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Product-, Sales- and Market-Oriented
Parties:
Literature Review and Implications for
Academics, Practitioners and
Educators

Robert P. Ormrod

School of Economics and Management
Aarhus University
Bartholins Allé 10, Building 1322
DK-8000 Aarhus C - Denmark
Phone +45 8942 1610
Mail: oekonomi@econ.au.dk
Web: www.econ.au.dk



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Robert P. Ormrod

Associate Professor

Institute for Economics and Management

Aarhus University, Denmark

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1. Introduction

The use of marketing tools and concepts by political parties has long been acknowledged in the academic literature from the time of the first debates on the nature and scope of marketing in the late 1960's and early 1970's (e.g., Kotler and Levy 1969; Kotler 1975). In fact, the implicit use of what we now understand to constitute marketing practice has been used for many years in one form or another to garner support for political actors (Fletcher 1997). However, it is only in the last 25 years that a body of academically rigorous literature has emerged with the explicit aim of structuring and investigating the mechanics of social exchanges in the political context. A deeper understanding of marketing's place in the multi-billion dollar, global and highly visible political sphere is arguably a lucrative proposition for practitioners, irrespective of whether this is in the guise of party professionals, political consultants or employees of commercial organisations hoping to influence the political process. Finally, educators link research with practice; their role is key to the dissemination of cutting-edge academic research to practitioners. However, it is astonishing how few models have been developed that can assist political actors in understanding their political environments and how to develop strategies with which to achieve their aims (notable exceptions are e.g., Newman 1994; Dean and Croft 2001; Henneberg 2002; Ormrod 2005). Despite reservations about the conceptual and practical utility of Lees-Marshment's (2001a) Product-, Sales- and Market-oriented Parties (POP, SOP and MOP, respectively) process models (e.g., Ormrod 2006; Coleman 2007; Krogh and Christensen 2010; Temple 2011), its remains one of the most widely used approaches by educators in classroom situations.

As such, our paper contributes to the political marketing literature by providing the first, formal literature review of the academic work that utilises Lees-Marshment's (2001a) POP, SOP and MOP process models with the express aim of assessing its utility for academics, practitioners and educators. This is motivated by a need to identify strengths and weaknesses in current political marketing models to enable research to focus on developing strategies with which to achieve organisational aims, and teaching to provide the best foundation for future political marketing practitioners. Our paper begins with a presentation of the Lees-Marshment (2001a; 2008) POP, SOP and MOP process models¹, followed by a description of the method that we use to select the literature. We then conduct a literature review, after which we present our conclusions and discuss the limitations to our study, the implications for academics, political practitioners and educators, together with identifying future research directions.

¹ In order to improve the readability of our paper, all references to the POP, SOP and MOP process models are those described in Chapter 1 in Lees-Marshment (2001a) and Chapter 1 in Lees-Marshment (2008) unless otherwise stated.

2. Product-, Sales- And Market-Oriented Parties

Lees-Marshment's (2001a, 2001b, 2001c) initial work introduced the idea that a market orientation was one of three general types of orientation that political parties can adopt, the two alternatives being a product orientation and a sales orientation. Lees-Marshment (2001a) proposes that a party that follows a POP process "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). Part that follows a SOP process, 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 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). The MOP 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). The definition of a MOP is extended and refined in Lees-Marshment (2008: 20-21) and Lees-Marshment (2010a: 4-5) as:

"A Market-Oriented Party uses party views and political judgment to design its behaviour to respond to and satisfy voter demands in a way that that meets their needs and wants, is supported and implemented by the internal organisation, and is deliverable in government"

Therefore, instead of an exclusive focus on being aware of voter needs and wants, Lees-Marshment's (2008, 2010a) definition includes ideology as a possible basis for developing the party's product, as "Parties may use their ideology as a means to create effective solutions to public demands, but party elites try to respond to market demand, rather than trying to shape opinion" (Lees-Marshment 2008: 338). Thus despite an explicit reference to the importance of ideology to political parties, the primary focus is still on voters as the central stakeholder group.

Each of the three party types can be expressed as a multi-stage process. 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 collected 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 (Figure 1). In addition to the extra two stages, the *Market Intelligence* stage occurs before the *Product Design* stage. As such, the structural distinction between the three process models is the priority given to market intelligence (Lees-Marshment and Pettitt 2010).

Stage	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
POP	Product design	Communication	Campaign	Election	Delivery			
SOP	Product design	Market intelligence	Communication	Campaign	Election	Delivery		
MOP	Market Intelligence	Product Design	Product Adjustment	Implementation	Communication	Campaign	Election	Delivery

Figure 1: The marketing process for the POP, SOP and MOP process models (adapted from Lees-Marshment, 2001a, pp. 28-31)

Market Intelligence consists of uncovering “the needs, wants, behaviour and demands of the voters whose support it seeks” (Lees-Marshment 2001a: 30) through formal and informal channels by both professional members and the party rank-and-file. As such, a parallel can be drawn to the behavioural approach to commercial market orientation research first introduced by Kohli and Jaworski (1990). *Product Design* utilises the intelligence that has been generated in order for the party executive to develop a “model product design or picture as to how the party would behave if it followed voters’ demands” (Lees-Marshment 2001a: 33). Lees-Marshment (2001a) underlines that the results of the *Market Intelligence* stage may indicate that the current party product is the most appropriate; however, it may instead indicate that the party product requires a complete overhaul if it is to be successful in attracting the support of key voter groups.

Product Adjustment, concerns assessing how realistic the product design is. Lees-Marshment (2001a) identifies four factors that affect the extent to which the party’s product design has to be adjusted, namely the achievability of the product, the internal reaction to the product, the relationship of the product to competing parties’ products, and the extent to which the product meets the needs and wants of key voter groups whose support is necessary for winning the election. *Implementation* represents the set of activities carried out by those party professionals responsible for marketing that are aimed at informing the membership of the product that has been agreed on. If the implementation stage is successful then it is necessary for the vast majority of party members to “broadly accept the new behaviour and comply with it” (Lees-Marshment 2009a: 208).

Communication consists of ensuring that party members and voters alike are aware of the party’s product through the use of commercial marketing tools. Lees-Marshment (2001a) underlines that it is imperative that these activities are carried out continually throughout the electoral period, and that communication is also targeted to other stakeholders such as competitors and the media. If successful, then the activities associated with the *Campaign* are “almost superfluous to requirements but provides the last chance to convey to voters what is on offer” (Lees-Marshment, 2001a: 211). Finally, the *Election* is the key success criteria of a MOP: “If the party is the most market-oriented of its main competitors, it then wins the election” (Lees-Marshment, 2001a: 211).

The final activity in the three process models concerns the *Delivery* of the offered political product; according to Lees-Marshment (2001a: 40), “A Market-Oriented Party will focus on the need to deliver in order to achieve voter satisfaction”, and therefore loyalty at the subsequent election. In later work, Lees-Marshment (Lilleker and Lees-Marshment 2005b; Lees-Marshment 2006) suggests the possibility of adding a ninth stage to the MOP process, *Maintaining a Market Orientation*, to take into account the fact that it is necessary to not only deliver on existing election pledges but also to continuously renew the party’s product throughout the electoral cycle in tune with the dynamic political marketplace, which was not taken into consideration in the initial conceptualisation of the three process models (Krogh and Christensen 2010). The *Maintenance* stage is fully integrated into the original MOP process model in later work Lees-Marshment (2008; 2010a). Lilleker and Lees-Marshment (2005b) and Lees-Marshment (2009a) also suggest an alternative development of the original Lees-Marshment (2001a) MOP process model that conceptualises a continuous renewal of the party’s product as part of a separate process of the *Market Oriented Government* (MOG), which “aims to maintain a responsive relationship with the public, continuing to consult a range of markets, to reflect and review delivery progress, offer appropriate leadership, and engage in strategic product development in the context of government realities to provide satisfaction over the long term” (Lees-Marshment 2009a: 211). As such, Lees-Marshment (2009a) retains the eight-stage MOP process and conceptualises a party that follows a MOP process, when in government (the MOG), as being in a different situation to a MOP without legislative responsibility.

3. Literature Review Method

In order to provide a concise assessment of the literature within the journal format it is necessary to be more strict in our choice of selection criteria than would otherwise be the case in a longer thesis. The first selection criteria was that the sources had to be published in peer-reviewed Journals or as chapters in edited books. This led to the exclusion of conference and working papers; reviews of the books included in the current literature review that were published in academic journals were also included as they were judged to provide additional commentary on the nature and applicability of the POP-SOP-MOP process models. The second inclusion criteria was that the included work was peer-reviewed; this criteria ensured that the sources were academic in style and content. The final inclusion criteria was that the source had to have a specific focus on the three Lees-Marshment (2001a) process models, either in conceptual development, as the focus of a critique or as an explicit framework for an empirical investigation.

For the current work the process of gaining literature was carried out in the following way. Firstly, a search of academic articles was carried out in March 2011 in article databases including SSCI, Business Source Complete, SAGE online, Academic Search Elite, EBSCOhost, SCOPUS, Emerald and JSTOR, accessed through the State Library of the authors’ country. The keyword ‘Lees-Marshment’ was used as the search term in ‘all fields’. This keyword was selected on the grounds that the original conceptualisation was developed in Lees-Marshment (2001a) and thus all subsequent articles would reference this work. This provided us with a total of 80 articles. We then filtered out the non-scientific

journal articles, reducing the number to 68. A visual inspection of each of these articles excluded those that did not develop Lees-Marshment's (2001a) POP, SOP and MOP process models, use the process models empirically or explicitly critique the process models, further reducing the number of sources to 28. In addition to this, a search of the State Library of the authors' country yielded three books that contained chapters using the Lees-Marshment (2001a) process model, with a total of 34 contributions. Finally, the library search also uncovered two books that were authored by Lees-Marshment; one of these two books was available in two editions (unless otherwise specified we use the first edition for referencing purposes).

Our literature review encompasses literature on three main themes, namely academic publications that contribute to the conceptual development of the POP, SOP and MOP process models, those publications that use the three process models in empirical investigations, and finally the pedagogic features of the three process models. These themes are used *in lieu* of an in-depth report on the results of each of the 64 sources we identified and as such may be criticised as an 'artificial' delineation of the literature; however, this structure is consistent with the objective of our paper (Green et al. 2006), namely the appraisal of the usefulness of Lees-Marshment's (2001a) POP, SOP and MOP process models for the academic, practitioner and educator communities. We use quotes in our work to exemplify the position of representative authors where these authors provide a particularly succinct summary of the basic theme.

4. Literature Review

Relationship to commercial literature

Political marketing has its conceptual roots in the commercial marketing concept. Lees-Marshment (2009b) equates the MOP process with political marketing, and Strömbäck (2010) considers parties that only parties that follow the MOP process model adopt the marketing concept, whereas parties that follow the SOP and POP process models simply adopt marketing techniques. However, Paré and Berger (2008) consider the three processes to combine political science and political communication rather than marketing, arguing that the three process models are too simplistic to capture the complex and dynamic characteristics of the political marketplace and that the general framework does not enable an assessment of the democratic implications of an increased number of parties that follow especially the MOP process. In addition to this, the conceptualisation of the party 'product' is too simplistic (Krogh and Christensen 2010; Mortimer and Gill 2010), the three processes are static and linear and thus do not allow for the dynamism that characterises political systems (Lees 2005; Krogh and Christensen 2010) and it is not possible to separate out the various activities carried out by the parties into separate stages (Paré and Berger 2008; Asano and Wakefield 2010).

One can argue that the use by Lees-Marshment (2001a) of the labels for parties as being 'product-', 'sales-' and 'market-oriented' may be unfortunate as this implies that the commercial conceptualisation of a market orientation is the direct antecedent of the POP, SOP and MOP process models. References to

the commercial marketing literature are primarily those that constituted the broadening of marketing debate in the late 1960's and early 1970's; of the 'classic' market orientation articles from the first half of the 1990's that form the basis for all modern research and could reasonably be expected to be used in a book from 2001² (e.g., Kohli and Jaworski 1990; Narver and Slater 1990; Jaworski and Kohli 1993; Kohli et al. 1993; Slater and Narver 1995), only Kohli and Jaworski (1990) and Jaworski and Kohli (1993) are referenced in Lees-Marshment (2001a). It can be argued that especially the market intelligence stage of the MOP process demonstrates some overlap with the conceptualisation of a market orientation in the commercial literature as a managerial process (Ormrod 2007), although this is arguably where the likeness stops (Ormrod 2006). The three process models may benefit from integrating the managerial processes within the existing political science literature on party organisations (as advocated by Ormrod and Savigny 2011), rather than arguing for a marketing-based approach as a replacement for models that existed in the late 1990's, such as Panebianco's (1988) Electoral/Professional Party, Kirchheimer's (1966) Catch-all party and Katz and Mair's (1995) Cartel Party model.

Instead of product-, sales- and market-oriented parties, it may be more useful to adopt Shama's (1976) understanding as a *Candidate Orientation*, *Sales Management Orientation* and *Marketing Orientation* towards the party, communication and voters, although this would not solve the implicit problem in Lees-Marshment's (2001a) conceptualisation as a focus on an institution (product), a process (sales) and a stakeholder group (market). Hughes and Dann (2010) make the distinction between being market-oriented and ideologically driven, despite this not being a choice offered by Lees-Marshment (2001a). This alternative appears to be based on a choice between following a POP process and a MOP process, a distinction that draws upon the work in the commercial literature by e.g., Kotler and Andreasen (1991) as a marketing orientation with an external or internal focus, subsequently developed for the political marketing context by O'Cass (2001). Finally, several authors (e.g., Ormrod 2006; Coleman 2007) have criticised the lack of a distinction between a market and a marketing orientation in work on the process models (e.g., Lees-Marshment 2001a; Lamprinakou 2008; Lees-Marshment and Pettitt 2010).

Parallels have also been drawn with another marketing concept, the difference between being market-oriented and market driven (e.g., Lees-Marshment 2006; Galindo 2010). The idea with the former comparison is that a market-driven party will blindly follow the *vox populi* whilst a party that follows a market-oriented process model will take members into consideration. Slater and Narver (1998) made the distinction between the analogous market-oriented/customer-driven organisation, which was subsequently developed by Henneberg (2006) for the political marketing context together with 'leading' and 'following' as approaches to defining a party's strategic posture. Lees-Marshment and Pettitt (2010) describe these distinctions but do not reference Slater and Narver's (1998) and Henneberg's (2006) work.

² Lees-Marshment (2001a) states in the Preface and Acknowledgements sections that the idea for the subject of her PhD was developed in the Autumn of 1996, and that Lees-Marshment (2001a) is based on the ideas advanced in her PhD thesis.

Lees-Marshment's (2006) lack of referencing previous work³ is also evident when discussing the problems associated with the use of the MOP process as a governing tool. Omrod (2006) argues that the Market-Oriented Government is actually a SOP due to the constraints imposed by legislative responsibility, which Lees-Marshment (2006: 123) considers to be "incorrect and misleading" in her response. Initially, the MOP process is developed by adding a ninth stage, *Maintenance* (Lilleker and Lees-Marshment 2005b; Lees-Marshment 2009a, 2010a) to address this weakness in the form of the Market Oriented Government (MOG). However, criticism of the lack of acknowledgement of the dynamism of political competition, voter preferences and the wider political environment (Lees 2005; Coleman 2007; Krogh and Christensen 2010) and considerable difference in the extent to which all nine stages were identifiable in the 14 cases in Lees-Marshment et al. (2010a) has resulted in Lees-Marshment et al. (2010b) using Omrod's (2006) arguments, that constraints in office mean that a MOP in government adopts a SOP process and that a MOP process is a strategy to win elections rather than govern.

Market-oriented = success?

A defining characteristic of the MOP is that it is normatively superior to the SOP and POP process models: "If the party is the most market-oriented of its main competitors, it then wins the election" (Lees-Marshment 2001a: 211); giving the voter what they want is a prerequisite for electoral success (Lees-Marshment 2005). In addition to this, the SOP process model is considered to be superior to the POP process model, thus implying a hierarchical relationship between the utility of the three process models (Lees-Marshment 2001a; Fell and Cheng 2010). However, this hierarchy is not found in the commercial market orientation literature, as Kohli and Jaworski (1990) explicitly state that a high level of market orientation will not necessarily lead to commercial success. In addition to this, the normative superiority of the MOP process model has yet to receive unequivocal empirical support, and various authors have pointed to conceptual issues that impact on the ability of parties that follow MOP process to be successful.

Several empirical investigations have concluded that it may be more appropriate to follow a SOP process rather than a MOP process (Lees 2005; Marland 2005; Strömbäck 2007; Matušková et al. 2010). Others have questioned the ability of a party that adopts a MOP process to win elections as a result of the traditional dominance by one party (Asano and Wakefield 2010) that has been able to change the political market to suit its own offering (Hutcheson 2010), incumbency (Kotzaivazoglou and Zotos 2010), environmental factors (Fell and Cheng 2010), lack of internal competencies (Gelders and van der Walle 2005) and problems with implementation, especially with minor parties (Marland 2005). Furthermore, in one case a party that followed the POP process model was more successful than parties adopting SOP and MOP processes (Hutcheson 2010), although in other cases adopting a POP process model was found to result in electoral defeat (Hughes and Dann 2010; Hutcheson 2010). Finally, hybrid process models

³ Shama (1976) is referenced in Lees-Marshment (2001a) but not credited in the conceptual development of the three process models.

(parties that combine elements of POP, SOP and MOP process models) have proved to be superior in certain cases (Galindo 2010; Hutcheson 2010) and have been argued to be necessary, for example in political systems with a strong mass media (Temple 2010).

It is important to remember that winning an election is not necessarily the goal of a party. Thus a party that deliberately adopts a niche positioning strategy – and thus follows a POP or SOP process model – may have representation and subsequent influence over legislation as its goal rather than outright victory (Asano and Wakefield 2010); this is consistent with Lees-Marshment's (2004) emphasis on achieving organisational goals as a moderator of the ability of a party to follow a MOP process model. Various authors (e.g., Lees 2005; Marland 2005; Rudd 2005; Ormrod 2006; Lees-Marshment et al. 2010b) have pointed out that for smaller parties, following a POP process is more appropriate in order to differentiate themselves from competitors, although others (e.g., Hughes and Dann 2010; Strömbäck 2010) have argued that these smaller, fringe parties are more able to adopt a MOP process model due to the overlap of party ideology and core voter beliefs. For small parties, electoral success is therefore more likely to be driven by the ideological congruence of the target voter segment with the party rather than by proficiency in marketing activities.

By aiming to fulfil the needs and wants of the widest number of voters as possible, the MOP functions as an aggregator of public opinion (Coleman 2007). However, simply giving voters what they want does not take into account the increasing diversity of society (Lees 2005) and the fact that sometimes voter opinion is based on incomplete information (Mortimore and Gill 2010). As such, parties focus their resources on appealing to the segment of the electorate whose votes are necessary to win in order to achieve the parties' aims (Temple 2010). For small parties following niche strategies, focusing on a well-defined segment is a necessary prioritisation of resources, and this focus may facilitate a good fit between the ideological position of voters and members (Hutcheson 2010). However, major parties may need to appeal to a larger number of voters and thus a consideration of the differences between multiple voter markets – especially between core and floating voters – is necessary; simply focusing on the floating voters has received stern criticism (Mortimore and Gill 2010). However, this leads to the following conundrum: if a party has two different target voter segments that want different things, how can one offering reconcile both groups? Should the party develop two offerings, one based on ideology (for the core voters) and a second based on public opinion research (for the floating voters), or market one offering in different ways to the two voter segments?

Whilst voters and party members (Lees-Marshment 2009b), and to a lesser extent the adversarial relationship with competing parties (Ormrod 2006) are afforded an explicit role in the three processes, critics have questioned the lack of emphasis on the role of the media (Savigny and Temple 2010), especially in the *Communication* stage (Temple 2010), as Lees-Marshment et al. (2010b) argue that the media, whilst important, does not affect the choice of orientation that parties are faced with. Indeed, there is a general lack of focus on the implications of a party's choice of orientation for stakeholders in general (Krogh and Christensen 2010), despite Lees-Marshment (2004) underlining the importance of both society and the individual and other authors identifying the importance of multiple markets (Mortimore and Gill 2010).

It has been argued that the resources available to parties can affect their ability to adopt especially the MOP process (Ormrod 2006). Resources in the political context are, for example, party funds, human competencies and volunteer labour. Party funds limit especially smaller parties as marketing activities are arguably too expensive to carry out throughout the electoral period and/or consistently on a nationwide scale (Galindo 2010). Whilst it is possible for smaller parties to have highly competent elected politicians, the funds available to smaller parties are lower and thus these parties are more reliant on volunteers and so according to Hutcheson (2010) are more likely to follow a POP process. The power that this reliance on volunteers provides the membership with emphasises the influence of the organisation over the ability of the leadership to implement a MOP process (Strömbäck and Nord 2005; Lamprinakou 2008; Lees-Marshment and Pettitt 2010; Lees-Marshment et al. 2010b;).

Internal stakeholders, the party members, join parties due to a congruence of their own values and beliefs with that of the party, expressed as an ideology. Ideology plays a subservient role in the MOP process whilst it is central to the SOP and POP processes. Following a MOP process means that the party leaders should control policy-making and that there is no space for the ideology of the members (Lees-Marshment and Quale 2001), although party ideology can be included in the party's product as long as it fits in with what the voters want (Lees-Marshment 2005); others have argued that it is possible to following a MOP process whilst remaining true to the party's ideology (Galindo 2010; Hughes and Dann 2010). Irrespective of the extent to which the party's ideology forms the basis of the party's product or not, Lees-Marshment considers internal acquiescence to the party's product to be both necessary (Lees-Marshment 2001; Lees-Marshment et al. 2010b) and can increase the level of market-orientation of the party in question (Lees-Marshment and Quale 2001), and so is essential for the political product to satisfy both voters and party members (Lees-Marshment 2004). Conceptually, if there is a mismatch between the needs and wants of voters on the one hand, and party members on the other, the party product should be designed to be responsive to voters (Lees-Marshment 2001b; Lees-Marshment 2006), although the opposite has been found to be most common in empirical studies (e.g., Knuckey and Lees-Marshment 2005; Fell and Cheng 2010; Lees-Marshment and Quale 2001; Mensah 2010).

Some authors have, however, concluded that following party ideology is more important than following voter opinion (Knuckey 2010), and that concentrating on voter opinion as the main driver of party policy may actually result in defeat (Strömbäck and Nord 2005; Osuagwa 2008), although Lees (2005) argues that adopting a MOP process may actually alleviate voter disenchantment with the wider political process. Instead, in order for a party to gain success with the MOP process, voters would be characterised as utility-maximising with a low level of party identification, the party itself would be large and well-financed and party members would display low levels of activism (Strömbäck and Nord 2005). Indeed, Nord and Strömbäck (2009: 42) state that the results of their investigation indicate that Lees-Marshment's (2001a) assumption that the most market-oriented party would by definition win the election was "falsified".

Empirical results

Lees-Marshment (2001a) introduces the conceptual underpinnings of the POP-SOP-MOP process models as frameworks for understanding the behaviour of British political parties. The utility of the three process models is demonstrated using the example of British Conservative Party during the premiership of Margaret Thatcher from 1979 until 1990 as a MOP (Chapter 2), the British Labour Party at the 1979 and 1983 elections together with the Conservative Party at the 1997 elections as examples of a POP (Chapter 3), the Labour Party at the elections of 1987 and 1992 as an example of a SOP (Chapter 4), and finally the Labour Party as a MOP between the election defeat at the 1992 General election until after the party's victory in the 1997 General Election (Chapter 5).

The British Labour Party has been the focus of various investigations using the POP, SOP and MOP process models as empirical frameworks subsequent to the original work by Lees-Marshment (2001a). Lees-Marshment and Lilleker (2001) describe the way in which the British Labour Party became more market oriented in the years following the 1992 election defeat, arguing that the use of political marketing tools and concepts, in line with the Lees-Marshment (2001a) MOP process model, had a direct impact on the positive result at the General Election of 1997. A similar result was found in Lees-Marshment (2001c), with the case study in this article tracing the development of the Labour Party's shift from being a POP at the elections of 1983 and 1987, through a SOP in 1992 to a MOP at the 1997 General Election. Whilst not a 'pure' example of a MOP, the Labour Party exhibited a close attention to uncovering voter needs and wants using formal market research methods, used this intelligence to develop the appropriate offering and was effective in communicating the party message out to those constituents it needed to convince in order to gain electoral victory.

The edited works by Lilleker and Lees-Marshment (2005a) and Lees-Marshment et al. (2010a) contain case studies from ten and fourteen countries respectively, thus using the three process models as an analytical framework in a variety of political systems and historical contexts. To a certain extent, the case-studies in Lilleker and Lees-Marshment (2005a) are standardised as the contribution of each author follows a common structure, although this structure is procedural rather than methodological in nature. There are, however, few examples of actual comparisons across party systems within a single article or book chapter; one exception is Ingram and Lees-Marshment's (2002) comparison of the campaigns of Blair in 1997 and Clinton in 1992. The qualitative case-study method can supply useful and detailed information about specific contexts but does not lend itself to generalisation or have the predictive capabilities of quantitative statistical procedures, leading to a tendency towards a post-election rationalisation of results. Measurement of the key success criteria of a MOP process model, *Delivery*, is hampered by the fact that post-election coalition building with competing parties precludes the fulfilling of election pledges to voters (Matuškova et al. 2010). Finally, Strömbäck (2010) proposes 24 research propositions for intra- and inter-system investigations, but does not propose a standardised method with which to achieve these.

Despite these limitations, the three process models are widely used in teaching as they are considered to be easy to follow (Egan 2004), relate marketing concepts to party behaviour in a concise way (Lamprinakou 2008; Temple 2010) and are useful as heuristics for understanding the political sphere (Temple 2007; Matuškova et al. 2010). In addition to this, the case studies in Lilleker and Lees-Marshment (2005) and Lees-Marshment et al. (2010a) provide a welcome cross-cultural perspective that otherwise is

rare in the political marketing literature (Temple 2010). However, if a more advanced understanding of political marketing is required, the conceptual breadth of the three process models does not provide sufficient granularity for a deeper understanding of the relationship between parties and their stakeholders (Arrow 1951 in Lees 2005; Krogh and Christensen 2010) and do not take systemic and party-specific differences into consideration (Strömbäck and Nord 2009; Strömbäck 2007; Lees 2005), a situation exacerbated by the lack of the methodologically rigorous, cross-cultural empirical framework across the case studies in Lilliker and Lees-Marshment (2005a) and Lees-Marshment et al. (2010a).

Parties that follow the POP process model have proved to be relatively rare in more recent elections due to their defining characteristic of a lack of use of the marketing tools that are considered essential to modern political campaigning, both in the context of Lees-Marshment's (2001a) process models (Kiss and Mihályffy 2010) and in the wider political marketing literature (e.g., Sheth 1994, foreword in Newman 1994). On the other hand, the general rule is that it has been difficult to discern in practice whether a party exclusively follows a SOP process model or a MOP process model (e.g., Ormrod 2006; Hutcheson 2010), despite differences in the fundamental structure of the three process models (Krogh and Christensen 2010); for example, the order of the Product Design and Market Intelligence phases of the SOP and MOP process models are reversed. Furthermore, there are striking similarities between the actual marketing activities that SOP and MOP parties follow (Rudd 2005), although some authors argue that certain marketing techniques, such as targeting, polling, focus groups and brand development, are more associated with a MOP process model (Kiss and Mihályffy 2010; Mensah 2010).

Few authors have identified parties that follow a 'pure' process model, exceptions being e.g., Lees-Marshment (2001a, 2010b), and Lees-Marshment and Pettit (2010). Many authors question the actual existence of discrete POP, SOP or MOP processes, instead arguing for conceptualisation that centres around a *tendency* towards one or another of the process models (e.g., Knuckey 2010; McGough 2005), a matter of degree rather than an either/or proposition (Ormrod 2006; Fell and Cheng 2010), an acceptance of the processes as 'ideal types' that cannot exist in reality (Lederer et al. 2005; Paré and Berger 2008; Temple 2010), an integration of SOP and MOP processes at any one point in time into one party strategy (McGough 2005; Rudd 2005; Coleman 2007; Kotzaivazoglou and Zotos 2010) or as one model with three alternative processes at the sub-party level (Matušková et al. 2010). A further alternative understanding is proposed by Asano and Wakefield (2010), as a dimension varying from a POP process to a MOP process, with a SOP process as the mid-point. This addresses to a certain extent the issue of dynamism in the political marketplace that was not included in the original conceptualisation of the three process models (Krogh and Christensen 2010; Temple 2010) by allowing for different process models to dominate across consecutive elections (Fell and Cheng 2010), and implicitly across individual electoral periods.

The original POP, SOP and MOP process models were developed in conjunction with case studies of the Labour and Conservative parties in the British political system between 1979 and 1997. Various authors have commented on the ability of the POP, SOP and MOP process models to be applied across different party systems. Whilst Rudd (2005) argues that the three process models can be applied across national borders, others have questioned this position (Ingram and Lees-Marshment 2002; Knuckey 2010; Temple 2010; Kotzaivazoglou 2011), and Lees-Marshment and Pettitt (2010) argue that rather than systemic

differences, the ability of parties to successfully adopt a MOP process is dependent on certain criteria, such as the power balance between the leadership and membership, the nature of competition and the ability of the party to respond to market intelligence. Temple (2010) considers the three process models to have explanatory power in the context of the development of New Labour in Britain during the 1990's; Mortimore and Gill (2010) argue that this rather unique context reduces the ability of the process models to be generalised to other parties and systems, as the British first-past-the-post electoral system generally returns single-party majority governments, a less common method of apportioning mandates and electoral outcome than in the proportional systems used in other countries, although Mortimore and Gill (2010) point out that this may be more representative of general difficulty in transferring models of campaign behaviour across national boundaries rather than a problem specific to the three process models; in her defence, Lees-Marshment (2006) states that it was not her intention to develop a model for use outside of the British system. Temple (2010) goes so far as to say that in many systems, market-oriented parties are neither a logical nor natural outcome; indeed, some authors have found that the standard process model is the SOP (e.g., Lees 2005; Maier et al. 2010; Mensah 2010).

Strömbäck (2010) argues that there are five factors that affect the extent to which a party can follow a MOP process: whether the political system is majoritarian or proportional; whether the party is in opposition or in government (Temple 2010); how promiscuous voters are in their voting choices (Strömbäck and Nord 2005); the relative power distribution between elected and volunteer party members (Fell and Cheng 2010); and the level of integration of the media and political systems. Of these, the political system is the most commonly cited factor in being able to adopt a MOP process (e.g., Fell and Cheng 2010; Kiss and Mihályffy 2010; Kotzaivazoglou and Zotos 2010; Knuckey 2010; Lees-Marshment 2010b), together with whether the party is in government or in opposition (Strömbäck and Nord 2005; Ormrod 2006; Temple 2010). Lederer et al. (2005) point out the interesting case of parties in coalitions: firstly, a party may deliver on the promises given during the election campaign but not be credited for achieving this, or may not be able to deliver on promises due to having to compromise on policies to participate in the coalition, although this can be ameliorated to a certain extent by taking competitor positions into consideration during the product design stage (Butler and Collins 1992; Lees-Marshment 2006). Finally, Strömbäck (2010) states that just because a party is most like a MOP, does not mean that it *is* a MOP, although the conceptualisation of the three process models implies that if a party is not a MOP then it must be by definition a SOP or a POP, as the three process models contain a different number and order of stages (five for the POP, six for the SOP and eight for the MOP; Krogh and Christensen 2010); how a party can follow a non-MOP process model whilst being most like a MOP is never resolved by either Lees-Marshment (2001a, 2010a) or Strömbäck (2010).

5. Limitations, Implications And Future Research Directions

This study is limited by the exclusion of certain types of academic literature, specifically conference papers, working papers and other non-peer reviewed publications. However, we argue that this does not necessarily invalidate our work in that by concentrating on peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters we emphasise academic rigour as the key quality criteria; in any case, many of the high quality

conference papers are subsequently published in peer-reviewed, academic Journals. We acknowledge that it is conceivable that we have unintentionally omitted some academic work that meets the inclusion criteria but that was not uncovered by the literature review process, and that our selection of quotes establishes an interpretational framework that may not be the same as other authors would provide. However, we argue that by adopting a systematic and transparent approach to collecting, screening and presenting our data we have enabled a peer-evaluation of our work and critique of our method and interpretation.

There are several implications for academics, professionals and educators working in the field of political marketing. For academics, concerns about the POP, SOP and MOP process models indicate that the conceptualisations may have to be revisited before their contribution to the academic literature can fully be appreciated; the vast majority of the 24 case studies in Lilleker and Lees-Marshment (2005a) and Lees-Marshment et al. (2010a) were ambivalent as to the usefulness and even existence, either in reality or *in potentia*, of the MOP process in contrast to the POP and/or SOP processes. As Mortimer and Gill (2010) suggest, this may be a result of especially the MOP process providing a fairly accurate description the behaviour of the British Labour Party around which the three processes was modelled; in her defence, Lees-Marshment (2006) herself states that she never intended the three process models to be used outside of the British electoral system. Future research here could carefully examine the three process models and clarify their relationship to the literature on political science models of party organisation, electoral systems and commercial marketing managerial processes. From an empirical perspective, academics have up until now concentrated on *post hoc* rationalisations of the nature (and existence) of the constituent stages of the POP, SOP and MOP process models using a case-study method. Future research here could use quantitative statistical procedures to investigate the predictive capabilities of the three process models with regard to specific performance criteria such as share of vote or the perceived ability to influence public opinion.

Professionals need to be aware of both the strengths and weaknesses of the Lees-Marshment (2001a) POP, SOP and MOP process models. Whilst some academics have suggested that the three process models can be useful as concise heuristics or rules of thumb, others have voiced concerns over the general lack of empirical support for Lees-Marshment's (2001a) argument that the MOP process is by definition superior to both the POP and SOP process models. Indeed, several authors have argued that following the MOP process model as it is currently conceptualised may lead to an electoral backlash; the implication for practitioners is that using the POP, SOP and MOP process models for analysis and development of the party organisation may not adequately capture the complexity of the political marketplace, and so a wider consideration of the nature of the party's political offering is necessary to provide a more nuanced basis for decision-making.

Finally, educators are faced with a dilemma; academic research has demonstrated conceptual and empirical weaknesses, but, if used carefully, the POP, SOP and MOP process models could provide a useful initial framework to make students aware of the organisational processes and fundamental questions that exist in political marketing, before moving on to more complex models. As such, the implication for educators is that whilst the POP, SOP and MOP process models can be used in a classroom situation as a pedagogic tool, it is essential that the weaknesses of Lees-Marshment's (2001a)

process models are made clear and that their use is balanced with other, more detailed approaches to understanding the complex set of processes and behaviours that are central to current political marketing practice.

6. Conclusions

Lees-Marshment's (2001a, 2008) process models of Product-, Sales and Market-Oriented parties (POP-SOP-MOP) have been widely used as empirical frameworks in the academic political marketing literature and as a teaching aid in classroom situations. However, academics with roots in both marketing and political science have raised concerns as to the viability of the three process models as frameworks for investigating the use of political marketing by parties. Our paper contributes to the literature by providing the first literature review of the Lees-Marshment's conceptualisation of POP, SOP and MOP parties with the express aim of assessing their usefulness to educators, academics and practitioners alike. This is motivated by an urgent need to identify models that have an appropriate balance of explanatory power, practical applicability and pedagogic value.

From the review of empirical results and conceptual critique discussed above it is clear that Lees-Marshment's (2001a) three process models have yet to receive clear empirical support and can be criticised conceptually; this is unfortunate given the process models' relatively high profile in the academic political marketing literature and their value as a pedagogic tool. In addition to this, Lees-Marshment's (2001a, 2005) assertion that the MOP is normatively 'superior' to the POP and SOP alternatives is generally not supported in the face of empirical evidence due to party-specific, system-specific or environmental conditions, which may well be more of a general problem than one specific to Lees-Marshment's (2001a) process models. From the commercial literature, Levitt (1960) argues that a focus on the products that an organisation produces may create a 'marketing myopia' and that a focus on the markets the organisations serve is more appropriate, thus supporting a delineation between the needs and wants of the party versus those of voters; however, Kohli and Jaworski (1990) point out that simply adopting high levels of market orientation and the attendant reallocation of resources within the organisation to the marketing function is not necessarily the most appropriate way of serving the organisation's (wider) markets. Therefore, our conclusion is that unless the criticisms of the three process models are addressed and integrated within a development of the three process models, the only strength of the POP-, SOP- and MOP-process models will lie in the pedagogic value of demonstrating the complexity of political marketing.

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