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**Outreaching the Inside:  
Looking into the Conservative Party of Canada's Reflexive Communication Code**

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**Outreaching the Inside:**

**Looking into the Conservative Party of Canada's Reflexive Communication Code**

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Thesis submitted to  
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## Abstract

In light of immigration trends and projected growth scenarios, the so-called ethnic vote in Canada is more important than ever for any political party that seeks to form a majority government. Beginning in 2004 there is evidence to suggest the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) adopted a sophisticated ethnic outreach strategy aimed at winning support among cultural and ethnic groups. Drawing on Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1513), Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens' theories on reflexivity (1994), Jürgen Habermas' public sphere (1962), and Jennifer Lees-Marshment's analysis of marketing techniques in political communication (2001), this thesis examines the motives, goals and outcomes of the reflexive communication code of the CPC as demonstrated in the national and local campaign levels. The research design for this thesis is qualitative and uses in-depth interviews and archival data collection methods to explore whether the ethnic outreach efforts and new policy positions of the CPC are a genuine reflection of a shift in ideology or a carefully calibrated strategy to obtain power. While interviewees claim the CPC's strategies are designed to better communicate with voters and encourage civic engagement, the influence of Machiavellian ethics and political marketing strategies suggest the outreach efforts may not be entirely altruistic.

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

#### Preface

Canada has enjoyed a long history of immigration and multiculturalism, two policy areas which have been historically intertwined, beginning with the *Citizenship Act* (1947) which formally recognized Canada's first official citizen as then Liberal Party of Canada (LPC) Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King. Later, in 1960, the Progressive Conservative Party (PC), under the leadership of Prime Minister John Diefenbaker, formally terminated Canada's racist immigration policies that gave preference to white, European applicants. The first visible minority Members of Parliament were featured as part of Diefenbaker's government, including Douglas Jung, the first non-Caucasian Member of Parliament, Lincoln Alexander, the first African-Canadian Member of Parliament, and Michael Starr, the first Canadian of Ukrainian descent to serve in Cabinet. Diefenbaker was also the first Prime Minister of neither wholly British nor French ancestry<sup>1</sup> and created the first *Bill of Rights* (1960) for citizens of Canada.

LPC Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson succeeded Diefenbaker and also became known as a champion of ethnic diversity in Canada, creating the world's first race-free points-based immigration system, a version of which is still used today (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2008). Pearson was also internationally renowned for his diplomatic work with the founding of the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

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<sup>1</sup> Prime Minister John Diefenbaker was of German and Scottish descent.

Though the PC played a substantive role in forming the conversation about cultural and ethnic diversity in Canada, it was Canada's 15<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, who forever changed the face of multiculturalism in Canada. In 1971, Trudeau introduced the *Multiculturalism Act*, the key tenets of which included measures to assist cultural groups to retain and foster their identity; to overcome barriers to their full participation in Canadian society; to promote creative exchanges among all Canadian cultural groups; and to assist immigrants in acquiring one official language (Dyck, 2000: 111). Trudeau also oversaw the creation of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982) which also enshrined the concept of multiculturalism into law under section 27 (Whittington & Williams, 2000: 340). All of these measures were designed to protect the right to equality and respect of Canadians from all different ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2010). In addition, Trudeau's government was responsible for ushering in the *Immigration Act* (1976) and updating the *Citizenship Act* (1977). As a result of these policies, in addition to previous LPC immigrant-friendly policies, Trudeau was able to firmly position and brand the LPC as the "natural governing party" of Canada and the party of choice for immigrants and new Canadians (Collins, 2008, September 17). Since that time, there has been a marked tendency among immigrant Canadians and visible minorities, also known as ethnic voters, to vote for the LPC (Blais, Everitt, Fournier, Gidengil & Neviite, 2009: 3).

The attachment to the LPC among ethnic communities is strongly associated with the efforts of Trudeau and the LPC and not the PC, despite the fact that the

*Multiculturalism Act* came into force under PC Prime Minister Brian Mulroney<sup>2</sup> and the PC had historically played a substantive role in forming the conversation about cultural and ethnic diversity in Canada. According to one former Reform Party Member of Parliament<sup>3</sup>,

Mulroney went out and ran a very massively pro-immigration policy: apologized for the Japanese head tax, the Italian internment... [he] majored on policy that was relevant to many Canadians, but they didn't follow through in terms of developing relationships on the ground – enduring relationships of trust.

Despite the accomplishments and consensus of both the LPC and the PC during the 1970s and 1980s, the 1990s<sup>4</sup> saw the emergence of the Bloc Québécois (BQ) and the Reform Party, two political parties that opposed official multiculturalism, sparking intense debate across the country about the role and purpose of multiculturalism and immigration policies (Whittington & Williams, 2000: 345). The Reform Party, a populist, anti-affirmative action, Western-focused alternative to the PC, advocated assimilation as the ideal goal of multiculturalism in Canada (Ibid: 149, 151). In their first policy document, the Reform Party advocated to maintain the traditional Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) uniform in response to public debate on whether to permit Sikh officers to modify the traditional uniform to include turbans. In addition, at the 1991 Reform Party policy convention, Member of Parliament for Calgary West, Stephen Harper, was quoted as saying that bilingualism and multiculturalism are the “pet projects of a political

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<sup>2</sup> While the policy was passed by the House of Commons by Trudeau, the law was effectively changed under Mulroney's government. Mulroney increased immigration targets to 250,000 in 1990.

<sup>3</sup> Current Member of Parliament for the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC).

<sup>4</sup> During the early 1990s, government spending on multiculturalism initiatives totaled approximately \$27 million per year, a relatively small program budget, which has decreased in size over the years (Whittington & Williams, 2000: 346).

priesthood that don't represent the wishes of Canadians" (Curry, 2007, October 19).

Interestingly, the Reform Party's front bench featured several Members of Parliament<sup>5</sup> representing visible minority groups, including Rahim Jaffer, the first Ismaili-Muslim elected to Parliament, Deepak Obhrai, the first Hindu elected to Parliament, and Nina Grewal, the first Indo-Canadian woman elected to Parliament (Whittington & Williams, 2000: 340).

In 2000, the Canadian Alliance Party (CAP) was formed as the successor right-of-centre political party to the Reform Party. Although the CAP only existed between the years 2000 and 2003, one of their more controversial policies advocated for caps on immigration to prevent strain on the economy. Political opponents were highly critical of this policy and some racial slurs and unsavoury comments made by CAP members fuelled criticisms, culminating with former LPC immigration minister Elinor Caplan publicly labeling the CAP and its supporters as "Holocaust-deniers, prominent bigots and racists" (CBC News online, 2000, November 16). Fuelled by partisanship on both sides, these factors largely contributed to the xenophobic, anti-immigrant branding that was associated with the Reform Party and subsequently with the CAP during the 1990s. As a result, the LPC brand and support among ethnic communities was strengthened even further (Plamondon, 2006: 453).

Created in 2003 by the merger of the PC and CAP, the CPC inherited the label of the Canadian, right wing, racist and anti-immigration party (Plamondon, 2006: 453).

Interestingly, research data and anecdotal evidence - as outlined in the findings of this thesis - indicate the LPC grip on the ethnic vote has began to dissolve, dropping from 71

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<sup>5</sup> Despite representing visible minority groups, these Reform Members of Parliament opposed state-sponsored multiculturalism, according to Whittington & White (2000).

percent in the 2000 federal election to 58 percent in 2004 (Blais, Gidengil, Everitt, Fournier & Nevitte, 2006). The apparent benefactors of the shift in ethnic vote has been the CPC, increasing their seat count from 127 in 2006 to 144 in 2008 and winning an additional six seats in ridings where research indicates populations of visible minorities account for 20 percent or more of the overall population – numbering approximately 70 across Canada (Statistics Canada, 2006).

### **Research Problem and Objectives**

Following the British parliamentary tradition, Canada's democratic institutions are anchored in a decadent, traditional history, while the political future of the nation continues to move toward that of a sophisticated, modern, political marketing machine. With four official political parties<sup>6</sup> vying for the attention of a relatively small population, political marketing in election campaigns has become an essential component to attaining power in Canadian politics.

This thesis suggests that since 2004 the CPC has engaged in a process of reflexive modernization in an effort to reconstitute its party image, branding and political marketing strategy to appeal to a broader segment of the Canadian population. Specifically by harnessing the power of sophisticated marketing and communications strategies the CPC has made measurable electoral gains among ethnic voters since 2004. This thesis explores the motives, goals and outcomes of the wide-ranging outreach strategy as implemented in those ridings where the CPC targeted its efforts and won in

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<sup>6</sup> Official party status in Canada requires at least 12 elected members from registered political parties. For the purposes of this thesis, this research recognizes the CPC, LPC, NDP, and BQ all presently hold official party status in the House of Commons.

the 2008 election. Spearheaded by CPC Calgary Southeast Member of Parliament Jason Kenney, a sophisticated network of organizers in urban ridings like the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), Vancouver, and Montreal, implemented a strategy that was designed to build support for the CPC and “replace the Liberals as the primary voice of new Canadians and ethnic minorities” (CTV News online, 2007, October 16). This thesis explores the ways in which the CPC used market research, demographics, polling, targeted mailings, recognition of historic injustices, and grassroots engagement to communicate with ethnic voters and how these efforts were used to re-brand the CPC as a more moderate, immigrant-friendly political party than its predecessors.

Tracing the epistemological roots of power and politics in Niccolò Machiavelli’s *The Prince* (1513), this thesis draws on the relevant theories of Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens (1994) on reflexivity and modernization, Jürgen Habermas’ (1962) notions of democracy and the bourgeois public sphere, and the Jennifer Lees-Marshment’s model (2001) for marketing in politics to establish a comprehensive theoretical framework to explore the reflexive communication code of the CPC from 2004 to 2010. This thesis explores how the CPC conforms to a Machiavellian ethical code of conduct in its use of political marketing strategies and communication tactics with regard to ethnic voters, both on the national and local levels. What are the motives and goals of the outreach efforts from the perspective of CPC insiders? Looking back to the roots of the legacy parties, namely the Reform, CAP and PC parties, what evidence exists that a process of reflexivity has shaped the newly-minted CPC with respect to strategies, tactics and policies toward multiculturalism, immigration, ethno-cultural communities and visible minorities? Are the guiding principles behind the ethnic outreach strategy a genuine

reflection of a shift in policy with respect to immigration and multiculturalism, a politically motivated campaign focused on undermining the support for the LPC among ethnic voters, or a combination of the two? Finally, what are the outcomes - whether positive or negative - in engaging in sophisticated political marketing strategies among new Canadians and ethnic voters? This thesis will explore these questions as well as whether these kinds of political communications practices are serving the best interests of Canadian democracy.

### **Thesis Overview**

The next chapter, Literature Review, outlines the relevant theories that inform the theoretical framework of this research. In examining Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1513), the teleological approach to politics is revealed through the use of strategic and often deceitful means to reach the desired ends. A Machiavellian ethical code is applied to the political communication strategies and tactics of the CPC to understand their efforts to reposition the party as a viable alternative to the LPC among ethnic voters.

The theory of reflexivity, as discussed by Beck and Giddens (1994), is explored to understand the process by which modernization leads to self-awareness, internal reorganization, and adjustment to respond to the pressures of modern society. In the context of Habermas' (1962) ideal model for democratic engagement – the so-called “public sphere” – critics of Habermas argue the notion of a hegemonic, elitist, bourgeois public sphere does not serve the best interests of the larger public, specifically marginalized groups which are excluded in Habermas' original model. Counter-publics are proposed as alternative sites of deliberation of issues affecting “other” interests. In the

political context counter-publics are sites for deliberation of the specific interests and worldviews of a fragmented electorate.

In an era of radicalized politics, political marketing has turned citizens into consumers argues Margaret Scammell (1999). Marketing influences on politics have resulted in the professionalization of political communications with a specific focus on election results over civic engagement. According to Jennifer Lees-Marshment's (2001) model for market-oriented political parties, the marketing of politics has become akin to the marketing of long-term services wherein the needs of the citizens are attended to at the outset. Lees-Marshment argues that in order to achieve power in a fragmented, consumerist society, politicians and political parties need to engage in sophisticated political marketing strategies to determine which policies, communication practices, and organizational structures appeal to their potential voters.

Chapter 3, Methodology, begins with a description of the qualitative research design and data collection methods employed for this thesis. Following the definition of key concepts, the information collected through in-depth interviews and archival data are analyzed to explore the CPC reflexive communication code. In exploring the relevant themes at the core of this research, the data collected was analyzed to inform key research questions central to the findings of this thesis. Finally, ethical considerations are outlined to explain the measures taken to ensure the validity of the study.

Chapter 4, Findings and Analysis, chronologically details the evolution of the CPC's ethnic outreach strategy, starting with the introduction of the 2004 Policy Declaration. By analyzing the data collected in the interviews, archival material and campaign communications, the thesis explores the CPC ethnic outreach efforts as

reported in the media and from the perspectives of CPC strategists, Members of Parliament and Cabinet Ministers. Following the findings of the research is a discussion of political communication ethics as applied to the findings of the study and to the literature review to explore the CPC reflexive communication code. The motives, goals and outcomes of the sophisticated political communication practices and strategies employed by the CPC are examined in the context of the Canadian pluralistic, multicultural political landscape to explore the implications on democratic ideals.

Finally, the conclusion summarizes the most significant findings of the research and analyzes how the study answers the research questions posed in the methodology section. This chapter also acknowledges the limitations of the thesis and details the contributions to knowledge.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review is to discuss the relevant threads of knowledge and theoretical framework that are referenced in explaining the findings of this thesis: the underlying motives, goals and outcomes of the CPC reflexive communication code. In discussing the relevant theories, this chapter provides a context and comprehensive theoretical framework for the topic under investigation.

Tracing the epistemological roots in Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1513) to understand the teleological approach to obtaining power and success in politics, this research establishes that the political communication strategies and tactics employed by the CPC follow a Machiavellian, goal-oriented rationality. The accompanying threads of knowledge explore Jürgen Habermas' public sphere and notions of democratic engagement, particularly among marginalized groups (1962) as well as the theories of Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens on reflexivity and modernization (1994) and Jennifer Lees-Marshment's model for the market-orientation of political parties (2001). Considered together these theories form the basis of understanding the reflexive communication code of the CPC.

#### ***The Prince* (1513): A Renaissance How-To Guide For Obtaining Power**

Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) was born in Florence, Italy during times of intense political conflict defined by power struggles between Italy, France, Spain, and the Holy Roman Empire, each side engaging in ruthless strategies in order to obtain control over

the main cities of Italy. Machiavelli was certainly influenced by the political struggles of the time, which can be observed in his writings about government. At an early age Machiavelli entered the Florentine bureaucracy as an advisor on matters of war. In this role Machiavelli had the opportunity to observe the traits a leader must possess in order to rule efficiently. Due to political tumult and accusations of conspiracy, Machiavelli was removed from office in 1512 and was sent to prison. Upon release three weeks later, Machiavelli began to work as a writer. He wrote *The Prince* (1513) in addition to *The Mandrake* (1518), *The Art of War* (1521), *The Discourses* (1521), however, it was *The Prince* (1513) that would define his perspectives of power and leadership.

One of the first political philosophers to advance notions of power beyond humanist theories surrounding empowerment of the individual, Machiavelli broke from the traditional discourses of Plato and Aristotle who treated politics strictly as a philosophical and ethical debate. Machiavelli saw politics and ethics as two separate entities, one having nothing to do with the other. His pragmatic approach was in stark contrast to the predominant, idealized philosophy of the time. Most notable and controversial of all is Machiavelli's position on free will, arguing the power of the individual to control one's destiny is paramount as opposed to previous philosophies that presented fate and Divine intervention as the most influential factors in the world.

Over-simplified and often vilified by critics, Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1513) is frequently characterized as advocating the use of extreme deceit and manipulation in politics as a form of tyranny: "Machiavellian" has become synonymous with ruthlessness. In *The Discourses* (1521), however, Machiavelli explicitly denounces tyrannical rule and advocates the virtues of political participation. He viewed both vice

and virtue as equal and argued they should not be pursued for their own sake in either case: they are a means to an end. For the purposes of this research Machiavelli's descriptions of the moral and ethical qualities necessary to obtain and retain power, as illustrated in *The Prince* (1513), are examined in light of present-day politics and the modern, sophisticated political communication strategies and tactics of 21<sup>st</sup> Century "princes".

### *Politics as a Science*

In this Renaissance era masterpiece, Machiavelli presents politics as a science, describing the necessary ends which a prince must be willing to go, however ethical or not, to acquire and maintain power. *The Prince* (1513) opens with a dedicatory letter to Lorenzo de Medici, a member of the ruling family in Florence, Italy. While most historians contend Machiavelli wrote his essay in an effort to regain favour among the ruling classes by demonstrating his political prowess, another perspective is that Machiavelli knew he was giving bad advice and wished to see the demise of the Medici<sup>7</sup>. In Book III of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *The Social Contract* (1762), Rousseau suggests Machiavelli's hidden agenda was to expose the tyranny of the Medici:

Machiavelli was a proper man and a good citizen; but, being attached to the court of the Medici, he could not help veiling his love of liberty in the midst of his country's oppression. The choice of his detestable hero, Caesar Borgia, clearly enough shows his hidden aim; and the contradiction between the teaching of the *Prince* and that of the *Discourses on Livy* and the History of Florence shows that this profound political thinker has so far been studied only by superficial or corrupt readers. The Court of Rome

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<sup>7</sup> As put forth by David Wootton is his introduction of *Niccolò Machiavelli: Selected Political Writings* (1994).

sternly prohibited his book. I can well believe it; for it is that Court it most clearly portrays

(Rousseau, 1762: 23).

Regardless of varying interpretations of Machiavelli's intentions, *The Prince* (1513) reads as an instructional guide to rulers seeking to obtain power. Non-partisan, value-free politics are at the centre of this teleological political philosophy: whatever is necessary to obtain or retain it is justified. In his examination of human nature, Machiavelli acknowledges that

To desire to acquire is truly something very natural and ordinary, and always, when men do it who can, they will be lauded, or not blamed; but when they cannot, and want to do it anyway, here is the error and the blame

(Machiavelli, 1513: 13)

*The Prince* (1513) offers relevant descriptions of human nature for present day politicians by suggesting "a prudent man must always enter by the paths beaten by great men and imitate those who have been most excellent, so that, if his own virtue does not reach it, at least it might be able to yield some of its scent" (Machiavelli, 1513: 20). Furthermore, "whoever does not make the foundations first might make them later with great virtue, though doing so then entails discomfort to the architect and danger to the edifice" (Ibid: 25).

While *The Prince* (1513) advocates a pragmatic, realist approach to balancing the pressures of obtaining power with considerations of ethical behaviour, Machiavelli is clear in his stated objectives – power is the ultimate objective of any prince. Although six centuries of human history suggest more civilized and diplomatic political strategies may

have emerged there are compelling examples in Canada and throughout the world that suggest the power of cunning and expediency still dominate the political arena.

For Harper and the CPC the desire to obtain power is a perfectly natural goal and understanding Machiavelli's advice is particularly applicable. Recognizing the potential political dividends through studying and mimicking the LPC strategy of targeting ethnic voters for political outreach, Harper and the CPC proceeded according to a Machiavellian, goal-oriented ethic. Although the goal of the CPC ethnic outreach strategy is to "yield some of [the LPC] scent", not having made solid foundations in ethnic communities, this strategy proved difficult in establishing the authenticity of the CPC's efforts among ethnic voters. Machiavelli does, however, offer further instructions on how a prince can use the appearance of virtue and the art of deceit as a means to persuade followers in order to win their support.

### *The Art of Deceit*

Machiavelli (1513) argued that power is obtained and retained in politics through the strategic use of deceit, intellect, and cunning to achieve the appearance of virtue. In an attempt to reconcile political necessity with societal expectations of ethical behaviour, Machiavelli puts forward the following ethical code of conduct for princes and rulers: a prince must conduct himself according to what is conducive to achieving power, even if this means appearing to be one thing while in fact being another. In this vein, a prince must fight in two ways: as a beast (meaning by force) and as a man (meaning in accordance to the law). A capable prince will be able to use both methods to his advantage: "one therefore needs to be a fox to recognize traps, and a lion to dismay the

wolves” (Ibid: 65). A prince must know how “...not to depart from good when he can, but to know how to enter into evil when he needs to” (Ibid: 57).

In W.B. Allen’s essay *Machiavelli & Modernity* (1997)<sup>8</sup>, the author explores the strategic use of language in *The Prince* (1513), what Machiavelli called the “ultimate human weapon”. Following Plato’s description of the noble lie in *The Republic* (380 B.C.), Machiavelli agreed that rulers can use carefully crafted stories in order to maintain control: what is taught to citizens may not be entirely true but the unveiled truth is of concern only to the rulers, not the ruled. He added that while “philosophers gaze on the pure light of the sun [...] ordinary people are chained to the shadows of artificial light” (Ibid: 105).

Allen (1997) contends that “both good and evil have their places in a new ethical framework structured by the concepts of necessity and usefulness”, noting that Machiavelli is the first philosopher to advocate for techniques that are associated with present day advertising, or even propaganda. Machiavelli argues that many cunning leaders are able to disorient and confuse the people to ensure the success of their strategies:

The nature of peoples is variable; and it is easy to persuade them of something, but it is difficult to fix them in that persuasion. And therefore it is necessary to be prepared so that, when they no longer believe, one might make them believe by force

(Machiavelli, 1513: 22).

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<sup>8</sup> Allen’s commentary on the use of language in *The Prince* appears in Codevilla’s translation and edit of the text, c1997 (see reference list).

He also advocates the prudent use of deception as means to achieve the desired end, regardless of moral or ethical implications: appearance is everything. In this view ethos and morality are only useful in the cultivation of favourable impressions or illusions:

Rather, I will be so daring as to say this, that, having [virtuous qualities] and observing them always, they are harmful, while appearing to have them is useful; like appearing piteous, faithful, humane, integral, religious, and [perhaps even] to be; but while keeping one's spirit predisposed so that, needing not to be those things, you might know how to change to be the contrary

(Machiavelli, 1513: 66-67).

For Machiavelli, political success is the only standard by which a prince ought to be measured: "Therefore, a prince must not have any objective nor any thought, nor take up any art, other than the art of war and its ordering and discipline; because it is the only art that pertains to him who commands" (Machiavelli, 1513: 54). If ethical behaviour inhibits this primary goal, Machiavelli advocates it is best that virtue be an appearance rather than authentic.

For the CPC, and indeed most present-day political parties, political communication is a careful art which blends the use of propaganda and persuasion with information and policies. Qualities like "good" or "bad," "right" or "wrong" does not matter according to Machiavelli unless they are in reference to one's capacity to succeed. Recognizing the power of perceptions in politics, the prudent "prince" will conduct himself in whatever manner necessary to reach the ultimate goal of achieving power. Even if the motives are political and self-serving, Machiavelli advises that a prince should appear to have virtuous qualities so that he may cultivate a favourable impression among the electorate. It is therefore arguable that the CPC's shift in policy position regarding multiculturalism and immigration is reflective of a strategic use of deceit,

cunning and intellect in order to acquire support from traditionally LPC-voting ethnic groups.

*Is it better to be feared, loved or both?*

Machiavelli (1513) recognized the importance of treating one's subjects well – in times of prosperity as well as in times of need - to ensure support from the populace. Ultimately the support of the populace has little to do with goodwill and is more a method to secure support. The astute prince recognizes the importance of encouraging the citizens to do well and rewarding them for their efforts to increase the stature of the city in which he rules. He keeps the “peoples occupied with feasts and spectacles at convenient times of the year...meeting with them from time to time, himself giving examples of humaneness and of munificence...because this should never be lacking in anything” (Ibid: 84). A prince can earn loyalty from his subjects through good deeds, especially “when they have good from him whom they have expected evil, [because men] obligate themselves all the more to their benefactor [and]...immediately become better disposed toward him than if he had made his way to the principality by its favors” (Ibid: 38). A devout citizenry will also parlay into trustworthy and devout soldiers. This is above all else important for the prince for knowing “though each of them is good, all together they will come better, when they will see themselves commanded by their prince, and by him honored and favored” (Ibid: 96).

Machiavelli (1513) advises that a virtuous leader must acknowledge while support from his subjects is paramount, certain deceitful, rash, and even murderous acts may be required to achieve or maintain this support. If a ruler cannot be feared and loved it is

best just to be feared because fear commands loyalty and love is easily broken for utility's sake (Ibid: 64). He explains that "...one would want to be both; but, because it is difficult to force them together, whenever one has to do without either of the two, it is much more secure to be feared than to be loved" (Ibid: 62). He also cautions that there is a fine line between being feared and being hated:

Since men love at their own pleasure and fear at the prince's pleasure, a wise prince must base himself upon that which is his, not upon that which is other men's: he must contrive only to escape hatred, as was said  
(Machiavelli, 1513: 64).

Avoiding hatred may not always be possible, Machiavelli admits, adding that this means avoiding the appearance of malevolence, unscrupulous behaviour, greed, or corruption (Machiavelli, 1513: 69). It is therefore the goal of a prince to avoid being hated by the most powerful of his subjects (Ibid: 71). Where wrongs must be done, Machiavelli advises that they "must be done all together, so that, being tasted less, they offend less: and the benefits must be done little by little so that they might be better tasted" (Ibid: 35-36). As previously explained, praise and blame are assigned in proportionality and Machiavelli argues that in order to maintain power and control it is more important to be appear virtuous than to actually be virtuous. Furthermore, he cautions that actions and their consequences can have opposite outcomes from their intentions: good is sometimes evil, evil sometimes good:

Hatred is acquired through good works as well as by nasty ones; and therefore [...] a prince who wants to keep the state is often forced to be not good; because when the constituency which you need to maintain yourself is corrupt, be they either people or soldiers or great ones, it is convenient for you to follow its humor to satisfy it, and then good works are your enemies

(Machiavelli, 1513: 72).

To illustrate this point, Machiavelli uses the example of Alexander the Great: he was righteous and loved, but ultimately killed by his own army for the very qualities that revered him among others (Machiavelli, 1513: 72). In contrast, Roman emperor Severus, “a ferocious lion and an astute fox; feared and revered”, was lauded for his strong, militaristic approach to establishing and maintaining order in governance (Ibid: 73). Machiavelli despised tyrannical rule even though he believed that autocracy was necessary to maintain order in certain circumstances. This included having “burdensome things administered by others [while they administer] graces by themselves” (Ibid: 70). He cautioned that it is wise to use one’s benefits to make ones supporters more friendly but it is useless to try to win over enemies in the same fashion.

In times of war, Machiavelli offered detailed instructions to the prince who strives for power via militaristic means. He noted it is not a birth-right nor a matter of the strength of one’s army that makes one powerful but one’s capacity to understand different perspectives of power: “in order to know the nature of the people, it is best to be a prince” (Ibid: 4). He also advised that a prince should be careful when choosing sides in conflicts between others leaders because he “is also esteemed when he is a true friend and a true enemy, that is to say, when he comes out in favor of one against another without hesitation. Which part will always be more useful than to remain neutral; because if two powerful neighbours of yours come to blows, either they are such that, one of them winning, you have to fear the winner, or not” (Machiavelli, 1513:82).

Harper and the CPC have adopted many of Machiavelli’s strategies associated with garnering support from the populace. Although the CPC inherited the anti-immigration stigma that was associated with its predecessor political parties, Harper has

carefully used fear as a political strategy in communicating negative messages about the LPC to targeted constituencies, as evidenced in the findings of this research. It is also clear that the CPC reflexive communication code centres on the goal to be loved by ethnic voters. From doling out favours to carefully choosing sides in conflicts, Harper has heeded Machiavelli's advice that the good deeds of the CPC are all the more welcome as ethnic voters do not expect them. The same strategy can also translate into the creation of worthy foot-soldiers, or in the case of politics, supporters and campaign teams. That being said, Machiavelli also warns that good deeds can have opposite consequences, a point well illustrated in the findings section of this thesis.

### ***Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan (1651): A Machiavellian view of Human Nature***

Following in the Machiavellian tradition, philosopher Thomas Hobbes analyzed problems of political power in the historical context of 17<sup>th</sup> Century English Civil War. *Leviathan* (1651) - Hobbes' principle work on political science – suggests, like in Machiavelli's *The Prince* (1513), that the supreme authority of the king is required to maintain peace, order, and good government and his rule is independent of the beliefs or desires of the public. Hobbes explores the nature of man and the systematic ways in which men seek to harness power. In his theories surrounding the motivations of men as being driven by incessantly changing appetites and aversions (Hobbes, 1651: 24-30), Hobbes argues that all men are driven by “more or lesse Desire of Power, of Riches, of Knowledge, and of Honour; this difference of Passions, proceedeth partly from the different Constitution of the body, and partly from different Education” (Ibid: 29). In his definition of a man's power as linked to some future apparent good, Hobbes asserts that every man must seek some level of

power, whether great or small, and these powers may be either natural - meaning one's strength, and physical or mental faculties - or acquired, meaning riches, nobility, reputation, friends, or good fortune (Ibid: 41). Hobbes acknowledges that since all powers of men are naturally in opposition to one another, and that some men's desires for power are limitless, the only way to acquire power is to master the powers in opposition to one's own, whether harmless or harmful in their results (Ibid: 42). In the case of Kings,

Whose power is greatest, [they] turn their endeavours to the assuring it [power] at home by Lawes, or abroad by Wars: and when that is done, there succeedeth a new desire; in some, of Fame from new Conquest”  
(Hobbes, 1651: 48).

Following these assumptions, Hobbes identifies man's relentless pursuit of power as an inherently harmful but entirely unavoidable reality (Hobbes, 1651: 47). In contrast to Machiavelli, Hobbes' writings demonstrate a more altruistic motive for the pursuit of power as a means to peaceful ends and not just an end unto itself. Still, Hobbes offers a Machiavellian perspective of human nature in *Leviathan* (1651), adding perspectives to this thesis for understanding the primal competitive motivations of politicians and political parties in their pursuit of power, even in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

From a teleological perspective Machiavelli and Hobbes suggest that to desire to obtain power above all other concerns, including morality, is entirely natural. While they disagree on the essential merits of a relentless pursuit of power it is clear both men agree it is inevitable. In the case of the CPC, and indeed most mainstream political parties, holding the seat of power is the ultimate goal. It is possible that in the case of the Reform and CAP - generally regarded as protest parties - the ultimate goal was not to obtain power but to instead further a political agenda. Nonetheless, after successive LPC

governments and a long history of negative branding, this thesis argues the CPC adopted a reflexive communication code that was motivated by the instinctive desire to obtain power. As Hobbes explains, the best way to acquire power is to master the powers in opposition to one's own. In the case of the CPC this means the LPC. As such, the CPC adopted a Machiavellian ethical approach to achieve the desired ends.

### **Ulrich Beck & Anthony Giddens: Reflexive Politics**

Beck and Giddens (1994), two of the pioneer writers on the theory of reflexive modernity, reject the notion that society has entered an era of post-modernism. Giddens suggests society has instead entered a radicalized version of modernity characterized by "fragmentation and dispersal" and "global integration" in which "progress can turn into self-destruction" (Eid, 2003: 814-815). They argue the increase in globalization and uncertainty in the world is evidence of the "renewal of modernity", or reflexive modernization (Ibid: 813). Reflexivity, therefore, is a social theory that describes the act of self-reference involving self-examination of the causes and effects of one's actions. Simply put, the act of self-reference is a precursor to change.

For the purposes of this research the variable nature of society and politics are explored by Beck and Giddens (1994) in order to understand the ways in which society is continually being reexamined and reformed in light of the pressures and consequences of modernity, the result of which is an ongoing state of alteration and adjustment:

If simple (or orthodox) modernization means, at bottom, first the dis-embedding and second the re-embedding of traditional social forms by the industrial social forms, then reflexive modernization means first the dis-embedding and second the re-embedding of industrial social forms by another modernity. Thus, by virtue of its inherent dynamism, modern society is undercutting its formations on class, stratum, occupation, sex

roles, nuclear family, plant business sectors and of course also the prerequisites and continuing forms of natural techno-economic progress (Beck, 1994: 2).

Institutions, including political institutions, once thought to be sacrosanct and immovable, are transformed in a new light by the forces of globalization. Beck posits that the global individualization of politics has caused an explosion of private interest groups and niche organizations wherein everything is political and nothing is political at the same time (Beck, 1994: 38-39). He contends the pressures of modern society have sparked the fusion of once incongruous elements to make new realities and rationalities possible:

Is the combination of art and science, of technology and ecology, of economics and politics with the result of something neither-nor, some third entity, as yet unknown and yet to be discovered, really out of the question simply because the basic multiplication table of functionalism considers it out of the question? Why must science itself, which changes everything, be conceived of and conducted as unchangeable? (Beck, 1994: 25).

As Beck explains, the reinvention of politics “requires a Machiavellian realism, but does not exhaust itself therein. Instead, it practises and struggles for spaces, forms and forums of style and structure formation inside and outside the political system” (Beck, 1994: 38). The “politics of politics” Beck explained is “altering the rules of the game”, calling into question the validity of modern political institutions (Ibid: 35). He described the reflexive modernization process as an opportunity to embrace the “disintegration of institutions [to make] room for a re-feudalization of social relationships”, which paves the way for a “neo-Machiavellianism in all areas of social action” (Ibid: 44). If society, and by extension power structures and politics, have been altered by the globalizing effects of

modernization, it follows that political parties must also adapt to the pressures of modernity in order to obtain or retain power.

But how does modernity transform politics to create new problems that require new solutions? Are ideological political parties an essential component to the existence of politics writ large? In the context of this research, reflexivity in politics can be identified in the CPC's efforts to position itself as a viable alternative to the LPC. As Beck argues,

The individualization of political conflicts and interests thus does not mean disengagement, not the 'opinion poll democracy' and not weariness of politics. But a contradictory multiple engagement arises, which mixes and combines the classical poles of politics so that, if we think things through to their logical conclusion, everyone thinks and acts as a right-winger and left-winger, radically and conservatively, democratically and undemocratically, ecologically and anti-ecologically, politically and unpolitically, all at the same time...That only means, however, that the current clarities of politics – right and left, conservative and socialistic, retreat and participation – are no longer correct or effective

(Beck, 1994: 21).

Beck questions the validity of the “the political left-right metaphor, which was born with bourgeois society” but he concedes that without credible alternatives the political paradigm “is probably unconquerable” (Beck, 1994: 42). In criticizing the “heterogeneity of the intelligentsia, the variability of its situations, intention and views and the constant internal quarrelling, the contempt and lack of consideration its members practise in their dealings with one another”, Beck argues that Habermas' idealized public sphere (as discussed later) is “anything in the world except a ‘class’ in any political practicable sense of that term” (Beck, 1994: 48).

According to Anthony Giddens, “modernity, almost by definition, [has] always stood in opposition to tradition”, particularly in Western societies where laws and traditions have been continually rewritten in order to maintain power and domination

(Giddens, 1994: 56). In the modern social order, globalization and the radicalization of modernity have caused the domination of Western political perspectives and hegemonic social forums to “stand open to scrutiny” (Ibid: 57). While modern political institutions are being reformed by external variables under the theory of reflexive modernization, Giddens saw the importance of combining the modern with the traditional, especially during the early stages of modern social development (Ibid: 91). While Giddens describes traditional politics as being defined by the rationalization of religion, segmental, dualistic, agrarian attitudes and influences, the early modern world continued to uphold many of these values: “Only with the consolidation of the nation-state, and the generalization of democracy in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, did the local community effectively begin to break up” (Ibid 93).

Beck argues that traditional values continue to play a significant role in the understanding of power dynamics in the modern social order “because it invests the past with a divine presence; from this point of view political rituals have a religious quality” (Beck, 1994: 104). In a Machiavellian context, Giddens claims that traditional politics have survived for so long because

Rulers may turn on their sages...kings on their churchmen, because at any given point the masters possess greater secular power; but were the influence of traditions’ guardians dispelled altogether, the power of a chief or prince would quickly come to naught

(Beck 1994: 83).

In a post-traditional society the effects of globalization are realized. Giddens describes the post-traditional society as “an ending; but it also a beginning, a genuinely new social universe of action and experience” (Giddens, 1994: 106). He claimed that, despite the Industrial Revolution and the advances of modernity since, “much of the world [has]

remained in a quasi-segmental state, in which many large enclaves of traditionalism persisted” and the influences of communal forces retained their power (Ibid: 97). He argues the advances of communication are primarily responsible for having altered global power dynamics, resulting in

a world where no one is ‘outside’ ... [and] where pre-existing traditions cannot avoid contact not only with others but also with many alternative ways of life. By the same token, it is one where the ‘other’ cannot any longer be treated as inert. The point is not only that the other ‘answers back’, but that mutual interrogation is possible

(Giddens, 1994: 97).

Like Beck, Giddens also recognizes the important difference between traditional and modern influences on notions of democracy and the marketplace of ideas. For Giddens, “tradition always discriminates between insider and other, because participation in ritual and acceptance of formulaic truth is the condition for existence. The ‘other’ is anyone and everyone who is outside” (Giddens, 1994: 79).

If reflexive modernity has forever altered the state of politics in the post-traditional world then our notions of democracy must also endure the same pressures and hazards of globalization and modernity. These pressures include modern power structures, advances in technology, communication, and the influences of business and marketing. The process of reflexive modernization has taken politics from its traditional form and transformed it into a commercialized, heavily marketed product – an autonomous reaction to the realities of the marketplace of ideas.

The transformation of politics by the forces of globalization is evident in the demographics of Canada, widely regarded as the most multicultural country in the world. Increases in immigration are arguably influenced by the same globalizing forces that have

resulted in the radical transformations of the institutions of the media, politics, and society writ large. In a society where the “other” no longer exists the previous, traditional forms of political communication employed by the CPC needed to adjust to the realities of a post-traditional society, a process Beck and Giddens argue is an autonomous reaction to the forces of radical or reflexive modernity. In the case of the CPC the processes of reflexive modernization can be seen in the political communication practices and ethnic outreach strategies.

### **Habermas and the “Bourgeois Public Sphere”**

In the *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962), Habermas described the public sphere as a space where individuals and groups assemble outside the influence of market forces or any form of authority to discuss and debate issues of mutual concern in a critical and rational manner, ideally reaching a consensus or public opinion in the public interest (Ibid: 85). By coming together in coffee houses, salons and pubs, the public sphere was conceived by Habermas as a place for people to congregate to discuss topics ranging from politics to literature in a setting outside the formal institutions of public life (Ibid: 32). The three main principles of the ideal public sphere include equality, universality and rationality (Ibid: 37) and in the liberal-democratic view, these ideals imply that public opinion transforms into political action. It follows then that the only legitimate governments are those that listen to the desires of the public sphere. In this light, Habermas’ theory poses several questions and problems.

Under the auspices of equality, Habermas (1962) contends dialogue about public affairs is the first obligation of citizenship, however, his definition of society at the time was confined to the educated, powerful, bourgeois-dominated upper classes (Ibid: 72). He

explains: “education was the one criterion for admission – property ownership the other”

(Ibid: 85). In defense of this exclusionary model Habermas contends that

Public opinion originated from those who were informed and spread chiefly among those classes that, if they are active in large number, are the ones that matter. Of course, the ‘lowest classes of the people’, the *sans-culottes*, did not belong to them, because, under the pressure of need and drudgery, they had neither the leisure nor the opportunity to be concerned with things that do not have an immediate bearing on their physical needs. (Habermas, 1962: 102).

By narrowing the scope of public discourse to white men belonging to the upper classes of society, one must then question the role of marginalized groups such as women, working-class men and racial minorities in the public sphere. Are the interests of the bourgeois classes relevant to all members of society simply because they are discussed by those in the upper echelons? Habermas argued his notion of universality disregards status in favour of viewing individuals as belonging to a “common humanity” (Habermas, 1989: 36). This perspective is problematic as well because it ignores the varying worldviews and perspectives of those outside the hegemonic, bourgeois strata and implies the concerns of the dominant take precedence over those of the dominated.

Finally, in defense of rationality Habermas (1962) argues that in order to advance the best interests of society as a whole, rational debate must lead to decisions about what is “right” and what is “wrong”, implying definitive conclusions can be reached through discussion alone. This perspective also poses significant problems when marginalized groups are included in the political discourse. The assumption that by “bracketing” inequalities a rational debate can resolve said inequalities is naïve and paternalistic (Calhoun, 1992: 21). Habermas assumes the oppressor knows what is best for the oppressed.

### ***“Counter-publics”***

For the reasons listed above the notion of a bourgeois public sphere is problematic from a revisionist perspective on the subject of political power. As Nancy Fraser (1990) points out, the subtitle of Habermas’ seminal theory - *An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* – indicates from the outset that Habermas’ model excluded the views of anyone outside the upper strata of society (Ibid: 58). She also points out that Habermas eventually acknowledged the shortcomings of the bourgeois public sphere model in later works but failed to introduce an alternative model for the post-bourgeois era.

By implying the fragmentation of public opinion emerged as a result of the non-bourgeois strata gaining access to the public sphere, Habermas argued rational debate was replaced with a “welfare state mass democracy” where critical society “gave way to public relations, mass-mediated staged displays, and the manufacture and manipulation of public opinion” (Ibid: 59). Habermas’ assumption was that the bourgeois public sphere is ideal and the emergence of counter-publics is an undesirable outcome and a “departure from, rather than an advance toward, democracy” (Ibid: 66). Still, as Fraser explains, Habermas “never explicitly problematizes some dubious assumptions that underlie the bourgeois model” (Ibid: 58) and his model for democracy does not apply to democracy as it actually exists today. Fraser questions Habermas’ assumptions about the ideal public sphere, specifically that 1) equality is not a necessary condition for democracy; 2) that competing counter-publics detract rather than contribute to the strengthening of democracy, 3) that public deliberation should focus solely on issues of public good, labeling private interests or issues as undesirable in the debate of civil society (Ibid: 62-

63). She asks “in short, is the idea of the public sphere an instrument of domination or a utopian ideal?”(Ibid: 61-62).

Neo-Marxists like Antonio Gramsci (1929-1935) and Noam Chomsky (1988) criticize the hegemonic domination of discourse in the public sphere, arguing the concerns of minority groups are often pushed to the periphery in favour of majority interests, institutionalizing class domination and perpetuating inequality. By excluding marginalized groups such as visible minorities, the legitimacy of the public sphere is called into question: “a public sphere adequate to a democracy depends both on the quality of discourse and quantity of participation... Modern politics is a return to the plebian public sphere: the people, not the bourgeois” (Calhoun, 1992: 2). Fraser also contends that

A necessary condition for participatory parity is that systemic social inequalities be eliminated ...[requiring] the sort of rough equality that is inconsistent with systemically generated relations of dominance and subordination. Pace liberalism, then, political democracy require substantive social equality

(Fraser, 1990: 40).

Other critics argue the public sphere has never existed in the Habermasian sense (Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999; Fraser, 1990; Schudson, 2006) and argue counter-publics have long existed outside the hegemonic model.

In Luke Goode’s (2005) examination of *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1962) the author examines the nature of public discourse in present day, Western societies and the trends that have largely shaped notions of democracy as it exists today:

increasingly sophisticated political marketing techniques; changes in media culture that implicate the very institutions which aspire to connect

citizens with the powerful; an ascendant politics of ethnicity and ethno-nationalism which can sometimes displace and sometimes appropriate the discourse of citizenship; and patterns of political behaviour, such as staggeringly low voting rates, which highlight widespread disaffection with the official institutions of democracy, especially in the younger generations

(Goode, 2005: 3).

Goode also examines these trends in light of reflexivity as a critique of Habermas' ideal deliberative democratic model. Adopting Beck & Giddens' notions of reflexive modernity as a process of re-invention, Goode argues the public sphere need not languish in its original bourgeois form: "the pathologies of late modernity stem not from having taken a wrong turn down a particular path of rationalization but, instead, from not having travelled far enough down it" (Ibid: 128). A reflexive public sphere, Goode argues, "energizes" Habermas bourgeois relic by "problematizing once unquestioned values and institutions and leading to demands for new ways of managing contradiction, conflict and difference" (Ibid: 120). The emergence of counter-publics as subaltern sites of public deliberation offer opportunities to resolve the "conflicts over questions of identity, including gender and ethnicity, that may be perceived by some, but not others, as relevant to the distribution of power and status within the public realm itself" (Ibid: 45).

Counter-publics, Fraser argues (1990), have existed as early as the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries and took a variety of forms, including nationalist, plebian, elite women, and working class publics (Ibid: 61). Often overlapping, counter-publics offer the opportunity for intercultural discussion to expand the possibilities of achieving a more accurate picture of democracy as it exists (Ibid: 70). In failing to examine these alternate sites of deliberation and public speech Habermas deliberately idealized the liberal-bourgeois version of democracy and ignored how counter-publics existed in conflict with

the dominant bourgeois model (Ibid: 61; Calhoun, 1992: 36). Confining competing interests to the dominant communicative discourse, Habermas' model discouraged marginalized groups from articulating their interests and concerns. Fraser argues this model generates inequalities:

After all, when social arrangements operate to the systemic profit of some groups of people and to the systemic detriment of others, there are prima facie reasons for thinking that the postulation of a common good shared by exploiters and exploited may well be a mystification

(Fraser, 1990: 72-73).

Furthermore, she contends "in stratified societies, arrangements that accommodate contestation among a plurality of competing publics better promote the ideal of participatory parity than does a single, comprehensive, overarching public" (Fraser, 1990: 66).

Even though the notion of public sphere as a model for democracy has utopian possibilities, the emancipatory potential of counter-publics is an interesting site for further examination in the Canadian political context. Fraser (1990) suggests "public life in egalitarian, multi-cultural societies cannot consist exclusively in a single, comprehensive public sphere" as the result would be the "demise of multiculturalism (and likely the demise of social equality)" (Ibid: 69 – *parentheses in original*). In Canada, there is evidence to suggest the CPC has shown significant interest in discovering the desires and concerns of previously marginalized groups, opening up politically motivated counter-publics outside the traditional public sphere. According to Fraser, the creation of counter-publics, or targeted ethnic outreach, provides multiple sites for public discourse outside the dominant forums of discussion. It is arguable the CPC is playing a role in expanding democratic discourse among marginalized groups by using targeted

communication strategies to reach out to ethnic voters. This thesis seeks to understand the changes in dialogue between the CPC and marginalized or “other” groups of citizens in Canada and how the nature of the discussion has been shaped by the influences of political marketing strategies.

### **Political Marketing**

Political marketing, as defined by Scammell (1999), is the professionalization of political communication with a specific focus on election results. Political communication, on the other hand, focuses on civic engagement. Scammell contends that the market orientation of politics has resulted in the shift of power *away* from political leaders and parties and *toward* citizens (Ibid: 5). She also finds that while the influences of marketing undermine the utopian ideals of a representative democracy, they also reinforce the individualism of the empowered citizen who is able to express him or herself through the purchasing power of their vote. While various factors influence consumer choices in commodity markets, the same is true of the political marketplace: if politics has become a marketing of services, the needs of the citizens are attended to at the outset. While critics blame marketing influences for the ills of democracy, Fraser (1999) argues this is a simplistic view of the role of the citizen consumer in the transaction. In fact, she contends consumer activism has had very powerful effects on politics:

Consumption in this view is not passive, nor necessarily an isolated, private action, but an integral way in which people ‘relate to themselves and the world through their relation to their needs, through a relationship of reflexivity and choice

(Fraser, 1999: 8).

Bennett and Manheim (2001) suggest political parties are using sophisticated communication strategies, including polling and advertising, to understand the best strategies and techniques to communicate with different segments of the electorate. By identifying which messages and themes resonate best with target audiences, political marketing specialists are able to break up the audience into identifiable target groups in order to communicate directly with a wide range of audiences in a variety of different media. The goal of these strategies is not to promote greater public discourse or an enlightened electorate – the ultimate goal is to use political marketing and outreach to activate specific segments of society over others: “strategy is king” – there are no rules except to win (Ibid: 287-288).

The influences of political marketing raise interesting questions about the potential positive and negative effects on civic engagement. While some argue marketing makes politics more democratic because it responds to the desires of voters, others contend the process of determining who is “worth” paying attention to and who can be ignored undermines democracy and civic engagement. But does the average citizen care to participate in the democracy project, as Habermas suggests, or are they looking for simple, easy to understand messages, delivered by the mass media or by political parties?

In Grossman, Lipsitz, Sides and Trost’s (2005) analysis of political campaign communication, their research indicates that voters who are least involved in politics want “simple cues that allow them to size up candidates with minimal effort” while those who are more involved want “more demanding campaigns” and a government that works in their best interest without the “minutiae, money and malarkey” (Ibid: 339). Voters desire clear, positive choices as they do not want to spend a lot of time deliberating over

who they will vote for, Grossman, Lipsitz, Sides and Trost argue. Voters look to character, trust and likability to inform their voting choice as opposed to policy agendas – facts completely in contradiction to the Habermasian notion of an ideal democracy composed of an informed and deliberative citizenry (Ibid: 344). The research also revealed that voters with liberal political perspectives tend to look to issues in making their decisions while conservative-minded voters look to qualities and characteristics. The study also indicates that Asians, Latinos and naturalized immigrants tend to be more positive about political campaigns and find advertising more helpful than Caucasians (Ibid: 346-347). Overall, Grossman, Lipsitz, Sides and Trost found that respondents looked to character, experience, intelligence and perceived governing abilities more than the candidate's stance on issues to help determine how they would vote (Ibid: 350).

The research of Blais, Gidengil, Nadeau and Nevitte (2008) complements the hypothesis that the least informed voters tend to be influenced by simple, crude messaging:

Poorly informed voters may be the most susceptible to cognitively cheap and simple information about voters, but research shows this group gains very little info from a campaign; info intake is highest among those who display a medium-high level of awareness, while the middle ground are the largest, most easily influenced

(Blais, Gidengil, Nadeau and Nevitte, 2008: 242).

Blais, Gidengil, Nadeau and Nevitte (2008) also found that the “knowledge gap” between the information rich and the information poor is actually widened during the course of election campaigns (Ibid: 232). There is no incentive for politicians or political parties to increase the general information (GSI) available to voters about politics or government, only campaign-specific information (CSI) as this information translates into electoral

gains (Ibid: 235). Which begs the question: are elections democratic *enough*? If “information is the currency of citizenship” (Ibid: 244), why are election campaigns predominately non-educational experiences? Simple messaging may be effective, but does this approach serve the best interests of voters, and by extension, democracy?

In their analysis of the outcomes of the 2000 Canadian federal election, Blais, Gidengil, Nadeau and Nevitte (2004) contend that multiculturalism complicated political marketing and communications efforts because the consumers, having weak or no established party ties, were most influenced by the image and credibility of the party leaders in deciding their vote. Since the political product is relatively intangible, the consumer relies on reputation as a primary selling point, says Scammell (1999): “Reputation, based on record and credible promises, is the *only thing of substance* that a party can promote to potential voters” (Ibid: 729; *emphasis is in original*). The challenge is to find effective strategies to communicate with Canada’s diverse cultural groups who are predominantly motivated by the interests and demands of their distinct communities (Berger & Pare, 2008: 42.)

### ***POP, SOP, MOP: The Lees-Marshment Model (2001)***

Jennifer Lees-Marshment’s (2001) proposed a detailed model to understand the modern marketing approaches adopted by political parties and to investigate the communications strategies and practices at work in election campaigns in Britain. During her examination Lees-Marshment identified three different approaches to marketing in politics: the POP (product-oriented party); the SOP (sales-oriented party) and the MOP (market-oriented party) (Ibid: 7). In each case the political party considers its relationship with the

electorate to inform their decisions as to how to communicate and present their product, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: The marketing process for POPs, SOPs, and MOPs: the Lees-Marshment model

<b>PRODUCT-ORIENTED PARTY</b>	<b>SALES-ORIENTED PARTY</b>	<b>MARKET-ORIENTED PARTY</b>
STAGE 1 PRODUCT DESIGN	STAGE 1 PRODUCT DESIGN	STAGE 1 MARKET INTELLIGENCE
	STAGE 2 MARKET INTELLIGENCE	STAGE 2 PRODUCT DESIGN
		STAGE 3 PRODUCT ADJUSTMENT
		STAGE 4 IMPLEMENTATION
STAGE 2 COMMUNICATION	STAGE 3 COMMUNICATION	STAGE 5 COMMUNICATION
STAGE 3 CAMPAIGN	STAGE 4 CAMPAIGN	STAGE 6 CAMPAIGN
STAGE 4 ELECTION	STAGE 5 ELECTION	STAGE 7 ELECTION
STAGE 5 DELIVERY	STAGE 6 DELIVERY	STAGE 8 DELIVERY

In the case of a POP, “classical conviction-based party behaviour” is employed (Lees-Marshment, 2001: 8). Rigid and resistant to change even when unsuccessful, a POP relies on party ideology as the key to attracting voters to the political product. The SOP uses the power of persuasion and marketing communication to attract voters. While a SOP understands how to manipulate the market, it does not change its product offering to suit the desires of the voter, opting instead to use sales techniques in an effort “to make people want what it offers” (Ibid: 9). On the other hand, a MOP is “not driven by ideology or leader opinion, instead [it] seeks to develop and deliver realistic policies and structures that meet the needs of the ‘market’” (Ibid: 10). At the end of her study, Lees-Marshment (2001) contends the era of product-oriented politics is over and society has

entered the era of the market-oriented political party: politicians and parties need to engage in sophisticated political marketing strategies to determine which policies, communication practices, and organizational structures appeal to their potential voters.

The tools of market intelligence and a consultative approach are arguably indispensable in the Western political context with an increasingly fragmented electorate, however Lees-Marshment does acknowledge that the “political reality can be highly complex, refusing the constraints imposed by models” (Ibid: 208). She also raises questions about ethical issues in treating politics as a commodity. She criticizes the motives and ethical behaviour of certain political parties, asking why “[they] are just cynically manipulating their electorate in order to gain power, rather than adopting a new and full form of market-oriented behaviour” (Ibid: 205). That being said, the political product is not easily explained to the citizen consumer as it is intangible and brand reputation is equally, if not more important, than the sales pitch:

Selling politics is like selling something that looks like soot, when calling it gold dust. No one believes you, no one wants it, not even when it is real gold dust that has just been made to look dirty

(Lees-Marshment & Lilleker, 2005: 217).

### ***MOPs in Canadian Politics***

Niche-marketing (in the form of SOPs and POPs) has been successful in Canada due to various regional perspectives and tensions, as evidenced by the success of the Reform and CAP movements in the West and the BQ in Quebec, however, there is evidence to suggest the CPC has recently undergone a significant market-oriented transformation from a SOP to a MOP. Beginning in 2004, the changes in the political communications

strategies and tactics of the CPC to target ethnic voters on the national and local level illustrate how these marketing approaches may have contributed to the successful election of six new CPC Members of Parliament in multicultural ridings in the 2008 federal election campaign. Through the examination of the increased use of political marketing tools, both new and older tactics are shown to be useful in Canadian election campaigns by national parties in winnable constituencies.

For a MOP, the first stage of market-orientation involves the use of market research to first understand the demands and priorities of the electorate before initiating the product-design stage. Through the use of public opinion polls and focus groups, a MOP is busy “gathering and analyzing of market intelligence to inform internal [...] and external [...] changes in party behaviour” from the outset in order to “discover the voter’s behaviour, needs, wants, and priorities” in advance of designing the product offering (Berger & Pare, 2008: 47). In the second and third stages, the design and subsequent adjustments of the product offering are based on the intelligence gathered during the market research phase. Any adjustments to the product offering are influenced by four core variables: achievability, internal reaction analysis, competition analysis, and support analysis (Ibid: 48). For the CPC, these two stages were particularly important in establishing the “newness” of the CPC as a more moderate, centrist political party as well as to ensure the product offering was “harmonious with the party’s ideological traditions”, a factor that Lees-Marshment (2005) contends is essential to success (Ibid: 211). Scammell (1999) also recognized the importance of tending to the needs of the internal market as it results in secure, dedicated support: “in the long-term, unless the

organisation finds other ways to stay close to its market, competitive strength may decline” (Ibid: 7).

In the fourth stage, product implementation is described as the process of “unifying the party around the proposed message (Lees-Marshment & Lilleker, 2005: 11), a stage which is crucial to convincing voters of the credibility and uniformity of the product offering. The communication phase, stage five, “centres on conveying a political party’s product offering to the electorate”, followed by the campaign stage which “emphasizes the most relevant aspects of the product offering for voters before they go to the polls” (Berger & Pare, 2008: 53-53). Stage seven, the election, is the entire objective of the marketing approach – winning is the ultimate goal. After winning, however, the final stage of the market-oriented approach is defined by the ability of the governing party to deliver on its promises (Ibid: 56). A thorough analysis of the CPC’s implementation of these stages is described in the findings of this research.

Under Canada’s first-past-the-post system with multiple political parties, it is inefficient that all parties be MOPs, according to Alex Marland (2005). In his examination of the applicability of the MOP model in modern Canadian federal election campaigns Marland uncovered historical examples of a variety of approaches to political marketing. Marland found the LPC focused on the careful monitoring of public opinion polls as its primary political marketing effort (Ibid: 61). In contrast, the PCP was responsible for creating the first political campaign poster in 1891, was first to begin using advertising agencies as early as 1917, and sponsored the first radio attack advertising in 1935 (Ibid). In 1993 the PCP also made one of the biggest gaffes in

Canadian political marketing history when it focus-group tested television attack ads featuring images of then Prime Minister Jean Chrétien's facial paralysis (Ibid: 62).

In the 2000 Canadian federal election campaign the LPC used extensive public polling and geo-demographic software to analyze sophisticated market intelligence to “define the CAP's product before that party could”, successfully branding the CAP as “a home for politically incorrect intolerants” and establishing the so-called “hidden agenda” of the populist right-wing party (Marland, 2005: 65-66). Marland acknowledges that the use of market intelligence is crucial to obtaining and maintaining power: it can be “used to identify not only benefits for electors, but also negative messages that can be used as part of a conflict marketing strategy” (Ibid: 74). In the era of the never-ending campaign the importance of pre-campaign communications cannot be understated: “by the time the official campaign begins, the cumulative effects of political communications are now thought to overpower the short-term influences during the campaign itself” (Ibid: 14). This means the use of negative advertising, even though research indicates voters find it distasteful, “is necessary, if only for juxtaposition” (Ibid: 216).

In response to the negative branding strategies of the LPC in the 2000 campaign the CAP focused its efforts on reversing the damage by attempting to convince voters the CAP was an improved political offering and not simply a repackaging of Reform policies. This process proved difficult because the implementation phase did not seek sufficient internal reaction from party candidates and members (Marland, 2005: 68). Compounding problems for the CAP was the refusal of then leader Stockwell Day to engage in proactive advertising attacks against the LPC, choosing instead to adopt an “agenda of respect”. In an interview with the *Ottawa Citizen*, Day is quoted as saying that

“If he [Chrétien] gets some particular joy out of going after me, then I feel better that I made him feel better” (Ottawa Citizen, 2000, October 26). This “high-road”, anti-Machiavellian strategy did not work: the LPC won an even larger majority<sup>9</sup>, but their effectiveness as a MOP suffered due to a focus on brand preservation over bold vision, says Marland. Even if a political party’s campaign is driven by market-oriented research, when in government there is a tendency for parties to “revert to a leadership driven sales orientation” (Marland, 2003b: 212). Furthermore, the pressures of government often require the governing party to make decisions that may not adhere to the prescribed desires of the electorate: “political consumers may not always know what they want, and short term wants may conflict with long-term needs” (Ibid: 213). The LPC was a MOP that devolved into a SOP: “[their] stagnant product required governance by opinion polls” (Marland, 2005: 66). The CAP also failed to convince voters it was more than “just a dressed-up sales operation whose core product had not sufficiently adjusted” (Ibid: 69). Marland also contends “populist, ideological and fundamentalist oriented parties are less likely to be MOPS because they believe to understand the wants and needs of their constituents, a potential detriment to the CAP’s effectiveness as an MOP” (Ibid: 73).

When Chrétien decided to retire as leader of the LPC in late 2003, the leadership of the party was passed on to his finance minister and political rival Paul Martin (Marland, 2005: 75). Recognizing the growing strength of the newly formed CPC in the vote-rich province of Ontario, Martin and the LPC were able to sustain the “hidden agenda” narrative for the 2004 campaign, ultimately winning a minority government. The repositioning of the CPC from SOP to MOP, in addition to factors surrounding the

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<sup>9</sup> According to Elections Canada, the 2000 Canadian federal election results are as follows: LPC (155 seats), CAP (60 seats), BQ (44 seats), NDP (21 seats) and PCP (20 seats).

sponsorship scandal<sup>10</sup>, directly contributed to the decline in the LPC's electoral fortunes (Blais, Gidengil, Nadeau and Neviite, 2006). The CPC was a new political party that was "more market oriented than [had] been since the 1993 campaign and it [presented] Canadians with seemingly better offerings" (Marland, 2005: 75). According to historical trends, the emergence of a "more centralist conservative party" was the only viable alternative to the LPC, blending the marketing approach of its rivals with the ideological populism of its predecessors (Ibid: 63-64). The trouble for the LPC came about when "...the longer a government goes unchallenged by another MOP, the further it can descend into a SOP, or even a POP, and the less democratic accountability exists for its decision-making" (Ibid: 75).

The 2006 campaign saw the CPC form a minority government, an outcome Berger & Pare (2008) argue is largely due to elements of a sophisticated market-oriented strategy which had not previously been identified in Canadian politics (Ibid: 57.) The CPC was still "something between a SOP and a MOP, using marketing to sell an ideologically based product" (Delacourt & Marland, 2009: 49). While the marketing-oriented approach may assist political parties in winning elections, its effects on democracy are open to debate. Marland (2005) argues incumbency in Canada<sup>11</sup> leads to an "unfair advantage of having the resources to adopt a market orientation while the

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<sup>10</sup> The sponsorship scandal emerged during the spring of 2002 when evidence surfaced that the LPC had set up a fund to help promote federalism in the wake of the 1995 Quebec referendum. The money was supposed to be used to raise Canada's profile in Quebec, however, the Auditor General's investigation of the matter found that "\$100 million was paid to a variety of communications agencies in the form of fees and commissions and said the program was basically designed to generate commissions for these companies rather than to produce any benefit for Canadians" (*CBC News online*, 2006, October 26).

<sup>11</sup> Under the 2006 *Federal Accountability Act* verbal-only reports are prohibited and departments and agencies are required to send a final written report on research findings obtained under contract to Library and Archives Canada within six months of completing data collection.

opposition parties do not” (Ibid: 209). In the highly competitive Canadian political market<sup>12</sup>, Marland argues, political marketing plays an integral role for any major political party on the national level that wants to govern. That being said, Marland also argues that Canadian political marketing has still not yet reached its full expression because the complexities of elections are not easily adapted to marketing techniques:

Political marketing also begs some public policy attention because of weaknesses associated with the transfer of commercial practices to politics...media intensity, the brevity of the campaign, a winner-take-all environment, a fixed public decision day and public debate of governance issues are just some of the features that are peculiar to politics

(Marland, 2005: 73-74).

In September 2009, Marland co-authored a column in *Policy Options* magazine with senior political correspondent Susan Delacourt of the *Toronto Star* in which they described how “politicians have to be seen, and see themselves, as more than door-to-door salespersons and how marketing is playing a role in Canadian politics” (Delacourt & Marland, 2009: 47). Marland once again applied the Lees-Marshment framework (2001) to the Canadian political landscape. In this latest analysis the authors identified to changes in strategies of the CPC, blending the approaches of the SOP, POP and MOP: “the Conservatives were a sales machine in 2008, satisfied to use their pre-writ research to guide a campaign of persuasion”, noting that the CPC spent “two and a half times more on research in 2006” (Ibid: 50).

Political purists are uncomfortable with the idea of politics and election campaigns being reduced to a consumerist transaction because it “encourages a bland, but

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<sup>12</sup> There are four mainstream political parties in the Canadian House of Commons: the LPC, the CPC, the New Democratic Party (NDP) and the BQ.

pragmatic, managerial style of governance that prioritizes short-term populist decisions” (Delacourt & Marland, 2009: 50). They also contend that in Canada, with the number of competing interests and multiple political parties, “it isn’t good enough to be ideological. To move into 24 Sussex a party leader needs to lead a party that is responsive to what the electorate wants, especially if that means internal change” (Ibid: 48). Although this approach follows both Machiavellian and reflexive logics, Delacourt and Marland advise that Harper and the CPC face significant challenges in sustaining the complete transition from SOP to MOP:

They longer they govern, the more difficult the Conservatives will find it to adjust their political product and to refresh their brand positioning...A repeat of the 2008 election, which involved slight policy manoeuvres and a communications blitz, is internally palatable and less risky than the alternative of leadership renewal

(Delacourt & Marland, 2009: 51).

But are the political marketing actions of the CPC a shameless promotion of a political product or a genuine effort to include marginalized groups in democratic debate? What is the impact of political marketing on the credibility of political parties and politicians? Could a market-oriented approach lead to a “more dignified, reflective and detailed debate about proposed policy than has hitherto been the case?” (Lees-Marshment & Lilleker, 2005: 216).

### **The Reflexive Communication Code**

By exploring the interconnection of the early and contemporary theories of Machiavelli (1513), Habermas (1962), Beck & Giddens (1994) and Lees-Marshment (2001) as applied to the Canadian political context, this thesis posits that the CPC followed a model

for political communication that can be described as a reflexive communication code. This model for political communication considers the motives, goals and potential outcomes politicians should consider when undertaking political communications strategies and tactics in a multicultural political context.

In the view of Machiavelli (1513), a ruler or governing figure should examine “a problem situationally and flex the ethical absolutes only to the degree necessary to gain the desired ends” (Eid, 2008: 243). However, if the desired results are not achieved, a “prince” or political party can engage, either consciously or unconsciously, in a process of self-analysis, reorganization and adjustment to achieve the desired end – a phenomenon known as reflexivity or reflexive modernity (Beck & Giddens, 1994). Beck and Giddens suggest there is no historical breakdown in modernity and the ongoing spiral of development is fueled by globalizing forces and the institutions of public life, including politics, are subject to radical transformations. This thesis details the transformation of the CPC as a process fuelled by reflexive modernization: an unstoppable process that was essential to obtain power, the ultimate goal of any political party. As Beck (1994) explains

Change, unstoppable and uncontrollable, something that appeared completely inconceivable, even blasphemous, to earlier periods, now comes to be taken for granted, a certainty that always deserves to be questioned; it becomes the law of modernity to which everyone must submit at the risk of political demise

(Beck, 1994: 26).

As illustrated by the effects of reflexive modernity, in an increasingly globalized society communication tools and practices become pivotal in understanding power paradigms in the modern social order. As such, the rules of democracy are reduced to a game between

competing communication machines. By placing a higher emphasis on the role of business in politics, marketing concepts have filtered down into society's understanding of post-traditional politics. From strategic research and product design to market orientation and branding, politics has been reinvented in an economic model where marketing allows political parties to seek office by developing policies that are in lock-step with voter preferences. But if the role of the citizen is reduced to that of consumer, then does politics by extension become a commodity and democracy a competitive marketplace of ideas where the one-day sale (i.e. elections) is the ultimate goal? In essence, politics has been transformed from its traditional form into a commercialized, heavily-marketed, institutionalized commodity. This transformation was an autonomous and inevitable reaction to the realities of the marketplace of ideas.

After over a decade of losses to the LPC, the newly-united right wing parties of Canada merged under the CPC banner in an effort to present a strong, viable alternative for government. The CPC engaged in a process of reflexive modernization by acknowledging that previous policies and approaches toward immigration and multiculturalism required reexamination and restructuring in order to present a desirable political product for ethnic voters. Assessed through the lens of reflexivity, the subsequent political communication strategies of the CPC vis-à-vis ethnic voters involved a teleological approach to politics wherein the ends justifies the means. Modern political parties and rulers must recognize the influence of marketing and an increasingly fragmented public sphere and how market information can be harnessed for political purposes.

In the Canadian context there has been significant interest in discovering the desires and concerns of previously marginalized groups and thereby opening up politically-motivated counter publics outside the traditional public sphere as described by Habermas (1962). The interests of ethnic minorities in Canada have had a long history of exclusion from matters of public debate, calling into question the hegemonic history of discourse in a country that espouses the virtues of multiculturalism. Furthermore, in order to determine the wants and desires of the electorate the CPC adopted a market-oriented approach, as described by Lees-Marshment (2001). Under the MOP approach, the CPC engaged in a sophisticated political communications strategy to identify target ethnic groups on the national and local levels. In the schema of business, political marketing reduces the role of citizens to that of consumers, politics to a commodity and politicians and communication strategists to advertising gurus and marketing professionals. The data analyzed in this research explores how the CPC conducted broad demographic research and public polling to understand the diverging interests of ethnic voters in order to supplant the LPC as the party of choice among these segments of the electorate.

Canada is the most multicultural nation on the planet and while all Canadian political parties have engaged in pandering to ethnic voters the biggest challenge facing the CPC in its transformation from a SOP to a MOP is convincing the ethnic voting public that the new policies are genuine and not simply a cynical, politically motivated means to an end (Marland, 2003b: 211).

## Chapter 3

### Methodology

As outlined in the previous chapter, for better or worse politics is about obtaining and maintaining power. A self-aware, or reflexive, modern political party understands the importance of marketing strategies in appealing to an increasingly fragmented and diverse electorate. These reflexive, modern political parties must also balance the necessity of political success within the boundaries of ethical behaviour. This thesis will explore the reflexive communication code of the CPC by drawing on the previously explained theoretical framework to detail the motives, goals, and outcomes of the ethnic outreach efforts as described by CPC insiders and as reported in the news media. Specifically, this thesis will explore whether the CPC reflexive communication code is a reflection of a genuine shift in policy regarding immigration and the ethno-multicultural model or a politically motivated strategy to obtain power. This research will also examine the positive and negative outcomes of the CPC ethnic outreach strategy.

#### **Definitions of Key Concepts**

Before proceeding, it is important to clearly define key concepts, following Neuman's (2007) instructions for qualitative methodologies. Although there are certainly many different definitions for a single construct, the following concepts are defined for the purposes of this thesis: *ethnic*, *multiculturalism*, *political outreach*, and *the reflexive communication code*.

Since the definition of race and ethnicity are plagued by problems of validity and superficiality, defining these terms for the purposes of this thesis requires acknowledging differing perspectives. Derived from the Greek *ethnos* (meaning people or nation), the term *ethnic* is predominantly employed to denote visible minorities or “non-dominant immigration and their descendants” (Whittington & Williams, 2000: 329). The *Employment Equity Act* (1995) defines visible minorities as “persons, other than Aboriginal peoples, who are non-Caucasian in race or non-white in colour”. Statistic Canada goes further to define visible minorities in Canada as “Chinese, South Asian, Black, Arab/West Asian, Filipino, Southeast Asian, Latin American, Japanese, Korean and Pacific Islander<sup>13</sup>”. While the term *ethnic*, *ethnicity*, or *ethno-cultural group* can take on a variety of meanings depending on context, for the purposes of this research the use of the term as described by the interviewees includes non-Caucasian immigrants, visible minorities, religious, cultural, and linguistic groups having distinct identities outside the Canadian Caucasian, Anglo-Saxon, English and French-speaking majority. Furthermore, ethnic ridings constitute those constituencies with a population of visible minorities and cultural communities making up more than 20 percent of the total population. Reports and interview respondents indicated approximately 70-80 federal electoral districts across Canada contain ethnic populations of 20 percent or greater (Canadian Election Study, 2004; Collins, 2008, September 17; MacCharles, 2008, February 23).

According to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada the official *multiculturalism* policy of Canada “[affirms] the value and dignity of all Canadians, regardless of their racial or ethnic origins, their language, or their religious affiliation”

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<sup>13</sup> According to Statistics Canada, the 1996 census was the first to ask direct questions to respondents on the subject of ethnicity (Statistics Canada, 2010).

(Citizenship & Immigration Canada, 2010). Although guaranteed under Section 15 (1) of the Canadian *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (1982), the ethno-multicultural model of immigration policy in Canada has been the topic of considerable debate since the creation of the *Multiculturalism Act* (1971). Neil Bissoondath (1993) contends the federal multiculturalism policy deepens racism and ethnic divisions: “in stressing the differences between groups, in failing to emphasize that this is a country with its own ideals and attitudes that demand adherence, the [multiculturalism] policy has instead aided in a hardening of hatreds” (Ibid: 376). In fact, prominent Canadian author Andrew Cohen suggests that

The greatest threat to Canada in the next half century will come not from the United States...or Quebec...More likely, the threats to Canada will come from immigration and decentralization...The failure of memory, the weakness of citizenship, the tolerance of ethnic nationalism, the willingness to compromise one too many times. This is a weakness at our core

(Cohen, 2007: 256).

Others advocate for a model of multiculturalism that more closely resembles “liberal individualism”, meaning equality among all Canadians according to universal human rights standards (Whittington & Williams, 2000: 347). In an article written in the aftermath of the 2005 terrorist attacks on London subways, prominent columnist and social commentator Naomi Klein wrote:

The brand of multiculturalism practiced in Britain (and France, Germany, Canada...) has little to do with genuine equality. It is instead a Faustian bargain, struck between vote-seeking politicians and self-appointed community leaders, one that keeps ethnic minorities tucked away in state-funded peripheral ghettos while the centres of public life remain largely unaffected by seismic shifts in the national ethnic makeup

(Klein, 2005, August 29).

Recent critics of the model contest that the Canadian ethno-multicultural mosaic is an outdated “relic” and a rigid model for understanding the ever-changing realities of diversity in Canada (Habacon, 2009, November 21). Alden Habacon is the founder of *Schema Magazine* that focuses on ethnicity and multiculturalism in Canada. He argues the ethno-multicultural mosaic is no longer a credible model with which to explain diversity in Canada because it centres around the notion that ethnicity and ancestry are key descriptors when labeling an individual. For example “Filipino-Canadian”, “Chinese-Canadian”, and a myriad of other monikers are designed to categorize individuals according to ethnicity. Habacon criticizes the ethno-multicultural mosaic model because it places an over-emphasis on ethnicity and race, “regardless of how little or how much [one’s] ethnicity is a part of [their] life” (Ibid). Many second generation, or “Gen. 1.5” Canadians as Habacon describes them, continually face the question “where are you really from” suggesting that ancestry is the only true definition of one’s cultural identity. In *Schema Magazine*’s six-part exploration of this perennial question contributors shared their stories of being compartmentalized and reduced to labels such a “Caribbean-Canadian” or “African-Canadian” instead of accepting “Canadian” as a sufficient descriptor. Habacon suggests a new model for understanding diversity in Canada and around the world - “Multiculturalism 2.0” – a concept that encompasses all aspects of an individual’s persona, including ancestry, race, religion, culture, language, interests, experiences, work experiences, social circles, and any other characteristics that inform one’s sense of self (Ibid). In the end, Jack Granatstein (2008) sums up the state of Canadian multiculturalism with great clarity: “the Canadian vision of multiculturalism, in all its simultaneous good will and self-congratulation, is no longer sustainable” (Ibid: 86).

*Political outreach* in Canadian politics is defined for the purposes of this thesis as the efforts to which a politician or political party can undertake to expand the number of people who are receptive to their political messaging. Given the vast geographical, economic, social and cultural differences from province to province (particularly when comparing urban against rural ridings) political communications plays an important role in outreach efforts as parties and politicians seek to understand how the different perspectives and tensions that define the political landscape of Canada interact with the political the offering of their party. As exhibited with the CPC, outreach among ethnic communities has been a strategy employed to expand the scope and impact of the party's political communications efforts. In documents obtained by *The Globe & Mail*, the CPC defines outreach as the opposite of "Inreach" adding that since they "already spend a great deal of [their] volunteer time within the confines of [their] immediate party...outreach means to look outside your normal comfort zone" (Leblanc, 2007, October 17).

Considering the relevant theories and historical background of this research, the *reflexive communication code* emerges as the core concept behind this research. As outlined in the comprehensive theoretical framework presented in the literature review, the CPC embarked on a teleological, reflexive process by adapting and reinventing the image, brand and communication strategies of the party to suit the desires of winnable constituents – namely ethnic voters. By engaging counter-public groups through the use of political marketing tools, the CPC has adopted a sophisticated political communication strategy to target specific ethnic groups.

## **Research Design**

This thesis follows a qualitative research design since “the [research] design is the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study’s initial research questions and, ultimately, to its conclusions” (Creswell, 2007: 20).

First, the following assumptions, based on theories from the literature review, apply to this thesis. From an ontological perspective political communication is an ever-evolving area of inquiry. While some critics claim sophisticated marketing strategies have limited application to the political product (O’Shaughnessy, 2001; Schudson, 2006), Margaret Scammell (1999) argues there are empowering possibilities for “citizen consumers” in an increasingly globalized market of ideas. Whether favoured or feared, for the purposes of this research political marketing is recognized as a transforming and dominant force in the study of political communication strategies and tactics. The impact of marketing strategies on notions of democracy and the ethical ramifications of these practices are explored in this research.

Second, to explore the epistemological roots of the study, Habermas’ public sphere theory (1962) is questioned as an appropriate democratic model in the Canadian multicultural context. Counter-publics, as described by Fraser (1990), emerged outside the traditional Habermasian public sphere in response to the anti-democratic exclusion of marginalized groups in society. In addition this thesis adopts the assumption that the Lees-Marshment model for market-oriented political parties (2001) is an appropriate measurement to apply to the Canadian context, as demonstrated by Marland’s (2005) application of the Lees-Marshment model to the Canadian political landscape.

Third, axiological assumptions require researchers to “admit the value-laden

nature of the study and actively report their values and biases as well as the value-laden nature of information gathered in the field” (Creswell, 2007: 18). The political tactics espoused by Machiavelli have always been controversial. In present-day democratic politics it is difficult to imagine any politician or leader would openly endorse Machiavellian tactics due to perceptions of malevolence. For the purposes of this study, however, ethical and moral values are extracted from the political arena in order to understand politics as a science and power as the primary goal objective. Furthermore, it must be noted that while the opinions of the informants of this thesis are grounded in a particular partisan political perspective, measures were taken to eliminate the potential for bowdlerization, “a deliberate distortion of the past designed to protect the appearance of a particular (usually favourable) image” according to Neuman (2007). Verifications against public records and secondary sources were made to ensure the validity of the information collected during the interview process. There was also a risk that sources were inclined to downplay their motivations as the examination of political outreach among visible minorities is an often racially-charged, politically-sensitive issue.

These assumptions are derived from the data collected from in-depth interviews and archival research and informed by the theoretical frameworks that emerged from relevant threads of knowledge. While it is true that “validity arises out of the cumulative impact of hundreds of small, diverse details that only together create a heavy weight of evidence” (Neuman, 2007: 223), qualitative studies cannot uncover causality. This study relies on a heavy weight of evidence to illustrate the magnitude of the findings presented. The interview subjects for this research are Members of Parliament and CPC strategists that revealed in-depth accounts of the process undergone by the CPC and the motives,

goals and outcomes of the ethnic outreach strategy.

Considering the key concepts of the theoretical framework, the archival data and in-depth interviews reveal how the reflexive communication code of the CPC has been implemented. Through a chronological, re-storying narrative, this thesis outlines the CPC ethnic outreach strategy to understand the ethical ramifications and implications of these sophisticated political marketing strategies on democracy and civic engagement.

### **Research Questions**

Given the main purpose of the thesis is to explore the motives, goals and outcomes of the reflexive communication code of the CPC - specifically from 2004 to 2010 - the following are key research questions:

RQ1. To what extent is the ideological moderation of the CPC's policies on multiculturalism a genuine reflection of a policy shift or a politically motivated strategy to gain electoral support?

RQ2. In what ways do ethical considerations factor into the goals of the political communication strategies and the reflexive communication code of the CPC?

RQ3. What are the positive and negative impacts of the strategic political communication strategies of the CPC toward ethnic voters?

## **Data Collection and Analysis**

The data collection methods for this thesis are in-depth interviews and archival research. Following a narrative analysis, data from the in-depth interviews and archival research were analyzed in order answer the research questions and apply the findings to the epistemology of this thesis to explain the reflexive communication code of the CPC.

Interviews can be problematic due factors including memory transience, misattribution, suggestibility, bias and absent-mindedness. However, this data collection method was selected for its ability to “solicit people’s descriptions and explanations of events in their world” (Jackson, Gillis & Verberg, 2007: 448). Additionally, Prus & Grills (2003) state that in-depth interviews are the “single most important method of gathering data” (Prus & Grills, cited in Jackson, Gillis & Verberg, 2007: 448). As such, ensuring studies are driven by informant data rather than theory is vital. A purposive sampling technique was employed in the selection of participants for this research using “strategic, clear criteria”, as outlined below (Ibid: 429). The in-depth interviews were designed to “solicit people’s descriptions and explanation of events in their world” (Ibid: 458) and informants in this study were selected specifically for their expertise on the subject matter. They were asked open-ended questions about the effects of political marketing on Canadian democracy in an effort to situate the CPC reflexive communication code within the larger schema of political communication, democracy and ethics. For example, questions regarding the specific campaign techniques, motives, successes, and failures of ethnic outreach provided rich detail central to the thrust of the study. In-depth interviews followed a think aloud approach, allowing respondents to explain in detail the rationale behind their answers. Verbal probes and follow-up questions were employed in order to

encourage respondents to answer more fully, where required. The interviews were conducted in person and by telephone when necessary and were digitally recorded and transcribed.

Since 2004 the number of ethnic ridings won by the CPC has been steadily rising, culminating in the 2008 federal campaign with the election of six<sup>14</sup> more CPC Members of Parliament from ethnically diverse ridings whose political communication strategies and tactics will inform this research. Two CPC campaign strategists, the current Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (2008 – present) as well as a former CPC Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (2006 – 2007) were also interviewed to flesh out the larger concepts and contexts of the CPC ethnic outreach strategy on the national level.

The following nine significant informants participated in this research:

- Mr. Bob Dechert, CPC Member of Parliament for Mississauga-Erindale. Mr. Dechert has run as a candidate for the CPC in this riding in all three federal elections since 2004;
- Mrs. Dona Cadman, CPC Member of Parliament for Surrey North. Mrs. Cadman is the widow of Chuck Cadman, former CPC representative of the Surrey North riding;
- Mr. Andrew Saxton, CPC Member of Parliament for North Vancouver;
- Mr. Paul Calandra, CPC Member of Parliament for Oak Ridges-Markham;
- Mr. Peter Kent, CPC Member of Parliament for Thornhill, Minister of State for the Americas. Mr. Kent is also well known as a former television news anchor;

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<sup>14</sup> Five of the six Members of Parliament selected for this research agreed to participate.

- Hon. Jason Kenney, CPC Member of Parliament for Calgary Southeast, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism;
- Hon. Monte Solberg, former CPC Member of Parliament for Medicine Hat and former Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (2006-2007). Mr. Solberg is currently a columnist for SUN Media and Senior Adviser at the strategic communications and public affairs firm Fleishman-Hillard Canada;
- Two CPC strategists with particular expertise in ethnic outreach on both local and national campaigns<sup>15</sup>.

Participants in the study indicated ethnic outreach played a significant role in the political communication efforts of the CPC and were selected for their expertise on the implementation of the political marketing and communication strategies. These interview subjects are extremely rare due to the nature of the subject under examination as public office holders and political strategists have vested interests in non-disclosure of strategies and tactics to maintain institutional secrets and prevent infringement by the competition.

Ethics approval for the participation of human subjects in this research was obtained from the University of Ottawa's Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board. A detailed analysis of the ethical parameters of this study was presented to the Board and clearance to conduct the research was granted. In accordance with the requirements of the Research Ethics Board, interviews were solicited for a length of one

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<sup>15</sup> The identities of these individuals are confidential for the purposes of this thesis as per the guidelines obtained for the ethical clearance of the research. All other interview subjects listed are current and former public office holders.

hour at the time and location of the participants' choosing. By signing the informed consent waivers, participants indicate their understanding of the purpose of the research, the potential risks associated with the disclosure of information, and the assurances of the researcher to respect the rights and confidentiality of participants. Since the majority of the informants for this thesis are public figures, subjects were guaranteed that specific answers will not be attributed directly to individual participants however information provided by participants may indirectly allude to their identities.

Confidentiality of information was assured to establish trust in the researcher and ensure participants are uninhibited in their responses. While other political parties (specifically the LPC) would offer different insights into the examination of ethnic outreach in Canadian politics, this thesis focuses on the significant information gleaned from nine CPC interview subjects in addition to relevant archival data to saturate the model.

The archival research for this thesis was conducted over a two-year period, beginning in 2008, and focused on data collected from commercial media accounts, actuarial records, and official documentary archives. A thorough search of national and ethnic newspapers yielded the widest variety of in-depth commentary and analysis of the CPC ethnic outreach strategies. A Command News search yielded 36 articles with search dates from January 2004 to May 2009. The search term specifically uncovered articles that referenced the CPC's policies and strategies with regard to ethnic voters. Additional newspaper and magazine articles referencing the topic were uncovered in subsequent months leading to the preparation of the thesis with the last referenced article dated April 2010. Primary print publications include the *Globe & Mail*, *Canadian Press*, *Toronto*

*Star*, and the *National Post*, in addition to magazine articles, government press releases, Government of Canada reports, and CPC campaign communication materials. A variety of political communication products were acquired<sup>16</sup> from CPC Members of Parliament and the Prime Minister's Office and are referenced in the research, including the 2004 CPC Policy Declaration. The articles were organized chronologically and reviewed for narratives that highlight evidence of sophisticated political communication strategies and themes surrounding the motives, goals, and the outcomes of the ethnic outreach strategy of the CPC. The themes and threads of information were recorded separately, noting the source of the information and the historical-political context in which it appeared. This non-probability purposive sampling technique is defined by Neuman (2007) as evidence the researcher has "[used] judgment in selecting cases with a specific purpose in mind" (Ibid: 347) allowing the content to determine whether or not it is selected for study. The sum information extracted from these sources serve as counter examples, added context and triangulation of the statements and assertions made by CPC strategists. A thorough review of historical accounts was conducted in order to ensure accuracy in the study.

Following a second-order narrative analysis the information gleaned from the in-depth interviews and archival research form the basis on which the "researchers construct a narrative about other people's experiences (e.g. biography) or present a collective story that represents the lives of many" (Creswell, 2007: 119). Also known as "restorying" (Ibid: 56), the structuring and organization of the accounts of CPC Members of Parliament, current and former CPC Ministers of Citizenship and Immigration, and the

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<sup>16</sup> Many of the materials acquired from sources are no longer in public circulation, including the CPC 2004 Policy Document and the Rosh Hashanah greeting cards from Prime Minister Harper (see appendices A, B & C).

insights of CPC strategists illustrate a complex narrative that highlights the motives, goals and outcomes of the CPC ethnic outreach strategy.

Jackson, Gillis & Verberg (2007) propose several tests for researchers to employ in their studies to ensure accuracy and truthfulness in the study. First, truthfulness of the findings needs to be established in addition to defining the criteria by which this will be measured. The data collection methods and analysis of the findings throughout the course of the study were key components in assuring the accuracy of the results. Furthermore, informants were assured their responses to interview questions would not be directly attributed to them or identified as their own to ensure that answers to interview questions were uninhibited and true to the facts. Given the purposive sampling of the informants, the expertise of the interview subjects (detailed below) is paramount to the authenticity of the study. In addition, the archival data, including commercial media accounts, actuarial records, official documentary archives, and both Government and political Websites, fill in any potential gaps and provide further details to extend the saturation of the model.

The second measure of reliability of the study according to Jackson, Gillis & Verberg (2007) is whether or not the results can be replicated. While the reflexive communication code of the CPC can be applied to other political parties, the specific details surrounding the political communication practices of the CPC may or may not be replicated by other parties as this research examines phenomena and data specific to the CPC.

Finally, Jackson, Gillis & Verberg (2007) ask whether the results of the study reflect biases in the researcher. While Creswell (2007) contends the history, culture, and personal experiences of the researcher are important reflexive elements in qualitative

research to position researchers within the study, researchers must be sure that all personal biases and beliefs are set aside and do not interfere with those of the interviewees. Given the fact that the researcher is an exempt staffer in the office of a CPC Cabinet Minister, careful attention to bracketing was carried out to ensure impartiality in the study. Further, interview questions were reviewed and approved by independent third parties prior to the undertaking of the research.

## Chapter 4

### Findings and Analysis

Through the analysis of the data collected in the interviews with CPC strategists, Members of Parliament, Cabinet Ministers, the archival material and campaign communications, the following chronological narrative will outline the ethnic outreach strategies of the CPC vis-à-vis ethnic groups. Following a discussion of the findings, this research explores the motives, goals, and outcomes of the sophisticated political communication practices and strategies employed by the CPC in the context of the Canadian pluralistic, multicultural political landscape.

#### **A New Party, A New Strategy (2004 – 2006)**

Following the 2003 by the merger of the CAP and the PCP, a current Member of the CPC<sup>17</sup> caucus described the creation of the new party as an opportunity to

Overcome three to four decades of negative branding by the Liberals and some of the mainstream media about [the] party being hostile to immigration and not understanding Canada's diversity...and present to people the positive history of diversity that the broad, small C-conservative tradition in Canadian politics represents.

After its first policy convention in 2004 the CPC presented an official Policy Declaration in preparation for the impending election against LPC Prime Minister Martin and his minority government<sup>18</sup>. The 2004 Policy Declaration was designed to re-brand the CPC

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<sup>17</sup> Interview subject is a former member of the CAP and Reform Party.

<sup>18</sup> Prime Minister Martin was sworn in December 12, 2003 as successor to Prime Minister Jean Chrétien. He won the leadership of the LPC in November of 2003.

as a more moderate party in an effort to appeal to wider segments of the population. It covered a wide range of issues targeting ethnic voters and new Canadians including the assertion that a CPC government would be pro-immigration and support small businesses and entrepreneurs (Plamondon, 2006: 369; CPC Policy Declaration, 2004). The Policy Document was accepted and adopted by delegates and caucus members at the convention, signifying a positive internal reaction to the more centrist, moderate policies outlined therein (Plamondon, 2006: 360). This step was essential to position the CPC as a viable alternative to the LPC in the next election (Berger & Pare, 2008: 47) as it allowed the party to shed its affiliations with the perceived anti-immigration history of its Reform and CAP roots and reach out more effectively to ethnic voters who traditionally vote for the LPC.

The CPC pledged to improve foreign credentials and prior work experience for immigrants, formally recognizing that “Canadian society has been built by successive waves of immigration from all sectors of the globe, and that immigration tremendously enriches our economy and national life<sup>19</sup>” (CPC Policy Declaration, 2004: 29). They also asserted that a Conservative government lead by Harper would develop a “Made in Canada foreign policy” that better articulated the core values of the nation, specifically “democracy and the rule of law, individual freedom and human rights, free markets and free trade, and compassion for the less fortunate” (Ibid: 40). These two planks of the Policy Document were clearly aimed at attracting the sizeable ethnic vote in major urban centres with mainstream, “small C-conservative” policies that placed an emphasis on the economic benefits of immigration, while at the same time asserting a Conservative

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<sup>19</sup> See appendix A.

government would protect and advocate core Canadian values including national security and foreign policy, said one CPC Member of Parliament.

Although the CPC suffered a relatively narrow defeat in the summer 2004 federal election<sup>20</sup>, the Conservatives were bolstered by the election of an additional 27 CPC Members of Parliament and continued to focus their political communication and marketing efforts on re-branding to become a more centrist party in order to one day to replace the Liberal party as Canada's "natural governing party" (*CBC News online*, 2006). In fact, Linda Gerber, a sociologist at the University of Guelph who specializes in ethnic voting trends, conducted an in-depth analysis of the ethnic vote in 2004 and came to the conclusion the LPC's lock on the immigrant vote had substantially weakened and the CPC was the apparent benefactor (Greenaway, 2008, October 24).

In the post-election analysis, one CPC organizer from the GTA made a presentation to Harper that explained the importance of outreach to ethnic and cultural communities. The organizer asked Harper if he enjoyed being Leader of the Opposition to which he replied he would probably prefer to be prime minister. The CPC strategist, interviewed for this study, says they then outlined a plan to make further headway in the heavily ethnic ridings in the "905 and 416 areas" in and around Toronto, Ontario - an area of the province that is extremely vote-rich and presents opportunity for all national political parties. After careful analysis of the demographics and research on potentially

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<sup>20</sup> On June 28, 2004, LPC leader Paul Martin formed a minority government with 135 seats over the CPC's 99 seats. The previous election (2000) saw LPC leader Jean Chrétien secure a third majority government with 172 seats over the CAP's 66 seats (Elections Canada, 2004); one CPC Member of Parliament said the loss was due to "scare tactics from Liberal apologists in the media" that reversed the vote in the final weekend of the 2004 campaign which had the CPC ahead in the polls.

supportive ethnic and cultural groups, the ethnic outreach strategy was born - and another federal election was on the horizon<sup>21</sup>.

The ethnic outreach strategy included several components that put an emphasis on appealing to undecided ethnic voters and to overcome the racist and extremist stigma and skepticism that plagued the legacy parties and the new leader Stephen Harper, a former Reform Party member (Plamondon, 2006: 369). In order for the strategy to be effective, however, the attitudes of the candidates had to change. Initially there was some hesitation and resistance to attend ethnic events, says one CPC strategist:

I had to practically beat them with sticks to get them to go to ethnic events. They would say ‘they don’t want us there – they don’t care about us’ [and I would say...] if you don’t talk to them, why would they talk to you? Guess what? You’re the guy or the woman that has got to start the conversation because we’re the ones who have been, frankly, ignoring them to our own detriment.

In preparation for yet another federal election, one CPC strategist said the party put forward new immigration policies in April 2005 after holding public consultations across the country on possible reforms to the immigration system. The new CPC policies endorsed the practice of Canadians posting immigration bonds when requesting visitor permits for family members and other policies including “extending automatic citizenship to children adopted from abroad once the adoption is final and reducing the need for immigration minister to issue controversial temporary resident permits” (Curry, 2005, April 26). The policy paper states that “as a government in waiting, the Conservative Party needs to have a thorough understanding of what reforms are essential to Canada’s immigration system” including a commitment to “increased, stable and long-term funding

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<sup>21</sup> On average, minority parliaments in Canadian federal politics last approximately 18 months ([www.parl.gc.ca](http://www.parl.gc.ca)).

for programs such as language training and job search skills” (CPC Policy Declaration, 2004). The CPC put out a swath of television commercials in preparation for the upcoming election including one highlighting the party’s immigration policies. The advertisement featured a diverse cast of CPC Members of Parliament, including Rahim Jaffer, the first Ismaili Muslim Member of Parliament, and Bev Oda, the first Japanese-Canadian woman elected to Parliament, ending with Harper proclaiming “it’s time we stood up for hard-working immigrants” (McArthur, 2005, September 20). The LPC slammed the proposals with then Immigration Minister Joe Volpe claiming the CPC “haven’t got out of the caves yet...it’s not a hidden agenda, it’s a creepy agenda” (Curry, 2005, April 26). Then Prime Minister Martin also called the CPC communication strategy toward ethnic voters as an “attempt to discriminate on the basis of nationality” (*National Post*, 2005, January 28).

Critics in the media also accused Harper of abandoning traditional right-wing policies (Milke, 2004, July 10) claiming he would merely end up “chasing [his] tail around in a circle and still fail at election time” (Ibid). Weighing in on the LPC legacy versus the CPC proposals, columnist John Ibbitson criticized Harper for not calling for a cut back on immigration rates, ironically the same policy the Reform Party was labeled “intolerant” and “racist” for suggesting in the 1990s. Despite the fact that the CPC was advocating for an immigration policy aimed at attracting more skilled immigrants,

Ibbitson claims

Our immigration policy, whatever its inefficiencies and abuses, is the proudest single achievement of the Liberal Party...[and ] in contrast, the Conservative Party has no immigration policy worthy of the name, and nothing Mr. Harper [says] changes that truth. Both he and his party are going to have to go much, much further before new Canadians can have

confidence that a Conservative government truly embraces the country we are becoming

(Ibbitson, 2006, January 5).

On November 28, 2005 a vote of non-confidence resulted in the defeat of Prime Minister Martin's minority government. Market research played a substantial role in the formation of the CPC's policy-heavy campaign strategy that was implemented in the long 2005 - 2006 winter election campaign<sup>22</sup>. Similar research continued on the ethnic outreach front with the creation of an "ethnic outreach S.W.A.T. team" consisting of a small number of CPC staff working to establish relationships with ethnic voters in different communities and setting up ethnic media opportunities, according to one CPC strategist. It was decided that ethnic media presented the "biggest bang for [their] buck":

*We organized a bunch of ethnic communications meetings, but really what we tried to do was make them really friendly – maybe it was lunch, maybe just a small reception. We invited all the media from particular communities, they would come in and sit down and had free reign to ask any kind of questions they wanted...[and] the coverage we got in the ethnic media during that election was way better than we had ever had before.*

Additionally, Jason Kenney – the young, Caucasian, Roman Catholic CPC Member of Parliament originally from Wilcox, Saskatchewan – became the CPC spokesman in multicultural communities, initiating a strategic grassroots effort to attract ethnic voters in multicultural communities. For example, with the local CPC candidate in tow, Kenney met with leaders in the sizeable Coptic Christian community in the GTA to discuss their general concerns and discover how the CPC could deliver results. One of the issues raised in the meeting with these Christian Egyptian immigrants was that they faced

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<sup>22</sup> At 55 days, the 2005-2006 general election campaign was the longest Canadian federal writ period since 1979 (Elections Canada, 2005).

discrimination in Egypt for their religious beliefs but were denied refugee status from the Canadian government. According to the local candidate Kenney pledged to those in attendance that if the CPC formed government he would raise the issue with the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights. He also informed them that if they would attend the committee meeting and share their stories, the Immigration and Refugee Board would be able to refer to their testimony as evidence that, in some cases, it may be appropriate to give refugee status to individuals for persecution over religious beliefs in Egypt<sup>23</sup>.

After a long winter campaign, on January 23, 2006 Canadians elected another minority government, but this time and for the first time in more than a decade the Government of Canada was formed by a right-wing party and leader: Prime Minister-elect Stephen Harper and the CPC. Post-election research showed the national increase in support for the CPC rose by approximately seven percent (CBC.ca, 2006). In ethnic ridings the average increase in support was 34 percent, including in the targeted ridings in the GTA. According to one CPC strategist “[the] increases in certain communities were pretty startling and pretty clear, so we knew that we were on the right track”. Using data gleaned from the 2006 Canadian Election Study, Blais, Gidengil, Everitt, Fournier & Nevitte (2006) also confirm the dissolution of support for the LPC among visible minority newcomers, citing 58 percent voting for the LPC in 2006 as compared to 71 percent in 2000.

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<sup>23</sup> Three months after the CPC formed government in 2006 Jason Kenney (then Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister) invited members of the Coptic Christian community to testify before the House of Commons committee.

## **Outreaching the Inside (2006-2008)**

Political marketing played a key role in the policy development and communication strategies during the 2006 campaign and there is evidence it continued throughout the next two years in government. The CPC ethnic outreach strategy continued to evolve through the use of market intelligence and polling to inform government policies, communications strategies, and the building up of strong relationships and contacts in cultural and ethnic communities. Under the direction of Deputy Chief of Staff and Director of Strategic Planning in the Prime Minister's Office, Patrick Muttart<sup>24</sup>, the CPC built a strategy to address the concerns and interests of ethnic voters and increase Harper's visibility among these groups. In particular, the CPC targeted approximately 30 ridings across the country where the CPC lost by five percent or less and ethnic voters could potentially make up the difference (MacCharles, 2008, February 23).

Recognizing his efforts in the area of ethnic outreach, Harper appointed Kenney as Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity in January 2007. As the Cabinet spokesperson for multiculturalism Kenney spearheads the CPC ethnic outreach strategy, working with a larger team supported by the Prime Minister's Office and organizers in targeted ethnic ridings across the country. Their short-term objective was to identify the priorities of ethnic voters and garner support in these communities, building toward a long-term objective to build enough support for the Tories to eventually

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<sup>24</sup> Patrick Muttart, a native of Woodstock, Ontario and graduate of the University of Ottawa, was "hired by Stephen Harper after he gave the Conservative leader a face-to-face brutal critique of the party's mistakes in the 2004 election campaign" (Valpy, 2008, September 13). Muttart is currently the Managing Director at Mercury Public Affairs ([www.mercurypublicaffairs.com/team-muttart.htm](http://www.mercurypublicaffairs.com/team-muttart.htm)).

“replace the Liberals as the primary voice of new Canadians and ethnic minorities<sup>25</sup>”.

Kenney and the ethnic outreach team sent out culturally specific mailings, often in the specific language of the targeted group, created detailed databases of supportive community contacts, delivered special greetings and provided representation on behalf the CPC Government at thousands of cultural events and celebrations across the country (MacCharles, 2008, February 23.)

In the Chinese-Canadian community the Chinese Head Tax, a discriminatory tax that unfairly targeted Chinese immigrants during the 1800s, was an issue that had “reached a boiling point in the community,” according to one CPC Member of Parliament. He explained that the LPC had previously attempted to address the issue but the community rejected the plan because it failed to issue a formal apology, offered no formal redress, and did not directly involve the grassroots community in the process. Recognizing an opportunity to make inroads with the Chinese-Canadian community, Harper campaigned in the 2005-2006 election to extend a formal apology in the House of Commons and redress for Chinese Head Tax survivors or their spouses – which he did as Prime Minister in June 2006 (Flanagan, 2008, November 14). The strategy paid off, according to one CPC insider:

The Chinese community saw that Stephen Harper understood their sense of their role in Canadian history, understood their community, honoured them, honoured their ancestors, and that built up a huge amount of good will, allowing us then to communicate our broader policy messages on small c-conservative issues like cutting taxes, fighting crime, and supporting families.

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<sup>25</sup> Excerpt from the CPC ethnic outreach presentation (see appendix D).

Other measures the CPC brought forward included: immediately cutting in half the \$975 right of landing fee for new immigrants; humanitarian aid for Somalia; creating the Air India Inquiry; lifting visa restrictions for eastern European countries; approving the use of temporary residence permits to people who are smuggled into Canada to work in the sex industry and other trades; investing \$53 million on Canada's Action Plan Against Racism; granting federal funding to improve security at ethnic and religious institutions in order to counter hate crimes; streamlined foreign adoption rules; and facilitated the immigration of more than 150 Vietnamese refugees who were left stateless in the Philippines for 20 years (Collins, 2008, September 17; Gandhi, 2008, March 1; Leblanc, 2007, October 16; Laghi, 2006, May 12; Martin, 2006, January 4; Simpson, 2006, May 5; MacCharles, 2008, February 23).

But how were specific ethnic groups chosen over others for outreach purposes by the CPC? They focused the wide-ranging ethnic outreach strategy to make gains in urban centres where they had previously been shut out such as the GTA, Vancouver and Montreal (Elections Canada, 2008). These large multicultural centres also attract large populations of immigrants and new Canadians (250,000 per year on average) meaning "one in five Canadians is now foreign born" (Statistics Canada, 2010; Barber, 2007, December 5). In fact, by the year 2031, between 29 and 32 percent of the Canadian population could belong to a visible minority group, according to the latest Statistics Canada projections.

CPC strategists conducted an extraordinary amount of research, using information obtained from Statistics Canada and contacts in cultural communities to select a number

of ethnic and cultural groups to target communities where they had established contacts and reason to believe there was opportunity increase support:

We weren't going to go knocking on doors where we would just end up beating our heads against a wall. Which didn't mean we were ignoring [the others], but rather, if we are going to focus our resources, we focused them where we thought we were going to do the best job.

Media reports (MacCharles, 2008, February 23; Martin, 2008, February 18) indicate the CPC carefully selected which ethnic groups to target on the national level, including Koreans, Chinese (specifically Cantonese-speaking immigrants from Hong Kong), Jews, South Asians, Persians, Poles, Jamaicans, Italians, Filipinos, and Vietnamese. National Post columnist Don Martin also contends that new Canadians “tend to listen to their community leaders, appreciate government action on relatively minor ethnic concerns and vote as a block” (Martin, 2008, February 18).

As Harper and the CPC soon discovered, understanding cultural biases and sensitivities can be a political minefield when attempting to analyze voter motivations. Since coming into power, the Harper government's strong stances and outspoken positions on human rights has been a thorny issue for ethnic outreach and diplomatic relations, particularly with China<sup>26</sup> and several Muslim countries. For example, the acknowledgement by Harper's government of the Armenian genocide<sup>27</sup> became a thorny issue for the government after considerable public backlash from Turkey. The statement

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<sup>26</sup> On June 22, 2006 the House of Commons passed a motion put forward by CPC Member of Parliament David Sweet to declare the Dalai Lama an honorary Canadian citizen, sparking Chinese foreign minister Liu Jianchao to call the reception “digusting conduct” (CanWest News Service, 2007, October 30). Harper has also publicly expressed his disapproval of China's human rights record (CBC News Online, 2006, November 15).

<sup>27</sup> During his time as Leader of the Opposition, Harper had publicly acknowledged the Armenian genocide in statements to the media and in the House of Commons.

from PMO was subsequently removed from [www.pm.gc.ca](http://www.pm.gc.ca) website and all evidence of official recognition on the part of the Government of Canada was reversed (Woods, 2007, June 25).

CPC insiders said they recognize cultural communities are not monolithic and that different groups represent different political perspectives and values. For example, one CPC strategist cited the Korean community. Traditionally LPC or New Democratic Party (NDP) voters, the Korean community was a target group for the CPC due to their close-knit community structure, religious beliefs, high levels of education, traditional family values, and socially conservative values, according to CPC strategists. Playing on the knowledge that some recent immigrants to Canada who tended to be “more socially conservative than the rest of us”, including British Columbia Sikhs and Koreans, GTA orthodox Muslims, and Toronto Tamils, the CPC continued to campaign against gay marriage and focusing their efforts in ethnic media outlets as the policy was more popular among recent immigrants to Canada (*National Post* editorial, 2005, January 28; Collins, 2008, September 17). Furthermore, new Canadians, particularly those who have arrived in the last 15 years, were seen as more attractive for outreach efforts than longstanding, predominantly European immigrants whose voting habits may be more entrenched, according to one CPC Member of Parliament. While some groups tend to look to issues over values when making decisions about which party to vote for, or vice versa, the CPC had detailed plans and strategies for communicating on both fronts, said one CPC strategist.

According to one of the principle architects of the ethnic outreach strategy, the CPC approach to ethnic voters signaled a move away from “top-down networks within

communities with self-appointed godfathers” as they claim existed under LPC governments. The CPC strategist explains how the outreach strategy focuses on engaging in dialogue and listening to the concerns and issues of ethnic voters and cultural groups to inform the communication approaches, policy initiatives and specific product design of the CPC. Depending on which group was being targeted, the nature of the conversation would shift from either an issues-based discussion or a values-based discussion, he said. The formula was not approached as “black or white” and cultural and ethnic communities were not portrayed as monolithic in their voting habits, a CPC strategist explains:

The Jewish community has certain core values that are based on religion, but then you have people in the Jewish community who aren't religious and don't necessarily share those values... [You] have people with very liberal values or left-leaning outlooks, and then you have people who are very socially conservative, or otherwise conservative at the other end, and everything in between. So the discussion couldn't be a values-based discussion, it had to be an issues-based discussion with them.

Originally the Jewish community did not figure into the ethnic outreach plan for the CPC until the Israel and Lebanon conflict in the summer of 2006, says one CPC ethnic outreach strategist. Harper, when questioned by the media on the issue, expressed his unequivocal support for Israel to defend itself with a “measured response” causing critics to claim his comments were entirely politically motivated (*Montreal Gazette*, 2006, July 18). Jewish-Canadians number an estimated 350,000 and are statistically shown to be consistent voters and more politically active than many other cultural groups (Collins, 2009). In an interview with *Embassy Magazine*, Morton Weinfeld, director of Canadian ethnic studies at McGill University noted that of the many issues of concern to the Jewish community, Middle East affairs is at the top of the list (Collins, 2009, February 11). In fact, the Jewish community is very organized and aggressively lobbies the federal

government much more than most ethnic and cultural groups<sup>28</sup>. It is no surprise then that the Jewish community responded favourably to Harper's stance in the 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict. Whether politically motivated or a matter of principle, for the CPC the Jewish vote was a natural fit as the next component of the ethnic outreach strategy.

While Harper and the CPC garnered much support from the Jewish community for its unequivocal support for Israel, the LPC, in contrast, occupied the middle ground on the issue. Some LPC members<sup>29</sup> even went as far as accusing Israel of war crimes for its military actions against Hezbollah (Collins, 2009, February 11). The response from the Jewish community was one of disappointment:

People were getting sick and tired of [the Liberal position]. I know Canada always wants to play a neutral role, but sometime people feel there's a right and a wrong on an issue, so why play a neutral role? And you know, the Conservatives were coming out and that have been true to their word<sup>30</sup>.

Of all the political communication efforts of the CPC, the most controversial and widely reported communications pieces have been those targeted toward the Jewish community. In 2007 a CPC ethnic outreach strategist put forward the idea to send greeting cards from the Prime Minister, as was typically done for Christmas, to various ethnic and cultural groups to acknowledge or mark their cultural celebrations and holidays. Lunar New Year cards were sent to the Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean communities with great success and so the decision was made to issue greeting cards to the Jewish community to mark

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<sup>28</sup> In 2004 the Canadian Council for Israel and Jewish Advocacy was formed as an umbrella organization in an effort to streamline lobbying efforts.

<sup>29</sup> Michael Ignatieff, then contender for the leadership of the LPC, made the statement in an interview with the *Toronto Star* in August, 2006:  
<http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2006/10/11/ignatieff-defection.html>.

<sup>30</sup> Excerpt from an interview with James Diamond, Joseph and Wolf Lebovic Chair of Jewish Studies at the University of Waterloo, *Embassy Magazine*, February 11, 2009.

Rosh Hashanah<sup>31</sup>. The CPC strategist who spearheaded the project explained how she used the CIMS<sup>32</sup> database, containing over 2 million names, along with the help of other CPC staff members from the Jewish community, to identify people they knew to be Jewish. Approximately 32,000 cards were sent out with approximately 0.001%<sup>33</sup> of people filing complaints for having received greetings cards. In some cases, those who received a card were not Jewish while others were upset that their names had been identified on a list of Jewish-Canadians by the CPC.

The complaints sparked an investigation into privacy concerns surrounding the ethical parameters of keeping personal information files on constituents. In the end, Canada's Privacy Commissioner Jennifer Stoddart decided the issue did not fall under her jurisdiction because the federal *Privacy Act* does not apply to political parties (*CanWest News Service*, 2007, October 8). The LPC took the opportunity to claim their party voluntarily adheres to commercial privacy laws, known as PIPEDA, and then communications director Elizabeth Whiting told reporters they “do not keep any information on individuals without their expressed consent” and that individuals who request to see their file may have access<sup>34</sup> (*CTV News online*, 2008, September 10).

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<sup>31</sup> See appendix B – 2007 Rosh Hashanah greeting card from Prime Minister Harper and family.

<sup>32</sup> CPC Constituent Information Management System (CIMS) is a database that store eligible voter contact information for use by Members of Parliament, candidates, and staff to track support, donation history, and get voters out on election days.

<sup>33</sup> The CPC strategist responsible for managing the greeting cards reported approximately 35 complaints from the 32,000 cards sent out.

<sup>34</sup> A high-placed LPC official, whose name is confidential for the purposes of this research, confirmed by phone that the LPC holds records on voters, including the researcher's information, as part of the information obtained from Elections Canada. However the guidelines for the handling voter information by registered political parties prohibits the disclosure of this information to individuals and the request was therefore denied. Further, they added “PIPEDA does not apply to political parties” when asked if the information would be disclosed upon request.

Privacy experts also questioned the ethical ramifications of how the CPC uses the CIMS database to collect and store information about the electorate<sup>35</sup>:

If somebody contacts their MP because they're having a problem with their CPP benefits or their military pension, they don't expect to end up on a mailing list for a political party. If they are going to end up on a mailing list, I think there's an ethical obligation to inform them and give them the opportunity to opt out.

To date, there is still no law that prevents the CPC from collecting this information for fundraising purposes. Still, the CPC outreach team insists that several people expressed gratitude for the Rosh Hashanah greetings from the Prime Minister: One CPC strategist says she knows an elderly Israeli woman who has lived in Canada for 15 years and just recently decided to take the Canadian citizenship test because she wants to “become a Canadian citizen so [she] can vote for Stephen Harper”. The same strategist says she also received notes of appreciation from prominent Jewish leaders, including the former president of the UIA Federation of Canada, Mr. Stanley Pocking. That being said, Bernie Farber as the CEO of the Canadian Jewish Congress acknowledged these types of greetings have been circulating for “decades”, adding that the Jewish community is not a monolith and no “particular party can count on a ‘Jewish vote.’ It’s how individual Jews see the issues” (Collins, 2009, February 11).

Undeterred, the CPC made the decision to continue sending culturally specific greetings<sup>36</sup> from the Prime Minister. The following year the CPC sent out the Rosh Hashanah greeting cards with a circulation of 65,000 people who were identified as Jewish voters in the CIMS database and only 25 complaints were received, including

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<sup>35</sup> Excerpt from an interview with the *Globe and Mail* and David Fraser, lawyer at Halifax law firm McInnes Cooper.

<sup>36</sup> See appendix C - 2008 Rosh Hashanah greeting from Prime Minister Harper and family.

some from people who wanted to be added to the list having not received a card, said one CPC ethnic outreach strategist. They explained the cost/benefit analysis was clear:

If we send 60,000 cards out, 25 calls – multiply that by 100 – and say maybe 2,500 people didn't like it – well the way I look at it is out of 65,000, over 60,000 people liked it. Oh well – how much better could you do? It's a targeted, direct hit right to their homes: a picture of the Prime Minister with his wife, with his children, smiling and happy saying 'Happy New Year...May you have a Happy Jewish New Year...Rosh Hashanah...it was a very positive thing.

In comparison, the CPC sent out similar greeting cards to the Indo-Canadian community for Diwali and to the Chinese, Vietnamese and Korean-Canadian communities for their lunar New Year celebrations numbering well over 60,000 communications pieces without receiving a single complaint. Despite being “nakedly political”, said one CPC strategist, the communications pieces were considered a successful communications tactic and they will continue to be sent to various ethnic groups to mark cultural and religious holidays and celebrations or simply to communicate policy and achievements of the Harper government.

In March 2007, the CPC held an ethnic media training conference lead by Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism Jason Kenney to educate and train candidates and political operatives in art of ethnic outreach strategy. Days later, the blueprint to the ethnic vote was leaked to the *Globe and Mail* (Leblanc, 2007, October 17). The documents reveal the CPC believe “only 79 percent of ethnic minority groups [are] viewed as accessible communities<sup>37</sup>” contrary to the fact that CPC strategists and Members of Parliament claim they were not engaged in narrowcasting (*CTV News online*, 2007, October 16). Kenney's presentation called for CPC Members of Parliament and

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<sup>37</sup> See appendix E – Conservative Party Conference 2007: Ethnic Outreach presentation, page 32

candidates to compile lists and databases of ethnic voters “by renting or buying lists of names for the target communities, and by attending events where they can gather business cards and guest lists” (Leblanc, 2007, October 17). Certain Members of Parliament were named in the presentation as representatives who focus their efforts in particular cultural and ethnic communities, including Haliburton-Kawartha-Lakes MP Barry Devolin as overseer in the Korean community, then Heritage Minister Josée Verner to the Haitian community, and Peterborough MP Dean Del Mastro to oversee outreach to the Lebanese community (Ibid). The presentation outlined the plan to create “Community Relations Councils” with designated members of cultural and ethnic communities who would communicate directly with Minister Kenney and his strategists (Taber, 2008, January 30). Entitled “Building Bridges with Ethnic Communities and New Canadians,” the CPC presentation also revealed key elements of the outreach strategy – a veritable “how-to guide” designed to appeal to undecided ethnic voters, as outlined in the three phases listed in Table 2:

Table 2: “Outreach Strategy – Reaching Out for Success!” (Kenney, 2007).

PHASE ONE	Identify potential supporters and plug their contact information and personal concerns into the CIMS database.
PHASE TWO	Create a voter profile of neighbourhoods and ridings expected to become electoral battlefields using psychographics and geo-demographics. These techniques compile information on people’s beliefs, values, opinions and lifestyles, and blend them into a composite sketch for their neighbourhood. Data are drawn from the census, public-opinion polls and information bought from agencies, private companies, and organizations like <i>Air Miles</i> ® that compile consumer data.
PHASE THREE	Develop policies that appeal to key voters and get in touch with them.

Using extensive focus group surveys, public opinion data, Elections Canada polling results, and other publicly available information to inform their research into ridings, the

CPC organized the data down to a street-by-street analysis of particular communities (Leblanc, 2007, October 16). CPC strategists even provided a concrete example of how the strategy could be applied to one of the targeted ridings: Thornhill, a GTA riding with approximately 37 percent Jewish voters who have traditionally voted for the LPC (Ibid).

Table 3: CPC Sample Ethnic Outreach Strategy – Thornhill (Kenney, 2007).

A Sample Outreach Strategy - Thornhill	
Total population: 116,640	Visible Minorities: 33,675 or 29%
Chinese: 12,610	South Asian: 6,595
Black: 2,665	Filipino: 2,530
West Asian: 2,355	Korean: 2,660
<i>Religions</i>	
Catholic: 25,000	Protestant: 15,560
Christian Orthodox: 4,425	Christian: 3,170
Muslim: 4,340	Jewish: 42,710 or 37 %
Buddhist: 2,655	Hindu: 3,250
<i>Languages</i>	
English: 71,425	Non-official languages: 16,280
English and non-official language: 26,900	

The media presented the ethnic outreach presentation as a shocking, politically explosive strategy which “cast a light on the 21<sup>st</sup> Century art of political communication that may make some Canadians uneasy” (*Canadian Press*, 2007, October 18). The reaction to the news was relatively neutral to positive among those Canadians who belong to the ethnic groups the CPC are targeting in their outreach efforts. According to one 60-year-old undecided voter, “what they’re saying is, ‘we’re reaching out. We know you’re here, and we want to relate to you.’ I don’t see a problem with that” (Alphonso, 2007, October 17). LPC Members of Parliament including Susan Kadis (Thornhill) expressed outrage at the CPC strategies, labeling the approach as “something right out of the Dark Ages”

(Leblanc, 2007, October 16). Nonetheless, one CPC Member of Parliament says he had the article framed for his office:

It's not a mystery and we're proud of our outreach, even though some newspapers like the *Globe and Mail*...[ran] what looked like an exposé, front page, with all sorts of black boxes that looked like Watergate...but it makes it look as though the Conservatives have a devious plot to win elections, which means doing what the Liberals have done for years, which is to effectively reach out to Canada's various communities.

Still, CPC organizers say they recognize the reputation of the CPC and its predecessors, whether rightly or wrongly, will not be undone overnight and disciplined efforts will need to be taken to ensure the work done up to this point continues to pay dividends among ethnic voters. As one CPC strategist explains: “we can't let the CPC be its own worst enemy. Historically, it's always been us doing or saying something at the wrong time that brings us down – it's never the other party doing something to look good.”

The CPC has encountered some tensions and problems in executing the ethnic outreach strategy. For example, the Chinese government expressed disapproval of Harper's private meeting with the Dalai Lama in October 2007 where he expressed his support of the Tibetan people and concern over China's human rights record (Collins, 2008, September 17). Harper also declined to attend the 2008 Beijing Olympics as a gesture to demonstrate his disapproval of China's human rights practices. Unlike the official apology in the House of Commons for the Chinese Head Tax, Harper chose to apologize for the Komagata Maru incident<sup>38</sup> in a public rally in British Columbia, sparking fierce criticism from the Sikh community in Canada: “why are they making

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<sup>38</sup> The SS Komagatu Maru was a steamship carrying 376 passengers - all British subjects - that sailed from Hong Kong, to Japan, and eventually Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, where they were denied entry and forced to return to India, highlighting the fact that, at the time, the Canadian immigration system was biased against immigrants from Asian countries.

apologies here and there in small gatherings? It is not serving community purposes; it is serving a certain group's agenda," said Sabjit Bains, president of Gurwara Dukh Niwaran Sahib (Collins, 2008, September 17). In its strong support of Israel, the CPC has alienated a large bloc of supporters from the Arab-Canadian community and raised the ire of several Muslim groups, including the Canadian Arab Federation who have called Minister Kenney "a professional whore". President of Canadian Islamic Congress, Mohamed Elmasry also questions the authenticity of the outreach strategy:

Since the Harper government took office, they have tried to court Canadian Muslims with very rudimentary tactics. Unfortunately, they are not addressing the core issues, like our mission in Afghanistan, immigration and integration policy and being too militant in foreign policy (Leblanc, 2007, October 17).

### **On Ethnic Ground: The 2008 Federal Election Campaign**

Despite having passed legislation for fixed election dates Harper asked the Governor General to dissolve parliament in the fall of 2008 and Canadians were sent to the polls for the third federal election in four years<sup>39</sup>. Although the CPC lost two by-elections a few months earlier in ridings considered LPC strongholds (Willowdale and Vancouver Quadra) the results showed LPC support in Vancouver Quadra dissolved to a 151-vote margin over the CPC<sup>40</sup>, reminding the LPC they "can no longer take for granted one of their traditional support bases" (Taber, 2008, January 30). The 2008 general election would prove a true litmus test of the CPC ethnic outreach strategy, labeled by *Embassy*

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<sup>39</sup> Harper's decision to prorogue parliament came as a result of negotiations among the LPC, NDP and BQ to form a coalition government.

<sup>40</sup> Two years prior in the general federal election, the LPC candidate defeated the CPC candidate in Vancouver Quadra by a margin of over 11,000 votes (Elections Canada, 2006, 2008).

*Magazine* as “the most wide-ranging and strategically planned effort to target immigrants and visible minorities in Canada’s history” (Collins, 2008, September 17).

Harper’s first stop on the campaign trail was the Vancouver suburb of Richmond, British Columbia where 52 percent of the population is of Chinese descent (CBC Canada Votes, 2008). There, Harper sat down with the Huang family to discuss the issues that concerned them as entrepreneurs and, less obviously, as ethnic voters (Collins, 2008, September 17). While the Huang family campaign stop was clearly an orchestrated media event, the meeting also signified an evolution in the CPC strategy to appeal to ethnic voters – moving away from social issues, like same-sex marriage and abortion, and toward a focus on entrepreneurial interests, the economy and immigration (Collins, 2008, September 17; MacCharles, 2008, November 14). While the CPC communicated its pro-family and socially conservative ideas to the appropriate audiences, the overarching theme of the 2008 campaign both nationally and locally was the economy and taxes, immigration issues, fighting crime and the achievements of Harper’s government on these fronts during the last nearly three years in office (Greenaway, 2008, October 24). Renowned Canadian pollster Nik Nanos<sup>41</sup> also recognized the evolution in the CPC strategy to appeal to ethnic communities, stating in an interview that

what the Conservatives, I think, have realized is that the entrepreneurship and immigration strategy is more likely to yield...political dividends...than focusing on social issues. I think the Conservatives finally wrapped their head around a strategy that could actually move voters. Our polling shows Canadians are much more supportive of immigration politics that bring in new Canadians with the skills that we need<sup>42</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup> President and CEO of Nanos research ([www.nanosresearch.com](http://www.nanosresearch.com))

<sup>42</sup> Excerpt from interview with *Embassy Magazine*, Sept. 17, 2008.

These public policy issues, while of great importance and value to specific communities, were also politically attractive to the CPC says one CPC Member of Parliament:

We addressed those things in our election platform and when we came in we implemented them right away and I don't think there's any question that it was seen as a real good faith gesture on behalf of our Party toward a lot of immigrant communities.

For example, President of the Canadian Polish Congress Wladyslaw Lizon<sup>43</sup> in an interview on *CBC Newsworld* said he acknowledged that Polish voters were looking to the CPC in the 2008 election because “some of the things [their] community has been asking for, for a very long time, were implemented in a very short period of time” (Canada Votes – “Polish Shift?” *CBC Newsworld*, 2008, September 24).

### ***The Ground War: An Examination of CPC local campaigns***

Of the approximately 70 ridings across the country with populations of visible minorities comprising 20 percent or more of the overall population (Canadian Election Study, 2004), most are won by the LPC at election time. As outlined in the previous sections, the CPC has been incrementally winning over some of these constituencies through a broad-based nationally organized ethnic outreach strategy, but also through the concerted efforts of individual candidates. In the 2008 general election campaign in particular, the LPC won 48 ethnic ridings, five less than in 2006, while the CPC won 18, six more than in

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<sup>43</sup> Mr. Lizon is currently listed as the nominated candidate for the CPC in Mississauga East – Cooksville.

2006, including North Vancouver, Richmond, Surrey North, Mississauga-Erindale, Oak-Ridges-Markham, and Thornhill (Jiménez, 2008, October 26).

During the 2008 campaign, Harper and Kenney played prominent roles in the targeted ethnic ridings. As stated earlier, the first stop on Harper's national tour was the British Columbia riding of Richmond where CPC candidate Alice Wong eventually unseated Liberal incumbent Raymond Chan. Harper also visited a Croatian community park in Bob Dechert's Mississauga riding. The event was lauded as a great success<sup>44</sup> for the outreach team, securing plenty of good will and good contacts in the community who were supportive and appreciative of the visit from the Prime Minister, said one CPC strategist. Kenney, in an announcement regarding changes to the live-in caregiver program, brought the audience to tears, said a CPC strategist:

I've never seen a more emotional response in my life. We actually followed through and did some of the things they had been asking [to see] for years and years. It was the most emotional and enthusiastic response of any audience to any government announcement I've ever seen!

These visits doubled as media opportunities when reporters and camera crews showed up on site to cover the events put on by the CPC's outreach teams in the targeted communities.

At the local level, many of the interviewed CPC candidates and their campaign teams used the same research that was conducted on the national level by CPC to inform strategy, tactics and message design in the run-up to and during the 2008 election campaign. With the CPC in power in Ottawa, candidates were supported by the ethnic

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<sup>44</sup> According to sources, no prime minister had previously visited the Croatian park in West Mississauga – a photo of Prime Minister Harper, the local priest and members of the community now hangs in the front hall of the church adjacent to the park.

outreach team, particularly if they were running in one of the 30-40 <sup>45</sup>targeted ridings that represented potential inroads for the CPC in the Greater Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal areas (MacCharles, *Toronto Star* online, 2008.) With the assistance of PMO and regional CPC organizers, candidates met with cultural groups and attended community events as informed by research on target constituencies from the national office, according to CPC strategists.

Above all, the main objective for any politician is to be seen as an active member of his or her community, including holding town-hall meetings, participating in community events, and maintaining constant contact with constituents. For candidates running in ethnically diverse communities, all of the aforementioned activities are equally, if not more, important. For the CPC, this translated into attending major events from a variety of ethnic and cultural persuasions. For South Asian Canadians, Vaisakhi marks the beginning of the solar New Year and Diwali, a festival of lights, is celebrated in the fall. For Chinese and Korean Canadians, the lunar New Year celebrations are the biggest cultural events of the year. Comparatively speaking, Jewish-Canadians mark Rosh Hashanah, Passover, Sukkot, and others among the high holidays of their faith and culture. Understanding the significance of these cultural events, holidays and celebrations is crucial to communicating with ethnic communities in Canada, however, it cannot be the only element, warns a prominent Chinese-Canadian activist<sup>46</sup>: “The caution I have for them, and everybody else who wants to do that, is to not try the song-and-dance stuff, not to try the superficial stuff. Address the issues that actually affect our lives as Canadians.”

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<sup>45</sup> Other analysts contend there are as many as 50 ridings across the country with the highest percentage of identified visible minorities. ([www.punditsguide.ca](http://www.punditsguide.ca)).

<sup>46</sup> Excerpt from an interview with the *Globe and Mail* and Susan Eng, an activist who lobbied the government for the Chinese head tax apology and redress.

Some candidates, having run for the CPC in previous elections, had previously established contacts in various ethnic communities and were able to build upon those through a process of “cross-pollination”, working to build good will and establish dialogue with ethnic voters in the riding. The information was gathered and managed on the local level and put into to the CIMS database to track support, fundraising efforts, issues of concern and to spearhead mailing lists. While religion and ethnicity are not listed in the central database, this information is collected at community events or when volunteered and is tracked in a separate tracking program, codifying lists according to language spoken, which CPC organizers say is used for direct mailing, phone-banking, door-knocking and advertising purposes.

Individual CPC campaigns had different strategies for engaging cultural groups: some chose to approach so-called leaders and figureheads in the communities while others preferred to engage with people in the community directly. The outreach strategy was determined by the level of organization evident in each ethnic group in order to maximize the efficiency of the campaign’s efforts. It was important to identify which groups were very active and identifiable and which were relatively disorderly, inactive or disengaged in order to maximize use of resources. For some campaigns the strategy was to identify prominent and supportive members of the community who were able to gather information and present it to the campaign organizers in order to facilitate the coordination of campaign events. Alternatively, others preferred smaller, localized efforts such as phone-banking, coffee parties and informal gatherings of 20 people or less. Interestingly, through this outreach many CPC candidates noted the growth of political engagement among young people in multicultural communities:

What we found in a lot of places in our phone banking is that in multicultural homes [...] if there are five people in the family, we would lose three votes but we might get two. In the Chinese homes, it was the younger people that came out and voted.

Even on the local level, understanding how international political tensions and biases influence domestic voting choices is important says one newly elected CPC Member of Parliament:

[Our] messaging to the Greek community was very fluid...we know they were not likely to vote for a Macedonian person...and we knew they weren't going to vote NDP just by virtue of past voting patterns...[so] they were either not going to vote, or vote Conservative. So our message to them [during] the entire campaign was 'if you don't vote for [the CPC candidate], you are still going to have a Liberal candidate you don't like...we seized on what we thought would bring them to the polls and it worked.

Interestingly, the Greek community was not targeted by the CPC on the national level due to the perception that Greeks do not support the government's recognition of an independent Macedonia<sup>47</sup>.

For female candidates, ethnic outreach to particular cultural groups posed different problems:

I can only tell you that being a woman [candidate campaigning] in the South Asian community it's really hard to get respect...it's a very unusual relationship. It takes a while before they will trust you and come to you and talk to you...it's really an 'old boys' network.

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<sup>47</sup> A motion 2007 adopted by the Canadian government to formally recognize the Republic of Macedonia by its constitutional name lead to fears among Greeks in Canada and abroad that Macedonia would lay claim to the adjacent Greek island of the same name. LPC Member of Parliament Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough-Agincourt) spoke out against the motion but was the author of a motion in 2004 to formally recognize the Armenian genocide (<http://karygiannismp.com/spip/>)

Candidate websites did not explicitly target the ethnic vote on the whole with the exception of content available in other languages and the endorsements section where supportive comments and sponsorship from the ethnic communities were listed. While some candidates sought official endorsements from cultural community leaders for publicity purposes, others focused on the support of individuals: “we had a little over 2,000 lawn signs out in our last campaign in comparison to 600 in the previous two by the [previous CPC] candidate.” Still, some campaigns saw community leaders play a larger role as intermediaries with candidates: “they are the leaders from their community so they bring [a] person and their complaint into you. It works sort of like their old system at home where the chief comes in with the person who has a problem,” said one CPC candidate.

The media strategy in the 2008 campaign in ethnic ridings focused on identifying which ethnic media outlets in which to advertise and conduct interviews, said one CPC strategist. With relatively small budgets, many candidates were able to target ethnic voters by using advertising and specially tailored messages that communicated accomplishments for specific groups. From weekly foreign language journals to ethnic radio stations, the CPC has been successful in increasing their exposure among ethnic voters through foreign language media, informants say.

As soon as the election was called in 2008, CPC advertisements began to be distributed across the country in various media, flaunting the Harper government’s record and achievements as well as specific messages targeted at ethnic communities. For example, for campaign advertisements aimed at the Polish-Canadian community listed three accomplishments the CPC delivered for Polish voters: lifting of visa restrictions,

pension benefits for immigrant veterans who fought for Poland in WWII and a cooperation agreement and youth exchange program between Poland and Canada. In fact, Harper was the first prime minister in a decade to travel to Poland<sup>48</sup>.

With more than one million people of Ukrainian heritage living in Canada (Statistics Canada, 2006), the CPC also decided to concentrate advertising efforts in publications like Edmonton-based *Ukrainian News*. The advertisements focused on how the Harper government has responded to issues of interest to Ukrainians, specifically immigration issues, election observation efforts to promote democracy in Ukraine, and passing long-awaited bills through the House of Commons on the subject of redress for wartime internment and recognizing the Holodomor<sup>49</sup>. On Chinese-language radio stations callers expressed support for the Harper government, some even expressing their desire to see the CPC form a majority government<sup>50</sup>. The strategy, as one CPC candidate explains, is simple:

It's getting more of the message to more people who wouldn't have received it otherwise. Some of these ethnic groups don't read the English language papers. So you have to reach them in other ways – either through their own language newspapers or through direct mail.

Based on previous election research, some campaigns decided against sending mailings, focusing instead on personal connections with individual voters. Previous election results

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<sup>48</sup> In April 2010, Harper was scheduled to visit Poland a second time to attend to funeral of the late Polish president, Lech Kaczynski, who lost his life in a tragic plane crash in Russia. The trip had to be cancelled due to vast volcanic ash clouds over Europe.

<sup>49</sup> The Holodomor was a famine in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic that lasted from 1932-1933 in which millions of people died due to starvation, widely recognized to have been a result of the economic and trade policies of then leader of the Soviet Union Joseph Stalin.

<sup>50</sup> In an interview with *Embassy Magazine*, Anson Wong, assistant manager at a Chinese radio station in Toronto, explains the responses he has heard from the 283,000-strong Chinese community about the Harper government and their outreach efforts to the Chinese-Canadian community.

also played an important role in the formation of outreach strategies going forward: “we wanted to make sure that we did justify the time we anticipated spending in certain areas with higher concentrations of visible minorities, in particular.” Broken down on a poll-by-poll basis, campaign teams used information from Statistics Canada to inform the ground campaign. The information gathered was used to form profiles for each poll based on the average income, education, and other socio-economic characteristics of constituents. Phone-banking and canvassing door-to-door in a variety of languages also played an important role in several different local CPC campaign strategies. One candidate explains the Chinese community in his riding is composed primarily of new immigrants having lived in Canada for less than a decade. As a result of this research the candidate’s campaign team was able to determine that while the community was very organized communicating with voters could be problematic if many of them do not speak English. As a result, the candidate was able to tailor his message to the Chinese community by producing campaign materials entirely in Mandarin. The same candidate operated his 2008 election campaign in seven different languages – including phone-banking, canvassing door-to-door, and multilingual flyers – and says he is aiming to expand his multilingual communications to include three more languages as a result of post-election research. Another CPC candidate had some difficulty with a flyer that was produced in Punjab: “somebody said there was something wrong with it – it could be taken wrong – so we didn’t hand very many of them out...I don’t know if it was sort of a term that was a slang term or something – I don’t know.” While some candidates distributed campaign materials that were prepared by the CPC head office in various languages, including Farsi, Punjab, and a host of other languages, other candidates

decided against sending campaign literature in languages other than English and French: “No other languages...we obviously did put literature out, but we stuck with the CPC and the main national campaign themes<sup>51</sup>.”

Several candidates were recruited by the CPC as high profile members of ethnic communities in their respective ridings, including local talk show host, university professor, and community activist Alice Wong from Richmond, British Columbia. According to CPC insiders, Ms. Wong’s strategy in this heavily Chinese immigrant populated riding was to target different minority communities, including Indo-Canadians, the Jewish community and even Anglophones, in addition to the sizeable Chinese-Canadian contingent. In a surprisingly sizeable victory<sup>52</sup> over incumbent Raymond Chan (Elections Canada, 2008), Wong’s ethnic outreach strategy looked beyond the majority Chinese population to win the election. In fact, it was through the outreach efforts in the Korean community that the CPC came to meet the “impressive” young Korean-Canadian Yonah Martin who was unsuccessful as a candidate in the 2008 election campaign and was subsequently named to the Canadian Senate. Candidates from cultural communities also had the benefit of being able to easily identify other members of their community for outreach purposes. One candidate cites his Italian heritage as an important element in his outreach efforts with the Italian community: “you will be able to come visit your Member of Parliament and you can speak Italian to him, he will understand, and you won’t have to worry if you ever need help...he’s family.”

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<sup>51</sup> See appendix F & G for examples of CPC produced fliers that were sent to local candidates to modify and distribute.

<sup>52</sup> Alice Wong won the Richmond riding with 49.81 percent of the vote over LPC second term incumbent Raymond Chan with 30.83 percent.

The credibility of the CPC among ethnic voters was buttressed by the long list of accomplishments at the national level on issues of particular interest to the targeted cultural groups. Candidates were able to communicate these accomplishments to their allies in the communities who would then disseminate the messages to the larger community. For example, one campaign team used an auto-dialer to deliver targeted messages from leaders in the Chinese-Canadian and Polish-Canadian communities. This enhanced their credibility among ethnic voters as it focused on a form of transactional politics: the CPC candidate tells ethnic voters what the CPC has done for them, what they will do in the future, and how electing him or her as their Member of Parliament is their role in the transaction. For example, in addition to targeted phone messages, the candidate campaigned on the promise to establish settlement funds for new Canadians, new infrastructure and enhanced trade policies, all of which appealed to urban, entrepreneurial, ethnic voters. The same candidate made commitments to individuals to be available to assist on immigration issues, including writing letters of support for two Pakistani constituents who were seeking visitor visas for their fathers.

One element that posed unexpected complications for organizers and candidates in ridings with large Jewish communities was the actual date of the vote: Election Day 2008 fell on the high holiday of Sukkot. As a result the Get out the Vote (GOTV) campaign for the Election Day for ridings such as Thornhill, Eglinton-Lawrence and York Centre focused substantially on getting Jewish voters to vote in the advanced polls, according to CPC organizers. In Thornhill the GOTV campaign for the Jewish community was instrumental in the electoral success of candidate Peter Kent<sup>53</sup>, former

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<sup>53</sup> Kent now serves in Harper's cabinet as the Minister of State of Foreign Affairs (Americas).

television broadcaster, over LPC incumbent Susan Kadis. Of the 11,500 people who voted in the advanced polls Kent won 10,000: “If we would have done just all the normal things and not paid attention to that issue, and not had a concerted effort, we would not have won,” said one CPC strategist who worked on the campaign. Indeed, the previous CPC candidate lost the Thornhill riding by approximately 10,000 votes whereas Kent’s victory boasted a 5,000-vote margin (Elections Canada, 2008). In fact, Kent’s GOTV strategy in the 2008 campaign was recognized as an international success, winning him second place in a *Campaign & Elections* magazine contest. As Mr. Kent told the *Hill Times*:

There was an awful lot of work because we scrubbed numbers, removing our identified votes from the advanced polls so that we could then concentrate on undecided and make sure that our identified supporters who hadn’t voted in the advanced polls did vote on Election Day. The training session that we put on for scrutineers, for canvassers, for the GOTV prep people, it was a great plan, but it wouldn’t have been a plan at all if it hadn’t been well executed

(Rana, 2009, February 16).

That being said, not all political communication outreach efforts results in the desired outcomes for CPC candidates. The advanced polling strategy did not work as well in other aforementioned heavily Jewish populated ridings where LPC incumbents Joe Volpe and Ken Dryden retained their seats in the House of Commons. Another CPC candidate explains that he had to suspend outreach efforts among Tamil-Canadians in his riding because the results had been too discouraging:

We did no better in those communities despite the efforts. [I’m] still working on that now as the MP and I am confident that in the next election we will have a significant change, but despite all of that work, there was no increase in vote, in fact...the worst two polls that we had in the election were in poll [A and B]...and 80 percent of the people who live in that area are Tamil-Canadians.

Despite varying techniques, strategies and tactics at the local level, several key elements are noted by all successful candidates in ethnic ridings: door-knocking, phone banking, and follow-up contact. In politics, fostering opportunities for relationship building is vital to success: “it’s a continuing process...a low-impact but non-stop campaign to make sure that we stay in touch with communities and develop relations and engage those communities politically.” In order to sustain the ties that have been built in cultural and ethnic communities the candidates and newly elected CPC Members of Parliament need to maintain relationships and continue to meet with ethnic groups on a regular basis, says one successful 2008 CPC candidate: “I am going to their events all the time and hearing from them on their views. We’re in constant dialogue.”

For most campaigns the traditional CPC election themes played prominently in the political communications strategies- ethnic ridings were no exception. A very important element for candidates in ethnic ridings was not to ignore the CPC base in their ridings. For some candidates, this meant that ethnic outreach was used in the pre-campaign but not during the writ period in order to keep the message focused on the core CPC campaign themes. Others attribute their success to focusing on getting ethnic voters out to the polls. In each case it is acknowledged by candidates, campaign organizers and national strategists alike: the values and policies outlined in the CPC platform have broad appeal with a right to right-of-centre lean that is carefully designed to broaden support, particularly among new Canadians.

## **A second minority, supported by minorities (2008 – present)**

For a myriad of reasons<sup>54</sup> voter turnout in the 2008 election campaign hit an historic low at 59.9 percent (Elections Canada, 2008). Harper fell short of his goal of winning a majority government, winning only 19 more seats than in the previous general election. While the media and the public did not perceive the 2008 election campaign to have dramatically changed the political landscape, it represented a small achievement for the CPC, specifically “new levels of support among Canada’s ethnic communities and New Canadians” (Ensign, 2008). This result may be attributed to targeted outreach in winnable ethnic ridings (Flanagan, 2008, November 14). After four years of experience in government the CPC has the benefit of being the governing party in the House of Commons and have been able to deepen their roots in the ethnic communities and work to undo the negative branding:

They [LPC] scared people into believing that all kinds of bad things were going to happen if the Conservatives formed government and in fact, those bad things didn’t happen and a lot of good things did happen...so every day we are in government, the fear of the ‘hidden agenda’ goes away.

With a relatively tiny budget and campaign team, Kenney and the ethnic outreach team were able to increase the number of seats won in the multicultural ridings and came a close second place in several other targeted campaigns such as prominent LPC MP Ujjal

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<sup>54</sup> In 2008, there was a four percent overall loss in the popular vote from the previous election. Possible reasons for the historic low voter turnout include voter fatigue, weak leadership perceptions, the LPC carbon tax platform and religious holidays, including the Jewish holiday Sukkot which occurred on Election Day.

Dosanjh<sup>55</sup>, LPC incumbent Keith Martin<sup>56</sup> in Esquimault-Juan de Fuca, and Punjabi LPC MP Ruby Dhalla<sup>57</sup> (Elections Canada, 2008.) In a post election interview Dhalla - a high-profile member of LPC caucus - acknowledged the CPC's successes on the ethnic outreach front:

One of the things that we saw with the Conservatives is that nationally they had a much more consistent message and a theme. In ridings like mine, they did a tremendous job of reaching out and engaging the ethnic media outlets

(*CanWest News Service*, 2008, October 23).

Susan Eng, co-chair of the Chinese Head Tax Redress campaign, also acknowledged that Harper's embrace of the cultural press was a tremendous success in reaching out to ethnic communities, adding the LPC has largely been resting on their "historical laurels" (Croome, 2009, December 2). In November 2009, a month after the campaign ended, Harper spoke at a training seminar for National Ethnic Press and Media Council of Canada at Seneca College. After being named Honourary Life Chair, Harper declared "[his] government will continue to collaborate with cultural media and communities in pursuit of a common vision of a stronger, richer sense of Canadian citizenship" (Prime Minister's Office – Communications, 2009, November 21). Cultural media outlets form a large part of the ethnic outreach strategy, said one CPC strategist, explaining the rationale behind engaging cultural media:

We can take the status quo, lazy approach of just blasting everything in English to the *CBC* and leaving it at that, or we can take a 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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<sup>55</sup> Dosanjh, former NDP premier of British Columbia, won by only 33 votes over first-time CPC candidate Wai Young, compared to a 9,000 vote lead in the previous election.

<sup>56</sup> Martin has been a Member of Parliament since 1993 and won by only 68 votes in the 2008 election over CPC candidate Troy DeSouza.

<sup>57</sup> Dhalla won by 1,000 votes over CPC candidate Parm Gill as compared to 8,000 in previous election.

approach that reflects the diversity of this country, that's proactive and actually being able to conscientiously seek out all of those different ways to connect between Ottawa and new Canadians and vice versa.

A CPC insider said Harper also acknowledged the ethnic outreach strategy was the “biggest success story of the [2008] election”. At the November 2008 CPC Policy Convention in Winnipeg Kenney spoke before delegates about the success of the ethnic outreach teams in the 2008 campaign, calling them a “big Blue Machine” (MacCharles, 2008, November 14). Around the same time, Tom Flanagan<sup>58</sup>, University of Calgary professor and former senior adviser to Harper, published an opinion piece in the *Globe and Mail* that argued Harper’s long-sought after majority government depends on winning the ethnic vote, which he dubbed “the fourth sister” – a reference to a 1996 speech by Harper which outlined his plan to obtain power by reuniting the right-wing parties in Canada. Flanagan dubbed Harper’s the “Winds of Change” speech the “Three Sisters” speech because Harper’s vision to gain power involved “uniting the populist conservatives of the West, the traditional Tories of Ontario and Atlantic Canada, and the francophone soft nationalists of Quebec” (Flanagan, 2008, November 14). Flanagan contends ethnic groups are the “fourth sister” and are much more open to the CPC and its policies than the elusive Quebec voters<sup>59</sup>. The CPC’s carefully orchestrated strategies<sup>60</sup> to woo Quebec voters proved ineffective in the 2008 campaign resulting in the CPC barely

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<sup>58</sup> Biographical note: Flanagan has published several books on Canadian politics, including *Harper’s Team* (2007) which ultimately resulted in his being ousted from Harper’s inner circle of advisors.

<sup>59</sup> The dominance of the BQ in Quebec results in very few seats for all other federal political parties ([www.parl.gc.ca](http://www.parl.gc.ca)).

<sup>60</sup> The CPC government adopted several policies aimed at winning support in Quebec, including changing the provincial equalization formula to give Quebec more money, formally recognizing Quebec as a “nation”, and giving Quebec a seat at UNESCO, among other measures.

holding on to the 10 Quebec seats it started out with<sup>61</sup>. Flanagan also suggests ethnic voters offer a more lucrative and responsive constituency for the CPC to target in its efforts to form a majority government: “Ethnic voters don’t rally to the fashionable causes of the left, such as gay marriage, carbon neutrality and the 100-mile diet; and they don’t make many demands except to be accepted as good Canadians” (Ibid).

The fact is, all Canadian political parties “shamelessly” shop for the ethnic vote, writes Italian-Canadian journalist Angelo Perschilli. For example, in early 2010, NDP Member of Parliament Bruce Hyer (Thunder Bay) sent a press release to Italian-language media that accused Harper of stalling the progress of his private member’s bill (Bill C-302) called the *Italian-Canadian Recognition and Restitution Act*<sup>62</sup>. The bill seeks restitution from the Government of Canada for its decision in 1940 to call for the arrest and internment of hundreds of Canadians of Italian-descent who were suspected enemy aliens. Perschilli, political editor of *Corriere Canadese*<sup>63</sup>, outlined the history of the LPC and CPC responses to this issue, noting that while Trudeau’s LPC government opposed an official apology, Mulroney’s government offered an apology in 1990 and hinted at the possibility of a compensation package. In 1994, however, Multiculturalism Minister Sheila Finestone stated, “the government will not grant financial compensation for the requests made” (Perschilli, 2010, January 31). Today, as the Harper government moves forward on the issue of redress, Perschilli notes the “hypocrisy” of the LPC in denouncing the Harper government’s proposals in an effort “keep milking votes from a

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<sup>61</sup> Cuts to federal funding to the arts and amendments to the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* became contentious issues, particularly in Quebec, that caused the CPC’s support to collapse near the end of the campaign.

<sup>62</sup> Bill C-302 was tabled by Massimo Pacetti (LPC) in February 2009.

<sup>63</sup> *Corriere Canadese* is an Italian-language daily newspaper published in Toronto, Ontario.

community it has exploited for four decades” especially since the LPC consistently opposed any such policies when in government (Ibid). He also notes the “laughable” fact that Hyer is calling for the urgent passing of Bill C-302: the NDP has “ignored [the issue] for the last 70 years” (Ibid).

### *The Battle for the Jewish Vote*

In December 2008 Israel launched a wave of air strikes on the Gaza Strip, sparking the three-week Gaza War between Israelis and the Hamas-lead government in the Gaza Strip. Pressured to react - and having learned a lesson from taking a middle-of-the-road approach with Jewish-Canadians during the Lebanon crisis - the LPC was swift to come out in support of Israel:

The Liberal Party of Canada unequivocally condemns the rocket attacks launched by Hamas against Israeli civilians and calls for an immediate end to these attacks. We affirm Israel’s right to defend itself against such attacks, and also its right to exist in peace and security

(McParland, 2009, January 6).

As a result, the CPC has since took an even stronger pro-Israel stance by condemning international anti-Semitism, a strategy that appears designed to maintain support levels from the organized Jewish community in Canada (Caplan, 2009, December 11). The pro-Israel campaign included banning firebrand British Member of Parliament George Galloway from entering Canada because he allegedly provided “humanitarian goods and \$35,000 in aid money to Hamas” (Wallace, 2009, March 30), condemning the Canadian Arab Federation’s distribution of anti-Semitic messages in support for Islamic terrorists (*CBC News online*, 2009, February 17), as well as taking a strong stance against Iran’s reported nuclear development program (*CBC News online*, 2009, September 25).

The CPC's research and design team at the Conservative Resource Group (CRG)<sup>64</sup> sent out a communications flyer<sup>65</sup> in late 2009 that targeted heavily Jewish populated ridings, including the riding of Jewish LPC Member of Parliament Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal). The fliers featured the CPC's pro-Israel policies while at the same time suggesting anti-Semitism among LPC members, specifically Mr. Cotler (Delacourt, 2009, November 27). Despite a strongly worded ruling from the Speaker of the House in favour of Cotler's point of privilege<sup>66</sup>, Kenney rose in the House and refused to apologize for the content in the flyer, asserting the LPC were willing participants in the 2001 UN-sponsored Durban I conference in South Africa which was widely reported to have been very anti-Semitic in tone:

Members opposite are trying to make a capital case out of a conventional political communication, using the same tactics and distribution that they use all the time, even on the same set of issues. Basically, incontrovertible facts are presented that are matters of conventional political debate  
(Delacourt, 2009, November 27).

In addition, Kenney announced the dismantling of the client relationship between the Government of Canada and organizations that have allegedly criticized the Jewish people's right to a homeland. The Canadian non-governmental organization KAIROS<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Traditionally called Government Caucus Services, the office was renamed in 2006 as the Conservative Resource Group when the CPC came to power. The Office is part of the House of Commons, providing similar roles and support as the Opposition Leaders Offices.

<sup>65</sup> See appendix H & I – copies of the flyer that were distributed by CRG in ridings with high Jewish populations.

<sup>66</sup> Speaker Peter Milliken ruled on November 27, 2009 that “the mailing constitutes interference with (Cotler's) ability to perform his parliamentary functions in that its content is damaging to his reputation and his credibility.” Voters in Mount Royal called for his resignation (Delacourt, 2009, November 27).

<sup>67</sup> KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives is a web of people and partnerships dedicated to a faithful and decisive response to God's call for respect for the earth and justice for its people. (<http://www.kairoscanada.org/en/who-we-are/>).

was de-funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in December 2009 because their funding requests did not meet the agency's "current priorities" (*Toronto Star*, 2009, December 24). Prominent Jewish Canadian journalist Gerald Caplan noted that Ministers Oda and Kenney did not support their accusations against KAIROS with hard evidence, raising questions surrounding the hard line on anti-Semitism and the so-called "campaign of seduction by the Harper government":

Why is this Conservative government so determined to woo Jewish support? Why is it so reflexive, so mindless, in its support for Israel? Given their single-minded pursuit of ethnic voters, politics seems a more plausible explanation than conviction. Yet Jews constitute only one percent of the Canadian population and are a factor in only a tiny number of seats. Most Jews vote Liberal and while some have defected to the Conservative over Israel, most still will. So the unseemly Conservative embrace just doesn't add up

(Caplan, 2009, December 11).

In an interview with *Shalom Life* in late 2009<sup>68</sup>, Peter Kent went even further by declaring that "an attack on Israel would be considered an attack on Canada," prompting calls for the Government of Canada to clarify whether Kent's remarks should be interpreted as official Canadian foreign policy and whether Canada would be willing to automatically declare war on any aggressor of Israel (Chase, 2010, February 16).

### ***Kenney's Canada: Multiculturalism 2.0?***

As the ethnic outreach strategy evolves the CPC continues to fine-tune its message to ethnic groups and new Canadians. In November 2009 Kenney introduced Canada's new

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<sup>68</sup> Shalom Life is a Canadian online news aggregate that is targeted to the Jewish community in Canada - [www.shalomlife.com](http://www.shalomlife.com). An interview with Minister Kent was published Feb. 12, 2010.

citizenship guide which included changes designed to “appeal to everyone with a very big focus on attachment to Canada and on common values and shared history” (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2009). The new guide is titled *Discover Canada* and is designed to better educate immigrants about the Canada’s history with specific regard to Confederation, the military, human rights, and the arts. When asked why the changes were necessary Kenney told reporters that “in the booklet that leads to the citizenship test, there is far more content on recycling than on the history of Confederation. There is not a single sentence about Canadian military history” (*CanWest News Service*, 2009, April 18). The new guide also places a higher emphasis on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, highlighting the importance of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, personal prosperity, gender equality<sup>69</sup>, public and community service<sup>70</sup>, participation in democratic elections, and celebrating the natural beauty and environmental legacy of the nation’s natural, cultural and architectural heritage for future generations (CIC, 2009). There are chapters that discuss the justice system, Canadian symbols, the various geographical regions, and the economy<sup>71</sup>.

The CPC’s new approach to multiculturalism goes beyond singular issues and policies: the cultural mosaic ideology of the past is no longer necessary, says Minister Kenney:

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<sup>69</sup> The guide states that “Canada’s openness and generosity do not extend to barbaric cultural practices that tolerate spousal abuse, honour killings, female genital mutilation, or other gender-based violence. Those guilty of these crimes are severely punished under Canada’s criminal laws.”

<sup>70</sup> The *Discover Canada* guide mentions volunteering in the community, serving on a jury, and voluntary military service.

<sup>71</sup> Access to Information requests revealed instruction from Kenney’s office lead to the de-emphasis of references to same-sex marriage in an effort to appease right-wing ethnic communities (*CBC News online*, 2010, March 2).

Integration does not mean assimilation. It's not about forcing people to cut themselves off from their religion, their faith, and their customs. It means keeping those things, celebrating them, but not staying locked in a mini-version of one's country of origin

(Chianello, 2009, April 18).

Furthermore, Kenney has also proposed the use of a new term – “pluralism” – one he contends better addresses the aim of multiculturalism: “We need a term that has a deeper meaning; that talks about the deeply different world views or belief systems that people have, and I thought pluralism perhaps speaks more to that” (Chianello, 2009, April 18). There is no “them” only “us” in a successful pluralistic society (Delacourt, 2009, December 24). Ethnic outreach is about an attachment to Canada that sees ethnic groups working together in the best interests of the country, regardless of background, according to one CPC strategist. In an attempt to reshape the country's approach to multiculturalism and immigration, Kenney has championed Canada as a nation that “[stands] up for tolerance, democracy and religious freedoms, but [does] not want to encourage fragmentation – we need to work toward greater social cohesion to avoid “ethnic enclaves” (Libin, 2009, March 28). Ironically, it is the existence of ethnic enclaves makes some of the CPC's outreach strategies more effective.

Another example of fostering greater integration of multicultural Canadians can be seen in Harper's ties with some of the countries of origin of ethnic voters. In an effort to promote deeper international ties, Harper conducted two long-anticipated trips abroad in late 2009, including a four-day tour of China and a two-day visit to India. The trips resulted in the announcement of Canada's approved destination status from China and a joint statement with the Indian prime minister of the relationship between India and Canada and “[recognizing] the contribution of the Indian-origin community in Canada in

further strengthening the bilateral bonds between the societies of India and Canada” (Prime Minister’s Office - Communications, 2009, December 3). Before wrapping his trip to India, Harper also appeared on a popular Indian reality television show, “Dance Premier League”, where he and his wife, Laureen, danced on stage with the cast (Cheadle, 2009, November 16). PMO strategically distributed photos and video of Harper with the Bollywood cast, many of whom were Indo-Canadians (Ibid).

While the visits were important to Canada’s international relations they were also part of a political strategy. Harper brought along several Members of Parliament from ethnic ridings on the prime ministerial delegation. The MPs were also encouraged to invite some of their constituents to come along. The strategy was to forge stronger attachments to Canada among ethnic voters, said one CPC strategist:

They’re not complaining about ‘why are you treating me differently?’ – they are so thankful and they are saying ‘you know what, you finally make me feel Canadian. You’re not making me feel more Chinese, you are making me feel more Canadian because you are bringing me as part of the Canadian prime ministerial delegation to China.

The strategy also included inviting ethnic media to participate on the foreign trips – an innovative approach that was not previously employed by the LPC.

Political opponents are watching the actions of the CPC very closely, specifically the LPC critic for multiculturalism Justin Trudeau, son of former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. CPC strategists claim the LPC are using the son of the former prime minister to influence ethnic voters: “people vote with their hearts and minds and by using the Trudeau name [the LPC] are appealing purely to the hearts of voters to get back some sense of nostalgia of when Canada was great under Trudeau.” As the Official Opposition’s watchdog on the multiculturalism file, Justin Trudeau has questioned the

appropriate use of departmental funds for outreach efforts. Even current LPC leader Michael Ignatieff has mused about Kenney's multicultural mega plan:

We condescend to people when we think the only thing they're interested in is being spoken to as an ethnic group. They want to be spoken to as citizens and they want to participate, and they want to be included and they want to be talked to as Canadians"

(Delacourt, 2009, December 24).

CPC strategists shrug off these criticisms<sup>72</sup> claiming "people want to believe in democracy at its best, and that's what we're doing". The reality for many minority communities is there is a "legacy of exclusion that is reinforced by the hegemonic bicultural discourse of party politics" (Whittington & White, 2000: 340). Kenney, acknowledging the unique challenges of ethnic communities, described in an interview with Tonda MacCharles of the *Toronto Star* (2008, February 23) the rationale behind tapping into discussions with ethnic groups:

We're talking generally about communities, with very few exceptions, that don't have a government relations strategy, or resources. They don't hire lobbyists. Their issues don't show up often in the mainstream media and so often these things are not on the radar of official Ottawa

(MacCharles, 2008, February 23).

The CPC characterizes the LPC outreach efforts as a "silo approach... [Putting] your ethnics over here, your seniors over here, and your women over here" – a strategy they say is not ideal for relationship building. According to one CPC strategist, the biggest difference between the LPC and CPC approach has been

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<sup>72</sup> In an interview with the *Globe and Mail* on January 29, 2010, Justin Trudeau stated that Minister Kenney has been effective in "buying off certain groups" by traveling in the Prime Minister's private jet from coast to coast, but that the CPC strategy only works in the short term and the LPC intends to reassert itself among new Canadians, "rather than just simply trying to buy off votes one group at a time."

Following through on issues that new Canadians care about – listening to them and actually taking concrete action, not just as the Liberals had done for years which is go to their cultural events and eat their food and tell them that they were their friends and actually not do anything for them.

The CPC efforts involve sitting down with leaders, individuals, and activists in various cultural and ethnic groups to better understand their issues and communicate the ways in which the Harper government has delivered and listen to feedback regarding policies and initiatives for the future. According to one CPC ethnic outreach strategist, the CPC plan is focused on grassroots political engagement:

What we are saying is that our doors are open – the Conservative Party is available to you – no matter who you are, where you come from, what your background is – if you want power in our Party, all you have to do is come in the door and take it because it's there to be had.

In fact, it was Harper and Kenney who first debated the details of an ethnic outreach strategy back in 1996 in a discussion about the future of conservatism in Canada (Friesen, 2010, January 29). Kenney argued that new Canadians hold more conservative values and are the “personification of Margaret Thatcher’s aspirational class,” making them an ideal and winnable constituency for the right-of-centre CPC (Friesen, 2010, January 29).

### **The CPC Reflexive Communication Code**

By comparing the data collected in the field to the instructive guidelines of Machiavelli’s *The Prince* (1513), the emergence of counter-publics outside Jürgen Habermas’ (1962) idealized democratic theory, the theory of reflexivity as outlined by Beck and Giddens (1994), and the political communication practices adopted by market-oriented political parties, as theorized by Jennifer Lees-Marshment (2001), this thesis examines the

motives, goals and outcomes of the CPC reflexive communication code. Before proceeding, however, it is important to first examine the major ethical principles which guide the codification of the reflexive political communication practices of the CPC.

### *Political Communication Ethics*

Ethics are remote from me...I do not break my head very much about good and evil, but I have found little that is "good" about human beings on the whole. In my experience most of them re trash, no matter whether they publicly subscribed to this or that ethical doctrine or to none at all...If we are to talk of ethics, I subscribe to a high ideal from which most of the human beings I have come across depart most lamentably

-Sigmund Freud<sup>73</sup>.

Ethics, when applied broadly, "refers to a discipline, theory, or other system that seeks to provide moral guidelines by integrating or balancing personal values with institutional or community obligations" (Wheeler, 2002: 70). Ethical codes include morals and principles that are considered by most members of a given society to be ideal or "right". According to Eid (2008) ethical decision-making should be both responsible and based in rationality. He outlines the six major categories of ethical principles as "independence, truth, accuracy, fairness, integrity, and serving the public interest" (Ibid: 128). Put simply, ethics refer to the moral guidelines of decision-making following a utilitarian, Golden Rule philosophy (Ibid: 91). When applied to the study of political communication, ethical codes of conduct follow a similar composition. Kelley (1960) states the primary goal of political communication is the promotion of the best interests of the public (a particularly problematic goal in a pluralistic society) through democratic ideals such as equal access, creating an informed electorate, and civic engagement.

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<sup>73</sup> Cited in Meissner, 2003: 5.

In light of the literature review and the findings of this research, these principles, while virtuous in intent, do not reflect the reality of political communication strategies as they exist in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In practice, political communication has been transformed by the influences of marketing strategies, shifting the focus from the ethical to the practical. Traditional, deontological ethics are replaced with teleological, goal-oriented ethics. Furthermore, this thesis suggests traditional ethical codes of conduct for political communication have limited applicability in practice.

### ***Reflexive Communication: Motives, Goals and Outcomes***

The key questions under examination for this research revolve around whether or not the ethnic outreach strategy of the CPC is a reflection of a genuine moderation in policy or a politically motivated means to an end.

To understand the motives behind the CPC reflexive communication code it is necessary to apply a Machiavellian ethical framework in the context of a fragmented public sphere where “counter-publics” have emerged to challenge the hegemony of political discourse. In the post-traditional political landscape where marketing influences and fragmented social systems have repositioned voters (or citizen consumers) as having significant influence and power over political leaders, what are the impacts of sophisticated, political communication strategies and tactics on public perceptions of democracy? Is a market-oriented approach to political communication and campaigning ethical political practice?

Often vilified by political traditionalists as oppressive and anti-democratic, Machiavelli’s (1513) disciplined, pragmatic approach to politics is instructive to modern

practices of political marketing because it elevates politics from the realm of philosophy to that of a practical science. In terms of the political marketing schema, Machiavelli's advice is particularly interesting to Harper and the CPC. Desiring power but not having built a stable foundation of support among ethnic communities, the CPC conducted competition research to understand and mimic the well-established LPC approach to communicating with ethnic voters - a strategy that is often advocated in the business world. By showering ethnic voters with benefits, the CPC ethnic outreach strategy raises questions from a traditional ethical perspective about consistency and equal opportunity for all. Based on a Machiavellian ethical code, however, the motives of the CPC in favouring ethnic groups are clearly a strategy designed to curry support. The approach, though ethically questionable, does not directly contravene major ethical principles.

In order to balance political necessity with societal expectations of ethical behaviour, as outlined above, Machiavelli (1513) advises a "prince" must master the art of deceit and manipulation: appearing to be one thing while in fact being another. For Harper and CPC this means harnessing the power of political marketing strategies in order to achieve the desired ends regardless of ethical considerations. Kelley (1960) warns that information disclosure can be ethically problematic when politicians are "communicating one set of positions to one audience and another set of positions to another audience" (Ibid: 155). The political motivations behind the CPC ethnic outreach strategy are not communicated directly to the voters as doing so could potentially reveal a less than altruistic motive. Based on information obtained from interviewees, the primary motive of the CPC is to obtain power. Issues such as transparency and creating an informed electorate do not factor into the reflexive communication code. This

teleological objective does not apply exclusively to the CPC: modern politics revolve around the strategies and tactics necessary to obtain and retain power. Regardless, under a Machiavellian ethical code, the appearance of virtue is best, often better, than actual virtue. In essence, whether the reflexive communication code of the CPC is genuinely altruistic or for appearances only, this is irrelevant to the larger, intrinsic goal of politics: to win.

While the mission statement of the CPC has always been to replace the LPC as the “natural governing party of Canada”, the goal behind Habermas’ ideal public sphere (1962) is to foster deliberative debate that transforms into political action in the interests of society as a whole. This notion becomes problematic in a pluralistic, post-traditional society where “counter-publics” threaten hegemonic discourses. In a radicalized, modern political context, the citizen consumer has significantly increased political power. Through the reflexive communication process, the CPC ethnic outreach strategy resulted in a transformation of the party’s political communication and political marketing strategies and tactics. Recognizing the political dividends represented by Canada’s ethnic and cultural minorities, the CPC adjusted its political communication strategies in order to better communicate with minority groups. As Kelley (1960) argues “one of the most difficult aspects of ethical communication requirements is the judgement of how far a source must go in disclosing information to the receiver, even if the information is not in the best interest of the source or source’s persuasive end” (Ibid: 153). By this measure, if information is withheld to create a false or misleading impression, this does not serve the ultimate goal of political communication - informing the electorate (Ibid: 148). Critics contend the CPC is narrowing public discourse and discussion while CPC strategists and

Members of Parliament see their efforts as expanding discourse to previously marginalized groups or counter-publics. As one CPC Member of Parliament explained:

People in the Chinese community probably had very little contact with the government in the past. Now, they are open and dialoguing with us and telling us what they think on a range of issues, including economic issues, health and education, and the more narrow and specific issues that are more relevant to their community.

By helping more people understand the importance of political engagement, CPC Members of Parliament say they are “[enhancing] knowledge of what’s going on in Ottawa and politics” and they do not think they are “doing a disservice by reaching out, in any way, shape, or form that [they] can.” While this goal appears benign, politics cannot be removed from the equation. From a teleological perspective it is entirely justifiable for politicians to be concerned with the dissemination of their political message to winnable constituencies.

The politics and policies of a party are “hopelessly intertwined and it’s hard to know what drives what” explained one CPC informant. Under the Lees-Marshment model (2001) for market-oriented political parties, political marketing is akin to “the selling of long term services in mature markets” (Scammell, 1999: 726). Compared to the two other typologies under the Lees-Marshment framework (2001), specifically POPs and SOPs, the MOP adopts a more complex approach to political communications, relying on research and market intelligence to “inform and define the demands that will be used to build and communicate an MOP’s product offering to voters” from conception to implementation (Berger & Pare, 2008: 45-46.) In the context of the CPC ethnic outreach strategy, the competing interests of various cultural and ethnic groups were

taken into consideration in designing the political marketing strategies. According to observers, the CPC has shown it is very adept at doing the research behind the MOP approach to political communication: “unnecessary judicial inquiries, formal apologies, financial payments and official recognition of events long ago are policies that go beyond even what Liberals, the past masters of ethnic politics, contemplated” (J. Simpson, 2006, May 5). In fact, the CPC government spent more than \$31 million in public opinion research in their first full fiscal year in office, more than any government in Canadian history (McGregor, 2010, April 30). Still, the CPC has clearly demonstrated its understanding of the importance of market research in winning elections, however there has been limited success thus far.

Another primary goal of the CPC in its ethnic outreach strategy was to overcome the negative brand associations that are often attributed to Harper and the CPC caucus as discussed in previous chapters. To achieve this, the CPC needed a competitive edge which required understanding the “first mover advantage” of the LPC brand over the ethnic vote. CPC strategists say they saw the potential of political marketing to re-frame the CPC to ethnic voters:

We have a Conservative platform – that’s our product. And its public information and people can look at it and say: Is it targeted? Is it narrow-casted? It is what it is and there’s no secret to it. How we take that product and then message it aggressively, based on the diversity of this country, that’s fair game.

CPC strategists also explain that while the product - the party platform - doesn’t change, this is where marketing influences become useful to political communication: “if you look at the business world, they are not going to make a car for Chinese people, a car for

Koreans...they make one car and they just market differently based on the market. It's common sense".

The CPC ethnic outreach strategy, in a nutshell, is designed to improve communication with voters within ethnic communities: "we want them to align their values with their votes by going from small c-conservatives to big C Conservatives" according to one CPC strategist. Summed up in two words, it is all about policy and presence, he said. These two pillars demonstrate the focus and commitment of the CPC to always be "delivering on issues and being present in the communities...[and] treating *Ming Pao* as important as the *CBC* and the *Toronto Star*". But does the targeting of certain ethnic and cultural groups over others pose a threat to the success of the overall political marketing strategy? Are there certain groups that present better opportunities for political gains than others? According to CPC strategists, evidence suggests the selection of targeted groups based on market research has informed the marketing strategies of ethnic outreach.

In examining the outcomes, both positive and negative, of the CPC policy initiatives and outreach efforts, it is difficult to assert if any of these measures or political communication practices have been injurious to ethnic voters or the country's national interests. In fact, one CPC Member of Parliament says he is proud that the CPC has "been able to serve [the] country while also addressing particular concerns of individual communities at the same time". Members of Parliament from ethnically diverse areas also say they do not see ethnic outreach as anything more than communicating with their constituents:

It's reaching out to who lives here and that's what MPs and politicians are supposed to do and in my case, it happens to be people in certain cultural

communities. In other places, it might be members of the Rotary Club or the youth bowling league...but [in my riding], it's reaching out to various cultural communities and how you represent them is finding out what their issues are and doing what you can to deliver on it...they have issues with respect to employment, skills training and credentials recognition – these are things that the government needs to do properly to represent the citizens of Canada.

Another important element of the ethnic outreach strategy, according to one CPC Member of Parliament, understanding the demographic realities of the country: “even if only 5 percent of your riding is immigrant, you’ve got to get out there and get to know these people now because they will be 15 or 20 percent in a couple of decades”. This reality will prove even more interesting for ethnic politics going forward, particularly in areas like the “Greater Golden Horseshoe” where populations of new Canadians is projected to grow up to approximately 12 million in the next 20 years (Statistics Canada, 2010).

While marketing techniques can be very effective in distributing messages to voters, the electorate can begin to feel bombarded when politicians from all sides are continuously spinning their messages, contributing to cynicism among voters, according to one CPC informant:

I think marketing is very important but I think it becomes manipulative unless it is based on solid policies and a real intent to actually keep the commitments that you make...if it's just a bunch of rhetoric and there's no real attempt to keep the commitments you make, then it's very deceptive and people will have every right to be cynical about it. It's not marketing itself; it's whether or not it leads to making the country better that makes the difference.

Furthermore, “newcomers who arrive [in Canada] don't have time to develop complex theories about consumerism and politics – they're too busy working three jobs and

starting a small business”, says one CPC Member of Parliament. He added that most new Canadians do not follow party politics and ideologies: if they vote at all, they vote for the candidate who has been able to connect with them on a personal level.

Achievability is the acknowledgement that a political party should not promise what it cannot deliver because this will result in voter dissatisfaction. Through market research the CPC ethnic outreach team was able to identify several achievable policies and measures ethnic and cultural communities had been lobbying for from the federal government that could be implemented quickly. While the CPC has seen growth in support among ethnic voters as a result of these measures, some of the CPC’s proposed immigration reform measures have not been as widely accepted or easily implemented as others. Foreign credential recognition, for example, a flagship policy of the CPC since the party’s inception, required an extensive consultation process before the program was able to begin operating in May 2007 (Foreign Credentials Referral Office, 2007). The CPC has also put forward significant reforms to the immigration system writ large, including implementing stronger language requirements for new immigrants and formalizing preferential status to “economic migrants”<sup>74</sup> as a strategy to ease the backlog of the several thousands of applicants: “I mean, we don’t really need a sociology professor. No offence to sociologists” (Chianello, 2009, April 18; *The Globe & Mail editorial*, 2008, March 17). Overall, the proposals were designed to restore people’s confidence in the immigration system to meet the needs of the labour market. The proposed changes faced criticism from the opposition parties in the House of Commons, including then LPC leader Stéphane Dion who cited the 1988 Reform Party platform, which stated

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<sup>74</sup> This includes technically skilled immigrants who pose advantages to the labour market, as opposed to those applying on the basis of family reunification or other reasons.

“immigration should not be based on race or creed”, and “should not radically or suddenly alter the ethnic makeup of Canada” (Riley, 2008, April 4). By suggesting skilled immigrants should take precedence over other applicants seeking admission into Canada, LPC Member of Parliament Maurizio Bevilacqua accused the CPC of “shutting the door on immigration because they fail to understand its importance to our labour markets and our nation-building” (*The Globe & Mail editorial*, 2008, March 17). The NDP’s multiculturalism critic Olivia Chow<sup>75</sup> also intoned fear-mongering statements, such as “refugee children in Canada will no longer be able to bring their family to Canada” adding that the ability to speak an official language does not make someone a “good citizen” (*The Globe & Mail editorial*, 2008, March 17; Riley, 2008, April 4). In the end, the proposed measures passed thanks to vote abstentions from the LPC, a move that is largely regarded to have been made to avoid a federal election<sup>76</sup>.

Martin Collacott, former diplomat and senior fellow at the Fraser Institute, says “there is very little public debate on the [multiculturalism] issue because every party has a vested interest. It’s one of the most fundamental problems in discussing immigration policy – it’s a sacred cow used by most politicians for votes” (Chianello, 2009, April 18). While all political parties are trying to claim the moral high-ground when it comes to immigration and multiculturalism policies, whether or not Harper and his CPC government can continue to deliver on their promises to ethnic voters remains to be seen. Given the sheer number of policies and initiatives aimed at improving the immigration

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<sup>75</sup> A high profile member of the Chinese community in Toronto, Chow is the spouse of NDP leader Jack Layton and Member of Parliament for Trinity-Spadina,

<sup>76</sup> Proposed immigration changes were hidden in a budget bill, causing some to question the Harper government’s motives in introducing the new measures. Liberals abstained from the budget vote, thereby allowing it to pass the House of Commons.

system, one CPC Member of Parliament argues, “it’s kind of hard for any opposition party to lay a credible charge of xenophobia or anti-immigration sentiment against a government that’s offered the largest immigration program in the developed world”.

Nevertheless, the CPC gains in key ethnic ridings across the country are unmistakable. In order to maintain these new levels of support newly elected CPC Members of Parliament in ethnic ridings will have to continue to work hard to communicate effectively and deliver results for ethnic voters. Many of the Members of Parliament interviewed for this research acknowledged outreach in ethnic communities cannot simply be a campaign activity -- it must be a long-term strategy with a personal approach that reinforces ties to between writ periods. As Tung Chan, CEO of the Chinese Canadian group S.U.C.C.E.S.S.<sup>77</sup> stated in an interview with *The Province*, “people are no longer simply looking at the party that brought them to Canada” (Bermingham & Olivier, 2008, October 16), and it is up to the newly elected CPC Members of Parliament in ethnic ridings to follow through on their promises and maintain and enhance the positive relationships, even more now that they have been elected. As one CPC strategist explains “it’s not something we can take for granted – it’s a fragile relationship”. Furthermore, Tom Flanagan warns “charges of racism are always just one syllable away” (Libin, 2009, March 28). While CPC strategists say they recognize the challenges they need to overcome with respect to the negative branding and misperceptions of their

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<sup>77</sup> A British Columbia based agency whose mandate is to “promote the well being of all Canadians and immigrants...and encourage their participation in the community through delivering services in five major areas: social services, employment services, business and economic development services, training and education services, and health services” ([www.successbc.com](http://www.successbc.com)).

ancestral parties, the focus remains squarely on using the ethnic vote to obtain the thus far elusive majority government.

Research conducted by the United Nations independent expert on minority issues, Gay McDougall, indicates that although Canada's borders are open to immigrants and the country has put forward well-intentioned policies, Canada is falling short of ensuring access to minorities for housing, education, justice and political participation (Cross, 2009, October 24). Some experts, including Paul Heinbecker, Canada's former ambassador to the United Nations, have also expressed concern that in an effort to win the ethnic vote the Harper government risks hampering international relations (O'Neil, 2009, June 14). In their book *The World in Canada: Diaspora, Demography and Domestic Politics* (2008) David Carment and David Bercusn examine several trends in Canadian foreign affairs, immigration multiculturalism policy. Contributor Jack Granatstein argues that governments that base foreign policy on diaspora politics are doing a disservice to Canada's national interests: "It will also help greatly if our leaders can focus on the aspects of foreign policy that are important to the nation as a whole and stop playing to the ethnicities that make up our population" (Ibid: 90).

In the end, whether the motives of the CPC or the LPC in targeting ethnic voters are genuine, well-intentioned, or pure pandering, the result is greater diversity of perspectives on issues of national significance and a stronger voice for the previously under-represented ethnic communities in Canada.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

I see both positive outreach to communities and I see politics at play, which is not a bad thing<sup>78</sup>.

- Bernie Farber, CEO of the Canadian Jewish Congress

The main purpose of the thesis is to explore whether the reflexive communication code of the CPC is a genuine reflection of a policy shift or a politically motivated strategy to gain electoral support. In addition, this thesis also examines the motives, goals and outcomes of the CPC's political marketing strategies toward ethnic voters.

#### Significant Findings

Through in-depth interviews and archival research, this thesis explores the evidence surrounding the CPC's ethnic outreach strategy and political marketing tactics to uncover the authenticity and ethicality of the party's more moderate policies toward immigrants and ethnic voters. While interviewees argue the underlying principles of the ethnic outreach strategy are to better communicate with voters, the influences of political marketing on the strategies and tactics of the CPC suggest the outreach efforts are primarily aimed at increasing electoral support and not strictly expanding civic engagement.

The negative brand associations of the Reform and CAP continue to linger as critics of the ethnic outreach strategy claim the CPC is engaged in racist politics by narrow-casting their political communications. Evidence suggests, however, ethnic

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<sup>78</sup> Excerpt from interview with Daniel Leblanc in the *Globe & Mail*, October 17, 2007.

politics and outreach strategies of this nature are not new. Furthermore, one must ask how it is logical to assume a politician can seek support from groups and individual voters but *not* from cultural groups and ethnic voters based on the fact they represent minority interests? Engaging cultural counter-publics outside the traditional hegemonic model, whether altruistic or not, extends opportunities for civic engagement, regardless of political motives. While the CPC may have been criticized in the past for not engaging ethnic voters in a meaningful way, the use of political marketing, or as some prefer, relationship marketing, has dramatically altered the communications strategies and tactics of the CPC. They say their new MOP approach is “much more open and democratic approach”, allowing them to seek input from ethnic communities on their priorities and “wherever possible, [seeking] to deliver on those priorities.” Furthermore the reflexive communication code of the CPC does not appear to violate any specific ethical modes of conduct from a teleological perspective. But what is the effect of targeted, segmented marketing on the electorate’s perceptions of democracy?

The reflexive communication code of the CPC emerged out of the desire to obtain political power, as illustrated in the identification of new Canadians as ideal and winnable constituencies for the right-of-centre CPC due to their perceived like-minded moral and ethical views. In this vein, the CPC proceeded with the moderation of their political offering on a superficial basis. Assuming new Canadians are generally more conservative-minded, the CPC only needed to discover better ways of communicating their product offering.

This research contributes to knowledge by situating the reflexive communication code of the CPC in the multicultural political market in Canada, providing evidence of a

sophisticated market-oriented approach to political communication in Canada. This research could be applied to explain the potential influence of political communication campaign strategies on voting behaviours among ethnic groups from an ethical perspective. This applied research that can lead to a pro-active move within political organizations to formalize ethical codes of conduct for political communications - a valuable link from theory to practice. Further research into how the ethnic outreach strategy was implemented in other ridings across Canada will shed more light on the role of policy adjustments, political and relationship marketing and stakeholder relations in the context of Canadian election campaigns and whether these approaches are good or bad for our democracy in the long term.

### **Thesis Summary**

This thesis begins by outlining the history of multiculturalism in Canada followed by a summary of significant political debate surrounding the role ethnic politics has played in the communication strategies of Canada's major political parties, specifically the LPC, PC, Reform, CAP and CPC. Political marketing in Canada has been increasing in prevalence and many perceive this to present potential improvements and potential hazards to democracy. This thesis contributes to the discussion of ethnic political marketing as it explores the ways in which the CPC has adopted a reflexive communication code in order to obtain power.

In-depth interviews and archival research with current and former CPC Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliament, and political strategists revealed a sophisticated ethnic outreach strategy was employed on both the national and local levels with varying

degrees of success. Spanning six years, research indicates that while techniques and targeted groups have varied, the underlying goal of the CPC has not changed: to increase support among ethnic voters in order to replace the LPC as the “natural governing party of Canada”.

The second chapter outlines a comprehensive theoretical framework for the study through the discussion of Machiavelli’s *The Prince* (1513) to provide an ethical backdrop in which to position the underlying motives of the CPC’s ethnic outreach strategy. While it is certain that *The Prince* (1513), being centuries old, does not apply explicitly to the practices of modern Canadian political parties, the wisdom imparted by Machiavelli has strategic applications in 21<sup>st</sup> Century political warfare. Considering Machiavellian codes of conduct for effective leaders, Harper’s CPC has mimicked many of the strategies for obtaining power outlined in *The Prince* (1513). From the strategic use of manipulation and deceit to carefully balancing fear and love, the CPC have demonstrated a thorough understanding of Machiavellian theories concerning the pursuit of power.

In addition, Habermas’ theories on the public sphere (1962) are contrasted with Fraser’s (1990) critique of the hegemonic model to form the basis of an argument in favour of counter-publics. In the Canadian context, ethnic voters are being engaged in alternative sites of discourse, a strategy the CPC claims promotes civic engagement. Beck and Giddens’ theories on reflexivity (1994) are also explored to understand the process of self-adjustment the CPC undertook in an effort to present a viable political offering to ethnic voters. Through self-awareness and self-reference the CPC endeavoured to shed the stigma associated with Reform and CAP immigration policies by presenting a more moderate set of immigration and multiculturalism policies and communication practices.

Finally, the Lees-Marshment model (2001) for market-oriented political parties provides detailed guidelines regarding the application of marketing techniques to the political product. Enriched by Marland's (2005) analysis of Canadian political parties, evidence suggests the CPC has been incrementally moving toward becoming a market-oriented party, or MOP. While future success and saturation of the Lees-Marshment model requires the CPC to place further emphasis on the research and implementation stages, the evidence presented in this research clearly indicates political marketing strategies have thus far resulted in minor electoral gains among ethnic voters.

In-depth interviews and archival research were chosen as the two data collection methods because they are the best tools with which to explore the motives, goals, and outcomes of the reflexive communication code of the CPC. The in-depth interviews were integral to the research as these rare informants offered colourful, robust and detailed accounts of their political communication strategies and tactics. The archival research complemented the in-depth interviews by filling in gaps and validating the information provided in the interviews, providing concrete examples, and alternative perspectives.

### **Limitations and Implications**

While it cannot be concluded from this research that an ethnic outreach strategy is entirely responsible for the election of six new CPC Members of Parliament in the 2008 federal election campaign, there is a strong correlation between the political communication strategies and tactics of the CPC and increases in support for the CPC among ethnic voters.

Some concerns or possible flaws in the ethnic outreach strategy may have also had a boomerang effect in some communities who felt neglected by the CPC because

they were not a targeted group. Conversely, some groups may have organized in opposition to the CPC candidate in particular ridings. Members of ethnic communities may also take offense to the implication they vote in blocks and not according to individual preferences. Finally, non-visible minorities may also perceive the ethnic outreach strategy as evidence the CPC shows a lack of interest in their issues or concerns.

While the marketing-oriented approach may assist political parties in winning elections, its effects on democracy are open to debate. Do targeted communications narrow or widen public discourse? Further research is required to understand how ethnic groups responded to the outreach strategy in other ridings across Canada. This will shed more light on the role of a reflexive communication code in the context of Canadian election campaigns. The ultimate question is whether these approaches are ethical and what the long-term effects on society are. As Denton explains, the ethical critique lies in “if political campaigns have created a discourse of citizen empowerment that in actuality diminishes citizen influence...[and] whether a genuine discourse of citizen empowerment is possible” (Denton, 2000: 47). Ethics, ultimately, are subjective principles. According to a teleological approach, political parties in general are designed to pursue power. Failing to do so undermines the intrinsic nature of the political entity. After all, as former British Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli once wrote “in politics, nothing is contemptible” (Disraeli, 1826: 422).

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## Appendices

Appendix A: CPC Policy Declaration, 2004, page 29.

### **Demand Better Communities:**

#### ***We will expand tax credits for caregivers taking care of elderly, sick, or disabled relatives***

More and more Canadians are taking care of their elderly parents or other elderly or disabled relatives in the home. With an aging population, this trend will continue.

##### **Providing more dignity**

Encouraging care in the home gives more dignity to the elderly by allowing them to live in the presence of the ones they love.

The Conservative Party of Canada wants to provide help and encouragement for families that make the decision to take care of loved ones at home – often making a major sacrifice in terms of income.

##### **The Plan**

A Conservative government led by Stephen Harper will double the size of the caregivers' tax credit to cover \$7,000 in allowable expenses.

#### ***We will improve recognition of foreign credentials and prior work experience for immigrants***

##### **Immigration has enriched Canada**

The Conservative Party recognizes Canadian society has been built by successive waves of immigration from all sectors of the globe, and that immigration tremendously enriches our economy and national life.

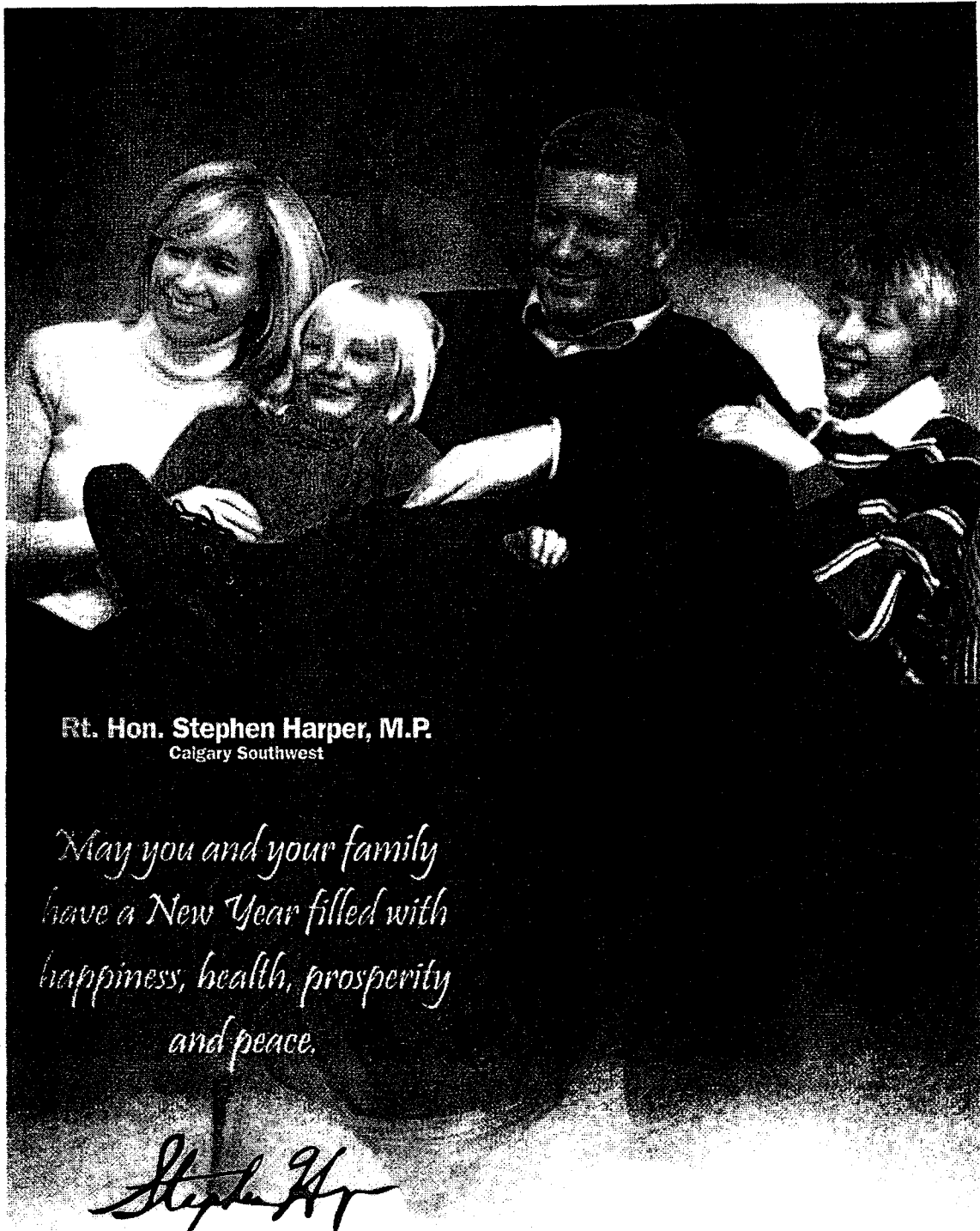
##### **Immigrants must be allowed to contribute their best**

Too often, immigrants find it difficult to use the very skills that earned them admission to Canada in the first place. Too many skilled workers and professionals face trouble having their credentials recognized, even after they have been assessed and vetted during the immigration process. We will not allow special interests to prevent immigrants from contributing their best to Canadian society.

##### **The Plan**

A Conservative government led by Stephen Harper will ensure speedier recognition of foreign credentials and prior work experience.

Appendix B: 2007 Rosh Hashanah greeting card from Prime Minister Stephen Harper and family (front and back).



**Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper, M.P.**  
Calgary Southwest

*May you and your family  
have a New Year filled with  
happiness, health, prosperity  
and peace.*

*Stephen Harper*

*L'Shana Tova U'Metuka!*

Appendix C: 2008 Rosh Hashanah greeting card from Prime Minister Stephen Harper and family.



## Ethnic Outreach Team

### Short-term goal:

A focused direct voter campaign to build support for the CPC

### Long-term goal:

Replace the Liberals as the primary voice of new Canadians and ethnic minorities




## A Sample Outreach Strategy - Thornhill



- Total population -- 116,640
- Visible minorities -- 33,675 (29%)
  - Chinese 12,610
  - South Asian 6,595
  - Black 2,665
  - Filipino 2,530
  - West Asian 2,355
  - Korean 2,660
- 79% of visible minorities are viewed as CPC accessible communities

Appendix F: Sample flier distributed by a CPC candidate – English and Korean (name is removed to protect confidentiality).



**With Conservatives  
You Get Real Results**

**보수당과 함께  
실질적인 혜택을 누리세요**

- Support students with tax exemptions on scholarships and textbooks
- Slashed the right of landing fee in half
- Pushed for Japanese apology on comfort women
- Opened the Foreign Credentials Referral Office
- 장학금과 교재비에 세금을 감면하여 학생 지원
- 정착비 절반으로 축소
- 정착비 절반으로 축소
- 외국자격인증조회청(Foreign Credentials Referral Office) 개소

**VOTE ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 14 / 10월 14일까지 투표해 주십시오**

Candidate  
www.cpc.ca  
Conservative Party of Canada

www.cpc.ca  
Conservative Party of Canada

Appendix G: Sample flier distributed by a CPC candidate – English and Farsi (name is removed to protect confidentiality).

## With Conservatives You Get Real Results

## بامحافظه‌کاران شما به نتایج واقعی دست می‌یابید




- Tough on crime**
- Supported students with tax exemptions on scholarships and credits on textbooks**
- Opened the Foreign Credentials Referral Office**
- Promoted respect for human rights in Iran**

- کنترل شدید جرم و جنایت**
- حمایت از دانشجویان بوسیله معافیت مالیاتی برای کمک هزینه دانشگاهی و کتاب های درسی**
- باز کردن دفتر مراجعه مدارک درسی خارجی**
- ترویج احترام برای حقوق بشر در ایران**

**VOTE ON OR BEFORE OCTOBER 14 / در روز ۱۴ اکتبر یا قبل از آن رای دهید**

Conservative Party of Canada  
100 Wellington Street West  
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2C6  
Canada



Conservative Party of Canada  
100 Wellington Street West  
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2C6  
Canada

Appendix H Copy of a flyer that was distributed by the CPC in ridings with high Jewish populations



Appendix I: Copy of a flyer that was distributed by the CPC in ridings with high Jewish populations.

