Perspectives of Political Marketing in Japanese Political Arena

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Introduction

Introduction

Many authors on party politics assert that party is in decline. Parties become weak, and its membership has also declined. The major role of party has been changing. As Katz and Mair note, parties act as brokers or agents between state and civil society (Katz and Mair, 1995, p.14). Party identification has fallen, and electoral volatility has increased. There is no longer ideology basis on which party founded its structure and behaviour. In many countries the candidate is no longer dependent on the party for his candidacy and support and can appeal via the paid media direct to the voters. But from another point of view such process of "party declining" could be seen as simply the changing the forms of party behaviour. As far as the essence of politics and the pattern of electoral behaviour have been changing, it is fair to assert that the party's behavioural structure has been changed too. Parties try to respond to the changes in political environment and evolve stage by stage changing itself. The mass-party was required by society with strong political cleavage to provide the essential linkage between citizens and the state. As far as ideology, concept of social cleavage, and party identification have been declined, and on the other hand electoral volatility, variability of party support, and instability of party systems have been increased parties reflecting such changes have transformed towards catch-all, electoral-professional, and cartel. As Katz and Mair (1994) contented,

The development of parties in western democracies has been reflective of a dialectical process in which each new party type generates a reaction that stimulates further development, thus leading to yet another new party type, and to another set of reactions, and so on. (p.6).

From Katz and Mair's perspective each type of party is simply a stage in continuing process. Accordingly, a market-oriented party could be seen as one of these stages in the line of behavioural changing. Structurally, party could be catch-all, electoral-professional or cartel one, but behaviourally it has transformed toward market-oriented organization. Certainly, it has its own specific characteristics, tasks, means, goals, and requires specific environmental conditions to be implemented. It can be executed in society with specific social and political structure. Lees-Marshment (2001) notes in this respect, "a country which still has clearly defined political cleavage might be less likely to use [political] marketing…" (p.219); in such countries a product-oriented party may be more appropriate in some circumstances.

Similarly to Katz and Mair's concept of continuing process of party development analysis could be taken

from marketing perspective. As far as political, social, and competitive environments have changed, political party has transformed its behavioural structure from product-oriented towards sales-, and market-oriented party. Western democracies now require the parties to be more voter-oriented; otherwise parties could not achieve a long-term success. Modern parties face new so-called "consumption" politics with voters acting like consumers. Thus, in order to be successful in such competitive environment parties need to act like businesses. The concept of market-oriented party seems to be most appropriative for the modern-day political parties in order to achieve a long-term electoral success.

1. Political Consumer

Political marketing is sweeping through the political systems of United States, Great Britain and many other European countries. Pressure from market-oriented parties in governments, significant changes in society (education, communication, geographical and social mobility) that have altered people's attitude towards all political products, organizations and services, and the rise in consumerism in the business sphere that has stimulated changes in public attitudes in the political environment cause the emerging such phenomenon as "political consumer". The people become more critical, with voices of their own. They want results, a product geared to suit their needs and wants. In turn, the rise of political consumer pushes a transformation in the conditions of the political market in which organizations are operating, and organizations themselves are pressured to change their behavior. A now-day political organization is not directed by ideological doctrine, party identification and so on anymore. It faces voters, which not identify themselves as communists, liberals, democrats or republicans anymore. Indeed, they identify themselves as consumers. Now, the main task for all political organizations is how to become more responsive to public needs and wants. As far as voters act like consumers, political parties need to behavior like business organizations to suit voters' demands. In such political context organizations turn toward political marketing as the means to understand and serve their "market" or people better. Lees-Marshment argue that marketing

"…is concerned not just with the selling of a product, but with how it is designed and whether it reflects the demands of those it is produced for. Whilst much of the literature on marketing is suited to business, it can be adopted to study the political world" (Lees-Marshment, 2004, p.7).

Political marketing is a global phenomenon with parties from all corners of the world developing political manifestos based around the results of qualitative and quantitative marketing research. Political organizations increasingly conduct market intelligence to identify citizens concerns, change their behaviour to respond those demands and communicate their "political product" effectively.

So, how could the political marketing be defined? There is a problem with discussing and researching political marketing is that the traditional view of political marketing is narrow and does not reflect political practice. Political marketing is not just about election campaigns, it designates the application of marketing to a wide range of political areas. Political marketing has moved beyond the narrow focus on communication that characterizes much of its literature prior to the twenty-first century – a focus that perhaps stemmed from the common mistake that marketing itself is the same as advertising or selling. Political marketing is viewed by many authors "…as a route towards a more participatory form of democracy" (Lilleker, 2005, p.5). The most comprehensive definition of political marketing was given by Lees-Marshment:

Political marketing is about political organizations adapting techniques and concepts originally used in the business world to help them achieve their goals. It studies the relationship between a political organization or individual and its market, its use of marketing activities (market intelligence, product design, communication and delivery), its product, and its overall attitude (product, sales or market-oriented). Such political organization include parliaments, political parties, charities, bureaucracies and television channels; their product legislation, policies or meetings; their market is the public, electorate, members, financial donors, tax-payers, benefit receivers or viewers; their goals are passing legislation, winning elections, campaigning for better rights for a section of society, and providing entertainment (Lees-Marshment, 2001, p. 17) .

2. Lees-Marshment's model

Nowadays, many scholars tend to concern political marketing as a global phenomenon, which could be applied to all democratic political systems of the world. They are discussing the democratic and philosophical implications of the use of political marketing around the world.

There is a universal model constructed in 1999 by Lees-Marshment that can provide a useful framework

to explain and analyze party behavior in political marketing perspective. Lees-Marshment (2001, p.21-43) identifies three approaches in the political marketing of a party: the product-oriented party; the sales-oriented party; and the market-oriented party. Each party considers its relations with its market and so behaves in ways deemed appropriate to that market. Before we begin to discuss the perspectives of political marketing implementation in particular country such as Japan, it is necessary to explain the nature of each orientation and the stages they go through. The stages of behavior for each approach are depicted in table 1.1.

Table 1.1. The marketing process for product, sales and market-oriented parties: the Lees-Marshment model

PRODUCT-ORIENTED PARTY	SALES-ORIENTED PARTY	MARKET-ORIENTED PARTY
STAGE 1 PRODUCT DESIGN	STAGE 1 PRODUCT DESIGN	STAGE 1 MARKET INTELLIGENCE
	STAGE 2 MARKET INTELLIGENCE	STAGE 2 PRODUCT DESIGN
		STAGE 3 PRODUCT ADJUSTMENT
		STAGE 4 IMPLEMENTATION
STAGE 2 COMMUNICATION	STAGE 3 COMMUNICATION	STAGE 5 COMMUNICATION
STAGE 3 CAMPAIGN	STAGE 4 CAMPAIGN	STAGE 6 CAMPAIGN
STAGE 4 ELECTION	STAGE 5 ELECTION	STAGE 7 ELECTION
STAGE 5 DELIVERY	STAGE 6 DELIVERY	STAGE 8 DELIVERY

Adopted from Lilleker and Lees-Marshment, 2005, p.8

The product-oriented party represents the classical conviction-based form of party behavior. It argues for

what it stands for and believes in. This kind of party assumes that voters will realize the worth of its ideas and will therefore vote for it. It refuses to change its idea, or product, even if it fails to gain electoral or membership support.

The sales-oriented party seeks to persuade voters through extensive marketing communications founded in an understanding of ways in which market can be manipulated. It does not change its behavior to suit what people want, but tries to make people want what it offers. The sales-oriented party is much more focused on selling its product. Communication strategy becomes the main tool of acting. Communication is well-organized, coherent, centralized and unified. It is designed not just to advance arguments but to persuade voters that the party is right and that they want to vote for the party. It uses all available selling techniques and marketing communication techniques, including mail, leaflets, posters, and direct-mail videos, party-election broadcasts, etc.

Lees-Marshment argued that a sales-oriented party approach is likely to fail at an election because it does not respond to the emergent political consumer and continues to seek to change voter demands rather than to follow them (Lees-Marshment, 2001, p. 31).

The market-oriented party model turns around traditional ideas about politics and argues that to win an election a party needs to identify and understand public priorities, concerns and demands before then designing a product that reflects them. It does not attempt to change what people think, but to deliver what they need and want. This type of party is driven not by ideology or leader opinion, but by the desire to develop and deliver a set of realistic policies and structures that will meet the needs of its market.

A market-oriented party goes through a more complex eight-stage process to provide a product that will satisfy voters' needs.

Market intelligence aims to discover voters' behavior, demands and priorities. The main task of this stage is to collect a data from many sources using various methods (polling, focus group, public meetings and discussions, etc.) to provide information about all aspects of the product and its "consumers". The party will then design a "product" on the basis of market intelligence data. This stage means making changes. Such changes may be trivial or to particular area of party activity, or they may be dramatic and indicative of a wholesale transformation in image and behavior. There are four general factors of product design adjusting: achievability, internal reaction, competition analysis and support analysis (Table 1.2.).

Table 1.2. Four factors of adjusting product design

Achievability	The party should not promise what it cannot deliver in government
Internal reaction	Analysis concerns linking the demands and priorities of the market with those of the party members, elected as well as grassroots. This stage could be seen as balancing act between the demands of external (voters) and internal (members) supporters. Political parties commonly have their own historical and ideological background. Thus, changes have to be congruent with the party's history, as well as with ideas of the market
Competition analysis	The strengths and weaknesses of the opposition parties are taken account of and response to them made in the product design. This stage allows party to design a distinctive product and so fill gaps in the market. A party which simply copies another electorally successful party would not be using political marketing correctly.
Support analysis	Identifying the key groups within electorate whose support is required. These market segments are then targeted by further product adjustments as well as by communication.

Based on Lilleker and Lees-Marshment, 2005, p.10-11

The next stage that is implementation involves unifying the party around the proposed product. Lilleker and Lees-Marshment argue that "this stage is perhaps the most difficult, though the most important; ineffective implementation may gain short-term goals but will hinder delivery and long-term electoral success" (Lilleker and Lees-Marshment, 2005, p.11).

Once the product is implemented throughout the party, it must be conveyed to the electorate using the most appropriate and effective communication techniques. Communication is continual process that allows interaction with both internal and external supporters. The official election campaign will simply re-emphasize the more important aspects of the product to remind the electorate what is on offer and will employ the more innovative practices of marketing communication. If the product is effectively communicated and the party is accepted as a viable potential government, the party will be elected and will gain support in terms of favorable voter and member assessment of the party's product. The final stage is to deliver the promised product in government. This difficult task is crucial if voters are to be satisfied and also

continue to support the party. Lilleker and Lees-Marshment continue then, "If the party is to remain market-oriented once in government, it must engage in continual market intelligence and adjust its behavior as demands change" (Lilleker and Lees-Marshment, 2005, p.11).

3. Framework for comparative research: Japanese case

The Lees-Marshment model was constructed in 1999 with reference to the United Kingdom, without the benefit of primary empirical testing. This paper is an attempt to show how the theory could be applied to a particular case, such as Japan. Such a work can be written within a structure clearly defined by many international scholars. That structure includes:

- an overview of political context;

- a history of the application of political marketing or its elements;

- the introduction of the case study or studies;

- a discussion of the implications for the democratic function;

Two questions arise when considering the suitability of Lees-Marshment's product-oriented party, sales-oriented party and market-oriented party models to the Japanese political context. First, how to Japanese national parties fall within these categories? Second, to what extent do Japanese parties follow the stages of the political marketing process?

3.1. Political context

Japan is the oldest democratic polity in East Asia. Liberal democracy was introduced to Japan in 1945. The nation's electoral system and laws have been modified several times since then. Japan has many similarities with Britain, and other countries, in terms of its overall political market environment, including significant demographic, social, and economic changes since the Second World War. For example:

- an increase in the numbers of white-collar workers and a decline in the number of blue-collar workers;

- growing numbers of voters whose occupational status differs from that of their parents;

- increases in affluence and improvements in quality of life;

- the waning of class consciousness;

- better educated citizenry, particularly in terms of tertiary education;

- the emergence of television as the main source of information on politics;

- the breakdown of the traditional family structure, especially the growth in number of single-parent households and childless couples.

There has also been a weakening of party identification; a much weaker socialization of partisanship from one generation to the next; and fewer of the electorate voting on the basis simply of social group membership. Voters are now more influenced by a party's position on issues, and by short-term factors such as the performance of leaders and the personality of the local candidate. The electoral market is volatile, characterized by weak or non-existent party loyalties.

Despite, the Liberal Democrats have in one or another dominated the political process since World War II, Japan is indeed a democracy. Its citizens enjoy substantial personal freedoms and the civil liberties associated with an open society. Japanese democracy has its specific character. It differs in many fundamental ways from democracies found elsewhere in the world. The typical forms of political competition are not characteristic of the Japan system. Louis D. Hayes argues in this perspective, that, "even when the Liberal Democratic Party was chased from power in 1993, it did not result from party from party competition as such, but rather from the collapse of the internal integrity of the LDP" (Hayes, 2005,p.122).

The party system in Japan is described by many authors as consisting of one and a half parties. The largest opposition party – the Socialists until 1998, and Democrats nowadays - according to this view, but half a party. The other parties play only minor roles.

In fact, interfactional competition within the Liberal Democratic Party may be the most significant in the entire party system. Kyogoku Junichi argues "the power struggle in Japan takes the form of factional strife within the LDP" (Kyogoku Junichi, 1987, p.191). The LDP divided into factions immediately upon its formation in 1955. Factions keep membership lists, which are matter of public record, although the exact size of any given faction is not completely clear since included in the membership are politicians who are temporarily out of office. Factions hold regularly scheduled meetings, have leadership positions that mirror those of the LDP itself, and publish their own newspapers. The importance of factions within the LDP and in politics in general contrasts with the fact that they have generally been viewed negatively by the public. Thus, appealing against the strong-faction system could be seen as a good key to increase the public support basis. In the early 1960s, there was a move to liquidate factions, and nowadays ex-prime minister Koizumi Jyunichiro effectively appealed to destroy LDP, he said "there are factions, no parties", "I will destroy the LDP", "Change LDP, change Japan" (Yomiuri-Shinbun-Seiji-Bu, 2001, p.121). That call presumed to be

highly effective to draw the public support.

Another one specific character of Japanese politics is Koenkai. The actions of Koenkai are designed to strengthen and consolidate a politician's grassroots support. They are permanent institutions rather than ad hoc committees formed right before an election. LDP candidates began to set up their personal support organization, the Koenkai, in 1958. In the 1950s, these personal support organizations were at an experimental stage and an exclusively LDP campaign tool. Within a decade, the Koenkai became an indispensable part of almost any candidate's campaign in Japan. "The Koenkai aims at securing long-term grassroots support, the jiban" (Abe, Shindo and Kawato, 1994, p.172-3). The Koenkai gradually bypassed the local political middle men. It constituted a direct link between the candidates and the individual voters. The Koenkai, indeed, represented "an innovation in campaign strategies and are to be contrasted with a strategy of reliance on local politicians and other community leaders" (Curtis, 1971, p.129).

Nowadays, changes in Japanese politics are visible. Especially it concerns voter behavior. Political participation has decreased over the years. In upper house election, voter turnout was the lowest in 1995 with less than 50 percent of the electorate casting their votes. In the lower house, turnout has generally been higher, but has also decreased over the years. Political corruption and other forms of misbehavior are certainly one of the reasons behind the increasing number of unaffiliated voters. The stagnating economic growth and the resulting inability of politicians to deliver the expected "product" to the electorate can be listed as another reason. Moreover, the increasing instability of Japan's party system in the early 1990s, the boom and the changing affiliation of several politicians further contributed to the rise of the independent class.

Commonly, independent class is very beneficial to the new parties, or to the parties which implement a new party positioning strategy. In such situation when the parties face a new type of voters many European political parties turn towards political marketing techniques in attempts to satisfy demands of voters acting like consumers.

3.2. History of the application of political marketing or its elements

The first experience of Japanese politicians with electoral campaigning dates back to the 1870s when the Meiji government was determined to promote industrialization and to build a modern nation state with a strong centralized bureaucracy. Schafferer and Kawakami argue

"It was about that time that political parties began to use newspaper advertisements to communicate

with the general population. The ads attacked government policies, announced party platforms, and asked the people to attend political gatherings. The number of political advertisements increased steadily" (Schafferer and Kawakami, 2006, p.11).

In 1920s candidates placed an enormous amount of political ads in Japan's daily newspapers and ran a capital-intensive electoral campaign. After the 1932 assassination of Prime Minister Tsuyoshi Inukai, the influence of the military grew tremendously and, in 1940, all political parties were dissolved.

Political parties re-established themselves at the end of 1945 in preparation for the first national election in postwar Japan. The first election was held in April 1947. Age was a significant factor in determining voting behavior. The 1950s experienced a rise in popular support for socialist parties. In the 1950s, the confrontation between the conservatives and the socialists was neither a class struggle nor a dispute over capitalism versus socialism. It was merely a confrontation between the conservative forces, who favored "traditional values of emperor worship, emphasis on hierarchy and harmony, and belief in militarily strong nation", and the socialists, who defended "modern values", such as individuality, equality, and world peace (Watanuki, 1991, p.60).

The changing Japanese voter and the subsequent drop in popular support, the increasing competition among LDP candidates contesting the same constituency, and in fact that the LDP could not rely on grassroots organizations brought about changes in electoral campaign strategies of LDP candidates. One of these changes was the emergence of Koenkai in 1950s. It gradually replaced the traditional structure of cultivating and defending the jiban.

The Socialists lost considerable support throughout the 1960s. The Japan Socialist Party could not benefit from the old cleavage of the 1950s, the riots of 1960, the rapid expansion of the secondary and tertiary industries, and the numerous corruption scandals of LDP politicians that surfaced in the 1960s. The JSP failed partly because the LDP was clever enough to adapt to the changing environment. The Koenkai was part of this adaptation. Moreover, a new campaign strategy developed by the LDP leadership under Hayato Ikeda proved successful: in the lower house election of November 1960, the LDP was aware that only the creation of new issues could minimize the unfavorable effects of the old cleavage. Ikeda, thus, announced two months before the election the party's election promise to double Japan's national income. Subsequently, Japan's economy emerged as the issue in every electoral campaign. The party's image was from then on based on the belief that only the LDP could guarantee prosperity and a bright future. At that time, real economic growth

was high and it was easy for the LDP to present itself as the party that understood economic issues.

The emergence of new political parties and issues intensified the electoral competition and led to new trends in campaigning. One of these was the involvement of television and the growing importance of the candidate's appearance. In 1967 mayor election in Tokyo marked the beginning of image politics in Japan.

In the 1968 upper house election, numerous candidates relied on appearance and their popularity to win the election. In other words, celebrity politics entered Japan's political arena. In this perspective Japanese way towards market-oriented politics is closer to US model, which started from popular politics to political marketing; in comparison with UK model which originated from propaganda. For instance, "Ishihara Shintarou, well-known author, adopted a market-oriented segmentation strategy to be successful in election" (Schafferer and Kawakami, 2006, p.17). He received three million votes, the highest number of votes ever obtained by any politician in Japan. He was the first politician in Japan who hired professionals from marketing agencies and TV stations to design his entire electoral campaigns.

In 1969 national election, more and more candidates hired professionals to instruct them on how to look attractive in front of TV cameras.

The 1970s brought about several changes in Japan's political environment. National elections in 1970s marked the campaigning with the total involvement of big business. As far as big moneys entered to political processes, that time is identified as a time of serious corruption scandals. As a result, in 1980s LDP lost half of the number of seats it had obtained in previous elections, whereas the JSP doubled its share.

It was a turning point for LDP to change its campaigning strategy. Schafferer and Kawakumi stress "the 1989 defeat caused the LDP leadership to launch an image campaign to present the LDP as the number one party to the electorate", they continue then, "Several ads argued that the consumer tax was necessary to finance the people's welfare programs" (Schafferer and Kawakumi, 2006, p.19). However, in the 1993 parliamentary election, the LDP failed to win a majority of seats and a seven-party coalition government excluding the LDP and the JCP was formed.

In 1994 Prime Minister Hosokawa succeeded in pushing through reform bills that changed the electoral system and aimed at cleaning up campaign finance practices. There were two expectations of the new system. First was to create a stable political system with an effective number of parties close to two. Second was the emergence of two strong parties that would rule alternately. Schafferer and Kawakumi stress, "the electoral success of the Democratic Party may bring Japan's party system closer to a system dominated by two parties" (Schafferer and Kawakumi, 2006, p.20).

The new election law and increasing number of unaffiliated voters brought about changes in campaign communications, especially in the utilization of TV. NHK surveys reveal that about 30 percent consider election news coverage on television and radio as the most important factor in their decision-making process. Another 30 percent said that newspaper editorials influenced their voting behavior. About 19 percent claimed that their decision to vote for a specific candidate was influenced by political advertisements on radio and television. Thus, the media has become a very influential force in Japan's elections. Takeshita and Mikami argue that the media "treated members of the new parties as if they were heroes" (Takeshita and Mikami, 1995, p.27).

Before the 1994 electoral reforms, political ads on TV were rare and had to be produced by NHK. Moreover, candidates could only introduce themselves to the electorate. This set format was widely regarded as boring. Under the new law, political ads can be produced by the candidates themselves and do not have to follow a given format. Several restrictions still apply. First, the number of advertisements is restricted depending on the number of candidates a party nominates. Second, independent candidates are disadvantaged since their ads are only aired once on NHK television and they are only a self-introduction to the electorate. Third, candidates are only allowed to place ads during the official campaign period of 12 days in lower house elections and 17 days in upper house elections. In the 1995 upper house election, political parties began to utilize mass media outlets far more than in the past. In this election, the LDP and the largest opposition party, the New Frontier Party, used abundantly the relatively cheap radio commercials.

The election to lower house was held a year after. That election was the first media war in Japan's electoral history. Political advertisements were used to attack and counterattack the opponent. Schafferer and Kawakumi argue "it seemed as if the two parties were communicating through political ads" (Schafferer and Kawakumi, 2006, p.24). It was a successful electoral strategy. The LDP was extremely successful in adapting to the new media-led electoral campaigning. In the 2000 lower house election the quality of the party's commercials was outstanding and one of them was chosen by the CM Research Institute as one of the best ads of that year.

After Koizumi Jyunichiro took over the LDP leadership in April 2001, he tried to attract the independent voters by announcing that he would "destroy the Liberal Democratic Party", and asserted large-scale structural reforms. The LDP under Koizumi developed a skillful media strategy, and soon Koizumi was at the center of every media report. There was a Koizumi boom. Koizumi put great emphasis on cooperation with the media. Observers noted that the prime minister was a master of sound bites and that he could capture his

audience in the first five to ten seconds. The new LDP chair more and more resembled a TV celebrity rather than a prime minister. Posters, T-shirts, cellphone straps and other campaign merchandise featuring Koizumi were sold. People queued for hours in front of the LDP party headquarters to get some of the popular items. The Koizumi boom left the opposition speechless.

3.3. Case study – Koizumi's success

Ex-prime minister Koizumi Jyunichiro is the third person, following Sato Eisaku and Yoshida Shigeru, who was in office such long period. His extremely new type of leadership pushed the changing of the policy decision system and LDP's power structure. Before Koizumi, in Japanese political system was an informal rule that only Member of Parliament who gets the post at least in 3 ministries can be elected Prime Minister. Koizumi was an exception. He had not experience of getting post in Ministry of foreign affairs or Ministry of financial affairs, his leadership was not founded on faction, and he was not well-known as a skillful leader but he could get the Prime Minister post. He contradicts the faction politics and principles of Nagata-chyo[1]. Although his is a member of LDP, he appealed to destroy it. So, some people call him "maverick" or odd person.

Firstly, Koizumi effectively utilized populist strategy of "good and evil". "Good" is represented by reformists and "evil" is who which resist reforms. Generally, forces who resist reforms are bureaucracies and elites. In turn, Japanese society since 1990s was negative about bureaucracies and elites, especially after series of corruption scandals. People were tired of corrupted politicians and rejected any political participation. They are seemed to be needed changes and reforms. Koizumi could realize it, and as a result, he successfully utilized that anti-bureaucracy movement and came to power. The symbol of his structural reforms was privatization of posts system. These basic stances were successfully used by Koizumi in 2005 election. Therefore, it could be argued that Koizumi can feel a society's mood and suitably exploit it. It is a very important part in political marketing practice that politician have sense of public stream.

Secondly, Iwasaki Daisuke argues, "one of the most reasons of "odd-prime-minister's" success lies on his image of clean person" (Iwasaki Daisuke, 2006, p.15). In general, there was a trend that all LDP's parliamentarians represent interests only of their own constituency and are concerned deeper with local issues rather than state's ones. Koizumi's stances were opposite that tendency. At the time of his first challenge of nation election (1969) he manifested that even thought he would be nominated for candidate by certain interest group or constituency he would not represent its interests only. He places greater importance on the

state's profit rather than local's one. It was a specific characteristic of his electoral strategy that distinguished him from other candidates. Since one of the most necessary tasks in planning and conducting electoral strategy is to investigate electoral market and other competitors' strengths and weaknesses, then as result of such examination, to distinguish candidate from others according to public mood and opinion, such kind of character like Koizumi could be viewed as one of the most market-oriented candidate.

Thirdly, Koizumi has a sense of self-producing strategy. Seko Hiroshige, Member of Parliament once argued, "Koizumi has a natural sense of PR. He is genius of PR. He is acting not by theory or logic, but by an unique sense" (Seko, 2006, p.23). Since he took office in April 2001, he has regularly made direct appeals for his reform-minded agenda, including privatizing the postal system and the road-construction monopoly. He even began regular radio broadcasts to spread his appeal. There is a principle in commercial marketing named AIDMA. It means Attention, Interest, Desire, Memory and Action. This is a theory of analysis consumer behavior in product-buying process. According this principle consumer perceives interested, desires, memorizes and finally buys products. Some authors argue that Koizumi successfully utilized it in political area. Especially it has been expressed when he appealed his main political products, such as structural reforms, privatization, small government etc. to electorate. One could see Koizumi on public speaking or TV-spots that he is acting like a salesman.

Fourthly, Koizumi's success was made mainly by effective media-strategy. Professor of Doshisha University, Ofer Feldman credits much of Koizumi's success to his astute (and sometimes forceful) handling of the media. He says that Koizumi is a new kind of politician for a new kind of Japanese political culture – more a leader in the Western style than the old consensus-building traditional Japanese politician. He is a leader who "has a dialogue with the people and the ability to influence them"(Feldman, interview to Japan Media Review). Also, Gerald Curtis, an expert on Japanese politics at Columbia University, commented shortly after the 09.11-election: "This was not a victory of the LDP; this was a victory of Koizumi." In 1990s Japanese politics was structurally changed. That caused changing in political culture and people's attitude toward leadership. People became ready to accept goal-orientated leaders rather than old-fashioned consensus-building leaders. That situation paved the way for Koizumi.

Koizumi manipulated the media using sound bites. He creates catch-phrase politics, one-phrase politics. He decides the content and length of the phrases himself. He decides when he is going to meet the media. He asks them for the questions they will ask in advance, he talks for 4-5 minutes and then he leaves.

Conclusion: the implications for the democratic function

Many authors in Japan, Europe and America debate strange form of Japanese democracy which is without competition. Between 1955 and 2006, the LDP was out of power for a total of ten months and 20 days. Nevertheless, Japan is a democracy. Citizens maintain all the usual civil liberties, and non-LDP parties contest elections, hoping to topple the LDP. While LDP is in control over 40 years, it is not popular. During the 1990s, in the face of severe economic stagnation, party corruption, and seeming paralysis on the part of the LDP to do anything about such issues, displeasure with the party grew dramatically. Nevertheless, no real challenge to the LDP was able to sustain itself.

Competition in politics, as well as in commercial, plays a drastic role. Like in economic area where the result of competition is decided by consumers by buying products, in political area, it is depend on decision of political consumer-voter. Firms and parties need to compete to increase its profit, market share, or number of seats in Parliament. Political marketing does not provide a method how to make a state more democratic, it provides a methodology of conducting competition. Thus, political marketing forces parties to suit people's demands. In modern Japanese politics we can see so many elements of political marketing practice, it seems be acted by a sense only, not by clearly planned strategy. It needs to be systemized and classified. By utilizing political marketing properly the opposition parties will able to effectively contest LDP and probably defeat it that will reflect Japanese democracy is not about only one dominated party.

Endnote

1 Nagata-chyo is the district of Tokyo in which all political activity of Japan is concentrated.

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