

Political Marketing: The Conservatives in Opposition

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By

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 - Rt Hon Stephen Dorrell
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 - Lord Hurd of Westwell
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Political Marketing: The Conservatives in Opposition

This thesis examines the political marketing of the Conservative Party in three opposition periods: 1966 to 1970, under Edward Heath, 1975 to 1979 with Thatcher as leader, and 1997 to 2001 under William Hague. The temporal comparisons made in this research contrasts with the accounts that discuss marketing issues in the context of one particular government, opposition period, or election campaign.

The thesis uses two marketing frameworks from Negrine and Lilleker and Brassington and Pettitt to test the hypothesis that the Conservatives were competent practitioners of proactive and innovative political marketing.

The research questions consider the key issues that frustrated the Conservatives' marketing development, whether the Conservatives were undertaking political marketing before the terminology became commonplace within academic literature, how important was the promotion of the personal ideological beliefs of senior Tory politicians to the Conservative marketing strategy, and why some Conservative marketing initiatives were unsuccessful?

In contrast to the many accounts that focus on the market orientation of the Tories in power, this thesis provides a key contribution to the political marketing debate by specifically examining the marketing strategy of three Tory oppositions. The analysis highlights a series of complex issues that can be faced by an opposition party when devising and implementing a marketing strategy, including intra party divisions regarding the previous election defeat, proposals for new policies and ideology, and new marketing initiatives.

The thesis also highlights how many innovative marketing techniques were implemented during the Heath opposition, which compromises the innovativeness of the market orientation during the Thatcher era, as well as demonstrating that the Tories were implementing marketing before the terminology was extensively used in academic discourse. The research additionally examines the unsuccessful Tory marketing initiatives, including the extensive amount of negative campaigning during the three periods, which further compromises a positive perspective of Tory marketing.

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Chapter 1

Theories and Frameworks

1.1 Introduction

This thesis examines the Conservative Party's political marketing in three periods when in opposition. The three eras are from 1966 to 1970 when Edward Heath led the Conservatives, (hence called the 'Heath opposition,') the Margaret Thatcher opposition from 1975 to 1979 and William Hague's period of leadership from 1997 to 2001. This thesis analyses the particular challenges that three opposition periods brought to the Tories. These issues are outlined in Section 1.1.1 of this introductory chapter. A large amount of existing literature has examined the development of the Labour Party's marketing strategy, and there has been a particular examination of the eighteen years of Labour opposition from 1979. For example, Wring, Sackman, and Shaw have provided accounts of the market orientation including an analysis of the 'New Labour' brand.¹ This thesis offers a comparative examination of the Tory marketing strategies whilst the party was in opposition, so this analysis also differs from the existing literature that focuses on the market orientation of the Conservatives when in power.²

1.1.1 Hypothesis, Research Questions and Thesis Structure

The hypothesis to be tested in this thesis is based on an assumption, which is frequently proposed in the existing literature, that the Conservatives were competent practitioners of proactive and innovative political marketing.

¹ Dominic Wring (2004) *The Politics of Marketing the Labour Party*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, A Sackman (1996) "The Learning Curve towards New Labour: Neil Kinnock's Corporate Party 1983-1992," *European Journal of Marketing*, Volume 30, Number 10/11, pp.147-158, Eric Shaw (1994) *The Labour Party since 1979: Crisis and Transformation*, London, Routledge

² Margaret Scammell (1996) "The Odd Couple: Marketing and Maggie," *European Journal of Marketing*, Volume 30, Number 10/11, pp.114-126, Peter Jenkins (1987) *Mrs Thatcher's Revolution: The Ending of the Socialist Era*, London, Jonathan Cape, Martin Harrop (1990) "Political Marketing," *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 43, Number 3, pp.277- 291, Bernadette C Hayes, Ian McAlister (1996) "Marketing Politics to Voters: Late Deciders in the 1992 British Election," *European Journal of Marketing*, Volume 30, Issue 10/11, pp.127-139

Harrop notes how political marketing involves a party focusing on images rather than specific policies and promoting the electorate's interests that align to the ideas of the party. Harrop believes that the Tories effectively executed this marketing process since 1950 to market themselves as a competent governmental party.³ This chapter offers a definition of political marketing,⁴ and this thesis considers whether the Conservatives were always effective at marketing during three opposition periods.

Davies believes that the Conservative Party was politically successful in the twentieth century, because the party recognised the need to deploy effective campaigning strategies and subsequently remain in government. The "relentless pursuit of power," has been based on the Tories' recognition that "nothing can be achieved or safeguarded" whilst in opposition.⁵ This desire is linked to Davies' assertions that the Conservatives have been "adept at electioneering" and "so ruthless towards its leaders," with leadership changes to avoid electoral defeat.⁶ As political campaigning methods evolve, Davies argues that the Tories were "fully aware that the methods needed to win or retain power are always changing."⁷ This research questions these statements in the context of the Heath, Thatcher and Hague oppositions.

Margaret Scammell argues that "the Conservatives, with their greater affinity for business techniques and more hierarchical organisation have been the communications pioneers throughout most of the [twentieth] century."⁸ Scammell offers a positive assessment of political marketing for improving communication between voters, politicians and the democratic process,⁹ as a result of techniques such as opinion polling and focus groups. Scammell also believes that political

³ Harrop (1990) p.281

⁴ See Section 1.2.1 of this chapter

⁵ A.J.Davies (1995) *We, The Nation: The Conservative Party and the Pursuit of Power*, London, Little Brown, p.448

⁶ Davies (1995) p.448

⁷ Davies (1995) p.11

⁸ Margaret Scammell (1995) *Designer Politics*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, p.269

⁹ Scammell (1995) p.xv

campaigning was “transformed”¹⁰ during Margaret Thatcher’s leadership, with a series of measures, including the hiring of Saatchi and Saatchi and the work of Gordon Reece.¹¹ Chapter Eight compares Scammell’s work to the findings of this thesis, and this research will argue that Scammell offers an excessively generous analysis of the Conservative Party. The research-based chapters highlight a series of intra party arguments concerning how the Tories would communicate themselves to the electorate, and whether new communication techniques would be used in this process. These arguments caused the Conservative Party to struggle to set the political agenda.

The initial research question examines what were the key issues that frustrated the development of Conservative political marketing? Lilleker and Negrine’s framework of “proactive” and “reactive” marketing strategies¹² will be used to assess the barriers to successful market orientation and this thesis develops the additional factor of ‘innovative’ marketing. The adapted framework is defined later in this introduction. This research question recognises a series of factors, which are frequently linked to organisational structures, which are not always extensively examined within the existing political marketing literature. For instance, Lees Marshment only offers the general suggestion that “parties [move] towards the market-oriented party model because they know that is the only one that works.”¹³ Lilleker also generally suggests that “the introduction of marketing concepts and philosophy into political policy formulation and marketing is increasingly seen as a core feature of party electoral strategy.”¹⁴

The issues that are examined within this thesis are intra-party divisions regarding the reasons for the previous election defeat, the development of new policies and

¹⁰ Scammell (1995) p.xiv and p.2

¹¹ Scammell (1995) p.2

¹² Ralph Negrine and Darren Lilleker (2003) “The Rise of a Proactive Local Media strategy in British Political Communication: Clear Continuities and Evolutionary Change 1966-2001,” *Journalism Studies*, Volume 4, Number 2, pp.200- 201

¹³ Jennifer Lees Marshment (2001c) “The Product, Sales and Market- Oriented Party,” *European Journal of Marketing*, Volume 35, Number 9/10, p.1081

¹⁴ Darren Lilleker (2005) “The Impact of Political Marketing on Internal Party Democracy,” *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 58, Number 3, p.570

ideology, and new marketing techniques. The next two issues concern the problems in setting the political agenda and exciting an indifferent electorate with an 'alternative' product. The final issue involves the countering of governmental marketing apparatus that can influence the national political discourse by using a greater amount of human and financial resources to remind the electorate of their achievements in office.

The second research question considers whether the Conservatives were undertaking political marketing before the terminology became commonplace within academic literature? This introductory chapter will substantiate Wring's belief that marketing was being undertaken by a British political party before the term became an "acceptable organisational concept,"¹⁵ by considering how marketing was being undertaken during the Heath opposition.

The latter section of this thesis considers the marketing of the Conservatives during the general elections of 1970, 1979 and 2001 and whether the Tories marketed a political offering that met a marketing framework proposed by Brassington and Pettitt.¹⁶ The third research question considers how important was the promotion of the personal ideological beliefs of senior Tory politicians to the Conservative marketing strategy. Butler and Collins have contributed to this debate and believe that there has "been a decrease in the importance of ideology in mobilising mass support"¹⁷ since the 1980s. Their conclusions suggest that there has been a shift in the emphasis of political discourse "from the abstract or principled to the tangible or immediate."¹⁸ This research also references the ideas of Harris and Wring regarding "the growing importance and centrality of leader and party image"¹⁹ but without the promotion of the political beliefs of the senior politicians. For instance,

¹⁵ Dominic Wring (1996) "Political Marketing and Party Development in Britain," *European Journal of Marketing*, Volume 30, Number 10/11 p.101

¹⁶ F Brassington and S Pettitt (2006) *Principles of Marketing*, 4th Edition, Harlow, Prentice Hall, pp.288- 289

¹⁷ Patrick Butler and Neil Collins (2001) "Payment on Delivery: Recognising Constituency Service as Political Marketing," *European Journal of Marketing*, Volume 35, Issues 9/10, pp.1027-1028

¹⁸ Butler and Collins (2001) p.1027

¹⁹ Phil Harris and Dominic Wring (2001) "Editorial The Marketing Campaign: The 2001 British General Election," *Journal of Marketing Management*, Volume 17, Numbers 9 and 10, p.910

this electorate does not want to know the precise beliefs of the leader regarding how their party would tackle anti-social behaviour but they want to feel that they can trust their party leaders to possess the integrity and the resolution to solve this problem. This thesis offers a new slant on these academic discussions with a detailed focus on the Conservative Party. As a result of analysing the opinions of senior party politicians and strategists, this thesis considers whether the Tories focused on marketing their leaders by discussing their personal (and often non-political) characteristics instead of promoting their political beliefs.

The fourth research question considers why some Conservative marketing initiatives were unsuccessful during each of the election campaigns. This final topic includes an analysis of the negative campaigning and whether these particular messages created a 'harsh' image for the party. This chapter will consider whether the initiation of personal attacks on the government can be worthwhile for an opposition party, because this form of marketing is deemed to create the necessary distinctions between the government and opposition. This thesis examines whether the Tories successfully used negative campaigning within their political marketing and whether the desire to remind the electorate of previous governmental achievements meant that the Conservatives were saddled with excessive voter expectations of their policies. The four research questions involve this thesis challenging as well as complementing the views within existing literature. The introduction will now set out the relevant debates associated with political marketing in more detail, and the individual chapters will provide the contextual material connected to the particular opposition period. This thesis is a qualitative analysis and involves the use of an extensive selection of primary material. The methodology is outlined in the next section.

1.1.2 Methodology

The methodology for this thesis was designed to highlight the internal party attitudes regarding political marketing, as well as examine various political marketing initiatives. Methodological approaches consisted of interviewing a

variety of current and former Conservative MPs, as well as former marketing strategists.

Most of the interviews were conducted face to face within the relevant Westminster or constituency office, although a few were conducted via telephone and e-mail. A list of the interviewees is cited within the thesis appendix. Any research that is based entirely on interviews can be potentially compromised by the interviewee's recollections being flawed or inaccurate due to the passage of time.²⁰ Arguments between the interviewee and party members since the particular opposition period may also have clouded the responses for this thesis. Furthermore the interview sample for this thesis is also small and can not solely provide conclusive findings.

The interview responses are complimented by archival data from the Conservative Party Archive in Oxford, as well as the repository of Margaret Thatcher's papers at Churchill College in Cambridge. Newspaper articles and media interviews from the period were also accessed for the purposes of this analysis. Furthermore, the party election broadcasts were an additional key marketing tool during each of the three opposition periods and the transcripts are referenced within this thesis. This material was accessed from the Political Studies Research Website that is maintained by Keele University, and referenced within the bibliography of this thesis.

The use of these internet-based resources eased the difficulties in analysing a period of history for which much of the internal party documentation was unavailable due to the recent occurrence of the 1997 to 2001 parliament. The analysis within Chapters Two and Three of the Heath opposition, and the 1970 election campaign, is especially based on documentation from the Conservative Party Archive, as well as elite interviews with party representatives. The consulted documents include the personal papers of John Rathbone and Geoffrey Tucker that

²⁰ Darren Lilleker (2003) "Interviewing the Political Elite: Navigating a Potential Minefield," *Politics*, Volume 23, Issue 3, p.212

chronicled their roles as Chief Publicity Officer. One of the key documents included the resignation letter of the John Rathbone, which highlighted the tensions between media professionals and politicians regarding the financial resources for marketing initiatives. This particular issue would reoccur during the Thatcher and Hague opposition. Other material highlighted the negative reactions to the Tories' intensely detailed policy marketing, and the attempts to promote Heath to the electorate.

Additional party political broadcast transcripts, media interviews and newspaper articles provided valuable additional detail regarding the market orientation during the Heath opposition. Microfilm copies of the *Times* provided a valuable insight into the party's decision making regarding their marketing strategy. An extensive interview was also conducted with Douglas Hurd who recollected his work as Edward Heath's Private Secretary. The wide range of interviews, which are extensively referenced in the other chapters, could not be undertaken in Chapters Two and Three, due to the unavailability of key politicians and strategists from the Heath opposition.

Chapters Four to Seven focus on the Thatcher and Hague opposition periods and involve more references to the interviews. This is due to the relatively recent nature of the 1975 to 1979 and 1997 to 2001 opposition periods and the consequent availability of potential interviewees. Chapters Four and Five draw upon the recollections of Sir Geoffrey Howe, Nigel Lawson and Sir John Hoskyns. In his capacity as Shadow Chancellor during the Thatcher opposition, Howe was heavily involved in the marketing-related decisions. Chapter Three particularly focuses upon his work regarding the perceptions of the Tories, especially amongst the working class electorate.

Nigel Lawson provided recollections regarding market orientation as well as the introduction of Saatchi and Saatchi's expertise in 1978. The reminiscences of Sir John Hoskyns also contributed to the focus within Chapter Three regarding how intra party disagreements were kept away from the public arena in the Thatcher

opposition, in contrast to the Heath and Hague eras. The interviews provided valuable opinions and reaction, and the two sources of material complemented each other to counterbalance any potential inaccuracies associated with the events of this period.

The material within the Thatcher archive at Churchill College Cambridge was also used to analyse the market orientation between 1975 and 1979. The documents were of a similar nature to the material that was used to analyse the Heath era. The letters, memoranda, transcripts of meetings, and telephone conversations provided an insight into the introduction of Saatchi and Saatchi into the market orientation process, as well as the development of marketing in response to the 'Winter of Discontent.'

The archival documents also highlighted the realisation by the party that they had to provide more policy detail during the 1979 election campaign. Other documentation concerned specific promotional initiatives, including the Conservative leader's television interviews as well as the reactions from the media and the party to the coverage.

Chapters Six and Seven focus on the political marketing of the Hague opposition and the interviewees for the 1997 to 2001 period included Andrew Cooper and Danny Finkelstein. These recollections from the Tories' former director of focus group research, and a former chief policy strategist for the party, provided a graphic illustration of the party divisions during this period that hampered market orientation. The interviewed MPs included Anne Widdecombe, David Curry, Tim Collins, John Maples, John Bercow, and Stephen Dorrell. These representatives were chosen to reflect the wide variety of opinions within the party from the left and right as well as the experienced and less experienced MPs of the period.

As a former Shadow Health and Shadow Home Secretary, Anne Widdecombe provided key recollections concerning life in the divided shadow cabinet as the party tried to formulate a product and a response to the enduring popularity of

'New' Labour. Tim Collins offered similar valuable reminiscences as well as general thoughts about the role of politicians, electorate and the media in market orientation. David Curry, John Bercow and John Maples gave insights as shadow ministers who fervently disagreed with the 'core vote' approach, which became the strategy during this opposition period. Many of these recollections are cited within the introduction, as well as the thoughts of John Whittingdale who was a parliamentary whip and front bench treasury spokesman during the Hague opposition.

The analysis of the Hague opposition also draws on newspaper articles and internet coverage from BBC, ITV, and Sky that chronicled the Tories' difficulties in projecting themselves to the electorate. Audio transcripts of interviews with party representatives were accessed from the archived BBC 2001 election website.

1.2 Political Marketing

1.2.1 Definitions

'Political Marketing' can be defined as the process of communicating the political party's policies and politicians, with constant consultation and regard to the views of the electorate. 'Political Marketing' is a different process to the methods of 'Political Communication.' 'Marketing' begins with the party discovering the views of the electorate, developing their product to reflect these views, and subsequently promoting themselves to gain electoral support. 'Political Communication' is a more technical task to promote policies and personalities to the electorate, and frequently undertaken by a specific department. These definitions are closely aligned to the existing literature on the topic. For instance, Harrop notes the "specific and technical" tasks of promotion, and how the "study of political marketing is not simply an investigation of promotional activities such as press advertisements, party political broadcasts and election addresses."²¹ Furthermore, the concept of a voter-centred 'marketing' process is highlighted in Plasser,

²¹ Harrop (1990) p.277

Scheucher and Senft's "central tasks of political marketing" which include the process of initiating a "dialogue with the voter."²²

Niffenegger's political marketing framework provides a further perspective on this process. The four "Ps" are the "product" on offer to the voter, "promotion" of the information to the electorate, the "price" of the product for the electorate including the potential economic consequences, and the "place" where the information is communicated to the voters.²³ O'Cass also argues that political marketing needs to involve the party understanding the "voter's needs and wants" during policy development.²⁴ Collins and Butler also note how when the political party has gained power, the electorate maintains a stake in the political party and can withdraw their vote at the next election.²⁵

The work of Dominic Wring²⁶ highlights the era of "Mass Propaganda," which was prevalent at the start of the twentieth century, witnessed the parties maintaining ultimate control regarding the particular information that would be promoted to the electorate. There were only 'limited' forms of mass media during the "Mass Propaganda" era, but as television evolved into a key campaigning medium, Wring defines political communications from the late 1950s as the "Media Campaign," when media companies gained more influence in the promotion of political discourse.

However, as the "Media Campaign" continued to evolve, there has been the development of "Political Marketing."²⁷ Wring's classifications can be closely linked

²² Fritz Plasser, Christian Scheucher, Christian Senft "Is there a European style of political marketing?" in Bruce I. Newman (ed) (1999) *Handbook of Political Marketing*, London, Sage p.95

²³ Philip B Niffenegger (1989) "Strategies for Success from the Political Marketers" *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, Volume 6, Number 1, p.46

²⁴ Aaron O'Cass (1996) "Political marketing and the marketing concept," *European Journal of Marketing*, Volume 30 Number 10/11 p.51

²⁵ Neil Collins and Patrick Butler "Considerations on Market Analysis for Political Parties" in Nicholas O' Shaughnessy (ed) (2002) *The Idea of Political Marketing*, Westport London, Praegar, p.2 and p.173

²⁶ Dominic Wring "From Mass Propaganda to Political Marketing The Transformation of Labour Party Election Campaigning" in Colin Rawlings, David Farrell, David Denver and David Broughton (eds) (1996) *British Parties and Elections Yearbook*, Hampshire, Frank Cass, p.107

²⁷ Wring in Rawlings, Farrell, Denver, and Broughton (eds) (1996) p.113

to Negrine's definitions associated with campaigning, and the media that is used by the political party. The "premodern" campaign involved the use of the press, the "modern" campaign was centred around television and the "post modern" campaign involves the use of the internet, but Negrine notes that "in no election campaign has an older campaign mode been abandoned."²⁸ This concept of 'adaption' in political campaigning, and how this approach is linked to the research questions of this thesis is discussed in Section 1.5.2 of this chapter

This research follows Brassington and Pettitt's definition of the "product" as "a physical good, service, idea, person or place that is capable of offering tangible and intangible attributes."²⁹ The offering must have the ability to make the 'consumers' feel they can vote for the party and be subsequently responsive to the particular group of politicians and their policies. Lees Marshment's definitions are also used within this thesis to define the concept of "market orientation" which is the process of designing "a product to provide consumer [voter] satisfaction."³⁰ The introduction and research-based chapters demonstrate how this fusion of terms causes confusion and anxiety amongst some politicians, political commentators and political scientists.

This thesis specifically focuses on the 'political marketing' of the Conservative Party 'product,' to gain a valuable insight into the potentially difficult relationship between the party, the electorate, and new communication techniques. Gamble notes that the "Conservatives have always prided themselves on being a party of government."³¹ Davies notes that the "Conservative Party's overriding objective is electoral victory and therefore defeat, or the prospect of it, inevitably renders the leader vulnerable."³² These observations are supported by this research, which highlights the Tories' difficult task to market themselves in opposition, and away

²⁸ Ralph Negrine (2008) *The Transformation of Political Communication*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, Macmillan (2008) p.24

²⁹ Brassington and Pettitt (2006) p.288

³⁰ Jennifer Lees Marshment (2001a) "The Marriage of Politics and Marketing," *Political Studies*, Volume 49 p.695

³¹ Gamble (1974) p.8

³² Davies (1995) pp.66-67

from the governing arena where they believed was their rightful place in British politics.

1:2:2 'Market' and 'Marketing' Orientation: Specific Techniques

'Political Marketing' is a distinctive 'strategy' to promote a policy or a politician to the electorate. In contrast to the "product oriented" or "sales oriented" party, Lees Marshment believes that the "market oriented" party is more receptive to the electorate's wishes and can design a product that will actually satisfy voters' demands, and can be effectively delivered in government.³³ The "product oriented" party will refuse to change their product even if there is a lack of electoral support.³⁴ A "sales oriented" party will "not change its behaviour to suit what people want, but tries to make people want what it offers."³⁵

Lees Marshment's framework has allowed researchers to understand the process of political marketing, which has been outlined in this chapter. Lees Marshment offers some detail about how political marketing could have assisted the Conservative Party between 1987 and 1997, but there is a lack of discussion about the external factors that can frustrate the effective implementation of political marketing. This thesis highlights a series of issues that can aggravate effective marketing. For instance, section 1.2.3 of this chapter considers the organisational structures of political parties, as well as the work of the media professionals, which can affect marketing strategies.

Ormrod has highlighted the concept of "market orientation" and "marketing orientation." within his criticism of Lees Marshment's 'sales,' 'product' and 'market oriented' party model.³⁶ Lees Marshment is criticised for mixing these concepts by suggesting that the whole party has embraced the concept of political marketing,

³³ Lees Marshment (2001a) pp.696- 697

³⁴ Lees Marshment (2001a) p.696

³⁵ Lees Marshment (2001a) p.696

³⁶ Robert Ormrod (2006) "A Critique of the Lees Marshment Market- Oriented Party Model," *Politics*, Volume 26, Issue 2, p.110

when only the communications department has embraced this style of promotion.³⁷ Ormrod defines “marketing orientation” as the acceptance of the political party’s communications department regarding the concept of political marketing. “Market orientation” is the approval by the whole party from senior politicians to local activists of political marketing techniques.³⁸ Ormrod’s ‘market orientation’ and ‘marketing orientation’ definitions can help researchers to understand that the adoption of promotional techniques is a difficult process for the political party. The party’s media and campaign strategists may accept these new forms of political presentation, but the politicians may be resistant to these new promotional methods.

This research will highlight various occasions during the three oppositions when the media strategists were demonstrating ‘marketing orientation,’ but the whole party was not always deploying ‘market orientation.’ Ormrod also argues that Lees Marshment does not pay enough regard to how a party attempts, as well as struggles, to become a market-oriented party. Ormrod believes that Lees Marshment does not offer a “precise description”³⁹ of the methods to integrate the ideas of the whole party (including the party ‘rank and file’) in the development of policies as well as not enough appreciation concerning the human and financial resources involved in this consultation process. Lees Marshment admits herself that her framework does not contain enough “answers or ideas for parties on how to manage the party” when implementing political marketing.⁴⁰ This thesis will highlight the attempts by the Conservatives to undertake political marketing as well as the difficulties encountered by the party.

³⁷ Ormrod (2006) p.114

³⁸ Ormrod (2006) p.114

³⁹ Ormrod (2006) p.113

⁴⁰ Jennifer Lees- Marshment (2006) “Political Marketing Theory and Practice: A Reply to Ormrod’s Critique of the Lees- Marshment Market- Oriented Party Model,” *Politics*, Volume 26 Number 2, p.124

1.2.3 Media Professionals

Media strategists advise political parties on how to set the political agenda with their political marketing. Negrine has noted the historical use of external media experts by political parties and describes the process of employing media professionals as the “professionalisation of political communication.”⁴¹ This working relationship involves these experts offering their promotional expertise, whilst political parties maintain a willingness to listen to these ideas, and potentially change their methods for the sake of effective promotion.⁴²

Chapters Two, Four and Six demonstrate the longstanding use of media professionals by the Tory Party by outlining the key personnel (including the media professionals) who were involved with political marketing in each of the opposition periods. Within his 2008 study of long-term communication trends, Negrine notes that “the better organised a political party becomes, the greater the likelihood that it will seek to exploit [expert] help.”⁴³ However, in the context of the Hague opposition, this thesis will demonstrate that the Tories were still deploying external media strategists, even though the party was in an intensely disorganised state.

Bruce has defined a variety of marketing personnel within a political party. These practitioners include the “Spin Doctors” who “manage the process of briefing the news media,” the “Image Minders” whose tasks include the forward planning of the party leader’s nationwide tours, and the “Wordsmiths” that provide material including the party leader’s speeches.⁴⁴ Various Conservative Party marketing personnel can be categorised according to Bruce’s definitions. For instance, Chapters Two and Three examine the work of James Garret during the Heath opposition, as an “image minder” developing an appealing image of Conservative Party policies and personalities in the Party Election Broadcasts.

⁴¹ Negrine (2008) p.2, p.70 and p.72

⁴² Negrine (2008) p.3

⁴³ Negrine (2008) p.81

⁴⁴ Brendan Bruce (1992) *Image of Power, How the Image Makers Shape Our Leaders* London, Kogan Page, p.128

Ronnie Miller was the “wordsmith” in the Heath and Thatcher opposition, with the responsibility of perfecting the speeches of the Tory leaders. Amanda Platell and Nick Wood assumed the responsibilities as “spin doctors” during the Hague opposition. They attempted to brief the news media about the Conservative Party’s policies and personalities. However, this analysis demonstrates that certain individuals, such as Gordon Reece and Geoffrey Tucker, performed all three roles as a ‘spin doctor,’ ‘image minder’ and ‘wordsmith’ during the opposition period.

In contemporary Western democracies, the media professionals are part of a political party that is a “lean organisation.”⁴⁵ Negrine notes how the centralised party structure involves a “small cadre of permanent employees who serve the political party as a whole and the leader more specifically.”⁴⁶ Section 1.6.3 of this chapter will consider the extensive work of media strategists to market the party leader.

Before this thesis offers an overview of the general political situation that constituted the 1966 to 1970, 1975 to 1979 and 1997 to 2001 Tory opposition periods, this introduction briefly considers the advances in Conservative political communication before the 1966 election. This short analysis attempts to place the three researched opposition eras within the long-term continuum of Tory marketing development. By adopting this approach, the thesis can highlight the ‘innovative’ marketing of the three periods during the conclusions of this analysis.

1.3 Periods of Analysis

1.3.1 Pre 1966 Communications

As a result of the unexpected 1945 election defeat, when the Conservatives suffered a landslide loss to Labour, despite Churchill’s popularity during the Second World War, the party began to deploy a more proactive approach to understand

⁴⁵ Negrine (2008) p.7

⁴⁶ Negrine (2008) p.7 and p.56

the political mood of the electorate. The Conservative Public Opinion Research Department was formed in 1947 to consider electoral opinion,⁴⁷ and would consider how the decline in support for Attlee's Labour Government had not transferred to the Tories in the 1951 election.

The Public Opinion Research Department was subsequently more widely used but still only to conduct a 'post-mortem' of particular election results.⁴⁸ Opinion polling of the mid 1950s attempted to discover various electoral groups that could be targeted with campaigning literature. Methods to attract the support of working class professionals and younger voters were developed, as a result of this polling. A psephology group was developed following the 1959 election, which adopted scientific methodology to examine post-war electoral behaviour.⁴⁹ Chapter Two will highlight how the Tories had appointed T.F.Thompson in 1965, as a special adviser on tactics who assisted in the development of the Opinion Research Centre (ORC.) The Centre used market research to identify target voters as well as predict the outcome of elections by using questionnaires and interviews.⁵⁰

Central Office made their first approach to the Colman, Prentice and Varley advertising agency in 1948 for advice regarding poster campaigns. The same collective would be more extensively used in the build up to the 1959 election. A £16,500 per month national poster campaign was launched in January 1959 that concentrated on particular marginal constituencies. The posters were entitled 'Life's Better with the Conservatives. Don't let Labour ruin it.' The copy of these posters were described by Butler and Rose as "simple and direct [without the] harsh political exhortations of pictures of prominent politicians."⁵¹ The marketing material for the 1959 campaign argued that "the Conservatives are the party of the

⁴⁷ Andrew Taylor "Speaking to Democracy. The Conservative Party and Mass Opinion from the 1920s to the 1950s" in Stuart Ball and Ian Holloway (eds) (2002) *Mass Conservatism The Conservatives and the Public since the 1880s*, London, Frank Cass, pp.88- 89

⁴⁸ Dennis Kavanagh (1982) "Election Campaigns and Opinion Polls. British Political Parties and the use of Private Polls," *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 32, Number 3, p267

⁴⁹ Taylor in Ball and Holloway (eds) (2002) p.90

⁵⁰ David Butler and Anthony King (1966) *The British General Election of 1966*, London, Macmillan, p.67

⁵¹ David Butler and Richard Rose (1960) *The British General Election of 1959*, London, Macmillan, p.24, Cockett in Ball and Seldon (eds) (1994) p.567

whole country”⁵² and best equipped to deal with the national issues. These adverts would be placed in papers such as the *News of the World* and the *Sunday Pictorial* to gain the attention of traditional working class voters.⁵³ Britain gained a regular television service in 1936 but only tiny audiences viewed the content. BBC coverage was restricted by the fourteen day rule when a subject could not be discussed, which would be debated in the House of Commons during the following fortnight.⁵⁴ However, the Tories began to extensively use the medium of television during the 1951 election. A private studio was constructed within Central Office to develop, refine and film broadcasts that frequently involved a BBC newsreader conducting a “spontaneous question and answer session”⁵⁵ with a senior MP. Harold Macmillan became particularly adept at using television and he became known for his ‘fireside chats’ regarding urgent national issues.

Bruce believes that “it was not until the arrival of the actor- manager Macmillan that television’s potential for persuasion was fully explored”⁵⁶ and Macmillan became the first political leader to utilise the teleprompter during his broadcasts.⁵⁷ A notable ‘chat’ took place with US President Eisenhower at Downing Street before the 1959 election. This particular photo opportunity showed the British Prime Minister in a relaxed and confident mood with an influential statesman. Macmillan also became a successful exponent of televised interviews whilst in transit at airports following state visits. These airport ‘photo opportunities’ enhanced the international reputation of Macmillan.

1.3.2 The Three Researched Opposition Periods: Existing Literature

This research considers how the Tories used marketing techniques to communicate their policies and senior politicians between 1966 and 1970, 1975 to 1979 and 1997

⁵² Butler and Rose (1960) p.23

⁵³ Butler and Rose (1960) p.23

⁵⁴ Bruce (1992) pp.29- 30

⁵⁵ Cockett in Seldon and Ball (eds) (1994) p.564

⁵⁶ Bruce (1992) p.30

⁵⁷ Harold Evans (1981) *Downing Street Diary: The Macmillan Years 1957- 1963*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, p.44

to 2001. The periods were chosen on the basis that these oppositions began after three 'significant' election defeats since 1951. At the start of each era, the Conservatives struggled to interpret their election defeat, and effectively oppose an elected Labour Government. The three opposition eras witnessed divisive intra-party disputes regarding market orientation and product formation, but also some of the most notable marketing initiatives that have been witnessed in British politics. This thesis considers the party's attitudes during these eras, and highlights a series of issues associated with opposition party marketing. These concepts could be analysed in the context of other opposition periods.

The temporal comparisons made in this research contrasts with the accounts discussing marketing issues in the context of one particular government, opposition period, or election campaign. In relation to the 1975 to 1979 period, and her sales, product and market oriented model, Lees Marshment highlights how the Tories frequently listened to the voters on policies and developing political issues.⁵⁸ This research compares this voter-oriented attitude across the three periods. Lees Marshment believes that the Marketing attempts of the Hague opposition failed due to historical perceptions of the party as well as the widespread approval of the electorate towards the Labour Party.⁵⁹ Lees Marshment and Rudd suggest that the marketing also foundered due to internal party disagreements regarding policy and ideology.⁶⁰ Furthermore Ormrod notes that resource limitations can affect political marketing hence this research considers how the lack of human and financial resources affected the marketing throughout the three opposition periods.⁶¹

This research also differs from the many accounts that 'tell the story' of the evolution of British political communications without a specific comparisons concerning a particular party in a particular political era. These historical narratives

⁵⁸ Jennifer Lees Marshment (2001b) *Political Marketing and British Political Parties: The Party's Just Begun*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, pp.50- 51

⁵⁹ Jennifer Lees Marshment (2001d) "Marketing the British Conservatives 1997- 2001" *Journal of Marketing Management*, Volume 17, pp.933- 935

⁶⁰ Jennifer Lees Marshment and Chris Rudd (2003) "Political Marketing and Party Leadership," *Paper for the 2003 PSA Conference*, p.2

⁶¹ Ormrod (2006) p.116

include the work of Cockerell that argues how “Heath had become Prime Minister [in 1970] with the help of the most professional media campaign up to that time in British history.”⁶² Cockett’s work is also based on the assumption that the Tories’ “greatest strength [was] the ability to adapt and survive”⁶³ regarding marketing. This research argues that the ‘adoption’ of new marketing techniques was not such an easy process for the party. Cockerell and Cockett’s accounts also mix eras of Tory government and opposition but as previously suggested in this introduction, the thesis differs by focusing on the party out of power. Furthermore, the Tory opposition periods are discussed in Ball and Seldon’s collection of essays⁶⁴ but this thesis offers a particularly detailed focus on marketing within three specific and contrasting eras. The introduction will now provide more political detail of the three oppositions that will contextualise the Conservatives’ marketing in each of the periods.

1.3.3 Edward Heath in Opposition 1966 to 1970

Chapter Two demonstrates that the Heath opposition could have learnt from the marketing strategies during the 1964 and 1966 elections. The promotion of Sir Alec Douglas Home was inadequate in the 1964 campaign and the strategy did not improve for Edward Heath in 1966. This chapter also begins the analysis of how Tory marketing was being undertaken whilst the electorate was becoming dealigned regarding their voting decisions. The factors of social class, religion and family political allegiances began to become less influential in voting decisions and this trend would continue during the Thatcher and Hague oppositions.⁶⁵ Chapter Two highlights a new generation of voters that were enjoying enhanced economic circumstances, and voting on specific issues.

⁶² Michael Cockerell (1988) *Live from Number 10: The Inside Story of Prime Ministers and Television*, London, Faber and Faber, p.168

⁶³ Richard Cockett “The Party, Publicity and the Media” in Anthony Seldon and Stuart Ball (eds) (1994) *Conservative Century, The Conservative Party since 1900*, Oxford, Oxford University Press p.547

⁶⁴ Stuart Ball and Anthony Seldon (eds) (2005) *Recovering Power: The Conservatives in Opposition since 1867*, Basingstoke, Palgrave.

⁶⁵ Philip Lynch and Robert Garner (2005) “The Changing Party System,” *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 58, Number 3, p.533

In terms of political developments, Edward Heath had been leader for less than a year by the 1966 campaign, so neither he nor the party was especially blamed for the election defeat. There was an optimistic resolve immediately to begin the process of preparing and marketing an attractive product after a full term of a Labour government.⁶⁶ The series of policy groups developed ideas regarding trade unions, Rhodesian independence and the decline of Britain's colonial empire 'east of Suez.' The Tories also attempted to challenge the Labour Government who was struggling to deal with the frequent economic problems including the 1967 devaluation of sterling.

Despite the advantage of time and the intensive work by the policy groups, Butler and Duschinsky describe this period as "uncertain and troubled."⁶⁷ Heath was undermined by the stigma of being the first Tory leader to retain his position after an electoral defeat as well as coming from a grammar school background. He appeared cold and aloof in comparison with the more 'approachable' Harold Wilson. Despite his resolve to demonstrate that the Tories were a 'government in waiting,' Heath had to contend with party divisions over a number of issues including immigration and education. In an attempt to maintain party unity, the Tories initiated a considerable amount of negative campaigning concerning the Labour Government but right-wing members remained frustrated that the party was not offering distinct alternatives to the policies of the Wilson administration.

The thesis highlights how media professionals were heavily involved in Tory marketing in each of the opposition periods. Chapter Five demonstrates that the Tories began the 1970 election campaign behind Labour in the polls after being ahead for over a year, and Heath was still being criticised for his leadership style. The leader continued to promote his economic concerns during formal rallies but the media strategists managed to encourage Heath to take part in more

⁶⁶ T.F. Lindsay and Michael Harrington (1979) *The Conservative Party 1918- 1979*, London, Macmillan, p.250

⁶⁷ David Butler and Michael Pinto Duschinsky (1971) *The British General Election of 1970*, London, Macmillan, St Martin's Press, p.63

spontaneous walkabouts as the election progressed. However the Conservative cause was particularly assisted by the release of new trade figures during the final week of the campaign, when Heath's warnings about a potential economic crisis gained more credence.

1.3.4 Margaret Thatcher in Opposition 1975 to 1979

The two Thatcher opposition chapters highlight the largely supportive press that would assist the Tory marketing process. Chapter Six chronicles the development of mass-market tabloids in the late 1970s, which achieved a higher circulation than their middle market competitors for the first time in 1979. The Tories extensively worked with these newspapers, including the *Sun*, to achieve suitably sympathetic coverage amongst the readership who were mostly working class professionals; a targeted electoral group for the Conservatives. An innovative strategy would also additionally exploit colour TV for political promotions.

Margaret Thatcher believed that politics was about the battle for ideas, so she focused on developing philosophical ideas, rather than creating a 'list' of policies that would resemble a product from the Heath era.⁶⁸ The key issues that concerned the Tory policy groups during this period included incomes policy, immigration and industrial relations and the party wanted to benefit from the latter topic by the public disquiet associated with the 'Winter of Discontent.' However any radicalism was curbed within the shadow cabinet due to the inclusion of former Heath supporters such as William Whitelaw and Ian Gilmour for the sake of party unity. The subsequent cautious attitude was also evident in the 1979 election manifesto with the existence of many one-nation beliefs such as a less belligerent industrial relations policy. There was also a considerable amount of negative campaigning by the Tories during this era and the Labour government was shown to have lost its

⁶⁸ David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh (1980) *The British General Election of 1979*, London, Macmillan, p.73

influence and restraint over its trade union supporters during the sustained period of industrial unrest in the winter of 1978 into 1979.⁶⁹

Many of the political marketing accounts positively focus on the Conservatives' marketing techniques during the 1979 election. A television documentary that was screened before the 2005 General Election suggested that the 1979 election campaign was the "first modern media strategy" achieving a "breakthrough in negative election campaigning."⁷⁰ Scammell also highlighted that the involvement of Saatchi and Saatchi was "vital to the Tories in the 1979 campaign."⁷¹ Their initiatives, including the 'Labour Isn't Working' campaign, are still cited as some of the most ingenious marketing ever initiated in British election campaigning.⁷² However certain issues, including the debate about industrial relations policy, remain critically unresolved within the party at the start of the 1979 campaign, which frustrated the effective implementation of political marketing.

1.3.5 William Hague in Opposition 1997 to 2001

Chapters Four and Seven highlight the various forms of the media that could be used for marketing purposes by the Tories between 1997 and 2001. Television, in an increasingly multi channel form, was still recognised as a key campaigning medium. There were approximately 250 channels, and a series of twenty-four hour news outlets that could be used by the Conservatives for marketing purposes.

Chapter Seven also makes reference to the emerging marketing opportunities via the Internet, e-mail and text message. Butler and Kavanagh noted that the 1997 election witnessed the initial development of websites to advertise candidates and constituencies. The initial attempts at online campaigning were noted for improving

⁶⁹ Tim Bell "The Conservatives Advertising Campaign" in Robert M Worcester, Martin Harrop (eds) (1982) *Political Communications. The General Election Campaign of 1979*, London, George Allen, p.10

⁷⁰ "Dispatches: Election Unspun: How to Win Power," *Channel Four*, 18th April 2005

⁷¹ Scammell (1995) pp.1-2

⁷² "Saatchi's Colourful History," *BBC Online*, 20th June 2000, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/799084.stm>

the style and speed of producing marketing literature.⁷³ The development of text messaging had the potential to provide a valuable opportunity for the Tories to market themselves to younger voters who an immensely apathetic segment of the electorate. However Chapters Four and Seven note how the Hague opposition could not guarantee a sympathetic press that had assisted the Tory marketing strategy in the earlier opposition periods. The influence of the traditionally Conservative supporting press barons was replaced by the pressure of multimedia conglomerates to decrease political coverage, or promote opinions that were aligned with the current thinking of the electorate, and ‘hopefully’ increase readership.⁷⁴

Chapter Four examines how the Conservatives attempted to understand why they had been driven from power following the comprehensive 1997 election defeat. However the party was in a critical state after this unparalleled landslide defeat, and the party had to inspire an unsympathetic public who had voted for a change in government following “eighteen continuous years of Tory rule, which had become discredited in its latter years.”⁷⁵ The depressed party morale was made even worse by the frequent positive polling for Tony Blair and the Labour Party, whose policies appealed to the electoral centre ground.⁷⁶

It was hoped that the election of William Hague would mean that the Tories possessed a modern looking and thinking leader to rival Tony Blair. Hague failed to meet these expectations because he was unable to engineer a strong personal authority over his party or cultivate a positive public profile. The Tory leader was frequently criticised by the media and focus groups for an inadequate personal image, his political views and his judgement in promoting ‘populist’ policies to gain

⁷³ David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh (1997) *The British General Election of 1997*, London, Macmillan, pp.213-215

⁷⁴ Seymour Ure in Seaton (1998) (eds) p.44

⁷⁵ David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh (2001) *The British General Election of 2001*, London, Macmillan, p.37

⁷⁶ Anthony Seldon and Peter Snowdon “The Barren Years 1997- 2005” in Ball and Seldon (eds) (2005) p.224 and p.238

media attention.⁷⁷ Hague did have some success at creating a new party structure to improve the internal party communication systems but the quality of policy initiatives was insignificant compared to the opposition periods under Heath and Thatcher. The party initially developed a modern and inclusive product but these messages made little impact in the polls. Certain Tory members believed that their party should not apologise and change some of its more 'controversial' beliefs and policies.⁷⁸ From the spring of 1999, the Tories consequently focused on 'traditional 'Conservative' topics such as immigration and crime but these were not the prime concern of the electorate. The media and internal party critics continually ridiculed the party for presenting their core ideas in an overtly 'populist' manner. For instance, Hugo Young criticised Hague for treating his wider audience with "intellectual effrontery"⁷⁹ in his 2000 conference speech whilst presenting populist policies such as 'jailing' asylum seekers and cutting fuel taxes.⁸⁰

This short chronology has provided an understanding about the three opposition periods when the Conservatives initiated political marketing. This introduction now considers the Negrine and Lilleker framework of 'proactive' and 'reactive' marketing identifiers that will be used within the first half of this thesis. This structure, with the additional descriptor of 'innovative marketing' will be used to analyse how a series of specific issues, including arguments between media professionals and politicians, affected the Tory market orientation. The use of this framework will also be used to examine the second research question concerning whether the Conservatives undertaking political marketing before the terminology became commonplace within academic literature.

⁷⁷ Butler and Kavanagh (2001) p.44 Seldon and Snowdon in Ball and Seldon (ed) (2005) pp.247- 248 and 251- 253

⁷⁸ Butler and Kavanagh (2001) p.39

⁷⁹ Hugo Young "Placing a Heavy Bet on Disillusionment," *The Guardian*, 6th October 2000, p.2

⁸⁰ Young *The Guardian*, 6th October 2000, p.2

1.4 Market Orientation in Opposition Periods

1.4.1 Innovative, Proactive and Reactive Marketing Strategies

Negrine and Lilleker characterise a 'proactive' political party on the grounds that the party recognises that competent marketing is essential component of their political strategy. Enough financial and human resources are allocated to develop effective promotional initiatives.⁸¹ The reactive party adopts a negative, fearful and dismissive attitude towards political marketing. These particular parties regard themselves as "naturally newsworthy"⁸² and would expect the media to automatically contact them for a political reaction. A reactive strategy would also involve policy formation without the influence of voters, MPs or activists.⁸³

An additional 'innovative' identifier has been added for the purposes of this thesis and 'innovative' parties use new and emerging promotional techniques as part of their overall political strategy. The 'innovative' party employs media professionals to produce fresh and interesting press releases, headlines, sound bites and photo opportunities for established, and also emerging, media outlets to reach as many voting groups as possible. 'Innovation' also involves the cultivation of effective relationships with traditionally hostile media organisations in a similar vein to Tony Blair meeting Rupert Murdoch in 1995.

Having examined the Lilleker and Negrine framework that will be used in this part of the research, this introduction now considers the key issues that could frustrate the development of an opposition party's marketing strategy. The introduction now discusses the internal factor of intra party arguments concerning the reasons for their election defeat that could affect the marketing of an opposition party.

⁸¹ Negrine and Lilleker (2003) p.201

⁸² Negrine and Lilleker (2003) p.201

⁸³ Negrine and Lilleker (2003) p.201

1.4.2 Internal Factors inhibiting Political Marketing

1.4.2.1 Accepting the Election Defeat

Norris and Lovenduski's comments that a political party should understand the truth about their past and not engage in "selective perception"⁸⁴ about their history do not appear to appreciate the problems associated with achieving a collective agreement regarding why an election defeat occurred. Negrine notes that "whilst newer technologies always present challenges, the political party that wishes to survive and thrive must take these on board and exploit them to its advantage,"⁸⁵ but this thesis will demonstrate that losing governmental power can cause passionate intra-party arguments regarding whether it is necessary to use these new marketing technologies. Despite being out of power, certain members may resist any potential changes that conflict with their future vision for the party.

The thesis demonstrates that disagreements over the reasons for defeat affected the Tories' implementation of political marketing in two of the three cited opposition periods. The arguments were particularly acute following the 1997 election with a multitude of different interpretations associated with the Tories' worst landslide defeat after eighteen years of power.⁸⁶ The attempts were further frustrated by a large majority of the electorate appearing utterly disinterested in anything that the Tories had to say. The 1974 general election results had a similar impact during the Thatcher opposition but the 1966 defeat did not have a similar impact during the Heath opposition. Chapter Two will highlight how the disagreements over policy and arguments between media professionals and politicians had a greater impact on the swift implementation of political marketing during the Heath opposition.

⁸⁴ Pippa Norris and Joni Lovenduski (2004) "Why Parties Fail to Learn: Electoral Defeat, Selective Perception and British Party Politics," *Party Politics*, Volume 10, Issue 1, p.98

⁸⁵ Negrine (2008) p.44

⁸⁶ Lees Marshment (2001d) p.939

1.4.2.2 Policy and Communication Strategy Differences

This thesis will examine the internal Tory party arguments associated with policies and the communication strategies that occurred in each of the opposition periods. Political marketers believe that a marketing strategy will be critically compromised if these policy disputes remain unresolved, because the electorate will be unsure what they will receive in return for their vote. However Negrine notes intra-party tension between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' within the party structure. The 'insider' politicians can be adverse or antipathetic to the use of 'outsider' media professionals who appear to have an undue influence on the product formation as well as the marketing of policies and personalities.⁸⁷ The vociferous nature of arguments regarding policies and communication strategies often means that a swift resolution for the sake of political marketing does not always occur. Internal party unity can be potentially maintained by an internal communications structure that facilitates a full discussion and resolution of any policy or ideological issues that could negatively affect the communication of the product.

Smith and Smith believe that a party should market detailed policy ideas during an election campaign within a manifesto that is a "focus of legitimacy for governmental action."⁸⁸ The failure to extensively promote a wide range of policies can cause a political party to be accused of failing to provide their ideas regarding a wide range of national issues. Certain politicians, as well as marketing strategists, believe that a political party does not need to develop a meticulous policy agenda that attempts to solve all of the nation's problems. Too much information is supposed to reopen, or provoke, internal party disagreements on contentious policy issues or future policy direction. The extensive marketing of a range of policies may also provide valuable material to be used by political opponents in a potential attack.

⁸⁷ Negrine (2008) pp.89-92

⁸⁸ Craig Allen Smith and Kathy B Smith (2000) "A Rhetorical Perspective on the 1997 British Party Manifestos," *Political Communication*, Volume 17, Number 4, p.460

The avoidance of a detailed discussion about policies has been endorsed by previous and current MPs. Sir Geoffrey Howe does not believe that a party needs to develop a “bible of detail on everything under the sun.”⁸⁹ Maurice Saatchi highlighted how the Tories were conducting this style of campaign in the 2005 election when the party did not especially focus on the economy.⁹⁰

Lloyd emphasises the need to promote a wide range of policies on national security, social stability and economic growth. The “services offering” may include policies that are linked to the managing of a particular project such as road pricing or a major sporting occasion, but the opposition also needs to demonstrate that they have the ability to deliver on their specific policy programme with positive consequences to the electorate.⁹¹ This thesis will consider the possible methods that could facilitate this image including a focus on the politician’s personal resolve to implement this manifesto.

These concerns associated with the lack of policy promotion are similar to concerns that political parties overuse soundbites and photo opportunities. The proponents of these marketing methods believe that they are a simple and effective method for political parties to promote their policy ideas within the constraints of limited air time and newspaper copy space. Jones believes that the impact of effective photo opportunities increased following the introduction of colour printing presses and colour television.⁹² Bruce also describes the complex process of marketing the party leader. The strategy is based on issues including physical appearance, and background although “everyone’s physical appearance, background and characters are complex enough to produce several different choices of image”⁹³ that may attract or repel votes.

⁸⁹ Sir Geoffrey Howe “Where should William Hague go next? To the Centre Ground of Course,” *The Independent*, 4th January 2000, p.4

⁹⁰ Maurice Saatchi (2005) *If this is Conservatism, I am a Conservative*, London, CPS, p.2

⁹¹ Jenny Lloyd (2005) “Square Peg, Round Hole? Can Marketing-Based Concepts such as the ‘Product’ and the ‘Marketing Mix’ have a useful role in the political arena,” *Journal of Non-Profit and Public Sector Marketing*, Volume 14, part 1-2, p.41

⁹² Nicholas Jones (1988) *Soundbites and Spin Doctors*, London, Cassell, p.27 and pp.64- 65

⁹³ Bruce (1992) p.95

Critics of these techniques believe that the use of soundbites and visual 'pseudo events' does not provide any 'meaningful' information to enhance the national political discourse.⁹⁴ Maloney and Colmer also argue that this modern political PR process draws "attention to important events and issues through sanitised, simplistic messages, banal images and confected events."⁹⁵ The modern day party conference is regarded as such an occasion, when the voter witnesses the 'continuous' delivery of soundbites and photo opportunities for the sake of journalists to be provided with noteworthy quotes. Bruce also questions the value of 'excessive' marketing initiatives and image promotion. He believes that "no amount of talent or hype can convince the voter that a sow's ear is anything other than a part of the body female pigs use for hearing the swill- bucket's rattle."⁹⁶ Furthermore "voters make a choice based on the credibility of promises, not on the track record of film directors. The medium in this instance is very definitely not the message."⁹⁷ This analysis examines how marketing could not always 'cover up' the inadequacies of the party's leaders, or their policy agenda, in each of the opposition periods.

It is not only internal issues that prevent a political party swiftly adopting marketing techniques. External factors can have an equally divisive impact on the development of innovative marketing techniques, and the introduction now considers how the lack of human and financial resources of an opposition party can adversely affect the innovativeness of a marketing strategy. The opposition party attempts to counter a government and undertake what Gamble describes as the "politics of support" where the party considers how to gain the support of the electorate to win elections.⁹⁸ The governing party can use a greater amount of resources as well as their governing 'status' to dominate the national political agenda.

⁹⁴ Brian McNair (2004) "PR must Die Spin, Anti- Spin and Political Relations in the UK 1997-2004," *Journalist Studies*, Volume 5, Number 3, pp.325- 326, p.337

⁹⁵ Kevin Maloney and Rob Colmer (2001) "Does Political PR enhance or Trivialise Democracy? The UK General Election 2001 as contest between Presentation and Substance," *Journal of Marketing Management*, Volume 17, Issue 9/10, p.967

⁹⁶ Bruce (1992) p.114

⁹⁷ Bruce (1992) p.114

⁹⁸ Gamble (1974) p.5

1.4.3 External Factors inhibiting Political Marketing

1.4.3.1 Resource Limitations and the Media Agenda

Each of the cited opposition periods involved the Tories experiencing limitations of financial and human resources that could negatively affect their attempts to counter the government 'marketing machine.' These deficiencies caused the party to be unable to produce effective marketing at critical times. The lack of resources should not be seen as surprising for a British opposition party because financial backers prefer to support winning parties. Post-election debts are commonplace for these parties who will subsequently undertake human resource cutbacks so it is by no means certain that a party can afford to use new marketing techniques for communication purposes.⁹⁹

The party may subsequently not be able to initiate as much opinion polling that would satisfy the political marketers' belief that a party needs to gain a full understanding of the thinking by an electorate. Chapter Three will highlight how marketing resources were particularly stretched between 1975 and 1979 because an election could be called at any time due to the Labour Government's small majority. The Tories were prepared for an election in October 1978 and this particular chapter highlights how the party had to refocus their communication resources for a 1979 campaign.

Chapter Four will examine how in the Hague opposition, the Tories felt unable to divert financial and human resources to effectively use these untried communication mechanisms such as the Internet and e-mail. This chapter will also highlight how the Conservatives attempted to increase their human resources, reform organisational structures, as well as successfully attract financial backing to update marketing equipment in all of the three oppositions.

⁹⁹ Alan Scott and John Street (2000) "From Media Politics to E- Protest," *Information Communication and Society*, Volume 3, Number 2, p.215

The resource limitations can also prevent an opposition party tackling what they perceive as a negative media agenda that continually criticises their personalities and policies. The modern day British political environment does not contain the same extent of deference to British politics and political institutions, and Negrine notes that political parties have struggled to counter this new media environment.¹⁰⁰ Deacon and Wring have noted a series of changes in the style of press coverage during the late 1990s as a result of the main political parties converging on the centre ground. They describe a press that has become bored and cynical with the “dismal collusion”¹⁰¹ of the main parties regarding the main policy areas. In an attempt to inject some political debate, the newspapers have implemented aggressive news management in their political coverage. These accusations of media bias can exacerbate the tense relationship between politicians and media organisations.

This suspicion about a ‘media agenda’ can obstruct the implementation of political marketing. Parties in this situation can acquire a defensive attitude towards political communications, as well as an evasive public image. However the media are frequently accused of behaving like the official opposition and having an ‘unwholesome’ interest in ‘cynically’ chronicling the lives of politicians at the expense of discussing the state of the nation.¹⁰² Despite the vociferous nature of these complaints, other politicians believe that the political figures who complain about the media are “like seamen who complain about the sea.”¹⁰³ Whittingdale and Dorrell accept that political parties do experience many difficulties in being able to satisfy the interview demands from the multitude of mass media outlets,¹⁰⁴ but it is important to maintain a constructive relationship with the media, because without them “a politician is talking to himself.”¹⁰⁵ This thesis demonstrates that

¹⁰⁰ Negrine (2008) pp.25-26

¹⁰¹ David Deacon and Dominic Wring “Partisan Dealignment and the British Press” in John Bartle, Roger Mortimore and Simon Atkinson (eds) (2002) *Political Communication. The General Election Campaign of 2001*, London, Frank Cass, p.207

¹⁰² See for example Glasgow Media Group (1980) *More Bad News*, London, Routledge

¹⁰³ Interview with Stephen Dorrell, 21st October 2005

¹⁰⁴ Interview with John Whittingdale, 3rd February 2006

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Stephen Dorrell, 21st October 2005

the Tories complained about these reporting techniques in each of the opposition periods.¹⁰⁶

Despite these external factors, the thesis highlights how the Conservatives used specific marketing techniques before the 'celebrated' campaign in 1979. In the context of the second research question of this thesis regarding whether the Conservatives were undertaking political marketing before the terminology became common place within academic literature, this introductory chapter now discusses the longstanding concept of political opinion polling.

1.5 Use of Marketing Techniques

1.5.1 Focus Groups and Opinion Polls

Gamble notes how the electorate is organised as an unpredictable "market."¹⁰⁷ This increasingly volatile electorate has been noted for making their voting decisions with less of a regard for the traditional influences of social class, religion and family political allegiance. The product is constructed of a series of electoral winning standpoints on the issues that particularly appeal to centrist opinions and beliefs.¹⁰⁸ Kirchheimer describes this process of attracting this wider range of voters as the "catch all"¹⁰⁹ approach to politics. A political standpoint is formulated to 'catch' as many voters as possible on the coveted political 'centre ground,' which is the area of the political spectrum where it is believed that the parties will gain the greatest electoral support.¹¹⁰ Instead of being heavily constrained by what Panebianco has cited as the "weight of the past,"¹¹¹ the political parties are consequently attempting to attract the dealigned electorate.

¹⁰⁶ Deacon and Wring in Bartle, Atkinson and Mortimore (eds) (2002) pp.206-207

¹⁰⁷ Gamble (1974) p.6

¹⁰⁸ David M Reid (1988) "Marketing the Political Product," *European Journal of Marketing*, Volume 22, Number 9, p.45

¹⁰⁹ O Kirchheimer "The Transformation of the West European Party Systems," in Joseph Lapolombara and Myron Weiner (eds) (1966) *Political Parties and Political Development*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, pp.177- 200

¹¹⁰ Kirchheimer in Lapolombara and Weiner (eds) (1966) pp.177- 200

¹¹¹ Angelo Panebianco (1988) *Political Parties: Organisation and Power*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p.xv

The aim of a political party with their marketing strategy is to “build an organisation that will enable his party to compete successfully in the political market [reducing] the uncertainty that universal suffrage brings to politics.”¹¹² This research will highlight how the Conservative Party, under the leadership of Margaret Thatcher and William Hague, were facing an increasingly volatile electorate who were basing their political decision making with a lesser regard for traditional factors such as social class.

The use of opinion polling can enhance the party’s overall image by ‘symbolically’ showing that it is prepared to listen to voters rather than thinking that ‘they know best.’ The opinions of random, or targeted, sections of the electorate can be gained by benchmark and follow up polls to gauge opinions on new policy ideas, manifesto proposals, campaign themes and slogans.¹¹³ Bruce also believes that political market research was developed by American multinational businesses and “modified by their admen who then fed them through to the politicians.”¹¹⁴ For instance, the specific processes of (opinion) research involve the sampling of voting intentions and voter’s attitudes to specific issues such as the economy and education.¹¹⁵

Focus group methodology has been criticised by Saatchi who highlights the “fiction of the focus groups [that] tell you what people are thinking, but not what you should be thinking.”¹¹⁶ The former Conservative media strategist described the ‘illusion’ of this research in 2005, “which said that as immigration was the number one issue in deciding how people vote, it should be the number one topic.”¹¹⁷ Savigny has also discussed the ‘unrepresentative’ and ‘undemocratic’ impression of what voters are thinking. The moderator can critically influence the resultant data,

¹¹² Gamble (1974) p.7 and p.10

¹¹³ Dennis Kavanagh (1992) “Private Opinion Polls and Campaign Strategy,” *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 45, Number 4, p.523

¹¹⁴ Bruce (1992) p.81

¹¹⁵ Bruce (1992) p.82

¹¹⁶ Saatchi (2005) p.1

¹¹⁷ Saatchi (2005) p.1

as well as determining the extent to which the focus group will discuss the proposed issues.¹¹⁸

It is not just focus groups and opinion polls that can be regarded as established political marketing techniques. The development of a permanent campaign is an equally longstanding trend. This thesis will demonstrate that the Conservatives used the expertise of media professionals to become engaged in a continuous strategy of political communication.

1.5.2 Permanent Campaign

This thesis will also consider how the media strategists attempted to gain media coverage and satisfy the appetite of news organisations for a continual series of stories. The research will demonstrate that the Conservatives were involved in permanent marketing campaigns between 1966 and 1970 as well as 1975 to 1979. These efforts were supported by a supreme organisational effort in each of the opposition periods. This thesis evidence conflicts with Negrine and Lilleker, and Sparrow and Turner's claims that this trend has only been evident in European political communications since the late 1980s.¹¹⁹ However, Chapter Four highlights the lack of continual political communications in the Hague opposition. The absence of a permanent campaign between 1997 and 2001 continued in the 2001 election when there was an uncoordinated attitude to promoting the Conservative Party.

Negrine notes how the campaigning of political parties is based on "adapting" to new methods of communication as well as the changing political and social circumstances.¹²⁰ The concept of 'adaption' is based on the party's philosophy to incorporate promotional opportunities for the sake of electoral victory. Although

¹¹⁸ Heath Savigny (2007) "Focus Groups and Political Marketing: Science and Democracy as axiomatic?" *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Volume 9, Number 1, p.127

¹¹⁹ Negrine and Lilleker (2003) p.207, Nick Sparrow and John Turner (2001) "The Permanent Campaign: The integration of market research techniques in developing strategies in a more uncertain political climate," *European Journal of Marketing*, Volume 39, Issue 9/10, p.984

¹²⁰ Negrine (2008) p.17

Negrine notes how new communication technologies are embraced by political parties for the sake of marketing themselves to the electorate, longstanding methods of promotion are not omitted by the marketing strategy.¹²¹ For instance, political parties would not use television at the expense of more established media forms such as radio and newspapers. This research examines whether the Conservative Party ‘adapted’ their permanent campaigning strategy to use new communications technology such as television, as well as reacting to more generalised trends such as the increasingly fragmented media environment.¹²² Chapters Six and Seven examines how the Hague opposition struggled to adapt to the fragmented media environment and use new media opportunities to market themselves to an increasingly apathetic electorate.

Having considered the longstanding techniques of market orientation during the product formation process, this chapter now considers the promotion of the Tory party in the 1970, 1979 and 2001 election campaigns. The entire series of ‘product’ chapters use Brassington and Pettitt’s framework¹²³ and this section of the introduction discusses the framework in greater detail, as well as defines the term ‘political product’ that will be used in this thesis.

1.6 Product Definition

1.6.1 Brassington and Pettitt Framework

The second section of this thesis will consider whether the Tories marketed a political offering that met a marketing framework proposed by Brassington and Pettitt.¹²⁴ As suggested earlier in this introduction, these authors highlight how a product “is a physical good, service, idea, person or place that is capable of offering tangible and intangible attributes.”¹²⁵ This thesis examines how the Tory offerings

¹²¹ Negrine (2008) p.21 and p.195

¹²² Negrine (2008) p.41

¹²³ Brassington and Pettitt (2006) pp.288- 290

¹²⁴ Brassington and Pettitt (2006) pp.288- 290

¹²⁵ Brassington and Pettitt (2006) p.288

particularly involved the marketing of 'ideas' (political beliefs) as well as 'persons' (the leaders) to the electorate.

Brassington and Pettitt's framework divides the product into the "core," "tangible," "augmented," and "potential" segments.¹²⁶ The four product 'segments,' which constitute the Brassington and Pettitt framework, should not be viewed as separate entities. These authors highlight how these concepts contribute to a 'marketing mix' that gives the product "its character and essential appeal."¹²⁷ In a political context, the development of the 'mix' allows the party to engage with the different voter groups who would be attracted by specific aspects of a political party, including policies, beliefs and the attitude of the party leaders. .

The "core product" is regarded as the "heart of the product," and in a political context, this segment would include a political party's core beliefs; arguably the reason for the existence of a political party. In the political environment, the marketing of the tangible product means the promotion of policies that will implement the 'core' beliefs. The "tangible product" is intrinsically linked to the "core product" because the strategists have the opportunity to "put flesh on the core product, making it a real product that clearly represents and communicates the offer of the core product."¹²⁸

Brassington and Pettitt describe the "augmented product" as the "add-on extras that do not themselves form an intrinsic element of the product [but used] to increase the product's benefits or attractiveness."¹²⁹ In the political context, marketing the 'augmented' aspects of the product involves the communication of extra features (in addition to the 'tangible' policies and 'core' beliefs) that distinguish the party from its political opponents. The final circle is entitled the 'potential' product and in a political context, the marketing of this aspect involves the promotion of what voters will expect if they support this political party.

¹²⁶ Brassington and Pettitt (2006) pp.288- 290

¹²⁷ Brassington and Pettitt (2006) p.288

¹²⁸ Brassington and Pettitt (2006) p.288

¹²⁹ Brassington and Pettitt (2006) p.289

In a summary of their four product layers, Brassington and Pettitt stress the interlinking nature of their framework, but highlight how the 'augmented' and 'potential' aspects are the segments that are mostly marketed to the viewer or buyer. This suggestion can be correct in a political context. The introduction to this thesis highlights the development of the dealigned electorate in Britain that resulted in the political parties fighting for support on the political centre ground. The discovery and marketing of 'augmented' aspects, such as the approachability and genial nature of the party leader, would help the party to distinguish itself within the voter's minds. The communication of the potential product answers the key question within the minds of the electorate, namely how will they personally benefit as a result of voting for the political party; possibly the key issue influencing how most people use their vote.

The Brassington and Pettitt framework and the related concepts have been referenced within academic literature. This particular work has been mostly cited as a key framework that highlights a 'marketing mix' and how a product should contain a variety of materials for the sake of attracting public interest.¹³⁰ Constantinides references the work of Brassington and Pettitt in his discussions about the 'marketing mix,' which he describes as a "concept easy to memorise and apply."¹³¹ This research highlights how each of the Tory products met the Brassington and Pettitt framework despite the external factors of public opinion as well as external political circumstances having a key impact on Conservatives' market orientation. The Brassington and Pettitt framework has also provided a concise yet detailed understanding regarding the aspects that constitute a political product, but the structure of their analysis allows the reader to appreciate how each aspect interlinks each other to develop an overall offering. Jackson highlights

¹³⁰ D.P.Bannon "A Systems Approach to Marketing" in Gillian Ragsdell, Duane West and Jennifer Wilby (2002) *Systems Theory and Practice in the Knowledge Age*, London, Springer, pp.303-319

¹³¹ E Constantinides (2006) "The Marketing Mix Revisited: Towards the 21st Century Marketing, *Journal of Marketing Management*, Volume 22, Issue 3 /4, p.408

the relationships in his discussion about direct political communication,¹³² but Jenny Lloyd explores these linkages in a political context, and in more detail, within her analysis of product construction.¹³³

Lloyd highlights the Brassington and Pettitt structure in a political context and discusses how the framework has made a contribution to academic understanding regarding political marketing.¹³⁴ The concise concentric circular structure of Brassington and Pettitt's framework is regarded to simplify the previous academic attempts to understand "the complexity of the nature of the political product" as well as highlighting the internal links between different aspects of the offering.¹³⁵ King also makes reference to the framework and the augmented product when highlighting how Local Government organisations have attempted to establish a relationship with a customer.¹³⁶

The existing use of the Brassington and Pettitt theory in a business and political context means that this thesis is able to explore the relationship between promotion of tangible commodities and political marketing. The legitimacy of this linkage has formed the basis for the substantial amount of intra-party arguments concerning modern political communication techniques. The interlinking aspects of the product are particularly evident in the three Tory products that are under examination by this thesis. There are frequent occasions when the marketing of 'core beliefs' impacted on the development of an 'augmented' and positive image of the party. However there are discernible trends regarding the extent to which certain aspects were communicated to the electorate, notably the decline of ideological promotion within a political product.

¹³² Nigel Jackson (2004) "Party E-Newsletters in the UK. A Return to Direct Political Communication," *Journal of E-Government*, Volume 1, Issue 4

¹³³ Jenny Lloyd (2005) "Square Peg, Round Hole? Can Marketing-Based Concepts such as the 'Product' and the 'Marketing Mix' have a useful role in the political arena," *Journal of Non-Profit and Public Sector Marketing*, Volume 14, part 1-2, pp.27-46

¹³⁴ Lloyd (2005) p.33

¹³⁵ Lloyd (2005) p.33

¹³⁶ S.King (2007) "Transformational Government? The Role of Information Technology in Delivering Citizen Centric Local Public Services," *Local Government Studies*, Volume 33, Issue 3, p.357

The introduction will now consider the extent of core ideological promotion, personality marketing and negative campaigning by a political party. Each of these debates will contribute to the research questions regarding how important was the promotion of the personal ideological belief of senior Tory politicians to the Conservative marketing strategy, as well as why certain marketing initiatives were unsuccessful. Furthermore in the context of the first research question regarding what were the key issues that frustrated the development of Conservative market orientation, the thesis will examine how all of the techniques attempted to assist the party to set the political agenda, counteract the government's supremacy in national political discourse and gain the attention of a dealigned electorate during the election campaign.

There have also been concerns that political parties are promoting the ever-changing views of the electorate instead of communicating an integral and stable collection of longstanding beliefs. As a result of avoiding the excessive communication of policy detail that can create too many expectations amongst voters, parties will be criticised as evasive by political commentators and the media. Lloyd believes that it is critical for the electorate to be told about the return on their vote. By communicating the product's 'outcome,' the party has to convincingly demonstrate that they have the "ability to deliver upon policy issues and election promises."¹³⁷ The disapproval concerning the lack of core ideology is linked to the general condemnation about commercial marketing being part of the political process.¹³⁸

1.6.2 Ideology not central to political product

Harris and Wring criticise political parties for excessively using focus groups, opinion polling, and marketing beliefs that will satisfy the short term demands of the electorate.¹³⁹ Cooke also notes that the desire to satisfy the requirements of voters

¹³⁷ Lloyd (2005) p.42

¹³⁸ Interview with Danny Finkelstein, 7th September 2005

¹³⁹ Phil Harris and Dominic Wring (2001) "Editorial: The Marketing Campaign. The 2001 British General Election, *Journal of Marketing Management*, Volume 17, Issue 9/10, p.909

means that there will be less promotion of the personal beliefs of the party leaders at the expense of chronicling their early childhood.¹⁴⁰ Seawright criticised the party in the 2005 election for failing to promote a “‘high road’ political vision of core ideology which would help project these policy proposals in a coherent and effective way.”¹⁴¹ The absence of ideology was also disapproved by Maurice Saatchi who admitted that the Tories in 2005 did not possess an “iconic policy” and collectively did not understand that “if you don’t stand for something, you will fall for anything.”¹⁴² This thesis examines the extent to which the personal beliefs of senior Tory politicians, rather than their non-political interests, were promoted to the electorate in each of the opposition periods. The examination of these specific messages contributes to a wider debate associated with the marketing of political personalities.

1.6.3 Personality Marketing

There is no clear consensus on whether personality-based marketing has been influenced by US politics or whether the British political parties have initiated this form of image management. As a result of promoting the party leader, the strategists hope that their leader will be seen not just as a competent national leader, but as a figure who understand the demands of the electorate in comparison to their political rivals.

Bruce argues how their first impressions of political leaders, based on a number of factors including personal appearance and their personal experience, last in the minds of the electorate.¹⁴³ These ideas are closely linked to Negrine’s observation that political leaders “need to consider how to talk to the electorate since the speech from the pulpit did not work so well on film or even radio.”¹⁴⁴ This thesis

¹⁴⁰ Alistair B. Cooke “The Conservative Party and Its Manifestos: A Personal View,” in Ian Dale (2000) *Conservative Party General Election Manifestos 1990- 1997*, London, Politicos, p.1

¹⁴¹ David Seawright (2005) “On a Low Road: The 2005 Conservative Campaign,” *Journal of Marketing Management*, Volume 21, Issue 9/10, p.955

¹⁴² Saatchi (2005) p.1

¹⁴³ Bruce (1992) p.41, pp.62- 83

¹⁴⁴ Negrine (2008) p.51

considers these ideas of Bruce and Negrine in the context of whether the Conservative strategists were concerned about the first impressions of their party leaders in each of the opposition periods.

This task for an opposition party may be assisted by the media who will particularly focus on the potential of the leader as the Prime Minister. These media strategists will subsequently attempt to involve the leader in events including photo opportunities and appearances on “soft” programmes such as light entertainment shows.¹⁴⁵ The politicians, academics and social commentators complain that this personality promotion contributes to an ‘evasive’ image for the party who appears uninterested in becoming involved in ‘worthwhile’ political debate. John Redwood complains about an apparent ‘distortion of priorities’ when the formation of policy and communications is left to “staffers” whilst politicians care about developing their image and getting “one more appearance on *Newsnight*.”¹⁴⁶ This debate is cited within the analysis of the three political products as well as the Conservatives’ attempts to excite the dealigned and increasingly apathetic electorate. Voters were attempting to access their political information in different media forms and making their voting decisions on different criteria than had been previously witnessed.

1.6.4 Negative Campaigning

The third ‘negative’ consequence of political marketing concerns the accusations that a party is involved in excessive negative campaigning at the expense of promoting their own policies and ideas. This introduction discusses the belief that these political attacks dissuade the voters from being involved in the political process. Negative campaigning is criticised by observers who believe that political debate should constitute something more intrinsic than a ‘competition’ to espouse as much abuse as possible.¹⁴⁷ The party that is involved in negative campaigning

¹⁴⁵ Kevin Swaddle (1988) “Hi Tech Elections,” *Contemporary Record*, Volume 2, Number 1, p.32

¹⁴⁶ John Redwood (2004) *Singing the Blues The Once and Future Conservatives*, London, Politics, p.37

¹⁴⁷ Tam Dalyell (2005) “Reflections on Leaving Parliament,” *Political Quarterly*, Volume 76,

can be deemed to be inadequate because it can not appear to attack the opponent's policies in principle. Instead of engaging in meaningful debate on crucial issues, the parties have been regarded as hiding behind jibes about the opposition.¹⁴⁸

The continuous political attacks have caused Dean to believe that the electorate has become alienated and disengaged with parliamentary debate.¹⁴⁹ Dean fears for the state of democracy because the attacks have caused the citizens to become not involved in the political process in a way that is meaningful to them.¹⁵⁰ These negative effects on voters are recognised by Brissenden and Moloney who believe that this style of promotion does "not change more fundamental features of the electoral system [which is] voter disengagement."¹⁵¹ Michael Moszynski of Saatchi and Saatchi believes that it has been frequently evident in previous election campaigns that the task of communicating a negative vision is made easier if there is an existing negative perception of the government.¹⁵² This thesis demonstrates that the Tories did not always achieve a balance between positive and negative campaigning in each of the three opposition periods. These downbeat messages created a "harsh" personality for the party.

1.7 Thesis Structure

The first part of the thesis answers the initial research question concerning what were the key issues that frustrated the development of Conservative political marketing, as well as the second research question regarding whether the Conservatives undertaking political marketing before the terminology became common place within academic literature. Chapters Two and Three focus on the Heath opposition and consider how effective marketing was frustrated by the

Number 3, p.378

¹⁴⁸ Andrew Alexander and Alan Watkins (1970) *The Making of the Prime Minister 1970*, London, MacDonald p.120

¹⁴⁹ Dianne Dean (2005) "Fear, Negative Campaigning and Loathing: The Case of the UK Election Campaign, *Journal of Marketing Management*, Volume 21, Number 9, p.1074

¹⁵⁰ Dean (2005) p.1075

¹⁵¹ Brissenden and Moloney (2005) p.1019

¹⁵² Interview with Michael Moszynski, 23rd September 2005

difficulties associated with accepting the election defeat, policy differences and arguments between media professionals and politicians. Chapters Four and Five consider the same factors in contrast with the Thatcher opposition between 1975 and 1979 and Chapter Six and Seven analyse the problematic market orientation between 1997 and 2001.

Chapters Three, Five and Seven examine the specific products that were marketed during the subsequent elections at the end of each opposition period. The research questions, which will be answered in the second half of this thesis, concern how important was the promotion of the personal ideological beliefs of senior Tory politicians to the Conservative marketing strategy as well as why were some Conservative marketing initiatives unsuccessful. Chapter Three particularly considers whether the Tories honoured their promises of positive campaigning during the 1970 election. Chapter Five continues these ideas, which were originally outlined during chapter four, that the marketing during the Thatcher opposition could not be regarded as the 'gold standard' in market orientation. Finally Chapter Seven analyses how the marketing in the election of 2001 was ineffective despite the product meeting the Brassington and Pettitt framework.

Chapter Eight brings together the research questions to discover why market orientation was often a problematic process for the Conservative Party. The findings will also be viewed in the context of the existing literature.

Chapter 2: 1966- 1970:

Product and Marketing Strategy Formation

2.1 Introduction, Key Personnel and Previous Commentary

This chapter is the first of the three accounts that use Lilleker and Negrine's "proactive" and "reactive" framework¹⁵³ to assess the marketing of the Conservative opposition from 1966 to 1970 when the party was led by Edward Heath. The analysis answers the research questions regarding what were the key issues that frustrated the development of innovative Tory political marketing during this period, and whether the Conservatives were undertaking market orientation before the terminology became commonplace within academic literature.

2.1.1 Political Context

The Tories had lost the 1966 election and were criticised as old fashioned as well as deploying policy arguments that were too abstract in nature.¹⁵⁴ However the party needed to maintain their competent level of financial and human resources following this campaign, which had been recognised by Lord Windelsham in 1965.¹⁵⁵ A proactive marketing strategy would also involve the Tories understanding that competent promotion was essential for a modern political outfit. An innovative strategy would witness the media professionals training Heath to effectively oppose Harold Wilson. There would be no repetition of incidents such as when Home was televised at the Birmingham Rag Market in 1964 whilst losing command of a group of hecklers. The innovative marketing strategy would also satisfy the demands of television companies¹⁵⁶ and this closer relationship between the party and media would mean more extensive coverage for the party, rather

¹⁵³ Negrine and Lilleker (2003) pp.200- 201

¹⁵⁴ David Butler and Anthony King (1966) *The British General Election of 1966*, London, Macmillan, p.183, Martin Rosenbaum (1997) *From Soapbox to Soundbite, Party Political Campaigning in Britain since 1945*, London, Routledge, p.9

¹⁵⁵ Lord Windelsham (1963) "The Communication of Conservative Policy 1963- 1964," *Political Quarterly*, Volume 36, pp.179- 180

¹⁵⁶ Jay Blumler and Denis McQuall (1968) *Television in Politics*, London, Faber and Faber, p.302

than just a short news bulletin transmitting a twenty-second segment of a speech.¹⁵⁷

A reactive strategy would mean that the Tories were replicating their leader's negative and fearful attitude towards marketing. The party would be particularly dismissive of the intensive personality promotion of Wilson by the Labour Party, and would be expected to provide an extensive statement to the media on issues such as the 1967 devaluation, the Rhodesia crisis and the Ulster troubles, due to being the official opposition party. Policies would be formed by senior MPs without a regard to the opinion polling from the electorate, the views of backbenchers, or the party activists. Polling would be merely used to discover the reasons for previous by-election results and this research would not influence marketing considerations.¹⁵⁸

The Heath opposition occurred at the end of an era when many voters admitted that they maintained very strong links with their party of choice. Social class, religion and family political allegiances were still influencing individual electoral decisions and this trend had been evident since 1945. The Tories and Labour dominated the share of the vote with their large core support.¹⁵⁹ Lynch and Garner also noted that the main British parties marketed themselves to the "hypothetical voter who occupies the electoral centre ground with equivalent numbers of voters to their left and right."¹⁶⁰ The post war electoral mood was defined as the "centre-left of the political spectrum" and the politics were based on mild ideological positions.¹⁶¹ Figure 2.1 outlines the strength of partisan identification in the 1960s but the graph also contains data from the 1970s elections to demonstrate the decline of a very strong identification with a political outfit.

¹⁵⁷ Blumler and McQuall (1968) pp.66- 67

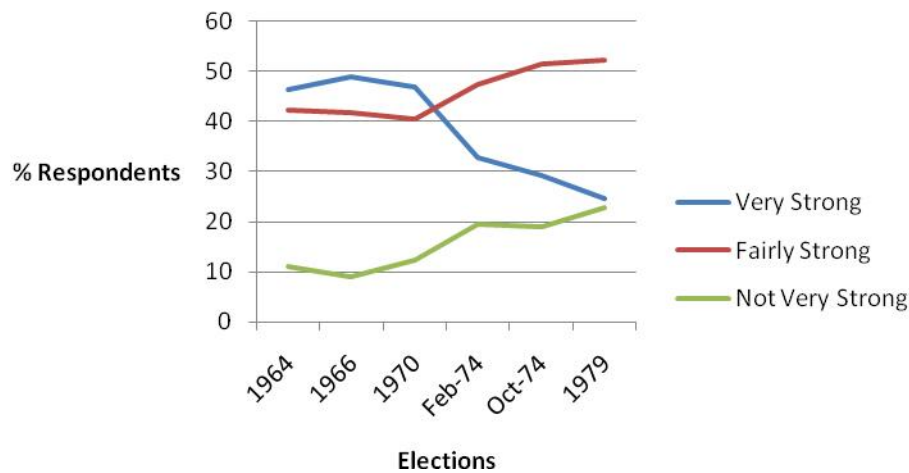
¹⁵⁸ Andrew Taylor "Speaking to Democracy, The Conservative Party and Mass Opinion from the 1920s to the 1950s" in Stuart Ball and Ian Holliday (eds) (2002) *Mass Conservatism, The Conservatives and the Public since the 1880s*, London, Frank Cass, p.95

¹⁵⁹ Lynch and Garner (2005) p.533

¹⁶⁰ Lynch and Garner (2005) p.533

¹⁶¹ Lynch and Garner (2005) p.533

Figure 2.1 Strength of Partisan Identification (% Respondents)



Respondents who said thought of self as party when initially asked (%) Source: BES
http://www.besis.org/Frameset_SplitThree.aspx?control=BESISSeriesMenu&seriesid=17

The 1960s began to witness the development of a new generation of voters who were “less imbued with the class attitude,”¹⁶² enjoying enhanced economic circumstances, increasingly politically aware and subsequently more volatile in their voting decisions. As discussed in Chapter One, Dunleavy has analysed how the economic boom of the late 1950s and early 1960s blurred the concepts of social class, in relation to political choices.¹⁶³ Being middle class did not necessarily mean voting Tory whilst the working class did not automatically vote Labour. The fluidity of class status and political preferences lead to the increased amount of professional working class Tories and this trend is evident in Tables 2.1 and 2.2.

¹⁶² David Butler and Donald Stokes (1974) *Political Change in Britain*, London, Macmillan, p.208

¹⁶³ Patrick Dunleavy (1979) “The Urban Basis of Political Alignment” *British Journal of Political Science*, Volume 9, Number 4, p.441

Table 2.1 1963 Class and Political Parties

	Middle Class (%)	Working Class (%)
Conservative	79	28
Labour	21	72

Table 2.2 1970 Class and Political Parties

	Middle Class (%)	Working Class (%)
Conservative	68	37
Labour	32	63

Tables 2.1 and 2.2 from Class, Self Image and Political Parties: Source, Butler and Stokes (1974) p.165

2.1.2 Marketing Developments

As the electorate were starting to become dealigned in nature, the Tories would be using opinion polling as a key activity to gain a more detailed understanding about the increasingly complex electoral behaviour and the reasons associated with a series of 'surprising' election results. The use of opinion polling represented a change in the relationship between political parties and the electorate. These surveys represented a two way process between these two groups rather than a one way lecture from the political party. Chapter One demonstrated that many political parties have attempted to listen to the electorate because they realised that this task was critical if they were going to regain power. The polling could analyse the target voters, and the emerging dealigned groups, who would be key

for an election victory¹⁶⁴ as well as monitor the effectiveness of any advertising campaign.¹⁶⁵

Chapter One highlighted the 'key' election results of 1945, 1950 and 1951 for the Tories that provoked the party into initiating opinion polling. During the 1950s, the work of the internal party psephology groups, and the public opinion research department, encouraged the Tories to take greater notice of the opinions of the electorate and adopt centrist policies.¹⁶⁶ The unexpected Orpington by election defeat in 1962 further encouraged party strategists to adopt more extensive polling¹⁶⁷ and following the 1964 election defeat, and Rosenbaum notes how "private polling was given an unprecedented central role in party strategy" from the mid 1960s.¹⁶⁸

The post 1964 election desire to devise new policies instead of remarketing the ideas of the 1950s, meant that an intensive policy review was begun in 1965. However certain party strategists were particularly concerned about whether the new ideas were acceptable to the electorate.¹⁶⁹ This polling was conducted on a regular basis then the previous efforts. The party used the British Market Research Bureau to construct a panel of 4,500 electors with 700 being repeatedly interviewed every seven months to chart the development of their personal political views as well as their changing support for political parties. The research highlighted a net swing from Tory to Labour between 1964 and 1966 of 2.7% and "30% of the electorate had changed their voting intention in some way during that period."¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁴ David Butler and Anthony King (1966) *The British General Election of 1966*, London, Macmillan p.67

¹⁶⁵ Frank Teer and James D Spence (1973) *Political Opinion Polls*, London, Hutchinson, p.194, Taylor in Ball and Holliday (eds) (2002) p.96

¹⁶⁶ Taylor in Ball and Holliday (eds) (2002) p.88

¹⁶⁷ Teer and Spence (1973) p.194

¹⁶⁸ Rosenbaum (1997) p.153

¹⁶⁹ Butler and King (1966) p.67

¹⁷⁰ Rosenbaum (1997) p.154

The Tory strategist, T.F. Thompson, also developed links with the National Opinion Polls (NOP) organisation to create the Conservative Party's Opinion Research Centre (ORC) in 1965. This organisation conducted interviews and distributed questionnaires to consider the opinions of large samples of the electorate in an attempt to "educate the party with an understanding of electoral behaviour."¹⁷¹ A series of monthly polls covered a specific policy area including education, tax, and industrial relations. Reaction polls would also gain the opinions on party political broadcasts and the conclusions of the ORC polling suggested that the party was regarded as "out of date, stale, and still associated with the Profumo scandal and other unhappy events of 1961-1964."¹⁷²

Despite the development of opinion polling organisations, there is conflicting information that the polling actually influenced strategic thinking, product and marketing formation during the 1960s. Teer and Spence note "how party members showed no interest in the results of all"¹⁷³ and Taylor also notes that senior representatives criticised the reliability of polling.¹⁷⁴

In response to the increasingly knowledgeable and dealigned electorate, opinion polling could become a crucial marketing technique to gauge the long and short term thinking of the electorate in a changing political environment. Section 2.4.1 of this chapter considers how the Tories developed opinion polling following the 1966 election.

2.1.3 Existing Literature

Only a few commentators cite the existence of internal party arguments within the Tory party between 1966 and 1970. This investigation differs from the previous commentary by providing a detailed focus on these fierce debates that often

¹⁷¹ Dennis Kavanagh (1982) "Election Campaigns and Opinion Polls: British Political Parties and the use of Private Polls," *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 32 Number 3, pp 268- 269

¹⁷² Butler and King (1966) p.68

¹⁷³ Teer and Spence (1973) p.160

¹⁷⁴ Taylor in Ball and Holliday (eds) (2002) p.90

resembled the arguments during the Hague opposition. The potency of the disagreements caused the internal party morale to fluctuate dramatically from 1966 to 1970. Gamble notes that this second spell of Tory opposition “since 1945 plunged the party into a ferment. The ideological convulsions were much greater than after 1945, and the leadership was much less securely in control.”¹⁷⁵

As a result of these intra- party disputes being developed in the public arena, Gamble believes that the party suffered from “a growing gulf between the decision-makers and opinion formers at the centre and the great mass of ‘ordinary’ people.”¹⁷⁶ Douglas Hurd believed he was “caught in the middle”¹⁷⁷ of the two factions whilst co-ordinating the leader’s private office activities.

However, Wright described the party morale as always positive whilst Heath succeeded as leader, despite the “political torture” of repeated personality attacks from television, radio and the press.¹⁷⁸ Mount also outlines a positive period of product formation that mirrored the 1945 to 1951 opposition¹⁷⁹ whilst Brittan believed that the Tories felt themselves to be “firm favourites to win the next election.”¹⁸⁰ Cockerell applauds the media strategists for assisting “Heath [to] become Prime Minister with the help of the most professional media campaign up to that time in British history.”¹⁸¹ Geoffrey Tucker is praised for revitalising the party publicity department with his advertising knowledge that had been acquired after marketing Ariel soap powder in the 1960s.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁵ Gamble (1974) p.87

¹⁷⁶ Gamble (1974) p.105

¹⁷⁷ Douglas Hurd (2003) *Memoirs*, London, Little Brown, p.184

¹⁷⁸ Esmond Wright (1970) “The Future of the Conservative Party,” *Political Quarterly*, Volume 41, Number 4, p.388 and p.392

¹⁷⁹ Ferdinand Mount “Edward Heath” in Tom Stacey and Rowland St Oswald (eds) (1970) *Here Come The Tories*, London, Tom Stacey Ltd, p.15

¹⁸⁰ Samuel Brittan (1968) “Some Thoughts on the Conservative Opposition,” *Political Quarterly*, Volume 39, Issue 2, p.145

¹⁸¹ Cockerell (1988) p.168

¹⁸² Cockett in Seldon and Ball (eds) (1994) p.568

Most of the criticism about the product and marketing formation is frequently blamed on Heath who was characterised by Roth as a “born loser,”¹⁸³ and criticised for ideological confusion due to his non-involvement with the product formation during the 1950s.¹⁸⁴ The policy groups are evaluated as inadequate for failing to “confront the big issues of principle.”¹⁸⁵ Gamble also believes that Heath lacked an ideological focus, due to his belief in “pragmatic, problem-solving, non-ideological politics.”¹⁸⁶ In terms of Gamble’s “politics of power” and “politics of support” model, Heath was focusing on the ‘politics of power,’ by demonstrating how the Conservatives could govern the country, rather than the ‘politics of support’ to gain the enthusiastic support of the party members and the electorate.¹⁸⁷

2.1.4 Key Personnel

Tables 2.3a and 2.3b chart the key personnel playing a key role in the product and marketing formation during the Heath opposition. The same people would be involved in the 1970 election marketing, and that campaign is discussed in Chapter Five.

¹⁸³ Andrew Roth (1972) *Heath and the Heathmen*, London, Routledge and K Paul, p.192

¹⁸⁴ Patrick Cosgrave (1973) “Heath as Prime Minister” *Political Quarterly*, Volume 44, Issue 4, p.439

¹⁸⁵ Willets and Forsdyke (1999) p.88

¹⁸⁶ Gamble (1974) p.91

¹⁸⁷ Gamble (1974) p.92

Table 2.3a Key Personnel¹⁸⁸

Name	Title	Responsibilities	Report to
Douglas Hurd	Private Secretary to Heath	Co-ordinating Heath's Private Office Activities	Heath
John Rathbone (1966 to 1968)	Chief Publicity Officer	Oversee development of publicity/marketing	Party Chairman (Edward Du Cann till 1967 then Anthony Barber) and Heath
Geoffrey Tucker (1968 onwards)	Chief Publicity Officer	Oversee development of publicity/marketing	Anthony Barber, William Whitelaw and Edward Heath
Edward Du Cann	Party Chairman (1965-1967)	Overseeing party activities as well as being the link between the party leader and Chief Publicity Officer regarding marketing initiatives	Heath
Sir Michael Fraser	Party Chairman	Overseeing links between the party's research effort to their electoral strategy	Heath (also works closely to Geoffrey Tucker)
Sir Edwin Leather	Vice President Conservative National Union	Advocates a Professional Marketing Approach. Express Opinions of constituencies and offer support re. policy	Heath

¹⁸⁸ Tables 2.3a and 2.3b: Information especially from David Butler and Michael Pinto Duschinsky (1971) *The British General Election of 1970*, London, Macmillan

Table 2.3b Key Personnel

Name	Title	Responsibilities	Report to
Brendon Sewill	Research Department Director	Involved in policy development including 1968 'Make Life Better' document	Heath and Sir Michael Fraser
Davidson, Pearce, Berry and Tuck	Advertising Professionals	Develop party advertising including posters	Tucker
James Garret and Sons	Advertising Professionals	Provide facilities and expertise in the development of party political broadcasts	Tucker
John Lindsay	Head of Broadcasting Section	Co-ordinating marketing via television and radio	Tucker
Gerald O'Brien	Deputy Publicity Director	Assisting in publicity development (also Central Office Press Spokesman during 1970 campaign)	Tucker
Thursday Communications Group	Collective of the Media Professionals	Collective name for the media strategists employed by the party.	Tucker

The 1966 to 1970 opposition period began less than two years after what Gamble regards as an organisational shake-up, which “confirmed the growing power of the professional bureaucracy in the party.”¹⁸⁹ Gamble has listed the main changes:¹⁹⁰

- A new procedure for selecting parliamentary candidates, and electing the leader, to avoid the repetition of the leadership crisis following Harold Macmillan’s retirement in 1963
- A reorganisation of Central Office including a streamlining of the research operations with the development of the Conservative Research Department. Sir Michael Fraser was appointed as deputy party chairman to oversee a “much close relation of the party’s research effort to their electoral strategy.”¹⁹¹
- Edward Du Cann was appointed as party chairman in 1965, with the hope of using his business experience to introduce market research, publicity and recruitment, as well as increase party funds. Tensions between the party chairman and Heath led to Du Cann relinquishing his post in 1967, to be replaced by Anthony Barber.
- The Development of opinion polling. This trend will be discussed in this chapter. Following the 1964 election defeat, the party conducted an extensive electoral survey, which identified five and a half million-target voters.
- A major policy review began after the 1964 election and would continue during the opposition, which is covered by this chapter.

This chapter will examine the work of the external media professionals, which were recruited by the Tories to assist with the strategic promotion of the party. John Rathbone had been previously employed with the Ogilvy and Mather public relations firm in New York. This analysis demonstrates the difficult relationship between Rathbone and the Conservative Party during this period. On the recommendation of Sir Michael Fraser, Geoffrey Tucker became the new Director of Publicity in April 1968, on secondment from the Young and Rubican agency.

¹⁸⁹ Gamble (1974) p.89

¹⁹⁰ Gamble (1974) p.89

¹⁹¹ Gamble (1974) p.90

Tucker had worked with the Colman, Prentis and Varley advertising agency that had developed the Conservatives' advertising during the 1959 election campaign. Between 1964 and 1968, Tucker had worked in Italy to market the Ariel washing powder brand and the strategist was invited back to the Conservative Party to "revitalise a publicity department that had somewhat lost its way in the early and mid- 1960s."¹⁹² Five publicity directors, including John Rathbone, had "revolved through Central office" between 1961 and 1968.¹⁹³ Gerald O'Brien assumed the role of Deputy Director reporting to Tucker.¹⁹⁴

Tucker would recruit his own team of advertising professionals and the 'Thursday Communications Group' consisted of James Garrett (commercials producer,) Ronnie Miller (playwright and speechwriter,) Barry Day (copywriter,) Brian Forbes (film director,) and Gordon Reece (TV director.) Bruce believes that "this group has every claim to be the most talented gathering of communications advisers ever recruited for a political campaign."¹⁹⁵ The Thursday group members reported to Tucker who reported to Anthony Barber, party chairman, and William Whitelaw who was in overall charge of the political promotions strategy. Whitelaw and Barber were also members of the Television Broadcasting Committee, which especially focused on sound broadcasts. The members of this additional group included John Lindsay, who was the Head of the Broadcasting Section of the party's publicity department, Sir Michael Fraser, James Garrett and Geoffrey Tucker. Brendan Sewill, director of the Conservative Research Department, and Geoffrey Johnson Smith as Party Vice Chairman were additional members of the committee.

The thesis now considers what were the key issues that frustrated the development of Conservative political marketing between 1966 and 1970? Section 2.2.1 analyses the internal factor of intra party disagreements regarding the previous election defeat.

¹⁹² Cockett in Seldon and Ball (eds) (1994) p.568

¹⁹³ Scammell (1995) p.54, Rosenbaum (1997) p.56

¹⁹⁴ Butler and Pinto Duschinsky (1971) p.104

¹⁹⁵ Bruce (1992) p.109

2.2 Internal Factors against Political Marketing

2.2.1 Accepting the Election Defeat

The 1966 election defeat occurred relatively recently after the Tories' loss in 1964, and Heath had also been party leader for less than a year. The party recognised that neither their leader nor the outfit could be blamed for the result, due to the lack of time for Heath to make his mark as leader, dispel the images of the Macmillan Government's chaotic last years, and develop an original and extensive policy manifesto.¹⁹⁶

The passage of time before the next election would mean that this argument could not be applied again but Lindsay and Harrington observed that the Tories remained calm despite the 1966 defeat and there was no reopening of the leadership question.¹⁹⁷ There was an internal resolve to use the extra time to develop a vote-winning product as well as innovative marketing. The Heath opposition would not begin an extensive review of the previous election defeat on a similar scale that would occur at the start of the Thatcher and Hague eras.

Despite the internal resolve, the Heath opposition gradually became similar to the Thatcher and Hague oppositions with a series of intensive debates about policy formation. This thesis has defined these arguments as a debate between 'cautious' and 'ambitious' MPs. The arguments were a key issue that frustrated the development of Conservative political marketing. The 'cautious' MPs argued against the promotion of a wide ranging policy agenda that could provide extra material for Labour's negative campaigning. The 'ambitious' MPs made increasingly passionate public speeches for Heath to market a detailed and distinctive policy agenda versus a Labour Government presiding over a continual economic crisis.

¹⁹⁶ Gamble (1974) p.98

¹⁹⁷ Lindsay and Harrington (1979) p.250

2.2.2 Policy Differences

Anthony Barber believed that there was no option but for the Tories to adopt a cautious attitude towards product formation and market orientation. There was little point in marketing ambitious policies because the Tories had little “opportunity of influencing events”¹⁹⁸ due to being in opposition. Furthermore Barber echoed John Rathbone’s belief that detailed policies would be acquired by Labour and marketed as their own ideas.¹⁹⁹ The media strategists also believed that the Tories had to promote their political ideas rather than becoming involved in interpreting complicated economic statistics for the benefit of the electorate.²⁰⁰ The policy groups were particularly focused on specific “practical matters” rather than being involved in theoretical debates, which Heath believed would mirror “Wilson’s empty rhetoric.”²⁰¹

The cautious approach was evident when the Tory MPs were instructed to avoid discussing ambitious ideas such as introducing the death penalty into British society.²⁰² The cautious representatives were also concerned that negative campaigning was aggressive in nature and “completely unappealing to the majority of the electorate.”²⁰³ However, in a possible indication of the extent of Rathbone’s influence as director of publicity, the negative marketing continued to be implemented on an extensive scale. The focus of the attacks was especially associated with Wilson’s personal credibility as well as Labour’s economic policies, which were criticised for being “stripped of all moral and political authority.”²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁸ Anthony Barber (1996) *Taking the Tide A Memoir* Norwich, Michael Russell, p.85

¹⁹⁹ Barber (1996) p.85, “Memo from John Rathbone to Colin Graig 23rd March 1967,” CCO 600/3/10/1 *Correspondence public opinion research and television programmes*

²⁰⁰ “Memo from John Rathbone 5th February 1968,” CCO 600/5/2 *Correspondence with the Party Chairman*

²⁰¹ Willets and Forsdyke (1999) p.88

²⁰² “Mr Heath’s Broadcasting Coverage December 1969,” CCO 600/3/6/1 *Mr Heath’s Broadcasting Coverage*

²⁰³ “Memo from John Rathbone 23rd March 1967,” CCO 600/3/10/1

²⁰⁴ Ian Harvey (1968) “Next Entry into Westminster,” *Political Quarterly*, Volume 39, Issue 3, p.304, “CCO Press Copy 3rd September 1969,” CCO 20/25/14 *Davidson, Pearce, Berry and Tuck Advertising*

Gamble describes the development of this ‘ambitious’ “new right” group within the party. These representatives hoped that the Tories would create a strong and distinctive policy agenda, to “remedy all the manifold ills of British society, [and] break with the existing consensus politics.”²⁰⁵ Angus Maude, a former minister from an earlier Heath shadow cabinet, believed that the lack of ideology was the cause of the party’s problems. He expressed his frustration how the party said that “we believe in small businesses... but we adopt policies that achieve the opposite.”²⁰⁶

Following Enoch Powell’s ‘Rivers of Blood’ speech in April 1968, a series of Tory associations expressed their support for Powell. Angus Maude suggested that his colleague’s views concerning mass immigration were “held by a great majority of British people” and bridged the “gap between opinion at the grassroots and current political dialogue in parliament and press.”²⁰⁷ Table 2.4 shows internal polling research that demonstrates which party was thought to implement immigration policies.

Table 2.4 Which Government would implement immigration policies?

	% of Respondents
All Parties	56
Conservative	62
Labour	53
Liberal	49

Which Government would ‘deliver’ on immigration? (%) Source: CCO 180/11/4/2 A Survey on Key Election Issues

Gamble also highlights the campaigning by the ‘ambitious’ representatives on the issue of capital punishment. A resolution for the party to restore full capital punishment was forced to a vote during the 1969 party conference.²⁰⁸ However,

²⁰⁵ Gamble (1974) p.102

²⁰⁶ Gamble (1974) pp.104-105

²⁰⁷ Maude (1968) p.628

²⁰⁸ Gamble (1974) p.114

despite the appeals from within his party and the general polling evidence, Heath continued to stress that an ambitious policy would not be introduced whilst the Tories were in opposition. On the issue of capital punishment, the Tory leader would not commit the party to a pledge to bring back hanging.²⁰⁹ Gamble also notes how Heath continued to believe that “a more efficient administration of the state” would effectively resolve the nation’s problems.²¹⁰ Like Barber, Heath stated that the Tories could not “convert policy into action overnight.”²¹¹ Fisher praised this approach because the party was able to produce solid parliamentary support²¹² but the ambitious representatives were not satisfied.

The Selsdon Park policy conference in January 1970 was also criticised for being a public relations affair rather than based on policy formation.²¹³ Nicholas Ridley dismissed the taxation policies and privatisation measures for their generalised nature.²¹⁴ The issue of intra-party disagreements regarding specific marketing techniques was a further issue that frustrated the development of the Conservatives’ marketing strategy between 1966 and 1970. The ‘modernist’ senior party figures, including Sir Edwin Leather, believed that the party should spend less time on product formation and more time on professional marketing rather than slipping “back into the amateur methods of the past.”²¹⁵ The ‘traditionalists’ resented the dispersal of marketing responsibilities from themselves to the modernist media strategists but the professionals were successful in encouraging the traditionalists to understand the usefulness of television for marketing purposes in running a media monitoring unit. There was a similar resolution of differences during the Thatcher opposition but there was a lack of agreement between 1997 and 2001.

²⁰⁹ Gamble (1974) p.114

²¹⁰ Gamble (1974) pp.122- 123

²¹¹ “Memo from Edward Heath to Sir Gerald Willis 16th July 1968,” *CCO 500/32/11Leader-Correspondence on Immigration*

²¹² Nigel Fisher (1977) *The Tory Leaders: Their Struggle for Power*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson p.131

²¹³ Alexander and Watkins (1970) p.114

²¹⁴ Nicholas Ridley (1991) *My Style of Government*, London, Fontana, p.3

²¹⁵ “Memo from Sir Edwin Leather to Geoffrey Tucker 7th June 1969,” *CCO 600/3/10/2*

2.2.3 Differences between Modernists and Traditionalists- Communication Strategy

The modernist media strategists complained about the politicians making marketing decisions without enough prior consultation.”²¹⁶ The resignation letter of John Rathbone as the Chief Publicity Officer criticised the MPs for maintaining an unnecessary mistrust about media professionals and their marketing initiatives.²¹⁷ This document is a vivid illustration of the internal party arguments that were raging within the party at the time. Rathbone complained about the “lack of thought and care” regarding opinion poll research or specific marketing messages. This approach was compared to the “professional approach in the US.”²¹⁸

Geoffrey Tucker replaced Rathbone to oversee the Tories’ publicity activities and was the “first outside advertising professional to become heavily involved with the party’s publicity.”²¹⁹ His structured strategic approach contrasted with the voluntary nature of Labour’s marketing²²⁰ and Tucker, with the advertising agencies of Davidson, Pearce, Berry and Tuck agency and James Garrett and Sons, had a remit to do a better job to break new ground or to experiment with new [marketing] methods.”²²¹

Bruce defines Tuckers strategy to make the electorate think of the Conservative leader in more informal terms “as Ted Heath rather than Edward Heath.”²²² The innovative attitudes of Tucker and the media strategists contrast with the actions of the media professionals during the Hague opposition. Chapter Four demonstrates that Nick Wood particularly focused on getting coverage in the traditionally supportive Tory press between 1997 and 2001. However, in contrast to the Thatcher opposition, the strategists of the Heath era rejected the need to advertise

²¹⁶ “Letter from John Rathbone to Sir Michael Fraser 6th March 1968,” *CCO 600/5/2*

²¹⁷ “Letter from John Rathbone 6th March 1968,” *CCO/600/5/2*

²¹⁸ “Letter from John Rathbone 6th March 1968,” *CCO/600/5/2*

²¹⁹ “Conservative Press Release 2nd April 1968,” *CCO 500/21/8Publicity General 1966- 1968*

²²⁰ Rosenbaum (1997) p.10

²²¹ “Letter from John Rathbone 6th March 1968,” *CCO 600/5/2*

²²² Bruce (1992) p.108

the party within women's magazines and cinema advertising because these marketing arenas were deemed to have limited audience exposure.²²³

The 'traditionalists' criticised the 'modernists' for turning 'respected' party figures into the "dashed music hall turns"²²⁴ of Harold Wilson and US President Johnson.²²⁵ Gamble describes how Rhodes Boyson believed that these "new 'scientific' techniques of electioneering" was making the electorate choose between "the parties as if between rival supermarkets selling the same goods but with varying prices and special offers to attract the consumer."²²⁶ There was little appreciation of the importance of television for political marketing and a television set was compared to a "goggle box."²²⁷ The traditionalists continued to voice their concern about the ongoing effectiveness of the marketing strategy when there did not appear to be a growing enthusiasm from the electorate for the Tories despite the unpopularity of the Labour Government. These concerns were evident following the Walthamstow By-election of September 1967 when Gallup polled only 5% of Tory voters who had voted Labour in the 1966 election. There was also a possibility that this 5% would vote Labour if there was economic prosperity at the next general election. James Prior and Bernard Braine MP wondered if the media strategists had been effective in promoting the party image.²²⁸

The traditionalists also criticised a direct mail campaign that targeted 20,000 opinion formers in 67 marginal constituencies. The literature, including an updated and detailed version of the *Make Life Better* policy document, was intended to promote a better understanding of the Tory standpoint on political issues such as the growth of central control, personal taxation as well as on housing, strikes,

²²³ "Paper on Advertising Proposals 1969," CCO 20/25/14

²²⁴ "Memo from Sir Edwin Leather to Tony Barber, 9th January 1968," CCO 600/3/10/2

²²⁵ Mount in Stacey and Oswald (eds) (1970) p.15

²²⁶ Rhodes Boyson (1970) *Right Turn*, London, Churchill, p.2 in Gamble (1974) p.105

²²⁷ "Memo from Sir Edwin Leather 9th January 1968," CCO 600/3/10/2

²²⁸ "Letter from Bernard Braine MP to Barber 31st July 1968," CCO 20/25/7, "Memo from Jim Prior to John Rathbone 13th September 1967," CCO 600/11/1 *Correspondence with and about Prime Minister/ Leader March 1966- September 1967*

morality and leadership.²²⁹ However the recipients of the marketing, including opinion formers, local dignitaries and academics, complained that they had “neither the time nor the inclination to go into great detail”²³⁰ regarding the Tory agenda. The “breathless little two-word sentences [with] keenly bogus intensity” were predicted to fail in satisfying the electorates’ need to know about the party that “he is entrusting with his future.”²³¹

Edward Heath was also a traditionalist in regard to political marketing. He enjoyed the “congenial attitudes of Geoffrey Tucker and the media professionals, but he “did not see the point” in the attempts to market his personality to the electorate.²³² Heath had extremely precise demands regarding how he wanted his party to use the media for marketing purposes. The party had to try and explain the national economic problems and offer positive remedies to an electorate that had become “more and more disillusioned with the government.”²³³

2.2.3.1 Agreement between Modernists and Traditionalists

Despite their differences, the two opposing groups were able to find agreement and work together on marketing initiatives such as the media monitoring unit. The unit involved activists, MPs and media strategists observing a wide range of media programmes from conventional political shows as well as comedy and schools programming. The subsequent campaigning was not always successful. The party criticised the BBC’s proposed coverage for their 1968 conference, but the corporation maintained their planned schedule to screen the BBC2 test card rather than the afternoon conference programme.²³⁴ The unit also complained about specific interviews and documentaries when socialist thinking was presented

²²⁹ “Memo from Gerald O’Brien to the Chairman re Direct Mail Campaign 22nd August 1969,” *CCO* 20/25/14

²³⁰ “Letter to Dr AE Benyon to Anthony Barber re Direct Mail 12th December 1969,” *CCO* 20/25/7

²³¹ “Letter from S.L. Scarlet Smith to Anthony Barber 25th November 1969,” *CCO* 20/25/7

²³² Interview with Douglas Hurd, 11th April 2006

²³³ “*ITV News at Ten* 11th September 1967,” *CCO* 20/12/3

²³⁴ “Letter from Tony Barber to BBC 27th August 1968” and “Letter from BBC to Tony Barber 28th August 1968” in *CCO* 600/5/2

without any meaningful opposition.²³⁵ The *Late Night Extra* radio show received specific complaints regarding why “socialist MPs always [appeared] on” that show. The BBC Radio 1 magazine programme was monitored for the “very quiet but persistent effort amongst left- wing Labour MPs to court the new voters aged 18 to 21.”²³⁶

The traditionalists slowly began to recognise that television was becoming an increasingly viable medium for effective marketing.²³⁷ The modernists successfully implored these politicians to seek professional help from TV executives to improve the quality of broadcasts,²³⁸ and the strategists particularly focused on developing party political broadcasts rather than television interviews or documentaries, because of the opportunity to maintain complete control over the marketed messages.²³⁹ Tucker cited the success of the ‘War on Waste’ broadcast about local government during the 1968 local elections for the need to continuously adopt a professional approach to political marketing.²⁴⁰

The MPs were trained regarding the importance of television for marketing purposes and the significance of effective televised appearances.²⁴¹ The strategists also encouraged the greater submission of correspondence to TV letters programmes rather than broadsheet newspapers that would attract bigger audiences.²⁴² For the key broadcasts, the media strategists created a list of the most effective TV performers who could market the party in the most coherent and meaningful way.²⁴³ Tucker also instigated the better planning of television coverage for Edward Heath’s UK tours with a reconnaissance of venues for suitable lighting

²³⁵ “Monitoring Unit ‘What was that about of the people by the people’ October 1968,” CCO 600/3/7/2 *John Lindsay Correspondence Aug 1959 to Dec 1968*

²³⁶ See for instance “Late Night Extra monitoring 3rd April 1969,” CCO 800/3/9/7 *Late Night Extra*

²³⁷ “Memo from J Galloway to R.J. Webster 26th February 1969,” CCO 500/25/288

²³⁸ “Memo from John Rathbone to W Whitelaw 17th November 1966” and “Memo from John Rathbone to Tony Barber 22nd September 1967,” CCO 600/3/10/1

²³⁹ “Proposals to the CCO for advertising in 1969” in CCO 20/25/14

²⁴⁰ “Memo from Geoffrey Tucker to Sir Edwin Leather 24th May 1968,” CCO 600/3/10/2

²⁴¹ “Memo from Geoffrey Tucker to Harry Wayne McMahon 1st August 1968,” CCO 600/3/10/2
Director of Publicity- correspondence relating to PPB public opinion research and television programming January- December 1968

²⁴² “Memo from Mr John Lindsey to Sir Michael Fraser 6th August 1969,” CCO 600/3/7/9 *John Lindsay Correspondence 1969- 1972*

²⁴³ “Paper on MP Broadcasting Ability 21st December 1967,” CCO 600/3/10/1

and sound resonance. The lighting had to enhance the colour television broadcasts, but prevent any pictures of violence or heckling within the crowd.²⁴⁴ Furthermore, the venues needed to be near television studios so Heath could easily be transported there for interviews.²⁴⁵ The 1969 conference was especially coordinated for television. The timing of the leader's address was designed to gain maximum television coverage and Heath conducted separate interviews for the regional television companies who had previously relied upon brief video extracts from the leadership speech. These innovative methods would satisfy the fledgling ITV regional outlets, as well as the fledgling BBC local radio and TV stations.

Despite the competent state of the party organisational resources following the 1964 election, the Tories' marketing equipment was in an abject state following the 1966 campaign and the subsequent marketing was compromised by inadequate equipment. The next section further answers the research question of this thesis regarding what were the key issues that frustrated the development of Conservative political marketing. Section 2.3 explains how financial concerns would frequently stop the investment in new technology for promotional purposes, and the party failed to coordinate their personnel for successful nationwide marketing.

2.3 External Factors against Political Marketing: Resource Limitations

John Rathbone compared the inadequate state of the Tory resources to the more professional US outfits.²⁴⁶ The communications equipment was obsolete and the strategists lobbied for financial investment in new models of video tape recorders, telecine TV cameras as well as receivers and monitors if they were going to produce competent party political broadcasts.²⁴⁷ Furthermore the Tories did not possess a library of film reels and consequently did not have sufficient material for an eye-

²⁴⁴ "Paper by Edward Rayner on 'General Election Television' 15th May 1970," *CCO 500/24/288*
Leader General 1966- 1970

²⁴⁵ "Minutes of a General Election Meeting 16th February 1970" and "Memo from R.J Webster to Sir Michael Fraser 29th November 1969," *CCO 500/24/288*

²⁴⁶ "Letter from John Rathbone 6th March 1968," *CCO 600/5/2*

²⁴⁷ "Memo from Gerald O'Brien to Geoffrey Tucker 28th May 1968," *CCO 600/3/10/2*

catching broadcast.²⁴⁸ Technical glitches were a frequent occurrence during the rallies and appearances by Edward Heath. The national anthem was mistakenly replayed at a rally in Plymouth and there were complaints about the dazzling television lights that made it impossible for the leader to conduct an effective question time because he could not see the questioners in the audience.²⁴⁹ The lack of finance also made the party chairman unwilling to implement innovative marketing on issues such as industrial relations.²⁵⁰ Despite the idea for vox pops with the general public to attack the Labour Government over the 1967 devaluation, the Tories could only spare enough resources to portray Heath in an “extremely rushed and disorderly production.”²⁵¹

The lack of human resources also compromised effective marketing. Regional press offices were forced to coordinate marketing across neighbouring areas. For instance, the West Midlands officer had to cover the Western area communications, and consequently work in an area that would stretch from Stoke on Trent to Somerset.²⁵² A lack of labour compromised the successful distribution of leaflets and publicity. Despite the rationalisation of leaflet distribution with a senior officer from each area committee made responsible for distribution, the party would admit in 1967 that they were still unable to initiate a competent literature delivery system.²⁵³ Furthermore in the autumn of 1969, Central Office noted that the East Midlands and Eastern areas were failing to provide enough press letters on key national issues such as trade union reform, and increased national insurance.²⁵⁴

This chapter now considers whether the Conservatives were undertaking political marketing before the terminology became commonplace within academic

²⁴⁸ “Memo from Sewill to Geoffrey Tucker 4th July 1968,” *CCO 600/3/10/2*

²⁴⁹ “Letter from John Macgregor to R.J Webster re Mr Heath’s tours 10th October 1967” and “Memo from Anthony Kershaw MP to John Rathbone 13th November 1967,” *CCO 600/11/2 Correspondence with and about leader October 1967 to March 1968*

²⁵⁰ “Letter from John Rathbone 6th March 1968,” *CCO 600/5/2*

²⁵¹ “Memo from John Rathbone to Gerald O Brien 21st November 1967” in *CCO 600/3/10/1* “Letter from John Rathbone 6th March 1968,” *CCO 600/5/2*

²⁵² “Letter to Gerald O Brien to 9th October 1967,” *CCO 20/25/6*

²⁵³ “Memo from John Rathbone to Sir Michael Fraser 27th January 1967” and “Memo from Miss Walker to Chairman 22nd March 1967,” *CCO 20/25/7*

²⁵⁴ “Memo from R.J Webster to Mr Livingston and Mr Gomer 26th September 1969,” *CCO 500/21/10 Publicity General 1969- 1970*

literature. Regardless of the resource limitations, the Tories did pay attention to opinion polling following the 1966 defeat. The next section shows that this research would be similar to the approaches that would be adopted between 1975 and 1979 period. The methods would examine the existing beliefs of the electorate as well as their reaction to developing political issues. As part of the aforementioned internal resolve, the strategists would develop questions and telephone canvassing to understand the existing beliefs of the electorate rather than the focus group operations between 1997 and 2001. The polling also gauged the public reaction to marketing, including party election broadcasts.

2.4 Use of Marketing Techniques

2.4.1 Opinion Polling and Focus Groups

The Tories contacted 4500 electors every seven months in order to identify and analyse changes in voting intentions. Further opinion polling discovered that “1 in 5 voters have no opinion as to whether the government was right or wrong to devalue the pound”²⁵⁵ and the Project 67 initiative researched the specific beliefs of targeted voters including working class housewives.²⁵⁶ A 1968 poll suggested that a majority of voters believed that the Tories had “produced no new ideas or policies since those in 1964.”²⁵⁷ Table 2.5 consists of polling in 1969 that highlighted how issues associated with the care of the nation, ‘sympathy issues,’ were linked to the Labour Government’s main campaigning themes of ‘improving the nation’s soul.’ In contrast to Labour’s compassionate image, the Tories were characterised as more efficient than the Labour Party but appearing to be less empathetic about the old, the sick and the poor. Table 2.6 demonstrates that the health, education and social policies, which were intrinsically linked to ‘sympathy issues,’ were of a key concern to the electorate.

²⁵⁵ “Opinion Research Centre SNAP Survey November 1967,” *CCO 20/25/6 Press and Publicity 1966- 1967*

²⁵⁶ “Memo ‘Targeting Organisation’ from Miss Walker to Mr Webster 25th March 1968,” *CCO 500/21/9 Organisation Department- Publicity General 1966- 1968*

²⁵⁷ “Memo from John Rathbone to John Lindsey 23rd February 1968,” *CCO 600/3/10/2 Director of Publicity- Correspondence relating to PPBs, Public Opinion Research and Television Programming*

Table 2.5 Delivering on the ‘Sympathy’ Issues

(% of respondents believing that the party would improve health, education, and social security)

	Conservative Government	Labour Government	Neither/ Don’t Know
Improved Care of the Old/Increased Pensions	29	31	40
Improve Primary Schools	22	29	50
Ensure Equal Pay for Women	14	42	44

Which Government would ‘deliver’ on the sympathy issues? (%) Source: CCO 180/11/4/2 A Survey on Key Election Issues

Table 2.6 Key Election Issues in November 1969

(% of respondents believing issue was most important)

	All	Conservative Voters	Labour Voters	Liberal Voters
Increased Pensions	75	78	72	84
Reduce Income Tax	71	78	63	60
Caring for the Old	68	68	69	73
Immigration	56	62	53	49
Increased Home Loans	64	70	58	69

A Survey on Key Election Issues carried out for Conservative Central Office 13th to 16th November 1969 (%) Source: CCO 180/11/4/2 A Survey on Key Election Issues carried out for Conservative Central Office 13th to 16th November 1969

Opinion polling also gauged the electorate's mood on specific marketing initiatives, such as party political broadcasts. The Tories collated the reactions to their own transmission, whether positive or negative, such as the suggestion that a broadcast was "rather dull and ineffective."²⁵⁸ Average viewing figures were collected for the Tory transmissions and compared to the equivalent recordings from the Labour and Liberals. It was discovered that Tory supporters were more interested in, and subsequently likely to watch, their party's broadcasts in documentary and interview form, rather than 'straight to camera' lectures. The average size of audiences for the Conservative broadcasts was larger than Labour and Liberal transmission by approximately 1 million voters. In a particular Opinion Research Centre survey for a Labour Party broadcast on 15th November 1967, it was discovered that "few viewers felt that they were positively attracted to the Labour Party."²⁵⁹

As well as using opinion polling, the Tories initiated a permanent campaign of marketing initiatives associated with policies and personalities. Like the marketing of Thatcher and Hague, the promotion of Heath was a difficult task because the leader had an inability to relax in front of the camera and use coherent language to explain complex political arguments. In the context of the initial research question of this thesis, these issues frustrated the development of Conservative political marketing. Senior politicians would continue to be concerned about how Heath could be effectively presented with a party political broadcast because of his limited television abilities.²⁶⁰ The media would continually criticise the Tory leader for being dull and aloof. As set out in Section 3.1.2, the attempts at continuously promoting policies were overshadowed by media speculation regarding the potential sacking of dissenting ministers.

²⁵⁹ "Documents on Audience Reaction to Labour Party Political Broadcasts 15th November 1967," *CCO 20/12/3 General Correspondence re Programmes 1966- 1968*

²⁶⁰ "Memo from Tony Barber to Geoffrey Tucker 27th August 1968," *CCO 600/5/2*

2.4.2 Permanent Campaign

It was critical for Edward Heath to be effectively promoted to the electorate because the voters had to be convinced that this leader would command his party “to deliver a quality service [and] maintain that quality over time.”²⁶¹ Heath’s supporters would continue to suggest that their leader was “straightforward, honourable, honest and dogged [whilst Wilson] seemed wily, insincere, devious and two faced.”²⁶² However, the party became generally concerned that their leader was making little positive impact on the political scene.²⁶³ It was also difficult to market Heath as the leader of a united Tory Party, when there was public evidence of intense arguments regarding EEC membership, Rhodesia and whether Enoch Powell should be dismissed from the shadow cabinet following his ‘Rivers of Blood’ speech.²⁶⁴ Furthermore, the leader’s grammar school background and bachelor status did not appeal to the electorate particularly women voters.

Geoffrey Tucker can be accurately described as an “agent of persistence”²⁶⁵ due to his continual attempts to persuade a reticent Heath to be a key aspect of the political marketing. The Tory leader was coached on the usefulness of each television appearance, being able to recognise interesting situations and attention-grabbing events that would require media coverage, and to embrace the opportunity to appear on programmes including local news magazines.²⁶⁶ The marketing of a ‘friendly’ and statesmanlike persona resembled the strategy to promote Thatcher between 1975 and 1979. Heath was coached to deliver broadcasts with emotional feeling and a Christmas 1968 broadcast involved Heath offering a “nice personal touch” with a specific wish to the viewer for a happy Christmas and peaceful 1969.²⁶⁷ Television interviews during 1969 were further

²⁶¹ Harrop (1990) pp.277- 292

²⁶² James Prior (1986) *A Balance of Power*, London, Hamish Hamilton, p.39

²⁶³ “Letter from Gilbert Wild and Geoffrey Tucker 22nd July 1968,” *CCO 600/15/13Correspondence with Ministers, MPs and Ministries*

²⁶⁴ Douglas Hurd (1979) *An End to Promises*, London, Collins pp.11- 12

²⁶⁵ Hurd (2003) p.133

²⁶⁶ “Memo from John Rathbone to Edward Heath 28th November 1967,” *CCO 600/11/2*

²⁶⁷ “Memo from Geoffrey Tucker to Tony Barber 7th August 1968,” *CCO 600/5/2*

attempts to portray Heath as not just a political automaton but a leader who was not afraid to demonstrate 'human' emotion.²⁶⁸

Heath's statesmanlike image would involve the conveyance of honesty and sincerity as well as a "new relaxed confidence and firm, straight and natural position of command before the television cameras and in interviews."²⁶⁹ During a 1967 rally in Plymouth, Heath was coached to deliver his speech in a "tough and strong" way that demonstrated assertiveness²⁷⁰ and the marketing of this image meant that he was advised to avoid appearing on programmes such as *The Frost Show*. There was a chance that Heath would become involved in an aggressive and highly personal interview as well as being forced to take part in David Frost's "gimmickry" tasks, such as playing the piano.²⁷¹ The statesmanlike image was also demonstrated in the context of Heath's passion for sailing. With the belief of "setting out to win and expect[ing] the same from his crew,"²⁷² Heath was pictured with the renowned sailor Sir Francis Chichester and participating in the Sydney to Hobart yacht race in December 1969. Heath's yachting exploits gained media coverage, including an interview on BBC's *Sportsnight with Coleman*.²⁷³ However, the Tory leader also appeared distrustful of females, when he did not know the identity of his female companion who had joined him for a particular sailing photo opportunity. He was unsure whether she was the cook instead of correctly identifying her as a sailor in her own right.²⁷⁴

During the preparation for a tour to the Vosper factory at Portsmouth in October 1967, Heath had to be persuaded that this tour needed maximum publicity, regardless whether he had a personal engagement later in the day.²⁷⁵ The leader's awkwardness was evident during an interview for the *Queen* women's magazine in

²⁶⁸ "Mr Heath's Broadcasting Coverage September 1969," CCO 600/3/6/1

²⁶⁹ "Aims of Pre Conference Interviews October 1967," CCO 600/11/1

²⁷⁰ "Memo from John Rathbone to John Macgregor 9th November 1967," CCO 600/11/2

²⁷¹ "Memo from John Rathbone to Edward Heath 15th November 1967," CCO 600/11/2

²⁷² "Correspondence between John Rathbone and A Edwin Stevens 13th July 1967," CCO 600/11/1
"Mr Heath's Broadcasting Coverage December 1969," CCO 600/3/61

²⁷³ Bruce (1992) p.109

²⁷⁴ Alexander and Watkins (1970) p.171

²⁷⁵ Rosenbaum (1997) pp.120- 122

August 1967. Despite the extensive advice from the strategists concerning his personal appearance and how his interview answers had to relate to the views of the *Queen* readership,²⁷⁶ the encounter was regarded as unsuccessful by many observers, including Heath. The interview suggested that the Tory leader only seemed relaxed when he was answering a political question. He seemed suspicious throughout the interview and admitted to be uneasy about talking about himself and the interviewer compared the process of asking a personal question to the emergence of “a splinter of light then darkness.”²⁷⁷ A series of further marketing ideas, including the potential development of a biography about Heath, were also discarded due to time constraints.²⁷⁸

As the opposition progressed, the Tory leader was generally unwilling to do further interviews that constituted an examination of his personality. Frequent requests for an interview with the *Daily Express* were continually rejected by Heath²⁷⁹ and following “problems” during a Westward Television interview in early November 1967, all television requests were ordered to be cleared in advance through Heath’s private office.²⁸⁰

The Tory leader also rejected any television coverage of him at businessmen lunches, and he prohibited Southern Television covering his appearance at a carol concert in his home town in Kent.²⁸¹ The complete list of Heath’s tours for the initial months of 1968, demonstrated that he wanted to speak to his own supporters in ‘traditionally’ Conservative areas like Sussex and Wessex rather than promoting himself to different electoral groups.²⁸²

²⁷⁶ “Questions for Interview with Mr Heath 1967” and “Memo from John Rathbone to Edward Heath 7th August 1967,” *CCO 600/11/1*

²⁷⁷ “Transcript of the *Queen* interview 1967,” *CCO 600/11/1*

²⁷⁸ “Memo from Humphrey Taylor to John Rathbone 20th October 1967” and “Memo from John Rathbone to John Macgregor 23rd October 1967,” *CCO 600/11/2*

²⁷⁹ “Memo to John Macgregor 12th May 1967,” *CCO 600/11/1*, “Memo from John Rathbone to Edward Heath 4th October 1967,” *CCO 600/11/2*

²⁸⁰ “Memo from John Macgregor to John Rathbone 28th November 1967,” *CCO 600/11/2*

²⁸¹ “Memo from John Macgregor to John Rathbone 19th November 1967,” and “Memo from John Rathbone to John Macgregor 24th November 1967,” *CCO 600/11/2*

²⁸² “Memo to R.J Webster 9th October 1967,” *CCO 600/11/2*

This chapter concludes by answering the two research questions regarding what were the key issues that frustrated the development of Conservative political marketing between 1966 and 1970, and whether the party was undertaking political marketing in this period, before the terminology became commonplace within academic literature.

2.5 Conclusions

This chapter has used the Lilleker and Negrine framework to examine the extent of innovation in the evolution of the Tories' product and marketing strategy between 1966 and 1970. In the context of the research question concerning the issues that militated against the effective market orientation, this chapter has demonstrated that intra party arguments were a key factor in the frustrated development of market orientation. These disagreements were exacerbated by the reticence of Edward Heath to be personally involved in innovative marketing. These conclusions offer more comparisons between the Heath opposition and the Thatcher and Hague eras.

During the Heath opposition, there was outright distrust by senior politicians towards media professionals. This suspicion would be less apparent during the Thatcher era because the senior politicians and officials were more amenable to the concept, and there were fewer concerns about adopting political marketing and debasing worthwhile political debate like their Labour opponents. Similar arguments are evident in the Hague opposition when certain MPs were distrustful of using political marketing due to their fear that the Tories would replicate the 'spin doctor culture' of 'New Labour.' This chapter has demonstrated that Heath was equally concerned not to allow the Tories to replicate Labour's marketing methods despite Harold Wilson gaining a reputation as a competent media operator. The Labour leader was frequently appearing on the main evening TV bulletins to communicate his personality as well as the Labour Party message,²⁸³

²⁸³ Richard Holme (1988) "Selling the PM" *Contemporary Record* Volume 2 Number 1 p.25

but Heath dismissed Wilson for being obsessed with developing policies and beliefs to 'merely' gain media headlines. The marketing did represent Heath's wish to communicate a large amount of policy detail to the electorate that would demonstrate that the Tories were in an appropriate state to conduct a serious and effective government.

The desire for wide ranging and bold policy based marketing contrasts with the focus on ideological based communication in the Thatcher opposition and the more specific policy promotion between 1997 and 2001. However the Heath era was witnessing the beginning of a trend in personality based political marketing and Wilson was demonstrating a deft effectiveness at this form of communication during this period. A totally policy-based campaign without enough references to the Tory leader would potentially compromise the overall marketing strategy in opposition to the Labour party. These conclusions highlight how the development of a policy based campaign in 1968 caused a negative reaction amongst the electorate.

The Tories faced similar problems in marketing Edward Heath as their leader. Like Thatcher and Hague, this chapter has demonstrated that Heath was a difficult 'brand' to be sold to the electorate and the process was made even more problematic due to the leader's unenthusiastic attitude towards the marketing of himself to the electorate. There are similarities between the attitude of Edward Heath and William Hague towards political marketing because they both recognised that media work was an essential requirement for a party leader, but they appeared less than enthusiastic to become personally involved with this work.

Heath was similar to Hague and Thatcher for having his leadership style criticised by the media. Thatcher was portrayed as 'hectoring' with a lack of understanding for the general public's concerns and Hague was ridiculed for his 'out of touch' image at an arguably greater intensity than his predecessors. Heath was described as 'dull' and 'bureaucratic,' and despite the innovative photo opportunities and attempts to

portray Heath with compassion and emotion, Heath would enter the 1970s with lower approval ratings than Harold Wilson.

Despite the intensive intra party arguments, and the problematic nature of the Edward Heath 'brand' this chapter has shown that the opposition marketing strategy between 1966 and 1970 has not been given the credit that it deserves from political marketing literature. In the context of the second research question of this thesis concerning whether the Conservatives were undertaking political marketing before the terminology became commonplace within academic literature, innovative promotion was implemented in the Heath era. Opinion polling was extensively used by the Tories to gauge the electorates' opinions on policies, specific marketed messages, and initiatives. The continuous panel surveys were effectively developed and coordinated like the research during the Thatcher opposition, but in contrast to the Hague era which was characterised by short term and eventually aborted initiatives such as 'Listening to Britain.' An 'agent of persistence' is an apt description for Geoffrey Tucker who had to work with a party leader who was less enthusiastic about political marketing compared to Thatcher or Hague. Despite the development of television marketing between 1975 and 1979, it was Tucker who introduced regional television interviews for Heath and expanded the marketing initiatives for television so the electorate would gain more in a news bulletin than a short segment of the leader's speech. The importance of television for marketing purposes was recognised in the Hague opposition although not effectively exploited or coordinated.

Within the structure of a 'core,' 'tangible,' 'augmented,' and 'potential' product that is offered by Brassington and Pettitt, Chapter Six offers a deeper analysis of the Conservative Party's 'political alternative' to the Wilson administration and the extent of negative campaigning that was communicated to the electorate during the 1970 campaign. As a result of this analysis of the Heath opposition, the following chapter accurately highlights the misplaced nature of much of the previous commentary that suggested the 1975 to 1979 marketing was 'groundbreaking' in nature.

Chapter 3: 1970 Election: The Conservatives' Party Product

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 Frameworks and Previous Commentary

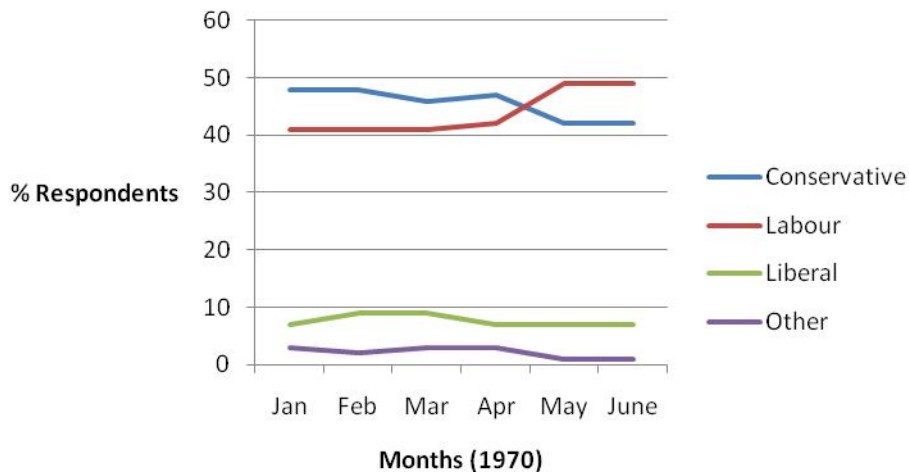
Chapter Three is the first of the three product-related chapters that test Brassington and Pettitt's product framework, which was outlined at the start of this thesis. This analysis considers the research questions concerning how important was the promotion of the personal ideological beliefs of senior Tory politicians to the Tory marketing strategy, and why were some Conservative marketing initiatives unsuccessful during the 1970 campaign. The material within this chapter also contributes to the research question, which was also discussed in Chapter Two, concerning whether the Conservatives were undertaking political marketing, before the terminology became commonplace within academic literature.

3.1.2 Political Context

The political circumstances for the Conservatives at the start of the 1970 election should have been much more favourable than in 1966. The party had been 'given' four years to develop a comprehensive and appealing product for the electorate, which was supported by an effective marketing strategy. However Figure 3.1 demonstrates that the Tories entered the 1970 campaign having recently lost a polling lead that had existed since 1967.

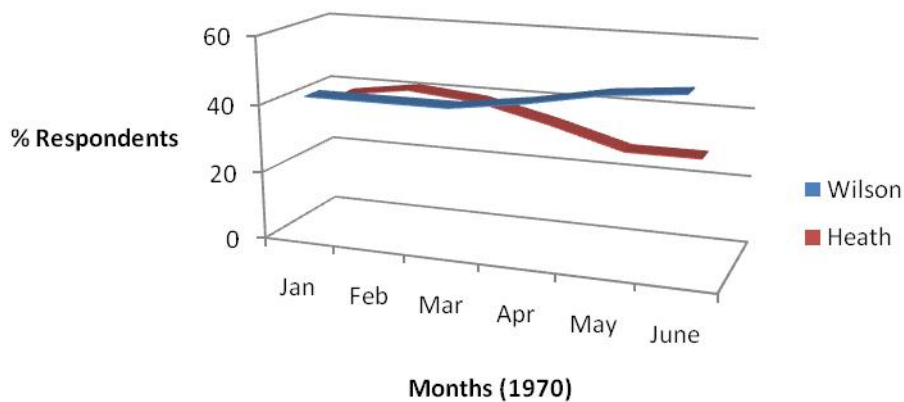
Figure 3.2 also demonstrates the failure of Heath to positively impact on the public consciousness in the immediate period before the 1970 campaign. Although he had gained enough time to establish himself as Tory leader, Heath was still attempting to oppose Wilson who remained able to conduct effective television appearances. Since the 1966 election, the Tory leader had only led the polls during November 1967, when Wilson made the infamous and much criticised 'pound in your pocket' broadcast following the devaluation of the pound.

Figure 3.1 Voting Intentions (% Respondents)



Gallup Poll (%) Source: Butler and Butler (2000) p.272

Figure 3.2 Approval Ratings (Wilson/ Heath) (% Respondents)



Gallup Poll (%) Source: Butler and Butler (2000) p.272

The Tories could have learnt a number of lessons from their marketing strategies for the 1964 and 1966 elections. The party was criticised for failing to effectively market Sir Alec Douglas Home during the 1964 campaign. These problems were starkly evident in Home's final televised election speech in Birmingham's rag

market when he was filmed whilst failing to deal with a group of hecklers.²⁸⁴ Butler and King believe that this particular broadcast caused Home to gain a reputation of being a weak and tentative leader.²⁸⁵ Whilst Home was failing to effectively use modern marketing techniques, Harold Wilson was noted for his promotional deftness and being able to “effectively [take] over editorial control of the news bulletin.”²⁸⁶ A series of cogent soundbites from Wilson was frequently transmitted into the televised evening news magazines.

During the 1966 election, Heath was criticised for using abstract language, obtuse arguments and promoting “concerns [that were] too remote from those of the ordinary citizen.”²⁸⁷ For instance, the Tory leader discussed ‘restrictive labour practices’ in a party election broadcast, but only 50% of responses to a University of Essex survey could give a meaning to the term.²⁸⁸

In the period following the 1966 campaign, Butler and Stokes noted the increased salience of leaders in the consciousness of the electorate,²⁸⁹ so in the 1970 campaign, the marketing of Edward Heath would form a key component of the promotional strategy. Chapter One highlighted how the development of television offered the opportunity for the electorate to gain a greater knowledge of policies and political personalities. Figure 3.3 draws attention to the increasing amounts of combined radio and television licence holders during the 1960s.

²⁸⁴ D.E. Butler and Anthony King (1965) *The British General Election of 1964*, London, Macmillan, p.146

²⁸⁵ Butler and King (1965) p.146

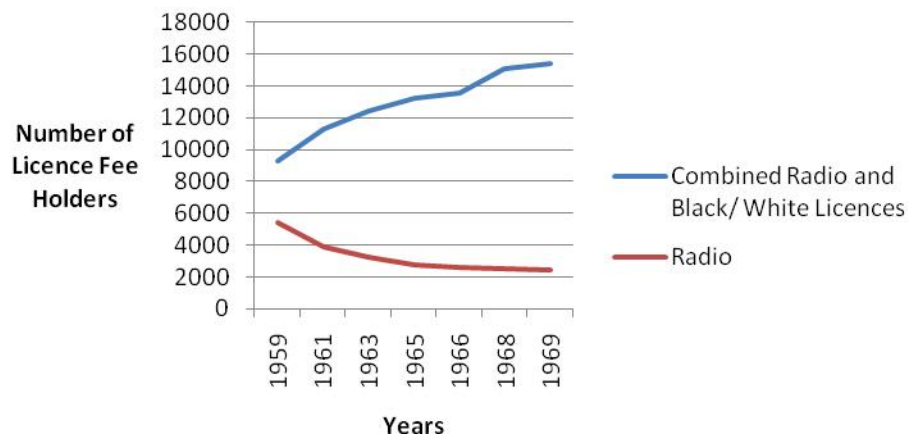
²⁸⁶ Cockerell (1988) p.128

²⁸⁷ Butler and King (1966) p.184

²⁸⁸ Butler and King (1966) p.189

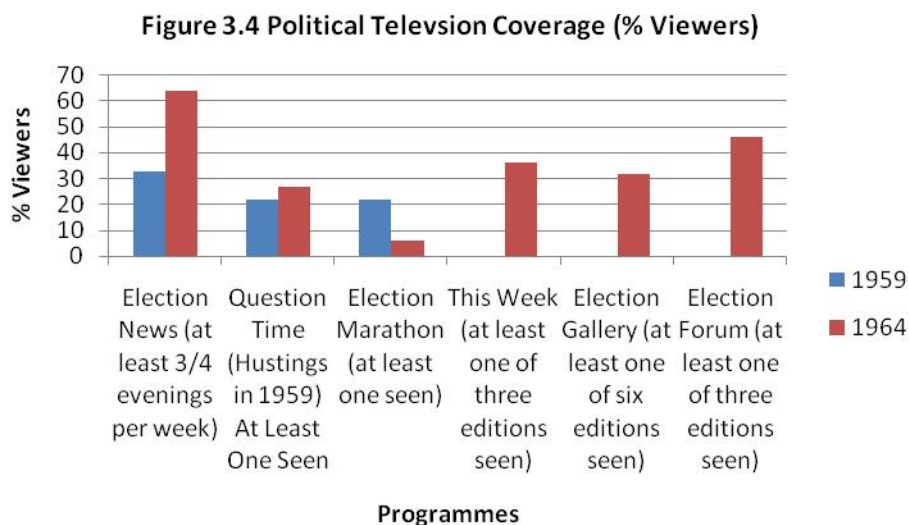
²⁸⁹ Butler and Stokes (1974) p.352

Figure 3.3 Radio and TV Licences: Numbers and Fees at Selected Dates



Source: BBC in Colin Seymour Ure (1996) *The British Press and Broadcasting since 1945* (2nd Edition,) Oxford, Blackwell, p.77

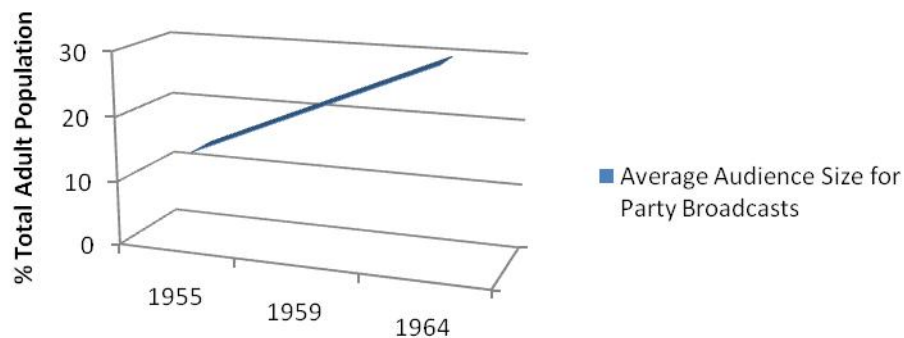
Figure 3.4 displays data from Blumler and McQuail, which highlights the increased amounts of political television programming during the 1950s and 1960s. The most dramatic increase occurred with the ratings of bulletins with election news that were seen at least three to four evenings per week.



Source: Blumler and McQuail (1968) p.38

There had also been a steady increase in the average audience for televised party election broadcasts between 1955 and 1964. Figure 3.5 outlines this data from Blumler and McQuail.

Figure 3.5 Average Audience Size for Party Broadcasts (% Total Adult Population)



Over three successive elections there was a steady increase in the viewing of party election broadcasts. Average audience expressed as percentages of the total adult population of the United Kingdom. Source: Blumler and McQuail (1968) p.36

Table 3.1 charts the reasons for viewers watching party election broadcasts in the 1964 campaign. The key motives were associated with seeing 'what some party will do if it gets into power' and 'to keep up with the main issues of the day.'

Table 3.1 Reasons for Watching Party Broadcasts (Respondents could endorse more than one reason)

Reasons	% Respondents
To see what some party will do if it gets into power	55
To keep up with the main issues of the day	52
To judge what political leaders are like	51
To remind me of my party's strong points	36
To judge who is likely to win the election	31
To help make up my mind how to vote	26
To enjoy the excitement of the election race	24
To use as ammunition in arguments with others	10
N =	677

Source Blumler and McQuail (1968) p.66

3.1.3 Existing Literature

In his analysis of the 1970 election, Cockerell believes that Heath became "Prime Minister with the help of the most professional media campaign up to that time in British history."²⁹⁰ Cockett notes how the 1970 election "broke important new ground for the Conservatives as it was the first time that the party had put all its faith in publicity professionals from outside Central Office."²⁹¹ Barry Day, the former advisor to the Tory party and speech-writer to Edward Heath between 1969 and 1975, argued that "the first conscious effort to use the established techniques of commercial marketing on the British political scene came in the 1970 election on behalf of the Conservative Party."²⁹² Scammell also offers praise for the

²⁹⁰ Cockerell (1989) p.163

²⁹¹ Cockett in Seldon and Ball (eds) (1994) p.570

²⁹² Barry Day "The Politics of Communication or the Communication of Politics" in Robert M Worcester and Martin Harrop (eds) (1982) *Political Communications: The General Election Campaign of 1979*, London, George Allen, p.5

Conservative marketing during the 1970 campaign, for being “the last innovative electioneering until Thatcher took over the reigns of the Tory party.”²⁹³

In the context of the research question, regarding how important was the promotion of the personal ideological beliefs of senior Tory politicians to the Conservative marketing strategy, this chapter considers how these messages did form a component of the ‘core’ product marketing. The ideological marketing was surprising, considering the intensive amount of policy formation that had been undertaken since the previous election, and Edward Heath’s particular interest in formulating and promoting a wide range of policies at the expense of philosophical discussions and the marketing of politicians.²⁹⁴ Heath wanted his party to be portrayed as a forward-looking party that possessed a coherent and distinctive ideology that would “re-establish our sound and honest British traditions.”²⁹⁵ The marketing in 1970 was intended to engage with the same extensive electoral group that would be targeted in 1979, who were demanding more freedom and opportunities, and not just the Tory ‘core’ vote that was the key electoral target in 2001.

The marketing of a coherent and cogent party image was often different to the Tories’ assertions at the start of the 1970 campaign. In a similar way to Margaret Thatcher’s declarations that personality marketing would not be undertaken during the 1979 election, Heath assured the electorate that his party would not fight “in terms of personalities and smears.”²⁹⁶ However negative campaigning would be a key feature of the marketing, and personality-based promotion would eventually become an important component too. Ramsden believes that the negative campaigning strategy was ideal for the party because of the unveiling of poor trade figures in the last week of the campaign, which disputed Labours’ positive economic

²⁹³ Scammell (1995) p.57

²⁹⁴ Lord Armstrong of Ilminster in Michael David Kandiah (ed) (1995) “Witness Seminar. The Heath Government,” *Contemporary Record*, Volume 9 Number 1, p.211

²⁹⁵ “Introduction to ‘A Better Tomorrow 1970 Election Manifesto,’ CCO 500/24/295, *Publicity 1970 General Election*

²⁹⁶ “Heath will avoid Smear Tactics in Campaign,” *The Times*, 16th May 1970, p.2

claims.²⁹⁷ However in his biography of Reginald Maudling, Baston describes the 1970 party political broadcasts as “extremely negative [with] vox pop grumbling and vulgar abuse.”²⁹⁸ In the context of the research question of this thesis, concerning why certain Tory marketing initiatives were unsuccessful during each of the election campaigns, this chapter highlights the damaging consequences of negative campaigning. The party was also criticised for being less ‘open’ regarding the future consequences of electing a Conservative Government although there were only a few accusations of policy evasiveness in 1970, compared to the 1979 and 2001 campaigns.

This chapter begins by considering how important was the promotion of the personal ideological beliefs of senior Tory politicians as part of the Conservative marketing strategy for the 1970 election. There appears to have been more initiatives that attempted to positively promote Heath’s political beliefs to the electorate, compared to the marketing of Thatcher in 1979, or Hague in the 2001 campaign. Even after the change of strategy to include public walkabout of Heath, the Tory leader’s personal beliefs were marketed during the public meetings and TV interviews.

3.2 Ideology and the Political Product

3.2.1 Core Product, Market Orientation and Voter Orientation

Heath’s personal ideology was being marketed in a similar way to Thatcher’s beliefs within her final party election broadcast of 1979. The Tory leader guaranteed that he would work “with all my strength and with all my heart” for freedom when a man would be “able to walk in safety and speak his mind in peace.”²⁹⁹ He believed that Britain “may be a small island, but we’re not small people.” The UK was a “great country and anyone who doubts it does so at their peril.”³⁰⁰ This broadcast

²⁹⁷ John Ramsden (1980) *The Making of Conservative Party Policy*, London, New York, Longman p.277

²⁹⁸ Lewis Baston (2004) *Reggie: The Life of Reginald Maudling*, Stroud, Sutton Publishing p.353

²⁹⁹ *PEB*, 15th June 1970, *PEB*, 30th April 1979

³⁰⁰ *PEB*, 15th June 1970

contained more detail of a Tory leader's personal beliefs than was evident in each of the 2001 transmissions, but Heath's renowned 'cold' persona had the potential to compromise the poignancy and emotional significance of the personal information. The final election broadcast also contained non political information about the Conservative leader's childhood, which was interspersed with a film of a shirt-sleeved Heath campaigning with enthusiastic children.³⁰¹ There were pictures and quotes from Heath's victory in the 1970 Sydney to Hobart race, which contributed to the image of a man with courage who had entered politics as "a self-made man with no inherited money or special position but [with] a great deal of ambition for his country."³⁰²

Many messages that formed the core product marketing concerned the party's concept of a citizen's 'freedom under the law' without a personal reference to Heath. The initial party political broadcast described the conviction of 'freedom' as the party's "single most important" core belief.³⁰³ The electorate had "the right to be proud and free and to seek happiness in [their] own way [and the government had] to give him that security, that choice."³⁰⁴ The free market economy was defined as "less governmental interference, more individual freedom, steadier prices, lower taxes [and] more choice, wider ownership and higher savings."³⁰⁵ The family would be in charge of their money instead of treasury mandarins,³⁰⁶ but this concept would also create a prosperous Britain that "earns and saves and owns and cares."³⁰⁷ This marketing also mirrored the 1979 and 2001 strategy when the Tories' free market ideology was compared to the 'reactive' and 'backward' beliefs of the Labour Party.

³⁰¹ Dominic Sandbrook (2006) *White Heat A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties*, London, Little Brown, p.736

³⁰² *PEB*, 15th June 1970

³⁰³ *PEB*, 2nd June 1970 (All 1970 PEB transcripts from <http://www.psr.keele.ac.uk/area/uk/pebs/con70.htm>)

³⁰⁴ *PEB*, 15th June 1970

³⁰⁵ "Suggested Points 21st May 1970," CCO 500/24/ 270 *Briefing Conference, Pre Election*

³⁰⁶ *PEB*, 8th June 1970

³⁰⁷ *PEB*, 11th June 1970

The party would also market their core ideological beliefs associated with a strong defence. Lord Carrington assured the electorate that this belief would create a “stronger Britain in the world,”³⁰⁸ and this ‘resolute’ strategy was compared to the Labour Party’s “smug and parochial”³⁰⁹ approach to the security threats from Russia and China. Heath also publicly admitted that the electorate were disappointed in the Labour Government and had expressed their “sadness at the way in which our reputation has shrunk”³¹⁰ in the world. The 1970 marketing differed from the 2001 strategy because the Heath opposition frequently demonstrated that they believed in the concept of public services. The Tories highlighted how they were able to combine economic competence with compassionate beliefs that would witness the rise in living standards “at a reasonable rate, improve beauty, preserve environment, relieve poverty and promote freedom.”³¹¹ Following the election of a Conservative government, the electorate was assured that the UK would “get back to the kind of growth we enjoyed before Labour took charge.”³¹² The national income that could be spent on social reform would “rise faster than it has done in recent years.”³¹³

However the Tories encountered difficulties in marketing their belief in modernisation. Willetts and Forsdyke believe that the promotion of this particular belief was compromised by Heath’s unwillingness to engage in an open internal debate about what ‘modernisation’ actually meant.³¹⁴ The manifesto introduction vaguely assured the electorate that the party possessed a “fresh approach” to decision making and implementing up to date techniques for a “better Britain.”³¹⁵ However Heath also talked about how his party always respected tradition and did “not believe in change for the sake of change.”³¹⁶ This statement could dampen the expectations of a truly radical agenda being developed by the Tories. The confusion

³⁰⁸ Dale (2000) p.179

³⁰⁹ “Election Mistimed- Heath,” *The Times*, 17th June 1970 p.4

³¹⁰ “Heath details his Four Main Attacks,” *The Times*, 23rd May 1970, p.2

³¹¹ Richard Sharpe “Heath’s Fighting Challenge,” *The Times*, 18th May 1970, p.2

³¹² *PEB* June 1970

³¹³ *PEB* June 1970

³¹⁴ David Willetts with Richard Forsdyke (1999) *After the Landslide*, London, CPS, p.96

³¹⁵ Dale (2000) p.177

³¹⁶ “Four main attacks,” *The Times*, 23rd May 1970, p.2

regarding the concept of modernisation was not as evident in the 1979 campaign, because the party was mindful of alarming the electorate with an excessively radical agenda.

This chapter now considers how this core ideology was marketed alongside a comprehensive range of policies. The marketing of an extensive problem solving agenda differed from the strategies that were deployed in the 1979 and 2001 election. The 1979 product particularly focused on marketing ideological beliefs, and the 2001 offering concentrated on marketing a specific group of policies. The 1970 marketing involved the promotion of a wide range of policy measures concerning all aspects of national life. The detail satisfied Heath's wishes for his party to propose a "new way of running our national affairs"³¹⁷ in which decisions would be made that would "affect the livelihood and perhaps the lives of millions of our fellow citizens."³¹⁸ Furthermore, the mixture of positive and negative marketing was not as evident in the 2001 campaign when the Tories adopted an intensively negative approach to their marketing. The next section begins by analysing the 'cautious' marketing of the immigration policy. These ideas were still promoted despite a series of high profile and discordant speeches from Enoch Powell during the campaign.

3.2.2 Focus on Problem Solving Agenda

The 'hesitant' marketing of the immigration policy witnessed Heath distancing himself from the different views on immigration from Enoch Powell's supporters, but reaffirming Powell's general patriotic attitude.³¹⁹ Labour was also attacked in a possible move to deflect public attention away from the Tory divisions on the subject. Harold Wilson was accused of making a "crude attempt to smear the whole Conservative Party with Nazism, racialism and anti-Semitism."³²⁰ Tony Benn would be particularly criticised for the emotive language within his speech that attacked

³¹⁷ Dale (2000) p.178

³¹⁸ Dale (2000) p.178

³¹⁹ "Transcript of Press Conference 4th June 1970," CCO 20/12/6, *Chairman's Office- Broadcasting*

³²⁰ "Heath Challenges Wilson to condemn Benn Speech," *The Times*, 5th June 1970, p.1

Powell's views on immigration.³²¹ The *Times* praised these messages from Heath for their assured nature that cultivated "an appearance full of character and self control."³²²

A similar mixture of positive and negative marketing was used in the promotion of housing policies. As well as promising to re-establish a house building programme, abolish the land commission and encourage home ownership, the Tories attacked Labour for failing to deliver on their pledge to embark "on a massive expansion of the housing programme."³²³ It was noted that only 367,000 dwellings had been built by the start of the 1970 campaign and average mortgage rates were 8½% instead of the promised 3%.³²⁴ Heath also stated that five million people were still living in houses in 1970 that were condemned as slums,³²⁵ and that Labour's state housing programme was an "absolutely unnecessary and typical socialist project [full of] gimmicks."³²⁶

It has already been mentioned that the Conservatives discussed their free market ideology as part of their core product marketing. The party also marketed their 'free market' tax cutting policies throughout the campaign with techniques that would be similar to those seen in 1979 and 2001 elections. Within the first week of the campaign, there were promises to end excessive taxation and the administrative burden that had been endured by small businesses.³²⁷ There were also suggestions that £76 million could be apportioned to tax cuts as a result of the party's opposition to the potential nationalisation of British ports.³²⁸

The Wilson administration was criticised for presiding over the rising of prices whilst wage levels were static or falling in relative terms. A party political broadcast displayed a frozen ice block that contained a wage slip, and the accompanying

³²¹ "Transcript of Press Conference 15th June 1970," *CCO* 20/12/6

³²² David Wood "Tough Heath bars Powell Questions," *The Times*, 16th June 1970, p.1

³²³ "Doorstep Election Special 1970," *CCO* 500/24/295

³²⁴ "Doorstep Election Special 1970," *CCO* 500/24/295

³²⁵ "Transcript of Press Conference 4th June 1970," *CCO* 20/12/6

³²⁶ "Heath Scorns Labour Housing Plans," *The Times*, 2nd June 1970, p.5

³²⁷ Brian Macarthur "Wilson taunted with rule by afterthought," *The Times*, 3rd June 1970, p.10

³²⁸ "Taunts by Wilson and Heath on rising rents and taxes" *The Times* 1st June 1970 p.7

quote that “the £ in your pocket is now worth 15/7”³²⁹ was a reference to Harold Wilson’s ‘pound in your pocket’ speech associated with the 1967 devaluation. The Wilson Government’s ‘interventionist’ and ‘high tax’ economy was criticised for being based on the belief that there was “something wrong with people being better off.”³³⁰

The ‘problem solving’ marketing achieved positive results. Tables 3.2 and 3.3 demonstrate that the tax cuts promotion positively permeated the consciousness of the electorate.

Table 3.2 Which party would be more likely to reduce taxes?³³¹

	% of Poll
Conservative	60.83
Labour	9.85
No Difference	24.02
Don’t Know	5.31
N/A	0.76

Which party would you say would be more likely to reduce taxes, the Conservatives or Labour or wouldn’t there be any difference between them on this? Source “British Election Survey Data 1970” BES

Table 3.3 Should the Government reduce taxes or spend more on social Services

	1966	1970
Reduce Taxes	62.06	65.43
Increase Spending on Services	37.94	27.09
Don’t Know	0	7.48
N/A	0	0.6

³²⁹ *PEB*, 8th June 1970

³³⁰ *PEB*, 15th June 1970

³³¹ N/A defined as No Response in each table

If the Government has a choice between reducing taxes and spending more on social services, which should it do? (% of respondents) Source “British Electoral Survey Data 1970” BES

Table 3.4 demonstrates that the Tories’ marketing in 1970 may have contributed to convincing the electorate that the particular party could effectively maintain price controls.

Table 3.4 Which party would be best at keeping prices steady?

	% of Poll
Conservative	40.69
Labour	12.12
No Difference	40.74
Don’t Know	6.44
N/A	0.6

Which party would you say would be best at keeping prices steady, the Conservatives or Labour, or wouldn’t there be any difference between them on this? (% of respondents) Source “British Electoral Survey Data 1970” BES

The Tories also focused on marketing their government record, with particular reference to the 1951 Churchill administration, to demonstrate how their beliefs could be implemented in national life. The promotion of this evidence was part of the ‘potential’ product marketing and was designed to satisfy the electorate, who would hopefully be assured that they would receive a tangible return if they voted for the party.

3.2.3 Focus on Government Record: Potential Product

The policy achievements of the 1951 to 1955 government were praised in the party political broadcasts, including the accomplishment of cutting income tax, increasing

the real value of pensions by 50%, and steadying prices for the benefit of the UK.³³² The 8th June transmission noted that the tax rates declined by two billion pounds between 1951 and 1964, whilst the Wilson Government witnessed three billion pound tax increases.³³³ Ian Macleod demonstrated that the 1951 election pledge for housing expansion had been fulfilled despite Wilson's predictions of 1951 that their housing target "was a cruel deception on those who are waiting for a home."³³⁴

In addition to the statistics and quotations associated with the previous achievements in office, the potential product was also promoted in a personal style that would mirror the marketing of the Macmillan period. One advert displayed a picture of a mother and baby, which symbolised that the Tories would care about the future prospects of the electorate.³³⁵

Heath also provided a personal assurance to enhance the opportunities of the nation when he suggested that the British people should not be standing still in life. Young people would be assisted to partake in the "better opportunities [and] more opportunities than they have had in the past."³³⁶ Similar positive messages were prominently marketed by Thatcher in 1979, but this intensely emblematic advertising would not be used in the 2001 election, when the strategy displayed a more negative and austere approach with pictures of truanting children and poverty-stricken pensioners.

This chapter now analyses the attempts to promote Tory personalities. In a similar way to the 1979 election, the party was more than prepared to reject personality related initiatives. A proposal to market the shadow cabinet ministers was rejected on the grounds that such a broadcast would leave the electorate unconvinced regarding whether the Tories would be able to initiate a comprehensive policy

³³² "Doorstep Election Special:" *CCO* 500/24/295

³³³ *PEB* 8th June 1970

³³⁴ *PEB*, 8th June 1970

³³⁵ "Memo from Stanley Rowland 3rd June 1970," *CCO* 500/24/295

³³⁶ *PEB*, 2nd June 1970

agenda.³³⁷ There was no indication that their refusal was due to on-camera nerves or a general dismissive attitude regarding the need for marketing initiatives.

3.2.4 Excessive Focus on Personality? Augmented Product

Heath was portrayed as a dignified potential Prime Minister and a “man of trust.”³³⁸ The strategy was similar to the attempts in 1979 to counteract the perception of Thatcher as a hectoring female. Heath was initially not involved in any whistle stop tours due to the strategic predictions that these events would degenerate into violence and heckling in a ‘trial by television’ replicating the aforementioned televised Birmingham Rag Market confrontation involving Sir Alec Douglas Home during the 1964 election.³³⁹ In a similar way to the start of the 1979 campaign, the daily itinerary would consist of all-ticket rallies, which Heath justified on the grounds that “our supporters, quite naturally want to hear what the leader of the party has got to say.”³⁴⁰

In regard to the research question of this thesis concerning why the marketing initiatives were unsuccessful during each of the election campaigns, these appearances by the Tory leader caused the press to believe that Heath appeared “aloof and out of touch with ordinary people.”³⁴¹ Wilfred Sendall of the *Daily Express* noted that Heath was not making a big enough impact in these campaign appearances.³⁴² These actions were negatively compared to Wilson’s informal walkabouts.³⁴³ The 1979 campaign witnessed a similar comparison between James Callaghan’s more relaxed attitude and Thatcher’s ‘hectoring’ appearances that involved little public interaction due to the ‘barrier’ of a media entourage.

³³⁷ “Letter from Edmund Dockerill 8th June 1970,” CCO 500/24/271

³³⁸ Cockerell (1988) p.168

³³⁹ “Paper from Edward Rayner ‘General Election Television’ 15th May 1970,” CCO 500/24/288
Leader General 1966- 1970

³⁴⁰ “Transcript of Press Conference 3rd June 1970,” CCO 20/12/6

³⁴¹ Brian Macarthur “Barry Shakes Ted’s Hand,” *The Times*, 4th June 1970, p.10

³⁴² “Wilfred Sendall ‘How the Tories shook Britain,’ *Daily Express*,” CCO 500/24/295

³⁴³ Cockerell (1988) p.163

The overall strategy in 1970 would undergo the same changes that occurred when Thatcher was promoted in 1979. In response to media criticism about the ticket-only rallies and the minimal contact between Heath and members of the public, a series of city-centre walkabouts and photo opportunities was instigated in the middle of the campaign. These 'meet the people' sessions included Heath being pictured whilst enjoying a beer at a Bristol pub.³⁴⁴

The 'meet the people' events in 1970 were similar to the marketing of Thatcher in the 1979 campaign at Birmingham Chocolate and Newcastle Tea Factories. The media were pleased that they were now being provided with suitable copy for reports about Heath's trips to cities including Exeter, Leicester and Norwich. Furthermore the Tory leader was praised as a "friendly likeable chap, who enjoyed his pint along with the next man,"³⁴⁵ and the BBC also noted that it had "become clear that there really is another Edward Heath far removed from the politician's public image."³⁴⁶ Douglas Hurd added that the public were pleased to see a well-known figure in the streets of their town and he "quickly learnt that Mr Heath felt far more at home in a crowded street than at a dull lunch party, or a difficult press interview."³⁴⁷ This marketing of party personalities continued throughout the campaign, but the promotion of Heath and his colleagues was only one component of the work that was needed to project a suitable party image to the electorate.

This chapter continues to answer the final research question of this thesis regarding why certain Conservative marketing initiatives were unsuccessful. A vote-winning persona would be based on more intangible perceptions, which included the perception that the party was willing to discuss policies regardless of whether they were controversial in nature. Throughout the 1970 campaign, the Tories continuously attempted to demonstrate that they understood the issues facing target electoral groups such as housewives. The next section of this chapter

³⁴⁴ David Wood "Heath Demands a Clear Answer on the Economy," *The Times*, 9th June 1970, p1

³⁴⁵ Sendall, *Daily Express*, CCO 500/24/295

³⁴⁶ "Extract from Press Release 'The Other Edward Heath' 24th May 1970," CCO 20/12/6

³⁴⁷ Douglas Hurd (1979) *An End to Promises*, London, Collins pp.17-18

considers whether the Conservatives were generally recognised for focusing their 1970 marketing on the issues that were important within the public consciousness.

3.3 Importance of Image Management

3.3.1 Tangible Product: “Out of Touch?”

Table 3.5 charts a Marplan poll that demonstrates how the 1970 campaign was mostly focused on the issues that were regarded as the most important by the general public.

Table 3.5 Importance of Election Issue

Issue	% of Poll Citing Issue in Top Three Most Important
Prevent Rise in Cost of Living	65
Reduction of Taxation	50
Maintenance of Law and Order	32
Control of Trade Unions	21
Production of Satisfactory Immigration Policy	15
Getting Britain into the Common Market	4

“Three most important political issues out of ten” (%) Source David Wood “Poll Dashes Tory Hope,” The Times, 5th June 1970, p.10

To counteract any accusations of being out of touch, the Tories demonstrated in the 11th June broadcast that they understood the electorate’s most important issues, in contrast to the Labour Party who were accused of causing considerable economic hardship amongst working families. By listening to ‘Sylvia’ the housewife, the electorate would hopefully understand the relevance of Tory policies. Sylvia

announced that she would vote Conservative regardless of her husband maintaining his traditional allegiances to the Labour Party. This broadcast involved a significant amount of negative campaigning. The 'model' housewife was angry about Labour's 'broken promises' and how "we haven't had them [the Conservatives] in for five years and I think it's about time we gave them a try."³⁴⁸ These assertions were supported by other members of the public admitting that "we just don't get time to work overtime" and "I can't manage on my husband's money; I have had to go out myself, you know, all night."³⁴⁹ The continuous marketing of a fictitiously named character akin to 'Sylvia' was not developed for the 1979 and 2001 elections. There were 'characters' in the 2001 party election broadcasts although they remained anonymous and were only mentioned once in one transmission.

Despite being detailed in their policy promotion, the marketing of the potential product incurred charges of evasiveness regarding the future consequences of electing a Conservative Government. In a similar way to what would occur during the 1979 and 2001 elections, the charges of evasiveness resulted from a series of vague predictions that were presented throughout the 1970 campaign such as the proposition that the election of a Tory administration would represent the return to an "honest and competent government."³⁵⁰ Furthermore the party would continue to predict the negative consequences of re-electing Labour, rather than marketing how a future Tory administration would fare.

3.3.2 Potential Product: "Evasiveness?"

When the party marketed the future consequences of electing a Tory Government, the electorate were assured that their administration would "speak the truth and act with honesty" in a "new and better style of government" without the "trivialities and the gimmicks."³⁵¹ However there would be no 'honest' assertion of the 'state of

³⁴⁸ *PEB*, 11th June 1970

³⁴⁹ *PEB*, 8th June 1970

³⁵⁰ "Suggested Points 21st May 1970," in *CCO 500/24/270*

³⁵¹ 'A better Tomorrow' 1970 Election Manifesto, *CCO 500/24/295*

the UK,' that would be presented during the 1979 election when the party suggested that the national economic problems may not be swiftly resolved despite the election of a Conservative administration. A gloomy outlook would conflict with the campaign theme that proclaimed 'For a Better Tomorrow, Vote Conservative.'

The party only asserted that Britain's future would not improve with the re election of a Labour Government. A third Wilson administration would mean the return of another five years of "incompetent, doctrinaire government."³⁵² Enoch Powell also assured the electorate that they did not need to "kiss the rod like a beaten hound and come back for more"³⁵³ by voting for Labour. The Conservative manifesto predicted that Labour would continue their use of every 'publicity stunt in its adoption of a "cheap and trivial style of government [making] decisions to catch tomorrow's headlines."³⁵⁴ For instance, Labour's education policy proclaimed to raise the school leaving age to seventeen, but the party had yet to raise it to sixteen.³⁵⁵

A third Wilson administration was predicted to create more economic problems of a similar style to the July 1966 crisis and the November 1967 devaluation. Ian Macleod argued that if Labour won the election, "you will see what is not even being whispered at the present time: the measures they will take to deal with this serious economic trouble everyone knows about."³⁵⁶ The Conservative election broadcasts contained a commercial that showed a pound note being cut up by scissors. The electorate was encouraged to believe that the value of the pound would continue to decline to be worth "ten bob" under another Wilson administration.³⁵⁷ On the day before the polling day, Heath would still be mentioning that the election of Labour would lead to four more years of austerity. The electorate needed to break out of what Heath regarded as "Mr Wilson's

³⁵² Dale (2000) p179

³⁵³ Enoch Powell in Macarthur, *The Times*, 3rd June 1970, p.10

³⁵⁴ "'A better Tomorrow 1970 Election Manifesto," *CCO* 500/24/295

³⁵⁵ Macarthur, *The Times*, 3rd June 1970 p.10

³⁵⁶ Ronald Faux "Macleod Accuses Wilson," *The Times*, 9th June 1970, p.12

³⁵⁷ *PEB*, 2nd June 1970

complacent election campaign.”³⁵⁸ Similar material could not be marketed in the 2001 election, because an economic crisis had not occurred since 1997 and ‘New’ Labour had been generally praised for their handling of the economy.

It has already been demonstrated that the Tories were involved in negative campaigning. However the final section of this chapter considers the personally emotive tone of this form of marketing. This account answers the research question regarding why certain Tory marketing initiatives were unsuccessful during the 1970 campaign, by demonstrating how the implementation of negative messages rebounded on the party in a way that would be evident in the 2001 campaign. In a similar way during the 1979 and 2001 campaigns, the negative criticisms in 1970 created a harsh image of the Conservative Party.

This form of marketing did not inspire the electorate before the unveiling of trade figures during the final week of the campaign. Henneberg’s assertion about “negative campaigning ‘disintegrating’ into the arena of show business and character assassinations”³⁵⁹ can accurately describe the Conservatives’ personal attacks in 1970, which began with the assertion that the Labour cabinet consisted of “bunglers and liars.”³⁶⁰

3.3.3 Augmented Product: “Negative Campaigning creating Harsh Personality?”

Whole marketing initiatives were designed to attack Labour rather than promote Conservative ideas on a particular issue. Douglas Hurd would question the effectiveness of this negative marketing after the first week of the campaign when there was bad polling for the Tories and a “general edgy weariness”³⁶¹ within the party. The Conservatives would still initiate personal attacks upon the Labour Government, which would hopefully improve the party morale following the spring

³⁵⁸ “Heath warning of squeeze, freeze and perhaps devaluation,” *The Times*, 17th June 1970, p.4

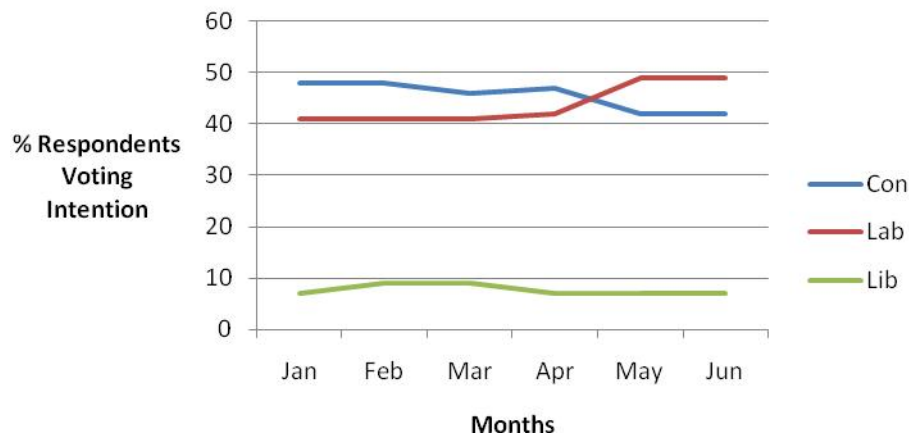
³⁵⁹ Henneberg (2004) p.234

³⁶⁰ Sharpe *The Times*, 18th May 1970

³⁶¹ Hurd (1979) p.21

1970 disintegration of the Conservatives' opinion poll lead.³⁶² The Gallup Polling in Figure 3.6 highlights the decline of the Conservatives' poll lead

Figure 3.6 Gallup Polling January- June 1970 (% Respondents)



Source Butler and Butler (2000) p.272

The 1970 poll was billed as the “longed for chance to get rid of the Labour Government.”³⁶³ Some of the more emotive attacks were centred on Harold Wilson who was portrayed as an out of touch, devious and self serving leader and not the congenial statesman that was being marketed on Wilson’s nationwide tours. In one of his all-ticket rallies, Heath attacked Wilson for suggesting to his captive audience that “they had come to see me because your own leader won’t come to you.”³⁶⁴ The Labour leader was accused of possessing a ‘cheating’ personality and voters were warned not to allow themselves “to be cheated again”³⁶⁵ by Wilson’s repartee.

Wilson was also held responsible for the declining value of the pound, as well as the 1967 devaluation.³⁶⁶ He was accused of not appreciating the seriousness of the economic situation in 1970 and taking advantage of the “present [economic]

³⁶² Douglas Hurd (2003) *Memoirs*, London, Little Brown, p.183

³⁶³ “Four Main Attacks,” *The Times*, 23rd May 1970, p.2

³⁶⁴ Butler and Duschinsky (1971) p.142

³⁶⁵ Sharpe, *The Times*, 18th May 1970 p.2

³⁶⁶ *PEB*, 2nd June 1970

euphoria”³⁶⁷ to call an election in May 1970, despite having failed to produce a coherent policy agenda, failing to answer questions and repeating statements just to win elections.³⁶⁸ One particular Tory pamphlet pictured a ‘closing down’ billboard for ‘H Wilson and Co’ shops, and a waste paper bin containing screwed up pieces of paper outlining Labour’s promises.³⁶⁹ This personalised campaigning on Wilson would be more severe than the attacks on James Callaghan during the 1979 election. ‘Devious’ and ‘self-serving’ were criticisms that were also levelled against Tony Blair in 2001, although these criticisms failed to make a significant impact during the campaign because the Tories themselves were being linked to these characteristics.

The Tories also personally attacked other members of the Wilson administration as “men of straw who had abdicated their responsibilities and allowed themselves to become the mere plaything of events.”³⁷⁰ In a sardonic reference to Labour’s pre-election advertisements picturing Heath and his shadow cabinet colleagues as plasticine models, Labour was accused of only being interested in playing with “admen’s toys, tribal witchdoctors, sticking pins into wax images.”³⁷¹ James Callaghan was criticised for his ‘broken promises’ that had been made as chancellor, including the suggestion that “I do not foresee the need for severe increases in taxation [but he had increased] taxation by three thousand [pounds] million a year.”³⁷² Callaghan was also criticised for his record as Home Secretary, and accused of withholding information from the public about the state of crime in the UK.³⁷³ He was rebuked as the first minister to receive a vote of no confidence from the police federation.³⁷⁴ The 1979 elections only witnessed isolated attacks on Labour ministers such as Tony Benn and Dennis Healey.

³⁶⁷ “Memo from Brendon Sewell to members of the Television Committee re Party Political Broadcasts 21st May 1970,” in *CCO* 20/12/6,

³⁶⁸ *PEB*, 2nd June 1970

³⁶⁹ Leaflet “Everything Goes Closing Down Sale” and “Memo from Stanley Rowland 3rd June 1970,” *CCO* 500/24/295

³⁷⁰ David Wood “Heath accuses Labour of abdicating,” *The Times*, 30th May 1970, p.1

³⁷¹ Sharpe *The Times*, 18th May 1970

³⁷² *PEB*, 2nd June 1970

³⁷³ Macarthur, *The Times*, 3rd June 1970, p.10

³⁷⁴ Macarthur, *The Times*, 3rd June 1970, p.10

The Conservatives also initiated personal attacks in their attempts to dispel the perception that the Labour Party was the only political outfit that cared about voters' welfare. Labour's traditional policy areas of strength had been associated with compassion such as health, education and social services but the second party broadcast suggested that acute misery was "the cost of living in Labour's compassionate society."³⁷⁵ It was suggested that since 1964, the "poor are getting poorer, things are actually getting worse" whilst pensioners were failing to "make ends meet" with two point five million OAPs suffering from malnutrition.³⁷⁶ Vox pops provided a more personal dimension to these statistics. An elderly man complained that the Labour administration did not do "anything for me or the people really, unless it is really forced to do something."³⁷⁷ Another citizen suggested "you get very lonely not having anyone to talk to" and "I don't like to be dependent on anybody. I mean I don't expect other people to bury me."³⁷⁸

Despite the extensive negative campaigning, Table 3.6 demonstrates that a significant amount of the electorate remained sceptical that the Tories sincerely wanted to increase public service spending on welfare issues. The *Times* reported how couples were split in their voting intentions in a stark way compared to previous elections. Despite the wives feeling "resentful about the rising cost of living," it was "being assumed that the loyalties of working men have returned to Labour."³⁷⁹ Table 3.7 demonstrates that the electorate was concerned that the Tories could not offer any vastly different solutions to Britain's economic problems.

Table 3.6 Which party would spend more on pensions and social services?

	1964	1966	1970
Conservative	6.57	8.00	16.63
Labour	75.54	68.31	49.26
Don't Know	0	0	5.75

³⁷⁵ *PEB*, June 1970

³⁷⁶ *PEB*, June 1970

³⁷⁷ *PEB*, June 1970

³⁷⁸ *PEB*, June 1970

³⁷⁹ David Wood "New Poll Boost for Labour," *The Times*, 3rd June 1970, p.1

No Difference	17.89	23.69	28.36
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Which party would be more likely to spend more on pensions and social services, the Conservatives or Labour, or wouldn't there be any difference between them on this? (% of respondents) Source" British Electoral Survey Data 1970" BES

Table 3.7 Prosperity under a Conservative Government

	% of Poll
Better Off	32.42
Worse Off	7.84
Little Difference	46.52
Don't Know	13.22
N/A	1.03

If a Conservative Government came in, would it make you better or worse off, or wouldn't it make much difference? (%) Source "British Electoral Survey Data 1970" BES

A similar strategy to highlight Labour's dispassionate attitude was undertaken in a 1979 election when the 'crisis what crisis' misquote of James Callaghan was used to highlight how Labour could not persuade their trade union colleagues to 'bury the dead' during the 'Winter of Discontent.' There were attempts to promote Labour's uncaring image during the 2001 election although the public still believed that the Tories were particularly hard-hearted regarding public service provision.

Furthermore Table 3.8 suggests that the public at the start of the election campaign did not believe that Labour was responsible for any economic crisis in 1970. Over a quarter of the respondents believed that the Macmillan and Home Governments were responsible for Britain's economic difficulties, despite six years having passed and two elections having been contested. Most of the respondents in Tables 3.9 and 3.10 suggested that their economic circumstances had not changed during the

Wilson Administration, and they were satisfied about the governments' economic record.

Table 3.8 Economic Difficulties: Fault of Labour or Conservative Government?

	1966	1977
Conservative	48.78	33.43
Labour	15.56	24.83
Neither	0	0.99
Both Equally	35.66	28.47
Don't Know	0	12.28

Do you think that Britain's economic difficulties are mainly the fault of the Labour Government or of the last Conservative Government? (% of respondents) Source: "British Electoral Survey Data 1970" BES

Table 3.9 Labour Government and Personal Wealth

	% of Poll
Better Off	17.52
Worse Off	29.19
Little Difference	51.53
Don't Know	1.75
N/A	0.87

Has the Labour Government made you better or worse off, or hasn't it made much difference? (% of respondents) Source: "British Electoral Survey Data 1970" BES

Table 3.10 Satisfaction with the Labour Economic Policies

	1966	1970
Very Satisfied	13.67	13.62
Fairly Satisfied	44.67	33.97
Neutral Mixed	15.9	12.69
Fair Dissatisfied	16.69	18.82
Very Dissatisfied	9.06	12.2
Don't Know	0	8.7

Speaking more generally, how satisfied are you with the government's handling of Britain's economic affairs? (% of respondents) Source: "British Electoral Survey Data 1970" BES

Despite the intensive negative campaigning on the issue of strikes, the Tories failed to convince a clear majority of the electorate that they had the better approach to industrial relations. Table 3.11 charts how there were more voters who could not recognise the differences between the parties on this issue, then those who felt one party was better than the other.

Table 3.11 Political Party with Best Approach to Strikes

	1964	1966	1970
Conservative	10.05	13.2	23.29
Labour	37.55	32.79	20.05
Not Much Difference	52.39	54.01	44.55
Don't	0	0	12.02

Which party do you think has the better approach to strikes, the Conservatives or Labour, or don't you think there is much difference between them on this? (% of respondents) Source: "British Electoral Survey Data 1970" BES

3.4 Conclusions

This chapter has used the Brassington and Pettitt framework to analyse the Conservatives' product for the 1970 election. The analysis has answered the research questions regarding how important was the promotion of the personal ideological belief of senior Tory politicians to the Conservative marketing strategy, and why were some Conservative marketing initiatives unsuccessful in the 1970 campaign. The material within this chapter has also contributed to the research question that considers whether the Conservatives were undertaking political marketing before the terminology became commonplace within academic literature. By answering these statements, this chapter has reassessed the historical 'innovativeness' of the Tory market orientation, as well as contributed to various academic debates.

Firstly, this chapter demonstrates that a substantial amount of 'core' ideology was promoted during the campaign and there were specific messages associated with Heath's personal beliefs. The existence of core ideology also counteracts the popular assertions that Heath was only concerned to market policies during this election campaign, and the promotion of the Tory leader's political beliefs formed a component of the core product marketing. A substantial and wide-ranging tangible policy manifesto was marketed to the electorate as well as a significant amount of core ideology. Bold policy projection was undertaken on a wide variety of topics and this marketing can be viewed as the natural consequence of Heath's particular interest in marketing policies. This forthright and wide ranging approach contrasts with the restrained policy promotion during the 1979 election and the bold, yet specific, policy promotion during the 2001 campaign. In contrast to the 1979 election where it would be difficult to gleam much ideological or policy information

from Thatcher's photo opportunities such as her appearance at a Suffolk Farm or in a Bristol Kleenex Factory, Heath's city walkabout frequently involved the marketing of Tory policies as well as his personal political beliefs.

In regard to the research questions concerning the failure of marketing initiatives in the 1970 campaign, as well as whether the Tories were undertaking political marketing before the terminology became commonplace within academic literature, the party promotions did not provoke the variety of negative responses that would be evident in 1979 or 2001. The party was not accused of being evasive during policy marketing, and there were attempts to present a personal dimension to the party ideology and especially Heath's individual beliefs. The party also managed to conduct an innovative promotion of Heath, who remained a difficult 'brand' to be accepted to the electorate. There has been justifiable praise regarding the innovative efforts to promote Thatcher during the 1979 election, but Thatcher was largely amenable to the ideas of professionals such as Gordon Reece and Saatchi and Saatchi. Heath commanded a less assured TV persona and was suspicious of personality based marketing, so Geoffrey Tucker should be recognised for working under more difficult circumstances during the 1970 campaign. With particular reference to Scammell's comments that were earlier outlined in this chapter³⁸⁰, the Conservative marketing strategy for the 1970 election should be offered some individual praise.

The major failure associated with the Tories' marketing strategy was their negative campaigning. This promotion was criticised for the 'harshness' of the tone and for not inspiring the electorate with policy detail. The large quantity of personal attacks conflicted with the pre campaign assertions that only positive ideas would be presented to the electorate. The negative campaigning created a "harsh" personality for the party, as well as an uninspiring image. The emotive attacks did not cause the electorate to believe in the Tory policies or ideas, and the negative campaigning only gained salience during the final campaigning week when negative

³⁸⁰ Scammell (1995) pp.55- 57

trade figures were unveiled for May 1970. The intensive negative campaigning and electoral fervour would be replicated in the 2001 election, and the party would not benefit from final week revelations to support their messages.

The party was accused of evasiveness regarding the potential consequences of electing a Tory government. In contrast to the 1979 campaign the Tories would refrain from admitting their limitations in resolving every problem even if they were in power. In a similar way to the 2001 election, the party particularly focused on life under a re-elected Labour Government at the expense of discussing the consequences of their own election.

The 1970 election was conducted in difficult circumstances for the Conservatives. The party had to market an unpopular leader, was divided on key national issues, and had a policy agenda that was uninspiring to the electorate. The Tories also began the 1970 election behind Labour in the opinion polls and their leader never carried public regard and appeared stubborn, dull and bureaucratic.

Despite this apparent 'losing' situation, and the failure of marketing initiatives, the Tories did implement innovative political marketing techniques, to promote a substantial policy manifesto with conviction, as well as portraying Heath as a plausible national leader.

Chapter 4: 1975- 1979: Product and Marketing Strategy Formation

4.1 Introduction, Key Personnel and Previous Commentary

This chapter is the second of the accounts that use Lilleker and Negrine's "proactive" and "reactive" framework,³⁸¹ and this analysis considers the Conservative marketing strategy between 1975 and 1979. This chapter answers the research questions regarding what were the key issues that frustrated the development of Conservative political marketing during the Thatcher opposition. As a result of considering the latter question, this chapter counters the frequently held perception that the marketing and product development between 1975 and 1979 was highly innovative in nature.

4.1.1 Political Context

Despite the circumstances being different for the Tories following the 1974 elections, the party could learn lessons from their market orientation between 1966 and 1970. The development of the product and promotional strategy could be assisted if the whole Tory party recognised the importance of market orientation. The Heath opposition period had witnessed continual tension amongst politicians as well as between politicians and the media professionals concerning marketing resources, and the attitudes of senior politicians regarding extensive promotional campaigns. Furthermore the whole party could show a greater willingness to work with the media for the sake of effective marketing. The Heath era had witnessed the constant suspicion that the British media had a left wing bias and there were few attempts to develop productive working relationships with the media. As a result of being more amenable to the marketing process than Edward Heath, Margaret Thatcher could personally assist with the strategic development. There were many occasions, including the 1967 *Queen* interview and the Portsmouth

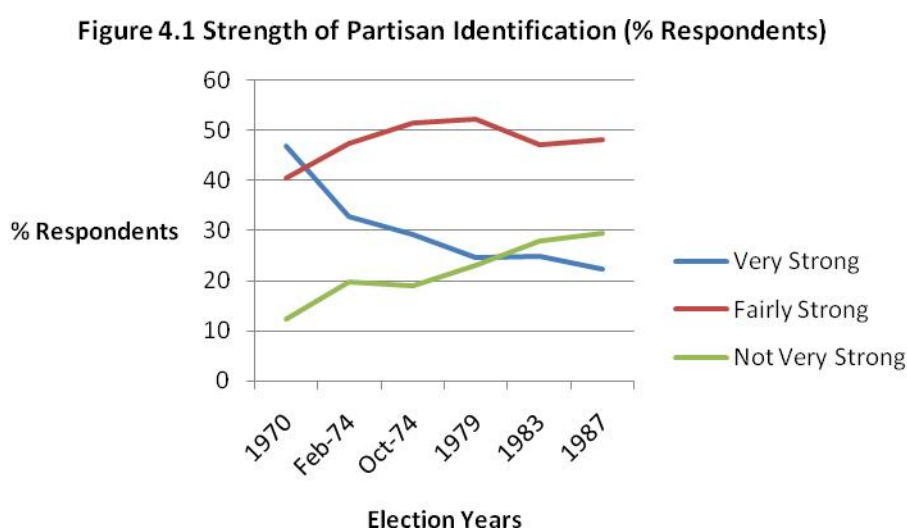
³⁸¹ Negrine and Lilleker (2003) pp.200- 201

walkabout, when Heath displayed his distrust about market orientation and this suspicion compromised the effectiveness of those initiatives.

The adoption of a proactive marketing approach would witness the Tories understanding that competent promotions were essential for a modern political outfit. The party would devote enough financial and human resources for the marketing initiatives and innovative thinking would involve the party using new forms of marketing. The use of techniques would include the extensive use of colourful photo opportunities for the ever increasing electorate who possessed a colour television. Innovative promotion would involve the positioning of adverts within cinemas as well as in specialist magazines, which were two arenas that had been previously unused by the party marketers. An extensive circle of media professionals would produce fresh and interesting messages within the press releases, headlines, soundbites and photo opportunities. The new concept of a mainstream British political party being lead by a female would provide a rich vein of verbal and visual marketable material, but the amount of national issues arising between 1975 and 1979 meant that the Tories needed to market their messages in an innovative way at particularly short notice.

A reactive strategy would involve a negative, fearful and dismissive attitude towards marketing. The promotion of Thatcher would not be as extensive due to the fear that there would be an intensive negative reaction from the media and public regarding a potential female prime minister. A reactive approach would be evident if the party rejected the opinions of backbench MPs, activists and voters during the formation of the marketing strategy and the product. Policies on key issues such as industrial relations and prices would be formulated by senior politicians and imposed on the party without any regard that the outfit would be accused of being 'out of touch.' The reactive party would also regard themselves as 'naturally' newsworthy because of their status as the official government opposition and the media would be expected to contact them for their reaction to developing news stories such as the frequent industrial relations disputes.

The Thatcher opposition occurred when voting trends, which had originally begun in the Heath opposition, became more dealigned in nature. Voters were increasingly admitting that they did not hold 'very strong' links to a particular party. The 'strongest' identification fell below the 'not very strong' classification for the first time in the 1979 election. The graph within Figure 4.1 includes the 1980s elections to demonstrate the continual decline of ardent partisan identification.



Respondents who said thought of self as party when initially asked (%) Source: BES
http://www.besis.org/Frameset_SplitThree.aspx?control=BESISSeriesMenu&seriesid=17

The 1970s witnessed the continued decline of social class as a factor in voting decisions whilst 'issue voting' began to be a trend amongst an increasingly volatile electorate. The February 1974 election witnessed a slump in the Tory vote by 8.6% and Labour's share of the vote by 6.0%. The Tories' loss was the sharpest decline suffered by any party since 1945 and the main beneficiaries were the Liberal Party who saw their vote virtually trebled. These increases in the Liberal as well as Nationalist votes have been described by Sarlvick and Crewe as short term middle class protests on key national issues such as industrial unrest.³⁸² This analysis is supported by a post February 1974 poll citing 35% of Liberal voters that defined

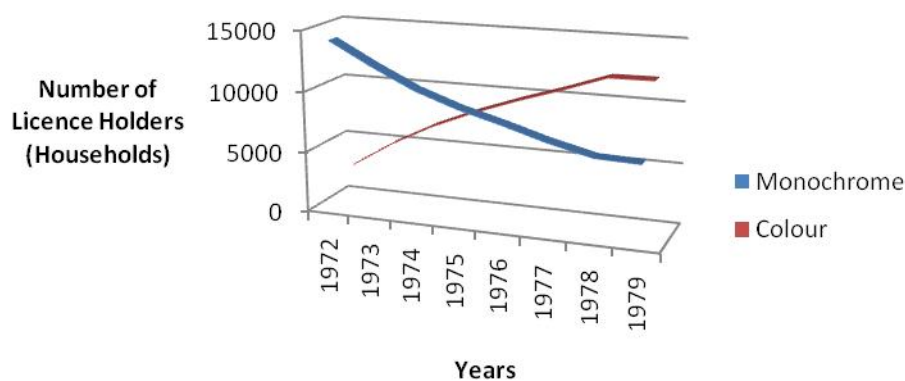
³⁸² Bo Sarlvick and Ivor Crewe (1983) *Decade of Dealignment*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, pp.45- 46

their political decisions based on 'being against' rather than 'for' a party whilst 9% of Conservatives and 14% of Labour voters were categorising their verdicts in this way.³⁸³ Specific policies were an additional factor on the decline of social class as a voting factor. Chapter Two chronicled the initial development of this new group that had been 'freed' by class constraints during the 1960s and particularly consisted of skilled working class professionals. Sarlvick and Crewe note how in the late 1970s, only 37% of Labour voters supporting the Callaghan Government's income policy, and over a third of Labour supporters felt that their party was too willing to listen to the unions.³⁸⁴ The Tory marketing could potentially communicate salient messages to this particular electoral group.

4.1.2 Marketing Developments

A largely supportive press assisted the execution of Tory marketing during the 1970s but an innovative strategy would additionally exploit colour TV for political marketing. Figure 4.2 highlights the rise in colour television licences. An innovative political party would subsequently recognise that their televised marketing would be subsequently more 'vivid' in nature if they used this enhanced form of visual media.

Figure 4.2 Number of Broadcasting Licences (Households)



³⁸³ David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh (1974) *The British General Election of February 1974*, London, Macmillan, p.143

³⁸⁴ Sarlvick and Crewe (1983) pp.145-7, p.327

Source: "Table 20.1 Broadcast receiving Licences and Cinemas" in Monthly Digest of Statistics, June 1980, Number 414, p.161

Although television news had not become a twenty-four hour operation of a style that would be evident during the Hague opposition, the Tories had the opportunity to market themselves on the new BBC and ITV lunchtime bulletins between 1975 and 1979.³⁸⁵

4.1.3 Existing Literature

The product formation and marketing by the Thatcher opposition is praised by Lees Marshment who describes the development of a truly "market orientated" outfit in the context of her sales, product and market orientation model.³⁸⁶ Scammell believes that this period represented "a landmark in the use of marketing in British politics [including] the expansion of the sphere of media experts to include the developments of communications strategy, overall co-ordination of publicity material and control of party political and election broadcasts."³⁸⁷ Scammell highlights the role of Margaret Thatcher in the market orientation process in exploiting "marketing to a significant degree in the shaping of the party's political programme, devising electoral strategy and designing communication campaign."³⁸⁸ Blake and Behrens also pay tribute to the "smooth and highly efficient party machine."³⁸⁹

This chapter takes a more measured perspective and argues that the Tories only gradually adopted marketing and that market orientation often remained a difficult process. This analysis conflicts with Scammell by arguing that the party sometimes struggled to surmount the first stage of the marketing process with an understanding of how they could return to governing power.

³⁸⁵ Butler and Kavanagh (1974) p.143

³⁸⁶ Lees Marshment (2003) p.4

³⁸⁷ Margaret Scammell (1995) *Designer Politics*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, p.87

³⁸⁸ Scammell (1995) p.272

³⁸⁹ Robert Blake (1985) *The Conservative Party from Peel to Thatcher*, London, Methuen, p.333

4.1.4 Key Personnel

Table 4.1 outlines the personnel who played a key role in the Conservatives' market orientation between 1975 and 1979.

Table 4.1 Key Personnel³⁹⁰

Name	Title	Responsibilities	Report to
Saatchi & Saatchi	Advertising Professionals (Employed by Party from March 1978 onwards)	Development of Party Advertising	Gordon Reece (Saatchi MD, Tim Bell, would also work closely with Thatcher.)
Tim Bell	Director of Advertising	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Overseeing work of Saatchi & Saatchi- Link between organisation and party. (Saatchi Brothers maintain a lower profile.)- Advisers of 1979 election co-ordination.	Close working relationship with Reece and Thatcher
Gordon Reece	Marketing Advisor to Thatcher. Director of Publicity from March 1978	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Provides marketing advice to Thatcher- 1978 onwards: oversees party marketing strategy	Thatcher
Tom Hooson	Director of Communications 1976 to 1978	Co-ordinating party marketing strategy	Thatcher

³⁹⁰ Information for Table 4.1 from Butler and Kavanagh (1980) and Tim Bell "The Conservative Advertising Campaign" in Robert Worcester and Martin Harrop (eds) (1982) *Political Communications. The General Election Campaign of 1979*, London, George Allen

Name	Title	Responsibilities	Report to
D. K. Britto	Opinion Poll Advisor	Disseminating psephological information	Reece and Thatcher
Chris Patten	Research Department Director	Providing research material and strategy information for shadow ministers	Sir Keith Joseph/ Richard Ryder/ Thatcher
Richard Ryder	Thatcher's Political Secretary	Co-ordinating Thatcher's Private Office	Thatcher

This chapter will chronicle the hiring of Saatchi and Saatchi by the Conservatives in 1978, and Cockett notes that the firm was the biggest advertising company in Britain in the mid-seventies. Their financial turnover was £71 million a year and 744 people were employed with this organisation. Saatchi and Saatchi had also done a prominent advertising campaign for the Manpower Service Commission in 1977.³⁹¹ Whilst employed with the Tories, the firm would report to Gordon Reece. Tim Bell, managing director of Saatchi and Saatchi, would also maintain a close working relationship with Margaret Thatcher.³⁹² Cockett additionally notes that “Bell was to become the most influential figure in the party’s publicity campaigns throughout the 1980s³⁹³

This chapter will highlight the extensive work of Gordon Reece during the 1975-1979 opposition, to reform the promotional strategy of the Conservative Party. Chapter Two highlighted how Reece was part of the Thursday Communications Group during the Heath opposition. Having been a floor manager for London

³⁹¹ Cockett in Seldon and Ball (eds) (1994) p.572

³⁹² Bell in Worcester and Harrop (eds) (1982) pp.10-11

³⁹³ Cockett in Seldon and Bell (eds) (1994) p.573

Weekend Television, and a TV producer, Reece would provide advice to Margaret Thatcher about effective political promotion. He would replace Tom Hooson to become the Conservatives' Director of Publicity in March 1978 as part of the party's attempts to market the party in a "more vigorous way."³⁹⁴

Other key personnel included Chris Patten, Director of the Conservative Research Department, who provided material for major party policy documents including *The Right Approach* and *The Right Approach to the Economy*, as well as Thatcher's major political and economic statements. Thatcher's parliamentary private secretaries, Adam Butler and John Stanley would also assist with the speech writing.³⁹⁵ Keith Britto of the Research Department would advise on opinion polling throughout the opposition period and the 1979 election campaign.³⁹⁶ Day-to-day management of Thatcher's private office was organised by Richard Ryder. Chapters Four and Five will also highlight the ideas of Ryder regarding the promotion of the Tory Party during the opposition period.

The chapter begins by examining what were the key issues that frustrated the development of Conservative political marketing. The analysis focuses on how the morale sapping 1974 election defeats particularly impacted on product formation and market orientation. There continued to be internal party tension associated with the 1974 results, the new 'radical' ideas that were being suggested by Thatcher's supporters and the nature of the February 1975 leadership election, when there were suggestions that Heath was a 'tired' leader after nine years in charge.

³⁹⁴ Robert Behrens (1980) *The Conservative Party from Heath to Thatcher*, London, Saxon House, p.58

³⁹⁵ Butler and Kavanagh (1980) p.68, Scammell (1995) p.75

³⁹⁶ Butler and Kavanagh (1980) p.276

4.2 Internal Factors against Political Marketing

4.2.1 *Accepting the Election Defeat*

The Conservatives marketed themselves in the October 1974 election as the party who could “form a coalition of talents that can put Britain back on course [and] unite this country.”³⁹⁷ In the consensus attitude of 1970s British politics,³⁹⁸ this attempt to portray the Tories as ‘champions of national unity’ was intended to provide relief for the electorate after the ‘three day week and industrial unrest that had begun in December 1973.’³⁹⁹ The ‘national unity’ perspective attempted to attract the Liberal supporters, which this chapter has already demonstrated had a decisive influence in the Tories losing power in the February 1974 contest. However the party was criticised for appearing irrelevant to modern Britain and engaging in vague and negative campaigning that predicted a “dire future” for the country, without providing any reasons for these bleak predictions.⁴⁰⁰ Heath was hampered by the status of losing two previous elections and he was criticised for appearing dull and aloof in party broadcasts.⁴⁰¹

The October 1974 defeat and Thatcher’s ascent to leadership in the following February 1975 led to a product formation strategy that focused on formulating ideology rather than developing policy. Margaret Thatcher viewed Heath as an “ideological traitor” as well as a weak politician for promoting the ideas of coalition government.⁴⁰² She also believed that her predecessors had “been over-prepared in terms of detailed policy.”⁴⁰³ Her view was shared by the Conservative Research Department who criticised the 1970 product for consisting of an excessively diverse range of policies without a coherent overriding theme.⁴⁰⁴ The concentration on

³⁹⁷ *Conservative Party Election Broadcast, 27th September 1974,*

<http://www.psr.keele.ac.uk/area/uk/pebs/con74b.htm>

³⁹⁸ Whitehead (1985) pp.331- 334

³⁹⁹ Sir Geoffrey Howe (2004) “Can 364 Economists All be Wrong,” *Chancellors Reflect Lecture at London School of Economics*, p.4

⁴⁰⁰ David Green (1975) “What was not said?” *Political Quarterly*, Volume 46, Issue 2, p.161

⁴⁰¹ Margaret Thatcher (1995) *The Path to Power*, London, Harper Collins, p.460

⁴⁰² Interview with Michael Dobbs, 11th May 2006

⁴⁰³ Interview with Sir John Hoskyns, 26th January 2006

⁴⁰⁴ “Memo from James Douglas and Chris Patten, 28th February 1975,” *THCR 2/6/1/27 Committees and Policy Groups: Administration of Policy Groups*

'values' was supported by Sir John Hoskyns, author of the *Stepping Stones* document, who criticised the Heathite party for a lack of an "intellectual base" that had caused the government to 'humiliatingly' abort their industrial relations legislation in 1972 following a series of strikes.⁴⁰⁵ The resolve of the Thatcherites, and their strategic distancing from the previous regime, made it difficult for Heath supporters to enthusiastically endorse the new personnel and their new ideas.

The party remained divided about policy detail in a similar way to the Heath and Hague oppositions. It would take until 1979 for the formation of a product that would sufficiently satisfy the shadow ministers including James Prior and Ian Gilmour who wanted a cautious product, and the members who demanded a more ambitious agenda. However the 1975 to 1979 arguments were successfully kept away from the public arena because the right wing recognised that the marketing of their radical ideas had to be restrained. Their electoral prospects could be harmed if the electorate or Heathite ministers became alarmed by specific ideas. Furthermore, the right wing was assured that Thatcher shared their ideas but she needed to suppress her true feelings for stability of her leadership position.

This chapter now considers the policy debates during this period, and the analysis has defined these arguments as a dispute between 'ambitious' and 'cautious' party representatives. Similar terminology was used in the previous chapter to describe the policy debates during the Heath opposition. The 'ambitious' ministers in the Thatcher opposition, advocated the development and marketing of a detailed and radical agenda. The 'cautious' representatives believed that a more restrained agenda needed to be communicated to the electorate. This analysis demonstrates that despite the private nature of these disagreements, the policy differences stunted the swift and innovative development of the product and the marketing strategy before the 1979 election.

4.2.2 Policy Differences

⁴⁰⁵ Interview with Sir John Hoskyns, 26th January 2006

The ‘ambitious’ MPs believed that a radical agenda with substantial press coverage and policy detail would ‘hopefully’ convince the electorate that the Tories could “look after them better than our opponents” and stimulate the electorate’s hope, idealism and dreams.⁴⁰⁶ A detailed agenda was promoted in the summer of 1978, including cuts in income tax and the retention of a regional aid structure. Other ambitious MPs believed that their eye-catching agenda should include negative campaigning with a radical and concerted attack on Labour’s personalities and policies. The Callaghan administration were accused of damaging the wealth of the electorate and that “every Labour Government put tax rates up (whilst) every Conservative Government puts tax rates down.”⁴⁰⁷ Chapter Two demonstrated that similar marketing initiatives had been used from the Heath opposition. James Callaghan had been personally criticised for his previous record as Chancellor during the devaluation crisis of 1967. The Thatcher opposition used an additional argument that Callaghan had been “around a very long time and should have been discredited long ago.”⁴⁰⁸ The electorate were also ‘warned’ about why former Labour ministers, such as Reg Prentice, quit the Labour Party,⁴⁰⁹ and how Labour had a secret policy agenda that was not just “Callaghan’s official anodyne waffle.”⁴¹⁰

The cautious attitude within the party was adopted by the shadow ministers, such as William Whitelaw who were supporters of Heath and a more collectivist agenda. After being unnerved by the industrial unrest of 1973, these ministers were arguing against the detailed promotion of policies, and the marketing of a generally radical approach to national affairs.⁴¹¹ Margaret Thatcher’s role in this policy debate originated from her view that her party had more to loose in the ‘battle of ideas.’

⁴⁰⁶ “Letter from David Howell to Sir Geoffrey Howe re the presentation of Conservative Party economic policy 4th June 1975,” *THCR 2/6/1/92 Papers Relating to Domestic Economy February to July 1975*, Geoffrey Howe “Liberating Free Enterprise, May 1977,” *THCR 26/1/27*

⁴⁰⁷ “Memo on Campaign Phrases 9th February 1978,” *THCR 2/6/1/71 Papers relating to Conservative Central Office October 1976 to April 1978*

⁴⁰⁸ “Memorandum from Tom Hooson (Head of Publicity) to Lord Thorneycroft, 3rd January 1978,” *THCR 2/7/1/32 Campaign Planning: Papers relating to Arrangements for Broadcasting and Press Conferences: November 1976 to April 1979*

⁴⁰⁹ “Letter from Nigel Lawson, 18th June 1978,” *1978JUN18SU*

⁴¹⁰ “Paper on Themes, 16th February 1978,” *1978FEB16TH*

⁴¹¹ “Letter from Sir Keith Joseph to Margaret Thatcher, 19th May 1976” *THCR 2/6/1/27*

The opposition outfit would be at risk of having their policies dismembered by a government who, although weak, divided and lacking an overall government majority, could use the civil service and statistical papers for a concerted attack.⁴¹² Furthermore Thatcher recognised that her right wing ideals were in a minority versus her shadow cabinet colleagues who distrusted her, her beliefs and believed that she had unfairly usurped Heath from his leadership. The Tory leader remained a “somewhat lonely figure” supported by followers who were “even less experienced and credible.”⁴¹³ Internal party enemies had been made after challenging and defeating Heath,⁴¹⁴ so Thatcher would be vulnerable to a leadership challenge if she attempted to assert a more extensive policy mandate that was believed to be gaining insufficient public support.⁴¹⁵

These internal policy differences were particularly prevalent during the development of industrial relations policies. Throughout the late 1970s, the group of ‘ambitious’ shadow ministers including Angus Maude, Sir Geoffrey Howe, Nigel Lawson and Sir Keith Joseph believed in the need to market the Tories as a “confident” and unified opposition against the trade unions.⁴¹⁶ The ‘ambitious’ ministers believed that their ‘cautious’ opponents marketed a defeatist attitude associated with Britain’s economy but the cautious representatives deemed that the Tories should not be attempting to provoke a confrontation with the trade unions.⁴¹⁷ The radical agenda within *Stepping Stones* was subsequently criticised for being over ambitious.⁴¹⁸

Chris Patten also suggested that the rhetoric within the consultation document about industrial relations would frighten the electorate into believing that a Tory

⁴¹² Nicholas Ridley (1991) *My Style of Government*, London, Fontana, p.13

⁴¹³ Interview with Sir John Hoskyns, 26th January 2006

⁴¹⁴ “Interview with Margaret Thatcher *LWT Weekend World* 18th September 1977,” *THCR* 2/6/1/171

⁴¹⁵ Ridley (1991) pp.10- 11

⁴¹⁶ Nigel Lawson “Thoughts on Implementing our Strategy, 15th January 1978,” 1978JAN15SU, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/archive/displaydocument.asp?docid=110321>

⁴¹⁷ Interview with Sir Malcolm Rifkind, 28th February 2006

⁴¹⁸ Ian Gilmour in “Minutes of the 51st Meeting of Leader’s Steering Committee,” 30th January 1978, *THCR* 2/6/1/249, *Strategy Papers General July 1977 to March 1979*

administration would restart the industrial confrontations that had been evident in the 1973 'three day week.' The party needed to take a non confrontational line in public, which should only be spoken by representatives such as James Prior, and William Whitelaw who were recognised for having the ability to talk in a composed way.⁴¹⁹ Thatcher adopted the cautious approach for the sake of maintaining her leadership position, and attracting more support from the electorate. She did not permit the public release of this analysis⁴²⁰ and Howe's public commentary on the trade union issue was restrained to be replaced by Prior's more cautious statements.

As a result of the Winter of Discontent, Howe believed that the public mood against the trade unions allowed the party to introduce radical measures for the labour market.⁴²¹ However Tom King, the shadow energy minister, advocated a cautious approach and believed that the trade unionists were disheartened by a difficult week that affected the "good name of the movement."⁴²² James Prior continued to believe that the party should "take things steadily" and industrial relations could not be solved by "draconian legislation [that flew] in the face of how industry worked over the previous two years."⁴²³ Chris Patten also believed that the series of vindictive, over-elaborate, unachievable and short term policy promises had to be replaced by a sense of hope that "things can be better,"⁴²⁴ and the language of the policy proposals had to represent the "common sense language about the real word."⁴²⁵ The Tory marketing during this period was praised for advocating of a bi partisan approach to resolving industrial unrest, although Prior also highlighted how the strategy was designed "to wrong foot a government already in total

⁴¹⁹ "Memo from Chris Patten to Margaret Thatcher re Stepping Stones, 10th January 1978," *THCR* 2/6/1/249

⁴²⁰ Interview with Sir John Hoskyns, 26th January 2006

⁴²¹ Howe (2004) p.7

⁴²² "Conservative Party Press Release, 19th January 1979," *THCR* 2/6/1/150 *Papers relating to industry the Winter of Discontent, January to February 1979*

⁴²³ Prior (1986) p.111

⁴²⁴ Chris Patten "Election Strategy. Some thoughts on a strategy for an election held this spring, 31st January 1979," *THCR* 2/7/1/57 *Papers relating to Campaign Tours and Meetings Planning, December 1977 to April 1979* pp8.10

⁴²⁵ Patten "Election Strategy" in *THCR* 2/7/1/57 pp.8- 10

disarray as well as providing the impression that the Tory outfit “was indeed already thinking the unthinkable about trade union reform.”⁴²⁶

Having highlighted the gradually innovative product formation, this chapter now examines the equally measured development of the marketing strategy. There was a productive relationship between politicians and strategists, which flourished when it became evident that this strategy was generally working and creating suitable amounts of positive media coverage. As a consequence of this success, the Thatcher opposition did not witness as much discontent between politicians and media professionals as in the Heath and Hague oppositions, although Margaret Thatcher did not always accept the marketing ideas of the media professionals.

4.2.3 Differences between Politicians and Media Professionals/ Politicians

The Tories suffered from a similar image problem between 1975 and 1979 that would be evident in the Hague and Heath oppositions. The party appeared as a ‘harsh’ outfit of public school educated politicians who were merely concerned to campaign for their wealthy supporters, but the Thatcher opposition witnessed a more concerted effort to solve this issue.

Sir Geoffrey Howe was particularly concerned that policies had to be marketed by “sympathetic, informal and widely representative spokesman so the party could develop a “face which the public could identify.”⁴²⁷ Keith Joseph also believed that the promotion of “down to earth people”⁴²⁸ in the party political broadcasts would gain working class support, and Richard Ryder believed that senior party representatives needed to meet the general public instead of merely ‘traditional’ party supporters. When visiting South Wales in July 1977, James Prior had to be

⁴²⁶ Prior (1986) p.111

⁴²⁷ Sir Geoffrey Howe “Party Strategy, Policy and Organisation 1st August 1976,” *1976AUG1SU*, Margaret Thatcher Foundation, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/archive/displaydocument.asp?docid=110078>

⁴²⁸ “Minutes of the 45th Meeting of Leader’s Steering Committee 13th December 1976,” *THCR 2/6/1/245 Leader’s Steering Committee, minutes and copies of papers circulated, April 1975 to March 1979*

pictured with voters as well as public service organisations such as the Welsh National Authority, rather than being pictured at the wine and cheese party of the Brecon and Radnor Conservative Association.⁴²⁹ The shadow cabinet also agreed that the party needed to demonstrate a relevance to the electorate's specific needs. The local television, radio and newspapers would be used for 'political' and 'non political' photo opportunities involving senior politicians who had a persuasive style of oratory, instead of a shadow cabinet minister who had an ineffective and unimpressive television manner.⁴³⁰

Despite her generally amenable attitude to political marketing, Thatcher occasionally replicated Heath and Hague by being not entirely compliant with the strategists during the gradual market orientation of the Tories. This measured commentary contrasts with the previous suggestions that the Tory leader was an innovative "marketing pioneer,"⁴³¹ who "was more than willing to get all the advice that she could from Reece and the Saatchis."⁴³² Howe believed that Thatcher did not understand effective marketing⁴³³ and this view is supported by the leader's occasional attempts to market policy ideas before the shadow cabinet had been consulted. Thatcher would proclaim that Britain could be "swamped" by illegal immigrants during a January 1978 *World in Action* interview, and stated to the *Guardian* that the country could not ignore the immigration problem⁴³⁴ before her colleagues had collectively discussed immigration policy. The Tories was subsequently accused of promoting a racist agenda by the media as well as the Labour Party.⁴³⁵ In hindsight, Michael Dobbs was surprised at these sudden policy announcements but characterised Thatcher as not an "instinctive consensual

⁴²⁹ "Memo Richard Ryder to Tom Hooson 29th June 1977," *THCR 2/6/1/201 Papers relating to Press and Publicity, February 1975*

⁴³⁰ "Minutes of the Weekend Publicity Initiative Group 11th May 1977," *THCR 2/7/1/33, Campaign Planning. Papers relating to proposed weekly initiatives during election campaign May- June 1977 to April 1979*

⁴³¹ Lees Marshment (2001b) p.49

⁴³² Cockett in Seldon and Ball (eds) (1994) p.572

⁴³³ Interview with Sir Geoffrey Howe, 5th April 2006

⁴³⁴ "Letter from Richard Ryder to Mrs Phyllis Buckland 12th April 1978," "Letter from Margaret Thatcher to Peter Preston (*Guardian* editor) 3rd February 1978," *THCR 2/6/1/140 Papers relating to Immigration, January to April 1978*

⁴³⁵ "Memo from Conservative Central office re Ilford North By Election 20th February 1978," *THCR 2/6/1/141 Papers relating to Immigration, February 1978*

politician.”⁴³⁶ She had a distrust and frustration for the “dragging of old timers” within her senior team so by marketing her policies before any cabinet discussion Thatcher could have some impact on the Tories’ policy development.⁴³⁷

The party had the same hopes about Tim Bell and Saatchi and Saatchi as their expectations of Geoffrey Tucker and the Thursday communications group between 1966 and 1970, as well as Nick Wood and Amanda Platell during the Hague opposition. Furthermore the media professionals appointed by Thatcher had similar restrictions like their colleagues with Heath and Hague. They were merely appointed to assist with marketing development and not policy formation. The innovative attitudes of Gordon Reece as well as Tim Bell and Saatchi and Saatchi created marketing initiatives that were designed to meet and react to the demands of the media companies. Bruce highlights Gordon Reece’s belief that the marketing of the Conservative Party and Margaret Thatcher “should be timetable[d] around the needs of the television news” to target the key electoral group of skilled working class voters who “mostly watched the early evening news, both national and regional.”⁴³⁸ The work of Saatchi and Saatchi were particularly associated with the development of the party political broadcasts that would be specifically designed for colour television, and attract the Tories’ targeted electoral groups including women, first time voters, skilled and semi skilled workers.⁴³⁹

One of the most notable marketing Saatchi and Saatchi initiatives was the ‘Labour Isn’t Working’ campaign during 1978 that involved the use of a variety of media forms including 1000 posters as well as cinematic adverts.⁴⁴⁰ The title of the initiative was designed to be symbolic of the ‘failed’ policies of the Labour Government, even with their issues of ‘strength’ such as unemployment. The introduction of this initiative during the summer was particularly effective because the campaign could keep the government under attack during the parliamentary

⁴³⁶ Interview with Michael Dobbs, 11th May 2006

⁴³⁷ Interview with Michael Dobbs, 11th May 2006

⁴³⁸ Bruce (1992) p.153

⁴³⁹ “Paper from Saatchi and Saatchi re Opinion Polls and Advertising Research 11th December 1978,” *THCR* 2/7/1/27

⁴⁴⁰ Behrens (1980) p.59

recess. The traditional 'summer holiday euphoria' was usually deemed to help the party in office but Michael Dobbs feels that he can not remember an advert which really changed the public mood as much as the 'Labour Isn't Working' campaign.⁴⁴¹

Gordon Reece was a key influence associated with the market orientation of the Tory Party. Thatcher praised Reece for being a "godsend" and "quite an education" for providing "invaluable" marketing advice.⁴⁴² She admitted that Reece had the ability to get her to "accept things I would have rejected from other people."⁴⁴³ Reece encouraged Thatcher to be pictured whilst undertaking 'normal' housewife chores including washing clothes on ITV's *World in Action*⁴⁴⁴ because he knew that these particular initiatives demonstrated that Thatcher understood the concerns of voters, and would be ideal copy for broadsheet and tabloid front pages and television programmes.⁴⁴⁵ Reece and Tim Bell attempted to develop a positive relationship between the Tories and the *Sun* because the paper was a key media outlet in 1979⁴⁴⁶ that was read by skilled manual workers who were key 'target' voters for the party. The strategy to woo the *Sun* and the rest of the popular press included Thatcher seeking advice from the editors during private meetings. Even during the Winter of Discontent, there were continuous attempts to establish better personal contact with the media and attract the "women of Labour voting households, skilled and semi- skilled workers and first time voters."⁴⁴⁷

Despite the innovative work of the media professionals, many of their efforts were frustrated by the state of the party's human and financial resources. In a similar way following the 1966 and 1997 defeat, the Tories' organisational structures were in a desperate state following the October 1974 election defeat. In the context of the first research question concerning the key issues that frustrated the Tory market orientation, the lack of resources was a key issue that frustrated the

⁴⁴¹ Interview with Michael Dobbs, 11th May 2006

⁴⁴² Thatcher (1995) p.167 and p.254

⁴⁴³ Thatcher (1995) p.273

⁴⁴⁴ Mark Hollingsworth (1997) *The Ultimate Spin Doctor: Life and Fast Times of Tim Bell*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, p.51

⁴⁴⁵ Thatcher (1995) pp.294- 295

⁴⁴⁶ Hollingsworth (1997) pp.67- 70

⁴⁴⁷ "Memo from Gordon Reece 4th December 1978, *THCR* 2/6/1/202

development of Conservative political marketing. It would take a long while to build up these structures like the process during the Heath opposition.

4.3 External Factors against Political Marketing: Resource Limitations and the Media Agenda

Barry Day highlighted the dilapidated organisational state of the Tories after losing two elections in 1974,⁴⁴⁸ and Howe noted how the senior shadow cabinet ministers had no private office, departmental press officer or driver in 1975.⁴⁴⁹ Financial constraints prevented the development of opinion poll surveys that would have assisted the product formation.⁴⁵⁰ The party communications group highlighted the irrelevant language within the marketing,⁴⁵¹ whilst there were additional concerns that the Tories remained one of the world's least resourceful parties in initiating and interpreting opinion poll research.⁴⁵²

In the summer of 1976, Janet Young recognised that there was a "real danger that the Conservative Party will become a party of amateurs" at marketing in a world where "everyone is professional."⁴⁵³ John Stanley would echo the complaints of John Rathbone in 1967 that the party was ineffectual in their promotional techniques. Stanley admitted in 1977 that the party was initiating "insufficient news value" in the most watched news programmes. The lack of Tory comment in response to interviews from Labour ministers was particularly noticeable on the popular 5:40pm BBC1 bulletin.⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁴⁸ Barry Day "The Politics of Communication or the Communication of Politics" in Worcester and Harrop (eds) (1982) p.9

⁴⁴⁹ Sir Geoffrey Howe (1994) *Conflict of Loyalty*, London, Macmillan, p.96

⁴⁵⁰ "Minutes of the 7th meeting of the Opinion Research Control Committee 1st December 1977," *THCR 2/6/1/189 Papers relating to Opinion Polls conducted by Opinion Research Centre February 1975 to May 1978*

⁴⁵¹ "Minutes of the Conservative Communications Group 2nd February 1976," *THCR 2/6/1/71*

⁴⁵² "Letter from Tom Hooson to Lord Thorneycroft 29th November 1976," and "Letter from John Stanley to Margaret Thatcher 9th November 1976," *THCR 2/6/1/89*

⁴⁵³ "Paper from Janet Young, Training Provided by Central Office, 30th June 1976" *THCR 2/6/1/68 Conservative Central Office February 1975 to July 1976*

⁴⁵⁴ "Memo from John Stanley to Conservative Party Chairman 4th February 1977," *THCR 2/6/1/201 Papers relating to Press and Publicity February 1975 to July 1977*

In contrast to the reaction of Rathbone when he resigned from the post of publicity director during the Heath era, Stanley's observations were listened to, and empathised by senior politicians whilst Rathbone's complaints, which were specifically directed towards the politicians themselves, were generally ignored. Chris Patten voiced the same concerns that the Tories were "bad at systematically running stories or ideas in the papers"⁴⁵⁵ and the party was not making an effective impact within the televised political debates because there was not a representative "as good a Labour-basher as Tony Barber was in the 1960s."⁴⁵⁶

There were innovative efforts to develop the amount of party finances and personnel, which were gradually but successfully implemented during the opposition. Alongside the deployment of external media professionals, the first marketing department in British politics was created,⁴⁵⁷ as a result of what Scammell believes was the "realisation that the traditional skills of the press officer were no longer adequate for all the demands and opportunities of modern communication."⁴⁵⁸ The operation co-ordinated a roster of media appearances by the party spokespeople, which would attempt to gain maximum exposure. A record was also kept of offers for interviews by the media that had been declined by the party. Training was developed for MPs to understand the need for the advanced promotion of party political broadcasts, and how to produce good copy. The Tories also attempted to recruit diverse range of people to volunteer and assist with the marketing.⁴⁵⁹ A similarly effective operation did not exist during the Hague opposition, and the marketing was less coordinated during the Heath era.

Despite these developments, the party resources were continually strained because an election could be potentially called at anytime during the 1974 parliament. The party would be particularly unwilling to commit to long term agreements associated

⁴⁵⁵ "Memo from Chris Patten 21st December 1977," *THCR* 2/6/1/245

⁴⁵⁶ "Memo from Chris Patten 21st December 1977," *THCR* 2/6/1/245

⁴⁵⁷ "Letter from Lord Thorneycroft to Margaret Thatcher re Party Communications 4th December 1975," and "Letter from John Stanley to Margaret Thatcher 13th April 1976," *THCR* 2/6/1/71

⁴⁵⁸ Scammell (1995) p.275

⁴⁵⁹ "Memo of A.S. Garner (Director of Organisation) 19th August 1976," *THCR* 2/6/1/71

with marketing⁴⁶⁰ and Callaghan's unexpected postponement of the October 1978 election affected the Tories' short term budgeting for the campaign.⁴⁶¹ The campaign strategy had been developed during the summer of 1978 including the hiring of the media strategists, the advertising hoardings, and the writing of a full policy manifesto.⁴⁶² The internal party discussions reveal the frustration of the Tories concerning Callaghan's "inability to decide on an election date until the decision is made for him."⁴⁶³ Despite these strategic pressures, the party did not continually feel that they needed to devote as much time, compared to the Heath and Hague oppositions, to complain about what they perceived was a media agenda against their ideas and personalities. There was generally a collective willingness to admit marketing shortcomings and work with the media to develop effective promotional initiatives. However there were occasions when the party initiated a resolute defence against 'unattractive' media ideas such as the proposed 1979 TV debate as well as particular BBC interviews. In a specific incident in Kent, a BBC Medway reporter described Margaret Thatcher as the "Ice Matron" as a result of 'yet again' refusing at the last minute to conduct interview with the local media.⁴⁶⁴

This chapter now considers how the Tories used their resources to develop opinion polling for practical and 'symbolic' reasons. Bruce believes that this opposition "proved a watershed in the use of market research to gain power"⁴⁶⁵ and certain senior politicians and strategists believed in the usefulness of opinion polling to help the party in identifying the product with "ordinary working people."⁴⁶⁶ The former Conservative Deputy Chairman, Sir Michael Fraser, believed that polling

⁴⁶⁰ "Letter from Lord Thorneycroft to Margaret Thatcher 9th August 1976," *THCR* 2/6/1/68

⁴⁶¹ Interview with Michael Dobbs 11th May 2006

⁴⁶² D.K.Britto "Opinion Research conducted since April 1977 6th July 1978," and "The Current State of Public Opinion 11th July 1978," *THCR* 2/7/1/25 *Campaign Planning General Papers, January to July 1978 to February to March 1979*

⁴⁶³ "Joint Memorandum from David Mitchell and Michael Dobbs regarding Election Timing 8th March 1979," *THCR* 2/7/1/25

⁴⁶⁴ "Memo re Mr Langley Brown. BBC Radio Medway 19th October 1976," *THCR* 2/6/1/201

⁴⁶⁵ Bruce (1992) p.83

⁴⁶⁶ Letter from Geoffrey Howe to Lord Thorneycroft re Shadow Cabinet Provincial Tours" 3rd December 1976" 1976DEC3FR, *Margaret Thatcher Foundation*, <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/archive/displaydocument.asp?docid=109771>

would “strengthen our appeal to young and manual working population,”⁴⁶⁷ whilst Sir Keith Joseph noted that the research would aid an understanding of the “more controversial and difficult” political and economic state of the UK.⁴⁶⁸ The views of the electorate were sought on the overall party image, the reaction of the electorate towards by-election results, policy details and marketing messages, but polling was not used to discover the reasoning for the 1974 election defeats. Bruce’s idea of a “watershed”⁴⁶⁹ in polling, and Scammell’s assertion that this market orientation “provided a near perfect example of strategy matching the conclusions of market research,”⁴⁷⁰ are both problematic statements. It is difficult to gauge whether any of this polling had a real influence on the product and marketing formation.

4.4 Use of Marketing Techniques

4.4.1 Opinion Polling and Focus Groups

Ridley believes that the lack of polling to discover the reasons for the 1974 election defeats was due to Thatcher’s self assurance “about what she wanted to do.”⁴⁷¹ She did not need “research organisations, study groups and policy committees,”⁴⁷² to define and implement her agenda. Nevertheless, the evidence of opinion polling suggests that the Thatcher opposition wanted to (at least) appear to be ‘listening to the electorate’ during product and marketing formation. D.K.Britto provided advice on specific electoral opinions and to ignore certain polls that provided a distorted view of the current thinking amongst the voters. As a result of this research, a series of target groups were recognised for marketing purposes including ex- Liberal voters, weak Labour supporters, and skilled manual workers.⁴⁷³ The first intensive public opinion research programme was undertaken in the summer of 1978 with monthly surveys to test public attitudes on a number of key policy issues especially

⁴⁶⁷ Letter from Lord Fraser of Kilmarnock to Mrs Thatcher 20th March 1975,” *THCR* 2/6/1/188
Papers relating to Opinion Polls March 1975 to April 1978

⁴⁶⁸ Paper from Sir Keith Joseph Policy Making 10th March 1975,” *THCR* 2/6/1/27

⁴⁶⁹ Bruce (1992) p.83

⁴⁷⁰ Scammell (1995) p.272

⁴⁷¹ Ridley (1991) p.13

⁴⁷² Ridley (1991) p.13

⁴⁷³ Britto, 6th July 1978 and 11th July 1978, *THCR* 2/7/1/25

in 'critical seats.' The conclusions of this work suggested that Margaret Thatcher appeared to be the "archetypal middle class Tory housewife."⁴⁷⁴ Kavanagh praised the innovative and carefully thought out nature of the polling between 1975 and 1979, compared to previous opposition periods⁴⁷⁵ but this development was gradual in nature. Furthermore, these polling techniques were not especially innovative in nature, due to the similarities with the methods deployed between 1966 and 1970.⁴⁷⁶

There is evidence that polling had an effect on the formation of the product and marketing strategy. When considering the range of policies that would be marketed, the party strategists cited the poll that suggested 80% of respondents "could not recall a single Conservative or Labour policy of which they either approved or disapproved."⁴⁷⁷ The electorates' views impacted on the Steering Committee's desire to market a message of national unity that had been evident within the public during the 1977 Silver Jubilee.⁴⁷⁸ Opinion polling formed part of the Tories' permanent campaigning to continuously market policy ideas and politicians to the electorate. Thatcher was similar to Heath and Hague in representing a difficult brand to be marketed to the electorate, and the promotional strategy was similar to the other opposition periods with the marketing of a politically firm and statesmanlike persona as well as a non political image. The task to market Thatcher was made easier than the promotion of Heath and Hague because this particular leader was amenable to the concept of personal promotion. Gordon Reece and Saatchi and Saatchi were heavily involved in the strategy but their techniques can't be totally regarded as innovative because some of these methods were deployed by Geoffrey Tucker and the media professionals to market Heath between 1966 and 1970.

⁴⁷⁴ Hollingsworth (1997) pp.61- 63

⁴⁷⁵ Kavanagh (1982) p.179

⁴⁷⁶ Lilleker and Negrine (2003) pp.200-201

⁴⁷⁷ A.J.B Rowe "The General Election 3rd January 1978," *THCR* 2/7/1/32

⁹⁸ "Paper circulated for the Steering Committee on 'Themes 16th February 1978," 1978FEB16TH, Margaret Thatcher Foundation,

<http://www.margaretthatcher.org/archive/displaydocument.asp?docid=109853>

4.4.2 Permanent Campaign

The development of a permanent campaign involving the continuous marketing of politicians was appropriate for the 1970s when political discourse was becoming increasingly based on the attributes of party leaders. This trend was due to the rise of television coverage that was defining and disseminating politics through a series of images.⁴⁷⁹ There were internal arguments regarding how Thatcher would be marketed to the electorate that would “allow her natural qualities to come through.”⁴⁸⁰ The effective promotion was dependent on Thatcher’s personal popularity, the requirements of the media, the importance of particular topical issues and the political stance of Callaghan. The presentation would also be dependent on whether Edward Heath had launched another attack on his leadership successor.⁴⁸¹

The marketing of Thatcher as a firm statesman was designed to demonstrate that the Tory leader possessed enough conviction to resolve Britain’s socio-economic malaise. Thatcher was compared to Churchill who was accredited for solving the “political, economic, moral and emotional problems of this nation”⁴⁸² and Thatcher promised “to achieve results” for the UK with the recapture of the “moral as well as the practical initiative from collectivism.”⁴⁸³ This promotion was additionally assisted by descriptions of the Tory leader as an ‘iron lady,’ and the commentary from sympathetic newspaper columnists who praised Thatcher’s “hard headed” nature,⁴⁸⁴ and as a “women of principle who stayed true to her beliefs.”⁴⁸⁵ Instead of being criticised as dull, aloof and excessively negative like Heath during the 1967 devaluation, or excessively populist like Hague during the 2000 fuel crisis, Margaret Thatcher was praised for her statesmanlike qualities, and “grasping the nettle” on a

⁴⁷⁹ Andrew Lock and Phil Harris (1996) “Political Marketing, Vive la Difference,” *European Journal of Marketing*, Volume 30, Issue 10/11, p.23

⁴⁸⁰ “Memo from David Boddy to Tom Hooson 11th March 1977,” *THCR* 2/6/1/201

⁴⁸¹ “Briefing Notes 15th December 1978,” *THCR* 2/7/1/27

⁴⁸² “Briefing Notes 15th December 1978,” *THCR* 2/7/1/27

⁴⁸³ Nigel Lawson (1991) *The View from Number 11*, London, Bantam Press, p.11

⁴⁸⁴ Paul Johnson “How Tomorrow’s Women will rule without yesterday’s men,” *News of the World*, 10th April 1977, p.12

⁴⁸⁵ Paul Johnson “All of a sudden Margaret Thatcher is looking like a real Prime Minister,” *Sunday Times*, 24th July 1977, p.16

difficult issue such as industrial relations with a bi- partisan approach during the broadcast on 17th January 1979.⁴⁸⁶

By marketing a more 'feminine' aspect of Thatcher's personality, the strategists hoped to nullify the electorates' concerns that they had been "never before asked to buy a woman Prime Minister."⁴⁸⁷ A press advertisement proclaimed that the potential election of the first UK female prime minister was a natural progression for an innovative party that had initiated the first women to sit in parliament and the first party to elect a woman as leader.⁴⁸⁸ It was also hoped that female voters would be attracted to the party as a result of the attempts to portray Thatcher as a 'typical' British housewife.⁴⁸⁹ Thatcher frequently appeared on television whilst interacting and empathising with the general public and her appearances were linked to the party's chosen subject of the day.

The marketing of Thatcher was not totally successful, which disputes the perception that the 1975 to 1979 opposition witnessed a continually effective series of marketing initiatives. Thatcher never led Callaghan in the leadership approval ratings, and the constant innovative marketing could not fundamentally change the statistics. The strategists rejected certain marketing initiatives including the appearance of Thatcher within a television debate with James Callaghan. Her political supporters believed that a confrontation would demonstrate that the Tory leader possessed a greater sense of honesty, cleverness and quick wittedness than Callaghan.⁴⁹⁰ However Reece believed that this TV spectacle would disrupt the general campaigning strategy⁴⁹¹ and in correspondence with London Weekend Television, Thatcher suggested that a debate was "alien to this country" where

⁴⁸⁶ "Brighter Prospects for Thatcher," *The Economist*, 20th January 1979, *THCR* 2/6/1/200
Miscellaneous Press Cuttings 1975 to March 1979

⁴⁸⁷ Neil Collins and Patrick Butler "Considerations on Market Analysis for Political Parties and Dominic Wring "Conceptualising Political Marketing: A Framework for Election Campaign Analysis" both in O' Shaughnessy (ed) (2002) p.2 and p.173.

⁴⁸⁸ *News of the World*, 2nd July 1978, *THCR* 2/6/1/202

⁴⁸⁹ Saatchi and Saatchi, 11th Dec 1978, *THCR* 2/7/1/27, pp.87- 88

⁴⁹⁰ "Memorandum from George Gardiner to Margaret Thatcher 3rd April 1979," *THCR* 2/7/1/32

⁴⁹¹ Interview with Michael Dobbs, 11th May 2006

“issues and policies decide elections not personalities. We are not electing a president, we are choosing a government.”⁴⁹²

As well as permanently marketing Thatcher, the strategists discussed the possibility to promote other senior politicians undertaking their leisure pursuits. This strategy had been implemented during the 1959 election when senior ministers such as Selwyn Lloyd were pictured horse riding, fishing and visiting football matches.⁴⁹³ The ‘Weekend Publicity Group’ in 1977 believed that the Tories needed to formulate and announce stories in ‘quiet’ news periods of weekends for maximum publicity reasons. Saturdays and Sundays were regarded as the only days in which the media showed an interest in the leisure activities of politicians so the party had to take this opportunity for extra media coverage.⁴⁹⁴ However after examining the British weekend newspapers from the summers of 1975 to 1978 when the annual summer recess could allow the party to achieve media coverage, there are very few examples of these non political stories within the quality press.

This chapter concludes by answering the two research questions concerning what were the key issues that frustrated the development of Conservative political marketing between 1975 and 1979, and were the Conservatives undertaking political marketing before the terminology became commonplace within academic literature.

4.5 Conclusions

As suggested in the introduction, this chapter has taken a more measured perspective of the Tories’ political marketing in opposition between 1975 and 1979. This approach contrasts with the existing positive commentary from commentators including Lees Marshment and Blake. These positive insights are only partly accepted within this account, which slightly disputes the argument that these

⁴⁹² “Letter from Margaret Thatcher to Mr David Cox 3rd April 1979,” *THCR* 2/7/1/32

⁴⁹³ Cockerill (1988) pp.69- 74

⁴⁹⁴ “Memo from Gordon Reece to Margaret Thatcher 20th July 1977,” *THCR* 2/61/201

marketing developments represented the 'gold' standard in political marketing evolution.

Despite the desire of the Margaret Thatcher's supporters to implement a different policy agenda compared to the Heath opposition, the spectre of the 1974 election defeats, the 'three day weeks' and industrial unrest created policy differences. In the context of the research question regarding what were the key issues that frustrated the development of Conservative political marketing, these intra party disputes slowed the process of product and marketing formation. Thatcher adopted a cautious attitude regarding the extent that she could initiate and market radical ideas because of the presence of Edward Heath's supporters who were reminded of the industrial crisis of 1973 and did not want another confrontation with the trade unions. In contrast to 2001 the negative aspects of history were impacting on the party consciousness in the Thatcher opposition whilst the party wanted to celebrate their positive history when designing their product during the Hague era. In relation to the 1966 and 1970 opposition when Angus Maude and Enoch Powell made public arguments for a more radical product, and the 1997 to 2001 era when pro European MPs figureheads, such as Kenneth Clark, made a public rejection of the Tories' anti Euro policy, the 1975 to 1979 arguments were successfully kept away from the public arena. The marketing portrayed the Tories as a united force opposite a weak and divided Labour administration.

The positive commentary within the existing literature does not appreciate the gradual nature of the Tories' adoption of innovative marketing techniques between 1975 and 1979. The party marketing was in an abject and reactive state following the 1974 election defeat and remained deficient for nearly four subsequent years. The Tories were failing to deal with questions from the media and there were many instances when Tory spokesmen were absent from interviews in peak time television programmes. Even in December 1977, the Tories would admit that they were struggling to gain enough financial and human resources for effective campaigning. The party's plight was made even more demanding because an election could be called at any time by the minority Labour government. It would

take until 1978 with the introduction of Saatchi and Saatchi, and noteworthy marketing initiatives, to allow the resources to be developed to satisfactory levels and an innovative attitude could be adopted for the marketing process. The strategy included attempts to generate newspaper coverage in a wide variety of broadsheet and tabloid newspapers, and this approach contrasted with the concern to get coverage particularly in Tory supporting newspapers such as the *Daily Mail* during the Hague opposition and particularly local papers during the Heath era.

The positive commentary does not appreciate that many of the techniques that have been attributed as 'new' in the Thatcher opposition were actually practised between 1966 and 1970. This argument has been highlighted in Chapter Two and shows that the Conservatives were undertaking political marketing before the terminology became commonplace within academic literature. While Thatcher was marketed in non political situations, Edward Heath was pictured at football matches and in sailing regattas. A similar strategy for William Hague was ridiculed by a more inquisitive and cynical media. The photo opportunities involving Hague at the Notting Hill carnival and Thorpe Park theme park were criticised for being manufactured in nature and merely a desperate attempt to attract positive media coverage. Thatcher frequently appeared on regional television but a similar approach was adopted between 1966 and 1970 although Heath was less amenable to the strategy as well as the concept of marketing that was focused on the leader.

The opinion polling that was undertaken between 1975 and 1979 was embarked upon in the Heath era on similar issues including the salience of marketing initiatives and policy messages plus the reasons associated with by-election results. There was little proactivity to discover the reasons associated with the 1974 election defeats. Polling appeared to be conducted for 'symbolic' reasons to show that the Tories were 'listening to the electorate' and re-establishing themselves as the 'natural party of government.' The senior politicians also maintained a considerable influence over the marketing whilst the media strategists organised the slogans and when a particular political idea would be communicated to the electorate. The negative campaigning associated with Labour's 'extremism' and

economic policies would be reminiscent of the 1966 to 1970 attacks. Similar attacks could not be made about 'New Labour' during the Hague opposition because of the 'fresh' nature of the Blair administration, who had successfully isolated their left wing elements and appeared to be competently managing the economy. However the Thatcher opposition was similar to the Heath and Hague eras when the negative campaigning caused the Tories to be portrayed as an abrasive outfit due to their continued emphasis on Labour's recent failures.

In comparison to the work of Geoffrey Tucker with a more reluctant Heath, or the daunting environment that was endured by Nick Wood and Amanda Platell in the Hague opposition, Reece arguably had an easier environment to conduct his work in the Thatcher opposition with amenable politicians versus a Labour Government who were a divided political force, with its beliefs and solutions having collapsed during the national socio-economic decline of the late 1970s.

It was mostly the strategists, who maintained these beliefs during the Heath and Hague oppositions. Geoffrey Tucker and his specialists successfully managed to convince the party about the merits of innovative marketing between 1966 and 1970, but Nick Wood and Amanda Platell failed to achieve similar persuasion during the Hague period. The party did not have a collective desire to change their image despite the development of 'New Labour.' The media professionals in the Thatcher opposition were able to exploit an 'opening' to market Tory politicians and policies especially after the 'Winter of Discontent,' so it is surprising that despite the dramatic marketing initiatives, Thatcher continuously remained behind Callaghan in the personal approval ratings throughout this opposition period.

Despite the gradual evolution of marketing and the problems outlined above, many of the promotional initiatives such as the 'Labour Isn't Working' campaign are still remembered to this present day. A similar initiative was not as successful during the Heath opposition due to a lack of sufficient financial investment, and a comparable strategy could not be apparent during the Hague years whilst the Tories were struggling to oppose a popular Labour Government. Furthermore the

marketing in the Thatcher opposition was assisted by senior politicians agreeing to be involved in the innovative techniques being proposed by the media professionals. This compliance was not evident in the Heath and Hague oppositions. The 1997 to 2001 era particularly witnessed a collective failure to understand the inadequacies of Tory marketing. Many politicians and strategists did not believe that their party needed to change their techniques despite the 1997 defeat, and adopt the 'disreputable' spin doctoring of New Labour. During the Heath era, the desire for marketing change came especially from the media professionals who eventually managed to convince a suspicious group of politicians about the merits of new marketing techniques.

The questioning of whether the Thatcher opposition really represented the perfect example of effective market orientation will continue within the analysis of the 1979 election product in Chapter Five.

Chapter 5: 1979 Election: The Conservatives' Party Product

5.1 Introduction, Political Context and Previous Comment

5.1.1 Introduction

This chapter is the second of the three accounts, which test Brassington and Pettitt's framework⁴⁹⁵ to consider the product that the Conservatives marketed during an election campaign. In the context of the 1979 election, this chapter answers the research questions of this thesis concerning how important was the promotion of the personal ideological beliefs of senior Tory politicians to the party's marketing strategy. Furthermore, why were some Conservative marketing initiatives unsuccessful during this particular campaign? These findings are compared to Chapter Three that considered the 1970 marketing strategy and the 2001 campaign, which is discussed in Chapter Seven.

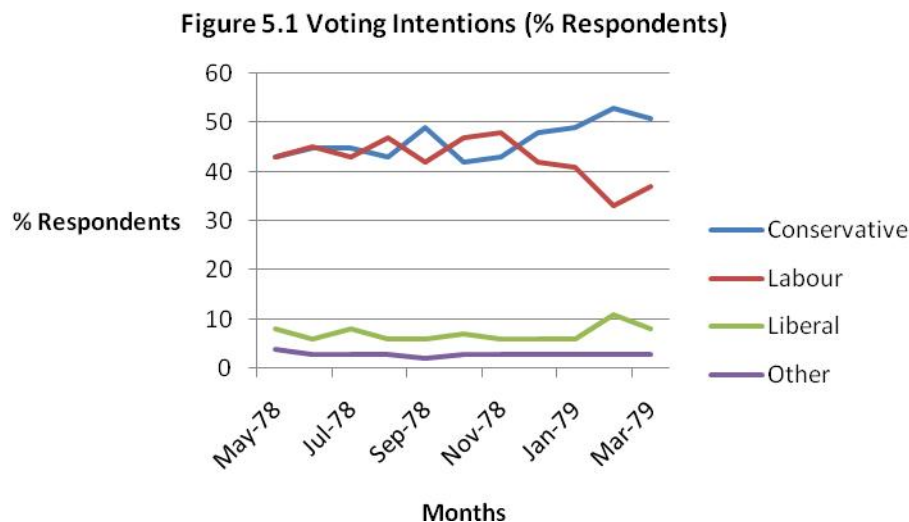
5.1.2 Political Context

The political circumstances were slightly more favourable for the Tories at the start of the 1979 election compared to the beginning of the 1970 campaign. The party had been praised for their statesmanlike approach during the 'Winter of Discontent,' whilst Labour had been criticised for their misjudged statements and generally weak attitude during the crisis.

Figure 5.1 demonstrates that Labour were four points ahead in polling during October 1978, but the Tories led in the polls in the six months to April 1979. Sarlvick and Crewe account for the Tory popularity by suggesting that the Tories had been making headway in gaining the support of the enlarged middle class, as well as former Liberal and Labour supporters who had become disillusioned with the

⁴⁹⁵ Brassington and Pettitt (2006) pp.288- 290

Callaghan Government's ability to handle industrial strikes.⁴⁹⁶ This situation favourably compares to the 1970 election when a twenty-four point Tory lead over the Wilson Government in July 1969 had changed to a deficit of seven points in May 1970.⁴⁹⁷



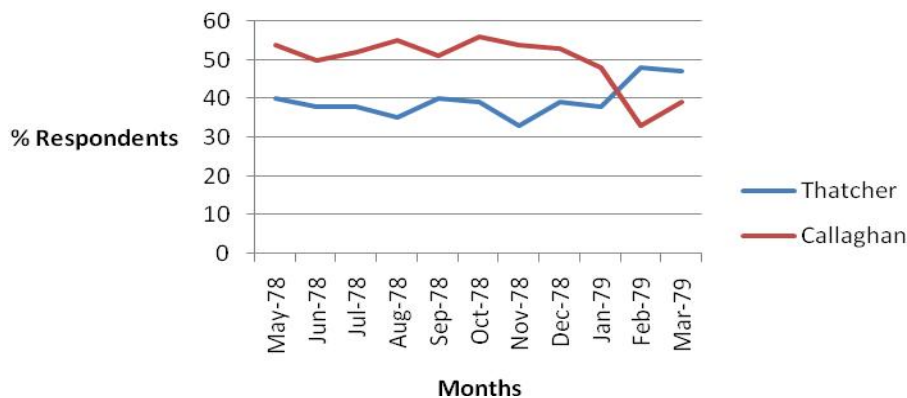
Source: Gallup Poll (%) in Butler and Butler (2000) p.274

Figure 5.2 demonstrates that Thatcher also began the campaign in a more advantageous position than Edward Heath at the beginning of the 1970 election. Chapter Three demonstrated that there was a sizeable deficit between the approval ratings of Heath and Harold Wilson, but Thatcher and Callaghan began the 1979 election with similar polling.

⁴⁹⁶ Sarlvick and Crewe (1983) pp.324-325

⁴⁹⁷ Gallup Polls in David Butler and Gareth Butler (2000) *Twentieth Century British Facts*, London, Macmillan, pp.253

**Figure 5.2 Approval of Callaghan/ Thatcher
(% Respondents)**



Source: Gallup Poll (%) in Butler and Butler (2000) p.274

The Thatcher opposition could learn from the marketing of the Tories in the 1970 election, as well as the strategies during the two contests in 1974. Chapter Three demonstrates that the negative campaigning by the Tories in 1970 caused the party to be portrayed as unnecessarily alarmist and out of touch with the views of the electorate. Butler and Pinto Duschinsky noted how Heath was in a “desperate position [who] had to be a messenger of bad tidings trying to awake the public to dangers which he claimed to see but which they did not want to hear about.”⁴⁹⁸ The Thatcher opposition could also not be guaranteed that any negative campaigning would be legitimised by a ‘last minute’ event, akin to the unveiling of bad trade figures in the 1970 campaign, which could legitimise the incessant warnings from the Tories. The conciliatory nature of the Tory product for the October 1974 election, that included proposals for a government of national unity, is criticised by Butler and Kavanagh for contributing to a colourless campaign.⁴⁹⁹ This thesis will consider whether the Tories also marketed themselves in the 1979 election as the party who would deal with the national issues, rather than becoming engaged in ‘political point scoring.’ This chapter will also examine whether the 1979 Tory product did not gain enough press coverage, apart from the odd policy

⁴⁹⁸ Butler and Pinto Duschinsky (1971) p.154

⁴⁹⁹ David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh (1975) *The British General Election of October 1974*, London, Macmillan, p.106

announcement. Butler and Kavanagh had made this criticism about the Tories' marketing strategy for the October 1974 election.⁵⁰⁰

The 1979 campaign would also be taking place in an era when personality promotion, with a particular emphasis on the party leaders, was a key feature of election campaigning.⁵⁰¹ Chapters Two and Three highlighted the marketing initiatives that focused on Heath's political beliefs and his non political interests, but the February 1974 election had witnessed the Tory leader being marketed in a "humourless, admonitory manner."⁵⁰² Heath remained considerably behind Wilson in the opinion polling throughout 1974.⁵⁰³ This chapter considers whether there was an emphasis on promoting Margaret Thatcher's political beliefs as part of the core ideological promotion in 1979.

The innovative promotion of the leader during the 1979 campaign would involve the full use of colour television. The images of Thatcher could subsequently satisfy the copy demands of mass market tabloids that had undertaken a similarly dramatic evolution in the late 1970s.

Figure 5.3 demonstrates that these particular newspapers achieved a higher circulation than their middle market competitors for the first time in 1979. Mass Market titles, such as the *Sun* and the recently launched *Star*, had the bigger share of the combined tabloid circulation of 12 million and a readership in excess of 36 million. Leapman notes that the *Sun's* success was particularly due to the "expensive but effective television advertising" and the paper surpassed the *Daily Mirror*, a key rival, in circulation during 1976.⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰⁰ Butler and Kavanagh (1975) pp.115- 116, p.121

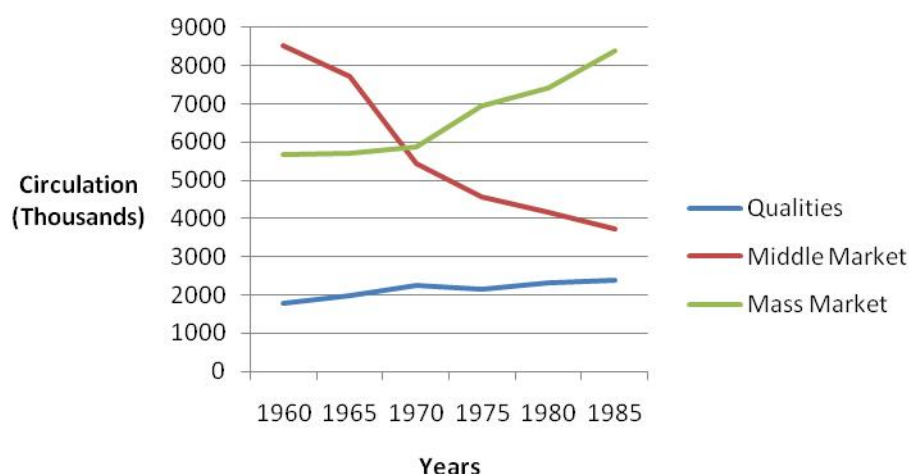
⁵⁰¹ Michael Pilsworth "Balanced Broadcasting" in David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh (1979) *The British General Election of 1979*, London, Macmillan, p.202

⁵⁰² David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh (1974) *The British General Election of February 1974*, London, Macmillan, p.81

⁵⁰³ Butler and Butler (2000) pp.272- 273

⁵⁰⁴ Michael Leapman (1983) *Barefaced Cheek The Apotheosis of Rupert Murdoch*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, pp.58-59

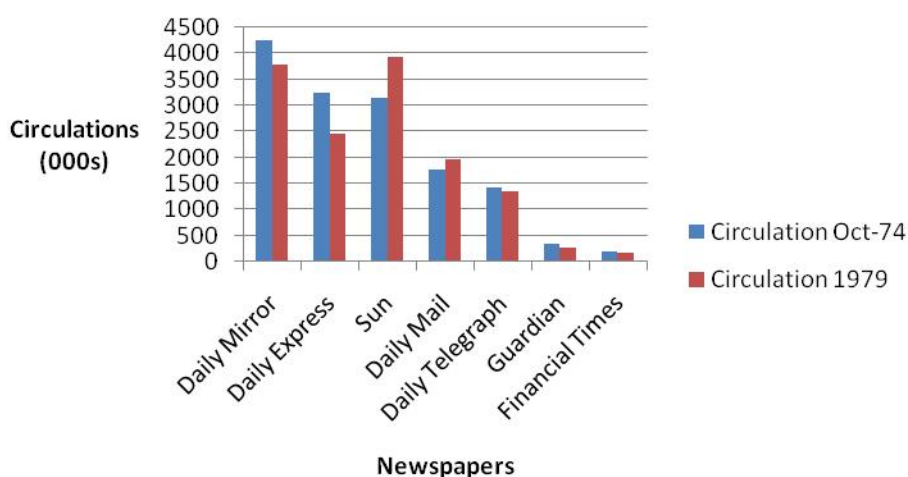
Figure 5.3 National Daily Newspapers Circulation (Thousands)



Source: Seymour Ure (1996) pp.28-29

Figure 5.4 highlights how the *Sun* was one of only two national newspapers to increase their circulation in 1979 from their level in 1974.⁵⁰⁵ As a result of their large readerships, which particularly included the target electorate of working class professionals, the mass market tabloids were an ideal arena for the provision of Tory marketing with a special emphasis on pictures of senior Tory politicians.

Figure 5.4 National Daily Newspapers (Circulation (000s))



Source: Bilton and Himelfarb in Butler and Kavanagh (1979) p.231

⁵⁰⁵ Michael Bilton and Sheldon Himelfarb "Fleet Street" in Butler and Kavanagh (1979) p.231

After being unveiled in November 1969 as a paper that would “be truly independent, but politically aware... It will never, ever sit on the fence,”⁵⁰⁶ the *Sun* had only ‘reluctantly’ supported Labour in 1970 and had changed to an equally hesitant endorsement of the Tories in February 1974. The October 1974 contest involved the newspaper campaigning for an all-party coalition.⁵⁰⁷ As a result of Rupert Murdoch’s growing concern about Labour’s apparent inability to control the trade unions, the emergence of Margaret Thatcher was regarded as a refreshing alternative to the decade of leadership between Harold Wilson and Ted Heath.⁵⁰⁸ The intense encouragement by the Conservatives with meetings, and the provision of ‘scoops’ concerning the Tory campaign, assisted the *Sun* to provide warm and highly partisan support for the Tories, as well as a highly critical analysis of Labour in the early months of 1979. The ‘Crisis what Crisis’ headline concerning James Callaghan’s reaction to the ‘Winter of Discontent’ is one of the key examples of press partisanship by the *Sun* during this period. The Tories needed to maintain the support of this paper during the election campaign when the mass and middle market tabloids were offering a particularly unrefined style of partisanship.⁵⁰⁹ In their attempts to entertain their large readerships, the mass-market tabloids were particularly focusing on the more noticeable “colourful and superficial aspects of electioneering,”⁵¹⁰ so the Tories would be ideally providing enough marketing messages that particularly concerned party personalities to achieve coverage in these papers.

The critical questioning of the Tories’ marketing techniques within this chapter is contrary to a large amount of positive commentary that has been produced about this particular election campaign. The positive remarks from the director of

⁵⁰⁶ William Shawcross (1993) *Rupert Murdoch, Ringmaster of the Information Circus*, London, Pan Books, p.153

⁵⁰⁷ Peter Kellner and Robert M Worcester “Electoral Perceptions of Media Stance” in Worcester and Martin Harrop (eds) (1982) p.62

⁵⁰⁸ Peter Chippindale and Chris Horrie (1990) *Stick it up your Punter! The Rise and Fall of the Sun*, London, Heinemann, p.51 and 55

⁵⁰⁹ Bilton and Himelfarb in Butler and Kavanagh (1980) pp.237-238

⁵¹⁰ Bilton and Himelfarb in Butler and Kavanagh (1980) p.248

publicity from the Heath era, John Rathbone, as well as Lees Marshment and Scammell are discussed within the next section of this chapter.

5.1.3 Existing Literature

Rathbone praises the professional nature of the 1979 Tory campaign that had considerable effect on the eventual result. The party had overcome their suspicions of market research and marketing professionals and was subsequently able to conduct a co-ordinated strategy.⁵¹¹ Scammell believes that “Thatcher’s Conservative Party led the way with the hiring of Saatchi and Saatchi in 1978 [with the] incorporation of marketing expertise at high levels of influence in the party organisation.”⁵¹² Scammell also applauds the party for neutralising the negative impact of Thatcher’s appearances by conducting a short election campaign and discussing the issues, including prices and the cost of living, which would most likely affect voters’ decisions.⁵¹³ Lees Marshment highlights the “electoral dividends” for the party as a result of their market orientation.⁵¹⁴

The critical standpoint within this chapter supports Cole who believed that Thatcher’s campaign speeches needed more “roughage”⁵¹⁵ and Wheeler’s description of the marketing as “watery” with an ‘unnecessary’ emphasis on initiating photo opportunities rather than marketing of policy details.⁵¹⁶ Bruce also questions the effectiveness of the photo opportunities, which are “television with the sound turned down.”⁵¹⁷ He hoped that “the lesson for the image makers in business, politics or the pressure groups, is to return to the low profile they enjoyed

⁵¹¹ Tim Rathbone “Political Communications in the 1979 General Election Campaign by One Who Was In It,” in Worcester and Harrop (eds) (1982) p.43

⁵¹² Scammell (1995) p.269

⁵¹³ Scammell (1995) p.83

⁵¹⁴ Lees Marshment (2001b) p.93

⁵¹⁵ Michael Cole “Marching With Maggie,” *The Listener*, 3rd May 1979, Volume 101, Number 2609, p.604

⁵¹⁶ David Wheeler “Campaign 79,” *The Listener*, 3rd May 1979, Volume 101, Number 2609, p.602

⁵¹⁷ Bruce (1992) p.153

before 1979 and devise events that visualise the benefits of policy, rather than ever more desperate attempts to catch the voter's eye."⁵¹⁸

These ideas echo Sarlvick and Crewe's comments that the Tories developed an undue amount of negative campaigning to create a product that was "vague and vacuous [with] imprecise promises."⁵¹⁹ Scammell argues that "blandness and excessive caution are ills associated with the political marketer's art." The "risk of boring students of politics is a cheap price to pay for strong, clear and unified images"⁵²⁰ but this thesis demonstrates that the Tories were criticised for being evasive during their policy marketing.

The next section of this chapter considers how important was the promotion of the personal ideological beliefs of senior Tory politicians to the Conservative marketing strategy in the 1979 campaign. Chapter Four highlighted how the party had consistently regarded their 'core' philosophy as a key element of their product between 1975 and 1979. Thatcher always believed that cogent political discourse should be based on a battle of ideas, and the Tory product should not be excessively policy rich like the 1970 offering.

By highlighting the extent of marketed ideology, this chapter supports Saatchi's perception that the 1979 product was no exception to the Tories' previous election offerings with its significant 'core' ideological aspect,⁵²¹ but to what extent did the politicians' personal ideological beliefs form part of the marketing?

5.2 Ideology and the Political Product

5.2.1 Core Product versus Political Marketing and Voter Orientation

The core Tory ideology was promoted within the first party election broadcast with frequent references to the free market ideals that were classed as the only effective

⁵¹⁸ Bruce (1992) p.155

⁵¹⁹ Sarlvick and Crewe (1983) p.22

⁵²⁰ Scammell (1995) pp.276- 277

⁵²¹ Saatchi (2005) p.5

methods that would stop Britain from remaining as the 'sick man of Europe.'⁵²² In the final campaigning week, Thatcher linked the core economic ideology with the party's traditional regard for freedom. There would be "a calm but resolute return to the politics and economics of the free world and [to] oppose a slide towards state control."⁵²³ The beliefs associated with the importance of law and order were marketed as a guarantee to restore the "greatness of our country again [where] everyone was equal under the law."⁵²⁴ The existence of this ideology would mean that the Tories would offer a strong response to Northern Irish terrorist threats, and communism from Africa and the Middle East.

The ideological messages frequently contained an 'accessible' form of words that replicated the 1970 and 2001 strategies. This strategy was designed to assist the electorate to relate potentially complex political ideology to real life situations. The Tories would market their free market beliefs in 1979, by suggesting that the 'mothers and fathers' of the UK had "much less to spend on the children or helping one's parents,"⁵²⁵ due to Labour's economic policies. The concern to present a relevant and coherent product was particularly linked to the desire to get coverage within the mass market tabloids. As this chapter has already demonstrated, this strategy was particularly competent considering that these newspapers were being read by working class professionals in the late 1970s.⁵²⁶ By continually adopting an intensely academic discussion about the breakdown of the Keynesian consensus, these key target sections of the electorate may not have gained the impression that the party was empathising with their financial difficulties.

The extensive promotion of the core ideology was the natural consequence of the Tories' desire to focus on ideological development between 1975 and 1979 at the expense of extensive policy formation. The next section of this chapter demonstrates how core ideology often dominated marketing initiatives at the

⁵²² *PEB*, 2nd April 1979 (All 1979 Conservative Party Election Broadcasts at <http://www.psr.keele.ac.uk/area/uk/pebs/con79.htm>)

⁵²³ James Wightman "Free Us Call by Thatcher," *Daily Telegraph*, 2nd May 1979 p.1

⁵²⁴ *PEB*, 30th April 1979

⁵²⁵ *PEB*, 2nd April 1979

⁵²⁶ Chippindale and Horrie (1990) p.60

expense of specific policy discussion. Any policy promotion was designed to placate the moderate MPs and avoid the provision of specific details that would alert Labour to the “less comfortable (and) slow motion”⁵²⁷ remedy to the nation’s problems.

5.2.2 Focusing on a Problem Solving Agenda and the Government Record

Margaret Thatcher was adamant that a detailed budget outlining every single tax cut should not be marketed during the campaign.⁵²⁸ For instance, tax reform was announced as a priority measure that would assist with the creation of a ‘free society,’⁵²⁹ but the raft of taxation ideas, including the ‘tax switch’ policy, were inconspicuously marketed during the election. In response to any detailed questioning about tax policies, the party would reaffirm the statement that a future Conservative government would “cut waste and unnecessary bureaucracy in government spending.”⁵³⁰

The privatisation policies were also linked to the development of a ‘free’ society. However the party only vaguely marketed the specific ideas and mentioned that the National Freight Corporation would be the only quoted company that would be returned to the private sector. The broad promotion of Conservative ideas also involved negative campaigning and this style of marketing was evident in the explanation of the education policies. The Labour Government was criticised for the “destruction of good schools,”⁵³¹ and the Tories promised to enhance the rights and responsibilities of parents in education, but the party did not precisely explain how these parents would be able to exercise their ‘rights.’ Specific policies encouraged firms to employ more people who were “especially trainees and apprentices [who wanted] the last year at school more closely related to the world of work with

⁵²⁷ Interview with Sir John Hoskyns, 26th January 2006

⁵²⁸ Interview with Margaret Thatcher, *BBC Radio 1* 26th April 1979,” *THCR* 2/7/1/32 *Campaigning Planning: Papers relating to arrangements for broadcasting and press conferences November 1976 to April 1979*

⁵²⁹ Alison Beckett “Battle of Issues Not Words,” *Daily Telegraph*, 16th April 1979, p.8

⁵³⁰ “Ideas to cope with Public Spending Questions,” *THCR* 2/7/1/32

⁵³¹ “Briefing Note 5th April 1979,” *THCR* 1/11/5

better career guidance.”⁵³² However there were no explanations regarding how a government imposed career development programme related to the pledges that parents and schools would have the freedom to determine their child’s education. There was no additional explanation how the Tories could provide appropriate investment to development of a suitable careers service as well as deliver tax cuts.

The previous chapter examined the intra party arguments between 1975 and 1979, which were associated with the formation of the trade union policy. The eventual proposal was marketed in the 1979 campaign in a cautious way with vague suggestions that the party wanted to work with the unions to build a strong and free market economy. Non-union affiliated workers would be protected during industrial disputes, and the Tories would ban flying pickets.”⁵³³ Despite the vagueness of the messages, the party was continually able to maintain a united image during their policy marketing. Any differences were kept away from the public arena and this approach is in stark contrast to the public arguments regarding immigration in 1970 and Europe in 2001.

An exception to the broad policy marketing was the extensive promotion of the policies to allow council house tenants to buy their property at half the market value and assist first time buyers to submit a deposit for a house.⁵³⁴ The policy involved the imposition of best practice for renting empty properties, physical security and encouraging tenants to repair and maintain their homes and estates.”⁵³⁵ As a result of these measures, the Tories hoped that there would be an extensive range of homes that could be brought by tenants and a new group of people could be included in property ownership who had previously thought that the idea “was for somebody else.”⁵³⁶ Michael Heseltine noted that this ‘right to buy’ policy was “by far the most radical pledge and as one of the core promises of

⁵³² Minutes of the Chairman’s Office Meeting 16th April 1979,” *THCR 2/7/1/2, Campaign Planning: Minutes of Meetings, 4th to 26th April 1979*

⁵³³ “Briefing Note 5th April 1979,” *THCR 1/11/5*

⁵³⁴ “Briefing Note 5th April 1979,” *THCR 1/11/5* p.147 and p.151

⁵³⁵ Michael Heseltine (2000) *Life in the Jungle, My Autobiography*, London, Hodder and Stoughton, p.194

⁵³⁶ Interview with John Maples 17th May 2006, Interview with Sir Geoffrey Howe, 5th April 2006

the election campaign.”⁵³⁷ As a result of marketing this policy, the Tories hoped to cement their support amongst the expanding number of working class professionals, including the voters who lived on the council house estates where Labour maintained strong support.⁵³⁸ Butler and Kavanagh, as well as Crewe, highlight how the Conservative canvassers reported that the marketing was effective and this policy was widely popular.⁵³⁹ The policy was the third most popular Tory proposal being presented in the 1979 campaign and achieved support from a wide spectrum of voter groups including 69% support from Labour voters.⁵⁴⁰ Crewe also makes the link between the marketing of this policy and the eventual electoral swings for the Tories in the ‘new’ towns that possessed a high concentration of high-wage manual workers who rented council houses. The party would achieve a 12.9 point swing in Harlow, 11.0 point swing in Basildon, and 9.2 point swing in Braintree.⁵⁴¹

Despite the generally vague nature of the policy promotion, the Tories echoed their 1970 strategy by focusing on their record of achievements in government, to assure the electorate that a future administration would be equally successful in implementing their proposals.⁵⁴² The party argued that the Conservative governments had previously “increase penalties for violence,”⁵⁴³ “increased spending on the National Health Service,” created “one million new jobs,” and developed “nine hundred thousand new school places” since the Second World War.⁵⁴⁴ Previous administrations were cited for always believing in tax cutting and a “future Conservative Government will cut them again”⁵⁴⁵ as well as repeat the “incentive to work and increase real home pay.”⁵⁴⁶ The marketing of this record of achievement was intended to demonstrate that the party possessed ‘realism and

⁵³⁷ Heseltine (2000) p.194

⁵³⁸ Heseltine (2000) p.195

⁵³⁹ Butler and Kavanagh (1980) p.190, Ivor Crewe “Why the Conservative Won” in Howard R Penniman (ed) (1981) *Britain at the Polls, 1979 A Study of the General Election, Washington and London*, AEI Studies, p.294

⁵⁴⁰ Crewe in Penniman (ed) (1981) p.294

⁵⁴¹ Crewe in Penniman (ed) (1981) p.293

⁵⁴² *PEB*, 25th April 1979

⁵⁴³ “Chairman’s Office Meeting 16th April 1979,” *THCR* 2/7/1/26

⁵⁴⁴ *PEB* 25th April 1979

⁵⁴⁵ *PEB*, 19th April 1979

⁵⁴⁶ *PEB*, 19th April 1979

‘integrity’ to implement their policies, regardless of any external issues. However it is also evident that the Tories did not frequently name the Heath Government during their marketing. The strategists were potentially concerned that these references would create the perception that a Thatcher government would end in a similar manner to the Heath administration with an industrial crisis and a three-day week.

This chapter has demonstrated that the core ideology was marketed throughout the 1979 election, even when the Tories were promoting policies or referring to their government achievements. However, the attempts to promote Thatcher as a conventional housewife were often undertaken at the expense of promoting her ideological beliefs. This strategy is derided by critics of political marketing who believe that the electorate should know that party leaders actually stand for rather than their non political activities.⁵⁴⁷

5.2.3 Core Product: Politicians’ Personal Beliefs

In the context of the research question regarding to what extent were the personal ideological beliefs of senior politicians forming a key component of the ‘core’ ideological marketing, these particular messages were not extensively promoted during the 1979 campaign. Shadow ministers, including Keith Joseph, who had made controversial speeches on issues such as birth control during the previous opposition period, were prevented from making similar statements during the campaign. Richard Ryder believed “very strongly about making sure that Joseph does not appear on a platform when we are discussing less government,”⁵⁴⁸ after the party chairman had made a series of controversial speeches since 1975. This approach was not fully accepted by the party and there was some criticism that “photogenic spokesman” were being used to appear on television “rather than those with the relevant portfolio.”⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁷ Brian McNair (1999) *An Introduction to Political Communication*, London, Routledge, pp.137-138,

⁵⁴⁸ “Ideas on 1979 campaigning 28th March 1979” *THCR* 2/7/1/32

⁵⁴⁹ “Fluffier TV image finally vindicated” *Daily Telegraph* 5th May 1979 p.21

The 1979 election campaign witnessed the continuance of a 'dual' strategy that had begun in 1975 to portray Thatcher as a 'conventional housewife' as well as a strong and effective statesmanlike persona. A strategy to project a non political as well as a political image was undertaken with Edward Heath towards the end of the 1970 election when the strategists initiated walkabouts into the campaigning schedule despite Heath's reticence. The dual strategy to promote Hague was attempted since 1997 but was not initiated in the 2001 campaign, due to a series of reasons including Hague's negative poll ratings, and the party's focus on attracting the core vote with traditional ideology and beliefs.

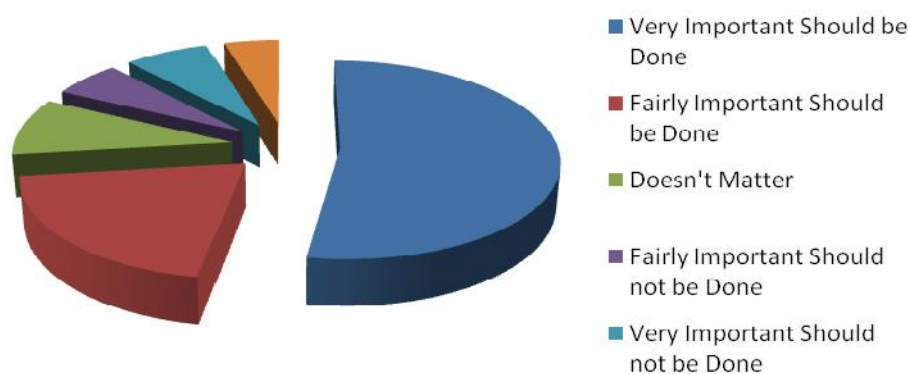
The attempts to portray the 'softer' side of Thatcher did not contain many references to her political beliefs. Scammell highlights how Gordon Reece designed Thatcher's nationwide tours with the "belief that a minute's coverage on prime-time news was worth the whole of a current affairs programme, and he advised her to limit drastically interviews with 'hostile' presenters."⁵⁵⁰ Thatcher continued to be pictured whilst undertaking domestic duties and these images would particularly assist the working class families to sympathise with the Tory leader who appeared to face the similarly mundane lifestyle issues. The neutral observer would have gained little ideological or policy information from the photo opportunities such as Thatcher tasting chocolates in a Birmingham factory.

Further photo opportunities included Thatcher swapping anecdotes with housewives during a tour of the Midlands, and the Conservative leader would also appear to be 'game for a laugh' when she cuddled a newly born calf on a Suffolk farm. There were more references to specific policies when the Tories attempted to market Thatcher as a resilient leader, but in terms of the marketing of ideological beliefs, Thatcher's individual characteristics rather than her personal ideology were predominantly promoted to facilitate this image. It was hoped that the Tory leader

⁵⁵⁰ Scammell (1995) p.275

would be perceived as having the necessary ability to disown Britain's reputation as the 'sick man of Europe' as well as drag the nation out of its post 'Winter of Discontent' malaise. The electorate were additionally assured that Thatcher would adopt a resilient attitude within the domestic political environment. The Tory leader promised the electorate that her party would not repeat the "wheeling and dealing" of the Wilson and Callaghan administrations to form coalitions to stay in power.⁵⁵¹ In her 25th April broadcast, Thatcher stated that "most of us would agree that things have not gone well for our country in the last few years"⁵⁵² and that the British people didn't "take kindly to being pushed around"⁵⁵³ under a Labour Government that was struggling to cope with powerful trade unions. Thatcher was compared to the 'great' British leaders such as Churchill, and the electorate was assured that she could be a leader of a united political outfit providing a viable alternative to the "present disastrous government."⁵⁵⁴ The marketing of this 'resilient' image would satisfy the large majority of the electorate that wanted the government to take tougher measures to prevent communist influence in Britain. Figure 5.5 highlights this popular viewpoint.

Figure 5.5 Countering Communist Influence in Britain (% Respondents)



⁵⁵¹ *Daily Telegraph*, 18th April 1979 p.36

⁵⁵² *PEB*, 25th April 1979

⁵⁵³ *PEB*, 25th April 1979

⁵⁵⁴ "Briefing Notes for Election Planning Meeting 15th December 1978," *THCR* 2/7/1/27, *Campaign Planning* 15th December 1978

Support for “taking tougher measures to prevent communist influence in Britain.”

(%) Source: “British Election Survey Data”

http://www.besis.org/Frameset_SplitThree.aspx?control=BESSeriesMenu&seriesid=17

The electorate was also invited to listen to one of Thatcher’s speeches via telephone. In the ‘Telephone Margaret Thatcher’ initiative, the public could ring up and listen to a stirring message from the Conservative Leader.”⁵⁵⁵ Thatcher discounted the possibility that her resilient leadership would be compromised because she was a woman. The Conservative leader highlighted the past achievements of female leaders in world history, and suggested that “Queen Elizabeth 1 didn’t do half badly and we did beat the Spanish Armada. And Golda Meir didn’t do half badly as modern women Prime Minister to Israel.”⁵⁵⁶

When Thatcher marketed her personal ideology to the electorate, the Tory leader stated that her beliefs were not ideological “dogma but [based] on reason and common sense.”⁵⁵⁷ Thatcher announced within the first party political broadcast that “I believe that anything other countries can achieve we can. We have the people. We have the talent” and the Conservatives would make a better use of the talent.⁵⁵⁸ In such a society, a Conservative Government would flourish in a country that was not socialist in nature.⁵⁵⁹ In a *BBC Radio One* interview targeted at a young audience, Thatcher claimed “I am not prepared to accept [decline] as a verdict for Britain.”⁵⁶⁰ These personal announcements would further enhance Thatcher’s resilient leadership as well as the belief that the Tory leader understood the problems within the UK.

⁵⁵⁵ “Memo from A.S. Garner to Margaret Thatcher 19th April 1979,” *THCR 2/7/1/47, Conservative Central Office Circulars, including copies on Questions of Policy April 1979*

⁵⁵⁶ *BBC Radio 1* 26th April 1979, *THCR 2/7/1/32*

⁵⁵⁷ Wightman *Daily Telegraph*, 17th April 1979, p.36

⁵⁵⁸ *PEB*, 30th March 1979

⁵⁵⁹ *PEB*, 30th April 1979

⁶² “*BBC Radio 1 Newsbeat*, 26th April 1979,” *THCR 2/7/1/32*

⁵⁶⁰ “*BBC Radio 1 Newsbeat*, 26th April 1979,” *THCR 2/7/1/32*

This chapter now considers the thesis research question regarding why some Conservative marketing initiatives were unsuccessful in the 1979 campaign. In contrast to the 1970 and the 2001 election, the attempts in 1979 to market a 'relevant' image were unaffected by accusations that the Tories were 'out of touch' concerning national issues. The party was recognised for marketing the widespread public mood about the perilous state of Britain in a forthright manner but the Conservatives were criticised for being evasive. This charge was the key criticism associated with the 1979 political marketing. The same criticisms about 'evasiveness' would be made in the 2001 election, particularly regarding the perceived lack of policies regarding public services. However the 1979 campaign witnessed criticism for vague marketing in a wide variety of policy areas including 'traditional' Tory topics such as free market economics and law and order. In response to the extensive criticism, the party did attempt to provide 'model' answers, although these statements were also criticised for being vague in nature.

5.3 Unsuccessful marketing initiatives

5.3.1 Tangible Product: "Evasiveness?"

The development of model answers towards the end of the campaign, demonstrated that the Tories had recognised that their marketing had not always been effective and the electorate had not extensively understood the policies.⁵⁶¹ For instance, the party accepted that they had to provide more details regarding "how we would finance our tax cuts"⁵⁶² as well as how the Trade Unions would work with a democratically elected Conservative government.⁵⁶³ A series of 'model' statements were developed on a range of issues to provide more detail regarding the tangible aspect of the political product. These answers can not be described as clichés but these statements were still criticised for being ambiguous in nature.

⁵⁶¹ "Chairman's Office Meeting 26th April 1979," *THCR* 2/7/1/26

⁵⁶² "Chairman's Office Meeting, 26th April 1979," *THCR* 2/7/1/26

⁵⁶³ "Chairman's Office Meeting, 26th April 1979," *THCR* 2/7/1/26

The 'model' answer regarding equal opportunities typifies the vague marketing with its suggestion that the party opposed "discrimination in all forms and [would] do something about it if it appears [and] recreate a real community spirit."⁵⁶⁴ There was no intention to "make sudden slashing cuts in subsidies"⁵⁶⁵ but a Conservative government would only "move gradually and steadily" to initiate more "productive and profitable real jobs."⁵⁶⁶ It is difficult to gather from this statement whether a series of measures would be implemented to resolve Britain's employment crisis with a total unemployment rate of 5.15%.⁵⁶⁷ Furthermore, the Tories continued to market a cautious attitude to trade union power despite their model answers on the subject. It was recognised that the "unions always have co-operated and always will do so with the democratically elected Government of the day."⁵⁶⁸ The model answer concerning the nationalisation policies could arguably have made the policy even more opaque in nature. The Conservatives suggested that there would be "no plans for further nationalisation,"⁵⁶⁹ although they did not rule out privatising other public sector bodies when they gained power. The model answer regarding race and immigration outlined the Conservatives' hopes to recreate the 'community spirit' but in the aftermath of the recent riots in East London and Southall, there were no specific information regarding how the community spirit would be achieved.

As a result of being evasive about their policies, the Conservatives only provided vague detail regarding the consequences of electing a Tory Government. A specific outline of what could be expected under a future administration could provide the Labour Party with valuable campaigning material regarding the 'true' scale of the Tory project. The ambiguous promotion of the potential product meant the marketing of vague messages but there was a 'honest' appraisal on the national political situation within the potential product marketing. The Tories admitted that

⁵⁶⁴ "Chairman's Office Meeting, 16th April 1979," *THCR* 2/7/1/26

⁵⁶⁵ "Messages to Candidates from Chairman of Conservative Party 27th April 1979," *THCR* 2/7/1/47

⁵⁶⁶ "Messages to Candidates from Chairman of Conservative Party 27th April 1979," *THCR* 2/7/1/47

⁵⁶⁷ Statistics from International Labour Organisation/Euromonitor International,
<http://www.gmid.euromonitor.com/StatsPage.aspx#src1>

⁵⁶⁸ "Ideas to cope with Public Spending Questions," *THCR* 2/7/1/32

⁵⁶⁹ "Ideas to cope with Public Spending Questions," *THCR* 2/7/1/32

Britain could face future socio- economic difficulties even if their party was in power and this candid yet downbeat approach was not evident during the 1970 or 2001 campaigns. The 1979 strategy also contrasts with Brassington and Pettit's criteria that 'potential' product marketing is an opportunity for a party to promote the positive consequences to the electorate, if the political outfit won the election.⁵⁷⁰

5.3.2 Potential Product: "Honesty v Evasiveness?"

The 'honest' dimension of the Tory marketing was evident in the initial party political broadcast. Thatcher assured the electorate that her party would not "make empty promises" and the task to rebuild Britain would be a hard one.⁵⁷¹ In her 'conversation' with the electorate, the Conservative Leader suggested that "none of us is so naïve as to believe that cutting taxes [would] suddenly transform everything and make our country prosperous over night."⁵⁷² In the spirit of 'bringing the country together,' Thatcher told the electorate that with the application of enough effort, the electorate would witness increased national production and services as well as individual "earnings, savings and talent."⁵⁷³ On a more general level, Thatcher promised the electorate that the Britain "which we love so much [would] find dignity and greatness and peace again."⁵⁷⁴ A falsely optimistic appraisal of the state of the UK would possibly compromise the Conservatives' credibility. By suggesting that all of these national problems could be quickly solved, the Tories would be accused of failing to provide a rational and sober political assessment.

As well as being criticised for providing frequently vague policy descriptions and predictions, the Tories were additionally reprimanded for involving themselves in intensive negative campaigning. This form of marketing was often delivered in an extremely emotive style that had not been in evident in 1970. In 1979, it was hoped

⁵⁷⁰ Brassington and Pettitt (2006) p.290

⁵⁷¹ *PEB*, 2nd April 1979

⁵⁷² *PEB*, 30th April 1979

⁵⁷³ *PEB*, 30th April 1979

⁵⁷⁴ James Wightman "Income Tax opens Election Campaign," *Daily Telegraph*, 3rd April 1979, p.1

⁵⁷⁵ *PEBs* 2nd April and 30th April 1979

that the electorate would understand these messages and recognise the incompetence and 'arrogance' of the Labour administration. Scammell describes this approach as a "traditional challenger strategy" and highlights the Tory messages that the Callaghan administration was presiding over "Britain's decline into a third rate off shore carrier with an over- taxed, over- governed and demoralised workforce ordered about by antediluvian trade union bosses."⁵⁷⁵

5.3.3 Range of Negative Campaigning

The extensive amount of negative campaigning during the 1979 election has been described by John Redwood as the "ultimate assault"⁵⁷⁶ on the Labour Party. These messages particularly attacked senior Labour Party personalities, the Labour Government's record in government and the state of 'Labour Britain' which had recently endured the industrial unrest during the 'Winter of Discontent.' The existence of these particular messages is surprising, considering that Saatchi and Saatchi had originally suggested that the Tory marketing should be "warm and sympathetic."⁵⁷⁷ However a strategy was developed that consisted of a series of severe 'augmented' attacks on the Labour Party. Furthermore, Michael Dobbs cited the division of marketing responsibilities during the 1979 campaign⁵⁷⁸ when advertisers especially dealt with the negative advertising whilst the politicians would deal with marketing the positive messages.

The wide range of policy criticisms contributed to what Geoffrey Howe describes as the "we told you so"⁵⁷⁹ analysis. The party had told the electorate in the 1974 elections that Britain would struggle to develop under a Labour Government and this strategy allowed the Tories to demonstrate the accuracy of their predictions. The initial attacks in 1979 were associated with Labour Party policies and the Callaghan Government's handling of Britain's economy. Labour were accused of

⁵⁷⁵ Scammell (1995) pp.90-91

⁵⁷⁶ Redwood (2004) p 48

⁵⁷⁷ "Saatchi and Saatchi 11th December 1978," *THCR* 2/7/1/27

⁵⁷⁸ Interview with Michael Dobbs, 11th May 2006

⁵⁷⁹ Interview with Geoffrey Howe, 5th April 2006

implementing price controls that “have done nothing to prevent inflation.”⁵⁸⁰ The second party political broadcast of the campaign involved the marketing of statistics that suggested the British worker had endured the “worst peace time inflation since the Great Plague” as well as increased taxation since October 1974.⁵⁸¹ Britain had experience a 0% average GDP since 1974, and the electorate were asked whether they believed Callaghan when he suggested that economic growth would increase to 3% a year if Labour won the election.⁵⁸² This situation conflicted with the idea that the Labour Party was “the working man’s party,”⁵⁸³ because their economic policies discouraged people from gaining employment⁵⁸⁴ and had failed to create “a stable, fair and efficient society.”⁵⁸⁵ As a result of experiencing the consequences of a high tax economy, the electorate was asked “what is stopping you”⁵⁸⁶ from voting Conservative. The economic ‘achievements’ of the Labour Government were negatively compared to other European countries in the third broadcast. Britain was cited as the European Common Market country that had the lowest hourly wages, except Ireland.⁵⁸⁷ The Callaghan administration were also accused of squandering the revenue of North Sea oil to try and win “an election in cynical disregard of the true interests if the nation.”⁵⁸⁸

This chapter has already demonstrated that the Tories marketed an ‘honest’ dimension to their potential product marketing. However, negative campaigning was also used to predict that Britain’s economy would be at a continual risk by a Labour administration. If the electorate wanted to continue their support for the Labour Government, Britain would witness a complete breakdown in the socio-economic order of the nation.⁵⁸⁹ The 25th April broadcast highlighted how Britain was failing to compete in the international economic environment due to the lack

⁵⁸⁰ “Briefing Note 5th April 1979,” *THCR* 1/11/5

⁵⁸¹ *PEB*, 19th April 1979

⁵⁸² “Answers for Questions suggested on telephone on 22nd April 1979,” *THCR* 2/1/1/32

⁵⁸³ *PEB*, 19th April 1979

⁵⁸⁴ *PEB*, 25th April 1979

⁵⁸⁵ “Chairman’s Office Meeting 22nd April 1979,” in *THCR* 2/7/1/26

⁵⁸⁶ “Chairman’s Office Meeting 16th April 1979,” in *THCR* 2/7/1/76

⁵⁸⁷ *PEB*, 25th April 1979

⁵⁸⁸ “Answers for Questions suggested on telephone on 22nd April 1979,” *THCR* 2/7/1/32

⁵⁸⁹ Interview with Andrew Cooper, 21st September 2005

of government spending on hospitals and schools.⁵⁹⁰ These initiatives were designed to gain maximum publicity that would disrupt the Labour campaign as well as satisfy the Tories' strong inner resolve "to get rid of" the Labour Government.⁵⁹¹

A vast majority of the negative messages involved the Tories attempting to demonstrate that they understood and sympathised with the economic hardship being faced by the electorate. The emotional impact was enhanced because the senior politicians were directly marketing these messages instead of the 'third' person marketing that would be undertaken in 2001. During her appearances in the party political broadcasts, Thatcher explained that "the truth is that too many of the real success stories are being written in other countries, not in Labour Britain."⁵⁹² The inclusive 'we' was used in the recognition that "we've just had a devastating winter of industrial strife [and] we saw the sick refused admission to hospitals."⁵⁹³ Sincerity was also evident within the 'model answers' that attempted to provide more detail about tangible policies. Conservative candidates were instructed to convey a sincere tone regarding Britain's current socio economic malaise.⁵⁹⁴ In the final week of the campaign, the Tories sympathised with the electorate who had become bored by the incessant electioneering by the political parties. Margaret Thatcher recognised that the electorate wanted the politicians to be quiet, so they could "think about our country, and its future, and the decision you're asking us to make," but she still wanted to offer further warnings about the "grave problems that faced Britain."⁵⁹⁵ The Tory leader reemphasised the importance of the 1979 election and that the voting day decisions would "decide what sort of country, our children and grandchildren grow up in."⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹⁰ *PEB*, 25th April 1979

⁵⁹¹ Interview with Michael Dobbs, 11th May 2006

⁵⁹² *PEB*, 2nd April 1979

⁵⁹³ *PEB*, 2nd April 1979

⁵⁹⁴ "Messages to Candidates from Chairman of Conservative Party 27th April 1979," *THCR* 2/7/1/47

⁵⁹⁵ *PEB*, 30th April 1979

⁵⁹⁶ *PEB*, 30th April 1979

Despite these sincere messages, the negative campaigning involved intensive attacks on Labour Party personnel with a continuous marketing of insinuations that compared Labour with the Communist Party. Callaghan was portrayed as a frontage for a more radical manifesto, in which the “realities of a left-wing Party would be dangerously deployed against the established institutions of this country.”⁵⁹⁷ The Tories also predicted that a returned Callaghan Government would allow the British minority to be “crushed out of existence by majority power” within trade unions and similar organisations.⁵⁹⁸ The ‘crisis what crisis’ misquote that had been applied to Callaghan during the ‘Winter of Discontent’, was continually exploited by the Conservatives. The Labour government were accused of maintaining an arrogant and ‘deluded’ belief that “everything was going pretty well under Labour” [or at least] “it would be all right tomorrow”⁵⁹⁹ and Thatcher highlighted how the Labour Government had ‘refused’ the Tories’ ‘assistance’ during the industrial crisis in January 1979.

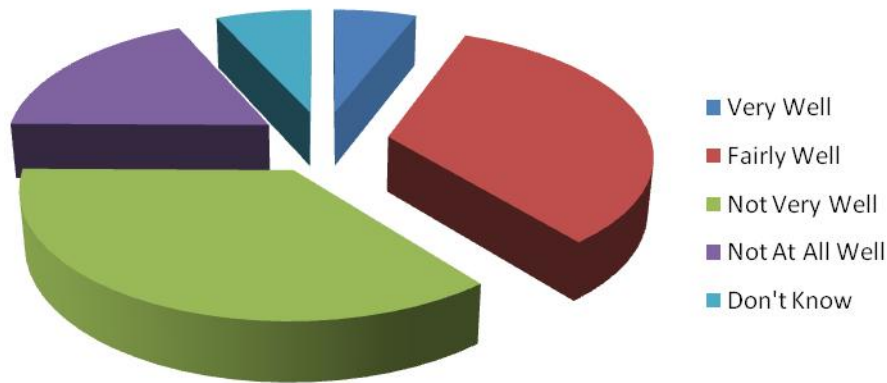
This chapter has demonstrated the Tories undertook a range of negative campaigning but these political marketing techniques occasionally backfired on the party. Despite the extensive range of attacks on the Callaghan government’s handling of the ‘Winter of Discontent,’ Figure 5.6 demonstrates that the electorate remained unconvinced that a Tory administration would handle the problem of strikes and Britain would positively change from being the ‘sick man of Europe.’

⁵⁹⁷ “Message to Candidate from Chairman of Conservative Party 28th April 1979,” in *THCR* 2/7/1/47

⁵⁹⁸ James Wightman “Mrs Thatcher’s Attack,” *Daily Telegraph* 17th April 1979 p.36

⁵⁹⁹ *PEBs*, 30th March 1979 and 2nd April 1979

Figure 5.6 Conservative Party and Strikes (% Respondents)



If the Conservative Party had been in power how well do you think they would have handled the problem of strikes- very well, fairly well, not very well, or not at all well? (%) Source: "British Election Survey Data 1979" British Electoral Survey (BES)
http://www.besis.org/Frameset_SplitThree.aspx?control=BESISSeriesMenu&seriesid=17

Negative campaigning was used to attack the Callaghan government in the context of the Labour Party's traditional policy areas of strength such as public services. The Tories highlighted how "since Labour came to power, capital spending on hospitals has actually decreased,"⁶⁰⁰ but as the campaign progressed, there remained a concern that the Labour Party was still admired for their health and welfare policies.⁶⁰¹ Senior strategists felt that the Tories "needed to attack the Labour Party more [and] take quicker tactical advantage of events to press home questions at the Labour Party conference."⁶⁰² Furthermore, the Conservatives would develop their initiative to contract 'friendly' journalists and feed questions that had been prepared by the research department to expose and hopefully 'humiliate' the Labour Party at their following day's press conference.⁶⁰³

⁶⁰⁰ PEB, 25th April 1979

⁶⁰¹ "Conservative Party had no plans for new NHS charges," *Daily Telegraph*, 19th April 1979, p.36

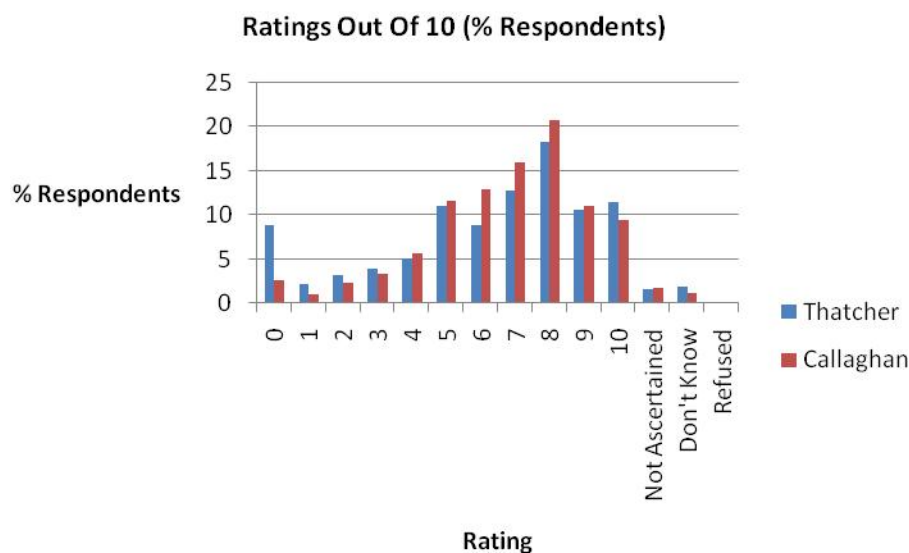
⁶⁰² "Chairman's Office Meeting 23rd April 1979," *THCR* 2/7/1/26

⁶⁰³ "Chairman's Office Meeting 18th April 1979," *THCR* 2/7/1/26

The anti-Labour messages would have an additionally adverse effect on Margaret Thatcher's personal image. She continued to be perceived as a strident and hectoring leader who was exasperated "that her policies were not being readily understood at least by the press."⁶⁰⁴ The *Washington Post* would remark upon Thatcher's "public stiffness [and] it was easy to see why opinion polls showed Mr Callaghan to be personally more popular."⁶⁰⁵

Figure 5.7 contains BES data that asked respondents to rate Callaghan and Thatcher on a scale from one to ten (one being negative to ten being positive.) Thatcher had a higher rating than Callaghan at the negative end of the scale whilst she did not achieve enough of a lead over Callaghan at the positive end of the scale.

Figure 5.7 Margaret Thatcher/ James Callaghan Approval



"What mark out of ten would you give the following- Mrs Margaret Thatcher and Mr James Callaghan?- Questions M000173/ M000174 (% of Respondents.) Source:

BES

http://www.besis.org/Frameset_SplitThree.aspx?control=BESISSeriesMenu&seriesid=1

⁶⁰⁴ Wightman *Daily Telegraph*, 28th April 1979, p.34

⁶⁰⁵ James Wightman. "Anger over Wilson disclosure," *Daily Telegraph*, 28th April 1979, p.34

5.4 Conclusions

By using the Brassington and Pettitt frameworks,⁶⁰⁶ this chapter has analysed the Tory product for the 1979 election. This account has examined how important was the promotion of the personal ideological beliefs of senior Tory politicians to the Conservative marketing strategy, as well as the reasons why some Conservative marketing initiatives were unsuccessful during the 1979 campaign. This chapter disagrees with the existing literature that has often inferred that this Conservative campaign represented a positive 'gold standard' example of effective political marketing.

The Tories marketed core ideology during the campaign. This chapter has also demonstrated that free market Ideology was promoted by the Thatcher opposition and these beliefs were also undertaken during the 1970 and 2001 campaigns. Thatcher also replicated Heath by personally marketing the party's ideology in a 'piece to camera' that formed part of the party political broadcasts. 'Freedom' had been marketed in the final 1970 party broadcast, and the concept was heavily promoted in the 1979 election. However the idea was only mentioned in 2001 in context to maintain British independence regardless of increased European integration. The belief in a 'strong' Britain was also marketed in 1979 and this particular ideology was only promoted during the 1970 campaign in context to joining the Common Market. The idea of British 'strength' was mostly related to the rejection of the European single currency and illegal asylum seekers during the 2001 election.

This chapter has also demonstrated that Thatcher's political beliefs were not extensively or effectively marketed to the electorate, who remained unconvinced that the Tory leader could be an effective Prime Minister. The promotion of Thatcher was intensely managed in a similar style to the marketing of Heath in the

⁶⁰⁶ Brassington and Pettitt (2006) pp.288-290

1970 campaign, and different to the marketing of Hague in 2001. Thatcher was forbidden from being involved in a proposed televised debate, and her extensive coaching about appearance and vocal pronunciation continued throughout the campaign. However, in a similar way to Geoffrey Tucker's task of marketing a 'dull' and 'aloof' Heath in 1970 and the mission to 'sell' a 'unpopular' William Hague in 2001, the promotion of Margaret Thatcher to the electorate was a difficult task for the strategists. Thatcher remained saddled with a 'hectoring' image and continued to be less popular than James Callaghan throughout the 1979 campaign, despite the proactive attempts by Saatchi and Saatchi and Gordon Reece.

The restrained tangible product marketing in the 1979 campaign can be viewed as the natural climax to the cautious attitudes that were displayed since 1975 during the policy formation process. The restraint is in distinct contrast to the extensive announcements on a range of policies during the 1970 campaign, and the restricted amount of policies in the 2001 election. It is possibly understandable that Thatcher's Conservative Party adopted these characteristics. The promotion of a range of controversial ideas could potentially cause internal party divisions being played out in the public arena. This spectacle was evident during the promotion of immigration policies in the 1970 election and would occur regarding the issue of Europe in the 2001 campaign. The tax policies were mentioned in an unspecific form in 1979, as in 1970 and 2001, but Thatcher's Conservatives maintained their united approach regarding the policy. The promotion of an extensive range of radical policies could also cause the electorate to believe that another 'three day week' would occur again. An 'extremist' attitude was linked to the Tory party during the 1970 and 2001 elections. Heath repudiated the ideas from Enoch Powell on the issue of immigration in 1970, but the party did not convincingly reject the 'extremist' tag in the 2001 election.

Despite the innovative techniques and the adoption of marketing principles such as the non commitment to an extensive range of policies, certain aspects of the marketing strategy backfired on the party. There were accusations that the Conservatives were appearing unnecessarily evasive regarding the marketing of

their policies as well as the potential consequences of a Tory administration. A large amount of the tangible policy messages could be dismissed on the grounds that every political party would want to achieve these objectives. There were no specific ideas associated with how this party could become successful in comparison to the previously failed administrations. This charge of ambiguousness was the most frequently cited criticism towards the Tories during the 1979 campaign and would not relent despite the production of model answers that were designed to offer more policy detail. .

Chapter Three outlined how the Conservatives initiated an intensely negative campaign in the 1970 election, despite Heath's initial assertions that his party would adopt a positive campaign. This chapter demonstrates that there was a similar discrepancy in the 1979 election with the original assumption that the Tories would be fighting an affirmative campaign, and the reality of frequent negative messages. In a further similarity to 1970, there was a split of roles within the 1979 contest when advertisers especially dealt with the negative advertising whilst the politicians would deal with communicating the positive messages. However this division was not as evident in the 2001 election campaign when both groups would involve themselves in negative campaigning.

The party initiated negative campaigning concerning the possible re election of a Labour administration, and the socio-economic nature of Britain. As part of the 'honest' appraisal of Britain's economic situation, the Tories admitted that not every single problem would be resolved by the election of a Conservative government. The statements that hard work from the electorate will only resolve national issues differ from the approach in the other campaigns. The muted statements downplayed voter expectations of a new Tory administration so there would be no disappointment if particular policies were not implemented by the next election. A more positive interpretation of these statements would suggest that the Tories were making an accurate assessment of Britain and not making reckless promises. However, the party could have possibly benefited by undertaking a more sustained positive campaign instead of continually using imagery which

were mostly reiterating and communicating negative criticisms without providing their own policy ideas. Chapter Four highlighted the positive reactions of the media and the electorate to Thatcher's 'statesmanlike' broadcasts during the 'Winter of Discontent,' so it is surprising that these transmissions were not repeated during the election. The initial attacks in the 1979 campaign were associated with Labour Party policies and the Callaghan Government's handling of Britain's economy from 1974 to 1979. A similar marketing strategy was used in the 1970 campaign to attack the economic policies of the Wilson administration. However there would be no external events during the final week of the 1979 contest, in a similar way to the unveiling of negative trade figures during the final campaigning week in 1970, which would provide the Tory messages with some enhanced credibility.

The 1979 election was a distinct opportunity for the Tories to market a product that would inspire the electorate from the socio-economic malaise of the 'Winter of Discontent' and the perception that Britain was the 'sick man of Europe.' In a contest which Margaret Thatcher believed would decide "what sort of country our children and grandchildren grow up in,"⁶⁰⁷ the electorate could have been empowered with more policy information about what the Conservatives planned for the future. The 1979 campaign witnessed the more extensive marketing of non-political facts associated with the politicians' lives in contrast to the 1970 election and in contrast to the Heath and Hague led campaigns. However the party's good intentions often backfired on the party so this strategy can not be completely regarded as the perfect example, or the 'gold standard,' of effective political marketing. The frequent criticism was one of evasiveness due to the perceived vague promotion of tangible policies. Sarlvick and Crewe are correct in their criticisms of the Conservatives' vague platitudes regarding their policy marketing.⁶⁰⁸ As a result of this analysis, there is some truth in the suggestions that the 1979 General Election was lost by the government rather than the opposition party's marketing strategy having a decisive impact on the eventual result.

⁶⁰⁷ *PEB*, 30th April 1979

⁶⁰⁸ Sarlvick and Crewe (1983) p.22

Chapter 6: 1997- 2001:

Product and Marketing Strategy Formation

6.1 Introduction, Key Personnel and Previous Commentary

This chapter forms the final part of the product and marketing formation section of this thesis. The analysis tests Lilleker and Negrine's "proactive" and "reactive" framework⁶⁰⁹ to answer the research question of this analysis concerning what were the key issues that frustrated the development of Conservative political marketing between 1997 and 2001.

6.1.1 Political Context

The political circumstances were dramatically different for the Tories following the 1997 election, in comparison to the situation that the party faced in 1975. The Hague opposition was facing a considerably more difficult task to develop and market a product, because the party was acutely divided regarding policy and ideology. The Conservatives had to additionally face a vibrant Labour Party who possessed effective marketing techniques as well as a huge electoral majority. However the politicians would ideally want to replicate the attitude of the Thatcher opposition by working with the media strategists to effectively implement their marketing initiatives. The Hague opposition would also have wanted to replicate the general ability of the party in 1979 to appear united by keeping their policy and marketing differences away from public knowledge. William Hague would preferably be amenable to the concept of political marketing in a similar way to Margaret Thatcher. However he would have possibly wanted to avoid replicating his predecessor's 'unsuspecting' policy statements, such as the 'swamping' speech in 1978, which created unwelcome media interest and compromised the carefully planned marketing strategy.

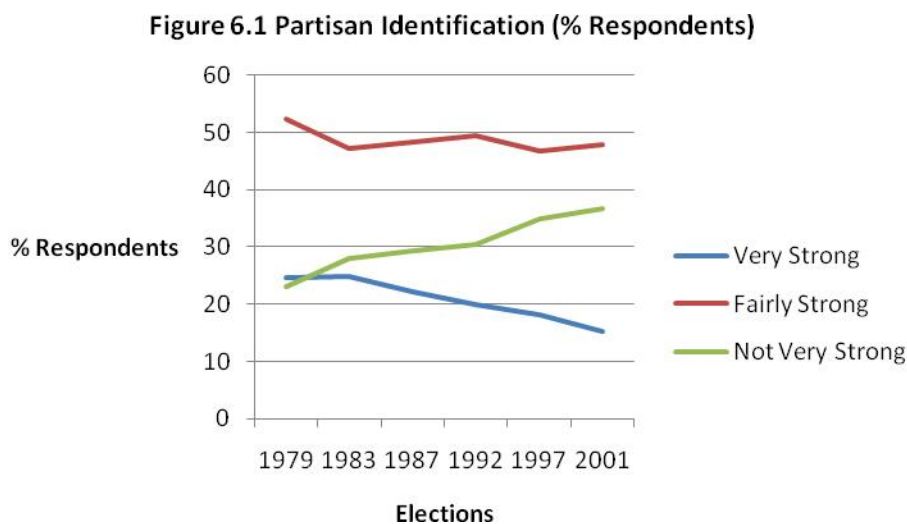
⁶⁰⁹ Negrine and Lilleker (2003) pp.200- 201

By replicating the marketing methods of the Thatcher opposition, the Tories would be deploying a proactive and innovative approach towards political communications by recognising the importance of effective market orientation and devoting enough human and financial resources to support the process. The party would also be displaying an innovative attitude following their 1997 election defeat if they marketed themselves in the extensive number of media arenas that had developed since 1979, including the twenty four hour multi channel television news environment. A wide circle of media professionals would be deployed to produce fresh and interesting press releases, sound bites and photo opportunities to portray the Tories and William Hague as a positive and plausible alternative to the extensively popular Blair administration. Cogent statements would be developed at particularly short notice for the extensive number of events that occurred between 1997 and 2001, including the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, and the September 2000 fuel crisis. This work would be made easier if the Tories rebuilt their effective relationships with previously sympathetic media outlets for the generation of positive coverage.

A reactive marketing strategy would involve senior Tories resisting the involvement of voters, MPs and activists in the product formation process. The issues that were held with great importance by the party would be heavily marketed, such as the European Single Currency, even if the majority of the electorate wanted to hear the Tories' view on other issues. Any resultant accusations that the party was 'out of touch' with the voters would be of little concern to the party. Regardless whether the outfit was now out of government for the first time in eighteen years, the reactive Conservatives would still regard themselves as naturally newsworthy. The party would believe that the media would automatically contact them for a reaction to a developing story such as the Kosovo conflict of 1999, or the fuel crisis in 2000. The outfit would believe that they did not need to employ media professionals and become involved in the 'spin culture' that was closely aligned with 'New' Labour. For instance, the marketing of William Hague would differ from the promotion of Tony Blair that had particularly focused on the Labour leader's personal characteristics. There would also be the constant suspicion amongst the Tories that

the British media had a left wing bias so the party would avoid the initiation of productive working relationships with the media.

In terms of the dealigned electorate, Figure 6.1 demonstrates that the trends, which have been highlighted in the previous chapters, continued in the Hague opposition period. Having surpassed the 'Not Very Strong' factor, the amount of respondents confessing to 'Very Strong' links to a political party continued to dramatically decline during the 1980s.



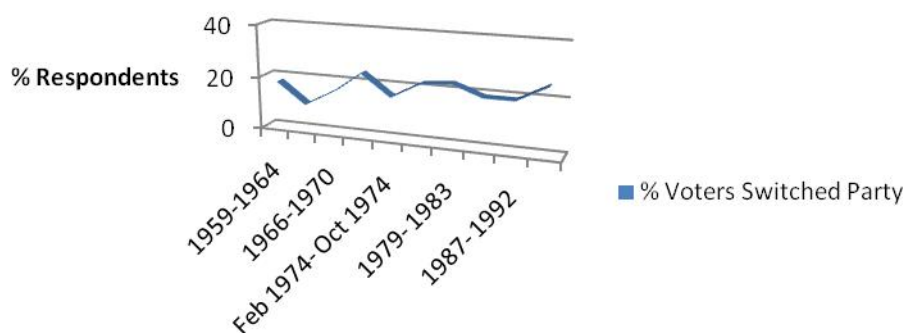
Respondents who said thought of self as party when initially asked (%) Source: BES
http://www.besis.org/Frameset_SplitThree.aspx?control=BESISSeriesMenu&seriesid=17

The factor of social class continued to become even less of a factor in voting decisions during the 1980s and 1990s. In contrast to 58% of the national workforce defining themselves as manual workers in 1961, 42% were categorised in the particular category in 1991. This contraction of British manufacturing is evident in the ratio of manufacturing employment to service jobs, with 38% in manufacturing and 47% in services in 1961 compared to 15% to 64% in 2001.⁶¹⁰ These changes led to the development of an electorate, which was less defined on the issue of class,

⁶¹⁰ David Denver (2007) *Elections and Voters in Britain*, (2nd edition,) Basingstoke, Palgrave p.75

and 'New' Labour would campaign to this wider middle class, who would usually vote Tory, by adopting a large amount of 'traditional' Conservative ideology, including the concept of privatisation.⁶¹¹ As a result of this campaigning, Denver describes the 1997 election as a "classic 'dealignment'" election when class voting and identification with the major parties reached "historically low levels."⁶¹² Figure 6.2 demonstrates that between 1992 and 1997, a record percentage of voters switched between parties, as they voted on issues rather than on 'traditional' factors such as social class.⁶¹³ This volatile electorate provided a "fluid and unpredictable"⁶¹⁴ distribution of party support and would make the Tories less guaranteed to regain their votes that had been lost since 1992.

Figure 6.2 Trends in Inter Election Volatility (% Respondents Switching Parties)



Source: Denver (2007) p.87 (Data from Anthony Heath, Roger Jowell and John Curtice "Can Labour Win" in Anthony Heath, Roger Jowell, John Curtice and Bridget Taylor (eds) (1994) Labour's Last Chance? The 1992 Election and Beyond, Aldershot, Dartmouth, p.281 and relevant BES surveys)

⁶¹¹ Philip Gould in Ivor Crewe, Brian Gosschalk and John Bartle (eds) (1998) *Political Communications: Why Labour won the General Election of 1997*, London, Frank Cass, pp.6-7

⁶¹² Denver (2007) p.77

⁶¹³ Denver (2007) p.93

⁶ John Curtice and Michael Steed "The Results Analysed" in David Butler and Dennis Kavanagh (1997) *The British General Election of 1997*, London, Macmillan, p.243

The Hague opposition would be formulating their marketing strategy in an especially hostile and fragmented media environment. In contrast to their support during Margaret Thatcher's election victories of the 1980s, the British newspaper market did not possess a "full-blooded newspaper partisanship"⁶¹⁵ that supported the Tories and adopted an intensely critical attitude towards Labour. The influence of traditionally Conservative supporting barons had been replaced by the newspaper ownership of multi conglomerates that deployed a variety of editorial thinkers who supported a variety of political causes.⁶¹⁶ Nessheim notes how Thatcherite supporters and Eurosceptic thinkers edited a key majority of the national papers during the 1990s. They became increasingly frustrated with the progress of the Tory party following the Margaret Thatcher's resignation in November 1990 as well as John Major's inability to counter Europhile MPs within the outfit.⁶¹⁷ The *Daily Mail* complained about Major's inept public relations in 1994,⁶¹⁸ William Rees Mogg implored the Tory leader to "recognise that the Maastricht treaty poisoned many people's confidence"⁶¹⁹ in the future of the European Union, and the *Sun* believed that Major was a "No Nation Tory" in 1996.⁶²⁰ The Conservatives subsequently faced an aggressive press whose proprietors, such as Rupert Murdoch, were being enticed by Labour strategists.⁶²¹

Figures 6.3 and 6.4 chart the change in newspaper partisanship between the 1992 and 1997 election campaigns. The 1992 election witnessed strongly anti Kinnock newspaper headlines, especially the *Sun*. The 1997 campaign began with the *Sun* stating their support for Labour, and the *Times* changed to being neutral in their political backing by supporting only Eurosceptic candidates of any party.

⁶¹⁵ Margaret Scammell "Newspapers Realigned" in Butler and Kavanagh (1997) p.185

⁶¹⁶ Colin Seymour Ure "Are the broadsheets becoming unhinged" in Jean Seaton (ed) (1998) *Politics and the Media: Harlots and Prerogatives at the turn of the Millennium*, Oxford, Blackwell, p.44

⁶¹⁷ Ragnhild Vindhol Nessheim (2001) "Politics and the Press in the 1990s: An Essay on the Political Alignment and Role of National Newspapers on the General Election 1992 and 1997, *English Studies*, Volume 82, Number 4, pp.361- 362

⁶¹⁸ Andrew Alexander "Ministry of Half Truth," *Daily Mail*, 11th March 1994, p.10

⁶¹⁹ William Rees Mogg "Major Slain by His Own Dagger," *The Times*, 17th December 1994, p.12

⁶²⁰ Nessheim (2001) p.363

⁶²¹ Brandenburg (2006) p.177

Figure 6.3 British Newspaper Partisanship in the 1992 Election (Number of Papers Supporting Party)

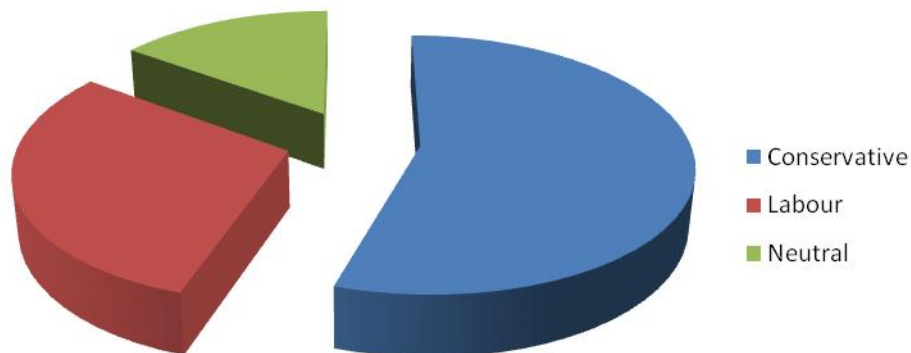


Figure 6.4 British Newspaper Partisanship in the 1997 Election (Number of Papers Supporting Party)



Sources for Figures 6.3 and 6.4: David Deacon and Dominic Wring “Partisan Dealignment and the British Press” in John Bartle, Simon Atkinson and Roger Mortimore (eds) (2002) *Political Communications. The General Election Campaign of 2001*, London, Frank Cass, p.202.

The Tories would be displaying an innovative attitude towards political marketing if they utilised the developing online technology. The internet was regarded as being in a “transitional stage”⁶²² during the 1997 campaign and e-mail was only used for

⁶²² Byron Criddle “The Local Battle” in Butler and Kavanagh (1997) p.213

internal party communications. Only fifty MPs were accessible through e-mail, and this form of marketing was not being widely used by the public⁶²³ but Ward and Gibson correctly believe that “in general the parties largely did not exploit the dynamic innovations that the internet offered them” during the election and the website was seen as merely an additional archive resource.⁶²⁴ Web usage would increase during the Hague opposition. Most major business in the UK was linked online and a third of the public would gain home internet access⁶²⁵ during the Hague opposition. The Tory website would ideally develop from being just an electronic notice board of campaign news, posters and policies.

The fragmented media environment was particularly evident in television broadcasting. The BBC1 had been losing 22% of their audience share since 1993 and 41% of viewers had deserted ITV during the same period.⁶²⁶ The proliferation of television stations, including the twenty-four-hour news outlets, created a more intense concern from broadcasters for high ratings that would justify the channel existence. Following the 1997 election when the audience for the BBC’s *Nine O’ Clock News* fell from 5.8 million to 4 million,⁶²⁷ political television underwent considerable changes during the Hague opposition. A third of the total viewing audience preferred entertainment, films and sports programming to the political coverage on the actual election night,⁶²⁸ and Tory marketing exposure could be additionally compromised by the axing of ITV’s *News at Ten* and the introduction of a BBC1 10pm bulletin. There was subsequently no prime time news on the most popular terrestrial channels and the additional termination of *World in Action* and the move of BBC1’s *Panorama* to Sunday evenings meant that there was no

⁶²³ Stephen Ward and Rachel Gibson “The First Internet Election? United Kingdom Political Parties and Campaigning in Cyberspace,” in Crewe, Gosschalk and Bartle (eds) (1998) p.93

⁶²⁴ Ward and Gibson in Crewe, Gosschalk and Bartle (eds) (1998) p.110

⁶²⁵ Stephen Coleman (2001) “Online Campaigning,” *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 54, Number 4. p.679

⁶²⁶ OFCOM review of Public Service Television Broadcasting (PSB) Phase 1, *Viewing Loyalty*, http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consult/condocs/psb/psb/sup_vol_1/tvb/section2/

⁶²⁷ Peter Goddard, Margaret Scammell and Holi A Semetko “Too Much of a Good Thing? Television in the 1997 Election Campaign” in Crewe, Gosschalk and Bartle (eds) (1998) p.150

⁶²⁸ Richard Tait “The Debate that Never Happened: Television and the Party Leaders, 1997” in Crewe, Gosschalk and Bartle (eds) (1998) p.206

‘serious’ current affairs programming on the two ‘main’ channels in the week.⁶²⁹ The trend of political leaders appearing on non political programmes to engage with an increasingly apathetic electorate, which had begun with Margaret Thatcher appearing on *Jim’ll Fix It*, *Saturday Superstore* and *Aspel and Company*, continued in the 1990s with Tony Blair appearing on *Des O’Connor Tonight* and *This Morning*. The Tory marketing strategy would ideally involve marketing within the new media arenas and be sufficiently cogent to attract the attention of the fragmented audiences, regardless whether the political programmes were a key component of the schedules.

By adopting these techniques, the Tories would be replicating Labour’s marketing strategy but the party would ideally imitate the Blair administration’s positive attitude towards market orientation. The Tory task was made additionally difficult by the Labour Party possessing a dramatically more advanced technological set up to assist with their market orientation. Butler and Kavanagh noted the dramatic ‘Americanisation’ of Labour marketing practice with the development of the ‘war room’ and the ‘New Labour’ brand. The Tories did not match this sophisticated market orientation in 1997.⁶³⁰

6.1.2 Existing Literature

Much of the previous academic work offers a myriad of reasons for the Tories’ marketing ‘ineptitude’ following the 1997 election but these accounts do not often link their ideas to other opposition eras, or a specific political marketing framework. There is little appreciation that market orientation was probably unworkable during the Hague leadership. Kelly believes that the structural deficiencies within the party organisation had an adverse impact on the marketing development,⁶³¹ but this

⁶²⁹ James Stanyer (2001) “The New Media and the Old: The Press, Broadcasting and the Internet,” *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 54, Number 2, p.352

⁶³⁰ Butler and Kavanagh (1997) p.243

⁶³¹ Richard Kelly (2002) “The Party Didn’t Work: Conservative Reorganisation and Electoral Failure,” *Political Quarterly*, Volume 73, Issue 1, p.38

thesis demonstrates that a reduction in financial and human resources is common for parties entering opposition.

Lees Marshment highlights the effect of recent history on marketing development⁶³² and this chapter considers how this influence impacted on the product and marketing in a way that was less evident during Heath and Thatcher's leadership. Lees Marshment and Rudd reflect on how internal party attitudes frustrated the political marketing⁶³³ and Norris and Lovenduski highlight the Tories' selective perception about what the electorate was thinking and whether an individual policy would gain the 'most support' in the centre ground entitled the "zone of acquiescence."⁶³⁴

This chapter examines how a number of MPs and strategists held key concerns about the marketing strategy and what the electorate were thinking, in a similar way to the Heath and Thatcher eras. Other commentary has focused on the problems associated with promoting Hague but without understanding that this leader was another difficult brand to be marketed like Thatcher and Heath during their oppositions. Worcester and Mortimore believe that Hague was an electoral liability and suggest that the party would not have faced 'polling meltdown' if the more popular Kenneth Clarke had been leader. Hague was too "young and inexperienced and lacked the dominating personality"⁶³⁵ to be involved in the projection of himself as a competent leader and a future Prime Minister.

This analysis draws on a number of sources with a particular emphasis on elite interviews with relevant politicians and officials. Apart from a few exceptions, most of the interviews gave a universally negative portrayal of the strategy. Other empirical data were collected, including party press releases, party political

⁶³² Lees Marshment (2001d) pp.933- 935

⁶³³ Lees Marshment and Rudd (2003) p.2, Pippa Norris and Joni Lovenduski (2004) "Why Parties Fail to Learn," *Party Politics*, Volume 15 Number 1, p.88

⁶³⁴ Norris and Lovenduski (2004) pp 88-89

⁶³⁵ Robert Worcester and Roger Mortimore (ed) (2001) *Explaining Labour's Second Landslide*, London, Politicos, p.61

broadcasts, and poster campaigns. A number of political programmes and news reports from the press, radio, television and internet were also examined.

6.1.3 Key Personnel

Tables 6.1a and 6.1b outline the personnel who played a key role in the formation of the Tory product and marketing strategy between 1997 and 2001. These tables outline the key figures that were reporting to the party chairman but it is evident within this chapter that these working relationships were problematic in nature. Due to the potent intra-party disputes throughout this opposition period, these people took their grievances directly to Hague. The same people and the same divisive relationships would feature in the 2001 election, and that campaign is discussed in Chapter Seven.

Table 6.1a Key Personnel⁶³⁶

Name	Title	Responsibilities	Report to
Andrew Cooper	Director of Polling and Strategy till summer 1999	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing polling - Co-ordinating focus group research - Strategy advice 	Party Chairman and Hague
Rick Nye	Director of Research Department	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Post 1999 polling and research - Personal briefings with Hague - Following departure of Andrew Cooper, daily management of pre-election campaigning 	Party Chairman, Party Vice-Chairman Tim Collins and Hague

⁶³⁶ Information for Tables 6.1a and 6.1b from Butler and Kavanagh (2001)

Daniel Finkelstein	Director of Policy Development	Co-ordinating policy research	Party Chairman and Hague
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Table 6.1b Key Personnel

Name	Title	Responsibilities	Report to
Gregor MacKay	Head of Media Relations till 1999	Developing relationships between media and party to facilitate successful marketing initiatives	Party Chairman
Nick Wood	Press Secretary/Tory Media Spokesman	Recruited from <i>The Times</i> to handle lobby briefings for Hague and the Shadow Cabinet	Party Chairman and Hague
Amanda Platell	Head of Media Relations, March 1999 onwards	Develop relationships between media and party to facilitate successful marketing initiatives	Party Chairman and Hague
Yellow M	External Advertising Professionals	Prepare advertising strategy for next general election and recapture swing voters	Party Chairman, Nick Wood, Amanda Platell and Hague

Andrew Cooper, Danny Finkelstein and Rick Nye were three key strategists during this opposition period. Cooper and Finkelstein had been closely involved in the Conservative general election campaign in 1997 and “had felt the brunt of the voters’ rejection of it.”⁶³⁷ Following the 1997 defeat, Cooper was in charge of political operations and strategy, Danny Finkelstein was in charge of policy development and Rick Nye was recruited in 1998 from the Social Market Foundation to become the Director of the Research Department. Cooper was a key co-ordinator of the Listening to Britain focus group exercise that will be discussed in this chapter, whilst Cooper and Finkelstein would produce the Kitchen Table Conservatism report. When the senior Tory politicians rejected the ideas of ‘change,’ “a disappointed Andrew Cooper soon left Central Office” in the summer of 1999⁶³⁸

In the immediate period before the 2001 campaign, Finkelstein and Nye were part of a four man advisory team, including William Hague, who received periodic presentations about focus groups and opinion polling. Following the departure of Andrew Cooper, Nye would also manage the pre-election campaigning on a daily basis, including the use of opinion polling, policy research, and finding an advertising agency who would market the Tories during the 2001 election.⁶³⁹ The Yellow M agency was chosen to undertake this role in the campaign.

In a similar way to the other opposition periods, the Conservative Party employed external marketing professionals to co-ordinate the strategy. After the resignation of Gregor Mackay in March 1999, who had been responsible for the party’s media relations, Amanda Platell became the head of media relations. The former *Sunday Express* editor joined Nick Wood, formerly of *The Times*, to brief the lobby on the Conservative Party’s activities. Butler and Kavanagh note that “Platell did not concern herself much with the details of policy or even debates about strategy.”⁶⁴⁰

⁶³⁷ Butler and Kavanagh (2001) p.41

⁶³⁸ Butler and Kavanagh (2001) p.43 and p.44

⁶³⁹ Butler and Kavanagh (2001) p.56, p.58 and p.131

⁶⁴⁰ Butler and Kavanagh (2001) p.57

This thesis will highlight the uneasy relationships between Amanda Platell, Nick Wood, Daniel Finkelstein, Rick Nye and many of the senior figures of the Conservative Party.

The chapter begins by considering how, in contrast to the aftermath of the 1966 election, the Tories were acutely divided regarding how to interpret the 1997 defeat and the subsequent new political realities. As a result of answering the research question regarding what were the key issues that frustrated the development of Conservative political marketing, this thesis highlights how the quarrels were especially passionate between 1997 and 2001. Many MPs were in despair regarding the humiliating state of the party, and the incomprehension regarding why the electorate had rejected the Tories' after their eighteen years of government.

6.2 Internal Factors against Political Marketing

6.2.1 Accepting the Election Defeat

The Tory members took a long time to understand that they were not in power, and had been so "off the pace with the public mood."⁶⁴¹ It was hoped that the years of reforming government between 1979 and 1992 would be remembered by the electorate instead of the last five years of power that were characterised by short term issues of sleaze, party divisions over Europe and the Black Wednesday debacle.⁶⁴² In this state of dejection, there was little internal resolve to develop a new product. John Maples highlighted how this approach ended up with the media becoming completely uninterested in the party, and unlike in 1966 or 1974, there was a real fear amongst the Tories that their outfit could become the third party of British politics.⁶⁴³

⁶⁴¹ Interview with John Maples, 17th May 2006

⁶⁴² Interview with John Maples, 17th May 2006

⁶⁴³ Interview with John Maples, 17th May 2006

Table 6.2 and Figure 6.5 highlight how the Tories needed to regain their image of ‘honesty’ and ‘competency,’ and apologise for their time in government that had included sleaze scandals, divisions over Europe and Black Wednesday.⁶⁴⁴ Figure 6.5 outlines how Labour was regarded as having the best policies and the Tories were perceived to have not done much on public service reform, as well as not valuing the role of public services in society. This perception of Labour as the only ‘caring’ party in British politics was evident during the Heath and Thatcher oppositions, and Chapters Two and Four demonstrated that the Tories believed that they should be marketing a more compassionate personality. As this chapter will demonstrate, this desire was not evident in the Hague era.

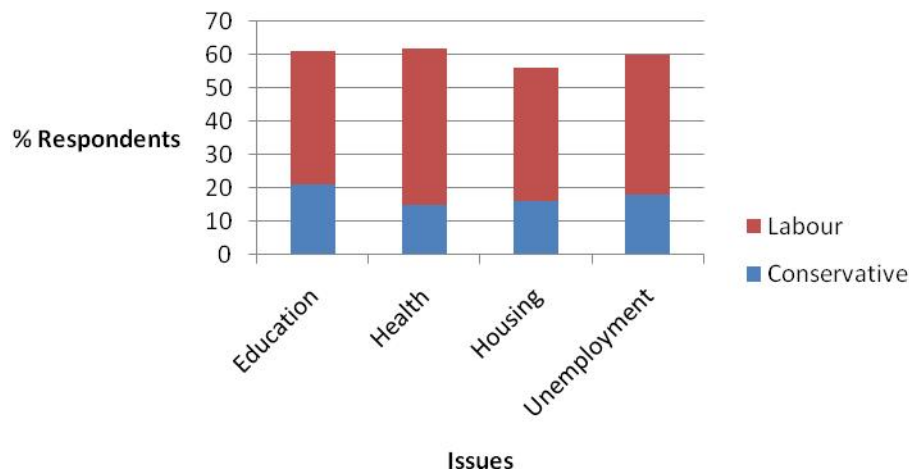
Table 6.2: How can you describing the Conservative Party Image

	April 1997	September 1997
Will promise anything to win votes	40	38
Keeps its promises	5	4
Divided	44	50
Out of touch	50	59
Concerned about people in real need	8	7

Conservative Party Image- “pick the letters next to the statements you feel fit the Conservative Party.” (%) Source: MORI April/ September 1997 www.ipsos-mori.com/polls/1997/t970401.shtml and www.ipsos-mori.com/polls/1997/t970929.shtml

⁶⁴⁴ John Bartle “Political Developments 1997- 2001,” in John Bartle and Dylan Griffiths (ed) (2002) *Political Communications Transformed, From Morrison to Mandelson*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, p.24

Figure 6.5 Best Party Policies (% Respondents)



"I am going to read out a list of problems facing Britain today and for each one, I would like you to tell me whether you think that the Conservatives, Labour, Liberal Democrat or some other party has the best policy on each." (%) Source: MORI "Best Party on Key Issues" 8th April 1997 www.ipos-mori.com/polls/1997/t970408.shtml

Sir John Hoskyns, the policy thinker from the Thatcher opposition, believed that any contrition from the party meant that the Tories would not be able to take credit in their past achievements, and that the public would believe a "re-written history."⁶⁴⁵ However Hague would contritely admit in his 1997 conference speech that he knew "why we lost and I think you know too."⁶⁴⁶ The delegates were assured that "far from being dead, we have embarked on a process of reform and renewal [that will] restore our confidence and make us fit to return to govern."⁶⁴⁷ Andrew Cooper believed that these practical attempts were mistakenly deemed to be enough to satisfy the electorate's desire for apologies, and the party could now be taken seriously as a political outfit.⁶⁴⁸ Hague was trying to move his party on from their apologetic state when he advocated a more offensive rehabilitation at the 1998

⁶⁴⁵ Interview with Sir John Hoskyns, 26th January 2006

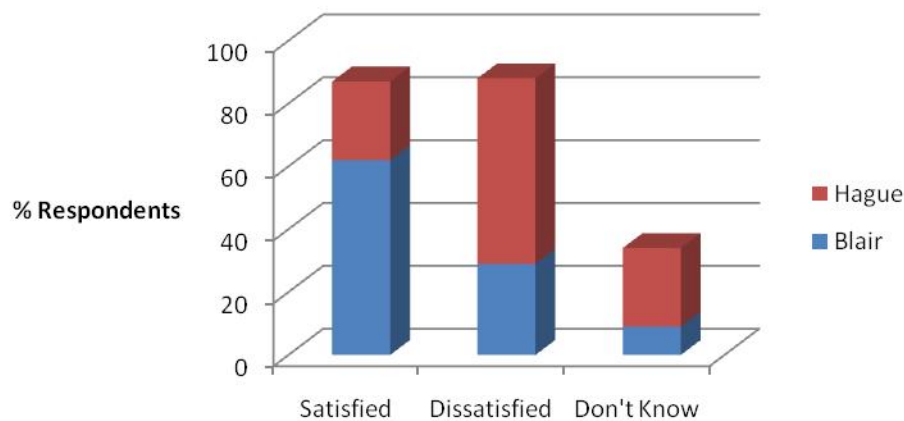
⁶⁴⁶ Interview with Andrew Cooper, 21st September 2005,

⁶⁴⁷ "Hague the apologist clears party's decks," *The Times*, 11th October 1997, p.1. See also Philip Webster "Hague apologies for ERM debacle," *The Times*, 11th October 1997, p.1

⁶⁴⁸ Interview with Andrew Cooper, 21st September 2005

conference. Although he admitted that it had not “all been plain sailing since the election,” Hague believed that “the old hostility to us on the doorsteps has gone.”⁶⁴⁹ Despite these abilities, Figure 6.6 demonstrates the dreadful personal approval ratings of Hague in comparison with Tony Blair at the time of that particular conference.

**Figure 6.6 Approval Ratings for William Hague/ Tony Blair
October 1998 (% Respondents)**



Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way Mr Hague/ Mr Blair is doing in his job as leader of the Conservative Party/ Prime Minister. Source: MORI Poll, The Times, 29th October 1998, <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/polls/1998/t981026.shtml>

In conjunction with the problematic acceptance of the election defeat, the market orientation was hampered by severe intra party differences regarding policies and whether to respect ‘traditional’ Tory beliefs. The debate between the ‘modernists’ and ‘traditionalists’ was associated with whether the party should adopt a socio liberal approach and campaign on the ‘centre ground,’ or continue to initiate the policies of the Thatcher years.

The ultimate influence of the ‘traditionalists’ caused the BBC to describe the marketing “political red meat [to] “satisfy the instinctive cravings of Tory lion

⁶⁴⁹ “Conservative Conference: Bournemouth 98: Hague spells out British Way,” *The Guardian* 9th October 1998, p.12

hearts”⁶⁵⁰ involving the frequent promotion of law and order and asylum policies as well as the desire to halt European integration.

6.2.2 Policy Differences

Although it would be eleven years in 2001 since Margaret Thatcher resigned as Prime Minister, her ideological legacy remained influential in British politics and particularly dominant within the psyche of the Conservatives. The ‘traditionalists’ revered Thatcher’s robust leadership and refused to countenance any marketing that would repudiate any aspect of her governmental record. The ‘modernists’ believed that Thatcher was a successful leader, but the agenda had to develop from the manifestos of the 1980s. Danny Finkelstein believed that the Thatcherite history had become a “noose around the party’s neck”⁶⁵¹ and David Curry thought that the party had to “renew the intellectual blood cells (and) renew the policy.”⁶⁵² Stephen Dorrell noted how a whole new political generation had developed different beliefs and would not relate to the ideological agenda that had been proposed in Thatcher’s last election campaign in 1987.⁶⁵³ The ‘modernists’ believed that the uncompromising rhetoric being promoted by the ‘traditionalists’ on issues such as asylum, crime, and European integration caused potential voters to be “put off... by a reputation that we’re too right wing, too hard line, [and] too hostile to some vulnerable people.”⁶⁵⁴ In response to these criticisms, the ‘modernists’ were accused of not appreciating the party’s historical beliefs, and how these values had rescued Britain from the economic and social paralysis of the late 1970s.⁶⁵⁵ It was not enough for ‘modernist’ MPs to “stomp around the country saying ‘oh we’re very compassionate and very caring.’”⁶⁵⁶

⁶⁵⁰ *BBC1 “On The Record”* 21st May 2000, http://www.bbc.co.uk/otr/intext/20000521_film_1

⁶⁵¹ Interview with Danny Finkelstein, 7th September 2005

⁶⁵² Interview with David Curry, 15th March 2006

⁶⁵³ Interview with Stephen Dorrell, 21st October 2005

⁶⁵⁴ Interview with Andrew Rowe, *BBC1 “On The Record”* 21st May 2000, http://www.bbc.co.uk/otr/intext/20000521_film_1.html

⁶⁵⁵ Redwood (2004) pp.144- 145

⁶⁵⁶ Interview with Lawrence Robertson MP *BBC1 “On The Record,”* 29th April 2001, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/otr/interviews00-01.shtml>

Despite the speeches by senior ministers, including Peter Lilley, which argued for the party to promote a more socially liberal policy agenda, the traditionalists succeeded in maintaining the Thatcherite spirit. Anne Widdecombe argued that although the party had actually won the policy agenda despite facing a “catastrophic loss in the election.”⁶⁵⁷ After recognising that the inclusivity agenda had not made a positive impact on polling, a product was developed to attract the Tory core vote and not the electorate who had deserted the party in the 1997 election. This drastic change in ideological and policy emphasis did not occur in the Heath or Thatcher opposition periods.

The ‘core vote strategy’ became generally accepted because of the favourable coverage from newspaper columnists and the positive results in the 1999 European Elections, despite the low electoral turnout.⁶⁵⁸ However the existence of the modernist thinking counteracts the suggestion of Norris and Lovenduski that the party deceived itself by continually misunderstanding the position of its voters. Not all MPs maintained a ‘misguided’ view that the majority of voters shared the Tory beliefs.⁶⁵⁹

Michael Portillo and Francis Maude were the two prominent ‘modernists’ who frequently vetoed policies proposed by ‘traditionalists.’ They were fearful that the Tories would be held to their policy commitments and their concerns were evident during the discussions associated with Anne Widdecombe’s health care proposals. The idea of sustaining health spending but expecting the public to pay for some of their health care was vetoed by Portillo and Maude.⁶⁶⁰ They also briefed the media with their criticisms about the Tory tax guarantee. Despite the unveiling of the policy in 1999 for tax to be cut as a share of the nation’s income during the next

⁶⁵⁷ Interview with Anne Widdecombe, 28th February 2006

⁶⁵⁸ Interview with Danny Finkelstein, 7th September 2005

⁶⁵⁹ Norris and Lovenduski (2004) p.89

⁶⁶⁰ Interview with Anne Widdecombe, 28th February 2006

parliament, Portillo implied that he was “ready to discuss”⁶⁶¹ the policy when he became shadow chancellor in February 2000. Hague also admitted that the tax guarantee was only an “aspiration.”⁶⁶² As a result of these statements, the Tories were subsequently accused of “not believing in anything at all.”⁶⁶³

Portillo and Maude also argued against the traditionalists about fuel duty prices. Following the September 2000 fuel crisis, a policy was proposed to cut three pence off petrol prices despite the ‘modernist’ argument that the Tories should not make spending commitments that could not be maintained when in Government. A lack of a response to the fuel crisis from the party would be similar to the Tories failing to discuss the 1967 Devaluation or the 1979 Winter of Discontent. The traditionalists felt that the fuel blockades represented the “best chance we have had for years” to make a positive impact within political discourse and start “reconnecting with the public.”⁶⁶⁴ However Hague was criticised by political commentators for his contradictory oratory, which suggested that the fuel protestors were “fine upstanding citizens”⁶⁶⁵ following the lead of French strikers, although he had originally castigated the French Government for a lack of resolve to quell the initial strikes within their country.⁶⁶⁶ Hague was not involved in a broadcast that was similar to Thatcher’s ‘statesmanlike’ transmission during the Winter of Discontent. The Tories were also accused of ‘cashing in’ on the issue without thinking about the consequences associated with their ideas. The party was criticised for adopting a ‘populist’ approach and aligning themselves with the more reactionary elements within British society.⁶⁶⁷

⁶⁶¹ “Portillo’s Pledge on Tax,” *BBC Online*, 10th February 2000, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/638128.stm

⁶⁶² “Hague fuels Tory tax speculation,” *BBC Online*, 8th February 2000, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/635624.stm

⁶⁶³ James Hardy “Portillo’s Puppet; Hague forced to dump third policy in 7 days,” *The Mirror*, 9th February 2000 p.2

⁶⁶⁴ Interview with Anne Widdecombe, 28th February 2006

⁶⁶⁵ David Aaronovitch “Who do you think you are kidding,” *The Independent*, 29th September 2000, p.3

⁶⁶⁶ Aaronovitch, *The Independent*, 29th September 2000, p.3

⁶⁶⁷ “Hague warns of Taxpayers Revolt,” *BBC Online*, 15th September 2000, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/wales/925446.stm>

In the atmosphere of intense feuding, Nick Wood, Amanda Platell and Yellow M tried to follow Gordon Reece, Tim Bell and Saatchi and Saatchi's 1979 efforts as well as those of Geoffrey Tucker from 1970 in providing professional expertise in the development of political marketing. Danny Finkelstein recognised that the arrival of Platell and Wood at the Conservative Party brought a "much greater professionalism to the operation."⁶⁶⁸ However Portillo and Maude had to be persuaded by Hague to withdraw their threat of resignation in spring 2000 if Amanda Platell remained as head of news and media.⁶⁶⁹ In the context of the research question regarding what were the key issues that frustrated the development of Conservative political marketing, the next section analyses these critical disagreements between politicians and media professionals. This chapter notes how the Hague opposition replicated the Heath era with concerns about replicating the 'inappropriate' aspects of Labour Party marketing.

6.2.3 Differences between Politicians and Media Professionals

Nick Wood wanted to continually engineer as much publicity as possible for the party but this objective was frequently criticised for being undertaken at the expense of marketing ideology and policies.⁶⁷⁰ The strategists were criticised for focusing their marketing within particular papers such as the *Daily Mail*, who would usually provide sustained and sympathetic coverage of the party to core supporters.⁶⁷¹ John Whittingdale believes that there should have been a more effective focus on getting favourable coverage within the pages of key former 'Conservative supporting papers'⁶⁷² to gain the attention of voters who had deserted the party between 1992 and 1997. As suggested in the introduction, there was no guarantee in the late 1990s that the Tories would be guaranteed a mass bloc of extensive, unqualified and positive support from the British newspapers. The party had to initiate a greater effort to engineer sympathetic coverage within

⁶⁶⁸ Interview with Danny Finkelstein, 7th September 2005

⁶⁶⁹ Dennis Kavanagh "How William Hague lost the election," *The Independent*, 3rd September 2001, p.5

⁶⁷⁰ Interview with John Maples, 17th May 2006

⁶⁷¹ Interview with John Whittingdale, 3rd February 2006

⁶⁷² Interview with John Whittingdale, 3rd February 2006

popular papers such as the *Sun*.⁶⁷³ However the party critically did not display such an innovative attitude. Although the *Sun* was spoken to on specific occasions, and meetings were arranged between Hague and Rupert Murdoch,⁶⁷⁴ the relationship was not as extensive compared to the Thatcher or the Heath opposition periods.

The lack of cohesion and agreement between senior politicians and media professionals led to inept media management at critical moments. Following the shooting of a burglar by a Norfolk Farmer in May 2000, the Tories advocated a change in the law regarding personal defence in the home, but the party were accused of having little idea of how they would actually implement their new proposals.⁶⁷⁵ The 'fall out' following the drugs arguments at the 2000 conference was a key example of the party's failure to constructively influence political discourse. Following the unveiling of plans for a £100 fixed penalty fine associated with low level drugs possession, the party was criticised, even in the traditionally supportive press,⁶⁷⁶ for adopting an overtly negative and alarmist approach of 'extreme' dawn drug raids. Tory MPs were questioned whether they had ever taken cannabis,⁶⁷⁷ and the difficult situation was further compounded when the representatives were instructed to accurately answer these questions, whilst the Labour whips ordered their MPs to leave the media enquires unanswered.

A lack of financial and human resources additionally frustrated the creation of innovative marketing. This chapter now considers how this issue thwarted the development of Conservative political marketing and these deficiencies appeared to be always in dramatic contrast to the resources at Labour's disposal. The Hague opposition did replicate the attempts during the Heath and Thatcher era to attract new marketing resources as well as reform the party.

⁶⁷³ Brandenburg (2006) p.159 and p.182

⁶⁷⁴ Simon Walters (2001) *Tory Wars*, London, Politicos pp 43- 45

⁶⁷⁵ "Hague backs right to defend homes" *BBC Online*, 26th April 2000, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/726389.stm

⁶⁷⁶ Stephen Glover "Plain Stupid, Incompetent or Suicidal," *Daily Mail*, 10th October 2000, p.15

⁶⁷⁷ "Tory Admission sparks Dope Debate," *BBC Online*, 8th October 2000, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/961807.stm

Hague stated that he would devote his energy to reforming the party structure, which he regarded as “not up to the job,”⁶⁷⁸ and the party chairman supported these ideas.⁶⁷⁹ However these measures were only partly initiated due to the party’s diverted attention on the variety of issues that have been already mentioned in this chapter.

6.3 Resource Limitations and Media Agenda

Following the 1997 election, the Tories acutely lacked enough human and financial resources after £28 million had been spent on the campaign.⁶⁸⁰ The scale of that defeat meant that potential backers were even less willing to offer continual financial support to this losing outfit, in comparison to the aftermath of previous contests. Similar resource issues had occurred following the 1966 and 1974 elections, including the lack of equipment with shadow cabinet officers. A subsequent programme of staff cuts and the closure of regional offices in 1997 meant that there were a diminishing number of full time party employees that could be deployed for marketing purposes.⁶⁸¹ Andrew Cooper noted the “painful” nature of the cutbacks including the dismissal of potentially useful personnel, such as the director of campaigning.⁶⁸²

The issue of a lack of finance was particularly evident in the lack of development of the Tories’ online campaigning and text message electioneering. The Tory web site remained in a basic form, requiring additional software to access certain information, till an upgrade was undertaken in October 2000.⁶⁸³ However it would probably have been unwise for the Tories to spend their sparse resources on a medium that could only be accessed by a small percentage of the electorate. The re-launch of the website caused intense embarrassment for the party as a result of

⁶⁷⁸ Gillian Shepherd (2000) *Shepherd’s Watch*, London, Politicos, p.181

⁶⁷⁹ Shepherd (2000) p.181

⁶⁸⁰ Shepherd (2000) p.191

⁶⁸¹ Andy McSmith “Politics, Conference Manoeuvres. Hague Needs to Restorer Tribal Ties That Bind,” *The Observer*, 5th October 1997, p.20

⁶⁸² Interview with Andrew Cooper, 21st September 2005

⁶⁸³ Stephen Ward and Rachel Gibson (2003) “On line and On Message? Candidate Websites in the 2001 election,” *British Journal of Politics and International Relations*, Volume 5, Number 2, p.191

inaccurate place names and a geographically imprecise map.⁶⁸⁴ Despite being a relatively small incident during the problematic 2000 conference, the episode further contributed to the perception of the Tories as an outfit that was ill suited to modern life.

In an attempt to avoid further 'sleaze' scandals, an 'Integrity and Discipline Committee' was developed that would oversee the behaviour of MPs. The senior party command would possess greater disciplinary powers over the activities of party activists and MPs, and there would also be a centralised national list of prospective candidates. Shepherd highlighted the significance of these measures for the Tories, and how they represented an "important first step in recovery from election defeat"⁶⁸⁵ but Finkelstein believed that the electorate did not care about organisational changes when they were making their political choices.⁶⁸⁶ These internal reforms stressing 'consistency' and 'accountability' could only be classed as innovative if the 'modernists' and 'traditionalists' unified to market some coherent policy ideas.⁶⁸⁷

Certain MPs believe that there was an alleged media agenda against their party. Less ferocious criticisms had been made in the Heath and Thatcher opposition periods although there was a media rebuttal unit in both eras that complained about perceived reductions in media exposure. Anne Widdecombe believed that the popular Labour Government was given an easy time particularly in its early months whilst the Tories were dismissed as a disunited and irrelevant outfit. The media were accused of 'unfairly' criticising the Tories for adopting a 'populist' stance on issues. Whittingdale and Curry noted that Blair was similarly developing policy in response to external events and the media agenda, without being accused of populism.

⁶⁸⁴ Peter Young "Web map gaffe rocks Tory Staff- Backroom bunglers locate Durham north of Tyne and Wear " *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*, 4th October 2000, p.11

⁶⁸⁵ Shepherd (2000) p.200

⁶⁸⁶ Interview with Danny Finkelstein, 7th September 2005

⁶⁸⁷ Interview with Danny Finkelstein, 7th September 2005

During a period of acute NHS bed shortages and a flu crisis during the winter of 2000, Blair promised extra health spending but Labour was not criticised for 'populism' after this BBC interview.⁶⁸⁸ The Tories' frustration at the alleged media bias led to the development of a defensive and 'angry' political marketing strategy.

Andrew Cooper believed that the Tories would gain the image of honesty and competence if they were more enthusiastic about listening to the electorate's views.⁶⁸⁹ The party used focus groups and telephone canvassing instead of the written questionnaires of earlier opposition periods. In comparison to the Heath and Thatcher opposition eras, there was less extensive polling regarding the impact of marketing initiatives. Furthermore these techniques appeared to be frequently conducted in symbolic way that attempted to suggest that the Tories were listening to the electorate. The 'traditionalist' Tories would reject the electorate's views if there was a possible repudiation of the party's history. They believed that their party had to trust its "instincts rather than mess around trying to define the views of the electorate."⁶⁹⁰

6.4 Use of Marketing Techniques

6.4.1 Opinion Polls and Focus Groups

The most notable polling initiative between 1997 and 2001 was the 'Listening to Britain' nationwide road show that involved discussions with voters and party activists regarding policies and the reasons for the landslide 1997 defeat. Danny Finkelstein hoped that 'Listening to Britain' would allow the party "to spend some time in an effective discussion of ideas [without] having to rush into a new set of policies."⁶⁹¹ Gillian Shepherd applauded the aspirations associated with this initiative to listen to a variety of electoral groups rather than just the "narrow circle

⁶⁸⁸ Interview with John Whittingdale, 3rd February 2006, Interview with David Curry, 15th March 1996. Both referring to Interview with Tony Blair *BBC1 Breakfast with Frost*, 16th January 2000

⁸¹ Interview with Andrew Cooper, 21st September 2005

⁶⁹⁰ Daniel Finkelstein "Now here's a spliffing idea..." *The Times*, 7th September 2005, p.22

⁶⁹¹ Interview with Danny Finkelstein, 7th September 2005

of metropolitan based opinion formers.”⁶⁹² However the Hague opposition did not embrace the poll findings and this road show did not gain enough media exposure.⁶⁹³ The senior party command is blamed by Cooper for rejecting his attempts to achieve enough coverage, which included convincing MPs to mention ‘Listening to Britain’ at the start of their political speeches.⁶⁹⁴

According to Cooper, Hague was interested in instigating focus groups but not that concerned with what they had to say if the findings diverted from his original view. When the Labour Party was effectively campaigning on the ‘salient’ issues of education and health service reform, the Tories were marketing on the issue of Europe that was held with less importance by the majority of the electorate. Evans believes that the party should have united to fight an anti-European campaign during the 1997 election,⁶⁹⁵ and the party did achieve electoral success, despite the low turnout, in the 1999 European elections whilst campaigning on an anti-Euro agenda.

The Tories continued to formulate and promote policies associated with Europe, which suggested that party disapproved of the European Union rather than the single currency. Figure 6.7 demonstrates that even by the start of the 2001 campaign, the public did not share the Tories’ concern about Britain adopting the Euro. The ‘salience’ of the European issue amongst the electorate had declined as a result of Labour’s promise of a referendum on Britain’s entry.

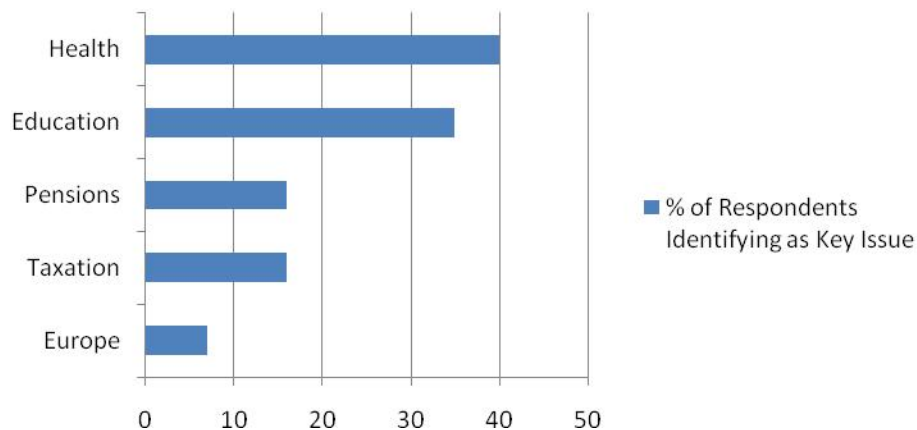
⁶⁹² Shepherd (2000) p.204

⁶⁹³ Interview with Andrew Cooper, 21st September 2005

⁶⁹⁴ Interview with Andrew Cooper, 21st September 2005

⁶⁹⁵ Geoffrey Evans (1998) “Euroscepticism and Conservative Electoral Support: How an Asset Became a Liability, *British Journal of Political Science*, Volume 28, Issue 4, p.575

**Figure 6.7 % Important Issues impacting on Voter Decisions
(% Respondents)**



Looking ahead to the General Election on June 7th, which, if any, issues will be very important to you in helping you decide how to vote? (%) Source: Sunday Telegraph Week 1 Election Poll 12th May 2001” MORI <http://www.ipos-mori.com/polls/2001/st010512.shtml>

The continual discussions about Europe further highlighted the divided nature of the party when senior politicians, including Kenneth Clarke and Michael Heseltine, were prepared to share a platform with Blair during the unveiling of the ‘Britain in Europe’ campaign. The party hierarchy also failed to prevent their pro Euro MPs from publicly disagreeing about the Euro veto on political discussion shows such as the BBC’s *On the Record* programme.⁶⁹⁶

Soundbites were a suitable marketing concept for the twenty-four-hour news environment and the increasingly apathetic electorate, who did not have the time or inclination to watch a televised news bulletin and understand specific policy details. The ‘Kitchen Table Conservatism’ branding involved the Tories portraying themselves as the marketers of policies, which the party believed, were talked about over dinner by the stereotypical ‘normal’ couple. The related party political broadcast featured two ‘middle England’ characters named Chris and Debbie, who

⁶⁹⁶ Interview with Tim Collins, *BBC1 ‘On The Record,’* 11th March 2001, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/otr/interviews00-01.shtml>

were sitting at their kitchen table discussing 'everyday' issue including the care of elderly people, crime, public services and taxes.⁶⁹⁷

Further rebranding attempts were entitled 'Common Sense Revolution' and 'Compassionate Conservatism.' The former did contain policy ideas on tax, school and hospital reform but the longevity of these branding attempts was continually compromised by the frequent changes of shadow cabinet personnel that attempted to demonstrate that the party had 'moved on' from the Major years. The rebranding efforts are an example of a reactive marketing strategy because the party was failing to be innovative, recognise, or resolve the deeper problems that have already been mentioned in this chapter. Simon Walters described the 'Pebble Dash Conservatism' initiative as a "patronising attempt to identify with Mr and Mrs Average in suburbia."⁶⁹⁸ Finkelstein believed that the 'Kitchen Table' initiative provided a false perception of the party because the policy ideas were "so out of kilter with what the Conservatives were willing to do."⁶⁹⁹ The media were also unimpressed with this continuous re-branding. Anne McElvoy in the *Independent* believed that "William Hague is preaching something called kitchen-table Conservatism: what it means I cannot tell you. But let us not worry too much- there is sure to be another relaunch along soon."⁷⁰⁰

Certain 'modernist' and 'traditionalist' Tory MPs were also sceptical of these branding attempts. Widdecombe has criticised the re-branding and distancing from the Tories' past as unnecessary 'panic' measures.⁷⁰¹ Sir Geoffrey Howe regarded the 'Common Sense Revolution' as an unnecessary "bible of detail on everything under the sun."⁷⁰² Instead of being involved in this continuous re-branding process, Howe argued that Hague had to stake "out 2 to 3 key issues of sustained public

⁶⁹⁷ "Kitchen Table: The Tories' Secret Weapon," *BBC Online*, 6th April 1999, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/special_report/1999/02/99/e-cyclopedia/319857.stm

⁶⁹⁸ Simon Walters (2001) *Tory Wars*, London, Politicos, p.104

⁶⁹⁹ Interview with Danny Finkelstein, 7th September 2005

⁷⁰⁰ Anne McElvoy "If the Tories didn't exist, would we really need to invent them?" *The Independent*, 21st April 1999, p.3

⁷⁰¹ Interview with Anne Widdecombe MP, 28th February 2006

⁷⁰² Sir Geoffrey Howe "Where Should William Hague Go Next? To The Centre Ground of course?" *The Independent*, 4th January 2000, p.4

concern.”⁷⁰³ The Tories had to stop the Tories becoming forever entwined in the “Catherine Wheel” stage of political marketing in which the party was unable to communicate any coherent party policy ideas.⁷⁰⁴ These criticisms mirrored the complaints about the alleged uninspiring and indistinctive agenda of policies being marketed between 1968 and 1970.

Alongside the ineffective use of opinion polling, the Tories failed to effectively market William Hague to the electorate within a permanent campaign. In the context of the thesis research question, this failure was a key issue that frustrated the development of Conservative political marketing. Hague’s personal image and political views made this Conservative leader an equally difficult brand to market in a similar way to the promotion of Heath and Thatcher. The other chapters demonstrate that the marketing of the previous party leaders was ineffective and the promotion of Hague was equally unsuccessful. In many instances, Amanda Platell’s strategy to allow Hague to demonstrate his natural personality exacerbated the marketing problems. The lack of success damaged the personal reputation of Platell and her professional colleagues whilst the party remained at 32% in the poll ratings and Labour maintained their substantial public approval.

6.4.2 Permanent Campaign

From his election as leader in June 1997, the Tories attempted to portray William Hague as a fresh face to convince the voters that the party had moved on from the troubled Major years. In comparison to John Major’s reputation as a weak leader, Hague had to be seen to bring ‘rigour’ to the party, and be an effective opponent at the dispatch box against Blair. However in an echo to Heath’s dismissive attitude towards Labour Party marketing in the late 1960s, Hague remained unconvinced about the need for the intensively personality marketing that had characterised the promotion of Tony Blair. The Labour leader had the ability to display himself as a ‘conventional family man’ on a series of light entertainment TV shows whilst

⁷⁰³ Howe *The Independent* 4th January 2000 p.4

⁷⁰⁴ Howe *The Independent* 4th January 2000 p.4

discussing his personal interests of football and rock music. Hague preferred to focus on his discussing his political beliefs. Cooper believed that the Tory leader maintained an “old fashioned and traditional view of politics” based on intense political discourse, which was difficult to be “positively put across to the electorate.”⁷⁰⁵ The Tory leader was effective at the older forms of marketing and generally believed that a competent overall strategy should be based on debates such as Prime Minister’s Question Time. However the ‘yah boo’ combative nature of those particular exchanges was known to annoy voters and was attracting meagre viewing figures.⁷⁰⁶

Maples believed that Hague would market policies without considering the electorate’s reaction, the Labour opposition or the media. For instance, after talking about private health insurance in January 2000, Hague did not appear to consider that the vast majority of the electorate was unenthusiastic about this policy. Furthermore, the Tories were forced to deal with Labour accusations that this policy meant that the Conservatives would privatise the health service.⁷⁰⁷ The difficulties of the Hague ‘brand’ were based on the Conservative Leader looking and behaving older than his age of 35, which was a negative contrast to the image of Tony Blair. Like Thatcher and Heath, Hague was ridiculed by the TV impressionist shows and by the public but on a more dramatic level. The ‘Yorkshire lad image,’ accent, personal appearance, and previous links with the Tory Party all suffered extensive derision. Hague incurred particular ridicule as a result of the widely published photograph of a teenage Hague making a speech to an attentive audience including Thatcher at the 1977 party conference. In comparison to the previous periods, the amount of abuse towards Hague supports Negrine’s observations that politicians were facing a dramatically less deferential media in the late 1990s.⁷⁰⁸ However the media professionals remained proactive in attempting to convince the electorate that Hague could be a plausible Prime Minister but their

⁷⁰⁵ Interview with Andrew Cooper, 21st September 2005

⁷⁰⁶ Jo Anne Nadler (2000) *William Hague- In His Own Right*, London, Politicos p.253

⁷⁰⁷ Interview with John Maples, 17th May 2006

⁷⁰⁸ Ralph Negrine (1994) *Politics and the Mass Media in Britain*, London, Routledge pp.141-142

attempts were compromised by the uncoordinated nature of initiatives and misplaced decision making.

The early demonstrations of Hague's leadership qualities at the Notting Hill Carnival and at a theme park were ridiculed as examples of politicians and strategists putting "image before ethics."⁷⁰⁹ Platell's methods to allow 'William to be William' were characterised by a series of failed 'panic measures.' The Tory leader's wife was encouraged to wear a pound shaped pennant, which would provide an attractive human dimension to the party's initiative to 'Save the Pound.' However the party were forced to offer a public explanation that the jewellery had not been paid for, and the initiative was described as "a very clumsy attempt to exploit Ffion [Hague]."⁷¹⁰

Platell asserts that she was not involved in instigating the GQ magazine article that claimed Hague drank fourteen pints of beers in a day. The article was developed to suggest that the Tory leader was just a 'normal Yorkshire lad' who went to a working man's club and dispel the public perception of William Hague as a 'toff.' However Hague was widely ridiculed for marketing a medically and socially improbable tale and Cooper believes that the electorate regarded this article as another example of a politician lying in public.⁷¹¹

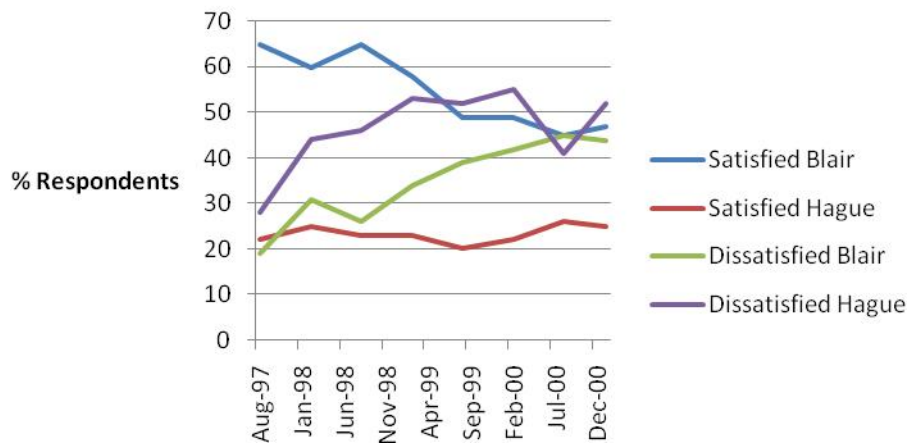
Figure 6.8 demonstrates that these initiatives failed to achieve their objectives. Throughout the opposition, the gradual dissatisfaction of Tony Blair did not translate into approval for William Hague.

⁷⁰⁹ Interview with Amanda Platell, *BBC Women's Hour*, 6th February 2002, http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/womanshour/2002_06_wed_01.shtml

⁷¹⁰ Interview with Andrew Cooper, 21st September 2005

⁷¹¹ Interview with Andrew Cooper, 21st September 2005

Figure 6.8 Satisfaction Rates for Blair and Hague (% Respondents)



Are you satisfied or dissatisfied with the way Mr Hague/ Mr Blair is doing in his job as leader of the Conservative Party/ Prime Minister. Source: MORI Poll, The Times, <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/polls/index.shtml>

This chapter concludes by answering the research question regarding what were the key issues that frustrated the development of Conservative political marketing between 1997 and 2001.

6.5 Conclusions

By using the Lilleker and Negrine framework, this chapter has analysed the evolution of the Tories' product and market orientation between 1997 and 2001. The problematic development of marketing during the Hague opposition supports Lilleker and Negrine's belief that a political party can be 'proactive' regarding marketing, and the political 'actors' can possess great media skills. However 'innovative' techniques need to be deployed if there is the possibility that the electorate would be 'positively' influenced by the messages.⁷¹²

The Tories were proactive in their marketing during the Hague opposition despite the meagre resources. Despite the slow development of internet campaigning, the

⁷¹² Negrine and Lilleker (2003) p.200

Tories did attempt to permanently market their policies and personalities across the media. This analysis does not detect the criticisms, which were made in the 1960s and 1970s that the party was not attempting to market its political information in the key television bulletins. Alongside the sound bites and photo opportunities, the 'Listening to Britain' exercise was similar to the opinion polling during the Heath and Thatcher opposition. The research was conducted with a variety of social groups to portray the party as responsive to the electorate's concerns and there were some initial contrite statements regarding their past failures in government.

Despite the proactive intentions, the Conservatives did struggle to implement 'innovative' marketing, and these problems were frequently due to their own making. The party was dramatically split between the 'modernist' and 'traditionalists,' as well as media professionals and politicians, regarding whether the party should develop new ideology and policies or repeat the products that were marketed during the 1980s. The divisions regarding Europe can also be compared to the divisions over immigration during the Heath era, although the 1966 to 1970 arguments did not get a continual momentum. Chapter Two demonstrates that despite Enoch Powell's high profile policy statements, Heath was praised for his resolute leadership. Hague was never portrayed as a strong leader throughout his opposition period. The 'traditionalist' Tories following 1997 would probably have found comfort in developing an identical product to their past offerings, which would help them to justify their political existence and enjoy remembering the times when they gained three figure majorities in general elections. However the electorate could easily gain the perception that the party had not recognised their heavy defeat and were carrying on with a deluded belief in their own importance. Many marketing initiatives were solely designed to demonstrate that the Tories was 'merely' listening to the electorate as well as respecting the party legacy, and especially the work of the Thatcher Government.

The differences regarding the marketing strategy partly contributed to the problems associated with promoting the promotion William Hague. The destructive

effect of all these disagreements supports the belief of Plasner et al⁷¹³ that a successful marketing strategy will not work in such a divided environment. Platell's methods to allow 'William to be William' contrasted with the carefully controlled promotion of Heath and Thatcher but the integrity of those previous leaders was not questioned in the same intensive way. In comparison to the fourteen pints episode, the tales associated with Heath and Thatcher often concerned more probable material. However those strategists were able to sufficiently move the political agenda on and allow these misfortunes to be forgotten.

This chapter has particularly made an extensive analysis of the intra party arguments between 1997 and 2001 and acknowledges that the disagreements were a key issue that frustrated the development of Conservative political marketing. However a more sympathetic disposition needs to be offered for the Conservative Party that is not evident in the previous commentary. It is probable that the most intensively market orientated party would have struggled to implement effective political marketing after an electoral rout akin to the Tories' defeat in the 1997 campaign. The party would doubtless have wanted a longer period of time away from the intensive twenty-four hour media glare to respond to the external influences of the 1997 election defeat and the seemingly everlasting popularity of the New Labour government. However the short term issues of internal party pressures, time constraints and the necessity to provide material for the twenty-four hour news agenda created acute problems for the party. This chapter has demonstrated that the Tories continued to struggle to counteract the supreme marketing techniques being practised by Labour that was in stark contrast to the more primitive efforts of the Wilson and Callaghan administrations.

The analysis has examined how the Tories struggled throughout the opposition to market themselves as modern and progressive in nature and this failure continued during the 2001 election. That campaign is discussed in the next chapter.

⁷¹³ Fritz Plasser, Christian Scheucher, and Christian Senft "Is there a European style of Political Marketing" in Bruce I Newman (1999) (eds) *Handbook of Political Marketing*, Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage p.97

Chapter 7: 2001 Election

The Conservatives' Party Product

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 Introduction, Political Context and Previous Commentary

This chapter is the final analysis that uses Brassington and Pettitt's framework⁷¹⁴ to analyse how important was the promotion of the personal ideological beliefs of senior Tory politicians to the Conservative marketing strategy, and why were some Conservative marketing initiatives unsuccessful in the 2001 election. This chapter demonstrates that the party did succeed in marketing a product that conforms to the Brassington and Pettitt criteria. However, the marketing strategy was acutely compromised as a result of the party's failure to resolve the persistent internal and external issues that had hindered the Tory market orientation since 1997.

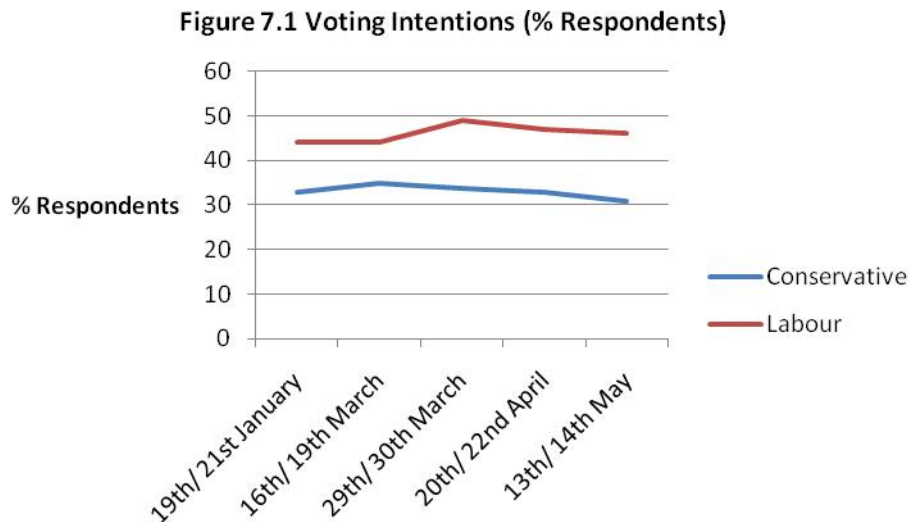
7.1.2 Political Context

The political circumstances were dramatically different for the Tories at the beginning of the 2001 campaign, compared to the start of the 1979 election. Chapter Six highlighted an extensive range of negative public perceptions of the Tory party that existed throughout the Hague opposition, including a reputation for economic mismanagement, as well as criticisms that the party was 'out of touch' with the concerns of the general public. For instance, Figure 6.8 in Chapter Six demonstrates how the party was extensively promoting their concerns about Britain's possible entry to a European Single Currency, when a key majority of voters were more concerned about increasing public spending on Health and Education.

Chapter Six also demonstrated that the Conservatives failed to develop an eye-catching agenda of ideology and policies. Figure 7.1 examines how the party

⁷¹⁴ Brassington and Pettitt (2006) pp.288- 290

entered the 2001 campaign with an unenviable task to overhaul a large poll deficit against the Blair government, who were still publicly popular and unhampered by a crisis on the scale of the 'Winter of Discontent.' This difficult situation compares to the 1979 election when the Tories began the campaign with a 10.5 point lead over Labour.⁷¹⁵



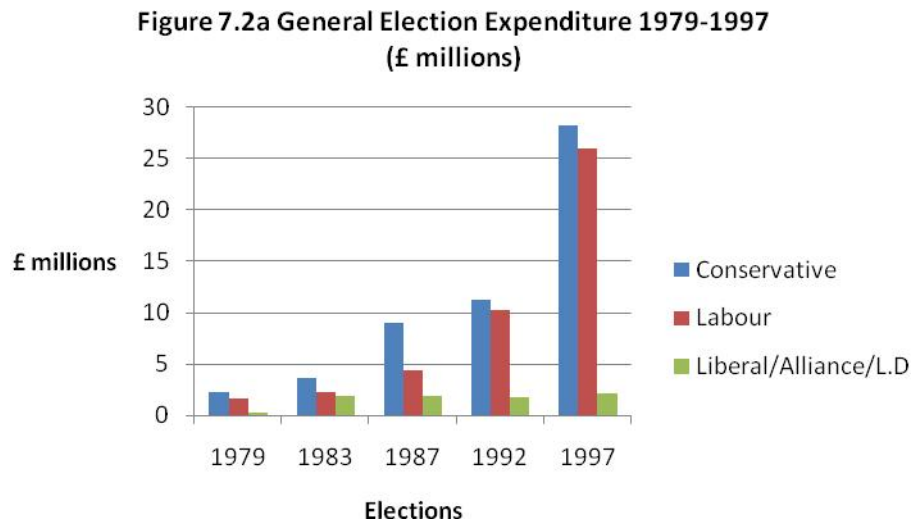
Guardian/ ICM Polls (%) Source: <http://www.icmresearch.co.uk/reviews/polls-archive.asp>

Despite the tougher state of affairs, the Hague opposition could learn from the 1979 marketing strategy and implement an approach that effectively marketed ideology, policies and personalities. The Thatcher opposition also managed to appear united despite persisting internal arguments and the Tories would want to replicate that strategic discipline in 2001. The attempts to market Hague against Blair would also be taking place in an era when parties were intensely focused on marketing the personal characteristics of their leading politicians, which Seaton regards as being “more eloquent and persuasive than argument or even action.”⁷¹⁶ The 2001 marketing was also being undertaken in an era of more professionalised marketing when parties were conducting a centrally co-ordinated and professional election campaign to cope with the more complex media environment. Strategic

⁷¹⁵ Gallup Poll in Richard Rose “Towards Normality: Public Opinion Polls in the 1979 Election” in Penniman (ed) (1981) p.196

⁷¹⁶ Jean Seaton (2003) “Public, Private and the Media,” *Political Quarterly*, Volume 74, Issue 2, p.176

changes would be made in response to polling, expert opinion, and unexpected events.⁷¹⁷ Figure 7.2a highlights the dramatic increase in financial expenditure from 1979 to 1997, being spent by political parties for election campaigning.



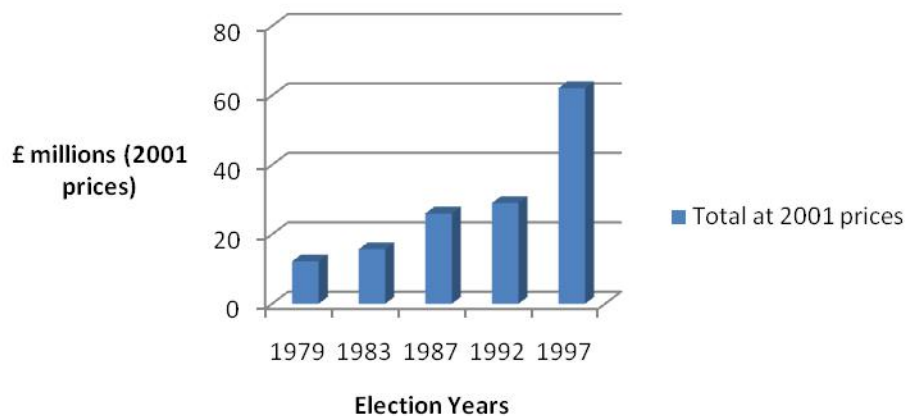
Source: See Details below Figure 7.2b

Figure 7.2b totals the expenditure for the three main parties and displays these figures as 2001 prices. These expenses included the hiring of media professionals which Tait notes became a key part of election coverage.⁷¹⁸ The 1997 campaign would witness further comment about New Labour spin-doctors and their operation of a ‘spin’ culture.

⁷¹⁷ Pippa Norris (1997) *Electoral Change in Britain since 1945*, Oxford, Blackwell, p.202

⁷¹⁸ Richard Tait “The Parties in Television” in Ivor Crewe and Brian Gosshalk (1995) *Political Communications, The General Election of 1992*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p.62

Figure 7.2b General Election Expenditure 1979-1997 (£ millions 2001 prices)



Sources for Figure 7.2a and 7.2b: For 1983-97 figures reported in *The Funding of Political Parties in the United Kingdom 5th Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life*, CM 4057 (London: The Stationery Office 1998) Tables 3.10 and 3.1, p.49. <http://www.archive.official-documents.co.uk/document/cm40/4057/volume-1/volume-1.pdf>

For 1979 figures: Statistics from *The Times* 14th April 1998- All Cited in Dick Leonard and Roger Mortimore (2005) *Elections in Britain- A Voter's Guide*, Elections in Britain, Basingstoke, Palgrave, Macmillan, p.201

7.1.3 The Media Context

Television was still recognised by parties as a key campaigning medium and the Hague administration would have access to 250 channels, including the new twenty-four hour news outlets, for marketing purposes.⁷¹⁹ The 2001 campaign would also witness more opportunities for election marketing via the internet, e-mail and text message. The Conservative Party website had been operational for six years, although in a very basic form till October 2000,⁷²⁰ but the new site contained

⁷¹⁹ DTI and DCMS (2000) *A New Future for Communications*, CM 5010, London, HMSO in Bob Franklin (2004) *Packaging Politics*, 2nd Edition, London, Arnold, p.6

⁷²⁰ Chris Ballinger "The Local Battle, the Cyber Battle" in Butler and Kavanagh (2001) p.224

separate web pages for journalists, party members, and the wider electorate.⁷²¹ Therefore Ballinger notes that the parties, including the Tories, could use the internet to convey “widespread, unmediated dialogue with the public”⁷²² with the marketing of more information than could be included within a public meeting or a party political broadcast. The development of text messaging provided an additionally valuable opportunity for the Tories to market themselves to younger voters. Baldwin noted that as many as “four out of five voters aged under 25 are likely to boycott the election” and the Tories could endeavour to counter Labour’s attempts to use this media⁷²³ by marketing themselves to this key, but apathetic segment of voters.⁷²⁴ However, the use of SMS was an expensive marketing device, because 3p per message would still be charged for a typical bulk load of 100,000 messages⁷²⁵ but the Tories needed to attract these voters if they hoped to overturn the Labour majority.

Chapter Two highlighted a deep interest in political information within the 1964 party election broadcasts, but there is conflicting evidence regarding whether the electorate were interested in the 1992 and 1997 televised election coverage. Figure 7.3 charts MORI polling from the 1997 campaign that suggests a general belief that there was ‘about the right amount’ of coverage in newspapers, radio television.

⁷²¹ Ward and Gibson (2003) pp.190- 191

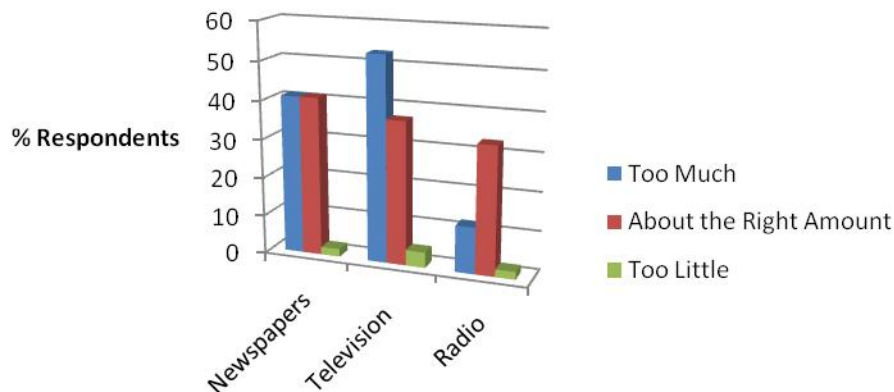
⁷²² Ballinger in Butler and Kavanagh (2001) p.226

⁷²³ “WNT 2 GT PSSD ALL NT EVRI NT? VT LBR” *Independent on Sunday*, 3rd June 2001, p.6

⁷²⁴ Tom Baldwin “WUCIWUG- LBR is on MSG for UTH” *The Times*, 5th June 2001, p.1

⁷²⁵ Ballinger in Butler and Kavanagh (2001) p.230

Figure 7.3 Opinions on the extent of 1997 election campaign coverage (% Respondents)



How do you feel about the amount of coverage in the newspapers, television, radio have been giving to the election campaign (1997)? Source: MORI Political Attitudes in Great Britain, The Independent on Sunday, 27th April 1997, <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/polls/1997/i970427.shtml>

Table 7.1 demonstrates that a significant amount of audiences in 1992 and 1997 were not paying particular attention to the televised election coverage. As a result of this increasing indifference from the electorate, television had been exploring new aspects for political programming and had become increasingly attracted to coverage that included a scrutiny of politicians outside the political arena.⁷²⁶ The Tory marketing for the 2001 election had to be sufficiently eye-catching for the apathetic sections of the electorate and promoted across the increased variety of media forms for the maximum exposure of messages.

⁷²⁶ Seaton (2003) p.174

Table 7.1 Interest/ Lack of Interest in Political Television in 1992 and 1997 elections

	1992	1997	% Change 1992- 1997
<i>Very or Fairly Interested</i>			
News about the election	60	53	-8
What the opinion polls say about the election	40	33	-7
Party election broadcasts	36	32	-4
Politicians' speeches	43	40	-3
<i>Not at all Interested</i>			
News about the election	14	22	8
What the opinion polls say about the election	25	28	3
Party election broadcasts	32	36	4
Politicians' speeches	28	30	2

How Interested would you say you are in the following... Source: Robert M Worcester (1997) *British Public Opinion: The British General Election of 1997*, London, MORI in Ivor Crewe, Brian Gosshalk and John Bartle (1998) *Political Communications Why Labour Won the General Election of 1997*, London, Frank Cass, p.59

The 2001 election has been extensively chronicled in previous commentary but without much appreciation that the Tories were promoting their product within an environment of intense public criticism and fragmented media arenas, in comparison to the Heath and Thatcher oppositions. There is also little analysis of any alternative campaign strategy that could counter the intensely negative public perceptions of the Conservatives.

7.1.4 Existing Literature

When considering the Tories in the 2001 campaign, many commentators have preferred to focus on what they regard are the party's deficient policies and

ideology, as well as the negative legacy of the Thatcher and Major Governments. Seldon and Wheatcroft focus on the historical factors that negatively impacted on the perceptions of the Hague administration.⁷²⁷ Seldon believes that these memories were exacerbated by the Hague administration continually “looking back to a golden era under Thatcher that never was.”⁷²⁸ Michael Heseltine echoes Seldon with his belief that the ‘tangible’ product contained “tired old spectres, the world of yesterday’s heroes and redundant demons.”⁷²⁹ Maurice Saatchi criticises the disordered ideological promotion⁷³⁰ whilst Sagger and Lees Marshment focus on the unpopular asylum and European policies that caused the Tories to be derided as ‘populist’ and insensitive to vulnerable communities.⁷³¹ Finkelstein compares the Conservative marketing strategy with the Labour Party’s approach and believes that the Tories crucially lacked an “election-winning message.”⁷³² The more sympathetic approach within this chapter echoes the few commentators who have been sensitive to the party’s cause. Green believes that the Tories knew that their opposition period would not end at the 2001 election⁷³³ and Mckibbin suggests that they had little “option but to do what they did and hope for the best.”⁷³⁴

The analysis draws upon a similar range of sources that was used in Chapter Four to analyse the formation of the product and marketing strategy since 1997. This chapter is based on interviews with relevant party representatives as well as empirical data including press releases, party political broadcasts, and poster campaigns. A number of political news programmes and news reports from the press, radio, television and Internet are also referenced within this chapter.

⁷²⁷ Geoffrey Wheatcroft (2005) *The Strange Death of Tory England*, London, Penguin, pp.232- 233,

⁷²⁸ Anthony Seldon “Thatcher’s Legacy Distorts the Tory Vision,” *Financial Times*, 24th August 2001, p.14

⁷²⁹ Michael Heseltine “A Disaster for the Tories- and a personal tragedy for William,” *Evening Standard*, 8th June 2001, p.13

⁷³⁰ Saatchi (2005) p.8 and p.21

⁷³¹ Shamit Sagger “The Race Card Again” in Pippa Norris (ed) (2001) *Britain Votes 2001*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p.196, Lees Marshment (2001d) p.936

⁷³² Interview with Danny Finkelstein, 7th September 2005

⁷³³ Jane Green (2005) “Conservative Party Rationality: Learning the Lessons from the Last Election for the Next” *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties*, Volume 15, Number 1, p.125

⁷³⁴ Ross Mckibbin (2001) “The Tax-and-Spend Vote,” *London Review of Books*, Volume 23, Number 13, p.6

The chapter begins by analysing the core ideology that was marketed during the 2001 campaign. These messages attempted to attract the Tory core vote that wanted the party to respect their historical beliefs and the achievements from their previous governments. The desire to focus the marketing on attracting the Tory core vote can be cited as a reason for the party's rejection of focus groups and opinion polling that criticised the Thatcherite legacy. However this approach caused the party to appear as if they were still marketing their values from the 1980s and the early 1990s. Anne Widdecombe counteracted this view and suggested that the traditional beliefs were intrinsically linked to the electorates' key concerns,⁷³⁵ which did not just comprise the Tory core vote. According to Widdecombe, external bodies such as the media were distorting the true image of the Tories as a party that was 'hysterically' focused on defining and seeking sympathetic headlines.⁷³⁶ However this chapter demonstrates that the promotion of beliefs, including free market ideology, was being undertaken despite a negative feeling amongst the electorate towards Tory beliefs and the personal ideology of Tory politicians.

The research question that is answered in this section of this chapter concerns how important was the promotion of the personal ideological beliefs of senior Tory politicians, such as the leader, to the Conservative marketing strategy. The marketing of the senior politicians' political beliefs was not extensive in the 2001 campaign so there were infrequent references regarding why the MPs initially joined the Tory Party. By intermittently explaining the origination of the political beliefs of Hague and his colleagues, the electorate would be potentially unable to understand that these beliefs were relevant to modern day Britain.

7.2 Ideology and the Political Product

7.2.1 Core Product versus Political Marketing and Voter Orientation

⁷³⁵ Interview with Anne Widdecombe 28th February 2006

⁷³⁶ Interview with Anne Widdecombe 28th February 2006

Finkelstein is correct in recognising that the emphasis on gaining the core vote meant that the Conservative Party was communicating with only 32% of the electorate. Having distanced themselves from opinion polling since 1997, the party did not appear to be interested in the thoughts of the voters whose support they needed to win the 2001 election.⁷³⁷ Hague may have been correct in his belief that “even if people are not interested, politicians are meant to campaign on issues they believe in very strongly.”⁷³⁸ However the Tories were misguided in focusing on their passionate beliefs at the expense of debating ideas, which were of most concern to the electorate. The Tories’ belief in law and order was concisely marketed in the first party political broadcast, which used the ‘tough on crime’ soundbite that had previously promoted by Labour. These beliefs were also marketed in association with the Tories’ education policies during the second party political broadcast. The party promised to ‘deal’ with youngsters involved in crimes including stealing sweets from a newsagent or drug dealing in public subways, and these assertions would probably tune into the consciousness of the core vote.⁷³⁹ However as a result of these beliefs, the Tories were accused of unnecessarily criticising the young with generalised assertions that British teenagers were engaged in a crime wave on British estates.⁷⁴⁰ The party was forced to state that the Labour government, rather than Britain’s young people, were to blame for the poor discipline and low standards in many schools that had resulted from the teacher shortages.⁷⁴¹

The core ideology associated with a ‘strong defence’ was evident in the marketing of the Tory’s immigration ideas. As a result of these initiatives, the party was accused of being a collective of ‘little Englanders’ and possessing emotive and inflammatory beliefs.⁷⁴² These indictments had been initially made following John Townend’s pre election comments that “immigrants were responsible for rising

⁷³⁷ Interview with Danny Finkelstein, 7th September 2005

⁷³⁸ Trevor Kavanagh and George Pascoe Watson, “I was right to campaign against the Euro. If we lose then I won’t blame anyone else,” *The Sun*, 2nd June 2001 p.1

⁷³⁹ *PEB* 24th May 2001 (All 2001 PEB web links at <http://www.psr.keele.ac.uk/area/uk/pebs/con01.htm>)

⁷⁴⁰ “Papers Ponder Portrayal of Children,” *BBC Online*, 25th May 2001, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/1350626.stm>

⁷⁴¹ Tom Baldwin “Former Head Rejects Policy,” *The Times*, 26th May 2001, p.577

⁷⁴² Minette Martin “I’m embarrassed to be a Tory: From the right” *The Guardian* 5th June 2001 p.22

crime and seriously undermining Britain's Anglo-Saxon society.”⁷⁴³ The criticism continued after Hague made a visit to Dover and suggested that his government would not be a ‘soft touch’ on asylum seekers.⁷⁴⁴ After a period of racial unrest that took place in Northern England cities during the Whitsun bank holiday weekend in the campaign, it was suggested that the Tory immigration beliefs were one of the causes of this disorder.⁷⁴⁵ Anne Widdecombe believed that the Tories “should not be deviated off [the important] issues” as a result of riots in Oldham and Bradford.⁷⁴⁶ The party eventually noted that the accusations of racism were hindering the attempts to claw back the support of voters who had deserted the Tories in the 1997 election. Hague had to make the qualification that the party’s immigration policies were designed to assist the “genuine refugee.”⁷⁴⁷

In a similar way to the other opposition periods, the Tories marketed their free market ideology in the 2001 election. The promotion of these beliefs became increasingly confused in nature when the Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury suggested a more radical tax cutting agenda whilst the Shadow Chancellor was making suggestions that a future Tory government would make £8 billion worth of tax cuts.

Michael Portillo had to reassert the fact that “William Hague and I make the economic policy”⁷⁴⁸ but the electorate was consequently led to believe that the Tories were as economically incompetent as they were during Black Wednesday. Portillo’s statement that highlighted Hague’s leadership role in the Tory Party is a

⁷⁴³ Nick Assinder “Tory Race Remarks Recall Rivers of Blood,” *BBC Online*, 28th March 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/1247501.stm

⁷⁴⁴ “Tories drag asylum back onto the agenda,” *BBC Online*, 18th May 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/world_at_one/programme_highlights/1338447.stm

⁷⁴⁵ “Police on Alert after Oldham Riot,” *BBC Online*, 27th May 2001, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/1354777.stm>

⁷⁴⁶ Anne Widdecombe on *BBC1 On The Record*, 13th May 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/vote2001/hi/english/programmes/specials/on_the_record/newsid_1181000/1181193.stm

⁷⁴⁷ Interview with William Hague, *BBC The World This Weekend*, 20th May 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/vote2001/hi/english/programmes/specials/the_world_this_weekend/newsid_1324000/1324053.stm

⁷⁴⁸ Michael Portillo on *BBC1 On the Record*, 20th May 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/vote2001/hi/english/programmes/specials/on_the_record/newsid_1181000/1181193.stm

close replication of an incident during the Labour Party's ill-fated 1983 election campaign when Jim Mortimer, General Secretary of the Labour Party, had to highlight that Michael Foot was still the leader of their party, despite a damaging intra-party argument about defence policy.

It was apparent that the 2001 electorate generally wanted a more sustained and substantial funding of the nation's public services after believing that there had been eighteen years of public service decline under the Conservatives. Finkelstein believed that the 2001 marketing needed to mention more details on public service policies because the electorate needed "to know what you are going to do and what do you stand for"⁷⁴⁹ but the Tories critically did not extensively promote their public service policies. However there had been an assertion amongst the public that the Tories had not cared about public services whilst they had been in government. These memories would be further emphasised if there were frequent and explicit mentions of the NHS internal market reforms, rail privatisation or measures against single mothers. T

These differences between what the Tories and the public believed are evident in Figures 7.4 and 7.5, which demonstrate that the electorate supported the Conservative policy to cut fuel duty, but did not want tax cuts if public service funding was compromised.

⁷⁴⁹ Interview with Danny Finkelstein, 7th September 2005

Figure 7.4 Approve/ Disapprove of Petrol Tax Cuts (% Respondents)

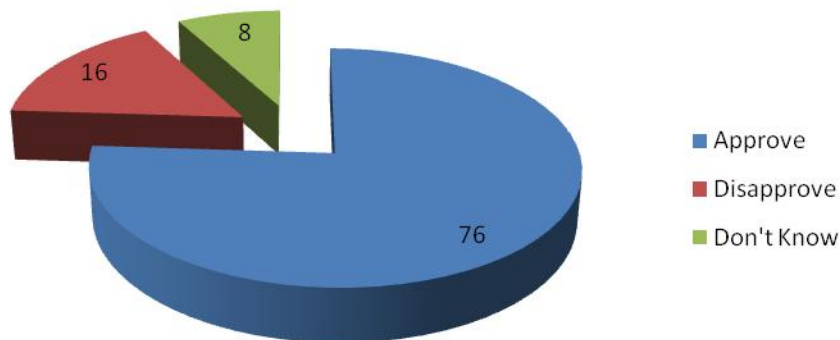


Figure 7.5 Do you think the people you know would approve or disapprove of tax cuts even if such cuts take money away from public services? (% Respondents)

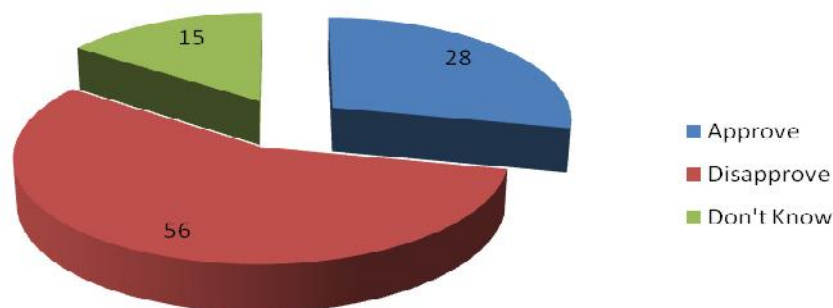


Figure 7.4 Do you think the people you know would approve or disapprove of tax cuts even if such cuts take money away from public services? **Figure 7.5** Do you think the people you know would approve or disapprove of tax cuts even if such cuts take money away from public service: Source: ICM Research/ The Guardian Campaign Poll 13th/ 14th May 2001, <http://www.icmresearch.co.uk/reviews/2001/guardian-campaign-poll1-may-2001.htm>

There were only a few references to the Tory leader's personal beliefs when Hague discussed the issue of Europe. The soundbites associated with 'saving the pound' and allowing Britain to be 'in Europe but not run by Europe' were continually made by Hague, but these phrases had already appeared on billboards, party political broadcasts as well as been uttered by other politicians. It would be difficult for the electorate to directly

associate these quotes with Hague's personal beliefs due to the frequent usage of these phrases in other media arenas. The lack of a personal dimension to Hague's ideological discussion is blamed by Andrew Cooper on the "horrible" co-ordination of the electioneering strategy.⁷⁵⁰

In his interview for the *Sun* during the final week of the campaign, Hague was still not offering a clear and direct explanation of how he reached his anti-European viewpoint. The Tory leader promised that he would "keep fighting to save the Pound"⁷⁵¹ in contrast to the lack of passionate beliefs within the Labour Party. However, the electorate still had no idea about how Hague had developed his anti-European ideas. It would eventually be in a set piece interview for the *Independent* that Hague defined himself as a one-nation Tory who believed in the "widening the Conservative Party, bringing more people into it."⁷⁵² However, Hague could not answer whether his 'hard line' on dealing with asylum seekers was an idea that could be linked to one nation Toryism.⁷⁵³

Kavanagh, as well as Dermody and Scullion, believes that the Tories failed to promote strong policy aims during the 2001 campaign,⁷⁵⁴ but this chapter shows that there were some policies that were marketed with conviction. From the first day of the election campaign in Watford, Hague was proclaiming that "if people want in this election a party that will hit crime hard, keep your taxes down, improve local schools and keep the pound that is what they will get from the Conservative Party."⁷⁵⁵

7.2.2 Focus on a Problem Solving Agenda

The Tories managed to achieve some success in marketing their policies, because the information did impact on the consciousness of the electorate. Norris and Sander's work suggests that the electorate were able to successfully recall the Tory

⁷⁵⁰ Interview with Andrew Cooper, 21st September 2005

⁷⁵¹ Kavanagh and Watson, *The Sun*, 2nd June 2001, p.1

⁷⁵² Donald Macintyre and Andrew Grice "Interview with William Hague," *The Independent*, 26th May 2001, p.7

⁷⁵³ Macintyre and Grice *The Independent*, 26th May 2001, p.7

⁷⁵⁴ Dennis Kavanagh "How William Hague lost the election," *The Independent*, 3rd September 2001, p.5, Janine Dermody and Richard Scullion (2001) "An Exploration of the Advertising Ambition and strategies of the 2001 British General Election," *Journal of Marketing Management*, Volume 17, Number 9/10, p.982

⁷⁵⁵ "Election is 7th June," *BBC Online*, 8th May 2001, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/pm/1319441.stm>

policies on asylum, taxes and the Euro.⁷⁵⁶ After exposure to the marketing messages, there was a “significant improvement”⁷⁵⁷ in the number of voters who could recall the party’s European and tax cut policies and approximately half of the sample could remember the policy to house new asylum seekers in secure reception centres.⁷⁵⁸ However, in a similar way to the general reaction concerning free market ideology, it is evident that the majority of the electorate was not convinced that the extensively featured issues such as the European Single Currency needed such urgent resolution in comparison with other matters.

The ‘Save the Pound’ initiative was extensively marketed during the election campaign involving a series of initiatives that attempted to highlight the negative aspects of the European single currency. The campaign began with the senior politicians stating that the Tories were “standing up for Britain’s interest” and the UK would be “in Europe but not run by Europe.”⁷⁵⁹ The party strategists believed that the ‘Save the Pound Campaign’ would be of a similar style to the ‘Tax Bombshell’ campaign that had provided positive results for the Tories in the 1992 election.⁷⁶⁰ In conversation with Hague about suitable campaigning themes, Widdecombe discovered that the leader believed that the party had made little impact in the campaign because “we haven’t started to talk about Europe yet.”⁷⁶¹ This attitude provides credence to Walter’s perception that Hague was unconcerned about the party appearing ‘out of touch’ with the electorate. He was merely concerned about marketing “issues that worked best for him,” regardless whether these issues were important within the public consciousness.⁷⁶² Hague publicly admitted that it was his “duty”⁷⁶³ to intensively campaign on the European

⁷⁵⁶ Pippa Norris and David Saunders (2003) “Message or Medium, Campaign Learning During the 2001 British General Election,” *Political Communication*, Volume 20, p.245

⁷⁵⁷ Norris and Saunders (2003) p.246

⁷⁵⁸ Norris and Saunders (2003) p.246

⁷⁵⁹ Interview with William Hague “*BBC1 Breakfast with Frost*,” 3rd June 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/vote2001/hi/english/programmes/specials/breakfast_with_frost/newsid_1220000/1220156.stm

⁷⁶⁰ Interview with Andrew Cooper, 21st September 2005

⁷⁶¹ Interview with Anne Widdecombe, 28th February 2006

⁷⁶² Simon Walters (2001) *Tory Wars*, London, Politicos, p.119

⁷⁶³ Hague, *BBC Radio Four*, 20th May 2001

issue on a daily basis and its prominence within the marketing strategy increased as the campaign progressed.

The party outlined a six-point plan to solve the asylum 'crisis,' including the detaining of all refugees in secure centres, and the prohibition of firms that used black market labour. Hague personally blamed Labour's incompetence for the increase in illegal immigrants into the UK.⁷⁶⁴ The party also promised to scrap Labour's Early Release Scheme but it was unclear whether the Tories' engineering of a 'fear of crime' would have a sufficient effect over the 'truth about crime,' to profoundly change the people's voting behaviour to support the party?⁷⁶⁵

In certain cases, the Tories did not prominently market their policy ideas even if the issue was of key concern with their core vote. The traditional support was particularly abundant in rural areas and an intensive campaign in the rural community on the foot and mouth issue would further strengthen the 'core vote.' However, despite the criticism that had been levelled by British farmers at the government regarding its 'draconian' measures with the slaughter of farm livestock, the Tories did not specifically campaign on the issue of foot and mouth. The party had not differentiated themselves from the government regarding how they would tackle the problem, and it would seem opportunistic for the Tories to suddenly offer an alternative strategy at short notice for the sake of winning votes.

The Tories had initially gained some sympathetic media coverage for 'check mating' their Labour opponents regarding taxation policies. In response to the Blair Government's refusal to rule out further taxes on petrol, national insurance and stamp duty, Hague asserted that the Conservatives would not increase the ceiling of national insurance contributions.⁷⁶⁶ He vaguely suggested that the Tories would manage the "economy with discipline and transparency" and "bring down tax on

⁷⁶⁴ "Tories drag asylum back onto agenda," *BBC Online*, 18th May 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/world_at_one/programme_highlights/1338447.stm

⁷⁶⁵ *PEB*, 15th May 2001

⁷⁶⁶ "Labour Under Tax Pressure" *Sky News* 21st May 2001 (All articles available at <http://www.sky.com/skynews/article>)

business”⁷⁶⁷ but there was no detailed explanation regarding how these aims would be actually put into practice. The policy to cut fuel tax by 6p a litre was mentioned in the second party broadcast and the “common sense”⁷⁶⁸ cut was equated to 27p a gallon. The party believed that they were satisfying the wishes of the large majority of the electorate who had supported the September 2000 fuel crisis, and were concerned about rising petrol prices. In an interview with the *Sun* during the last week of the campaign, Hague attempted to promote his petrol tax policies to the blue collar workers who would potentially read this particular paper.⁷⁶⁹ However, in the context of the research question of this thesis regarding why were some Conservative marketing initiatives unsuccessful, the party had to withstand the accusations that their tax cutting proposals would make little difference in terms of really effective government expenditure.⁷⁷⁰

The Tories struggled to engineer enough enthusiasm about their previous record in government to support their policy and ideological marketing. In the context of the research question of this thesis regarding why were some Conservative marketing initiatives unsuccessful, the eighteen years of government were acutely discredited in the minds of the electorate. These circumstances did not stop senior MPs linking their party in 2001 to Margaret Thatcher’s administrations of twenty years earlier. For instance, Michael Portillo would suggest that “anyone interested in building on Mrs Thatcher’s wonderful achievements in government” should vote Tory.⁷⁷¹

7.2.3 Focus on Government Record: Potential Product

Figure 7.6 highlights the electorates’ belief that many of the nation’s problems in 2001 were associated with the policies of the Thatcher and Major Governments. The biggest share of the blame was associated with the National Health Service and

⁷⁶⁷ “Tax,” *Sky News*, 21st May 2001

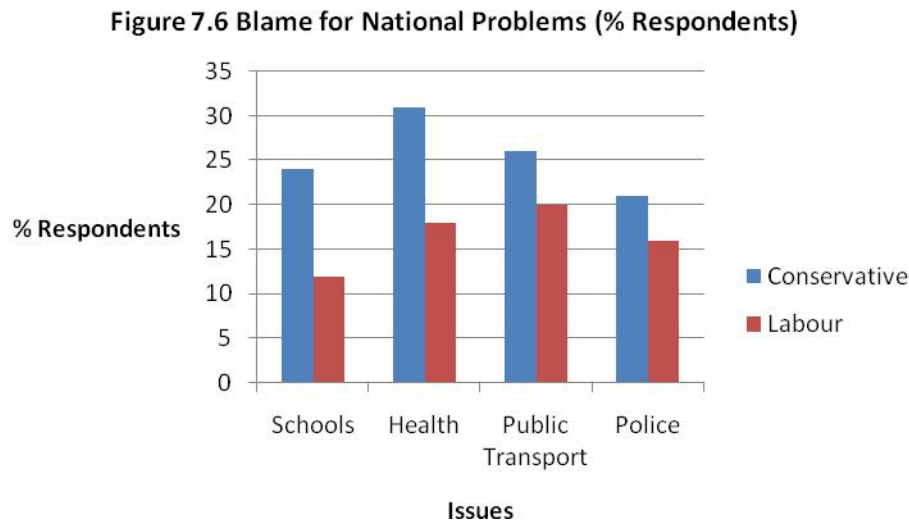
⁷⁶⁸ *PEB*, 15th May 2001

⁷⁶⁹ Kavanagh and Watson, *The Sun*, 2nd June 2001, p.1

⁷⁷⁰ Hague, *BBC Radio Four*, 20th May 2001

⁷⁷¹ “Thatcherism: Alive and Well” *BBC Online*, 5th June 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/world_at_one/1371118.stm

the proposal in the 2001 campaign to extend private health insurance could reinforce the idea that the Tories were only concerned about health care for the elite few.



How much do you blame [a lot for] the current Labour Government/ last Conservative Government for the problems in your area? (%) Source: Evening Standard/ ICM Research Poll 11th/ 13th May 2001,
http://www.icmresearch.co.uk/pdfs/2001_may_evening_standard_london_general_election_poll.pdf

The negative consequences associated with mentioning previous governments were particularly evident when Margaret Thatcher made public appearances during the latter weeks of the campaign. The emergence of Thatcher would remind the electorate of potentially negative memories of her three governments, and re-stoke the resentment of her stoic yet strident leadership during her eleven years as Prime Minister. Thatcher quipped that the advertising display for *The Mummy Returns* film meant that the people of Plymouth knew that she was coming to make a speech. However, Michael Dobbs observed that this remark would have a negative impact amongst the voters, which the party desperately needed to win back if they stood any chance of regaining power.⁷⁷² A further negative consequence of Thatcher's appearances was to cause Hague to appear a weak and ineffective

⁷⁷² Interview with Michael Dobbs, 11th May 2006

leader. Her domineering speeches had the potential to further enforce the stereotyped image of Hague as one of 'Thatcher's children.' This perception had initially originated from the photograph of the former Tory leader listening to a sixteen year old Hague at the 1977 party conference. Hague tried to laugh off the Labour poster that involved a merged picture of Thatcher and himself but he continued to link himself to the ideology and policies of the former Tory leader.

The final initiative to market the 'potential' product involved the Tories reminding the electorate of Labour's 'arrogant' attitude "abusing the democratic institutions of the country," and generally sidelining parliament.⁷⁷³ The electorate were urged to not repeat the 1997 poll when Labour gained a landslide victory. During a newspaper interview, Thatcher compared a potential second Labour landslide to an "effective dictatorship."⁷⁷⁴ A marketing initiative at the end of the campaign consisted of a series of posters that pictured a pin beside the face of Blair within a bubble, which the electorate was encouraged to 'burst.' Andrew Cooper derided the 'defeatist outlook' of this particular initiative, which showed that "Hague (had) effectively thrown in the towel."⁷⁷⁵ The ex Tory Minister, Philip Oppenheim, believed that the development of this strategy was as a result of Hague "loosing resilience" in the final weeks of the campaign.⁷⁷⁶

Alongside the ineffective promotion of their former senior politicians, in contrast to the 1970 and 1979 campaigns, the Tories did not focus on extensively promoting their shadow cabinet to a national audience. For instance, the 2001 marketing did not involve the widespread promotion of Hague and Anne Widdecombe's non-political interests. In a similar way to the 1970 election, personal information was never marketed in a personal 'piece to camera' of a style that was undertaken by Thatcher in the 1979 campaign. There were too many senior Conservative politicians that remained ridiculed in the eyes of the public and closely linked to the

⁷⁷³ Hague *BBC1 Breakfast with Frost*, 3rd June 2001

⁷⁷⁴ "Hague Accused Over Euro," *Sky News*, 1st June 2001

⁷⁷⁵ Interview with Andrew Cooper, 21st September 2005

⁷⁷⁶ Interview with Philip Oppenheim 'BBC2 *Newsnight*' 1st June 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/vote2001/hi/english/programmes/specials/newsnight/newsid_1180000/1180738.stm

disgraced party image as well as the discredited decision making during previous Tory governments. However as a result of failing to effectively market their party personalities, the electorate could remain unsure whether the party representatives possessed enough integrity and leadership ability that would be required in government.

7.2.4 Excessive Focus on Personality: Augmented Product

The Tories did not produce a broadcast during the 2001 campaign that was similar to 'The Journey' transmission from the 1992 election in which John Major had been pictured whilst travelling around his native Brixton. A comparable transmission would have provided the electorate with an opportunity to become more familiar with Hague, as well as destroying some of the stereotypes of the Tory leader that may have been in their minds. A broadcast could further exacerbate the problems that the party faced in marketing what David Curry MP regarded as the "difficult narrative" of Hague to the electorate.⁷⁷⁷ His personal development had been less gradual in comparison to John Major, without the emotional impact and the sense of a 'rags to riches' perspective.

Hague had undertaken what was traditionally regarded as the stereotypical route to become a Conservative politician. The picture of a teenage Hague speaking at the 1977 Conservative Party Conference to an audience that included an attentive Margaret Thatcher, and the involvement in the Oxford Union, and the gaining of a first at that university, could all provoke criticisms from the media that Hague had taken the 'stereotypical' route to become a Conservative politician. Furthermore, the Tory leaders' entry into politics as a twenty-seven year old MP in 1989 could incite accusations that he could not relate to modern British life due to his lack of 'real' work. A potential sequence of Hague outside a Yorkshire country pub could also rekindle the ridicule that he had faced in 2000 after suggesting that he had drunk fourteen pints a day during his childhood.

⁷⁷⁷ Interview with David Curry, 15th March 2006

Hague was reticent about discussing his life outside politics in the television interviews. He failed to counteract the suggestions from Jeremy Paxman that he was a slightly 'weird' leader and an old fashioned campaigner who refused to let his wife speak when they were campaigning around the UK.⁷⁷⁸ In a *Daily Mail* interview, Hague proclaimed that "I'm not normal" but potential leaders needed to have some special qualities and "be exceptional people, so let's not be ashamed of being different."⁷⁷⁹ As a result of practising his judo, the Tory leader had learnt the need for "mental focus," personal stamina, and developed an ability to concentrate "completely on the task in hand [because] the winner is often the person whose energy lasts the longest."⁷⁸⁰ In his interview for the *Sun*, Hague admitted that "resoluteness" was one of his greatest strengths because he was "fighting for something I believe in."⁷⁸¹ However, there were a few attempts by Hague to display an emotional aspect to his personality by proclaiming that he enjoyed holidaying with his wife and that "I'm deeply in love with her."⁷⁸² In the same interview, Hague reiterated that he was a normal UK citizen unlike the Labour cabinet ministers who "don't smoke, don't drink, don't have a car and don't want to get married."⁷⁸³

It has already been demonstrated within the chapter that the party effectively marketed their ideas into the consciousness of the electorate, but in a similar way to the 'core' ideological promotion, the Tories developed an 'out of touch' perception. In the context of the thesis research question regarding why some Conservative marketing initiatives were unsuccessful during the 2001 campaign, the Tories failed to convince the electorate that their passionate ideas on issues such as immigration were of key importance.

⁷⁷⁸ Interview with William Hague, *BBC Newsnight*, 29th May 2001, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/events/newsnight/1362843.stm>

⁷⁷⁹ Lynda Lee- Potter "For the Love of Ffion," *Daily Mail*, 5th June 2001 p.16

⁷⁸⁰ Lee-Potter, *Daily Mail*, 5th June 2001, p.16

⁷⁸¹ Kavanagh and Watson, *The Sun*, 2nd June 2001, p.1

⁷⁸² Lee Potter, *Daily Mail*, 5th June 2001, p.16

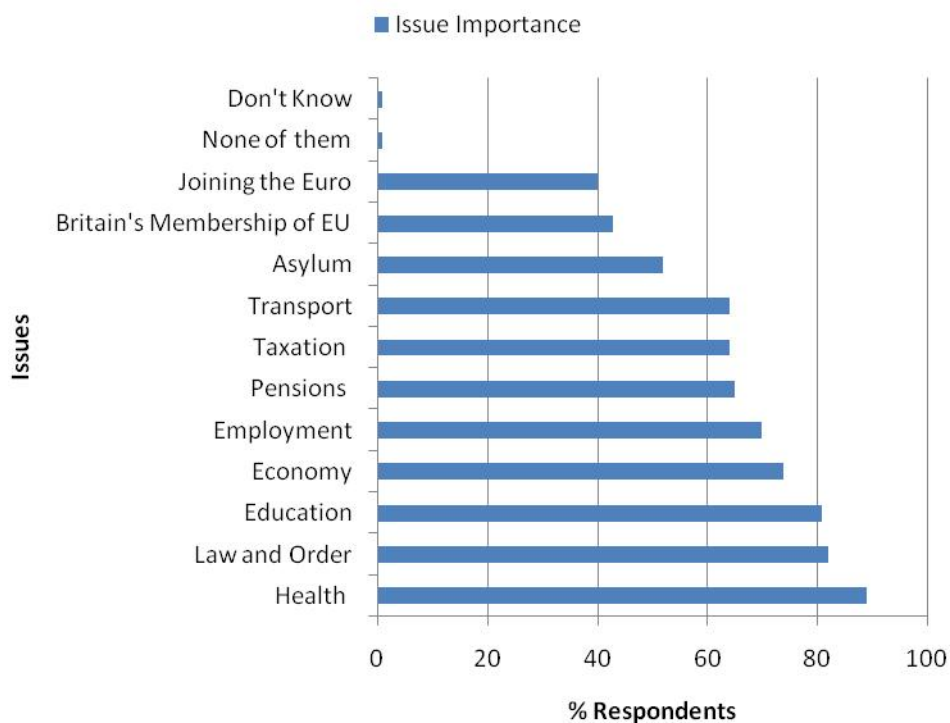
⁷⁸³ Lee Potter, *Daily Mail*, 5th June 2001, p.16

7.3 Unsuccessful Marketing Initiatives

7.3.1 Tangible Product: "Out of Touch Perceptions?"

Many senior Conservatives were continuing to believe into the 2001 campaign that anti Euro ideas were "in tune with what the public wanted on Europe."⁷⁸⁴ Figure 7.7 highlights how the heavily promoted issues of Europe and the European Single Currency were not regarded with the same importance by the electorate.

Figure 7.7 Importance of Issues in 2001 Election (% Respondents)



Which of the following are important issues for you in deciding how you will vote on June 7th? (%) Source: "ICM Research/ The Guardian Campaign Poll 3," ICM 26th to

⁷⁸⁴ Hague, BBC, 3rd June 2001

28th May 2001, http://www.icmresearch.co.uk/pdfs/2001_may_26-28_guardian_campaign_poll.pdf

Sky News suggested that this lack of importance was due to the electorate being assured by the Labour Government that there would be a referendum on joining the Euro.⁷⁸⁵ Despite the public indifference, the Tories increased the intensity of their 'Save the Pound' initiative in the final weeks of the campaign. The 'Twenty Four Hours to Save the Pound' campaign' warned the electorate that the pound would cease to be national currency within a day of the election.⁷⁸⁶ As a result of this intensive strategy to promote the 'Save the Pound campaign,' the electorate could gain the impression that the Conservatives were predominately a party that was concerned with only one single issue. At the end of the election campaign, Michael Heseltine were criticising the 'harsh' standpoint that was adopted by the Tories regarding this policy marketing. The whole tone of the campaign was described as "Euro Isolationist" and "little Englanderish" in style.⁷⁸⁷ These prejudices could be linked to the series of comments by Sir Peter Tapsell MP who suggested that the blueprint by Germany for a future European Union was of a similar style to Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.⁷⁸⁸ In response to the broadcast and associated comments, the electorate could struggle to be convinced that the Tories offered a positive and honest appraisal about Britain and Europe at the start of the twenty first century.

7.3.2 Tangible/ Potential Product: "Evasiveness?"

By the end of the campaign, only 11% of the polled electorate thought that the Tories were marketing on the key issues that the electorate were concerned

⁷⁸⁵ "Tories Seek Fair Euro Fight," *Sky News*, 28th May 2001

⁷⁸⁶ Lee Potter *Daily Mail* 5th June 2001 p16

⁷⁸⁷ Heseltine *Evening Standard* 8th June 2001 p.13

⁷⁸⁸ "Hague Backs Off Hitler Row MP" *Sky News* 13th May 2001

about.”⁷⁸⁹ In response to the accusation that the party had a “one issue obsession about the Euro,”⁷⁹⁰ some additional policies were marketed that would hopefully develop a more empathetic party image and attract a variety of voter groups other than their ‘core’ supporters. The Tories were hastily assuring their core vote that the increased discussion about Britain’s public services did not mean that the party had realigned their campaign. The party argued that they had always been campaigning on the issue of public services⁷⁹¹ and a new poster campaign highlighted the gradual resignation of the police, nurses and teachers from their professions due to their frustrations with the state of their particular public service.⁷⁹² The electorate were asked to vote Tory and give these people a reason to stay in their employment although specific policies were not marketed.

Hague waited till the final weekend of the campaign to proclaim that “it’s time not just to deal with the symptoms of inner city decline but with the causes as well.”⁷⁹³ Ten pledges were promoted to assist with urban regeneration for Britain’s cities but this last minute strategy contrasts with the continuous promotion of the council house sales policy that had taken place in the 1979 election campaign. These last minute attempts to align the Conservative party with public service workers were deemed by Carr to have a meagre impact on the eventual election result.⁷⁹⁴ Figure 7.7 highlights the consequences of the Tories being evasive about policies and supports Worcester and Mortimore’s belief that the party could not convince the electorate that they could lower taxes and maintain (or increase) public spending.⁷⁹⁵

⁷⁸⁹ Roger Mortimore “Election Commentary: Party Image,” *MORI*, 25th May 2001, <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/publications/rmm/ec0525.shtml>

⁷⁹⁰ “Euro Fight,” *Sky News*, 28th May 2001

⁷⁹¹ Interview with Francis Maude, *BBC Radio 4 PM*, 2nd June 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/vote2001/hi/english/programmes/specials/pm/newsid_1205000/1205841.stm

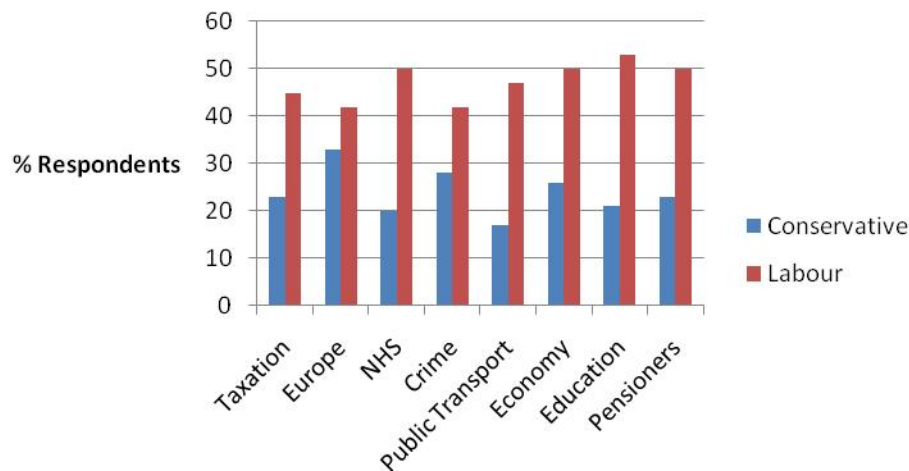
⁷⁹² Francis Maude, *BBC Radio 4*, 2nd June 2001

⁷⁹³ “Urban Regeneration ‘Top Priority’ for Tories,” *Sky News*, 1st June 2001,

⁷⁹⁴ Simon Carr “Election 2001: Election sketch- It’s Underdogs versus Managers: Leaving the Tories crushed,” *The Independent*, 7th June 2001, p.2

⁷⁹⁵ Robert Worcester and Roger Mortimore (2001) *Explaining Labour’s Second Landslide*, London, Politicos, p.96

Figure 7.8 Trust in Policy Implementation (% Respondents)



Which party do you trust to.... (% Respondents) Source: Evening Standard/ ICM Poll 2nd/ 3rd June 2001,

http://www.icmresearch.co.uk/pdfs/2001_june_evening_standard_london_general_election_poll_2.pdf

The Tories appeared equally non-committal about how the nation would benefit from the election of a Conservative administration. This vagueness resulted from the party initiating incessant negative campaigning, being evasive about their own specific policy details, but also due to the outfit continuing to appear disunited over key issues. Therefore Kavanagh is correct in suggesting that Hague failed to market how his brand of conservatism was relevant “⁷⁹⁶ to the country he wished to govern and this task were made more difficult due to the divided nature of the party.

The future consequences of any European policy were compromised by the continuing existence of internal party debates regarding whether the Tories were promising to ‘keep the pound’ for the lifetime of the next parliament or forever. Whilst Kenneth Clarke and Chris Patten were publicly critical of Hague’s strategic decision to considerably focus upon the “save the pound” initiative during the

⁷⁹⁶ Kavanagh, *The Independent*, 3rd September 2001, p.5

election campaign,⁷⁹⁷ other senior party figures, including Thatcher, were openly campaigning for an everlasting rejection. Hague admitted that he wanted to renegotiate Britain's EU membership but he would never threaten to totally withdraw from Europe. The Tory leader did not offer an assurance that he would use his potential prime ministerial authority to maintain some strong control over those powerful voices who wanted a total separation between Britain and Europe.

Regarding the issue of tax cuts, there was no explanation whether a fuel duty tax cut would be one cut and be consequently wiped out by natural inflationary increases over the next parliament. The Tories did not promise to abandon the fuel escalator which had been implemented by their previous government and was seen as the root cause of the September 2000 fuel crisis. Furthermore, when it was nationally recognised that Britain's public services needed more public investment, the electorate could remain unsure whether they would actually benefit in the long term from the tax cutting measures.⁷⁹⁸ The uncertainty associated with the Conservative's pledge to lower taxes was further exacerbated by Hague's public admission that the party's hope to save £0.5 billion in government spending in the first year of a Tory government would not be met.⁷⁹⁹ If a voter had been attracted to vote for this party due to the promise of tax cuts, they had to be assured that the cuts would actually take place.

Despite the difficult opposition period since 1997, the 2001 election provided the Tories with an opportunity to promote a positive image of themselves to the electorate. However the party was involved in a considerable amount of negative campaigning that painted an austere perception of Britain at the beginning of the twenty first century, without presenting their own ideas to resolve the critical situation. Many marketing initiatives were encouraging various electoral groups to

⁷⁹⁷ "Hague Accused Over Euro," *Sky News*, 1st June 2001

⁷⁹⁷ "Thatcher's New Euro Row," *Sky News*, 22nd May 2001, "Hague figures under Spotlight," *Sky News*, 31st May 2001

⁷⁹⁸ *PEB*, 15th May 2001

⁷⁹⁹ "Hague figures under spotlight," *Sky News*, 31st May 2001

vote for the Tories on the basis of their dissatisfaction with Labour. Norris describes the negative campaigning as “old- fashioned soap box oratory and gut instincts.”⁸⁰⁰

In the context of the research question of this thesis, regarding the unsuccessful nature of certain marketing initiatives, the negative campaigning in 2001 was criticised on the grounds of excessive ‘populism’ and a strategy that was designed to merely attract media attention. Furthermore there were no ‘honest’ appraisals like in 1979, which suggested that the Tories would equally struggle with the problems that had been faced by Labour since the previous election. The Labour Government was entering the campaign with high approval ratings, but a negative campaign would have to be particularly effective if the polls were to change and a significant section of the electorate became frustrated about the Blair administration.

7.3.3 Augmented Product Negative Campaigning Creating “Harsh Personality?”

Andrew Cooper describes the Conservatives’ negative campaigning as the ultimate consequence of the party’s refusal to understand the reason for its loss in 1997, which have been outlined in Chapter Four. As a result of failing to reform their intellectual mandate following their heavy election defeat, and being unable to benefit from the predicted ‘Winter of Discontent’ styled crisis or a slump in Tony Blair’s substantial public approval rating, the Tories were forced to produce a negative campaign as a result of being “left in want of a (core or tangible) point to make.”⁸⁰¹

The Conservatives would not waste any opportunity to initiate negative campaigning. Dermody and Scullion demonstrate that the Conservative Party ‘challenged’ the Labour Party’s personalities and ideas in 75% of their electoral promotions.⁸⁰² Even in an interview for the *Sun* when Hague initially refused to be

⁸⁰⁰ Pippa Norris (2001) “Apathetic Landslide: The 2001 British General Election,” *Parliamentary Affairs*, Volume 54 Number 4 p.573

⁸⁰¹ Interview with Andrew Cooper 21st September 2005

⁸⁰² Dermody and Scullion (2001) p.972

drawn into making personal attacks on Tony Blair, the Tory leader accused the Prime Minister of dishonesty, hypocrisy, and not recognising British traditions and history.⁸⁰³ Labour's 'broken promises' formed a key element of the poster campaigns and the electorate were questioned that they had "paid the tax" but where were the enhanced public services?⁸⁰⁴ Other negative messages included the suggestion that the "Labour Party (was) looking for a second chance, not a second term,"⁸⁰⁵ and a poster initiative forecasted a bleak future for Britain if the Labour Government was re-elected. Beside a caricature of John Prescott's fist, the Tories forecasted that "Labour will hit you hard."⁸⁰⁶

The first party election broadcast also contained negative campaigning. The transmission is a key example of what Rosenbaum regards as a modern day PPB which had "become shorter and slicker, more elaborate, more entertaining and more expensive."⁸⁰⁷ The series of "chilling illustrations of recidivism"⁸⁰⁸ concerned crime, explicitly blamed the Blair government, rather than the police and magistrates, for letting "out 35,000 convicted criminals early under their special early release scheme."⁸⁰⁹ Whilst these offenders were on release, they were offending again and in an attempt to demonstrate the graphically 'human' aspects of Labour's perceived incompetence, the statistics were supported by a menacing soundtrack with vivid images of burglary and drug dealing and an old lady being attacked.⁸¹⁰

The Tories blamed the incumbent government for increasing petrol prices to pay for their public spending plans. The transmission showed the 'human' consequences of the petrol tax being "Labour's favourite stealth tax,"⁸¹¹ with an accompanying imagery of harassed mothers and old aged pensioners wishing that

⁸⁰³ *The Sun*, 2nd June 2001, p.1

⁸⁰⁴ Dermody and Scullion (2001) p.271

⁸⁰⁵ "Hague: We can win," *Sky News*, 8th May 2001

⁸⁰⁶ "Hague hits Back," *Sky News*, 30th May 2001

⁸⁰⁷ Rosenbaum (1997) p.75

⁸⁰⁸ Mark Lawson "Election 2001: Tories woo viewers with Blair Switch Off Project," *The Guardian*, 17th May 2001, p.18

⁸⁰⁹ *PEB*, 15th May 2001

⁸¹⁰ *PEB*, 15th May 2001

⁸¹¹ *PEB*, 15th May 2001

they could afford to run a car. The Blair administration was specifically blamed for allowing an old man in an isolated country cottage to face near starvation with a lack of food in his fridge.⁸¹² It had been evident that the actions of the fuel protestors in September 2000 had gained considerable public support but this particular broadcast attracted media headlines on the basis of the dramatic imagery. The Labour Party was accused of a failed European policy within the second party political broadcast. As a result of the Blair government's enthusiasm for greater European integration, the Tories believed that the British fisherman would soon be told that they could only fish for three days a week, a £1 coin would become a museum exhibit and English apples would be sold on a market stall having been priced in Euros. This imagery consisted of symbols that maintained potency within the consciousness of the electorate but this broadcast would potentially arouse the traditional suspicions amongst a large section of the electorate regarding the character of the European Union.⁸¹³

Stephen Dorrell criticised the negative campaigning for containing a "profoundly unattractive set of values"⁸¹⁴ and John Redwood highlighted the unattractive 'severe' image that resulted from a "tough and narrow" campaign on the issues of Europe and immigration.⁸¹⁵ The negative imagery appeared sensationalised and misplaced because not enough of the electorate possessed the desire for a change of government. The party's poll rating still remained at roughly 32% at the end of the 2001 election campaign as it had done since 1997.

7.4 Conclusions

This chapter has used the Brassington and Pettitt framework to examine the Tories' product and marketing strategy during the 2001 election, and this analysis suggests that the 2001 Tory marketing failed to meet the challenges faced by a modern market orientated party. This chapter has answered the research questions

⁸¹² *PEB*, 15th May 2001

⁸¹³ *PEB*, 24th May 2001

⁸¹⁴ Interview with Stephen Dorrell, 21st October 2005

⁸¹⁵ Redwood (2004) p.145

regarding how important was the promotion of the personal ideological belief of senior Tory politicians to the Conservative marketing strategy, and why were some Conservative marketing initiatives unsuccessful during the 2001 election. This chapter has demonstrated that the personal beliefs of senior Tory politicians were not extensively marketed to the electorate during this particular campaign and a number of marketing initiatives were unsuccessful and created a negative image for the party. The conclusions offer frequent comparisons between the Hague opposition and the Thatcher and Heath eras. It remains unclear how the Tories would be able to market themselves to counteract the popularity of the Blair Government and create support for their particular cause.

Despite the derision that has been placed on the 2001 offering, the party did satisfy Brassington and Pettitt's 'model' product framework and marketed a 'core,' 'tangible,' 'augmented' and 'potential' product. The introduction highlighted the trend for an increased professionalised approach to political marketing in recent elections and the Tories were no different to other main parties in recognising the need for effective market orientation. The party deployed media strategists and adopted a centralised operation to market their product but the approach was critically frustrated. New marketing techniques were not sufficiently embraced by the party such as text message and e-mail correspondence. These achievements have to be viewed with the knowledge that the Tories were facing particularly difficult campaigning circumstances in 2001, in contrast to the 1970 and 1979 elections. Chapter One highlighted how an opposition party frequently struggles to counteract government marketing that is based on civil service expertise and attracts more media interest. However the key issues of intense public hostility towards Conservative ideals, effective Labour market orientation, and the fragmented and often hostile, media arenas made effective market orientation an unrealisable aspiration in 2001.

Notwithstanding the good intentions, the Conservative cause was not helped by the party's own behaviour in the election. Chapter Four highlighted how the party had undertaken a difficult policy and marketing formation process since 1997 and had

failed to reverse the negative perceptions of the Tories amongst the electorate. Despite the usage of Philip Gould's *Unfinished Revolution* as a blueprint for the shadow cabinet to discuss political marketing, the party remained generally dismissive of the Labour Party's spin doctoring, and the work of officials such as Alistair Campbell. Senior Tory politicians such as John Redwood⁸¹⁶ demonstrated their concern for the 'cult of personality' that was evident in twenty first century British politics. The party could have looked back to the 1970 and 1979 strategies to witness the joint marketing of personalities as well as ideology and politics. The projection of senior figures would not necessarily mean that the Conservatives would have lost any 'battle of ideas' that could possibly have taken place during the election campaign. If the Conservatives had undertaken this joint marketing strategy, it is possible that the outfit could have had a more positive impact on the political "know- nothings" which Norris and Saunders recognise was the group who learnt most about politics in the 2001 election campaign.⁸¹⁷

This chapter has demonstrated that Hague had similar concerns about extensive personality marketing and unlike Thatcher (and Heath in the latter stages of the 1970 campaign,) he remained unsure about the need for the promotion of himself to form a key component of the marketing strategy. The marketing professionals subsequently struggled to effectively market Hague during the 2001 campaign (who was similar to Heath and Thatcher in being a 'different brand' to be marketed to the electorate) in this era of increased personality based promotions. In the context of the research question regarding how important was the promotion of the personal ideological beliefs of senior Tory politicians to the Conservative marketing strategy, Hague's personal beliefs were not extensively communicated to the electorate. Hague was subsequently portrayed as a weak leader without a distinctive set of relevant beliefs, and unable to control his own party.

In a similar way to the accusations during the 1970 and 1979 campaigns, the Tories were accused of evasiveness as a result of the extent to which they were prepared

⁸¹⁶ Redwood (2004) p.37

⁸¹⁷ Norris and Sanders (2003) p234

to market their policy ideas in the 2001 election. A specific series of policies were intensely marketed to particularly attract 'core voters.' However the policy marketing did not replicate the 1979 election when the party managed to keep their differences away from the public arena. The Thatcher opposition managed to appear a united outfit despite intense divisions over key policies including industrial relations, but the 2001 election witnessed the party being dramatically divided on policies including the measures that would be prominently marketed during the campaign such as tax cuts and the European single currency. The 1970 election had witnessed similar public divisions regarding policies on immigration and race relations but the media had praised Heath's command over Powell. Without this dominant influence, the media did have the freedom to utilise what McCombs and Shaw and Kavanagh regard as their considerable influence in the political environment,⁸¹⁸ and their influence was to be to the Conservatives' disadvantage.

This analysis demonstrates that the personal and policy related attacks on the Labour Government during the 2001 election received negative comment akin to similar criticisms that were levelled towards Heath and the Tories in 1970. Those messages were equally described as sensationalist and unnecessarily negative, but the Heath led party did prominently market their own ideas. The 2001 attacks did not frequently include the marketing of Tory policies and without the constructive attack on the principles of Labour ideas, the party was accused of appearing desperate to achieve any media coverage but hiding away from promoting their own policies. Chapter Five highlights how Harold Wilson criticised Edward Heath's bleak economic analysis on the grounds that the Tory leader did not understand that the national economic prospects were actually more positive. It should be noted that the negative messages in 1970 gained 'credibility' following the unveiling of unexpectedly dire trade figures during the final week of the campaign. However the 2001 election did not witness a similar incident that would suggest that the Tories possessed credible ideas rather than appearing as a suspicious, defensive and intolerant party.

⁸¹⁸ Maxwell E McCombs and Donald L Shaw (1972) "*The Agenda Setting Function of Mass Media*" *Public Opinion Quarterly*, Volume 3, Number 2, p.176

The Tories did not react effectively to the failure of their marketing strategy in the 2001 election. On the 2001 polling day, a MORI poll gave Blair 51% to Hague's 14% regarding "who do you think would make the most capable Prime Minister?"⁸¹⁹ This statistic can be seen as the ultimate failure of the Conservative's well-intentioned marketing strategy.

⁸¹⁹ "Campaign Polls Wave 5" *Mori* 7th June 2001, <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/polls/2001/t010605.shtml>

Chapter 8

Conclusions

8.1 Introduction

This research comprehensively examined the Conservative Party's attempts to initiate political marketing during three opposition periods, by using Lilleker and Negrine's 'proactive' and 'reactive' framework⁸²⁰ with the additional factor of 'innovativeness.' Brassington and Pettitt's product structure⁸²¹ was used to examine the eventual Tory 'product' in the three campaigns.

This research has highlighted a series of complex issues that can be faced by an opposition party during their market orientation. This thesis has also questioned various longstanding beliefs associated with the Conservative marketing strategies. These conclusions address the four research questions that were outlined in Chapter One and have been extensively analysed within this research. .

- What were the key issues that frustrated the development of Conservative political marketing?
- Were the Conservatives undertaking political marketing before the terminology became common place within academic literature?
- How important was the promotion of the personal ideological beliefs of senior Tory politicians to Conservative marketing strategy?
- Why were some Conservative marketing initiatives unsuccessful?

In regard to the first research question, the initial key issue that is considered within this analysis concerns intra party divisions regarding policies, ideology, and marketing techniques. These arguments contributed to difficulties in setting the political agenda, gaining positive media coverage, and inspiring an electorate who were uninterested with their policies or senior politicians. The final issue concerns

⁸²⁰ Negrine and Lilleker (2003) pp.200- 201

² Brassington and Pettitt (2006) pp.288- 289

how to counteract the superiority of the incumbent governments who could use more financial and human resources as well as their governing status to gain positive media coverage.

These conclusions summarise the issues by drawing on the key themes from the research. Section 8.2 highlights the acute intra party divisions amongst the Tories in each of the three opposition periods, which concerned policies, ideology, and marketing techniques. All of these arguments caused the party to struggle to positively market themselves within the national political agenda. This section initially considers the disagreements regarding the reasons for the previous election defeats.

8.2 Intra Party Divisions

Chapters Two, Four and Six highlighted the intra party arguments amongst the Conservatives that were associated with the reasons for the previous election defeat. Chapter One examined the potentially passionate nature of these divisions, which are particularly experienced by a political outfit that has recently gone into opposition. The opposition MPs may struggle to accept their loss of governing responsibilities and will seek someone, or something, to blame for their election defeat.

The disagreements associated with the reasons for the election defeat were a key issue for the party at the start of the Thatcher and Hague eras. Chapter Four examined the arguments regarding the two 1974 election defeats as well as Margaret Thatcher's victory to become Tory leader in 1975. There was considerable anger from Edward Heath's supporters regarding the manner of the former Tory leader's removal from office, and these MPs included shadow cabinet ministers. These party members continually argued for the protection of Heath's ideological legacy, and this situation was similar to the party representatives who wanted to preserve Thatcher's political legacy during the Hague opposition.

Chapter Six discussed the assertions of certain 'traditionalist' Tory MPs in the Hague opposition, who believed that their party had won the policy argument during the 1997 election and should not be particularly concerned to reassess their policies and overall party image. The 'modernist' MPs believed that the 1997 defeat meant that the party had to change their policies and image to reengage with the concerns of the modern electorate. These disagreements remained unresolved and the electorate could subsequently gain the perception that the Tories did not fully understand the reasons for the 1997 defeat. In contrast to these two opposition eras, Chapter Two highlighted the internal resolve at the start of the Heath opposition to regroup following the 1966 defeat, and become an appealing and competent alternative to the Wilson administration.

As each opposition period progressed, there were passionate arguments amongst the Tories concerning policies and ideology. This issue had a key effect on the Conservatives' marketing strategy in each of the three opposition periods. The vast majority of these disagreements concerned policy proposals that had been promoted within the party, with the assurance that these measures would attract the voters from the political centre ground. When these policy arguments began to be played out in the public arena, the Tories appeared to be a disunited outfit, and perceived to be unable to potentially implement their policies when in government.

Chapter Two highlighted the policy arguments in the Heath opposition. After the initial positive resolve following the 1966 defeat, policy disputes occurred concerning comprehensive education, the future of Rhodesia, and race relations. Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' speech contributed to further policy disagreements regarding immigration, and these disputes remained unresolved by the start of the 1970 election. Throughout the opposition, Heath faced accusations that he was merely echoing Labour's policies, and offering collectivist solutions to the nation's problems rather than marketing a truly radical product.

Chapter Four analysed a series of ardent policy and ideological arguments that occurred during the Thatcher opposition, and many of these disputes resulted from the reticence of shadow cabinet ministers to adopt radical policy measures. Edward Heath's supporters within the shadow cabinet disagreed with the ideas that were being developed within 'The Right Approach,' and they were concerned that their party would be involved in another confrontation with the trade unions that was similar to the industrial unrest of 1973. The Thatcher Opposition also witnessed arguments regarding immigration and race relations. These disagreements were particularly exacerbated following Thatcher's unscripted 'swamping' reference during a television interview in 1978. However the policy differences of the Thatcher opposition were mostly maintained away from the public gaze, in contrast to the Heath and Hague eras.

Chapter Six examined how the policy and ideological differences was a key contributor to the market orientation problems between 1997 and 2001. The 'traditionalist' MPs publicly battled with 'modernist' representatives for the Conservatives to campaign on 'traditional' Tory issues, such as tax cuts, to enthuse the core party supporters. The particularly intense debates regarding European integration and Britain's potential entry to a European Single Currency remained unresolved by the start of the 2001 election. The severity of many of these arguments caused the Tories to be unmanageable and critically unable to implement innovative marketing.

The thesis also examined the divisions between the politicians and the party's media strategists regarding communication techniques. Chapter One highlighted Negrine's concept of an effective working relationship between these two groups. Media experts offer their professional expertise, whilst political parties listened to these ideas and sanction strategic changes,⁸²² but this 'ideal' arrangement was frequently absent in the three opposition periods.

⁸²² Negrine (2008) p.3

Chapters Two, Four and Six examined how senior party representatives frequently criticised the concept of marketing professionals being responsible for the party's promotional strategy. This research also highlighted the increased resentment of politicians towards the media strategists when the promotional strategy appeared to be ineffective.

Chapter Two highlighted how Edward Heath was unenthusiastic about undertaking marketing initiatives that focused on his life outside politics. The party's outgoing director of publicity highlighted the reticence of senior politicians to approve potentially expensive and labour-intensive marketing initiatives. Chapter Six also examined the wary attitudes to media strategists during the Hague opposition. The mistrust in the Heath and Hague opposition periods particularly resulted from the belief that the deployment of new marketing techniques would resemble Labour's promotional strategy. The party would appear subservient to the wishes of the electorate and the pollsters. Members of the Heath and Hague oppositions suggested that Labour had been excessively obsessed with courting 'positive' headlines about Wilson for the 1964 election and Blair in 1997, at the expense of promoting the 'realities' of their socialist ideology.

Chapter Four discussed the more amenable approach of Thatcher to market orientation and the media professionals. This Tory leader was willing to be personally involved in marketing initiatives that were political or non-political in nature. However, this research has also highlighted the refusal of Thatcher and her strategists to be involved in particular media interviews as well as a televised election debate with James Callaghan.

These conclusions have examined how the intra-party differences contributed to the second internal issue associated within the factors that can hinder the marketing of an opposition party. This issue concerned the difficult process of an opposition party setting the political agenda, and gaining media coverage in the opposition period as well as in the subsequent election campaign. Chapter One demonstrated how an opposition party, as a result of their lack of governing

influence, often struggles to swiftly attract the media's attention and influence the national political discourse. The Tories were no different to this model in each of the researched opposition eras.

In the context of the fourth research question regarding why some Tory marketing initiatives were unsuccessful during the opposition periods, these conclusions highlight how the Tories used a large amount of negative campaigning in an attempt to set the political agenda. However, these messages subsequently created a 'harsh' image of the Conservative Party.

8.3 Setting the Agenda

This research frequently demonstrated that the Tories initiated a desperate and out-of-control form of negative campaigning in each of the opposition periods.⁸²³ Chapter Three highlighted the negative marketing during the 1970 election although Edward Heath had stated that the Tories would focus on positively marketing their policies and ideology without the need to rubbish the beliefs of their opponents. The negative campaigning was a key element of the party election broadcasts and Harold Wilson was the subject of a series of extremely personal messages, including the suggestion that the Labour leader was an economic cheat. Negative marketing was also used to counter Labour's image as the only caring party in British politics. The continuous promotion of statistics attempted to highlight the 'inadequacies of Labour's health, education, social security and pension policies rather than promote the Tory equivalents. There were similar attempts to counteract what the Tories regarded was Labour's 'sensitive' and 'considerate' image during the Thatcher and Hague oppositions. As the 1970 campaign progressed, the negative marketing became increasingly desperate in nature, because the Tories were aware that their criticisms were failing to impact on the minds of voters. It was during the last week of the campaign with the release of negative trade figures that supported Heath's economic concerns that the

⁸²³ See Chapter 3- Table 3.6, Chapter 5- Figure 5.6, Chapter 7- Section 7.3.3

negative campaigning and continuous economic warnings gained a degree of credibility amongst the electorate

Chapter Five examined how the Tories repeated their pre-election promises of nine years earlier to assure the electorate in 1979 that the party would adopt a positive approach to election campaigning. Chapter Four highlighted how the Conservatives had been complimented for their positive approach to political marketing during the Winter of Discontent but the party used negative campaigning during the 1979 election at a greater level of emotional intensity than had been witnessed in the previous election campaigns. Many of the attacks were associated with the issue of trade union unrest as well as Labour's 'inadequate' economic and social policies. Chapter Five highlighted how the Tories were accused of initiating negative campaigning at the expense of promoting their own policies.

Chapters Six and Seven demonstrated how the Tory marketing involved an extensive amount of negative campaigning between 1997 and 2001. In a similar way to the pre-election assertions in 1970 and 1979, the Tories suggested that they would extensively market positive messages during the 2001 election. However, the party was heavily involved in negative campaigning throughout the election. The media and politicians criticised the Tories for attempting to attract newspaper headlines and appeal to the reactionary elements of society with hysterical, inflammatory and negative messages associated with immigration and European integration.⁸²⁴ The 2001 party election broadcasts were particularly criticised for the negative tone and a perceived lack of credible detail. The negative campaigning, which included a series of attacks about Labour's economic problems, was criticised because a 'winter of discontent styled' socio-economic crisis had not occurred during the Blair administration. Furthermore, the negative campaigning in 2001 did not gain the last minute credibility with a last minute event that was similar to the unveiling of the negative trade figures in 1970. During the last week of the campaign, the Tories resorted to initiating a 'desperate' negative campaign that

⁸²⁴ See *Section 7.3.3 Augmented Product: Negative Campaigning Creating "Harsh Personality?"*

implored the electorate to avoid giving another landslide majority to the Labour Party. The party was accused of marketing a defeatist personality and allowing the perception to develop that Hague had given up on an election victory.

As well as initiating a negative campaign to gain media coverage, the setting of the political agenda had to involve the Tories inspiring an increasingly dealigned and politically uninterested electorate with their product. This thesis has demonstrated that the party frequently struggled to achieve this objective in each of the opposition periods, although a wide variety of marketing techniques had been engaged with the indifferent elements of the voting public.

8.4 Uninterested Electorate

Chapters Two, Four and Six highlighted how the Tories implemented opinion polling to maintain their understanding of an increasingly unpredictable electorate. This analysis of the longstanding use of opinion polling by the Tories also answers the second research question regarding whether the Conservatives were undertaking political marketing before the terminology became commonplace within academic literature.

Chapter Two analysed the co-ordinated nature of the opinion polling during the Heath opposition that discovered a series of target seats and specific voter groups for more focused campaigning. However Chapter Three demonstrated that the party proposed ideas in the 1970 election that did not mirror the key concerns of the public. There were frequent predictions that there would be an economic crisis as a result of the re-election of a Labour Government. However the British Election Study (BES) data demonstrated that the majority of the electorate were content with the economic situation. These statistics also showed that there was a generally weak public enthusiasm for Britain to enter the European Common Market, which was another policy that was extensively marketed during the election campaign.

The opinion polling during the Thatcher opposition has not been extensively referenced within the existing literature but this thesis highlighted a series of

techniques that was used during this period. As well as using written questionnaires, telephone interviews were also conducted to research the political opinions of the electorate. Potentially controversial policies underwent an intensive 'focus group' styled process. The pollsters discovered that there was a need for the Tories to target their marketing to the aspirational working class. The politicians were also warned against excessively campaigning on particular issues such as trade union reform, which could alarm a febrile electorate who had recently experienced the Winter of Discontent. Saatchi and Saatchi also used focus groups to gauge the reaction to marketing initiatives. The promotional language was specifically formulated to make Thatcher and her party appear to be sympathising with the problems being faced across the UK, but the party was subsequently criticised for marketing vague messages for the sake of courting public esteem.

In contrast to the Heath and Thatcher oppositions, Chapter Six highlighted the lack of a comprehensive opinion polling strategy during the Hague opposition. . Focus groups were implemented at the start of the opposition with initiatives such as 'Listening to Britain,' but these schemes were uncoordinated, insufficiently promoted, and the party did not react on the results. For the sake of assuring the support of their core vote, the Tories continued to market their core ideology and attract the party's traditional voters.

In conjunction with the opinion polling, this thesis has demonstrated that the Tories maintained a strategy of frequent policy announcements during each of the opposition periods. This long-term existence of permanent campaigning by the Conservatives also answers the second research question concerning whether marketing techniques were used by political parties before the 'marketing' concept was evident in academic discourse. Chapter Two highlighted how Heath extensively promoted policies between 1966 and 1970, including his desire for Britain to enter the European Common Market.

The continuous policy promotion during the Thatcher opposition was less extensive than in the other periods. This strategy had resulted from the party's general concerns that excessive policy promotion would provide the Labour Party with valuable campaigning material. Margaret Thatcher was also concerned that any promises to the electorate had to be adopted when in government. Thatcher's cautious approach also resulted from the recognition that she maintained a vulnerable leadership position, and was subjected to the frequent disapproval of radical policy ideas by Edward Heath's supporters within the party. However the Tories did unveil some key policy related documents during this period including 'The Right Approach' and 'The Right Approach to the Economy.'

A more limited range of policies was marketed during the Hague opposition to target the Conservative 'core' vote. Chapter Six examined how the Conservatives knew that it would be unlikely that they would overturn Labour's landslide majority from the 1997 election so the party opted to attract their traditional supporters by discussing topics such as immigration. This strategy assisted the Labour Government because not enough of the electorate were sufficiently engaged with the narrow range of policies that were being promoted by the Tories in 2001. Chapter Six highlighted a key majority of the electorate that were willing to give Labour 'another chance' to implement their policies. Chapter Seven examined how the Tories struggled in the 2001 campaign to effectively suggest that the Blair administration had been incompetent stewards of the economy, due to the absence of a significant financial crisis since 1997.

Chapter Seven also demonstrated how lower taxation; warnings about European Single Currency, immigration and an emphasis on defence remained the least important beliefs within the minds of the electorate. When the Tories discussed those key concerns of the electorate such as public service funding, the advertising material consisted of negative campaigning focusing on the inadequacies of the Labour ideas rather than the benefits of the Tory equivalents. The 'You've Paid The Taxes' posters were a key example of the emphasis on negative campaigning, and many of the initiatives lacked an overriding positive theme in contrast to the earlier

eras. The permanent campaign subsequently appeared disjointed and lacked a sense of direction.

Whilst policies were being marketed on the key national issues, the Tories were attempting to gain the attention of the electorate by promoting the personal characteristics of their senior politicians. Chapter One highlighted how a focus on the party leader differentiated the parties who were jostling for the attention of the electorate on the political centre ground. Chapter One, as well as the contextual material at the start of each research chapter, highlighted how television became a key marketing medium. It would have been problematic for the Conservatives to avoid developing a product that lacked a visual reference to the leader. However, in the context of the third research question of the thesis regarding how important was the promotion of the personal ideological beliefs of senior Tory politicians to the Conservative marketing strategy, the promotion of the personal ideology became a less important component of the overall marketing approach. This viewpoint supports Harris and Wring's assertion, which was outlined in Chapter One, that the promotion of the leader is a key aspect of a political marketing strategy but the party does not extensively market the personal political beliefs of their senior politicians.⁸²⁵

Chapters Two and Three examined the attempts to project Heath as an approachable and sympathetic politician. The promotion of his personal beliefs was part of an initiative to convey Heath as an honest and sincere leader, and these initiatives included the Tory leader's Christmas message in 1968. During the 1970 election, the strategy of 'presidential' walkabouts around the provincial cities of the UK allowed the party to promote Heath as a man of integrity who had the ability to engage with the general public. Chapter Three highlighted the large amount of archival documents that were associated with these events, as well as the intense intra party discussions about the wording of placards, and the style of the car that would transport the leader to the tour. Chapter Three also highlighted how Heath

⁸²⁵ Harris and Wring (2001) p.910

particularly wanted to focus on promoting the party's policies but his personal beliefs were marketed to the electorate, including his concept of 'freedom' and his wish to give more opportunities to young people. It is evident that these personality-based messages eventually permeated the conscience of the electorate. The influential nature of this marketing provides further credence to the idea that the 1970 marketing strategy should be extensively and positively mentioned as part of the analysis concerning Conservative market orientation.

A similar series of personality based marketing initiatives was undertaken to promote Margaret Thatcher between 1975 and 1979, without much focus on her political beliefs. The Tories were basing their marketing strategy on particularly satisfying the curiosity of the media and the electorate regarding the possibility of Britain electing the first female leader of a Western European country. Chapter Five examined how Thatcher was portrayed as a woman 'in touch' with the concerns of housewives, by being pictured whilst food shopping or undertaking household chores. Thatcher was marketed as willing to interact with the general public and not an aloof and hectoring senior politician. These initiatives, including the projection of the Conservative Leader at a Suffolk farm, eating chocolates, and using exercising bicycles were unconnected to the 'tangible' policy announcements. Her political ideology was marketed as part of the party's attempts to demonstrate that the Tory leader was a potential Prime Minister with 'integrity' and 'honour.' Chapter Five analysed the 1979 party election broadcasts that attempted to project the Tory leader's political virtues but without a sustained focus on her political ideology. This strategy subsequently caused the party to be accused of initiating a vague marketing approach and a series of polling results questioned the effectiveness of this method. The personal polling of party leaders demonstrated that Thatcher never achieved better ratings than Callaghan during the 1979 campaign.

Chapter Six also highlighted the ineffective initiatives to promote William Hague between 1997 and 2001. These approaches contained few references to his personal political beliefs. In the context of the fourth research question concerning

why certain Tory marketing initiatives were unsuccessful during each of the election campaigns, this thesis has discussed the generally uncoordinated marketing of the senior Tory politicians during the Hague opposition.

Hague and his shadow cabinet did not personally feature in the Tories' party election broadcasts or on the advertising billboards in a positive way during the opposition or the 2001 election. The meagre amount of references to the Tory leader's personal ideology meant that the electorate was unable to gain a positive personal understanding of Hague. Chapters Six and Seven demonstrated that the Tories never sufficiently dented Tony Blair's strong public approval ratings at any time during the opposition and Hague became a negative factor for the party. The Tory leader was stereotyped as 'boring' and closely associated with the overall 'harsh' image of the party. Hague was also perceived to possess weak leadership qualities, as well as being personally linked to the unappealing aspects of the Thatcher and Major governments. This perception was further exacerbated by Margaret Thatcher's extensive appearances towards the end of the 2001 campaign, and the Labour party billboard poster that merged the facial features of Thatcher and Hague.

Despite the extensive attempts to resolve the intra party arguments, interest a politically ambivalent electorate, attract positive media coverage and set the political agenda, the Conservatives struggled to oppose the Labour Government. In each of the opposition periods, the Tories were concerned that the detailed marketing of radical policies would provide valuable campaigning material for Labour who could use their financial and human resources, as well as the prestige of being the governing party, to counteract the marketing efforts of the Tories. In the context of the first research question, the issue of opposing the Labour Government was one of the key factors that frequently frustrated the development of Conservative political marketing.

8.5 Government Superiority

This thesis has highlighted how the vague marketing strategy was particularly evident in the 1979 campaign. These conclusions have already highlighted the Tories' concern that policy detail could provide the weak Callaghan administration with valuable extra campaigning material. Labour could suggest that a future Tory government would create another 'winter of discontent' of a similar intensity to the 'three day week' of 1973.

Media strategists were particularly concerned that Thatcher's integrity would be compromised in a television debate with Callaghan because of her lack of knowledge regarding foreign affairs. However, in answer to the research question concerning why certain Tory marketing initiatives were unsuccessful during the election campaigns, the statistical data within Chapter Five demonstrates that the cautious promotion was not sufficient for the majority of voters who believed that their country was in a desperate state. The subsequent pressure from the Labour Party, the media, and the voters, forced the Conservatives to provide more ideas and 'model' answers with a particular focus on the potential consequences of their policies. The analysis concerning these 'model answers' in the 1979 campaign counteracts with the positive perceptions of this particular marketing campaign that have been made in the existing literature. These accounts have been cited within Chapters One, Four and Five.

Chapters Six and Seven also examined the many vague policy messages that were marketed between 1997 and 2001 to avoid assisting the Blair administration with their own promotional activity. To avert the belief that another Black Wednesday could occur during a Hague government, the Tories offered a series of assurances that the party would competently manage the economy and reduce business taxes. This particular marketing initiative was unsuccessful because there was no supplementary explanation regarding how these aims would be put into practice. For instance, Chapter Seven demonstrated that public service funding was a key issue for the electorate and the Tories did mention the topic within their 'You've

Paid The Taxes' advertising. However, the initiative consisted of powerful negative commentary about the Labour Party's ideas rather than the promotion of the Tory policies. A strategy of vague policy marketing was less evident during the Heath opposition. The Tories continued to announce their distinctive policies despite the criticism from Labour that the Heath opposition were out of touch regarding Britain's true economic situation as well as the concerns of the electorate.

In addition to the marketing of policies whilst being mindful of the Labour Party's campaigning activity, the Tories were equally cautious when promoting the positive record of their previous periods in government. These messages attempted to convince the electorate that the party had the ability to implement their policies, but the extent of the marketed information was frequently minimal. This discretion was due to concerns that the Labour Party would focus on the negative aspects of the previous periods in office, as well as the personnel, and the ideological beliefs from past administrations. Chapters Six and Seven highlighted the anxieties of the strategists in the Hague opposition that the party would provoke widespread public negativity if the achievements of the Thatcher and Major governments were extensively marketed to the electorate. Labour could exploit the negative memories and convince the electorate that another Conservative Government would climax in a similar way to the previous eighteen-year-old administration. The attempt to attract the 'core' voters meant a change in this view and, as already mentioned in these conclusions, Margaret Thatcher made extensive personal appearances during the latter stages of the campaign. These appearances would galvanize the party's traditional supporters.

Chapter Five examined how the 1979 campaign did not contain many references to the Heath government. The lack of coverage was due to Thatcher's concern that her administration needed to distance themselves from the 1970 to 1974 government but the party was additionally mindful that Labour could highlight the 'three day week' that was closely associated with the fall of the Heath administration. The Tories subsequently focused on the work of the Macmillan government, which included the increased spending on the National Health Service

as well as the creation of one million new jobs. Chapter Three also demonstrated that there had also been extensive references to the Macmillan and Home governments during the 1970 election. Two elections and a longer opposition period had occurred since the Tories had been in power, and the 1951 to 1964 government had not climaxed in quite such an intensively negative fashion in comparison to what would befall the Heath and Major governments.

These conclusions have summarised the themes that have been discussed in the research chapters. Chapter Eight now considers how this research can relate to wider debates associated with political marketing and opposition politics.

8.6. The Thesis Contribution

8.6.1 Reflections on Methodological Approaches

This research contains a diverse range of primary material from a variety of sources. This thesis has included documentation including minutes of strategy meetings, resignation letters from media professionals, a draft manifesto for an election that was never contested, and transcripts of party election broadcasts. When comparing the methodological approaches to researching the three opposition periods, the researching of the Heath and Thatcher oppositions was made easier due to the availability of the archival depositories at Oxford and Cambridge.

The Conservative Party archive at the Bodleian Library in Oxford contained a wide range of archival documents, which assisted with the research of the Heath opposition. Various intra party disputes were extensively chronicled in the archival material, including a passionate letter from John Rathbone when resigning from his position as the Tories' Director of Publicity, and general internal correspondence associated with the problematic promotion of Edward Heath.⁸²⁶ However, the archival material also contained various details about the innovative and more successful marketing techniques that were deployed during the opposition period,

⁸²⁶ See the Conservative Party Archive folder CCO 600/11/1 Correspondence with and about Prime Minister/ Leader March 1966- September 1967

as well as in the 1970 election campaign. Various materials outlined the opinion polling techniques as well as the logistical correspondence to gain regional television exposure for Heath.⁸²⁷

The archive of Margaret Thatcher's papers at Churchill College, in Cambridge, provided a considerable amount of interesting material to develop a critical perspective of the 1975 to 1979 opposition as well as the Conservatives' campaign in the 1979 election. The most interesting material concerned the intra-party debates at the start of the Thatcher opposition that highlighted the lack of resources and ineffective methods to promote the party and subsequently help the Tories to set the national political agenda. Chapter Four highlighted that even in 1977, at the halfway point of the opposition period, senior party personnel were still criticising fundamental aspects of the Conservative Party's marketing strategy, including the inability of the party to provide key personnel to speak on TV in the main evening news bulletins.⁸²⁸ The Churchill College Archive also included prepared material for the potential 1978 election, as well as subsequent intra party memorandums concerning logistical and financial issues resulting from Callaghan's decision to forgo calling an election during the autumn of that year.

An internet-based BBC archive of programmes from the 2001 general election was a valuable asset to analyse the Hague opposition period. The material was extensively referenced in Chapters Six and Seven, and was supported by additional information from newspaper archives, and responses from an extensive series of interviews. However, due to the recent nature of the 1997 to 2001 opposition period, internal party documentation was not available for view at this present time. Material, of a similar nature to the records at the Bodleian Library and Churchill College, would have provided a revealing insight into the intra party debates concerning the marketing strategy, during this difficult period for the party.

⁸²⁷ See the Conservative Party Archive folders CC0 600/3/10/1 and CC0 600/3/10/2 Correspondence, public opinion research and television programmes

⁸²⁸ See the Margaret Thatcher Archive folder THCR 2/6/1/201 Papers relating to Press and Publicity February 1975 to July 1977

It should be also noted that there were also limitations associated with the analysing the promotional activity of the Heath and Thatcher oppositions. There were few available interviewees associated with the Heath opposition. Many of the principal actors of the period have passed on, or were unavailable for interview; hence the one interview with Douglas Hurd for this thesis. Within the Churchill College Archive concerning the Thatcher opposition, there is potentially valuable documentation, associated with the Winter of Discontent for example, which is still embargoed for release in twenty-five or fifty years.

The research for the three opposition periods could have also been additionally assisted by a collective archive of BBC and ITV media broadcasts. The lack of an extensive repository remains a key issue for researchers. It is also surprising that a number of satellite news outfits, whose coverage is becoming increasingly significant in elections, do not maintain an extensive archive of broadcast material. However, it is also a surprise that due to the existence of an archival repository to assist with analysing the earlier periods of opposition, the tasks to analyse the earlier periods of the Conservative Party's history was a more easier task than conducting the interviews, and viewing the enhanced (but uncoordinated) media coverage of the more recent Hague opposition.

These conclusions now consider the findings of this research, in the context of further ideas that have been proposed in existing literature.

8.6.1 Existing Literature

This thesis considerably converges with a large amount of the arguments within the existing literature on this particular topic. This research bears out Negrine's concept of 'adaption' in political campaigning, when political parties incorporate newer promotional techniques into their strategies without abandoning older campaign modes.⁸²⁹ This thesis highlights that the Conservatives were mostly

⁸²⁹ Negrine (2008) p.24

adapting their election strategies to use new and established forms of media. Chapters Two and Three examined how the party used colour television and the regional TV outlets to promote themselves to the electorate during the Heath opposition. Furthermore, Chapters Four and Five analysed the Tories' use of mass media tabloids in the Thatcher opposition era. In each of the opposition periods, the party used more established promotional techniques in both periods such as broadsheet newspapers and party election broadcasts.

Chapter One also highlighted Negrine's examination of how political parties have had a longstanding working relationship with media experts. This research has partly supported Negrine's concept of "professionalisation of political communication,"⁸³⁰ by showing the historical use of external media professionals by the Tory party. A particular regard should be given to the work of Geoffrey Tucker, and the media strategists, in the Heath opposition and the 1970 election. This research has offered supplementary material to Negrine's argument, by demonstrating that the process of 'adaption' was sometimes problematic for the Conservatives. The chapters associated with the 1997- 2001 period demonstrate that the Tories did not extensively use internet-based material, as well as struggled to 'adapt' to the increasingly fragmented and twenty-four hour media environment.

In the context of the debate between Lees Marshment and Ormrod that was highlighted in Chapter One, this thesis prefers to further Ormrod's concepts of "market orientation" and "marketing orientation."⁸³¹ Ormrod's concept is a proficient tool to the understanding of intra party difficulties associated with political marketing. These definitions are advancement on Lees Marshment's 'market orientated' definition in the context of her 'sales orientated,' 'product orientated,' and 'market orientated' model.

⁸³⁰ Negrine (2008) p.2, p.70 and p.72

¹² Ormrod (2006)p.110

The introduction to this thesis highlighted Ormrod's definitions, and the occasions when only specific party departments embrace political marketing. This research has demonstrated on many occasions within these opposition periods when the Conservative Party was practising only 'marketing orientation,' in which the Tory communications department was displaying an enthusiasm for marketing, but the wider party, was not embracing marketing orientation. This inability to move from a 'marketing orientated' stance and effectively promote the party personalities and policies was particularly evident during the Hague opposition.

The reserved endorsement of this research for the Conservative Party's marketing approaches during these three opposition periods, counters Scammell's more positive analysis. Within 'Designer Politics,' Scammell suggests that "the Conservatives, with their greater affinity for business techniques and more hierarchical organisation have been the communications pioneers throughout most of the [twentieth] century."⁸³² Despite the diligent work of Geoffrey Tucker during the Heath Opposition. Chapters Two and Three highlighted the Tories' frequent struggle to market Edward Heath as an alternative Prime Minister to Harold Wilson. The research into the Thatcher opposition highlighted a party that had antiquated resources for promotional activity, and was constantly under pressure due to the possibility of an election being called at any time during the opposition period. Scammell's statement from 1995 also conflicts with more recent periods, including the 1997 to 2001 opposition. For instance, Chapters Six and Seven highlight the intra-party arguments about particular parties and whether to target specific groups of voters. These disagreements frustrated the development of a coherent and effective promotional strategy for the Conservatives. Throughout that opposition period, and in the 2001 election campaign, the Labour Party were the marketing pioneers and successfully dominated the national political agenda.

⁸³² Scammell (1995) p.269

The other book that has been considerably referenced in this thesis is Andrew Gamble's 'Conservative Nation.' His account of the Heath opposition period provides a comprehensive analysis of the intra party ideological debates of this era. Gamble's concept of the "new right" group within the Tory party⁸³³ is described as the 'ambitious' group of MPs in this thesis, who wanted Heath to develop and promote a more distinctive policy agenda. The argument of this thesis does not conflict with the narrative from Gamble, but this research has placed Gamble's ideas in the context of promotional activity at the time. As suggested in the introduction to this research, the communications initiatives by the Tories between 1966 and 1970 have not received as much coverage in existing literature, compared to other opposition periods.

In the context of the second research question regarding whether the Conservatives were undertaking political marketing before the terminology became commonplace within academic literature, it is evident that many marketing techniques were undertaken in the 1970 campaign. This opposition period has not been given enough credit in the existing literature. Chapter one highlighted how many accounts have used the distinctive business related language, which defines the political marketing terminology, to describe 'new techniques' of the 1980s, such as a emphasis on opinion polling and permanent campaigning. However, this research demonstrated that these initiatives were a key part of the political process during the Heath opposition. Although the party did benefit from the unveiling of negative trade figures during the final week of the campaign,

Chapter Three noted that the 1970 election was conducted in difficult circumstances for the Conservatives with negative polling, unpopular policies and an uninspiring party leader. The 1970 campaign did not provoke the variety of negative responses that would be evident in the 1979 or 2001 elections. The Tories were not accused of being evasive about their policies in the 1970

⁸³³ Gamble (1974) pp.87- 122

campaign and there were concentrated attempts to present a personal and relevant dimension to the party ideology as well as Heath's individual beliefs. The party also managed to innovatively promote Edward Heath, who was a difficult 'brand' to be sold to the electorate. The party also extensively used negative campaigning in each of the election campaigns, as well as soundbites and photo opportunities before these concepts were recognised in marketing commentary. However, in regard to the fourth research question of this thesis, concerning why were some Conservative marketing initiatives unsuccessful, this analysis has demonstrated that the party was criticised by the media, political opponents and the electorate for their use of these marketing techniques. The Tories were also engaged in each of the three opposition periods to market a product to the electorate, and the use of the Brassington and Pettitt framework has allowed this thesis to explore the diverse aspects of the offerings.

This research supports the perception from the existing literature that there has been a decline in the amount of ideological detail that was marketed to the electorate and this analysis has shown a decline in the extent that policies were marketed to the electorate. In contrast to the policy rich offering that was promoted in 1970, 'issues' were discussed in the 2001 election with very few specific policy measures being expounded apart from 'saving the pound' and implementing tougher immigration controls that would satisfy traditional voters. The lack of tangible policies in the Thatcher and Hague administrations was particularly associated with the failure to resolve policy disputes. There was a concern in 1979 that the marketing of a particularly radical agenda would alarm the electorate, and provide additional campaigning material for the Labour Government

8.6.2 Suggestions for Future Research

This thesis has highlighted a series of problems faced by opposition parties when developing their marketing strategies. These factors would be enhanced by further studies of particular oppositions. One obvious example is the Conservatives under

David Cameron's leadership, where future research could examine whether the Tories have managed to develop an effective product and marketing strategy.

The research could examine whether Cameron's Conservatives have set the agenda in a way that eluded Hague between 1997 and 2001, as well as Edward Heath during his 1966 to 1970 opposition. The project could also consider the strategic thinking associated with the decisions by the Tories to focus on issues such as the environment, while downplaying the subjects of tax, immigration and European integration. In comparison to Hague's inability to distance his administration from the Major and Thatcher governments, the additional research could discuss whether Cameron's Conservatives have developed a new brand that was dissimilar to previous marketing strategies. A series of comparisons could also be made between this approach to market David Cameron, and the promotion of Margaret Thatcher of thirty years earlier. Both leaders embraced modern political marketing techniques so these strategies could be evaluated in the context of the third research question of this thesis, namely the promotion of the personal ideological beliefs of senior Tory politicians and the increasing focus on their lifestyles away from the political arena.

This research has also demonstrated that intra-party divisions have been a key factor in hampering the development of effective marketing for the Tories. The Cameron opposition has experienced similar intra-party divisions to those evident in the Heath, Thatcher and Hague periods on both ideology and policy detail. Future research could consider whether the Cameron Tories managed to cope with these disagreements in a way that eluded the Heath and Hague oppositions. Finally, the project could examine whether the Conservatives managed to accumulate enough human and financial resources for marketing purposes since 2005. Did the party gain enough support to use innovative marketing techniques and marketing forums such as podcasting? This final examination would further enhance the detailed analysis that has been provided in this thesis, concerning the Heath, Thatcher and Hague opposition periods.

Appendix

The following current and former Conservative politicians, party strategists and thinkers, as well as political marketing professionals kindly agreed to be interviewed for the purposes of this thesis:

- **John Bercow MP:** Telephone interviews conducted on 23rd and 30th January 2006
- **Peter Bottomley MP:** Interview conducted at Westminster on 28th February 2006
- **Andrew Cooper:** Interview conducted in London on 21st September 2005
- **Tim Collins:** E-mail interview conducted on 16th November 2005
- **Michael Dobbs:** Interview conducted at the RAC Club in London on 11th May 2006
- **Rt Hon Stephen Dorrell MP:** Interview conducted at constituency office in Thurmaston, Leicester on 21st October 2005
- **Daniel Finkelstein:** Interview conducted in London on 7th September 2005
- **Sir John Hoskins:** E-mail interview conducted on 26th January 2006
- **Lord Howe of Aberavon:** Interview conducted at Westminster on 5th April 2006
- **Lord Hurd of Westwell:** Telephone interview conducted on 11th April 2006
- **Lord Lawson of Blaby:** E-mail interview conducted on 7th June 2006
- **John Maples MP:** Interview conducted at Westminster on 17th May 2006
- **Michael Moszynski:** Telephone interview conducted on 23rd September 2005
- **Rt Hon Sir Malcolm Rifkind:** Interview conducted at Westminster on 28th February 2006
- **David Treddinick MP:** Interview conducted at Westminster on 28th February 2006
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