

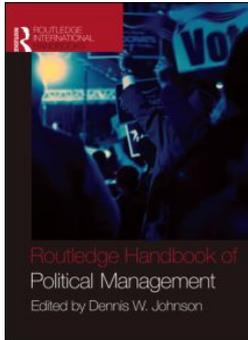
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Dennis W. Johnson

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3

Political Consulting Worldwide

Fritz Plasser

The worldwide market for political consultancy and campaign communication is a multi-billion-dollar market. In the United States nearly \$2 billion flowed through consultants in 2003–2004 federal elections. About 600 professional consultants were paid more than a combined \$1.85 billion according to a review conducted by the Center of Public Integrity. Abundant spending on campaign communication and strategic advice is not confined to the United States. Total expenditures for the recent Brazilian and Mexican presidential campaigns exceeded \$600 million. About 60% of that amount has been spent on campaign communication and the production of vivid television spots crafted by top media consultants and advertising agencies. In Russia the gray market in elections is at least \$1 billion a year. In the Asia-Pacific region more than \$1 billion is spent on campaign communication every election cycle. Even in Western Europe where expensive paid political television advertising campaigns are rare exceptions and campaigns are planned and directed by professional party managers, there are business opportunities for external political consultants. In the United Kingdom Labour and the Tories spent more than \$2 million on outside consultants in 2005. About the same amount has been spent in Italy in 2006 by Forza Italia and Ulivo on strategic advice by American overseas consultants. In 2006 even in a small country such as Austria the Social Democrats spent considerable money on advice and services provided by a team of top US consultants.

Extensive spending on campaign consultancy can also be observed in developing and emerging democracies often funded by international democracy assistance programs.¹ A rough estimate of current annual total party aid worldwide—often concentrating on campaign-related aid and covering the expenditures for the services of political consultants—would be approximately \$200 million.² The flow of campaign money in some of the least developed countries in Asia and Africa is almost surreal. The annual worldwide election market can be roughly estimated at \$6 to 8 billion depending on the respective election calendar and election cycles.³ Although the bulk of campaign spending covers expenses for paid media, buying airtime, production of television spots, print advertising, posters, organization of mass rallies and logistics, and only a fraction of the total expenditures is direct income to political consultants and their firms, the political market of 123 electoral democracies worldwide is a flourishing business for campaign professionals, pollsters, marketing experts and advertising agencies.

Until recently no systematic research on the practices of political consultants outside the United States had been carried out apart from anecdotal evidence. In the meantime there are numerous studies dealing with the ongoing internationalization of professional political

consulting.⁴ Starting with the worldwide proliferation of modern campaign expertise and the activities of overseas consultants, I will concentrate on country-specific consultancy practices before discussing the variety of role definitions of a worldwide sample of campaign professionals based on the Global Political Consultancy Project.⁵

Professionalization of Campaigning Worldwide

During the last decades, the style and practice of election campaigns have been modernized and professionalized according to country- and culture-specific variations.⁶ A comparison of actual changes in campaign practices shows several macro-trends, which can be observed in industrial democracies as well as in democracies of economically less developed countries.⁷ The first and presumably most important trend is the exclusive television-centeredness of campaign communication. Television nowadays is the primary source of news in almost all countries. Campaigns are won or lost during an intensive encounter between candidates and parties primarily fought on television. The contestants are trying to present their topics in a favorable way and to reach undecided voters with carefully defined messages and planned, camera-ready events.

The second macro-trend is the growing importance of paid television advertising with consequently increasing campaign expenditures.⁸ While there were worldwide only four countries in the 1970s permitting candidates and parties the purchase of television time, it was also possible to buy television time for political advertising in sixty countries at the end of the 1990s. With the exception of Western European democracies where only six countries allow paid political television advertising with considerable limitations, paid television campaigning replaced the traditional media and forums of campaigning such as posters, print ads and mass rallies in most of the countries.

The third macro-trend is the growing importance of television debates between leading politicians. Such debates represent the culmination of election campaigns in at least fifty countries, compared to only ten countries at the end of the 1970s.⁹ This in turn leads to the fourth macro-trend: the increased personalization of election campaigns. Even in countries with party-centered election systems and strong party organizations, campaigns increasingly focus upon the personality of top candidates.¹⁰ The communication of messages requires a messenger. In media-centered democracies this means that party leaders take over the central communication tasks in front of the television cameras. Attentive observers of campaign practices in Western Europe, where the prevailing election formula is proportional representation and the decisive vote is the vote for a party, speak of a trend toward presidentialization in the sense of moving away from party-centered election campaigns to media-centered personality campaigns.¹¹

The fifth macro-trend is the growing importance of professional campaign managers and external political consultants. The worldwide diffusion of American campaign techniques and the progressive professionalization of leading staff members within the party headquarters transformed election campaigning from an activity of amateurs into a highly professional enterprise.¹² Both observations point to specialists, who are either recruited from a circle of external political consultants or well-educated and qualified party staff members.

The transformation of political campaign practices during the past decades can be divided into *three* consecutive phases, which in practice, of course, are overlapping (see Table 3.1).¹³ The first phase could be described as a party-dominated style of campaigning based on substantial messages, programmatic differences, a party-oriented press and the loyalties of core groups of the electorate. The second phase, starting in the 1960s, was characterized by the spread of television as the dominant medium of political communication. In order to cope with the structural requirements of a visual and scenic medium, candidates and parties had to accept the standards of a new media logic based upon the communicative abilities of the candidates, their competence of

Table 3.1. Modeling Changing Campaign Practices Worldwide

<i>Phase</i>	<i>Traditional</i>	<i>Modern</i>	<i>Postmodern</i>
Mode of Political Communication Systems	Party-dominated	Television-centered	Multiple channels and multi-media
Dominant Style of Political Communication	Messages along party lines	Sound bites, image and impression management	Narrow-casted, targeted micro-messages
Media	Partisan press, posters, newspaper adverts, radio broadcasts	Television broadcasts through main evening news	Television narrow-casting, targeted direct mail and e-mail campaigns
Dominant Advertising Media	Print advertisements, posters, leaflets, radio speeches and mass rallies	Nationwide television advertisements, colorful posters and magazine adverts, mass direct mailings	Targeted television advertisements, e-mail campaigns and telemarketing, web-based videos, YouTube and blogs
Campaign Coordination	Party leaders and leading party staff	Party campaign managers and external media, advertising and survey experts	Special party campaign units and more specialized political consultants
Dominant Campaign Paradigm	Organization and party logic	Television-focused media logic	Data bank-based marketing logic
Preparations	Short-term, ad hoc	Long-term campaign	Permanent campaign
Campaign Expenditures	Low budget	Increasing	Spiraling up
Electorate	Cleavage- and group-based stable voting behavior	Erosion of party-attachments and rising volatility	Issue-based and highly volatile voting behavior

Source: Plasser, *Global Political Campaigning: A Worldwide Analysis of Campaign Professionals and Their Practices* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002), 6.

self-presentation, impression management and the creation of camera-ready events.¹⁴ With these changes a new entrepreneurial profession entered the political market place: political consultants specialized on strategic communication, image-building, the production of television spots and extensive opinion research.¹⁵ A new style of candidate-centered politics replaced the old style of party-centered election campaigns; and since the parties did not have any experts in that field, they hired external advisors, especially advertising and marketing experts for strategic planning and management tasks.¹⁶

The third, still developing phase of political campaigning is characterized by a fragmentation of television channels and target groups, the intrusion of Internet and bloggers into the campaign process as well as the transformation of large-scale campaign messages into micro-messages targeted to carefully defined voter segments. The negative tone of mass media reporting becomes more intensive and reacts upon advanced techniques of news management. The increasing professional competence of public relations experts and media advisors is defining, shaping and spinning campaign news and this leads to another factor changing the practice of electioneering: the marketing-revolution of campaigns.

In confrontation with the progressive erosion of party loyalties and the growth of voter mobility the practice of selling politics has been replaced step by step by a political marketing approach.¹⁷ Standardized campaign operations characterized by political marketing contain: careful segmentation of the electoral market, strategic positioning toward the political opponent,

research-supported development of micro-messages appealing to the needs and emotions of selected groups of target voters, rigid message discipline and intensive use of focus groups.¹⁸

Core features of traditional campaign practices were:

- their concentration upon the personal communication with voters in form of canvassing, door-to-door contacts, party meetings and mass rallies;
- the importance of the party press, the widespread use of posters, stickers, brochures and print ads or radio speeches of party politicians and candidates to mobilize the core voters; as well as
- a party- and organization-centered approach to planning and waging election campaigns.

In comparison, professional campaign practices are based on:

- the available media formats of political television and professional techniques of news management, impression management, arranged camera-ready events and the potential of viral marketing activities;
- but equally upon political television advertising in the form of free air time or as paid television advertising campaigns replacing traditional campaign media such as posters, print ads and mass rallies by web-based videos, e-mails, direct mail-campaigns; as well as
- professional political consultants, pollsters, media, marketing and political management experts responsible for primarily candidate-centered and media-driven campaigns.¹⁹

Regarding the professionalization of election campaigns, the United States is considered to be a role model of campaigning in the view of European, Latin American and Asian campaign managers. Campaign techniques originally developed in the United States found worldwide acceptance.²⁰ In fact, American presidential election campaigns have become a political shopping mall for foreign campaign managers, a virtual political supermarket for new campaign techniques and campaign innovations, which they leave after their selective shopping tours with filled baskets. The most widespread model for the transfer of select techniques and innovations of American election campaigns is the *shopping model*, where concrete practices and methods of American election campaigns suitable for unproblematic use in the national context are imported to Europe, Latin America or Asia in modified form.²¹ There would be, however, more consequences in the case of taking over the *adoption model*, where foreign campaign managers also try to accept the strategic axioms of American campaign activists and transfer the political logic of competition in American presidential campaigns to their national parliamentary campaigns. In the end this would actually lead to a transformation of the worldwide campaign styles in the direction of “global reproduction of American politics.”²²

While the *adoption model* results in a gradual standardization of election practices following the American role model of campaigns in media-centered democracies (for which no empirical evidence exists until now), the *shopping model* leads to a hybridization of the international practice of election campaigning. *Hybridization* of campaign practices stands in this context for a supplementation of country- and culture-specific campaign traditions by select components of a media- and marketing-oriented campaign style which, however, needs to be oriented in no way exclusively on the American role model.²³

The British campaign for the general election of 2005 represents an impressive example of hybridization of European election campaigns. The Conservative Party hired two Australian campaign experts, Lynton Crosby and Mark Textor, specialists in marginal-seat campaigns (regional mobilization of target groups in highly competitive districts), as well as negative attack campaigns, who took over the planning and management of the Conservatives’ campaign. At the same time the Conservatives imported software from the strategic data bank maintained by the

Republican Party in the United States during the presidential campaign of 2004. The Labour Party on the other hand relied, just like during previous general elections, on the expertise of a team of high ranking political consultants from the United States, who had given strategic and advertising advice to the Democratic presidential candidates during the American presidential elections in 2000 and 2004. Directing the campaign of the Labour Party, however, were British campaign strategists who themselves had been involved in the planning of American presidential election campaigns as foreign experts in the past years. The British example of a selective takeover of foreign expertise, which agrees with the institutional and cultural rules of the national competitive system, corresponds better with the manifold reality of European or Latin American election campaigns than the misleading idea of a global standardization of campaign practices.

Worldwide Activities of Political Consultants

American overseas consultants have played a leading role in the worldwide proliferation of professional election campaign techniques. The extremely high number of political consultancy firms within the United States, the intensifying competition for lucrative contracts, the increasing cost of overheads at the full service-companies, and the cyclic dynamics of the political consultancy business caused leading representatives during the 1980s either to switch to corporate consulting and public affairs management²⁴ or motivated them to look for new markets outside the United States. Pioneers of the political consulting business such as the legendary Joseph Napolitan made their first experiences as American overseas consultants during the 1960s. At the end of the 1990s more than 50% of all American top political consultants had worked as overseas consultants in around eighty countries.²⁵ Clearly the most important market for the services of American overseas consultants is Latin America, followed by Western Europe, East-Central and Eastern Europe, while the electoral markets of Asia and Africa have only been entered on a commercial basis by few American consultants so far.²⁶ Although only a small fraction of American overseas consultants can be classified as super consultants, earning more than 50% from their work overseas, a global electoral market for American political consultants has evolved, contributing to the worldwide diffusion of American campaign techniques and campaign expertise.

According to our Global Political Consultancy Survey, one-third of the interviewed party managers and consultants outside the United States have cooperated with an American consultant during the last years.²⁷ In the late 1990s, American consultants worked in almost all Western European countries. The situation is similar in the new democracies in East-Central Europe, where market-driven activities of American overseas consultants, combined with donor-driven activities of democracy assistance programs, have led to a sustainable influx of American campaign expertise. American consultants frequently have been involved in Latin American countries, worked in Australian campaigns, traveled to the Philippines and South Korea and temporarily left their footprints also in Russian presidential campaigns. With the notable exception of Asian countries such as Japan, Taiwan, Indonesia and India, where severe cultural and regulatory constraints represent a barrier that is only rarely overcome by US consultants²⁸ and francophone Africa, where French top consultants dominate the electoral markets, American consultants shaped campaign practices worldwide to a considerable degree.²⁹ (On Philippine elections, see Chapter 26 by Louis Perron; on Asian elections see Chapter 27 by Christian Schafferer.)

In addition to market-driven activities of prominent US consultants, campaign training seminars, trade journals and academic programs such as the high-quality curriculum of the Graduate School of Political Management (GSPM) at the George Washington University, contributed to the worldwide diffusion of American campaign expertise. In addition, democracy assistance programs of such organizations as the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), International Republican Institute (IRI), National Democratic Institute (NDI) or the US Agency for

International Development (USAID) invested hundreds of millions of dollars in campaign-related aid to emerging democracies.³⁰ Using the expertise and services of US consultants, but increasingly from other countries, donor-driven party aid covers fundraising, platform development, message development, polling, recruitment and training of staff and volunteers, door-to-door outreach, media relations, ad writing and placement, public speaking for candidates, and get-out-the-vote campaigns.³¹ These programs also provide instructive training opportunities for domestic campaign staffers interested in state of the art techniques of political management. In addition, transnational and regional political consultancy associations have a key function in the worldwide dissemination of professional campaign know-how (see Table 3.2). These networks are platforms for exchanging experience and discussing the latest trends and innovations in international election campaigns. In the meantime there is a worldwide network of professional associations emerging, indicating the globalization and professionalization of the political consultancy business.

Although every year more than a hundred US consultants spend considerable time overseas as campaign advisors, media experts, pollsters, webmasters or guest speakers at professional conferences and party campaign manager seminars, the international demand for American political consultants actually concentrates on a few superstars of consultancy business. Largely they are former advisors of American presidential candidates or leading figures of the American political consultancy business. Celebrities in the international consultancy market are the former Clinton advisor Dick Morris, who has been involved in dozens of Latin American presidential campaigns in Mexico, Argentina, Honduras, Venezuela, Uruguay and Guyana, worked as consultant in dozens of Western and Eastern European campaigns and recently acted as campaign consultant to the Yushenko presidential campaign in the Ukraine. Also there is James Carville, who with Philip Gould and Stanley Greenberg founded in 1997 the London-based opinion polling group and transnational consulting organization GGC/NOP; Carville is also partner in the global political consultancy and strategy company Greenberg Carville Shrum. Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research is also a pre-eminent international political consultancy firm. The team around Stanley Greenberg has been involved in campaigns in over sixty countries so far and was consulting among others in three campaigns of Tony Blair (United Kingdom), the 1998 election campaign of Gerhard Schröder (Germany), and the 1999 and 2001 campaigns of Ehud Barak (Israel). In 2006 they advised the Labour candidate Amir Peretz in Israel, the successor to Nelson Mandela in South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, several Latin American presidential candidates and were also involved in numerous West European parliamentary campaigns.

Table 3.2. Transnational and Regional Political Consultancy Associations

<i>Platform</i>	<i>Founded</i>	<i>Members (approx.)</i>
International Association of Political Consultants (IAPC)	1968	120
American Association of Political Consultants (AAPC)	1969	1,100 ^a
Associação Brasileira de Consultores Políticos (ABCOP)	1991	100
Association of Professional Political Consultants (APPC) (UK)	1994	35 ^b
European Association of Political Consultants (EAPC)	1996	75
Asociación Latinoamericana de Consultores Políticos (ALACOP)	1996	60
Associazione Italiana Consulenti Politici (AICP)	1999	50
Association of (Russian) Political Consulting Centers (ACPK)	2000	40 ^b
German Association of Political Consulting (degepol)	2002	70
Asia Pacific Association of Political Consultants (APAPC)	2005	50
Asociación Española de Consultores Políticos (AESCOP)	2007	20

Notes:

a Additionally there are about 600 corporate members.

b Only corporate membership for consulting firms.

An impressive example of the increasingly global market activities of American top consultants is VOX Global Mandate SM, a worldwide operating cooperation of three leading consulting firms headquartered in Washington D.C. and London. It offers its services to candidates, political parties and democracy movements worldwide. Top strategists of these three consulting firms have been involved in more than 500 presidential, prime minister and party election campaigns worldwide. Similarly impressive is the list of clients of Penn, Schoen and Berland (PSB), which offered polling operations and strategic advice in over seventy campaigns outside the United States. PSB offered its services to more than twenty presidential campaigns in the Far East, Latin America, Western Europe, Georgia and Ukraine. PSB also was involved in Slobodan Milosevic's overthrow in the Serbian presidential election of 2000, which may go down in history as the first poll-driven, focus-group-tested democratic revolution based on the expertise of American consultants.³²

The heavy engagement of American overseas consultants leads increasingly to the paradox of American consultants facing each other as campaign opponents. Examples of such paradox competitions between American consultants are the parliamentary election in Israel 2006 (James Carville, Stanley Greenberg and Robert Shrum versus Arthur Finkelstein), Italy 2006 (Frank Luntz versus Stanley Greenberg), Mexico 2006 (Dick Morris versus James Carville) and the Ukraine 2006, where former Clinton's Chief of Staff John Podesta and former Clinton's Press Secretary Michael McCurry advised Yushenkov's Our Ukraine bloc, while the former campaign manager of Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush, Paul Manafort, advised Yanukovich's Party of Regions. The third candidate, Yulia Tymoshenko, refrained from hiring American overseas consultants and relied on the advice of prominent European consultants. (On the Israeli elections, see Chapter 23 by Dahlia Scheindlin and Israel Waismel-Manor; on Russian elections, see Chapter 24 by Derek S. Hutcheson.)

In the 2006 Ukraine presidential election as well as in the 2007 parliamentary elections, candidates and parties exclusively used the expertise of Western political consultants, while the 2004 Ukraine presidential campaign stood for a clash between two cultures of consultants: The pro-Western coalition *Nasha Ukraine* (Our Ukraine) was supported by a team of high ranking American consultants (among them PSB and Aristotle International Inc.), while the Yanukovich election group, which was preferred by the Kremlin, got support for its campaign from the elite of Russian spin doctors such as Gleb Pavlovsky, the Head of the Foundation for Effective Politics, and dozens of other leading Russian political technologists. Pavlovsky, Markov and other Russian top public relations consultants had been hired on request of the Kremlin and Russian business corporations invested about \$300 million in Yanukovich's campaign. Similarly conflicting consultancy battles also took place in Georgia and in other Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries, where the Kremlin tried to influence the outcome of the elections based on strategic and economic motives.

A fierce *guerra de asesores* is also fought on the heatedly contested Latin American consultancy market, where often two teams of US consultants have found themselves in opposing camps during election campaigns.³³ Since the 1980s, leading figures of the American consultancy business have been specializing on Latin American *campanas electorales*. Top consultants such as Ralph D. Murphine have been involved in sixteen Latin American presidential campaigns; others such as Gary Nordlinger focused on the subpresidential level and specialized on gubernatorial and mayoral campaigns. Super consultants such as Dick Morris, James Carville, Stanley Greenberg, Douglas Schoen and Gary Nordlinger—just to mention a few—spend considerable time in Latin America and have been involved in dozens of presidential and gubernatorial campaigns. Their competitors are not only American colleagues and domestic Latin American consultants, but with increasing frequency also top French consultants, who are trying to get a hold on the Latin American electoral market. French *conseils politiques* such as Jacques Seguela (Havas), Stephane Fouks (EURO RSGG Worldwide) and Thierry Saussez (Image et Strategie) have been involved

in several presidential campaigns in Latin American countries during the past years, but also top Russian consultants such as Igor Mintusov (Niccolo M.) and Alexei P. Sitnikov (Image Kontakt) exported Russian campaign know-how to Bolivia, Chile, Nicaragua and Venezuela.

However, the fiercest competition in Latin America does not take place between overseas consultants from the United States and Europe, but between Latin American *consultores politicos*, who specialized on interregional campaign consulting. Two to three dozen Brazilian, Argentine and Venezuelan political consultants divide the Latin American consultancy market up between themselves and compete for attractive consultancy contracts. Carlos Manhanelli, the founder of the Brazilian professional association ABCOP, has been engaged in more than 200 campaigns in Brazil and other Latin American countries. The activities of the former superstar of Brazilian consultancy business, Duda Mendonca, are legendary; he helped Luiz Lula de Silva win the presidency and appeared as a highly paid and visible advisor in dozens of Latin American election campaigns until his career experienced a setback in 2005 following his involvement in the *escandalo do mensalao* (political corruption and illegal party financing). Another Brazilian super consultant is *publicitario* Nizan Guanaes (DM9, São Paulo), who was the top advisor of Fernando Cardoso in 1994 and 1998 and managed the election campaign of Jose Serra, going up against consultant Mendonca in 2002. Prominent *consultores politicos* such as Carballido, Chavarria, Hugo Haime, Felipe Noguera and Pessoa, to name only a few leading figures, have frequently been involved in presidential and gubernatorial campaigns across Latin America.³⁴ In the meantime Latin American election campaigns have become multinational operations in political management. In 2006 in Venezuela there were, besides the domestic advisors, also consultants from Mexico, Cuba and the US engaged in the campaign. In other campaigns there was a mix of Brazilian, Argentine, American and Russian consultancy styles, resulting in a *hibridex de estilos comunicacionales y tecnologías*, as attentive observers described the reality of consultant- and money-driven campaigns in Latin America.³⁵

As mentioned before, US political consultants have no monopoly on the international electoral market and since the 1990s, they have seen themselves confronted with increasing competition by a new generation of highly professional regional consultants, many of whom made their first professional experiences as staff members of American consultants before they founded their own companies. One example showing the spin off of American consultants' expertise is the election campaign in Israel in 2006. As in past elections Amir Peretz, the candidate of the Labour Party, relied on the know-how of Stanley Greenberg and Mark Penn and Doug Schoen, while Benjamin Netanyahu, the candidate of the Likud Bloc, used the hard-hitting advice of Arthur J. Finkelstein from New York City. But the winner, Ehud Olmert and his newly founded Kadima Party, was exclusively advised by younger Israeli consultants who had cooperated with American consultants as domestic junior partners in earlier campaigns.

While American overseas consultants operate on the highly competitive electoral markets in Latin America, French *conseils politiques* control the lucrative market in the francophone countries of Africa. Thierry Saussez (Image et Strategie), who advised Jacques Chirac, Alain Juppe, Edouard Balladur and in 2007 Nicolas Sarkozy in France, specialized on consulting African presidential candidates, and has been involved in large-scale and highly expensive presidential campaigns in numerous countries such as the Ivory Coast, Cameroon, Togo and Congo-Brazaville.³⁶ Claude Marti and Bernard Rideau are also French superstar overseas consultants, and have been active, along with others, as political consultants in Burkina Faso, Gabun, Guinea Bissau, Cameroon, Madagascar, Nigeria, Senegal and Togo among others. Besides French *conseils politiques* there were also American top consultants such as Paul Manafort involved as strategic advisors in Angola, Congo, Nigeria and Somalia during the past years. With the exception of South Africa, where the African National Congress (ANC) uses American consultants along with domestic experts and the opposition party Democratic Alliance engages British and West European advisors, the African electoral market is primarily an area of business for French political consultants.

Next to the American overseas consultants, leading Latin American *consultores políticos* and French *conseils politiques*, also Russian spin doctors have established themselves on the international political consultancy market since the middle of the 1990s. They first concentrated on the neighboring CIS countries but in the meantime also have invaded overseas markets. The increased international activity of leading Russian spin doctors is a reaction to incisive changes within the domestic consulting scene as well. Since a few years ago the Russian political consulting market has been characterized by a process of concentration in the direction of large-scale firms with links to the Kremlin parties of power.³⁷ Today the consultancy market is already dominated by a few large multi-disciplinary corporations such as the Center of Political Research Nikkolo M. (Igor Mintusov and Ekaterina Egorova), the Foundation for Effective Politics (Gleb Pavlosky), Image-Kontakt (Alexei P. Sitnikov), Novkom and the Center of Political Technologies.

Apart from freelancing *prshchiks*, a pejorative Russian term for superficial image-handlers, the Russian elite consultants do not see themselves primarily as political consultants, but as political technologists, which can mean

a policy analyst or political consultant; it can mean an expert in “black PR” or in containing the political environment; but it can also mean a Kremlin insider or a political provocateur. What makes political technologists a different species from the other election strategists or PR consultants is their direct or indirect connection to the Kremlin.³⁸

In Vladimir Putin’s managed democracy the access to the corridors of power and to state-controlled administrative resources are preconditions of successful campaigns.³⁹

Following the recent incisive reforms of the Russian electoral process such as the abolishment of the direct election of half of the Duma representatives, the introduction of a party-centered list-voting system, and the nomination of provincial governors instead of their direct election, attentive observers expect a dramatic curtailment of the Russian consultancy market. In order to finance their staff and overheads between the election cycles, the remaining Russian consulting firms will appear even more often as advisors outside of Russia. Already Russian political consultants have been involved in election campaigns in Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Poland, Serbia, Slovakia and Ukraine. Beside their operations in CIS countries and several East-Central European countries, some top Russian consultants have also been engaged in campaigns in Colombia, Mexico, Nicaragua and Venezuela. Obviously the Russian style of consultancy, preferring hard-hitting attacks, using dirty technologies, “black PR,” and their expertise in influencing the electoral process through administrative resources and media structures⁴⁰ seems to correspond to a Third World-style of campaigning prevalent in fragile electoral democracies in the Latin American, Asian and African regions.

In the Asia-Pacific region mainly Australian campaign professionals appear as overseas consultants. Sydney-based firms such as Anderson & Company, the Hawker-Britten political consulting group, and Malcolm McGregor, Ian Kortlang, John Utting and Nick Straves, to name only a few leading Australian consultants, offer their services not only to Australian and New Zealand candidates but also to clients in Indonesia, Malaysia and South Korea. Recently two Australian top consultants, Lynton Crosby and Mark Textor, have been in charge as campaign managers of the British Conservatives. Similar to the African electoral market, the Asia-Pacific region represents an emerging market for international consultants. At present only a few professional political consultancy firms are operating in the market, but the recent founding of an Asia-Pacific Association of Political Consultants is a sign that the Asian consultancy market has started to move as well. (On Australian elections, see Chapter 25 by Ian Ward.)

Prominent representatives of the Asian political consultancy business, which so far has only been accessible in exceptional cases for selected American overseas consultants, are in Japan.

Takayoshi Miyagawa (Center for Political Relations Inc.), Hiroshi Miura (Ask Co.), a political consulting firm that so far advised already more than 200 Japanese candidates, and Kazuo Maeda, a professional campaign advisor in Tokyo. Political consultants who are known outside their own countries are Kim Hak-Ryang from South Korea and Wu Hsiang-hui from Taiwan. The interregional consulting networks in Asia are currently only loosely tied and election campaigns in countries such as Japan, India and Taiwan are almost exclusively supported by domestic expertise.⁴¹

The political consulting networks in Western Europe are comparatively also loosely tied and quite informal.⁴² Few European political advisors are working outside their own countries. Interregional political consulting in Western Europe is limited to regular meetings and campaign manager seminars organized through the networks of conservative or social democratic parties and serving the mutual exchange of experiences. While American overseas consultants have been engaged in most West European countries, there exists only a handful of European political consultants who have been involved in four of five European parliamentary campaigns outside their own country. The regional fragmentation of the European consultancy markets has several causes. On the one side is the market for strategic consultancy services strongly segmented by party loyalties and the ideological background of external consultants, on the other side the professionalization of political management in Europe has taken a completely different direction than in the United States or in Latin America.

External professionalization is characteristic for the United States. Candidates hire professional, external advisors who offer their specific expertise to a candidate against payment. However, in Europe *internal* professionalization dominates.⁴³ Qualified staff members who are fully employed at the party headquarters meet more or less those political management and strategic tasks in parliamentary election campaigns that are fulfilled by external consultants in the United States.⁴⁴ If external communication and campaign consultants are contracted by European parties, they work in a team with internal staff experts and are tied to the programmatic party lines as well as the strategic decisions of leading official party managers. On the contrary, advisors of American candidates are obliged primarily to their candidates, which consequently leads to autonomous, party distant, exclusively candidate-centered election campaigns.⁴⁵

In spite of the regional fragmentation and internal professionalization of the European practice of political management, the European consultancy market has started to move during the past years. A new generation of ambitious and qualified entrepreneurs founded consulting firms in Austria, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Greece and Sweden, and media, public affairs and corporate consulting in Europe has turned into a growth industry. But in spite of the multitude of European consulting firms the degree of professionalization of the political consultancy business still differs significantly from that in the US. It is predominantly former politicians, party managers or political journalists who start a second professional career as self-employed advisors. The majority of these newly founded consulting firms specializes in media consulting, public relations, media training and coaching, and primarily uses the advantages of professional contacts and personal networks from their previous activities. Only during the last few years has a definite professional development in the direction of strategic political consulting taken place. In the meantime several European universities offer special programs and MA curricula for political management, political consultancy and public affairs management. The graduates of these programs represent the second generation of European political advisors, who are equally familiar with the techniques of American consultants in Washington, D.C., as they are with the practices of European lobbying in Brussels. Should an increased coordination and cooperation of European party alliances develop within the next few years, this could also lead to a Europeanization of national election campaigns and the formation of a genuine European consultancy market.

Professional Orientations of Political Consultants Worldwide

The worldwide proliferation of modern campaign techniques has resulted in an ongoing process of professionalization and internationalization of electioneering and campaign practices in media-centered democracies. As seen in Table 3.3, rather than an American-dominated one-way transfer we have to differentiate between several paths of diffusion of modern campaign expertise determined by country-specific institutional arrangements, regulatory frameworks, electoral laws, candidate-centered versus party-centered campaign styles and external versus internal professionalization of campaign managers, putting severe constraints on campaign and consultancy practices worldwide.

Table 3.3. Campaign Regulations and Campaign Practices in Thirty-Seven Countries

<i>Countries</i>	<i>Public Funding of Campaigns</i>	<i>Ceiling on Campaign Expenditures</i>	<i>Restrictions on Political Advertising Practices</i>	<i>Dominant Medium of Political Advertising</i>	<i>Development of General Campaign Strategies</i>	<i>Frequent Cooperation with US Overseas Consultants</i>
Argentina	Yes ^a	Yes ^c	No	TV-ads, Mass Rallies	Consultants	Yes
Australia	Yes	No	No	TV-ads, Direct Mail	Party staff	Yes
Austria	Yes	No	No	Print-ads, Posters	Party staff	Yes
Bolivia	Yes ^a	No	No	TV-ads, Mass Rallies	Consultants	Yes
Brazil	Yes ^a	No	Yes	TV-ads, Mass Rallies	Consultants	No
Bulgaria	Yes	Yes	No	Posters, Mass Rallies	Party staff	No
Canada	Yes	Yes	Yes	TV-ads, Direct Mail	Party staff	Yes
Chile	No	No	Yes	Posters, Print-ads	Party staff	No
Columbia	Yes ^a	Yes ^c	No	TV-ads, Mass Rallies	Consultants	Yes
Czech Rep.	Yes	No	No	Posters, Print-ads	Party staff	No
Finland	No	No	No	TV-ads, Print-ads	Party staff	No
France	Yes	Yes	Yes	Posters, TV-ads	Consultants	Yes
Germany	Yes	No	No	Posters, Print-ads	Party staff	Yes
Greece	Yes	No	No	TV-ads, Posters	Party staff	Yes
India	No	No	Yes	Mass Rallies, Posters	Party staff	No
Indonesia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Mass Rallies, Posters	Party staff	No
Israel	Yes	Yes	No	TV-ads, Posters	Consultants	Yes
Italy	Yes ^a	Yes ^c	No	TV-ads, Posters	Party staff	Yes
Japan	Yes ^a	Yes ^c	Yes	Posters, Print-ads	Party staff	No
Mexico	Yes ^a	Yes ^c	Yes	TV-ads, Mass Rallies	Consultants	Yes
Netherlands	Yes	No	No	Print-ads, Posters	Party staff	No
Norway	Yes	No	No	Print-ads, Posters	Party staff	No
Poland	Yes	Yes	No	TV-ads, Posters	Party staff	Yes
Portugal	Yes	Yes	No	Posters, Mass Rallies	Party staff	No
Romania	Yes	No	No	TV-ads, Posters	Party staff	Yes
Russia	Yes ^a	Yes	No	TV-news, Print-ads	Consultants	No
South Africa	Yes	No	Yes	Radio-ads, Mass Rallies	Party staff	Yes
South Korea	Yes ^a	Yes ^c	Yes	TV-ads, Posters	Consultants	No
Spain	Yes	No	No	Posters, Mass Rallies	Party staff	No
Sweden	Yes	No	No	Print-ads, Posters	Party staff	No
Switzerland	No	No	No	Posters, Print-ads	Party staff	No

Taiwan	Yes ^a	Yes ^c	No	TV-ads, Mass Rallies	Consultants	No
Ukraine	Yes ^a	Yes ^c	Yes	TV-ads, Mass Rallies	Consultants	Yes
United Kingdom	No	Yes	No	Print-ads, Posters	Consultants	Yes
United States	Yes ^b	Yes ^d	No	TV-ads, Direct Mail	Consultants	N/a
Uruguay	Yes ^a	No	No	TV-ads, Mass rallies	Consultants	Yes
Venezuela	No	No	No	TV-ads, Mass rallies	Consultants	Yes

Sources: Reginald Austin and Maja Tjernström, *Funding of Political Parties and Election Campaigns* (Stockholm: International IDEA, 2003); Lynda Lee Kaid and Christina Holtz-Bacha, *The Sage Handbook of Political Advertising* (Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2006); Karl-Heinz Nassmacher, *Foundations for Democracy: Approaches to Comparative Political Finance* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2001); Fritz Plasser, *Global Political Campaigning: A Worldwide Analysis of Campaign Professionals and Their Practices* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2002).

Notes:

a Covers only marginal proportion of total campaign expenditures.

b Public finance is optional for presidential candidates only, congressional candidates don't have access to public campaign finance.

c Frequently circumvented.

A comparison of institutional backgrounds of the electoral process in Australia, Latin America, Europe and Asia with the institutional context in which political consultants operate in the United States only offers few indicators for similarities. Political campaigns in the US are candidate-centered, strongly influenced by capital and media as well as highly professional, largely autonomously management and marketing operations.⁴⁶ In most countries outside the United States campaigns follow the traditional model: they are party-centered and labor-intensive, they receive free air time on television, are publicly supported and primarily planned and coordinated by party staff members.⁴⁷ Yet, candidate-centered campaign styles compared to party-centered styles represent only *one* essential differentiation. Other important context factors of the political consultancy practice include:⁴⁸

- the electoral system (e.g. majority or plurality vote system versus proportional election system, density of the election cycle, candidate versus party elections);
- the system of party competition (e.g. number of party activists, dominant cleavages within electorate, ability of the organization to mobilize party followers, member versus voter parties);
- the legal regulations of election campaigns (e.g. public versus private campaign financing, limits on expenditures, access to television advertising, time limits for official campaigns, candidate nomination, primaries);
- the degree of professionalization of election campaigning (professional sophistication of campaign management, expertise and use of political consultants);
- the media system (e.g. public versus dual versus private media systems, differentiation of the media system, level of modernization, professional roles of journalists, autonomy of mass media, degree of media competition);
- the national political culture (e.g. homogeneous versus fragmented cultures, hierarchical versus competitive political cultures, degree of trust in the political process, political involvement, high versus low turnout cultures);
- the political communication culture (e.g. professional self-image of political journalism, closeness versus distance of the relationship between politics and media, degree of mutual dependencies); and
- the degree of modernization in society (e.g. degree of societal differentiation and segmentation, industrialized versus information society, socioeconomic mobility).

In the light of these criteria the situation of political competition differs substantially in the majority of electoral democracies worldwide from the one in the United States, a fact that consequentially is reflected in the different professional role-interpretation of political consultants. The data of the Global Political Consultancy Survey, a worldwide survey among over 600 campaign managers and political consultants from forty-five countries, which was conducted between 1998 and 2000, allow insights into the professional role definitions of political consultants and campaign managers and allow a typological differentiation of different approaches and orientations.⁴⁹

A typology of the evaluations of success factors of a campaign resulted in two groups representing different types of strategic approaches toward a professional campaign. Consultants belonging to the first type have been classified as *Party-Driven Sellers* while the second type could be characterized as *Message-Driven Marketers*. Party-Driven Sellers concentrate on party-related success factors such as a strong and effective party organization, the programmatic policies of their respective parties and, while also stressing the importance of the candidates' personalities, they seem to be primarily party-focused. For Party-Driven Sellers the centerpiece of a campaign is the product of party-related factors. They try to sell the policy agenda of their party even when concentrating on the communicative role of their top candidates, who are regarded as party advocates, representing and communicating party positions and partisan arguments.⁵⁰

In contrast, Message-Driven Marketers are more concerned about the strategic positioning of their candidates and developing messages that appeal to the expectations of specific target groups. Apparently, Message-Driven Marketers are more inclined to define campaigns in terms of political marketing operations, where segmentation, strategic positioning and targeting are seen as essential prerequisites of professional politics.⁵¹

Message-Driven Marketers concentrate more on resources such as the availability of campaign funds and tend to evaluate the role of external advisors and campaign consultants as far more important than Party-Driven Sellers. These two types of professional role definitions differ also substantially regarding their estimations of party-related campaign factors. Message-Driven Marketers seem to be more party distant, doubting the relevance of a strong party organization within the overall campaign operations.⁵² Sixty percent of the political consultants interviewed in forty-five countries operate as party-centered Party-Driven Sellers, 40% correspond more with the political marketing logic of Message-Driven Marketers. Table 3.4 reveals the distribution of these two different styles of professional role definitions within select areas.

A majority of campaign professionals from seven out of ten areas worldwide are following the first type of professional role definition and can be classified as Party-Driven Sellers. Operating in

Table 3.4. Professional Campaign Styles by Areas (1) (percentage)

<i>Campaign Professionals Classified as . . .</i>	<i>Party-Driven Sellers</i>	<i>Message-Driven Marketers</i>
India	97	3
East Asia	84	16
Australia, New Zealand	79	21
South Africa	77	23
Western Europe	73	27
East-Central Europe	72	28
Other CIS Countries	67	33
Latin America	50	50
Russia	41	59
United States	15	85
Political Consultants Worldwide	60	40

Source: Global Political Consultancy Survey (1998–2000).

different media environments and shaped by different institutional arrangements and cultural traditions, these campaign professionals share a common point of reference: their party-focused approach toward campaign strategy. Among campaign managers from Latin America there was found at least a balanced distribution of selling versus marketing approaches. Apparently, one-half of Latin American *consultores políticos* are following a more traditional party-focused approach, while the other half seem to be influenced by the logic of *marketing politico* when reflecting about essential factors of a campaign.⁵³ Also a majority of Russian campaign experts prefers already a political market approach. Weak party organizations, concentration on strong leader personalities and a diffuse voter market favor a technocratic approach at the mobilization of disillusioned, largely detached voters.⁵⁴

American political consultants come closest to the type of Message-Driven Marketers. Eighty-five out of 100 American campaign consultants interviewed could be classified as driven by strategic message development based on market segmentation and targeting operations. Comparing the composition of these types, more than 40% of respondents classified as Message-Driven Marketers are American political consultants, whereas only 5% of Party-Driven Sellers are from the United States. Data from the Global Political Consultancy Survey offer indications that the focus of modern campaign strategies also shifts toward candidate- and message-centered factors among political advisors from traditionally party-centered cultures such as Austria, Germany, Italy or Sweden.⁵⁵ This transformation seems to be especially pronounced among political consultants with strong affinity to the US role model of modern election campaigning.

Although only a minority of campaign professionals outside the United States could be classified as Message-Driven Marketers, we should be careful about concluding that party-focused approaches toward campaign strategies can be regarded as constant and resistant to advanced professionalism as represented by the American style of campaigning. While in the US emerged a division of labor between political parties and external consultants, with advantages for both sides, frequently tensions can be observed in West European campaign headquarters when party managers, fixed upon their organizations, are confronted with the strategic recommendations of party-external marketing consultants.⁵⁶

Looking at the distinction between strategic orientations of party-internal and party-external campaign experts, we can assume that the ongoing professionalization of campaign management seems to be contradictory to party-centered styles of campaigning. Contrasting select core components of campaign strategies, we found divergent perspectives between Party-Driven Sellers and Message-Driven Marketers. Party-Driven Sellers tend to focus their campaign strategy on the national party organization and on the mobilizing force of strong party organizations, preferring a centralized and coordinated approach. Message-Driven Marketers primarily concentrate on available financial resources and on the central campaign message based on market segmentation and the expectations and emotions of target voter groups. In this case internal party managers primarily choose large-scale mobilization campaigns and personal voter contacts, while external consultants prefer targeted advertising campaigns on television, direct mail and phone banks. Finally, the American presidential campaign 2004 so far represented the most intensive mobilization campaign (ground war) as well as the so far most expensive television campaign (air war). Presidential and congressional candidates, political parties and affiliated advocacy groups combined aired 1.1 million 30-second spots, sent 5.5 billion mailings to target households, mailed 1.3 billion personal e-mail messages to target voters, made 120 million telephone calls and organized 30 million household visits by campaign volunteers during the 2004 presidential and congressional campaign season.⁵⁷

A second cluster analysis based on evaluations of campaign experts regarding the importance of several mass media for advertising strategies resulted in *three* distinct types of orientations. Respondents belonging to the first cluster could be characterized as *Mobilizers*. While estimating

the influential power of television, their communication strategies focus also on radio and on traditional forms of political advertising such as street posters and mass rallies.

The second type can be described as *Broadcasters*. This group of campaign managers is far more television centered, obviously highly attracted by the possibility of reaching a mass audience. In addition, radio and advertisement in daily newspapers are regarded as effective channels to communicate central campaign messages to target voter groups. Broadcasters also rely on traditional forms of political advertising strategies but to a significantly lesser degree than Mobilizers. Generally, Broadcasters tend to evaluate direct mail campaigns as slightly more effective than street posters and mass rallies.⁵⁸

The third cluster seems to represent an advanced style of campaign communication. Political consultants belonging to this group can be described as *Narrowcasters*. While centered on paid television advertising campaigns as the most effective form of campaign communication, they also evaluate targeted communication forms such as direct mail as exceptionally important aspects for their advertising strategies. The Internet, as a new medium to communicate with connected voters via e-mail, banner ads and web-based videos, is seen as an enormously powerful campaign tool by Narrowcasters. Traditional advertising channels, such as print media advertising, large-scale street poster campaigns and mass rallies, seem to be regarded as outdated and as a waste of money and energy. Table 3.5 shows the area-specific distribution of these three distinct approaches to effective campaign communication.⁵⁹

These data offer indicators for a combination of traditional and modern styles of political communication in most of the regions studied. West European political consultants differ significantly from the modus operandi of American political consultants. Two-thirds could be classified as television-concentrated, appealing to a mass public and trying to optimize the reach of their campaign messages. On the contrary, American political advisors prefer a rather *postmodern* strategic communication logic. Three out of four interviewed US political consultants could be classified as Message-Driven Marketers. Confronted with a multitude of news channels, “media clutter” and the declining effect of large-scale advertising campaigns in national networks, they focused upon segmented advertising campaigns in local cable channels, target group-oriented direct marketing activities and on the potential of the Internet and YouTube.⁶⁰

On first sight the distribution of different political communication styles among political consultants seems to reflect the degree of modernization of the media systems in the respective regions. But with the exception of India and South Africa and the majority of African countries, where the media revolution of election campaigns only started recently, television is now almost everywhere the dominant medium. We should therefore expect that Latin American campaign

Table 3.5. Professional Campaign Styles by Areas (2) (percentage)

<i>Campaign Professionals Classified as . . .</i>	<i>Mobilizers</i>	<i>Broadcasters</i>	<i>Narrowcasters</i>
India	68	32	0
Russia	53	43	4
Other CIS Countries	50	39	11
South Africa	50	50	0
Latin America	50	45	5
East Central Europe	48	47	5
East Asia	24	73	3
Western Europe	15	74	11
Australia, New Zealand	8	64	28
United States	4	19	77
Political Consultants Worldwide	35	45	20

Source: Global Political Consultancy Survey (1998–2000).

managers, just like their West European and East Asian colleagues, will direct their communication strategies primarily toward television. Yet, one-half of all Latin American campaign managers interviewed has been classified as Mobilizers who continue to believe in traditional forms of campaign communication and voter mobilization. Western European political and campaign managers on the other hand see themselves mostly as Party-Driven Sellers and regard television as the core medium of strategic self-presentation and communication. Although they are recognizably influenced by the American role model and every second one had direct contacts to American political consultants during the past years, their professional self-image is oriented on the institutional rules of the game of parliamentary party-centered democracies.⁶¹

The data of the Global Political Consultancy Survey show that the political consultants and campaign managers outside the United States have more in common than expected. Generally the differences between the role definitions of consultants outside the United States are less pronounced than their distance to the professional style of American political consultants. American consultants prefer a marketing-oriented, party-distant campaign style while the majority of campaign experts outside the United States represents a party-centered “selling approach.” In spite of observable tendencies toward Americanization there remains a substantial difference between consultancy styles and professional orientations of campaign professionals outside the United States and the professional role models of American political consultants. Their approach is unparalleled and seems to represent a unique style driven by institutional and media factors characteristic for the American electoral democracy.

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