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Political Marketing

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Introduction: Early Models of Political Marketing

The first conceptualizing efforts related to political marketing referred to or represented the transferring of classical product marketing to the sphere of politics (e.g., Farrell & Wortmann, 1987; Kotler, 1975; Niffenegger, 1988; Shama, 1975). The starting point for this approach was the assumption that it would be a gross mistake to think that election campaigns have taken on marketing character only in recent years. Campaigning for office has always had a marketing character, and what has only increased over time is the sophistication and acceleration of the use of marketing methods in politics (Kotler, 1975; Kotler & Kotler, 1999). From this perspective, political marketing was defined as "the process by which political candidates and ideas are directed at the voters in order to satisfy their political needs and thus gain their support for the candidate and ideas in question" (Shama, 1975, p. 793). Applying consumer product marketing to politics was justified by a number of similarities – similarities of concepts (e.g., consumers, market segmentation, marketing mix, image, brand loyalty, product concept, and positioning) and similarities of tools (e.g., market research, communication, and advertising). On the other hand, attempts were made to prove that the differences between marketing and politics were only ostensible and that they disappeared under a more thorough analysis (see Egan, 1999; Kotler, 1975).

Despite many similarities between political marketing and mainstream (product, service, not-for-profit, and relationship) marketing, identifying them cannot be justified. First and most important, as O'Shaughnessy states (1987, p. 63): "Politics deals with a person, not a product." In every democratic country in the world,

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regardless of the electoral system (e.g., majority rule, first-past-the-post, proportional representation), voters cast a vote for a particular candidate – listed on the ballot with the name. It may be representative of political party, but it may be an "independent" candidate. In consequence, political marketing is mainly concerned with people and their relationships with each other, whereas consumer goods marketing is often concerned with people's interaction with products (Cwalina, Falkowski, & Newman, 2017). Lock and Harris (1996) point out seven major differences between the two spheres. First, those eligible to vote always choose their candidate or political party on the same day that the voting takes place. Consumers, on the other hand, can purchase their products at different times, depending on their needs and purchasing power. Second, while the consumer purchasing a product always knows its price – the value expressed in financial terms – for voters there is no price attached to their ability to make a voting decision. Making a voting decision may, but need not to, be the result of analyzing and predicting the consequences of this decision in terms of possible financial losses and gains by particular voter. Third, voters realize that the choice is collective and that they must accept the final election result even if it goes against their choice. Fourth, winner takes all in political elections. The closest equivalent to commercial marketing in this case would be gaining a monopoly on the market. Fifth, the political party or candidate is a complex and intangible entity. Although in commercial marketing there are also products and, especially, services that the consumer cannot unpack and check while buying them, the proportion of such packages that cannot be unpacked is much greater in the political market. Besides, consumers may change their minds and exchange products or services almost immediately for others, if they do not like the ones that they have purchased. However, if voters decide to change their minds, they have to wait till the next election, at least a few years. Sixth, in consumer product marketing, brand leaders tend to stay in front. In political marketing, on the other hand, many politicians and parties begin to lose support in public opinion polls after winning the election, because their decisions are not well received by various social groups (e.g., unfavorable budget decisions or tax increases).

Furthermore, the changes taking place in modern democracies, in the development of new technologies and in citizens' political involvement, significantly influence the theoretical and practical aspects of political marketing efforts (Harris, 2001). Above all, modernization causes changes from direct involvement in election campaigns to spectatorship. Campaigns are conducted primarily through mass media and citizens participating in them as a media audience. In this way, politicians more and more often become actors in a political spectacle rather than focus on solving real problems that their country faces. They compete for their voters' attention not only against their political opponents but also against talk shows or other media events.

The differences between consumer goods marketing and political marketing are big enough to make one think about developing an independent concept for studying voting behaviors. Newman (1994) believes that the key concept for political marketing is the concept of "exchange." The main purpose of the election is for voters to select their representative, who will pursue the most desired policies (Downs, 1957). Thus, when applying marketing to politics, the exchange process centers on a candidate who offers political leadership in exchange for a vote from the citizen. In other words, when voters cast their votes, a transaction takes place. They are engaged in an exchange of time and support (their vote) for the services that the party or candidate offers after election through better government. In this way, marketing offers political parties and candidates the ability to address diverse voter concerns and needs through marketing analyses, planning, implementation, and control of the political and electoral campaigns.

Challenges for Political Marketing

Political marketing campaigns are integrated into the environment, and, therefore, they are related to the distribution of forces in a particular environment (Cwalina, Falkowski, & Newman, 2008; Newman, 1994; Scammell, 1999). In this

way, changes in societies, legal regulations, or the development of new technologies force modifications of particular marketing strategies and make marketing needs regenerate as well (Cwalina, Falkowski, & Newman, 2012). Each of these elements represents an area where dynamic changes have taken place in the past few decades. These changes facilitate the development of marketing research and are becoming more and more important for the election and governing processes. Thus, political marketing should include changes taking place in modern democracies, such as shift from citizenship to spectatorship and assess and show new ways of increasing citizen support. Besides, the relations between political marketing and such areas of knowledge as practice, public relation, or political lobbying also need to be clearly defined (Baines, Harris, & Lewis, 2002; Newman, Cwalina, & Falkowski, 2017).

The emphasis on the processes of election exchanges cannot obscure the fact that political marketing is not limited only to the period of the election campaign. In the era of permanent campaign, in reality there is no clear difference between the period directly before the election and the rest of political calendar (Harris, 2001). Governing to and tough endless campaigning secures politicians' legitimacy by stratagems that enhance their credibility (Nimmo, 1999). Dulio and Towner (2009, p. 93) "in order to govern effectively, elected officials must act as if they are in a political campaign while they are in office." In other words: "Each day is election day."

Media and Politics

Together with the political transformations, a number of changes in the ways the media operate took place. These changes concerned both the legal regulations of the media market and its opening up to commercial broadcasters and to introducing new technologies and improving the quality of the broadcast. For centuries, the media was regarded as the "Fourth Estate," serving as the eyes and ears of the public and a check on the government. The development of new technologies and "mobile revolution" has contributed to a rise of a new power represented by social media, bloggers, and journalists publishing in nonmainstream media channels, dubbed as the "Fifth Estate" (Cooper, 2006). These progressive changes required the redefinition of media's role in society and politics to reflect its growing power as a political actor rather than a neutral channel of communication (McNair, 2014).

The media function also as a "gatekeeper" by controlling the information that is transmitted to the audience. The control can take a form of "selecting, writing, editing, positioning, scheduling, repeating, and otherwise massaging information to become news" (Shoemaker, Vos, & Reese, 2008, p. 73). The gatekeeping function is connected to the concept of agenda-setting, according to which the media determines the importance and newsworthiness by such means as allocation of time to particular information and others. Framing, another key function of the media, as defined by Gamson and Modigliani (1987, p. 143), is "a central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events, weaving a connection among them. The frame suggests what the controversy is about and the essence of the issue." Thus, whereas agenda-setting determines what the audience thinks, framing affects how people think about a given issue. Gamson and his collaborates (1992) state that a wide variety of media messages act as teachers of values, ideologies, and beliefs, and they provide images for interpreting the world whether or not the designers are conscious of this intent. It seems, however, that in relation to politics, developers of media messages are fully aware of what content and in what form they are trying to communicate to society.

The observers of the growing role of media in politics coined the term "mediatization" to describe an increasing intrusion of media into the political domain. Importantly, mediatization does not equal mediation, so that whereas the old concept of mediated politics pertained to the media's role as a vehicle of communication between the governors and the governed, the new concept of mediatized politics describes a situation in which political organizations and the citizenry are influenced by the media (Strömbäck,

2008). Discussing mediatization, Mazzoleni and Schulz (1999) mention its "mutagenic" effect, predicting that it can change politics into something different from what traditionally has been embodied in the tenets of democracy. The mediatization of political discourse is accompanied by a shift of journalism toward "infotainment," often resulting in sensationalization of news and a rather superficial treatment of politics. The critics of mediatization point to its negative consequences for the democratic process, the media's lack of accountability, and the distortion of politics by turning it into a market-like game (Entman, 1989; Habermas, 1989).

Mass media has often been regarded as an element in the political fight and a way of influencing society. Thompson (1994), trying to define the mutual relations between social development and mass communication, suggests that the media play an important role in the mechanisms of power. The close relation between the world of politics and the media is made even closer by the specific characteristics of mass communication. In this context, the power of the media using symbolic forms while transferring information in order to influence events becomes a temptation for those who want to use it to achieve particular ideological, economic, or political benefits.

The media rely on political figures to provide newsworthy content and generate the audience, whereas political organizations need the media to exist in social reality and promote themselves. Describing the relations between the media and politics, Strömbäck (2008) points that although earlier the two were semi-independent and politics held the upper hand, more recently it is the media who hold the upper hand. Despite reciprocity, the media seems to be less dependent on politics than vice versa. Although political organizations have developed means to circumvent journalists (such as advertisements or presence in the social media), they still rely heavily on such intermediaries as influentials, spin doctors, and lobbyists.

Political Public Relations and Lobbying

Kotler and Keller (2006) believe that public relation is one of six major modes of communication within *marketing communications mix*. Public relation is company-sponsored activities and programs designed to create daily or special brand-related interactions. It involves a variety of programs designed to promote or protect a company's image or its individual products. Public relations include communications directed internally to employees of the company or externally to consumers, other firms, the government, and media. According to these authors, the appeal of public relations is based on three distinctive qualities: (1) high credibility (the news stories and features are more authentic and credible to readers than ads); (2) ability to catch buyers off guard (PR can reach prospects who prefer to avoid salespeople and advertisements); and (3) dramatization (PR has the potential for dramatizing a company or product). Then, major tools in marketing PR include publications (e.g., reports, press and the Web articles, or company newsletters), events (e.g., news conferences, seminars, or outings), sponsorships (sports and cultural events), news (the media releases), speeches, public service activities (e.g., contributing money and time to good causes), and identity media (e.g., logos, stationery, business cards, buildings, or uniforms).

McGrath (2007) believes that political lobbying can be considered as a form of political communication and – as Lock and Harris (1996) add – is a part of the broader field of public relations (see section Evolution of Lobbying). It is related to the fact that "stimulation and transmission of a communication, by someone other than a citizen acting on his/her own behalf, directed to a governmental decision-maker with the hope of influencing his/her decision" (McGrath, 2007, p. 273). And the most powerful form of lobbying is the supply of information on your case, and the issues surrounding it, on a regular basis to those within the decision process. According to Andrews (1996), lobbying means two things. First, lobbying is working the system, i.e., representations based on careful research, usually followed by negotiation with several elements of central or local government. Second, it means pressure on government, mobilization of public, and media opinion around a particular problem.

Political Consultants

Today, politics has become a big, profitable business to consultants who help manufacture politicians' images. O'Shaughnessy (1990, p. 7) describes political consultants as "the product managers of the political world." The consultants have become more important because they are in a position to help a politician craft a winning image over the television that resonates well with citizens. As we move from the television era to the Internet era, the expertise necessary to be a successful consultant will have to change. As Howard (2006) states, while pollsters supply campaigns with important information about the electorate and fund-raising professionals generate revenue, information technology experts have also had significant influence on campaign organization. Information technology experts build their political values into the tools and technologies of modern campaigns, with direct implications for the organization and process of campaigning. At the level of overall strategic thinking, the candidate is involved, but when it comes to creating a campaign platform, conducting polls, and setting up a promotional strategy, very few candidates get involved.

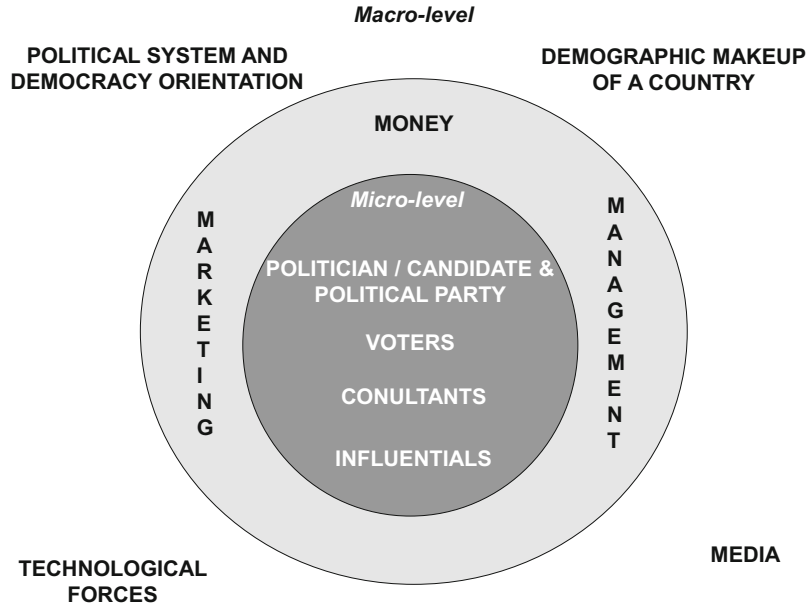
Consultants are hired and fired by campaigns in the same way that a corporation might hire a consultant, based on word-of-mouth recommendation and relative success in the past. The consultants have not been exposed to the public, nor have they been screened by voters in the same way that party officials have been. Furthermore, consultants, who may have previously concentrated their efforts on products and services, or even social campaigns like green marketing, are now engaged and hired by political organizations who are constantly trying to position and reposition the brand image of their political leaders in a favorable light as a result of the 24/7 h media coverage of politics that exists all over the world (Newman & Newman, 2018).

The Advanced Model of Political Marketing

Cwalina, Falkowski, and Newman (2009, p. 70) define political marketing as "the processes of exchanges and establishing, maintaining, and enhancing relationships among objects in the political market (politicians, political parties, voters, interests groups, institutions), whose goal is to identify and satisfy their needs and develop political leadership." Political marketing is then conceptualized as permanent element of governance rather than a discrete element of election campaigns.

The political marketing management should be analyzed at two interdependent levels: the macro and micro levels, shown in Fig. 1 (Cwalina et al., 2012). In this perspective, the following macrostructures play important roles: (1) the political system and its legal regulations concerning the foundations of a particular political system (the constitution), as well as ruling, organizing elections, and regulating the media market; (2) technological forces; (3) the state's demographic structure; and (4) modern concepts of marketing management and its methods (focus on voters' needs and wants, voter segmentation, candidate/party positioning, message development and dissemination; see e.g., Cwalina, Falkowski, & Newman, 2011; Lees-Marshment, 2009).

Voters, politicians, political parties, opinion leaders, and other organizations (e.g., lobbyists, nongovernmental organizations, or labor unions) are considered agents that function not only within these macrostructures but also within specific microstructures (Cwalina et al., 2012; Newman et al., 2017). Just as microeconomics and macroeconomics are the two major perspectives within the field of economics, so are the micro and macro approaches to political marketing which represent the two major perspectives that allow one to better understand the workings of modern democracies and the processes taking place there. An approach which takes into account both levels of analysis can integrate various theories of particular political behavior considered as part of an external macrostructure, understood as broad social, political, legal, economic, and technological context, with the theories of political behavior of individuals and institutions considered as the internal microstructure. They enjoy a lot of influence on the course of political events and the shape of the microenvironment.

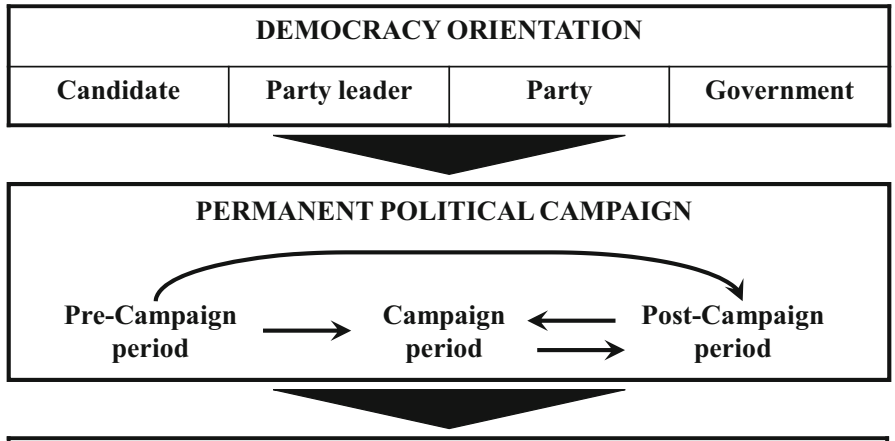


Political Marketing, Fig. 1 The macro and micro view of political marketing. (Reproduced from Cwalina et al., 2012)

Looking at political behaviors and processes from macro and micro perspectives simultaneously, one can better understand the working of modern democracies and the processes taking place, as well as the inherent development, threats, and opportunities. Such an approach can then integrate various theories of particular political behavior, regarded as part of an external macrostructure and understood in a broad social, political, legal, economic, and technological context, forming and controlling the political behavior of individuals and institutions. However, such an approach toward marketing can also perform a heuristic function: it is the source of new ideas and an innovative approach to explaining the existing political behaviors, as well as predicting those which might appear in the more or less remote future. In this context, marketing management functions as a lens through which a given persuasion strategy is planned and implemented.

The advanced model of political marketing proposed by Cwalina, Falkowski, and Newman (2011, 2014, 2016) and presented in Fig. 2 constitutes a proposal to explain the specificity of marketing activities in politics described above. This model is derived from the model of political marketing put forward by Newman (1994, see Fig. 3).

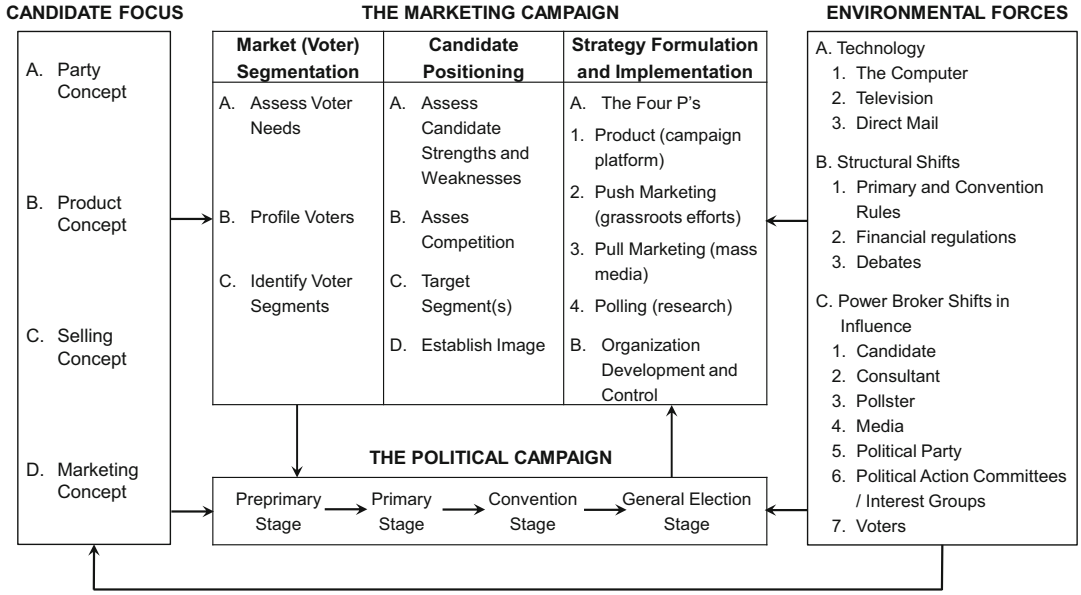
The advanced model of political marketing integrates the permanent political campaign and the political marketing process into a single framework. The permanent campaign is a process of continuing transformation that never stops (Nimmo, 1999). It transforms government into an instrument designed to sustain an elected official's public popularity. The permanent political campaign and political marketing processes are realized within a particular country's political system. The system depends, above all, on "democracy orientation," which consists of political tradition as well as the efficiency of the developed democratic procedures (e.g., referenda, direct, or indirect election of president). Democracy orientation determines how the functions of the authorities are implemented and who the dominant object in the government structure is. However, democracy orientation also defines whom the voters focus on during elections. From this perspective, one can distinguish four fundamental types of such orientation: candidate-oriented democracy (e.g., the United States), party leader-oriented democracy (e.g., the United Kingdom and Mexico), party-oriented democracy (as France, Poland, or Finland), and government-oriented democracy (e.g., Russia and China).



POLITICAL MARKETING PROCESS			
Message development		Message dissemination	Relationship building
Voter segments determination	Candidate/party positioning and targeting (branding)		
A. Primary segmentation B. Secondary segmentation (assess voter needs) C. Profile voters D. Voter segments identification E. Target segments identification	A. Assessing candidate/party image and issues strengths and weaknesses B. Assessing competition C. Candidate position in target segments D. Campaign platform establishing (image, issues, promises)	A. Personal (direct) campaign (grass-roots efforts, election events and meetings) B. Mediated (indirect) campaign (printed and electronic materials) C. Public Relations D. Campaign development and control (polling) E. Social networking	A. Platform delivery (policy implementation , public sector services) B. Mutual trust building C. Permanent communication D. Lobbying

Political Marketing, Fig. 2 The advanced model of political marketing. (Reproduced from Cwalina et al., 2011)

Depending on the democracy orientation, then, political campaigns may focus on different goals and use different means to reach them, including micro-targeting, social media, voter analytics, and Big Data (Newman, 2016). Nevertheless, in all democratic systems, political campaigns are permanent. The permanent campaign is a process of continuing transformation. It never stops. Therefore, distinguishing the particular stages of the campaign (pre-campaign period, campaign period, and post-campaign period) is, in a sense, an artificial procedure because those particular stages often merge into one with no clear dividing lines between stages.



Political Marketing, Fig. 3 A model of political marketing. (Reproduced from Newman, 1994)

Governing then becomes a perpetual campaign that transforms government into an instrument designed to sustain an elected official's public popularity.

The political marketing process contains three key elements: politician/party message development, message dissemination, and relationship building (Cwalina et al., 2011, 2012).

Message Development

Message development refers to distinguishing particular groups of voters for whom an individualized and appropriate campaign platform will be designed. Determining voter segments is a process in which all voters are broken down into segments or groupings that the candidate then targets with a particular message. In political marketing, one can distinguish two levels of voter segmentation: primary and secondary (Cwalina et al., 2009). The primary segmentation focuses on dividing voters based on two main criteria: (1) voter party identification (particular party partisanship vs. independency) and (2) voter identification strength (from heavy partisans through weak partisans to floating voters). Looking at the marketing campaign holistically, its goal should be to reinforce the decisions of the supporters and to win the support of those who are uncertain or whose preferences are not crystallized and those who still hesitate or have poor identification with a candidate or party that is close ideologically. It is these groups of voters that require more study – the secondary segmentation. The goal of the secondary segmentation is developing a deeper knowledge of the target voters, as a result of which their profile can be developed including their demographic, psychological, and behavioral features.

After identifying voting segments, one needs to define the candidate's position in each of the multiple stages in the process of positioning. This consists of assessing the candidate's and opponents' strengths and weaknesses. The key elements here include (1) creating an image of the candidate that emphasizes the individual's particular personality traits and (2) developing and presenting a clear position on the country's economic and social issues (see chapter ▶ "Issues Management"). The term "candidate image" means creating a particular type of representation for a particular purpose (e.g., voting, governing, negotiating), which, by evoking associations, provides

the object with additional values (e.g., socio-demographic, psychological, ethnic, or ethical) and thus contributes to the emotional reception of the object (Cwalina, Falkowski, & Kaid, 2000). The values through which the constructed object is enriched may never be reflected in his "real" features. It is enough if they have a certain, positive meaning for the receiver. In sum, a politician's image consists of how people perceive him based on his characteristics, leadership potential, and surrounding messages that are conveyed through the mass media and by word of mouth in everyday communication with friends and family (Cwalina & Falkowski, 2015). The most important issue in creating any image is selecting those features that will lay the foundations for further actions. Such characteristics include personality features that can refer to voters' beliefs about human nature, e.g., integrity and competence (Cwalina & Falkowski, 2016; Cwalina et al., 2017; McCurley & Mondak, 1995), energy and friendliness (Caprara & Zimbardo, 2004), and leadership styles (Cwalina & Drzewiecka, 2015), or be a consequence of social demand in a given moment of time.

Image and issue positions may be used jointly by positioning politicians via policies on issues or image and emotional positioning or, for example, the model of "political triangle" proposed by Worcester and Mortimore (2005, see also Worcester, Mortimore, Baines, & Gill, 2015). The goal of message development is to set and establish the campaign platform or "political product." It evolves over the course of the permanent political campaign (during both the election period and the governing period). Butler and Collins (1994) describe the candidate offer as a conglomerate consisting of three parts: the multicomponent (person/party/ideology) nature of the offer; the significant degree of loyalty involved; and the fact that it is mutable – that is, it can be changed or transformed in the postelection setting. Lees-Marshment (2003, pp. 14–15) defines a party's "product" as its behavior that "is ongoing and offered at all times (not just elections), at all levels of party. The products include the leadership, MP's (and candidates), membership, staff, symbols, constitution, activities such as party conferences and policies." According to Newman (1994; see also Newman & Sheth, 1985) the campaign platform consists of a number of elements, including (1) the election manifesto of the candidate based on the political and economic guidelines of the party she/he belongs to or the organization set up for the time of the elections; (2) his/her positions on the most important problems appearing during the campaign; (3) the image of the candidate; and (4) his/her reference to her/his political background and the groups of voters supporting her/him (e.g., labor unions, associations, NGOs, etc.) or the authorities. These components are strongly interrelated, and they are likely to influence candidate evaluation and support (Hacker, Zakahi, Giles, & McQuitty, 2000). The weights of particular domains of platform may change with changes in macro (e.g., legal regulations, demographic transitions, new media) and micro (e.g., changes in voter beliefs, set of the candidates, role of political consultants) factors influencing political process (Cwalina et al., 2012).

Message Dissemination

The established political or party message is then communicated to the voter market. A personal (direct) campaign primarily refers to the grassroots effort necessary to build up a volunteer network to handle the day-to-day activities of running the campaign. The grassroots effort becomes the first information channel to transmit the candidate's message from the candidate's organization to the voters and to transmit feedback from the voters to the candidate.

A mediated (indirect) campaign is a second information channel for the candidate. The key elements of the political communication process include media content, the influence of political institutions and other political and social actors on the content of the messages, the specific audience, and interaction processes between sources of information and the media disseminating information (Cwalina, Falkowski, & Newman, 2015). The media agenda is the result of the work of media practitioners (owners of media

corporations, editors, journalists, reporters, etc.) and political actors or events covered by the media. The relationship between media and politicians is then a bilateral relationship: politicians try to include their agenda (campaign platform) in the media, but in order to be successful, they need to adapt to the content distributed by the media. Moreover, the content of a campaign platform is influenced by interest groups (lobbyists, labor unions, human rights groups, ecological movements, etc.). The most powerful form of their influence is the supply of information on a constituent's case and the issues surrounding it, on a regular basis to those within the decision process – actual or potential members of parliaments or governments.

Instead of the person-to-person channel used with the direct marketing approach, mediated campaign makes use of electronic and printed media outlets, such as television, radio, newspapers, magazines, direct mail, the Internet (e.g., e-mail, Websites, blogs), campaign literature (e.g., fliers, brochures, fact sheets), billboards, and any other available forms of promotion. Political marketing also adopts new ways of communicating with the voter, mainly related to the development of new technologies, such as social networking and mobile marketing (see section Digital Marketing). In Howard's (2006) opinion, information technologies have played a role in campaign organization since the 1970s, but it is only over the last decade that adopting new technologies also became an occasion for organizational restructuring within political parties and campaigns. As a result, a completely new and different way of planning and conducting the campaign emerged, which Howard (2006, p. 2) defines as the *hypermedia campaign*, "an agile political organization defined by its capacity for innovatively adopting digital technologies for express political purposes and its capacity for innovatively adapting its organizational structure to conform to new communicative practices." It is not simply that political campaigns employ digital information technologies in their communications strategies. Integrating such technologies becomes an occasion for organizational adaptation, effecting organizational goals and relationships among professional staff, political leadership, volunteers, financial contributors, citizens, and other political campaigns. According to Howard, this rising prominence of hypermedia campaigns is related to three factors. First, a service class of professional political technocrats with special expertise in information technology (IT) arose. Unlike these other campaign managers, the consultants specializing in IT focus mainly on building new communication technologies for citizens and candidates. Second, the political consulting industry replaced mass media tools with targeted media tools, as e-mail, Websites, and social networking, which allowed the industry to tailor messages to specific audiences. Third, the engineers of political hypermedia made technical decisions about political hypermedia that constrained subsequent decisions about the production and consumption of political content. For example, the use of social networking by the Barack Obama campaign as both a personal and mediated information outlet in 2008 was integral to his victory (Newman, 2016).

Relationship Building and Political Branding

The third element of the political marketing process and the goal of any political party or candidate is to establish, maintain, and enhance relationships with voters and other political power brokers (e.g., media, party organizations, sponsors, lobbyists, interest groups) to meet the objectives of the parties involved (Cwalina et al., 2011). This is achieved by a mutual exchange, both during the election campaign and after it, when the candidate is either ruling or in opposition to the winner. An integral element of this relationship building is the "promise concept." The key functions related to this concept are giving promises, fulfilling promises, and enabling promises. Therefore, an important element of building stable relationships is trust, which is a willingness to rely on an exchange partner in whom one has confidence. To achieve trust, one also needs to establish communications channels that function on a constant basis.

For both political parties and candidates, relationship building is fundamental to how their political brand – such as meaning, identity, and symbolic value – is perceived (Scammell, 2015; see chapter ► "Branding: Brand management").

For political actors, relationship building is integral to their brand management – i.e., the development of trust and confidence with their supporters – as well as how their supporters view the extent to which promises are kept by the candidate or party. Political marketing processes therefore recognize the importance of branding and its use to differentiate among competing actors. Increasingly, political parties and candidates are seizing on the relevance of political branding as a way to establish relationships with specific communities and issue publics to foster greater support (Newman & Newman, 2018). More recently, scholars have focused their attention of political branding frameworks to include the developments of alternative brands, nontraditional brands, and political brands in different settings and contexts (Pich & Newman, 2019). This includes party and candidate characteristics, such as credibility and personality (Armannsdottir, Carnell, & Pich, 2019; Jain & Ganesch, 2019), as well as contentious issues (Falkowski & Jabłońska, 2019; Newman 2019).

Conclusion

Politics is about persuasion. And political marketing largely relies on rational planning and developing persuasive strategies, predominantly based on psychological knowledge and principles, in order to shape people's beliefs, attitudes, and behavior (Cwalina & Falkowski, 2000). On the one hand, contemporary political marketing penetrates the politics to a larger and larger extent – a phenomenon which Moloney (2007) calls "policy-by-marketing."

It is criticized from the ethical standpoint as undermining democracy because of its ability to promote populism and to manipulate and mislead the voter. It contributes to the misperception of political processes and the ease with which solutions can be traded and implemented. Political marketing subjects politics to the consumer-like forces of business management and the market. On the other hand, political marketing has a positive influence on the stability and development of democracy, as well. O'Shaughnessy (1987) points out that, at least to some extent, it can support the growth of an issue-oriented "political nation": distinguished from the older base of political support by greater commitment to narrower issues and the possession of detailed and intimate information. Furthermore, political marketing contributes to filtering down the knowledge of the variety of marketing tools and techniques and transmission of power from elected to nonelected to staffers and civil service. Political marketing as well as political persuasion may be used for various purposes, and it is not a threat to democracy in itself. The real threat comes with the intention of the people who decide to use it.

Cross-References

- ▶ Branding: Brand Management
- ▶ Digital Marketing
- ▶ Evolution of Lobbying
- ▶ Issues Management

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