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Theories and Concepts in Political Marketing

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- state the characteristics of modern political marketing management
- distinguish between wide and narrow interpretations of political marketing
- identify seven key themes in political marketing.

Introduction

Marketing theory has been influenced by many different disciplines, but it has also contributed to the development of other academic areas within management studies and beyond. While there is a considerable stock of knowledge concerning political marketing management, especially in the areas of campaign management, political strategies and comparative political marketing management, the essence of political marketing theory remains somewhat opaque. This is sometimes explained by the notion that 'traditional marketing frameworks do not fit neatly into a political marketing configuration' (Dean and Croft, 2001: 1197). Furthermore, there is no clear understanding of the ontological and epistemological implications of a marketing perspective on politics due to the primary research focus on descriptive studies that attempt to explain what political actors actually do (Marland, 2003). This refers to the fact that marketing theory makes specific assumptions about the 'fabric of reality' (ontology) and how knowledge claims can be made about this reality (epistemology). These assumptions can be applied to politics and constitute a political marketing perspective. In this chapter, we argue that the managerial focus is only one element of political marketing theory. What has been neglected is an epistemological view of political marketing as a 'research lens', a meta-theoretical vehicle for making sense of the political sphere. In order to develop this argument, we first provide a concise overview of the state of affairs in political marketing, followed

by a discussion of 'narrow' and 'wide' interpretations of the nature and scope of political marketing research. We will then discuss seven key themes that we consider to be essential research foci.

The state of affairs in political marketing

It has often been argued that the application of marketing tools and instruments in politics is nothing new (Baines and Egan, 2001). This may or may not be the case, but what certainly has changed in the last twenty-five years is not just the magnitude of political marketing management but the belief that political actors not only act in marketing terms but also think in marketing terms; they themselves as well as outside experts believe that they *do* marketing management (even if they may not admit it publicly), and they try to integrate their use of marketing instruments in a coherent marketing strategy (Dermody and Scullion, 2001). This is notwithstanding the idea that much of their marketing knowledge might be 'political folk wisdom' (Scammell, 1999: 738). In this context, political actors include not only political parties, politicians and political consultants, but also governments, single-issue groups, lobbying organisations and so on, and political marketing applications have moved from solely a communication tool to an integrated way of managing politics, be it policy development, permanent campaigning or even governing. Six main developments of applications of political marketing management can be generalised for most democratic political systems in the last two decades:

- an increased sophistication of communication and 'spin'
- an emphasis on product and image management, including candidate positioning and policy development
- an increased sophistication of news management, that is, the use of 'free' media
- a more coherent and planned political marketing strategy development
- an intensified and integrated use of political market research
- an emphasis on political marketing organisation and professionalisation of political management.

However, most political actors are far from possessing an integrated and sophisticated understanding of marketing applications for their specific political exchange situations. Political marketing management has caused some parties and candidates to adopt a simplistic and populist 'follower' mentality, contributing to the disenchantment of the electorate and a resulting cynicism regarding politics in general (Henneberg, 2006).

Serious, intensive and coordinated research activities on how marketing can be applied to politics is a fairly recent addition to the area of social and non-profit marketing. The academic field of political marketing started to form in the late 1980s and concentrated on topical events and in-depth

analyses of marketing instruments, but none offered a general theory of political marketing. However, research on political marketing management quickly gained momentum, driven mainly by the increasing use of marketing applications by political parties and candidates. Although technological drivers, especially in the media arena, are often quoted as being the main reason for this acceleration, various changes in the political sphere fostered this development, such as lower levels of party identification and higher electoral volatility. Furthermore, increased competitive pressure in the political market with single-issue groups for resources such as volunteer labour and member subscriptions, less differentiation between political offerings and a general professionalisation of political marketing management activities characterise modern political markets (Panebianco, 1988). To provide an understanding of these phenomena and the reactions of political actors to them, research on political marketing management became an established sub-discipline of marketing, especially in France, the UK, Germany, Australia, New Zealand and the USA (Perloff, 1999). The need to describe and understand these phenomena instigated numerous academic articles, books and conferences. So whilst the institutional requirements for the development of political marketing theory are in place, an assessment of current research on political marketing shows shortcomings.

A distinct bias in the research foci of marketing instrument usage in campaign situations obscures more general and theoretical discussions. Whilst communication activities, market research tools and other political marketing instruments and activities have been well analysed and compared, this has been undertaken on a descriptive level. Higher-level concept development or prescriptive studies are rare. Furthermore, more fundamental issues such as ethical dimensions of political marketing, the underlying exchange mechanisms and the interaction of marketing activities with the political system have remained under-researched. As such, political marketing 'theories' have not been developed in any depth and so empirical work is not well anchored. Many crucial discussions about definitions have remained unresolved, not due to competing positions and interpretations but because of negligence and inactivity in these areas. Furthermore, a tendency towards ossification exists as many political marketing studies use an oversimplistic instrumental/managerial interpretation of marketing, oriented towards the '4P' marketing mix of product, price, promotion and place (see Baines et al., 2011: 15). This causes a decoupling of research in political marketing from fresh developments in commercial marketing theory, be it on conceptual or epistemological levels. For example, relational marketing concepts which have gained importance in commercial marketing theory in the last decades do not find their equivalent in political marketing (Bannon, 2005). Several arguments have been put forward that theoretical and applied research on political marketing need to be more innovative. In the next section of this chapter, we will examine 'narrow' and 'wide' interpretations of the scope and nature of political marketing theory.

Narrow and wide interpretations of political marketing

Essentially, the different aspects of political marketing theory can be exemplified by the two different possible research objects that political marketing theory could focus on: political marketing management, on the one hand, and political exchanges, on the other. Whilst the first research object concerns managerial aspects of marketing in politics, the second is concerned with an epistemological stance and is therefore not limited to marketing applications but encompasses all political interactions and exchanges. Together they provide the core for a holistic theory of political marketing (Henneberg, 2002).

The initial aspect of a political marketing theory takes its impetus from existing practice in the political sphere: political marketing management. It manifests itself in such diverse activities as focusing campaign strategies on the salient political issues of swing voters or through the application of sophisticated segmentation techniques, through a consequent voter orientation, the application of celebrity endorsement strategies as part of an integrated marketing communication or the institution of powerful directors of communication and campaign consultants. Furthermore, political actors, political communicators and to some extent the electorate believe that marketing activities have become an essential part of political management in many situations. This belief has now entered the mainstream through endless discussions and analyses of the ill-defined concept of 'spin' in the media (Harris, 2001).

As a result of these (perceived or real) occurrences of marketing practice and language in politics, the use of marketing theory as a means of explaining these phenomena seems obvious. Whilst political science (or other related disciplines) have little to say about topics such as segmentation, brand management or strategic capability management, they fit easily into an explanatory scheme that is based explicitly on management and marketing theory. As such, political marketing theory is a necessary (if not sufficient) way of getting to grips with some of the modern developments in democratic life. It allows us to describe certain political phenomena in a way that political science is not able to. Furthermore, as part of the established tradition of commercial marketing theory, political marketing theory can integrate a descriptive understanding of political marketing management with a prescriptive theory, that is, a theory that can help political actors to apply political marketing management techniques effectively and efficiently. Such a research view has been entitled a 'Theory of Political Marketing Management' by Henneberg (2002). However, this theory cannot break out of its self-induced narrow focus on marketing activities, relegating everything else in politics to the level of unknowns or exogenous variables. Hence, in such a narrow interpretation the wider political environment that frames the application of commercial marketing management

to the political sphere remains somewhat 'alien' and ill defined in its relationship with marketing theory.

On the other hand, a wide interpretation of the nature and scope of political marketing attempts to understand the whole of politics, that is, its constituting exchange and interaction structures, not just political marketing management practice. This is done via the application of the underlying concepts of marketing theory through a marketing oriented epistemology. Such a claim needs justification that can best be provided by looking at some of the embedded elements.

First, a wide interpretation of political marketing theory is not solely concerned with marketing activities, but tries to integrate these activities with the political environment in which they are used. Therefore, only an holistic understanding of all political activities, interactions and exchanges, players, structures and so on will be sufficient to understand the specific ramifications of and for political marketing management. Such a development seems necessary in light of the frequent claims that political marketing theory has not as yet developed any meaningful ethical frameworks or analyses regarding the implications of political marketing activities on macro-level structural variables of politics such as the party system, voting behaviour, the media landscape and power distributions in society (Henneberg, 2004).

Second, a wide interpretation of political marketing theory is concerned with epistemology, that is, the 'enquiry into our knowledge of being' (Ackroyd and Fleetwood, 2000: 6). This is not to say that political marketing *is* an epistemology but rather that certain ontological and epistemological positions can be connected with a political marketing perspective, for example the specific and fundamental issues that establish the identity of the field of political marketing. The constituting elements or premises of commercial marketing theory provide such a position as outlined below, although not all of these principles are uncontested in the commercial marketing literature. These positions, in so far as they differ from those of political science, provide a new and innovative way of understanding the political sphere. As with all ontological/epistemological stances, limitations exist in as much as they obscure certain issues and highlight others, and therefore need to be supplemented by alternative perspectives.

Third, political marketing theory as a way of understanding political interactions and exchanges in general has to be seen as part of a methodological pluralism. The implication is not that a marketing-related epistemology would explain the political sphere better than a political science, sociological or psychological epistemology. However, evaluative judgements need to be employed with regard to the appropriateness of certain epistemological positions in the face of a specific phenomenon, for example seeking an understanding of the impact of negative political advertising on voter decision-making processes in order to provide guidelines for self-regulating bodies of political advertisers. Hence, this is concerned with the respective explanatory power of different epistemological stances in a concrete situation

and for a given purpose. As an abstract concept, no preferences can be deduced beyond that.

Therefore, a political marketing theory of politics would not supersede but complement other (such as political science) theories. It would be more appropriate in explaining certain elements of political life whilst others would not be covered in the same depth, rigour or quality. Additionally, certain explanations might contradict those of political science directly, without it being clear which claim is of higher appropriateness, thus stimulating further discussions. As such, a wide political marketing theory would consist of theories of middle-range and would have no ambition to provide any general theories. Understood in this epistemologically oriented way, a theory of political marketing cannot be anything but a sense-making framework, that is, a way of knowing. Whilst these theoretical considerations can only present political marketing theory as a possibility for enriching our understanding of politics, the ontological and epistemological essence of a political marketing theory needs to be described in order to gauge an understanding of how far these provide a specific and valuable lens for the gaining of knowledge in the political sphere.

The character of marketing as focusing on exchange (theory) provides an ontological foundation for political marketing. The assumption is that 'reality' is made up of actors (or forces) in relation to each other. Everything achieves its characteristics and qualities within a web of (multiple) 'pairings' (Bagozzi, 1975). Marketing, in its simplest form, cannot be carried out by one actor alone; it is always an exchange between actors. Thus, the corresponding epistemology would prescribe an enquiry that looks at dyads (or networks of relationships) as the main focus of analysis. While these dyads/networks consist of actors, the exchange focus of political marketing means that, for example, research on political campaigns should not focus on the political marketing activities of parties/candidates, but take into consideration that the political marketing exchange consists of three interactions in the electoral, parliamentary and governmental marketplaces. Perceptions, interpretations and representations of activities and other meaning-laden properties such as intentions, positions and resources within the political exchange become the defining epistemological characteristics of political marketing enquiry.

Related to this point is the ontological assumption of a 'qualified' market exchange. A managerial perspective of political marketing is linked to a traditional (micro-economic) market understanding as a clearing mechanism, prescribing the exchange characteristics of independent actors with self-interested goal functions which they maximise in episodic and unrelated transactions. However, political marketing theory characterises interactions and exchanges between interdependent actors and structures. This would also encompass cooperation and collaboration, and in some cases also collusion, which in traditional markets are deemed to be anomalies. Furthermore, an increased emphasis on time dynamics is implied: not only single transactions are analysed but also the totality of interactions and exchanges constructed within

relationships over time. Historical determinants, as well as future-oriented considerations, become real forces within these market exchanges.

A third element is concerned with the embeddedness of politics, especially its relationship with social and other narrative models of representation. It can be posited that the political sphere does not exist independently of other cultural and social aspects of life (Butler and Collins, 1999). The interactions and interdependencies of politics on the economy, the legal system and social and cultural experiences give a clear indication for the arbitrariness of any attempt to disentangle politics from its contextual frame (Mancini and Swanson, 1996). As this condition is existent on both an epistemological level (in the way we attempt to gain insights about politics) and on an ontological level (the fabric of politics as is), any political as well as social marketing enquiry needs to look at interconnected systems; and cannot focus simply on an arbitrarily delineated political sphere (Brenkert, 2002). This complexity makes simple and uni-dimensional explanations very unlikely. Furthermore, it becomes difficult for political marketing theory to find clear-cut 'horizons' for its explanatory purpose.

Lastly, the structural connectedness of the management of politics and politics itself is ontologically anchored in political marketing theory. The difference between content and packaging in politics is treated as spurious. Any political management or marketing activity relates inevitably to policy/politics content either through considerations regarding development, execution or assessment of policies, and is recognised as such by other actors. On the other hand, policy-making and governing encompass management issues. So any enquiry in political marketing can be said to look at aspects of politics that in a narrow sense do not have anything to do with marketing instruments. As such, political marketing theory cannot limit itself to political marketing management as the application of tools and concepts from commercial marketing to the political context. Directly linked to this is a recognition that marketing is not a neutral aspect or tool of politics and that ethical considerations have to be an integral part of any political marketing theory.

The delineation of wide and narrow understandings of political marketing theory has implications for political marketing research, especially with respect to the current state of affairs of the discipline. It is the main contention of this chapter that the current realities of research on political marketing can be explained through connecting them with the two different perspectives on political marketing theory. The underpinning idea is that the shortcomings of current research are linked to a research community that subscribes to the narrow interpretation of political marketing theory that is concerned with understanding marketing activities in politics. While this happens predominantly implicitly, this managerial stance is widespread, not only with researchers but also commentators on, or opponents of, political marketing, and so political marketing actually mirrors the most limiting aspects of mainstream marketing. Political marketing theory has not yet been employed or conceptually discussed widely and this lack of research

causes the field of political marketing to be short-sighted and without a solid, theoretical foundation. The main implication of this chapter is that research on political marketing needs to be broadened in order to enhance knowledge development in political marketing. In the following section we discuss seven key themes that we perceive to be central to the advancement of the discipline of political marketing.

Key themes in political marketing

Theme 1: grounding in exchanges and interactions

Whilst commercial marketing theory can now look back on decades of theory and concept development which manifest themselves in different schools of marketing thought (Wilkie and Moore, 2003), this is not the case for political marketing thought. The research domain of political marketing was made possible on the theoretical level by the 'broadening debate' of marketing in the 1970s, but it was not until the 1990s that political marketing became the focus of serious research. As the historical development of political marketing stems from commercial marketing, marketing theory provides the ontological rationale for political marketing and it is therefore important to link the knowledge gained from political marketing research with underlying and fundamental marketing concepts (Henneberg, 2008). As a core concept in commercial marketing theory concerns the exchange and interactions, this needs to be represented in research on political marketing. Commercial marketing theories use distinct tenets about the underlying monadic, dyadic or network exchange processes that shape and restrict marketing interactions. Such an understanding of the structural characteristics, based on social exchange theory, provides clear ontological delineations and partitioning for theory development in political marketing.

A critical analysis of the assumptions that guide theory and concept development in political marketing is necessary in order to avoid the development of conceptual models with little epistemological discussion of the fundamental assumptions of each model. However, such a discussion of assumptions regarding the epistemological grounding is rare in political marketing research (Baines and Egan, 2001). Furthermore, it seems as if our understanding of the nature of exchanges and interactions in political marketing is underdeveloped. The grounding of research in clear discussions of exchange and interaction characteristics and their differences from traditional marketing exchanges has rarely been attempted. The fundamental question of the political marketing exchange characteristics which lies at the heart of filling the metaphor of the 'political market' with life has not been clarified theoretically in enough depth. This is true for campaign exchanges as well as for other relevant interactions, especially the service implementation of policies (governmental

political marketing). This limitation means research in political marketing is not rigorous enough with regard to the underlying exchange morphology which determines theory and concept-building efforts.

Theme 2: pluralism of theoretical marketing approaches

When it comes to underlying marketing theories, it must be noted that marketing is somewhat eclectic: many different theories and schools exist that are based on differing perspectives that are often incompatible. Marketing as a 'maggie discipline' borrows theories from other disciplines such as economics, psychology and sociology, and what is needed is a further step, using these borrowed theories to provide insights from which to build specific theories of political marketing which can be the foundation of a theory-driven discipline (Burton, 2005). At present there are many competing theories of commercial marketing and with this comes the ability to sustain multiple research approaches, something that can be seen to have a positive and liberating effect on the discipline. For example, despite the existence of several schools of thought in the late 1980s, this did not stop the development of relationship marketing approaches (Grönroos, 1994) or interaction and network theories of marketing (Ford and Håkansson, 2006). Pluralism within a discipline is not necessarily a problem, as having multiple perspectives can increase the understanding of different facets of the research field. However, the eclectic nature of marketing also makes it a 'low-paradigm' field (Weick, 1995) in which dominant approaches are weakly defined and detailed with regard to other approaches.

Political marketing theories and concepts are obviously highly influenced by research in marketing. However, it has been observed before that an instrumental view of marketing management is dominating political marketing research. An adaptation to the political market of the 4Ps framework and the marketing mix paradigm is crowding out other research streams of marketing. As such, political marketing theory is developing into a 'strong' paradigm, focused on a singular approach that is, however, often seen as obsolete or naïve in mainstream marketing theory. Pluralism of marketing schools is not used enough in political marketing, that is, functional, relational, or network-oriented concepts are rare in political marketing theory development (Henneberg, 2007).

Theme 3: adaptation of existing marketing and political science theory and concepts

The issue of multiple theoretical approaches is doubled in the area of political marketing: theories that are developed from both marketing and political science can be used, and these theories and concepts can also be overlaid,

integrated and compared. As such, political marketing theories and concepts depend on borrowing and adaptation of existing theories from both marketing and political science. Although this is dependent on the exchange characteristics of the political market, such an integrating nature of theory and concept development from different disciplines remains an important aspect of contemporary political marketing research. This problem is further compounded owing to the very different ways in which both commercial and political marketing are understood and that some of their theories are incompatible. However, the existence of multiple ways of understanding the research field can increase theory-building creativity by searching out similarities and friction points in alternative theories.

Unfortunately, research on these alternative theoretical positions in political marketing is not high on the research agenda, as research carried out by marketers and by political scientists remains isolated from each other. Not many truly 'interdisciplinary' research groups or projects exist in the field of political marketing. Consequently, integrated or adapted theories that bridge the disciplinary divide are rare. In fact, there are currently two different ways of thinking about political marketing that exist, which are not integrated except on the most superficial level (Dean and Croft, 2001). State-of-the-art theories and concepts are not used across disciplinary borders to challenge existing theories and concepts in political marketing and to develop new theories and concepts. For example, important marketing concepts like market orientation, the service-dominant logic of marketing and value-network concepts are only starting to creep into political marketing research. However, with the development and acceptance of political marketing as an established sub-field of marketing theory and political science, this can go some way to encouraging cross-disciplinary research.

Theme 4: integration of pragmatic and abstract discipline views

Another issue of political marketing research concerns the aim of this research: should it be the development of theories and concepts that are ultimately capable of being applied by political marketing practitioners, for example candidates, governments, single-issue groups and their marketing advisers, or should it be about understanding politics through a marketing approach (Henneberg, 2008)? Although the former, more pragmatic approach towards theory-building seems to underpin most management research, such a narrow application of political marketing research may hinder the discipline more than it gives it focus. Therefore, the issue of the research aims could lead to different 'discipline borders' for political marketing theories, that is, a narrow vs. broad view of the limits of research in political marketing.

Surveying current political marketing research, it becomes clear that most efforts are focused on a 'narrow' definition of political marketing, that is, one

that is related to the description and application of political marketing strategies and instruments. This is connected to the multiple approach characteristic of political marketing research with its primary focus on instrumental/managerial marketing theory. Whilst this in itself is not a harmful development, the lack of more abstract and 'wider' theories of political marketing does make discussions with political scientists more limited. In fact, we would argue that wider theories of political marketing can actually help provide political marketing research with the intellectual rigour and legitimacy which will allow it to become a contributing factor to political theory itself (Henneberg, 2007).

Theme 5: theories cover what, how and especially why (and justify these choices)

'Good' theory consists of building blocks: 1) the *what*, the concepts or constructs and the variables that operationalise these; 2) the *how*, the interrelationships between the concepts and constructs; and 3) the *why*, the underlying rationale for the selection of specific factors and relationships (Whetten, 1989). The *why* issue is necessary for a comprehensive theory as it is arguably the explaining part (Weick, 1995). According to Hunt (1991), these explanatory models need to be pragmatic, intersubjectively certifiable and have empirical content. However, whether a theory needs to be judged by its application depends on the definition of theory itself; good theory can also be abstract and non-applied. Furthermore, rules for good theory-building include aspects of how the variables are defined: the focus is especially on the uniqueness of the variables, a clear understanding of the limits that each of the variables can explain, a logical way of deriving relationships between constructs, and the link between theory and empirical support (Wacker, 1998). Such theories (or concepts) cannot be justified by just selecting specific variables. It is important to explain *what* variables have been selected, *how* these have been selected and *why* they are believed to be connected.

Coming to the essence of building theory in political marketing, it is necessary to have a better and more precise definition of variables and constructs. Too often, political marketing research employs a very loose way of using conceptualisations without clearly spelling out the differences between constructs and their interactions with other constructs. Critical discussions such as the applicability of the value concept in political exchanges (Brennan, 2003) or of the meaning of market orientation for political actors (Ormrod, 2007) are rare. Furthermore, the *why* question that features so prominently in Weick's (1995) discussion of theorising is mostly absent from the literature on political marketing. A more conscious and reflective way of presenting the gestation process of political marketing theory development may actually increase the likelihood that other researchers will engage with these theories and develop them further.

Theme 6: theories contextualise as well as bridge levels

Theories and concepts need to be placed in a context; they need not attempt to be universal laws but should at least attempt to model specific contexts. Whetten (1989: 492) calls this the who/where/when questions, which are linked to providing a multi-level outlook. Macro- and micro-structures and their relationships need to be developed theoretically. Klein et al. (1999) have summarised the benefits of multi-level work: bridging theoretical gaps, integrating the focus of different research areas to provide richer explanations, and getting to grips with complexity to 'illuminate the context [macro level] surrounding individual-level processes [micro level]' (p. 243). However, barriers to such an outlook are the fact that especially in overarching knowledge fields, the macro- and micro-levels are often integrated. Furthermore, with regard to political marketing theory, a clash of interest exists between commercial marketing theory with its main focus on individual-level analyses, and political science with its main focus on structural perspectives.

Level issues in theory development are among the most difficult aspects. Political marketing research does not always provide a clear indication of the explanatory level it operates on. Individual actors such as candidates and professional political marketers are mixed with organisational levels such as parties and governments. The interaction between the macro- and micro-levels often remains obscure, and the party system level as a further macro-level has so far been excluded from political marketing research. However, as the structures of the party system may be an important contextual variable, it seems reasonable to expect more research that is linked to the aspect of the interplay of political marketing management by actors/organisations and the political party system itself (a relationship that is clearly bi-directional).

Theme 7: juxtaposition of theoretical and empirical plane

The last theme extends theory and concept development by integrating it with empirical data. A validation of theories and concepts needs to link the abstract process of theorising to the empirical plane by assessing the likelihood of providing support for hypotheses and structuring empirical phenomena. Consequently there exists a need to develop more stochastic models in contrast with deterministic explanations, and therefore any theory or concept of political marketing needs to be constantly compared with political experiences. However, the relationship between data and theory is a two-way interaction, with theories and concepts explaining and shaping the data, and with data testing the explanatory power of theories and concepts.

Empirical research, especially theory-testing projects, are still rare in political marketing research. Only through a strong empirical involvement can we achieve substantive theories (Cornelissen and Lock, 2005). However, mostly descriptive and qualitative approaches dominate the methodology

agenda in political marketing research, and describing or categorising data do not fulfil theory development, although they can already contain an unconscious recognition of a theory as part of the process of assembling the data (Weick, 1995). What is missing in political marketing research are rigorous quantitative and especially comparative analyses that integrate theory and concept development with a deep understanding of data. Research on political voting behaviour in relation to political marketing instruments leads the way in this area (Newman, 2002), but other theory aspects of political marketing research need to follow.

Conclusion

Whilst political marketing management is a well-established focus of research, political marketing theories and concepts are not afforded the same importance. This is arguably a direct result of the widespread adoption of a narrow interpretation of the nature and scope of political marketing. Instead, this chapter argues that it is necessary to widen the focus to include questions regarding the impact of political marketing on society. This chapter has also proposed seven key themes that are central to the advancement of the field of political marketing. Common to them all is the need for a better understanding of the theoretical and conceptual foundation upon which political marketing research is based.

Discussion questions

- Think about your political system. Which of the two interpretations of political marketing is most prevalent?
- Now think about the characteristics of modern political marketing management. Which of the two interpretations of the nature and scope of political marketing do they fit best with?
- We advocate a broad interpretation of the nature and scope of political marketing; do you think that this is realistic given the current focus on political marketing management by politicians, political professionals and the media?

Key terms

Narrow interpretation (of political marketing)

Wide interpretation (of political marketing)

Further reading

Henneberg and O'Shaughnessy (2007): This chapter is based on some of the work published in Henneberg and O'Shaughnessy's (2007) article in the *Journal of Political Marketing*.

Henneberg (2008): This chapter is based on some of the work published in Henneberg's (2008) article in the *Journal of Political Marketing*.

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