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Voter Empowerment in Emerging Democracies: Mobilising the Marginalised of Peru

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Abstract:	Motivating the politically and economically disenfranchised to vote can be problematic, particularly in the emerging democracies where political marketing is gaining ground without concurrent voter education. Utilising textual and discourse analysis this paper deconstructs a social marketing campaign in Peru where the rhetoric of political candidature is challenged. Through characterising voters as employers and selection criteria based on analogies of daily life, the political process is made comprehensible and accessible, if not also radically appealing. The author introduces voter empowerment as a concept positioned in the interstices between social marketing and political communications, and distinct from political marketing. Comparative studies of similar campaigns are needed to demonstrate whether these may prove effective and how much adaptation is needful cross-nationally. Meanwhile the Peru campaign provides policy-makers and social activists elsewhere with a model for communicating creatively with marginalised citizens about exercising their democratic rights.
Response to Reviewers:	As advised, the paper has been considerably re-ordered for clarity and re-written for succinctness. The literature review now situates the research problem more firmly in the field of social marketing, with other sub-disciplines as counterpoint. The methodology has been elaborated upon, with greater foregrounding of interview data in the discourse analysis of the media materials. The findings have also been systematically and a more critical stance adopted in findings. Some latter sections have been excised as recommended, and replaced with a new critical conclusion on the concept empowerment.

VOTER EMPOWERMENT FOR CANDIDATE SCRUTINY: MOBILISING THE MARGINALISED IN PERU

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to understand whether marketing communications can be employed effectively to mobilise the politically marginalised and economically disenfranchised in developing countries to vote. Utilising textual and discourse analysis it demonstrates how a Peruvian voter education campaign deconstructed the rhetoric of political choice in developing countries. The author introduces the concept of voter empowerment: making the selection criteria for political leadership comprehensible via analogies drawn from in daily life, thus motivating election engagement. The paper proposes that voter education is best positioned in the interstices between social marketing and political communications, and not conceptualised as being incorporated within political marketing. Universality of democratic ideals might render adaptation of the campaign concept minimal, though differing political, social and economic contexts could constrain effectiveness globally. Comparative studies of similar education campaigns worldwide are needed to demonstrate whether whether these prove effective and how much adaptation is needed cross-nationally. Meanwhile the Peru campaign provides a model for public policy-makers and social activists elsewhere for communicating with citizens about political choices and exercising democratic rights.

Key-words: voter mobilisation, citizen engagement, political communications, social marketing, developing countries

1. INTRODUCTION

Much political communications worldwide is partisan, being concerned about the successful marketing of particular candidates, parties and, to a lesser extent, platforms, modelled roughly on practices in North America. This is exemplified by the work of US political consultants on elections in the Europe, Asia-Pacific and Latin America (Lees-Marshment, and Lilleker, 2012). The vast majority of voters in developing countries, often the poorer segments, are justifiably cynical about their vote counting for much, given their past experience. As worldwide, the popular perception is that politicians appear locally only around election time, promise much, and, in the developing world, even attempt to bribe their vote. No sooner are the results announced, that little change for the better is seen by the politically powerless, regardless of who wins power. Social marketing campaigns invariably urge citizens simply to vote and consider their task fulfilled by appealing to voters not to waste the opportunity, with scant motivation provided. This might have an element of unenthusiastic effort from politicians in government that commission such campaigns, lest the status quo of apathy among the general populace or a segment thereof jeopardise their present hold on power. So while democratic processes have seen resurgence in many developing countries and emerging economies in recent years, elections often remain a context for manipulation of a wide populace and alienation of the economically disenfranchised.

In the 2000s a situation of voter alienation could have been said to exist in Peru, as with many developing countries in Latin America and beyond. Over the late 20th century the country had seen its fair share of political turmoil, including military dictatorships and ineffectual politicians, not to mention home-grown terrorist, drug-trade and para-military scourges. Concerned about voter apathy among the politically and economically disenfranchised, local

civil society groups and non-government organisations consulted a Peruvian communications agency, Toronja, which had already pioneered the inclusion of the indigenous peoples in advertising. Co-led by a creative professional and an anthropologist, this agency devised a political communications campaign to educate and mobilise voters ahead of elections in 2006. Hence the primary objective of this research is to analyse how innovatively the creators of the campaign managed to do communicate a radical re-thinking of voting behaviour. Secondly, it will seek to evaluate the political and cultural contexts in which a similar campaign would prove more or less effective elsewhere in the developing world. A final objective of this article is to make a contribution to the debate on the boundaries of political marketing, and how this relates especially to social and non-profit marketing but also to political communication.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Geography and History

Straddling the Andes mountain range in the north-west of South America and bordered by Chile, Ecuador, Columbia, Brazil and the Pacific Ocean, present-day Peru was the site of the Inca civilisation subsequently conquered by the Spanish in the 16th century. Since independence in the 19th century the country has had a history of military regimes and civilian governments in succession to each other, with democracy finally restored in 1975. The present form of government is constituted as a presidency with a unicameral congress, both popularly elected with voting compulsory for citizens aged between 17 and 70 (CIA Factbook, 2011). Its multi-cultural population of 29.5 million, almost a third of which residing in the capital Lima, is comprised of indigenous Amerindians (45%), *mestizos* or mixed race (37%), whites (15%), as well as blacks, Japanese, Chinese and others (3%). Peru

1 is a rapidly-developing or emerging economy, in recent years classified a Middle Income
2 Country by the World Bank (2011). Yet its indigenous peoples are largely uneducated,
3 illiterate, and often dispossessed of lands valuable for mineral exploration and agricultural
4 development by major corporations at the behest of national government (Arguro 2008).
5 Hence considerable socio-economic disparity persists within the populace despite the
6 promises of successive governments since the late 20th century, thus making for a continuing
7 political challenge facing the citizenry into the 21st century.
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19 2.2 Socio-Political Context

21 In 2000, the then President Alberto Fujimori contested for a third term, emulating many
22 politicians worldwide who find themselves unable to relinquish the reins of power and often
23 overstaying their welcome. It took a subsequent scandal over corruption via the drug trade of
24 his close aide for the president to flee the country, and precipitate the establishment of an
25 interim government (Conaghan, 2005). Into the breach came President Alejandro Toledo,
26 who held much promise as a former shoe-shine boy turned World Bank official and the first
27 indigenous person to be elected to the Peruvian presidency. Yet he struggled to deliver on
28 populist promises made in his election campaign of jobs, indigenous rights and poverty
29 alleviation made, becoming immensely unpopular and beset with corruption towards the end
30 of his term. The backdrop to this era included a long-running guerrilla war with an extreme
31 left-wing movement called Sendero Luminoso or 'Shining Path' and the drugs cartels. In the
32 2006 elections, ahead of the voter education campaign in question, Peruvians were faced with
33 the unusual political choice. On the one hand they had the candidature of Alan Garcia, a
34 former left-of-centre president who in his previous time in office had mismanaged the
35 economy spectacularly (McClintock, 2006). On the other they had the nationalist former
36 army colonel Ollanta Humala and untried political leader, who nonetheless led in the first
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round of the election, lost in the run-off but became president in a subsequent election. He was sympathetic to the even further left-leaning policies of neighbouring Venezuela under Hugo Chavez which was said to have backed him financially.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1 Election Mobilisation

There are broadly two theoretical perspectives on elections, as Neimi and Weisberg (2001) pointed out. One is the view that elections allow public attitudes to influence public policy or even significant political change through peaceful means. The other is that elections are largely symbolic or a ritual of democracy in which voters fulfil their civic duty even if they remain sceptical that their vote influences any public policy. Quite controversially, Neimi and Weisberg questioned whether there is much difference in outcome of holding to either perspective, given the prevailing cynicism in the US at least. While political marketing is invariably partisan in promoting the election or re-election of a candidate or party to power, voter education for mobilisation needs to be manifestly apolitical. Voter education campaigns which simply urge voter turnout are more inclined to the view of elections as a symbolic ritual which assuages the populace need for perceived involvement. Clearly the underlying ethos and rationale behind the Peruvian voter education campaign was that a knowledgeable and engaged populace could bring about significant political change.

Much has been made about the 2008 US elections being the first internet-generation one, given the Obama campaign success in mobilising major segments of the populace through social media. In justifying candidates having a separate digital marketing campaign directed at youth, Leppaniemi *et al* (2010) advocated strongly the incorporation of interactivity through blogs, tweets, competitions, viral messages and the like. Without these

they argue that the simple transposing of traditional media messages to a website, as done by many European politicians, adds little value. The risk of course is mixed and confused messages, or unethical practice in having different messages to the loyal older voters and the younger voting-averse ones. Voter education seeks to engage the electorate in the political process in the expectation that the optimum decision for the majority is reached by consensus. While the singular Peruvian campaign was largely in print media, though also transcribed to the website and radio, its attempts to generate engagement with the campaign, as well as interaction with others in the community would be worthy of note.

3.2 Voter Behaviour

Since most research on political communication and political marketing is based on North American, European or developed-world context, these are questionably relevant to other contexts, particularly in the developing world. Nonetheless, some propositions such as Popkin's (1994) that voters are investing in collective goods about which there is imperfect information, would seem to apply to democracies universally. Likewise the Zaller (1992) proposal that voters with low levels of political awareness had a greater probability of accepting a political message uncritically, would seem to be hold in developing countries too. Popkin and Dimock (1999) went further in affirming that less politically-informed voters were more likely to evaluate candidates on personal characteristics, rather than on policy platforms. This was apparently confirmed in the Italian context, where Caprara *et al* (1999) demonstrated that personality traits did explain actual voter behaviour beyond political partisanship. In the US context, Marcus *et al* (2000) found migrants of Hispanic background relied on cues about the candidates' personal qualities. This bias among a minority in the US could well be true of the majority of the populace in many developing countries. A

propensity to vote for candidates on on personality traits, even personal campaigning style, was certainly something the voter education campaign in Peru sought to address.

The decline in political participation in the developed world continues to be a source of puzzlement and conjecture. Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) demonstrated that between the 1960s and 1980s in the US, voter participation had declined considerably despite rise of in education as well greater resources of time and money. They attributed this partially to perceived limited efficacy of voter participation on public policy and power, but more substantially to decline in voter mobilisation. Further, Verba *et al* (1995) posited that perceived competence in political affairs was a key predictor of participation. Engagement in political campaigns was also a factor in developing a constituency able to lobby for social change. Given that active US voters tend to be white, older, educated and higher-income due to a number of socio-political factors, Hardina (2006) advocated registration to vote as a key means of empowerment of low-income communities. In the landmark 2008 US election, Hall (2010) attributed non-partisan efforts at voter empowerment of disadvantaged minorities in just one marginal state to the eventual victory of an African-American president. Mobilising those groups in-between the regular voters and recalcitrant non-voters to register as voters, proved effective in raising participation in those elections and general engagement in the political agenda. While voter mobilisation was not specifically highlighted in the Peruvian campaign messages, this underlying agenda can be inferred as an evident outcome of its stimulation of greater political engagement.

3.3 Marketing Politics

Proponents of political marketing as the application of commercial marketing concepts tools to the arena of the social and political sphere, from Butler and Collins (1994) through O'Cass (1996) to Kotler and Kotler (1999), seem to ignore the ideological base of all marketing in

capitalism. Even earlier Newman and Sheth (1987) argued for adopting political marketing to overcome complexity of voter choice, over promoting democratic behaviour. In advocating the use of consumer marketing concept of segmentation in political marketing, Baines (2003) pointed out that the bases are common to both fields, namely being geographic, demographic, psychographic and behavioural. In the US, Schiffman *et al* (2010) cynically proposed that the candidates ought to embrace the concerns of various segments of the electorate and thus capitalise on their apparent alignment. The ethics of communicating slightly different things to different segments, or at least putting a different spin on similar messages, seem not to concern political marketers. Phillips *et al* (2010) sought to demonstrate via means-ends laddering technique how consequent segmentation might have been better used to construct communications in the 2004 US presidential election. If political marketing as an academic sub-discipline has met with scepticism among political scientists, it may be due to this sort of post-hoc research.

Dissenters like O'Shaugnessy (2001) acknowledged that there might be some similarities and that insights from commercial marketing could be useful as prescriptions in the political arena, but that political marketing has to remain quite distinct. He quite rightly argued that it had gone beyond getting governments elected to becoming the very basis on which public policy is devised and decided upon. A consequence of this has been to make the latter a profitable multi-billion industry in its own right. Not mentioned by proponents of political marketing is the fact that the 'product' is not one that carries any guarantees of performance or recourse for redress for the voter. In offering the promise of a better tomorrow, political marketing bundles together past performance, present policies, future promises and candidate integrity into one service product. Political marketing treats the voter as a consumer, political communication as a citizen, and hence they represent diametrically different fields of academic investigation and theorising.

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2 In summary, the extant literature suggests that voters of low political awareness, often from
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4 the lower socio-economic segments of society, tend to be either apathetic towards the election
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6 process or if they respond to political messages, whether via media or rallies, do so
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8 uncritically. What has been demonstrated true of a minority segment in the developed world
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10 might be truer yet of the majority in the developing, transitional or emergent countries. If
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12 voter turnout in the developed world has declined dramatically due in part to lack of voter
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14 mobilisation, it will arguably not rise in the developing world - where there has been less of a
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16 democratic tradition - without concerted effort. The question remains how this at
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18 mobilisation of the citizenry is best done. Political marketing has been promoted in some
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20 academic and many consultancy circles as the panacea to persuading voters of a particular
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22 party leader or platform. Others question whether political communication ought to adopt
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24 commercial marketing concepts to engage disenfranchised voters especially, in seeking to
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26 promote greater democracy. The research conducted for this article seeks to address these
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28 issues of mobilising engagement and influencing voter behaviour, thus conceptualising the
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30 process.
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41 4. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

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46 In adopting the qualitative approach of textual analysis of documents from the political
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48 education campaign in Peru, this research attempts to identify the underlying subtext behind
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50 its media messages and evaluate their cumulative communication effectiveness. Content and
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52 textual analysis in this context are not necessarily incompatible or contradictory, but can be
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54 complementary methods in qualitative analysis of media materials when hybridising
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56 interpretative codes and systematic sampling (Penn, 2000). Initially, denotational or content
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analysis was conducted of the advertising materials and while largely descriptive, this established an audit across the range of tangible vehicles comprising the campaign. Then connotation or textual analysis was conducted on selected materials to go deeper than the surface messages, in order to uncover the underlying concepts and their symbolic significance. As such, semiotic methods are relevant in identifying and examining intrinsic structures (Berger, 2013), in this case within both text and visuals of the advertising materials that comprised the signification system of the voter education campaign. Elements of discourse analysis are also alluded to in understanding how the messages communicated via the voter education campaign shape thinking and counter the dominant election rhetoric. This negotiation of political power does potentially influence the construction of the social reality of all participants in the democratic process, as Foucault (1972) had proposed.

Trustworthiness of the qualitative data and its analysis by this researcher was achieved through triangulation of its sources (Denzin and Lincoln, 2002). This was done primarily via unstructured interviews with the creative director who developed the campaign, as well as two members of the team that had worked at the agency Toronja during that period. Further, an editor and a reporter of the leading newspaper, *El Comercio*, were interviewed for their perspective of the societal impact of the campaign, and they provided some secondary data such as newspaper articles on the campaign. Finally, business executives participating in a graduate programme at the Catholic University in Peru were polled informally for corroboration of third-party perception in that social context.

Dependability was exemplified by the coherence of the research problem, methodology chosen, data gathered and careful interpretation. While it is not required of researchers to demonstrate transferability (Zhang and Wildemuth 2009), presentations on this campaign were made in two other developing countries facing impending elections, one in the Middle East and another in Sub-Saharan Africa. Comprehension of the rationale and

affirmation of the idea from those audiences, comprised of civil society activists, non-government organisation staff and government officials there were noted in the exploration of the transferability of the campaign concept. Further confirmability is potentially feasible with adaptations of this or similar voter education campaigns in other developing or emerging economies. Thus the criteria expounded by Lincoln and Guba (1985) for evaluating qualitative research have been fully adhered to.

5. MEDIA ANALYSIS

The voter education campaign materials were quite ubiquitous, as exemplified by its use of billboards, wall-posters, print advertisements and handbills, supported by radio and television commercials. This was instrumental in prompting discursive activity in society which has been well established to be influential in voter engagement. With its thematic colour of bright red to highlight importance, the campaign was designed to stand out amidst the clutter of other advertising. The choice of red might also be deemed a warning sign of danger, in this case of voter apathy arising out of political cynicism and leading to poor government in the longer term. The bold, capitalised headlines in white could arguably imply a concern for purity, honesty, even transparency.

5.1 Campaign Theme

Denotation: The theme of the campaign is well summed up by the billboard seen in Figure 1. Its headline in rough translation reads: 'The current candidates are to become our employees' while the subheading says: 'Let us examine them'. More importantly, it addressed the scepticism of voters over the effectiveness of their vote and promoted a radical re-thinking of their role and the power relations in society. Instead of seeing politicians as all-powerful

leaders pre-selected and self-selected from among the political and economic elite, the campaign engendered ordinary citizens to perceive themselves as the potential employers of their leaders'. The choice of billboards as the medium for the theme was significant in presaging that this campaign was directed at the whole society. This included the less well-off that commuted by buses, motorcycles and bicycles, as much as the more affluent who did so by private cars and taxis, along the congested major roads and extensive highways of the country (Interview with press, 2007).

Connotation: As potential employees of the electorate that the political candidates had to be put through a systematic selection process, the campaign advertisement argued. Thus the traditional rhetoric of political leadership as a calling for an elite group with esoteric qualities and special aptitudes was debunked. By subsequently drawing on analogies of day-to-day experiences that voters could relate well to as workers, parents, small-time entrepreneurs, even students, the campaign empowered them to evaluate aspiring political candidates. In doing so, the campaign endeavoured to turn the power differential upside-down, certainly in the perception of the poorer, indigenous and otherwise marginalised people. Comprising the majority of the populace, they had been accustomed to being condescended to by political leaders or at least subjugated by the economic elite, arguably for centuries. Notably, the proposal to examine candidates was phrased in the plural, suggesting strength in numbers or collective power of scrutiny and decision now potentially available to all voters.

Insert around here – **Fig. 1 Street Billboard**

5.2 Politicians Admonition

Denotation: The corollary of the message about the need for evaluation of candidates appeared to be embodied in another element of the campaign, this time directed at the politicians themselves. The print advertisement in Figure 2 stated plainly: 'Seeking this chair?' accompanied by an ornate chair draped with presidential sash typically used ceremonially at political inaugurations in Latin America. The ad then went on to say: 'First take this chair', illustrated with a humble chair typically used in school or college classrooms, particularly within examination halls. As an advertisement placed in the print news media, its message was targeted primarily at potential candidates, though secondarily at the more educated middle-classes that had been their support-base, informing both of impending social change (Interview with executives, 2007).

Connotation: This advertisement implied then that any aspirant to high office needed firstly to be highly-qualified and then thoroughly scrutinised for competence. While ostensibly addressed to the political elite or aspirants to that position of privilege, it figuratively turned the tables on them in front of their electorate and served as an admonition to no longer take the latter group for granted. Political candidates were thus clearly, if somewhat light-heartedly, reminded that eloquence in public speeches, vaunted patriotism, glib professions of care, or even charisma, were no longer sufficient to get elected. This advertisement in particular suggested that humility and pragmatism were traits better appreciated by an increasingly politically-aware voting populace. While directed at the politician, the implicit individual 'you' of the headline could be seen as a reiteration and corollary of the original theme to voters, who as the persons holding power were implied to be collectively issuing the command to the candidate to take a pre-selection test.

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2 Insert around here – **Fig. 2 Print advertisement A**
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Denotation: A companion advertisement [Figure 3] stated: ‘For every job one has to take a test. And for the presidency? Be prepared’ followed by the web-address for the campaign. Both this and the previous advertisement, in fact all publicity efforts hinged on the questionnaire labelled ‘Prueba Ciudadana’ or Civic Test, which came to be the popular name for the whole voter education campaign (Interview with agency, 2007). The questionnaire to which it referred was widely distributed as a printed flyer or made available also online for download. Comprising a list of pertinent questions for voters to ask themselves about their potential leaders, this will be explained in greater detail in a subsequent section.

Connotation: This campaign name reinforced its message of the need for both politicians and voters to stay reminded of their civic responsibilities at election time. Seeking political office was not some special case, exempt from the usual requirements and process of getting a job. This advertisement put the candidates on notice that voters could no longer be taken for granted. At the same time the theme raised again in the minds of voters the idea that they need no longer be misled, given the way proposed by the campaign to ascertain worthiness for political office. Although the Civic Test itself was meant for individuals in the populace to take, the concept that political leadership needed to have a rational basis, was underscored for the candidates as well. The choice of the term ‘test’ instead of merely ‘questionnaire’ or ‘exercise’ buttressed the campaign concept of examining political candidates. The implied message of the test itself will be elaborated on subsequently.

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Insert around here – **Fig. 3 Print advertisement B**

5.3 Analogies and Realities

Denotation: The wall poster in Figure 4 showed two elaborations on the theme. The one on the left read: 'Would you entrust him/her with the future of your children?' On the surface it could be construed as suggesting that political leaders needed manage the country sustainably for generations to come. The other on the right read: 'Would you entrust him/her with managing your business?' which could also be interpreted as the political leader needing to provide the populace with favourable economic conditions. One other elaboration in a campaign poster, not illustrated, was: 'Would you entrust your house to his/her care?' suggestive of house-sitting or home-management on an inter-personal level, yet implying safety-and-security ensured on a societal level. The choice of wall-posters for this elaboration of the campaign theme did ensure that the message was readily accessible to the poorer majority. The headlines of these wall-posters were also made available as small stickers and widely distributed, with their placement by citizens serving thus as teasers and reminders of the campaign to themselves and to others of their contemporaries. These analogous vignettes were also communicated via 16 radio commercials, half in Spanish and the other half in Quecha, the native language of the disenfranchised Amerindian majority (Interview with agency, 2007).

Connotation: The first advertisement had overtones of whether one would be happy for the children to be under his or her foster care if you were no longer able to look after them. This could seem targeted primarily at women, the half of the voting population who arguably have

the interest of children at heart. This target segment was affirmed by the use of female voices in its accompanying radio commercial. The second print advertisement had nuances of delegating control without abdicating ownership rights and responsibilities, and may have had somewhat greater appeal to the male electorate. Much of this targeted segment of the electorate would economically be at best micro-to-small-business owners, often though these are not a exclusively male preserve in Peruvian society. Thus the analogy with managing the business would have been a reminder of how precarious their economic situation was, and hence the choice of candidate crucial. The non-illustrated third advertisement also had connotations of granting stewardship of one's property, possessions even family, while subject to clear understanding of one's expectations in turn. Hence these elaborations of the campaign theme drew parallels from the micro-level of daily life to the macro-level of the national political economy, and vice-versa. In the radio commercials there was an extended dialogue between two acquaintances in each case, featuring both gender for greater appeal. The actors rhetorically asked each other these questions about trusting politicians and expressed their doubts, with humour to attract popular attention and aid memorability (Interview with executives, 2007).

Insert around here – **Fig. 4 Wall posters**

5.4 Testing Candidates

Denotation: Included as the tagline at the bottom-edge of every advertisement, poster or other publicity material was the web-address for the campaign which led to an online test about the political candidates. This could also be printed out from the campaign website or be obtained

as a printed flyer which incorporated also two of the print advertisements in miniature on the reverse side. As seen in Figure 5, the preamble to the online test reiterated the central thrust of the voter education campaign, namely that: ‘The candidates are our employees-to-be; it is time to exercise the power of one who hires, and ask these questions before voting someone to Congress or the Presidency’. This reiterated the campaign sub-theme that there were to be no exceptions to the process of selection and that political office was not significantly different from other jobs with responsibility over people and finances. Participation in doing the self-test was promoted by a low-budget 15-second television commercial showing a person’s hand attempting the questionnaire, while the voice-over stated the theme of examining all political candidates for the job.

Connotation: Notably in this political communication campaign the politicians were consistently called ‘employees’ and the voters ‘the ones with the power to hire and fire’ or collectively the bosses. This notion could well have been quite radical to the latter group comprised of the often poor, disenfranchised and marginalised (Interview with press, 2007). Nonetheless it would have given pause to the former group, despite their paying lip-service about politicians about being ‘servants of the people’. The test was not on specific candidates but how well the voters themselves knew the skills, values, agenda and track record of candidates in their own constituency. It was thus a self-test about having presently the ability to evaluate candidates’ suitability for office, and so being invited to assess oneself was in itself empowering to the rank-and-file of voters, quite apart from being asked to ‘exercise the power’. A noteworthy phrase within the text was ‘it is time’ signifying both the stage during an impending election period for such a task, but more importantly that this was a new era of accountability for politicians before the voting populace. The television commercial which showed the close-cropped hand attempting the questionnaire, pausing before marking an

answer and then erasing it for another, reinforced the notion that it was quite acceptable for any voter to not have all the answers about the politicians initially.

Insert around here – **Fig. 5 Website test preamble**

Denotation: As shown in Figure 6 the questions in the questionnaire itself were classified as being about integrity, experience and capacity in three distinct sections, using the sub-themes of the campaign above. The sections had such probing questions on character as ‘Do you know if the candidate has been involved in corruption?’ and ‘Does he have an addiction to drugs?’ Other questions in relation to the job asked: ‘Is he recognised as a serious worker?’, ‘Has he had experience in running a complex organisation?’ and ‘Do you understand the proposed plans of his government?’ All of these questions aimed to trigger voters to ask themselves both how well they knew the candidates and what implications such knowledge had for their voting decision (Interview with agency, 2007).

Connotation: The quite explicit message of the test was that any tendency to corruption or drugs noted in the candidate would suggest deficiency of integrity and unreliability for the future. The questions also pointed to the need for a demonstrable track record of diligence and experience in delivering, whether as a businessperson, government official, civil society organiser or politician. The criterion was spelt out as skill in management of organisations, and clearly not just experience as a politician, implying that the former is sufficient, if not preferable where the latter have a poor track record. The final question to the voter about understanding the candidate’s plans would have evoked the importance of voters looking

beyond the political rhetoric to the hard facts concerning the details and feasibility of promises made. Subtly yet clearly then, the voter was prompted to ponder seriously the pertinent criteria of character and competence, as well as past performance and future policies of each and every candidate for political office, whether incumbent or aspiring.

Insert around here – Fig. 6 Online and printed questionnaire

5.5 Grading Oneself

Denotation: The voters-to-be using this questionnaire were then provided with a key for rating their ability to assess their awareness of the preferred candidate's performance on the various critical factors, as shown in Figure 7. If the voters scored between 0-5 on self-knowledge about the candidate, then they were gently warned: 'Do not complain later' and advised to click-through to a site advising them on how to improve on their knowledge of their candidate. If voters scored between 6-10, then they were affirmed in having made the effort and encouraged to keep being informed. If the voters scored over 19, then they were congratulated but nevertheless urged not to waste their vote. As a diagnostic tool, the Civic Test left all who took it in no uncertain terms as to where they stood presently through the self-grading key and allowed them to gauge their progress over time.

Connotation: This advice to those with low scores reminded all voters of both their innate capacities to participate effectively through acquiring greater information, and thus not plead powerlessness in the political process later. Those of medium scores were reminded that they now had a diagnosis of the problem, namely the areas highlighted in which they lacked the

answers presently and needed to work on. The encouragement to the high-scorers not to waste their vote was especially important because of the common problem of voter absenteeism in countries where it is not compulsory to vote. This is even greater an issue in developing countries, than in developed ones, because of the need to be earning a living even on election day, often not a public holiday, either in waged labour or in self-employment. Regardless of the self-diagnosis of current awareness, there was no option afforded by the Civic Test for continued apathy or subsequent withdrawal in relation to the political process, only encouragement to act personally for positive societal change. In a sense the test promoted the Gandhian adage to the voters to ‘Be the change you want to see in the world’, as does the campaign as a whole.

Insert around here – Fig. 7 Test self-scoring
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6. CONTEXT & CONSEQUENCES

6.1 Distilling Discourse

The textual analysis of the Peruvian campaign above demonstrates how marketing communications tools may be used innovatively and effectively for political education concerning democratic rights, rather than merely for voter persuasion about particular leaders or party platforms. Notably the voter education campaign was designed to prompt citizens to examine their own political awareness and motivate them to utilise their voting privileges to further a public policy agenda by selecting candidates of integrity. It did this by inventively

distilling choices for political leadership into manageable selection criteria, by using analogies drawn from the everyday life of its prime target audience of the poorer, marginalised majority.

Each message of the voter education campaign may be seen as an antidote to one or more elements of the prevailing situation, exemplified by campaign rhetoric (Figure 1). The tendency worldwide is for politicians to be prominent at their constituencies during election time in seeking either to be re-elected on the basis on past record, or to be elected in the first place on promises of a better future. Thus they seek to be acknowledged as established leaders or potential leadership material and therefore supported loyally through votes in the election. The implicit assumption is that their skills, competence, experience and integrity are mostly self-evident. The theme of the Peruvian voter education campaign addressed this directly by calling for scrutiny of all candidates as aspiring employees, as with any other position. The emphasis was now to be on qualifications, character and performance, not personality, connections and promises. This might have been a radical notion for the poorer and less-educated majority of the populace but would also have given pause to the usual political candidate pool drawn from the middle and upper classes.

As to how this evaluation of candidates was to be conducted, the campaign pointed out that this did not require any special skills to assess specific qualifications for political office. It did so by precipitating a new dialectic between the message of the voter education campaign and the rhetoric of party electioneering campaigns (Figure 8). Drawing on analogies from the micro-level of daily life familiar to the campaign audience it suggested parallels to the macro-level of regional or national leadership. Hence caring for a household and children could be related to issues of education, health-care, housing, employment and the like. Running a small-business was subtly portrayed as not all that different from stewardship of a national or regional economy, requiring testing of competence, diligence and experience as well as questions of character. Thus scrutiny of track-record, whether in performing

political office or in managing any major organisation, was deemed essential for voters. Issues of integrity and vices, which may tend to be side-stepped in many developing countries where ethnic, class or ideological loyalties may matter more, were specifically highlighted by the Peruvian campaign as key criteria for political office.

Insert around here – Fig. 8 Education and electioneering dialectic

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In essence the Peruvian campaign put potency into the notion of politicians being servants of the people, and made it clear that they served solely at the latter's pleasure so long as they performed to expectations. For the politicians, it signalled elections were no longer to be about getting elected to power in near-perpetuity, but about being given an implicit contract of employment by the wider populace, to perform to expectations for a fixed period. With their greater trust in the politicians elected, could come greater confidence in the electorate about influencing socio-economic policy through participation in the political process, no less via the upcoming elections, to their own benefit. Thus the Peruvian voter education systematically achieved its aim of radically changing the perceptions of the electorate, especially the disenfranchised, about the potential value of political engagement.

6.2 Gauging Impact

The impact of private and public funding on voter perception of information on candidates and parties are generally not addressed by such campaigns of voter education as the Peruvian one. It is especially true of incumbents who may have many more opportunities for publicly-funded 'official' travel than their political opponents. This could have included occasions for

speeches as part of their government duties, duly covered by a sycophantic media. The voter education campaign in Peru could also be deemed reductionist in confining the political agenda to the individual voter and individual candidate, ignoring the impact of community on voter behaviour as well the role of the political party, coalition, even social dissent or activist movement, behind most candidates. The campaign may also have had limited effectiveness with highly-partisan electorates, as opposed to non-partisan or 'swing' voters. In the Peru context this might have been along the historic lines of ideology, ethnicity, generation gap, social class, geographic region, education or gender among others.

With any communications campaign, the issue of measuring value or impact arises sooner or later, yet is that even material in the context of political communications of this voter education campaign? It was not known and perhaps could be known just how many people in Peru were influenced by this advertising campaign, not only to vote but to use the test or at least its criteria to evaluate politicians. For one thing, the internet usage in the country was quite limited at about 10 percent of the population. So a vital component of the campaign, the Civic Test, would have been inaccessible to the politically marginalised majority who comprise its primary target audience and so monitoring its use would be a inaccurate measure of impact (Interview with agency, 2007). On the other hand the billboards and posters were readily accessible and through which, in a land where the literacy rate is over 90 percent, the impact could well have been considerable. Obviously, the inclusion of digital media would have had greater appeal to the more technologically-savvy younger voters, who might otherwise have been cynical about a political process dominated by an old-guard of candidates, as was indeed the case in Peru of 2006.

Surprisingly for a politician on the campaign trail, Garcia admitted the failings of his previous government and asked humbly for a second-chance in the 2006 election (Galindo, 2010). That earlier government of his was succeeded as mentioned by that of the then

1 relatively unknown Alberto Fujimori who was later implicated in corruption and imprisoned,
2 and then by government of Alejandro Toledo that did not live up to its promise of reform.
3
4 Did the populace nonetheless think Garcia had the integrity and capacity to lead again? Or
5
6 was he seen as a new face to a younger generation of voters who had not experienced his
7
8 previous government, and were not inclined to vote the same way their parents might. What
9
10 role might the voter education campaign have played in this election and his victory?
11
12 Subsequently Garcia's second government became embroiled in a corruption scandal over the
13
14 allocation of oil-drilling licenses and there were demonstrations by the native peoples of the
15
16 areas where the drilling has commenced. His left-leaning APRA party also veered to the
17
18 political right in its policies despite promises to the contrary during the election campaign.
19
20 This does raise the question that he and his political compatriots may have passed the test for
21
22 integrity on paper, as per the Civic Test, yet not in practice.
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29 Even if electronic responses to the Civic Test questionnaire had been recorded and
30
31 analysed in Peru, these would have constituted a marginal sample. It could have been biased
32
33 towards the urban, higher-income and educated, who were not the primary target audience of
34
35 the campaign. Ideally, research on the effectiveness of such an intervention would entail a
36
37 longitudinal study in action-research style and this remains an option for a future academic
38
39 study. Measurements would need to be taken before and after the campaign, yet preferably
40
41 before pre-election day so as to not have bias from retrospection. Another approach would be
42
43 for socio-political experiments to be conducted by having some sub-national regions exposed
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45 to a voter education campaign and others not, though this raises ethical issues. Ultimately, in
46
47 order to establish whether such a voter education campaign is exportable across geographical,
48
49 political and cultural boundaries, one would need to conduct comparative cross-national
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51 research on near-identical or similar campaigns.
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6.3 Promoting Empowerment

The notion that radically challenging voter perception of the political power-structure could lead to greater motivation and a more rational approach to voting, might yet be a liberal-bourgeoisie one, borne out of a predilection for rationality. The proposed search for information about candidates' character and experience, or the implications of various party platforms might prove too onerous for the poor and uneducated. Highlighting the absence of image within political science models of voting, Harrop (1990) showed that political marketing stressed the crucial role of perceived, rather than actual, competence and trustworthiness. Certainly the nebulous notions of trust, charisma, and other personality dimensions are more readily grasped by the less-educated than personal investigation of policy implications or candidate experience. Nonetheless, political engagement of the sort promoted by the Peruvian voter education campaign would make for more in-depth engagement in the political process, rather than superficial election participation or non-participation altogether.

Voter education of the sort analysed in this article may not be effective where there is one-party dominance or where the voter choice might be limited to the lesser of two evils. Where tribalism or ethnic loyalties are pre-eminent in parts of the developing world, such as in Sub-Saharan Africa (Mensah, 2010), advocacy of voter engagement with candidate credentials and election manifestos would have limited appeal. The urban-rural, rich-poor divide in communications media mitigates against the use of campaigns that require billboards, posters, print advertisements, let alone electronic and digital media. While the urban-poor might still be reachable by such media, the rural-poor would be unlikely to be even in emergent economies. Finally such a campaign as the Peruvian one may be ineffectual if all party platforms are vague, and if all political candidates are of questionable reputation. Nonetheless, public policy-makers, election officials and social activists in those countries

could well be inspired by this case-study to adopt more creative approaches to voter education. The imperative is to communicate effectively with all citizens about how they might evaluate their political choices and exercise their democratic rights, thus empowering them to influence the national agenda for the betterment of their own lives.

Interpersonal communications prove more influential than the media communications in political choice, as Beck *et al* (2002) found in the US context. Thus campaigns like the Peruvian one could similarly have limited effect in voter education if there were limited incorporation of social networks. Even if a voter education campaign were to explicitly encourage voters to source information on politicians from their social networks, the reality often is that most such groupings are comprised of ideologically compatible persons (McPherson, 2001). Yet in introducing social learning as a key factor in modelling voter behaviour, Galeotti and Mattozzi (2008) report a controversial finding that the richer the interpersonal communication network, the more likely the voters are to hold exaggerated views. This is because truthful information gets passed on by and to voters of similar ideology, while inaccurate information is given to those of a different ideology, resulting in an even more polarised populace. While the Peruvian voter education campaign certainly stimulated public awareness and social discussions (Interview with press, 2007), it was not known how it impacted on partisan political networks. However, it must be noted that these more politically aware and engaged groups were not the target of the Peruvian campaign.

Noting that election turnout has declined throughout Europe, Calabretta (2012) suggests this may be because party leaders fail to be able to maintain engagement with their citizens on arising issues of concern in the period in-between elections. After surveying a number of alternatives to representative democracy he offers the concept of *doparies* as a means of periodic consultation between politicians and their party membership on policy issues. Even more radical forms of such empowering consultations have been advocated in

the developing world, most notably by the Zapatistas revolutionary movement in the remote and poor Chiapas region of Mexico in the 1990s. If campaigns like the Peruvian one come to have impact on voter engagement, politicians would see it in their interest to consult similarly, at least with their party members, if not civil society activists and the populace in general, on a regular basis outside of election times.

7. APPLICABILITY & ADAPTATION

While democratic processes may have seen resurgence in many developing countries and emergent economies, elections often remain a context for political manipulation. On the face of it, there could to be much mileage in adapting this voter education campaign elsewhere to overcome the alienation of the economically disenfranchised. It ostensibly demonstrates how marketing communications tools can be used innovatively yet responsibly for political education about democratic rights, rather than for mere voter persuasion about particular leaders or party platforms. A key question then is whether the universality of human rights and social justice issues renders the adaptation requirements of this political education campaign for use in other developing countries relatively minimal, even in developed countries with marginalised groups. Under what circumstances could an electorate be resistant to persuasion by any voter education campaign, no matter how creative?

7.1 Political-legal factors

In some countries, the same dominant political party stays in power in election after election, legitimately or by rigging the election process. In other countries, power shifts from one political party periodically to another with no appreciable change of policies or effectiveness of governance. Certainly if an electorate were to see no possibility of changing the party in

1 power or little difference between political parties, then they might not even bother to vote. If
2 all politicians are perceived as uniformly corrupt on the basis of historical record, there would
3 seem little point in voters scrutinising any individual candidate. If corruption is an entrenched
4 part of a national culture, there might be no incentive for voters to seek political change
5 through elections. Elections then are just a superficial change of players, with the victors
6 enjoying the spoils over their term of office, with the transition making no appreciable
7 difference to the lives of the wider populace. Certainly in all such contexts, a voter education
8 campaign promoting scrutiny of political candidates would have limited appeal.

19 Longevity of a democratic constitution and of it being consistently upheld in the
20 country would invariably influence voter participation there. If there is a long tradition of a
21 working democracy with smooth transfers of power, clear political manifestos, effective
22 changes of government policy, responsiveness to dissent and the like, then voters would be
23 more inclined to vote and their resolve would be bolstered by an education campaign such as
24 the one in Peru. At the same time, elections soon after revolutionary change, say from a
25 dictatorship to democracy as in the Arab Spring in the early 2010s, might also see voters
26 optimistic about entrenching that outcome through election participation. However if there is
27 cynicism following initial or subsequent elections about the democratic process as has been
28 the case in North Africa then, then voter education campaigns might be rendered ineffectual.
29 Berman (1997) did propose rightly that the concept of political cynicism represented a
30 cumulative distrust of aspiring politicians, political parties, incumbent office-holders and
31 government in general, which would be difficult to overcome.

51 If leaders have been historically drawn from a socio-economic elite, then anyone
52 outside of that fold would struggle to gain a political foothold, no matter how effective the
53 voter education programme. In some countries, political leadership is largely family-dynastic
54 and this might even be of cultural appeal to the populace, especially if the family's ancestry is

identified with a pertinent political struggle. Furthermore there might be significant short-to-long-term repercussions for the voting of an opposition candidate, personal or collective. These could range from neglected provision of social services to outright persecution of all constituents or individual activists in that electoral district. In many developing countries and emerging economies the election day is not a holiday or is not held on a weekend, and so exercising one's citizen rights interferes with work, including domestic responsibilities, daily-wage labour and the running of micro-business. Thus there is an opportunity-cost of going to vote which is often significant to the poor, who thus tend to be among the segments least likely to turn-out to vote.

7.2 Socio-cultural factors

The issue of culture comes to the fore in elections and needs to be given greater attention through comparative political communications research. Literacy as a factor influencing voter behaviour is particularly crucial in research on political communications particularly in developing and emergent economies. The words used in a campaign might be incomprehensible to the poor and rural population segments, which may lack the skills to read or let alone comprehend nuances of the particular language used. Often the official language of the national or state government might be quite different from that in common use by an ethnic minority or majority group within, as was the case in Peru. Thus the literacy assumed in any such voter education campaign may mean that it is not necessarily accessible to the poorest of the poor.

Overall, schooling has proven as important to meaningful political engagement as specific voter education, regardless how thought-provoking in intent the latter is. Concepts of political rights, party platforms, and the like might be difficult to grasp without language sophistication, awareness of intellectual traditions and adequate critical thinking skills.

Consequently, as Abrajano (2005) confirmed with Latinos in North America, low-education voters tended to use non-policy cues in evaluating candidates. Given that high rates of illiteracy are the norm in many developing countries, a similar campaign to the Peruvian one might have limited impact because elections would tend to be dominated by image and rhetoric. It certainly would not work in countries where computers are scarce, not to mention electricity unavailable in large parts or available only erratically so. Still, an imaginative concept such as this Peruvian voter education campaign might enjoy considerable word-of-mouth communication mileage and it might suffice that the campaign initially reached the opinion-leaders among the disenfranchised. Cynicism about politicians seems commonplace across geography as well as across time, if their image in the popular media is any guide. So there would be little room for discrepancy of interpretation trans-culturally on the key concept of being empowered to examine candidates for political office.

8. MARKETING vs. COMMUNICATION CONCEPTUALISATION

It remains for this article to address where and how voter education fits in the ambiguous interstices between fields of political marketing, social and non-profit marketing, and political communications. Since political views are enmeshed with values and identity, O'Shaughnessy (2001) believed these cannot be marketed as products, even if the rise of branding suggests that values, meaning and lifestyle are increasingly associated with the latter. Others appear to take a middle-road on whether political marketing is close relative of commercial marketing or are ambivalent about its contribution to political practice, if not political science. On the basis of a limited focus group study involving the watching of party election broadcasts, Peng and Hackley (2009) acknowledge that political marketing differs somewhat from commercial marketing. They argue that the former elicited greater emotional response and critical

analysis of the message, even though no commercial marketing was tested with the same focus group. They suggest that services marketing might be the closest sub-field to political marketing in that it dealt with intangibles like trust, relationship, track-record and the like. . Marland (2003) went further in drawing some parallels of political marketing with the historic marketing of soap and the contemporary marketing of real-estate, as well as the co-opting of rituals for consumers/voters and militaristic language in both their strategies. On the face of it, any voter education campaign is quite unlike commercial marketing or political marketing in not wanting its audience to make a specific decision to purchase or elect, or to demonstrate any form of loyalty. While it did use similar media and techniques of communication, the Peruvian campaign sought rather to raise awareness and perhaps change attitudes, as well as to empower political behaviours over the long-term.

Drawing on their discourse analysis of a social marketing campaign sponsored by the UK government, Raftopoulou and Hogg (2010) made the case that political marketing encompasses such a practice. Since government objectives in running a social marketing campaign are highly political in affecting the relationship between it and citizens, and invariably ideological in promoting a particular stance on socio-economic behaviour, in their valid view. It is worth noting that the Peruvian voter education campaign was not sponsored by government and so by their definition it would not be considered political marketing although its focus certainly is political. Nonetheless there is a valid rationale for the avoidance of government sponsorship of voter education campaigns, lest the motivation be less than altruistic, such as in mobilising those segments of the populace that might be sympathetic to the incumbency of the party in power.

In seeking to extend the scope of political marketing beyond positivistic dimensions such as segmentation, strategies and advertising, Moufahim and Lim (2009) proposed that a critical orientation explore alternative models of political representation, voter consciousness,

layered identities, election theatre, irrational choice and the like. Critical theories and discourse analysis could then be applied to such uncharted waters for political marketing as religious extremism, terrorism, peace-enforcing, financial reform and race-relations. It is difficult to envisage such issues which do not seem to have an immediate pay-off garnering much interest from political marketing practitioners, given its ideological base. In analysing the power discourse of the Peru voter education campaign, the present research is certainly in alignment with the Critical Theory agenda of seeking to mobilise all voters, especially the disenfranchised, to uncover and resist elite domination of their socio-cultural, political and economic context.

It is noteworthy that in the wave of reference works on political marketing that have appeared in recent years, all make no mention of voter education. Within the edited volume on Global Political Marketing (Lees-Marshment et al, 2010) which surveys the use of political marketing in Europe, the US, Africa and Latin America, the focus is on techniques, market orientation and marketing communication by political parties to achieve election success, not on the voting populace. The work of Maarek (2011) explicitly deals with election campaign communication as seemingly the primary form of political communication though comprising a number of tools and methods. A more recent volume that seeks to provide a retrospective and prospective on political marketing (Williams and Newman, 2013) deals with a largely America-centric agenda of political consulting, lobbying, advertising and new media. In setting out the theoretical and strategic foundations of political marketing, Cwalina *et al* (2011) critique previous conceptualisations and in their own model cover campaign message development and dissemination, candidate image, even post-election relationship marketing with voters, though not their pre-election education. In the authoritative *Routledge Handbook of Political Marketing* (Lees-Marshment, 2012), there are comprehensive sections on understanding the market, product development, internal marketing and communicating with

the public. But even in its final section on government marketing deals with such topics branding public policy and using public opinion research, making no mention of voter education, much less voter empowerment. It would appear then that voter education has no legitimate disciplinary niche in political marketing as it is conceptualised presently.

In referring to the original concept of democracy as legitimising consensus arising out of reasoned debate among citizenry, Luca (2010) asked pointedly whether that ideal might be impossible. Instead we seem faced today largely with consensus manufactured by political marketing. Stressing its roots in propaganda techniques developed well prior, he argues that political marketing with its emphasis on segmenting voters, targeting messages, packaging candidates and spinning of news is antithetical to the Habermasian notion of communicative action. In any case, Luca thinks we might never be able to achieve that ideal of debate based on mutually-criticisable validity claims in our post-modern societies of weakening political legitimacy. Yet with its aim to deconstruct the political rhetoric occurring especially as election time, the Peruvian voter education campaign was endeavouring to approximate authentic discourse. It sought to achieve this about pertinent social issues, including the credentials of leaders purporting to have and promising to implement solutions, across a wider portion of the populace.

Voter education, as exemplified by the Peruvian campaign, arguably lies at the interstices of social marketing and political communication. It is social marketing defined as the application of marketing communications concepts and techniques to inform, educate, and bring about social change through positive behaviours, in this case voter engagement in the election process. Whether it is also political marketing is questionable since the voter education campaign does not seek to convince its audience of any particular political agenda, party or personality. Ostensibly the client of political marketing is the political party or leader, while that of voter education is the citizen. The voter education campaign certainly

constitutes political communication in the sense of fostering transmission of information and fostering debate, policy, power and leadership in the furtherance of participatory democracy. If anything the campaign in question is the marketing and communication praxis of an ideological perspective within political science that all members of a society ought to be engendered to participate more fully. As such, it goes well beyond voter education to empowerment of citizens to engage in the political process to their own collective benefit, an idea which large segments of the electorate of developing countries might not have considered possible before.

9. CONCLUDING COMMENT

A perennial issue in political communication is understanding how citizens decide on whether and how to vote. If they are motivated to vote in the first place, they seem to do so rationally but based on relatively limited criteria, even if there is a surfeit of information on the media or via community opinion-leaders. One explanation is that people do so by taking short-cuts or making conceptual connections and even extrapolations of concepts from small pieces of information (Lupia and McCubbins, 1998). As such, the argument that limited information might lead to voter apathy, intolerance or even manipulation may not hold. Still, it remains true that some political information, versus no information at all, is necessary to make decisions consistent with having more information. In the Canadian context, Nadeau et al (2008) confirmed that there are always knowledge and information gaps, since all election campaigns impact segments of the populace differently. Nonetheless they found evidence that those with relatively less of a prior knowledge gap were able to reduce their information gap in the course of the campaign. The Peruvian voter education campaign worked to get voters to seek out appropriate information on candidates, however limited its availability. On

the basis of their new-found conception of political leadership, voters were empowered to utilise this information rationally and optimally. in lieu of emotional responses of ranging from apathy to fervour.

The theory of deliberative democracy emphasises deliberation on societal common good, based on what Habermas (1993) defined to be essential requisites of openness, equality and reason for citizenship and democracy. Once such qualities are attained, then informed yet tolerant citizens with valid opinions are capable of articulating interests, and hence participation in political processes is said to flourish (Dutwin, 2003, Ryfe 2005). More recently, Ekstrom and Ostman (2013) found evidence that civic talk in peer and family contexts, often triggered by the media, is influential in development of political knowledge, values and participation among youth. Through stimulating talk not just in public forums but also in private settings, the Peruvian voter education campaign could be seen as instrumental in bringing the marginalised majority of the citizens into that national discourse. Thus its creative concept could serve as a model for similar campaigns for voter empowerment in other societies in the developing, transitional or emergent world.

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Fig. 1 Street Billboard

Source: Toronja (2006)

Fig. 2 Print advertisement A

Source: Toronja (2006)

Fig. 3 Print advertisement B

Source: Toronja (2006)

Fig. 4 Wall posters

Source: Toronja (2006)

Source: Toronja (2006)

Fig. 5 Website test preamble

Source: Toronja (2006)

Fig. 6 Online and printed questionnaire

[Pásala a un amigo](#) [Imprimela](#)

PRUEBA CIUDADANA

INTEGRIDAD
→ ¿LE DEJARÍAS TU CASA PARA QUE TE LA CUIDE ?

- ¿Sabes si tu candidato(a) ha estado involucrado en casos de corrupción? si ☐ no ☐
- ¿Sabes si cumple cabalmente con sus responsabilidades familiares? si ☐ no ☐
- ¿Sabes si es buen pagador(a) de sus deudas y sus impuestos? si ☐ no ☐
- ¿Sabes si bebe en exceso o es adicto a drogas? si ☐ no ☐
- ¿Sabes si le han descubierto mentiras en el pasado? si ☐ no ☐

EXPERIENCIA
→ ¿LO CONTRATARÍAS PARA MANEJAR TU NEGOCIO ?

- ¿Sabes si es reconocido(a) como un trabajador serio y cumplido? si ☐ no ☐
- ¿Has leído su hoja de vida? si ☐ no ☐
- ¿Sabes si entiende de presupuestos, balances y otras responsabilidades propias de quien maneja el dinero de todos? si ☐ no ☐
- ¿Conoces si tiene experiencia en administrar organizaciones complejas? si ☐ no ☐
- ¿Sabes si logra que la gente se ponga de acuerdo? si ☐ no ☐

CAPACIDAD
→ ¿LE CONFÍARÍAS EL FUTURO DE TUS HIJOS ?

- ¿Conoces las prioridades de su plan de gobierno? si ☐ no ☐
- ¿Sabes si su equipo de trabajo tiene especialistas respetados? si ☐ no ☐
- ¿Sabes si ha participado en alguna organización que busque mejorar la vida de otros peruanos? si ☐ no ☐
- ¿Sabes por qué quiere realmente este cargo? si ☐ no ☐
- ¿Te sentirías orgulloso de tenerlo(a) como líder? si ☐ no ☐

CALCULA TU PUNTAJE
[Pásala a un amigo](#) [Imprimela](#)

¿CÓMO SALISTE?

Source: Toronja (2006)

PRUEBA CIUDADANA

[Pásala a un amigo](#) [Imprimela](#)

INTEGRIDAD

➔ ¿LE DEJARÍAS TU CASA PARA QUE TE LA CUIDE ?

1. ¿Sabes si tu candidato(a) ha estado involucrado en casos de corrupción? si ☐ no ☐

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2. ¿Sabes si cumple cabalmente con sus responsabilidades familiares? si ☐ no ☐

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3. ¿Sabes si es buen pagador(a) de sus deudas y sus impuestos? si ☐ no ☐

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4. ¿Sabes si bebe en exceso o es adicto a drogas? si ☐ no ☐

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5. ¿Sabes si le han descubierto mentiras en el pasado? si ☐ no ☐

EXPERIENCIA

➔ ¿LO CONTRATARÍAS PARA MANEJAR TU NEGOCIO ?

6. ¿Sabes si es reconocido(a) como un trabajador serio y cumplido? si ☐ no ☐

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7. ¿Has leído su hoja de vida? si ☐ no ☐

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8. ¿Sabes si entiende de presupuestos, balances y otras responsabilidades propias de quien maneja el dinero de todos? si ☐ no ☐

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9. ¿Conoces si tiene experiencia en administrar organizaciones complejas? si ☐ no ☐

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10. ¿Sabes si logra que la gente se ponga de acuerdo? si ☐ no ☐

CAPACIDAD

➔ ¿LE CONFÍARÍAS EL FUTURO DE TUS HIJOS ?

11. ¿Conoces las prioridades de su plan de gobierno? si ☐ no ☐

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12. ¿Sabes si su equipo de trabajo tiene especialistas respetados? si ☐ no ☐

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13. ¿Sabes si ha participado en alguna organización que busque mejorar la vida de otros peruanos? si ☐ no ☐

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14. ¿Sabes por qué quiere realmente este cargo? si ☐ no ☐

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15. ¿Te sentirías orgulloso de tenerlo(a) como líder? si ☐ no ☐

CALCULA TU PUNTAJE

[Pásala a un amigo](#) [Imprimela](#)

¿CÓMO SALISTE?

Fig. 7: Test self-scoring

Source: Toronja (2006)

Fig. 8 Empowerment versus electioneering dialectic

VOTER EMPOWERMENT FOR CANDIDATE SCRUTINY: MOBILISING THE MARGINALISED IN PERU

Abstract: This paper aims to understand whether marketing communications can be employed effectively to mobilise the politically marginalised and economically disenfranchised in developing countries to vote. Utilising textual and discourse analysis it demonstrates how a Peruvian voter education campaign deconstructed the rhetoric of political choice in developing countries. The author introduces the concept of voter empowerment: making the selection criteria for political leadership comprehensible via analogies drawn from in daily life, thus motivating election engagement. The paper proposes that voter education is best positioned in the interstices between social marketing and political communications, and not conceptualised as being incorporated within political marketing. Universality of democratic ideals might render adaptation of the campaign concept minimal, though differing political, social and economic contexts could constrain effectiveness globally. Comparative studies of similar education campaigns worldwide are needed to demonstrate whether these prove effective and how much adaptation is needed cross-nationally. Meanwhile the Peru campaign provides a model for public policy-makers and social activists elsewhere for communicating with citizens about political choices and exercising democratic rights.

Key-words: voter mobilisation, citizen engagement, political communications, social marketing, developing countries

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VOTER EMPOWERMENT IN EMERGING DEMOCRACIES: MOBILISING THE MARGINALISED OF PERU

Abstract: Motivating the politically and economically disenfranchised to vote can be problematic, particularly in the emerging democracies where political marketing is gaining ground without concurrent voter education. Utilising textual and discourse analysis this paper deconstructs a social marketing campaign in Peru where the rhetoric of political candidature is challenged. Through characterising voters as employers and selection criteria based on analogies of daily life, the political process is made comprehensible and accessible, if not also radically appealing. The author introduces voter empowerment as a concept positioned in the interstices between social marketing and political communications, and distinct from political marketing. Comparative studies of similar campaigns are needed to demonstrate whether these may prove effective and how much adaptation is needful cross-nationally. Meanwhile the Peru campaign provides policy-makers and social activists elsewhere with a model for communicating creatively with marginalised citizens about exercising their democratic rights.

Key-words: election mobilisation, marginalised electorates, political engagement, social marketing, emergent democracies

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1. INTRODUCTION

The majority of voters in emerging democracies, often the poorer segments, are justifiably cynical about their vote counting for much, given their past experiences. As worldwide, the popular perception is that politicians appear locally only around election time, promise much, are beholden to powerful groups, and, in the developing world, even attempt to bribe their vote. Election turnout has declined throughout Europe because party leaders fail to be able to maintain engagement with their citizens on arising issues of concern in the period in-between elections Calabretta (2012) suggests. No sooner are the results announced, that little change for the better is seen by the politically marginalised, regardless of who wins power (Ahmed *et al*, 2011). Much political communications worldwide is partisan, being concerned about the successful marketing of particular candidates, parties and, to a lesser extent, platforms, modelled roughly on practices in North America. This is exemplified by the increasing involvement of US political consultants with elections in the Europe, Asia-Pacific and Latin America (Lees-Marshment, and Lilleker, 2012).

Criticism of political marketing as enabling the best-funded candidate to win (Henneberg, 2004) is increasingly applicable also to developing countries – where it occurs even to the extent of vote-buying. On the other hand, social marketing campaigns by governments invariably urge citizens simply to vote and consider their task fulfilled by appealing to voters not to waste the opportunity, with scant motivation provided. This might be due to an element of unenthusiastic effort from incumbent politicians that commission such campaigns, lest the status quo of apathy among the general populace or a segment thereof jeopardise their present hold on power. So while democratic processes have seen resurgence in many developing countries and emerging economies in recent years, elections often remain a

context for manipulation of a wide populace and alienation of the economically disenfranchised. As with many countries in Latin America, Africa, Middle East and Asia in the decade of the 2000s such a situation of voter alienation could have been said to exist in Peru, where a voter education campaign was developed to creatively address such.

2. PERUVIAN CONTEXT

2.1 Catalyst for Change

Over the late 20th century Peru had seen its fair share of political turmoil, including military dictatorships and ineffectual politicians, not to mention home-grown terrorist, drug-trade and para-military scourges. While voters in the developed world have other outlets than elections to express citizen engagement (Dalton, 2008), the wider populace in developing countries have only elections, if that. Concerned about voter apathy among the politically and economically disenfranchised, local civil society groups and non-government organisations consulted a Peruvian communications agency, Toronja, which had earlier pioneered the inclusion of the indigenous peoples in its advertising. Co-founded by an advertising professional and an anthropologist, this agency consequently devised a political communications campaign to educate and mobilise voters ahead of elections in 2006.

2.2 Politics in Transition

In 2000, the then-president Alberto Fujimori contested for a third term, emulating many politicians worldwide who find themselves unable to relinquish the reins of power and often overstaying their welcome. It took a subsequent scandal over corruption via the drug trade of his close aide for the president to flee the country, and precipitate the establishment of an interim government (Conaghan, 2005). Into the breach came President Alejandro Toledo,

who held much promise as a former shoe-shine boy turned World Bank official and the first indigenous person to be elected to the Peruvian presidency. Yet he struggled to deliver on populist promises made in his election campaign of jobs, indigenous rights and poverty alleviation, becoming immensely unpopular and beset with corruption towards the end of his term. The backdrop to this era included a long-running guerrilla war with an extreme left-wing movement called Sendero Luminoso or ‘Shining Path’ and the drugs cartels (Galindo, 2010). So in the 2006 elections, well ahead of the voter education campaign in question, Peruvians were faced with the unusual political choice. On the one hand, they had the candidature of Alan Garcia, a former left-of-centre president who in his previous time in office had mismanaged the economy spectacularly (McClintock, 2006). On the other, they had the nationalist former army colonel Ollanta Humala and untried political leader then, who nonetheless led in the first round of the election, but lost in the run-off, only became president in a subsequent election. Troublingly to the ‘western governments’ and ‘big business’ he seemed sympathetic to the extreme left-leaning policies of neighbouring Venezuela under Hugo Chavez which was said to have backed him financially.

2.3 Setting and Heritage

Straddling the Andes mountain range in the north-west of South America and bordered by Chile, Ecuador, Columbia, Brazil and the Pacific Ocean, present-day Peru was the site of the Inca civilisation subsequently conquered by the Spanish in the 16th century. Since independence in the 19th century the country has had a history of military regimes and civilian governments in succession to each other, with democracy finally restored in 1975. The present form of government is constituted as a presidency with a unicameral congress, both popularly elected with voting compulsory for citizens aged between 17 and 70 (CIA Factbook, 2011). Its multi-cultural population of 29.5 million, almost a third of which

residing in the capital Lima, is comprised of indigenous Amerindians (45%), *mestizos* or mixed-race (37%), whites (15%), as well as blacks, Japanese, Chinese and others (3%). Peru is a rapidly-developing or emerging economy, in recent years classified a Middle Income Country by the World Bank (2011). Yet its majority indigenous peoples are largely uneducated, illiterate, and often dispossessed of lands valuable for mineral exploration and agricultural development by major corporations at the behest of national government (Argurto 2008). Hence considerable socio-economic disparity persists within the populace despite the promises of successive governments since restitution of democracy in the late 20th century, thus making for a continuing political challenge facing its citizenry into the 21st century.

3. FRAMING ELECTIONS

3.1 Voter Apathy

The decline in political participation even in the developed world continues to be a source of puzzlement and conjecture. Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) demonstrate that between the 1960s and 1980s in the US, voter participation had declined considerably despite rise of in education as well greater resources of time and money. They attributed this partially to perceived limited efficacy of voter participation on public policy and power, but more substantially to decline in voter mobilisation. Further, Verba *et al* (1995) posit that perceived competence in political affairs was a key predictor of participation. Engagement in political campaigns is also a factor in developing a constituency able to lobby for social change. Given that active US voters tend to be white, older, educated and higher-income due to a number of socio-political factors, Hardina (2006) advocates registration to vote as a key means of empowerment of low-income communities. In the landmark 2008 US election, Hall (2010) attributes non-partisan efforts at political participation of disadvantaged minorities in just one

1 marginal state to the eventual victory of an African-American president. Mobilising such
2 groups - in-between the regular voters and recalcitrant non-voters - proves effective in raising
3 participation in elections and general engagement in the political agenda.
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9 Some propositions such as Popkin's (1994) that voters are investing in collective goods about
10 which there is imperfect information, would seem to apply to democracies universally.
11 Likewise the Zaller (1992) proposal that voters with low levels of political awareness had a
12 greater probability of accepting a political message uncritically, would seem to be hold in
13 developing countries too. One strategy of voters is to take short-cuts or make conceptual
14 connections and even extrapolations of concepts from small pieces of information (Lupia and
15 McCubbins, 1998). Popkin and Dimock (1999) went further in affirming that less politically-
16 informed voters were more likely to evaluate candidates on personal characteristics, rather
17 than on policy platforms. This was apparently confirmed in the Italian context, where
18 Caprara *et al* (1999) demonstrated that personality traits did explain actual voter behaviour
19 beyond political partisanship. In the Canadian context, Nadeau et al (2008) confirmed that
20 there are always varying information gaps in the populace, since all election campaigns
21 impact various segments differently. In the US context, Marcus *et al* (2000) found migrants
22 of Hispanic background relied on cues about the candidates' personal qualities. This bias
23 among minorities in the developed countries and advanced economies could well be true of
24 the majority of the populace in many developing countries and emergent economies.
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51 Surveying data from 23 democracies in the late 20th century, Solt (2008) concluded that
52 unequal income distribution has a straightforward negative effect on voter turnout. This
53 suggests that poorer citizens are politically apathetic because they see the system as
54 inequitable towards them and therefore spending their own scarce resources on engagement
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was of dubious benefit. Based on OECD data, Anderson and Beramendi (2012) argue though that if that if there is no competition on the left end of the political spectrum, any left-leaning party would tend to concentrate on gaining the middle and upper class votes. Only if there is competition among left parties, would each channel effort towards mobilising the lower income voters thus increasing turnout of the latter. Thus in developing countries, the poor become apathetic, having been neglected even by left-leaning parties in favour of courting the more economically affluent and thus politically influential segments of the electorate.

3.2 Marketising Politics

Most proponents of political marketing as the application of commercial marketing concepts tools to the arena of the social and political sphere, ranging from Butler and Collins (1994) through O'Cass (1996) to Kotler and Kotler (1999), seem to ignore the ideological base of all marketing in capitalism. Even earlier Newman and Sheth (1987) had argued for adopting political marketing to overcome complexity of voter choice, over promoting democratic behaviour. In advocating use of the consumer marketing concept of segmentation in political marketing, Baines (2003) pointed out that the bases are common to both fields, namely being geographic, demographic, psychographic and behavioural. Phillips *et al* (2010) sought to demonstrate via means-ends laddering technique how consequent segmentation might have been better used to construct communications in the 2004 US presidential election. If political marketing as an academic sub-discipline has met with scepticism among political scientists, it may be due to this sort of post-hoc research. Again in the US, Schiffman *et al* (2010) cynically proposed that the candidates ought to embrace the concerns of various segments of the electorate and thus capitalise on their apparent alignment. The ethics of communicating somewhat disparate things to various segments, or at least putting a different spin on similar messages, seem not to concern political marketers.

Dissenters like O'Shaughnessy (2001) acknowledged there might be some similarities and that insights from commercial marketing that could be useful as prescriptions in the political arena, but that political marketing has to remain quite distinct. He quite rightly argues that the latter had gone beyond getting governments elected to becoming the very basis on which public policy is devised and decided upon. A consequence of this propensity has been to make the latter a profitable multi-billion industry in its own right. Not mentioned by proponents of political marketing is the fact that its so-called product is not one that carries any guarantees of performance or recourse for redress for the voter. In offering the promise of a better tomorrow, political marketing bundles together past performance, present policies, future promises and candidate integrity into one service product. However voters often do not get the right information about candidate track record, political agenda in office or future public policy, only superficial sound-bites, spin messages, campaign slogans and branding. Political marketing largely treats the voter as a consumer, while political communication primarily as a citizen, and hence they could represent discordant fields of academic investigation and theorising.

3.3 Promoting the Social

The agenda of social marketing has been stated notably by Kotler and Zaltman (1971) as being 'to influence the acceptability of social ideas', utilising the tools of commercial marketing in such areas as health, safety and public opinion. When the 4Ps marketing mix or even the extended 7Cs frameworks have come under challenge from longer term relationship-based and consumer-focussed models such as Gronroos (1994) and Dev and Shultz (2005), their relevance to social marketing is in question. Quite evidently most practitioners of and some researchers in social marketing do not have a commercial marketing pedigree and are

thus able to draw on knowledge in such fields as health, environment, social justice, and development (Gordon, 2012). As Peattie and Peattie (2003) have advised, perhaps social marketing should drop its dependence on inadequate concepts of commercial marketing and develop a vocabulary all its own for different contexts and in changed consumer times.

Although Shaugnessy (1996) differentiated between social marketing as having a consumer focus even if financed by groups, corporations and government, and propaganda as being dictated by a biased anti-establishment agenda, he acknowledges that they are related and to an extent substitutable in that both seek to change behaviour by emotive means. While fear, guilt and shame have a role to play in social marketing, both Bennett (1998) and Brennan and Binney (2010) confirmed these have to be used with caution if these negative appeals can be counter-productive at certain intensities, with certain target groups and in certain contexts. Instead the social norm approach (Burchell et al, 2013) which proposed behaviour as being influenced by what is portrayed as the norm of others, is intuitively appealing and can be demonstrated to be effective in much social marketing.

The issue of whether social marketing ought to be seeking to change behaviours of individuals without addressing also the upstream social environments that work against this was raised by Hastings *et al* (2000). In similar vein, Andreasen (2002) believed that social marketing can be effective only if it competes at the levels of subject, intervention, product and brand. Citing how sustained and better-funded corporate marketing efforts have negated social marketing messages in diet and health, Wymer (2010) advocated that social marketers expand their remit to include activism with government to regulate such corporations. Doubtless any social marketing campaign to educate voters will need to competitive with

1 messages from political marketing campaigns candidates and parties especially at election
2 season when that latter takes on a hue of propaganda.
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7 3.4 Election Mobilisation

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9 Broadly there are two theoretical perspectives on elections, as Neimi and Weisberg (2001)
10 pointed out. One is the view that elections allow public attitudes to influence public policy or
11 even significant political change through peaceful means. The other is that elections are
12 largely symbolic or a ritual of democracy in which voters fulfil their civic duty even if they
13 remain sceptical that their vote influences any public policy. Quite controversially, Neimi and
14 Weisberg questioned whether there is much difference in outcome of holding to either
15 perspective, given the prevailing cynicism about politics, in the US at least. While political
16 marketing is invariably partisan in promoting the election or re-election of a candidate or
17 party to power, voter education for mobilisation needs to be manifestly apolitical. Voter
18 mobilisation which simply urges voter turnout is more inclined to the view of elections as a
19 symbolic ritual that cynically assuages the citizens' need for perceived involvement. Clearly
20 the underlying ethos and rationale behind the Peruvian voter education campaign is that a
21 knowledgeable and engaged populace could bring about significant political change.
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43 Much has been made about the 2008 US elections being the first internet-generation one,
44 given the Obama campaign success in mobilising major segments of the populace through
45 social media. In justifying candidates having a separate digital marketing campaign directed
46 at youth, Leppaniemi *et al* (2010) advocated strongly the incorporation of interactivity
47 through blogs, tweets, competitions, viral messages and the like. Without these they argued
48 that the simple transposing of traditional media messages to a website, as done by many
49 European politicians, adds little value. The risk of course is having mixed and confused
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1 messages, or unethical practice in having different messages to the loyal older voters and the
2 younger voting-averse ones. Voter education seeks to engage the electorate in the political
3 process in the expectation that the optimum decision for the majority is reached by consensus.
4 While the singular Peruvian campaign was largely in print media, though also transcribed to
5 the website and radio, its attempts to generate engagement with the campaign, as well as
6 interaction with others in the community would be worthy of note.
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17 In summary, the extant literature suggests that voters of low political awareness, often from
18 the lower socio-economic segments of society, tend to be either apathetic towards the election
19 process or if they respond to political messages, whether via media or rallies, do so
20 uncritically. What has been demonstrated true of a minority segment in the developed world
21 might be truer yet of the majority in the developing, transitional or emergent countries. If
22 voter turnout in the developed/industrialised world has declined dramatically due in part to
23 lack of voter mobilisation, it will arguably not rise in the developing/emergent world - where
24 there has generally been less of a democratic tradition - without concerted effort. The
25 question remains how such mobilisation of the citizenry is responsibly and effectively done.
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Political marketing has been promoted in some academic and many consultancy circles as the
panacea to persuading voters accurately about a particular party leader or platform. Yet
others may question whether in seeking to engage disenfranchised voters in pursuit of more
representative democracy, social marketing ought to adopt commercial marketing concepts.
The present research seeks to address these issues of mobilising engagement and influencing
voter behaviour, thus re-conceptualising the process.

4. SCRUTINISING CAMPAIGN MEDIA

4.1 Intents and Ambitions

While voter mobilisation was not specifically highlighted in the Peruvian campaign messages, this underlying agenda can be inferred as an evident outcome of its stimulation of greater political engagement overall. A propensity to vote for candidates based on personality traits, even personal campaigning style, was certainly something the voter education campaign in Peru sought to address. Hence the primary objective of this research is to analyse how an innovative campaign managed to communicate a radical re-thinking of voting behaviour, thus promoting political engagement. Secondly, it will seek to evaluate the political and cultural contexts among emerging democracies elsewhere in which a similar campaign could prove more or less effective. A final objective of this article is to make a contribution to the debate on the boundaries of social marketing, and how this relates not only to public and non-profit marketing, but also to political communication and marketing.

4.2 Qualitative Approach

In adopting the qualitative approach of textual analysis of documents from the political education campaign in Peru, this research attempts to identify the underlying subtext behind its media messages and evaluate their cumulative communication effectiveness. Content and textual analysis in this context are not necessarily incompatible or contradictory, but can be complementary methods in qualitative analysis of media materials when hybridising interpretative codes and systematic sampling (Penn, 2000). Secondary data comprising posters, print proofs of advertisements, a CD of radio commercials, copy of the questionnaire, access to the archive website and photos of billboards, were provided by the advertising agency that created the campaign.

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2 As semiotic methods are relevant in identifying and examining intrinsic structures (Berger,
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4 2013), in this case within both text and visuals of the advertising materials that comprised the
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6 signification system of the voter education campaign were analysed. Initially, denotational or
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8 content analysis was conducted of the advertising materials and while largely descriptive, this
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10 established an audit across the range of tangible vehicles comprising the campaign. Then
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12 connotation or textual analysis was conducted on selected materials to go deeper than the
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14 surface messages, in order to uncover the underlying concepts and their symbolic
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16 significance. Elements of discourse analysis are alluded to in understanding how the
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18 messages communicated via the voter education campaign shape thinking and counter the
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20 dominant election rhetoric. This negotiation of political power does potentially influence the
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22 construction of the social reality of all participants in the democratic process, as Foucault
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24 (1972) had proposed.
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34 Trustworthiness of the qualitative data and its analysis by this researcher was achieved
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36 through triangulation of its sources (Denzin and Lincoln, 2002). This was done primarily via
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38 unstructured interviews with the creative director who developed the campaign, as well as two
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40 members of the team that had worked at the agency Toronja during that period. Further, an
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42 editor and a reporter of a leading national newspaper, *El Comercio*, were interviewed at their
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44 offices in the year following the campaign for their retrospective of its societal impact, and
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46 they provided some secondary data such as newspaper articles on the campaign. Finally,
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48 business executives participating in a graduate programme at the Catholic University in Peru
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50 were polled informally during class and at break-times in the cafeteria for corroboration of
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52 third-party perception in that social context. Dependability is thus exemplified by the
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coherence of the research problem, methodology chosen, data gathered and careful interpretation.

4.3 Themes and Transferability

The qualitative research approach entails focusing on the description of phenomena and understanding of how people interpret objects in context. Being inductive this research sought emergent theoretical insights, yet was guided by the existing literature in its data analysis in identifying patterns or themes. While qualitative research may not have clear rules for data analysis as does quantitative research, there are general strategies. The researcher used his own judgement which was informed by interviews in the field when analysing the secondary data collected, in this case largely campaign materials. Inspired by grounded theory, a consistent analytical coding method was applied consisting of stages of open coding, axial coding and selective coding (Bryman and Bell, 2007). This process enabled an integration of the categories into emergent themes, which in classic grounded theory would form the theoretical framework.

Although it is not strictly required of researchers to demonstrate transferability (Zhang and Wildemuth 2009), research presentations on this Peruvian campaign were made in two other developing countries facing impending elections, one in the Middle East and another in Sub-Saharan Africa. Comprehension of the rationale and affirmation of the idea from those audiences, which were comprised of civil society activists, independent minority candidates, non-government organisation staff and government officials there, are borne in mind when exploring transferability of the campaign concept. Further confirmability is potentially feasible with adaptations of this or similar voter education campaigns in other developing or

emerging economies. Thus the criteria expounded by Lincoln and Guba (1985) for evaluating qualitative research have been adhered to.

5. DECONSTRUCTING THE DISCOURSE

The voter education materials were quite ubiquitous for the duration of the campaign, as exemplified by the use of billboards, wall-posters, print advertisements and handbills, supported by radio and television commercials. All this was instrumental in prompting discursive activity in society which has been well established to be influential in voter engagement. With its thematic colour of bright red to highlight importance, the campaign was designed to stand out amidst the clutter of other advertising. The choice of red might also be deemed a warning sign of danger, in this case of voter apathy arising out of present political cynicism perpetuating poor government in the longer term. The bold, capitalised headlines in white could arguably imply a concern for purity, honesty, even transparency.

5.1 Theme 1: Power Inversion

Instead of seeing politicians as all-powerful leaders pre-selected or self-selected from among the political and economic elite, the campaign engendered ordinary citizens to perceive themselves as the potential employers of their leaders. In doing so, the campaign endeavoured to turn the power differential upside-down, certainly in the perception of the poorer, indigenous and otherwise marginalised people, thus turning the tables on the politicians in power or elite candidates seeking it.

Sub-theme A: Citizens as Employers

Denotation: The theme of the campaign is well summed up by the billboard seen in Figure 1. Its headline in rough translation reads: 'The current candidates are our employees-to-be' while the subheading says: 'Let us examine them'. More importantly, it addressed the scepticism of voters over the effectiveness of their vote and promoted a radical re-thinking of their role and the power relations in society. The choice of billboards as the medium for the theme was significant in presaging that this campaign was directed at the whole society. This included the less well-off that commuted by buses, motorcycles and bicycles, as much as the more affluent who did so by private cars and taxis, along the congested major roads and extensive highways of the country (Interview with press, 2007).

Connotation: As potential employees of the electorate that the political candidates had to be put through a systematic selection process, the campaign advertisement argued. Thus the traditional rhetoric of political leadership as a vocational calling for an elite group or social class with esoteric qualities and special aptitudes was debunked. By subsequently drawing on analogies of day-to-day experiences that voters could relate well to as workers, parents, small-time entrepreneurs, even students, the campaign empowered them to evaluate aspiring political candidates. Comprising the majority of the populace, in a context of considerable social inequality, they tend to have little rational motivation for participation or belief in the efficacy of their vote (Goodin and Dryzek, 1980). Notably then, the proposal to examine candidates was phrased in the plural, suggesting strength in numbers or collective power of scrutiny and decision now potentially available to all voters.

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2 Insert around here – **Fig. 1 Street Billboard**
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11 *Sub-theme B: Politicians on Notice*

12 The corollary of the message about the need for evaluation of candidates appeared to be
13 embodied in another element of the campaign, this time directed at the politicians themselves.
14 While ostensibly addressed to the political elite or aspirants to that position of privilege, it
15 figuratively turned the tables on them in front of their electorate and served as an admonition
16 to no longer take the latter group for granted.
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26 Denotation: The print advertisement in Figure 2 stated plainly: 'Seeking this chair?'
27 accompanied by an ornate chair draped with presidential sash typically used ceremonially at
28 political inaugurations in Latin America. The ad then went on to say: 'First [take] this chair',
29 illustrated with a humble chair typically used in school or college classrooms, particularly
30 within examination halls. As an advertisement placed in the print news media, its message
31 was targeted primarily at potential candidates, though secondarily at the more educated
32 middle-classes that had been their support-base, informing both of impending social change
33 (Interview with executives, 2007).
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48 Connotation: This advertisement implied then that any aspirant to high office needed firstly
49 to be highly-qualified and then thoroughly scrutinised for competence. Political candidates
50 were thus clearly, if somewhat light-heartedly, reminded that eloquence in public speeches,
51 vaunted patriotism, glib professions of care, or even charisma, were no longer sufficient to get
52 elected. This advertisement in particular suggested that humility and pragmatism were traits
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better appreciated by an increasingly politically-aware voting populace. While directed at the politician, the implicit individual ‘you’ of the headline could be seen as a reiteration and corollary of the original theme to voters, who as the persons holding power were implied to be collectively issuing the command to the candidate to take a pre-election test.

Insert around here – **Fig. 2 Print advertisement A**

5.2 Theme 2: Candidate Scrutiny

All publicity efforts hinged on the questionnaire labelled 'Prueba Ciudadana' or Citizens Test, which came to be the popular name for the entire voter education campaign (Interview with agency, 2007). Although the test itself was meant for individuals in the populace to take, the concept that political leadership needed to have a rational basis, was underscored for the candidates as well.

Subtheme C: Logic of Examining

Denotation: A companion advertisement [Figure 3] stated: ‘For every job one has to take a test. And for the presidency? Get ready’ followed by the web-address for the campaign. The questionnaire to which it referred was widely distributed as a printed flyer or made available also online for download. Comprising a list of pertinent questions for voters to ask themselves about their potential leaders, this will be explained in greater detail in the subsequent section on voter self-diagnosis.

Connotation: This campaign's name reinforced its message of the need for both politicians and voters to stay reminded of their civic responsibilities at election time. Seeking political office was not some special case, exempt from the usual requirements and process of getting a job. This advertisement put the candidates on notice that voters could no longer be taken for granted. At the same time the theme raised again in the minds of voters the idea that they need no longer be misled, given the method advocated by the campaign for ascertaining worthiness for political office. The choice of the term 'test' instead of merely 'questionnaire' or 'exercise' buttressed the campaign concept of examining political candidates.

Insert around here – **Fig. 3 Print advertisement B**

Subtheme D: Analogies from Life

Elaborations of the campaign theme drew parallels from the micro-level of daily life to the macro-level of the national political economy, and vice-versa. The choice of wall-posters for this did ensure that the message was readily accessible to the poorer majority. The headlines of these wall-posters were also made available as small stickers and widely distributed, with their placement by citizens serving thus as teasers and reminders of the campaign to themselves and to others of their contemporaries. These analogous vignettes were also communicated via 16 radio commercials, half in Spanish and the other half in Quecha, the native language of the disenfranchised Amerindian majority (Interview with agency, 2007).

Denotation: The wall posters [Figure 4] showed two elaborations on the theme. The one on the left read: 'Would you entrust him/her with the future of your children?' On the surface it

could be construed as suggesting that political leaders needed manage the country sustainably for generations to come. The other on the right read: 'Would you hire him/her to manage your business?' which could also be interpreted as the political leader needing to provide the populace with favourable economic conditions. One other elaboration in a campaign poster, not illustrated, was: 'Would you entrust your house to his/her care?' suggestive of house-sitting or home-management on an inter-personal level, yet implying safety-and-security ensured on a societal level.

Connotation: The first poster's message had overtones of whether one would be happy for the children to be under his or her foster care if you were no longer able to look after them. This could seem targeted primarily at women, the half of the voting population. The second message had nuances of delegating control without abdicating ownership rights and responsibilities. Thus the analogy with managing the business would have been a reminder of how precarious their economic situation was, and hence the choice of candidate crucial. The non-illustrated third poster also had connotations of granting stewardship of one's property, possessions, even family. In the radio commercials there was an extended dialogue between two acquaintances in each case, featuring both gender for greater appeal. The actors rhetorically asked each other these questions and expressed their doubts, with humour to attract attention and aid memorability (Interview with executives, 2007).

Insert around here – **Fig. 4 Wall posters**

5.3 Theme 3: Voter Preparedness

The tagline at the bottom-edge of every advertisement, poster or other publicity material was the web-address for the campaign which led to an online test about the political candidates. This could also be printed out from the campaign website or be obtained as a printed flyer which incorporated also two of the print advertisements in miniature on the reverse side. Participation in doing the self-test was promoted by a low-budget television commercial showing a person attempting the questionnaire by hand and with much pondering, while the voice-over reiterated the idea of examining political candidates.

Subtheme E: Imperative of Knowledge

Denotation: As seen in Figure 5, the preamble to the online test reiterated the central thrust of the voter education campaign, namely that: ‘The candidates are our employees-to-be; it is time to exercise the power of one who hires; ask these questions before voting your candidate to Congress or the Presidency’. This reiterated the campaign sub-theme that there were to be no exceptions to the process of selection and that political office was not significantly different from other jobs with responsibility over people and finances. The test was not on specific candidates but on how well the voters themselves knew the skills, values, agenda and track record of candidates in their own constituency.

Connotation: Notably in this political communication campaign the politicians were consistently called ‘employees’ and the voters ‘the ones with the power to hire and fire’ or collectively the bosses. This notion could well have been quite radical to the latter group comprised of the often poor, disenfranchised and marginalised (Interview with press, 2007). Nonetheless it would have given pause to the former group, despite their paying lip-service about politicians about being ‘servants of the people’. A noteworthy phrase within the text

was ‘it is time’ signifying both the stage during an impending election period for such an urgent task, but more importantly that this was a new era of accountability for politicians before the voting populace. The respondents were being invited to assess oneself was in itself empowering to the rank-and-file of voters, quite apart from being asked to ‘exercise the power’ collectively which could prove contagious in voter mobilisation (Nickerson, 2008).

Insert around here – **Fig. 5: Website test preamble**

Subtheme F: Urgency to Improve

The questions in the questionnaire itself [Figure 6] were classified as being about integrity, experience and capacity in three distinct sections, using the sub-themes of the campaign above. The quite explicit message of the test was that any past tendency to corruption or drugs noted in the candidate would suggest deficiency of integrity and unreliability for the future. Such knowledge was to be acquired and then acted upon at the elections to come.

Denotation: The sections in the questionnaire had such probing questions on character as whether the candidate has been involved in corruption or has an addition to drugs. Other questions in relation to the job asked about diligence as an employee, experience in running a organisations and has proposed plans for government that are comprehensible. All of these questions aimed to trigger voters to ask themselves both how well they knew the candidates and what implications such knowledge had for their voting decision (Interview with agency, 2007).

Connotation: Cumulatively the questions pointed to the need for a demonstrable track record of diligence and experience in delivering, needful of leadership whether as a businessperson, government official, civil society organiser or politician (Zhang, 2012). The criterion was spelt out as skill in the management of organisations, and clearly not just experience as a politician. This implies that the former was sufficient, even preferable where the latter was a poor track record. The final question to the voters about understanding the candidate's plans would have evoked the importance of looking beyond political rhetoric to the probability of the promises made being fulfilled, providing thus a rational motivation for exercise of voting (Uhlener, 1986). Consequently, the voter was prompted subtly yet clearly to ponder seriously the criteria of character and competence, as well as past performance and future policies, all of which are pertinent to building trust in the person and the party (Davies and Mian, 2010).

Insert around here – Fig. 6 Online and printed questionnaire

Sub-theme G: Competence for Engagement

The voters-to-be using this questionnaire were then provided with a key for rating their ability to assess their awareness of the preferred candidate's performance on the various critical factors, as shown in Figure 6. Regardless of the outcome of self-assessment, there was no option afforded by the Citizens Test for continued apathy or subsequent withdrawal in relation to the political process, only encouragement to act personally for positive societal change.

Denotation: If the voters scored between 0-5 on self-knowledge about the candidate, then they were gently warned not to complain subsequently and advised to click-through to a site

advising them on how to improve on their knowledge of their candidate. If voters scored between 6-10, then they were affirmed in having made the effort and encouraged to keep being informed. If the voters scored over 11, then they were congratulated as exemplary Peruvians but nevertheless urged not to waste their vote. As a diagnostic tool, the Citizens Test left those who took it in no uncertain terms as to where they stood in political awareness presently through the self-grading key, and allowed them to gauge their progress over time.

Connotation: This advice to those with low scores reminded also all voters of their innate capacities to participate effectively through acquiring greater information (Nicholson et al 2006), and thus not plead powerlessness in the political process later. Those of medium scores were reminded that they now had a diagnosis of the problem, namely the areas highlighted in which they lacked the answers presently and needed to work on. The encouragement to the high-scorers not to waste their vote was especially important because of the common problem of voter absenteeism in countries where it is not compulsory to vote (Karp and Banducci, 2008). This is even greater an issue in developing countries, than in developed ones, because of the need to be earning a living even on election day, often not a public holiday, either in waged labour or in self-employment.

Insert around here – Fig. 7 Test self-scoring

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6. OUTCOMES AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Explicit Agenda

It has been fairly well established through research that in low-information elections, voters rely on information cues such as gender, race and age as shortcuts to deciding which candidate to choose. However McDermott (2005) points out that occupation or profession of the candidate has been seldom researched even though it is of obvious relevance in indicating suitability for political office in terms of skills and experience. In essence the Peruvian campaign put potency into the notion of politicians being servants of the people, and made it clear that they served solely at the latter's pleasure so long as they performed to expectations. For the politicians, it signalled that elections were no longer to be about getting elected to power in near-perpetuity, but about being selected on pertinent criteria and given an implicit contract of employment by the wider populace, to perform for a fixed period.

Insert around here – Fig. 8 Education and electioneering dialectic

The Peru campaign would seem to be aligned rather with the notion that political marketing of candidates is more like the marketing of the services of a realtor than that of a product like soap (Marland, 2003) as in demonstrating community knowledge and interaction, under constraints of an umbrella body of a political party. With voters greater trust in the politicians elected, could come greater confidence in the electorate about influencing socio-economic policy through participation in the political process, no less via the upcoming elections, to their own benefit. Thus the Peruvian voter education campaign seems to have systematically

1 achieved its aim of radically changing the perceptions of the electorate, especially the
2 disenfranchised, about the potential value of political engagement.
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7 The notion that radically challenging voter perception of the political power-structure could
8 lead to greater motivation and a more rational approach to voting, might yet be a liberal-
9 bourgeoisie one, borne out of a predilection for rationality. The proposed search for
10 information about candidates' character and experience, or the implications of various party
11 platforms might prove too onerous for the poor and uneducated. Highlighting the absence of
12 image within political science models of voting, Harrop (1990) showed that political
13 marketing stressed the crucial role of perceived, rather than actual, competence and
14 trustworthiness. Certainly the nebulous notions of trust, charisma, and other personality
15 dimensions are more readily grasped by the less-educated than personal investigation of
16 policy implications or candidate experience. Nonetheless, political engagement of the sort
17 promoted by the Peruvian voter education campaign would make for more in-depth
18 engagement in the political process, rather than superficial election participation or non-
19 participation altogether.
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41 Voter education via the type of campaign analysed in this article may not be effective where
42 there is one-party dominance or where the voter choice might be limited to the lesser of two
43 evils. Where tribalism or ethnic loyalties are pre-eminent in parts of the developing world,
44 such as in Sub-Saharan Africa (Mensah, 2010), advocacy of voter engagement with candidate
45 credentials and election manifestos would have limited appeal. The urban-rural, rich-poor
46 divide in communications media mitigates against the use of campaigns that require
47 billboards, posters, print advertisements, let alone electronic and digital media. Such a
48 campaign as the Peruvian one may be ineffectual if all party platforms are vague, and if all
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political candidates are of questionable reputation. Nonetheless, public policy-makers, election officials and social activists in those countries could well be inspired by this case-study to adopt more creative approaches to voter education.

6.2 Fostering Solidarity

Interpersonal communications prove more influential than the media communications in political choice, as Beck *et al* (2002) found in the US context. Thus campaigns like the Peruvian one could similarly have limited effect in voter education if there were limited incorporation of social networks. Even if a voter education campaign were to explicitly encourage voters to source information on politicians from their social networks, the reality often is that most such groupings are comprised of ideologically compatible persons (McPherson, 2001). Yet in introducing social learning as a key factor in modelling voter behaviour, Galeotti and Mattozzi (2008) report a controversial finding that the richer the interpersonal communication network, the more likely the voters are to hold exaggerated views. This is because truthful information gets passed on by and to voters of similar ideology, while inaccurate information is given to those of a different ideology, resulting in an even more polarised populace. While the Peruvian voter education campaign certainly stimulated public awareness and social discussions (Interview with press, 2007), it was not known how it impacted on partisan political networks. Still by achieving a high profile and entering everyday discourse the Peru campaign may have acted as a form of social pressure which has been proven to encourage turnout in elections (Gerber et al, 2008). Clearly then non-personal means of persuading people to vote have a role to play, especially as more resource intensive canvassing by itself cannot succeed without some media support (Niven 2004).

1 Concepts of political rights, party platforms, and the like might be difficult to grasp without
2 language sophistication, awareness of intellectual traditions and adequate critical thinking
3 skills. Consequently, as Abrajano (2005) confirms with hispanics in North America, low-
4 education voters tend to use non-policy cues in evaluating candidates. Given that high rates
5 of illiteracy are the norm in many developing/emergent countries, a similar campaign to the
6 Peruvian one might have limited impact because elections would tend to be dominated by
7 image and rhetoric. It certainly would work less efficiently in countries where computers are
8 scarce, not to mention electricity unavailable in large parts or available only erratically. Still,
9 an imaginative concept such as this Peruvian voter education campaign might enjoy
10 considerable word-of-mouth communication mileage and it might suffice that the campaign
11 initially reached the opinion-leaders among the disenfranchised.
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29 Ideally, research on the effectiveness of such an intervention would entail a longitudinal study
30 in action-research style and this remains an option for a future academic study.
31 Measurements would need to be taken before and after the campaign, yet preferably before
32 pre-election day so as to not have bias from retrospection. Another approach would be for
33 socio-political experiments to be conducted by having some sub-national regions exposed to a
34 voter education campaign and others not, though this raises ethical issues. As Dann et al
35 (2007) point out the effect of political marketing on voters is problematic to distinguish from
36 many other influences on not just who to vote for but whether or not to vote.. On the other
37 hand they argue that social marketing should not just be concerned about putting the client
38 first as the very nature of this sub-discipline is to achieving a mutual beneficial outcome for
39 the individual and society. Ultimately, in order to establish whether such a voter education
40 campaign is exportable across geographical, political and cultural boundaries, one would need
41 to conduct comparative cross-national research on near-identical or similar campaigns.
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7. CONCEPTUALISING EMPOWERMENT

It remains for this study to address where and how voter education fits in the ambiguous interstices between fields of political marketing, social and non-profit marketing, and political communications. Since political views are enmeshed with values and identity, O'Shaughnessy (2001) believes these cannot be marketed as products, even if the rise of branding suggests that values, meaning and lifestyle are increasingly associated with the latter. Others appear to take a middle-road on whether political marketing is close relative of commercial marketing or are ambivalent about its contribution to political practice, if not political science. Peng and Hackley (2009) argue that political marketing differs somewhat from commercial marketing as the former elicited greater emotional response and critical analysis of the message, suggesting that services marketing might be the closest sub-field in that it dealt with intangibles like trust, relationship, track-record and the like.

Marland (2003) goes further in drawing some parallels of political marketing with the historic marketing of soap and the contemporary marketing of real-estate, as well as the co-opting of rituals for consumers/voters and militaristic language in both their strategies. On the face of it, any voter education campaign is quite unlike commercial marketing or political marketing in not wanting its audience to make a specific decision to purchase or elect, or to demonstrate any form of loyalty. While it did use similar media and techniques of communication, the Peruvian campaign sought rather to raise awareness and perhaps change attitudes, as well as to empower political behaviours over the long-term. Rather than utilise guilt and shame unreliably to change behaviours as Bennett (1998) demonstrates, the Peru political education campaign uses positivity to free people from the norm of political non-engagement.

Drawing on their discourse analysis of a social marketing campaign sponsored by the UK government, Raftopoulou and Hogg (2010) make the case that political marketing encompasses such a practice. In their view, since government objectives in running a social marketing campaign are highly political in affecting its relationship with citizens, and invariably ideological. It is worth noting that the Peruvian voter education campaign was not sponsored by government and so by their definition it would not be considered political communication or marketing although its focus certainly is political. Nonetheless there is a valid rationale for the avoidance of government sponsorship of voter education campaigns, lest the motivation be less than altruistic, such as in mobilising those segments of the populace that might be sympathetic to the incumbency of the party in power (Mercer, 2002). Neither are non-government organisations always independent of vested political interests despite purporting to be mobilising the grass-roots of society, particularly in developing/emergent countries (Karim, 2001). Nonetheless, a positive appeal to voters to act proactively in their own interests (Burchell et al, 2013) rather than any political block, as is the case of the Peru campaign, would appear ethical.

In seeking to extend the scope of political marketing beyond positivistic dimensions such as segmentation, strategies and advertising, Moufahim and Lim (2009) propose that a critical orientation explore alternative models of political representation, voter consciousness, layered identities, election theatre, irrational choice and the like. Critical theories and discourse analysis could then be applied to such uncharted waters for political marketing as religious extremism, terrorism, peace-enforcing, financial reform and race-relations. It is difficult to envisage such issues which do not seem to have an immediate pay-off garnering much interest from political marketing practitioners, given its ideological base. In analysing the power

discourse of the Peru voter education campaign, the present research is certainly in alignment with the critical theory agenda of seeking to mobilise all voters, especially the disenfranchised, to uncover and resist elite domination of their socio-cultural, political and economic context.

It is noteworthy that in the wave of reference works on political marketing that have appeared in recent years, none make mention of voter education. Within the edited volume on global political marketing (Lees-Marshment et al, 2010) which surveys the use of political marketing in Europe, the US, Africa and Latin America, the focus is on techniques, market orientation and marketing communication by political parties to achieve election success, not on the voting populace. The work of Maarek (2011) explicitly deals with election campaign communication as seemingly the primary form of political communication though comprising a number of tools and methods. A more recent volume that seeks to provide a retrospective and prospective on political marketing (Williams and Newman, 2013) deals with a largely America-centric agenda of political consulting, lobbying, advertising and new media. In setting out the theoretical and strategic foundations of political marketing, Cwalina *et al* (2011) critique previous conceptualisations and in their own model cover campaign message development and dissemination, candidate image, even post-election relationship marketing with voters, though not their pre-election education. Even the final section on government marketing in a recent handbook on political marketing (Lees-Marshment, 2012) deals only with such topics branding public policy and using public opinion research, making no mention of political education. It would appear then that voter empowerment has no legitimate disciplinary niche in political marketing as it is conceptualised presently.

7. CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

In referring to the original concept of democracy as legitimising consensus arising out of reasoned debate among citizenry, Luca (2010) asks pointedly whether that ideal might be impossible. Instead we seem faced today largely with consensus manufactured by political marketing. Stressing its roots in propaganda techniques developed well prior, he argues that political marketing with its emphasis on segmenting voters, targeting messages, packaging candidates and spinning of news is antithetical to the Habermasian notion of communicative action (Habermas 1993/1962). Informed yet tolerant citizens with valid opinions are capable of articulating interests, and hence participation in political processes can flourish (Ryfe 2005). Yet with its aim to deconstruct the political rhetoric occurring especially as election time, the Peruvian voter education campaign was endeavouring to approximate authentic discourse. It sought to achieve this about pertinent social issues, including the credentials of leaders purporting to have and promising to implement solutions, across a wider portion of the populace.

Voter empowerment, as exemplified by the Peruvian campaign, arguably lies at the interstices of social marketing and political communication. It is social marketing defined as the application of selective marketing communications concepts and techniques to inform, educate, and bring about social change through positive behaviours, in this case voter engagement in the election process. Whether it is also political marketing is questionable since the voter education campaign does not seek to convince its audience of any particular political agenda, party or personality. Ostensibly the client of political marketing is the political party or leader, while that of voter education is the citizen. The voter education campaign certainly constitutes political communication in the sense of fostering transmission

of information and fostering debate, policy, power and leadership in the furtherance of participatory democracy. If anything the campaign in question may be deemed as the communication praxis of an ideological perspective within political science that all members of a society ought to be engendered to participate more fully. As such, this author believes that it goes well beyond voter education to empowerment of citizens to engage in the political process to their own collective benefit, an idea which large segments of the electorate of developing countries might not have considered possible before.

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Fig. 1 Street Billboard

Translation Spanish-English:

THE CURRENT CANDIDATES
ARE TO BE OUR 'EMPLOYEES'

COME ON, LET US EXAMINE
THEM.

GET READY

Citizens Test web-address

Source: Toronja (2006)

Fig. 2 Print advertisement A

Translation Spanish-English:

SEEKING THIS CHAIR?

FIRST (TAKE) THIS CHAIR

If you need to take a test for any job why
don't we give one to the people who run
for the Presidency and the Congress?
Let's see if they are what they claim to be.
Let's see if they pass.
Let's see if disappointments come to an
end.

CITIZENS TEST

Learn about the test at: [Web-address]

Source: Toronja (2006)

Fig. 3 Print advertisement B

Translation Spanish-English:

FOR EVERY JOB ONE
MUST TAKE A TEST

AND FOR THE
PRESIDENCY?

Get Ready

Citizens Test web-address

Source: Toronja (2006)

Fig. 4 Wall posters

Translation Spanish-English:

THE CURRENT
CANDIDATES
WILL BE OUR 'EMPLOYEES'

WOULD YOU ENTRUST
HIM/HER WITH THE
FUTURE OF YOUR
CHILDREN?

WOULD YOU HIRE HIM/HER
TO MANAGE YOUR
BUSINESS?

CITIZENS TEST
Web-address

Source: Toronja (2006)

Fig. 5 Website test preamble

Source: Toronja (2006)

Translation: Spanish to English:

THE CANDIDATES ARE OUR EMPLOYEES-TO-BE

IT IS TIME YOU ASSUME THE POWER OF ONE HIRING

ASK YOURSELF THESE BEFORE VOTING FOR YOUR CANDIDATE TO
CONGRESS AND THE PRESIDENCY

Here is the Citizens Test

Fig. 5 Online and printed questionnaire

PRUEBA CIUDADANA

INTEGRIDAD → ¿LE DEJARÍAS TU CASA PARA QUE TE LA CUIDE ?

- ¿Sabes si tu candidato(a) ha estado involucrado en casos de corrupción? si no
- ¿Sabes si cumple cabalmente con sus responsabilidades familiares? si no
- ¿Sabes si es buen pagador(a) de sus deudas y sus impuestos? si no
- ¿Sabes si bebe en exceso o es adicto a drogas? si no
- ¿Sabes si le han descubierto mentiras en el pasado? si no

EXPERIENCIA → ¿LO CONTRATARÍAS PARA MANEJAR TU NEGOCIO ?

- ¿Sabes si es reconocido(a) como un trabajador serio y cumplido? si no
- ¿Has leído su hoja de vida? si no
- ¿Sabes si entiende de presupuestos, balances y otras responsabilidades propias de quien maneja el dinero de todos? si no
- ¿Conoces si tiene experiencia en administrar organizaciones complejas? si no
- ¿Sabes si logra que la gente se ponga de acuerdo? si no

CAPACIDAD → ¿LE CONFÍARÍAS EL FUTURO DE TUS HIJOS ?

- ¿Conoces las prioridades de su plan de gobierno? si no
- ¿Sabes si su equipo de trabajo tiene especialistas respetados? si no
- ¿Sabes si ha participado en alguna organización que busque mejorar la vida de otros peruanos? si no
- ¿Sabes por qué quiere realmente este cargo? si no
- ¿Te sentirías orgulloso de tenerlo(a) como líder? si no

CALCULA TU PUNTAJE

¿CÓMO SALISTE?

Source: Toronja (2006)

Translation Spanish-English:

CITIZENS TEST**INTEGRITY: WOULD YOU LET HIM/HER TAKE CARE OF YOUR HOUSE?**

1. Do you know if your candidate has been involved in any corruption case?
2. Do you know if s/he pays his debts and is responsible with his/her family?
3. Do you know what s/he does for a living and how he/she finances the campaign?
4. Do you know if s/he has presented a resume as a candidate?
5. Do you know if s/he is a mature and balanced person?

EXPERIENCE: WOULD YOU HIRE HIM/HER TO MANAGE YOUR BUSINESS?

6. Do you know if s/he is a responsible professional or worker?
7. Have you read his/her resume?
8. Do you know if s/he understands budgets, finances and responsibilities with money?
9. Do you know if s/he has experience administering major organizations?
10. Do you know if s/he has participated in associations and institutions related to social development?

ABILITY: WOULD YOU TRUST HIM/HER WITH THE FUTURE OF YOUR CHILDREN?

11. Do you know why s/he wants this position?
12. Do you know the plans and policies of his/her government?
13. Do you know if there are good professionals in his/her work team?
14. Do you know if s/he has the ability to get others to agreement?
15. Do you know how s/he sees Peru in the decade ahead?

Fig. 6: Test self-scoring

Source: Toronja (2006)

Translation: Spanish - English	
From 0 to 5 points	Do not complain later. Click here to improve.
From 6 to 10 points	You are on your way. Continue informing yourself.
From 11 to 15 points	Congratulations! Wish there were more Peruvians like you who do not waste their vote.
[Boxes for section subtotals and overall test score]	

Fig. 8 Empowerment versus marketing dialectic

VOTER EMPOWERMENT IN EMERGING DEMOCRACIES: MOBILISING THE MARGINALISED OF PERU

Abstract: Motivating the politically and economically disenfranchised to vote can be problematic, particularly in the emerging democracies where political marketing is gaining ground without concurrent voter education. Utilising textual and discourse analysis this paper deconstructs a social marketing campaign in Peru where the rhetoric of political candidature is challenged. Through characterising voters as employers and selection criteria based on analogies of daily life, the political process is made comprehensible and accessible, if not also radically appealing. The author introduces voter empowerment as a concept positioned in the interstices between social marketing and political communications, and distinct from political marketing. Comparative studies of similar campaigns are needed to demonstrate whether these may prove effective and how much adaptation is needful cross-nationally. Meanwhile the Peru campaign provides policy-makers and social activists elsewhere with a model for communicating creatively with marginalised citizens about exercising their democratic rights.
[143 words]

Key-words: election mobilisation, marginalised electorates, political engagement, social marketing, emergent democracies

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