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# Political Market Orientation: An Introduction

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## 1. Introduction

In the same way that market orientation is a central concept in commercial marketing research and practice, political market orientation (PMO) is fast becoming a central concept in the field of political marketing. The aim of this working paper is to introduce the reader to the conceptual model of PMO (Ormrod 2005, 2009; Ormrod and Savigny 2011) and to provide an overview of the conceptual and empirical research that has been carried out to date; thus the focus of this working paper is broad rather than deep. In order to understand a PMO it is necessary to understand the commercial approach to market orientation, which makes up section two. After this, in section three we present two alternative approaches to political market orientation (e.g., O’Cass 1996, 2001a; Lees-Marshment 2001a) and briefly discuss the related yet distinct concept of political marketing orientation (Ormrod 2006; Colman 2007; O’Shaughnessy et al. 2012 forthcoming). Section three also contains a comprehensive discussion of the conceptual model of PMO. Section four contributes to this working paper by detailing conceptual developments to the original PMO model (Ormrod 2005) and the results of empirical investigations that have used the PMO model. Section four will also contain a discussion of the relationship of the PMO model to the strategic political marketing literature, specifically Henneberg’s (2006a, 2006b) Strategic Political Postures (SPP’s) and the ‘PMO profile’, and a brief discussion of the way in which the conceptual model of PMO can contribute to models of party structure developed in the political science literature. Section five of this working paper will present an example taken from the Danish context in order to demonstrate how the PMO model can be applied to political parties at both the national and local levels, and in section six we will conclude on the current state of research into the PMO model, identify weaknesses with the PMO model and provide suggestions for future research avenues.

## 2. The commercial origins of a PMO

The first references to a ‘market orientation’ occurred in the 1950’s and early 1960’s, when authors such as Drucker (1954) and Levitt (1960) argued for a change in organisational focus away from the products the business produced to the markets that the business served (Deshpandé 1999). One of the examples used by Levitt (1960) was that of the rail companies in the USA. The traditional focus of these companies had been simply ‘being a railroad company’. Levitt (1960) argued that had the

railroad companies focussed on being a means of transport for humans and goods, then it may have been more difficult for the automobile, truck and aeroplane to become the preferred means of long-distance transport.

By the late 1960's, marketing academics began to discuss whether the primary focus on how to sell fast-moving consumer goods like soap and soft-drinks could be expanded to include other markets and product types. More formally, these discussions were concerned with the nature and scope of marketing as a field of research. Led by academics as Kotler and Levy (1969), discussions centred around whether services and ideas could justifiably be included in marketing research, and whether the behaviour of actors such as hospitals, non-profit organisations and political candidates could be understood using marketing theory (Kotler 1975). At the end of the 1980's attention again turned to developing a more precise definition of the concept of market orientation. Shapiro's (1988) question "what the hell is market orientation?" marked the beginning of a formalisation of the concept of market orientation, which initially centred around two alternative approaches, as a set of managerial behaviours (e.g., Kohli og Jaworski 1990; Jaworski and Kohli 1993) and as an organisation culture (e.g., Narver og Slater 1990; Slater and Narver 1995; 1998). This extended the discussions to include an explicit reference to the consequences of a market orientation, that is, the effects on business performance.

The managerial behaviours approach to market orientation was first proposed by Kohli and Jaworski (1990). This approach consists of three elements: *Intelligence Generation*, *Intelligence Dissemination* and *Responsiveness*. Intelligence is generated about customers and can be from formal and informal sources, for example through market research, analysis of secondary data or as a result of social interactions. This intelligence is then disseminated throughout the company by employees, using organisational structures that enable the intelligence to be passed on from the source of the intelligence to the employee who needs the intelligence for their work for the company. Finally, a company that is responsive to the intelligence that has been generated and disseminated it develops products and services that meet the needs of customers in a more appropriate way than the company's competitors.

The organisational culture approach was first proposed by Narver and Slater (1990) and focused on the way in which the company was oriented towards its customers and its competitors, and the extent to which the organisation coordinated marketing activities across functional boundaries. Narver and Slater (1990) saw a *Customer Orientation* as an organisational focus on the needs and wants of customers; these could be both explicit, that is, known and demanded by the customer, or latent, where the customer did not realise that they had a need. An example of a latent need is

Sony's Walkman; market research indicated that the market for portable cassette players would not be viable, but Sony produced their Walkman anyway – and the rest is history. A *Competitor Orientation* refers to being aware of what other companies in the industry are doing, for example, which new products have been released, how much advertising is being used and whether competitors are expanding into new markets. Finally, an *Interfunctional Coordination* refers to ability of the organisation to work across different functional areas, for example the extent to which marketing professionals and the scientists working in the R&D department can cooperate to develop the products that the customers require.

The perception of the relationship between the managerial behaviours and organisational culture approaches to understanding a market orientation has gradually developed from being alternatives to being complementary (e.g., Gray *et al.*, 1998; Griffiths and Grover, 1998; Gainer and Padanyi, 2005; Hult *et al.*, 2005; Langerak 2003). The argument is that market oriented managerial behaviours are unlikely to affect performance unless there is an organisational culture that supports these behaviours, and vice versa. Another important point is that simply possessing high levels of market orientation will not necessarily lead to higher performance; for example, in the computer processor market in the late 1990's, resources were focused on the R&D departments as companies such as Intel realised that financial performance was dependent on being the first to develop ever faster computer CPU's. Thus it is the configuration of resources and competences within the organisation, and the strategic 'fit' of these resources and competences with the market-specific ideal strategy that determines the level of market orientation that is most appropriate for an organisation. Finally, a market orientation is dynamic; competitors do not stand still and customer needs and wants change and so companies have to continuously scan the marketplace to identify trends.

### 3. Market orientation of political parties

Market orientation was first mentioned in the political context in the early 1990's (e.g., Smith and Saunders 1990; Newman 1994), but rather than concentrating on the concept, the term was used as an element in a wider understanding of political marketing as part of commercial marketing. The first explicit attempt at developing the commercial market orientation conceptualisation was published by O'Cass (1996). O'Cass followed this in 2001 (O'Cass 2001a, 2001b) with two articles that investigated different aspects of the market orientation and marketing orientation of political parties. Further approaches were published by Lees-Marshment (2001a, 2001b) and Ormrod (2005), and it is these two approaches that comprise the current alternative conceptualisations that

comprise the current literature. Whilst this working paper focuses on the PMO conceptualisation developed by Ormrod (2005), the approaches proposed by O’Cass (1996, 2001a, 2001b) and Lees-Marshment (2001a, 2001b) will be briefly presented below.

#### *Alternative approaches to a political market orientation*

The first explicit attempt to understand the concept of market orientation in the political context was published by O’Cass (1996). In his article, O’Cass (1996) followed Kohli and Jaworski’s (1990) conceptualisation of a market orientation as an organisational process involving the generation and dissemination of, and responsive to, intelligence, and defines a PMO as “the analysis, planning, implementation and control of political and electoral programs” (O’Cass 1996: 40). O’Cass (2001b) expands upon this conceptualisation by integrating the three behavioural constructs within a framework developed by Kotler and Andreasen (1991) that distinguishes between an external and internal orientation, with the explicit focus on voters and competitors that characterises Narver and Slater’s (1990) conceptualisation. As such, the conceptualisation of a PMO used by O’Cass (1996; 2001a; 2001b) can be considered to be an example of the interdependence approach to PMO. However, O’Cass’ (1996, 2001a, 2001b) approach does not aim to develop the commercial market orientation concept to the political sphere, instead providing useful insights into the understanding of the concept by political actors.

Lees-Marshment’s (e.g., 2001a, 2003, 2008) contribution to the literature considers a market-oriented party (MOP) to be one of three general types of orientation that political parties can adopt, the two alternatives being a product-oriented party (POP) and a sales-oriented party (SOP). Lees-Marshment (e.g., 2001a) proposes that the POP “argues for what it stands for and believes in... this type of party refuses to change its ideas or product even if it fails to gain electoral or membership support” (Lees-Marshment 2001a: 28). The SOP on the other hand “retains its pre-determined product design, but recognises that the supporters it desires may not automatically want it... A Sales-Oriented Party does not change its behaviour to suit what people want, but tries to make people want what it offers” (Lees-Marshment 2001a: 29). Finally, the market oriented party (MOP) “designs its behaviour to provide voter satisfaction... it does not attempt to change what people think, but to deliver what they need and want” (Lees-Marshment 2001a: 30). This said, the MOP “will not simply offer voters what they want, or simply follow opinion polls, because it needs to ensure that it can deliver the product on offer” (Lees-Marshment 2001b: 696), as “Political marketing identifies the demands of voters but it is still up to parties and politicians to design the policies to meet those needs” (Lees-Marshment 2003: 28). Adopting a MOP process is the key to success at election time as

“the basic assumption of CPM [Comprehensive Political Marketing] theory is that the party which is the most market-oriented wins” (Lees-Marshment 2001a: 74).

Each of the three party types can be expressed as a multi-stage process (Lees-Marshment 2001a). The POP process consists of five stages: *Product Design, Communication, Campaign, Election* and *Delivery*. The SOP process consists of six stages. In addition to the five stages that characterise the POP, *Market Intelligence* is moved to after the *Product Design* stage. Finally, the MOP process consists of a total of eight stages, adding *Product Adjustment* and *Implementation* to the six stages that characterise the SOP process. In addition to the extra two stages, the *Market Intelligence* stage occurs before the *Product Design* stage (Lees-Marshment 2001a). As such, the structural distinction between the MOP on the one hand, and the POP and SOP on the other, is that explicit voter needs and wants are uncovered first and then responded to by designing an appropriate product. The party’s product is then adjusted to take internal opinions into consideration, and this is followed by an explicit implementation phase.

Especially Lees-Marshment’s (2001) MOP model and its developments (Lilleker and Lees-Marshment 2005; Lees-Marshment 2009; Lees-Marshment et al. 2010) have, however, been criticised by academics in the fields of both marketing and political science. Ormrod (2006) presents five conceptual points of criticism: that the model is short-term in approach, has a narrow focus on voters, assumes an antagonistic relationship with competitors, demonstrates a tendency towards centralisation and does not distinguish between the related concepts of ‘market orientation’ and ‘marketing orientation’ (discussed in detail below). Furthermore, Ormrod (2006) argues that empirical studies demonstrate problems with the model when applied to certain party types and electoral systems, that there are problems with implementing the model due to ideology and scarce resources, that the model is only partially applied in practice, and that there are constraints on the ability of the market-oriented party to deliver when in government. Further points of criticism are raised by Coleman (2007) and Temple (2010, 2011).

### *Political marketing orientation*

Before proceeding to a detailed discussion of the conceptualisation of a PMO it is necessary to discuss the distinct yet complementary concept of a political marketing orientation. As pointed out in the commercial market orientation literature as far back as Kohli and Jaworski (1990), a market orientation is not the same as a marketing orientation despite their close semantic proximity. A more precise delineation is, respectively, ‘an orientation towards the stakeholder markets in which the

organisation is present' (market orientation as an organisational orientation), and 'an orientation towards the use of marketing tools and concepts to achieve organisational goals' (market orientation as a function). O'Cass (2001b) was the first to distinguish between a PMO and a political marketing orientation (Ormrod 2007). From a political science perspective, Coleman (2007) sees the difference between a political marketing orientation and a PMO to be "an important distinction between democratic populism, in which parties pander to ephemeral whims and prejudices, and responsible democratic governance, which regards public demand at any one moment as being but one factor within an historical environment of evolving experiences, reputations and expectations" (Coleman 2007: 182).

O'Shaughnessy et al. (2012 forthcoming) argue that the distinction between a PMO and a political marketing orientation lies in the relationship of the concepts to the organisation; whilst the former is a organisational philosophy acknowledged by the party, the latter is an organisational emphasis on the managerial processes that are centred on the political professionals in the party's 'marketing function'. The two concepts are not mutually exclusive; indeed, O'Shaughnessy et al. (2012) argue that if an appropriate PMO strategy is implemented, then the use of the relevant tools associated with a political marketing orientation can aid a party in achieving its goals. However, there are five issues that impact on the ability of political parties to implement a successful political marketing orientation: 1) that it is difficult to control symbolism; 2) that it is difficult to control the perception of personalities associated with the party; 3) that there are value and symbol abnormalities; 4) that the public mind is unknowable; and 5) that negative campaigning reduces the ability of parties to provide information focused on their political offering.

Control of symbolism and personality refers to the fact that the political market is a dynamic and mediated environment, where the ability of parties and candidates to influence how they as actors are perceived and interpreted is usually outside of their control (O'Shaughnessy et al. 2012 forthcoming). Value and symbol abnormalities refers to the way in which the marketing activities that are carried out to facilitate the exchange of political offerings for votes mainly consist of appealing to the emotional and rational needs and wants of voters, rather than presenting the ideological arguments that provide the foundation for the party's political offering (O'Shaughnessy et al. 2012 forthcoming). Despite advances in market research technologies in recent years it remains difficult to gain a full picture of voter needs and wants; in any case, these are often contradictory – for example, a low rate of tax coupled with a high level of public services such as schools and hospitals (Henneberg and O'Shaughnessy 2007). Finally, negative campaigning refers to the type of personal attacks that are illegal in the commercial sphere yet are commonplace in politics, especially at election-time. Whilst some negative messages can be justified in that they add to the amount of

information available to voters to make an informed decision (Banker 1992), in the majority of cases, negative advertisements appeal to core voters whilst disillusioning the majority of the electorate (O'Shaughnessy et al. 2012 forthcoming). Whilst a political marketing orientation can be seen as a complementary concept to PMO, the problems raised by O'Shaughnessy et al. (2012 forthcoming) mean that more research has to be carried out in order identify the nature, strengths and weaknesses of the conceptualisation of a political marketing orientation.

### *The conceptual model of PMO*

Ormrod (2005) argued that the nature of the political marketplace meant that Narver and Slater's (1990) focus on competitors and customers (and to a lesser extent, employees) was too restrictive; due to their importance to political parties, other stakeholder groups such as interest and lobby groups, citizens and the media played a key role and thus should be explicitly included in the PMO approach. This focus on a wider group of stakeholders is also in keeping with political science models of party organisation which emphasise the importance of the link between parties and society in general (e.g., Katz and Mair, 1995; Panebianco, 1988; Heider and Saglie, 2003; see Ormrod and Savigny 2011).

Ormrod's (2005) conceptualisation of a PMO has undergone several refinements since it was first proposed. From the original conceptualisation in 2005, the PMO model has been investigated and several of the constructs representing the stakeholder orientations have been developed in various academic works, for example Ormrod (2007, 2009), Ormrod and Henneberg (2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2011) and Ormrod et al (2007). More recently, the contemporary conceptualisation of Ormrod's (2005) PMO model has been integrated into a wider political marketing strategy literature (Henneberg 2006a, 2006b; Ormrod and Henneberg 2010a, 2010c, 2011; Ormrod et al 2010) and to party organisational types from the political science literature (Ormrod and Savigny 2011). These developments will be detailed below in Section four, together with the results of the empirical investigations.

Ormrod (2005) introduced the conceptual model of PMO that, as with O'Cass (1996, 2001a, 2001b), was based on the commercial marketing perception of a market orientation as an integration of the managerial behaviours and organisational culture approaches (Ormrod 2007). Ormrod's (2005) conceptual model of PMO consisted of eight constructs, four representing the behaviour of members and four representing the attitudes of party members towards core stakeholder groups in society (the developed conceptual model of PMO Ormrod and Savigny 2011 is presented in Figure 1). The

conceptualisation centres around the process whereby information is generated from the four stakeholder groups, integrated into a consistent party offering and communicated out to stakeholders in society with the goal of achieving long-term party aims within a framework imposed by society, thus following the interdependence approach to commercial market orientation (Ormrod 2007). This represents a pragmatic relationship between the political party and society in that there is an acceptance that the framework imposed by society means that not all of the aims of the party can be realised (Ormrod 2005). Ormrod (2005: 51) defines a party as market oriented when:

“its members are sensitive to the attitudes, needs and wants of both external and internal stakeholders, and to use this information within limits imposed by all stakeholder groups in order to develop policies and programmes that enable the party to reach its aims”.

*Ormrod (2005: 51)*

Ormrod (2005, 2009) and Ormrod and Savigny (2011) present four constructs that originate in the work of Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Harrison-Walker (2001), namely *Information Generation*, *Information Dissemination*, *Member Participation* and *Consistent Strategy Implementation* (Figure 1). These four constructs represent the behaviours of party members with regard to the flow of information within the political organisation about relevant stakeholder groups in society. The fact that the constructs are arranged in a chain does not imply a dependence relationship, merely the logical flow of information. For example, it is possible for a political party to be extremely proficient at generating information from stakeholders yet not have the organisational structure in place to disseminate this information to those in the party who need the information in their political work. Ormrod's (2005) first 'behavioural' construct, *Information Generation*, is defined as “the party-wide generation of formal and informal information regarding all internal and external stakeholders” (Ormrod 2005: 54) and was developed from the work of Kohli and Jaworski (1990). As with Kohli and Jaworski's (1990) construct, information can be generated from formal and informal sources by each party member. Formal information is carried out primarily by the party top, as it consists of conducting market research (e.g., focus groups) and analysing the results of publicly available opinion polls. Informal information is far wider in reach as each member possesses their own discrete set of personal relationships and so has the opportunity to contribute in their own, unique way (Ormrod

and Henneberg 2010a). The generated information is then be disseminated throughout the organisation to those members who need it in their work for the party (Ormrod 2005).

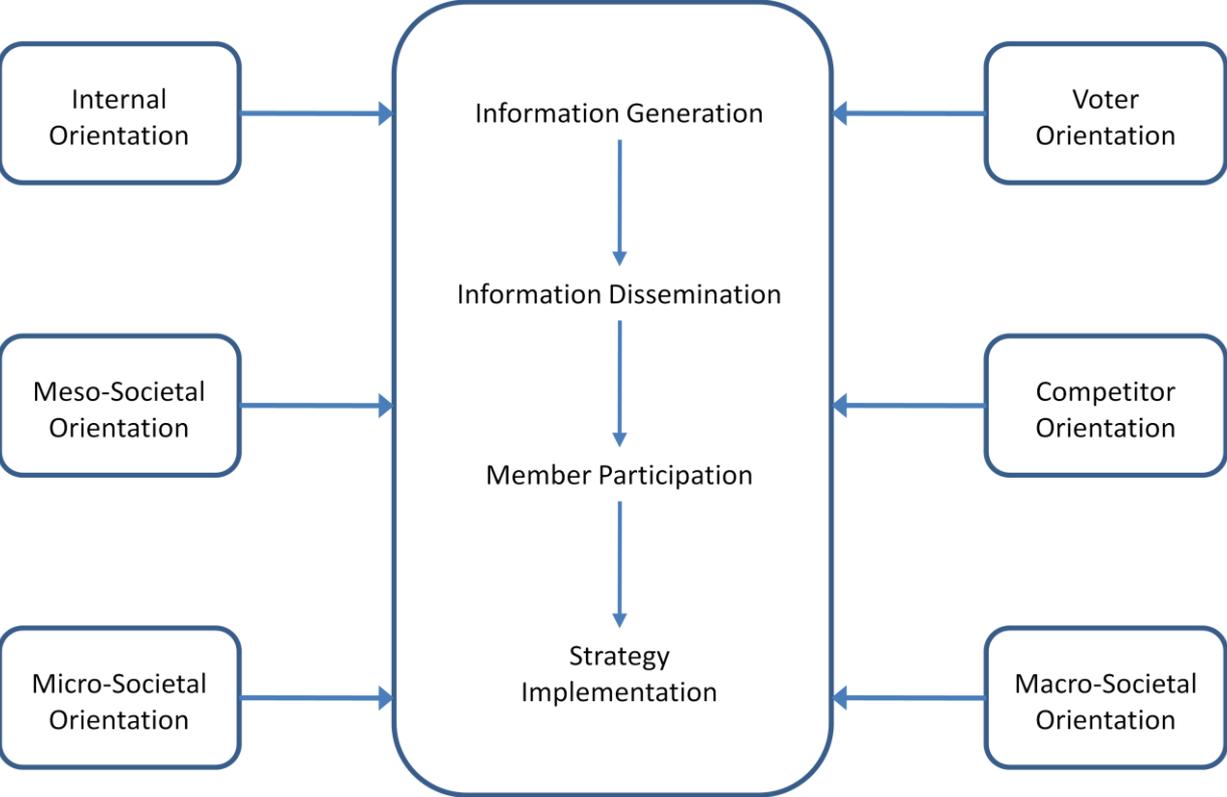


Figure 1: The PMO model (developed from Ormrod and Savigny, 2011)

The *Information Dissemination* construct, again developed from the work of Kohli and Jaworski (1990), maps this process, conceptualising it as consisting of two dimensions: a willingness to disperse the information and a willingness to receive the information. For example, a party professional responsible for market research may learn about a policy initiative by a competing party. This information is dispersed to the party members who make up the appropriate internal discussion group, who are open towards receiving information that the party professional has generated and has dispersed to them.

After the information has been disseminated to the relevant party members, this information can be used in the development of the party’s offering. The party offering consists of such elements as the policy portfolio, party history, political personalities and a general perception of the party brand by a wide variety of stakeholders (e.g., Henneberg 2002; Smith 2009). As parties are legitimised by their members in democratic political systems (Bille 2003), a specific construct, *Member Participation*, was included in Ormrod’s (2005) PMO model. Ormrod’s (2005) construct has two dimensions: the

breadth and depth of debate in the party. The breadth and depth of member participation correspond to how comprehensively the offering is discussed within the appropriate fora, and the extent to which each element of the offering is debated (Ormrod 2005). Continuing with the example above, if the party demonstrates a high level of market orientation then the information that was dispersed to the internal discussion group will be discussed in depth by party members. In addition to this, members will also discuss the relationship between the policy and other areas of policy, emphasising that the party offering is coherent.

Finally, the *Strategy Implementation* construct maps the way in which members at all levels of the party can contribute to implementing the party offering. The *Strategy Implementation* construct has been developed from Ormrod's (2005) *Consistent External Communication* construct. Ormrod (2007) provided the first critique of the PMO model by arguing that the *Consistent External Communication* construct did not adequately capture the implementation of party strategy by party members. Ormrod (2007) argued that focusing on the relatively straightforward task of communicating the party offering out to stakeholder groups through formal and informal channels ignored the wider implementation of the strategic plan that had been developed in the course of the *Member Participation* process. For example, simply communicating the offering would not take structural changes to the internal party organisation into account, an event that could conceivably have a profound impact on the relationships that a party had with various stakeholder groups.

In response to this, in all subsequent work (e.g., Ormrod 2009; Ormrod and Henneberg 2010a, 2010b; Ormrod and Savigny 2011) the construct was re-conceptualised as *Consistent Strategy Implementation* to take Ormrod's (2007) critique into account. However, Krogh and Christensen (2010) have pointed out that the 'consistent strategy implementation' label is prescriptive and so has been changed to *Strategy Implementation* to reflect this point of criticism. The fundamental nature of the *Strategy Implementation* construct remains the same as different members have access to different stakeholder groups; whilst politicians are able to implement a national media strategy and elected members have regular contacts with their counterparts in opposing parties, 'rank-and-file' party activists are more able to implement local strategy and have a much wider contact with citizens through their social interactions. As such it is imperative that party members are aware of potential differences between the decision of what the party offering *is* and their own opinion of what the party offering *ought to be*.

The contemporary conceptualisation of Ormrod's (2005) PMO model is developed in Ormrod and Savigny (2011) and Ormrod et al. (2010). This conceptualisation broadens Ormrod's (2005) original work to include six stakeholder groups rather than the initial four (Figure 1); whilst explicit constructs

representing the organisational orientation towards competitors (*Competitor Orientation*), voters (*Voter Orientation*) and party members (*Internal Orientation*) are retained, the *External Orientation* construct (Ormrod 2005) has been refined into three separate constructs, representing citizens (*Micro-societal Orientation*), the media (*Macro-societal Orientation*), and lobby and interest groups (*Meso-Societal Orientation*) (Ormrod and Savigny 2011; Ormrod et al 2010). However, despite the change in focus the underlying nature of the constructs has not changed; each of the six orientations represent a complex set of relationships that can be initiated, developed, maintained and ended, if the relationship with the stakeholder is not in tune with the strategic aims of the party.

Narver and Slater's (1990) original *Competitor Orientation* construct was developed by Ormrod (2005) to allow for the fact that cooperation amongst parties is possible and in some cases necessary for a party to have influence (e.g., Lock and Harris 1996). A good example of this is when parties have to work together in coalition governments. In Denmark, the vast majority of governments are minority coalitions, both left-wing and right-wing. As a result of this, political parties are very aware of which other parties they cooperate with all the way through the electoral cycle, and this cooperative tradition even affects pre-election rhetoric (Bowler and Farrell 1992). As a consequence, voters know in advance that a vote for the Liberal Party is a vote for a Liberal-Conservative coalition government. Whilst it is not so obvious, in political systems with one-party, majority governments, long term investment in defence systems or infrastructure may stretch over 20 years or more and so it is important to achieve cross-party support. British governments up until the 2010 General Election are a good example of this; the fact that the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government has worked (at least for the first year of its existence) indicates that the elected representatives of each party, despite a long tradition of opposition, realise the necessity of cooperating with each other.

The *Voter Orientation* construct was also developed from the work of Narver and Slater (1990) and is the equivalent of a Customer Orientation (Henneberg 2002). The *Voter Orientation* construct is focused on the relationship of the party to those stakeholder groups with whom it has a direct, electoral exchange (Henneberg 2002). There are various ways of segmenting voters; a simple way is by classifying voters as either loyal voters who always vote for the party, 'swing' voters who make up their mind at each election or those voters who will only vote for other parties. There are also non-voters, for example the young or the otherwise disenfranchised who might not be able to vote at the next election but will be able to vote in the longer term. So if a party displays a high level of *Voter Orientation* it will be aware of the needs and wants of all groups of voters; however, this does not mean that the party has to deliberately design its offering solely on the basis of a good 'fit' with the needs and wants of all voters (which is in practice impossible) or even a subset of voters.

Ormrod (2005) adapted Narver and Slater's (1990) *Interfunctional Coordination* construct to be appropriate to the political marketplace; whilst the commercial market orientation literature adopts an approach to internal stakeholders based on bridging functional boundaries (Lafferty and Hult 2001), political parties tend to be characterised by being more hierarchical in structure (Dean and Croft 2001). As such, Ormrod's (2005) *Internal Orientation* construct is conceptualised so as to integrate all members into the various decision-making processes that lead to a consistent implementation of the agreed-upon party strategy. An *Internal Orientation* consists of two dimensions: the inclusiveness of the party and an acknowledgement of the importance of other party members.

The original conceptualisation of a PMO (Ormrod 2005) included two dimensions in the External Orientation construct, the media (macro-level stakeholders) and lobby and interest groups together with public sector employees (meso-level stakeholders). The construct was defined as "the party-wide acknowledgment of the existence and importance of stakeholders in society that are not voters or competitors" (Ormrod 2005: 60). Kotzaivazoglou (2011) notes that the phrasing 'in society' implies that only stakeholders within the national system are part of the model, although 'supra-national stakeholders' such as the EU and NATO were explicitly investigated in Ormrod and Henneberg (2009).

Ormrod and Henneberg (2011) refined the conceptualisation of an External Orientation to reflect the focus on society rather than simply on "stakeholders in society that are not voters or competitors" (Ormrod 2005: 60). In a paper presented at the 2010 International Conference on Political Marketing, Ormrod et al. (2010) argue for a separate 'Media orientation' construct distinct from an aggregate societal orientation construct. This reflects the high importance attached to the media in the political marketing literature. This division of the External Orientation construct into micro (citizens), meso (lobby and interest groups) and macro (the media) elements is reflected in Ormrod and Savigny (2011; Figure 1).

Ormrod and Savigny's (2011) *Micro-Societal Orientation* construct is broader in that it represents all citizens in society and not just voters. Ormrod and Savigny (2011) argue that it is necessary to have a separate construct representing citizens due to the sharp difference from voters in the nature of the exchange. The focus on citizens is also maintained throughout the electoral period as opposed to being primarily at election time. Ormrod and Savigny (2011) also introduce the *Macro-Societal Orientation* construct, representing the relationships that exist between the party and the media; this construct is labelled *Media Orientation* in Ormrod et al (2010) in order to reflect the central position that the media has in the political sphere. The third construct to be developed from the

original *External Orientation* construct of Ormrod (2005) is a *Meso-Societal Orientation*, representing the interest and lobby groups in society. These stakeholders are important in that they have the ability to provide parties with support in terms of knowledge and/or finances (Ormrod and Savigny 2011).

#### 4. Empirical and further conceptual work

Several investigations using both qualitative (e.g., Ormrod and Henneberg 2009; Ormrod et al 2007) and quantitative methodologies (Ormrod and Henneberg 2010a, 2010b; 2011) have been carried out in order to better understand the PMO model. The first of these, Ormrod et al (2007), used a case-study method (Huberman and Miles, 1994; Stake, 2000) to investigate the stakeholder orientation of the candidates for the British Conservative Party leadership. The results demonstrated that the stakeholder orientation constructs of the PMO model, whilst developed to inform on the party level, also had explanatory power at the sub-party level. The second qualitative investigation (Ormrod and Henneberg 2009) analysed political party manifestos in the UK and Germany and used Ormrod's (2005) four stakeholder orientations in a collective case study (Huberman and Miles, 1994; Stake, 2000) to investigate "the number, strength and relationship of occurrences to other related events in the manifesto text" (Ormrod and Henneberg 2009: 195) and subsequently to interpret the content of each of the occurrences. Ormrod and Henneberg (2009) find further evidence for Ormrod and Henneberg's (2006) 'gravitational centre effect' and 'incumbent effect', i.e., that the electoral system and the government's need to demonstrate its results may be key elements that affect the way in which election manifestos are structured.

Ormrod and Henneberg (2010a) used a questionnaire to elicit responses from a British political party to investigate the PMO model, both overall and by activity level dividing the total sample of  $n = 1156$  into three groups, the very active members, the moderately active and the inactive members. Ormrod and Henneberg (2010a) found that the relationships between the four behavioural constructs in the baseline model (all respondents together) and across all three activity levels were strong and positive, whilst there were differences in the scores across the constructs representing the four stakeholder orientations. Ormrod and Henneberg (2010a) used the original 2005 constructs in their investigation). For example, the items concerning the media and lobby and interest groups were not significant in the measurement model, and there were few significant relationships between the *Voter Orientation* and *Competitor Orientation* constructs and the four behavioural constructs across the baseline and activity-level based models. Finally, there were significant links

between the *Internal Orientation* and *External Orientation* constructs on the one hand, and the four behavioural constructs on the other.

### *Integrating PMO with the strategic political marketing literature*

The PMO model has been further integrated into the strategic political marketing literature. Ormrod and Henneberg (2010c) provide a conceptual integration of the PMO model with Henneberg's (2006a, 2006b) strategic party postures, the Convinced Ideologist (CI), the Tactical Populist (TP) and the Relationship Builder (RB). Each of these postures is centred around the extent to which the party prioritises public opinion when developing its offering (TP), prioritises member opinions in the offering (CI) or attempts to integrate alternative perspectives on society into one offering (RB) (Henneberg 2006a). Furthermore, each of these strategic postures can be represented by a distinct 'PMO profile', a configuration of resources, competences, beliefs and goals which influence the behaviour of members and which stakeholders are considered to be important (Ormrod and Henneberg 2010c).

Ormrod and Henneberg (2010c) argue that the PMO profile of a CI emphasises the opinions of party members and specific stakeholder groups in society with a special affinity with the party at the expense of other stakeholder groups (e.g., voters and the media) when developing the party offering. The CI also tries to involve as many party members as possible in the development and implementation of the party's offering, as members are considered to be central to the existence of the party. On the other hand, the TP prioritises external stakeholders, primarily voters and the media, and adopts a top-down approach to disseminating information to party members and a strong control of the development and implementation of the party strategy. Finally, the RB attempts to balance the needs and wants of all stakeholder groups whilst involving as many members as possible in the development of the party's offering.

Ormrod and Henneberg (2011) investigated the PMO profiles of two Danish political parties by comparing expert opinions of which of the three strategic types each party could be assigned to with the empirically-derived profile based upon questionnaire responses from  $n = 1560$  and  $n = 1623$ . Ormrod and Henneberg (2011) found that whilst Party B demonstrated a fit between the expert opinion of a Convinced Ideologist and the results of the questionnaire investigation, Party A exhibited a misfit between the expert opinion of the party as a Relationship Builder and the member-derived PMO profile which indicated a Convinced Ideologist strategic posture. These results indicate that it is possible for the PMO-party strategy to distinguish between strategy types and also to inform on the

extent to which there is a fit between empirically-derived strategic posture and expert opinions of each party's strategic posture.

Ormrod et al (2010) presented the results of an investigation into the relationship between the PMO profiles of four Belgian political parties and performance indicators based on member perceptions of the ability of the parties to affect legislation and public opinion over the preceding five years. The investigation was divided up into three stages: in the first stage, the 'ideal PMO profile' was derived from a self-typing paragraphs investigation, where experts in Belgian politics were asked to assign each party to one of the three PMO profiles. In the second stage, party members were asked to complete a questionnaire; 1153 respondents were members of the two parties assigned to the CI strategic posture, whilst 1995 respondents were members of the two parties assigned to the RB strategic posture. The final stage consisted of comparing the misfit between the optimal (stage one) and actual (stage two) PMO profiles, and then linking the results to member perceptions of party performance. As Ormrod et al. (2010) hypothesised, there was a significant, negative relationship between the strategic misfit and perceived performance, irrespective of which strategic posture was followed. The conclusion is that it is imperative to both consciously adopt a strategic posture and actively work towards achieving this, as results indicate that there will be a positive impact on perceived party performance.

### *Contribution to the Political Science Literature*

The PMO model has also been integrated with areas of research that traditionally have been the remit of political science. Ormrod and Savigny (2011) demonstrate how the PMO model can complement political science models of party organisation, such as Heidar and Saglie's (2003) *Network Party*, Panebianco's (1988) *Electoral/Professional Party*, and Katz and Mair's (1995) *Cartel Party*. Whilst the underlying conceptualisation of a PMO draws on the commercial 'relationship marketing' approach to understanding interactions between political parties and their stakeholders (Bannon 2005; Henneberg et al. 2011), Ormrod and Savigny (2011) underline that the contextual sensitivity to the political marketplace enables the PMO conceptualisation to contribute to understanding how the competing interests of stakeholders can shape party strategy and organisational structure.

Ormrod and Savigny (2011) discuss the way in which the political market orientation perspective proposed by Ormrod (e.g., 2005) complements the alternative party organisation types from the political science literature. For example, member participation in the development of the party

offering can be facilitated by information and communication technologies (ICT's) that enable information to be generated and to be disseminated throughout the organisation (Gibson and Ward 2009), echoing Heidar and Saglie's (2003) Network Party. A focus on competitors is central to Katz and Mair's (1995) Cartel Party, whilst the varying importance of members that is explicitly included in the PMO model is a central issue in the political science literature (e.g., Duverger 1954; Michels 1959; Koole 1994; Panebianco 1988). Finally, the PMO model identifies ways in which parties can make explicit the tensions that exist between ideological purity and legislative responsibility (Strøm and Müller 1999) whilst refraining from adopting a normative position on how a party 'ought' to choose.

## 5. An example: the Danish Socialist People's party

In the following we use the Danish Socialist People's Party (Socialistisk Folkeparti, SF) to demonstrate how the PMO model (Ormrod 2005; Ormrod and Savigny 2011) can be used as a framework for understanding a concrete party, developed from an example in Ormrod (2011). SF was founded in 1959 as a party based on socialist ideals that would work within the framework of the democratic political system (Socialistisk Folkeparti 2011a). The foundation of SF's organisational structure are the local party organisations (Socialistisk Folkeparti, 2011b). The primary political responsibility of each individual local party organisation consists of discussing local council policy, together with electing one representative to the National Party Conference<sup>1</sup>. The National Party Conference meets once a year and is the forum where SF's political offering is discussed and changed, if this is deemed necessary. The National Party Conference is also the occasion when the majority of the members of the National Council are elected. The National Council is the forum where most of the decisions are made regarding the implementation of SF's political offering and meets approximately once a month. Finally, at the time of writing SF has 23 MP's who are responsible for representing the party in the various government committees and by voting on legislation in the parliament itself in accordance with the decision of the National Council. The MP's have a staff who provide advisory and administrative support.

An important distinction to make is between the PMO profile at the local level and that at the national level. Whilst all part of the same overall organisation, each of the local party organisation

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<sup>1</sup> The local party organisations are also responsible for electing members of the board and representatives for each of the five Regional Councils. These regional organisations have the task of specifying and implementing SF's regional political offering. This political forum has, however, limited powers and no tax raising ability and therefore has been omitted from this discussion in order to allow for a more focused treatment of the local and national party organisations.

possesses its own, unique set of orientations towards the various stakeholders groups. In addition to this, whilst each of the local party organisations has a common organisational structure, there are differences between local party organisations as to the level of activity of party members, whether there are elected representatives from the local party organisation and the influence that each local party organisation has. In a marketing context this is somewhat analogous to the difference between the corporate (national) and individual strategic business units (local) that deal with individual market offerings.

#### *The local level*

Focusing on SF's local party organisations, most of the information that is generated is from social interactions between members, and between members and their social network. This is due to the lack of resources (e.g., time and money) that can be devoted to the formal generation of information, together with the low level of direct contact with stakeholder groups such as trade unions, the media and competing political parties. An exception to this could be those private and public organisations where the party members are employed; however, many members may feel uncomfortable about actively trying to generate information from their social network. As such, at the local level we would arguably expect a low level of *Information Generation*.

The opposite is true of the level of information that is disseminated. Due to the close geographical proximity of the members of each local party organisation it is possible to hold regular meetings where information is shared. For example, the meetings provide a forum where SF's elected members of the local legislature can report back on their progress and provide information about the views of competing parties, the local media and other local interest groups; volunteer members can also contribute with information from their own social networks. The meetings also provide a forum where members can participate in the development of the local party offering, although this is again dependent on the level of activity in the specific local party organisation. However, due to the ability to hold frequent meetings it is possible for a comprehensive and deep discussion of the various issues that affect the local political offering, and to ensure that the offering and SF's wider party strategy is implemented to the extent possible. As such, we would expect a high level of *Information Dissemination, Member Participation and Strategy Implementation*.

#### *The national level*

Nationally SF has from its inception had a close cooperation with the Social Democratic Party throughout the electoral cycle due to ideological proximity. Due to the nature of the Danish political system, minority coalition governments are the norm and thus it is possible for SF to have influence in the formation of legislation irrespective of which parties form the government. In addition to this, the Danish governmental system emphasises the importance of gaining support for major pieces of legislation (such as foreign policy and the budget) from as many parties as possible in order to ensure a smooth transition following a change in government. This demands a certain pragmatism in SF's contact with other parties and an understanding of competitor positions, irrespective of ideology, which can be gained through formal and informal generation of information. The mass media is an important tool in getting the party message out to key stakeholders, especially voters, and journalists are present in the parliament with whom social relationships can be developed; thus it is possible to generate both formal and informal information from the media. Whilst it is slightly more difficult to have a close contact with citizens in general, direct contact is possible via informal links using online social media; the same can be said of the volunteer party members outside of the National Council, although SF's organisational structure enables information to be generated from members in this route, again primarily based on informal methods. Thus at the national level, SF displays higher levels of *Information Generation* than at the local level.

At the national level, SF is not able to have the same face-to-face contact between volunteer members and MP's on a regular basis. Thus more arms-length methods of disseminating information have to be used, such as an intranet, the party magazine 'F!' and making individual elected representatives or advisory staff responsible for specific areas of policy. Likewise, the number of members in the entire party – more than 18 000 at the time of writing – makes a comprehensive participation of all members in deciding national policy impossible. SF's organisational structure attempts to overcome this by delegating the responsibility for deciding the framework of SF's offering to the participants at the annual National Party Conference. Finally, the responsibility for ensuring that the party strategy is implemented at the national level is delegated to the National Council and the elected representatives.

#### *Local and national PMO profiles*

The strategic posture of SF's local party organisations can best be described as a *Convinced Ideologist*. Information is not actively generated from external sources due to lack of resources and limited social contact between the volunteer members and representatives of the other stakeholder groups, although there is some knowledge-sharing between members, and between members and

core interest groups due to the 'double membership' of both organisations by party members (Ormrod and Henneberg 2009). Information is disseminated through regular party meetings and therefore it is interest in the political activities of the party rather than party organisational structure that dictates the extent to which individual members participate in developing the local party offering. Finally, strategy implementation in the legislative body can be monitored closely due to the geographic proximity of the elected member to the volunteer party members.

On the other hand, there is a tendency for the party top to exhibit the characteristics of a *Relationship Builder* strategic posture, as there is contact with a wider range of stakeholders. This is arguably due to the proximity of members of parliament, party employees and the National Council to journalists, interest groups and members of competing parties, but also due to the fact that the National Council and MP's are restricted by what the National Party Conference has decided is the general course of the party. There are clear organisational structures in place which facilitate the two-way dissemination of information, and *Member Participation* is facilitated via regular meetings at the local level that feed into annual discussions at the National Party Conference. Finally, the National Council is the representative body outside of the parliament that meets at regular intervals to ensure that the party strategy that was decided at the National Party Conference is implemented in practice.

## 6. Conclusions, limitations and future research directions

Since its introduction in Ormrod (2005), the conceptual model of PMO has undergone numerous developments and been used in several investigations using qualitative and quantitative methodologies. In addition to this, the PMO model has been integrated with the wider political strategy literature and has been linked to the political science literature on party organisations. The current PMO model consists of two sets of constructs, four representing the behaviour of party members, and six representing the orientation of the party organisation towards stakeholder groups in society. The four constructs representing the behaviour of party members are *Information Generation*, *Information Dissemination*, *Member Participation* and *Strategy Implementation*, and were developed from the managerial behaviours approach to understand a commercial market orientation (Kohli and Jaworski 1990; Harrison Walker 2001). The six stakeholder orientations focus on citizens, voters, competing parties, the media, party members, and interest and lobby groups. These six orientations have gradually been developed from three constructs first proposed by Narver and Slater (1990) as part of the organisational culture approach to understanding a commercial

market orientation to include, most notably, an explicit orientation towards the media, reflecting this stakeholder groups central place in the political sphere.

The results of the empirical investigations that have been carried out using the PMO model have demonstrated that there is a strong relationship between the four constructs representing the flow of information throughout the political organisation, and the extent to which party members are included in the development and implementation of the party offering. Key stakeholders are citizens and party members; the media, competing parties and voters were not generally considered to be as important. Investigations with the integrated PMO profile have demonstrated that political parties tend to follow a strategy that emphasises either the opinions of party members or a more balanced approach by integrating different the sometimes conflicting opinions of a range of stakeholders in society, when developing a single political offering. In addition to this, one investigation has shown that if there is a misfit between the actual PMO profile that a party has on the one hand, and the optimum PMO profile for its chosen strategy type on the other, then there will be a significant, negative impact upon performance.

There are of course limitations to our knowledge surrounding the conceptual model of PMO. Whilst the number of empirical investigations is increasing, there is yet to exist a consensus on the relationship of a PMO to society; the commercial market orientation literature tends to conceptualise the external environment as a moderator or mediator of organisational performance, whereas the PMO model considers stakeholders such as the media, citizens and lobby groups to be of such importance to the ability of parties to successfully implement their strategies that constructs representing these groups are included in the PMO model itself. Indeed, there has only been one publication that empirically investigates the link between PMO and party performance; more research is needed before it is possible for us to say with a level of confidence that striving towards a particular strategic posture based on a PMO profile has a positive impact on performance. With the development of the conceptual model also comes the question of whether the overarching definition of a PMO proposed by Ormrod (2005) is still appropriate; for example, the current definition can be construed as an either-or proposition, despite the qualification as a PMO being a matter of degree, in line with the commercial market orientation literature.

Whilst research into political marketing cannot be said to be in its infancy any more, there are still issues that require further investigation in order to justify a recognition of the research field as more than just an esoteric sideshow to mainstream commercial and non-profit marketing research. Empirical investigations are often post-hoc rationalisations of political events, usually election campaigns, using a case-study method. Whilst these investigations provide useful, qualitative

information about the behaviour of political actors at the most visible occurrence of marketing in the political sphere, an increase in the number of investigations using multivariate statistical procedures would enhance the standing of political marketing in the predominantly quantitative-oriented commercial marketing academic community. Following on from this, O'Shaughnessy et al (2012) point out that future research could begin to combine the different areas into an overarching conceptual framework of political marketing that integrates specific tools and concepts with party strategy, market orientation and a wider consideration of the role of political marketing in society. The PMO model and its integration with political marketing strategy and the political science literature is arguably the first step towards this goal.

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