

## Is political marketing new words or new practice in UK politics?<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

This review of the literature on political marketing and the party most associated with it in the UK, New Labour, suggests that the relationship is not straightforward. Politicians are, for example, hesitant to use marketing language in public. The relationship is problematised along the three dimensions of: partial or total import into some or all of politics; functional or instrumental use by leading politicians, and the roles of transformer of politics, or transfer agent for techniques. The results suggest two responses. The first is more fieldwork into political marketing outside of electoral campaigning and inside policy making. The second is a reconceptualising of the relationship away from the transformation or transfer dimension, and towards political marketing as a methodology for understanding a very different, and very separate activity, namely politics.

### Background

The growth of references in the UK literature to political marketing since the 1980s suggests a transfer of marketing concepts and language into the practice of politics. Questions raised are - who is using political marketing language; is the transfer one of language only; is practice as well as language being transferred; and could the discipline of commercial marketing be related to politics in a way other than the present one?

These questions are set against the background of the current 'marketisation' of UK culture, a process which became noticeable in business in the early 1980s. This is the process by which many diverse human activities, far from the traditional sites of buying and selling, have become markets (sometimes disguised), or in a weaker form, have taken on market-like features. This process is expressive of a promotional culture (Wenick, 1991) where the majority of messages circulating in a social system are self-interested. For example, churches employ advertising agents and have ad campaigns; universities have marketing departments and talk about students as customers, as do railways about people who were once called travellers. When language changes, there is sometimes - but not always - behaviour change and so social activities are transformed.

Such a transformation is illustrated by the startling example below, found in a conference paper about Hungarian elections submitted to a political marketing conference in 2003. 'The switch to the marketing approach meant that politics became business, where success mainly depends on professional communications skills and unique Public Relations strategies. The final goal is to project the most positive image of the political candidate and the party and to sell them with the biggest possible profit. The profit is the voters' support and the winning of elections'. The underlinings are by this author, done to signal a possible radical conclusion to the questioning done here. Have UK politics become marketing by another name?

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<sup>1</sup> Development of a paper given at the Political Studies Association conference, April 2004, at Lincoln.

### **Who is using political marketing language?**

The public often talk about politicians 'selling' policies and events and it may be that voters see an identity between politicians and salesmen and are most at ease with it. Among academics and party professionals, there is differential use, with academics more frequent users of the language than professionals.<sup>2</sup> There is some anecdotal evidence about this hesitancy over public usage by the latter<sup>3</sup>, and Lilleker (2003) offers an explanation about the UK Labour Party. He notes that commercial marketing was the background of many 'who advise the party on campaigning, but it appears that such tactics [targetting groups of voters] lead to severe disaffection within the context of political campaigns'. He reports that MPs avoid the phrase because of its manipulative connotations, and because of suspicion of association with a Downsian view of democracy. But he notes that MPs say they must listen to voters (just as a CEO would listen to customers) and that they use polls. Bartle (cited in O'Shaughnessey, 2002, p. 46) gives an intra-party reason for not using the phrase. He writes that Labour Party members are suspicious of marketing: because of the type of person who practises it; because it promotes capitalism; because if marketing discovers what voters want, the policy-making role of trade unionists and party members would be reduced. Kavanagh (1995, p. 78) makes a similar point about suspicion towards communications professionals by Labour traditionalists who would respond in the style of: 'Labour was the party of the working class, which constituted by far the majority of the electorate: it had to "get out the vote", which it would do by good organisation and by enthusing the party workers with policy leaflets and documents'. This grassroots level of contact has long been supplemented by a national apparatus for monitoring opinion, the intellectual climate, and inserting Labour policies into the media. There was a research department (founded in 1921), a news management operation (at least since 1945; see Williams [1946]) and associated think tanks for policy development (e.g. The Fabian Society, founded 1892). (The Conservative research department appeared in 1929.)

From the early 1980s marketing ideas presented to the party by the modernisers as a way out of failure and into winning elections. They were seen as a relevant import from business, at a time when the Thatcher administrations were favouring capitalist interests and developing a cult of markets and of business. Lilleker (2004, p. 23) puts it this way: 'Perhaps it is natural that marketing is seen to offer so much potential within the post-modern era of capitalist triumphalism'. It is arguable, therefore, that marketing had several types of attraction for the party as a whole. Psychologically, it was a connection with the dominant and successful culture of business.

Methodologically, it was a possible method for finding winning policies, and in terms of control and command strategy, marketing was an activity not controlled by Old Labour. It could be that the power instincts of the New Labour modernisers were an important driver for importing political marketing. Surveying the party's use of

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<sup>2</sup> The Emerald Management Reviews database showed 320 matchings of 'politics' and 'marketing' (08. 7. 03). The ABI/Inform database indicated 50; BIBS 24 on the same date. On the PSA database – 84 matchings.

<sup>3</sup> Steven Lawther of the Scottish Labour Party gave a talk at the Political Marketing Conference, September 18-20, 2002, Aberdeen. He told the author after the meeting that politicians of his party did not use marketing terms in meetings. Another political worker, Thomas N. Edmonds for the American Republican Party, reported privately, after his talk on Bush unilateralism at the 2003 Political Marketing Conference, that he did not hear marketing language used in private by politicians and workers in the US. He had not heard the term 'brand' used by politicians; that the phrase 'political marketing' was relatively unknown, and that 'political management' was favoured instead, Mr Edmonds is a noted Republican political consultant associated with the Bush presidencies and he spoke to the author after his presentation at Portcullis House, London, September 19, 2003. He works for Edmonds Hackney & Associates.

focus groups and release of findings, Wring (2003, p. 3) judges that 'Far from being peripheral presentational exercises, the adoption of a marketing driven approach became integral to the leadership's reassertion of control'. Indeed his review can be read as an account of tactics by Labour 'modernisers' against 'traditionalists' from the late 1980s until and beyond the 1997 Labour victory. This is marketing as a resource for party infighting. Indeed, Wring (2001) notes that more powerful party leaderships may be the most significant outcome of more professional political communications.

Finally a historical note on language use. One phrase much used in political marketing today was not used some thirty years ago; before the 1960s, a focus group was a 'discussion group' and it had the same function. The Times reported, for example, the following in 1948 about preparing for a general election: 'Labour Party headquarters asked local parties to make use of discussion groups in considering [industrial democracy] and to send comments to the party's research department'. Political parties had to wait until the late 1960s and early 1970s before they could import the term for it was only then that 'focus group' was used by business (Greenbaum 1998, p. 167).<sup>4</sup>

### **Is the transfer only of language and not of practice?**

Election campaigns, policy development, and policy delivery can be conceptualised as the three building blocks of modern democratic politics. They are not new activities; they have been done before the 1980s and pre-political marketing concepts and language have been used to describe them. These earlier descriptors (in the UK) for electoral work include party propaganda; political publicity; political public relations; electioneering; campaigning, and winning elections ('getting the vote out'). For policy development and delivery, earlier terms include public debate; public consultation; consulting experts; following public opinion; moulding public opinion; keeping manifesto promises, and 'doing the right thing by the country'.

O'Shaughnessy notes in The Idea of Political Marketing (2002, p. 213) this replacement of older terms by the phrase 'political marketing'. He says that the phrase political marketing '... has become a useful hold-all, a glad-bag of disparate entities that at an earlier phase in history would have been called "populism" or propaganda". If used in a 'strictly business context', the phrase would be called corporate communications or public relations, he adds. In the same text, the unnamed authors of the introduction note that political marketing is criticised by some political scientists as 'an ascription of new labels to old truths' (p. xv). Kavanagh (1995) makes a point which can be interpreted this way. His book's subtitle is 'The New Marketing of Politics' and he lists (p. 9) the activities making up 'a new professionalization of campaign communications' as 'advertising, public relations, opinion polling, and marketing strategies'. The first three have been widely used by parties since the 1960s, and it is not spelt out what 'marketing strategies' means.

### **Is the transfer one of practice as well as language?**

Does it matter that descriptors of underlying political processes in a democracy change over time? Looked at from the operational viewpoint of doing politics, perhaps the answer is 'not much' if users and observers agree the meaning of the new descriptors. They can then dispute whether established practice is accurately covered by these descriptors. But the usage of the phrase 'political marketing' would

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<sup>4</sup> And not until the 1980s was it used by the social sciences (Miller & Brewer 2003, p. 120).

matter much more if it described new, previously unknown activity for election campaigns, and for policy development and delivery. If this was happening, political practice would be transformed because new modes of thinking and practice were being imported from another field.

Both enthusiasts and sceptics of political marketing face a common obstacle at this point and it is the difficulty of distinguishing between previously unknown activity imported into politics from outside, and existing activity reformed from within after observing outsiders. Take what is today called 'targetting voters' and 'voter ID profiling' by the Labour Party. In the 1960s and 1970s, when telephones were not in wide ownership and telephone canvassing was unheard of, local parties did door-to-door 'canvassing' in working class areas and 'floating' voter areas, and kept the results for election day when Labour voters' addresses were transferred to 'Reading pads', and given to activists for 'knocking up', i.e. 'getting the vote out'. The canvassing was often done on Sunday mornings by small teams of activists. There was no telephone canvassing then and if that technological dimension is stripped out, how is that past practice different in purpose from modern practice as a method of identifying support?<sup>5</sup>

Another then-and-now comparison is in the area of national polling. A Mori internet note (2000) recounts that political polling started in the UK in 1937, and that in 1938 Gallup was testing the '. . . public's satisfaction with the Prime Minister . . .' (p. 1) and in 1939, '. . . the first national voting intention question was introduced . . .' (ibid). Is modern polling of the public technically different from yesterday's 'political polling' Indeed, could it be that polling for politics influenced polling for marketing? What, also, is the difference between yesterday's 'floating' voter and today's 'swing' voter?

A distinctive, new political activity without a history of disputed parentage would be the use of commercial marketing techniques in policy development. Here are three references which argue it but do not demonstrate it. Wring writes in O'Shaughnessey (p.175) about the political 'product' having three components – party image; leader image and manifesto (i.e policy commitments) but most of his chapter is about the first two components. His chapter is entitled 'A Framework for Election-Campaign Analysis' and he sees the political marketing process as one based on (and adopted from Niffenegger [1990]) the marketing mix of the 4Ps which a party presents to its 'market' of supporters, floating voters and opponents. The index does not credit Wring's use of 'policy': instead it refers to nine references about 'policy-making' by Bartle in his chapter. The most interesting one is on p. 55. It refers to the setting up of policy review groups after the 1987 Labour defeat. This move meant that 'At last, slowly . . . policy-making and marketing were becoming integrated, as effective policy-making power passed back from the Annual Conference to the leader'. This is an interesting statement because it is a reminder that most texts (read by this author) on political marketing locate the subject as a party headquarters activity, done by professionals who are controlled by party leaderships. Have regional parties marketing competence? If not, how do local authorities make policy? It is also interesting because Bartle does not elaborate on how or which policies were 'integrated' with political marketing. The third reference is to Lees-Marshment and Lilleker (2001, p. 211) who have also identified a point of integration between policy-making by marketing and policy-making by party debate. It is to use

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<sup>5</sup> Sources of this description are the author's activism in Labour Party politics in the 1960s and 1970s, and second his observation of local and regional party campaigning.

marketing presentational skills to persuade party members about market-researched policy.

How does the sceptic interpret these references to a marketing link with policy? Wring has not sustained his argument<sup>6</sup>. Bartle's statement suggests the existence of marketing-for-policy-development at national level but it is not supported with evidence. Lees-Marshment and Lilleker need to give examples of 'product adjustment' to policies, because what they suggest is called 'tweaking' in pre-marketing language.

### **The Lees-Marshment model and policy-by-marketing**

Lees-Marshment is foremost in the development of a literal theory of political marketing and offers it in Political marketing the British political parties (2001)<sup>7</sup>. What role has she assigned to policy making? Policies are an element in one of the four components of 'product' (p. 27). The organisational site of her theory is the party and she lists three types - the product-, sales-, and marketing-orientated party. In chapters 3-5, she analyses exemplars of these models in modern British politics. About the Thatcherite Conservative Party (ch. 2 'Thatcher the marketing pioneer') she says, significantly for this argument, that 'While Margaret Thatcher was leader, little attention was paid to new policy design' (p. 90). About Labour, she argues that in 1979 the party made policy proposals which did not reflect voters' opinions (p. 97). The Conservatives made a similar mistake in 1997 (p.108). Labour in the 1983 election was a product orientated party (pp. 120-4) and many of the 'party's policies were disliked by voters' (p. 124). In 1987, Labour changed many policies but did not 'remove all the unpopular policies' (p. 138). She notes that Labour used market intelligence to review policy after the 1987 defeat (p.149) but again there is a lack of evidence about which policies were reviewed and how marketing changed them. However it was done, most 'unpopular policies' had gone by 1992 (p. 155).

This detailing of how the two larger parties have changed or not changed policies before elections shows that Lees-Marshment has asserted but not defined a role for policy in her marketing model. Examples of marketing-developed policy are not prominent, even though she states (p.2) that 'Political marketing can be applied comprehensively to all aspects of political behaviour'. Moreover, her field data is mostly about parties and not government<sup>8</sup>.

She explicitly confirms that political marketing has tight operational boundaries for she lists what a 'party' can do with marketing outside of 'how it sells itself'. She notes that academics since the 1990s put their 'majority focus on campaigns and communication', but that political marketing needs 'to be pushed beyond the confines of political communication'. She may have had in mind the title of Wring's chapter 'The Marketing Colonisation of Political Campaigning' (pp. 41-54) in the Handbook of Political Marketing (Newman, 1999). If she also scanned the book's contents pages, she would find that 'campaign', 'campaigning', 'candidate', 'poll', 'election', 'media' all make multiple appearances. The text is principally about describing and inventing tactics to win elections.

More confirmation of narrow boundaries comes in her own (2001) text when she goes on to list (p. 229) fields for expansion - local government, Parliament, the civil

<sup>6</sup> Wring rebuts this conclusion by noting his reference to the Party's policy review. See his 2005 book on the history of that mechanism.

<sup>7</sup> Lees-Marshment read a draft of this paper and contests some of the points made.

<sup>8</sup> Her 2003 work does not add more evidence for marketing-as-policy-making.

service, public policy, the public services and 'even the media'. She adds that wherever political marketing is located or expands to, it will be differential over time for 'Marketing, like elections, are cyclical' (p. 217). She takes up the theme of boundary breaking again (2003) with the assertion "The ramifications of this phenomenon [political marketing] may indeed be phenomenal: marketing could transform, or may already have transformed, the nature of politics as we know it.' (p. 3)

It could be argued that Lees-Marshment's assertion of policy-by-marketing is a reductionist approach to policy change by parties/governments. There is little room in her thesis for competing explanations. For example, it could be that the shock of defeat brings policy changes to parties. Labour and Conservative party members did not need the quantification of 'market intelligence' about policy in 1983, 1987, 1992, 1997 for there to be change: the balance of votes between the parties was as strong a signal for change as any market intelligence. Historically parties have changed policy before and after elections, in and out of power for mixed reasons of conviction, opportunism and *raison d'état*, e.g. the Conservatives on free trade in the 1840s and early 1900s; empire in the 1870s; war with the Nazis in 1940, and Suez in 1956; Labour on public expenditure levels in 1929; pacificism in the late 1930s; trade union reform in the 1960s; European integration in the 1970s, and privatisation in the 1990s. These changes occurred before the rise of commercial marketing in the UK in the 1980s. Marketing is the consequence of a historically located type of capitalist, political economy, first associated with neo-liberal, Anglo-American governments from the late 1970s. How is policy change explained before the rise of marketing if its ideas and practices were not available to these earlier parties and governments? Has another methodology for policy change been lost? What was it?

There are other influences in politics to account for that change. Ideological shifts, experience in government, party in-fighting, electoral opportunism are competing explanations, and a fuller account of political marketing needs to relate to them, before it eliminates them. It could be that the distinction between language use and underlying practice needs to be brought back in here. Modern parties may choose to say, with less than full regard to the truth, that 'political marketing' changed policy on the grounds that such a public explanation causes less internal division and less embarrassment than others. Kavanagh (1995, p. 149) makes a similar point; 'It is possible to exaggerate the electoral impact of the package of polls, broadcasts, speeches, and advertisements, compared to political factors, events or economic conditions'. Bartle (2002, p. 173-5) also points to the primacy of politics when he analyses the improved performance of the Liberal Democrats in the 2001 general election: 'If the evidence of the polls is taken at face value, then it appears that the only party able to claim that it "won" the campaign was the Liberal Democrats, the party that had the least to spend on complex market research and communications'.

Finally, it is arguable that the insistence of political marketers that politicians should do as businesses do when developing new products and service is based on a naïve understanding of what happens in markets. The naivety is that the business person is passive about what to offer, and that she is principally reactive to market wants. Posner has described the situation otherwise. He (2003, p. 194) argues that both the political 'seller' and the commercial seller are making offers initiated by themselves to a largely reactive audience of voter/consumers. 'Critics of American democracy deride politicians as panderers to the uninformed preferences of the average citizen. . . There are sellers and sellers. The most interesting are those who seek to create (in order, of course, to then be able to satisfy - at a price) new desires

in consumers. The consuming public did not know that it wanted automobiles . . . The voting public did not know that it wanted social security . . .'.<sup>9</sup> Henneberg<sup>10</sup> (2003, p. 9), in his defence of political marketing, also notes the active stance of the politician. He writes that the ' . . . the dialectical interplay of market-driven and market-driving behaviour characterises successful (political) marketing management in term of building long-term relationships. An element of 'leading' complements an emphasis on following and satisfying customer needs and wants'. A witness of Blair's policy making behaviour over the second Iraq war wants a similar point. Alan Milburn, the re-instated Cabinet minister charged in September 2004 with co-ordinating Labour's general election manifesto, writes about the run-up to the war that 'The man I know is driven not by focus groups but by moral focus. If anything, his value-led sense of purpose, so clear on the international stage, needs to become more apparent on the domestic agenda'.<sup>11</sup>

The UK political class, in so far that it copies the behaviour of sellers, is not passive before the voter. There is policy input from civil servants, interest and cause groups, academics, party researchers. Those policies may, or may not, have been subject to previous private consultation (or testing as the marketeers would put it) with party members or with the public via polling and focus groups; but even so, the offerings are invariably 'seller' initiated and presented as 'what's right for the country'. Moreover, policy may or may not have been endorsed by an election victory. This is a much more complicated process than commercial marketing and its complexity is well illustrated by government policy-making on top-up fees for universities (November-January 2003-4). Few business people would recognise that byzantine process as marketing.

### **Other views on practice transfer**

Other apologists for political marketing, besides Lees-Marshment, note current boundaries of political marketing thinking and practice but are more cautious about expansion beyond them. Butler and Collins (1999, pp. 70-71) cited Ware's warning (1996) that making politics and marketing analogous is of limited usefulness for 'ultimately, politics is about state power and moral choices'. They further add: 'It seems safe to say that the effect of marketing strategies on voting is usually marginal' (ibid). Their conceptual framework (p. 57) demonstrates their own note of caution about the limits of analogy. For example, their descriptor 'political product' in table 4. 1 of 'The Structural and Process Characteristics of Political Marketing' has three features: a multi-component entity with person, party and ideology elements; a loyalty feature, and thirdly mutability. The explanatory power of this characterisation has its utility in the field of electoral campaigns, but it is hard to know whether their 'political product' includes policy, or to see how it could help with more arcane policy dimensions such as administrative structures and equity issues.

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<sup>9</sup> Also see pp. 188-203 for an economic interpretation of representative, pluralist models of democracy.

<sup>10</sup> Henneberg has done the critic, sceptic and endorser of political marketing the service of elegantly codifying the negative literature about it into 11 categories, four of which this paper would appear to fall under. They are that political marketing has made politics more populist; has a different mindset to politics; focuses on communications and campaigns, and is not part of the marketing domain.

<sup>11</sup> Milburn was reviewing two books about UK policy making and the second Iraq war. He is usually indentified as a Blairite in Labour Party terms.

There is, however, another way of looking at Bulter and Collins's model and it is one which touches on the transformation and transfer question raised earlier: does political marketing theory posit that politics is marketing (now or shortly); or that it is like marketing? For example, they write 'Here, we are attempting to capture the peculiar process aspects of politics that would be of concern to marketing observers and practitioners in "going to market"' (ibid). This phrasing suggests an outsider – the marketeer - watching a discipline different to their own but noting similarities.

The same authors, Collins and Butler, maintain the tendency towards concentration on elections in their contribution (ch. 1, pp. 1-2) to the O'Shaughnessy (2002) edition. They say that an analysis of the 'political/marketing competitive arena' can provide strategic insight. They draw on the business strategy literature about firms' relationships to their markets (leader, challenger, follower, and nicher): this will offer a 'competitive positioning map' which will enable the development of a strategy and will enable marketing frameworks to be applied effectively to political campaign management. Their model, however, does not '... highlight the usual political-science questions of accountability, responsibility and electoral legitimacy . . .'

The anonymous authors of the introduction (p. xviii) to the O'Shaughnessy edition also note narrow boundaries: 'Political marketing works because of the apoliticality of most voters, who are cognitive misers and who are thereby inadvertent consumers of political information'. Bartle in his chapter entitled 'The Marketing of Labour' concludes (p. 63) even more modestly on behalf of political marketing. It is an open question whether 'the New Labour' phenomenon or the ERM crisis contributed most to Labour's 1997 landslide victory. Finally let us note Newman (1999) and Marland (2003). The former is editor of the Handbook of Political Marketing and he offers a bounded definition. The second sentence of his preface is: 'Political marketing is the application of marketing principles and procedures in political campaigns by various individuals and organisations' (p. xiii). (The index of the handbook carries 14 references to 'policy', and five to 'policy making'.) Marland (2003, p. 103) writes that '... the application of marketing to politics may require the rethinking of ingrained electoral jargon and concepts'. Note the word 'electoral'. Seyd (2002, pp. 97-102) has recounted the new policy making arrangements in the Labour Party since 1994, and he does not discuss any role for marketing.

### **More words than practice**

The analysis presented here suggests that there is a transfer of a small number of terms (e.g. 'positioning', 'product', 'targetting', 'service delivery') but of very few practices (e.g. stunts?) from commercial marketing into politics. The latter are concerned with maximising votes. Any practice transfer (or even language-only transfer) allows politicians to claim relevance and connectedness to a modern, market-orientated society but it is not common that they make such claims in public. It is academics who use the terminology more. The limited literature reviewed for this article suggests that researchers divide between those who see marketing-for-all-politics, and those who see marketing-for-campaigning. Lees-Marshment is in the academic vanguard calling for the fullest expansion of political marketing in order '... to lead the study of politics and demonstrate the wider applicability of marketing'. (2003, p. 29).

Overall, this transfer (whether of practice or language) is the latest appropriation by political parties of resources from another domain (this time business; previously

religion, nationalism) to win votes. Fieldwork will alone reveal whether words or practice comprise most of the transfer; whether marketing has much role outside a contribution to campaigning, and whether 'transfer' leads to the transformation of politics into a new category of marketing. Whatever the data on these matters, there is no doubting the ubiquity of marketing culture in contemporary British politics.

### **Marketing methodology as a lens for through which to study politics?**

Finally, there is another view about this transfer which is a conceptual competitor to the ones described here. It builds on Collins and Bulter's, and Ware's point above about the limits of describing politics and marketing as analogous, and it challenges the literal view of 'politics is marketing'. It is the view that when academics use the phrase 'political marketing' we should instead mean a methodological transfer: namely that if we take marketing ways of viewing behaviour, and import them into the foreign domain of politics to describe, analyse and predict, we will have a new way of thinking about politics. Such a view of the transfer is independent of, and agnostic about, whether politicians think, speak, practise marketing. Such a view assumes politics exists outside of marketing in its essence and in most of its practices, but that the marketing mindset and its method(s) illuminate politics from another ontology in a way which resonates strongly with the dominant, marketing, contemporary culture.

This paper has briefly looked at the transfer as language and practice, and even more briefly as history. It has seen political marketing as an intervention and as a change agent in politics. To look at it as a methodology transfer is to leave those roles and see the phrase as a descriptor for developing another perspective on politics. Such an approach would have some parallel with that of Anthony Downs. He notes in his introduction to The Economic Base of Democracy (1957) that little contemporaneous '... progress has been made toward a generalised yet realistic behavior rule for a rational government similar to the rules traditionally used for rational consumers and producers' (p. 3). Note his use of 'similar'. He says that his thesis '... is an attempt to provide such a behaviour rule for government'<sup>12</sup>.

Downs's thesis is rational choice theory applied to democracy theory. He writes (p. 14) 'Thus our model could be described as a study of political rationality from an economic point of view' and that 'By comparing the picture of rational behaviour which emerges from this [Downs's] study with what is known about actual political behavior, interesting conclusions can be drawn about democratic policy'. Note above the phrase 'study of political rationality'. He is not saying that politics is economics but looking for 'interesting conclusions' through the application of a behavioural rule. His rule was a methodology used in economics - the rationality concept. His book does not, of course, reference 'marketing' and if he had been aware of it as the applied economics of supply and demand, it is as unlikely that he would have written of 'political marketing' as it is that he would have written of (but did not) 'economic politics'.

Should our study of political marketing stop seeking evidence for politics-marketing identity, politics-marketing similarities or marketing-transformation of politics, and seek instead a 'realistic behavioural rule which facilitates 'interesting conclusions' about contemporary democratic politics?

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<sup>12</sup> He argues for applying the rationality of economics to politics, where 'rationality' means efficiency in terms of maximising output from a given input (p. 5), and where it refers to '... processes of action, not to their ends or even to their success at reaching desired ends' (p. 6). He summarised his theory (p. 300) as parties acting to maximise votes on the assumption that citizens behave rationally in politics.

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