

Antecedents of political market orientation in Britain and Sweden: analysis and future research propositions

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- *During the last 20 years, political marketing has become a widespread phenomenon around the world. However, most of the research concerning political marketing has been carried out in countries such as the United States and Britain. Thus, in order to understand the antecedents of political marketing, as well as its effectiveness as an electoral strategy, there is a need for comparative research including countries that differ significantly from the U.S. and Britain.*
- *One such country is Sweden. Thus, the purpose of this article is to compare and analyze Sweden and Britain with regard to two analytical research questions: (1) What differences are there between Britain and Sweden that might be relevant in understanding why parties choose to be sales- or market-oriented? (2) What are the implications with regards to differences between countries and between parties within countries that might help to explain why some parties in some countries are more likely than others to be market-oriented?*

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Introduction

During the last decades, political marketing appears to have become a widespread phenomenon. Increasingly, parties or candidates in different countries appear to think that, just as in commercial markets, the greater the market orientation of a party or a campaign, the higher its performance in the electoral arena. This view also gains support from some scholars (Lees-Marshment, 2001).

As yet, however, most of the research has been carried out in countries such as the United States and Britain (but see Lilleker and Lees-Marshment, 2005; Plasser and Plasser, 2002), both part of the *Liberal Model* of media and political systems (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). Although there are differences between these two countries, they also share some relevant characteristics within the context of political marketing and communication. For example, the effective number of parties is small, the media system is highly commercialized and competitive, and the electoral system fosters an individualized form of political representation.

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These and other characteristics of the U.S. and Britain means that it is an open question as to whether the lessons learned regarding the effectiveness of political marketing are also valid in other countries. Thus, in order to understand the phenomenon of political marketing, there is a need for comparative research including countries that differ from the U.S. and Britain. One such country is Sweden.

Analytical strategy, purpose and research questions

When performing comparative studies and choosing cases to compare, one can either follow the *most similar systems design* or the *most different systems design*. This analysis follows the most different systems design.

Thus, this comparison includes Sweden and Britain. Britain is a large heterogeneous country whereas Sweden is a small and, until recently, relatively homogeneous country. In contrast to Britain, Sweden belongs to the *Democratic Corporatist Model* of media and political systems (Hallin and Mancini, 2004), it has a proportional electoral system and seven parties represented in the parliament. Furthermore, according to previous research *within* Britain (Kavanagh, 1995; Scammell, 1995; Lees-Marshment, 2001; Bartle, 2002; Wring, 2005) and Sweden (Nord and Strömbäck, 2003; Petersson *et al.*, 2006), respectively, British political parties are generally speaking more market-oriented than Swedish parties. These are only a few of the reasons why Sweden and Britain constitute significantly different cases. Comparing these significantly different countries might offer insights into political marketing and its antecedents that can be extended beyond Sweden and Britain.

The approach chosen in this article is analytical, and it is inductive rather than deductive. The first analytical question is: What differences are there between Britain and Sweden that might be relevant in understanding why parties choose to be sales- or market-oriented? In order to answer this

question, the analysis builds on a review of the existing literature. The second analytical question is: What are the implications with regards to differences *between countries* and between parties *within countries* that might help to explain why some parties in some countries are more likely than other parties to be market-oriented? Thus, the purpose of this article is to answer these two questions and to offer propositions that might guide future comparative research on political marketing.

Political market orientation: a brief explanation

For the purpose of this paper, it is necessary to briefly define what is meant by the term market orientation. As is often the case, several definitions can be found in the literature. At the core of most definitions, however, is that 'the needs of consumers are of primary concern and should be identified, and attempts made to satisfy the identified needs' (O'Cass, 1996, p. 38. See also Narver and Slater, 1990; Kotler and Kotler, 1999; Henneberg, 2002). Similarly, Newman (1994, p. 8) writes that 'marketing is a needs assessment approach to product innovation that relies on information from the marketplace to help guide research and development'. Thus, market-oriented organizations are characterized by their use of market intelligence to identify the wants and needs of selected target groups and the use of that market intelligence when designing and communicating the products or services.

In terms of politics, however, what constitutes the product or service is not self-evident, and it is by no means certain that voters themselves know what their needs and wants are. As Slater and Narver (1998) have emphasized, there is also a difference between expressed and latent wants and needs, and being market-oriented is not the same as being customer-led. Thus, market-oriented organizations should not focus only on the expressed wants and needs, but also on the latent wants and needs. This is no less important in the political marketplace than in the economic

marketplace. Hence, being a market-oriented political organization is not the same as slavishly following the most recent polling on the wants and needs of the voters. Rather, it is an ambition to satisfy both expressed and latent wants and needs while also ensuring that it is possible to enforce the policies.

As a consequence, political marketing is not just about campaigns and political communication. More importantly, it is about organizational principles and the design of the political product. This is particularly important with regards to party-centred systems. The more important the political parties are in a particular political system, the more important it is to appreciate the intimate link between the kind of organization behind the campaigns, and the style and strategies of the campaigns.

Thus, the important question facing political parties in different countries is not whether to conduct product-, sales- or market-oriented campaigns. The important question is whether to be a product-, sales- or market-oriented organization.

The differences between these kind of orientations—as ideal types—have been described by Lees-Marshment (2001, 2004), Henneberg and Eghbalian (2002) and Newman (1994) among others. According to Lees-Marshment (2001), a product-oriented party argues for its own ideas and policies and assumes that voters will realize that its ideas are the best ones and therefore vote for it. The ideology and the core values, as they are interpreted by the members and activists, are what matters most. Such a party could also be described as policy-oriented. A sales-oriented party basically has the same approach to the design of the political product, but places significantly more effort into ‘selling’ its ideas and policies to the electorate. Thus, a sales-oriented party attempts to make the voters want what it offers, through as extensive usage of marketing and advertizing as possible and affordable.

A market-oriented party, in contrast, makes extensive use of market intelligence, and uses this when designing a product that will satisfy the expressed and latent wants and needs of

the target groups. Thus, such a party could also be described as voter-oriented. In Newman’s work on the ‘Marketing of the President’ (1994), focusing on U.S. politics, there is also a fourth concept, namely ‘party concept’. The crucial difference here between the party concept and the product concept is whether the organization and the campaigns focus on the party or the candidates (p. 32). However, in party-centred democracies it seems reasonable to treat the party- and product concepts as basically the same. In both cases, being market-oriented is conceptually in clear opposition to being product- or party-oriented (Gummesson, 2002, p. 14), with sales orientation falling in between.

Strategic party goals on multiple arenas

If the crucial question facing a party thus is whether it should be product-, sales- or market-oriented, it is also a decision which should not be taken without considering who the primary actors are and the fact that parties are active in multiple arenas.

In this context, there is an important difference between party- and candidate-centred political systems. In the latter, it is ultimately the candidates who decide what kind of orientation the campaign should follow. In party-centred systems, the decision involves a collective body with several groups of stakeholders, such as the members and the activists. This, in turn, makes the nature of the decision to become market-oriented as well as the implementation of such a decision different and more difficult in party-centred than in candidate-centred systems.

The most important reason is that political parties in party-centred systems are active in at least four different arenas (Sjöblom, 1968; Nord and Strömbäck, 2003; see also Henneberg, 2002). Each of these has its strategic party goal, its primary actors and its specific decision types (see **Figure 1**). Assuming that the ultimate goal of a party is that the it shall make the authoritative decisions in

	Parliamentary arena	Electoral arena	Internal arena	Media arena
Party goals	Maximize parliamentary influence	Maximize electoral and voter support	Maximize internal cohesion	Maximize positive publicity
Primary actors	Members of Parliament from different parties	Citizens and those who have the right to vote	Members of and activists in the party	Journalists, editors and gatekeepers within the media
Decision types	Decisions about cooperation or conflict with one another	Decisions regarding which party or its candidates to vote for	Decisions about whether or not to support the official policies and the party leadership	Decisions about whether or not to give publicity to the party and whether the publicity should be critical or positive

Figure 1. Strategic party goals for multiple arenas.

accordance with what the party has decided is its ideology or 'evaluation system' (Sjöblom, 1968, p. 73), it follows that the party must develop strategies guiding their behaviour regarding each of these arenas. It also follows that the party must monitor and develop the relationships with the primary actors and the exchange processes regarding each of the arenas.

The implication is that parties, when considering whether to be product-, sales- or market-oriented, must take the likely consequences with regards to each of the arenas into account. Thus, a party in a party-centred democracy cannot focus exclusively on the electoral arena. Stated differently, it cannot be completely voter-oriented, if it is not accepted by the internal arena. Regardless which orientation a party wants to choose, it must consider the consequences regarding the internal arena, the media arena and the parliamentary arena, as well as the relationships with the primary actors concerning each of these. Consequently, the factors which might be decisive in explaining the extent to which being market-oriented is an effective choice of strategy, can be found within each of these arenas, as well as at a system level.

This returns us to the first analytical question, now in a re-phrased form: What differences between Britain and Sweden can be found with regards to the system level, the parliamentary arena, the electoral arena, the media arena and the internal arena, that might be relevant to understanding why, in general, British parties are more market-oriented than Swedish parties?

Comparing Britain and Sweden: the political and media systems

In their seminal analysis, Hallin and Mancini (2004) identified three models of media and politics. According to them, Sweden should be characterized as a prototype of the *Democratic Corporatist Model*, whereas Britain belongs to the *Liberal Model*.

With regards to the political systems, Sweden and Britain differ significantly. The British Westminster system is 'the classic case of a majoritarian system' (Hallin and Mancini, 2004, p. 242), whereas Sweden is a consensus-oriented system. This is partly the result of the different electoral systems, where Britain has single-member districts and a First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) electoral system, and Sweden has a

proportional electoral system. Thus, whereas there is a clear distinction between government and opposition in Britain, compromise and cooperation between the governing and opposition parties is the rule in Sweden.

Furthermore, whereas Britain has three significant parties represented in parliament, Sweden has seven parties. However, the Social Democrats are significantly stronger than all the others. In the national election of 2006, the Social Democrats won 35% of the votes, the second largest party 26% of the votes, and the smallest party 5.2% of the votes. These differences in terms of size are reflected in differences in terms of resources, with the Social Democrats spending as much as all the other parties together in the 2002 election (Strömbäck, 2004).

Since election campaigns in general, and market-oriented campaigns in particular, are expensive, this means that several Swedish parties do not have sufficient resources to conduct market-oriented campaigns. Some parties cannot even afford to conduct their own polling.

The fact that Sweden has seven parties might make it more difficult, although not impossible, for them than for their British counterparts to become market-oriented. First, a more crowded political landscape makes it more difficult for parties to highlight the uniqueness of their party in comparison to their competitors (Maarek, 1995). Second, this suggests that it is more important for parties in multi-party systems to rely on their ideological and historical policy positions and images, than for parties in systems with two or three parties. Third, and providing that most of the voters can be found in the middle of the right-left continuum, this makes it difficult for parties to choose a 'flight to the centre' as an electoral strategy—a strategy that would otherwise be a likely result if the parties were to become market-oriented (Downs, 1957; Wring, 2002). Fourth, becoming market-oriented would probably make it more difficult for the parties to mobilize their electoral bases. Finally, the uneven strengths in terms of sizes, power and resources arguably restrict the

freedom of choice for a majority of the parties, the exceptions being the largest.

With reference to the media systems in Sweden and Britain, there are both differences and similarities. One important similarity is the existence of strong public service broadcasting. However, whereas commercial TV has been allowed in Britain since the 1950s, the first commercial terrestrial TV channel in Sweden was not allowed until 1991. The British broadcasting system has thus been and still is more competitive than its Swedish counterpart.

In both countries, newspaper sales are high, even though it is considerably higher in Sweden than in Britain (Hallin and Mancini, 2004, p. 23–25). Thus, the political communication system is more reliant on newspapers in Sweden and TV in Britain (McKenzie, 2006). Also, Swedish media is not as incorporated in global media conglomerates as are British media (Croteau and Hoynes, 2001).

Another part of the media systems relates to the degree to which the structure of the media system parallels that of the party system (Hallin and Mancini, 2004, p. 26–33). In both countries, the newspapers have traditionally reflected their affiliations with the political parties. In Sweden, however, the content of news journalism no longer reflects distinct political orientations (Asp, 2003; Hadenius and Weibull, 2003), whereas in Britain, the political affiliations of the newspapers are evident even on the news pages (Franklin, 1997, 2004; McNair, 2000). Consequently, the British newspaper system seem to be characterized more by external pluralism (diversity between different media) rather than internal pluralism (diversity within different media), in contrast to the Swedish system.

A part of that pattern is that British newspaper journalists think it is more important to champion certain values and ideas, as well as to influence politics, than Swedish journalists (Donsbach and Patterson, 2004). Among broadcast news journalists, however, the same type of differences do not appear. In both countries, broadcast news journalists stress the importance of journalistic objectivity.

However, Swedish and British journalists define journalistic objectivity differently. Whereas 58% of Swedish journalists define it as 'going beyond the statements of the contending sides to the hard facts of a political dispute', the definition preferred by most British journalists (31%) is 'expressing fairly the position of each side in a political dispute' (Patterson, 1998). However, it should be noted that in both countries, there is evidence that interpretative, speculative and assertive journalism has become more common (Franklin, 1997; McNair, 2000; Strömbäck, 2004).

One final difference relates to the issue of paid political advertising on TV. In contrast to the U.S. and many other countries (Kaid and Holtz-Bacha, 2006), paid political advertising on TV is either banned or insignificant in both Britain and Sweden. In Britain, the parties are allowed to broadcast a given number of Party Election Broadcasts (PEBs) but not to purchase airtime. In Sweden, the parties are not allowed to broadcast any PEBs. However, since 2006 they are allowed to purchase airtime in some of the digital TV-channels. At the same time, so far these channels have only limited audiences. Thus, the role of paid political advertising on TV is, so far, very insignificant in Sweden.

This discussion regarding differences and similarities between Sweden and Britain is by no means exhaustive. Nevertheless, it does suggest that there are differences that might be consequential regarding the degree of market orientation among British and Swedish parties.

Comparing Britain and Sweden: the parliamentary arena

Parliamentary life and procedures are very different in Britain and Sweden. Whereas the parliamentary arena in Britain is characterized by clear distinctions and confrontations between the government and opposition, in Sweden it is characterized by cooperation and a blurring of the line between the governing party and the opposition parties. The positioning of the Swedish parties in parliament is also very structured along the left-right continuum

(Holmberg and Oscarsson, 2004). For a Swedish party, it is thus difficult to change too much, because other parties are occupying other positions. Since the largest party occupies the middle-left position, it might also be difficult for other parties to attempt to win the centrists' votes.

British parties have more opportunities to change their policy positions and their positioning on the left-right scale. The launch of 'New Labour' certainly indicated a move to the right, which would have been more difficult had the political landscape been more crowded. Moreover, no British party occupies the political centre in a manner similar to that which the Social Democrats do in Sweden. Thus, it is easier for British parties to cater for the interests and opinions of the political centre, providing that market intelligence shows that it might be a wise strategy.

Since the Swedish parliamentary arena is consensus-oriented, it also places a price on attempts by the parties to try to 'steal' the voters for other parties. Such a party would risk being punished when trying to form the cooperation necessary for the enactment of new laws and regulations.

Comparing Britain and Sweden: the media arena

In modern democracies, election campaigns are fought mainly within the media arena. This makes the skills in news management (McNair, 2000; Franklin, 2004) essential for any party wishing to succeed. The more commercialized and competitive the media landscape is, the more important it is for the parties to spin the news in a favourable way.

What is important here is that, for decades, the British media system has been more competitive and commercialized than the Swedish media system. Even allowing for the fact that the British parties can temporarily count on the support of 'their' newspapers, the importance of TV forced the British parties to develop techniques and strategies for news management at an earlier stage than their

Swedish counterparts. Thus, even though the Swedish media system has become more commercialized since the 1990s, Swedish parties still lag behind with regards to the need for and the skills required in news management.

Another aspect concerns the media coverage of politics and political campaigns. Of particular importance is the degree to which the news frames politics as a game rather than as issues, how interpretative the news is, and how adversarial towards the parties and the candidates the news is (Patterson, 1993; Norris *et al.*, 1999; McNair, 2000). Generally speaking, the more the news frames politics as a game, interprets the words and actions of politicians and adopts an adversarial stance towards the parties, the more important it is for the parties to be able to frame themselves as 'speaking for the citizens'. If they manage this successfully, for example by being market-oriented, they can make it more difficult for journalists to criticize them and to focus on aspects of the campaigns other than those issues the parties feel are important. Hence, it seems reasonable to conclude that it is more important to be market-oriented in a commercialized and competitive media system where the news in general or the election coverage in particular is highly adversarial.

Comparing Britain and Sweden: the internal arena

The internal arena is one of the most important for the parties, particularly in party-centred democracies. The primary actors here, apart from the leadership, are the members and the activists. However, there are many differences between parties, even within a country. For example, in some parties the ordinary members have a more decisive role in deciding the policies of the party than in others, and in some parties the members and activists are more ideologically oriented than in others.

Thus, the importance of the internal arena might vary between parties within a country, and between parties in different countries. As a

general rule of thumb, however, any decision to become market-oriented must be accepted and implemented within the whole organization (Kohli and Jaworski, 1990; Jaworski and Kohli, 1993; Lafferty and Hult, 2001). The party leadership cannot make such a decision without having the acceptance of the party members.

Looking at the British case and the Labour party under the leadership of Tony Blair, it is often discussed as a rather pure example of a market-oriented party (Lees-Marshment, 2001). However, it is important to note that the creation of the new Labour was never an easy journey. On the contrary, it took several electoral defeats before the party and its activists realized that they had to change not just their communications and images, but also the party itself, in order to win elections and be able to realize their policies in government (Scammell, 1995; Wring, 2005).

Since the electoral defeats from 1997, the Conservatives have had similar internal conflicts. Some think that the Conservatives should stay loyal to their core values and history, that is be product-oriented. Others think that it is sufficient if the party manages to sell its policies better. Some, however, think that the party must change its policies and image in response to the needs and wants of their target groups. If the latter groups win the argument, it will probably be because of rising desperation due to continued electoral defeats.

For several reasons, the situation in Sweden is different. First, the political landscape is more crowded, making it difficult for the parties to change policies in major ways. Second, with the exception of the periods between 1976-1982, 1991-1994 and after the election in 2006, the Social Democrats have been the governing party, alone or in coalition, since World War II. No party anticipates that it will be able to form a single-party government. The only opportunity for the non-socialist parties is to cooperate in the hope of forming a coalition government.

Third, successive electoral defeats do not necessarily create the kind of incentives to become market-oriented as it may do for their

British counterparts, since most of the parties are fairly resigned to not winning or losing more than a few percentage points in each election. The party leadership might see incentives for becoming more market-oriented, but the activists tend to be more fundamentalist than the party leadership and the voters (Widfeldt, 1997). Hence, in the absence of a major electoral defeat they might be unwilling to change the policies in major ways and to become more market-oriented. Fourth, Swedish parties are fairly strongly rooted in their histories regarding policy positions and the positioning on the left-right continuum. This fosters a product- or a sales orientation. It also means that the acceptance for major policy innovations is rather low.

Finally, Swedish parties have a tradition of being strongly anchored to their members and loyalists. Having a large membership, participating in the internal decision-making, is a strong normative ideal for the parties (Nord and Strömbäck, 2003). Hence, listening and adapting to the wants and needs of target groups outside the party risks violating the tradition of focusing on the wants and needs of members and activists within the party.

Comparing Britain and Sweden: the electoral arena

With reference to the electoral arena, the primary actors are the voters. During the last decades, their political behaviour has changed considerably in both Britain and Sweden. To start with, voter turnout has fallen, especially in Britain (Aarts and Wessels, 2005). Party identification has also fallen in both countries since the 1960s. In the late 1990s, approximately 40 per cent of Swedish voters expressed party identification whereas the corresponding share in Britain was 55 per cent (Berglund *et al.*, 2005, p. 109–110). Party membership has also fallen in both countries during the last decades (Scarrows, 2000).

Furthermore, political distrust has increased over the last few decades. The percentage

share expressing political distrust has almost doubled in Sweden since the late 1960s (Holmberg and Oscarsson, 2004). The trend in Britain has been similar (Dalton, 2002, p. 243), although trust in political institutions seems to be higher in Britain than in Sweden (Dalton, 1999).

Another trend is that electoral volatility has increased in both countries (Dalton *et al.*, 2000). In Britain, the percentage of voters who made their voting decision during the election campaign has increased from 12 per cent in 1964 to 24 per cent in 1992. In Sweden, it has increased from 18 per cent in 1964 to 57 per cent in 2002. To some extent this is an effect of class voting having decreased in Sweden, even though it is still stronger in Sweden than in Britain (Dalton, 2002, p. 151). On the other hand, value orientations have a stronger impact on how people vote in Britain than in Sweden (Dalton, 2002, p. 166).

Another difference concerns the correlation between voter support for the parties and the voter's placement of the parties on the left-right scale. In Sweden, the correlation (η) is 0.77, whereas in Britain it is 0.52. Moreover, the perceptual agreement (PA) regarding how the voters place the parties on the left-right scale is 0.65 in Sweden and 0.45 in Britain. This suggests that in the minds of Swedish voters, the ideological left-right scale is more important than in the minds of British voters. The degree of party distance on the left-right scale is also higher (7.78) in Sweden than in Britain (3.20) (Holmberg and Oscarsson, 2004, p. 106).

Thus, the evidence suggests that voters in both Sweden and Britain are increasingly sceptical with regards to politicians, that they identify less with the parties and that electoral volatility has increased. Furthermore, electoral volatility seems to be considerably higher in Sweden than in Britain. On the other hand, British voters seem less influenced by class voting, social or political-ideological cleavages, and more by value orientations. This might make it easier for British parties to re-position themselves than for Swedish parties.

Table 1. Research propositions regarding differences between countries and between parties within countries

Propositions regarding differences between countries	Propositions regarding differences between parties within countries
<p>(1) Parties in candidate-centred political systems are more likely to be market-oriented than parties in party-centred political systems.</p> <p>(2) Parties in countries with majoritarian electoral systems are more likely to be market-oriented than parties in countries with proportional electoral systems.</p> <p>(3) Parties in countries where the left-right ideological continuum is of less importance in the minds of voters are more likely to be market-oriented than parties in countries where it is of major importance.</p> <p>(4) Parties in countries with few competing parties are more likely to be market-oriented than parties in countries with many competing parties.</p> <p>(5) Parties in countries with a low degree of party identification are more likely to be market-oriented than parties in countries with a high degree of party identification.</p> <p>(6) Parties in countries with a highly commercialized media system are more likely to be market-oriented than parties in countries with a less commercialized media system.</p> <p>(7) Parties in countries with an adversarial journalistic culture are more likely to be market-oriented than parties in countries with a less adversarial journalistic culture.</p> <p>(8) Parties in countries with deep social or political cleavages are less likely to be market-oriented than parties in countries without such deep cleavages.</p>	<p>(1) Large parties in terms of voter support and resources are more likely to be market-oriented than small parties.</p> <p>(2) Parties where the members have a strong influence on the organization and the policies are less likely to be market-oriented than parties where they have a limited influence on the organization and the policies.</p> <p>(3) Parties where the members and activists are ideologically committed on the left-right continuum are less likely to be market-oriented than parties where they have a more value-oriented outlook.</p> <p>(4) Parties whose voters are strongly identified with the party are less likely to be market-oriented than parties whose voters are weakly identified with the party.</p> <p>(5) Parties that are part of government, or have a competitive chance of forming the next government, are more likely to be market-oriented than parties which are not part of government or do not have a competitive chance of forming the next government.</p> <p>(6) Parties that are historically linked with certain policy positions regarding major issues are less likely to be market-oriented than parties that are historically not linked to certain policy positions in major issues.</p> <p>(7) Parties that have suffered a major electoral defeat are more likely to become market-oriented than parties which have not suffered a major electoral defeat.</p>

Implications and future research propositions

The analysis has shown several differences between Sweden and Britain that might be relevant in understanding why the British parties have chosen to become more market-oriented, whereas Swedish parties thus far have chosen mainly to be sales-oriented. By generalizing and systematizing the factors that have been discussed, they can be divided into differences *between countries* and *between parties within countries* and offered as future research propositions. These propositions are summarized in **Table 1**.

Conclusions

The overall conclusion of this analysis is that the likelihood that parties are or attempt to be market-oriented depends on a number of factors which can be located in the context made up by the media system and the political system, as well as within the parliamentary arena, the electoral arena, the internal arena and the media arena. Thus, differences between countries or between parties within countries can help to explain why some parties choose to be market-oriented, whereas other parties choose to be sales-oriented. Thus, the analysis also suggests that whereas being

market-oriented might be the road to electoral success for some parties in some countries sharing some characteristics, it might not be a universal truth. For some parties in some countries, being sales-oriented might even be a wiser choice of strategy.

The comparison between Britain and Sweden has suggested several significant differences which might be of major importance in this regard. By systemizing and generalizing these differences, the analysis offers 15 propositions that might help guide further comparative research on political marketing.

These research propositions should not be perceived as 'laws', however, as parties are constantly positioning and re-positioning themselves, and as the particular context at a specific point in time also matters. The propositions also require more rigorous and systematic testing, and in some cases further operationalizations. Furthermore, the weighting and relative importance of the suggested factors requires to be tested. Nevertheless, we hope that this analysis might prove to be useful in the forthcoming comparative research regarding the political market orientation that is necessary and, we believe, bound to happen.

Biographical note

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