

Political Marketing and Manitoba's Progressive Conservative Party, 2011-2016

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines to what extent, if at all, has the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba incorporated political marketing techniques into its organization's campaigns. This thesis is primarily grounded in the findings collected from semi-structured interviews with five individuals who could provide insights into what political marketing techniques have been and are currently in use by the Progressive Conservative Party. These five individuals come from different professional backgrounds that include public opinion research, journalism, a former campaign member, and a current member of the party. The findings from this study highlight a number of political marketing techniques used by Manitoba's Progressive Conservative Party such as the gathering of market intelligence, segmentation, and positioning. Furthermore, based on these findings, this thesis concludes that there is significant evidence that indicates that the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba, like other parties, has incorporated newly available technologies in the form of political marketing techniques into its organization's campaigns.

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DEDICATION

To my family and friends.

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1. INTRODUCTION

As much as the right to vote is an integral component to democracy and the democratic process, so is having candidates running and campaigning to be elected. The importance of having candidates running to be elected in a democratic system could not be better exemplified than when one looks to one-party type political systems. To Tom Flanagan, “campaigns are intrinsically important because they determine who will control the machinery of government for the next few years,” calling them “absolutely central to the practice of modern democracy.”¹ However, the campaign techniques employed by political candidates and parties are changing along with the advancement of technology,² prompting both concern for the legitimacy of this integral component of democracy and questions of fairness of democratic process as a whole.

In Canada, political parties – federal and provincial – are adopting a market-oriented approach in the way that they campaign, known as ‘political marketing.’ Political marketing as defined by Alex Marland, Thierry Giasson, and Jennifer Lees-Marshment, is:

The application of business marketing concepts to the practice and study of politics and government. With political marketing, a political organization uses business techniques to inform and shape its strategic behaviours that are designed to satisfy citizens’ needs and wants.³

As a result of advancements in technology, political marketing offers parties a variety of the tools and strategies to aid in party efforts, including identifying the concerns and priorities of

¹ Tom Flanagan, *Winnipeg Power: Canadian Campaigning in the Twenty-First Century* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2014), 3.

² Thierry Giasson, Jennifer Lees-Marshment and Alex Marland, “Introducing Political Marketing,” in *Political Marketing in Canada*, eds. Alex Marland, Thierry Giasson and Jennifer Lees-Marshment (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012), 3.

³ Alex Marland, Thierry Giasson, Jennifer Lees-Marshment eds., *Political Marketing in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012), 262.

voters.⁴ These strategies and tools includes polling, focus groups, listening exercises, segmentation, voter profiling, get out the vote (GOTV), opposition research, strategic product development, internal marketing, volunteer management, voter-driven communication, branding, e-marketing, delivery, voter expectation management, and public relations.⁵

A distinctive feature of political marketing is the collection of market research by political parties “to inform them on their decisions.”⁶ As per Lees-Marshment, marketing consists of “identify[ing] and respond[ing] to customer needs and wants in the way they design, produce, and deliver their goods.”⁷ Furthermore, this collection of research on the electorate allows parties to “alter aspects of their behaviour to suit the nature and demands of their market.”⁸ Prior to the start of an official election campaign, parties with a political marketing approach will first understand “in advance” what voters want.⁹ Since campaigning is about “building a coalition of supporters to win control of the government,”¹⁰ a party with such an approach will “shape the face” of the party based on the research done on voter demand and alter their party offerings to gain support from the most voters. Susan Delacourt illustrates this strategy by writing: “This means that you don’t go to the pollsters and advertisers after you’ve decided on your policies and platform – you bring them in before, to help design what you’re offering to the electorate.”¹¹

⁴ Jennifer Lees-Marshment, “Political Marketing Theory and Practice: A Reply to Ormrod’s Critique of the Lees-Marshment Market-Oriented Party Model,” *Politics* 26, no. 2 (May 2006): 122.

⁵ Jennifer Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Applications* (London: Routledge, 2009).

⁶ Alex J. Marland, *Brand Command: Canadian Politics and Democracy in the Age of Message Control* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016): 28.

⁷ Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Applications*, 23.

⁸ Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Applications*, 1.

⁹ Susan Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them* (Madeira Park: Douglas and McIntyre, 2013): 109.

¹⁰ Flanagan, *Winning Power: Canadian Campaigning in the Twenty-First Century*, 6.

¹¹ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 109.

With the continuous development and advancement of technology, newer and sophisticated methods and techniques of campaigning constantly emerge, allowing parties to become more professionalized in the ways they campaign. However, despite political parties making greater efforts using political marketing techniques in targeting voters and determining and identifying partisan leanings of households, subsequently getting those voters to the ballot box does not always succeed. Voter turnout in Canada has been declining, dropping to a “historic low” of 58.8 percent in 2008.¹² Canadians have become more cynical and distrustful of the government and of politicians.¹³ Registered voters in Canada are increasingly less attuned and more disinterested with politics.¹⁴ Lastly, and among other things, young Canadians who are eligible voters are less inclined to cast a ballot than older voters.¹⁵ This raises the possibility that, as parties professionalize and employ new modern techniques of campaigning, voters are increasingly distancing themselves from the political process. This makes it all the more important to both critically examine and understand political marketing.

Since “the extent to which an organization is market oriented is a matter of degree,”¹⁶ this thesis addresses two research questions. First, to what extent if at all has the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba incorporated political marketing techniques into its organization’s campaigns? Second, if so, how has it done so?

This study is primarily grounded in the findings collected from elite interviews with five individuals who could provide insights into what political marketing techniques have been and

¹² Elisabeth Gidengil, “The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace,” in *Political Marketing in Canada*, edited by Alex Marland, Thierry Giasson, and Jennifer Lees-Marshment, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012): 40.

¹³ Gidengil, “The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace,” 40.

¹⁴ “Survey Suggests Canadians Ignorant of Government System,” CBC News, December 14, 2008, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/survey-suggests-canadians-ignorant-of-government-system-1.751002>.

¹⁵ Andre Blais, Elisabeth Gidengil, Richard Nadeau, and Neil Nevitte, *Anatomy of a Liberal Victory: Making Sense of the 2000 Canadian Election*, (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2002).

¹⁶ Giasson, Marland, and Lees-Marshment, “Introducing Political Marketing,” 6.

are currently in use by the Progressive Conservative Party. These five individuals come from different professional backgrounds that include public opinion research, journalism, a former campaign member, and a current member of the party. These interview participants were asked questions about the political marketing techniques used by the Progressive Conservative Party in their 2011 and 2016 provincial election campaigns, and leading up to them. Given the different experiences these participants have, the interview questions prompted relevant information which aids in answering the research questions. Please see Appendix 1 for the list of questions asked. However, the format of the interviews was semi-structured, which allowed for interviewees to expand on new points and provide examples.¹⁷

In conducting semi-structured interviews for research, there are several advantages and disadvantages. In this case, a semi-structured interview was an effective way of ensuring the topic was focused throughout the interview.¹⁸ Having some structure also made the interviews conducted comparable among interviewees,¹⁹ ensuring consistency in the methodological process. Provided that semi-structured interviews have open ended-questions, the interviewer also gains the flexibility in having participants elaborate on their answers to questions about a particular topic, offering the opportunity for more depth and “rich” responses that otherwise could have been missed with a stricter interview style.²⁰ However, some disadvantages include the risk that a participant being interviewed could try to control the interview and provide unsubstantial and/or even misleading answers,²¹ the risk that the interviewer may misinterpret

¹⁷ Christine Dearnley, “A Reflection on the Use of Semi-Structured Interviews,” *Nurse Researcher* 13, no. 1 (January, 2005): 19-28.

¹⁸ Ali Alsaawi, “A Critical Review of Qualitative Interviews,” *European Journal of Business and Social Sciences* 3, no.4 (July, 2014): 150.

¹⁹ Alsaawi, “A Critical Review of Qualitative Interviews,” 150.

²⁰ Alsaawi, “A Critical Review of Qualitative Interviews,” 150.

²¹ William S. Harvey, “Strategies for Conducting Elite Interviews,” *Qualitative Research* 11, no. 4 (August 2011): 439.

the interviewee,²² the risk that the interviewer may miss-convey what the interviewee meant in transcribing the interview,²³ and the ethical issues that a researcher's identity and/or behaviour may affect the answers given.²⁴

The reason to use semi-structured interviews as the methodological approach for this study rests in the nature of this research. This study aimed at measuring the extent to which, if at all, the Progressive Conservative Party has incorporated political marketing techniques into its organization's campaigns. Answering this question requires the collection of specific insights and information from key informants who have some knowledge of the presence of the discussed political marketing techniques. Other methodological methods available would not have been sufficed in collecting this specific necessary information. Although surveying may have yielded some findings, it is handicapped with the close ended question structure which would have prevented the collection of specific information. Observation, and the observance of participants, on the other hand, is severely hindered by the granting of privilege by party elites. In sum, interviews are well adapted to addressing the research questions for this thesis.

There were some challenges that had to be faced in conducting these semi-structured interviews. Of all the problems, it was perhaps the fact that a provincial election campaign was about to get underway. This was a problem for potential interviewees since individuals with valuable information were too busy preparing for the campaign, or that they were concerned that participating in the study would give away secrets at a sensitive time. Another problem included the general avoidance and perhaps hesitation on part of the participants in discussing about party matters. This was further compounded by the limited available number of people who have such

²² Alsaawi, "A Critical Review of Qualitative Interviews," 154.

²³ Alsaawi, "A Critical Review of Qualitative Interviews," 154.

²⁴ Alsaawi, "A Critical Review of Qualitative Interviews," 155.

insights. This study was limited by the methodological style since it required interviewees to be interviewed for forty-five minutes, and some were too busy, along with the fact that others lived out of the province. Another limitation could be found with the granting of anonymity. The interviewees requesting to be anonymous tended to provide shorter answers than the ones who were not anonymous, thus impacting the amount of data collected from each interviewee.

This study also faced several ethical challenges in the acquiring of data. Given the sensitivity of party matters, and the potential implications arising from disclosing activities and knowledge surrounding party operations, the granting of anonymity may have had an impact on the data collected. Interviewees requesting anonymity were chiefly concerned with the impact and fallout the study may have on their professions and livelihood. This concern may have had them guard some answer choices and therefore the withholding of certain valuable pieces of information to the study. On the other hand, the interviewees not requesting anonymity may have provided answers that were overblown per se and not completely accurate. As it was with one, these interviewees may have a partisan leaning that affected their answers, and thus their choice of words were not as well carefully chosen as the anonymous ones.

This research is important because the information collected from evaluating the degree of political marketing techniques a political party has could help in understanding the efficacy of Canada's citizenry and the state of its democracy. A healthy democracy is one without corruption, foreign interference, and without election results being tampered with, among other things. For a democracy to be healthy, its citizenry ought to be actively participating and engaged with the democratic process, at the very least. However, there are indicators signaling otherwise in Canada, and in order to understand why, all factors should be explored, including that of political marketing.

There are negative impacts political marketing may have on citizen efficacy. As Royce Koop writes, “political marketing may lead to the development of elitist political parties willing to ignore entire segments of the voting population, as well as their own loyalists and members.”²⁵ Heather Savigny argues that this prioritization of the interests of a smaller particular group to that of the general well-being of the populace is allowed by the marketing technique of micro-targeting and segmentation of the electorate.²⁶ It could be the case that, as Lilleker argues, political marketing is creating a democratic deficit that is in part the cause for a decline in voter turnout²⁷ and is “feed[ing] cynicism about the political process.”²⁸ Prior to establishing a relationship between political marketing and a democracy’s efficacy, this research first looks at the use of political marketing techniques.

In order to evaluate to what degree the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba has incorporated political marketing techniques into its organization’s campaigns, the remainder of this thesis has been divided into four chapters. Chapter Two reviews the existing literature on political marketing and explores the techniques used in every stage of the process. Chapter Three offers the results found in the research. Lastly, Chapter Four ends by discussing the conclusions arrived at from the research.

²⁵ Royce Koop, “Marketing and Efficacy: Does Political Marketing Empower Canadians?” in *Political Marketing in Canada*, edited by Alex Marland, Thierry Giasson, and Jennifer Lees-Marshment, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012): 225.

²⁶ Heather Savigny, *The Problem of Political Marketing* (London: Continuum International, 2008): 52.

²⁷ Darren G. Lilleker, “Political Marketing: The Cause of an Emerging Democratic Deficit in Britain?” *Journal of Nonprofit & Public Sector Marketing* 14, no. 1-2 (November 22, 2005): 5.

²⁸ Koop, “Marketing and Efficacy: Does Political Marketing Empower Canadians?” 225.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

It could be said of Manitoba's Progressive Conservative Party that it is one of the province's traditional parties. Dating back to the early years of Manitoba,²⁹ the Progressive Conservative Party has witnessed its share of success in the province. Among the most notable of these successes was in the period of Rodmond Roblin, who led the party in winning majority governments in the 1903, 1907, and 1914 provincial elections.³⁰ After a period of desolation and coalition governments, with Duff Roblin at the helm, the Progressive Conservatives returned to government with a majority in the 1958 provincial election, and further winning majority governments in the 1962 and 1966 elections.³¹ It was not until the 1977 provincial election that the Party had won another majority government, this time under party leader Sterling Lyon. After a devastating loss in the 1981 election, Gary Filmon led the party to a minority government in 1988, and a series of majority governments in the 1990 and 1995 provincial elections. The Progressive Conservative Party would not see these types of successes until the 2016 provincial election, having been in opposition government for 17 years which witnessed Gary Doer's climb to premiership, and Premier Greg Selinger's and the New Democrat Party's downfall.

The success enjoyed by today's Progressive Conservative Party would perhaps not otherwise been enjoyed not without the help of the self-implosion of the New Democrat Party. After Premier Gary Doer's exit from politics, Greg Selinger faced the difficult task of leading the New Democrat Party to winning a consecutive fourth majority government. The Progressive Conservative Party, under the leadership of Hugh McFadyen, "headed into the campaign on a

²⁹ Christopher Adams, *Politics in Manitoba: Parties, Leaders, and Voters* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2008): 23.

³⁰ Adams, *Politics in Manitoba: Parties, Leaders, and Voters*, 28.

³¹ Adams, *Politics in Manitoba: Parties, Leaders, and Voters*, 35-40.

hopeful note,³² even “having every reason to hope that this would be their time.”³³ However, the election resulted in the devastating failure for the Progressive Conservatives with Hugh McFadyen resigning the night of (see Appendix 2 for results). For the Progressive Conservative Party to win in the 2016 provincial election, it would require a blatant breaking of promise by Greg Selinger on the provincial-sales tax hike, the publically open revolt of five cabinet ministers, and the minimization of errors by the Pallister campaign, which was successful (see Appendix 2 for results).

Although political parties in Canada are distinct in their own respect, they are linked in a few ways. In Canada, Rand Dyck suggests that the relationship between the provincial and federal branch of a political party “is generally close,” going to the extent of called a party “integrated.”³⁴ This linkage found in the interdependent and cooperative relationship between two political party branches could involve the sharing of elite individuals, the sharing of a volunteer base, and the sharing of techniques used in campaigns, all along with a transferring of party knowledge and information.³⁵ In the context politics in Manitoba, many of these informal connections may be present.

The availability of political marketing techniques and their use by political parties may have permanently changed how political parties approach the electorate. With the use of marketing techniques, and the advancement of technology, parties have found themselves

³² Kelly Saunders, “Conservative Progress? The McFadyen Campaign,” in *Disengaged? Fixed Date, Democracy, and Understanding the 2011 Manitoba Election*, edited by Andrea D. Rounce, and Jared J. Wesley, (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2014): 76.

³³ Saunders, “Conservative Progress? The McFadyen Campaign,” 76.

³⁴ Rand Dyck, “Links between Federal and Provincial Parties and Party Systems,” In *Representation, Integration, and Political Parties in Canada*, edited by Herman Bakvis, Royal Commission on Electoral Reform and Party Financing, (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1991):186.

³⁵ Scott Pruyers, “Reconsidering Vertical Integration: An Examination of National Political Parties and Their Counterparts in Ontario,” 47, no. 2 (June 2014): 237–258.

acquiring sophisticated methods used to help achieve power. Thanks to political marketing, parties are capable of precisely understanding not only what voters want, but also the tastes, values, and priorities of different various demographics and segments of the electorate. In understanding what it will take for individual voters to vote for a specific party, parties are able to make the decision to targeting individuals by tailoring their appeal to what it takes to win.

With the help of technology, the extent to which data research is collected on the electorate paves newer ways for parties to incorporate into their grand strategy. With software programs, parties are capable of creating a profile of a targeted segment of voters with a set of characteristics based on data and research which helps parties in their efforts to not only target communities or neighborhoods, but also helps parties pin point, hyper-segment and micro-target individuals and households. By spotting similarities in the data collected, parties could reasonably conclude the tastes and values of different segments of voters and thus aid in their decision to either target that group or not. Especially in a first-past-the-post system, where *the* most number of votes determines the winner, attempts to target a specific demographic of voters through these methods could go so far as to potentially changing the very character of the party itself.

The theoretical framework of political marketing provides us the advantage in allowing us to understand the reason(s) behind a particular action a party takes towards the shaping of its organizational structure and identity. It is political marketing that makes the key assumption that parties act with their best interest in mind, that is – winning elections. Parties are therefore adapting to a changing electorate, and adopting modern technology in helping them push for votes and thus win. This may include marketing techniques that help the party understand and know the concerns and priorities of voters prior to formulating policies, or framing a leader's

image or the ballot box question. This theoretical framework aids us in understanding whether political parties ultimately change their behaviours to meet the demands of the electorate and communicate their “product offering” more effectively.

Having read the literature regarding political marketing, I have identified the stages in which parties rely on political marketing techniques, and have sorted them into four distinct themes. This literature review will examine these categorized themes and therefore the close relationship parties have with political marketing techniques. Each theme provides a deeper analysis and uncovers indicators of political marketing used in each of these stages.

The first section will explore the electorate and how voter behaviour is changing, and what sort of implications this has for parties in approaching voters. This will be followed by an examination of how parties using political marketing techniques identify the wants and needs of the electorate, and to what degree they respond to this information. The third section will look at how parties develop a research-backed communications strategy in communicating to these targeted segments. Lastly, the fourth section will analyze how successful parties utilizing a marketing approach continue to use marketing techniques while governing, remaining in and re-engaging a cycle of research, formulation, and communication.

The Electorate: Knowing the Political Marketplace

To understand the reasons behind a party’s use of political marketing, it is important to first consider the context in which parties in Canada operate. The electorate, or in political marketing terms, “the electoral marketplace”, is changing – how voters in Canada behave is changing. Gone are the days when parties simplified voter identification, party loyalty and support by basing it on geographic, linguistic, religions lines. This task of voter identification has now

become increasingly difficult with the emergence of other variables of behaviour, ultimately affecting the logic voters employ when they are at the ballot box. As a result of these factors, Yannick Dufresne and Alex Marland write that, as in the case of the United Kingdom, political parties in Canada have become more competitive and are responding to this changing electorate by developing “more sophisticated and efficient marketing strategies.”³⁶ This section will look at what is changing with the electorate, and how these changes create favourable conditions for political marketing and enhance it.

Party identification and thus voter intentions could perhaps no longer be safely predicted on primary characteristics based on one’s region, ethnicity, religion, gender, and class. Political parties in Canada historically counted on traditional cleavages for identifying potential support. For instance, the Liberal Party of Canada safely relied on the Catholic vote. However this strategy by the Liberals can no longer be safely relied on.³⁷ These traditional cleavages are actually declining. Rather than “constituting a fixed political environment,”³⁸ and being “static categories”³⁹ these cleavages are rather “live social forces”⁴⁰ forming “multiple cross-cutting cleavages”⁴¹ and memberships. While socialization, and possibly lack of thereof by such groups contributes to the cross-cutting of multiple cleavages, making it even “common” for voters to belong to one,⁴² Canadians can belong to many primary groups based on region, ethnicity, religion, and gender. However, the disappearance of a clearly cut electorate along defined

³⁶ Yannick Dufresne, and Alex Marland, “The Canadian Political Market and the Rules of the Game,” in *Political Marketing in Canada*, edited by Alex Marland, Thierry Giasson, and Jennifer Lees-Marshment, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012): 22.

³⁷ Gidengil, “The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace,” 47.

³⁸ Dufresne and Marland, “The Canadian Political Market and the Rules of the Game,” 23.

³⁹ Blais et al., *Anatomy of a Liberal Victory: Making Sense of the 2000 Canadian Election*, 96.

⁴⁰ Blais et al., *Anatomy of a Liberal Victory: Making Sense of the 2000 Canadian Election*, 96.

⁴¹ Gidengil, “The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace,” 39.

⁴² Andrea Perella, “Overview of Voting Behaviour Theories,” in *Election* edited by Heather MacIvor, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012): 234.

characteristics could complicate the task for parties to identify support among traits. This, among other things, could contribute to a volatile and flexible electorate.

With respect to party loyalty and remaining faithful and attached to one political party, voters in Canada are becoming more volatile at the ballot box and more flexible in their political party preferences. Andrea Perella goes so far as to writing that Canadians change their party identification “quite readily.”⁴³ Jennifer Lees-Marshment,⁴⁴ and Darren Lilleker and Richard Scullion,⁴⁵ acknowledge this phenomenon by writing about this weakening of ties between a political party and its voter base. Susan Delacourt writes that 30 to 40 percent of voters of voters in Canada today change the way they cast their ballot in elections.⁴⁶ In contrast, only about 10 to 20 percent of Canadian voters in the 1960s changed their political party preference.⁴⁷ Brad Lavigne, former director of strategic communications for the federal New Democrat Party and the former campaign director for the party in the 2011 federal election confirms this observation by adding that the electorate is becoming “increasingly persuadable.”⁴⁸ Furthermore, Lavigne stated that “voters are becom[ing] less entrenched in traditional voter behaviour (based on family, geography, religious, or class), and are increasingly open to switching their party

⁴³ Andrea Perella, “Overview of Voting Behaviour Theories,” 236.

⁴⁴ Jennifer Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing and British Political Parties: The Party’s Just Begun*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008).

⁴⁵ Darren G. Lilleker, and Richard Scullion, *Voters or Consumers: Imagining the Contemporary Electorate*, (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars, 2001).

⁴⁶ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 11.

⁴⁷ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 10.

⁴⁸ Alex Marland, Thierry Giasson, and Tamara A. Small, eds, *Political Communication in Canada: Meet the Press and Tweet the Rest*, (Vanouever: UBC Press, 2014): ix.

preference...”⁴⁹ As a result of this apparent volatility, Lawrence LeDuc demonstrates in his research that political parties have taken advantage of this.⁵⁰

In his study on the electorate, Lawrence LeDuc, confirms this flexibility. LeDuc demonstrates that it was the 1984 federal election that “marked the end to the days of predictable loyalty to parties.”⁵¹ Furthermore, the Canadian electorate had become “highly sensitive” to a variety of short-term focuses which shaped their attitudes and behaviours and therefore their party preference. Adding to this observation, former pollster and strategist for the Conservative Party of Canada, Allan Gregg said that “Canada was moving well out of the days when 80 percent of the electorate could easily define their political allegiance.”⁵² Parties could no longer comfortably rely on a stable base of support and this volatility provides parties with strong incentives to become more marketing oriented and more in tune with the demands of voters.⁵³

As Canadian voters become “highly sensitive” to short-term focuses, LeDuc reveals a “considerable potential” for political parties to take this volatility to their advantage. Characterizing the period from 1965 to 1980 as a period of “stable dealignment,”⁵⁴ LeDuc argues that political parties tapped into this volatility. This was demonstrated in the 1984 and perhaps more clearly in the 1993 federal election, when the incumbent Progressive Conservatives’ vote share dropped from 42.9 percent to 16 percent.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ Marland, Giasson, and Small, *Political Communication in Canada: Meet the Press and Tweet the Rest*, ix.

⁵⁰ Lawrence LeDuc, “Canada: The Politics of Stable Dealignment,” in *Electoral Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies: Realignment or Dealignment?* Edited by Russal J. Dalton, Paul Beck, and Scott Flanagan, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).

⁵¹ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 125.

⁵² Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 125.

⁵³ Gidengil, “The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace,” 39.

⁵⁴ LeDuc, “Canada: The Politics of Stable Dealignment.”

⁵⁵ Gidengil, “The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace,” 45.

A volatile electorate could mean more flexible voters in terms of their ties to a single party, and therefore fewer voters holding a membership and/or formal affiliation with a political party. According to a study by William Cross and Lisa Young, only about 2 percent of Canadians today have memberships in a political party.⁵⁶ In addition, most of those party members are over the age of forty.⁵⁷ To further this observation that Canadians are becoming more flexible in voting for a party, Harold Clarke and Allan Kornberg provides some evidence to suggest that party identification among Canadians is decreasing.⁵⁸ Not only is this dealignment in partisanship only occurring in Canada, but also in advanced industrial democracies,⁵⁹ and Yannick Dufresne and Alex Marland blame this on not only “the erosion of traditional cleavages lines,” but also on “the growing mistrust of parties.”⁶⁰

Canadian voters have become more distrustful and more cynical of the government and of politicians in the past few decades. Neil Nevitte demonstrates the prevalence of these attitudes among Canadians in his research.⁶¹ In understanding the cause of this cynicism, Elisabeth Gidengil discloses that many Canadians “believe that politicians will say anything to get elected, and once elected, quickly lose touch with the people.”⁶² In a 2008 survey carried out by Canadian Election Study (CES), a quarter of respondents believed that political parties “hardly ever keep their promises.”⁶³ More than a half of the respondents doubted that the government cares much what people “like them” think. Lastly, there is “fairly widespread perception” among

⁵⁶ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 13.

⁵⁷ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 13.

⁵⁸ Harold D. Clarke, and Allan Kornberg, “Evaluations and Evolution: Public Attitudes toward Canada’s Federal Political Parties, 1965-1991,” *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 26, no.2 (1993): 287-311.

⁵⁹ Russell Dalton, and Martin Wattenberg, *Parties without Partisans: Political Change in Advanced Industrial Democracies*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁶⁰ Dufresne and Marland, “The Canadian Political Market and the Rules of the Game,” 24.

⁶¹ Neil Nevitte, Andre Blais, Elisabeth Gidengil, and Richard Nadeau, *Unsteady State: The 1997 Canadian Federal Election*, (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁶² Gidengil, “The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace,” 40.

⁶³ Gidengil, “The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace,” 40.

respondents who believe that the government wastes taxpayers' money.⁶⁴ A "substantial" minority of respondents also believe that there are "quite a few crooked" people in government.⁶⁵ With numbers pointing out that these respondents believe there is "little to choose" from among the selection of political parties, and that voters "lack a say" in terms of the direction the government heads towards.⁶⁶ What is perhaps most alarming is that only 16 percent of respondents concluded that they are very satisfied with the way democracy works in Canada.⁶⁷ A quarter of respondents either were not very satisfied or not satisfied at all with how democracy works in Canada. These attitudes were again reflected in a 2012 survey, with 90 percent of respondents believing that politicians "were most concerned with money."⁶⁸ Most of the respondents surveyed also indicated that politicians were "untruthful."⁶⁹ In addition, only 1 percent of respondents had a "very favourable" view of politicians.⁷⁰ These results could be compacted with the findings from another study which found that most respondents believed that politicians will say "anything" in order to get elected, and once elected, they will lose touch with their original pledges.⁷¹ All things considered, Canadians are increasingly more suspicious and pessimistic of the motives held by politicians, adding to the complexity behind their rationale in choosing who to vote for.

The voter turnout in Canada has been declining, despite the country being historically known for having a relatively high voter turnout.⁷² To Thierry Giasson, Harold Jansen, and

⁶⁴ Gidengil, "The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace," 40.

⁶⁵ Gidengil, "The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace," 40.

⁶⁶ Gidengil, "The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace," 40.

⁶⁷ Gidengil, "The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace," 40.

⁶⁸ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 13.

⁶⁹ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 13.

⁷⁰ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 13.

⁷¹ Gidengil, "The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace," 40.

⁷² Lawrence LeDuc and Jon H. Pammett, "Voter Turnout," in *Election*, edited by Heather MacIvor, (Toronto: Emond Montgomery Publications Limited, 2010): 252.

Royce Koop, this noticeable decline “is by now an old story.”⁷³ In the 1950s and 1960s, nearly 80 percent of eligible voters were casting ballots in elections.⁷⁴ In the 1980 federal election, voter turnout declined to just fewer than 70 percent.⁷⁵ Since 1988, voter turnout has dropped sixteen points, reaching 58.8 percent of registered voters in 2008,⁷⁶ which was “the lowest recorded [voter turnout] in Canadian history.”⁷⁷ Notwithstanding the factors for this decline in voter turnout, these low rates are accompanied by the low rates of other types of political participation.⁷⁸

In exploring the factors for this decline in voter turnout, Jon Pammett and Lawrence LeDuc reveal that a lack of interest among non-voters, rather than disaffection with politics and politicians, provides a piece to the story.⁷⁹ In a study, when non-voters were asked why they did not vote, they cited lack of interest as the single most important reason for their apathy. Furthermore, non-voters feel that their vote is “not meaningful,” or that “there is no one worth voting for.”⁸⁰ Although dissatisfaction and a resulting loss of confidence could also come to play, it cannot alone explain why turnout to vote has declined to current levels.⁸¹

Many Canadian citizens have admitted to a lack of interest in politics,⁸² which could be resulting in a politically less attuned and more disinterested electorate. According to a 2008 poll

⁷³ Thierry Giasson, Harold Jansen, and Royce Koop, “Blogging, Partisanship, and Political Participation in Canada,” in *Political Communication in Canada: Meet the Press and Tweet the Rest*, edited by Alex Marland, Thierry Giasson, and Tamara A. Small, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014): 194.

⁷⁴ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 13.

⁷⁵ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 116.

⁷⁶ Gidengil, “The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace,” 40.

⁷⁷ Tamara A. Small, Thierry Giasson, and Alex Marland, “The Triangulation of Canadian Political Communication,” in *Political Communication in Canada: Meet the Press and Tweet the Rest*, edited by Alex Marland, Thierry Giasson, and Tamara A. Small, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014): 22.

⁷⁸ Small, Giasson, and Marland, “The Triangulation of Canadian Political Communication,” 22.

⁷⁹ LeDuc and Pammett, “Voter Turnout,” 257.

⁸⁰ LeDuc and Pammett, “Voter Turnout,” 257.

⁸¹ Blais et al., *Anatomy of a Liberal Victory: Making Sense of the 2000 Canadian Election*.

⁸² Small, Giasson, and Marland, “The Triangulation of Canadian Political Communication,” 23.

conducted by the Dominion Institute, over half of Canadians believed that the prime minister was directly elected by voters, and 75 percent could not identify the head of state.⁸³ In a 2008 Canadian Election Study (CES), when people were asked how interested they were in politics, their average scale from 0 to 10 was 6.2 for interest in the election, and 5.8 for interest in politics generally.⁸⁴ However, 1 in 5 people rated their interest in the election at 4 or less, and this figure rose to more than 1 in 4 for politics in general.⁸⁵ This lack of political awareness was also demonstrated in the study when a quarter of respondents were not able to name the leader of the Conservative Party in the closing days of the 2008 campaign.⁸⁶ To make matters worse, this leader was Canada's incumbent prime minister and had been for the two years prior to the election. The lack of knowledge is not only confined to federal political matters, but also transcends into the provincial political sphere. In the same study, almost a third of respondents were not able to name their own provincial premier.⁸⁷

Consequently, an electorate that is less attuned and more disinterested with politics could change not only how voters themselves vote, but also how parties communicate to them. In a 2011 study conducted by the Gandalf Group, the main source of information for most Canadians is through television (58 percent), followed by newspapers (20 percent), radio (8 percent), and the Internet (8 percent).⁸⁸ In another study, conducted by CES, 54 percent of those who read the news online every day also watch the news on television every day; 46 percent listen to the news on the radio every day; and surprisingly, 39 percent read the news in the newspaper daily.⁸⁹

⁸³ "Survey Suggests Canadians Ignorant of Government System," CBC News, December 14, 2008, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/survey-suggests-canadians-ignorant-of-government-system-1.751002>.

⁸⁴ Gidengil, "The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace," 42.

⁸⁵ Gidengil, "The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace," 42.

⁸⁶ Gidengil, "The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace," 42.

⁸⁷ Gidengil, "The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace," 43.

⁸⁸ Gidengil, "The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace," 42.

⁸⁹ "Canadian Election Study 2011," Canadian Opinion Research Archive, <http://ces-ecr.org/>.

Furthermore, the 2011 study by Gandalf Group reveals that 72 percent of Canadians tended to see commercial advertising as truthful, while only 30 percent believed they were getting any truth from political party ads.⁹⁰ It appears that political parties are taking this lack of political awareness by the electorate as an opportunity to influence voters through political marketing in the form of advertisements, messaging, logos, etc.

Although not all the time, voters who are undecided, flexible, and politically illiterate may tend to base their ballot choice on factors such as emotion, personality, and leadership qualities. Issues sometimes matter, and parties cognizant of the needs and wants of voters have capitalized on the ones that do. Dufresne and Marland point this out with the North American Free Trade Act (NAFTA) being a critical issue in the 1998 federal election, or with health care to a lesser extent in 2000, or corruption and accountability in the 2004 and 2006 federal elections.⁹¹ However, voters may be weighing their vote considerably more so on campaign “pictures... images, and slogans.”⁹² John Meisel writes that this segment of voters is less influenced by issues than they are by other short-term forces such as party image and leader personality.⁹³ Frank Luntz, a strategist for the Republican Party in the United States, further added to this observation about today’s “post-partisan” voters, saying that

...people do not vote as much for policy as they do for emotions and intangible personality traits – trust, consistency, stability... We would rather vote for someone who we completely trust than someone who agrees with us on the ten issues that we care about the most. We now vote for people in terms of who they are as people rather than just their intellectual capability and so [being] a straight shooter is so important... The key here is consistency. The key here is stability.⁹⁴

⁹⁰ Can be found online: www.adstandards.com/en/MediaAndEvents/canadianPerspectivesOnAdvertising.pdf.

⁹¹ Dufresne and Marland, “The Canadian Political Market and the Rules of the Game,” 25.

⁹² Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 114.

⁹³ John Meisel, *Working Papers on Canadian Politics*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1975).

⁹⁴ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 225.

In light of this post-partisan voter segment, Harold Clarke, Allan Kornberg, and Thomas Scotto have come to the conclusion that Canadian politics is becoming more “presidentialized,” with party leaders and other short-term focuses becoming more important than party candidates, or policy ideas.⁹⁵

A similar observation about this segment of voters was also made by Jerry Grafstein, who was in charge of helping the Liberal Party with its advertising. In a speech, Grafstein had said:

The less educated, the more uncommitted, the undecided, the less partisan, the non-party people rely more on TV than any other mode of public persuasion. Those whose ‘software systems’ or ‘codes’ are not fixed or simply don’t care are persuaded the most. It appears that television, if it has any persuasive power, persuades those most who care the least about the particular issue.”⁹⁶

A detached, disinterested, uninformed, and flexible electorate could translate to a number of swing voters who have a flexible mindset, being at risk of political marketing techniques. For instance, the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) concentrated efforts and resources towards 10 percent of the population which they labeled as “floaters” with this particular mindset. Party strategist Patrick Muttart and party pollster Dmitri Pantazopoulous discovered that only half of the Canadian electorate paid any attention to the news at all, whether in newspapers or on TV.⁹⁷ The two also established that those who follow the news on a regular basis generally have already established an opinion as to which political party they support, and even how they intend on casting their ballot on Election Day, even before the start of the campaign.⁹⁸ Since these regular followers composed 50 percent of the electorate, they were unlikely to be influenced by

⁹⁵, Harold D. Clarke, Allan Kornberg, and Thomas J. Scotto, *Making Political Choices: Canada and the United States* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009).

⁹⁶ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 90.

⁹⁷ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 202.

⁹⁸ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 202.

the unravelment of a party's election campaign.⁹⁹ This meant to Muttart and Pantazopoulous that the other 50 percent were not regular ballot box goers. Taking into account the average voter turnout rate in recent elections in Canada, which was at 60 percent, the Conservative Party was left with 10 percent of the "news unfollowers" they could target.¹⁰⁰

Another indicator of a volatile electorate is the number of Canadian voters who decide how to cast their ballot once the election campaign is underway. Elisabeth Gidengil writes that approximately 50 percent of voters would decide which political party to vote for during the election campaign.¹⁰¹ Using data gathered from the 2008 federal election, 48 percent of voters stated that they waited until the campaign to "make up their minds."¹⁰² In addition, 15 percent of voters in the 2008 federal election waited until the last day of the campaign to decide.¹⁰³ To Gidengil, these figures "have been steadily rising over the past three decades."¹⁰⁴ In getting her point across, Gidengil quotes Peter Donolo, a political strategist and former chief of staff to Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff, who had said: "The electorate had never been this volatile... That's the real story."¹⁰⁵

Young Canadians, who are eligible voters, are less inclined to cast a ballot than older Canadians. As according to Elections Canada, less than half of young people under the age of thirty, who are eligible to vote, end up going to a polling station to cast a ballot in the most recent elections.¹⁰⁶ In the 2008 federal election, only about 37 percent of voters among eighteen to

⁹⁹ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 202.

¹⁰⁰ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 202.

¹⁰¹ Gidengil, "The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace," 45.

¹⁰² Gidengil, "The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace," 45.

¹⁰³ Gidengil, "The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace," 45.

¹⁰⁴ Gidengil, "The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace," 45.

¹⁰⁵ Gidengil, "The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace," 45.

¹⁰⁶ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 13.

twenty-four year olds voted.¹⁰⁷ Considering this statistic, young Canadians are much less likely to vote than their parents or grandparents were at the same age.¹⁰⁸ Gidengil writes that this is a “generational replacement” among young voters,¹⁰⁹ and even suggests that this voter apathy among young Canadians could even be “spreading to other age groups” since in 2008, “the estimated drop-off in voting was even greater for older Canadians.”¹¹⁰ Political parties may be taking these haunting figures into account when they construct their political marketing strategy.

When one compounds all of these characteristics which make up the electorate, it may be not difficult to imagine that voters are becoming increasingly harder to reach by political parties. To Stephen Taylor, former director for the National Citizens Coalition, voters are becoming increasingly difficult to contact since they have become “too busy, too tuned out of politics or simply not answering the phone.”¹¹¹ Nathan Rotman, a long-time New Democrat Party aide, also joined Taylor in saying “People are harder to find,” in respect to locating voters through simple mass communication, either through prime-time TV, or through land-line home phones.¹¹² Perhaps, with all of these changes, one could no longer figure out a person’s political strip through simple surveys.¹¹³

With the assumption that political parties act in their own self-interest, a changing electorate would mean that parties will have to put in greater effort in understanding how contemporary voters pick-and-choose between political parties. Like businesses in a competitive market, with the help of political marketing techniques, political parties may undertake primary

¹⁰⁷ Gidengil, “The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace,” 40.

¹⁰⁸ Andre Blais, Elisabeth Gidengil, Richard Nadeau, and Neil Nevitte, *Anatomy of a Liberal Victory: Making Sense of the 2000 Canadian Election*, (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2002).

¹⁰⁹ Gidengil, “The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace,” 40.

¹¹⁰ Gidengil, “The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace,” 40.

¹¹¹ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 262.

¹¹² Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 298.

¹¹³ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 262.

research on the electorate – or in political marketing terms, the “electoral market.” This primary research would inevitably reveal what voters want, how to best approach those demands, and communicate them effectively. But before knowing how voters vote, parties require knowing who is voting. As Campbell et al. writes, “If the electorate was not changing, and voters were predictable, then election campaigns would not matter.”¹¹⁴ But this is not the case.

All of these changes in the electorate as discussed above are certainly incentives for parties to pursue a political marketing-oriented approach. With regards to less partisanship and more flexibility, Jesper Strömbäck argues that the “fewer strong partisans there are, the stronger the incentives for political parties to become market-oriented.”¹¹⁵ Furthermore, Gidengil writes that “when party attachments are flexible, [political] parties have a realistic prospect of inducing defections, provided that they can design a product offering that addresses the needs and wants of those most likely to consider voting for another party.” With 40 percent of Canadians having either a weak attachment to a party, or no attachment whatsoever, prospects of a party adopting a political marketing approach is further enhanced.¹¹⁶ These conditions could be conducive to making parties take a political marketing approach to the electoral market.

Yannick Dufresne and Alex Marland confirm that the Canadian electorate, or in political marketing terms, the “marketplace,” is evolving.¹¹⁷ Provided that political parties exist to win elections, one would think they would respond to changes in the electorate accordingly. Political

¹¹⁴ Angus Campbell et al, *The American Voter* (New York: Wiley, 1960).

¹¹⁵ Jesper Strömbäck, “A Framework for Comparing Political Market-Oriented,” in *Global Political Marketing*, edited by Jennifer Lees-Marshment, Jesper Strömbäck, and Chris Rudd, (New York: Routledge, 2010).

¹¹⁶ Gidengil, “The Diversity of the Canadian Political Marketplace,” 53.

¹¹⁷ Dufresne and Marland, “The Canadian Political Market and the Rules of the Game,” 23.

parties now have to be mindful of vast demographic considerations since the population can no longer be simply divided up upon traditional lines and cleavages.¹¹⁸

Given that the way Canadian voters behave and come to a decision on which leader and/or party to vote for, with the aid of modern technology, parties have increasingly been incorporating the reliance of political marketing techniques in various forms in understanding and knowing the concerns, values, priorities of voters and what they want.¹¹⁹ As Delacourt concludes in her book, *Shopping for Votes*, political marketing is used by political parties to “[aim] at the 10 percent of Canadians who didn’t pay attention to politics.”¹²⁰ Jennifer Lees-Marshment as well writes that voters are changing, becoming more critical and expecting more of parties to deliver what they want.¹²¹ Political parties are now adopting the political marketing strategy of confirming the minds of voters rather than changing them,¹²² but this first requires knowing what those minds are.

Formulating the Party’s Political Product: Knowing and Producing What Voters Want

As demonstrated in the previous section, the rationale and mindset of voters, and how they come up with the decision to choose a political party at the ballot box is changing. This change in electoral behaviour may have implications for the strategies political parties use leading up to an election campaign. This section will explore how parties using political marketing techniques undertake the task of collecting market intelligence in understanding what the views, opinions, and tastes of the electorate are, among other qualities and characteristics for the purpose of having an informed research-backed campaign strategy. As Lees-Marshment puts it, “Without

¹¹⁸ Dufresne and Marland, “The Canadian Political Market and the Rules of the Game,” 23.

¹¹⁹ Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing and British Political Parties: The Party’s Just Begun*.

¹²⁰ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 328.

¹²¹ Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing and British Political Parties: The Party’s Just Begun*.

¹²² Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 16.

knowing what the market is, how it behaves and what it wants, politicians cannot make informed decisions about how to respond to it.”¹²³ As a result, parties could take several courses of action with the goal of engaging the electorate in formulating and producing a political product composed of policies, advertisements, slogans, and logos aligned with what voters want.

Market Intelligence

A defining element of political, or as Jennifer Lees-Marshment writes, “the key to political marketing,”¹²⁴ is the acquisition of market intelligence. Alex Marland, Thierry Giasson, and Tamara Small define market intelligence as such:

Empirical data about the political marketplace and public views... The practice of collecting market intelligence involves the use of quantitative and qualitative methods such as polls, opinion surveys, focus groups, role playing, co-creation, and consultation, as well as analysis of existing public census data and election records. Politicians and political parties rely on market intelligence to aid in prioritizing issues, developing communication strategies, and helping to present themselves as the most competent alternative able to address those issues.¹²⁵

Furthermore, what makes market intelligence essential to the political marketing process is that it reveals a whole range of characteristics of the electorate, including what are the wants, needs, values, and desires of voters throughout the campaign process.¹²⁶ This knowledge impacts the development of a range of things for a party, including how to frame its leader, or how to position itself on an issue, or its communications strategy.

The goal with market researching and collecting intelligence is identifying underlying emotions and finding an emotional reaction to what otherwise is known is the party product.

¹²³ Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Applications*, 76.

¹²⁴ Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Applications*, 76.

¹²⁵ Alex Marland, Thierry Giasson, and Tamara A. Small, *Political Communication in Canada: Meet the Press and Tweet the Rest*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014): 251.

¹²⁶ Marland, *Brand Command: Canadian Politics and Democracy in the Age of Message Control*, 149.

Discovering what the emotion commitment factor of individuals is, and knowing where their values lay leads to understanding what their motives are. After this has been completed, researches highlights the most logical appeal to individuals.¹²⁷ To researchers such as Martin Goldfarb, people implicitly reveal themselves by their choices and actions.¹²⁸ Furthermore, Goldfarb believes that successful marketing rests in “understanding people’s motives and wants, beyond the mere transaction.”¹²⁹

Methods of Market Intelligence:

The gathering of market intelligence could be formally divided into qualitative and quantitative methods of research. Since both methods of research have different characteristics, they could be used by political parties for different purposes.

Qualitative methods used for market intelligence purpose is the *preferred* method for the collection of data.¹³⁰ This is because the methods used (most commonly focus groups, although there are others including semi- or unstructured in depth interviews, projective techniques, word associations, and consumer drawings¹³¹), allow the political party using it to probe deep into an individual’s mindset. It can “reach” into a person so that his or hers values, beliefs, attitudes, and influences behind the formation of an opinion could be understood.¹³² This can be done because focus groups encourage participants “to share private feelings and associations.”¹³³ The information collected from these sessions could then be used by a political party “to explore

¹²⁷ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 106.

¹²⁸ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 84

¹²⁹ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 87.

¹³⁰ Marland, *Brand Command: Canadian Politics and Democracy in the Age of Message Control*, 149.

¹³¹ Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Applications*, 85.

¹³² Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Applications*, 85.

¹³³ Marland, *Brand Command: Canadian Politics and Democracy in the Age of Message Control*, 149.

emotional levers and identify messages that will resonate with targeted audiences.”¹³⁴

Techniques employed in a session generally range from “mood boards,” “concept statements,” “game-type associations,” and group discussions on topics such as what participants would like to ask a political leader, and what that leader would probably say.¹³⁵ The information collected would indeed be valuable for political parties, especially in generating insights which could inform decisions being made on repositioning the party on certain policies, or how to frame a leader’s image, among other things.

Quantitative methods are perhaps the traditional means used by political parties for market intelligence purposes. Although it provides “surface level data”¹³⁶ in the form of numbers, it “offers a number of benefits.”¹³⁷ Quantitative methods include polling, consumer panels, telephone surveys, personal interviews, panel studies, and mail surveys,¹³⁸ and require “less coordination work” than qualitative research, are “less expensive,” and are quicker to conduct while offering “statistically valid data.”¹³⁹ This data, as Alex Marland writes, “permits the reliable identification of audience clusters and the sharpening of messages.”¹⁴⁰ Furthermore, it could help a political party test its campaign messages and policy ideas and see what the public reaction and interpretation is.¹⁴¹

Responding to Market Intelligence

The responsiveness to market intelligence depends on the degree to which a political party has incorporated it to its grand strategy. Jennifer Lees-Marshment categorizes the degrees to which

¹³⁴ Marland, *Brand Command: Canadian Politics and Democracy in the Age of Message Control*, 149.

¹³⁵ Marland, *Brand Command: Canadian Politics and Democracy in the Age of Message Control*, 150.

¹³⁶ Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Applications*, 83.

¹³⁷ Marland, *Brand Command: Canadian Politics and Democracy in the Age of Message Control*, 150.

¹³⁸ Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Applications*, 83.

¹³⁹ Marland, *Brand Command: Canadian Politics and Democracy in the Age of Message Control*, 150.

¹⁴⁰ Marland, *Brand Command: Canadian Politics and Democracy in the Age of Message Control*, 150.

¹⁴¹ Marland, *Brand Command: Canadian Politics and Democracy in the Age of Message Control*, 150.

political parties incorporate market research into their strategies. Depending on the degree to which a political party relies on its market research, it could even go so far as to “actually design [its] policies and messages according to what voters want.”¹⁴² Or as Lees-Marshment explains, a party may only use market intelligence to inform it of how to communicate its political product offering to the electorate.¹⁴³

A political marketing technique used by political parties in responding to market intelligence is the segmentation of the electorate. This segmentation is a process of “breaking up” the electorate into smaller sections based on common characteristics.¹⁴⁴ This technique can be especially helpful to political parties that require aid in identifying a coalition of supporters since segmentation divides voters into groups.¹⁴⁵ These groups could be based on a number of characteristics, and in addition to that, further division could occur in a segmented group.¹⁴⁶ These groups could be based on common characteristics such as geographic (where people live), behavioral (based on the actions of an individual), demographic (age, family nature, social class, income), and psychographic variables (lifestyle, beliefs, attitudes, activities, interests, and opinion).¹⁴⁷ This complicated statistical process involves using software such as “Voter Vault” and “Mosaic” which “offers tailor-made programmes to parties,” and with the advancement of technology, these categorizations of these are indeed becoming increasingly complex.¹⁴⁸

Further division is possible within already segmented groups due to the advancement and availability of complex voter profiling software and databases. This technique, known as

¹⁴² Jared J. Wesley and Mike Moyes, “Selling Social Democracy: Branding the Political Left in Canada,” in *Political Communication in Canada: Meet the Press and Tweet the Rest*, edited by Alex Marland, Thierry Giasson, and Tamara A. Small, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014): 75.

¹⁴³ Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Applications*, 46.

¹⁴⁴ Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Applications*, 76.

¹⁴⁵ Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Applications*, 77.

¹⁴⁶ Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Applications*, 77.

¹⁴⁷ Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Applications*, 77.

¹⁴⁸ Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Applications*, 77.

“hypersegmentation,” was adopted by the Conservative Party of Canada while Stephen Harper was its leader. As with the segmentation process, in first understanding the composition of the electorate, the party first collected market intelligence through the use of polling.¹⁴⁹ This method yielded findings “that allowed isolating very specific groups of voters and ways to specifically appeal to them.”¹⁵⁰ Andre Turcotte described this form of profiling as being “very specific and creative.”¹⁵¹ Lees-Marshment also describes how precise segmentation has become, writing that this techniques creates “micro-targets... cutting across regions.”¹⁵² After identifying these different specific groups and their demands, the Harper Conservatives then were able to adjust accordingly and, in a way, tailor their product offering to the groups and address their needs that would “maximize their electoral share” to form government.¹⁵³

In an interview with *The Globe and Mail*, party pollster and strategist Allan Gregg revealed how sophisticated polling research had become. In providing a glimpse of this, Gregg explained the capability political parties have in understanding the electorate: “We can target not just the possible swing ridings, and key voters within those polls. We can identify on a block-by-block basis their historical voting behaviour, their demographic profile, their inferred preference – and reach them, not by the old mass media techniques, but by telephone and direct mail.”¹⁵⁴

The political marketing technique of hypersegmentation leads to a detailed profiling of individual voters with assigned characteristics. In the case of the Harper Conservatives, Flanagan

¹⁴⁹ Andre Turcotte, “Under New Management: Market Intelligence and the Conservative Party’s Resurrection” in *Political Marketing in Canada*, eds. Alex Marland, Thierry Giasson, and Jennifer Lees-Marshment (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012), 85.

¹⁵⁰ Turcotte, “Under New Management: Market Intelligence and the Conservative Party’s Resurrection,” 85.

¹⁵¹ Turcotte, “Under New Management: Market Intelligence and the Conservative Party’s Resurrection,” 85.

¹⁵² Jennifer Lees-Marshment, “The Impact of Market Research on Political Decisions and Leadership: Practitioners’ Perspectives,” in *Political Marketing in Canada*, edited by Alex Marland, Thierry Giasson, and Jennifer Lees-Marshment, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012): 101.

¹⁵³ Turcotte, “Under New Management: Market Intelligence and the Conservative Party’s Resurrection,” 85.

¹⁵⁴ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 129.

explains this process as the creation of “fictional people to epitomize [the party’s] core and swing voters.”¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, Marland describes this process as involving giving names and stereotyping these fictional voters “whose socio- and geo-demographic profiles indicated their propensity for voting Conservative.”¹⁵⁶ For example, the Conservatives created a voter target with the name of “Dougie,” who is “single, in his late twenties, working at Canadian Tire,” and represented one type of swing voter.¹⁵⁷ Through the use of market intelligence and hypersegmentation, party strategists uncovered that voters like “Dougie” agreed with the party on issues such as crime and welfare abuse, “but was more interested in hunting and fishing than politics, and often didn’t bother to vote.”¹⁵⁸ Other fictional people were devised by the party, such as “Rick and Brenda,” who are “a common-law couple with working-class jobs,” or “Mike and Theresea,” who “probably would be Conservative core supports except for their Catholic background.” By identifying these sets of swing voters in addition to the key ridings they are found in, the party could focus on the voters and ridings that “make the difference between victory and defeat.”¹⁵⁹

The New Democrat Party of Canada have also acquired and incorporated this political marketing technique of profiling into the party’s strategy. Delacourt writes that the party commissioned polling firms to “paint a demographic portrait of people who might be swayed” to the party with the right marketing efforts.¹⁶⁰ It was after the 2008 federal election, the party commissioned a firm to conduct a polling exercise, mixed with “typologies” of voters, organized

¹⁵⁵ Tom Flanagan, *Harper’s Team : Behind the Scenes of the Conservative Rise to Power* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007): 223-224.

¹⁵⁶ Alex Marland, “Amateurs versus Professionals: The 1993 and 2006 Canadian Federal Elections,” in *Political Marketing in Canada*, edited by Alex Marland, Thierry Giasson, and Jennifer Lees-Marshment (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012): 67.

¹⁵⁷ Flanagan, *Harper’s Team : Behind the Scenes of the Conservative Rise to Power*, 223-224.

¹⁵⁸ Flanagan, *Harper’s Team : Behind the Scenes of the Conservative Rise to Power*, 223-224.

¹⁵⁹ Turcotte, “Under New Management: Market Intelligence and the Conservative Party’s Resurrection,” 85.

¹⁶⁰ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 291.

by political leaning, and the “pop-psychographic” look at consumer tastes and lifestyles.¹⁶¹ Just like the Harper Conservatives, this research produced the image of a fictional character that fit a potential supporter for the party, which then became the party’s targeted voter.

After this process of identification, a political party has the market intelligence to inform its decision on what group of individuals to target in creating a winning coalition of support. Flanagan writes that despite the change of methods political parties use in campaigning, it has always been and will always be about building this coalition of supporters.¹⁶² Although there are a number of ways which parties could establish targets, the basic strategy has always been about maintaining loyalty among core supporters, “ignoring hard-core opponents, and concentrating [a party’s] resources to appeal to soft supporters who need to be reassured and to soft opponents who can be won over.”¹⁶³ These soft supporters and opponents are voters who are “persuadable target voters,” who as Flanagan explains, “are actually of the most interest to campaign strategists.”¹⁶⁴ In terms of choosing which segments of persuadable voters to target, factors include measuring their responsiveness to a given stimuli, the cost and effectiveness of accessing that targeted segment, whether the product offering by the party could be tailored to suit the taste of the segment, and the potential of resonance within the minds of voters (Bannon 2004). Afterward identifying and deciding which voters to target, a political party may then structure its strategy accordingly, involving techniques such as opposition, candidate, and policy research, a party’s own policy and communications development, and its own positioning on policy issues.

¹⁶¹ Delacourt, *Shopping for Votes: How Politicians Choose Us and We Choose Them*, 291.

¹⁶² Flanagan, *Winning Power: Canadian Campaigning in the Twenty-First Century*, 5.

¹⁶³ Flanagan, *Winning Power: Canadian Campaigning in the Twenty-First Century*, 6.

¹⁶⁴ Flanagan, *Winning Power: Canadian Campaigning in the Twenty-First Century*, 76.

Incorporating market intelligence into a political party's product development "is often complex and constantly evolving."¹⁶⁵ However, there are a few components to the process. Depending on the strategy the political party is embarking on, it could be that only a few aspects of the party is changed with respect to the market intelligence gathered.¹⁶⁶ Or, as Lees-Marshment outlines, in theory it could be the case that a political party with a great reliance on market intelligence could change everything about it, although that would be unrealistic. Newman argues that by responding to market intelligence accordingly, which could involve repositioning on certain policies and/or images, political candidates could maximize their potential to gain and maintain support among voters.¹⁶⁷ Lees-Marshment describes these stages of product development as going through an "introduction, growth, maturity, and decline" stage.¹⁶⁸

In terms of policy, a political party may position itself on a certain issue with respect to what the market intelligence reveals about the various opinions of the electorate. Taking into account the market intelligence collected and the segmentation of voters,¹⁶⁹ market positioning "utilizes the analysis of the competition to suggest that parties and candidates occupy a distinctive and superior place in the political market from which they can attract support."¹⁷⁰ As Dufresne and Marland write, political parties operate in a competitive environment that may

¹⁶⁵ Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Applications*, 108.

¹⁶⁶ Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Applications*, 108.

¹⁶⁷ Bruce I. Newman, *The Marketing of the President: Political Marketing as Campaign Strategy*, (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1994): 47.

¹⁶⁸ Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Applications*, 110.

¹⁶⁹ Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Applications*, 91.

¹⁷⁰ Giasson, Lees-Marshment, and Marland "Introducing Political Marketing," 10.

require developing a position that is not only “attractive” to the targeted voter, but that also differentiates the party itself from “the positioning of opponents.”¹⁷¹

Market intelligence may also inform a political party on positive and negative attributes a political leader may possess. Whether it’s a party’s own leader, or a leader of an opposing party, this information could be incorporated into strategy. It could be the case that a certain quality of a party’s own leader resonates with the electorate, which could be then used to good advantage, especially if it resonates with a targeted segment of voters. Likewise, a political party may want to minimize or downplay negative attributes. Knowing this, parties could construct a certain narrative accordingly in a way that promotes and advertises the leader.

In sum, a political party is concerned with its brand, or how it is perceived by voters overall. This brand, as described by Lees-Marshment, is “broader” than the product offering of a party. A brand is “more psychological and less tangible.” Furthermore, it is concerned with impressions, images, attitudes, and recognition.

Communicating to an Intended Audience

Without any means of communicating to a party’s targeted segment of the electorate, the incorporation of political marketing techniques would most likely prove to be not worthwhile. Furthermore, communication is important for political parties since it is the vehicle of delivering information to voters. This section will explore how research can help political parties make a party’s communication strategy more effective to ensure that it targets the segment of the

¹⁷¹ Dufresne, and Marland, “The Canadian Political Market and the Rules of the Game,” 25.

electorate it was intended for.¹⁷² As Lees-Marshment writes, “If politicians understand voters, they can create more effective communication; knowing who they are, what they want, and how to reach them helps develop much more targeted and wanted communication.”¹⁷³

Communication tactics include delivery management, get out the vote (GOTV) campaigns, and advertising, “all in which aim to engage in communication that suits both the producer and the receiver...”¹⁷⁴

With the collection of market intelligence, political parties are able to create voter database management software to collect and store information on voters for communicative purposes. Although the types of systems used by political parties vary,¹⁷⁵ the main function of these programs is to locate key voters to aid in communicating the party’s political offering. This was done by the Canadian Alliance, which developed a voter tracking program comprised of a database of potential voters in key ridings.¹⁷⁶ The building of these databases are especially complimented by the fact that the information of eligible voters including their name, sex, date of birth, and address is provided to all parties for “communications purposes” and “soliciting donations.”¹⁷⁷ When this information was first made available, the federal Liberal Party “developed an electoral list manager software to integrate Statistics Canada socio-demographic data, as well as voter canvass information inputted by a constituency campaign...”¹⁷⁸ As Dufresne and Marland write, the “implementation of these systems then allows for more

¹⁷² Thierry Giasson, Jennifer Lees-Marshment, and Alex Marland, “Challenges for Democracy,” in *Political Marketing in Canada*, edited by Alex Marland, Thierry Giasson, and Jennifer Lees-Marshment (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012): 255.

¹⁷³ Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Applications*, 162.

¹⁷⁴ Giasson, Lees-Marshment, and Marland, “Introducing Political Marketing,” 10.

¹⁷⁵ Dufresne and Marland, “The Canadian Political Market and the Rules of the Game,” 25.

¹⁷⁶ Turcotte, “Under New Management: Market Intelligence and the Conservative Party's Resurrection,” 82.

¹⁷⁷ Dufresne and Marland, “The Canadian Political Market and the Rules of the Game,” 32.

¹⁷⁸ Kenneth R. Carty, Lisa Young, and William P Cross, *Rebuilding Canadian Party Politics* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000): 202.

efficiency in tactical marketing techniques such as telemarketing and direct mailing, and increasingly online marketing which aim to precisely join targeted voter population segments,”¹⁷⁹ along with GOTV efforts.

Get-out-the-vote campaigns identify targeted voters and motivate these people to show up to the ballot box to vote.¹⁸⁰ This is especially possible with the use of these techniques, “associated with direct marketing.”¹⁸¹ For the Canadian Alliance party, their database was used to locate key voters in winnable ridings,¹⁸² and in turn guided GOTV efforts by identifying “walk routes” for door-knockers in constituency campaigns with potential electoral support.¹⁸³

However, the most important technique parties use to communicate to a targeted segment of the electorate is through advertisements. A political party executing a political marketing strategy of advertising would typically do so by “continuously employing TV narrowcasting, targeted direct mail, and telemarketing” with precision.¹⁸⁴ Advertising is a “strong feature” of Canadian politics, and an “exceedingly important communication tactic.”¹⁸⁵ With the use of market intelligence, parties can be informed accordingly in the production of these advertisements in producing “informative advertising that creates an evidence-based strategic messaging frame...”¹⁸⁶ As Giasson, Lees-Marshment, and Marland writes, with respect to advertising, a party using political marketing strategy and research should theoretically be creating “informative advertising, that generates product awareness.”¹⁸⁷

¹⁷⁹ Dufresne and Marland, “The Canadian Political Market and the Rules of the Game,” 25.

¹⁸⁰ Giasson, Lees-Marshment, and Marland, “Introducing Political Marketing,” 11.

¹⁸¹ Turcotte, “Under New Management: Market Intelligence and the Conservative Party's Resurrection,” 86.

¹⁸² Turcotte, “Under New Management: Market Intelligence and the Conservative Party's Resurrection,” 86.

¹⁸³ Turcotte, “Under New Management: Market Intelligence and the Conservative Party's Resurrection,” 86.

¹⁸⁴ Marland, “Amateurs versus Professionals: The 1993 and 2006 Canadian Federal Elections,” 67.

¹⁸⁵ Giasson, Lees-Marshment, Marland, “Introducing Political Marketing,” 11-12.

¹⁸⁶ Giasson, Lees-Marshment, Marland, “Introducing Political Marketing,” 13.

¹⁸⁷ Giasson, Lees-Marshment, Marland, “Introducing Political Marketing,” 13.

An example of directly marketing to a targeted segment of voters is how the New Democrat Party communicated to ethnic groups in their mother tongue in the 2006 campaign. For the NDP, the ridings the party was targeting were ethnically populated with French, Chinese, Korean, and Punjabi ethnic groups.¹⁸⁸ The party then “circulated multilingual issue pamphlets... and postcards that were customized to reflect regional priorities.”¹⁸⁹ These materials were then distributed during the party’s door-to-door voter identification process. This technique of distributing specifically tailored material towards voters was again used by the NDP in promoting strategic voters to vote for the party.¹⁹⁰ For example, if a house displayed support for a candidate from the Conservative Party, which had a slim chance in winning, the party would then provide that residence material advertising itself as the best in preventing a “Liberal victory” in the riding.¹⁹¹

Efforts made in communicating to targeted segments also resulted in stricter and more centralized message control. By having control over a centralized message, parties could release daily micro-messaging of policies created to “gradually resonate with issue-based segments of the electorate...” as was the case with the Harper Conservatives.¹⁹² Not only does a stricter and centralized message control prevent ad hoc statements made by candidates of a party, but it also helps communicate a party’s policies with a targeted segment of the electorate.

¹⁸⁸ Marland, “Amateurs versus Professionals: The 1993 and 2006 Canadian Federal Elections,” 68.

¹⁸⁹ Marland, “Amateurs versus Professionals: The 1993 and 2006 Canadian Federal Elections,” 68.

¹⁹⁰ Marland, “Amateurs versus Professionals: The 1993 and 2006 Canadian Federal Elections,” 68.

¹⁹¹ Alan Whitehorn, “The NDP and the Enigma of Strategic Voting,” in *The Canadian General Election of 2006*, edited by Jon H Pammett, and Christopher Dornan, (Toronto: Dundurn, 2006): 105.

¹⁹² Marland, “Amateurs versus Professionals: The 1993 and 2006 Canadian Federal Elections,” 70.

Marketing in Government: Governing and Campaigning

Political marketing “is most commonly associated with efforts to win an election.”¹⁹³ In theory, a political party having incorporated political marketing techniques in its strategy and tactics for electioneering purposes could continue this practice while it is in government. This section will explore the possibility that a governing political party could continue to use political marketing techniques, resulting in a broader view of what and how citizens’ view a certain subject, consequently having a more informed approach in galvanizing support.¹⁹⁴

Just as market intelligence is valuable for political parties, so it could be for a party in government.¹⁹⁵ This is largely because it could uncover “what the public thinks of an issue,” which can therefore inform the government of its direction, and political communications.¹⁹⁶ An example of a governing party which incorporated this technique into its strategy was the federal Conservative Party under then prime minister, Stephen Harper.¹⁹⁷ The Harper Conservatives “fully integrated polling activities within the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO), thereby blurring the lines between governing and electioneering.”¹⁹⁸ This move is described by Andre Turcotte as being “the most important change”¹⁹⁹ that the Conservative strategists made since polling then became an ongoing practice for the governing Conservative party. Party strategists such as Dimitri Pantazopoulos, David Herle, and Dan Arnold, all provide similar accounts²⁰⁰ of the

¹⁹³ Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Applications*, 199.

¹⁹⁴ Esselment’s “The Governing Party and the Permanent Campaign.”

¹⁹⁵ Anna Esselment, “The Governing Party and the Permanent Campaign,” in *Political Communication in Canada: Meet the Press and Tweet the Rest*, edited by Alex Marland, Thierry Giasson, and Tamara A. Small (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2014): 25.

¹⁹⁶ Esselment, “The Governing Party and the Permanent Campaign,” 25.

¹⁹⁷ Andre Turcotte, and Simon Vodrey, “Permanent Polling and Governance,” in *Permanent Campaigning in Canada*, edited by Alex Marland, Thierry Giasson, and Anna Lennox Esselment (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017): 132.

¹⁹⁸ Turcotte and Vodrey, “Permanent Polling and Governance,” 132.

¹⁹⁹ Andre Turcotte, “Under New Management: Market Intelligence and the Conservative Party's Resurrection,” 83.

²⁰⁰ Turcotte and Vodrey, “Permanent Polling and Governance.”

integration of polling activities within the activities of different provincial and federal governments which point to the continued presence of the political marketing technique.

Polling and other public opinion methods such as focus groups could be used by governments on a range of things. A government may want to test potential reactions to a new policy, to evaluate the mood of the public on government services, to see government approval ratings, identify key public issues and concerns, and lastly to “collect valuable information on how to frame issues and guide a communications strategy.”²⁰¹

There have been instances that insights gained from market research conducted by governments were used to the advantage of the governing party for re-election campaigns. Dimitri Pantazopoulos confirms this suspicion by admitting that the insights gained from the research he had conducted for Premier Clark and the provincial government, were transferred “seamlessly” to the premier’s re-election campaign.²⁰² As Pantazopoulos said in an interview: “We used polling to determine where to call, and the message,” adding that this allowed the governing party to “focus the campaign on the correct ‘group’ of ridings” and choose strategically among the list of government policy priorities.²⁰³ Dan Arnold also provides a similar account when he worked for then premier of Ontario, Kathleen Wynne, where he “updated seat projections, prepared regional reports, or worked with local candidates on riding surveys.”²⁰⁴

In addition to using market intelligence for likening a governing party’s re-election chances, it could also help inform a government’s communication strategy accordingly. Not of

²⁰¹ Esselment, “The Governing Party and the Permanent Campaign.”

²⁰² Turcotte and Vodrey, “Permanent Polling and Governance,” 137.

²⁰³ Turcotte and Vodrey, “Permanent Polling and Governance,” 138.

²⁰⁴ Turcotte and Vodrey, “Permanent Polling and Governance,” 138.

all a government's advertising is partisan, but as Denver McNenney and David Coletto write, "politicians have strong incentives to align their official government communication with their ongoing campaign work,"²⁰⁵ risking the conflation of campaigning and communications.²⁰⁶ This continuation of a research informed communications strategy was exemplified when Stephen Harper and the Conservative Party implemented a strict "command-and-control" communications strategy, maintaining a strict message discipline.²⁰⁷

This reliance on market research and its influence on the communications style of the governing party could also be noticed in how much the Harper Conservatives partook in extensive polling in its first year of government. As part of its "communications machinery" the government spent at an annual cost of \$31.4 million dollars, on public opinion research,²⁰⁸ with 44 percent being on marketing and communications research and on advertising initiative. Furthermore, another 44 percent was spent by the government on policy development and program evaluation, "with the remainder spread among the categories of quality of service, web testing, and "other."²⁰⁹

Despite there being difficulties, limitations, and a new "series of challenges"²¹⁰ for political parties having a political marketing approach in government, there are a number of indicators reflecting the use of these techniques. Governing political parties that had won a campaign by incorporating political marketing techniques into their strategy could continue with

²⁰⁵ Denver McNenney and David Coletto, "Preaching to the Choir in Case it is Losing Faith: Government Advertising's Direct Electoral Consequences," in *Permanent Campaigning in Canada*, edited by Alex Marland, Thierry Giasson, and Anna Lennox Esselment, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017): 187.

²⁰⁶ Esselment, "The Governing Party and the Permanent Campaign," 24.

²⁰⁷ Esselment, "The Governing Party and the Permanent Campaign," 28.

²⁰⁸ Public Works and Government Services Canada, *Trends in Public Opinion Research in the Government of Canada, 2006-7*, (2008), <http://www.tpsgc-pwgsc.gc.ca/>.

²⁰⁹ Public Works and Government Services Canada, *Trends in Public Opinion Research in the Government of Canada, 2006-7*.

²¹⁰ Lees-Marshment, *Political Marketing: Principles and Approaches*, 199.

this political product development cycle and process of re-creating a new political product for segments of the electorate. Indicators of political marketing techniques incorporated by a governing party reflect this cycle of conducting research, collecting market intelligence, segmenting the electorate, and incorporating these findings into the governing party's re-election strategy, product formulation, and communications strategy.

3. **FINDINGS**

This chapter explores the use of political marketing techniques used by the Manitoba Progressive Conservative Party in order to address the thesis' research questions. This exploration is structured by the themes I derived from the literature on political marketing and which were outlined in the last chapter. I first address the context of Manitoba's political marketplace before moving on to how parties learn about the nuances of that marketplace. This then leads into a discussion of communication, or how parties take the data they've acquired and use it during election campaigns. The chapter concludes with a short discussion of political marketing by the Progressive Conservative Party while being in government. In each section, I draw on interview data to show both whether and how the Progressive Conservative Party has incorporated these techniques.

Manitoba's Political Marketplace

The first theme we address is analyzing the political marketplace. As per the description provided by Steve Lambert, Manitoba is a "middle-of-the-road" province, "where politics is very different compared to a province like Quebec." There are a number of factors present in Manitoba that encourage the use of political marketing techniques by parties. There are several indications that the Manitoba Progressive Conservative Party does so.

The Road to Victory: Numbers and Ridings

In Canadian politics, there are safe and swing seats for parties and Manitoba is no exception. In general, there are ridings identifiable as being a "safe seat" or otherwise having a partisan leaning towards a particular party which, during election time, can be counted on by parties.

This calculative process of identifying “safe seats” and riding support for the Progressive Conservatives incorporates the analysis of historical voting patterns in ridings.

As described by a senior pollster:

...there are areas of Manitoba that are PC and will be PC for a long time. So you sort of take that into account and into your decisions.... Historically elections are a good way [of identifying where your support is]. I mean that’s the ultimate benchmark of where your support is. And if you look at elections, you look at when PCs have run good elections, and you can see where they have won seats in the city. And then when the PCs have run actually horrible elections. And so you look at where they have won seats in the city then, and you say to yourself "Well look if they can win any seats in a horrible election, those are probably pretty good areas of the city, and so then, you know, demographically, you can even look at those areas a little bit.

In taking into account historical voting patterns in Manitoba, the Progressive Conservative Party’s base of safe seats could be found in the province’s rural ridings. As described by a senior pollster, this process for the Party entails looking at the province and breaking down support into broad impressions, with the Party saying to itself, “OK we know these parts of the province are always PC.” The voter base in these safe ridings could be identified and described as “Good folks, you know, my kin folk, the Mennonites [of] Winkler, Steinbach.”

To add to this observation, a former PC insider also described this historical dynamic between the Party and rural ridings.

...the Conservatives historically since World War II typically enjoyed a lot of support in rural Manitoba in southern rural Manitoba and will tend to win most of those seats even in a bad outing, as long as they have a good, basic, campaign.

Thus it could be comfortably said that the rural ridings of Manitoba make up, for the most part, the base for the Progressive Conservative Party. However, as Leslie Turnbull reveals with

regards to the limits of a voter base, “a base only does you so much good, because your base isn't everywhere.” So while the party base forms a foundation, parties must also understand places and voters that exist outside the base.

This leads to a discussion of swing seats, which can be characterized as having a less partisan leaning electorate and therefore, unlike “base” seats, are actively contested during election campaigns. Parties, however, must recognize these seats. Steve Lambert, a reporter who covers politics in Manitoba with the Canada Press, provides his opinion that these swing seats have been successfully identified by the Progressive Conservatives, and highlights their importance to the Party:

I think what the PCs have done successfully is the same thing that Gary Doer did successfully: is that they've identified the 10-11 seats that actually swing. Most seats don't swing. You got your bedrock Tory seats. You got your bedrock NDP seats. Sometimes, like the last election, there is such a wild swing that bedrock NDP seats go Tory or Liberals and vice-versa like in '99. But generally, Manitoba elections are decided by 10 seats most of which are in Winnipeg suburbs. And I think what Gary Doer did successfully and what Brian Pallister did somewhat successfully is that they identified the swing voter.

Furthermore, most of these seats are indeed in the Winnipeg suburbs – more specifically in the south of the city.

What is unique is that in addition to there being swing seats in the city, to form government in Manitoba, parties require winning a number of ridings in the city of Winnipeg, including those that swing. A former PC member who took part in the 2011 provincial election campaign with Hugh McFadyen at the helm, revealed the importance of capturing these seats:

So, our party was starting from 19 seats. To form government in Manitoba, you need some sort of critical mass of seats out of Winnipeg... we knew we could—it'd be no

problem to return with 19 seats again, and that's what we ended up doing anyway. To win, to get to 29 seats, to win, we needed to pick up a bunch of seats in Winnipeg.

An election win in Manitoba for any party, especially the Progressive Conservatives requires a strategy which targets seats in Winnipeg because, as was seen with the failure of the Party in 2011, 4 seats in the city did not translate to forming government. As Lambert says:

[The Party in 2011] started off with a base: many seats outside of Winnipeg, like the rural south is mostly Tory. But if you win 4 out of 31 seats in Winnipeg, you're not forming government. So what they failed to do was find an issue that would swing urban voters.

This strategy targeting those suburban seats becomes even more of a priority given that many of them are swing seats, as the former campaign member highlights:

If we were going to win, they were going to tilt to us. I could not, I couldn't see a situation where we form government but we didn't pick up all those seats in south Winnipeg. Now that, that would imply that we pick up northwest and north Winnipeg somehow, and there were parts that were trending like if you take a seat like Kildonan, which was held by Dave Chomiak, the NDP pick who lost finally in 2016, it was sliding towards us - maybe we could have made an effort there. But south Winnipeg is where it would have started.

In explaining the importance of these seats, former NDP staffer and co-founder of Viewpoints Research Leslie Turnbull also reflects on what these seats meant for the governing New Democrat Party (NDP):

...the key to government in Manitoba is the suburbs. So, the suburbs elect the government. Like when we were in power, with the old boundaries, but basically we elected people in every riding except maybe in four, in the city.

There are also other ridings which can be courted by the Progressive Conservatives due to their ethnicity and household income. As Turnbull explains:

When I look at the PC, the south is characterized largely by mostly white family people. So the proportion of families with kids in school is higher. Is there much difference between Fort Richmond, Southdale, Seine River, St. Norbert? No. But, if you go into the northwest part of the city, there's a lot more ethnic diversity... Now there's a Waverley seat out near Fort Whyte, like those... there's some diversity out there, but mostly it's high income people who are essentially white.

Turnbull's insight reveals that a closer examination of individual ridings may reveal potentially fertile ground for parties seeking votes.

Voter Segments

In the next steps for a party, identifying which ridings are "swing seats" allows the party to identify targeted voters by segmenting on the basis of characteristics. As a senior researcher explains, after identifying these seats, the Progressive Conservative Party asks itself, "So, what is it about that area of the city that those things seem to be driving support? Can we do a better job in these parts of the city with this demographic?" In addition to the fact that "you still have to win 30 odd ridings to form a majority in the province of Manitoba," parties in Manitoba have different segments of voters to appeal to.

The Progressive Conservative base in Manitoba –rural and urban – has a number of characteristics. In describing these characteristics, a senior pollster explains that:

Your typical PC voter is probably a little older. And they do historically skew to males more often than females. So I think you find that what PCs have strived for, occasionally struggled for is the female vote clearly those over the age of 35. That when they achieve success, they tend to do better in those age groups, and when they struggle they tend to do poorly in those age groups.

Women are a potential segment of the electorate which has the potential to impact the Progressive Conservative Party's bid to form government. Lambert shares that if you look at the

results from the 2016 provincial election, the Party did well among women. Furthermore, with the release of the most recent research polling intentions by Probe Research and Mainstream Research, two major polling companies located in Winnipeg, Lambert thinks the Progressive Conservatives are “actually doing well among women.”

Men are a segment of voters who, according to Leslie Turnbull are more concerned with how high taxes are, who is wasting money, and (especially among older men) are less concerned with the environment, healthcare, or education. In contrast, Turnbull suggests that women are more likely to care about issues pertaining to their parents and their kids. Especially for undecided women, Turnbull says healthcare, schools, seniors care, and “stuff that involves their families” are all important issues.

Women are more undecided. Women are more likely than men to vote NDP, but you can't just have one gender so I would say that the conservative target to win government would be motivating men in the suburbs and try to get, break-even with women in the suburbs... So, for the conservatives, you want to, in those areas, motivate men, older men, and probably older women.

Provided that winning ridings in Winnipeg is necessary to forming government in Manitoba, and not all ridings in the city are the same, there are also a number of characteristics which differentiate ridings and voters in those ridings from each other. As Turnbull explains, “there are different Winnipeggers” when it comes to tastes, values, and opinions. For instance, there are 400,000 living in the inner city and “who are really, really poor.” On the other hand, you had a riding such as Kirkfield Park, where there is a higher concentration of seniors living. Turnbull reveals that the reason the NDP thought it could win Kirkfield Park is because “there’s a lot of apartments – there’s a lot of rentals” with respect to that party’s policies pertaining to those issues. In addition to the seniors living in the riding and those apartments, Turnbull also

makes note that there are also people who live in apartments “who are more likely to vote” and gives credit to them, saying “we won with those people.” Given the particular demographic of the riding, friendlier policies aligning more closely to their tastes, values, and interests could result in a riding win.

The ethnic population and diversity in particular ridings in Winnipeg is a growing demographic that is beginning to shape the characteristics of the riding. In northwest ridings of Winnipeg, such as the Maples, McPhillips, and Kildonan there is an increase in ethnic diversity. Both Turnbull and the senior pollster recognize that there is a large Filipino population, large south-Asian population, and middle class people living in the northwest that is different from any other part of the province. In Fort Richmond, there is an increasing Chinese population, along with south-Asian, Hindi populations. The changing face of the demographic and population of a riding does not go unnoticed by the Progressive Conservatives, implies the senior pollsters, who points out that “there are elements of the ethnic population that are obviously keenly of interest to the party.” Turnbull highlights the importance of outreach efforts made by parties to these communities by saying that:

...with new Canadians, you have to be able to keep track and match up your values with new Canadians. You have to be able to... you know, old people are dying, you have to do something to attract younger people.

The base only lasts for a time, and with a changing influx and dynamics of a population, parties are making efforts in keeping track and modifying their bases.

Public servants, defined as those who are employed by the provincial government, is a demographic that the Progressive Conservatives cannot ignore. With the provincial government being one of the largest employers in the province, there is a considerable amount of sway power

this demographic has and also a considerable amount of potential a party could gain by paying attention to this demographic. The senior researcher explains that this demographic of individuals are part of “a voter universe that the party is interested to grow.” Individuals working in the public sector are “running their own household, they’re paying their taxes, just like everybody else, so when they see flagrant government spending, or wasteful government spending, that doesn’t thrill them either” despite “taking it on the chin a little bit in terms of wage increases.” Rather than appealing to this group through “3 percent raises every year,” the Progressive Conservative Party could appeal to this group by suggesting that the party will not raise taxes either, and say “We’re trying to provide you better value for services.”

Lambert explains that the PCs achieved this appeal in the 2016 provincial election. Just by looking at the results, Lambert suggests that “[The Progressive Conservatives] are one of the few governments that actually got more than half the actual vote. In our first-past-the-post system, you can get 38% and have a majority - they got 52 which is drawn from all cross sections of society.”

Swing Voters

In addition to identifying potential voters supporting the Progressive Conservative Party, it is recognized that elections in Manitoba “come down to 10 to 20 thousand votes added among a few suburban ridings.” Lambert gives credit to former premier Gary Doerand the NDP for successfully “identif[ying] the swing voter.” According to Lambert, Brian Pallister did this somewhat successfully in the 2016 provincial election.

These voters in these suburban swing ridings have the power to decide whether a party lands in government or in opposition. This especially impacted the Progressive Conservatives in

the 2011 provincial election when it won 43.61 percent of the popular vote, a percentage more than what brought Gary Filmon a majority government in the 1995 election. Despite having higher popular support than the Filmon Progressive Conservatives, there was no change in the amount of seats won. Furthermore, only 4 seats were won in Winnipeg, out of 31. However, Lambert explains that this is because “the Tory vote in Winnipeg could be very dispersed”:

Province wide, they got, I'd have to go back and check, but it was 42, 43, 44% of the vote. Normally, that's pretty close to majority government territory. And they ended up with the same amount of seats, and that's why Hugh McFadyen resigned. The fault of the 2011 campaign... again I don't want to go too hard on Hugh McFadyen because he did build up the party, he did make some excellent points about the PST, he did a lot of things right, and was not handed the PST increase the way his successor was. Had he been handed the PST increase, I think he would have likely become premier. Where the Tories failed between 2003 and 2016, was they failed to concentrate on the math.

In terms of failing to “concentrate on the math,” what Lambert means is that the Progressive Conservatives may have increased the Party's number of votes, but not in the suburban swing ridings that are required to form government in Manitoba. PC Party President, Ryan Matthews, put this failure of getting the right amount of voters in the right ridings into scope:

I would say every campaign, you have targeted seats, whether you hold them or not, there are targeted seats.... I just think that we lost it at the doors. That 5 or 7%, if I recall, 2011 there was someone who added it up, and had we won 700 votes in the right seats, we would have been majority government. It was a very close election. It just didn't come out that way. It was a very close election.

Speaking from first-hand experience, Lambert, who lives in Seine River, a suburban riding, has an informal focus group in his neighborhood and explains that these swing voters:

[Will] vote for different people all the time, [voting] based on platform, based on the performance of the government. And, what people tell me is that they want someone to run their store, so they like managerial skills. So they voted Gary Doer throughout the 2000s. They felt like things were going a bit off the rails in 2014, 15, 16, and then they

voted for Pallister... I think if you look at the results of elections, going back decades and decades, and again this goes to managerial instincts, people tend not to vote in ideologues. People want sort of practical stuff. And, obviously, the Tories did something in 2016 to appeal to broad cross sights in society.

This suggests that the people in Lambert's neighborhood's informal focus group, and perhaps also on a broader scale in the Seine River riding and other suburban ridings, are flexible in their voter preference for a party, and are more inclined to vote for a leader with a specific set of skills, especially one who has more of an edge in managerial skills, rather than strictly for a party's platform and brand.

In addition to voters in the riding of Brandon West, which tends to "swing" between the Progressive Conservatives and the New Democrats, voters in Winnipeg suburban ridings tend not to pay close attention to party campaigns until "the campaign is underway." In describing this voter behaviour, Lambert explains that

Generally, its Winnipeg suburban voters who want... most people who vote aren't involved in politics, aren't paying attention day to day. They don't even start thinking about polls a whole 6 months out, really varied in election day and the polls. We've had very accurate polls 2-3 weeks out, and those numbers are different than 6 months out. People only start paying attention that close. The Tories are sitting on a whack of cash, they got a million dollars plus in the bank, they're not spending it now, and I personally think it's a bit weird. But they are totally waiting until people are paying attention. Whether people are going to pay attention in the summer, if we get this late summer election campaign remains from seen, but they haven't gone heavy on advertising. So far, even though they have the capacity to, because they believe people generally are disconnected, they are not rabid political followers, and they'll start paying attention when the campaign is underway. Those who do follow, it's a very small percentage of the population.

There is reason to believe that voters are generally disinterested with politics. Especially since parties are not releasing campaign material in a year of an early election, it could be the case that

it is because voters are indeed disinterested and are not involved and pay attention to politics on a day to day basis.

Progressive Conservative Marketing Research

It can be confirmed that categorically, the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba, “definitely undertakes marketing activities, market research activities.” A former member of the PC 2011 campaign team also confirmed that the entire 2011 campaign including the ballot box question, campaign slogan and message, etc. was informed by market research. However, as revealed by a senior researcher, the Progressive Conservative Party does not call these activities marketing per se, but at its essence, undergoes marketing activity to understand voters. Conducting research informed marketing techniques by political parties in Manitoba as in anywhere else is essentially aimed at winning “more voters over than the other guys.”

Operational Research - Analyzing Longitudinal Data

The marketing research process typically first begins “particularly in the early stages of... planning,” by analyzing the market holistically. It could be described that this is “an equally active operational component” of marketing research aimed at analyzing riding-level official ballot poll results in an attempt to understand how a party could win the riding. A senior researcher describes this stage as being a “very deliberate hands on” sort of activity. From a holistic perspective, this entails understanding:

What [the market] looks like, in terms of people who are open to voting for Progressive Conservatives, versus those who might be closed off to voting for the Progressive Conservatives. They'll do that kind of research, and they'll also within that, then they'll start to understand what the voters look like in terms of... there are some voters who you pretty much do or say anything, they're still going to vote for you. Your base, right. But, so you want to understand cause your base is not forever, it does change and shift and so you'll want to understand what that looks like. And occasionally you do things

specifically for the base, in terms of actions that are quite frankly have less interest broadly but have very specific interest, that narrow group of voters, right. And then you want to understand, but beyond that, you can never, no one could ever win on their base. It's always about, you know, I always like to say, I mean, and sometimes I think parties don't always look at it in this way, but I always look at campaigns as an effort as an effort in addition: who can we add to the, who can we add to our cohort of, in this case, PC voters. And, so then parties will start to look at the voter, and then start to say "OK, what are some of the other voters out there that are in our orbit, but not necessarily with us yet. And that gets to some of the things you talk about is, is what would make them interested in looking at the PC Party of Manitoba

In understanding what “the vote” looks like, the Progressive Conservative Party, prior to “spending any money,” looks at its data over a longitudinal period, and, as the senior researcher explains, “a lot of it has to do with maintaining a good historical record.” This is because:

Historically elections, are always a good way, I mean that's the ultimate benchmark of where your support is. And if you look at elections, you look at when PCs have run good elections, and you can see where they have won seats in the city. And then when the PCs have run actually horrible elections. And so you look at where they have won seats in the city then, and you say to yourself "Well look if they can win any seats in a horrible election, those are probably pretty good areas of the city, and so then, you know, demographically, you can even look at those areas a little bit. And again, you're not really spending any, what I would call, primary research, money to go find that.

It could be said that this is typically done prior to *real* marketing research which could be used to find a weakness in a governing party or qualities about your party leader that might be worth promoting.

Researching the Political Marketplace

After distinguishing ridings and demographics that could potentially support the party, the Progressive Conservatives have both in the past and currently invested in survey research, “on a fairly regular basis.” A former member of Hugh McFadyen’s PC provincial campaign confirmed this insight that the Party did regular polling and placed value in this:

...we would do regular polling. So you'd have access to your own polling and public opinion data that you'd commission as the party. And then you'd also keep a careful eye on the published public opinion findings, like Probe, they are commissioned by media and the market. So they would publicize their findings. So you'd combine what you can get for free, and the media was acting on with your own information.

Described by the senior researcher, this research is “becoming increasingly important” and will either look at province wide data, or will be more focused on the city of Winnipeg. Perhaps, as suggested, “it may focus a bit more heavily on the city of Winnipeg,” provided that ridings in the city are required in order to form government, further compounded by the amount of suburban swing ridings located within the city.

[Conducting this] very holistic quantitative kind of data... of a sufficient size [will] allow you to start to parse out geographically where support's located, demographically where support is strongest, attitudinally what might be going on in some of these areas where the can math up where strong support and where those attitudes are and say to yourself: “So what is it about that area of the city that those things seem to be driving support, can we do a better job in these parts of the city with this demographic?”

One way that these parties collect data is through the use of focus groups. As Turnbull explains, focus groups allow the party to “tap into the underlying emotions of the electorate” in a number of ways. First, focus groups are unique in their own right because they allows the party to “listen to people talk about issues including problems in their own words” meaning that a party could use the language used by participants and potentially “reflect it back” to a targeted segment of the electorate. Turnbull explains the importance of listening, learning, and reflecting back this language and choice of words by a targeted segment of the electorate:

You listen to people talk about issues, talk about their lives, talk about how issues impact them personally. Because for most people, particularly undecided voters it is all about them and their lives – you know it makes sense. So then you try to develop advertising which reflects how they feel, which answers the questions: Why don't you vote for these people? Why would I vote for these people? You see if it's clear, if it makes sense to them, would it capture their attention.

Second, the use of focus groups could inform parties on how people view certain issues. For example, a party could find out what problems people perceive and are talking about, such as health care, education, government spending, etc. This could allow a party to test solutions to the described problem to see if it “make sense [or] doesn’t make sense” to people. A focus group gives the opportunity for a party to see if they understand the solution put forward, or if the targeted segment of the electorate interprets it the same way as the party wants them to.

Another way of discovering voter concerns is through the grassroots approach of having MLAs door knock within their ridings. As described by a former member of McFadyen’s campaign team, the caucus members played a role in understanding what voters wanted.

You would also try to, you're constantly encouraging the caucus members, the elected officials, that were, even if you are in opposition because at the time when I worked with the party we were in opposition, we still had 19 caucus members and we would tell them to, you're almost, borderline harassing them, to be out there talking to their voters. Whether it would be their own constituents, the ones they're representing, you should spend time with them, and then to the extent that they were available or had time available to be active in events outside their constituency, maybe in seats you would try to target to win. So you'd want to know "What are you hearing? What are people saying? What's their reaction to whatever is in the news or whatever we might have said?" So, that's the sort of basis of it. Like "where is the voting populace at," "what are they concerned about," and "with regards to how we see public policy as it should be carried out," "how do we reconcile all of that?"

Researching Demographics within Targeted Ridings

Having research-backed evidence showing potential riding-level support could lead to further studies researching what the demographics of these seats are. A former insider for the Hugh McFadyen PC provincial campaign in 2011 had revealed that this was indeed the case:

You'd try to get a representative sample of voters. So polling you'd do it on a couple of levels. You'd do a representative sample of the province, but we would try to dig in to representative samples of south Winnipeg in particular.

By making the sample as representative of the demographics of the ridings as possible, the Progressive Conservative Party could further understand what segments of voters could be counted on for potential support. Further demographic research could consider other factors such as voter turnout or voter cynicism, as per what the former insider revealed by saying:

We had demographic research of the likeliest voters, just generally likely to vote period... We had research, "OK these are the likelihood of voters."...And then what their concerns were. And then we looked at things that we could do as policies. And these were things, like people get cynical about promises politicians and political parties make. But it was through a prism of: "look we are still Conservatives, we aren't just going to say and do just any dumb thing." Increasingly maybe it seems like some political parties operate that way, or some politicians operate that way, and I can get why people are cynical about that. Like there were some things that we just weren't going to do.

Questions asked on these surveys would be like:

"Do you know what the PC Party is? ...Are you aware of the Conservative Party of Manitoba? What have you heard about them? Do you think they could be in government? What makes you worry about them? What makes you encouraged about them?"

Especially in a focus group setting, questions like these would prompt discussions among respondents which would be analyzed by the Party. The revealed data could include important findings such as strengths and weaknesses of the party's proposed messaging. For example, a finding could reveal that the leader of the PC Party generally has no negative impressions. Meanwhile, a weakness revealed through a focus group session could be that "no one has any idea of who [the leader] is or what [the leader] stands for.

Market Research Results

Prior to the official provincial campaign in 2011, the Progressive Conservatives had a number of researched-backed findings. The Party had “good numbers” among voters who are male and over the age of 30. As according to a former campaign member, “if we had a policy that men over age 30 loved, well OK that’d be a policy but we don’t need to trump that because we are already cool with dudes over 30.”

Research had also shown where the Progressive Conservatives in 2011 had problems. Support for the party among women over the age of 30 was not the same as it was among men. As it was described,

It's not that they didn't trust us but they liked a lot of what the NDP were promising. Well, what could we promise that was different? And I found that overall... you saw that, the electorate up until the summer, the electorate was really ready for a change. But it was more like they were really tired with the NDP, but they weren't so much tired with what the government was doing and that was something that we struggled with.

A former campaign member revealed that the extent of the research even identified the likelihood of voters and their concerns. In addition, it showed strong support for the party in areas “that you’d never [had thought], it’d shock everyone.”

Categorizing, and Creating Voter Typologies

After gathering data, political parties tend to create typologies or categories of target voters. This could aid parties in their voter identification and engagement methods as revealed by Leslie Turnbull, who says “Everybody does that.”

...if you create personas, like most parties will have: “This is our primary target, this is the secondary target, this is the third target. These are the demographic attributes of that target, these are the geographies, and these are the attitudinal characteristics of this

target.” And so they develop a person, but that's mostly a tool for decision makers, to remind the decision makers that their target voter is different than them.

In terms of how these voter typologies are created, most political parties do telephone surveying. The advantage of phoning a landline is due in large part to knowing exactly where people live at the time the survey is conducted, as opposed to phoning a cell phone. For example, Turnbull points out that if a party would like a riding-level poll for the riding of St. Vital, it could phone the landlines of residents found in its boundaries.

Other ways of creating voter typologies include using focus groups, and online surveys. Parties could specifically group people living in specific ridings into focus groups based on their postal codes. Political parties could conduct province wide research through focus groups and have a fifteen or twenty percent cell sample. In regards to contacting participants, parties could phone people and have them reveal their postal code or at least the first 3 digits of their postal code, which would allow them to be categorized into their respective riding.

In contrast, with online surveys, a political party could go with a company and access their database. This access would allow invitations to be sent out to people with certain required characteristics. For example, participants must reside in Manitoba could be a prerequisite. Furthermore, it could be requested by the party that surveys must have an equal portion of men and women, or sixty percent must be completed in Winnipeg, etc. Or, as Turnbull further explains, a company could send out invitations to cell phones to go to a survey online to complete the survey.

A targeted voter for the Progressive Conservatives, at least for the 2011 provincial election was mothers living in the suburban ridings. This segment of the electorate was “the

biggest one” as described by a former member of the campaign. Conceding it sounds “crude” just to characterize this typology of voters, however, the former member believes that had the Progressive Conservatives picked up “suburban moms, we would have brought in all sorts of others,” implying a sort of triggering of a chain reaction of votes. Although “there are a lot of ways to slicing and dicing the electorate... we could only do so much.” Citing a limitation in spending as mandated by law, the campaign had to make its “shots count,” and therefore arrived to the group that they believed could be “moved the most,” and that “would make the most difference.” This group was “women who are mothers, and between the ages of 30 to 45.”

The Progressive Conservatives following up to the 2011 provincial election were able to identify the issues and concerns of this typology of voters, and what it would take them to vote for the Party. As the former member explains:

You would hear a lot about... concerns over child care, education, healthcare... And so, a campaign where the NDP would be successful in portraying all of those things are at risk would be one that would cause that vote bloc to stick with the NDP.

With this being said, the Progressive Conservatives recognized that in order to be appealing to this targeted voter bloc, the Party had to make themselves either friendlier with regards to these policy issues, find a weakness in the NDP that overshadowed these issues, and ultimately a ballot box question that would have these voters side with the PCs.

Trial and Feedback

Conducting and having this research done not only provides an opportunity for parties to gather intelligence, but also allows parties to *test* material and determine the desired reaction to it.

Turnbull highlights this process by saying that:

You test what they see is the main message of the ads. So the question becomes a money question in many ways, and you usually have groups that help develop ad concepts and then you would test them. The extent - amount of money you have depends on how – it kind of governs the extent to which you test advertising in final form. Once you have something in final form you can change the audio quite easily with the pictures, and you can put words on the screen overtop of what you shot. Because it costs so much money you want to have a pretty good idea going in. A lot of times people will test them with story boards or concept boards and audio recordings of what would happen and what would be said. Because, like I said, it costs so much money to bring it to full development. And then they go back and they shoot and adjust the script and everything based on the findings of the groups.

Furthermore, although campaign material is tested after its conception, with the amount of money put into its production, parties in a multi-stage process have an idea of the mood of the electorate prior to producing campaign materials.

A former member of Hugh McFadyen’s campaign team confirms this multi-stage process of testing an advertisement with a focus group for the purpose of collecting feedback. In the 2011 provincial campaign, the PC McFadyen team would

... show [the focus group] an ad [and ask] "What did you think?" You would ask them about Greg Selinger, ask about the NDP. You'd ask them about Jon Gerrard, about the Liberals, all those kinds of things. Policies too.

It turned out that the advertisements made by the PC campaign “tested well” with the focus group. However the former member further revealed that in hindsight, “more research could have helped us target [voters] even better but it gets back to limitations on resources.”

Communicating a Research-Backed Message

Campaign Promises

No political party can win on its voter base alone, as confirmed by Leslie Turnbull, requiring it to propose policy ideas that could bring the party more support. This could even mean upsetting

the most partisan support in a party, as was in the case of the Progressive Conservatives in the 2011 provincial election. As a former senior member of the campaign said, the policies it had proposed in this election concerning improvement to ambulances, health care, and pledges “to be very slow to balancing the budget” were not “aggressive enough in signaling how tough [the PCs] would be on the budget” to some members of the party’s base. This was because the view the McFadyen campaign had was that it “was not wanting to be a party of cuts, and that would have been [its] approach to government.”

Would we have reduced government spending? Sure. But, we wanted to protect things that people were worried about, and that was public services. The kind of ways to do on the target was this aconite stupidity of the west Bi-Pole route. I'd say the biggest tragedy of us losing in 2011 was that it became too late to stop that. So once the NDP returned in 2011, they'd build that stupid power line and now we are stuck with it for the rest of our lives. And Manitoba is approximately \$1 billion to \$2 billion poorer because of that. That's the example and another example would be we didn't want to target doctors and nurses but WRHA has 700 vice presidents. The figure is not 700 but in terms of generating new presidents and vice presidents and directors, that's the kind of stuff we wanted to go after.

Rather than be a party painted as being a champion of spending cuts, the Progressive Conservatives wanted to find as many policy issues that they could that were “small, actionable, and [made] people notice that were different.” This includes the campaign promise made by the PCs to repair Winnipeg’s back lanes:

...the back lane is something that irritates everyone. Everyone has an opinion about it. It's something that where there are networks of gravel back lanes, they were all in pretty much all the areas we wanted to win.

McFadyen’s PC campaign team in 2011 was avoiding itself in becoming branded as the party of ‘cuts’ by proposing policy ideas other than the ones found in health care. This even meant not

promising to balance the budget by the next provincial election, which would have been in 2016, a promise which had upset the party's partisans:

But in 2011, even our own partisans had believed what the NDP had been saying about us in the last 10 years. Which is that "oh yeah, they cut everything." Which is idiotic. If you go back to our prior period in government, from 1988 to 1999, it took 8 years to balance the budget. We were proposing something similar and partisans were like "Oh that's too slow." Well, you were there! You didn't just show up in 2 days and say "Yep, figured this one out! There's \$2 billion off the books, we're good to go." It doesn't work like that. Even if you're a real fiscal hawk... you can't just go in there and just ripping it all out. You have to be methodical, careful, evaluate what the citizens want. There is public service to be provided ... and then there is the question of getting the services to them in the most effective and efficient way possible.

The Progressive Conservative campaign in 2016 made "several key big promises, very specific promises" which could provide an idea in terms of the type of voters the party was targeting. First, it was the campaign's promise to cut ambulance fees by 50 percent. A senior researcher thought this promise "probably targeted more at seniors as opposed to your female audience." Second was Pallister's position on committing to not reducing the deficit in 4 years, and saying it would take longer, which "helped blunt the attack that he was going to slash and burn and cut/chop everything in a sole focus to reduce the debt and balance the budget in 4 years." Again, similar to the PC's campaign in 2011, the Pallister campaign "sent that signal and allows the government to say, "No, no we are not in a rush – we have to spend smarter" kind of thing." Ultimately though, research will have played a role in constructing these promises:

...I think one thing that, again parties will learn this by research and I think you would, if you went back and looked at sort of party platforms, there were some things that parties are perhaps a little better not talking about, and from a PC perspective, that tends to be one, where health care really is not something that you're going to, if you think you'll be seen as the champion, health care usually doesn't work out that way. Political parties have a way of describing issues, as you utilize an issue as a sword/spear, so you feel like this issue is an advantage, compared to your opponent, so you could attack your opponent on this issue, and win points. Or, it's a shield, and health care for a lot of people, for the PCs, is the shield. Where quite frankly what you really want to do is, you want to mail this,

you have a position, you have a record, you could defend that record, but it's not something that you'll necessarily going to defeat your opponent on. So you're going to, ideally if you could sort of defend off the attack and move into some sort of area that's probably what you're going to see that.

Leader Image

As past campaigns by the Progressive Conservatives reveal the importance of attaining support from key swing ridings and voters, it is not surprising to think that the Party made efforts to identify the strengths and weaknesses of its leader and act upon it. Although the task is not as simple as it sounds, since “[the leader is] a human, not a deli sandwich where you can’t just take out that,” focus group participants were asked questions in an effort to identify the strengths and weaknesses a leader’s image may have. Questions respondents were asked were essentially “What do you think? Do you recognize him first of all? Do you know who he is? What have you heard about him? What do you think about him? Do you think he can be premier? If yes, why? If no, why? What are your impressions of him?” A former campaign member confirmed “That’s what [the campaign] would do,” and “to the extent of tailoring... it’s more like what [will the campaign] have Hugh do based on this data.”

In the 2011 provincial campaign, one advantage the Progressive Conservatives had with its leader, Hugh McFadyen, was that he was young, and the party made efforts to use this strength of his with voters. Despite coming from opposition and the incumbent party having the strategic advantage in “setting the tone” of the campaign, the PCs made efforts in propping McFadyen up: “If all [the NDP] do is run Hugh down, and we don’t have Hugh anything positive, we are going to suffer. You're kind of compelled to make it about Hugh, because it's a choice that Hugh, a strategic advantage, made.” This included doing research on branding McFadyen 2011 with the campaign slogan “Vision, Change, Progress.”

From Leslie Turnbull's perspective, in 2003 and 2007, the NDP ran on a campaign that was about "We had Gary Doer and you don't." In 2011, since the PCs did not have to run again Gary Doer, it is her suspicion that a "young, vibrant, change was kind of part of what [the PCs] were marketing... to market McFadyen as a new generation, and kind of more attractive than Selinger."

In the 2016 provincial campaign, given it was an election "based on a vote for change," Leslie Turnbull recalls efforts made by the Progressive Conservatives to "really" limit voter exposure to leader Brian Pallister, especially among potential supports such as women:

He's a tough guy to market, a tough guy to market to women because he talks before he thinks and he's way too tall. So he's intimidating. And I think basically, he does not appeal to most women. So to me the key thing they did in that campaign was run on us (the NDP) and really dial back voter exposure to Pallister. And if you look at the polling now, there is just a gigantic gender gap. Like it's, gigantic, especially in the city. In rural areas, we're (the NDP) in big trouble, like we don't have much support. In the city, women can't stand him. Men like him. But you know, he is the personification for women of an arrogant, cold hearted... he softens not at all. And he tried several things like softening to his wife, and I remember he said things like, "Well his wife's family didn't like him when they first met him, and in a year you're going to like him." ...I just think that they just limited people's exposure to him.

Although the 2016 provincial campaign for the Progressive Conservative was more-or-less based on "not jeopardizing" its lead over the incumbent NDP, Turnbull believes it made efforts in not "putting victory at risk," which included keeping Pallister "low-key" with voters. To many including Turnbull, the NDP "defeated itself" prior to the campaign – breaking its own campaign promise by raising the provincial sales tax (PST), and having a publically visible internal dispute and revolt by Cabinet Ministers. However, the Progressive Conservatives still had to minimize its risk of losing even if it meant limiting voter exposure to Pallister since "for a lot of people

he's not really a likeable person. I think people see him as competent – someone who will take on tough things, but he's not very likeable.”

As for strengthening the perception of Pallister as a leader, especially with targeted voters, one could look at some of the topics he talked about in some of the Progressive Conservative advertisements. A senior researcher points to the advertisements with Pallister discussing his background in education and growing up in rural Manitoba:

...those were ads that had some things in there that I'd suggest would appeal to women in terms of that. I think in the campaign, I recall the front line health care, the front line worker guarantee where he wasn't going to lay off front line health care staff or government staff kind of thing. Again, health care is an issue that women tend to sort of ears perk up a lot quicker than men when it comes to that.

It is not difficult to see these advertisements as attempts by the Progressive Conservatives to make the Party's leader, Brian Pallister as being friendly with as targeted segment of voters including women and public servants.

Advertisements

The production of campaign advertisements is “really, really, expensive” and naturally, a party investing significant funding into advertisements would “have to have research to support it.”

Turnbull explains that the research used for advertising provides confidence that the information being used is related to the people who are being targeted. Furthermore,

[Research] gives you information about whether people are listening, whether they get the message you're putting out there. Is that a message which is motivating to them? Does it mean anything to them? When you produce the ad, do they understand it? Is their interpretation the interpretation you want them to have?

Furthermore, given the connection between conservative policies and the male demographic, it would be strategic for the Conservatives to buy television advertisements that are heavy on sports since “People watch sports – they watch a lot of sports. Men watch a lot of sports. Older men watch even more sports. Middle and upper class men even watch more sports, and they don’t PVR this, and they don’t watch them online.”

For the most part, news and especially sports is watched in a very conventional way. And you can, people still do watch TV, so you can, you know you buy television advertisements on the basis of programs, men between the ages of 40-59, are most likely to watch these kinds of programs, so you buy television advertisements on those shows. Or you know, you buy social media advertisements based on people's buying habits signs, so you buy stuff and you have people see it who are most likely to be your targeted voter.

Provided that TV production and placement costs “hundreds of thousands of dollars,” and to not spend for example “twelve thousand dollars on focus groups,” is to Turnbull, “not a smart thing to do.”

Door-Knocking, GOTV, and “Marks”

Door-knocking is another way of communicating campaign advertisement to the targeted voter. As pointed out by Steve Lambert, constituencies in Winnipeg are “very small.” Ridings in some parts of the city are “10 blocks long and 10 blocks wide,” a size that could allow a party to identify almost every voter just by “hitting the doors a couple of times a week over the course of the year.” This could allow a party to count its votes 6 months out of the election and see if there’s some change in the numbers tallied.” To Lambert, these voters “could be treated like a neighbor, and in-turn get really in-depth intelligence. That’s where the marketing is [for the PCs].” In contrast, federal politics is different since there are larger ridings, making it more

difficult to knock on every door. To provide sense of what sizes are the ridings, Lambert points out that “There are 8 federal seats in Winnipeg, and there are 32 provincial seats.”

In terms of marketing, the Progressive Conservatives follow a methodical system at the constituency level. Every incumbent MLA and candidate has what are referred to as “marks” to hit. These marks could be in a number of forms, including selling ‘x’ number of memberships, attending ‘x’ number of community events, raising ‘x’ number of dollars, etc. Since the Party expects these marks, if they are not met, consequences could be as severe as for an incumbent MLA. This includes being contested for the next nomination, or being removed as a candidate altogether. This occurred in 2016 when Brian Pallister removed a candidate in the riding of Selkirk almost mid-campaign for “not hitting their marks in terms of community engagement... which Pallister confirmed.” This candidate was replaced by Alan Lagimodiere, who “worked hard and took the seat that had been NDP forever... which everybody assumed was a lost cause.”

With door-knocking comes identifying the vote. The Progressive Conservatives use a computer system to aid their efforts. Using this computerized voter identification system, those going door-to-door can rate on a numerical scale, identify the voters in a household:

1 = they're going to vote for us, they'd take a sign and making sure this person's getting to the polling station on voting day, or advance poll. 2 = this person's probably voting for us, so we're going to get them to the poll. 3, 4, and 5 = they're against us, and we don't need to bother to try to get this person to the polls, let somebody else worry about them. So, they have that information, that detailed level of information, and that's where their marketing strength is: it's mostly offline.

Ballot Box Question

The ballot box question constructed by a campaign could be described as an “evolution” in terms of how it is developed. A senior researcher explains how this starts with two or three iterations of

themes that are thought of during the campaign, and through research and strategic meetings with the core players of the campaign, “It boils down to a question where something that you can capture in a question. But realistically, what it does is that it helps guides your communications.” Furthermore,

The ballot box question is really just that little piece that sort of helps people, reminds people, of what when you're communicating to people, to voters, we're sending, “What is it we want to leave people thinking about.” Because we feel this is the question that they think about it this way, it will break in our favor. And then it's a matter of, so to your point then, then we go one step away and you say to yourself “so what are some of the things that support this question.”

In the 2016 provincial election, the ballot box question developed by the Progressive Conservatives, as mentioned by Leslie Turnbull, was about change. As a senior researcher explains, “Look, it’s time for change,” was the ballot box question. In terms of communication, the Progressive Conservatives, guided by this ballot box question, communicated “First and foremost how heinous and horrible Greg Selinger and his government was on a number of things including broken trust, broken promises, unintended contracts, all kinds of staffers, payouts. All that was tied back to ‘It’s time to change this government.’” With that being said, the other side of the communication campaign was to also say what Brian Palliser represents, which was “Real Change, Honest Change, Safe Change.”

Governing while Campaigning

Polling in Government

As indicated by a senior researcher, the Progressive Conservatives as a governing party are continuing to do polling even between elections. However, a party in government looks at market research from a different perspective than a party that is not in government would. The

main distinction lays with the essential purpose of marketing, which parties running to be in government use “to see what [parties] did that people liked, or you’re trying to uncover the things that people really didn’t like with what [the party] did, and find a way to talk about it a different way.”

The marketing research methods typically used by governments in understanding policy issues are in the form of polling and focus groups. Having more access to resources, governing parties can do such research on a variety of policy issues for departments, pulling that resource from the budget, should they choose to. Turnbull agrees with how easy it is for a government to commission a focus group, and became more informed with respect to a policy issue.

Like if you listen to people talk about, as an example, streamlining health care, closing emergency rooms, closing urgent care, you use that information, politically too, even if it's done by the government. So, when you are in government, you have a lot more access to those kinds of resources, any kind of intelligence.

Furthermore, in the words of a senior researcher, “There are those opportunities for sure on the policy development side” for a party in government.

In addition to the availability and accessibility of resources, Leslie Turnbull suspects that the Progressive Conservatives had been surveying at the constituency level since they were elected into government in 2016. To Turnbull, this is evident in the latest government decision to turn Concordia hospital’s emergency room into an urgent care centre. This is “definitely a response to” local public opinion “in polling that they are doing.” Turnbull explains that this logic lies with the fact that:

If you look at the north-east quadrant of the city, [the PCs] hold all but 2 seats. So [the NDP] hold Concordia and Elmwood, but they hold Rossmere, which [the NDP] won before, River East-Kildonan, which is a new seat, Transcona, McPhillips, Radisson, and

now this push to make Seven Oaks into urgent care. So, yes they are [polling]... and you know, people like Maloway, Jim Maloway, have done a lot to keep that issue alive.

4. CONCLUSION

To arrive at a conclusion, I re-identify what political marketing techniques are used by political parties. Through this, I establish a connection between the literature review and the findings found in this study in answering my two research questions, which are the following. First, to what extent if at all has the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba incorporated political marketing techniques into its campaign organization? Second, if so, how has it done so? Prior to answering these two research questions, I identify the context within which political marketing techniques are used by political parties, what those political marketing techniques are, and the general stages in which parties incorporate these techniques into their organization's campaigns.

Political marketing techniques are used by political parties in a changing political environment. Political parties can no longer safely predict the voter intentions of demographics due to the cross-cutting of such groups. Voters are becoming more volatile and flexible at the ballot box with their choice of party. Fewer voters are card holding members with a political party. Canadians are becoming more distrustful and cynical of the government and of politicians, while admitting a lack of interest in politics. Voter turnout in Canada has been declining, reaching a historical decline in the 2008 federal election. Compounded, these factors change the mindset of voters, how political parties communicate to voters, and ultimately create incentives for political parties to pursue an approach using political marketing techniques towards the electorate.

The first of the stages political marketing techniques are used is in the gathering of market intelligence on the electorate. In this stage, I have identified a number of techniques used. Since the electorate "marketplace" is evolving, political parties pursue an approach involving a

technique known as market intelligence, or the research of the electorate using quantitative and qualitative methods, later relying on this information and incorporating it into their strategies. This technique could be followed by the technique of segmenting and hyper segmenting the electorate into identifiable and targetable voter groups. Afterwards, political parties may use the technique of profiling voters. Other political marketing techniques include using the market intelligence to inform a political party on positioning on issues, framing its leader or other leaders to exploit strengths and weaknesses, and overall incorporating this information to its overall campaign strategy.

The second stage political marketing techniques are used is in the communication of the political party's product offering to the electorate. Having done market intelligence on the electorate, political parties may use the information collected in effectively targeting whatever segment of the electorate it wants. Communicative techniques involving political marketing include the creation of a database management software system, the use of this system for GOTV campaigns, the narrowcasting and direct marketing of material such as advertisements, and the stricter and more centralized control of the campaign message.

Lastly, political parties that have incorporated political marketing techniques into their organization's campaigns continue their use in government after winning an election. Theoretically, a political party using political marketing techniques would continue to use them while in government. Therefore, techniques would include ones already discussed, such as the continuation of collecting market intelligence, the segmentation and creation of identifiable and targetable voters, the reliance of this information to inform its communicative strategy, and the overall incorporation of this information to for electioneering purposes.

The findings from this study highlight a number of political marketing techniques Manitoba's Progressive Conservative Party have incorporated into their organization's campaigns. First, there are some factors present in Manitoba that encourage the use of political marketing techniques by political parties such as the ones present on the federal political landscape. Namely, there are ridings in Manitoba which could be described as ones that swing. Other factors include the changing flux of demographics and identifiable characteristics which make up ridings.

Second, there is evidence pointing to the use of political marketing techniques by the Progressive Conservative Party in researching the political marketplace and therefore the collection of market intelligence. Political marketing techniques used by the PCs include the analysis of longitudinal data, the collection of market intelligence through polling and focus groups, door-knocking, researching demographics *within* targeted ridings, and the creation and categorization of voter typologies based on the information collected.

Third, in communicating the product offering of the party, there is some evidence indicating the use of political marketing techniques in this stage by the Progressive Conservative Party. Political marketing techniques incorporated in past PC communications strategies include the positioning of the party on the deficit, a number of pledges including the pledge to repair back lanes in the city, and cutting ambulance fees by 50 percent, the framing of its leaders, and the party's GOTV campaign.

Lastly, there is some evidence suggesting the possibility that the Progressive Conservative Party have continued to use political marketing techniques involved in all stages while governing. While being in government, the Progressive Conservatives have the ability to

commission research on whatever they would like, including issues for electioneering purposes. This accessibility also includes surveying at the constituency level.

In conclusion, there is significant evidence that indicates the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba has incorporated political marketing techniques into its organization's campaigns. Like other parties, the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba has drawn on newly available technologies to incorporate political marketing techniques into its organization's campaigns. The result has been that the way parties compete for power in Manitoba has been changed as a result of these new campaign techniques.

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APPENDIX A

Table 1: Summary of the 2011 Manitoba Provincial Election

Political Party	Party Leader	Vote Share (%)	Seat Share
New Democrat Party	Greg Selinger	46.61	37
Progressive Conservative Party	Hugh McFadyen	43.71	19

Source: Data adapted from Elections Manitoba, “Summary of Results – Manitoba’s 40th General Election,” 2011, https://www.electionsmanitoba.ca/downloads/PDF_Summary_GE2011.pdf.

Table 2: Summary of the 2016 Manitoba Provincial Election

Political Party	Party Leader	Vote Share (%)	Seat Share
New Democrat Party	Greg Selinger	25.78	14
Progressive Conservative Party	Brain Pallister	53.10	40

Source: Data adapted from Elections Manitoba, “Summary of Results – Manitoba’s 41st General Election Official Results,” 2016, https://www.electionsmanitoba.ca/downloads/PDF_Summary_GE2016.pdf.

APPENDIX B

Research Ethics Board Approval



TO: Martin Michalak (Advisor: Royce Koop)
Principal Investigator

FROM: Julia Witt, Chair
Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB)

Re: Protocol J2019:033 (HS22835)
"Political Marketing in Manitoba"

Effective: May 7, 2019

Expiry: May 7, 2020

Joint-Faculty Research Ethics Board (JFREB) has reviewed and approved the above research. JFREB is constituted and operates in accordance with the current *Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans*.

This approval is subject to the following conditions:

1. Approval is granted for the research and purposes described in the application only.
2. Any modification to the research or research materials must be submitted to JFREB for approval before implementation.
3. Any deviations to the research or adverse events must be submitted to JFREB as soon as possible.
4. This approval is valid for one year only and a Renewal Request must be submitted and approved by the above expiry date.
5. A Study Closure form must be submitted to JFREB when the research is complete or terminated.
6. The University of Manitoba may request to review research documentation from this project to demonstrate compliance with this approved protocol and the University of Manitoba *Ethics of Research Involving Humans*.

Funded Protocols:

- Please mail/e-mail a copy of this Approval, identifying the related UM Project Number, to the Research Grants Officer in ORS.

APPENDIX C

Informed Consent Form



UNIVERSITY
OF MANITOBA

Faculty of Arts
Political Studies

Informed Consent Form

Department of Political Studies
532 Fletcher Argue Building
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, MB.
R3T 2N2

Research Project Title: Political Marketing in Manitoba

Principal Investigator: Martin Michalak, M.A. Candidate
michala3@myumanitoba.ca

Supervisor: Royce Koop, Academic Advisor
royce.koop@umanitoba.ca
(204) 474-8949

This consent form, a copy of which will be left with you for your records and reference, is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. If you would like more detail about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

Purpose of Research

The purpose of this study is to better understand how the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba uses political marketing techniques to attract support from voters. Since political parties are acquiring newer and technologically advanced tools in helping them identify votes, it is my intention to explore the applicability of this phenomenon to politics in Manitoba. More specifically, my aim is to gain a glimpse at the relationship between Manitoba's Progressive Conservative Party and the incorporation of business marketing techniques to the party's organizational structure.

Research Procedures

I would like to interview you about this topic. This interview should take roughly 45 minutes and can take place at a location of your choosing.

Recording Devices

In order to ensure accuracy in reporting your comments, I would like to record the interview using a voice recorder application on my mobile phone. I will subsequently transcribe the interview myself.

Benefits and Risks

There are no anticipated benefits to you personally. However, this study will uncover new insights into how political parties use political marketing techniques. There are no anticipated risks beyond what you would encounter in everyday life.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

Your identity will be kept confidential unless you prove me permission to use your identity.

- I wish to be identified in this research
- I wish for my identity to be kept confidential

Signature: _____

If you choose to remain confidential, every possible step will be taken to ensure that your identity is protected. No contextual details will be provided that would mean you would be identified. However, while I will do my best to protect your confidentiality, I cannot guarantee it.

Any data collected during this research will be permanently stored at all times in a locked office. All digital files will be stored onto a password-protected computer. Furthermore, data will be encrypted and stored in a password-secured folder. The consent forms and transcripts will be stored in a locked filing cabinet. There will absolutely be no transportation of data. The interview audio will be destroyed as soon as they are transcribed. All data will be destroyed by December 2020 at the latest.

Remuneration for Participation

There is no remuneration for participation in this study.

Withdrawal

You are welcome to withdraw from this study by simply stating so or contacting me, and there are no negative consequences for doing so. If you withdraw, all data collected during our interview will be destroyed. You will be free to withdraw up until July 1, 2019 when it will no longer be possible to withdraw.

Debriefing

Participants will receive a brief summary of sections from the interview relevant to the thesis. The latest date you could expect this is December 2019. Participants can also receive the thesis that results from this research. Please indicate whether or not you wish to receive this.

- Yes, I would like to receive the thesis

- If so, please indicate your email address: _____

- No, I would not like to receive the thesis

I anticipate sending this thesis by December 2019 at the latest.

Research Dissemination

The results of this research will be disseminated in an M.A. thesis at the University of Manitoba. It may also be disseminated in conference presentations and/or a journal article.

Your signature on this form indicates that you have understood to your satisfaction the information regarding participation in the research project and agree to participate as a subject. In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time, and /or refrain from answering any questions you prefer to omit, without prejudice or consequence. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

The University of Manitoba may look at your research records to see that the research is being done in a safe and proper way.

This research has been approved by the Joint Faculty Research Ethics Board. If you have any concerns or complaints about this project you may contact any of the above-named persons or the Human Ethics Coordinator at 204-474-7122 or humanethics@umanitoba.ca. A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Participant's Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX D

Interview Questions

1. What is or was your role with Manitoba's Progressive Conservative (PC) Party?
2. How does the PC Party look like to you today?
3. Does the PC Party today resemble to that of Premier Gary Filmon's?
4. How much has the party changed since the Filmon years, leading up to the 2016 general election? (In terms of what the policies it represents, etc.).
5. What were some crucial pivoting moments and lessons learned from previous elections leading up to the 2016 general election?
6. To what degree does the party interact and exchange ideas and/or personnel with other provincial and federal Conservative counterparts across Canada?
7. Within a span of 17 years, to what degree has the party incorporated political marketing methods and techniques within its organizational structure?
8. What was the political marketing strategy for every election since 1999 and how has this evolved from one election to the next?
9. How does the party identify and know what voters want?
10. What was the level of market research performed leading up to the 1999 election? How much progress has the party made in with its research since then? Was market intelligence incorporated in the 2003, 2007, 2011, and 2016 elections?
11. How does the party arrive at the decision of what to include and promise in its election platform? How much does it pick and choose from the research it has collected on the electorate? How much of the policies and positions of the party is based on research in the form of polling, focus group sessions, etc.?
12. In terms of communication, how much progress has the party made in becoming more sophisticated with the way it advertise itself?
13. To what degree have the experiences of other Conservative party structures influenced the organizational structure of Manitoba's PC Party? Have the experiences of the federal Conservatives, or other provincial Conservative counterparts transferred to Manitoba's PC Party?
14. Do you have anything else that you would like to add to this discussion?

APPENDIX E

Initial Contact Script

Email 1

Dear X:

My name is Martin Michalak and I am an M.A. student in the Department of Political Studies at the University of Manitoba. I am presently conducting interviews related to the use of political marketing techniques by the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba. I am writing to see if you would be interested in being interviewed for this project.

The interview will take roughly 45 minutes and can take place at a location of your choosing. I will be asking you a number of questions but would also be interested in having you elaborate further based on your own experiences and views. If you would like, I can keep your identity confidential.

I believe that you have a great deal of insight to contribute and I would be very grateful for your time. Please do not hesitate to email me at michala3@myumanitoba.ca or call me at [redacted] if you have any questions about this research or would like to set up a time to talk.

Sincerely,

Martin Michalak

Academic Advisor: Dr. Royce Koop
Email: royce.koop@umanitoba.ca

Email 2

Dear X:

I am writing to follow up on the email I sent you last week regarding my M.A. thesis research on political marketing in Manitoba. I believe this research would benefit greatly from your insight and so hope you will be able to spare some time to speak with me. If you have any questions at all, please do not hesitate to email me at michala3@myumanitoba.ca or call me at [redacted].

Best wishes,

Martin Michalak

Academic Advisor: Dr. Royce Koop
Email: royce.koop@umanitoba.ca