don’t have the capacity to go round and check these people, and even then, they are not the ones to prosecute them. They are to report them to the police and the police will now go and pick them up and investigate and then prosecute them. So far nobody has been prosecuted in the last sixteen years.

TO: 4. Does regulation increase social expectation of the industry? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 10: I think so. People expect that since government has recognized the practice and enacted a law governing it, then yes, people expect practitioners to be of very high standards.

TO: 5. Does regulation increase acceptance of public relations as a profession?
INTERVIEWEE 10: I’m not sure really if it does. In many societies there is no regulation and yet PR people are highly regarded . . . It has hardly added much.

TO: 6. What are sources of pressure for the public relations industry in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 10: PR practitioners working in companies or in government agencies, whenever their employers are going through difficult times they exert an lot of pressure on them they never allow them to sleep, they can’t rest, but that is really one bad aspect of the practice, it shouldn’t be like that. . . . Once there is crisis they are there, they go to work, they don’t even know when to close, sometimes they even spend the night at work. I have some colleagues now who work for politicians as employers, they stay there until very late at night everyday.
TO: What would you say those other sources of pressure could be?
INTERVIEWEE 10: One other source of pressure comes from the internal audiences, an internal audience that may not necessarily understand the job of the PR practitioner. They think maybe the company has done something good, something that should be highlighted or maybe because they have seen their competitors doing it and it is working for them. If you are not professionally sound, you can easily fall into that trap and you start jumping up and down doing it because the internal audience believes that yes you should do that, and it can easily boomerang and also CEO’s can exert pressure on you to begin to do some personal things, you know, run some personal errands for them, either things that have to do directly with their families or their community association or whatever, which shouldn’t be the case.

TO: 7. How is pressure exerted?
INTERVIEWEE 10: (Question 6).

TO: 8. How do you respond to such pressure/s?
INTERVIEWEE 10: I try to be myself. I tried to be as professional as possible. Anything I had to do, I looked at it properly and decided whether or not it is something I should do. If I felt it was something I shouldn’t do, I always went back to the management and tried to persuade them, sometimes I succeeded sometimes I didn’t depending on the issues.

TO: 9. What are risks associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 10: If it is something on the positive side, it increases your reputation within the company as a highly successful person who is highly professional. But if it is on the negative side, it portrays you in bad light and I am sure you will continue to live with that problem.

TO: 10. What are benefits associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 10: (Question 9).

TO: 11. What is your departments/organizations source of funding/revenue?
INTERVIEWEE 10: When I was practicing I was an employee and I had a yearly budget. We would always do a pre-budget meeting and the company will decide what the budget should encompass and there is usually a budget committee and the budget committee would approve it. Sometimes you don’t get what you recommend so you have to do some cuts. But right now that I am running my own PR consultancy, I don’t do any budgeting except project our income for the year and then expenditure as well.

TO: 12. How does this affect your departments/organizations relationship with these sources in terms of flexibility and independence?
INTERVIEWEE 10: I tried to have a fairly good working relationship with the management, with the internal audience, and other relevant sections that I always related with, like the legal department, finance department, operations so that I will not be drilled unnecessarily, and once you are able to convince them that you are doing what you are doing because you want to uplift the image or the reputation of the company and they are able to understand it as such, then you wouldn’t have much problems. But when you cannot convince such sections of the company that what you are doing is wholly professional, then you have a problem.

III. Evolution of Public Relations
TO: 1. How has the transition from military to democratic government affected public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 10: The transition was good, PR practitioners loved it, we thought it was great. The military era was a bad era for a lot of people if not most Nigerians. In a democracy now, there are times when things are really tough. No matter what a lot of people believe that it doesn’t matter how bad a democratically elected government is, the worst democratically elected government is still better than the best military regime. So people are able to make such distinctions, but you know the military really didn’t bother about PR, they used the barrel of the gun to coerce people and so PR people didn’t really play very important roles during those times, but now they play a lot of it and PR consultancies are springing up everywhere in the country and they are also benefiting from the democratic setting in the country.

Interview Eleven
I-A. Contextual Variable: The Socioeconomic Environment

TO: 1. Please describe the current socioeconomic environment in Nigeria.
INTERVIEWEE 11: Nigeria is a country coming from a history lest say eight years ago where we are moving in a different direction from the rest of the world. While the rest of the world was moving into a market economy, we were gradually moving into a controlled economy. Like the socialist economies use to be but thanks to democracy, the economy particularly is beginning to move in the direction of the rest of the world. It is a free market system, banking system has been properly sanitized. The number of banks in the country was cut down. The same has been done for insurance as well. There are also a lot of micro and macro economic policies that have helped to set the economy on the path of growth. Interest rates have grown tremendously in the past 8 yrs. A lot of confidence is coming back to the capital market. There has also been a very huge inflow of foreign direct investment. Many companies are returning to Nigeria, new ones are coming; unlike in those days when most of them packed up and left because the economy was very bad. Right now the economy seems to be looking up particularly in telecoms although of course there is a marginal increase in unemployment, even though some of these companies are being privatized, people are loosing their jobs, although it is natural, when they restructure people loose their jobs. However, the infrastructure has not been very wonderful and that has in a way limited the quantum and quality of foreign direct investment. For example the energy sector has not been very wonderful. The roads are worse than they were before now, no major improvement has been done. Only telecoms appears to have picked tremendously, of course coming from much less than 500,000 lines in 2001 we now have over 28 million lines in Nigeria now and most if it is mobile. The ITT sector is growing tremendously, even faster than other sectors of the economy. Security has been a major concern, of course you know what’s going on in the Niger Delta, and aside from that the incidents of armed robbery has been very alarming. People are being harassed, most banks are being robbed on a daily basis. Highway armed robbery, in the traffic, in the daytime in the nighttime, it has escalated tremendously so security to life and property are at serious risk and that is enough to start scaring investors or potential investors away. There have been a lot of political assassinations because the level of tolerance is very low in politics. People have devised other means of winning elections, some of them are extremely unorthodox. There is plenty of tension in the land because of the election that is coming up soon.
It is more of a do or die affair, even the president himself said it . . . It is not just competition, it is cut throat competition . . . People are fighting, a lot of impeachment, people are being arrested, effort is being made by government to stop some people from contesting elections. All of this is a really scattered picture.

TO: 2. What are the socioeconomic issues affecting the public relations industry and practice?
INTERVIEWEE 11: We all have jobs to do. On the positive side, using myself as a PR practitioner, my business is booming, there is a lot of activity . . . and therefore I am having to deploy more resources . . . more time . . . more human beings to do the business of creating a positive perception for my business . . . so, we are very busy things are happening, the media are happy, news is flowing . . . a lot of activities for us to manage. Even in government, in everyday life PR consultants are doing very well because there are a lot of issues out there for them to manage, managing politics, managing business . . . I can tell you that the billings are high for those who are consultants and even the budgets are high for those of us who work in the private sector (Question 1)

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the public relations industry and practice, and how have you responded to them?
INTERVIEWEE 11: As I speak to you I am recruiting more people into my team to help manage the increased level of activity of my business that need to be given PR cover. As well we have had to therefore communicate more . . . we are a lot more out there now. In the days when the tempo was low competition was of course low . . . The tempo of activity is more, the competition for share of minds of consumers and the public is increased so we have had to deploy more men on the job . . . to spend more, to be more creative, and of course we have to engage the media more . . . to creatively try and reach our audiences . . . in other aspects of PR, especially in stakeholder management . . . we also look at the communities that we do business in some of them are more restive they want attention, the consumer wants more information, we need to reach them more so we have to organize more activities, more product launches . . . for them to understand what we do because there are many more people out there seeking attention. So we have had to do more than ordinarily we would do because of the increased activity in the environment.

I-B. Contextual Variable: The Political Environment
TO: 1. How would you describe Nigeria’s present political environment?
INTERVIEWEE 11: I think in the first place this looks like a country in transition. It is a particularly delicate environment we are operating in now. Because of the way politicians in Africa . . . perceive power it is a particularly delicate and challenging time. Some of the positive results we have gotten from eight years of democracy may just go up in smoke if the attendant politics going on now is now well managed. . . . Both the economic and social environment is very bad . . . the people who have escalated the crime wave in the environment are these same politicians. It is not uncommon to see politicians arming their thugs . . . to do violence just for election purposes and then after elections, those guys go away with their guns . . . even if everything goes well, the environment is now playing host to those deviant behaviors and there really isn’t any end-in-sight to what is going on.
TO: 2. What political aspects have an impact on the public relations industry and its practices in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 11: Aside from the law making that comes from the politicians . . . we also know that there are a lot of political decisions being taken. When those decisions are taken, they directly impact on PR. Let me give you an example; The issue of the crisis of confidence between the president and his vice president has meant that the PR people in both camps have had to work on overdrive just to make sure that they win the battle in the court of public opinion . . . Most of the political actions and inactions are resulting in more jobs for PR people and they are busy engaging themselves out there in the media . . . There are also all kinds of events being put together by politicians seeking offices . . . PR people are having to organize fundraisers . . . parties and dinners and all kind of social events to attract the attention of people towards their clients who are probably politicians.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the industry, your specific practices and, your public relations responses?
INTERVIEWEE 11: These political activities have created more challenges for the practice. They have given us more work to do. They have created negative perception as well for the country itself, they have also created negative perception for certain individuals . . . as a professional group, PR people are . . . trying to live up to expectation of managing these issues, managing the perception of the public by all kinds of means, either using the media, or go one-on-one, or hold public events . . . so we can try to tackle the issue of perception. . . . What we have done as an industry group is to organize . . . awareness sessions. We have lectures where we have brought in well known speakers to come and talk about the public relations implications of some of these political issues, or managing PR in a political dispensation, or managing crisis as the case may be. For me for example, I remember having to manage some crisis that were around my business at a time. It was a long-drawn war . . . For me, crisis management is something that I am already used to now having dealt with it for the past four/five years. People are challenged to be more proactive . . . to be more incisive in analyzing the environment because really it is only when you understand the environment that you develop strategies to manage the issues for you and as professionals, the best you can actually do is to actually give your client . . . the best strategy you think can work and it is up to him to buy the strategies and support you in doing it. For those who manage politicians, who manage government . . . I suppose they are making stacks of money and are doing very well, same with those who are managing the businesses and the industries. We are all having to come up with new ideas and creative ideas to leverage good tidings in the environment right now and when the . . . situation is negative we also have to try and manage it and as you know there is so much you can say when human life and security are concerned.

II. Coercive Isomorphism

TO: 1. How does government regulation affect public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 11: Incidentally, the PR practice in Nigeria is not a very highly regulated business. It is perceived as soft and all kinds of people come in and out of public relations. Of course there are codes of conduct; there are all kinds of policies guiding the practice. Where we get hit most really as PR practitioners is the media, and of course it is because the media . . . is the strongest vehicle we use in actualizing our mandate. Any policy that affects the media affects
us. We’ve had a few assassinations of people in the media of late where . . . journalists have been “taken out,” people have been arrested, some publications have been shut down . . . such situations affect you directly because the platform is no longer there for you to say what the things you want to say and it might have well have been what the PR practitioner delivered to the media that led to the closure. These are some of the challenges that we face. If government, in any way stifle the media, it has a knock-on effect on PR people because we can then no longer feel as free.

TO: 2. What are the benefits, if any, of compliance with regulation?
INTERVIEWEE 11: Of course it is only natural that if you comply with the rules and regulations or laws, you live well, you live unperturbed. But of course as a professional, you must always interrogate rules and regulations and policies. You must engage them always to make sure that you are delivering what they are supposed to deliver for you. If a policy is becoming trite . . . you have to engage . . . the people who make the policies so that you can change them . . . if things are not right, it is your onus as a professional to interrogate those policies just so that it can create a positive and enabling environment for you to carry out your practice.

TO: 3. What are the consequences, if any, of non-compliance with regulations?
INTERVIEWEE 11: Of course you know if you don’t comply with the regulation you are likely be delisted. The NIPR has rules and regulations guiding the practice and anybody that goes against the policies of course will be removed as a practitioner. If you go contrary to the laws of the land as well, of course you will be prosecuted, that is basic . . . there are bound to be some law breakers, people who are not actually not in the business, but they find themselves there, they are not professional, they are the ones that are likely to breach the rules and ethics. . . . Because it [NIPR] is a professional body, most of the people who are in it are educated so there is a tendency for people to play by the rules. Occasionally when we find guys who step off the line, they are sanctioned.

TO: 4. Does regulation increase social expectation of the industry? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 11: I don’t know whether I can say so. I am not sure anybody will like to operate in a lawless environment. I think expectation will even be higher if it is not regulated. If it is regulated you operate within the ambits of the law and you can then create an environment yourself of what you want to achieve. What I think happens is, if it is regulated certainly people are going to operate within the bounds of the law, then we know where we stand with everybody at every time . . . and you know what your expectations are . . . and both the regulator and the regulated know what they are supposed to do and therefore I don’t think there will be undue expectations from either party except where there is need to make a change.

TO: 5. Does regulation increase acceptance of public relations as a profession?
INTERVIEWEE 11: I obviously think so. Any profession that is not regulated is not taken seriously. There must be laws and rules and regulations guiding a profession. The moment people see that this business . . . is guided by rules, and regulations, and ethics and somebody can actually seek redress if he feels offended, or somebody has done something unethical he is punished, people will respect it more. So, it is better for a profession to be regulated than not, otherwise all kinds of people can come into it and tarnish the reputation of the business and
create havoc and that way you will loose respect . . . I think regulation is best for any business, but regulation, not as in restrictions. If regulation is equal to restriction, then I will not advocate that.

TO: 6. What are sources of pressure for the public relations industry in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 11: I think for PR people the first source of pressure is his client . . . Your client wants you to deliver front page stories for him whether the story makes sense or not. Your employer also does the same., they expects you to deliver a story . . . as if you own a publication. They expect everybody to like you, they expect customers to be in love with you . . . they expect their product to be the best in the market forgetting that there is occasional dissonance, also forgetting that there is competing products . . . and competing viewpoints in the market . . . The second point will actually come from the media who happen to be the people that we use more often, we work with them . . . sometimes they have undue expectation of PR people . . . corruption is not yet finally eliminated in these parts. People think that a PR person should get stories into the media, he probably would have collected money from his business and that is not so. So, it takes you a long time to convince people that it’s not as if you have collected money to do the story. Some of them won’t believe you . . . you have to manage the media as they always continue to increase their expectations, especially as your business becomes more prosperous. They think that more money has been thrown into the field and therefore you should bring money and share for them for stories to come. Sometimes it even works against your stories coming out. Sometimes they will not publish your stories because they think that you are supposed to have done more . . . than you have done . . . I must tell you that security is an issue for us. PR people who have run the cycle, who have to be around every time . . . even as airplanes are falling off in Nigeria, you also have to engage the other people out there in the communities. I am talking about driving round in the city late, facing security challenges . . . You also face pressure from your family . . . as a PR person, you are always on the move. Many of us have had to either change our careers . . . because you hear wives complaining that the man is never around, you are flying from one location to the other, particularly for those who have multi-locational businesses . . . You come home your wife is not happy, she is complaining. This is a very important pressure point.

TO: 7. How is pressure exerted?
INTERVIEWEE 11: (Question 6).

TO: 8. How do you respond to such pressure/s?
INTERVIEWEE 11: Starting from home, you have to balance the work and home relationship. It is very important for you to try to strike a balance . . . you must make your family realize that this is where my bread comes from . . . and you need to maximize anytime. Any opportunity you have, you must use it wisely with your family, show a lot of love. If you are traveling for instance, and you can, you take your family so that they can experience you at work . . . the more they come to see your events, the more they will understand what you go through . . . For your business that is a more fiscal issue. We continue to engage our people just for them to understand that Rome was not built in a day . . . they need to understand that certain things cannot be achieved overnight and that certain things are not possible and the more you engage your system, if you are a professional you are more likely to get away with certain things. You would have laid the foundation before then, you would have had regular business sessions with management,
making presentations with your CEO . . . and they understand how things work . . . For the journalist, what I do is engage them . . . If you do media relations very well, you get these guys to know you better, they get to understand you, they know how your business works . . . so it is easy for everybody to understand therefore that you are not making money and you are not giving [it] to the press people, because you are not in the business to bribe the journalist. You are there to provide content for their newspaper . . . When you convince them to start thinking professionally, you find out that your job is smoother. That is not to say . . . you don’t give gifts once in a while. It is a sign of good business to exchange gifts. But I won’t give gifts to the detriment of my business, but once in a while, you show some love.

TO: 9. What are risks associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 11: If you have a management that does not understand they can fire you . . . they can fire an agency because they believe that they are not delivering value. And that is not so, sometimes it is because they do not understand what you do . . . it becomes more challenging when they find out that competition is doing it and you are not doing it . . . You stand the risk of being blanked out in the media sometimes if you do not show good relationship with the media . . . it can actually create problems for your business . . . so you must find a way to manage your relationship with people . . . Even at home it is a challenge . . . many people have lost their children [inaudible] . . . their wives, somebody has lost his relationship, families have broken down . . . if you don’t take time, the allure of social engagement . . . may just put you in trouble family wise.

TO: 10. What are benefits associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 11: On the positive side . . . sometimes it pays well. PR people are now being recognized, some of us are top managers in our businesses, you drive good cars, you wear good clothes . . . It gives you the opportunity to network . . . you meet top class people in society. You have the opportunity for personal aggrandizement . . . Some people make a lot of money. It can actually make ways for you to make money when you leave the job . . . you can actually go on to becoming a proprietor yourself if you know how those things work.

TO: 11. What is your departments/organizations source of funding/revenue?
INTERVIEWEE 11: It is a business budget. There is a budget every year for PR . . . the business budget is for our expenses and those expenses includes salaries, travels, publications. Etc.

TO: 12. How does this affect your departments/organizations relationship with these sources in terms of flexibility and independence?
INTERVIEWEE 11: I don’t know about independence. For a corporate PR group you cannot be independent per se because you are actually a mouthpiece for your organization so you can’t be independent. You are saying exactly what you want your business to say. You will advise them professionally. Of course there are times when they are bound to say “no sorry I want you to say this, I want you to do it this way.” So, independence comes really when they have gained a lot of confidence in you and they think you can do thing for them. So, they can trust you to go out and represent them very well . . . Independence is not exactly an issue for us because we are a staff of the business, but I know that for those who are in consulting business, if a client is not seeing your point, you will take a walk from the account. If we don’t agree on how to do things and I am not sure that I want to bend, then I will do it . . . You can be flexible and pay for
independence which you can earn by proving that you know what you are doing, that is if you are working on the corporate side.

III. Evolution of Public Relations

TO: 1. How has the transition from military to democratic government affected public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 11: The transition from military to democratic government has affected the environment under which we operate. Basically. Maybe not directly, but indirectly so because it has done is that we now have a free market economy, we now have an open market of ideas, we now have freedom of speech . . . more freedom of movement . . . in a democracy, it is easier for anything associated with information communications to thrive. It has a . . . spill over effect with PR with freeier environment, a free economy. A free economy means that there is more business for us now . . . businesses are growing . . . freedom to put things in the media, free to have events . . . and the media are free to report and write about issues in the environment without being guarded so much. Democracy has brought about better life, better values for PR people we are freeier now, we are more relaxed, the budget is bigger, the economy is booming . . . so it is good for us.

Interview Twelve
I-A. Contextual Variable: The Socioeconomic Environment

TO 1. Please describe the current socioeconomic environment in Nigeria.
INTERVIEWEE 12: .Nigeria is obviously a rich nation rated 6th among the worlds largest producer of petroleum products. But the reality on ground is that the standard of living of the average Nigerian has no direct relation at all with this level of wealth that is ascribed to the nation. Accommodation is still a huge problem . . . unemployment is still a huge problem, people graduating from schools and cant find work. The state of insecurity is so high, that the “haves” those who have it live under a siege mentality. You can’t go out; you can’t even flaunt what your sweat has given you because of the fear of the reaction of the less privileged whom the system has completely dehumanized. The level of education has fallen so-much-so because of the level of poverty. People are now accepting money to admit unqualified students into the school system

TO: 2. What are the socioeconomic issues affecting the public relations industry and practice?
INTERVIEWEE 12: The biggest problem facing the PR industry in Nigeria is that of credibility . . . We are in a society where everyone suspects every other person. Because of poverty, charlatans have invaded the profession. Everybody answers the name public relations officer and so the very few credible ones have this battle of credibility . . . before they can begin to make any progress. Once you are operating, especially in the area of press relations, Nigerians believe that their newspapers no longer tell them the truth once the information is coming from a government establishment. So, you have the first factor, to establish the believability of your message, and your credibility as a practitioner because you find out that the very top functionaries are made to issue information that are not exactly the truth and this is ethically wrong of PR, and we see it being done. Like I said this has to do with the poverty level in the land, everybody is poor, and so the few public relations practitioners who are in the field will want to keep their jobs at the expense of some basic ethical factors. . . . The tools are not there for the public relations officer
to perform optimally . . . I do not have e-mail facilities, my telephone has been down for almost two years, I don’t buy newspapers to monitor the press. . . . I am not empowered in any way to function. . . . I do not have a digital camera, I do not have an in-house press where I can print my bulletins . . . Under this scenario public relations is at a great disadvantage . . . and sometimes when you have the tools to work you do not even have the qualified people because the profession in Nigeria has been invaded by charlatans.

TO: What will you say are the socioeconomic factors affecting PR then?
INTERVIEWEE 12: The society does not place any value so much on public relations . . . they believe that everyone who is a public relations person is an errand boy . . . . Few schools really run PR as a course. What you have in Nigeria is mass communication as a general area, then PR is seen as a post graduate course, not as a first degree course. So, you have general practitioners who have read mass communication who have invaded the profession . . . . The professional body which the practitioners have been able to establish . . . it barks, but it does not bite. So it is not able to function the way it should as a regulatory body sanitizing the profession . . . because in some cases, the top practitioners employed by the same govt. who made these laws are not registered, some of them are not even registerable but they are the ones who get the plump jobs in the oil industry and in the financial sector. . . .and it is s discouraging for people to even join the profession because there is nothing enviable in the lives of those who are already there because they are not well paid most times . . . and so there is nothing that will want to attract any smart person . . . into the profession.

TO: How do these issues influence the public relations industry and practice, and how have you responded to them?
INTERVIEWEE 12: We have not has enough institutional backing in that area. Sometimes you find that those who are even in charge of those professional bodies at state level, they themselves don’t qualify. . . . The highest level of practice is being a fellow . . . but you find out that some of your colleagues were given this title just to patronize them, or maybe to reflect federal character at that level in the practice of the profession and that has not done us any good. You will find someone who is supposed to be a fellow who will find it difficult explaining to you what PR is indeed . . . and again, government institutions keep employing charlatans. . . . The institute is looking inwardly to see how it can tighten the appropriate legislation concerning the practice of PR in this country. . . . We are hoping that we can delist people who are not qualified, . . . we can sanction those who are doing unethical things . . . and as individuals, some of us are beginning to carry the gospel, like in my office I insisted that my assistant must be registered . . . I don’t attend any function or seminars, or conference organized by those that I don’t know their credentials in PR. By doing that I am protesting . . . but in this regard there is very little you can do.

I-B. Contextual Variable: The Political Environment

TO: How would you describe Nigeria’s present political environment?
INTERVIEWEE 12: The political environment is an all comers affair. We have political parties, about fifty registered now, but the way you find people . . . cross-carpeting from one to the other you know that this game is not governed by ideology . . . and principles. People are looking for political space for what they can get out of the system. Nigerian political system cannot be identified on the political continuum of left and right, . . . we find obviously [inaudible] fellows
who are aggregating and doing things together just because everybody is looking for political space. Violence is still a major characteristic of the political system; bribery is still a part of it. Election rigging is a major part of it . . . you would have imagined that the primaries was like a marketing strategy to know the candidates who have electoral possibilities . . . and for the party to carry such people to win elections. . . . That is not what is happening, we have seen people who won the primaries but their candidature was swapped for people who didn’t even contest . . . . There is no democracy being seen anywhere because the money bags have hijacked the thing. If you look closely, you see that most of the presidential candidates are former generals in the army, those who have stolen a lot of public funds, and they are now re-plowing this money to rule this country.

TO: 2. What political aspects have an impact on the public relations industry and its practices in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 12: This should have been a field day for PR people to market and to package candidates for the electorate, but in a situation where election is rigged, you don’t need a PR person because his work is intellectual, his work is to win votes. People win in Nigeria without votes, so you don’t need a PR person . . . people vote for candidates they have never seen, people vote for candidates, they don’t know their manifesto. So, the PR man has really no role in this, he has been reduced to a printer. The best he can do sometimes . . . is to help them digitally design posters . . . but beyond printing, you find out that the PR person has little or no input.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the industry, your specific practices and, your public relations responses?
INTERVIEWEE 12: The institute has not done too well in that area too because Nigeria has never been in a democracy. We don’t even have enough PR people who have been properly exposed in the area of political image marketing. There are a few people in that area. . . . There is need for people in America where there is democracy, and where we have seen real democratic elections. . . . to come here for manpower development exercises. PR consultants should try to synergize, the local ones should find the foreign ones in America. . . . Nigerians should be strengthened by their more experienced and exposed foreign counterparts . . . such programs should be done locally because if it is done abroad . . . people here will face visa problem . . . problem of cost etc. It can either be done institutionally through the institute or through private initiatives . . . Alternatively, for companies that have the money, they can send their employees on . . . something like industrial attachment.

II. Coercive Isomorphism

TO: 1. How does government regulation affect public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 12: I would like to believe that the government has done quite a lot in professionalizing the institute by enacting a law. . . . The institute has also established study centers in different parts of the country. . . . I will say government policies and enactments have been favorable, but the problem lies more with the professionals and to some extent, the government. The government cannot put all this in place and still go ahead to employ charlatans, they cannot enact a law and be the same ones to break that law. . . . Government still has very big role to play in putting on ground policies that will enable the profession thrive in this country. And again, those who are already in the field, in the institute itself . . . the institute has not done
enough to sanitize itself. If the institute can do that then I think the public will take us more seriously.

TO: 2. What are the benefits, if any, of compliance with regulation?
INTERVIEWEE 12: That is a very valid question. It is valid in the sense that charlatanism . . . mediocrity in the profession will continue for as long as there is no sanction. The question I have asked them . . . is “if I don’t join the institute, what am I loosing? . . . The truth is that you are loosing nothing. . . . Till date, not a single person has been prosecuted for doing PR with doubtful qualifications. . . . The institute has an ethical committee, not a single person has stood before it for the breach of its ethics. . . . So, the truth of the matter is those who are not members are even privileged because they are not subjected to any monthly subscriptions, they are not subjected to attending conferences where money is spent . . . they are just there doing their business, and once you have a brother, a townsman in high places you get a plump job . . . many top positions . . . are occupied by non professionals, people who are not registered to practice and the institute is doing nothing about it.

TO: Are you saying there are no benefits of compliance with the regulation.
INTERVIEWEE 12: No, there is no benefit. If there was benefits . . . my subscription should have been giving me a journal which would be helping me in building myself, my capacity to . . . deliver, there is no journal, my membership should grant me certain privileges in looking for jobs it doesn’t do that anymore.

TO: 3. What are the consequences, if any, of non-compliance with regulations?
INTERVIEWEE 12: There are no consequences. The consequences are there in statutes . . . nobody has been publicly indicted or ridiculed.

TO: 4. Does regulation increase social expectation of the industry? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 12: Yes it should ideally. Because where there is regulation, [it] will spell out certain conditionalities which should enhance professionalism. . . . Regulation stops bastardization of the profession, the regulation is like a gate keeping arrangement to sift the chaff from the substance. So, once regulation is in place, of course expectations will be high. In the Nigerian case that is what we thought. Expectations are really high, but in the institute now, you can enter without doing any exam . . . and people who get things so cheap don’t place any value on it.

TO: 5. Does regulation increase acceptance of public relations as a profession?
INTERVIEWEE 12: Yes it should, because it attracts public respect when they know that somebody is being regulated, that it is not an all comers affair . . . in fact, if anything, that is the reason for regulation . . . and it increases your value as a professional

TO: 6. What are sources of pressure for the public relations industry in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 12: (Question 1A.2).

TO: 7. How is pressure exerted?

TO: 8. How do you respond to such pressure/s?
INTERVIEWEE 12: I went round to all the major establishments here . . . asking the chief
executives if they don’t have PR to establish one, and if they do to make them join the institute
so that they can be regulated . . . we arranged and had several TV discussions and radio
discussions where the people were sensitized and educated on what PR is all about . . . I also do
part time teaching . . . where mass communication is new and I have done career talks in
secondary schools. These are a little private initiatives.
TO: What about your response to no internet?
INTERVIEWEE 12: We patronize the private internet cafes in town . . . sometimes I go to
struggle with students in the public library to read newspapers . . . I charge my phone from my
pocket to do my press relations . . . I use my personal car to shuttle around anytime there is any
public function . . . to go pick the press men and sometime when I am tired, I give them money
from my pocket to take taxis . . . In the absence of capacity building things, I am training my
staff myself . . . I lecture them, I give them texts to read in PR.

TO: 9. What are risks associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 12: I am operating at the position of a [blank] and I don’t have internet facilities
in my office . . . my own office is not given a car, so that anytime I have to distribute my press
release, I . . . either go by taxi or I use my car, sometimes it takes me two, three, four, five days
to do that. Sometimes I have a public function to carry out, sometimes the public function is
carried out at my expense, I only get a refund after two months. So, sometimes, because I need
my money to do my private things, I don’t want to commit my funds, and in those areas I fail. I
don’t feel good about it. It robs you of your self esteem.

TO: 10. What are benefits associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 12: I think the only benefit is that it pushes you to the wall to the point where
the best in you is seen . . . because sometimes we need a crisis situation to bring out the best in us
. . . because the little you have you make the best of it . . . It brings out a lot of commitment, it
makes you begin to practice at an altruistic dimension.

TO: 11. What is your departments/organizations source of funding/revenue?
INTERVIEWEE 12: It is purely government. [We have a] budget and part of it is for my office.
But it will interest you to note that for almost seven to nine years we had no budget to run. If I
wanted to replace the bulb in my office I had to apply [for it] but recently, they have started
giving us [inaudible] of N10,000 when you exhaust it you apply for another one.

TO: 12. How does this affect your departments/organizations relationship with these sources in
terms of flexibility and independence?
INTERVIEWEE 12: It makes us completely dependent on the government, on the [management]
. . . and no flexibility at all.

III. Evolution of Public Relations

TO: 1. How has the transition from military to democratic government affected public relations
practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 12: It will surprise you to note that the military were using more of the PR
people than the civilian administration . . . Most of the PR people prospered under military
administration than they are doing now under the civilian administration. The civilian administration has turned out to be a government of patronage, you patronize people not because of who they are and what they can do but for what their relationship is with you. . . . The military government is an aberration . . . so, perhaps to package themselves to build up their reputation, I would say they made use of the PR people more than the civilians are doing. . . . If there has been any encouragement on the side of the PR people, it’s more from the private sector. But you see, an economy where competition is lacking, PR takes the knock because whatever you offer is accepted. Most of the services are monopolistic services. Like in the GSM business, we can see real PR and marketing taking place now because everybody is trying to build up his reputation for public acceptability and goodwill . . . But in government, NEPA does what it wants to do, if you get light fine, if you don’t get light fine . . . and we are hoping that with the way government is now privatizing, PR has a bright future in this country because with privatization, the profit instinct in the private sector will come down to the point where reputation becomes an issue with corporate organizations.

Interview Thirteen
I-A. Contextual Variable: The Socioeconomic Environment

TO: 1. Please describe the current socioeconomic environment in Nigeria.
INTERVIEWEE 13: I would say that in the last decade, the economy is dwindling, going down, and that has affected the social environment in Nigeria. What that means is that thinks are not looking very good. The economy has gone down, the education system has broken down, we have low per capita income, the unemployment rate is high, we lack the infrastructure and it has affected . . . the mood of the nation very negatively. In the past decade you will notice that we have a lot of youth on our street who are well able to be productive but are not enabled because of the environmental factors that I had mentioned earlier. Because of unemployment rate which is high you have students that have the necessary qualifications who cannot find jobs to do, and what that has done is, they have resorted to doing, should I say, menial jobs, and that has affected the psyche of youth in Nigeria.

TO: 2. What are the socioeconomic issues affecting the public relations industry and practice?
INTERVIEWEE 13: What all of these have done to PR is that it is difficult to brand a bad product. The image wealth is poor . . . PR as you know is a discipline that tries to build brands . . . to the extent that it would interest the public or stakeholders who want to do business with the company or with the brand. Nigeria as a brand, with all of the factors that I have mentioned it’s difficult for PR practitioners to build the brand. . . . What that has done is that the PR practitioner will need to do a lot more to be able to sell his or her own product.
TO: You mentioned unemployment and low per capita income and educated youths who have no job opportunities, how would you say that has affected the PR industry?
INTERVIEWEE 13: Because there are no visible openings for practitioners in PR they have resorted to doing other things. In other words, if a practitioner decides to specialize in the core duties of a PR practitioner globally, you would probably go hungry . . . people that are specialized in PR do other things. What that means is that we are loosing professionals because there are no jobs for them and the core thing that they are supposed to do will not impact on them economically.
TO: 3. How do these issues influence the public relations industry and practice, and how have you responded to them?
INTERVIEWEE 13: As a practitioner it is our duty to continue to strive to build our brand. Like I said before, our core need as a nation is to build our brand in such a manner that it will attract investment that will grow the economy. It is a lot of work for PR practitioners because we need to also not just trying to paint pictures or telling the stories the way that it will be suitable to brand our country; we need to also let the people of the country understand what has been the problem. As a practitioner what we have done in the last few years is to try to . . . work the government on one side, and the people on the other side. Recently, in the middle of last year, we planned a training program for practitioners because they are the voice . . . inviting practitioners from [abroad] . . . because we could learn from other countries . . . indeed the government and the people of Nigeria understand the need to re-brand . . . Nigeria as a nation. We have so many good things going for us, and we have so many things we could do to turn around our economy. And we need to also de-emphasize again, those other areas that would not be good for our country as a brand. What we did was to seek to tell our stories in a better way. . . . As a practitioner . . . myself and my team put this training together, which we felt would be one of the ways we could communicate to the Nigerian public and to our publics abroad about the things in Nigeria that are sellable.

I-B. Contextual Variable: The Political Environment

TO: 1. How would you describe Nigeria’s present political environment?
INTERVIEWEE 13: Honestly, it is developing. What I can say personally is that our political environment is unique. It is so dynamic . . . because we have seen what happens in other countries and if we need to make direct comparison we might be judging us wrongly. So, the environment . . . by April will be going to the polls. People are a bit laid-back because they even don’t seem to understand what we are expecting in the next poll. . . . I can even say that probably the politicians themselves are not so sure of what they are delivering . . . or what the populace expect them to deliver. It is such a situation that is unpredictable . . . and I would go back to saying that it is unique because it is probably not following the way democracy is being practiced. . . . I wouldn’t want to use the word that democracy is relative, but, the political environment in Nigeria now is unique.

TO: 2. What political aspects have an impact on the public relations industry and its practices in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 13: The unsettling nature of politics in Nigeria and the things that happen . . . it is not describable because you find out that in some ways, even court processes during political squabbles are not credible, people are wary, impeachment processes are like just the norm. I’ll give you one scenario . . . you could have three or four governors in a few months . . . you find out that the governor is impeached and he is returned, he is impeached again and he is returned and you loose count. What now happens to PR is that it doesn’t allow you communicate with the public in earnest because today you are saying one thing, and tomorrow you are saying a different thing. So, it is a challenge to PR practice because you need to be credible, you need to be believed. And as a practitioner, sometimes we don’t even know what to believe. It is really a big challenge to PR practice in Nigeria because things are dynamic, processes sometimes are not followed.
TO: 3. How do these issues influence the industry, your specific practices and, your public relations responses?
INTERVIEWEE 13: I try to practice global PR. Recently . . . we are playing ambassadorial roles. . . . But the challenge we have because of the instability of the polity is that people don’t want to invest in an economy which is very unstable . . . sometime, you need to do really a few letters and maybe back it up with phone calls and even visits for people to believe you. So that has affected some of the things we do. We could get them done faster if we had a more stable political environment.

II. Coercive Isomorphism

TO: 1. How does government regulation affect public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 13: I must say that it has not been so bad. The good news is that today, you could say that there are regulations and rules guiding PR at least in paper. Now there are certain sanctions on anybody who is [inaudible] from the rules. However, there is a level playing ground, we are allowed to practice and NIPR being empowered has also had a little running battle with the government. because sometimes, it is difficult for them to draw the line with certain rules that are laid down by the government. But so far, I think . . . the regulation of the government has not been very tough on PR practice.

TO: 2. What are the benefits, if any, of compliance with regulation?
INTERVIEWEE 13: Definitely, before now PR practice in Nigeria was an all comers thing, but today except if you are a member of the institute, you probably won’t be able to practice openly . . I would not say that every other person that is in practice is a member, but in the event that you are not a member, you will not be recognized . . . It is positive that we have that.

TO: 3. What are the consequences, if any, of non-compliance with regulations?
INTERVIEWEE 13: You will be sanctioned. . . . There are some fines that you will pay and in extreme cases they will clamp down on you, they will close your shop.

TO: 4. Does regulation increase social expectation of the industry? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 13: Yes . . . people are now training in different aspects of PR, people are now becoming more professional, people now understand the tools that PR employs in practice . . . people now understand the distinction between PR practice and the other areas of marketing communication.(Question 5).

TO: 5. Does regulation increase acceptance of public relations as a profession?
INTERVIEWEE 13: Yes. PR has a face . . . in Nigeria, people have come to respect practitioners, practitioners have known the expectations from them, and therefore they are trying to do the right things, the things that are expected from them. Now PR practice has become viable. Before now people didn’t understand the importance of PR in our country, but today PR practitioners are now part of policy makers. Until recently their grown in blue chip companies
was terminal . . . because their roles, their importance was not defined. But today the private sector, the government sector . . . has realized the importance of PR in the economy.

TO: 6. What are sources of pressure for the public relations industry in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 13: Number one pressure is believability. The biggest challenge we have is to be able to sell our products, products in the sense of brands. Another challenge . . . [is] if clients are signing you on . . . they will rather have you do the things they want you to do rather than do the things that the profession requires. And because you really depend on clients, sometimes, some people will probably want to bend. As you know we need the media . . . often times . . . it is not just peculiar to Nigeria . . . you will need for instance to buy into the media because you need it as a tool for practice. Challenges are funding, in the sense that you need people to budget . . . people need to understand why there should be a budget set aside for PR. What happens most of the time is that people expect your offering to be value added, they see it as value added, they don’t see it as something that is quantifiable, something that should be paid for.

TO: 7. How is pressure exerted?
INTERVIEWEE 13: (Question 6).

TO: 8. How do you respond to such pressure/s?
INTERVIEWEE 13: They way we have responded is to do things differently and that is very simple. If you are very scientific in the way you do your practice and you are very professional, then people will begin to need you, if you add value people will come back to you and that is the only way that they can understand that they have to pay for your services. But if you don’t do things differently . . . then it will be difficult for you to face those challenges. . . . We ensure that we understand what is required from this profession and we continue to train, we continue to learn and you continue to do those things that will make you distinct from people that don’t understand the profession.

TO: 9. What are risks associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 13: The profession is so viable, it is what you require in your everyday living . . . because if you are not able to tell the story in such a manner that you will be needed . . . then there will be difficulties . . . it puts you ahead of others because you begin to understand different publics and how best to get them to buy into whatever you are doing . . . it makes you a better person, it makes you more knowledgeable. Beyond that you meet almost every type of person in this world and it helps. . . . Because we sell service . . . you find out that you do the things you love doing and you get some monetary rewards from them, and then you impact on people . . . Most importantly you help in changing things through [inaudible] through discussions . . . What are the other sides to it? I wouldn’t even say it is negative . . . it keeps you on your toes.

TO: 10. What are benefits associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 13: (Question 9).

TO: 11. What is your departments/organizations source of funding/revenue?
INTERVIEWEE 13: Remunerations will always come from clients. We offer them services and they pay for it.
TO: 12. How does this affect your departments/organizations relationship with these sources in terms of flexibility and independence?
INTERVIEWEE 13: It is really very easy, we work in partnership . . . what we do as an agency, because we deal with different other organizations, we come up with . . . a wider outlook of PR solutions to the needs of these clients and that is what they are paying for . . . Because they pay for our services, does that mean that probably we will be doing the things they need us to do or to say the things they need us to say? No! As practitioners we will be doing ourselves a disservice by selling a bad product. So we also play advisory roles because we have a bigger picture . . . of what the feeling of the public or the stakeholder are . . . we would advise on areas that need improvement . . . Sometimes there are clashes when we are asked to either exaggerate or hide the truth . . . We have lost some accounts because we opted not to do the bidding of our clients.

III. Evolution of Public Relations

TO: 1. How has the transition from military to democratic government affected public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 13: It was a breather because before that happened you couldn’t do anything as a practitioner as much as we wanted. You find out that practitioners were taking everything on sufferance nobody did much because you couldn’t do much, nobody believed you. The government before we became democratic became its own PR practitioner. They tried to get a buy-in from the rest of the world, but that was very difficult. So, the shift has been such a relief for our profession . . . we have done well, we will need to do a lot more. We are growing and we are beginning to get an understanding of what we are supposed to be doing and before now, before the democratic government, you couldn’t write, you couldn’t talk we lost a couple of people that spoke against . . . the non-democratic government.

Interview Fourteen
I-A. Contextual Variable: The Socioeconomic Environment

TO: 1. Please describe the current socioeconomic environment in Nigeria.
INTERVIEWEE 14: [It] is one in which there is a lot of challenges, and those challenges are opportunities for growth . . . there are problems of electricity generation and distribution, there is problem of water and there is the problem of safety and security of lives and property, there is also problem of health care facility which are never enough, there is also the problem of education at all levels . . . it is a growing economy . . . there is a lot of demand on the services. The government have never been the best managers of the economy, so, increasingly now there has been a lot of talk about private sector/public sector partnerships so that a lot of what the government use to provide for will now be provided by private enterprises so that the government will be playing the role of regulator to ensure that things are done properly . . . In terms of economics, there is a lot of investment in the traditional sectors in terms of oil and gas, telecoms, and high end manufacturing. . . . There is a lot of activity in the small and medium scale enterprise sector . . . a lot of money exists in the formal sector, that is those who are yet to be captured by the statistics, those who may not have bank accounts . . . and those who do not pay their taxes . . . What has happened in the last four to five years is that government has done a good job of fixing the macro-economic issues which is sort of like putting the foundation there
for growth . . . we’ve gone from having nearly over $40 billion in debt to less than $5 billion now . . . the image of the country internationally has improved despite one or two incidents in the Niger Delta. Nigeria is seen once again as a destination for investment. The other reality is that Nigeria is competing with other emerging markets in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East. But, there is still a lot more that can be done to generate jobs. Sectors like oil and gas are growing . . . in terms of fiscal, monetary issue, the currency is stable.

TO: 2. What are the socioeconomic issues affecting the public relations industry and practice?
INTERVIEWEE 14: In as much as it affects every sector, it also affects the practice of PR . . . in PR . . . you talk about the perception or the role of PR in the society, how much influence does PR have? I think . . . it’s growing. You can also talk about marketing communication and PR being a sub-unit of that. There is a lot of money being spent on PR by companies across the sectors and it is seen as a major driver of business . . . we’ve seen in the last few years a lot of money flowing into PR . . . because of activities in the financial sector. The banks have had to consolidate; several companies and banks . . . have also had to re-brand themselves. So, the ultimate beneficiary are PR practitioners and people in various segments of the media. . . . The flip side of that is that there are issues with regards to the professionalism of PR. A lot of people think PR is an all comers affair, so you have the problem of professionals and charlatans . . . competing for the business of PR accounts of companies . . . There is also the issue of qualification and certification of PR and how relevant they are . . . you can talk about poverty levels. Certainly, poverty and infrastructure level affect PR practice. Despite all the advancements in IT and telecoms, there is still a lot that can be done . . . the environment is still very unfriendly for PR practitioners. The perception [is] that they are just people who are spinning and who want to take your money. . . . The other challenge is that society itself is yet to really understand PR, or people in business see PR as a fire fighting tool rather than a proactive thing . . . that they have to plan for and budget for when they are doing their strategies.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the public relations industry and practice, and how have you responded to them?
INTERVIEWEE 14: You just have to do what is right, you have to equip yourself with knowledge. In an environment like this, you can’t . . . work with everybody, so you have to basically look at the field and say “Who are the players and what are they doing?” then you have to identify those you want to play with . . . what you look for rare those that will add value to you and your job . . . You basically have a wide network so that when there are issues, you know where to go . . . it all boils down to the PR persons abilities and competencies and training of course is part of that . . . and you have to have a nose for trends so that you pick up those trends and flow with them.

I-B. Contextual Variable: The Political Environment

TO: 1. How would you describe Nigeria’s present political environment?
INTERVIEWEE 14: it’s vibrant, it’s fertile . . . it is fermenting . . . all sorts of things happen and PR and the media is always in the middle to distill all of this . . . This election is a key indicator of how well we will move forward in subsequent years.

TO: 2. What political aspects have an impact on the public relations industry and its practices in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 14: The political practitioners . . . do a lot of things. They are doing a lot of rallies, town-hall meetings . . . without communications and the role of PR, nobody gets to know about this things. So, PR to a large extent is at the center of publicizing political activities. So, yes practically every aspect of politics is being exposed by people in PR.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the industry, your specific practices and, your public relations responses?

INTERVIEWEE 14: My purview is basically my office, what I do for my company. So it is basically a wait and see, and watch, attitude and watch and hope that things go right because politics is about business when you think about it . . . if politics is not right, then business and investment cannot continue. So, to that extent that we hope that things go well, it affects my practice business wise. Now that I am in the political side, I am basically applying the rules to ensure that my candidate gets a fair share of the media space out there.

II. Coercive Isomorphism

TO: 1. How does government regulation affect public relations practice in Nigeria?

INTERVIEWEE 14: Constitutionally PR is regulated by the freedom of information act . . . and we have statutes and professional bodies that have been chartered under law to certify practitioners. We have the regulatory umbrella to do what we have to do . . . you have the Nigerian institute of Public Relations which is trying its best to promote the practice of PR across the board. They might have their issues, but at least they are doing what they should do, which is promote PR. So, to that extent that the professional bodies and institutions are recognized under the law, you just have to do your job and do it within the ambit of the law.

TO: 2. What are the benefits, if any, of compliance with regulation?

INTERVIEWEE 14: It basically puts you out of trouble. If there are penalties for non-compliance I don’t know, but being professional, being ethical, and being through has always been the role to take . . . so the benefit is that you have a client who is happy with you and you have a market which is responding to your initiatives. So, to that extent, the market will reward you for doing what is right.

TO: 3. What are the consequences, if any, of non-compliance with regulations?

INTERVIEWEE 14: You may succeed short term, but in the medium to long term you would have ended up spending money and achieving very little and you have low patronage . . . If it is corporate thing, there is loss of reputation . . . and there is a loss of patronage if it is a product.

TO: 4. Does regulation increase social expectation of the industry? Please explain.

INTERVIEWEE 14: Not necessarily. I don’t think so . . . If certain things are legal or illegal and you are on the wrong side of the law, it will be obvious . . . As long as you are creative and you do what is right, regulation is just there. It not as if it is always hanging and you are thinking about it.

TO: So you wouldn’t say that the society expects a certain level of professionalism or ethics from public relations practitioners.
INTERVIEWEE 14: . . . I believe they do, but we assume that all societies know what is good and what is bad. So, that is not a yes or know or black and white answer . . . we exist in a very interdependent region now . . . so the idea of “I am doing something here and it is only us it affects,” is over.

TO: 5. Does regulation increase acceptance of public relations as a profession?
INTERVIEWEE 14: It is possible, but it is tough to say. It will help if it is to promote professionalism and to ensure that the right people with the right qualifications . . . end up practicing, it will help. But then again . . . people read physics and end up getting the certification . . . If you want to be restrictive in terms of the qualifications and entry level required, you might then be stifling creativity itself . . . You have a lot of PR practitioners who are not registered members of the institute of public relations practice. Some of them do well, so it is not a “by force” thing.

TO: 6. What are sources of pressure for the public relations industry in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 14: One of the pressures . . . has always been the short term attitude of Nigerians or of the market place. For PR to work, it has to be sustained . . . but Nigerians can be flippant in their demands . . . and the PR practitioner is in the middle of all this . . . and then there is the issue of budget . . . he who has more money always has the ability to do more.

TO: 7. How is pressure exerted?
INTERVIEWEE 14: (Question 6).

TO: 8. How do you respond to such pressure/s?
INTERVIEWEE 14: I have never been in a situation of such pressure. If there are, then I just do what I have to do to counter or to get what I don’t have. Sometimes, you have more money, but you don’t have creativity, you don’t have contacts to make your PR work. So it is just a function of the dynamics of the environment. PR is all about networks . . . so when you have to sell ideas to people on behalf of clients or to the publics, it is all about knowing where to go to and utilizing those networks and channels . . . If you ever find yourself in any scenario or situation, you can always get out of it by addressing the issues and talking to the relevant people that will help you effect a change.

TO: 9. What are risks associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 14: the people that employ PR practitioners themselves don’t seem to understand PR, or they think they understand PR . . . they also do not invest enough in the PR activities and budgets.

TO: 10. What are benefits associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 14: Those who get it right, there is a lot of payback in terms of more market share, more patronage, or customer loyalty as the case may be.

TO: 11. What is your departments/organizations source of funding/revenue?
INTERVIEWEE 14: We had a budget from [my organization]. Every financial year, we plan for our activities and we plan a proposal and a plan of action which . . . gets approved by
management, and this of course comes from the total [organizational] budget . . . once you get your approval at the beginning of the financial year, you just follow your course of action.

TO: 12. How does this affect your departments/organizations relationship with these sources in terms of flexibility and independence?
INTERVIEWEE 14: My department is seen as a cost center . . . what I do is to spend on advertising, spend money on PR, . . . on communication internally or externally . . . to enhance the market value of the [organization], protect the image and reputation of the [organization], and to create loyalty, and we do that at the corporate level and at the product specific level.
TO: So would you say that you had your independence and flexibility without any interference from management?
INTERVIEWEE 14: You can have some independence, but total independence does not exist. There is always a question of budget, of what is possible but not legal. There is always . . . things you have to consider and weigh . . . is it too expensive, is it affordable, and then you're balancing this with other priorities also . . . timing issues, policy of government, competition activities . . . it depends . . . I don’t think that anybody who works in any company . . . in PR will say that they have 100% dependence. Your loyalty is to your organization.

III. Evolution of Public Relations

TO: 1. How has the transition from military to democratic government affected public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 14: It's been a boom for public relations, its been positive.
TO: What specific aspects will you say there have been improvements?
INTERVIEWEE 14: It is a more friendly atmosphere . . . there is a lot more knowledge in the environment about the need for PR practitioners, and the need for advice and the need to plan. And then there is a lot more money circulating the business environment which is good, and there is a lot more competition which is good too, it is tougher but it is good . . . there is a lot of opportunities all over the place.

Interview Fifteen

I-A. Contextual Variable: The Socioeconomic Environment

TO:1. Please describe the current socioeconomic environment in Nigeria.
INTERVIEWEE 15: The Obasanjo administration has embarked on an economic reform program. The program has been somewhat successful in terms of policy, but with regards to its effect on the Nigerian people, you still have infrastructural decay, you still have issues with education, you still have issues with power . . . With regards to the soft issues, how it affects people, the benefits have not yet been seen. Politically, we are heading for an election. The main challenge with regards to the election is whether Obasanjo is really going. We believe that regardless of who is elected that it provides an impetus for moving on.

TO: 2. What are the socioeconomic issues affecting the public relations industry and practice?
INTERVIEWEE 15: There is not a proper understanding of what public relations is in Nigeria, although one will quickly point out that the level of understanding is increasing . . . it is not as high as it should be, even among educated people in Nigeria . . . Quite a number of persons who
go around as public relations practitioners are not well equipped to practice public relations. You can see two major problems, the lack of understanding of what PR is and then the quality of the manpower; these are the two major problems affecting public relations in Nigeria.

TO: So what will you say are the socioeconomic issues then, affecting PR?
INTERVIEWEE 15: Well, the environment itself, I have talked about lack of understanding of what it is all about, that is a social issue. The fact that quite a number of practitioners are not adequately equipped is also another issue. If you do a further extension and begin to look at the media, the Nigerian media again is not as developed as it should be, and that in itself also has an effect on the practice of public relations. There are instances where people have to more or less pay for news.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the public relations industry and practice, and how have you responded to them?
NMR: IF people do not quite understand, if the level of understanding of public relations in Nigeria is not as high as it should be, then people do not understand what PR is all about . . . there is still a fairly high level of ignorance about what PR is all about . . . then it affects the practice. On the other side, if practitioners are not so equipped as they should be, then they will not practice effectively . . . What needs to be done is to educate the general public on what public relations is, also educate practitioners so that they are adequately equipped to practice.

TO: How have you as a practitioner responded to these issues.
INTERVIEWEE 15: I have been at the fore front of trying to educate people about what public relations is all about . . . and these two challenges are the challenges that we are riding. Trying to educate people on what PR is all about. I must say that people are beginning to understand, but we have not gotten to that stage yet. PRCAN has an enlightenment program, trying to get people to understand, [and] then we also have a capacity building program to get our members to adequately equip themselves . . . giving lectures, giving talks, making sure that clients appreciate what PR is all about.

I-B. Contextual Variable: The Political Environment

TO: 1. How would you describe Nigeria’s present political environment?
INTERVIEWEE 15: The political environment is not tense, but May 2007 will have to be a defining moment in Nigeria. If Nigeria is able to hold another election and a new president emerges, then we would have made progress. The situation in which the president and the vice president are literally fighting themselves is not the best. That has polarized the polity, but despite . . . the differences . . . one believes that there isn’t too much cause for worry that in the next two months, elections will be held, a new president will emerge, and we will move on. . . . The courts have also done very well . . . all the matters brought before the judiciary have been treated with dispatch, the courts at the highest level . . . have done very well. That is good for democracy.

TO: 2. What political aspects have an impact on the public relations industry and its practices in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 15: Well, if democracy thrives, then public relations will thrive. If the government tackles the problem of hunger, poverty, illiteracy and disease, the people are empowered and that creates an enabling environment for public relations to thrive. PR best
thrives in an environment where there is a considerable degree of enlightenment. It all has to so with information, access to information.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the industry, your specific practices and, your public relations responses?
INTERVIEWEE 15: A lot of these problems arise because of the insincerity of the political elites. Quite a number of people who hold political positions are not there to serve. If they are there to serve, then they will act in the best interest of the people, they will work towards building consensus, and if they want to do that, then they will have to use the tools of public relations rather than what you have now which is largely propaganda. Public relations does not operate in a vacuum. If the leadership is willing, if you hold a position where you are entrusted with certain responsibilities . . . you are obliged to act in the best interest of the people, and if you act in the best interest of the people, then you must build consensus, you must listen to various opinions, you must understand that there are various viewpoints, and in that type of environment, public relations will thrive. But in a situation where most of these people do not care, they are not out there to serve the people, they are out to serve their pockets, they don’t give a damn about public relations, what they are really doing is propaganda.

TO: How would you say that the political issues have affected your specific practice, and what has been your PR response to them?
INTERVIEWEE 15: In terms of specific practice, right now, we don’t have too many govt. clients . . . so in terms of direct effect, not much, like I said, we don’t have too many public sector clients. But, at a macro level, it affects everybody, whether you clients are in the public sector, whether they are in the private sector. The fact that those who have responsibility for managing the polity are not committed to a certain level of building consensus impacts on everything from a conceptual point of view . . . means that you cannot have the adequate environment.

TO: So how have you responded to these issues.
INTERVIEWEE 15: As a corporate body . . . and as an individual we have been in this whole business of trying to educate people on what public relations is all about, trying to improve the standards of our members, also contributing to the debate to have a more open society.

II. Coercive Isomorphism

TO: 1. How does government regulation affect public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 15: There is an enabling legislation, but you see that legislation is not even enforced. You need a license to be a public relation practitioner; that is what the law says. But lots of people are not even qualified and they are practicing . . . it is not a question of the regulation because there is a law, but it goes back to the issues I have mentioned, understanding of what public relations is all about, and the quality of the people who are practicing public relations.

TO: 2. What are the benefits, if any, of compliance with regulation?
INTERVIEWEE 15: I have made the point that there is a regulation, but government has not been able to enforce it . . . it is not a question of the benefits of complying. There are lots of people who earn a living from public relations, who are not registered to practice . . . You can say that because government does not enforce the law, anything goes . . . but what is happening
is that reputable practitioners are constantly making the point in showing the difference in what they do and what quacks do and by educating the people in terms of the service that they deliver. It is a gradual process. We will come to a situation where there will be a better understanding of what public relations is all about. There sill be improvement in the quality of the practice itself.

TO: 3. What are the consequences, if any, of non-compliance with regulations?
INTERVIEWEE 15: That is the point I am making. Because there is non-compliance, standards are poor, quality of service is low, and government itself is unable to enforce the regulation.

TO: 4. Does regulation increase social expectation of the industry? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 15: The whole thing about regulation depends on how the society has evolved. In certain societies . . . there is self-regulation, in others, you need a charter . . . it is more about the quality of what is done. The level of appreciation in the society for the use of public relations and the quality of the people who are practicing . . . one of the reason why in the Nigerian situation it has not really worked is because the body arising from the regulation is both a . . . regulatory agency and a trade union . . . If you separate the two, it becomes easy to regulate.

TO: 5. Does regulation increase acceptance of public relations as a profession?
INTERVIEWEE 15: Theoretically, yes. In the United States, there is no regulation but the standard is high. In Nigeria there is a regulation, but the standard is not as high as it should be . . . like in the Nigerian situation . . . if you have a separate body regulating standards, and a separate body caring for the welfare of members then the point you are making about regulation . . . it is more of what are you doing to improve the standards? If regulation is one of them, regulation can be a vehicle to do that. But the focus should be on improving the standards . . . [so] that the standards are of best practices.

TO: 6. What are sources of pressure for the public relations industry in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 15: If you have clients or principals . . . who do not understand what PR is all about, they bring all kinds of pressure. Some people for in stance see public relations from a narrow prism of media relations. “I have to be on the pages of the newspaper. How I get there, I don’t care” . . . They will even try to compromise editors . . . just to be on the pages of the newspaper . . . A the end of the day it goes back . . . to the two challenges. Do people really know what is public relations? Are those who are practicing adequately equipped? If you burn the candle from these two ends, then you can reduce the pressure . . . Even the so-called ethical issues also arise from that . . . If people are adequately equipped, understand what they shouls do, chances are that they will not engage in unethical activities.

TO: 7. How is pressure exerted?

TO: 8. How do you respond to such pressure/s?
INTERVIEWEE 15: I can look people in the face and tell them that “I cant do this, it is unethical” . . . I say “look, these are the ground rules how I operate,” . . . clients who come to me . . . we agree the ground rules and . . . it becomes easy to do the work, because they know the no-
go areas . . . I usually will tell my clients the position as it is no matter how bitter, then we begin to look at ways to ride the challenge without necessarily compromising our integrity.

TO: 9. What are risks associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
The first risk is certain kind of people who want to do what in Yoruba we call “jankara” [tricks] don’t come to you. There is a risk of possible loss of income . . . certain kinds of people won’t come to you because you won’t engage in untoward things.

TO: 10. What are benefits associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 15: The benefit is that you stand for professionalism, you have your integrity, [and] you are ethical in what you do.

TO: 11. What is your departments/organizations source of funding/revenue?
INTERVIEWEE 15: Clients . . . pay fees. That is how we get our revenue. We work for you and you pay fees. You pay for our time. We sell time.

TO: 12. How does this affect your departments/organizations relationship with these sources in terms of flexibility and independence?
INTERVIEWEE 15: You know I told you that any client that we work for, we agree a ground rule. So even if you are paying all the money in the world and you want us to engage in certain kinds of things we will say . . . we will not do certain kind of things . . . we maintain our integrity.

III. Evolution of Public Relations

1. How has the transition from military to democratic government affected public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 15: One of the things that happened is that it has increased foreign direct investment in Nigeria, and all of these international concerns who are coming to Nigeria are coming from environments there public relations is very well practiced and they are using Nigerian practitioners. It has had a positive effect, and a lot of these international organizations, multinational companies, are redefining the practice of public relations. Most of them are quite ethical in what they do. For them international best practice is the gauge . . . It has had a positive effect on public relations in Nigeria both from the point of view of consultancy and in-house practitioners.

Interview Sixteen
I-A. Contextual Variable: The Socioeconomic Environment

TO:1. Please describe the current socioeconomic environment in Nigeria.
INTERVIEWEE 16: The current economic situation in Nigeria Is despicable. You find just about 5% of the population living in affluence while more than 70% are actually living in poverty . . . I am sure you are aware of the crisis in the Niger Delta which is predicated on the abandonment of the area. We produce so much of petroleum products, but it is all hemmed up among the influential and the political class. When you go to the grass roots, there is abject poverty and people are not able to protect their votes because a few days or months to the election, there is a
raised distribution of foodstuffs; rice, bread, and naira notes and people generally today see whoever is able to do that around that time as the appropriate person to vote. Why? Because they see him as, “he has given us what he wants to give us, let him go there and do what he wants to do, and at the end of the day, the same people will go back crying that the environment, the communities, and the towns are not developed, so this is a major problem. When you want to package a serious political juggernaut who will feel that all he needed do is advertise his programs, his policies, what he thinks about the development of the place, of the community, of the town, of the country, what he thinks should be the appropriate economic reform measures, what he thinks are political steps that he thinks should be taken to emancipate the people, they see him as talking rhetoric’s, nobody takes him serious. You spend money on billboards, you spend money on radio and television advertisements handbills and the rest of it, but people don’t see him from that angle. They see a serious politician from what he is able to ditch into the pockets of the people as at that time, not minding what goes on thereafter. Another thing is that today, if you come to Nigeria, you will see that people spend more on education today, on health because they don’t believe in public hospitals, in public schools because the products you get from there are not thoroughbred, so when you earn a little, and you spend so much on children education, in fact in my own sub-urban area, the least you can get for a nursery/primary school, you spend about N18–N20 thousand naira to send . . . a toddler to kindergarten/nursery school for a term. This is the same country where N7,500 is the minimum wage paid, so those who cannot afford are compelled to leave their children in public schools, public schools where the staff are poorly paid and they spend a better part of their time looking for what will cushions the effect of their salary. You can imagine what kind of education people will get from that source.

TO: 2. What are the socioeconomic issues affecting the public relations industry and practice?
INTERVIEWEE 16: The socioeconomic issues affecting the public relations industry and practice in Nigeria is that people don’t believe. You see, public relations is predicated on truth, say it as it is even when your organization is at fault. Say what is and try to rationalize whatever decision you have taken. If it is not acceptable to the public, you go back to the drawing board, but here, when it comes to political issues especially in governance . . . you find it difficult. When you say the truth it turns round to be an albatross for the employer and the ordinary man on the road will not see the [inaudible] they will say “why can’t they allow the man to get the thing, is it because they want to collect money from him etc . . . but the same people will turn round when there are problems . . . You will find out that even multinationals find it difficult convincing people on their mission in the country because their activities don’t impact positively on the environment where the people live. Irrespective of the PR package that you have, the community relations policies and the rest of it, because of the poverty that is entrenched in the system, many people see multinationals that are not prepared to come down and give individuals money, rather they prefer to build infrastructure and facilities that are communal based, they see it as wasting their time because . . . their immediate personal need is not met. So these are the kind of problems that you have packaging individuals, packaging industries, packaging government and until we have removed these socioeconomic problems, to allow people actually see public education, public enlightenment in the light they should be seen and reason along with whoever, or the organization that is churning out such information, be at empathy with it, . . . People say “an hungry man is an angry man” there is nothing you talk to a hungry man that he will appreciate until his appetite is satisfied. So, ditto the problem we have in the Niger Delta, there is no amount of publicity, stop vandalization. , [Like] the recent pipeline vandalism that
resulted in the loss of thousands of lives at Abule Egba . . . I don’t think that a multitude of people will want to commit suicide. For what? But because they are under unnecessary pressure. It is a function of the economic pressure on the people. Anywhere you see crime rates especially the violent kind it is the people’s reaction to the edge at which the economy has pushed them, and you don’t have a social life when you don’t have an economic life. The social life is bound to nosedive when your purse is depleted. You don’t live in a slum and have respect for those who live in affluence when especially you are convinced that they are living on communal funds that is supposed to be meant for everybody.

TO: So the specific effects on PR are once again?
INTERVIEWEE 16: The specific effect is that no matter the kind of campaign you put up to re-orientate and make people see what the organization is doing in good light, will never be appreciated until such a time when your listeners are at peace with themselves. Nobody will be at peace with himself when he is hungry, when he cannot meet his immediate needs, when his children cannot go to school, when his children have not been fed, there is no way this man can live. So, whatever you spend on public relations goes down the drain. That is the primary effect.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the public relations industry and practice, and how have you responded to them?
INTERVIEWEE 16: You continue to hammer more on the point . . . your campaign costs you so much money before it makes any impact . . . after running the campaign, you start matching the campaign with enforcement.

I-B. Contextual Variable: The Political Environment

TO: 1. How would you describe Nigeria’s present political environment?
INTERVIEWEE 16: So far it is stable, although we are apprehensive of what the next two months might bring about because in one or two states, thuggery seems to have been the mainstay of the political situation there, but at least lately, largely, the country is at peace.

TO: 2. What political aspects have an impact on the public relations industry and its practices in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 16: Now we are into campaigns and what you do mostly is selling the individuals for what he stands for, the individual and the party for what he stands for to win the elections. But I have said that in most cases, apart from the fact that our people are largely illiterate, they are not prepared to listen, in fact when you organize political rallies, which are part of PR criteria to sell candidates and their parties, they tell you unless you bring money, they will not attend, they even fund them to attend, and you will see that only a few will attend, even getting to them via the media, forget about print, how many people read print? Only the few elites and the middle class people, and we are largely a few considered with the grassroots. Even the television and the radio broadcasters that is almost free, where is the time for the people to sit and hear? Because round the clock, they first do one thing or the other to make ends meet. So the situation does not favor PR via the media and even one-on-one contact except PR or what people see as PR which is not actually PR but bribery, and you know bribery is different from PR. There is a lot of misconception even about PR in Nigeria. They see propaganda as public relations . . . The NIPR is finding it extremely difficult to tell the people the difference between PR,
propaganda . . . bribery and all sorts of back-door approach. Those are the problems we are facing here.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the industry, your specific practices and, your public relations responses?
INTERVIEWEE 16: The political situation today . . . is that we predicate PR on truth. You check out which fact can be verified on the ground, tell people what the govt. has done that is verifiable. You tell people what the govt. intends to do, which are not verifiable until they are done. But so far, at least in the last eight years, we have seen that what we say can actually be matched with words except the few occasions where situations are terribly beyond the control of the state government. So politically, intrigues, hounding of political opponents, intimidating opposing voices and the rest of it, mounting campaign of calumny against people who are not towing their line has been affecting PR terribly.

II. Coercive Isomorphism

TO: 1. How does government regulation affect public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 16: Sincerely, I think we are not under any guard. Unless anybody is thinking that PR is synonymous with journalism. I know that journalism on one or two occasions has suffered one or two blows shutting down some media houses and the rest of it. But sincerely, when you talk about PR per se, I think we have a field day . . . the regulation helps people to at least work with decorum . . . it helps to check abuse, it helps the industry to grow because people will build confidence in . . . the industry.

TO: 2. What are the benefits, if any, of compliance with regulation?
INTERVIEWEE 16: The NIPR . . . has ensured that practicing PR persons or managers who are members or associate members go by the rules . . . I think censorship in what one or two people say that might not be too palatable for the print has also helped in giving us problems.
TO: So you are saying that there are no benefits to the regulations?
INTERVIEWEE 16: No, there are a lot of benefits, I have said so. Following these rules have kept especially members off troubles . . . if you predicate journalism on truth as the regulation says, then most likely, you will not run into problems and that further brings good reputation to the profession.

TO: 3. What are the consequences, if any, of non-compliance with regulations? Sincerely, I must say that I have not noticed one or two in recent times. I have not noticed, not in recent times.

TO: 4. Does regulation increase social expectation of the industry? Please explain.

INTERVIEWEE 16: It increases social expectation of the industry, social expectation of your employer, social expectation of the public itself because sometimes the public itself says one or two things that are capable of affecting negatively the image of the country or heating up the polity, so that too guides people in what they say. And when you look at the overall interest of the public, it has helped reduce restiveness among the youths or supporters of one group or the other or protecting company interests and the rest of it. So people choose and guard jealously their words, the views of their organizations.
TO: 5. Does regulation increase acceptance of public relations as a profession?
INTERVIEWEE 16: Very well. It has enhanced the image of practitioners. You know, hitherto, until the last one decade or so, people see public relations as an all-comers thing, but now that practitioners are handling issues and people see the professionalism in it, they are being more appreciated, and highly welcome. And you can see that regarding regulations which make people act in the light for good image affects us tremendously.

TO: 6. What are sources of pressure for the public relations industry in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 16: Pressure comes from your employer one, pressure comes from the public, especially public commentators in the media. So you watch what you say, so that is you say A, you don’t go back to say A+ because you could loose your reputation. So there is pressure everywhere.

TO: Q7. How is pressure exerted?
INTERVIEWEE 16: Especially for me as a practitioner in government, pressure is exerted in such a way that you have very few published prints and media reports. No threats, no harm . . . but the organization is always put at an edge . . . you hardly see people rise to commend you. But they always look at, you have not done this you have not done that. And that is where pressure comes from and that so much gingers you to want to do everything in such a way that you do not get a negative press representation.

TO: Q8. How do you respond to such pressure/s?
INTERVIEWEE 16: You start by explaining what you have done, what you are going to do, what you are supposed to do that you have not been able to do and why you have not been able to do that.

TO:Q.9. What are risks associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 16: I believe that there are high risks, but sincerely, we have not suffered one . . . I live in a very popular area, accessible to just anybody I don’t live under any [inaudible], so I think the pressures comes in civilized manners as against violent manners . . . I don’t see any risk associated with it. It only makes you sit up and plan further.

TO: Q10. What are benefits associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 16: Yes there is a lot of benefit because if you are not criticized you will not know where your weaknesses are, you may think that you are doing pretty good when you are just dong about 50% of what you are supposed to do. It’s just like when you have an opposing person in government, or you have a rival partner in the [inaudible], it keeps you on your toes, and like that when you go to the management meeting of your authority, you tell them . . . the response we are getting from the public and these steps we are not doing too well.

TO: Q11. What is your departments/organizations source of funding/revenue?
INTERVIEWEE 16: Our source of funding is govt., the govt. funds our activities to showcase its achievement, its intentions, its reading of public wants and needs and its likely responses to them and in most cases we organize stakeholders forums to allow people contribute to decisions that are [inaudible] especially when it boarders on introducing new laws and regulations. So
ultimately, I am an employee of the government and the source of revenue comes from the government.

Q12. How does this affect your departments/organizations relationship with these sources in terms of flexibility and independence?
INTERVIEWEE 16: The management of my ministry gives me a free hand to act as appropriate, but because is people serving and not corporate oriented, we do not have enough funds to go the whole [inaudible] and this is predicated on the fact that we are better off spending a large sum on providing infrastructure than defending reasons why you could not. As against profit oriented organizations where maybe 5% of total profit is voted for ensuring that the image is not [inaudible] government cannot do that. Government is more of social service and owes the people a lot of social responsibility.

III. Evolution of Public Relations

TO: How has the transition from military to democratic government affected public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 16: We have not had it this good. Under the military as a PR person, you have to get clearance every minute before you say anything, even where you know the same to be true. Under this democratic dispensation it has been an eldorado if there is anything like that. You are free to defend you authority and to say whatever you like about your. I work with a government where we don’t actually share the same opinion with the federal government on a lot of fronts, but it has not posed any hazards. It has been positively good to be under a democratic dispensation.

Interview Seventeen
I-A. Contextual Variable: The Socioeconomic Environment

TO: 1. Please describe the current socioeconomic environment in Nigeria.
INTERVIEWEE 17: It is much better than the one for the last administration. . . . The economy has improves at least just by inspection, and the climate is that we are now moving towards election 2007. . . . They are going to commission some generating plants in the next few months. The environment is not as tense as before, although there are some uncertainties about the election , but we are moving towards the election 2007.
TO:2. What are the socioeconomic issues affecting the public relations industry and practice?
INTERVIEWEE 17: The first one is professional rather than socioeconomic . . . it is the passage of the freedom of information act which has been on for seven years. The freedom of information bill was done to let PR practitioners to have access to pertinent information for research and good use. The bill was a private bill jointly sponsored by professionals associations including public relations people and it has just been passed by the house of senate . . . and . . . is now with the president for his own signature . . . it will allow PR officers, journalists, communications people and researchers to have unrestricted access to pertinent information that lead them in their research and of course if you are given that information, you are supposed to use that information for public good. So if an officer is refusing you information, you can invoke a section of that [inaudible] to allow the public officer to allow you access which you must use for public good . . . the second thing that is of interest to us is professionalization of PR. For you
now to practice PR in Nigeria, you must be a registered member of NIPR . . . if you practice it, you violate the law, and you can be jailed.

TO: What would you say then are the socioeconomic issues affecting PR?
INTERVIEWEE 17: The devaluation of the naira . . . it affects the practice in terms of procurement of equipment for PR, assembly of PR instruments and the like.

TO: How about socially?
INTERVIEWEE 17: PR has been upgraded to the point that people now accept them as professionals rather than the briefcase carrier of the CEO. However, they are still something they use when you want to bribe . . . PR is a deliberate and concerted effort to build mutual understanding between the parties . . . PR now has . . . become a management function it is now compulsory, before you can employ a PR manager in your office, he must be a member of the institute and socially now, people are recognizing the importance of PR in democracy development.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the public relations industry and practice, and how have you responded to them?
INTERVIEWEE 17: The govt. now is employing PR practitioners to brand the image of Nigeria, that is what you call the “Heart of Africa” . . . and make sure that our reputation is respected . . . government is now very conscious of the fact that image is very important so they are trying to put a lot of effort into branding and repositioning the image of Nigeria in the world polity.

TO: How have you as a practitioner responded to these socioeconomic issue?
INTERVIEWEE 17: We have organized seminars and conferences and made recommendations to government in terms of budgeting and articulation, and fighting corruption and knowing fully that the image of a country is more important to it than the loss of money. So, we have making a concerted effort to make our contribution to [inaudible] is more important, even more important than politicians . . . we are now doing more of media relations, and community relations and social responsibility of the PR practice . . . the communiqués from all these conferences and workshops have been passed on to government, especially to the ministry of information and communications.

I-B. Contextual Variable: The Political Environment

TO: 1. How would you describe Nigeria’s present political environment?
INTERVIEWEE 17: The political environment is charged now, and that is not unusual because we are now moving towards the zero hour of elections . . . however, most of the politicians are not addressing issues, they are addressing personalities . . . they have beautiful posters and the posters are saying nothing, no conclusive thing to remember. . . . They should tell us their manifesto, but rather they are telling us by dancing and putting themselves in beautifully decorated posters . . . the PR practitioners are trying to redefine these things and make sure that the posters are based on issues rather than personalities.

TO: 2. What political aspects have an impact on the public relations industry and its practices in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 17: That one is derived from chapter 2 of the Nigerian constitution which is called the “Fundamental Objectives and Direct [inaudible] Principles,” . . . chapter 22 prescribes the application of the media . . . which includes monitoring govt. and making government
accountable to the people at all times. There is no profession in the constitution that is given that obligation except the Nigerian media . . . under section 2 and 39, media people are given, including the PR man, the power to monitor government . . . but in doing so, they are handicapped because they do not have access to the information so that is why we are now talking about the freedom of information bill . . . thereby making the media people and the PR man trustees of the public trust and that is expected in a democracy.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the industry, your specific practices and, your public relations responses?
INTERVIEWEE 17: They have to adhere and put sanctions based on the professional code of ethics, that is policing their ranks. Anybody violating that one would be sanctioned by the professional body . . . or remove him from the register of NIPR.
TO: What has been your response to these political aspects?
INTERVIEWEE 17: We do that in our teaching and our research . . . and also try to bring professionals to the university to let us know what they are doing, what we should be doing, our expectation of them, and their expectation of us. . . . We employ some practitioners from the industry to come and teach on a part time basis as adjunct lecturers to impact on training, ad in training, we are making our own contribution to the profession.

II. Coercive Isomorphism

TO: 1. How does government regulation affect public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 17: They have their enabling laws that tell you what PR should be or should not be. As a result of the national communication policy and the deregulation of the airwaves in 1992, the government the government came out with four regulatory bodies which include . . . the NIPR to regulate the practice of public relations . . . they have the enabling law . . . and they sanction their members through the professional ethics . . . Professional regulatory bodies . . . must work together with professional associations . . . the enabling laws are there as reference points and there are rules and regulations . . . and the practice is being regulated by the codes of these media regulatory bodies.

TO: 2. What are the benefits, if any, of compliance with regulation?
INTERVIEWEE 17: If . . . you are not a member of the institute and you go and practice PR, you will be arrested . . . in recent time’s government has come out with the new policy that as from this year [2007] they will not give them [NIPR] any subvention . . . This is my preferred position because he who pays the piper dictates the tune.
TO: What will you say are benefits of compliance with the regulation then?
INTERVIEWEE 17: They have their president and in each state they have their state associations and they also have conferences and meetings and they have their annual general meetings where they [inaudible] have problems and they solve it. At the moment, the NIPR is having some internal problems about leadership . . . what they are trying to do now is to make sure that things are done properly and we are on the right track.

TO: 3. What are the consequences, if any, of non-compliance with regulations?
INTERVIEWEE 17: (Question 2).
TO: 4. Does regulation increase social expectation of the industry? Please explain.

INTERVIEWEE 17: It increases compliance and enhances professional competence. When there is no law there is no offence, and when there is law, you know your limitations. Regulations can only be enforced by the professional ranks, it is only when it is getting difficult that you go to court . . . it is left for professionals to discipline their own ranks except when it comes to . . . criminal offences and the like . . . It increases professionalism and also encourages compliance and also brings good recognition of that profession by the people. It encourages the young ones to grow by being a PR practitioner rather than a protocol officer.

TO: Are you saying that there is no social expectation of the industry then?
INTERVIEWEE 17: Hitherto, PR has been regarded as a protocol, and protocol is not PR . . . Protocol is no longer synonymous with PR in Nigeria . . . we regard PR at the moment as a management function.

TO: 5. Does regulation increase acceptance of public relations as a profession?

INTERVIEWEE 17: Yes! Not everybody can practice PR now. You have to be registered and you have to pass an examination . . . you must pass a minimum entrance examinations; including academic and professional examinations which is conducted by the institute . . . and you renew your certificate every year to remain relevant in the profession.

TO: 6. What are sources of pressure for the public relations industry in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 17: In the past, the policy makers . . . didn’t recognize PR as an important segment of the company, but now they are coming to realize that PR is . . . as important as the MD himself.
TO: What would you say are some other sources of pressure?
INTERVIEWEE 17: From the MD’s. Some of them believe that they are Mr. know all, and they don’t mind their utterances . . . you as a PR practitioner must first of all examine yourself and say what you mean and mean what you say. Do not say too much about what you know little about and you must be looking ahead, do your research so that you will be able to advise your company CEO.

TO: 7. How is pressure exerted?
INTERVIEWEE 17:

TO: 8. How do you respond to such pressure/s?
INTERVIEWEE 17: It is for the chief executive to understand that PR is no longer errand boys and girls, they are also a management function and they should be respected and given their own vote, given their own budget to plan and do research because PR is no longer an intangible thing, there is also a tangible aspect of any company that is looking for change.

TO: 9. What are risks associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 17: That is malpractice. If you are over pressured by your bosses or the environment, then you do the wrong thing and you cause more damage to the reputation of your company . . . another thing contributing is no power. There is no power every time you want to
do your work, there may not be power for hours, or even days, or weeks . . . without power, nobody will come here and invest on anything.

TO: 10. What are benefits associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 17: The benefit is that new recognition of PR as a management function.

TO: 11. What is your departments/organizations source of funding/revenue?
INTERVIEWEE 17: We are funded by the federal government of Nigeria.

TO: 12. How does this affect your departments/organizations relationship with these sources in terms of flexibility and independence?
INTERVIEWEE 17: Nobody can fund anything department to its fullest. You have to also do your internal thing and do self reliance . . . it doesn’t affect our flexibility

III. Evolution of Public Relations

TO: 1. How has the transition from military to democratic government affected public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 17: In the military, you obey the last command. It is [inaudible] democracy, it is a very backward system that is very rigid, and that is why the military spoiled the economy of this country . . . the civilian government at least is much better. We prefer the civilian government than any military and the military are not trained to be politicians so when they get there they turn the tables [inaudible] and therefore people [do] not understand. In democracy, you have the freedom to talk, freedom to associate, and if you are not satisfied, you go to court.

Interview Eighteen
I-A. Contextual Variable: The Socioeconomic Environment

TO: 1. Please describe the current socioeconomic environment in Nigeria.
INTERVIEWEE 18: There are various views as to whether the economy has improved since the current administration came into power. There are mixed views. Some believe that the government has done nothing, while some who are getting something out of the economy believe that it is not so. I believe there have been a few things that have been done that need to be commended in terms of legislation . . . in terms of maybe privatization, there have been some successes here and there, whether or not they are selling these things to themselves, but at least some of these companies have been successfully privatized . . . They say that poverty is high, in some cases you find that . . . people are still getting by. The power sector has not improved as it should have, but government keeps saying that things will change in that regard. I think the fact that the country still remains standing . . . and the civilian administration has stayed for eight years, that is something to be cheerful about, and people are getting ready to vote for the next civilian administration.

TO: 2. What are the socioeconomic issues affecting the public relations industry and practice?
INTERVIEWEE 18: Essentially, it is lack of public power supply . . . the Niger Delta . . . the country is loosing billions of dollars because of the crisis in that place.
TO: So how do these issues affect the practice of public relations?
INTERVIEWEE 18: If there is no power to run your factory, then it will affect everybody. You cannot say it is PR specific. Energy is key to the running of industry . . . what it means is that margins will be lower . . . What I have seen is the government information machinery has been largely reactive not proactive. They have not said much about what they are doing for the people . . . they have a poor information management system.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the public relations industry and practice, and how have you responded to them?
INTERVIEWEE 18: I am using alternative power supply. Energy is key. Perhaps we solve our problems differently from the others . . . if you want to increase your staff salary by about 50%, you will probably have to look at what is coming in and say . . . “we cannot do more than 25% until the economy really improves through inflow of jobs.” That is what we have been able to do, at least to ensure that the basic things are running . . . we just have to manage with what we have.

I-B. Contextual Variable: The Political Environment

TO: 1. How would you describe Nigeria’s present political environment?
INTERVIEWEE 18: Rallies are going on here and there. The opposition parties are accusing government of all sorts . . . but I believe strongly that these things will go on course because there are political activities going on . . . There is no evidence that people are not willing to participate in the process.

TO: 2. What political aspects have an impact on the public relations industry and its practices in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 18: Politicians have to get the word out about themselves, and some of them have engaged PR practitioners.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the industry, your specific practices and, your public relations responses?
INTERVIEWEE 18: I have tried as much as possible to be a part of the process professionally and commercially.

II. Coercive Isomorphism

TO: 1. How does government regulation affect public relations practice in Nigeria?
It doesn’t affect anything . . . essentially what they are saying is that if you want to practice PR, make sure that you are registered with the Nigerian institute of public relations . . . It is a profession is covered by a body of laws . . . in good companies, they insist that you are registered by the NIPR . . . In good companies, they insist that you should be registered by the NIPR. It is for us to have people who measure up to the standards that are expected of professionals, so, it is a positive thing. The only thing is that it has not really been enforced as it should.

TO: 2. What are the benefits, if any, of compliance with regulation?
INTERVIEWEE 18: It ensures that the practice is professionalized . . . It enhances professionalism.
TO: 3. What are the consequences, if any, of non-compliance with regulations?
INTERVIEWEE 18: You have quacks all over doing the wrong thing. If it is a profession, then it
should conform to the body of laws . . . It is about ethics of the profession.

TO: 4. Does regulation increase social expectation of the industry? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 18: That is what it should be. But . . . it is a young profession . . . in this
country. It will come to a time that if you need a PR practitioner to work for you, you would
insist that he has certain things. But at the end of the day, it is the work that will show that this
person is qualified.

TO: 5. Does regulation increase acceptance of public relations as a profession?
INTERVIEWEE 18: At some point it will grow to that level . . . right now, the compliance is not
like absolute. People still get to do their things without having to hire a PR professional.

TO: 6. What are sources of pressure for the public relations industry in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 18: Well, because you have other people who are not professional, who
encroach on your territory, it is still an all comers thing. Like I said, the compliance is still not
absolute. You find someone who is a management consultant doing your work.
TO: Are there any other sources of pressure? Well, it is a law of demand and supply. There are
fewer jobs available . . . once there is recognition of the value of PR, then the demand will
increase.
TO: 7. How is pressure exerted?

TO: 8. How do you respond to such pressure/s?
INTERVIEWEE 18: I head a company of PR professionals. We go out and seek jobs, seek
clients and they seek us . . . You have to have NIPR certification. It is important that if you don’t
have it before you are employed you are made to at least go through the process while you are
here[in my organization].

TO: 9. What are risks associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 18: Some people will still prefer to get their friend who is in journalism to do
something from them.

TO: 10. What are benefits associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 18: The important thing is that as more people tend to comply . . . there will be
recognition of the need to use qualified PR practitioners.

TO: 11. What is your departments/organizations source of funding/revenue?
INTERVIEWEE 18: We are a limited liability company so we have to go out there and look for
jobs.

TO: 12. How does this affect your departments/organizations relationship with these sources in
terms of flexibility and independence?
INTERVIEWEE 18: What independence are you looking for? A client gives you a brief, you work on the brief, and you collect your money . . . you have to depend on your clients . . . a client at the end of the day will decide whether he wants to run with you or not . . . If he doesn’t like the solutions you have given him, you are out of job, he doesn’t pay you . . . You want to give your client solution and you ram it on him? It’s not possible . . . you proffer solutions to your clients challenges and he remunerates you on that.

III. Evolution of Public Relations

TO: 1. How has the transition from military to democratic government affected public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 18: The enabling environment in all areas I believe is better. There is free speech . . . there is enhanced freedom everywhere, so you take advantage of that . . . if you do something that is valuable whether it is military or civilian, they will look for you.

Interview Nineteen
I-A. Contextual Variable: The Socioeconomic Environment

TO: 1. Please describe the current socioeconomic environment in Nigeria.
INTERVIEWEE 19: Presently you have the campaigns going on in the political environment . . . in an ideal situation, the PR practitioner has a role to play . . . to make it a professional thing, but you cannot remove the people from the society. In a situation where people will be abusing each other instead of facing issues, we have a little problem there . . . when they are out there in public and they are provoked, they will make some utterances that will backfire . . . It is a kind of interwoven relationship socially, politically. Then economically, everything is moving towards this political situation. Everybody trying to be cautious . . . people are skeptic, they are not sure of what is likely to be . . . The certainty is not really there and based on past experience, you find that economically people are watchful . . . people are being cautious, expecting the prices to go up, manufacturers awaiting the new people in the saddle, whatever policies they embark on whether [inaudible ] with the present economic direction or not, has an impact on their operation.

TO: 2. What are the socioeconomic issues affecting the public relations industry and practice?
INTERVIEWEE 19: When it comes to the area of corruption . . . some of the things you read in the papers, you want to ask yourself many questions. This person has been accused of corruption and you don’t have the facts, and you know the politics of bitterness that you have in the country, it has not reduced. So, you have accusations and counter-accusations. So the PR practitioner is really hampered by the fact that . . . you don’t have the facts . . . the personnel . . . most times will not give you the true position of things and you as a practitioner will be expected to say “no, it is not true” and you ask for facts and they will not give it . . . the truth at times could be relative.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the public relations industry and practice, and how have you responded to them?
INTERVIEWEE 19: Within the industry you have prejudices . . . and among the publics you have varied prejudices as well.
I-B. Contextual Variable: The Political Environment

TO: 1. How would you describe Nigeria’s present political environment?
INTERVIEWEE 19: it is not stable, although it is not volatile . . . people are skeptic.

TO: 2. What political aspects have an impact on the public relations industry and its practices in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 19: Apart from the area of giving out the facts . . . when it comes to corruption, the journalists that you are supposed t make use of your story, you have to pay. It’s supposed to be cash and carry.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the industry, your specific practices and, your public relations responses?
INTERVIEWEE 19: I am not really affected because I work in the [blank] industry.

II. Coercive Isomorphism

TO: 1. How does government regulation affect public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 19: In some industry someone could be in the administrative department and they are promoted to handle public relations . . . depending on the organizations perspective of what public relations should be. Now NIPR is trying to come in and ensure that those who are in the PR departments are registered professionals with adequate training . . . some . . . organizations easily circumvent that code by changing the . . . designation of the practitioner . . . that is part of the problems in the industry . . . When you have the NIPR code saying that only those who have requisite training should work in public relations or corporate affairs department.

TO: 2. What are the benefits, if any, of compliance with regulation?
INTERVIEWEE 19: When government enacts a law, implementation, enforcing that law is another thing . . . the benefit would have been to the profession itself and to the organizations concerned. But it is not going to be that easy.

TO: 3. What are the consequences, if any, of non-compliance with regulations?
INTERVIEWEE 19: It will affect the growth of the profession, the respectability that profession demands or deserves . . . the profession is not better for it

TO: 4. Does regulation increase social expectation of the industry? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 19: I’m not too sure about that because the regulation is meant to guide the practitioner . . . social expectation of the average industrial person is quite different. They don’t want to play according to the rules and they want the public to think that they have the best practice . . . What we need is a balanced report that gives the organizations its own fair hearing and to have the fair hearing, the organization is supposed to have best practice. When you look at the Nigerian environment, the regulation and the social expectation don’t seem to gel.

TO: 5. Does regulation increase acceptance of public relations as a profession?
INTERVIEWEE 19: I’m not too sure . . . the regulation is for the practitioners, it is not for those employing them . . . those employing them are circumventing it because the know that the moment you hire only practitioners, then you organization has to pay certain fees to the institute, so they want to stay away from paying that. But that not withstanding . . . the average Nigerian understands the need for public relations but the only problem is that . . . when there is a problem that has attracted public attention, that is when most organizations now appreciate public relations, however compared to ten years back, I will say that appreciation of the profession, the appreciation the need, every company will want to get a PR person . . . when it comes to the real appreciation of the profession . . . I think that it can be better than it is presently.

TO: 6. What are sources of pressure for the public relations industry in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 19: Lack of understanding, if . . . the management of the organization really understand the profession . . . that you owe . . . the duty of best practice . . . but the understanding is not there . . . Then you talk about corruption, an organization will want to bribe its way to get certain things done . . . The average organization believe that public relations . . . just spends money . . . because they cannot quantify the goodwill . . . because of that they find it difficult to pay so much, and newspapers . . . believe that you people are making so much profit that the PR department gets so much so they keep increasing the advert rate . . . That is where the research aspect of public relations . . . will come in . . . that department would embark on a research what is the reason we are paying so much . . . how many copies do they produce, what is the reach, are people reading them? No one is bothered about that . . . and some media houses because you are not placing adverts will look for a story that is not professional . . . they will tell you that they want to shake the organization so that they can give them adverts . . . I remember I went for a management development course and . . . the trainer and participants faced me . . . [asking] how come we [were] not creating awareness about the [organization], they don’t see the [organizations] adverts, they don’t hear about the [organization] . . . I faced each of them . . . I gave it to all of them . . . [saying], You have not been treating your customers very well you don’t do this, you don’t do that, now, that is one, you want us to advertise what do you want us to tell the public? That they will come to your branch and be disappointed? A fifty second advert on NTA is over 500 thousand . . . [this] will not make the impact, you need continuous, so multiply that maybe five times in a day.

TO: 7. How is pressure exerted?
INTERVIEWEE 19: (Question 6).

TO: 8. How do you respond to such pressure/s?
INTERVIEWEE 19: (Question 6).

TO: 9. What are risks associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 19: If that budget is too slim, no matter how you try, the inadequacy will be exposed and that is embarrassing.

TO: 10. What are benefits associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 19: The benefits are the challenges impose on the practitioner. You could get the best out of the worst situation . . . to ensure that you achieve the best with minimum cost.

TO: 11. What is your departments/organizations source of funding/revenue?
INTERVIEWEE 19: [My] organization gives us funding.

TO: 12. How does this affect your departments/organizations relationship with these sources in terms of flexibility and independence?
INTERVIEWEE 19: Even if you are a consultant, you are still paid by the organization. You can only give . . . professional advice to your client. Now, when you are an employee, you can only work with what the organization has given you. You may seek for other source of funding. It . . . will be counterproductive because in an industry where fraud is something everybody is afraid of, you wouldn’t want to tarnish your name and your career so you cannot seek funding elsewhere, rather you can only seek for upward review.

III. Evolution of Public Relations

TO: 1. How has the transition from military to democratic government affected public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 19: You know that the military . . . is obey before complain . . . many things that you can try democratically and you can get away with you won’t dare that. Assuming the institutes code that was supposed too be implemented, if it were to be during military regime . . . they probably will be able to achieve it up to a level, but because it is democratic . . . those that are supposed to implement, they also have their own affiliation . . . Democracy gives people some leeway so far in the country, and there are some things that is being done now that you will not have dared in the past because the military . . . will just seal off your organization. Then politics, maybe the organization has given some funding to that party, or maybe the party is hoping to get some funds, so they will be careful, but the military, they don’t owe you that allegiance.

Interview Twenty
I-A. Contextual Variable: The Socioeconomic Environment

TO: 1. Please describe the current socioeconomic environment in Nigeria.
INTERVIEWEE 20: Well generally, currently the situation in the country is being overheated by the political discourse and with the fact that the national election that will usher in elected officers at the federal, state and local levels will be held in April. So generally, Nigeria’s concern so far is about the 2007 elections which everybody is discussing, the same thing with the media and all the political gladiators.

TO: How about the socioeconomic environment?
INTERVIEWEE 20: Well, unfortunately when you look at it from the issue of revenue that accrues to the federation account, the government has not been prudent in the management of resources. There is crisis, economic crisis, there is fuel scarcity, there [are] long queues for fuel here and there, at the same time, there is the issue of inflation. The cost of living is so high and people cannot meet to the demand and even though there is war against indiscipline through some powerful agencies like the EFCC and the ICPC but unfortunately, the reality on ground is that there is no way civil servants, [inaudible] can be able to sustain themselves from their remuneration without digging their hands in the till. These are some of the serious problems that [are] being confronted from the economic perspective. That is to say that the cost of living is so
high and unfortunately, the minimum wage cannot sustain the reality on ground, and against that there is other crisis, energy crisis, the electric agency, that is Power Holding Corporation of Nigeria has not been forthcoming, the same thing with the water board and so on and so forth. There is a lot of crisis actually on ground but the politicians with the hope that we would consider electioneering their campaign they have been saying that they want to enumerate on some of these problems but unfortunately, Nigerians are doubtful but the prayer here is that we are hopeful that the next administration may likely perform better, but that is clearly from the economic aspect. In addition to that, if you want to go to facts and figures, we can say that in the last dispensation before the emergence of democracy the accrual that comes to the national purse, that is the central purse which we call the federation account, it has never gone above N25 billion. But surprisingly with the current price of oil in the global market, the federation is now on a monthly basis they are disbursing almost about N 300 billion. If you make a comparison between N25 billion of those days and the over N300 billion presently you would have expected that the economy should be back on and the cost of living shouldn’t be as high as it is but unfortunately we have some managers and some leaders that it seems they don’t even know what their environment is all about, they don’t have a feeling of the masses, they don’t have the feeling of the environment then we have the problem of corrupt leaders.

TO: 2. What are the socioeconomic issues affecting the public relations industry and practice?
INTERVIEWEE 20: From PR, we have to look at it from two ways, between the in-house practitioner that is those recruited by the organization or management who are sometimes part of the management, and the outsiders who try to work for the organization in the name of external consultants. For the in-house PR department, unfortunately they are not as effective as the consultants and here we know their weaknesses. That is if they challenge the management they may be queried or sanctioned and for that reason, they are not up and doing. Most organizations especially financial institutions prefer to work and deal with the consultants, that is the PR agencies than recruiting in-house staff to manage their PR dept. but all the same, most agencies presently, they still have their in-house PR staff some of which are very effective in their duties, but when we look at it from ministry for instance, the problem we are having is that most of the ministries. Most of the ministers what they do is when they come in the first thing they do is to bring their own, they call somebody personal assistant on public affairs, and the personal assistant on public affairs, actually majority of them come from the media houses being called to come and be advises to the minister on information management. But instead of utilizing the press secretary, the information manager recruited for that purpose within the organization, they will prefer to get a consultant to work for them. But now we are now going back to square one that is to the issue that I raised earlier about corruption, endemic corruption in the country. It is from this way that sometimes the PS’s sometimes with their ministers they negotiate asking the consultant sometimes to inflate the consultant fee whereby you know it is a normal thing. The problem of corruption cuts across all the strata of the society.

TO: 3. How do these issues influence the public relations industry and practice, and how have you responded to them?
INTERVIEWEE 20: In my own case, in my 10 yrs head of PR in the org. where I served I tried, one, you have to be savvy, you have to know what you are doing, you have to know where you are coming from, I let them have an Idea of what I can do and in addition to that I let them know that as in-house PR person, I will like to be at the management level, agree to make some input
on policy direction of the organization... In addition to that I establish good relations with the media because one of our major stakeholder is the media that is through the issuance of regular press releases, feature articles, granting interview here and there, organizing press conferences, press issues and soon and so forth and then syndicating some of our articles which has been very effective. In my own organization we hardly use consultants for anything that has to do with public relations, it only comes in when it comes to issues of publication, maybe printing of journals, you know you have to get them to do the graphic work and so-on and so-forth and in terms of circulation. For in-house copy some organizations have a problem but definitely, the problem we are still having is that in most organization the PR are not given the necessary support to perform their duties effectively.

I-B. Contextual Variable: The Political Environment

1. How would you describe Nigeria’s present political environment?
TO: You have already described the present political environment in Nigeria and I want you to tell me how those issues are affecting the practice of public relations as well.
TO: 2. What political aspects have an impact on the public relations industry and its practices in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 20: For instance let me give you a simple example, one, with regard to political office holders, we have to define what is call the political environment. Political environment, you can talk of political office holders, when talking of political office holders you are talking about the ministers who are just appointed arbitrarily by Mr. president and so-on and so-forth. One thing which I want to point out here is that a lot of political holders don’t have [an] idea as per what information management is all about. You may be aware about a program, a brain child of the Federal ministry of information which is called the heart of Africa project. Unfortunately when you look at the program, the project is more of branding than public relations and when you look at it, you will wonder whether it is cost effective. It has so far gulped billions of naira in trips to New York, to London, to Canada, to South Africa and so on and so forth. And now ask, what about the PR, the officers recruited and the staff of the organization, are they happy about their project? No they can’t be happy about that project because they know that that project, the staff in the ministry cannot make any contribution. How can we talk about branding? We are talking about corruption you say you want to go and protect and project our image outside. The question I will like to ask... is what happened to the issue of the militants in Nigeria? How are you resolving the issue of corruption? What are you doing about resolving some of these crisis in the Niger Delta area? The ministry was not looking at this angle, but was just thinking about the branding. The question is that what brings about the idea of the branding? The consultants from London they have said “... why don’t you do the branding?”... They have spent millions on it and yet there is no result... there is a lot of political interference by political office holders in not leaving the right officers, the right personnel to do their jobs, to give recommendation on how to handle issues that have to do with the image of the country or... with the image of the organization... Political interference has negated the spirit of most of the image makers to be able to perform their duties effectively, and unfortunately some consultants [inaudible] even collaborating and cooperating with the in-house they prefer to deal with the political office holders and then share some of these ideas with them which actually affect the... country and the organization.
II. Coercive Isomorphism

1. How does government regulation affect public relations practice in Nigeria?
   Actually when you talk about government regulation, in Nigeria it is a free market whereby you can even [inaudible] in the media which is one of the freest in the whole world where you can say anything and are free to express yourself and so-on and so-forth. . . . In terms of PR there is not much regulation whereby FG sanctions the profession, but you have a body going by the name NIPR that regulates the practice of PR in Nigeria and it has proven resourceful for registering members and it has its code of conduct by which its members must abide by . . . But at the same time we still have problems with the institute that is the regulatory body in the country that is the NIPR, there is in-house politics going on. Even the present executives of the body are not organized, all the members of the institute in Nigeria, that is top category are there so because of that crisis, they too are not actually monitoring the practitioner, monitoring the profession as it ought to be and as it happens in other countries . . . There are rules and regulations guiding the practice, there are code of ethics establishing the institute, but to some extent, government doesn’t have much interference with the practitioner per se in terms of regulating the PR practice.

TO: 2. What are the benefits, if any, of compliance with regulation?
INTERVIEWEE 20: When you talk about the benefits in the financial sector it is good for the public in the sense that it is difficult for organizations . . . to . . . hoodwink and fool the stakeholders by trying to inflate the share price and so-on and so-forth because the regulatory bodies in that sector are up and doing it . . . I think it is very good in the sense that the stakeholders are confident about the market that is why you can see that our capital market is one of the best so-far in the African sub-region. Very vibrant people are buying shares here and there because they have confidence because it is difficult for any organization whether in the telecom sector of banking sector to just come out and just say they have this and that, the message must be approved must be endorsed by the regulatory body before it comes out for the public, so the public are not fools, they are paying for what they deserve . . . you operate smoothly in the terrain.

TO. 3. What are the consequences, if any, of non-compliance with regulations?
INTERVIEWEE 20: There are fines, I think there are some fees, either they are fined I think there are some fees that there are some [inaudible] too for those who default by not abiding by the rules.

TO: 4. Does regulation increase social expectation of the industry? Please explain.

TO: 5. Does regulation increase acceptance of public relations as a profession?
INTERVIEWEE 20: I don’t think so, but to some extent I think it is very good in the sense that it is not only for the well-being of the practitioners but also for the well being of the public for the well-being of the organization itself that is if the regulation is [inaudible] for the purpose of guiding the practitioner and the consumer or the public. I think it [inaudible] but in Nigeria so far so good. We have never had any problem whereby the practitioner have to either sue the regulatory body or get discontent with the regulation. I think so far there are no such crisis between the practitioners and the regulatory bodies.

TO: Does regulation increase acceptance of PR as a profession in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 20: Yes it does. Talking about the regulation from the NIPR? Yes it does. In fact it gives a lot of credibility and public confidence on the institute. [inaudible] code of conduct and what expectation from the practitioner and even the organization.

TO: 6. What are sources of pressure for the public relations industry in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 20: When you talk about pressure, it is everywhere. Everybody wants immediate results, and you know PR is a thing where you cannot measure it in quantifiable terms . . . The pressure most of the time comes from those people who believe that . . . let me just give you an example, you know this impression about an organization and the management will sat PR persons, why won’t you organize something for us and they call for press briefings . . . management may expect PR to perform a miracle to make sure that the press release is widely publicized and is in most of the dailies in the front page. But unfortunately you realize that the pressure on him is to make some results, the news, the immediacy, to be on the front page but unfortunately, even if you are lucky to get your news report . . . political office holders, they find it difficult to trust the PR people on ground in their org. they want to bring in somebody from outside, consultants from outside and using consultants is very expensive here in the country, but I think the pressure is where they want immediate results from the practitioner.

TO: 7. How is pressure exerted?
INTERVIEWEE 20: (Question 6).

TO: 8. How do you respond to such pressure/s?
INTERVIEWEE 20: Definitely when they ask me I always tell them what is possible and what is not possible. For one you only give assurance, assurance cannot be guaranteed the moment you know there is a problem and you digest the issue, the first thing you do is to analyze the situation and when you analyze the situation you now think of actions plan, you go this way you get this result, after this result you go to the next step. So when you have an idea of how to go about it, you then inform the mgt and let them have confidence in what you can do but in my own case I don’t think I have a problem with my CEO or mgt, they always buy my ideas, but one thing is that before your ideas you have to make sure that you have done your own research, your own investigation, you have done a lot of work before they accept. I think it has to do with the relationship between you and the mgt and the CEO.

TO: 9. What are risks associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 20: Like I said earlier, if you fail you may be sidelined or redeployed to another place

TO:10. What are benefits associated with such pressure/s? Please explain.
INTERVIEWEE 20: I like meeting the deadline. In fact when there is too much pressure that I bring out my reserves . . . I like pressure. But not everybody can. Some get confused but the truth is honestly I believe in making what people see as impossible possible. This is an individual opinion, when you are given a project and people say “can he make it?” I like such things. Some pressure works, it makes you to sit up, to be [inaudible], I makes you to be committed, it makes you be focused, it makes you even do a lot of research. Such pressure sometimes for those who are optimistic it is very good for them, but for those who are always dilly-dallying or don’t know their left from right they get confused easily, some can even break down.

TO: 11. What is your departments/organizations source of funding/revenue?
INTERVIEWEE 20: Revenue for the public institution in Nigeria here is through the federal govt. considered revenue, if you like you can call it subvention. It is from considered revenue. Usually annually you propose your budget through another budget and you get your subvention. The revenue comes from considered revenue, if you like you can call it [inaudible] from the FG. It is from that budget that you are now allocated the funds that you will use to carry out your assignment

TO: 12. How does this affect your departments/organizations relationship with these sources in terms of flexibility and independence?
INTERVIEWEE 20: If you are talking about my organization you are talking about the body. Within the organization we have different dept. Each dept. gets its funding from one source that is the public funds, and all you need to do before the year is to propose your budget, submit your budget for approval. When it is approved, then you start making your request for monthly disbursals or as when due.
TO: So no direct contact other than submitting your budget to the appropriate offices.
INTERVIEWEE 20: Yes that is it, you don’t have any direct contact at all. In all these institutions you don’t have direct contact with anybody. All you need to do is make your proposal, that is annual proposal, you have annual budget on areas which you may want to, like basic things like PR press conferences, publications and then you have contingencies in case of emergency, in case of crisis the one you are using for issues mgt. but one you propose your budget annually and once it is approved that is all, you carry on with your assignment . . . Who pays the piper dictates the tune . . . remember I am a public officer . . . I am employed by the organization to work for them . . . if they say this is what I want to do . . . then I have to give it to them. One thing I have been doing . . . I always give them honest and truthful advice.

III. Evolution of Public Relations

TO: How has the transition from military to democratic government affected public relations practice in Nigeria?
INTERVIEWEE 20: There is no difference honestly. I don’t want to be pessimistic in the sense that, in fact I can tell you one thing. The reality is that since the military era, the ministers appointed by the military govt. don’t just sack or ask for redeployment of their press secretary or information officers in the ministries and they don’t bring anybody from outside in the name of personal assistants or special assistants, they believe in the ability of their in-house staff to do their duties effectively. And they encourage and motivate them through prompt release of funds. But unlike the military political era whereby the politicians in the name of ministers they want to
have loyalists, to get those people that have helped them in their campaigning, to keep them busy, they bring in all manner of people, that is why sometimes you wont be surprised, as I am telling you now, there is a ministry where the minister was appointed and the next thing he did was to bring in his PA of public affairs, PA for publicity, one on electronic media, you know I don’t think it makes sense. But in the military era I am sorry to say it even though I believe in democracy but in the military era there was nothing like that. The press secretary is the press secretary, you do not bring anybody from outside, that is the reality. The ministers accorded a lot of respect to the in-house PR during the military era than it is now. Unfortunately some of the people they bring from outside are not members of the institute of PR and some of them don’t have experience, don’t have qualifications for PR, they just bring them because they have some experience in media relations as journalists, as correspondents, as reporters, as editors, but PR is more than just reporting and writing like a media-man.
LIST OF REFERENCES


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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Tolulope Opeyemi Odubela was born in Lagos, Nigeria, on November 23, 1976. He majored in mass communication at the University of Lagos, Akoka, Nigeria and earned his B.Sc. degree in 1999.

Before attending the University of Florida, Tolulope Opeyemi Odubela was a consultant with KPMG Professional Service Nigeria, a tax, audit, and business advisory services firm.

Tolulope Opeyemi Odubela attended the College of Journalism and Communications at the University of Florida majoring in public relations in the fall 2005.

Tolulope Opeyemi Odubela recently completed his thesis and plans to graduate with his Master of Arts in Mass Communication degree in May 2007.