

Evolution of a framework of co-creation in political marketing: select cases

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Abstract Co-creation is a new paradigm that has captured the attention of management researchers and practitioners worldwide. Through this paper we attempt to understand the relationship between political marketing and co-creation and how it is bringing the transformation in political system through engaging the citizen at various levels. We have started with the literature review on co-creation and political marketing. Then we have identified the levels of co-creation in political marketing through literature review. We have followed the inductive case study approach to examine the phenomenon of co-creation in political scenarios where it was not used as a conscious political marketing tool. However, due to intense political situation, fewer political organization and leaders have understood the changing political climate and realized the increasing role of voters and thus involved voters at various level of decision making and product development which results in increased awareness and engagement of voters with that political party at that point of time. Based on this, we have selected three case studies and through within case and cross case analysis we have proposed the framework of political co-creation. This framework represents three categories of factors that indicate the different stages of co-creation in political system. First is the Co-creation indicating factors which include social dissatisfaction and local level CSO integration. Second group of factors is Co-creation process factors which include active actors and knowledge sharing and lastly Post co-creation factors which include aware citizen, engaged voters and proactive political system.

Keywords Political marketing · Co-creation · Political co-creation

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1 Introduction

Political marketing seeks to “establish, maintain and enhance long-term voter relationships at a profit for society and political parties, so that the objectives of the individual political actors and organizations involved are met. This is done by mutual exchange and fulfillment of promises” (Henneberg 1996). As a part of the exchange method, political candidates should thus perceive the electorate’s wants and aspirations (Kotler and Kotler 1999). All Political activities takes place in a political marketplace where consumer (voter/Citizen) buy (caste the vote) the political product(Party) on the day of election(Savigny 2008).

Political marketing is the application of marketing concepts and practices/activities by political actors and organization in order to achieve their long-term objective (Lees-Marshment et al. 2014). These concepts includes segmentation, targeting, positioning, branding, market oriented strategies, internal political marketing and many others also. These activities are further grouped into four main areas of political marketing activity-researching, strategizing, organizing and communicating (Lees-Marshment et al. 2014). As per this grouping co-creation is categorized under researching activity. Co-creation is suggested as one of the researching technique besides role play and focus group, in which voters are involved in identifying the solution and designing the political product rather than just voicing their demand (Langmaid 2012; Lees-Marshment, 2012/ 2014). Thus co-creation could be used as market research tool in political marketing. Therefore, political organization can very well employed this tool in their conscious marketing activity.

However, through this paper we attempt to understand the relationship of political marketing and co-creation through examining the co-creation process in political scenarios where it is not consciously employed as the tool of marketing at that particular point of time. However, due to intense political situations, fewer political organization and leaders have understood the changing political climate and realized the increasing role of voters and thus involved voters at various level of decision making and product development which results in increased awareness and engagement of voters with that political party at that point of time. Therefore we have selected these cases for futher studying the relationship of political marketing and co-creation and found out the common factors that could act as guideline for concious implementation of co-creation as a political marketing tool. In this study, we have started with the literature review on co-creation and political marketing. Then we have identifiedthe levels of co-creation in political marketing through literature review. Later we have selected three case studies (Co-Creation forcing the existing parties to change (Centro Democrático Liberal, Spain), Co-Creation by forming a new Political Party (West German Green Party, Germany) and Co-Creation changing the Political Framework (Akbayan Citizens’ Action Party, Philippines)). Lastly, through the individual case analysis and subsequent cross case analysis, we were able to develop the understanding of the relationship of political marketing and co-creation and proposed the framework of political co-creation. This framework represents three categories of factors that indicate the different stages of co-creation in political system. First is the Co-creation indicating factors which include social dissatisfaction and local level CSO integration. Second group of factors is Co-creation process factors which include active actors and knowledge sharing and lastly Post co-creation factors which include aware citizen, engaged voters and proactive political system. These stages could further act as a guidelines for conscious implementation of co-creation as political marketing tool in near future.

Apparently, Co-creation concept has been studied in reference to various industries such as healthcare (McCull-Kennedy et al. 2012; Gill et al. 2011), tourism (Cabiddu 2013; Eraqi 2011) and many more. However the importance of co-creation in politics is not studied much (Langmaid 2012). Drawing on these premises, this paper will be an important contribution in the field of political co-creation.

2 Co-creation in political marketing

According to Langmaid and Fosyth (2003) definition “co-creation is a methodology that involves both the producer and the customer who, together, create and build solution, products and services that truly meets the evolving needs of all parties. In essence co-creation places the customer alongside the producer at the center of business decision making”. Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a, 2004b, 2004c) defines “Co-creation as the process by which products, services and experiences are developed jointly by companies and their stakeholders, opening up a whole new world of value”. There is a relationship developed in which flow of values occur. Customer can share his choices with company and company can offer many option. Co-creation helps consumers to interact with the company giving new sources of competitive advantage. Co-creation is about joint effort to create value by the company and customer. It’s about creating an experience environment in which consumers can have active dialogue and co-construct personalized experiences independent of the newness of the product.

Vargo and Lusch (2008) have described how sharing of resources among systems of service exchange leads to value co-creation. Their framework is based on adaptation and integration of resources among various actors. Since politics is about redistribution and reallocation of resources, this framework plays an important role in case of the functioning of the political system of any country. Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a, 2004b, 2004c) have determined the factors that decide the effectiveness of a co-creation framework. These include in-depth discussions with consumers, transparency and collective view. These factors are the building block of co-creation. In political marketing, Co-creation as a practice is increasingly being adopted by the political parties who honestly want to connect to the public in large. Due to rapid growth of information and communication technology, both active and passive participation of the public in politics has increased. This leads to increase in various political marketing activities to address different citizen group. The aim of political marketing activities is to build the long term relationship with its various stakeholders. Here co-creation came out as marketing tool for political parties to build and sustain its relationship with citizen. As co-creation activities brings transparency and openness in the system. Lees-Marshment et al. (2014) group the political marketing activity into four category. These are- Researching, Strategizing, Organizing and Communicating (Fig. 1).

As per this grouping co-creation is categorized under researching activity. Co-creation is suggested as one of the researching technique in political marketing besides role play and focus group, in which voters are involved in identifying the solution and designing the political product rather than just voicing their demand (Langmaid 2012; Lees-Marshment, 2012/ Lees-Marshment et al. 2014). We have considered this definition to identify the sign of co-creation in particular political context.

Co-creation can add value or can bring transformation increasing adaptiveness, competitiveness and differentiation. Citizen can now differentiate and compare political parties

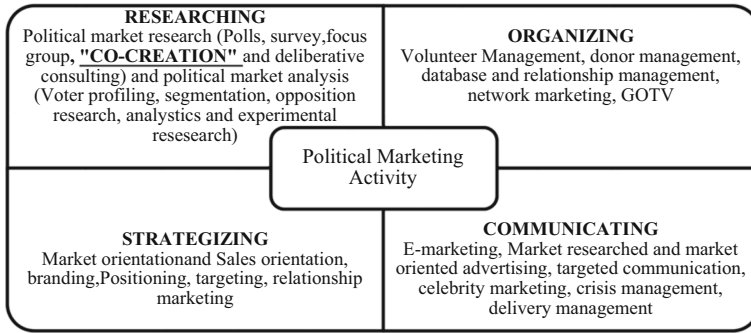


Fig. 1 Political Marketing Activity (Source: Lees-Marshment et al. (2014))

and choose what's best for them. Transformation at different levels is necessary for co-creation. Effectiveness of co-creation can be increased by personal transformations. Co-creation can explore how individual personal transformations take place at micro level and how they affect structural change at a macro level. Small changes at root level can affect a change at macro level. People build up a personal and pre-existing criterion, explore for the options and evaluate them and then select the best alternative. Co-creation involves two way communications between political parties and citizen and thus provides insightful information to political parties regarding the people view on their current policies and also their expectation from future policies. This help in strengthening and sustaining the relationship. König & König (2012, 57) thus argued that 'if deliberative political marketing is accepted and applied within the federal institutional system, then it will become part of the logic of the political culture. This will lead to a new form of trust in the citizen-leader relationship.' However, the involvement and awareness of citizen is not same everywhere. Based on their awareness level of awareness and involvement in political activities various level of co-creation has been discussed in below section.

2.1 Levels of co-creation

Bolton (2006) observed that many business leaders believe 'enterprise integration'—connecting and utilizing business processes that cut across traditional organizational functions or 'silos'—is the key to business success. With increased consumer awareness and learning and the idea of 'integration' in the mind of consumers, the consumers play their part at varying levels in the production activity. From the framework presented by Kotler (2005), we can infer four levels of co-creation:

- The traditional way of very little involvement of consumers in any form.
- Consumers force changes in the existing institutions and production practices.
- The whole working of the economy changes due to the role of the consumer.
- Consumers themselves become producers and get involved in the economy.

These levels represent different levels of engagement and influence of the consumer and determine how the sharing of resources and responsibilities would take place in an economy and what activities would be undertaken.

2.2 Adaptation of levels of co-creation in political marketing

The involvement of voters in the political activities leads to various modifications in the existing political system of a country. The impact of these modifications on the society and politics depends on the level of co-creation that exists. As observed in the corporate system, we usually observe four levels of co-creation based on the levels of voter awareness and activity:

- No co-creation – In this scenario, there is little involvement of the citizens in the political framework. They are kept out of the decision making process and do not have opportunities to express their issues. The primary reason for this scenario is the lack of awareness among the voters and the inherent inflexibility of the existing political framework. The classical example of this form of political governance is the Communist regime of China. In China, the government formulates all the laws on its own and there is no space for public opinion in the decision making.
- Co-Creation forcing the existing parties to change – This is the most basic and common form of co-creation that is observed in most of the democracies. The citizens have the freedom to put forward their views and are aware about their needs and preferences. They can voice their concerns in different forms – through demonstrations, public rallies, free and active media or through a direct dialogue with the political leaders. The political parties pay special attention to these demands and formulate their agenda, policies and manifestos in a manner that would satisfy the majority of the voters. For example The Republicans and the Democrats in The United States of America, each represent a group of like-minded people and focus on their needs and demands.
- Co-Creation by forming a new Political Party – This scenario leads to a direct participation of the citizens in the election process not just as voters, but as candidates. The citizens are not just aware enough to understand their needs and requirements, but they realize that they themselves need to act through direct participation in the decision making in order to solve these issues. This situation might be characterized by a lack of faith in the existing political parties. People are willing to participate in the election process and fight for what they think is right. For example several protests in Germany against construction project and other environment issues end up with the formation of green party.
- Co-Creation changing the Political Framework – This is the most extreme form of co-creation. Such a situation arises when the citizens are not happy with the existing manner in which the country is run. It may be characterized by a radical and violent movement against the existing ‘ruling method’. The citizens, in this case, demand for a new way of governance and are responsible for the shift towards the new political system. Usually this is observed in the case of monarchies, anarchies and non-democratic rules. The Arab Spring is represents such a co-creation framework.

3 Methodology

The methodological approach used in this paper is case study based as the phenomenon under investigation is new and there is lack of similar studies in this area. This study

attempt to explore this phenomenon in order to increase the researchers understanding about such topics. Moreover, since our aim is to explain how co-creation plays a role in political marketing for building relationships, the case study is an appropriate methodology to explore this issue (Yin 1994). Case studies may include single or multiple cases (Yin 1994). Multiple case studies have been used to describe the role of co-creation in political marketing. Case studies may be descriptive, exploratory and explanatory. The present case studies describes the phenomenon of co-creation in three different contexts in order to understand how political organizations involved citizen at various level in organisation activities. These case studies represent how the involvement of citizen in various independent social movement and political party activities leads to the formation of the proactive political system. The case studies have been selected based on the above stated level of co-creation in political marketing i.e.

- Co-Creation forcing the existing parties to change
- Co-Creation by forming a new Political Party
- Co-Creation changing the Political Framework

4 Case studies

4.1 The Centro Democrático liberal in Spain

The Centro Democrático Liberal (CDL) is a Spanish political party formed in 2006 after years of political turmoil and struggle. A marginal player in the two-party system, CDL has a small number of representatives across the country and no major financial backing. In such a difficult scenario, CDL took up a very different approach in the political scene and started engaging citizen movements to garner publicity, popular support and grow as a party (O'curneen Cañas 2014).

4.1.1 Formation of CDL

Spain was predominantly a monarchy till 1976 when King Juan Carlos made Adolfo Suarez as its Prime Minister (Hopkin and Paolucci 1999). In the first general elections in 1977, Suarez formed the Unión de Centro Democrático (UCD) and gained majority (Glover, 2017). However, being made of different factions of liberals and democrats, UCD separated due internal conflicts and Suarez established Centro Democrático y Social (CDS). By the 1982 general elections, Spain had developed into a two-party system (Socialists and Conservatives) with CDS mostly left as a fringe party trying to establish a Centrist-liberal third front.

This effort to form a third front lasted for over a decade following which in 2006 CDS combined with the Liberals (Hopkin and Paolucci 1999). By then Suarez had already resigned and this move to join the conservatives had its share of opposition. Sixteen local councilors who principally opposed this alliance separated and found a new party-the CDL.

In the upcoming local elections of 2007, CDL doubled its tally of councilors to 39. By 2008, they started a drive to get more and more on people board, receiving immense support from several fronts to further the development the party.

The main problem for CDL was the lack of available financial support and very little media access (O'curneen Cañas 2014). The electoral system was mostly two-party with media affiliated with one of the two major parties. Hence, media was hostile to supporting them. To make for that and gain much-needed publicity, CDL started engaging with citizen groups on major social and economic issues. Also, this fluid dialogue with the citizen groups allowed them to attract members and gain in policy content. Hence, it was the people who started joining the ranks of the party and developing policy material to be taken up. This was mostly done by raising awareness on essential issues like renewable energy, small businesses, female empowerment and sexual orientation groups.

At the National level, this engagement exercise was largely unsuccessful as most large-scale groups were unwilling to act. However, at the local level, the response was largely positive considering that most local representatives were widely known and trusted at the grass root level. Also, since they held offices of power in many areas, CSOs saw in CDL an opportunity to get policy action, which did not seem possible with any other political front. The success of the move was such that citizen groups and movements started taking the initiative to contact CDL representatives personally. This was a major move in ensuring CDL has a positive image among the citizens.

CDL had another strong point in its strong ties with politicians across the European Union owing to its CDS history. 2008 was a time when the EU was strengthening into a major decision making body for matters in Europe. The EU developed an executive, the European Commission, and a European Parliament that co-legislates with a Council of Ministers of member state governments. They received support from politicians across EU holding elected mandates and European civil society. Therefore, CDL's political contacts were a huge opportunity for CSOs who had been ignored by major Spanish parties and needed to address their problems directly to EU institutions. Among the major citizen groups that engaged with CDL were a group of pensioners who had been victims of a massive credit fraud, a group of television workers who fought against a new legislation that transformed the funding mechanism for broadcasters, victims of 2011 earthquake who were seeking prompt rehabilitation from the government and a group of European expatriates who had bought land in Spain and were now facing hurdles. In all these cases, CDL successful became the face of these groups and was able to represent them at the EU level. Accordingly, the citizen groups could also develop a meaningful dialogue with the party to create value for themselves as well as the party.

4.1.2 Citizen movements and the complexities of politics

After the 2008 sub-prime crisis, Spain also saw major economic turmoil with the economy being contracted by 2% and unemployment affecting almost 20% of the total working population; this led to discontent among people. The government was forced to apply tough austerity measures under the pressure from EU member states and the US. This was met with great hostility by the citizens who turned to social media to express their anger and discontent regarding the same. There were calls on social media for mass movements and demonstrations before local and regional elections. This led to setting up of several websites and social media pages, urging people to come forward and ask the government to take steps for improving the situation, but all this received

little support from common people. The scenario underwent a drastic change after the Arab uprising in 2011 which witnessed huge participation of common people and triggered similar movements in different parts of the world. In Spain, also, several groups joined hands to create social media page *iDemocracia real YA!* (Real Democracy Now) for organizing mass protests and a common manifesto for regenerating Spanish Democracy and tackling financial crisis. They organized protests across the country resulting in a countrywide struggle. CDL faced a difficult dilemma over whether to join the struggle or stay away from it. The protestors were visibly hostile towards any members of the political circle (Hughes 2011) and joining the movement could turn out to disastrous for CDL. CDL decided to play smart and send a member undercover to become a part of the protest and understand the mindset of the people. He reported excessive disdain towards anyone working in the political system and suggested CDL against pursuing any further contact.

Gradually, the movement started breaking out without any visible leader. A large number of people could not divert time for the cause like full-time politicians do and hence started backing out. There were also calls to form a new political party out of the movement but eventually internal politics lead to the breaking up of the cause. Many of the early participants who were very serious for the cause showed interest in CDL an also CDL was interested in them as they would bring their expertise of reaching out to people and mobilizing thousands of people for a cause in very short span of time which CDL failed to achieve despite several attempts. A political party like CDL had lot to learn from this movement. This people led movement resulted in making CDL realize the need to completely overhaul their party and redesign of their product/offering.

Case analysis CDL represents a classic case of the people demanding greater involvement in the political process and demanding new ways to communicate. In most cases, people do not and cannot replace political representatives owing to lack of time and dedication. However, they do not wish to be involved only at election time and look to create value in the political system. As a result, political parties and CSOs need to co-exist and complement each. Also, CDL shows how a political party can use citizens as a tool of co-creating value and marketing themselves among the voting class by using their language and means of communications. It was even more important in case of CDL as they did not have access to traditional media unlike the other two leading parties. So, they had to search for other means of communication for reaching out to people. The authenticity of such a political brand will be more and it will also be easy to capture the imagination and trust of the people. The movement showed the path by emphasizing the reach and impact of social media (Anduiza et al. 2013), and led to realization of need to redesigning of CDL.

4.2 Akbayan citizens' action party, Philippines

The Philippines, usually described as an Elite democracy, is a country ridden by political and economic inequality as well as widespread poverty. Philippines became the economically poor due to political factors not due to economic factors (Rogers 2004). There exists a few political dynasties that dominate elections both at the national and local level (Severino and Salazar 2007; Coronel 2004). These political dynasties

also gain significant economic benefits from these positions of power thus turning the whole act of governance into a business enterprise. Very frequently, a strong presidency is used to manipulate weak democratic institutions. Elections have literally become battlegrounds for power struggles to take place and political rivalries to be fought (O'curneen Cañas 2014). Elections are usually fought on the popularity plank, with the poor and lower classes preferring candidates who are kind and caring rather than going for merit.

Another noteworthy aspect of the Philippines is its strong and emerging middle class. Ordinary Filipinos are known to express their discontent with the government by organizing themselves into strong non-violent civil society protests. Philippines has the vibrant civil society, which is “noisy, but at its best, world class” (Hill 2006). The Civil society has previously been involved in ousting members holding public office, specifically when the choice of people is subverted through unethical and immoral acts like corruption (Severino and Salazar 2007).

4.2.1 The founding of Akbayan

1986 saw The People's Power Revolution saw widespread protest against the authoritarian regime of President Marcos and restored democracy in the country (Severino and Salazar 2007). The non-violent revolution was termed as “the revolution that surprised the world” and was successful in capturing the imagination of the middle class. The Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) was the backbone of the movement leading a people's war against the regime. However, the Leftist party could not capitalize on the political advantage focusing more on Maoist principles rather than forming a government. It was at this crucial juncture that CPP split leading to the formation of Akbayan (Quimpo 2008).

Akbayan had the task of entering into a completely different ballgame as none of its members had any prior experience of electoral politics or what was then known as the elite's political game. However, entering into the electoral scenario was important to lend viability to the demands of the civil society. The founding years of Akbayan saw four political blocs that had formed by the CPP come together and support the party. Each bloc was a coalition formed out of NGOs, CSOs and mass movements associated with a particular agenda. The coming together of these blocs was essential to accumulate power required to pass socio-political reform and ensure welfare of their constituencies and people (Quadir and Lele 2004).

In 1995, the Party-List Act was passed that expanded membership to the House of Representatives to include representatives of smaller or non-traditional political parties, as well as organizations and citizen movements that are formed along sectoral interests, registered as ‘party-list organizations’. This allowed Akbayan to formally register as a National party and send its first representatives to the lower chamber (Quadir and Lele 2004).

This also turned out to be the turning point for Akbayan as the different political ideologies started to dissolve into a common agenda of pushing social and political interests at national levels (Velasco 2007). This meant a larger representation from NGOs and citizen organizations to strengthen voting bloc. Also, with its expansion drives at the local level, more and more non-political and non-aligned individuals started finding Akbayan's platform of good-governance attractive and efficient. Greater

participation from the working class, local government officials and middle-income group meant a stronger participation in local issues (Velasco 2007).

What stands out specifically in Akbayan's story is the large-scale representation of social movements and civil society. It has developed caucuses that aggregate the interests of citizen movement organizations to develop legislative and governance agendas for Akbayan. By closely integrating with local struggles, they are successful in taking these issues to various levels of the government (Quimpo 2008). Moreover, these grass root organizations are given a certain degree of autonomy to develop political agenda. Hence, Akbayan has succeeded in establishing itself as an alternative to the traditional parties whose only strength is the power and money of their dynasties. For Akbayan, its strength lies in the hordes of ordinary Filipinos who have now enrolled into its ranks and are using the platform to voice their concerns.

4.2.2 *The PDAF and the million people march*

PDAF is a public distribution fund allocated to the members of the Senate for social welfare schemes and public works projects. It was supposed to provide for the basic welfare needs of people such as healthcare, education, housing and so on. However, PDAF turned out to be a mode of large-scale corruption by the legislators. Several bogus enterprises were being set up to reallocate funds and gain benefits out of the scheme (Rodrigo 2014).

This corruption scandal was met with large-scale uproar by the public, who emerged on social media calling for one million people to hit the streets in protest. The protests emerged mostly organically on Facebook and Twitter without the support of any political organization (Manrique and Manrique 2016). The people wanted to remain 'leaderless' so as to oppose the political class as a whole. The scam was particular important as it targeted the core of the Philippine political system as it was through PDAF that the elite maintained their political influence.

For Akbayan, it was a difficult position to take. Although PDAF was known to be a tool to carry out widespread corruption, the benefits from PDAF when used ethically by some legislators were also important. Hence, there were mixed voices on whether to refuse the PDAF and fighting for its allocation. Akbayan resorted to a survey of grass-root level political officers to resolve the same. With most of these political officers associated with CSOs and NGOs, this literally meant taking the public opinion into account (Rodrigo 2014). From the survey, it was decided that the party call for complete abolition of PDAF fund in the present budget and also fight for other legislation to allocate funds to basic services as well as fight for budgetary reforms. To prevent the resurrection of the PDAF, the party developed policy alternatives such as freedom-of-information legislation.

Hence, Akbayan joined the people's voice by becoming a part of the movement and thereby establishing themselves as a crusader of common Filipino fighting for change in the corrupt scheme of things (Teehankee 2009). The enormity of the protest forced President Aquino to announce the abolishment of the PDAF. Although this was met with widespread protest by most legislators, Akbayan through its only representative protested against it in Congress. This in turn established its image as a progressive party fighting for the cause of the people. Eventually, all opposition had to bog down to people's power and both

chambers abolished PDAF. In turn more stringent bureaucratic requirements and budgetary approvals were put up for legislators who wanted additional funding.

4.2.3 Return of EDSA- People's movement

In early 2000s, Philippine was ruled by actor-turned-politician Joseph Estrada who enjoyed great popularity and appeal among the citizens. However, in 2001, he was publicly impeached for corruption bringing to light widespread misuse of office by the President (Teehankee 2002). The middle class relaunched a protest called EDSA dos or People Power 2 to oust Estrada. Akbayan was one of the only political parties to support this endeavor. Following this, his Vice-President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo succeeded him. Arroyo however started to lead by a state of rebellion and ordered armed forces to silence any kind of dissent and disperse all protestors. Also, massive electoral fraud and serious allegations of illegal gambling and high-level corruption started coming to the fore (Severino and Salazar 2007). Hence, Arroyo's term was worse than Estrada's and she started losing any kind of popular support.

In the aftermath of Arroyo's presidency, Akbayan lead the mainly middle-class efforts to rid the government of her and her cronies. They supported a presidential and vice-presidential candidacy of Liberal Party stalwarts Benigno Simeon Aquino III and Mar Roxas who were honest candidates having spotless careers in terms of corruption. Akbayan combined civil society advocacy and legislative intervention to lead 2 majorly successful campaigns against Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez and Supreme Court Chief Justice Renato Corona. The members from the local to national level led massive public campaigns (Teehankee 2009). The members of the party were even active in Congress preparing charges against the leaders. The complaints and public pressure led to the resignation of Gutierrez and the impeachment of Corona by a majority vote in the Senate.

Case Analysis The Akbayan shows a case of the growth of a political party through a hugely elitist democracy with due help from the civil society and middle-class citizen movements. The Party changes its stance from an earlier Leftist approach to a people's party that fights for social causes. Akbayan plays a major role in taking important movements from mere mass movements to successful policy changes and legislation. It is important since in most democracies it is this last step that is the most difficult to achieve. Moreover, it is the people that give them the causes to fight for and their well-established democratic internal hierarchy ensures ample say for CSOs and NGOs. Finally, people use Akbayan as a front in unmaking of Presidents and politicians.

4.3 The West German green party

4.3.1 Origin of the green party

The German political parties were highly organised in a hierarchical fashion and were ignorant to citizen initiatives. This perception was altered after the national level protests of the 1960s (Papadakis 2014).

The first half of the 1960s, visualised two failed citizen protests: students protest and anti-Vietnam War protest. These demonstrations formed extra-parliamentary oppositions which however could not sustain continuous local action. The student protests broke down into several small Leftist factions, of which, some sustained factions continued carrying on their protests in isolation (Papadakis 2014).

The latter half of 1960s, experienced widespread global public awareness of environmental deterioration that led to the growth of several independent grassroots level protests (Mewes 1983). These local protests subsequently played a vital role in environmentalism politics. This problem regarding the environmental degradation was officially recognised as a threat to human ecology by the United Nations in 1972 at its conference held in Stockholm on Human Environment (Mewes 1983). The environmental policies being enforced by the government were influenced by economic growth and related pressures, thereby no visible improvement was observed in the environmental condition. Hence, the continuous citizen protests were not put to an end by either national environmental legislations or international conferences. These effects were pronounced in Germany through the establishment of thousands of local and independent public initiatives. Around 50,000 individual groups were present at the end of 1979 such that the total membership of all groups rivalled the registered members of the political parties then. This level of citizen participation was unprecedented in the history of post-war Germany politics. It was the broadest mass movement in the history (Joppke 1991).

4.3.2 Formation of *Bundesverband Bürgerinitiativen Umweltschutz (BBU)*

The early protests that were initiated by issues related to urban planning and highway construction were fuelled by the issue of nuclear energy as a solution for the energy crisis (Mewes 1983). The protest against the set-up of nuclear power plants was supported by the European peace movement at Whyll. The concept of cooperation and coordination of protests along with an essence of ecology and natural life spread rapidly amongst various citizen initiatives, which then escalated to national organizations. This led to the formation of *Bundesverband Bürgerinitiativen Umweltschutz (BBU)* by 16 citizen groups in 1972. The BBU slowly penetrated within the society thereby resulting in a membership of 1000 action-groups with approximately 300,000 individuals. The BBU was an initiative of the citizens at the federal level that mobilised and coordinated support on pressing national issues independent of the parliament and parties. The BBU in association with the anti-nuclear protest played an instrumental role in coordinating the first successful nation-wide protest in Germany against nuclear power. In 1979, BBU and the German Association of Conscientious Objectors (DFG-VK) participated in the 'Ecology and Peace Conference' held at Kassel. DFG-VK was considered a major leader of the citizen peace initiative advocating disarmament (Mewes 1983). The cooperative alliance between BBU and DFG-VK continued even after 1979. The first environmentalist joint public protests against both the peaceful and military use of nuclear weapons was held at Nordhorn-Lingen. In 1981, the BBU along with the peace groups conducted the Hamburg Conference which is considered to be a major milestone in Germany's peace movement (Mewes 1983).

4.3.3 Formation of National Green Party

These successive movements led to the formation a new party the ‘National Green Party’ by a BBU member, Petra Kelly (Mewes 1983). The Green party was formed due to the necessity of a permanent party to express the intrinsic unity of all the ecological initiatives. Also the party was formed to provide direction and coherence to the dispersed initiatives that may lose their dynamics in the absence of such a unifying strategy. Another major aim for the party was to legitimise the non-spokesmanship of the citizens due to the fact that though the elected members were supposed to be the citizen representatives they lacked responsiveness to the citizens. Hence, the Green Party challenged the existing political parties that dominated the public realm and the access to politics.

4.3.4 Endeavours of the green party

The Green party that started in 1977 in Lower Saxony received a 3.6% vote share in the local and state elections of 1978. A coalition of the former Social Democrats, anti-nuclear groups and environmentalists in the city-state of Bremen lead to the ‘Bremen Green Lists’ in 1979. The Bremen Green Lists received a lot of opposition from the Left-wing factions, including orthodox communists who propagated the use of ecology for personal use. The communists did not cooperate with the green party and opposed the Greens in the state elections of 1979. The result of the elections created a sensation in Germany as it was for the first time a new party overcame the 5% barrier and entered the state parliament with a vote share of 5.14% of the popular vote. The Green Party ‘Green Action Future’ in Baden-Wurtemberg, a politically conservative state, was founded by eclectic groups such as conservative environmentalists, independent nationalists, who did not fit into the Left or Right political divisions. This party received a vote share of 5.3% in 1980 state elections and was since then established the idea of a moderate division apart from the Left and Right traditional divisions. Similar initiatives took place in the 1979s–1980s at the local and regional level, that lead to contesting in the respective state elections and securing a vote share in the range of 3%–5.5%.

The Greens emerged as a federal party through a series of meetings that was attended by about 1000 delegates representing the regional Green groups and 250 from the alternative groups. After several extensive debates, both the Green group representatives and the alternative group representatives agreed to the formation of a national party in 1980 and they passed a basic party program a few months later. But unfortunately the Green party lost its first federal election that would have gained access to Bundestag (Mewes 1983). The Green party was not able to keep up with its fundamental aim as it could not cater to the needs of all kinds of citizen initiatives. Some grass-root movement lacked the feel of representation and hence they chose autonomous self-help organisations instead of expressing their views through voting for opposite parties.

With the advent of BBU, the Green Party and the sprouting of several local and national citizen initiatives, Germany realised a change in its political landscape (Mewes 1983). Political Parties reached a level of acceptance with the unconventional citizen participation in extra parliamentary oppositions. Established parties aimed to gain trust amongst voters by supporting the citizen protests and some parties tried to incorporate such movements by forging alliances with the protests.

Case analysis It can be observed that there was a common aim for that lead to the widespread citizen protests. These protests spread from local or regional levels to national levels. Later these initiative joined hands in the local level and contested elections in order to represent the views of the citizens at the parliaments. Later these local parties combined to form the national Green Party that contested the federal elections. Though the party was not as successful as it was expected to be it can be seen that the citizens voiced their opinions and fought for their opinions in the political domain.

5 Framework of political co-creation

Through these case studies, we attempt to study the co-creation process in political scenarios where it is not consciously employed as the tool of marketing at that particular point of time. However, the political organization or leaders who have understood the changing political climate and realized the increasing role of voters, got benefited in terms of popularity and election results by involving the voters at various level of decision making and product development. From these case studies, co-creation came out as an important tool of political marketing. Although it was not consciously used as marketing tool in these cases however, in current competitive environment, political organization can used it as a conscious political marketing tool for long term advantage. Based on case analysis we have found out 8 factors, which are further grouped into 3 main broad categories based on timeline of event. These factors are shown in Fig. 2 “framework of political co-creation”. This figure indicates suggestive framework for the implementation of co-creation process by the political organization.

I. Co-creation Indicating Factors

These factors signify the need of co-creation. These factors acts as a signal for the co-creation process. A proactive political organization may understand these societal signals and may employ the co-creation as a political marketing tool.

- a. **Social Dissatisfaction-** From the above case studies it is evident that dissatisfaction from the existing situation is the most important reason for oppositional behavior. There could be two forms of dissatisfaction (Opp, Voss, & Gern 1995). First is relative deprivation in which citizen compare their situation with the others who is living better life and the other is absolute deprivation in which citizens are dissatisfied due to the fact that they are not able to achieve something that they desires. Once dissatisfaction grows among the citizens, they turned their hopes from political parties to some other actors in the political system. Civil society organization and social movements now plays an active role. In Germany due to growing dissatisfaction among citizen due to infrastructure projects leads to formation of green party. Similarly in Akbayan Party in Philippines became popular among citizen due to its role in bringing social change and minimise dissatisfaction among citizen.

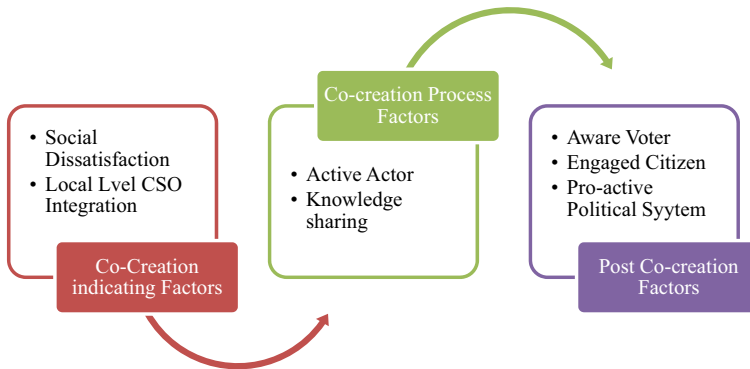


Fig. 2 Framework of Political Co-creation

- b. **Local Level CSO Integration-** The definition of civil society is being contested since the time of Hobbes and Locke (Robertson 1986). Hegel defines civil society as “a social formation intermediate between the family and the state” (Mautner 1999). Edwards (2000) describes civil society as “the arena in which people come together to advance the interests they hold in common, not for profit or political power but because they care enough about something to take collective action”. These CSO plays a catalyst role in political system. In above case studies it is prevalent that due to social dissatisfaction various local level CSOs integrated together to fight for a common cause. Akbayan Party in Philippines started as a CSO and social movements but later on decided to form political party in order to bring political reform in the system.

II. Co-creation Process Factors

This is known as co-creation process. Once a political organization has decided to use the co-creation as political marketing tool then they can do this by identifying the active actors and continuous knowledge sharing or dialogue with the citizen/voters in that particular political context.

- a. **Active actor-** Active actors play a significant role in co-creation process in political system. Once the CSO integrated for a common cause, it is required to have an active actor who can lead the entire social movement for a common cause. Many a times there are situation when certain contradiction arises, which required an active actor, who can put forward their own ideas and influencing these groups to shape their agendas and policies as per requirements of citizens. This is a pivotal characteristic of an active actor, supporting an idea and working to strengthen the support necessary to build it up through different means like social media and various social campaigns. At this stage an individual takes up to protests and formation of interest groups and an attempt to influence different stakeholders and get their support. In Case of Germany, early protest was focusing on the issues of urban planning and highway constructions were fuelled by the issue of nuclear energy as a solution for the energy crisis. This protest against the set-up of nuclear power plants was alsosupported by the European peace movement at Why1. This

protest spread rapidly amongst various citizen initiatives, which then escalated to national organizations. This led to the formation of BBU by 16 citizen groups in 1972. Here Active Actors plays a critical role in increasing the membership of the BBU. The membership from 16 groups increased to 1000 action-groups with approximately 300,000 individuals. These group of active actors at BBU in association with the anti-nuclear protest played an instrumental role in coordinating the first successful nation-wide protest in Germany against nuclear power.

- b. **Knowledge Sharing or Dialogue-** Knowledge sharing is the key element of co-creation process. It means an active dialogue between two parties. Dialogue means “interactivity, deep engagement and propensity to act – on both Sides” (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). Knowledge sharing facilitates trust and help in building trust which further act as the foundation of the co-creation process. Knowledge also represents openness and transparency among the parties involved in co-creation. In all the case studies these active organization using advanced communications tools like social media in order to broadened their reach to maximum people.

III. Post Co-creation Factors

These are the output of the co-creation process. A successful implementation of co-creation as political marketing tool may leads to pro-active political marketing system, aware citizen and engaged voters.

- a. **Aware citizens-** Citizens form the basic building block of every country. They exist even in absence of democratic system. Enlightenment of citizens basically refers to their awareness about their society. All the problems which society are facing whether there is disproportionate division of wealth, health issues, low literacy, poor legal system and many more issues that influence the life of individual and society alike. So enlightenment is the stage where citizen is cautious about his surroundings and wonders its causes and plausible solutions. As a result of co-creation in political system, the citizens are more aware and have more trust in the existing system. Co-creation leads to more knowledge sharing and thus make citizens become more aware about the various policies and program of the political organization which further helps in building the trust among the parties i.e. citizen and political organization.
- b. **Engaged voters-** Engaged citizens are committed towards the broader view of the “Common good” much beyond their individual and independent selves. In Ben Barber’s (1984) words, they are more concerned towards “we-thinking” instead of “I-thinking.” Thus engagement fosters a greater sense of citizenship. Once citizen reaches this level of awareness, he acts upon it. In a democratic scenario this action is rather rendered as civil duty to vote. Thus our citizen now becomes a voter. Voter is not only aware about the society’s plight but also looks into the manifestos and policies of various political parties present. Here he rises one level above where he not only looks at a problem but also votes for the person he deems to have better solutions for those problems. At this stage a citizen align themselves to particular approach and supports it.

- c. **Proactive political system**—Proactive political system consists of active actors, aware citizen and engaged voters. They all mutually support each other to run an efficient political system. Many Civil society organizations which formed the political parties or the existing political parties who has promoted the co-creation tool in their working system are able to survive in the competitive political system for a long time through building trust among citizens.

Thus political organization or leaders can use co-creation as a political marketing tool under conditions of increasing social dissatisfaction and local CSO integration for the common societal cause by employing active actors and continuous knowledge sharing/dialogue which may leads to proactive political system, aware citizen and engaged voters in that particular political context and at that point of time.

6 Conclusion

This paper attempt to study the relationship between political marketing and co-creation. Indeed in the marketing literature there is much discussion on the concept of co-creation & its further application into various industries (McColl-Kennedy et al. 2012, Gill et al. 2011, Cabiddu, Lui and Piccoli 2013) but there is fewer research on application of co-creation concept in political marketing (Langmaid,2012). Due to rapid growth of information and communication technology, citizens become more aware and thus their participation has also increased in the political system. Here Co-creation as a tool of marketing plays an active role. On the basis of the extent of impact that it creates, four levels of co-creation in politics were suggested. This might lead to influencing the decisions of the existing political parties, formation of a new political party or changing the complete political framework. A proactive political organization who has involved citizen at various level of their functioning got more popularity among the citizen. In order to study the relationship of co-creation and political marketing we have selected three case studies of political parties from different countries which have involved citizen in their functioning.

Through this inductive case based research we have proposed the framework of political co-creation in which we discussed three common groups of factors that indicates the different stages of co-creation in political system. First is the co-creation indicating factors which include social dissatisfaction and local level CSO integration. These factors show the sign of co-creation in political system. In all the three case studies (Green Party, Germany; Akbayan Party, Philippines; CDL, Spain), due to growing social dissatisfaction and later on CSO integration a new political party has formed which has worked with citizen and fought for their causes. If a proactive political party is able to understand these sign of co-creation then they can accordingly placed their product as per the changing needs of the citizen and thus would be able to sustain the competition. Second group of factors is the co-creation process factor which includes active actors and knowledge sharing. Once a political party determines the need of co-creation, they can very well use this in their organization functioning through the involvement of active actors in organization activities and as well as the knowledge sharing with the citizen. Last group of factors is the Post-Co-creation factors which includes aware citizen, engaged voter and proactive political system. These

factors show the results of employing the co-creation process by the political party. Thus political organization or leaders can use co-creation as a political marketing tool under conditions of increasing social dissatisfaction and local CSO integration for the common societal cause by employing active actors and continuous knowledge sharing/dialogue which may leads to proactive political system, aware citizen and engaged voters in that particular political context and at that point of time. Akbayan Party in Philippines is one of the favorable parties as it positioned itself as a catalyst of social transformation by involving citizen at various levels. Thus making an overall proactive political system. The research work on political marketing mainly involves qualitative & descriptive studies or the post event analysis and feedback primarily elections (Henneberg, 2002; Henneberg & O'Shaughnessy, 2007; Scammell, 1999). Thus, the contribution of this work is to open up this new research direction in political marketing with reference to co-creation.

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