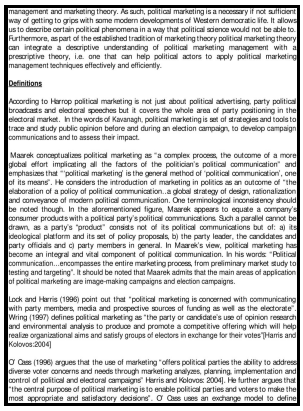
Electoral strategies and political marketing

Macmillan Press - Electoral strategies, political marketing and marketing research


management and marketing theory. As such, political marketing is a necessary if not sufficient way of getting to grips with some modern developments of Western democratic life. It allows us to describe certain political phenomena in a way that political science would not be able to. Furthermore, as part of the established tradition of marketing theory political marketing theory can integrate a descriptive understanding of political marketing management with a prescriptive theory, i.e. one that can help political actors to apply political marketing management techniques effectively and efficiently.

Definitions

According to Harrop political marketing is not just about political advertising, party political broadcasts and electoral speeches but it covers the whole area of party positioning in the electoral market. In the words of Kavanagh, political marketing is set of strategies and tools to trace and study public opinion before and during an election campaign, to develop campaign communications and to assess their impact.

Maarek conceptualizes political marketing as "a complex process, the outcome of a more global effort implicating all the factors of the politician's political communication" and emphasizes that "'political marketing' is the general method of political communication', one of its means". He considers the introduction of marketing in politics as an outcome of "the elaboration of a policy of political communication...a global strategy of design, rationalization and conveyance of modern political communication. One terminological inconsistency should be noted though. In the aforementioned figure, Maarek appears to equate a company's consumer products with a political party's political communications. Such a parallel cannot be drawn, as a party's "product" consists not of its political communications but of: a) its ideological platform and its set of policy proposals, b) the party leader, the candidates and party officials and c) party members in general. In Maarek's view, political marketing has become an integral and vital component of political communication. In his words: "Political communication...encompasses the entire marketing process, from preliminary market study to testing and targeting". It should be noted that Maarek admits that the main areas of application of political marketing are image-making campaigns and election campaigns.

Lock and Harris (1996) point out that "political marketing is concerned with communicating with party members, media and prospective sources of funding as well as the electorate". Wring (1997) defines 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 realize organizational aims and satisfy groups of electors in exchange for their votes"[Harris and Kolovos:2004]

O' Cass (1996) argues that the use of marketing "offers political parties the ability to address diverse voter concerns and needs through marketing analyses, planning, implementation and control of political and electoral campaigns" Harris and Kolovos: 2004]. He further argues that "the central purpose of political marketing is to enable political parties and voters to make the most appropriate and satisfactory decisions". O' Cass uses an exchange model to define

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Notes: Includes bibliographical references and index.
This edition was published in 1992

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