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Understanding Political Marketing

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"[W]e see a chance to systematise the existant [*sic*] literature under the marketing concept thus addressing the deficiencies of the political science literature which is still an arbitrary collection of unrelated subjects."

Wortmann (1989, p. 311)

"[It] is necessary for marketing as a discipline to present its insights and analytical perspectives in a 'political-science-user-friendly' fashion."

Butler and Collins (1996, p. 32)

Political marketing acts as the guiding theory in the development of a model voting behaviour with managerial implications. Much has been said about the use of marketing tools and techniques in the political sphere. By now, there exist numerous studies on the topic, written by political scientists, marketers, communication specialists, and so forth. Nevertheless, political marketing as a concept is rather new and still very much in flux. It is therefore inappropriate to use political marketing as the theoretical base for a discovery and interdisciplinary approach without explicating what exactly is meant by this juvenile concept. Political marketing is often misused in analyses of political activities as a journalistic "buzzword", a fashionable term that is so familiar that it does not need substantiation or conceptual discussion. Although a recent assessment of publications counted no less than 350 academic sources on political marketing in the period 1990–1996 (Henneberg 1995b; see also

final section in this chapter), it is astonishing that even seminal texts do not provide definitional or conceptual clarifications of the essence or the scope of political marketing (Henneberg 1996b; Lock and Harris 1996). It has to be acknowledged that the most recent publications are located in the sphere of the *theory of political marketing management*—that is, they are managerially relevant by either analysing existing marketing-management practices or prescribing them. Furthermore, it is interesting to notice that there is a clear-cut “division of labour” in publications and research foci in the sense that most political scientists specialise more in descriptive studies—that is, on analyses of marketing activities as shown by political actors (prominent examples are Bowler and Farrell 1992c; Franklin 1994; Jamieson 1992b; Kavanagh 1995b; Scammell 1995). Marketing scientists, on the other hand, anchor their research more in the normative management theory. Here, the “optimal” use of marketing strategies and instruments in the political sphere is prescribed (e.g. Mauser 1983; Newman 1994a; O’Shaughnessy 1990a; Smith and Saunders 1990; Wangen 1983; Wortmann 1989). It remains questionable whether this structure is fruitful for a new interdisciplinary research area. At this point, it suffices to state that the lack of attention shown for grounding research in the area of the *theory of political marketing* seems to be troubling (Henneberg 1995b).

The present chapter, on conceptual aspects of the phenomenon of political marketing, introduces an anchor point for this book of readings by drawing on existing research in the area of political marketing, but predominantly by providing an integrated concept using and developing established marketing theory. It therefore follows the rationale outlined in Wortmann (1989).¹ As guidelines for such a fundamental analysis of political marketing, one can use the following six principles which have been derived from a qualitative and quantitative assessment of the existing political marketing literature (Henneberg 1995b). Political marketing should be seen as a:

- holistic phenomenon;
- permanent phenomenon;
- theoretical phenomenon;
- international phenomenon;
- interactive problem;
- ethical problem.

A holistic approach is necessary in order to counteract the existing tendencies (especially by political scientists) to restrict the scope of analysis to communication instruments (Butler and Collins 1996). These

do not only simplify the variety of instruments available in the political marketing mix but ignore non-operational—that is, strategic—elements of political marketing, or, as Wortmann (1989) puts it: “thus, political parties’ acting is mainly seen in its communicative function while the fact is neglected that political communication is only one part of political acting” (p. 8).² This holistic element also includes broadening the range of relevant actors to all players in the political market, rather than limiting the interest just to political parties (Lock and Harris 1996). Such a holistic approach to political marketing is still lacking in research, and Reid’s conclusion, made in 1988, still stands about ten years later: “there appears to be a dearth of published research which treats it [i.e. political marketing] in a holistic way” (Reid 1988, p. 34). Political marketing is, furthermore, permanent—that is, it is not restricted to the short and intensive period of political campaigning. Today, it is used on an ongoing basis, even for governing purposes (Blumenthal 1982; Kavanagh 1995b; Newman 1995b; Scammell 1994). The theoretical aspect of research in political marketing has been pinpointed above: the essence of the research object must be clarified as a starting point. This also includes a demarcation of political marketing from similar research topics—for example, political propaganda (O’Shaughnessy 1996b). Furthermore, political marketing has international implications: it is not an isolated phenomenon but occurs with differing intensity in all democratic countries (Bowler and Farrell 1992c; Thurber and Nelson 1995). Therefore, a concept of political marketing must include candidate-centred as well as party-centred party systems in any existing form.³ Differing political marketing activities can also be seen as cross-fertilising themselves—for example, the use of the “Clinton-concept” by Blair in the 1997 general election, or the “export” of political marketing consultants (one example is the work of American consultants in Latin America, in France and recently in Britain) (Mauser 1983; Scammell no date). Lastly, political marketing has an interactive and an ethical dimension. Interactivity refers to the systemic process of political management, which has to be viewed holistically in order to be appreciated fully. It is an exchange-based understanding that demands a dynamic perspective. Ethical questions of political marketing are extremely important because the impact of political marketing activities on the democratic process are under-researched and need clarification. However, this clarification must be grounded in a sound theoretical understanding of the basics of political marketing and the effects of political marketing management, be it at a strategic or instrumental level (Fowler 1995; Lock and Harris 1996; O’Shaughnessy 1989/90, 1990a). Otherwise such “criticism” deteriorates into mere “witch-hunting” or “anti-marketing propaganda” (Bauer 1995; Mauser 1983).

THE CONCEPT OF POLITICAL MARKETING MANAGEMENT

"Political marketing is now clearly woven into the fabric of British politics. It has been adopted by right and left of the spectrum, trade unions, pressure groups and charities."

Scammell (1995, p. 269)

"Almost all politicians *use* marketing techniques and ideas, but very few wish to admit it openly."

Mausser (1983, p. 3, emphasis in original)

Political Marketing: A "New" Phenomenon

Political marketing came into existence as a new phenomenon of political activities. It is now a seemingly ubiquitous element of political life. When Tony Blair created "New Labour" (i.e. repositioned the party), when Bill Clinton used new information-dissemination channels (cable-TV shows) in order to communicate directly with target voters, or when the German Neo-Communists used sarcasm as their main political "ideology" in order to transform the political competition, all these activities can be understood as comprising political marketing elements (in these examples product/image management, channel and targeting strategy, and communication strategy, respectively). There is a scholarly consensus that political marketing has changed the political sphere (Franklin 1994; Jamieson 1992a, 1992b; Kavanagh 1995b; O'Shaughnessy 1990a; Scammell 1995), without a clear understanding of the essence and the mechanism of this change. Several detailed studies have highlighted the influence of the marketing perspective on campaigning in different countries and times (e.g. Scammell 1991, 1994 for the British Tories, in particular the Thatcher era; Kavanagh 1995b; Rallings 1995, Wring 1995a, 1995b, 1995c for British Labour; Arnold 1995 for the Liberals; Newman 1994a, 1995b, Popkin 1995, Wattenberg 1995 for the US Democrats under Bill Clinton). Synonyms like "media democracy" (Franklin 1994) or "Americanisation of politics" (Field 1994) are commonly used in order to describe this phenomenon. Furthermore, it has been equated with an expression of the postmodern characteristics of our times (Axford and Huggins 1995; Axford et al. 1996). Alas, others argue that what is now called political marketing has always existed (Lock and Harris 1996). Similar instruments to marketing have always been engaged in every historic political struggle. Therefore, these scholars argue, political marketing is only a new name for an established way of political competition. It is indeed striking to notice many "modern" aspects of political competition in descriptions of historic political campaigns (Jamieson 1992a; Kavanagh 1995b; O'Shaughnessy 1990a [especially chapt. 2],

1996b; Scammell 1995; Wring 1996a). Nevertheless, this view must be qualified. It has often been pointed out that the overlap between the use of propaganda or crude communication instruments on the one hand and the concept of political marketing on the other is only a superficial one (O'Shaughnessy 1996b; Scammell 1995). Even today, not every new communication gimmick demonstrates the employment of political marketing instruments. As O'Shaughnessy puts it: "for the term 'political marketing' to have any descriptive value it must replicate most of the processes involved in consumer marketing—research, advertising, personal selling, product management and so on—and this would make it an almost exclusively post-Second World War phenomenon" (1990a, p. 17).

Scammell (1995) adds to these characteristics strategic management intent and the use of the perspective of a consumer/voter-orientation as constituent elements of political marketing. These elements have only recently been introduced into the tool-kit of political management (Wangen 1983). Hence, political marketing as a concept "represents a qualitative change in the nature of 'state of the art' campaigns" (Harrop 1990, p. 286) or, to use the oft-cited words of Kotler: "Campaigning has always had a marketing character. The 'new methodology' is not the introduction of marketing methods into politics; but an increased sophistication and acceleration of their use" (1982, pp. 461–462).

In order to get to grips with the elements of this new quality—that is, its sophistication—it is helpful to "reconstruct" the development of (political) marketing in a phase model before one can "deconstruct" the fundamentals of political marketing. Wring (1995a; see also Rallings 1995) has proposed a model of the development of political campaigning, mirroring commercial-strategy developments in the consumer-goods markets, which is based on earlier concepts by Shama (1973, 1976) (see Fig. 5.1, left-hand side). In a first phase of electioneering, a "mass-propaganda" approach prevails. Intensive promotion and publicity approaches are the main instruments used. The conceptual-orientation is towards the candidate. Availability of opinion research and mass media, especially television, introduces a second phase—that of "media campaigns"—with a sales-orientation: the emphasis is now on market segmentation and targeting via sophisticated advertising, following a consumer-orientation. The last phase, that of "political marketing", is even more based on market research and a total management of the whole political offer—that is, a strategic and managerial understanding of the marketing of politics in a market-orientation (Wring 1995a, 1995b).

Of course, this concept shows considerable overlap with Kotler's phase model of marketing's development, which has been used directly by Newman (1994a) (see Fig. 5.1, right-hand side). Mass propaganda can be equated with a product perspective, media campaigning with a sell-

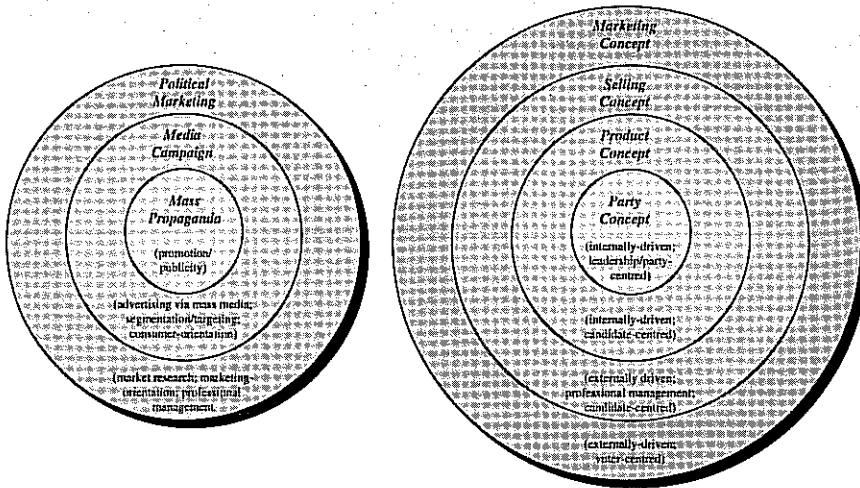


Figure 5.1. Phase models of political marketing (after Wring 1995a and Newman 1994a).

ing concept, and modern political marketing practice with the marketing perspective of commercial organisations (Kotler 1972; Kotler and Andreason 1991; Kotler and Armstrong 1996; Smith and Saunders 1990). It is assumed generally today that political campaigning and political management has progressed to the level of the political marketing perspective in most Western countries and that many, if not all, actors in the political market follow this conceptual orientation (Newman 1994a, 1994b, 1996; O'Shaughnessy 1990a; Scammell 1995; Wring 1995a). In the next sections, this view will be contested and qualified by, first, scrutinising the essence of the political marketing concept, and second, analysing the macroelements, microelements and auxiliary concepts of political marketing management.

Political Marketing: Fundamentals and Definitions

At the core of any attempt to understand the phenomenon of political marketing are, of course, definitional exercises. At the same time, herein lies one of the main shortcomings in research in political marketing. Although somewhat developed as a discipline, definitions of political marketing are rare to find (Henneberg 1996c; Lock and Harris 1996), even in seminal texts on the subject. However, this must not serve as an excuse for neglecting this crucial element, especially not for a study that takes political marketing theory as its major theoretical anchor.

Political Marketing: A Definition

A definition of political marketing is, of course, bound to definitions of marketing in general, due to its link with marketing theory (Hasitschka 1995; for a general discussion of the development of marketing definitions see Mercer 1992). The following discussion provides an overview of definitional attempts of political marketing in seminal texts. However, most scholarly contributions do without explicit considerations of the scope and essence of their research field. Implicit assumptions dominate over overt and concise clarification.

Definitional attempts can be distinguished broadly along two dimensions: nearly all definitions of political marketing focus, first, on the exchange concept underlying the political activity and, second, on the political marketing activities themselves. Hence, differentiations along these two dimensions allow for a classification of different definitions. The exchange dimension, applying modern marketing theory, can be characterised by a continuum between transactional exchange and a relationship approach (Berry 1995; Grönroos 1990, 1995; Zeithaml and Bitner 1996). On the other hand, the activity dimension distinguishes definitions that are focused mainly on the instrumental level—that is, the operational side of political marketing (like the different political marketing mix instruments)—and those with a more holistic (i.e. strategic) perspective (incorporating political-marketing-strategy questions like targeting, positioning or voter-retention approaches). These two dimensions are used here as illustrations of different definitions of political marketing in four studies judged influential for the development of the discipline (see Fig. 5.2).

Farrell and Wortmann (1987), in a comparative analysis of party strategies, come close to defining political marketing by stating:

The political market is a system of exchange in which two or more actors each possess "something-of-value" which can be traded. The "sellers" offer representation to their "customers" in return for support. [. . .] The exchange occurs at election time when, to ensure maximum revenue, the sellers market themselves through an application of directed promotional activities. They market their particular styles of representation and specific intentions for government as a "product" which comprises party image, leader image, and manifesto proposals or selected issues.

The marketing exercise consists of a strategy in which a product is designed with close attention to market demands. Market research surveys the market, allows it to be segmented into homogeneous groupings of customers; and indicates potential targets. The seller has four types of instruments at his disposal with which to influence these targets: product policy, communication, policies distribution, and pricing. The marketing strategy aims to apply, with the aid of marketing research, the optimum "mix" of these instruments. (p. 298)

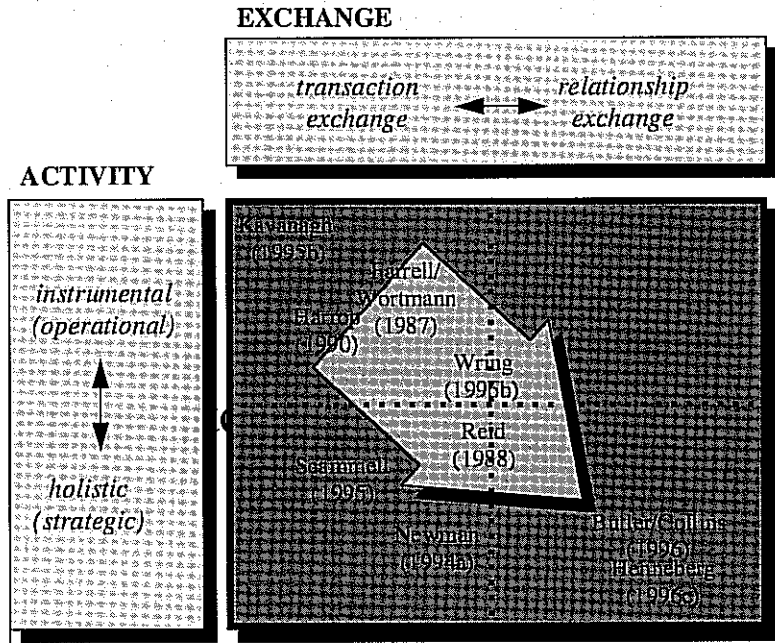


Figure 5.2. Definitional attempts of political marketing in context.

Farrell and Wortmann (1987) continue by defining the four policy elements of political marketing. However, any attempts at getting to grips with the strategic elements they mention in the quotation above, as well as with the “mix problem” itself, are absent from their study. In terms of the two dimensions under discussion here, the main emphasis is on the following aspects: operational elements prevail over a truly holistic view, and a traditional exchange definition as a transaction is used.

Another definitional attempt can be found in Harrop (1990). He also stays very closely with conventional definitions of marketing:

The formal definition of marketing is that it involves facilitating exchanges between an organisation and its environment. For our purposes, however, we can break marketing down into two simple dimensions: strategy, which involves providing things people want, and promotion, which is selling the things you have decided to provide. [...] Thus the study of political marketing is not simply an investigation of promotional activities such as press advertisements; party political broadcasts and election addresses. It is a much broader area, covering whether where and how a party positions itself in the electoral market. (p. 277)

What is interesting in the above is the somewhat flawed use of the concept of “promotion” as well as the limited understanding of “strat-

egy” in a management context. A classical “follower-mentality” of marketing seems to be advocated (Dickinson et al. 1986). Altogether this definition seems to resemble the commonly used classification of strategic versus operational levels of marketing. Unfortunately, Harrop’s study does not do justice to the strategic elements of political marketing as well as their implications for the concept itself. Its characteristics are therefore predominantly operative, though noticing the implications of the strategic level. The exchange characterisation remains transaction-oriented.

Wring (1996b) produces a more modern approach towards marketing by defining political marketing as:

the party or candidate’s use of opinion research and environmental analysis to produce and promote a competitive offering which will help realise organisational aims and satisfy groups of electors in exchange for their votes. (p. 5)

A real development in this definition is the implicit reference to relationship approaches of marketing by “voter satisfaction”. Wring also subsequently analyses some strategic elements of political marketing management as well as discussing the marketing mix problem.

Newman does not give a concise definition but a model description of political marketing (1994a, picture p. 12). From this model it is clear that he incorporates instrumental as well as strategic considerations (from strategy intelligence to formulation and implementation). However, the exchange concept does not embrace a relationship approach, although the discussion of voters’ loyalty has some prominence in his study.

It is more difficult to grasp the implicit understanding of political marketing in some seminal articles. Reid (1988), for example, focuses very much on strategic elements of political management and does also question a purely transactional understanding of the exchange process without formulating a full-scale relationship approach. Another influential study, by Kavanagh (1995b), is concerned more with communication and media aspects of campaigning and remains very much in the political scientists’ tradition of looking at political marketing. This is also underlined by the limited use of the exchange concept, even in its traditional form, as a system of isolated transactions. Scammell (1995) stresses the holistic approach towards marketing. However, in her treatment of the political exchange process, on the other hand, she follows mainstream political scientists’ interpretations. The influence of recent developments in marketing theory can be seen in Butler and Collins’ (1996) study of strategic aspects of political marketing. Holistic and relationship-oriented thinking dominates their analysis.

Altogether, these definitional attempts and implicit assumptions lead to an interesting pattern (see Fig. 5.2). Two aspects spring to mind: first, there is a tendency, over time, to incorporate more holistic aspects of

political marketing into the analysis as well as a development towards relationship definitions of the underlying exchange process (Kavanagh 1995 has to be seen as an outlier). Second, while most political scientists' understanding of political marketing can be found in the top-left quadrant (the "traditional" approach) of Figure 5.2, that of marketing theorists can be found in the bottom-right area. This division demonstrates the grounds for misunderstandings between the two "mother-disciplines" of political marketing regarding the essence of the research object. However, one has to back Butler and Collins who state that: "[I]t is pointless to berate political scientists [. . .]; rather, we should acknowledge fault on both sides. [. . .] it is necessary for marketing as a discipline to present its insights and analytical perspectives in a 'political-science-user-friendly' fashion" (1996, p. 32). Therefore, a definition of political marketing should follow state-of-the-art marketing, without forgetting the need to elucidate its meaning and implications to political scientists. This also means incorporating and conciliating the research traditions of political science.

One main aspect of innovation in marketing theory is the so-called market network or relationship approach, sometimes named the "Nordic school of marketing" (Easton 1995; Henneberg 1997; Wensley 1995). It has severe implications for the understanding of the essence of marketing, embedded in an innovative definition of marketing (J. O'Shaughnessy 1995). This approach is followed through here for the field of political marketing. Relationship marketing differs from standard interpretations of marketing (e.g. Dibb et al. 1994; Mercer 1992) in that it stresses the following new characteristics:

- A relationship, a kind of partnership, between the market players is advocated. This includes a commitment-and-trust exchange as the underlying attitudinal foundation of the relationship (Morgan and Hunt 1994).
- A long-term perspective that shifts the emphasis from one-off transactions to continuous exchange, which can go a long way beyond the originally intended primary exchange (Grönroos 1995).
- An acknowledgement of the objectives of all involved players (individual actors or organisations, but also societal goals influenced by externalities of the primary exchange) (Kotler and Armstrong 1996).
- Mutual benefits of the exchange relationship and the delivery of promises (Bitner 1995).

Following a definition of commercial marketing by Grönroos (1990), all these elements can be bound together in a formal analytical definition of political marketing (Henneberg 1996c):⁵

Political marketing seeks to establish, maintain and enhance long-term voter relationships at a profit for society and political parties, so that the objectives of

the individual political actors and organisations involved are met. This is done by mutual exchange and fulfilment of promises.

This definition, here especially targeted at the exchange processes between parties and voters (i.e. the electoral market), can be generalised in order to fulfil the demands of a holistic approach, incorporating all political activities:

Political marketing seeks to establish, maintain and enhance long-term political relationships at a profit for society, so that the objectives of the individual political actors and organisations involved are met. This is done by mutual exchange and fulfilment of promises.

The scope of this definition embraces governmental political marketing and interest-group political marketing as well as that of political parties and candidates. It furthermore gets to grips with the permanent character of political marketing, acknowledging its theoretical and international implications by, first, leaving the instrumental level out of the definition by focusing only in general on strategic objectives ("establish, maintain and enhance . . .") and, second, by not limiting the applicability to a specific political situation. Interactivity features prominently with the introduction of the rationale of a "relationship exchange", while ethical problems are acknowledged via the stress on societal responsibility. As can be seen from Figure 5.2, this definitional attempt (Henneberg 1996c) follows the general development of political marketing definitions towards more holistic and relationship-oriented interpretations. Together with Butler and Collins (1996), it forms the latest attempt of transferring marketing-theory innovations into the subdiscipline of political marketing.

However, political marketing is comprised of more than discussions of definitions. In order to grasp its essence, an analysis of fundamental concepts underlying the rationale of political marketing and its managerial application follows.

Fundamental Concepts of Political Marketing

One fundamental element of political marketing—that is, its reference to an underlying exchange process—has been mentioned above. It needs, however, further elucidation because it is often claimed that the exchange process is in fact the underlying explanandum of marketing which separates it from other disciplines like economics (where a "market" constitutes the basic research object) (Hunt and Morgan 1995).⁶ A major development in the theoretical content of this marketing exchange process was the inclusion of "ideas" as objects of exchange in addition to products and service. This broadened the scope of the marketing concept

considerably and was the foundation of social and non-profit marketing. For an exchange to take place, it is generally assumed that four conditions have to be fulfilled:

- two players must participate (these may be individuals/groups, or organisations);
- each player must possess something of value (a product, service or an idea) that at least one other player desires;
- each player must voluntarily be willing to exchange the value belonging to him for the value in the belonging of another player;
- last, the players must be in contact in order to facilitate the exchange of values (Dibb et al. 1994; White 1986).

The exchange is guided by the so-called law of exchange, which states that an exchange only happens if all involved parties receive something which they perceive to be of greater value than that which they traded-in for it (Wortmann 1989). Exchange theory, based on a sociological understanding of transactions (e.g. Heath 1976; Homans 1961), has been developed, especially by Bagozzi, into a distinct concept underlying marketing theory (Bagozzi 1974, 1975, 1978, 1995; White 1986).

Another structural concept of political marketing that is often referred to is the voter-orientation of this managerial approach. It is mentioned unanimously by political scientists and marketing theorists in their discussions of the essence of political marketing (Bauer et al. 1996; Collins and Butler 1996; Newman 1994a; O'Cass 1996; O'Shaughnessy 1990a, 1996b; O'Shaughnessy and Wring 1994; Smith and Saunders 1990). Scammell concludes that "[t]his emphasis on the 'consumer', the voter, and the satisfaction of consumer wants, differentiates political marketing from earlier forms of political salesmanship: . . . even [from] the use of commercially derived techniques" (1995, p. 8). However, further elucidation is clouded by the use of the original marketing concept of "customer-orientation". The implications of the political competition with voters (or citizens) as the "consuming" part of the exchange process have rarely been explicitly treated. Whether, for example, the different goal functions of consumers and voters influence the philosophy of an outside-in perspective remains unclear.

Consumer-orientation is defined as an understanding of the needs and wants of an organisation's target customers (actual or potential) as a basis for the creation of offerings (J. O'Shaughnessy 1995)—that is, the organisation must be "oriented towards satisfying the needs of its customers" in order to be successful (Dickinson et al. 1986, p. 18). The concept of voter-orientation for political parties would mean acquiring knowledge about the needs and wants of their voters—that is, about the "public opinion"—and consequently facilitating an offering that satisfies

this preference structure.⁷ Furthermore, a preconception about segmentation and targeting regarding the entirety of voters is also part of the definition. However, this definition of consumer- (voter-)orientation is a very limiting concept of (political) marketing (Newman 1996), be it in its "soft" or "hard interpretation" (J. O'Shaughnessy 1995, p. 8). It has been argued that consumer-orientation in its traditional interpretation is flawed—for example, by a simplistic "follower-mentality", a dominance of consumer wishes. This creates a very static market without many breakthrough-product innovations (process innovations and product differentiations would prevail) as well as difficulties for the companies to find a unique selling proposition and therefore a strategic and sustainable competitive advantage in the market (Day 1997b; Dickinson et al. 1986). This mirrors partly the confinement of a "fit-strategy" of the organisational industrial-economy school (Porter 1996)—that is, an optimal organisational positioning in the market according to external restrictions. Modern "stretch-strategies", built on internal capability development, allow more flexibility in an organisation's market approach (Bourgeois 1996; Hamel and Prahalad 1996). Furthermore, a mix of internal and external strategy orientations is now perceived to be the most promising approach in strategic management (Day 1997a, 1997b). Consequently, customer-orientation must be understood more proactively prior to becoming a foundation of "stretch-approaches" of dynamic strategic management.⁸ Thus, it must consist of a matching exercise of customer/voter needs and the internal capabilities of the relevant organisation, a more bidirectional approach to strategic marketing which supplements the predominant outside-in perspective with an inside-out one.

One initial way to enlarge and "modernise" the customer-orientation concept is by integrating it into the larger context of a marketing-orientation. This concept, which was revived during the 1990s, is one of the key concepts of recent research in marketing (Greenley 1995; Wensley 1995; for a comprehensive conceptual criticism see Dreher 1994). The concept of a marketing-orientation embraces a customer-orientation (outside-in view) as one element, supplemented by a competitor-orientation (inside-out view) and the component of interfunctional coordination (Narver and Slater 1990).⁹ Kohli and Jaworski, in a slightly different operationalisation of a marketing-orientation nevertheless also include a "customer focus" as one of the pillars of their concept (Jaworski and Kohli 1993; Kohli and Jaworski 1990). This is in line with the "received view" of the marketing concept. A marketing-orientation therefore tries to remedy the problems of the "tunnel vision" of a pure customer-orientation by putting it into a wider context of the whole market as well as the intra-organisational sphere (Andreasen 1993; Wensley 1995). The repercussions of marketing-orientation for the concept of political marketing are

plentiful. Furthermore, a proper understanding of marketing-orientation is necessary for an appreciation of ethical aspects of political marketing. It suffices here to point out that voter-orientation in its classical form would open up fears of populist politics, a dictatorship of the fickle opinions of the masses (Birch 1993; Jamieson 1992b). In politics, parties and candidates always have been guided by an ideology—that is, an idea of creating public well-being. These ideas have been implemented more often than not via political leadership—that is, a top-down approach—which also includes the “education” of the voters. Furthermore, it can be shown that, in fact, leadership is one of the most important traits of political figures in the eyes of the voters. Tocqueville has summed up this aspect in his inimitable way:

What I call great political parties are those more attached to principles than to consequences; to generalities rather than to particular cases, to ideas rather than to personalities. Such parties generally have nobler features, more generous passions, more real convictions, and a bolder and more open look than others. (1994/1848, p. 175)

Therefore, a pure voter-orientation brings with it the accusation of opportunism (in the following analysis, it is referred to as a “packaging-orientation”). This has to be taken into account, especially in the creation of an appropriate political offering. Therefore, a more general and balanced marketing-orientation (sometimes called “customer-led” marketing) (Piercy 1994) is the guiding principle of political-product policy and of the organisation in general.

This leads directly to another fundamental concept of political marketing: any marketing approach has several dimensions. Obviously, there is political marketing as an orientation, a perspective or a philosophy, if one wishes to use such heroic terms (Dreher 1994). However, this conceptual view is only one facet of (political) marketing. (Political) marketing also comprises an instrumental (or better: technological) element (O’Shaughnessy 1990a). This is concerned with the “knowing how” to implement the marketing concept (J. O’Shaughnessy 1995).

Another fundamental aspect of political marketing which determines the substance of all political marketing activities is its characteristic as service marketing: the political exchange offer is essentially a service, be it in a party–voter exchange or other political exchanges such as interest group–activist, candidate–donor, government–citizens, and so forth (Harrop 1990; Newman 1994a; O’Shaughnessy 1988). This fact has implications for the whole concept of political marketing and surfaces in many publications on the topic (e.g. Bauer et al. 1995).¹⁰ Services marketing is characterised by different exchange properties—problems of intangibility, heterogeneity, production/consumption simultaneity and

perishability (Zeithaml and Bitner 1996). It therefore has different demands on the decision-making behaviour of the service recipients, as has been shown in a study by Gabbott and Hogg (1994) and discussed later in this chapter. However, it can also be argued that in fact *all* marketing is service marketing (Foxall 1985a).

To sum up: this chapter defines political marketing with a special emphasis on its relationship-building qualities. Underlying the relationship approach, the essential normative foundations of the concept of political marketing are, following the principles of a theoretical and holistic understanding of the explanandum,

- its exchange character in a competitive market;
- its enlarged concept of a marketing-orientation;
- its multi-level character of being a philosophy and a technology;
- its service character.

Bearing in mind these conceptual foundations (see Fig. 5.3), each of which is looked at further in the following sections, the content of political marketing can be outlined in a discussion of: first, the macro-

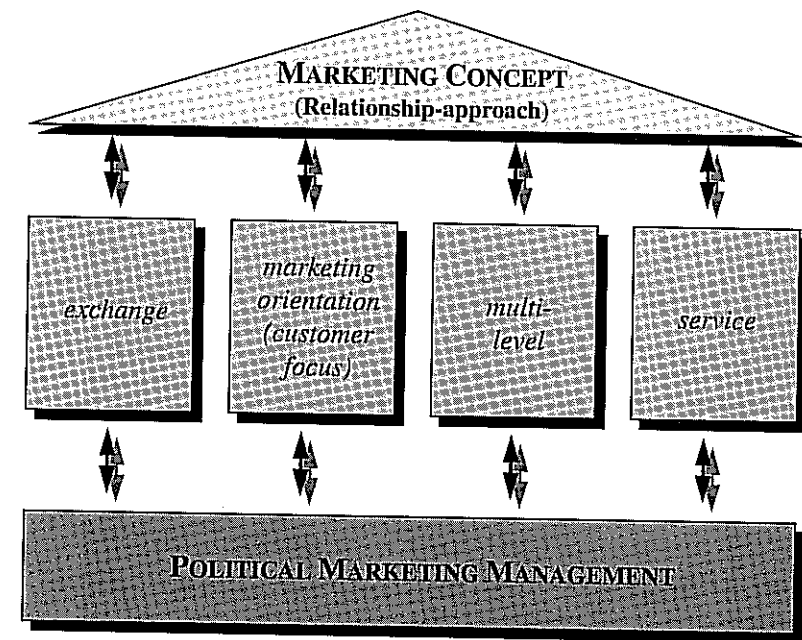


Figure 5.3. Characteristics of political marketing.

elements and, second, the microelements as well as auxiliary functions of political marketing.

Macroelements of Political Marketing

The macroelements of political marketing are those framing (in the sense of restricting) the political marketing management. All political marketing activities take place inside this realm, which sets the scope for further analysis on a micro level. At the macro level of political marketing, three spheres can be distinguished. First, there are the participants in the exchange process—that is, the actors or players. Their characteristics need to be described. However, these actors engage in an exchange, which, second, adds a dynamic dimension. The exchange of political marketing is crucial but also difficult to get to grips with. Third, these two elements have to be brought into context with each other, meaning the establishment of the political “market” and its competition, respectively.

In this section, emphasis is placed especially on political marketing aspects with relevance to the explanandum of this study—that is, the decision-making behaviour of voters and, subsequently, the marketing activities of parties/candidates that are targeted at influencing this behaviour.

Static Exchange: The Players

The players in the political market are more plentiful than normally expected from a glance at the relevant literature. Political parties and candidates as well as voters are constantly focused upon. However, other crucial and interesting players are neglected. Studies on governments (Newman 1995a, 1995b), interest-groups (Maloney 1996), party members (Granik 1997) or political activists (Stirling 1996) are rare. Thus, this aspect of variety of actors in the political market is underresearched, as are the implications of the constituent exchange structures.

Electoral Players. The classical players (primary actors) are, of course, either the parties (in a party-oriented party system like most European democracies) or the political contestants—that is, candidates (in a candidate-oriented party system like that of the United States, where the affiliation of candidates to parties is nominal) (Meny 1993; Ware 1996; see also the articles in Lijphart 1992). Their exchange opponents are the electorate—that is, all eligible voters on federal, state, or communal level.¹¹ However, even if one is only concerned with this limited exchange during political elections, it becomes evident that there are more actors involved than are visible at first glance. This is in line with the

“procedural model” of political decision-making, which superseded mere aggregate models of voting (Hansson 1992). Sweeney (1995) analysed the differences between “primary” and “secondary” audiences for the American political market. If one calls the party/candidate–voter exchange the primary exchange (Henneberg 1996d), there are at least three further exchanges going on that are related to this primary exchange, in the sense that they facilitate and supplement it (see Fig. 5.4). This changes the “electoral exchange” into a four-player market. First, the media (here, in their “aggregate” form) act as an intermediary between the party/candidate and the electorate but have, in addition, a direct effect on the electorate as well as on the parties/candidates (secondary exchange) (Franklin 1994; Kavanagh 1995b).¹² They communicate/interpret the behaviour of parties and candidates but also act in their own right (via opinion influence or agenda setting). Second, parties/candidates depend on donations (monetary or in kind) in order to secure survival in the market (Kotler 1982). This resource-generating (quarternary) exchange with donors has to be understood as ranging from party-member fees, donations by individuals/companies or fund-raising events to state subsidies (Himes 1995; Stonecash and Keith 1996). To complete the picture there are, third, party members and party activists (i.e. people who are not members but nevertheless have an interest in the party/candidate and can substantiate that interest) (Granik 1997; Herrnson 1995; Ware 1992).¹³ As discussed in the next subsection, party members are of some importance for the determination of the political exchange offer (tertiary exchange).

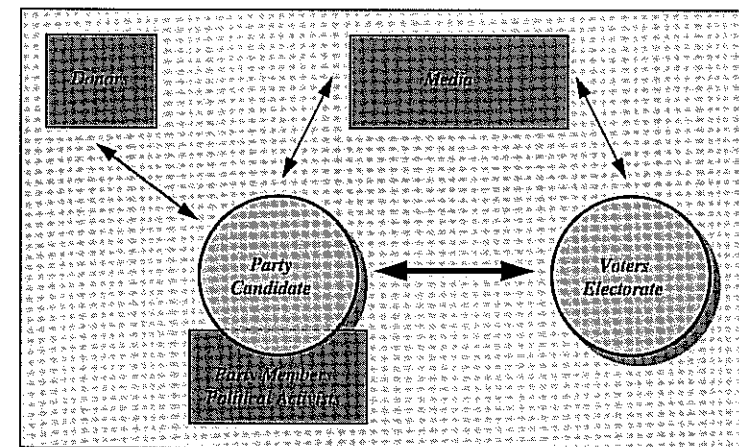


Figure 5.4. Exchange processes in the electoral market.

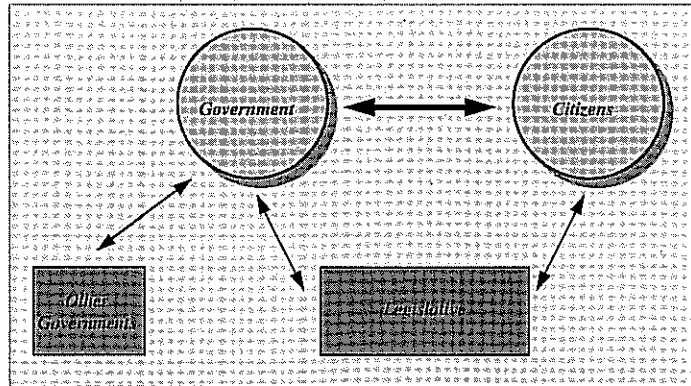


Figure 5.5. Exchange processes in the governmental market.

Governmental Players. Besides the electoral market, one can identify at least two more exchange spheres with other players. In the governmental market, the government (also a primary actor) is in primary exchange with the citizens of the relevant country. Further exchanges are with other players such as the legislative power or other governments (see Fig. 5.5).

Political Activism Players. Another political market with distinct players is that of political activism (Richardson 1995), sometimes called the "alternative political sphere" (see Fig. 5.6). Here, the primary exchange is concerned with the interactions of political-interest groups (these primary actors could be informal initiatives, environmental organisations, political-action committees or other lobbying bodies, etc.) and political activists—that is, citizens with behavioural intentions to back the cause of the interest group (Schmitt-Beck 1996). Furthermore, the resource generation is of pivotal importance for these groups as well, and therefore the actor group of donors is also existent in the market for political activism. Last, interest groups engage in exchange with primary actors of other political markets, governments or parties/candidates.¹⁴ These markets are put into a context and the competitive mechanisms analysed in a later subsection.

Dynamic Exchange: The Processes

For a better understanding of the markets, it is evident that the underlying exchange processes must be analysed briefly. As above, the electoral market—and here especially the primary exchanges—are pivotal to this study and deserve a more detailed understanding.

Exchange in the Electoral Market. The exchange relationships in the political market are, in general, extremely complex and difficult to get grips with (Hasitschka 1995). Therefore, many writers on political marketing do not clarify their understanding of what the part of the transactions in the electoral market is. Thurber is essentially right when he states: "Campaigns are competitions over ideas" (1995, p. 3).

This product is therefore essentially an offer of political leadership and representation, a promise to implement policies (once elected) according to certain "principles" (Farrell and Wortmann 1987; Harrop 1990; Newman 1996). To put it more cheekily: "Politicians . . . sell hope" (O'Shaughnessy 1990a, p. 199). However, besides the more manifest aspects of policies, the political offer also has transcendental elements that are embraced in the political values, and a social connectedness of "believers" in these values (Hudelson 1987; O'Shaughnessy 1988; Schedler 1994). Therefore, there are "expressive" elements to it, according to a study by Brennan and Lomasky (1993). In its entirety, the political offer is therefore similar to a so-called systems-exchange in marketing (Bauer et al. 1995).

The electorate has many different ways to "respond" with a reciprocal offer. The most obvious is voting behaviour (i.e. electoral support at one specific point in time), but other possibilities are more permanent—

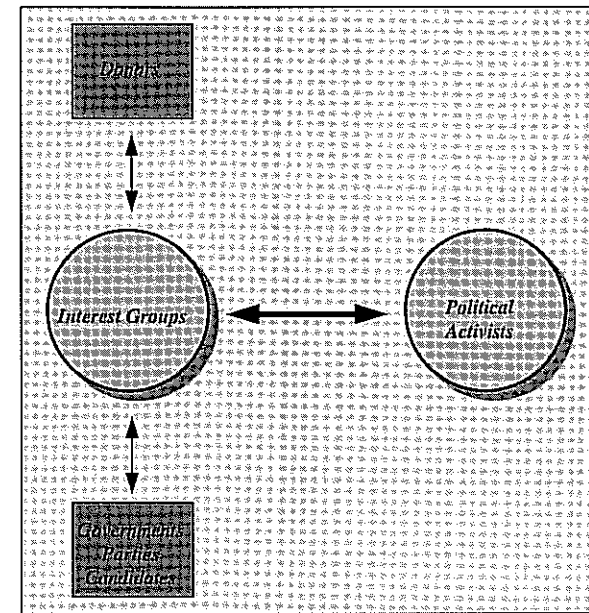


Figure 5.6. Exchange processes in the political activism market.

value or attitude changes regarding political issues, involvement in the political discourse, positive word-of-mouth or, in a material sense, donations and party-political activities (Farrell and Wortmann 1987; Hasitschka 1995). Furthermore, voters also exchange general information—for example, about attitudes, needs. Such information is sometimes exchanged directly with political parties/candidates or via the media. The media are therefore important information-transaction and -exchange channels (Schedler 1994).

Party members/activists demand a specific political product (as described above) or some party-specific bonuses (positions, power, etc.) while reciprocating through membership, active endorsement and so forth. Therefore, intra-party exchange is about collective and selective incentives for the members/activists, while in return the leaders get participation, but especially a mandate of "freedom of action" (Panebianco 1988).

Donors can have the same (direct) interest in the party/candidate's political offer, or they in general back democratic institutions (like business organisations, which sometimes donate to parties opposing each other) and have therefore only an indirect interest. Their exchange offer is essentially monetary.

Exchange in the Governmental Market. The deliverables of governments are their promised policies but also other (improvised) decisions and their implementation. These are exchanged with the electorate for continuous confidence by the voters (according to Newman 1996, this is represented in the public opinion) and positive attitudes that in the long run allow the government to continue over the initial election period.

Exchange in the Political-Activism Market. Interest-groups offer representation (aggregation of opinion, channelling and lobbying of a specific demand) outside the electoral sphere but with impact on societal decisions. Their activists demand this representation for active backing (be it material or immaterial). Furthermore, donors are needed for additional monetary resources. Because many single-issue groups are financed by their members (who should normally also be activists), who pay a membership fee while remaining passive (meaning the lobbying is done by "professionals"—e.g. Greenpeace), the actor groups "activists" and "donors" can overlap considerably in this market.

Competition in the Political Market

The whole "political market" can now be put together—that is, the isolated market segments can be brought into context and their interactions can be highlighted. Furthermore, this allows for a clarification of

the main "clearing mechanisms" in the political-network system. In effect, this means putting together the political subsystems and integrating them into a supra-system of political activity in order to gain an overview of the relevance of the analysed exchange (the party/candidate-voter exchange) from a holistic perspective.

The Supra-Market of Politics. Integrating all three subsystems of political activities means also introducing a new subdivision between spheres in the political market. The three generic subsystems of electoral, governmental and political-activism markets do not exhibit the same quality of politics. Following an idea put forward by Inglehart (1979), who divided the political sphere via an establishment/anti-establishment cleavage (supplementing Lipset and Rokkan 1966), two possible submarkets can be distinguished (see Fig. 5.7): the electoral and governmental markets have been fused to what can be called "high politics" (following a phrase used in Stirling 1996). "High politics", or the "establishment" in Inglehart's terms, is characterised by a formalised political and democratic competition. It is this market that normally comes to mind first when politics is concerned, and it was until recently the only developed and organised market for exchange in political systems (Birch 1995). Hence, its naming as "high".¹⁵ However, it can be argued that developments over recent years compel the acknowledgement of another aspect of politics, which has now formed a well-organised sphere with a distinct scope. This market of "low politics" comprises the exchange of political activism and has to be seen as in direct competition for resources with the "high-politics" market, exemplified in Schedler's analysis of the "anti-political triangle" (1996). Although without formalised "legitimation" in Western democracy, it is nevertheless an important trading place for political ideas, resources and interests (Birch 1995; Richardson 1995; Schmitt-Beck 1990) and can also directly influence key players of "high politics", be it directly—for example, candidates or parties—or indirectly—for example, via the media or donors (exogenous intermediaries that stand outside the political sphere in their own subsystems but interact heavily with it) (Schmitt-Beck 1994). As analyses by Stirling (1996) showed, there is evidence for substantial distinctions between these two political spheres (e.g. in their dynamics, their competitive differentiation, their exit/entry-barriers and the allegiance-switching costs). However, it is noteworthy that there are now tendencies that in the future might weaken these differentiations between the two political submarkets. The most prominent of these tendencies is the formation of "anti-political-establishment parties" (an oxymoron by Schedler 1996, p. 291)—that is, a transfer of the logic and politics of "low politics" into the market of "high politics". Altogether, it becomes clear now that the political market is indeed one characterised

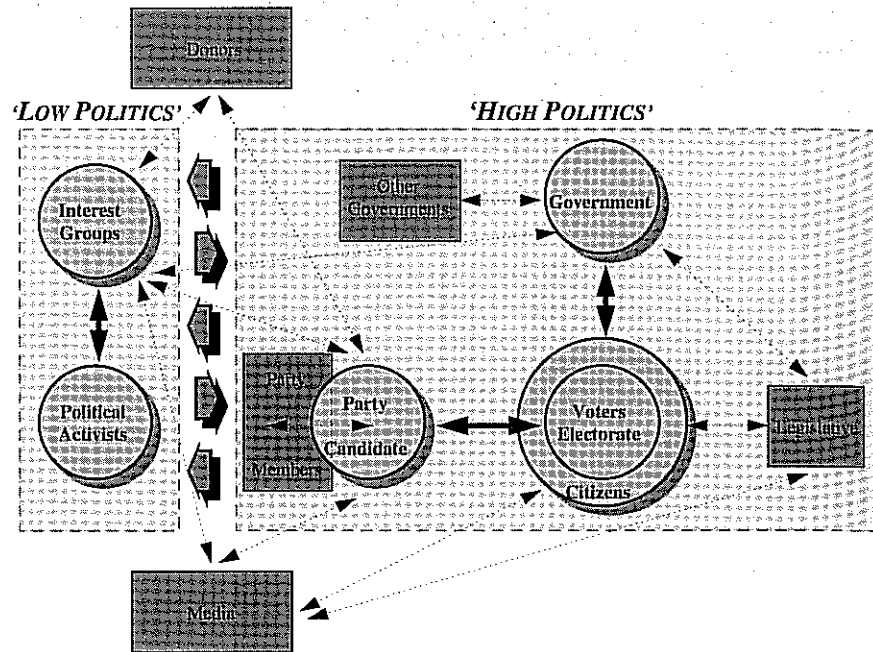


Figure 5.7. The "supra-market" of politics.

by "complex exchanges", to use Bagozzi's (1975) terminology of types of exchange interactions.

From the structure of Figure 5.7, it becomes subsequently clear that an isolated analysis of the main exchange process of the electoral market would mean an oversimplification that does not allow for the systemic view needed for discussions of the managerial implications. Such a holistic understanding shows the contextual boundedness of exchange (Senge 1993).

Clearing Mechanisms. The existence of clearing mechanisms is one of the preconditions for a market analogy between commercial and political transactions. Although this isomorphism is not essential for a marketing discussion (because such a discussion would be guided by exchange structures and not by market structures), some brief statements may assist a better understanding of the political market (Wangen 1983). One major contribution to this is a study by Newman in which he states: "public opinion, the currency in politics" (1996, p. 2). It is certainly true that organisational behaviour, if guided by a marketing concept of pure voter-orientation, would follow such a clearing mechanism. However,

with a more "advanced" understanding of political marketing, organisations in the political market may go back to what political economists since Downs (1957) have postulated. This implies an orientation and clearing mechanism guided by the vote/office-seeking goal in the electoral market, exemplified by vote-maximisation attempts (Bartle 1995; Farrell and Wortmann 1987; Wangen 1983). Wortmann, in an elaborate discussion of the problem, derives the main clearing mechanism as defined by the power-seeking objective of the main electoral players, parties and candidates (Wortmann 1989).¹⁶ Power-seeking can be satisfied via different mechanisms: in "high politics", via electoral seats (government position)¹⁷, in "low politics", via general influence. However, some more cynical voices would say that the real clearing mechanism is the "invisible hand" of political consultants—"hired guns" who steer campaigning according to their perceptions (O'Shaughnessy 1990a).

Microelements of Political Marketing

Based upon the framework knowledge gained above regarding the macroelements of political marketing, the theory building will continue with an analysis of functions, instruments and strategies of political marketing—that is, the heart of a managerial analysis of a political organisation's activities in the market. In this section the transformation from the *theory of political marketing* to the *theory of political marketing management* becomes manifest. The concerned organisations could be parties/candidates, governments or interest groups—that is, each of the three primary actors of the three political submarkets identified above.

Functional Analysis of Political Marketing Management

"when we come to marketing functions, it is [...] clear that every organization performs marketing-like activities whether or not they are recognized as such."

Kotler and Levy (1969, p. 11)

A functional analysis of political marketing management is linked to the caveats in the research on the topic in general. So far, there exist no studies about the underlying functions of organisations in the political market from a managerial point of view. Political marketing management theory has not yet scrutinised the underlying problem of utilising these functions for an instrumental and strategic analysis. Instrumental analyses of political marketing use mainly the "4P" concept of McCarthy (1960), either in its pure form (e.g. Farrell and Wortmann 1987; Wring

1996b) or in a derived form (Newman 1994a). However, this classificational scheme can be criticised as providing merely educational value, not representing state-of-the-art marketing theory, and not taking into account the peculiarities of the political market. Furthermore, in an evaluation of the 4P concept, van Waterschoot and van den Bulte (1992) use Hunt's (1991a) criteria for assessing classificational schemes. They conclude that it is flawed by, first, unclear characterisation of the properties on which the scheme is based; second, the fact that the categories are not mutually exclusive; and third, the problematic catch-all category of sales promotion as part of communication/promotion (van Waterschoot and van den Bulte 1992). Thus, without a functional analysis, it can be argued that political marketing instruments are "in the air"—that is, without a sound foundation of their purpose within the organisation. This might explain the caveats of instrumental analyses prevalent in the literature (Henneberg 1995b, 1996d; Wortmann 1989).

Functional analysis in marketing theory is a very old research object (Fulbrook 1940; Sheth et al. 1988), although it has to be stated that it has lost momentum recently (Henneberg 1995b). By analysing marketing functions one subscribes to the view that functions are conditions of marketing entities (organisations), while instruments are means for the fulfilment of these functions. Functions can also be characterised as outputs of organisational behaviour. They "can be accomplished through a variety of specific activities or tools. . . . Any specific marketing activity or tool can serve several functions simultaneously." (van Waterschoot and van den Bulte 1992, p. 87). This quotation clarifies that marketing instruments are the means for satisfying functional prerequisites. In addition, it makes clear that marketing instruments or instrument groups (also called "policies"¹⁸) are not exclusively focused on the fulfilment of one function. Knowledge of the underlying functions are, therefore, a prerequisite for organisational survival and success because the usage of marketing instruments (their selections, usage intensity and coordination) must be founded on a clear idea of the necessary outcomes that these instruments ought to bring about. Instruments fulfil no purpose *sui generis* but they are defined in terms of the functions they serve (Hunt 1991a; Kotler 1972). In the following, "generic" functions of political marketing management are analysed—that is, those which are not only primary exchange-facilitating functions but also those that are necessary for the survival of the political organisation in general (i.e. in the case of parties/candidates, also the secondary, etc. exchanges in the electoral market as well as additional exchanges in the supra-market) (Henneberg 1995b). Therefore, the underlying exchange process is the one characterised in Figure 5.4—that is, the electoral market. Altogether eight generic functions of political marketing management can be identified, as outlined below.

Product Function. In order to facilitate the main exchange process between parties and the electorate, the political organisation has to offer something of value—that is, the political. As already clarified, this "product" has, in fact, service character; it is a promise of a certain behavioural activity and outcome. However, this product function is restricted in marketing terms by the fact that political marketing management cannot follow the concept of a strict voter-orientation. A more restricted voter-orientation as part of a political marketing-orientation underlies the development of the organisational offer. The political product in a representative democracy with free mandates (Birch 1995; Schedler 1994; Stoiber 1983) is partly fixed (in the short term) by an underlying ideology of the party/candidate as part of latter's history. This ideology sometimes clashes with voter demands. Nevertheless, a free mandate gives politicians the chance to implement their ideals (e.g. ideologies) (Barry 1991a). This ideology constitutes the marketing-irrelevant part of the political product, and it causes a certain stability in the political market—for example, by minimising "leap-frogging" of parties. From a political marketing point of view, these ideological elements of the organisational offer cannot be ignored, because they determine the credibility of the political service (and also that of the party system itself). Services as future-oriented promises have trust and credibility of the person/organisation promising it as one of the main characteristics of the political product (Bitner 1995; Zeithaml and Bitner 1996). Loss of credibility by changing around the values that a party stands for results in immediate loss of credibility with the voters and subsequently electoral defeat. Therefore, the product function in a marketing sense is only applicable to the marketing-relevant part of the political product which is the flexible and dynamic aspect of politics: issue agenda, candidate personality, the corporate culture of the party and so forth (Worcester 1996).¹⁹ This can be named the "packaged" element of the political product. In recent years the candidate has achieved a prominent position in this triad because of personalisation (and centralisation) tendencies of campaigning, even in party-oriented party systems (Field 1994; Wangen 1983; Worcester 1996). Decisions about the product offer are, therefore, in a strategic sense of this marketing function, always decisions about the position of the product on a continuum between inflexible ideological elements and the packaged aspects of politics (see Fig. 5.8).

For example, the British Labour Party has recently made a move rightwards on the continuum and became more marketing- (and voter-) driven (like most catch-all parties, be they challengers or leaders) and therefore similar to a "packaging" party like Berlusconi's *Forza Italia*—that is, "postmodern populism". Niche parties like the German neo-socialist *Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus* are normally less flexible and fundamentally ideology-driven (Axford et al. 1996; Butler and

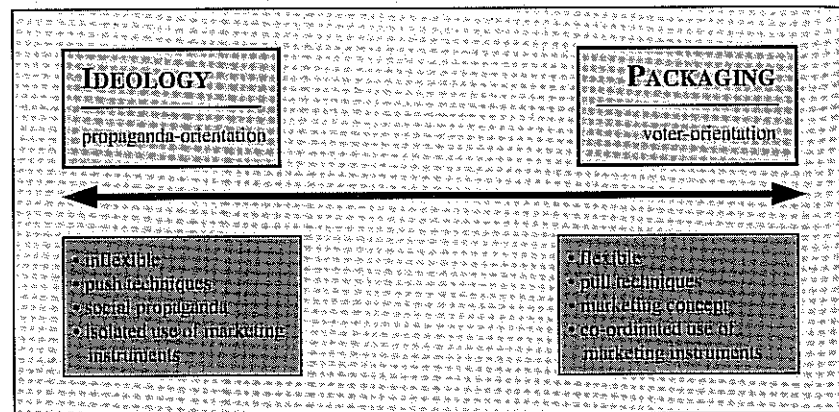


Figure 5.8. Ideology versus packaging.

Collins 1996; Collins and Butler 1995). The functional decision as to how far the offer should serve ideological or marketing-related aspects has ramifications for the use of instruments and, indeed, for the applicability of the political marketing concept itself. If the party chooses a location near the ideology-orientation end, only isolated marketing instruments can be used and an integrated marketing-orientation is ruled out. A tendency towards the use of social-propaganda methods (the hyper-demic model) is imminent (Baer 1995; O'Shaughnessy 1996b). On the other hand, the use of "packaged" offers is not without risks. O'Shaughnessy (1990a) reminds us that "[r]ealism is essential in the political product . . . ; therefore packaging must be disguised as much as possible" (p. 56). Parties and candidates with different "orientations" can exist in the same party system at the same time, according to their strategic understanding of the product function. Altogether, this function is, thus, a political marketing function that has to take into account considerations about strategic aspects as well as genuine political decisions. The political product is not as flexible as its commercial counterpart; therefore, this function has a reduced marketing relevance due to political rigidities.

Distribution Function. The distribution function is concerned with activities regarding the availability of the exchange offer to the exchange partner. In commercial marketing this includes channel-management strategies (Stern et al. 1996). For a political party/candidate, the picture becomes more complicated. One can define a primary distribution function that is characterised by the ways of implementation of the political service in the sense of governmental policies. However, this is only of minor importance for political marketing in the electoral market. The first aim of the actors is to achieve participation in government (and

"change" into the governmental market), not to implement (Downs 1957; Dunleavy 1991). Therefore, a secondary distribution function is of importance for the electoral market—that is, the allocation of the marketing-relevant part of the political offering (the tangible and intangible aspects of the service promise). These elements can be characterised as product surrogates—namely, the candidate and the party image. These surrogates must also be distributed. This can mean "candidate-placing" in a literal sense—for example, by determining the channels of distribution with which the candidate gets in contact with the electorate (or with specific target groups). Meetings, speeches, party conferences and the selection of appropriate media are related to this distribution function (Wortmann 1989). The function will increase in complexity with the arrival of new media—for example, email, web TV and the Internet (Johnson 1997).

Cost Function. The cost function is normally derived from considerations about the price—that is, the direct exchange return that an organisation receives. Recently, this view has been superseded by opportunity- and transaction-cost approaches which are, in fact, more relevant for a discussion of political marketing functions because the primary exchange in the electoral market does not involve any direct monetary exchanges. The cost function has so far been neglected in discussions of political marketing instruments and strategies (exceptions are Schmidtchen 1974 or Wortmann 1989,²⁰ but the only really relevant study is Wring 1996b).²¹ It is, however, a crucial element of an organisation's political marketing management. The political "price" has to be understood in the sense of reducing the electorate's perceived opportunity costs, which can determine inhibition barriers (Downs 1957). These barriers can prevent the implementation of a behavioural intention. Therefore, facilitating the exchange process in terms of costs means for the organisation to minimise the opportunity costs of voters' electoral decision-making process as well as of the electoral act itself. In addition, it also means enhancing the direct benefits from political involvement and the voting process as a symbolic act (Downs 1957; Lane 1993).

Communication Function. Communication serves the function of informing the exchange partner about the offer and its availability, and so forth. In the case of political parties, it is concerned with the manifesto, the agenda and the candidate as well as with images. In addition, it is an aid to the interpretation of the meaning of the exchange process for other exchange partners. This can go as far as creating a communicative image that becomes the primary product benefit for the exchange partner (e.g. the status of a Marlboro-man for smokers or, in the political sphere, the specific rhetoric of *Forza Italia*: see Axford et al. 1996; Rauen 1994).

The communication function is essential for a political organisation/candidate because it facilitates the voters' decision-making process, feeds necessary information into the political market and brings the political competition and discourse into the electorate's sphere (Popkin 1994). Basic aspects are: name/brand identification, image development, issue/agenda setting and exploitation, and tactical attack/defence (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995; Bryant 1995; Roberts and McCombs 1994). The communication function referred to here directly targets the electorate and can therefore be named the primary communication function. Although it can use an intermediary, like the media, via paid advertisements,²² the message is basically controlled by the political organisation (Bryant 1995; Newman 1993). Primary communication can therefore be via the primary or the secondary exchange channel (Schmitt-Beck and Pfetsch 1994). Through new technologies "the electoral process has changed in this country [USA] from voter participation through political parties to direct contact with the candidates" (Newman 1994a, p. xiv)—that is, primary communication has increased in importance. Because of the service character of the political product and its being a mere "promise", the political communication message can serve as a product surrogate, a cue (Sniderman et al. 1993). However, these two functions (communication and product) should not be confused. They are distinct functions with distinct purposes for the organisation (Wortmann 1989). Nevertheless, their use in the form of communication instruments can be similar. Thus, the distinction is primarily on the functional level and not so much on the instrumental one.

News-Management Function. In addition to the primary communication function, there exists a secondary one that is perhaps of an even greater importance for political marketing (see Fig. 5.9 below). It can be named, with a phrase coined by Franklin (1994), "news-management" (also called "newsmaking": Bryant 1995). While the primary communication message is targeted at the electorate, the secondary one is targeted primarily at the intermediaries, the media that then communicate with the electorate. It is not so much information distribution, more an agenda-setting and information-interpretation effort (Baer 1995; Franklin 1995; Gabor 1995; Schmitt-Beck and Pfetsch 1994). The split of communication into primary and secondary parts has similarities to marketing attempts to get to grips with the diversity of the "communication mix" (van Waterschoot and van den Bulte 1992; van Waterschoot and Voet 1988; Wangen 1983). News-management is of great importance because of the scrutiny that any political activity, statement, decision and so forth is under. Commercial organisations in comparison do not work in the lime-light of media attention all the time. Some political parties speak of a hostile media environment in which they have to live (Bryant

1995) The media communicates political messages/interpretations/comments concerning the parties and candidates directly to the voters, while getting an inherent credibility bonus (and scope) that parties cannot hope to achieve because they are perceived as biased towards their own interest (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995). Therefore, the parties try to influence the influencers (Harrop 1990). The recipients of this news-management of information, interpretations and influencing attempts are journalists and other media opinion leaders (Franklin 1994). This function has gained publicity with the public discussion about "spin-doctoring". This refers to the ability of party press officers (or other "Machiavellian" figures, best typified by Labour's Peter Mandelson) to give political information a spin that is favourable for the concerned party (Vallely 1995).²³ Media reports, by using these interpretations, create political "facts" and opinions founded on this spin (Franklin 1994). The news-management function is more complicated than commercial public relations: it has to be identified as a distinct functional prerequisite for the survival of political parties.²⁴ However, it is also of great importance to governments and interest groups in other political submarkets (Newman 1995b; Stirling 1996).

Fund-Raising Function. The fund-raising function is incorporated in the price/cost function in the commercial sphere because the exchange offer involves resource generation as a reciprocal measure. However, in the political market of elections, the reciprocal exchange is a non-pecuniary one—that is, no revenue flow exists in relationship to the primary exchange. Therefore, the establishment of a distinct fund-raising function is crucial for the financial base of the political organisation and therefore for the survival of the party in the long run (Himes 1995; Sorauf 1995; Stonecash and Keith 1996).²⁵ Political candidates/parties normally get their monetary resources through a (quarternary) exchange process with donors. These donors can be members of the party (contributing via membership fees or voluntary donations), activists (by providing free services to the party/candidate) or the general public (by donations from individuals or organisations). Today, interactions with these donor groups is the main focus of candidate/party activities during or before electoral campaigns in some party systems, notably the US one (Himes 1995; O'Shaughnessy 1990a) where fund-raising practices are a constant topic of discussion.²⁶

Parallel-Campaign Management Function. Coordination is at the heart of the parallel campaign management function. Wortmann describes it as trying "to hide the origin[,] that is the name of the political party from which political activities stem" (1989, p. 306). However, it is sometimes not hiding the origin (as in the case of the Willie Horton advertisement,

produced by a non-Republican organisation but evidently coordinated with the Bush campaign) (Jamieson 1992b) but open synergy that is the aim of this function. The function is targeted at organisations whose activities in the political market are similar in their goals and means to those of the party. These organisations can be called the "backing environment". They consist mostly of individuals and organisations that are not players in the electoral market but use the market of political activism ("low politics"; e.g. Greenpeace's backing of Green parties in Europe). The parallel-campaigning function facilitates a synergy optimum between a political party's activity and the "parallel" organisations such as interest groups, social movements, political foundations, think-tanks, but also companies, independent polling institutes and so forth. A prerequisite is an agreement on both sides to argue along the same lines. Such an agreement can be general or concern only some limited issues; in some cases it can also be covert and only implicit. Campaign coordination in the political sphere must be seen as a generic function because of the possible credibility gain by networking with "independent" opinion leaders. Achieving an image of credibility by the use of "objective" communication sources is a crucial element of the promised service in the political competition.

Internal-Cohesion Management Function. Besides the primary, secondary and quarterly exchange processes of the electoral market, there is also an internal (tertiary) exchange relevant to the party itself. The primary exchange process of "party/candidate-electorate/voter" is supplemented by another (group of) player(s) interested in the political product, the service offering. These are the party members but also, to some degree, party activists who are not necessarily members of the party (Duverger 1959). The intra-party negotiations are concerned with the very essence and form of the political offer. The party decision-makers—that is, the party leaders, candidates as well as the outside consultants that are a common characteristic of today's professional parties (Katz and Mair 1995; Newman 1994a; Panebianco 1988)—must therefore accommodate the opinions of their internal clientele as well as market forces and the public opinion (Demsetz 1990). The importance of this functions has been highlighted in a very interesting study by Koelble (1996) that uses the principal-agent theory as a methodological tool for analysing intra-party power distributions. Members and activists normally have a more ideology-oriented understanding of politics which causes a preference for a political product more on the left side of the strategic-product continuum (see Fig. 5.8). Panebianco commented in this context: "One can exercise power over others only by satisfying their needs and expectations; one thereby paradoxically submits oneself to their paneer" (1988, p. 22).

In addition, this function serves a critical role in securing internal stability and therefore the credibility of the party, which is a positive cue for voters in their assessment of the party's/leader's general ability to govern.

This enumeration of managerial marketing functions of political parties/candidates is not exhaustive in the sense that all functional prerequisites of organisational activities have been covered. However, the generic functions of political marketing for parties/candidates have been characterised. All exchange relationships, especially those with other actors in the electoral market but also those with the market of "low politics", have been covered by allocating at least one function to them (see Fig. 5.9). It becomes clear that the primary exchange process of the electoral market is naturally the focus of many political marketing management functions of political parties/candidates. Product, cost, distribution and communication functions are mainly facilitators for this relationship. Internal cohesion as well as product function links the party/candidates to the party members. Distribution and news-management functions allow for an interplay with the media, a player that stands outside the political market. The news-management function also influences the connection from the media to the voters/the citizens and

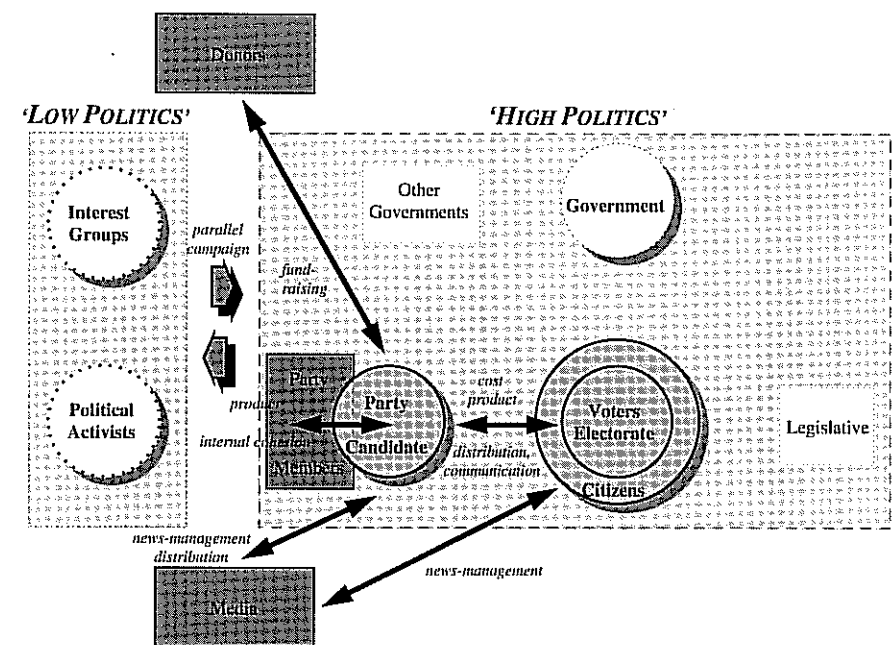


Figure 5.9. Exchange processes and functions for political marketing management of parties/candidates.

therefore has an additional indirect repercussion on the system. Fund-raising functions hold the contact with the other exogenous element of the political market, the donor groups. Last, the market of "high politics", in which parties and candidates operate, and the market of "low politics" are coordinated via the parallel-campaign management function.

Before instruments are categorised within these eight generic functions, the importance of specific functions for different organisational players in the three political markets is highlighted briefly here. Although developed for political parties/candidates, these eight generic functions are not of equal importance in practice for a party's political marketing management. Furthermore, for other actors the importance mix might also be different due to specific managerial necessities of these organisations. Therefore, an overview of the "managerial weighting" for these generic functions completes this subsection (see Fig. 5.10). Notable in a comparison of these "functional mixes" is the fact that in the governmental market much more emphasis is placed on parallel campaign management (i.e. lobbying exchanges, coalition building, etc.) (Franklin 1994; Harris 1994; Harris and Lock 1996) whereas interest groups have a special focus on organisational survival (bearing in mind the extreme amount of churn/fluctuation in membership figures, this seems imminent) (Maloney 1996). Furthermore, the importance of "classical" marketing functions (i.e. product, distribution, cost and communication) is higher in the electoral market than in both the governmental and the political-activism markets. These findings suggest that the political mar-

keting management of parties and candidates is more similar to normal (services) marketing than the management of other political exchange processes.

Instruments of Political Marketing Management

The discussion above regarding functions of political marketing management introduced the idea that in marketing theory the management of an organisation should be seen according to the necessary functions that the organisation ought to cover—that is, the vital ends—and that instruments are merely the corresponding means of doing so (van Waterschoot and van den Bulte 1992). Therefore, political marketing management activities can best be viewed by looking at functions instead of instruments or instrument groups. This perspective is, however, one that has not been widely applied in political marketing. Prevalent are studies concerned with the instrumental use of marketing in the political sphere or studies that utilise political marketing instruments (normally in the form of the 4P concept) as the structural framework for their studies (e.g. Boll and Poguntke 1992; Bowler and Farrell 1992a, 1992b, 1992c; O'Shaughnessy and Wring 1994; Webb 1992). Exemplary of this thinking is the elaborate scheme by Wring (1996b). Because of the large volume of literature on descriptions of instruments in political marketing, this subsection deals with them in a more cursory way.²⁷

In the following, instruments are perceived as serving a generic function(s)—that is, contributing to its (their) fulfilment. A second new element to the study of political marketing instruments is the idea of the basic versus complementary nature of instruments, first introduced by van Waterschoot and van den Bulte (1992). This will allow for differentiation according to instrument policy regarding permanent versus short-term and immediate consequences. For political marketing, this helps in understanding the distinction between permanent activities and campaign activities. However, this subsection starts by introducing the main political marketing instruments and discussing some examples (for the electoral market). Initially, the simple 4P scheme of product, place (distribution), promotion (communication) and price (cost) will be used as a guiding framework (Kotler and Armstrong 1996; McCarthy 1960, 1981).

Product Policy. As mentioned earlier, product instruments have to be seen in the context of three product elements. Firstly, product instruments are about images and traits of the candidate—that is, the main "tangible" asset of the service provided/promised by the party (besides the party manifesto, which is more obscure because of its complexity) (Newman 1996). The candidate is the main "product surrogate"—that is,

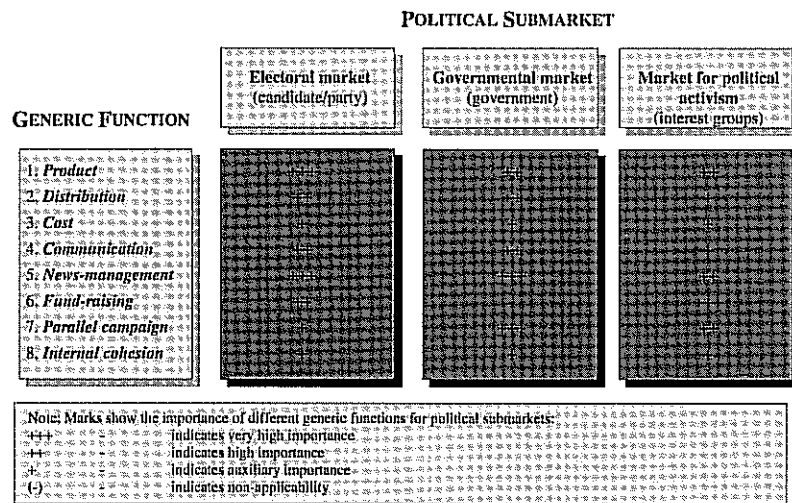


Figure 5.10. Importance of generic functions in different political markets

is the *pars pro toto* of the political product. Such candidate traits can be, for example, statesman-like appearance (manifested in the right clothes or intimacy with world leaders) or newcomer/anti-establishment image (exemplified in academic speech, unorthodox political gestures, etc.). Following Kavanagh (1995b): "Achieving a favourable image for the candidate or party is now a key objective of modern campaigning. Parties and candidates will have images freely provided by the mass media and by their political opponents. Hence the incentive to do it for themselves" (p. 13).

Candidate-oriented product instruments are used frequently, both in candidate-centred as well as in party-centred party systems (Wattenberg 1995). One particularly well-researched example is "the marketing of Maggie Thatcher", a politician who would normally be associated more with "principles" than with "packaging" (Scammell 1991, 1994).²⁸

Second, party image is another element of product instruments of political marketing management. It is made up of a variety of aspects, all relevant for the credibility of the political organisation as a service provider. These aspects can be related to the party's image of innovativeness or conservativeness, togetherness or volatility, its ability to "listen to the people" in general, or its internal "democracy"—that is, the image of whether the party grass-roots are involved in policy decisions. Instrument use can influence the corporate culture (e.g. corporate design, corporate organisation). All these image-related aspects of product instruments have left some commentators with the conclusion that today in politics "image has supplanted substance" (Franklin 1994, p. 9).

Third, the main "promise" of a party/candidate—its policy intentions—are laid out in a kind of manifesto, a long-term, stable policy statement that is, however, normally a very complicated and complex rationale for the party's existence. Specific political "issue-stands" are clarified in the manifesto or can be derived from it. Changes of essential manifesto guidelines appear rarely in the political competition (it is easier in candidate-centred party systems where each candidate is to some extent a new contestant without a political history) and constitute normally a radical product repositioning. Examples of such a radical product policy are the "Clause IV" discussion of the British Labour Party or the "Bad Godesberger Programm" of the German Social Democrat Party (both, incidentally, part of a major repositioning effort of these parties, to "New Labour" and social democracy, respectively). In general, decisions about emphasis on a specific issue for the political agenda are very important for the instrument use in this regard.

Obviously, all three elements of product instruments are highly inter-related: changes in candidate image have a spin-off effect on the party's image; a product repositioning at the manifesto level must be coordi-

nated with the other elements of this product triangle (Worcester 1996). Therefore, a positioning on the packaging-ideology continuum is always concerned with the effects on all three product instrument groups—that is, candidate-related, party-image related, and manifesto-related product instruments.

Distribution Policy. Distribution instruments constitute the link between the product/service offer and the potential customer/voter. This includes the actual delivery of the political product (or its main derivative, the politician) with the help of campaign meetings, door-to-door canvassing, voter-meetings, and public speeches. However, besides these traditional distribution instruments, "packaged" press conferences, media picture events and "soundbite" opportunities, interviews, and so forth can supplement the easy "distribution" of the candidate (Farrell and Wortmann 1987; O'Shaughnessy and Holbrook 1988; Robinson 1995). Therefore, the physical distribution of the political candidate can be directly (with the electorate) or indirectly (via a targeting of specific media). Here the overlap with communication policy instruments becomes obvious.

Communication Policy. Communication techniques are today the most important political marketing instruments of all political players. This is especially evident for political parties and candidates. The political product—that is, the image elements of it—can be created, influenced or distributed by communication instruments, such as party-political broadcasts, political ads and posters, leaflets, mailings²⁹ and corporate culture/identity signals (Ansolabehere and Iyengar 1995; Bryant 1995; Farrell and Wortmann 1987; Franklin 1994; Rothschild 1978). In addition, new technology can be used for phone-in/dial-in chat shows, live video discussions, talk radio and so forth. Even "non-political" events can be used, as shown by Bill Clinton's playing the saxophone on chat shows during his first campaign (Johnson 1997; Newman 1993, 1994a, 1995b). At first glance, issue stands and ideology do not seem to fit under these images as the core of communication instruments. However, these also need to be marketed by communication means because they have to be made comprehensible for the electorate in the sense that the underlying rationale (and the unique features of differentiation) must be visible and easy to grasp. In addition, political communication instruments can influence the agenda of the political discourse by bringing up specific themes and repeating them constantly (Gabor 1995). This can be of great importance, as was seen in the 1992 Clinton campaign with the new issue of health care reform (Thurber 1995). In this context, the instruments of attack and negative advertising have to be mentioned without

any intention to engage in a discussion about them (Banker 1992; Franklin 1994; Jamieson 1992b; Kaid and Holtz-Bacha 1995b; O'Shaughnessy 1989/90; Scammell no date).

While most of the communication instruments already mentioned are used normally in a very untargeted way (i.e. based on mass-media usage), there are other communication instruments that are personal-based and micro-targeted. These are normally associated with fulfilling news-management functions. These communication instruments are concerned with planting information, interpretations and opinions with crucial "information leaders" via sophisticated methods of personal communication by persuasive experts. Their main thrust is agenda setting, control over politicians' media appearances and influencing the content/style of these appearances via putting constant pressure on the media (Franklin 1994; Scammell 1995).³⁰ These "micro-marketing" approaches of communication are also used for fund-raising functions with the help of database-marketing (O'Shaughnessy 1987; O'Shaughnessy and Holbrook 1988; O'Shaughnessy and Wring 1994).

Cost-Management Policy. Instrument usage in this political marketing domain is rare and neglected. However, many cost-management instruments work together with communication instruments. Their main function—that of reducing the information-processing costs of the individual voter by using easy-to-understand argumentations and cues (specific catch-phrases) that trigger specific concepts for retrieving information—is linked to information management.³¹ However, in addition to these instrument groups there are those that in general enhance and increase the involvement level of the electorate concerning political issues but also politics in general. Only if voters, party members, activists and so forth perceive a benefit from involvement in the political discourse or in political actions, and if acting in the political sphere (be it voting, political activism or any other political activity) is not costly (in terms of opportunity costs), will there be an individual incentive for the citizen to open up to the political sphere—that is, getting involved psychologically. Such an involvement also constitutes a better basis for the functioning of other political marketing instruments, in the sense that it makes the individual voter receptive to these stimuli. Successful cost-management can be seen as a filter variable that decides the success of other political marketing management variables. Typical cost-management instruments in this regard are concerned with the physical voting act—for example, transport services to the polling station (where allowed), "educational" information about the voting process, enhancing the "hedonistic" elements of voting (e.g. citizen's duty) and so forth. This has become more and more important with the acknowledgement that elections are determined not only by voter preferences but also by turn-

out (Baer 1995). In addition, lowering the threshold of political activity in general by involving people in community work or communal discussions, fostering their engagement in political actions via appropriately organised events, will help not only the political organisation but has been credited by some writers with a legitimisation function for the whole democratic system (Bauer et al. 1995; Lane 1993; Nimmo 1970; Stirling 1996)

Instruments and Functions: A Matching Exercise. Political marketing functions and instruments are corresponding, but, as mentioned earlier, they are not in a one-to-one fit of one instrument serving one (and only one) function, as has been traditionally assumed (McCarthy 1960; van Waterschoot and van den Bulte 1992). With the more diverse functional requirements of political marketing management, laid down in the eight generic functions, a precise match must be achieved with the instruments available. Therefore, an instrument mix for each function is deemed appropriate. The importance of the four instrument groups in relation to the eight generic functions in the electoral market can be summarised as in Figure 5.11. While the functions are the independent variables, the instrument groups of political marketing are the dependent variables. Hence, the relationship is only unidirectional from functions to instruments, not *vice versa*. Figure 5.11 shows clearly the importance that

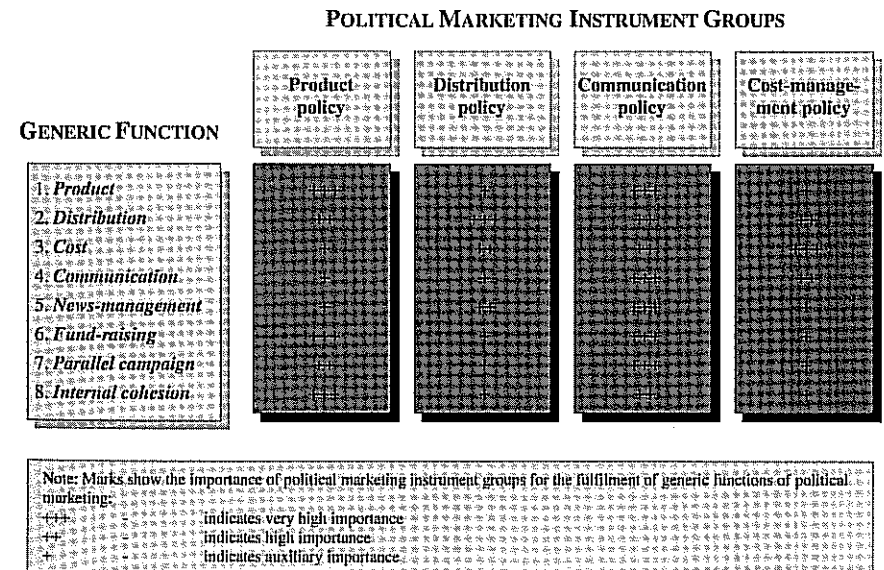


Figure 5.11. Matching functions and instruments of political marketing management.

communication instruments have for nearly all functions of political marketing. This backs the emphasis that has so far been given in research to this aspect. However, it also shows that it is vital to see political marketing management holistically as an integrated use of all possible operational aspects in order to meet the functional prerequisites. To give an example: product-related instruments not only have importance for the primary exchange of the product function but also serve the fundraising and internal-cohesion function prominently. Here, possible clashes between the differing functional demands on operational political marketing management are surfacing. Looking at distribution instruments, their impact lies not only in the area of placing the exchange offer conveniently at the disposal of the prospective exchange partner (distribution function) but also in, for example, managing the cost-management function. Cost-related instruments, on the other hand, also serve the distribution as well as the communication function.

Basic versus Complementary Instruments Usage. The microelements of political marketing management—that is, the functions and instruments—allow for a delineation and clarification of the operational side of the competitive phenomena in the political market. However, these elements have to be brought into context—that is, they have to be understood as an interacting and dynamic entity. Thus, a discussion of the strategic framework of political marketing management must provide a more holistic approach. Before the strategy elements are discussed in the next subsection, an intermediate step between operational and strategic management can be made by distinguishing differing usage categories for political marketing instruments. As mentioned earlier, this is done by taking into consideration the “promotional” character of election campaigning (and other intermediate campaigns) and distinguishing it from the “permanent” aspects of political marketing management, following van Waterschoot and van den Bulte’s (1992) approach of separating basic and complementary usage of marketing instruments. The rationale behind this is that there is a basic mix of political marketing instruments, facilitating a constant relationship with the target market players. This basic-instrument usage needs supplementary actions in some circumstances—that is, tactical adaptations of new strategic emphasis for the period of election campaigns (Bowler and Farrell 1992a).³²

For political parties, most policy issues are determined in the long term (this is more pronounced the more the party follows an ideology-orientation in their product approach); the campaigning phase is normally a high-intensity fine-tuning exercise. However, the used instruments (as well as the underlying functions) of political marketing management are the same, be it for the basic or the complementary instrument mix. The main differences are, however, the intensity, planning detail and re-

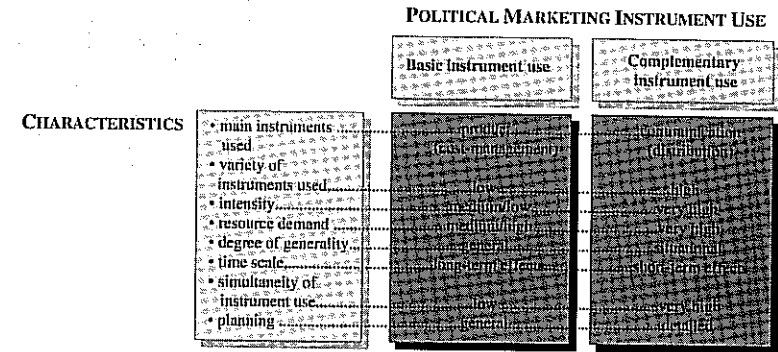


Figure 5.12. Characteristics of basic versus complementary use of political marketing instruments.

source demand, which are extremely high for the complementary (election) campaign and its situational-orientation, which is based on short-term effectiveness. In all this, campaign political marketing management is exactly what Tocqueville called it 150 years ago: a “national crisis” (1994/1848, p. 135). Regarding the engaged instruments, the election campaign mix uses all possible political marketing instruments simultaneously, compared to a more isolated use of instruments in the permanent and basic political marketing mix. The main political marketing instruments used in the campaign are communication techniques (followed by distribution elements), while the permanent campaign uses more product-related and cost-related instruments (see Fig. 5.12). An integrated picture of constant political marketing activities emerges, with differing intensities according to contextual and situational factors (see Fig. 5.13) (Sweeney 1995).

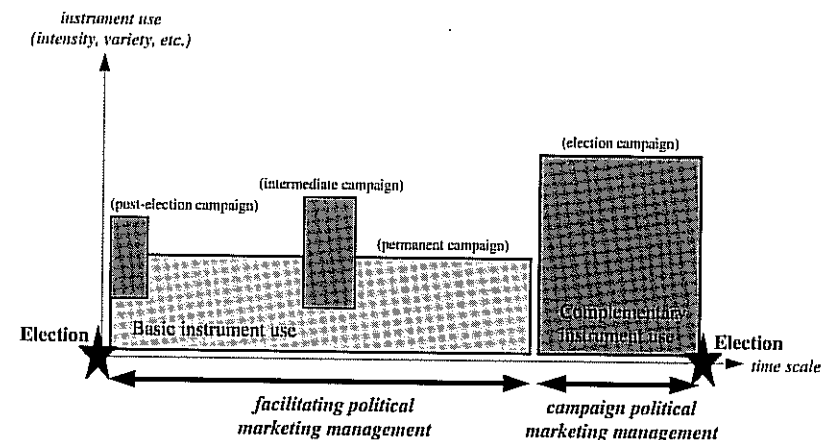


Figure 5.13. Use of political marketing instruments over an electoral period.

Political Marketing Strategy Elements

"The competitive nature of both elections and markets means that the strategic problems facing political candidates are essentially the same as those facing product managers."

Mausser (1983, p. 6)

Strategic elements of political marketing management³³ surfaced earlier in this study as one of the major new characteristics that elevated the mere use of isolated marketing instruments in the political competition to a full-scale political marketing concept. They were also connected to a packaging-orientation of product positioning. This indicates the integrative power of these strategy elements, which pull together all political marketing management elements into a coherent whole with proactive—that is, market-shaping—powers. Political marketing strategy is often equated with facilitating a "rational" electioneering approach (Scammell 1991, 1994). In this subsection, three main aspects of this strategic framework are covered: a starting point is the concept of segmenting the relevant (sub)markets and the targeting of one or several of the identified segments. An appropriate positioning of the political party/candidate with regard to the target segments is the second cornerstone of the political marketing strategy. This is concerned with matching the targeting approach with internal restrictions and capabilities. The transformation of the targeting and positioning elements into an integrated strategy—that is, the coordination between the different operational realms—builds the context for a discussion of the third aspect, the political marketing mix concept.

Political Segmentation and Targeting Strategy. The segmentation approach as a foundation of a political targeting strategy does not fulfil a function *sui generis* but facilitates a targeting strategy—that is, it "reveals [...] market-segment opportunities" (Kotler and Armstrong 1996, p. 249).³⁴ However, it is often defined as a fundamental concept of marketing, although generally perceived as critical in the sense that there is no "best way" to segment the consumption side of the market structure (Loudon and Della Bitta 1993; Saunders 1995; for a comprehensive criticism of the concept see Wensley 1995). Using the classical Kotler definition, segmentation means: "Dividing a market into distinct groups of buyers with different needs, characteristics, or behavior who might require separate products or marketing mixes" (Kotler and Armstrong 1996, p. 235)

In the case of political marketing the electoral market's potential voters are clustered (disaggregated) together in homogenous groups of individuals with the same characteristics. These characteristics could be specific ideologies/issue stands sought by the voters or other

"behavioural" traits (e.g. party loyalty of voters) but also geographic differentiations, and differences in demographics, sociographics or psychographics (Collins and Butler 1996; J. O'Shaughnessy 1995; Smith and Saunders 1990; Wangen 1983).³⁵ One of the main segmentation approaches in politics is that of competitive intensity.³⁶ Classical strongholds (either one's own or a competitor's) are not targeted specifically, but emphasis is targeted primarily on the constituencies with marginal results in the last elections ("marginal seats")—that is, those that are very contested (e.g. cf. Clinton's segmentation/targeting or that of many UK parties) (Harrop 1990; Newman 1994a, 1996). Multivariate methods of analysis like cluster analysis can help with this, while factor analyses can determine the "demarcation" variables (Worcester 1996). The logic behind this is to apply different political marketing strategies or instruments according to the specific demands and preferences of the identified segments of voters in order to allow for an optimal exchange process (Thurber 1995; Wortmann 1989).³⁷ It has to be noted that segmentation approaches, also with regard to party strategies, are somewhat conspicuously and latently present in studies of political scientists: "Political science has used a similar term in a more narrow way. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of 'catch all parties' or 'cartel parties' resonates tellingly with marketing understanding of segmentation strategies and tactics" (Collins and Butler 1996, p. 8).

This finding has been backed by a study regarding Kirchheimer's catch-all concept. Segmentation itself allows for a better overview and understanding of the market structure. However, in order to allow for a targeting approach—that is, a decision of what the segments of the markets are that should be targeted (i.e. served) by the political party—one needs to have more qualitative knowledge of the segments. This knowledge is provided by assessing the "profiles" of the market segments (Kotler and Armstrong 1996). This is done, for example, by matching behavioural and attitudinal data ("vote predominantly Social Democrat", "have strong socialist economic views") with the identified segments (of e.g. a psychographic cluster of "underachievers"). This step leads to the transformation of the segmentation approach into a targeting strategy for the political organisation—that is, the party's approach towards groups of the electorate. Before a party can decide about targeting a segment, it must assess its attractiveness—for example, its size, prospective development (e.g. if one wants to target the segment of first-time voters, one must take into account that their percentage of the electorate will decrease in time because the "senior" age groups are increasing in mature democracies)—but also its competitiveness. Competitiveness could mean, for example, that a right-wing, ideology-centred cluster has a good fit with existing niche parties, and therefore it would be a very competitive segment for a left-centre, packaged party to

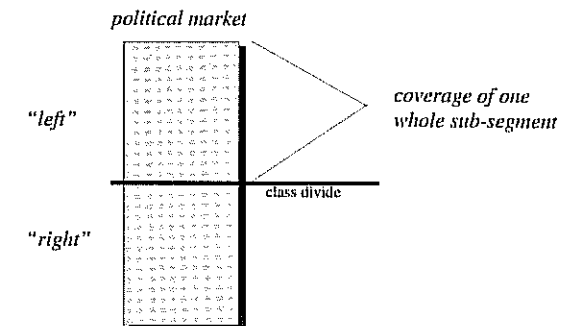
target. Another scenario of competitiveness would be the fact that many single-issue groups have already positioned themselves in the area of environmental anti-establishment issues. Another competitor might find it difficult to convince political activists with its specific offer because it has no "unique selling proposition". The political organisations' objectives and resources are, of course, also important for an assessment of possible target segments. A contradiction of long-standing ideological stances of a party by a chosen target segment would cause credibility losses, as seen above. Here, packaging-oriented parties have more leeway than ideology-oriented ones because their internal capabilities—that is, their potential to meet voter's preferences—are more flexible and their political history is less monolithic and extreme.

In general, a political party can follow several general targeting strategies. In the following, concentrated, undifferentiated and customised political targeting strategies are introduced and discussed in context of the ramifications for a party's competitive position.

Concentrated targeting applies when an organisation's market-coverage is targeted at a large share of one (or a few) subsegments of the electoral market (Dibb et al. 1994; Kotler and Armstrong 1996). In the political competition, this is a strategy that was followed by "mass-integration parties" in an electoral market defined by a clear-cut cleavage line (e.g. the class cleavage) (Kirchheimer 1966; Lipset and Rokkan 1966). Figure 5.14 exemplifies a two-segment market with very homogeneous "left" and "right" subcultures. Normally, two major class-based parties would try to target "their" natural market segment without much hope of appealing to sympathisers of the other segment.

With a more *differentiated* and less easily distinguishable political-preference structure in the market—that is, more voters leaning towards a greater variety of specific positions—a concentrated approach of political marketing targeting loses its appeal. This can be understood as a "remodelling" of the electoral market towards narrower issues of politics (O'Shaughnessy 1987). Such transformations of the market structure has been analysed by Kirchheimer (1966) in order to explain the appearance of what he called the "catch-all party", a *Volkspartei* that essentially follows an undifferentiated targeting approach (see Fig. 5.14) (Wangen 1983). This means a market-coverage that, to a large extent, tries to ignore segment differences and goes after the whole market (or at least a huge part of it) (Kotler and Armstrong 1996). The political offer: "will focus on what is common in the needs of consumers [read: voters] rather than on what is different" (Kotler and Armstrong 1996, p. 250), or, to use Kirchheimer's (1966) words: "National societal goals transcending group interests offer the best sales prospect for a party intent on establishing or enlarging an appeal previously limited to specific sections of the population" (p. 186). In the end, this equates to a "mass standardisa-

concentrated approach (mass-integration party)



undifferentiated approach (catch-all party)

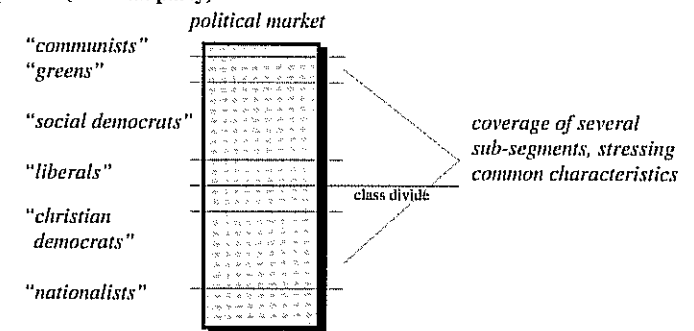


Figure 5.14. Concentrated and undifferentiated targeting approaches of political marketing management.

tion" approach of the political offer. However, even in such a market, a concentrated approach of targeting is possible but restricted to a so-called niche-approach (Collins and Butler 1995; Wangen 1983). The exclusive preference satisfaction of one subsection of the market allows some parties (e.g. "Greens" or right and left fringe parties, but also centralist parties like the German Liberals) to survive in a market of large players (if there is a proportional-representation system). However, leader or challenger positions cannot be achieved with such an approach (Butler and Collins 1996).

Further developments in the market-preference structure in the political sphere can be accommodated by a *differentiated market* coverage. Preference fragmentation has nowadays reached the degree of atomisation—that is, nearly no loyalty structures or high-attachment attitudes of the electorate are visible any more. This phenomenon is known in the political-science literature as the "party-identification decline" and is discussed in the "re-alignment" versus "de-alignment" controversy

(Crewe et al. 1977; Mair 1989, 1993). Reasons for this are social and geographical mobility, increases in educational levels and so forth (Butler and Stokes 1969; Crewe 1974; Crewe et al. 1977; Harrop 1986; Kavanagh 1995b). In such an environment it becomes more difficult to appeal to a sufficient part of the electorate with vague and common-grounded offers, touching basically only on valence issues that stress supra-segmental societal goals.

Such an undifferentiated targeting loses out against niche-market organisations that cater specifically for the benefits of the few and make no attempt to directly gain electoral success in the sense of overall majorities (Collins and Butler 1995).³⁸ Recent tendencies, especially in most European party systems, show that new niche-party entries into the electoral market indeed take place with increased frequency and cause a more volatile political system (Henneberg 1993).

The old "mass-standardisation" approach of mass-integration and also catch-all parties can be supplanted by a customisation of the political marketing strategy, following a differentiated market-coverage. In its extreme, this means a "micro-marketing" of segment-of-one targets. A differentiated approach involves targeting several distinct target markets not with only one offer and one political marketing strategy (standardisation) but with several separate offers and political marketing strategies/instrument mixes (customisation) for each identified target market (Webster 1994) (see Fig. 5.15). However, achieving this is extremely difficult in political marketing management. Marketing theory lays out ways in commercial marketing that political marketing cannot use—for example, differentiation by new product-line creation (Mercer 1992). Political parties simply cannot do the same. British Labour cannot form a new, additional political-product line with the name "Green Labour" in order to attract the niche-segment of environmentally ori-

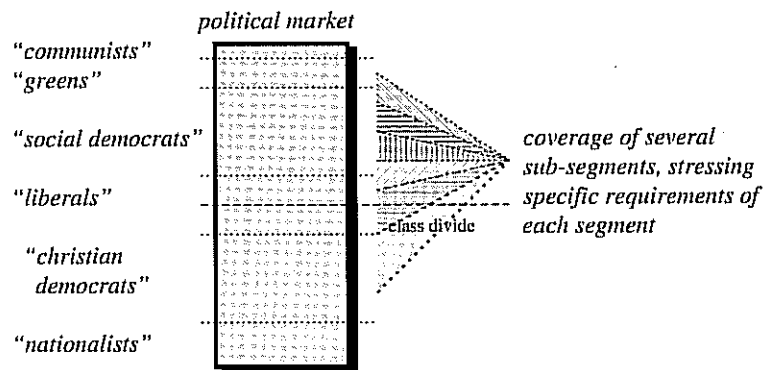


Figure 5.15. Differentiated targeting approaches of political marketing management.

ented voters. Political parties have to live with the fact that they are (perceived as) one organisation, one brand and one image. Therefore, they have to integrate product-development strategies into their existing product offer (Wangen 1983). A political targeting approach can contain several different "political offers" under one "brand framework"—for example, one with emphasis on green topics for environmentally oriented voters, one with emphasis on health care and pensions for elderly voters, one on free-market values for "achievers", and so forth. Each "programme" has a political marketing strategy tailored to suit the segment group it is targeted for. A means of delivering these programmes efficiently is consequent channel segmentation and media selection for the fulfilment of the distribution and communication function (Newman 1994a). The art of a customised targeting is to integrate these differentiated programmes and activities under a party umbrella into a cohesive and relatively consistent whole. This means living with potentially conflicting political offers (e.g. pro-environment versus pro-free-market issue stands and candidates). Such conflicts have to be resolved in a responsible manner according to the party's corporate culture, brand value or "ideology". However, if such an integration is possible, the "customised party" is able to exploit the ever more competitive electoral market, as well as to give the electoral competition stability and long-term credibility. In addition, the customised party regains the ability to proactively shape the electoral market by engaging in "intimate" relationships with their exchange partners, a capability inherent in mass-integration parties (which were themselves an expression of a social subculture) but lost with the adoption of undifferentiated targeting by the catch-all party (Mair 1989). This equates with a concept by Pomper (1992) regarding parties' attempts at regaining an "expressive mode"—that is, an affective relationship with the electorate—which got lost with the introduction of catch-all politics (i.e. an "instrumental mode").

However, targeting, especially in its customised form, is not unequivocally accepted as an optimal political marketing strategy, as the following argument by O'Shaughnessy shows: "Yet targeting contains the danger that, in focusing on particular groups, others will be ignored completely in the political dialogue, for much political material, though actually consumed inadvertently, has the effect of contributing to the citizens' political awareness . . ." (1990a, p. 74).

It will be important to watch how political parties use targeting approaches in practice because of the ethical implications of such a concept. Of interest are the new developments in media selection in the US American presidential election which allow (via cable-TV, talk radio and the flourishing of single-issue and speciality media) a very precise targeting of homogeneous market segments. First indicators of a customisation of the political offer are visible (Johnson 1997; Newman 1994a).

Political Positioning Strategy. Political positioning strategy helps the political organisation to integrate its approach further. Positioning is concerned with several aspects: the internal capabilities of the party/candidate must be assessed; this must be brought into coordination with the external opportunities of possible target segments; and, eventually, positioning defines exactly where the party/candidate stands in the political competition in relationship to other offers by deciding on the target strategy and subsequently the positioning strategy (Bradshaw 1995; Mauser 1983).³⁹ This means assessing possible competitive advantages, especially regarding their sustainability (Day 1997a; Kotler and Armstrong 1996).⁴⁰ "Positioning is a marketing tool that captures the essence of a candidate's [and party's] vision and structures strategy" (Newman 1994a, p. 86).⁴¹ All three of these aspects are discussed briefly:

Internal-capability assessment is concerned with the assessment of the strengths of the party and the available candidates. This analysis is concerned with personal traits, political assets, historical developments and so forth (Newman 1994a). For example, in order to achieve credibility as a service, the political offer must be aligned with historical characteristics: a traditionally conservative organisation cannot make leeway with Marxist topics, as it would lose its political "roots" and become volatile in the eyes of the voters. However, capability assessment is not restricted to a totally reactive approach; it also includes reasonable changes or the unearthing of unused potential in the sense of the definition of a marketing-orientation. Altogether, this type of analysis also has to be seen in context of other (existing or potential) market offerings and an assessment of the relative position and strength of the candidate/party in the context of other contenders. Mauser (1983) showed how such an approach can be modelled in a similar way to new-product development and testing techniques used in commercial marketing, using multidimensional scaling (MDS) techniques.

External opportunity analysis is based on the findings of, first, the segment assessment and, second, the internal-capability assessment. Finding a match between attractive segments and their political demands, together with possible offers based on the strengths of the party and the candidate, will show scenarios of possible strategy options—that is, competitive advantages. These have to be judged in light of the overall goal of the political organisation—for example, although sometimes the most promising strategy would be one of serving exclusively a very small segment, this is incompatible with the rationale of a people's party which essentially wants to achieve an electoral-majority position.

A *political positioning strategy* is the outcome of the interplay between the internal capability analysis and the external-opportunity analysis. Positioning does not, as seen before, mean a total remodelling of the party/candidate but an optimisation of their market approach (Baer

1995). In general, one can distinguish broadly four different generic positioning strategies, derived from marketing theory. These depend on the goals, capabilities and the existing positioning of the party/candidate. Butler and Collins (1996), in a study on strategic analysis in political markets, show that these "marketing models are robust enough to withstand the distinctive characteristics of noncommercial contexts . . ." (p. 35). They differentiate the strategic positions of

- market leader
- challenger
- follower
- nicher.

Figure 5.16 enumerates the characteristics of these market positions. Typical strategies and targeting approaches are also enumerated. Complications accrue because of the differences of market positions in different electoral systems (Butler and Collins 1996). These differences have not been included in the listing of Figure 5.16, which exemplifies an

MARKET POSITION	LEADER	CHALLENGER	FOLLOWER	NICHER
EXAMPLE	CDU (Germany) SPÖ (Austria)	SPD (Germany) VP (Austria)	Centre (Netherlands)	PDS (Germany)
CHARACTERISTICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • professional image • strong and clear ideological stance • traditional and conservative • moderate and pragmatic • broad appeal • high credibility • strong leadership • clear and consistent message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • professional image • strong and clear ideological stance • traditional and conservative • moderate and pragmatic • broad appeal • high credibility • strong leadership • clear and consistent message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • multi-party coalition • strong and clear ideological stance • traditional and conservative • moderate and pragmatic • broad appeal • high credibility • strong leadership • clear and consistent message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strong and clear ideological stance • traditional and conservative • moderate and pragmatic • broad appeal • high credibility • strong leadership • clear and consistent message
STRATEGIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear and consistent message • strong and clear ideological stance • traditional and conservative • moderate and pragmatic • broad appeal • high credibility • strong leadership • clear and consistent message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear and consistent message • strong and clear ideological stance • traditional and conservative • moderate and pragmatic • broad appeal • high credibility • strong leadership • clear and consistent message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear and consistent message • strong and clear ideological stance • traditional and conservative • moderate and pragmatic • broad appeal • high credibility • strong leadership • clear and consistent message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clear and consistent message • strong and clear ideological stance • traditional and conservative • moderate and pragmatic • broad appeal • high credibility • strong leadership • clear and consistent message

Figure 5.16. Characteristics of four generic market positions in the electoral market.

electoral system of proportional representation. However, it must be said that the system of strategic political positions in the electoral market is not precise. Certain parties—for example, the German Greens—cannot be pigeon-holed in this scheme. Although showing most characteristics of a follower, they are highly “innovative” in their political-product offering. Nevertheless, they are also not a challenger because their more concentrated targeting restricts their electoral scope to that of a small-medium party. Further research specific to the political circumstances is necessary to cover this aspect more convincingly.

Having used segmentation, targeting and positioning approaches, a political organisation has achieved the following elements: it has an overview of the preference structure of the political market, knows about groups of voters with homogeneous characteristics and can assess the general attractiveness of these segments. Furthermore, it has information about its own strength and restriction (as well as that of the other players in the market). Last, the organisation is able to combine all this information into a preferred market position with a specific market-coverage approach.⁴²

The political party is now well equipped to implement these strategic aims via the appropriately guided use of political marketing instruments. This aspect of political marketing management comprises the integration of instrument groups with strategic aims as well as functional prerequisites.

Political Strategy Formulation and Implementation—The Political Marketing Mix. In this subsection the elements of the previous subsection meet again: strategic positioning and targeting on the one hand, and political marketing instrument groups on the other. The interface between both is the political marketing mix, which facilitates the formulation and implementation of the strategic issues (Wortmann 1989). The functions of political marketing management constitute the umbrella for this dialectic interplay of strategic and operational level, all in the framework of the concept of political marketing management (see Fig. 5.17) (Henneberg 1996d).

Questions of political instrument mix coordination have been grossly neglected in the literature (e.g. Farrell and Wortmann 1987; Harrop 1990; O’Shaughnessy 1990a; even the excellent study of Newman 1994a does not give them credence) which seems astonishing bearing in mind the “obsession” with the instruments themselves. Wangen (1983, p. 278) explains this as the lacking of understanding of the complexity of strategic political marketing approaches, both in theory and practice. However, when analysed, the marketing mix problem often seems to be misunderstood as representing merely the entirety of political marketing instruments—that is, the “configuration that consists of product, promo-

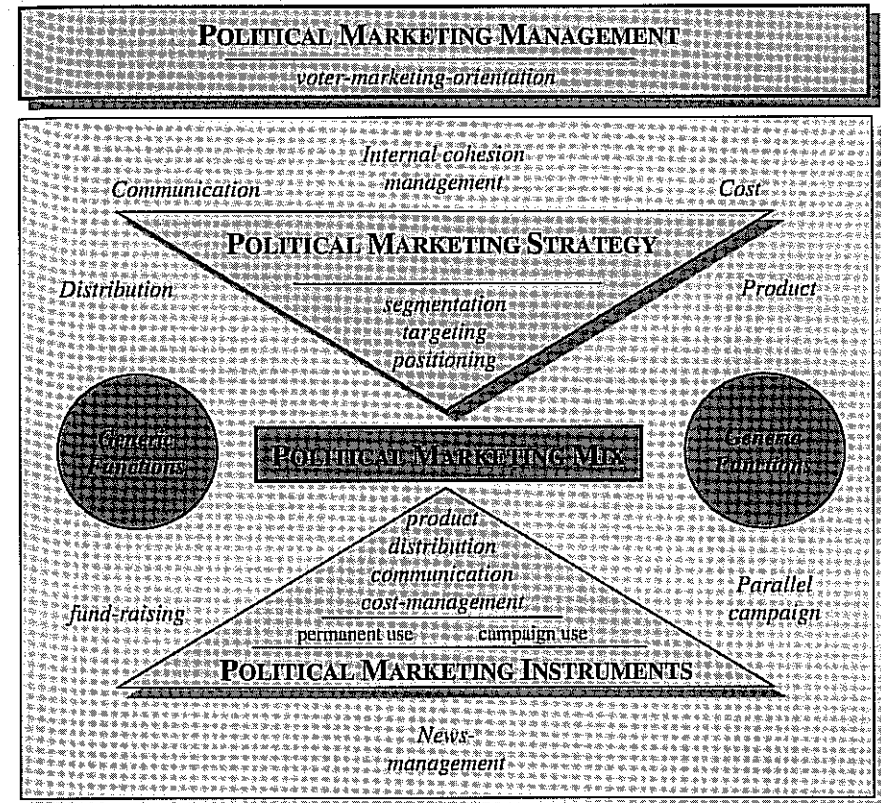


Figure 5.17. Political marketing management—overview.

tion, place and price” (Wring 1996b, p. 9). In fact, the political marketing mix as a part of strategic political marketing is concerned with the selection of appropriate marketing instruments (according to, first, the targeting and positioning strategy and, second, the necessary functional fulfilments). However, along with the mere selection goes the determination of their activity—that is, the intensity level of these instruments as well as the timing problem. Of foremost importance is the coordination of all instrumental activities for the purpose of optimising complementarity and spill-over effects between instruments and instrument groups as well as the forecasting of their interdependency and effectiveness (Kotler and Armstrong 1996; Simon 1992; Wangen 1983). Goal and targeting conflicts as well as instrument overlaps must be resolved, as must problems within instrument groups, when serving several functions (Wortmann 1989).⁴³ This coordination effort is notoriously difficult in marketing but is a “prerequisite for [. . .] success” (Wortmann 1989, p.

53). Especially in the environment of a "customised party"—that is, one following a differentiated targeting approach—the problems of marketing mix optimisation as well as the variety of possible intervening variables become plentiful. This is further complicated by the existence of two different marketing mixes, determined by the distinction between a basic (permanent) and a complementary (campaign) use of political marketing instruments. While the permanent political marketing mix provides the underlying platform of political marketing management, the campaign mix allows for the party's intense competitive behaviour during election campaign times (Henneberg 1996d).

To complete the tool-kit of political marketing management, some other elements deserve mentioning. Political marketing management's core comprises the strategic and operational translation of the marketing concept. In addition, there exist some auxiliary elements of political marketing that have facilitating potential for the management of political organisations. Several could be discussed here—for example, political marketing controlling or political marketing organisation and planning (Newman 1994b; Sackman 1992; Wortmann 1989)—all elements of the transformation of political parties to "professional parties" (Katz and Mair 1995; Panebianco 1988). A recent development is the role of the political consultant, a political (marketing) management expert who is essentially an external consultant to the political market (Johnson 1997; Newman 1994a; O'Shaughnessy 1987, 1990b; Peele 1982). However, for this study there is emphasis on another auxiliary element: political marketing research, which is discussed in context in chapter 6. Before that, the circle of argumentation has to be closed.

This chapter started off with some remarks regarding political marketing as a new phenomenon. Part of this was an initial discussion of the development of political marketing—that is, some stage models. The next section reintroduces this thought. However, now having a much better normative understanding of political marketing and its managerial implementation, this discussion of the development of political marketing will be "coming from the end"—that is, from a thorough understanding of the research object. Thus, the next section first argues recursively about the theoretical and conceptual development of political marketing in a marketing theory framework; second, a modified stage model is introduced; and, third, the determinants of changes in political marketing management activities are analysed.

The Development of Political Marketing

The following subsections go back to the level of the *theory of political marketing* by highlighting the genesis of political marketing. Such an analysis must obviously start with a discussion of the conceptual prereq-

uisites of the development of political marketing inasmuch as marketing theory was originally understood exclusively in a commercial context. Therefore, along the way of marketing theory development there must have evolved a "junction" that allowed the conceptual rationale for political marketing to develop.

Political Marketing and Marketing Theory—Developments

Although this is one of the better-documented aspects of political marketing theory (e.g. O'Cass 1996), it is nevertheless important enough to justify a brief recapitulation. The so-called broadening of the marketing concept (Kotler and Levy 1969) introduced a way of thinking that eventually enlarged the scope of marketing from commercial markets of profit organisations with product or service exchanges to those additionally comprising non-profit organisations and their specific exchange relationships (Raffee and Wiedmann 1995). This development was also the theoretical "birthplace" of political marketing. Bagozzi raises this broad approach even to the heights of a new paradigm in Kuhn's sense (Bagozzi 1975). It is noteworthy that this development was partly stimulated and influenced by research on the marketing activities of political parties and candidates in the US political system—namely, the contribution of McGinnis (1969: catch-phrase, Nixon as a "product"). The premise was that every organisation had a product, be it goods, a person, a service or an idea. Social causes, but also religions or ideologies, were now part of marketing-relevant exchange processes because these explananda were acknowledged as falling into the sphere of marketing theory. The theoretical umbrella of non-profit marketing (Hunt 1976) can be divided into two activities, both distinct from commercial marketing: classical non-profit marketing (e.g. marketing of a museum or a university) and social marketing (e.g. marketing of social ideas such as anti-smoking) (Fox and Kotler 1980; Kotler 1979; Kotler and Zaltman 1971).⁴⁴ Political marketing falls essentially into the second category.

The concept of widening the scope of marketing was not unanimously regarded as either worthwhile or theoretically justified: several arguments were voiced against the new approach (Arndt 1978; Enis 1973; Luck 1969, 1974). Furthermore, the enlargement of the scope of marketing went through different phases of theoretical development.

Kotler himself enlarged his diffuse concept once again. While originally focusing on non-pecuniary exchanges, he developed a "generic concept" that also included the wider public—that is, indirect exchange partners or stakeholders (Hunt 1976; Kotler 1972). Today, the enlarged concept of marketing, with its introduction of non-profit marketing, is established and is part of the core of marketing. It did not become a "blind alley for the discipline [of marketing]" (Arndt 1978). Neverthe-

less, caution is needed in the use of marketing and marketing management theories in the area of non-profit marketing. One has to agree with Foxall's argument that these concepts should only be applied in areas where "real" market characteristics and exchange mechanisms are existent. Therefore, the rash incorporation of any activity into the sphere of marketing seems overambitious (Foxall 1984a). However, this problem does not apply to political marketing, as acknowledged by received wisdom and shown in the analysis of macroelements above (Henneberg 1995a).

Political Marketing Management Stages

Phase models of political marketing, developed with an eye to elementary marketing stage models, prove to be unsatisfactory because of their "one-to-one" adaptation. They are normally "comparative static"—that is, they highlight certain points in time of a development without an endogenous understanding of the dynamics in between. However, these dynamics—that is, the reasons and determinants why political marketing management has developed—are of real interest to political scientists as well as marketers. Therefore, this subsection, in conjunction with the next one, tries to outline the stages as well as dynamics of political marketing management. This is done by using the concept of political marketing management philosophies (similar to Wring 1996b) but integrating it with information on strategic and operational elements. Furthermore, all "philosophies" are allowed to coexist in a political system at the same time (indeed, it is assumed that they normally do), determined by the political parties' perceptions of the market structure and its derived political marketing strategy. Underlying this is, again, Kotler and Armstrong's (1996) concept of the gradual development of the complexity of marketing philosophies, developed from the original model (Kotler 1972).⁴⁵

The Political Selling Philosophy. Figure 5.18, shows the characteristics of the political selling philosophy (the "commercial equivalent" has also been juxtaposed in the figure for comparison purposes). Underlying the selling philosophy, as mentioned before, is an "inside-out" perspective. It focuses on existing political programmes and ideologies, uses mainly (social) propaganda and push promotion (isolated-communication approaches), and prefers a concentrated but nationwide targeting approach (O'Shaughnessy 1990a, 1996a, 1996b). The political market (or better: the political party's perception of it) is characterised by a split in clear-cut social subsegments. The main end for the political organisation is electoral power through propaganda and "education". This approach, essentially that of a mass-integration party, is arguably still the underly-

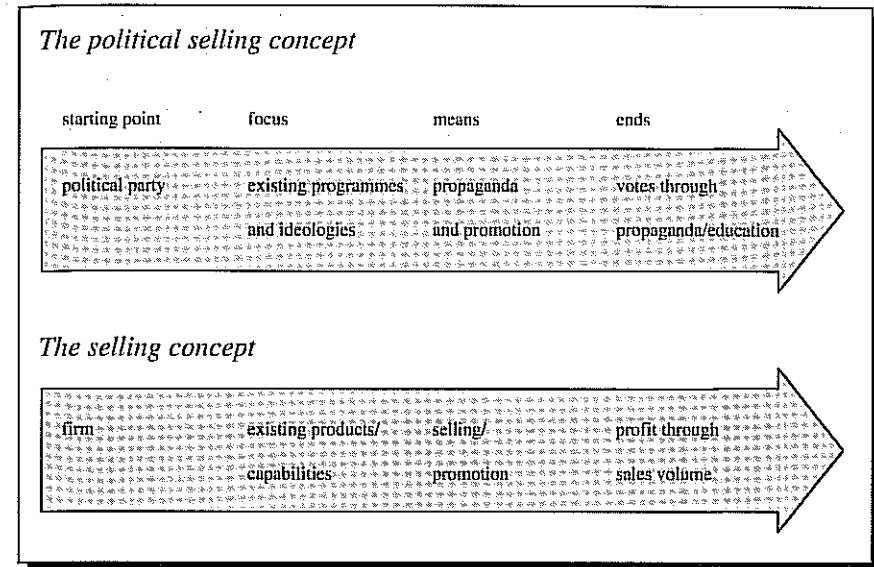


Figure 5.18. Political selling philosophy.

ing thinking of many political organisations, although the political market has changed considerably. Such a finding is in line with a recent analysis of the adaptation of the "marketing concept" in political parties (O'Cass 1996).

One example of a party following such an approach was British Labour until 1995. Although Neil Kinnock and John Smith led the party into a transition phase, it was still essentially a class-based party of a selling mentality (Bartle 1995; Wring 1995a). A very good summary of this political management philosophy has been given by Kotler himself:

The selling concept [is also] practiced in the non-profit area. A political party, for example, will vigorously sell its candidate to voters as a fantastic person for the job. The candidate works in voting precincts from dawn to dusk—shaking hands, kissing babies, meeting donors, making speeches. Much money is spent on radio and television advertising, posters, and mailings. The candidate's flaws are hidden from the public because the aim is to get the sale, not to worry about consumer satisfaction afterwards. (Kotler and Armstrong 1996, p. 16)

The focus on a fixed ideological and programmatic world view ("how can we sell our ideology to the people") causes parties to neglect voters' wants and alienates them. Ideological rigour is seen to dominate, not the benefits of the electorate. Such a management philosophy of ideology-orientation can cause credibility and legitimacy problems for the whole political party system when it is perpetuated in a changing electoral

market, especially when facing shifting value systems and a “consumer ethos” (Bauer et al. 1995; Kirchheimer 1966). One example of a reaction to parties neglecting a necessary adaptation of their political management philosophy is that of the “critical” 1993 Canadian general elections (Clarke and Kornberg 1996).

The Political Marketing Management Philosophy. A concept that allows for a more flexible approach towards the electorate is the political marketing management philosophy (see Fig. 5.19). It is founded on voter-orientation and takes into account the electorate’s needs and wants, and it tries to achieve a high level of exchange satisfaction—that is, it is based on responsiveness and reciprocity. This is the opposite of the inward-oriented “ideology-satisfaction” mentality of the political selling concept. In comparison, the political marketing philosophy is not inherently elitist like the political selling philosophy but seems to be better suited to an egalitarian approach and also plebiscitarian and participatory approaches (Abramson et al. 1988; O’Shaughnessy 1990a; Scammell 1995). Integrated marketing approaches—that is, sophisticated and coordinated political marketing strategies (e.g. undifferentiated or differentiated targeting)—are used and a packaging approach of strategic-product positioning is favoured. Tony Blair’s “New” Labour Party and most American presidential campaigns fall into this management philosophy. However, especially in the European party systems, it is normally not

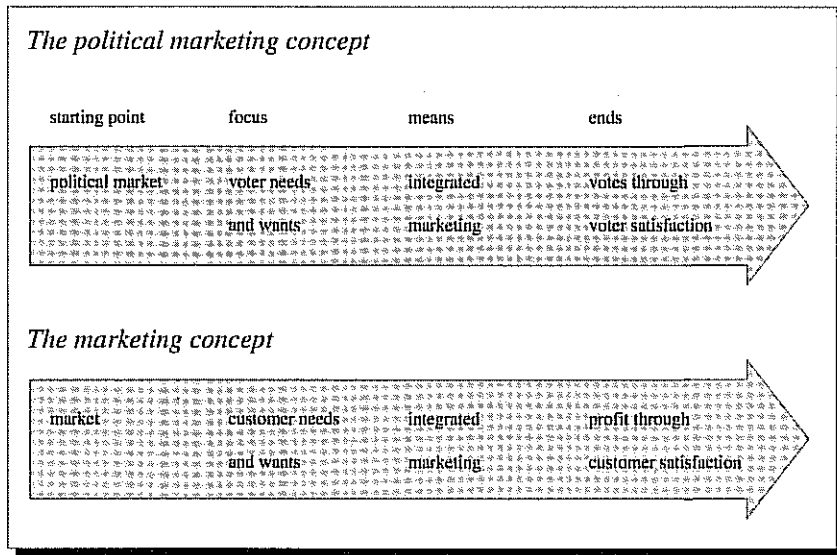


Figure 5.19. Political marketing management philosophy.

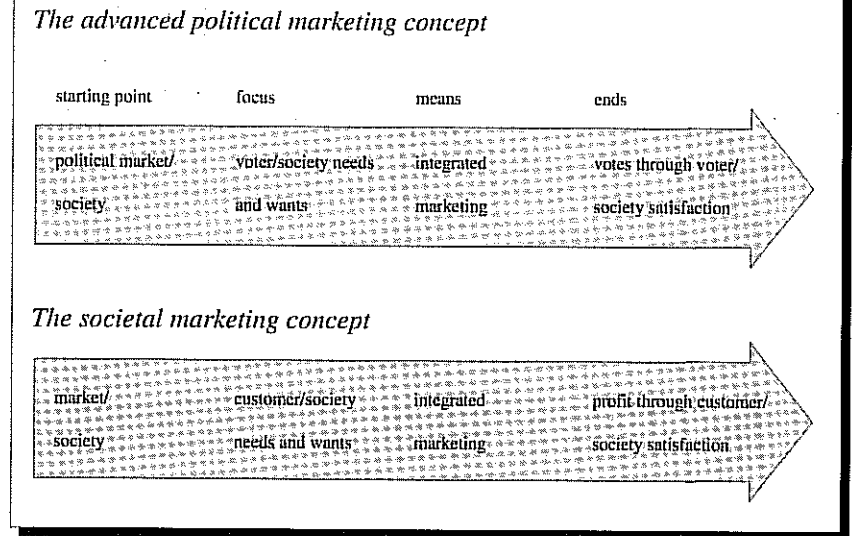


Figure 5.20. Advanced political marketing management philosophy.

widely used and, if at all, normally by the challenger party. However, Blair’s significant victory in the 1997 general election makes this concept attractive to other parties and party systems. One first sign of such a development was that of the Norwegian 1997 general elections but also some state elections in Germany.⁴⁶

The Advanced Political Marketing Management Philosophy. Besides these two relatively opposed political marketing philosophies, one can derive an “advanced” version of the political marketing management philosophy, founded in the conceptual criticism of the fundamentals of marketing. In order to get to grips with the inherently reactive and populist nature of the classical political marketing concept (its demagogic nature is one of the main targets of critics), Kotler’s societal marketing concept can be adapted to the political sphere.

Although customer-orientation is still the core element, society’s well-being is also considered (see Fig. 5.20). The (possible) conflict between the wants of the voters and the long-term well-being of society (and the ideological idea of how to bring about such an utopian state) has to be resolved by responsible marketing, inspired by a more general stakeholder approach (Houston 1986). While the political selling concept is too monolithic (elitist), the political marketing philosophy can be too fickle (populistic) (Stoiber 1983). Societal well-being needs a long-term perspective and a general policy framework. Therefore, a restricted political marketing concept seems more appropriate, especially in political

markets with more and more "voter sophistication" but also voter disillusionment and competition with the very "opinionated" sphere of "low politics". Not only the wants of the voters but also societal needs are guidelines for the competitive behaviour of parties following this philosophy. The concept is "restricted" insofar as it focuses on more than the immediate target group(s). However, this does not mean a revival of an ideology-orientation, as one might be tempted to believe. If one looks at this philosophy in more detail, it becomes clear that, on the contrary, the societal needs can be incorporated into politics via a general framework concept that is able to learn—that is, the political offer is stable but not monolithic like an ideology, responsive but not educational. Although one may still call these frameworks "ideologies", they have more similarities to corporate cultures of competitive organisations. In this sense, they can be called "image ideologies". Newman (1996) speaks in this context of "ideology as a 'labeling' process" (p. 12). These are behavioural and intellectual guidelines for the party that give the electoral efforts a certain hold by interacting with people's values and preference systems.⁴⁷ This new kind of image ideology, though different from ideological concepts of the mass-integration party, reflects its heritage, bringing credibility to the political offer and legitimacy to the political competition. Baer (1995), in an analysis of the US elections, shows that such a rationale underlies the concept of what she calls "strategic candidates" (p. 59). Furthermore, similar ideas surface in political science as well (Budge 1994). An advanced political marketing philosophy is partly the base for Bill Clinton's campaigning activities. However, many aspects of the traditional political marketing philosophy are still visible, especially in his governmental marketing, which is essentially a perpetuation of his campaign marketing strategy (and therefore ineffective in the sense of governing) (Newman 1993, 1995a, 1995b).

It is interesting to note that this restricted concept is in line with the definition of political marketing given above. In particular the societal element, as well as the (long-term) satisfaction of voters, is at the core of both.

Determinants of Political Marketing Management Activities

"The use of television has probably been the greatest catalyst in changing the marketing/political relationship from implicit to explicit."

Rothschild (1978, p. 58)

It has been said that all three political marketing philosophies can coexist in a party system. In addition, it has been alluded to that parties might change the philosophy of their electoral approach in time. It has been established above that it is important to know about the determi-

nants of these transitions. Received knowledge in political marketing is that changes in the electoral strategy as well as in the overall political marketing philosophy are essentially technology-determined. More often than not, this is enumerated as the dominating, if not the only reason, for political parties to "develop" managerially (Harrop 1990; Wring 1995b; see Newman 1994b, who allows for a more rounded argument). Technology-determination in this context refers to the development of new media technologies, starting with the introduction of mass media like radio and later television (along with the proliferation of advertisements) (O'Shaughnessy 1987) and continuing with the sophistication of these elements—for example, via interactive or cable-TV, but also by the development of new media presentation forms like news conferences or other communication instruments like large-scale direct-mailings (Kavanagh 1995b; Newman 1994a, 1994b). Therefore, political marketing is sometimes also referred to as "electronic electioneering" (Newman 1996, p. 2). Altogether, the sole developer of the understanding of political marketing lies, according to this argument, in communication policies fostered by media-technology developments. Such lines of argumentation can be found among political management practitioners as well as among scholars. Wring (1995b) reports that Nick Grant, the UK Labour Director of Publicity for the 1983 campaign, sees the development of marketing in politics as part of the development of a "science in communication". O'Shaughnessy and Wring (1994) credit the "evolution of mass media-centred electoral races" to "technological advance" via "embrac[ing] the opportunities presented by both television and advertising" (p. 246).

Harrop explicitly concludes that "advances in political marketing respond to developments in the media" (1990, p. 284) and Kavanagh introduces his book on "the new marketing of politics" by stating: "Election campaigning adapts by employing the latest techniques and ideas in effective communications and persuasions" (1995b, p. 8).

This monocausal argument is not conclusive and also contradicts the fact that strategic elements elevate the simplistic use of marketing instruments to a full-scale political marketing concept. Therefore, it is necessary to analyse the determinants within a broader context and use a marketing-related rationale (Mercer 1992). The enumerated aspects of media, its technological development and the subsequently emerging possibilities of new communication instruments are, of course, one of the main aspects of a transformation of political marketing philosophies. However, these are only facilitators—that is, means that enable a reaction to the real drivers of change: first, the underlying electoral market structure and, second, the specific strategic response (Newman 1994a). These determinants have been recognised in a different context—for example, by Farrell and Wortmann (1987):

political marketing can be viewed as part of an overall shift in the electoral process towards a more competitive basis for electoral competition and for electoral choice [read: the structure of the electoral market]. Political marketing represents the evolution of party strategies [read: the strategic response] in a changing electoral process. (p. 314)

A change in the market structure—for example, preferences or characteristic changes of the electorate or new competitors (or new competitive markets like that of “low politics”)—is the basic imitator of change (Katz and Mair 1995). To be precise, “objective” changes are not of foremost importance to political parties, they react to subjective—that is, perceived—changes of the market structure. Political parties react to a variety of structural stimuli: the emergence of a new political “ideology” (e.g. green issues), the loosening of party attachment by the voters (e.g. a general party-identification crisis) (Heath and McDonald 1988), or simply by having lost consecutive elections (e.g. Smith’s and Blair’s attempts to modernise Labour after three lost elections) (O’Shaughnessy and Wring 1994). Strategic development is one way for an organisation to adapt proactively to these market changes (Newman 1994b)—for example, by introducing new targeting strategies, new strategic-product positioning, or a totally new orientation of the whole political party, such as towards advanced marketing philosophies. The deployment of more sophisticated political marketing activities is therefore a sign of markets developing towards more competitiveness and less predictability (Bowler and Farrell 1992a; Farrell and Wortmann 1987). Exactly these strategic adaptations are the essence of what Panebianco (1988), in an analysis of political party’s organisational structure, has called “professionalisation” in a so-called “electoral-professional party”, brought to an extreme in “cartel parties” (Katz and Mair 1995).⁴⁸

Research on Political Marketing

Having developed political marketing as a concept it is now time to go back to the question of research on political marketing. This chapter has outlined an initial concept of political marketing which serves as a benchmark model for an evaluation of the overall knowledge base, represented by publications (books, articles, theses) in the area of political marketing.⁴⁹

This *tour de force* through an assessment and evaluation of political marketing research is based on a database at the Judge Institute of Management Studies (compiled by the author) containing all available sources on the topic. Although the number of publications between 1980 and 1997 has grown to about 350, the results are still structurally similar to a comparable approach done by Reid (1988) in preparation for his

studies on political marketing. The database was assembled using a comprehensive computer-based screening technique of published and unpublished research in the English-speaking world. The criteria for inclusion into the database are divided into hard and soft ones. Hard criteria comprise:

- use and/or naming of the concept “political marketing”;
- use of theories, methods and so forth from both areas—political science *and* marketing;
- use of seminal sources of research in political marketing (e.g. Newman 1994a; O’Shaughnessy 1990a).

If two of the three hard criteria are fulfilled, the source is included in the database automatically. If only one (in special cases, none) of the criteria is fulfilled, soft criteria are used in an auxiliary manner. If one or two of these apply, inclusion into the database follows. Soft criteria are:

- the explanandum of the source is important and directly relevant for research in political marketing;
- political marketing is not the main aspect of the source but innovative results/theories are discussed with repercussions for political marketing;
- seminal sources of political marketing refer to this source in relationship to their conceptual analysis of political marketing.

Obviously this procedure is an extremely subjective one. Therefore, the judgement for inclusion was checked by another experienced researcher in the field of political marketing. The overall interrater reliability was 0.92, a very satisfactory figure.

Overview of Research in Political Marketing

The author (Henneberg 1995b) argued that, based on a classificational scheme of political marketing, there are nominally four main areas of research, each subdivided into a normative and a descriptive sphere. Figure 5.21 shows different “research schools of political marketing”, using concepts developed by Sheth et al. (1988). All sources have been classified into this scheme.⁵⁰ In the *microtheory of political marketing*, the voter-behaviour school is dominant, although there are also some beginnings of an exchange school. In the area of microtheory, a foundation for managerial application is provided by analysing the behaviour of individual parties, voters or other players in the political market. In the normative tradition, the rational/public-choice theory dominates, inspired by approaches of political economy (Brennan and Lomasky 1993).

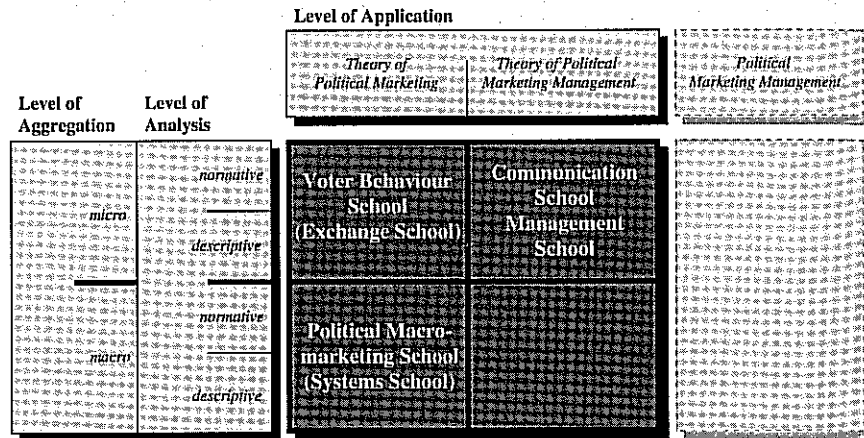


Figure 5.21. Research schools of political marketing.

In the descriptive area, these approaches are subsumed under the "positive political-economy" umbrella (Alt and Shepsie 1990). However, marketing-related models of party or voter decision-making are very rare. Although many political-science studies of voter behaviour can be subsumed here (Columbia as well as Michigan school and psychological/socio-psychological models), these conventional studies are supplemented by very isolated cases of holistic and political management-related analyses (e.g. Himmelweit et al. 1985; Sniderman et al. 1993; Popkin 1994; especially Newman and Sheth 1987, and Reid 1988). This microtheory level characterises one of the main shortcomings in research on political marketing theory.

The second area of neglected research problems can be found on the macrolevel of the *theory of political marketing* (the same can also be said for the *theory of political marketing management*). In the normative cell, ethical problems of political marketing and aspects touching the theory of democracy are covered (e.g. the ethical repercussions of the use of specific political marketing instruments, or possible problems and developments in the area of the theory of democracy in connection with the use of the marketing concept in the political competition) (e.g. Banker 1992; Denton 1991a, 1991b, 1991c; Fowler 1995; Franklin 1994; Jamieson 1992a; Michalos 1991; O'Shaughnessy 1989/90). This can be subsumed under the heading of political macromarketing (Barry and Jenkins 1977; Meade and Nason 1991). The descriptive macrolevel is of less interest as a focus of research: the characteristics of the political market—its underlying players and processes as well as the competitive interactions as a whole (a political systems school of political marketing)—are the main subject

of only some publications; furthermore, definitional attempts and framework theories of political marketing are covered (e.g. Axford and Huggins 1995; Hasitschka 1995; Henneberg 1995a, 1996a; Newman 1994a; O'Shaughnessy and Wring 1994; Wangen 1983; Wortmann 1989).

However, the *theory of political marketing management* is much better covered by research activities. About 70% of all publications can be found here (of which 80% are mainly concerned with micro-topics). Two main schools have "institutionalised" themselves: a communication school and a management school. In the normative cell, all aspects of political marketing management instruments and, less comprehensively, strategies are focused on: political marketing research (e.g. Mauser 1980, 1983; Worcester 1996), political marketing strategies (e.g. Butler and Collins 1996; Newman 1994a; O'Shaughnessy 1990a), political marketing instruments (e.g. O'Shaughnessy and Peele 1985). Even more frequent are, however, descriptive studies concerning election campaigns, with a bias towards communication and news-management aspects (e.g. Arnold 1995; Boll and Poguntke 1992; Bowler and Farrell 1992a, 1992b; Farrell and Wortmann 1987; Harrop 1990; Kaid and Holtz-Bacha 1995b; Kavanagh 1995b; Newman 1993, 1995b; Scammell 1995). The strict "segregation" between political scientists in the descriptive sphere and marketers in the normative one has been mentioned earlier.

Evaluation of Research in Political Marketing

A brief evaluation has to follow this enumeration. Specific interest is on gaps in the research web, especially those that endanger the development of political marketing into a theoretically sound and methodologically rigorous discipline. As seen in the subsection above, although the area of political marketing management has been covered relatively comprehensively, other areas have not been tackled with the same vigour. Nevertheless, even in managerial research on political marketing there are structural deficiencies—for example, the conceptual/terminological problems between marketers and other involved researchers, the suboptimal coverage of strategic aspects, the bias towards communication instruments/functions (Bowler and Farrell 1992a; Butler and Collins 1996; Harris 1996; Henneberg 1995b, 1996a, 1996c). Improvements in these areas are, however, not imminent if the theoretical foundation is neglected, as has been done so far. This is a strong argument for a conceptual foundation of managerial analysis of political marketing (be it descriptive or prescriptive) in a theoretical and definitional framework (as has been provided for this study by this chapter). Two prominent research areas need improvement on the level of the *theory of political marketing*: the mentioned theoretical framework, and the understanding

of the main exchange partners—for example, in the electoral market, the electorate. Only if knowledge about the motivations, determinants and processes of voters' rationalisation (or "ir-rationalisation") are available is it possible to develop, analyse or criticise political marketing management.

NOTES

1. Unfortunately, Wortmann's (1989) important study did not follow his own rationale but instead steered clear of "set[ting] up a *useful overall framework*" (p. 10), thus merely descriptively analysing the campaign behaviour of German parties.

2. One example of a "misuse" of marketing concepts in this regard is Franklin (1995, p. 2). In this study he assumes that political marketing activities are a subgroup of communication activities.

3. This is especially important if, as Karvonen (1991) argues, campaign analyses have so far focused more on the American model.

4. For a good discussion of the problem inherent in the comparison of American and European political management activities in the context of differing party systems, see Kavanagh (1995b, chapter 10).

5. The term "analytical definition" refers to its strong linkage with the marketing *concept* itself, in contrast to some definitions of (political) marketing that are built on a mere understanding of what is called by Houston "weak implementation. . . . The marketing concept does not consist of advertising, selling and promotion" (1986, p. 86). These "definitions" are in fact not definitions in the narrow sense of the word but descriptions of the necessary behavioural conditions for a fulfilment of the demands of the marketing concept.

6. The best elucidation of transaction/exchange relationships is still that found in Aldersen (1957).

7. It is interesting to note that there is a qualitative difference in the treatment of the attitudes of the target actors (voters/consumers) in political science and marketing. While marketing is concerned with needs and wants of individuals (or small purchasing groups like families) or at least of homogeneous groups, these preference structures surface in political science mostly in their aggregate form of the "public opinion", a much more diverse and unfocused concept. This distinction between micro- and macro-perspective seems to be exemplifying genuine differences between these two mother-disciplines of political marketing, which will become important later in the study as well (Scarborough 1991).

8. For a more detailed discussion of other aspects of criticism of the customer-orientation concept see Dickinson et al. (1986) or Houston (1986).

9. These three behavioural aspects have to be seen in context of two guiding decision criteria—that is, long-term focus and profitability (Narver and Slater 1990).

10. It is noteworthy that marketers as well as political scientists agree in general about this characteristic, even though the very often heard polemic (e.g. by Lord Young, see Franklin 1994, p. 4) that political marketing means treating politics like "washing powder" or "cornflakes" (to mention only two of the most

popular comparisons) would contradict this rationale. The analogy with, for example, a "hair-cut", would show better insight on the side of the critics.

11. In the United States, the "electorate" can be very limited locally—for example, at elections for district sheriff (Johnson 1997).

12. In political science these relationships are still hotly debated, especially regarding who has "highjacked" whom (Franklin 1994, p. 10). However, Franklin also shows very convincingly that the two factions of parties/government and media are, in fact, not totally divided camps but highly interactive.

13. The number of activists in a political system is often underestimated, perhaps because political parties are not good at using this latent potential (Kavanagh 1995b).

14. This analysis overlaps with Newman's (1994a) discussion of "power brokers" in the political sphere. However, his categories of consultants and pollsters have been excluded because they are seen as professional "appendices" of the political organisation/candidate in question (Panebianco 1988).

15. "High" and "low" are obviously neutral connotations in this context.

16. Note that this is opposed to the political-science assumption of political-goal-orientation motivated by the introduction of an idea/ideology while vote-seeking is only and (intermediate) mean. More research on an integrated approach towards goal functions in the political sphere seems necessary (Schmidtchen 1974).

17. It is noteworthy that some parties gain government positions without unambiguous electoral support but due to their power position in the political system (e.g. in a two-and-a-half-party system). One example is the German FDP, where there exists constant coalition-building (Wortmann 1989).

18. This technical term originates from marketing theory and must not be mistaken for political "policies".

19. This study does not follow Wortmann's (1989) limited use of the product function by eliminating candidate-related aspects from product considerations.

20. Wortmann (1989) mixes electoral and governmental political market exchanges in a circular understanding of exchanges in order to allow for the development of a cost element, based on an "imputed balance" in the transaction system (pp. 49–51).

21. Even Newman (1994a), in the most comprehensive analysis of political marketing management to date, substitutes pricing elements by "polling", yet concedes that "the point could be stretched and an argument made that there is a price that comes with voting for one candidate over another" (p. 105). There are other attempts to get to grips with "pricing" in political marketing that do not convince (e.g. Farrell and Wortmann 1987).

22. However, there are also direct ways of communication—for example, via "town-hall" style meetings, canvassing, rallies, mailings, or telephone solicitation.

23. However, this element of news-management is normally overrated in its importance, or, simply put: "Losers spin; winners grin" (Anonymous 1996, p. 79).

24. Besides its communicative element, there is a very tangible aspect to news-management. To quote Anonymous (1996) again: "But the real campaign was what happened *between* those events now. It was about whatever J.S. [synonym for Bill Clinton] chose to say in response to the fusillade from the sullen throng

that began to follow us around; it was about the logistics of ferrying these people—who had suddenly materialized from nowhere, gulls following a garbage barge—from place to place, and providing the facilities, multi-boxes and risers and all the rest, so that they could hound us and pound us . . ." (p. 105, emphasis in original).

25. Exceptions from this rule do exist in some countries where the electoral result is the benchmark for state subsidies to political parties/candidates—for example, see the practice of "*Wahlkampfkostenzuschuss*" in Germany (Boll and Poguntke 1992; Sontheimer 1993). However, these subsidies have to be complemented by other sources of party income; they are not sufficient in the long run (Bowler and Farrell 1992b).

26. "We flew a Gulfstream. . . . The plane had been made available by a prominent music-industry homosexual several weeks earlier, when our prospects seemed more plausible. (The 'rental' rate was give-away cheap, the policy implication troubling.)" (Anonymous 1996, p. 145).

27. It must be noted that there are also dissenting arguments that state "that most of the marketing instruments can only be used in terms of planning. The only operational instrument is the communication policy" (Wortmann 1989, p. 298). However, from the context it seems as if Wortmann wants to have this "normative" conclusion understood as a "descriptive" summary of findings regarding the use of political marketing instruments by German political parties.

28. However, Scammell argues convincingly that "Thatcherism was not so much ideology but more a style of leadership and a set of values" (1994, p. 25). This statement corresponds with the concept of an "image ideology" as part of an advanced political marketing concept (discussed below under "Product Policy").

29. These mailings need not necessarily be letters. American elections have seen videotape mailing of ads which in fact have never been broadcast on television but were only used through this highly targeted method (Kaid and Holtz-Bacha 1995a).

30. Thatcher did this by constantly denouncing even sympathetic media like the BBC (Scammell 1991).

31. "Stanton's case against Harris, succinct and deadly as it seemed in real life, was too long, too complicated to communicate in a two-minute spot on the evening news . . ." (Anonymous 1996, p. 178).

32. However, promotional activities can also be used for the management of, for example, the launch of a new "policy offensive" or the introduction of a new party leader. This is called an intermediate campaign.

33. Note that "strategy" in this study is understood as facilitating a matching exercise between (internal) capabilities and (external) opportunities, in accordance with marketing strategy literature (Bourgeois 1996). A different approach towards political marketing strategy, based on a redefinition of operational aspects, can be found in Newman (1994a, chapter 6).

34. Although one can only agree with Collins and Butler (1996) that segmentation in itself is no strategy but only a means for analysis, this study does not follow their argument that the segmentation-targeting-positioning approach for political parties does precede the real strategic consideration (e.g. product differentiation). Legal and technological constraints (Collins and Butler do not elaborate further on this) cannot be used in order to argue that the inflexibility in the

political market does not allow political parties to use full-scale positioning strategies.

35. Typically a multidimensional approach is chosen (Kotler and Armstrong 1996). However, political managers must decide whether they want to use a *post hoc* or an *a priori* segmentation—that is, whether the clustering variables are given (typically used by political scientists: e.g. Wring 1996b or Bradshaw 1995) or will evolve during the segmentation research (Collins and Butler 1996; Smith and Saunders 1990).

36. The approach of competitive intensity is an *a priori* one.

37. Curious in this contest is the assessment of targeting by some political scientists: Harrop, for example, argues in favour of targeting as an effective method of political marketing managers because, if a specific marketing strategy works with the target voters, it also works in general for other groups of the electorate (e.g. Harrop 1990, p. 233, or Kavanagh 1995b, p. 21)! This rationale is diametrically opposed to the logic of targeting and resembles more an argument in favour of the use of focus groups.

38. Although Kirchheimer himself did not see the vulnerability of the catch-all party in such a changing electoral market, other political scientists stress this point (Mair 1989; Smith 1989). In marketing terms, this resembles partly a SWOT analysis (Mercer 1992).

39. In marketing terms, this resembles partly a SWOT analysis (Mercer 1992).

40. Of course, this position always has to be understood as the "perceived" position—that is, the position as seen by the electorate (or specific segments of it). "Objective" positions—for example, obtained by an analysis of manifesto positions (as practised by political scientists)—have no value in this context.

41. Newman's (1994a) approach towards political positioning strategy is slightly different. However, it exemplifies all aspects that are covered in this study.

42. Of course, all these instruments of strategic analysis can also be used by the researcher in order to get to grips with occurrence in the political market. The author would go further and argue that it is indeed a prerequisite to have knowledge about these elements in order to be in a position to assess competitive political behaviour today.

43. It must always be kept in mind that mix management is an extremely complicated process, which, as marketing theory teaches us, is necessarily a compromise: positive instrument interactions have to be weighted with negative ones (Nieschlag et al. 1994).

44. This distinction is only one possible classification. In fact, there exists some uncertainty about the content of the concept of non-profit marketing. Luck (1974) speaks in this context of a "semantic jungle" and an intolerable "anarchy in the terminology" (p. 72).

45. Earlier concepts mentioned in Kotler (1972), like the production or the product concept era, have been neglected in the following analysis.

46. For example, in September 1997 the Hamburgian SPD used an imitation of Blair's concept of a "packaged" social democratic party (sometimes even by literally taking over catch-phrases). This election was notable for the rejection of this concept by the voters.

47. Although this concept seems to be a very modern one, it essentially ap-

pears already in Schumpeter's discussion of the topic: "Denn alle Parteien werden sich naturlich jederzeit mit einem Vorrat von Prinzipien oder Rettungsplanken vergehen, und diese Prinzipien oder Planken koennen ebenso charakteristisch fuer die Partei, die sie annimmt, und ebenso wichtig fuer ihren Erfolg sein, wie die Warenzeichen der Artikel, die ein Warenhaus verkauft, fuer diese charakteristisch und fuer seinen Erfolg wichtig sind" (1993/1950, p. 449).

48. The concept of the "cartel party" does not fit very well into a political marketing analysis. It is a hybrid of extreme political marketing orientation, professionalisation of politics, a merging of state and party interests, individualisation of competition, and so forth (Katz and Mair 1995, especially table on p. 18). Although very illuminating, the concept needs further clarification (Koole 1996).

49. This subsection is based on work done for special literature at the University of Mannheim as well as on a paper given at the EPOP conference 1995 (Henneberg 1995b).

50. This "clustering" was complicated by the fact that some sources touch upon several aspects/levels of the classification scheme. Normally the dominant argument was used for categorisation purposes. However, again there is a large amount of subjectivity existent in this procedure, checked again by a second researcher (interrater reliability 0.9) (Henneberg 1995b).

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6

Conceptualising Political Marketing: A Framework for Election-Campaign Analysis

Dominic Wring

In their seminal article, Kotler and Levy (1969) argued that elections should be one of the new arenas of marketing interest: "Political contests remind us that candidates are marketed as well as soap." However, the earliest recorded use of the term "political marketing" did not appear in a formal management study but in the pioneering work of political scientist Stanley Kelley which charted the emergence of the professional campaign industry in the United States. Commenting on the activities of the first election consultancies, Kelley wrote: "The team relies heavily but not entirely upon their own intuitive feel for providing political marketing conditions. They pride themselves on having 'good average minds' that help them to see things as the average man sees them" (Kelley 1956, p. 53).

In spite of the opposition from marketing purists, those in sympathy with the "broadening" thesis began to attempt to clarify, refine and establish the subfield of political marketing. By the mid-1970s, American scholars such as Avraham Shama (1974, 1976) and the prolific Philip Kotler (1975) were to the fore in developing theoretical foundations for the subject. Similarly, experts in Europe began to consider the political dimension to marketing, positing the view that an exchange relationship existed between democratic elites and their voters (O'Leary and Iredale 1976). By the mid-1980s, a steady stream of research discussing the emergence of the phenomenon helped confirm its importance (Mauser 1983; Newman and Sheth 1985). Writing in 1988, David Reid concluded that: "In western terms, although seldom recognised by politicians, the problem of getting elected is essentially a marketing one. Political parties

must determine the scope and the most effective way of communicating its benefits to a target audience" (Reid 1988, p. 34).

MARKETING AND POLITICAL MARKETING

Seymour Fine identifies the 1985 decision of the American Marketing Association (AMA) to redefine its central concern as a milestone in the integration of social (and political) issues into mainstream marketing thinking. New phraseology added the crucial word "ideas" to the list of legitimate product concerns: "Marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives" (cited in Fine 1992, p. 1).

Since its revision, the American definition has continued to enjoy wide currency in the literature in spite of various complex arguments over what the precise nature of the subject is, is not and ought to be (Hooley et al. 1990; Hunt 1976; Whyte 1988). The British equivalent of the AMA statement, as agreed by the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM), places similar emphasis on the notion that organisational success is an integral part of strategic concerns: firms do not seek to satisfy consumers out of altruism but from a desire to realise their own profit-making goals. To the CIM, marketing is "the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably" (cited in Whyte 1988). The British and American definitions are useful in that they counteract the crude and oversimplistic belief that marketing is simply about firms giving their customers what they want. Such a cliché may convey clarity but it obscures more complex truth. And because some in political science (not to mention other disciplines) may have misunderstood marketing in this way, it helps explain why relatively few in the field have sought to use it as a tool of electoral analysis.

Marketing, then, is a process in which the notion of "consumer focus" plays a major strategic role but not to the exclusion of organisational needs. Compared with oversimplistic customer-centred understandings of the subject, this theoretical interpretation fits more easily with the world of *realpolitik*. In analysing the electoral market, Adrian Sackman emphasises this point, arguing that: "Marketing is thus built upon a paradox; it starts with the customer, is directed at the customer, but is fundamentally concerned with the satisfaction of the producer's own interests" (Sackman 1992, p. 6). Such sentiments resemble J. K. Galbraith's stricture that marketing and advertising are activities governed and to some extent created by producer groups (Galbraith 1969). In political science, this view is reflected in theoretical considerations of competition that attempt to marry the need of the organisation (i.e. the

party) to win support with its desire to maintain some degree of programmatic consistency between elections.

Due to the peculiar nature of the environment in which they operate and despite the existence of "voter sovereignty", parties rather than firms are perhaps more adequately equipped to influence the deliberations of their market. Thus, for Schattschneider (1960) elections are based around the organising principle that: "Democracy is a competitive political system in which competing leaders and organizations define the alternatives of public policy in such a way that the public can participate in the decision-making process" (p. 141). This "realist" concept of democracy underpins Andrew Gamble's isolation of the key variables in the electoral marketplace:

The actual workings of the mass democracy has divided the political market into two camps. There are those that compete for office and those that vote. Like the producers and consumers in economic markets it is a mistake to believe that these two functions are of equal importance. One is active, creative and continuous; the other is passive, receptive and intermittent. (Gamble 1974, p. 6)

It should be noted that while the statements of Schattschneider and Gamble place emphasis on a party's ability to shape voter preferences, neither commentator would deny the fundamental role that the electorate play in determining outcomes within a competitive political market situation. Consequently, by emphasising the fact that it is both an organisational as well as consumer-focused exercise, it is possible to understand the usefulness of marketing analysis to political scientists.

POLITICAL MARKETING: A DEFINITION

Making reference to the management literature outlined in the previous section, it is possible to conceive of political marketing as: the party's or candidate's use of opinion research and environmental analysis to produce and promote a competitive offering which will help realise organisational aims and satisfy groups of electors in exchange for their votes.

At the root of this definition is a framework developed by Philip Niffenegger (1989). Designed with reference to the classic 4P marketing model popularised by McCarthy (1960), Niffenegger's formulation highlights the roles played by environmental analysis, strategic tools like market research and, ultimately, the "mix" of variables (product, promotion, place and price) in the design of political campaigns. The desirability of applying this "mix" model to non-profit not to mention commercial marketing has been challenged by some who consider the "Ps" approach outdated and inherently flawed (Blois 1987). Similarly,

recognising the implicit difficulties in analysing the "chimerical nature of elections", O'Shaughnessy cautions against the application of overly rigid marketing frameworks to politics (O'Shaughnessy 1990, p. 4). Nevertheless, in spite of these objections, the Niffenegger framework has been adopted by Butler and Collins (1993), and other derivations of the mix model can be found in the work of Farrell (1986), Farrell and Wortmann (1987) and Newman (1994).

THE POLITICAL MARKETING PROCESS

The political marketing process as outlined in Figure 6.1 consists of four parts: the party (or candidate) organisation, the environment that conditions its development, the strategic mix it deploys, and, ultimately, the market in which it must operate.

The Political Market

Adopting the maxim of Schumpeter (1943) that democracy is primarily concerned with parties' "competitive struggle for [the] people's vote", Gamble contends that: "The main components of the modern political market are three; the existence of a mass electorate; competition between two or more parties for the votes of this electorate; and a set of rules governing this competition" (Gamble 1974, p. 6).

Within the political market, the key relationship is based around a concept central to marketing theory—namely, that of exchange between buyer and seller. Thus, citizens give their votes to politicians who, when elected, purport to govern in the public interest (Lane 1993; Scott 1970). In a modern democracy, the right to vote, commonly associated with the age of majority, allows for a mass electorate that can typically number well into the millions.

Commercial markets tend to resemble the competitive structure found in an electoral system run on the grounds of proportionality as opposed to "first past the post". This is not to argue that market criteria cannot be applied to a political situation such as that in Britain where purely majoritarian rules of voting operate. Indeed, the need for the parties to maintain vote share as well as court new groups of "swing" voters is as relevant to participants in this system as it is to those operating under conditions of proportional representation.

Analysing the Environment

On reflection, it may appear that business organisations have a considerable advantage over politicians in respect of the amount of resources they are able to invest in analysing their environment. However, such a

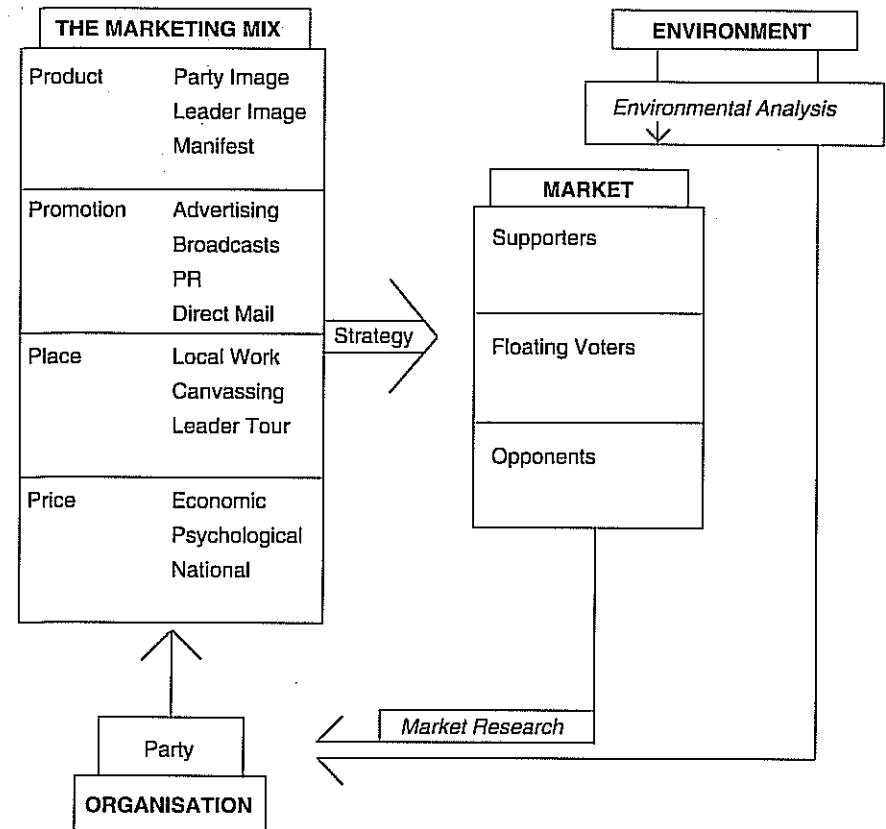


Figure 6.1. The political marketing process (adapted from Niffenegger 1990).

perception of the marketing process perhaps discounts the immense amount of pertinent information which candidates and party professionals can draw upon in planning their campaigns. Broadsheet newspapers, specialist magazines and academic briefs offer a plethora of reports, analysis and opinion-research material on which political strategists can base their decisions and better understand the economic, media and other factors shaping electors' concerns.

In contrast to the environment, which constitutes the "givens", Hunt (1976) identifies what he calls "controllable factors"—namely, the collection of strategic decisions that an organisation can implement as part of its marketing programme. Together these variables are commonly known as the "mix", a configuration that consists of the 4Ps: product, promotion, place and price.

Product

The product is central to a marketing mix. In electoral terms, the product—a “mix” of variables in its own right—combines three key aspects: “party image”, “leader image” and “manifesto” (i.e. policy commitments). This configuration has been popularised by several analysts, including Bob Worcester, head of the MORI polling organisation (Farrell and Wortmann 1987; Shaw 1994; Worcester 1987, 1991). Using survey data, Worcester points out the extent to which each element of the product influences opinion among different groups of voters. Thus, where one segment might be susceptible to primarily issue-based appeals, others will display a preoccupation with the dimensions of leader or party image. Consequently, Worcester represents the preoccupations of different electors in a series of triangular diagrams, the length of whose sides can be equated with the emphasis that voters give to each of the product concerns (Worcester 1987).

The notion that politicians are increasingly using appeals based on the promotion of image at the expense of issues has become a common feature of journalists’ election coverage. However, such a view can no longer be regarded as a cliché and commands significant academic support (Biocca 1991; Franklin 1994). As Terence Qualter has concluded: “The marketing of politics means, of course, the reduction of politics to marketable images” (Qualter 1985, p. 138).

While the notion of party image is built around factors such as the organisation’s record in office, recent history and unity of purpose (Harrop 1990), the substance underpinning the concept is more likely contained within the policy platform on which an election manifesto is based. In the last twenty years, psephological research has begun to place greater emphasis on the rational-choice notion of the elector as a consumer evaluating the issues and voting for the party most in tune with individual policy preferences (Harrop 1986; Himmelweit et al. 1985). However, the overall picture is not simply one of a shift from party image to issue-based explanations of voter choice, because the situation has been complicated by another factor—that of leader image—which forms the third constituent in the political product mix.

Once a largely ignored factor in electoral research, the growing and potential future importance of leader image has been recognised in several studies into the increasing presidentialisation of British politics (Crewe and King 1994; Foley 1993; Mughan 1993). Media coverage of current affairs has helped extenuate this trend; as Philip Kotler comments: “Voters rarely know or meet the candidates; they only have mediated images of them. They vote on the basis of their images” (Kotler 1982).

Promotion

Promotion, in its various forms, is the most obvious part of a political marketing campaign. Misinformed commentators sometimes inflate the importance of advertising, the most recognisable communications tool, to the extent that it is held to represent the entire marketing process (see, for instance, Tyler 1987). Such a mistake fails to appreciate the complexities of a complete strategy, not to mention other parts of the promotional mix. Given the centrality of advertising within the modern marketing industry, it is perhaps not surprising that its public profile is considerably higher than that of its “stablemates”, in the fields of direct mail and public relations. Nevertheless, with the advent of modernised forms of the latter in the shape of “junk mail” and “spin doctors”, these parts of the promotional mix are beginning to gain increasing public prominence and particularly in the electoral arena.

The promotional mix can be divided into two principal parts, commonly referred to as “paid” and “free” media. The term “paid” media covers all forms of advertising, be it poster, print or broadcast. It should be noted that, though the primetime television and radio advertising slots for Party Election Broadcasts (PEBs) in Britain are free, those parties that qualify for them are technically in receipt of a state subsidy in kind (Scammell and Semetko 1995). Hence, PEBs can be placed in the same category as other forms of political advertising. Paid media also covers the burgeoning sector of telephone and direct-mail marketing, an increasingly common feature of contemporary election campaigning. Party colours, designs, slogan copy and symbols provide an additional dimension to the overall communications mix.

“Free” media refers to the publicity that parties receive but do not buy. In contrast to purchased advertising campaigns, organisations have less control over their product’s exposure in the mass media. Consequently, political strategists—not to mention the voting public—tend to view this kind of coverage as being of greater importance. Electoral organisations are becoming increasingly reliant on the techniques of news management. In recent years, the American term “spin doctor” has entered the political lexicon in recognition of the increasing role that press, publicity and broadcasting officers can and do play in the British electoral and parliamentary process (Jones 1995). This aspect of campaigning provides perhaps one of the most striking contrasts between commercial and electoral marketing strategies: unlike their political counterparts, communications staff working for even the most senior corporate executives are unlikely to be deluged on a daily basis by some of the most experienced journalists eager for information and answers to highly sensitive questions.

Free media strategies are not solely concerned with defensive news-management activities. More common to commerce and increasingly a part of the political process, public relations is a tool designed to attract favourable media attention for the organisation concerned. It is now almost obligatory for senior British politicians to participate in "photo-opportunities", news conferences and other scenarios designed to enhance the status of themselves and their message (Cockerell 1989; Franklin 1994). This is particularly true of the period in the run-up to an election.

Place

At the heart of a placement or distribution strategy is a network of regional suppliers. In politics, the equivalent form of organisation is the party at grassroots' level. Parties in Britain organise their membership and machinery on a regional and local basis. The executives of these bureaucracies help coordinate and supply volunteer labour and strategic inputs during election campaigns. In addition, this network also liaises with the national apparatus in order to devise and coordinate regional events and tours by the party leadership. It should be noted that, precisely because it is a political marketing "mix", some of the activities that may constitute part of one variable can be found in another. In this way, the methods of the distribution policy closely mirror those of a promotional strategy in that both are reliant on tools such as direct mail despite having different aims (Farrell 1986).

Local electioneering commonly takes the form of traditional activities such as canvassing, leafleting and what American strategists call "getting the vote out" on polling day (Denver and Hands 1992; Kavanagh 1970). Contrary to some perceptions, most modern campaign canvassing is now more preoccupied with identifying and contacting potential and confirmed party supporters than it is with persuading them. This may derive from the fact that local activities have had to change due to a decline in the availability of volunteers coupled with the increasing desire of central headquarters to assert a common "brand" awareness in all party electoral communications.

The postwar decline in grassroots' membership perhaps reflects an assumption that localised forms of campaigning are largely ineffectual. Such a view has been widely fostered in the United States, where the use of political consultants has had an unfavourable effect on the strength of precinct organisation (O'Shaughnessy 1990; Ware 1985). However, recent research in Britain has begun to challenge the notion that local campaign work is ineffectual by demonstrating the potential electoral benefits of maintaining a healthy organisation at this level (Seyd and

Whiteley 1992). Furthermore the implementation of new and more affordable forms of campaign technology may even increase the value of electoral initiatives at constituency level (Farrell and Wortmann 1987). Existing evidence suggests that computers, telephone canvass banks and direct-mail initiatives became the norm in British by-elections before later establishing themselves as standard general-election practice in most key marginal seats (Swaddle 1988).

Price

Pricing, the fourth part of a conventional marketing mix, enables a commercial firm to develop a strategy that will help maintain competitiveness and profitability in the marketplace. Some electoral commentators have discounted the pricing element in the belief that it adds little to the analysis of campaign planning and implementation (Farrell 1986; Farrell and Wortmann 1987). Wangen takes the variable to mean the way an organisation raises campaign finance and attracts members (Wangen 1983).

In contrast, the theoretical basis of this chapter is built on a conception of the political marketing process defined by Philip Niffenegger (1989) and which includes all the central tenets of conventional theory (see Fig. 6.1). Niffenegger justifies the relevance of the pricing mix by outlining its constituent parts. These elements, relating to environmental phenomena as interpreted by the electorate, comprise voter feelings of national, economic and psychological hope or insecurity. This notion of the political "price" reflects Reid's observation that a vote is a "psychological purchase" (Reid 1988). The parallels between electoral and consumer behaviour have been more comprehensively analysed by Lane (1993).

There are always problems inherent in designing campaigns according to market research findings. These pitfalls are augmented when candidates seek to capitalise on the reported anxieties or aspirations of a given electoral group. One public sign of the importance attached to this kind of strategy is the growth in "negative campaigning". This type of electioneering, most commonly associated with American politics, involves attempts by party or candidates' organisations to frighten voters with robust and often startling denunciations of opponents. The frequency with which many leading national candidates in the United States have used this type of campaign has offended even the late David Ogilvy, a staunch defender and senior member of the marketing industry: "There is one category of advertising which is totally uncontrolled and flagrantly dishonest: the television commercials for candidates in Presidential elections" (Ogilvy 1983, p. 209).

Negative "appeals" usually focus on only one aspect of the pricing mix at a time. Depending on the audience being targeted, common economic themes include an opponent's intention either to raise tax and spending or else make sweeping budget cuts. In times of international insecurity or domestic uncertainty, politicians—particularly incumbents—often stress their rivals' apparent lack of diplomacy or administrative competence. Such appeals are often couched in images that stress the need to counter what is posed as a threat to the "national interest" from "undesirable elements", be they at home or abroad. Perhaps the least tangential element of the pricing mix relates to the psychological cost implicit in voting. A popular feature in negative campaigns, such strategies tap into often deep-seated and unspoken prejudices about a given politician's lack of ability, judgement and trustworthiness. As O'Keefe notes: "in no other campaign situation are target audiences required to take into account not only ideas, issues, and policies, but also such human traits as honesty, professional expertise, and managerial style" (O'Keefe 1989, p. 261). Famous victims of this type of attack advertising have included American presidential and vice-presidential hopefuls such as Barry Goldwater, Spiro Agnew, Michael Dukakis and Bill Clinton (Jamieson 1992).

"Pricing" policy need not necessarily form a wholly negative part of the political marketing mix. It is possible to conceive of a campaign strategy that promotes the idea of a domestic "feel-good factor" or boasts a perceived increase in the country's international standing in order to make political capital and win votes. Similarly, incumbent politicians often allude to psychological notions of "a nation at ease with itself" in their attempt to secure re-election. Despite the fact that pricing is the least tangible aspect of a marketing strategy, it is nevertheless a useful concept which complements the other variables. Precisely because it is a "mix", pricing can be seen to interlock and overlap with the other strategic tools, particularly those concerned with communications and product management. Marketing can be analysed in its constituent parts but should ultimately be seen in its totality.

Strategic Considerations:

Market Research, Segmentation and Positioning

Market research plays an important role in modern electoral politics. Since its first recorded use by an American candidate in the 1930s, private polling has mushroomed in terms of both its expense and its importance (Hodder-Williams 1970; Kavanagh 1992; Teer and Spence 1973). The rise of opinion research offers party leaderships potential enlightenment but also a challenge. Political élites who were once able to

rely on channels of mass communication to influence a captive public are now faced with commissioning often unedifying polling findings in order to help sharpen strategy and sustain their electoral good fortune (Wring 1996). In the past, opinion research has commonly taken the form of quantitative-based surveys of key demographic groups. More recently, politicians have begun to employ consultants who specialise in the "psychographic" forms of private polling designed to explore voters' more deep-seated values and attitudes (Kleinman 1987; Worcester 1991). Increasingly, campaign-research studies are beginning to combine traditional quantitative research with focus groups and other types of qualitative methods.

Feedback in the form of opinion research is an important component in the design of an effective marketing mix. It also forms an integral part of the wider strategic process, helping to segment and target the market. Market segmentation takes place when an organisation uses research to divide available customers into categories according to their likely need or ability to purchase the firm's offering. Having identified key consumer segments, a marketing programme can then be targeted at defending or expanding current market share. Given their similar strategic aims, political strategists have also drawn on segmentation and targeting tools. Marketing analysis has pointed to the possible benefits to be derived from dividing voters according to demographic, psychographic or geographic criteria (Smith and Saunders 1990; Yorke and Meehan 1986). From the perspective of political science this trend has been exacerbated by psephological studies stressing the importance of parties' need to target the masses of uncommitted or "floating" voters in their bids to secure electoral victory (Miller et al. 1990).

In implementing marketing strategy, organisations use research to help them best position their offering in the market. The concept of positioning has a central place in political marketing analysis. Downs' classic study of party competition was based on a market model in which rival organisations maximised electoral support by moving themselves towards the electoral centre ground (Downs 1957). This model has since become a popular analytical starting point for many strategists. More recently, other theorists have developed alternative concepts of positioning that emphasise the value of continuity in the electoral offering and the importance of leading as well as following opinion. In their work, Smith and Saunders (1990) point to the potential political problems caused by "the flight to the centre" whereby parties fail to differentiate the brand values of their "product" through use of its Unique Selling Point (USP) or other positioning tools (Fletcher 1984).

In a marketing analysis of an American senatorial race, Schoenwald (1987) demonstrates the centrality of positioning theory to candidate-

image management. Similarly, in his groundbreaking work on political marketing, Gary Mauser places the concept at the core of his research (Mauser 1983). Developing a multidimensional scale, Mauser demonstrates how a candidate can use cluster analysis and other statistical methods to isolate those issues and attributes that unite partisans with potential voters in a common resolve. The logical consequence of this argument is that the adoption of marketing strategies does not necessarily mean the dilution of party ideology (see also O'Casey 1996), a view most amply demonstrated by the electoral success of the Thatcher and Reagan administrations.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has been concerned with demonstrating the usefulness of marketing analysis in the study of political campaigning and has shown how the writings of democratic theorists might be reconciled with those of management scholars. A framework based on the basic 4P marketing model has been used in order to identify and explore the various elements that constitute an election campaign. Such an approach is arguably useful in analysing the increasingly marketing-driven politics evident in many of the major Western democracies.

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