

Marketing Scholars and Political Marketing: the Pragmatic and Principled Reasons for Why Marketing Academics Should Research the Use of Marketing in the Political Arena

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Abstract

The marketing discipline needs to pay more attention to political marketing. Marketing has permeated deeply into the heart of elections and government. Numerous political players, including presidents and prime ministers, politicians, and parties, as well as government departments and councils turn to marketing in their pursuit of political goals. While media coverage of recent issues, such as the Trump campaign's use of big data, has shone a spotlight on commercial marketing techniques in the political and governmental arena, scholars from multiple disciplines (marketing, political science, and communication) have been exploring cross-disciplinary research on political marketing for several decades. This article argues that it is time for the marketing discipline to embrace political marketing more openly than before. This article will make the case by outlining the broad scope of political marketing in practice and research, providing examples of political marketing, and then discussing the significant ethical implications of marketing politics. Finally, it will provide reasons for why marketing scholars should research this dynamic and profoundly impactful area.

Keywords Marketing scholars · Political marketing · Political arena · Government · Elections · Society · Marketing ethics

1 The Broad Scope of Political Marketing

1.1 Political Marketing in Practice

Politicians, advisors, parties, movements, NGOs, governments, and even whole nations use marketing strategy, research, branding, communication, and delivery to help them achieve wide ranging goals from winning elections to achieving policy change. Marketing also influences policy development and leadership decisions. Significant government resources are devoted to policy research, marketing, and branding. Politicians communicate to build long-term relationships with voters rather than just selling their product. Marketing has a profound impact on the way the political world operates.

Just like marketing, political marketing is about how political organizations and practitioners—including candidates, politicians, leaders, parties, governments, and NGOs—use

marketing tools and concepts. They do this to understand, develop products for, to involve as well as to communicate, and interact with their political market in order to achieve their goals. Such goals of course are not about making money, but are also not just about winning elections, and include creating policy change, representing minorities, changing behavior, and increasing participation.

The issues that practitioners in the political market worry about include not just voters but members and volunteers within a political party or campaign, other politicians, lobbyists, interest groups, donors, the media, professional associations or unions, electoral commissions, and party or government staff. As marketing academics Hughes and Dann (2009, p. 252) [12] argue, once in government politicians need to meet the broader stakeholder needs of society,[^] not just their own target markets.

The political product is also constantly evolving—it is not like an iPhone that is manufactured and can be picked up from a shop. The product includes the entire behavior of a political organization including political figures and volunteers, not all of which are controllable. Policies are important where parties and governments are concerned, but so too is the leadership, members of the organization (e.g., politicians), staff, unpaid volunteers, and events.

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Like marketing, politics uses tools and concepts to achieve goals, e.g., obtaining support from their market for their product. These fall into four broad categories, strategizing, researching, organizing, and communication (see Fig. 1).

1.2 Political Marketing Research

Twenty years ago, political marketing scholarship was focused on campaign ads or spin doctoring and marketers could be forgiven for seeing little connection with modern marketing. But that has changed.

As Harris and Lock (2010, p. 43) [11] note, political marketing is now a significant area of international research in contemporary marketing. As a field it has its own models of branding, strategy, market research, communications, and delivery. These are derived yet distinct from pure commercial marketing models or political science theories, combining concepts from both. The field has its own journal, handbooks [19, 24], a textbook [18, 20, 21], a book series *Palgrave Studies in Political Marketing and Management*, and online resource www.political-marketing.org. It is taught all around the world in political science, marketing, and communication departments, and applied political management programs in the USA and Canada.

I argue the dominant research philosophy is pragmatism, the methodology depends on the research question, and the aim is to have a potential practical application [21]. Political marketing explores a range of behaviors from a strategic perspective that is both analytical and applied. Like commercial marketing, it is prescriptive, rather than just analyzing the past. It prompts fresh perspectives on old questions: taking the normally profit-oriented marketing analysis into an arena where values dominate and thus has implications for classic issues of leadership, citizenship, ethics, ideology, beliefs, policy, and principles.

Like commercial marketing, political marketing scholarship utilizes a range of approaches, to thinking about, relating to, or approaching the public (see Fig. 2). This includes the old-fashioned view that political marketing equals selling, or being sales-oriented, using market research to test the effectiveness of both the message and the medium in persuading key voters to switch their support for a policy, politician, party, or government. Pre-dominantly the literature argues for using market research before designing and developing a product or brand to identify voter demands and then tailoring the product to suit this—becoming market-oriented [17]. Market-oriented approaches require politicians to listen to voters more. More recently with the election of leaders such as Barack Obama, scholars contended that political marketing could become more relational, creating long-term positive relationships between voters and political elites that help sustain politicians in times of crisis. With this practitioners could therefore choose more dialogical and transformational approaches to achieve and maintain relationships with political consumers over the

long term. Lastly experiential marketing, suggested by Jackson [14], focuses on involving the consumer in an active experience with the brand. Voters are not just spectators but feel part of the event. Leaders such as Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders may be tapping into this sentiment by emotionally appealing to voters, but have not as yet displayed a sense of co-creating solutions.

2 Examples of Political Marketing

Political marketing research has uncovered multiple, wide ranging, examples of marketing in politics globally. Here, I summarize the four categories with illustrative examples.

2.1 Strategizing

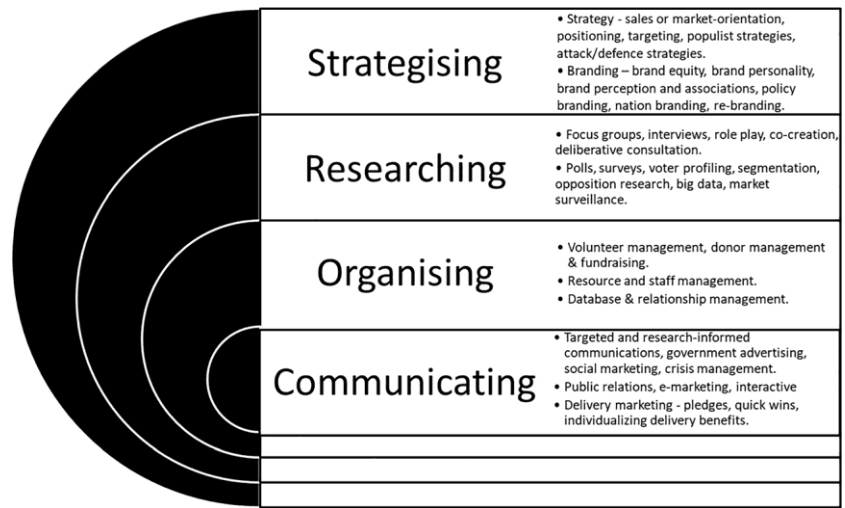
Political marketing strategy is about how political practitioners and organizations formulate plans that respond to multiple factors including market demands, stakeholders, competitors, and resources to achieve their goals. Strategizing includes sales or market orientations, populist strategies, targeting, positioning, and political branding (e.g., brand equity, brand personality, brand heritage, brand delivery, policy branding, nation branding, and managing and decontaminating brands). Examples include the following:

- ⊗ The UK Labour Party became a Market-Oriented Party for the 1997 election. It conducted extensive market intelligence; elected a new leader, Tony Blair; adopted the slogan *New Labour, New Britain*; and made specific pledges in areas important to voters, such as education and health. It produced a commitment to fiscal prudence. Reducing government spending and income tax, responding to voter demands rather than party ideology [17].
- ⊗ Barack Obama's 2008 brand was simple and reassuring, centering on aspirational rhetoric with the slogan *Yes We Can*, embodied core values of hope, and change that resonated with the target audience, while offering credibility [4, 6].
- ⊗ Donald Trump harnessed the Reagan-originated Republican Party brand of a smaller state, lower taxes, and a strong America, projecting himself as someone who would restore America's glory, but also integrated his personality and outsider position to update it to a change-making brand, *Make America Great Again* [7].

2.2 Researching

Political market research includes polling and surveys, segmenting and profiling the market, data analytics, focus groups, and co-creation. Polling is ubiquitous for politicians

Fig. 1 Political marketing functional tools. Source: [21], *Political marketing: principles and applications*, 3rd edition



and the media and it uses quantitative methods to measure opinion and the strength of opinion. Polls are used for varying purposes, including to benchmark at the start of a campaign, to delve into particular issues or crisis, and to track progress. Segmenting and profiling the market breaks up the heterogeneous, mass electoral market into smaller sections according to geographic, demographic, psychographic, and behavioral factors, identifying groups that are then targeted in terms of product, message, and medium. Data Analytics collects and harvests online behavioral data from multiple sources, time periods, and organizations to produce new insights to inform strategy and communication. Focus groups are used to understand current views and desires, potential for change, and to test reaction to proposed policies and communications. For example,

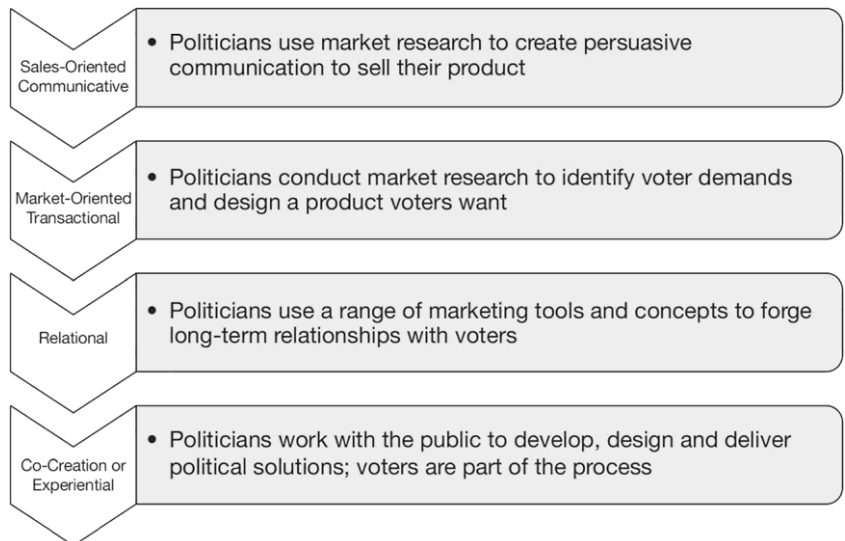
& Mark Penn’s market research company conducted a unique microtargeting project for Republican candidate Michael Bloomberg’s campaign for New York City major

in 2001. Research combining demographics, party affiliation, and established attitudes and needs generated new segments such as older, affluent Jewish males on Wall Street and younger, low-socio-economic status, Hispanic waitresses who shared concerns about the effects of terrorism. The campaign then sent these groups details of Bloomberg’s security plan [3].

& An analyst on Obama’s 2008 campaign identified that, of the hundreds of variables on Wisconsin voters explored, those who rode on public transport were most likely to support Obama. Combining data on the city’s bus routes with individuals having high support scores led to the media/advertising agency GMMB purchasing ads on targeted buses [13].

& In the UK Phillip Gould used focus groups to understand why the Labour party lost yet again in 1992. He found that Labour was judged by its past; was seen as hostile to aspiration, wealth, and entrepreneurship; and was no

Fig. 2 The development of political marketing approaches. Source: [21], *Political marketing: principles and applications*, 3rd edition



longer seen as the party of ordinary working people [10]. This informed the substantial redesign of the party, with a new slogan New Labour, new logo the red rose, constitution changes, and the adoption of more mainstream policies.

- ⊗ The market research firm Promise used co-creative techniques to understand and tackle the growing disconnection between UK PM Tony Blair and voters during Labour's second term. They asked participants to write letters to Blair and used Btwo-chair work^ to role play Blair and as they saw him and then how they wouldlike him to be. The Party's reconnection strategy moved from focusing on Blair to Team Blair including other senior party figures and made sure that Blair was seen as listening to and showing respect for criticism [16].

2.3 Organizing

Political organizing includes creating volunteer-friendly organizations, creating unity, relationship marketing, and fundraising. This is important to parties wanting to build strong volunteer and membership bases to help them gain market intelligence and campaign for funds and votes. Research needs to be conducted to understand what volunteers want and need which can include social not just political factors, flexibility to suits volunteers' busy lives, segmenting volunteers into types, and activity levels. Essentially designing structures to suit the volunteer, not just the party or NGO The aim is to make it as easy as possible for someone to get involved, e.g., offering training and support. Volunteers act as part-time marketers, gathering informal intelligence for their party or candidate. Relationship marketing involves volunteers in creating new products and brands, seeking ideas and participation beyond campaigns to forge a strong relationship to support politicians in government. Fundraising draws on many aspects of internal political marketing, e.g., market research to understand donor behavior, segmenting small from big donations, pre-testing appeals, enabling volunteers to fundraise, and seeking positive donor relationships. Examples include the following:

- ⊗ US Republican volunteers carried out direct face-to-face marketing, building an effective structure for their local areas, and helping get out the vote for President George W. Bush's on a 72-Hour Task Force contacting GOP-leaning voters leading up to election day [28].
- ⊗ US Democrats had volunteer neighborhood leaders reporting what they were hearing, seeing in conversations with neighbors. The Obama campaign's MyBo gave details of local events, voter information, and who to target. Not only making it easier for volunteers but the data helped them feel empowered and involved [22].

- ⊗ The Democratic Party's *Organizing for America* used on-line marketing to fundraise to support Obamacare, running a competition voting on the best citizen-created video supporting health insurance reform and then asking for donations to air the winning ad [23].

2.4 Communicating

Communicating includes research-led and targeted communication, ads to garner support and get the vote out, celebrity marketing, e-marketing, public relations, leader communication, and delivery marketing. *Research-led communication* is utilizing research to identify what communication the market wants and needs. Advertisements are also designed using research to identify a range of views, insights, hopes, fears, and perceptions. Big data research profiles prospective voters and is used in the design of messages and ads. Online ads are adapted to suit different segments or micro-targets, directly reaching individuals. Research informed communication also helps get the vote out at polling time. Research-informed *government advertising* promotes specific programs, policies, or behaviors, ostensibly for the public good through social marketing campaigns like do not drink and drive, but arguably to help the party in power. *E-marketing* utilizes online communication but best practice ensures that it includes two-way communication and stimulates engagement and interaction, building networks and relationships rather than simply Bselling.^ *Leader communication and reputation management* places political leaders among voters to show genuine concern for and appreciation of their views. Often through body language, leaders need to communicate respectful acknowledgement of public concerns and criticism as well as strength and competence while maintaining an image of being in touch. *Delivery* includes building credibility before elections through pledges, and once in office using delivery units, managing problems, and communicating progress and success.

For example,

- ⊗ Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign utilized data services from the UK-based firm Cambridge Analytica to provide a granular understanding of the US political market. This was used to develop compelling messaging focused on specific policies such as the economy and immigration. Thousands of different versions of the same Facebook advert were specifically tailored to connect with market segments [2, 5].
- ⊗ Justin Trudeau's Instagram included pictures of him interacting with nationally and internationally renowned cultural, political, sports, and media celebrities, including the UK's Prince Harry [15].
- ⊗ The Conservative government used research-driven advertising in the privatization of public utilities British

Telecom and British Gas in the 1980s. This appealed to individual needs and desires by showing how the public could gain from buying shares, with emotive advertising such as the White cliffs of Dover, and more down-to-earth ads featuring ordinary people discussing how they could become shareholders [1].

- & New Zealand Prime Minister John Key's communication around increasing the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in 2010 involved him acknowledging the arguments against his policy while outlining the potential benefits. The public felt he was doing it for justifiable reasons even if they did not agree [8].
- & The Canadian Conservatives under Stephen Harper placed a bright blue B5% GST sticker onto a cash register in a retail store to convey delivery, creating a strong visual [9].

More examples can be found in Lees-Marshment (2019) [21] or www.political-marketing.org. Marketing deeply permeates elections, parties, campaigns, and government and profoundly impacts the way politics works.

2.4.1 The Ethical Implications of Marketing in the Political and Government Arena

The expansion of marketing into the political and government arena raises potential ethical issues, such as the following:

- & Marketing encourage a focus on short-term wants, rather than more effective long-term solutions the country needs.
- & Market research encourages political leaders to listen to public opinion which can be problematic when the public lacks information, expertise, and objectivity.
- & Targeting the most influential markets gives some people more power than others.
- & Treating voters like consumers discourages them from considering ethical, moral, and community aspects.
- & Marketing politics like a product encourages focus on policies that produce tangible and measurable outcomes rather than what actually works.
- & Research leads candidates to change their policies, presentation, and even their personality, rendering politics a false shopping exercise.

For example, Conley [5] argues that BTrump based his core message and policy positioning on a detailed, research-driven understanding of how specific voters segments targeted by his campaign think and behaved politically. This is not new, but what made Trump different according to Conley was his Bbold attempt to formulate policy, and communicate those policies based solely on mimicking what specific voters thought about selected issues, without any effort to interact or shape those opinions and with total disregard for any repercussions.

Political focus groups have been hotly debated by academics because of fears about moderator bias, the small sample size, and excessive influence, inhibiting rather than facilitating the expression of what the market wants. Savigny [27] argues that in the case of UK Labour in the 1990s, BGould also used focus groups as a site to test his own ideas [r]ather than listening and collecting the opinions of the selected public. ^

The market-oriented concept of political marketing may conflict with the need for long-term solutions where is a conflict between immediate wants and the long-term welfare. Paré and Berger's [26] analysis of the Canadian Conservative's adoption of a market-oriented strategy in the leadup to winning the 2006 election suggested that the Party avoided discussing contentious policy issues. As Paleologos [25] argues, a poll-driven society Bignores creativity. It overlooks new ideas. It prohibits change and true reform. ^ Marketing can thus prevent politicians from showing leadership.

3 The Rationale for Marketing Scholars to Research Political Marketing

I collected and synthesized the views of 11 marketing academics in 7 countries to understand the rationale for researching political marketing (see Fig. 3).

Below is more detailed explanation, with scholars acknowledged through attachment of their surname.

3.1 What Political Marketing Research Adds to Marketing Research

3.1.1 Provides a Valuable Test Market to More Deeply Understand Public Behavior

Market research is arguably more important in politics than business (Spiller), and thus, researching political marketing provides a BGlobal Live War Zone and test field for new Consumer Behaviour Research ^ (Harris). In practice, it Bhelps market research agencies test and refine their methods every election ^ and thus Badds an enormous amount of understanding about public opinion, attitudes, and values ^ (Baines). Researching political marketing Bbroadens a marketing academics knowledge ^ because it includes unconventional consumer behavior and thus for example Bthe consumer's sophistication in the voting process can enhance our understanding in consumer behaviour in service marketing ^ (Mensah). New marketing trends often develop in political marketing *first*: Bpolitical marketing is often at the cutting edge of some elements of marketing, most notably the use of analytics ^ (Bendle).

What political marketing research adds to marketing research	Why marketing academics should research political marketing
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provides a valuable test market to more deeply understand public behaviour. 2. Helps marketers understand politics, emotive and personal marketing. 3. Enhances the understanding of unusual markets, more challenging stakeholders 4. Encourages diversity in marketing research 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Because politics is just like marketing and business is just like politics. 2. To expand the marketing discipline, your own thinking, and keeps you fresh. 3. To gain pragmatic benefits such as media exposure. 4. To fulfil the social obligation to study the marketing of politics which has a profound influence on society.

Fig. 3 Summary of the rationale for marketing scholars to research political marketing. *Source:* core points identified through a synthesis of comments provided to author by marketing scholars. Acknowledgments due to Professor Paul Baines, School of Business, University of Leicester, UK; Dr. Stephen Dann, Senior Lecturer, Marketing, Research School of Management, ANU College of Business & Economics, UK; Professor Phil Harris, Westminster Chair of Marketing and Public Affairs, University of Chester, UK; Associate Professor Neil Bendle, Ivey Business School, Western University, Canada; Professor Lisa Spiller, Distinguished Professor of Marketing, Joseph W. Luter, III School of

Business, Christopher Newport University, UK; Dr. Kobby Mensah, Senior Lecturer, University of Ghana Business School, Ghana; Dr. Chris Pich, Senior Lecturer in Marketing, Nottingham Business School, Nottingham Trent University, UK; Associate Professor Kakhaber Djakeli, Faculty of Business Management, International Black Sea University, Georgia; Dr. Jenny Lloyd, Senior Teaching Fellow, Management, University of Bristol, UK; Dr. Peter Reeves, Lecturer, Salford Business School, UK and Associate Professor Dan Laufer, Associate Professor Department of Marketing, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

3.1.2 Helps Marketers Understand Politics, Emotive and Personal Marketing

Consumers make political decisions about their commercial products, Bif several companies can provide me with a high quality running shoe and are mainly differentiated on image why wouldn't I support the one that shares my beliefs?^ Thus, understanding political marketing informs how to create marketing campaigns which connect to politics (Bendle). It also showcases the importance of emotive and personal marketing: it Breminds marketing researchers that politics is an emotive and personal subject for stakeholders and adopting a sensitive, reflective approach throughout all stages of a project will reveal deeper insight^ (Pich). Marketing a candidate, who is a person not a product, is Bvastly different from marketing products, services, events, organizations, etc. Marketers are challenged by this form of personal marketing^ (Spiller).

3.1.3 Enhances the Understanding of Unusual Markets, More Challenging Stakeholders

Political marketing research thus helps marketers understand application of marketing to diverse contexts: Bwhile political contexts differ they often are winner takes all which contrasts nicely with much commercial marketing which is rarely winner takes all... Political marketing provides an example of marketing with different rules^ (Bendle). Politics is also ideological and this understanding can Bbe used for any product/service where there is a need to consider more explicitly a wider set of stakeholders beyond the usual suspects^ (Baines). Politics also presents great uncertainty: Bthe rules and laws of political marketing are lacking, compared with all other forms of marketing...

Political candidates must 'be all things to all people' as they seek the votes of the mass audience^ and Bconsumers cannot return their vote if the candidate that they vote for do not live up to his/her campaign promises. There is not consumer recourse^ (Spiller).

3.1.4 Encourages Diversity in Marketing Research

Lastly, but not least, political marketing helps Bmarketing research continues to evolve^ and promotes diversity in research: Bthe application of political marketing within marketing research shows the academic and practitioner community that marketing is a broad church and rich landscape bursting with different fields, streams, and areas. This diversity must be celebrated and explored^ (Pich).

3.2 Why Marketing Academics Should Research Political Marketing

3.2.1 Because Politics Is Just Like Marketing and Business Is Just Like Politics

While there are obvious differences, Bmany things in politics can be explained from the point of markets and marketing... segmentation, targeting, positioning, and differentiation... all this is... marketing!^ (Djakeli). For that matter, Bmarketing concepts theories and frameworks have been employed by political stakeholders for centuries as a way to understand the wants and needs of voters, communicate their ideology and political campaigns and build-maintain relationships with citizens^ (Pich). Concepts are transferrable from business to politics: for example, one colleague noted how Bconcepts from attribution theory can also be used to examine issues relating to attributions of blame for policy failures^ (Laufer). Indeed, market research was pioneered

and tested in politics before business such as B(track and trace for example, developed in the 1970s[^] and Bpolitical marketing popularised focus group use although it was used extensively in advertising before that[^] (Baines).

Similarly business can learn from politics. For example, Bcommercial marketing is more than ever exposed to negative comment, politics has long operated in such a critical environment so commercial marketing researchers may be able to learn how political parties have operated in this critical environment[^](Reeves). Political marketing helps scholars understand politics in business: Bbusiness is political ultimately[^] and the Bmarketplace has a set of micro- and macro-political constraints which must be negotiated by companies[^](Baines). This is why marketers run a PEST (Political, Economic, Social, and Technological factors of the external macro-environment) analysis: Bgiven that virtually all marketing academics at some stage or another have seen the PEST analysis, taught it, run it or marked it, the opportunity in political marketing is to be able to engage one of the key areas of the PEST on our own terms[^] (Dann).

3.2.2 To Expand the Marketing Discipline, Your Own Thinking, and Keeps You Fresh

Researching political marketing helps academics' business marketing work: Bit offers the opportunity to revisit or expand on core theories and frameworks to a unique setting, which in turn will expand not only the sub-discipline of political marketing but also the mother-discipline of marketing[^] (Pich). It helps scholars to become more agile: Bpolitical marketing challenges marketers to think outside the box. Sometimes, way outside the box!... [it] is unlike the marketing of most products and services as it is not only a unique form of personal marketing, but one that doesn't aim to reach and influence a single target market... I've personally grown as a marketer and a scholar by embarking on political marketing research and writing. Seeing marketing principles and theories applied in different ways is always intriguing[^] (Spiller). Marketing scholars will be able to sharpen Btheir scientific methodologies[^] in the very Bcomplicated markets of products and services[^] that political marketing presents. Because the political product Bis very different,[^] BPolitical Marketing Research must mostly work with hope, promise, fulfilment of promises, expectations and something like augmented products than functional products in Political Marketing Research[^] (Djakeli).

3.2.3 To Gain Pragmatic Benefits Such as Media Exposure

Lastly, colleagues note that their political marketing Boffers a much better opportunity for academics to gain media profile, whether this be through TV appearances, press and radio interviews, or by writing articles for popular outlets[^] (Baines).

3.2.4 To Fulfill the Social Obligation to Study the Marketing of Politics Which Has a Profound Influence on Society

The significant ethical issues from marketing politics and government may be especially fascinating to scholars interested in marketing ethics and also anti-consumption. But all should pay attention to this area. BPolitics affects everything from the moment we are conceived (i.e., the availability of anti-natal health care) to well after we die (i.e., inheritance tax)[^] (Lloyd) and Bwho is in the White House can change the world for better or worse, and if we can help understand how campaigns happen, how parties organize, how politicians interact with voters etc... we can serve our public mission to advance knowledge[^] (Bendle).

Obviously, given politics uses marketing, marketing scholars are in prime position to research and comment on this area of practice. As one scholar noted, Bmarketing academics... have the base knowledge and thus, can bring a lot more insight through their research. If not done, the quest for insight, as politicians keep seeking to enhance their marketing, shall be filled by advertising agencies and others who may not have the requisite skills to do so[^] (Mensah). Without academic input, practice may decline: Bwe're part of politics, and marketing is being used so terribly badly by political types, it's up to us to get in there and get it up to speed[^] (Dann).

In terms of social obligations, therefore, Bit is time for academics to step up and shine a light on political systems, politicians and the political 'product' that they offer. Ideally, voters should be as savvy about the political parties they choose as the food they put in their mouths or the make and model of car they choose to drive. They should be sufficiently educated to see through 'fake news' and understand the implications of policies in the short, medium and long term[^] (Lloyd). Indeed, Bnever before have all of our marketing strategies and tactics been fully utilized as they have in recent elections[^] (Spiller).

4 Conclusions

Political marketing plays a substantial and significant role in the world. Marketing influences the policies politicians pursue, the opportunities they give to people to be involved in campaigns and party organizations, the staff they employ, the way they communicate, and the way they govern and lead. It also determines who wins elections and ultimately control of government. Marketing concepts have to be adapted to suit the political environment, but they are as applicable to pursuing goals such as winning voters or achieving policy change as they are making profit.

Marketing scholars can benefit significantly by researching political marketing. Firstly, politics has similarities where marketing ideas can be applied easily. Secondly, given business has to deal with politics, and consumer decisions are

impacted by politics, understanding political marketing helps commercial marketing research. Thirdly, because politics is also different to business, with an emphasis on personal marketing and emotion, unusual markets, and more challenging stakeholders, political marketing research helps marketers understand and appreciate complexity and atypical environments. Fourthly, politics can also help scholars more deeply understand public behavior, given the significant market research during elections. Fifthly, researching political marketing helps to expand scholars' own thinking, encouraging greater diversity and freshness benefiting the whole area.

Furthermore, big data, the impact of market research on leadership, and the need for simplistic communication are just some of the democratic/ethical questions of marketing in politics and government. This creates a moral argument for marketing scholars to research political marketing. When practitioners use marketing so pervasively, who better to critique this than those whose understanding of marketing is comprehensive? There are significant pragmatic and principled reasons for marketing scholars to research political marketing.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Conflict of Interest The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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