

An Updated and Conceptual Aspect to the Political Marketing Mix

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Extensive Summary

Introduction

Companies carry out their activities pursuant to the changing environmental factors. Changing circumstances also have an impact on human factors which are led by business activities and due to the requirements of continuous differentiation, the customer-company context is continuously updated. All parties to fall behind such a change, face some problems in reaching desired results. In this respect, the function of marketing can be accepted as a changing business function. In time, the increased level of consumer consciousness; accessing to information in a fast, easy and cheap manner; and organized consumers have led to rational consumer behavior. People in marketing sector and people in politics who are interested in marketing should be keen on following and adapting change as well as differing change-related realities (Butler, Harris, 2009). In order to maximize the potential of political marketing, the focus should be on the need for this issue to change orientation and be updated each day (Lees-Marshment, 2003). This study is based on the necessity to re-evaluate political marketing within the context of these changes.

Fundamentally, policy is related to the structuring and organization of the social being. Therefore, people themselves, their natural abilities and their intrinsic potential lies at the core of responsible policy (Bauer, Huber and Herrmann, 1996). The scope of political marketing as a discipline has changed over time and convert into a more complex entity. Studies with regard to the political marketing intensely reveal themselves with a strong effort to identify the scope. The political marketing has its own unique characteristics; hence, these studies concentrate on the scope. The political marketing can be taken into account as a sub-discipline of marketing. Thus, the fundamental differences between political marketing and traditional (commercial) marketing bring the idea of studying political marketing separately to the forefront.

Political parties should know their voters and sympathizers, and observe activities of their rivals. Political marketers should understand the voters, approach election campaigns as a communication tool, and should not ignore the fact that voters' decision

is a means of psychological purchase. This essentialness requires political marketers to adopt a complex perspective including psychological aspects towards their target groups (Dermody, Scullion, 2000). During the market analysis, marketing allows the political parties for assuring voters with different opinions as well as giving them the opportunity to highlight the planning, control and implementation of political campaigns and election campaigns (O'Cass, 1996). In terms of the political marketing, everything becomes more challenging for mechanisms that act to have an influence on the voters. Therefore, the elements mix that forms the basis of marketing strategies should be re-examined and be contextually synchronized with respect to the changing conditions.

Political Marketing Mix

Political marketing elements mix has more complex and integrally variable structure than that of traditional marketing elements mix. In this respect, this study tries to constitute a perspective on providing insight on the complex and variable nature of these elements.

In terms of political marketing, the product has a multivariate structure. Thus, the product includes the party, the leader, leader's and party's image, the candidate, members, personal features, staff, policies, programs, projects, ideas, previous records, statements. (Lees-Marshment, 2001; Wring, 1997; Widagdo et. al., 2014; Ediraras et. Al.; Arofah, Nugrahajati, 2014; Smith, Saunders, 1990) The product, which is sold in the scope of the political marketing contains abstract and uncountable, value-laden, alluring future promises (O'Shaughnessy, 2001).

According to Butler and Collins (1994), in political marketing, the product, election program and instruction; candidates' and party's position as a whole regarding the significant issues raised during the campaign; candidates' image and their political background as a reference point; and their supporters (Arofah, Nugrahajati, 2014), symbols (Lees-Marshment, 2009) are formed of people, the party, ideology, loyalty and variability (Okan, Topcu and Akyüz, 2014). During the process that has started with the party, candidate and leader trilogy, the emphasis on the political product has increased in time. In particular, the stress on the image and symbols have even more increased than the evolving process. In political marketing, it is not possible to mention about such a price aspect as in the traditional marketing. (Lock, Harris, 1996; Egan, 1999; Henneberg, 2003). Regarding the political price and together with the costs, Niffenegger emphasizes three elements of costs in the political marketing: the psychological costs, economic costs, and national image (Widagdo et. al., 2014; Wring, 1997). It may upset the voters if the voted party does not have a power in the government as well as the implemented policies, which creates a psychological cost for the voters. Likewise, some policies (taxes, wage adjustment, etc.) adapted by the ruling party may also create financial loss for the voters. Such a situation will create costs more than just psychological cost (Okumuş, 2007).

Distribution, in terms of political marketing, is conveying all elements form of the product to the voter. Compared to the traditional marketing, promotion and distribution are the two overlapping mix elements in the political marketing. Two factors can be highlighted regarding the distribution (Henneberg, 2003). First, there is the distribution of the campaign that enables the voter to access all elements of the political product. The process to choose the right channel has become even more complex and complicated with the growing new media tools. This underlines the dynamic aspect of

political marketing as well as highlighting the adaptation process regarding progress. E-campaigns, web TV, social media and blogs are new aspects of the media that should be managed carefully. Second, there is the distribution of promises. It is about fulfilling the promises (Henneberg, 2003). Both direct and indirect distribution can be practiced in the scope of the political marketing. This may include regional activities, propaganda, leader's visits (Wring, 1997), brochures (Harris, 2001), voluntary programs, personal interviews, meetings (Widagdo et. al., 2014), statements of political and social powerbrokers (Cwalina, Falkowski and Newman, 2012) in order to convey the political product to the voter.

By its very nature, the political marketing includes different promotion activities than that of the traditional marketing mix. The promotion mix consists of advertisement, panel discussions, direct mailing, public relations and publicity and negative campaigns (Egan, 1999; Kaid, 2002; Gelb, Bush, 2011; Dermody, Scullion, 2000; Harris, 2001; Widagdo et. al. 2014; Butler, Harris, 2009). In addition, meetings, continuous communication campaigns with the candidate or the party, word of mouth, internet, TV, papers, magazines, radio, brochures, mail, posters, house visits are other promotion activities (Akyüz, 2015; Widagdo et. al., 2014; Lock, Harris, 1996; Bauer, Huber ve Herrmann, 1996; Bowler, Donovan, Fernandez, 1996; Kaid, 2002; Coursaris, Papagiannidis, 2009; Arofah, Nugrahajati, 2014; Fowler, Ridout, 2009; Smith, Saunders, 1990; Cwalina, Falkowski ve Newman, 2012). The communication activities in the scope of changing face of political marketing offers other communication tools – either synchronized or not - between the candidate and the voters, such as; e-mail, chat, newsletter groups and instant messaging (Coursaris, Papagiannidis, 2009). Internet introduced other social media (Gelb, Bush, 2011) channels such as facebook, twitter, instagram, youtube, periscope, pinterest, linkedIn, google+, etc. (Ediraras et.al., 2013; Lees-Marshment, 2009; Okan, Topcu and Akyüz, 2014; Cwalina, Falkowski and Newman, 2012) to the actors in the political market. Another aspect of political marketing regarding promotion is the advertisements in the scope of mobile marketing (Cwalina, Falkowski and Newman, 2012). Smart mobile phones ensured easy and fast access to information via internet. On one hand people have easier access to information; on the other hand the political actors have the opportunity to reach their voters anytime.