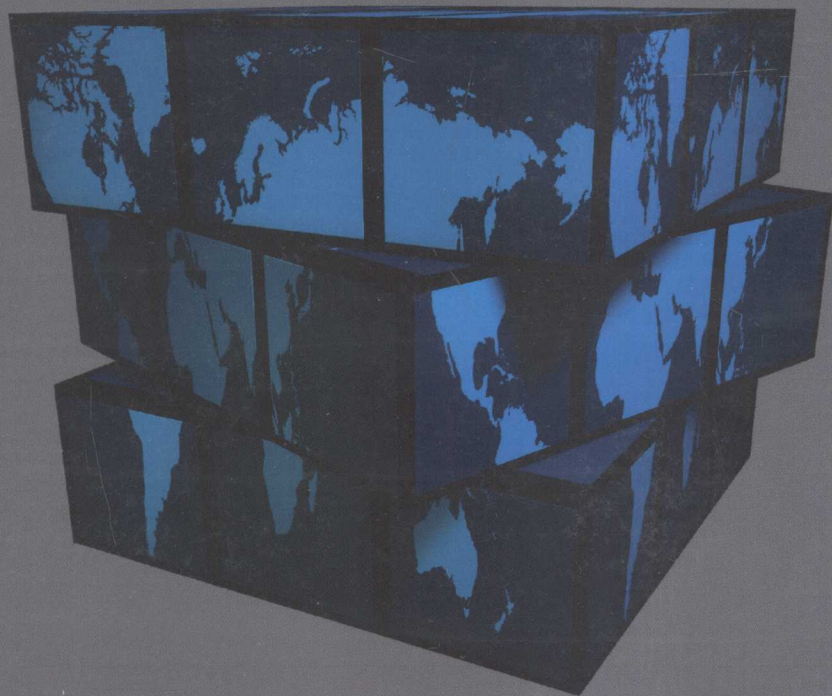


POLITICAL MARKETING

THEORETICAL AND STRATEGIC FOUNDATIONS



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M.E. Sharpe

Armonk, New York

London, England

This book is dedicated to our families:

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Andrzej Falkowski: Ewa Falkowska, Justyna Falkowska, Zuzanna Falkowska

Bruce I. Newman: Judith Ann Newman, Todd Paul Newman, Erica Lynn Newman

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80 Business Park Drive, Armonk, New York 10504.

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Payne Loving Trust. EuroSlavic and Transroman are available
from Linguist's Software, Inc., www.linguistsoftware.com,
P.O. Box 580, Edmonds, WA 98020-0580 USA, tel (425) 775-1130.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Cwalina, Wojciech.

Political marketing : theoretical and strategic foundations / by Wojciech Cwalina, Andrzej
Falkowski, and Bruce I. Newman.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-7656-2291-4 (hardcover : alk. paper)—ISBN 978-0-7656-2916-6 (pbk. : alk. paper)

1. Campaign management. 2. Political campaigns. 3. Marketing—Political aspects.

I. Falkowski, Andrzej. II. Newman, Bruce I. III. Title.

JF2112.C3C93 2011

324.7'3—dc22

2010040044

Printed in the United States of America

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of
American National Standard for Information Sciences
Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials,
ANSI Z 39.48-1984.



IBT (c)	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
IBT (p)	10	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1

Introduction

Democracy is full of paradoxes. One of its premises is the freedom of citizens, which creates favorable conditions to create more and more sophisticated marketing strategies whose goal is to make the voter vote for a certain political option. We face then a paradoxical situation because a side product of these strategies is the limitation of the voters' choices in their voting decisions; in other words, the developing democracy creates mechanisms that limit democracy.

One may wonder how it might be possible to handle such a situation. First of all, one should discover how social and psychological mechanisms controlling citizens' behavior operate. These mechanisms are the basis of the applied marketing strategies. Thus the main concern of this book is the demonstration that political marketing analysis is virtually impossible without substantial knowledge of psychology. The theoretical and practical knowledge of political marketing is analyzed with particular emphasis on psychological mechanisms of voter behavior. It is obvious that the psychological research in the domain of cognitive and emotional processes is commonly used to create politicians' or parties' images as well as to construct persuasion messages for political campaigns. Such efforts lead to stronger and stronger control of people's attitudes and preferences on the automatic level—that is, beyond their conscious control. Thus, voters do not realize that their behavior is often shaped by those who deliberately use sophisticated marketing techniques.

The present book provides a complete and profound view of political marketing. Apart from instructing readers how to use the research tools of political marketing, it teaches them to understand social and political reality and encourages them to participate in shaping this reality. This is especially important for well-established as well as emerging democracies, in which the dynamic development of information technology, resulting in the devel-

opment of the Internet and new technologies used for wireless multimedia transmission and increasingly available to ordinary people, is creating a new information society. The rapid development of the media and the possibility of reaching each person with information encourage individuals to construct in their minds a certain way of perceiving the surrounding reality.

One might wonder then who may be interested in such constructing. In the first place, it is managers responsible for marketing strategies in business and also political marketing consultants. The first group uses the achievements of modern social science for influencing customer behavior, whereas the other group uses them for influencing voter behavior. The increasingly sophisticated promotional campaigns used by both groups influence the cognitive and emotional spheres of the voters, creating a certain image of reality in their minds. In this way voters become puppets in the hands of the manager who, by controlling their behavior, is limiting their freedom.

The content of the book is put within the theoretical framework of social psychology with particular emphasis on cognitive-emotional processes. Such an approach is especially important in creating the flexibility of the political campaign consultant not only in using the market research tools discussed in detail in this book, but also in creating and controlling the surrounding social reality.

The first chapter presents political marketing as a separate discipline and analyzes current definitions of the field, which leads to proposing our own, original definition of this domain of research in theory and practice. The second chapter introduces an advanced theory of political marketing in the context of existing models. The third chapter is devoted to the marketing tools of segmentation of the voting market and positioning of parties and politicians. Special attention is paid to three positioning methods, the first one based on triangulation, the second on the associative affinity index, and the third on contrast theory of similarity. The following four chapters discuss in detail particular problems related to candidate image, direct campaigns, debates, permanent campaigns, and maintaining relationship with voters. The final, eighth, chapter is a special one. It undertakes the problem of democracy and freedom of citizens which, in a sense, is limited as a result of advanced marketing strategies used to convince voters to vote for a particular political option. It seems that the only way to eliminate such paradoxes is through social education. The increase of political awareness and the popularization of the knowledge of economy and law should ensure that an increasing number of those entitled to vote will start making rational political choices. Popularization of political marketing will, on the one hand, equalize the election chances of all political subjects on the scene and, on the other hand, lead to citizens' becoming less enslaved and manipulated.

The book is aimed not only at students and researchers working in marketing, business, and political sciences. It is also aimed at psychologists, sociologists, and those who are professional in the humanities. It can certainly be helpful to consultants working on political campaigns as well as politicians who would better understand their chances of success or failure.

The completion of this book would not have been possible without the support and constructive editing of several people. We first want to thank Harry Briggs, executive editor at M.E. Sharpe. Harry served as a guiding light throughout the process, providing necessary feedback and excellent leadership. It should be noted that Harry served as the editor on two previous books on political marketing, dating back to 1994, a clear indication of his foresight in the promise of the field. We also want to thank Andrzej Antoszek from Catholic University of Lublin for his careful reading of the manuscript that proved to be invaluable. Furthermore, we want to thank several colleagues for their contribution to the field of political marketing. They organized conferences and wrote important articles and books, all of which had an influence on the subjects and problems we addressed in our book: they include Costa Gouliamos from European University, Cyprus; Phil Harris from University of Chester, England; Stephan Hennebergu from University of Manchester, Manchester Business School, England; Nicholas O'Shaughnessy from Queen Mary University of London; Paul Baines from Cranfield University, England; Dominic Wring from Loughborough University, England; Dennis Johnson from George Washington University, United States; and Wayne Steger from DePaul University, United States. We want to thank Yuanyun Peng (Ella) from DePaul University for her help with the proofreading of each draft of the manuscript. We want to also thank the administrative and editorial staff at M.E. Sharpe for their support of this project. Finally, we thank our families for their continued love and their support of our professional lives.

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POLITICAL MARKETING

1

Metatheory in Social Science and Political Marketing

Theory development in political marketing has borrowed from several different social science disciplines. At the very heart of this pursuit is the understanding of human behavior that encompasses the various activities involved in political marketing. The sum total of those activities is put forward in the following definition of political marketing: “the applications of marketing principles and procedures in political campaigns by various individuals and organizations. The procedures involved include the analysis, development, execution and management of strategic campaigns by candidates, political parties, governments, lobbyists and interest groups that seek to drive public opinion, advance their own ideologies, win elections and pass legislation and referenda in response to the needs and wants of selected people and groups in society” (Newman 1999a, xiii).

Metatheory in Social Science

The various activities that encompass the human behaviors related to political marketing will be analyzed in this book in an effort to understand how democracies around the world use these methods to accomplish the many political goals that allow a society to increase the quality of life for its citizens. The theorists from the different social science disciplines that we have borrowed from all approach theory development in a slightly different way, with each approach unique to the study of activities that pertain to the human behavior in question. However, it is possible to study the contribution of a theory in social science by outlining the various functions that theory serves into four different categories: integration, description, delimitation, and generation (see Howard and Sheth 1969; Rychlak 1968). Each of these functions will be described and used to evaluate how a theory in political marketing should be

developed to better understand the technopolitical shift that has taken place in democracies around the world over the past twenty years.

The Integrative Function

One of the most important parts of theory development in the social sciences is the integration of constructs, propositions, and existing models that seek to explain the phenomenon in question. Perhaps the most important function to use to test a theory in political marketing is its ability to bring together the various constructs that define a discipline made up of two different worlds: politics and marketing. We find ourselves at a very exciting stage of theoretical development in the field of political marketing where scholars from around the world are contributing to the knowledge base of the field on a regular basis (see *Journal of Political Marketing*, published by Taylor & Francis, in its eighth year in 2009). It is not surprising that the research most widely referenced in the field is from two disciplines: political science and marketing. However, it is fair to say that scholars have borrowed from many other disciplines to explain the very wide range of human behaviors that make up the field of political marketing, including, but not limited to, cognitive and social psychology, sociology, advertising, cultural anthropology, economics, management, and political management. Each of these different disciplines seeks to explain and predict the behavior of the many actors involved in the functioning of democracies.

We believe the theoretical structure put forward in this book pulls together the relevant empirical and conceptual findings in several different disciplines that have been tapped to contribute to the current thinking in the field. This statement is made with an understanding that theoretical developments have come from disciplines in democracies around the world. Furthermore, it acknowledges the importance that must be placed on developing theory from empirical works that allow us to bridge the global network of democracies that rely on similar constructs to understand the thinking and actions of the voter in society (Cwalina, Falkowski, and Newman 2008).

The Descriptive Function

Like other theories in the social sciences, theory in political marketing should be explained by the integration of constructs and propositions that allow one to get an understanding of the human behavior in question. Key to describing the central constructs of the theory in this discipline is the ability to integrate the environmental forces that play a role in shaping the behaviors in question. Because the phenomenon in question can have global idiosyncratic charac-

teristics, it is critically important in the description of theory in this field to account for the broad commonalities that do exist in all democracies around the world. This is perhaps the most compelling aspect of the work presented in this book, which to date has not been accomplished by any other scholar in the field.

We believe the theoretical contribution made in this book moves the field forward because human political behaviors around the world do have many features in common, but at the same time have some unique features. For example, some democracies are driven by governments as opposed to political parties. In other words, governments are so powerful that they are able to pick and choose the political party that is in charge of day-to-day operations of the society. At the same time, in some democracies individual politicians may be put in power without the consent of the government, or a political party may gain control through the sheer power of money and advertising that are used to drive the choice of candidates. Furthermore, it has been well established in the field that the set of activities and actors may vary or stay the same as a democracy moves from precampaign, to campaign, to postcampaign status. Finally, the actual use of marketing tools and strategies can also have a differential impact on the outcome of campaigns depending on the democracy being studied. It is therefore imperative that a theory be developed that describes and accounts for all the conditions that might impinge on the uniqueness of a democracy. We believe our theory can be used to fully describe the human behavior we are studying.

The Delimiting Function

In light of the fact that theory in the social sciences must be limited to a selection of constructs that describe the phenomenon from a specific vantage point, and the fact that we are attempting to provide a theory that has a global reach, the selection of constructs is very important (see Figure 2.6 in Chapter 2). Our goal in this book is not to attempt to explain the unique features of political marketing in each and every democracy around the world, but rather to present an array of constructs and propositions that can give meaning to the common human behaviors and activities that cut across the discipline. The question then arises how we went about selecting those constructs that could give meaning to anyone who might have an interest in this phenomenon around the world. The best answer to this question lies in the fact that we relied on both empirical and conceptual works in the development of our theoretical linkages.

By definition, the field of political marketing is an applied science that relies on the application of constructs that are measured in paper-and-pencil questionnaires. Yes, these measurements come from models and conceptual

frameworks that fit into the phenomenon being studied. Therefore, it is quite possible that the selection of constructs (from empirical studies) in our theory may be limited to the execution of the research carried out and reported in the literature. We are naturally constrained by the relationships that show statistical significance in the reporting of results, and by the modeling that is developed from these research studies. It must also be recognized that there may be constructs that should be included in our theory, but because they cannot be measured, we are limited to their exclusion. This is the nature of an applied discipline and naturally delimits the choice of constructs that describe and explain the phenomenon in question. As the methodological sophistication of a discipline advances through multivariate statistical testing, it becomes possible for theorists to use more rigorous tests to validate the meaning of the constructs and their relationships. Ultimately, it is the ability to predict the human behaviors in question that allows us to extract meaningful explanations and ultimately a choice of constructs to use in our theory. We are of the opinion that we have successfully selected out those constructs that delimit the field.

The Generative Function

The ability to test a theory, and parts of it, is a measure of the generative function. In the social sciences, testing hypotheses that are generated from theory is one measure of the richness of the thinking. The development of our theory in this book is based on preexisting models, some of which have been tested across people, time, and places. However, we have gone a step beyond the traditional thinking in the field by expanding the phenomenon to be tested across global boundaries. For example, we have borrowed from models that have been conceptualized in one country, but never tested. We also have borrowed from some models that have been operationalized in selected democracies, but not in others. Finally, we have also borrowed from conceptual frameworks that have not been tested, but have been compared between countries.

It is our goal to generate much thinking and research from scholars around the world on the subject of political marketing. We expect that to happen because the theory provides for an unlimited number of relationships that could exist between constructs in the model (see Figure 2.6 in Chapter 2). For example, it will be very interesting to see how the strategic use of social networking moves from the United States (as witnessed in the Obama campaign of 2008) to other democracies around the world as the Internet becomes more popular and more economical to use compared with traditional communication tools, such as television advertising. We also expect to see some very interest-

ing research carried out longitudinally within democracies from precampaign to campaign to postcampaign as constructs are more clearly delineated and able to be measured by researchers. This function should serve to advance the field of political marketing in a significant way, and we believe that the theoretical propositions put forward will serve to do that well.

Political Marketing as a Separate Discipline of Science and Practice

Politicians are in the business of selling hope to people. This hope is related to convincing people that it is this particular politician or political party that guarantees, as Jenny Lloyd (2005) puts it, successful management of national security, social stability, and economic growth on behalf of the electorate. From this perspective, the major challenge to political marketing is to connect a politician's words, actions, and vision into a realistic transformation of the electorate's dreams and aspirations (Newman 1994).

According to Stephen Dann, Phil Harris, and their collaborators (2007), political marketing faces four main challenges. First, we need to turn political marketing into political marketing science. Implementing this goal requires, above all, developing background research and core datasets to utilize for constructing advanced insights into the political marketing process. Second, political marketing needs to be modernized. The research agenda for marketers and academics is to test the applicability of the principles in the context of the local political system so as to identify independent and nation-dependent political marketing strategies and campaigns. This step is necessary to develop a general theory of political marketing. Third, we need to define the relations between political marketing, lobbying, and government. Fourth, any theory of political marketing should include changes taking place in modern democracies, especially the shift from citizenship to spectatorship, and assess and point new ways to increase citizen involvement.

Paraphrasing the words of Phil Harris and Patricia Rees (2000, 368), "political marketing needs to regenerate itself and not fear change or ambiguity in its quest to seek the truth. It needs to avoid shibboleths, false and unarmed prophets, learn from history and show passion and courage or be deemed beyond redemption."

Mainstream and Political Marketing

The first conceptualizing efforts related to political marketing referred to or represented the transferring of classical product marketing to the plane of politics (e.g., Farrell and Wortmann 1987; Kotler 1975; Niffenegger 1988;

Shama 1975), defined by Stephan C. Henneberg (2003) as “instrumental” or “managerial” interpretation of political marketing activities. The starting point for this approach was the assumption that it would be a gross mistake to think that election campaigns have taken on marketing character only in recent years. Campaigning for office has always had a marketing character, and what has only increased in the course of time is the sophistication and acceleration of the use of marketing methods in politics (Kotler 1975; Kotler and Kotler 1999). From this perspective, political marketing was defined as “the process by which political candidates and ideas are directed at the voters in order to satisfy their political needs and thus gain their support for the candidate and ideas in question” (Shama 1975, 793). Applying mainstream marketing to politics was justified by a number of similarities—similarities of concepts (e.g., consumers, market segmentation, marketing mix, image, brand loyalty, product concept and positioning) and similarities of tools (e.g., market research, communication, and advertising). On the other hand, attempts were made to prove that the differences between marketing and politics were only ostensible and that they disappeared under a more thorough analysis (see Egan 1999; Kotler 1975).

One of the consequences of identifying political marketing as product marketing was that candidates or political parties often were compared to particular consumer products, such as toothpaste or a bar of soap, and the media played an important part in popularizing that myth. As Philip Kotler and Sidney Levy (1969, 10) state, “political contests remind us that candidates are marketed as well as soap.” However, as Alex Marland (2003) demonstrates, such comparisons are outdated and hardly appropriate in modern political marketing. The notion that parties and candidates can be promoted in the same manner as soap has become the mechanism for decrying the side effects of political marketing. This outdated axiom still continues to be used by political actors and observers alike. The “selling soap” analogy presumes that candidates are sold with a selling concept rather than promoted within a marketing concept. According to Marland (2003, 106), “only amateur, underfunded, and small-scale election campaign teams are still involved in a selling concept.” Candidates are not “sold”; they are “marketed,” as are realtors (i.e., real estate agents) and other service providers.

This idea is also strongly emphasized by Nicholas O’Shaughnessy (1987, 63): “politics deals with a person, not a product.” Rather, politicians should be treated as vendors hired for a particular period of time—like doctors or lawyers. In other words, political marketing is mainly concerned with people and their relationships with each other, whereas mainstream marketing is often concerned with people’s interaction with products. Therefore, attitude and impression formation in reference to political candidates also has a number of characteristics distinguishing it from consumer brands. The results of a