

# The study of the impact of political marketing on citizens' political participation promotion in Uromia province

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Received for publication 28 November 2012.

Accepted for publication 17 December 2012.

## Abstract

The purpose of this research is the study of the impact of political marketing on Citizens' Political Participation Promotion in Uromia province. For doing this study, 301 persons among political elites and activists of Uromia were selected as sample based on stratified random sampling and answered to the questionnaire about citizens' political marketing and participation. Finally, the obtained data were analyzed using Pearson's correlation coefficient and multivariate linear regression. Results indicated that using partial-political, scheduling, symbols, media based-political tools and depending on religious-revolutionary symbols results in increasing Uromia citizens' political participation.

**Keywords:** political marketing, political participation, Uromia citizens.

## Introduction

The rise of political marketing could be considered as the result of integration of marketing and politics knowledge. As the basic goal of political marketing is to facilitate the exchange and to make profit making for political groups, specific tools and approaches are considered in this process which its efficient utilization makes the political marketing different from other fields such as product marketing.

Basically, political marketing plans to increase political groups power in political conflicts specially in elections. Political groups try to boost their success probability in those races by invoking political marketing process. According to their ideology, po-

litical groups form suitable integrated marketing in accordance with the destination political markets.

Therefore, the amount of legitimation resulted from elections in the democratic societies is conditioned to how suitable integrated marketing is integrated with the aforementioned political marketing which is used in order to stimulate the society mentality for accepting the political groups.

The recent broad studies about contents and applications of marketing in politics have had an important role in defining a new field in social and public marketing. Political marketing archaism and its raised issues are originated more than three decades ago (Mauser, 1983; Newman, 1994).

Mouries Douvorget considers the political party as the gear for democracy machine. Today, all societies, whether developed or developing, have got this reality that the healthy competition of parties with different economical, political, social and cultural policies for obtaining tenure and managing the society affairs and achieving power have resulted in people's more participation in the country management and more accountability and transparency of the authority. Therefore, societies are paying due attention to the serious presence and functions of parties, NGOs and other civil institutions in managing the country.

According to the news and information department of «Eqtesade-e Iran», 260 parties have got operating permit from commission of Article 10 for parties in the form of parties, associations, assemblies, communities, organizations, etc. However, according to the announcement of the secretariat of parties house of Iran, only 60% of the registered parties which have the operating permission are com-

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peting to obtain power in three major political-social fronts and directions including Conservatives, Reformists and Moderates. In this way, there are 47 parties, groups and organizations in the reformists' camp in which it could be pointed to Association of Combatant Clerics, Islamic Iran Participation Front, Islamic Iran Executives of Construction Party, Islamic Iran Youth Party, Mojahedin of Islamic Revolution Organization and the Labor's House which are among the most important and influencing parties. As well, the front of Conservatives includes 35 parties, groups and assemblies which their most famous are the Combatant Clergy Association, Islamic Society of Engineers, Society of Devotees of the Islamic Revolution, Abadgaran and the Academicians Islamic Society. On the other hand, the Moderates Front has got 25 parties and groups including Moderation and Development Party, People and Justice Party. There are some so-called independent groups and parties such as technocrats which participate in election races independently and with no dependency to any specific party (Taheri, 2008).

It should be noted that the issues which political competitors and activists are confronting are similar to those a marketing manager is facing. A group of organizations in each field competes to each other in order to attract the destination market. Consumers or citizens are the decision-makers whose selection is important and their communication and persuasion is more or less the same (Mauser, 1983).

The main reason behind selecting this topic as the subject for the research is firstly the personal interest, the researcher's field of activity and also the country research society's need to political marketing issue because the current theoretical deprecation in this area indicates the necessity for investigation about political marketing. Moreover, as the people's participation is considered as the fundamental criteria in religious democracy in the Islamic Republic of Iran, in which the parties and groups are making their best to acquire the citizens' political participation during elections and each year is a witness for that claim, and on the other hand, the excessive number of parties in Iran, in comparison to few parties in developed countries, can be regarded as one of the reasons that make their performance far from the expectations. Therefore, first we refer to some studies in the area of this research and then we proceed the research methodology and its results.

Toloe (2000) in his study entitled «Youth po-

litical sociability by emphasizing on the role of television» has resulted that the political knowledge has got the strongest influence on the amount of political sociability.

In another study, Jafari (1998) investigated «The scholars political participation in Mashad Ferdowsi University and its effective factors». He concluded that the majority of people have considered fear from the conclusion, individual view toward politics and his political knowledge as the effective factors in political participation or non-participation and his evaluation about his political knowledge, the variables of need to power, evaluating the participation profit, gender, amount of political knowledge, the friends' view toward participation in politics, the amount of political knowledge have got a significant correlation to the amount of political participation.

Harris & Lock (1996) have classified the differences between political marketing and product marketing as below:

- The product cost cannot be interpreted evidently but products cost service in market has a very high transparency in product marketing, thanks to the current balance.
- All purchases in political marketing takes place in one day, but in service and product marketing, it is not true.
- In political marketing, even if product is not purchased by someone, its effect is popular while it is not the case in service and product marketing.
- Product could not be separated in political marketing and it is not possible to purchase separately, while, sometimes it is happened in service and product marketing.
- A specific variety of trademarks is rarely introduced by a political group in political marketing while, in service and product marketing, this case generally happens in many large companies.
- Utilizing negative advertizing happens in political marketing, while it is not the case for the other side (at least by that level).

Butler & Collins believe that voters' stimulating factors and wider understanding of their behavior could be achieved using political marketing and then apply the requirements based on modern marketing principles in order to conduct the voters' opinion.

According to Fine (1992), marketing is a process of planning and executing the primary plans, price, promoting and contributing beliefs and idea, products and services, in which both sides obtain the necessary satisfaction during a mutual exchange.

Niffenegger (1989) expressed and described marketing position in political and election races by introducing a model. By applying P.Mc. Karti's marketing model and utilizing analysis process of environment and strategic tools such as market researches and finally including product, promotion, position and price, he proceeded to the marketing role and function in election races. It should be noted that while there are some criticisms regarding this model, its fingerprint could be found in many researches including Farrell & Wortmann (1987) and Newman (1994).

Political marketing is among the concepts that is not long lasted worldwide, but it should be pointed that many researches and studies have been done regarding that issue in developed countries in comparison to Iran and the political marketing techniques has shown to be effective in many countries nowadays.

Scholars of Politics have concentrated on issues which are far from political marketers' concerns and problems while studying the elections is their main research topic (Mauser, 1983). They emphasize on organizational relationships, legal processes, general policy-making and scientific description of politics and election phenomena more instead of concentrating on election race strategies and its management (Gamble, 1990).

However, it should be mentioned that political marketing could often be seen in societies based on democracy and as the societies become less democratic, this issue will decrease in importance. On the other hand, the importance of this issue increases by more complex relations and elections quality and process. In the current study, we have decided to investigate the impact of political marketing on the citizens' political participation promotion in Uromia province. We hope the result of this study could help scholars and officials.

## Methodology

Research method is recognized by two criteria in behavioral sciences, the first is research objective and the second is data collection method.

Regarding research method based on objective, it is an applied one from objective viewpoint. Scientific research can be classified in three groups of fundamental, applied and development researches according to the objective (Bazargan *et al.*, 2004). Applied researches are those which utilize theories, rules, regulations and techniques to solve executive and real issues that are codified in fundamental re-

searches (Khaki, 2004). This research also aims at utilizing theories, regulations, rules and techniques to solve executive and real issues which are codified in fundamental researches and help the relationship between two variables by investigating the political marketing impact of citizens' political participation promotion in Uromia province in order to use this research results in political marketing and political participation promotion.

As far as research method according to data collection method is concerned, this study is a descriptive and non-experimental research from data collection and analysis method viewpoint. Scientific research can be classified in two groups including experimental and descriptive research (Bazargan *et al.*, 2005). As descriptive research aims at description of conditions or phenomena under study, our objective is to study the political marketing impact of citizens' political participation promotion in Uromia province.

### Participants

The sample of this study is Uromia elites and political activists including the following groups:

- Parties official members
- Political figures who have some responsibilities such as deputy, ministry and government in their resume
- Official employees of Azarbaijan-e-Gharbi government
- Official employees of Uromia province

The whole population included 411 people. Among them, 301 people including 63 of parties' official members, 36 of political figures who have some responsibilities such as deputy, ministry and government in their resume, 46 people of official personals of Uromia county and 156 people of official personnels of Azarbaijan-e-Gharbi government, were selected through stratified random sampling method for further research.

### Instrumentation

Data collection instrument used in this study was a self-made questionnaire. This questionnaire was developed in five alternative Likert scale (very low to very high) including 32 questions related to political marketing and 25 questions related to citizens' political participation. Validity of this questionnaire was confirmed by the teachers and experts of this field and the reliability was obtained through Cronbach's Alpha test equal to 0.86 and 0.91 respectively which shows the appropriate reliability for of this questionnaire.

### Procedure

The aim of selecting research method is that the researcher specifies which method should be adopted in order to help him in accessing research questions faster, more precise, simpler and cheaper. This study was conducted in library and survey form and research hypotheses were answered doing the following procedures:

- Investigating similar researches: The researcher selected some texts first and read them methodically, then briefed them.
- Scientific study about the topic and stating the main question using Persian and Latin books and articles: The most important action in this step is to select a hypothetical framework for research to review the main points of the read texts.
- Determining the research method: After the two previous steps, the researcher selected his research method after consulting with his teachers and knowledgeable experts to the research issue and also specified the population.
- Preparing the questionnaire according to the

literature of the issue: Aspects and indexes were derived according to the concepts which formed the questionnaire framework.

- Data collection: According to the questionnaire, all necessary data were derived and collected in this step.
- Statistical data analysis: The researcher utilized SPSS ver.16 in calculating Pearson correlation coefficient and linear regression in order to analyze the collected data.

### Results and Discussion

This research aimed at studying the impact of political marketing on citizens' political participation promotion in Uromia province. We described and presented data statistical analysis to obtain the following results.

First, Pearson's correlation coefficient test was used in order to study the relationship among research variables. Table 1 indicates the results of data analysis.

**Table 1. Correlation coefficient results among research variables.**

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
Utilizing sectarian-political tools	1					
Using planning tools	0.320	1				
Exploiting intellectual symbols	0.168	0.504	1			
Using media-advertizing tools	0.254	0.695	0.520	1		
Dependence on religious-revolutionary symbols	0.633	0.357	0.273	0.266	1	
Citizens' political participation	0.40 **	0.67 **	0.68 **	0.63 **	0.50 **	1

P<0.01

Results of Pearson correlation coefficient show that there is a significant and positive relationship between utilizing sectarian-political tools and citizens' political participation ( $r=0.4$ ,  $P<0.01$ ), using planning tools ( $r=0.67$ ,  $P<0.01$ ), exploiting intellectual symbols ( $r=0.68$ ,  $P<0.01$ ), using media-advertizing tools ( $r=0.63$ ,  $P<0.01$ ) and dependence on religious-revolutionary symbols and increase in Uromia county citizens' political participation ( $r=0.50$ ,  $P<0.01$ ).

In other words, by increasing the level of each of these variables, the level of citizens' political participation will increase too and vice versa.

After studying the amount of correlation between political marketing components and citizens' political participation promotion, multi-variate linear regression test was used to evaluate the amount of political marketing influence on citizens' political participation promotion and results as depicted in Table 2.

**Table 2. Results of variables influencing on citizens' political participation.**

Variables	R2 adj.	Beta	F	P
Utilizing sectarian-political tools	0.16	0.40	56.358	0.00
Using planning tools	0.45	0.67	248.936	0.00
Exploiting intellectual symbols	0.46	0.68	252.425	0.00
Using media-advertizing tools	0.40	0.63	197.641	0.00
Dependence on religious-revolutionary symbols	0.24	0.50	98.438	0.00

The results of data analysis from research samples indicated that 0.16 ( $P < 0.01$ ) of citizens' political participation variations in Uromia province could be specified using sectarian-political tool and it is 0.45 ( $P < 0.01$ ) for using planning tools, 0.46 ( $P < 0.01$ ) for exploiting intellectual symbols, 0.40 ( $P < 0.01$ ) for using media-advertizing tools, 0.24 ( $P < 0.01$ ) for dependence on religious-revolutionary symbols.

## Conclusions

Participation means achieving a share in something and getting profit from or assisting a group and finally cooperating with it. From sociological viewpoint, we should differentiate between participation as a manner or situation (participating issue) and participation as an action and commitment about the act of participation (Biroo, 1992). There are two different approaches regarding political participation. The first approach is related to those individuals who emphasize some characteristics such as being voluntary, being elective, legality, and only being common in liberal democratic political systems. The second one is related to the group who do not devote the political participation only to liberal democratic political systems. According to Maclosky, political participation term indicates volunteering activities in which the members of a society take part in the governors selection directly and indirectly and political incuriosity resulting in separation or withdrawal from such activities (Jafari, 1998).

Discussion and investigation about definition, concept, nature, participation types and consequences were considered by many thinkers and have been regarded as a topic for many books, articles and writings. Like other social concepts, participation has been a conflicting points of view and opinions. It is natural that we use a definition which is acceptable by scientists in one hand and it is applicable as an operative definition in text on the other hand. Generally, social science definitions transform during the time and in accordance with phenomena and realities of each period. Because, definition is valuable when it facilitates understating the phenomena at the first place and covers its examples at the second place (Mosaffa, 1997).

Usually, when there are many definitions from a concept, they primarily utilize a definition which is used in reference books. International encyclopedia for social science gives the following definition in participation article for that concept:

Political participation is the voluntary activity of the meeting members in selecting leaders and taking part in general policy directly or indirectly.

Myron Winner, in his famous article about political participation, gives the following definition after mentioning 10 cases of political participation manifestations:

Political participation is any voluntary action whether successful or unsuccessful, organized or non-organized, periodic or continuous and includes legal or illegal methods to influence on selecting leaders, policies and managing general affair in any level of local or national government (Mosaffa, 1997).

An increasing spread of technology in different layers of human's life requires to utilize efficient tools in political marketing. These changes need new approaches toward political groups. According to Kolter (2005), election is of new fields in which marketing knowledge is very useful. In political marketing, especially in election area, each candidate is a kind of product which marketing knowledge is used for promoting his performance level and obtaining higher market share.

Anyway, when customers' expectations become more complex in political market, this issue becomes more important. New marketing approaches could help in creating appropriate integration by efficient utilization of marketing research tool and the recognition of expectations and motivational stimulus and certainly by psychological and sociological analysis about environment and its elements. On the other hand, with more complex relationship between quality and process of election, this issue becomes more important. Another issue which can affect political marketing importance level in societies is the number of political groups. The more their number, the more important the political marketing.

It should be noted that the issue of politics in democratic based societies is more different than the relationship among political parties. People as voters and society in general, political marketing is considered as an important issue which needs to be investigated and it emphasizes on the significance of the impact of political marketing on citizens' political participation promotion in Uromia province. By doing a fieldwork, we proceeded an applied research which can help in political marketing through indicating its importance in a scientific method. This study is necessary because in spite of the attention on doing research on political marketing in Iran, there is not any comprehensive investigation yet and there are few Persian and local theoretic bases in this

field in this country. We hope it has been a positive and effective step toward that issue.

In general, results of this study showed that there is a significant and positive relationship between political marketing components including utilizing sectarian-political tools, using planning tools, exploiting intellectual symbols, using media-advertising tools and dependence on religious-revolutionary symbols and increase in Uromia county citizens' political participation.

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