
Political Marketing: A Third Force in Political Campaign

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ABSTRACT

Political Marketing is an off-shoot of traditional marketing theory. This study is on the social and democratic implications of using marketing in political campaign. Marketing strategies are used in politics by politicians to communicate with the voters and electoral community. It is evolving and the strategies, communications and campaigns rely on political marketing for success in elections. The outline of this study includes segments of political marketing which were discussed along- side with the model of political marketing and its components. Detailed in the study also are functionality of political marketing; political marketing and lobbying and its impact on election and democracy. Efforts were made to dovetail political marketing and the criticisms about it. General findings were discussed and conclusion drawn upon it.

Keywords: Political Marketing, Segments, Models, Political Marketing vs Political Science, Functionality of Political Marketing, Political Marketing and Lobbying, Impact, Criticism

INTRODUCTION

Marketing has expanded into politics with its development in business over the years. In politics, marketing strategies are used to communicate with the voters nowadays as political marketing is evolving and campaigns rely mostly on political marketing for success in elections. Marketing has expanded into politics with its development in business over the years (Durmaz & Direkci, 2015). Kotler & Keller (2006), has defined marketing as “meeting needs profitably”. This is also in line that marketing is identifying and satisfying human and social needs. As contained in Durmaz & Direkci (2015), the concept of marketing is no longer restricted to the domain of exchange of goods and services but also the distribution of ideas (Donovan, 2012).

Harris & McGrath (2012) referred to political marketing as a form of political communications within electoral campaigns which originated with the broadening debate of marketing in the 1970s (Kotler,1999). This goes with more sophisticated techniques having been adopted such as media supplying the political information that voters base their decisions on problems they have identified in the society and this serves as medium for deliberation (Durmaz & Direkci, 2015).

The modern political competition tends to be open and transparent. Hence, Sofyan (2015) added that there is a modern political competition that is open and transparent, contestants need a method that can facilitate the distribution of political products, such as new ideas, issues, party ideology, programs and leadership characteristics to the public.

Problem Statement

The study is on the social and democratic implications of using marketing in political campaigns, As contained in Bigi (2017), Butler & Collins (1994) have stated that Political marketing is the “marketing of

ideas and opinions which relates to public or political issues or to specific political candidates. In general, political marketing is designed to influence peoples' votes in elections". In essence, political marketing employs many of the same techniques used in product marketing such as paid advertising, direct mail and publicity. designed to influence (Bigi,2017).

Bigi (2017), has credited Kelley (1956) with the first usage of "political marketing" though the broadening of the idea of political marketing originated with the broadening debate of marketing in the 70s by Kotler (1975). In Kelley's view, political marketing is designed virtually synonymous with propaganda because its essential aim was persuasion while Lock and Harris saw it in different perspective that political marketing is concerned with communicating with party members, media and prospective sources of funding as well as the electorate. Bigi (2017) argued that this is a narrow perspective of political marketing. In his view, political marketing goes beyond that, as it is the process of communicating the value of product or service (policies, political program, and leader image) to customers (voters and non-voters) in order to sell that product or service (gain votes and trust). All these controversies inform the need for this study, using political marketing as a third force in political campaign.

Objective of the Study

Political marketing is much more than political advertising. Shama (1976) reiterated that many terms used in conventional marketing such as consumer behavior, market segmentation, image, brand loyalty, product concept and product positioning can be used in political marketing. Similarly, the link between politics and marketing can be traced to Kotler (1999) in the broadening debate of political marketing and reinforced study of Rothschild (1978) in political advertising effectiveness, segmentation, social policy and political policy-making.

Bigi (2017) and others – Egan, 1999; Farrell and Worthmann, 1987; Harrop, 1990; Henneberg, 2003; Lees-Marshment, 2002; Lyod, 2003; Newmann, 1994; Niffenger, 1989; O'Cass, 2001, and Wring,2002 agreed on a wider perspective of political marketing. Hence, the objective of the study is the application of political marketing as a process of communicating the value of policies, political programs and leader images to voters and non-voters in order to gain votes and trust in electioneering campaign

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dimensions of Political Conduct Segments or conducts of political marketing are discussed as follows (Durmaz & Direkci, 2015):

Political Product: A political party, person/candidate or an ideology can be seen as a political product in a political marketing. The success of the product mostly depends on the personal image, the candidate's past life or the party itself. According as Butler, Patrich, Haris & Phil (2009) on account of multi-dimensional nature of the political product, it might be said that a "political concept" may be used instead of a "political product" in political marketing of a traditional product as contained in Durmaz & Direkci (2015). But Political product constitutes of three different dimensions as the product's multi-component nature, (a) the importance of customer (b) voter's loyalty and (c) its adaptability as in figure 1 according as Butler & Collins (1994).

Political Organization: A political organization is any entity that is in the political process engaged in political activities that aims at achieving clearly defined political goals that develops political system. Butler and Collins (1994) as contained in Durmaz and Direkci (2015) have revealed three important characteristics of a political organization namely (a) the amateur-like nature of the organization, (b) its traditionally negative perception of marketing, and (c) its dependency on volunteer workers (Fig.1).

Political product	Political organization	Political market
1) Multi component nature	1) amateur like nature	1) Counter consumption
2) Importance of voter Loyalty	2) Traditionally negative perception of marketing	2) social affirmation
3) Adaptability	4) dependency on volunteer	3) ideology change

Fig. 1: Three Dimensions of a political Conduct

Source: Durmaz & Direkci (2015); Adapted and cited from Butler & Collins (1994).

Political Market Target: There are different elements that shape political structures which include ideologies, values, economics, cultures and traditions. Good to know that the power of these elements may vary in different countries. As observed by Polat & Kulter (2008) in Durmaz & Direkci (2015), religion is more effective in some countries such as Turkey, Israel and India including Bangladesh than others. They assert that they create stronger bonds between the voters and the parties. The political market differs from the traditional market place where an exchange is considered as a separate one-time event (Gemmerson, 1987). If compared with traditional one, an exchange in political market happens over a long time in which the political organization or candidate keeps the promise that has been made to the voters in exchange for the votes during the election. There are three attributes that are typical to the political market (Durmaz & Direkci, 2015). They are counter consumption, social affirmation and the ideological charge of the market (Fig. 1)

Model of Political Marketing

The most common model of political marketing is three-stage model of political marketing and this is closely followed by media in political marketing and communication distribution as explained by Durmaz and Direkci (2015):

Stage Model of Political Marketing: The most popular theory of political marketing is the three-stage model. According to Durmaz & Direkci (2015), this has been widely accepted and discussed in academic literature. There are three different stages in this model namely,

Step 1: Identify consumer demand, feed this back into the product and messaging and refining it accordingly.

Step 2: Inform the consumers of the changes to the product due to their demands and needs to suit their economic and social goals.

Step 3: Delivery of the refined product which will satisfy the consumer demand better, thus producing incrementally great profit for the party/company/organization.

As contained in Durmaz & Direkci (2015), the three-stage model, assumed (Savigny, 2010) that parties establish what voters want using methods that include sophisticated polling methodology and feedback from focus groups. Ordinarily, parties and candidates listen to targeted public opinion and provide the electorate with a product that they may want in order to achieve electoral victory.

Media in Political Marketing: Political Marketing is made up of marketing management theories, though this has not been recognized by the academic literature. Savigny (2010) explains this in Durmaz & Direkci (2015) that marketing theory acknowledges the existence of the media and it affords it a role as a conduit through which politicians communicate to the electorate. For this reason, the study concentrated on

what is arguably the major weakness in the political marketing approaches.

Communication Distribution in Political Marketing In traditional marketing, the role of the media is the distribution – the channel by which the message is conveyed, to whom, and how often the media is paid for simply reproducing the messages given by the advertiser. In the political arena, the media is said to be an active participant. It differs from traditional technique of potential candidates (Durmaz & Dorekci, 2015). Communication distribution is a tool by which the media get to their consumers. It is not in a way traditional marketing theory which is built on perception, attitude, behavior and patronage. The theory is not an end in its self but a means to an end (Ndubuisi, 2019).

Political Marketing vs Political Science

Therefore, as previously stated, political marketing is the junction between marketing and political science (intersection point) because it applies the specific marketing concepts, marketing theoretical frameworks and models, market-orientations, and activities to political science and molds them into an integrated theoretical framework (Bigi, 2016).

In social science, political science includes the foundations of the state and the principles of government. According to Garner (1910), politics initiates and finishes with the state. Similarly, Gettel (1928) wrote that politics is Marketing application to politics and its development are strictly correlated to the evolution of political systems. Political scientists have been skeptical in their acceptance of political marketing (Lees Marshment, 2001; Scammell, 1999) as contained in Bigi (2016). In contrast, political marketing is often considered of limited value due to its merely descriptive role. Political science scholars are more interested in the consequences than in how and why governments shape and mold public opinion.

According to Bigi (2016), “The transition from a political and electoral system based on party affiliation to a system based on the candidates has increased the use of technical support, which has provided professionalism that is indirectly related to the field of politics. Echoing comments on political professionalism, Weber observed that, in his professional definition, the one who lived for politics was responsible for politics; new politicians are often professionals in other fields who provide expertise that was previously nonexistent within the political world.

“The entry of new professionals into the political arena has opened the door to the use of new technologies, especially related to the media, electronic processing, and the election polls. These new technologies have in turn required additional technical professionalism (even more with the growing use of new media). Therefore, media coverage of politics induces political professionalism and becomes linked to the possession of different skills”.

On the conceptual level (Durmaz & Direkci, 2015), political science has not be universally accepted among political scientists, though there is a group of political scientists who believe that it (political science) brings “Distinctive strengths lacking in orthodox political science treatments” (O’Shaughnessy, 2001). From this, Lees-Marshment (2002) observed that political marketing is like an alliance inter-twined between political studies and marketing.

Yet there is no such definite definition of the word “political marketing” but political marketing literature accepts the analogy of parties as business which are in competitive relationship aiming to secure an exchange with consumers. From this background, it should be noted that political actors can be marketed in the same manner as any other commercial good or service (Kaskeala, 2010). Hence, out of ten types of entities applied by Kotler (1999), six of them namely, events management, persons, places, organisations, information and ideas are in political marketing.

Election Campaign Development: Many authors have studied election campaign development. As in Bigi (2016), Norris (1997) proposed the division of the evolution of election campaigns into pre- modern (until about 1950); modern (up to the mid-80s), and post-modern (current). The differences between these three phases concern not only campaign duration, which passes from short to long and then becomes permanent, but also other elements.

Firstly, electorate orientation changed; voting was initially characterized as stable, then became floating, and finally became intermittent as observed by O'Shaughnessy (1987) and Wring (1999) as contained in Bigi, (2016). Indeed, once parties could count on faithful followers, even after failing to keep campaign promises, the need for immediate and concrete answers to the problems of daily life prevailed (Lusoli & Ward, 2004; Mair & Van Biezen, 2001). Electoral choice tends to reward the most credible and coherent personality—a person who appears to be trustworthy and who will not betray the electoral mandate.

Furthermore, campaign organization moves from mainly local to exclusively national and finally to local and national in tandem. The presence of political consultants has changed. In particular, they have increased in number and improved in their level of professionalism. The type of prevalent political communication has also evolved. It was initially interpersonal, and then became national, and, finally, integrated between the local and national. Campaign costs have ascended from low to high to very high. Meanwhile, many authors have revealed increasing political disengagement and external members' disinterest in political activity in Western democracies, especially among voters (Dermody & Scullion, 2005; Miron, 1999; Spogárd & James, 2000; Teixeira, 1992) as cited in Bigi (2016). Continuing, Farrell and Webb (2000) constructed a similar pattern of tripartite division of electoral campaigns. This analysis includes a new exemplification of professionalization's development and, more generally, of election campaigns, which are divided into three phases.

Phases of Election Campaign: According to Bigi (2016), "The first phase (of election campaign) is characterized by low technological and communication activities that are entirely managed by the party. In addition, the party is the main agent with regard to resources and fund collection; activist volunteers are the main people involved. Still, the local arena is predominant, with limited centralization and coordination. Regarding themes, events are constructed on the basis of a leader in direct relationship to an audience, which is made up of groups from established social origins. Hence, the will of mobilization is much stronger than persuasion.

"The second phase is firstly characterized by technological developments of the mass communication media, particularly the advent of television. This determines a series of consequences including the lengthening of election campaigns, the need for professionals with specific skills and the ability to drive candidates, and a greater need for funds. The campaign is nationalized; hence, power and resources accumulate in the center, and the party leader gains more importance. Finally, it also changes the target audience, which becomes large and socially diversified internally.

"The third phase of professionalization lies in the era of the latest technological developments of the mass communication media such as satellites and the Internet. The characteristics of this third phase are the advent of a permanent campaign and the realization that the election campaign is usually entrusted to a staff of professionals. As for the message, it increasingly trends toward targeted messages, with copious use of feedback and subsequent adaptation of the message to the public".

In conclusion, Bigi (2016), observed that during campaign evolution, particularly when entering the third phase, analysis and management of competition become technically complex new commitments that require the professional approach offered by political marketing. Consequently, political campaigning has over time, evolved from party-centered, labor-intensive campaigns, which relied on volunteers, to

candidate-centered affairs with mass media advertising, marketing techniques, and professional campaign consultants (Gunlicks, 1993; Rayner, 2014; Strömbäck, 2007).

Many types of political consultants can be involved (Dulio, 2004; Dulio & Nelson, 2005; Kinsey, 1999): campaign strategists or managers (Goldenberg & Traugott, 1984; Rosenbloom, 1973); media consultants; direct correspondence specialists, who prepare and disseminate written reports; polls experts; and fundraising experts. Thus, the professionalization of political marketing has also permitted the application of mainstream marketing trends in politics. Mass customization started with the direct mass production of customized services for each user (Peppers & Rogers, 2001). Experiential marketing, which aims to create a complete experience for potential voters, has been introduced, for example, in the organization of special events (Schmitt, 1999). Real-time marketing aims to provide services that adapt in real time to changing preferences and needs of users (Oliver, Rust, & Varki, 1998)

Functionality of Political Marketing

Centre for Democracy and Development was established in Nigeria for promoting democracy, governance, human security and people-oriented development through the functionality of political marketing in electioneering campaign in Nigeria.

Political marketing examines the use of marketing techniques in the political process. It is a relatively new field of study within the discipline of political sciences and communication. It has however attracted the attention not only of scholars but also from politicians, bureaucrats and professionals involved in politics (Sofyan, 2015). He described political marketing as the outcome of marriage between marketing and politics just as political marketing implies the usage of marketing tools, techniques and methods in the political process. It is third force in political campaign in Nigeria. As an activity and method, Political marketing reflects the penetration of the political space by marketing. Political advertising, celebrity endorsements, involvement of professional consultants and campaign managers, online campaigning, mobile phone canvassing, segmentation, and micro targeting are some of the methods extensively used in political marketing as discussed subsequently (Sofyan, 2015).

Marketing Philosophy: The information revolution and globalization have played vital role in changing the pattern and content of traditional political campaigning into one of the most professional and sophisticated marketing tactics. It is said that if a political party implements the marketing philosophy, it will seek to meet voters' needs and wants, thereby producing voters' satisfaction and gaining electoral support to meet its own goals of satisfying the needs and wants of the electorates (Marshment, 2006).

Special Functions: Prior to that, the use of political marketing is considered to have a special function in effecting the purpose of political activities, through strategic planning, preparing, designing and packaging political issues, which is the distribution of the political information based on the segmentation (target) of the public. The final goal is to create a mutually satisfying state between the political parties and voters.

Political communication: Political marketing is “a complex process, the outcome of a more global effort implicating all the factors of politician's political communication” (Marrek, 1995) and he points out that political marketing is the general method of political communication. In his view, political marketing has become an integral and vital component of political communication.

Marketing Campaign: As explained by O'Cass (1996), the application of marketing in political campaign “offers political parties the ability to address drivers of voter concerns and needs through marketing analysis, planning, implementation and control of political and electoral campaign”. That is, the central purpose of political marketing is to enable political parties and voters to make the most appropriate and

satisfactory decision.

Political Consultants: Many studies (Norris, 2004) have been completed focusing on the increased professionalization of political marketing campaigns. These include the rise of the class of political consultants, pollsters, advertising executives and the consequences of this process of strategic communications by political parties and interest groups.

Increasing Role of Marketing: Ugur (2012), the practice of political marketing can be marked by six characteristics. Firstly, the political campaigns today are mainly based on single issues and candidate concentration. Secondly, the importance of money, especially in the pre-nomination presidential campaigns is increasing because of media advertising. Thirdly, there is an increase in the number of professional communicators who use effective, new communication technology. They are conducted by public relation experts, fundraisers and opinion pollsters. Fourthly, the role of mass media has increased since it is a very effective tool for candidates to be recognized and to evaluate the campaign performance of their parties. Fifthly, the connection between citizens and political parties is narrowed. Finally, there is a growing concern about the influence and activities of the consultants.

Principles of Marketing: As contained in Hennenberg (2004), Sofyan (2015) observed that the presence of marketing in politics has an increasingly large role which is based on the fact that political actors and governments, single issue groups, and lobbying organizations not only act according to the principles of marketing but also think in marketing terms in their political activities. For example, the use of the name of the candidate pair which consists of two syllables is intended to be easily recognized and popular in the public memory as well as the management of the image and popularity of the politician as a way of marketing similar to the development of marketing a business product. To elaborate this further, a presidential candidate in Nigeria whose name is Obi and very loyal to the needs of his followers (populist candidate) was commonly known and called Obident. The two syllables is intended to be easily recognized and popular in the public memory.

Marketing Application: Political marketing applications have changed from a communication instrument to a coherent way of managing politics, whether it be policy making, election canvassing, or implementation decisions. Come what may, some political actors are far from having an integrated and sophisticated understanding of marketing applications for their political exchange situations. However, marketing management in politics has caused some leading parties and candidates to adopt a simplistic and popular follower mentality, contributing to the disenchantment of the electorate and a resulting cynicism regarding politics in general (Sofyan, 2015).

Political Marketing and Lobbying

Political Marketing and lobbying have much to learn from each other. Essentially, both are forms of persuasive communication: both have some basis in more general marketing theory, and both are involved in exchanges, networks and relationships (Harris & McGrath, 2012). It is however found that very little research has taken place to date on how political marketing theory can explain the representation of interests by lobbyists or their policy influencing activities. These functions form the core area of political lobbying and associated marketing activities. Yet, the attention paid by political marketing specialists is not commensurate to many of these key lobbying functions (Harris & McGrath, 2012).

Lobbying shares several key characteristics with both general marketing and political marketing theories that marketing socialists could find a great deal to explore in lobbying activities. According as Harris (2009) in Harris & McGrath (2012), Lobbying is the marketing communication of information and pressure on government or public bodies to bring about commercial gain or competitive advantage". In the same vein Fraser (1982) has ascribed to an American writer who posited that lobbying is the marketing communication of information towards selling the policy issue in the government marketplace parallel to selling a product to

convince the decision-maker for cost effectiveness.

From the foregoing, (Harris & McGrath, (2012) admitted that some lobbyists themselves recognize the connection here. According to them David Rehr, then President of the National Beer Wholesalers Association in America said that he saw a direct connection between marketing and lobbying: that they are marketing and selling a product or a bill or a regulation, or something that they wanted from the government, or something that they wanted the government not to do to them.

Political marketing and lobbying have much similarity and much to learn from each other. They are both persuasive forms of communication; both have some basis in more general marketing theory; both involve exchanges, networks and relationships. While much lobbying practice is informed by political marketing theories, this connection is only made explicitly sometime in the literature of either field. Most political marketing study relates marketing only to the area of party political electoral competition while ignoring how it could be further developed into the area of interest groups generally and, specifically, into an examination of how organizations attempt to influence public policy (Harris & McGrath, 2012).

Impact of Political Marketing

The image of the leaders is the focus and main concern and the style, behavior and character of the leaders are the important products that a broad range of personnel can be deployed to produce political texts and images. It requires sophisticated skills to produce political texts and images to control the flow of information with the mass media and public across the the political organizations, observed Solfyan (2015) as stated in Craig (2004).

According to Solfyan (2015), the use of political marketing has three positive planks that influence the health of democracy and brings about benefits to the democratic system. In the first place, political marketing increases the number of information source as well as the amount of information which is available to voters. On the second plank, it helps in building the relationship between candidates and consultants, just as political marketing is used as an exchange model among politicians and public which is similar to producers and consumers. Thirdly, the practice of this political communication technique is voter oriented, and as a result the public has many choices and enough information from which to select.

Yet, despite these positive impacts, the use of political marketing has four potholes as well (Sofyan, 2015), Firstly, political marketing drives tend to be commercialized which reduces political values and political substantives. This is followed as the media and consultants become more important, it replaces the role of parties in the future. The third is the use of money politics which is an obvious negative impact (corruption) of political marketing. Finally, the fourth in political marketing is the use of advertising as medium to promote the candidate that tends to manipulate the public. This is not good for democracy.

Criticism of Political Marketing

There are some criticisms about the ethics of political marketing which are viewed sometimes as to be under an obligation to justify itself and to defend itself against those criticisms. These are outlined as follows (Durmaz & Direkci, 2015):

Purchase of Democratic Election: One of the most common criticisms of the use of political marketing instruments in the political fields is the accusation that election is a product that can be bought. This is because elections are won by the candidate or party that has established facilities of agenda of political adverts and media manipulation, planting of sound bites in the news media and orchestras. In other words, the most professionally run campaign management dominates the political market place (Henneberg, 2004)

and it comes with a price (Franklin, 1994). As a result, one with more resources or better fundraising capabilities regardless of the political argument wins the election (Wray, 1999).

Non-correlation of Campaigns: The electoral campaigns have become more expensive and it is estimated that, for example, political candidates running for the US presidency spend more than half of suffered a second humiliating and crushing defeat 31.7:40.9 per cent. Henneberg (2004), therefore accentuated that the more campaign budget does not correlate well with the success.

Packaging without Content: Another most common criticism of political marketing campaign is packaging without content. Political marketing management is often accused of avoiding political communications, as well as party politics of any direct relationship with political issues and deeply held political convictions that are expressed in coherent political and topical offers. This is to say that substance has been replaced by image while political marketing has introduced packaged messages. In this way, it is argued that politicians should become brand managers while governments should govern the nation as a brand (Henneberg, 2004) to do the needful.

Populism without Leadership Factors: Another is some concern about populism and no leadership factors in political marketing. Parties and politicians run after the political opinion and adapt to small changes especially to perceived opinions shifts in important segments of the electorate such as opinion leaders, swinging voters or electoral areas. Political market research is used to determine policy that runs after the whims of the electorate which is being driven by the market. This implies that the concept of customer-orientation is often used in political marketing (Henneberg, 2004).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

As a relatively new field of study, Political Marketing is examined on the use of marketing techniques in the political space within the discipline of political science. Political marketing is not just about political advertising party political broadcasts and electoral speeches but covering the whole area of party positioning in the electoral market (Harrop, 1990). The study is an embodiment of study of segments of political marketing, and its models, political marketing and lobbying and functionality of political marketing and how it relates to political science.

It is found that there is need for effective leadership that is frequently relayed to the management and marketing literature. This brings to the forefront a debate into the need for leadership in political marketing with a clear strategic leadership of political parties wishing to further their use of political marketing strategies.

Therefore, for a modern political competition that is open and transparent, the study recommends as follows:

1. Contestants need a method that can facilitate the distribution of political products such as new ideas, issues, party ideology, programs and leadership characteristics to the public.. This method is no other one but political marketing.
2. For application of new political strategies that are more oriented to voters and understand how this can be applied by implementing marketing strategies to promote the candidate and their political values in order to win election.
3. Involvement of the elected party leadership in political marketing enables human and material resources to be reapportioned effectively and efficiently to meet the needs of political marketing.
4. For a robust debate on issues, ideas, product values, political programs, and leadership image to win the heart of voters and non-voters.
5. For combination of political marketing and lobbying, both of which are persuasive and they are beneficiaries of each other and involved in exchange, networks, relationship.

The democratically elected political party leaders seen to support a political marketing, make it clear the direction that the organization takes. Succinctly, it acts as a way to communicate and support a political marketing initiative and signals to audience internally and externally that the language of political marketing is absolved in the party environment.

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