

Chapter 28

The Internet, Social Media, and Knowledge Production and Development of Political Marketing

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ABSTRACT

Though the use and development of the Internet, World Wide Web and social media and their impacts on politics have been robustly investigated, specific attention has not yet been paid to explore the impact of adaptation and use of social media by political actors and organizations on the knowledge production and generation of political marketing. In order to fill this knowledge gap, a conceptual framework to explore modes of knowledge production and generation of political marketing has been proposed. The transcendental realism approach postulated by Bhaskar (1998, 2008) and the meta-theoretical assumptions of political marketing proposed by Henneberg (2008) were adopted. A content analysis of 320 articles of Journal of Political Marketing published in between 2002 and 2015 was carried out. This work reveals that the adaptation and use of the Internet and social media have been accounted for in producing and generating the operational or the rudimentary-conceptual or the established-conceptual knowledge of political marketing.

INTRODUCTION

The adaptation and use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), especially the Internet, various websites and social media, have provided various impacts on individuals, society and organisations at large. These developments and their impacts on knowledge management—in general—and knowledge production, and sharing—in particular—have been studied. Nonetheless, such developments and their effects on politics, political communication and campaigning have been robustly undertaken

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as well. However, a specific research has not yet been undertaken to discuss the impact of the adaptation and use of social media platforms on knowledge production and generation of political marketing.

In addressing this issue, this work postulates following propositions. *Firstly*, the development of media, as a medium of political exchange and interaction and the adaptation and use of ICTs and the Internet by political actors and organisations, as a strategic communication tool and platform in the political sphere, have influenced the knowledge production and generation of political marketing. *Secondly*, there have been two-fold dynamic conditions that determine on how and the extent to which social media have impacted on the knowledge production and development of political marketing. The first one is modes and degrees of the adaptation and use of the Internet, websites and social media by political actors and organizations, while the second one is the ways political marketing scholars have captured and theorised these actors and organisations when they have adopted and used the Internet, websites and social media during the elections and post the elections. *Thirdly*, political marketing scholars whose work has been published in Journal of Political Marketing have been considered to assess the adaptation and uses of social media. The focus was to explore whether they have created and generated the practical or the rudimentary-conceptual or the established-conceptual knowledge of political marketing. However, they have not yet accounted for the various modes of adaptation and use of social media for producing and generating the systemic knowledge of political marketing.

Based on these propositions, the following points will be discussed in this chapter. The first section will examine the media, ICT developments and their impact on political marketing. The second section will propose a conceptual framework that examines modes of knowledge production and generation and its application in the field of political marketing. The third section will spell out the transcendental realism perspective, meta-theoretical assumptions of political marketing and research design. The fourth and fifth sections will explore how, in which ways and the extent to which the Internet and social media has been accounted for in knowledge production and generation of political marketing. The last section will present the conclusions and research recommendations.

THE MEDIA, ICT DEVELOPMENTS, AND POLITICAL MARKETING

The changing landscapes of the media, the development of ICT and the adaptation of the Internet have carved a huge impact on politics, political marketing and campaigning. They have been widely seen of being important as essential factors that determine not only the strategies and practices of political marketing, but also the development of theories and concepts of political marketing (Lees-Marshment, 2001, 2004, 2008; Stromback, 2007; Stromback, et.al, 2012; Ormrod, 2005, 2007, 2009, 2011; Ormrod & Henneberg, 2009, 2010a, 2010b). Some researchers have suggested that they need to be taken into further account practices of political marketing and to develop theories and concepts of political marketing (Harrop, 1990: 227; Lock & Harris, 1996: 21; Henneberg & O' Shaughnessy, 2007: 22; Henneberg, 2008: 171; O'Shaughnessy, 2010: 1050-1051; Temple & Savigny, 2010; Temple, 2013).

Political marketing scholars so far have accounted the development of ICT and the adaptation of the Internet using diverse political marketing perspective. Collins and Butler (1996) and Butler and Collins (1999) have considered the media as a vital element for developing the positioning strategies of political parties in the political market. Moreover, Wring (1997, 2005), and Lilleker (2006) have placed the media as an important element when political parties have followed either the selling-orientation or the market-orientation. Additionally, Lees-Marshment (2000; 2001, 2004, 2008) and Lilleker and Lees-

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