

# Public sector marketing, political science and the science of public administration: the evolution of a transdisciplinary dialogue

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**Abstract** This article describes the evolution of the application of marketing techniques to the public sector and evaluates how political science and public administration have responded to them. Within the framework of the new definition of marketing established by the American Marketing Association (AMA), this article also discusses the potential of marketing in contemporary public management and its coherence with democratic values.

**Keywords** Marketing · Public sector marketing · Public administration · Public management · Political science

## 1 Introduction

New Public Management (NPM) cleared a path for incorporating private sector technologies for adapting services to user demands into public sector administrative practices. The appeal to rationalization of services, the growing significance given to the work environment and particularly the controversial conversion of citizen into client have led to a radical conceptual change in the provision of services. The classical concept of user as the subject of the exercise of authority has given way to that of the user as an active agent who gives meaning to the provision of a service and can both demand personalized service and judge its utility and effects.

The empowering of the citizen vis-à-vis public administrations has opened administrative practices to a set of techniques found in the sphere of marketing. In the field of political competition, marketing has gradually gained acceptance and established its presence. However, its potential for developing effective governmental action plans has not yet been understood by political science and public administration (Wring 1997), disciplines in which public sector marketing seeks to find its place

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and dissolve perceptions that link it to a strictly market-dictated provision of services. It is generally seen as restrictive and lacking in solidarity from the perspective of economic management, or rhetorical and complacent with the user but devoid of content, or closely tied to excessive stimulus towards competition. Above all, it is considered a perfect alibi for returning to the market broad areas of activity assumed by the Welfare State.

Contrary to much of the current management literature, some practices within the extensive field of marketing have been applied to the public sector for decades. This sector was in fact the testing ground for certain techniques that later successfully spread to the private sector (Graham 1994; Walsh 1994). So, to a certain extent, there is already an alignment with the most orthodox principles of marketing practices; but the practices have had to wait for the “discovery of technological potentials” offered by marketing in order to gain acceptance by the public sector research community.

In spite of the achievements, the literature shows constant efforts to banish most of the negative connotations linked to this term, with rather mixed results. Many States embraced deregulatory, privatizing or liberalizing practices throughout the 1980s and 1990s, contributing to the diffusion of public sector marketing techniques. However, to understand this discipline from that perspective alone would be to renounce the enormous benefits that any public administration, regardless of its political system, can receive from implementing marketing techniques.

In contrast with other administrative practices that have become more easily consolidated in public management, the path of marketing through the fields of political science and public administration is proving more difficult than was expected in the early 1980s. Beyond the adherence of public sector business and economics researchers, neither the benefits of marketing nor its potential for the public sector have managed to banish the distrust of many political scientists. Nor has it demolished the frivolity or irresponsibility that academics in the fields of political science and public administration find when marketing is applied to the public sector. These perceptions are fatally linked to purely electoralist propaganda activity, or to the barely ethical excesses of some practices that are applied for income-generating objectives.

In this article we leave aside the exegesis of the concept of public sector marketing, which has already been dealt with successfully and extensively by other writers (Walsh 1994; Bovaird 2003; Vázquez-Burguete 2004). The intent here is to examine three decades of public management and clarify its evolution and the role of marketing in the public sector. We will show how some of the reflection leading to recent AMA conceptions of marketing indicate a high degree of coherence with the dominant public management theories (NPM, neo-Weberianism and democratic governance). This should be sufficient to free public marketing from its status as an “exotic” practice among political scientists and public administration specialists, and to justify its presence in the current management practices of public administrations and its coherence with democratic values.

## **2 Public sector marketing: penetration of the public sector**

Marketing follows a pattern similar to that of other second- and third-generation disciplines that were born from economics, law and sociology. Over the last 100 years

it has travelled through several phases (Wilkie and Moore 2003: 116), which include its founding (1900–1920); formalization (1920–1950); deviation from the paradigm (1950–1980); and intensification and fragmentation of deviation (1980–present). The third and fourth stages represent the periods when marketing reached greater maturity and autonomy vis-a-vis the disciplines on which it was founded.

Around 1950 marketing emerged as a discipline, leaving behind its narrower identity in the realm of sales activities and the category of mere economic activity (Webster 2005: 121). This transition was marked by two novelties: the conception of marketing as a management philosophy that emphasized the role of the consumer and the integration of quantitative and behavioralist methods.

During the 1960s, in response to the enormous expectations regarding the expansion of marketing, authors gave themselves wholeheartedly to defining both the concept and the discipline (Borch 1964; Keith 1960; McKitterick 1957; Kotler and Levy 1969). Marketing entered into what some authors considered “the period of greatest influence and greatest promise [as a discipline]” (Day 1992: 324).

During the fourth stage, marketing expanded to areas that until then had only marginally been touched. This is when researchers (Webster 2005: 125) suggest that the second great transformation of its trajectory occurred. Marketing shifted from focusing on internal organizational management to a focus on the importance of consumers. It moved from interest in the product to concern over services, from transactions to relations, from the manufacturing process to creating value, from focusing on human and material resources to concern for knowledge-based resources. From an epistemological perspective, marketing transitioned from a management to an analytical focus (Webster 2005: 121). Some authors (Lehmann 2003; Webster et al. 2003) suggest that this reflects a significant, though not profound, loss of status as a management function and strategic support.

Vazquez (2004: 10–12) has fine-tuned the stages outlined by Wilkie and Moore (2003), and proposes a division of public and social marketing into five stages: beginnings (until 1940); first debates (1941–50); first transition period (1951–60); consolidation (1961–80) and expansion and specialization (1991–present). He points out the growing interest that existed among the emerging professional marketing community as early as 1940 regarding the role of the public sector in the economy and therefore the importance of political and administrative action. This interest waned at times, as reflected in the discipline boundary debates that took place over the next 30 years, but finally found its way into the marketing community during the 1960s.

Indeed, at the end of that decade, a well-known article by Kotler and Levy (1969: 10), published in the *Journal of Marketing*, proclaimed the universality of the marketing approach and the validity of the marketing discipline for every organization with clients and products. Many eyes turned definitively towards the public sector, which seemed to offer endless possibilities for experimentation, supported in good measure by citizen demand for more efficient public institutions and efforts to fight waste. Towards the mid-1970s, the need to contain public expenditures generated an academic response that is still present in these areas. The financial imbalances and excesses of public administrations were considered to lay within the public sector economy; which should therefore provide both the main solutions and the limits to all initiatives, particularly those linked to approaches to services and responses to the programmatic proposals of political organizations.

The dominant environment in the 1980s was one of increasing demand for better services from the private sector. In contrast, factors such as decreasing citizen satisfaction, discontent with the functioning of public services, the increase in competition between organizations, the apathy and demobilization of some public entity objectives and the increasing dependence of the public sector on co-pay systems for accessing public services gradually encouraged interest in the possibilities of public sector marketing. This was reflected in the birth of several specialized publications. The 1980s took the world of management (Webster 2005: 123) to a new scenario in which forms of organization gradually left behind bureaucratic rigidities and adopted more flexible structures and behaviors. Advances in computer science and information and communication technologies (ICTs) spread rapidly, especially the internet. Competition between organizations and recourse to subcontracting for the provision of services increased.

Public administrations also found themselves in this new scenario and the great question at that time involved the role governments should play regarding their duties towards citizens. Ultimately, this was the question behind all efforts to transform public management models in both academic and professional spheres. Answers were expressed in different ‘languages’ depending on the forces influencing the public administrations: cultures of global competition (OECD 1990–2005; 1995; Osborne and Gaebler 1992; Peters 1995); economic and fiscal system crises (Purchase and Hirshhorn 1994); technological innovations (Horton 1996); demographic changes (Borins 1995; Osborne and Gaebler 1992); new ideological approaches to management (Aucoin 1990??); electorates dissatisfied with public services (Graves 1995); and other trends that are still felt today, such as those personified by efficiency and quality propagandists (Hackman and Wageman 1995; Jarrar and Aspinwall 1999) or the defenders of citizen participation in the design and provision of public services (Coleman 2003).

During the last two decades, the decisive and isomorphic role of the consulting sector in promoting marketing in the public sphere has been matched in magnitude by the equally unquestionable and incomparable power surge of public sector marketing as an effect—not a means—of the dominance of managerialist thinking as well as the ideological acceptance of NPM. These approaches have inspired and supported most of the public administration management reform processes of the last 30 years in developed countries.

Managerialism was especially influential in political science and public administration studies during the 1960s and 1970s. It legitimated the line of organizational theory of researchers who insisted on dispossessing public organizations of their distinctive characteristics and likening them to any other type of entity in their administrative research and practice. Managerialism emphasized concepts such as satisfying interests, efficient provision, rationality and profitability, administrative viability, mobilization of resources, even reform and modernization, always with the intent of optimizing management of functions and resources (Gross 1968: 273–274).

NPM emerged with a heterogeneous doctrinal base and a markedly economic tone, which was reflected in proposals such as public expenditure reduction, cutbacks in public services and the “marketization” of public sector activities (Pollit and Bouckaert 2004: 186–194). During the 1980s it became a powerful transnational

philosophy centered around management, focused on the client and results, and committed to transparency and accountability. NPM argued for greater competition and incentives in the public sector and a new, more flexible, decentralized and cost-sensitive management style. As many authors of this current have expressed, the main NPM proposals (Pollit 1990; 2003; Behn 1995; Ferlie et al. 1996; Hood 1991; 2000; Barzelay 2000; Kettl 2000; Christensen and Laegreid 2001; Lynn 2003) were concerned with reducing the size of the public sector, increasing political control of bureaucracy, involving outside experts in management, replacing the civil servant structure when possible (de-bureaucratization), intensifying economic incentives and pay-for-performance mechanisms, increasing competition with the private sector for provision of services, decentralizing organizations and making them more horizontal, and promoting a new organizational culture based on the concept of the citizen as client.

Following the path outlined by NPM theory, the priority agenda that governments of developed countries established in matters of public management policy during the 1980s and 1990s followed a common pattern (DeLeon 2005; Pollit and Bouckaert 2004): reduction of the size of the public sector, decentralization, leveling of structures, creation of agencies, normative simplification, modernization of the human resources function, user guidance, introduction of evaluation mechanisms, changes in organizational culture and promotion of ICTs (e-administration and e-government). Most of these measures have directly or indirectly redefined the relationship of the administrations with their environment in many ways, some of which are listed here.

- a) Combating the gigantic size of numerous public organizations. In extreme cases, this involved privatizing and subcontracting certain portions of public administration that were traditionally controlled by public powers as well as introducing practices that fostered competition between public sector organizations.
- b) Decentralization processes that resulted from the need to act more efficiently and to combat complexity, inertia and the tendency to evade control mechanisms in large bureaucracies. The centers of policy execution were thus brought closer to the citizens, fine-tuning the relationship between the demand for problems to be resolved and the supply of solutions.
- c) The spread of agencies as a form of organization provided public entities with greater flexibility, autonomy and environmental fit.
- d) Normative simplification influenced how new technologies were introduced as well as the redesign of production structures and the public administration-citizen relationship.
- e) 'Clientelization' reflected a change in cultural values in response to the unilateralism that had characterized the traditional public administration-citizen relationship, replacing it with bidirectional relationship models. The tendency to strengthen the authority of the citizen in relation to public administrations became evident in measures such as the improvement of mechanisms to facilitate information regarding citizen services (accessibility, processing and results), the perfecting of complaint mechanisms and conflict resolution as well as the introduction of participative management models that involved the citizen in various phases of the policy cycle.

- f) Citizens wanted transparency in the actions and results of their leaders, governments and public organizations. Internal processes were audited and unnecessary procedures eliminated in an attempt to give sense to the design of services and the conditions that citizens face when dealing with public administrations. Program and policy evaluation practices became foundations for accountability, which was decisive in achieving a positive, effective and prolonged change in the behavior of public administrations and the actions of government.
- g) ICTs have facilitated interaction with citizens. E-government seeks to overcome low levels of interaction (by simple information download for users) and mid-levels of interaction (download and non-final electronic response), finalize transactions (full completion of online transactions), and attain a level of openness (inter-administrative transactions).
- h) Changes in the cultural values of civil servants have increased the concern of political leaders and bureaucrats for managing the social impact of the internal and external image that the entity projects.

Thus, policy processes are no longer being articulated entirely within a monolithic architecture of large traditional administrative entities with huge normative constraints and a condescending, indifferent view of demands upon public administrations, which perceived the citizen as the passive recipient. The implementation of public policies and the subsequent design of public action have changed substantially. Intense technological changes, growing workforce specialization, successful quality-promoting management ideas, power transfer processes (decentralization/devolution) and the need to provide services in a multi-level governmental environment have increased interest in the capacity of marketing to enhance new State-citizen relationships.

Like private enterprises, public organizations identify their clientele, develop services, determine prices, design distribution systems and communicate the efficiency and availability of all they offer. However, public sector organizations differ significantly from private enterprises. From an environmental perspective, authors (Rainey 1997; Pollit 2003) have traditionally identified several distinguishing factors for public administration: less autonomy and flexibility, less exposure to the market (competition, dependence), greater political pressure, and more intense inter-relationship with the public. Regarding economic management, they highlighted the existence of multiple non-financial objectives, dependence on tax-based resources, and the absence of very tangible objectives for evaluation. In regard to the relationship to the user, they highlighted the compulsory requirement of acting towards an unreceptive public, the tendency to apply non-differentiated action techniques, and positioning difficulties.

These differences give rise to singular marketing problems that require singular marketing solutions (Lamb 1987: 56).

Academics who recorded the incorporation of marketing techniques into the public sphere (Lovell and Weinberg 1978: 413–452; Crompton and Lamb 1986; Lamb 1987) caused much debate on the differences between applying marketing to the public and private sectors. These differences are mainly environmental, economic and product/user characteristics. There was also evidence that a different methodology was

required, one that might not line up perfectly with private sector methodology. These factors explain the apologetic tone of public sector marketing studies during the 1970s and part of the 1980s, which sprang from a conviction that most of the natural recipients of these practices would be hostile, resistant and distrusting of a set of tools that were perceived as a threat to the most solid principles for action in public administrations (equality, transparency, solidarity).

Great efforts were made in the literature to extol the virtues of marketing as something which all public sector organizations could incorporate into their management techniques (Bovaird 2003: 75). This approach, which emphasizes the benefits of marketing, its role in management practices and how it differs from marketing in for-profit organizations, can still be seen in the literature in spheres where suspicion towards the use of public sector marketing techniques lingers.

Public sector marketing became popular in the public sector as administrations assumed responsibility for new services, and spread quickly as competition increased between public entities and other public and private sector organizations. As states assumed new objectives and services and the structure of public administrations became decentralized, the monopolistic control of many States over important portions of economic activity fractured (Dunleavy et al. 2005: 9). Later, this stimulated rivalry between organizations and fed interest in acquiring users, maintaining their fidelity and responding adequately to their needs. Many organizational forms born within the public sector, such as agencies, began to operate without the guarantee of ongoing normative and cultural continuity that had traditionally characterized public sector entities. Managerial efforts increased as it became imperative to set and meet objectives in the most efficient manner possible in order to survive as an organization.

During the 1980s and 1990s marketing contributed to the governing of public administrations from a product-centered perspective (Bovaird 2003: 77; Sheaff 2002). It emphasized correct supply, development of the initial product and attracting consumers/users. The focus was on production and consequently on the internal organization of productive processes. The success of actions was measured according to the image projected by the organism; failure was explained as a consequence of user rejection and never as a production failure. During this period the spotlight was on service development and diffusion, which is typical of any first-generation concept. Towards the end of the 1990s there was a clear turn of public administrations towards their citizens. The citizen became the central point for all organizational activity, with the subsequent emphasis on citizens' desires, the development of services based on expressed and potential needs, and advances in user satisfaction studies.

One of the main transformations that took place in the early discipline of marketing was during the post-World-War II period, which opened up global business opportunities that generated considerable increase in demand and a significant diversification of consumers (within the favorable environment of the increased popularity of television and mass media). Something similar occurred with public sector marketing in the 1990s: the restrictive perception of public sector marketing began to change thanks to large reform measures and modernization in NPM agendas and the incorporation of administrations into the knowledge society (investment in ICTs). Methodology was refined for greater efficacy and efficiency, as



prior approaches had been nothing but efforts at importing into the public sector the most widely used techniques from the for-profit sector. The focus was on the user rather than internal processes, including broad use of market segmentation tools, greater interaction with citizens in designing, providing and supporting services, and a more precise use of statistical analysis in such uncultivated fields as the study of citizen satisfaction or the perception of a public administration's actions in a sector or in general.

### 3 Public sector marketing in an era of accountability and participation

In 2007 the American Marketing Association established a new definition of marketing that explained it as an “activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large”.

A definition in any field of knowledge is enormously important and can influence lines of action and content when accepted and extended by the epistemic marketing community. It operates as an authorized and symbolic declaration of the meaning and importance of the scientific area that it covers, inspiring the work of academics and professionals for years to come. If a definition is sufficiently prescriptive, it helps establish the role of the discipline and give it legitimacy before other scientific areas and society as a whole (Gundlach 2007: 243).

The prior AMA definitions were a reference point and a guide in the evolution of the discipline.

The first definition (1935) -marketing is “the performance of business activities that direct the flow of goods and services from producers to consumers”- marked the construction of a field of knowledge and opened up a space that was limited to the business world, linking marketing to the main organizational functions.

The second definition (1984) -marketing is “the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion, and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives”- involved a formulation of contents with a market management orientation valid for any type of organization. It accompanied marketing into the public sector, into both publicly owned companies and the very heart of administrations, their services and their central organs, from which public policies are defined, executed and supervised. For some authors (Hooley et al.1990; Fine 1992), the second definition may be considered a milestone in the emerging practice of integrating social and political issues into mainstream marketing thinking.

The 2004 definition -marketing is “an organizational function and a set of processes for creating, communicating, and delivering value to customers and for managing customer relationships in ways that benefit the organization and its stakeholders”- assumed a certain content (a set of technologies), highlighted its interorganizational significance, reiterated the role of the user as the recipient of marketing activity and -possibly the most significant element vis-à-vis prior interpretations- underscored the social significance of marketing. Given the social importance of the activities of these organizations, this is of great interest to those who believe that marketing should have a role in the management of public entities.



Regarding this definition, however, a debate emerged. As Gundlach (2007: 244) states, authors have been critical of the excessive emphasis on management and the lack of visibility of institutions, actors, individuals and processes that form part of marketing as a subsystem. In spite of having agreed on a formulation that has enormous social projection, some authors are critical of the weak emphasis placed on moral responsibility from a socioeconomic perspective, and of the position of marketing as an organizational function instead of as a phenomenon that involves multiple aspects of society.

The social turn reflected in the 2004 AMA definition—and confirmed by the 2007 definition—was influenced by the turn towards the market and towards citizens, which has been felt in the business world and in the actions of governments since the late 1990s. Although market orientation will not affect policy content, it will influence how governments act (Kelly 2005: 76). States have traditionally aligned themselves with one of two conceptions of good government and democracy. The first perceives democracy as an end in itself and minimizes the importance of the role of the State in managing its affairs and offering services efficiently. The second approach deemphasizes political activity and centers on State capacities and developing the supply of services.

Although marketization of government services is still extending in some sectors in some advanced industrial countries (Dunleavy et al. 2005??), in the last decade governmental actions have shifted focus from the provision of resources to transparency/accountability and response to citizen demands. The concept of democratic governance, which currently dominates public management literature and partially inspires the present-day neo-Weberian current in public administration, reflects a certain governmental predisposition towards citizens. It marks the transition from a universal vision regarding the adequate behavior of a centralist, monocentric, unidirectional actor to a policentric, bidirectional model of good governmental action. Democratic governance is an approach which strengthens participation and citizen-administration relations, by involving the entire political system (government, public administrations, parliament and society as a whole) (Rodrik 2007; Acemoglu and Robinson 2008).

Most current codes of good government contain certain basic principles such as the use of rationalizing practices in management processes, giving attention to citizen demands and fostering the need to evaluate the impact of public actions. Governments and administrations have left behind the economic limitations of the most hard-core NPM postulates and have settled into an era of accountability with their highest hopes placed in the idea of citizen participation. The very idea of accountability involves a doctrine of government based on the supposition that citizens want their administrators to do things well. It shares with management approaches the confidence that public management techniques constitute the raw material for achieving efficiency in public policies and programs. It differs from them in that the rules that limit functions as a means of avoiding bad practices create obstacles to flexible and committed governmental choices in response to citizen demands. Accountability is promoted by the State as a tactic to improve the quality of services offered, to generate greater credibility among citizens regarding the adoption of political decisions or to reinforce the legitimacy of the government (OECD 2001).

Governments should not only interact with a variety of public and private sector organizations, (parliament, judicial powers, security forces, political parties, trade unions, companies, mass media, non-governmental organizations, etc.) but also with the formal and informal institutions that affect individual and collective behavior. In other words, State capacity, accountability and attention to citizen demands are insufficient concepts for understanding current governmental and public administration correct practice. Democratic governance also involves the mechanisms, processes, relations and institutions by which citizens and groups articulate their interests and exercise their rights and obligations (Pierre and Rothstein 2008: 5). These means entail the combined actions of organizations and institutions (values, norms, behavior patterns, rules of the game). Thus, governance includes changes in both formal and informal ways of doing things, which in turn requires institutional change and constitutes the true challenge facing States today.

In the complicated scenario that surrounds current governmental action, Ozanne, Corus and Saatcioglu (2009: 29) hold that deliberative democracy offers a very interesting perspective for understanding the impact that marketing should have on society, as it reveals the complex and conflictive networks of the actors involved. Considering that in an increasingly interdependent global market, citizens have less capacity to decide what they or their society needs, the authors emphasize the idea that good government based on citizen participation should not be built just on a limited understanding of the preferences and needs expressed by citizen. Citizens' capacity to express their needs improves when they can discuss and debate their concerns with other interested parties. Rather, marketing should be seen from a more social perspective and extended to the needs of society as a whole.

What some academics called for in the mid-1990s (Walsh 1994: 63) is finally coming to pass. Current public sector marketing has gradually abandoned its marginal supportive role in understanding the production of public services, a role based on the provision of specific techniques, and has begun to occupy an influential place in the administrative orientation of essential public services such as health or education.

#### 4 Conclusion

It is still too early to know what effect the 2004 and 2007 AMA approved definitions of marketing will have on defining the limits and aspirations of public sector marketing during the next few years. Although the signs are optimistic, it would be premature to calibrate its fit with the current program of the discipline of public sector marketing. Marketing has shown that it can make public organizations more effective, although with obvious limitations. All administrative practices have their limits, and this should not cast a shadow on the usefulness of marketing nor impede its full and well-deserved placement in the prominent position that it has sought over the last 30 years in the extensive transdisciplinary field of public management.

The great usefulness of its technological arsenal should be enough to eradicate the negative connotation of marketing that persists among researchers from other areas who study public administrations. Marketing and the public interest are not antagonistic concepts if the role of marketing is understood to mediate between

citizens who demand a service and the public entities that are willing to provide it. This can be an ethical praxis or a morally impoverished one (Bovaird 2003: 76); the same can be said of other disciplines, which obstinately question the moral integrity of practices attributed to marketing.

Since the mid-1990s some authors have been suggesting that the negative connotations that marketing suffers in the eyes of other public administration researchers such as political scientists will only be erased when public administration professionals and political elites leave behind a view of marketing as a mere arsenal of techniques and begin to consider the significance of its ideas and its approach. Other barriers must also be overcome for public sector marketing to be consolidated in the field of public administration studies. It will gain greater acceptance as other disciplines discover that public sector marketing researchers provide initiatives for transdisciplinary cooperation in training and research programs. There is still a manifest deficit in the diffusion of knowledge and a low diversity of scientific backgrounds in the specialized publications, even in those that offer broad coverage.

Debates within the AMA Committee on Definitions included the relationship between marketing and society. They covered areas such as macro-marketing, consumer interest economy, marketing ethics, international consumer policies and social marketing. These debates, which led to both the 2004 and 2007 consensus on the new definition, also covered how marketing can contribute to governmental decisionmaking and more effective and efficient normative actions, such as improving public policies (Gundlach 2007: 244). Public sector marketing can support current efforts to implement codes of good government, especially the social commitment required by the prevailing idea of democracy in Western countries. Walsh (1994: 70) suggests that public sector marketing needs to develop a psychology of the user/citizen that is as rich and detailed as the psychology of the consumer, which has been developing in marketing for many years. It should also assume a confident position on a higher ideological plane and reveal its proven capacity to contribute to social change and democratic development (Jocz and Quelch 2008: 202–206).

Under the present-day influence of the concept of democratic governance, public administrations that take citizens into account will make use of marketing tools to adjust the content of their policies to the demands of the population. Buurma (2001: 1287; 1299) suggests that perhaps public sector marketing should place less importance on the “mercantilization/selling” of public policies, on procuring large numbers of ‘consumers’, and put more faith in the idea that the true reward for public action is found in social behavior.

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