

**Celebrating the True North:
Canada Day as part of a political master brand**

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Abstract

In Canada, the rise of political branding coincided with the adoption of the permanent campaign, creating an environment in which politicking is now normalized and politicization is expected. With Canada Day 2017 as a case study, this thesis adopts Marland's Branding Lens Thesis (2016) as a conceptual framework to analyze if a national holiday became part of the Liberal Party of Canada's master brand. The key conclusion of this thesis is that the Liberals integrated their 'master brand' into Canada Day 2017 by integrating political branding into their government communications. This thesis also shows that Justin Trudeau played a bigger role during Canada Day than expected by a Prime Minister. Significantly, this thesis shows the Liberal government altered the themes and messaging of Canada 150 to parallel that of their master brand, applying a Liberal tint to Canada Day and Canada 150.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Canadians are bombarded with branded communications every day, and not just from businesses. Public sector actors such as governments, politicians, and political parties have jumped on the 'brandwagon', as well. Branding can generally be defined as attempting to offer one's products and services through the purposeful action of producing a specific image in the mind of the consumer (Kotler & Lee, 2008). Political branding then, is the extension of these images or emotional attachments to citizens by politicians, parties, and governments, in part by appropriating the use of national symbols, concepts, emblems, and values (Nimijean, 2014).

Political branding literature of the 21st century suggests that major political parties in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, and elsewhere have shifted from a sales perspective to one of marketing (Lilleker & Lees-Marshment, 2005). This approach of marketing their policies and candidates has created political consumers out of citizens (van Ham, 2001). Since the 2000s, the degree to which political parties have understood branding and the way that politicians and parties utilize its tenets, are significantly different than how they traditionally positioned themselves. Branding was previously only seen during election campaigns, not used as an over-arching strategy. It typically was done piece-meal via common denominators like slogans and colours, as well as attempting emotional visuals to appeal to the electorate (Marland, 2012; Delacourt, 2013; Scammell, 2015). Now, like elsewhere, branding is a significant and full-time element of Canadian political strategy (Marland, 2016).

The rise of political branding coincided with the adoption of the permanent campaign, viewed as a domestic political ecosystem and its actors –led by the governing party using the government resources available to them– behaving like they are continuously in a campaign whether a writ has been dropped or not. The permanent campaign concept is underpinned by an

emphasis on brand management, carefully crafted messages, and communication discipline by members of the executive branch and its inner circle. The permanent campaign was first widely publicized early in the Reagan presidency by Sidney Blumenthal (1980), a journalist who later worked for the Clinton Administration. Canadian politicians and parties adopted it much later, but with no less vigour.

In Canada, the literature suggests that the permanent campaign arose out of the uncertainty of minority governments (Flanagan, 2014). Since the start of the Harper Government (2006-2015), the permanent campaign has been regarded as a fixture of Canadian politics – albeit one that ebbs and flows. Its presence has less to do with the nature of government and more with the communications environment the government functions in (Esselment A. , 2014; Marland, Giasson, & Esselment, 2017).

In the age of the permanent campaign, every action, decision, event, and communication of political parties is “deliberately conveyed according to an overall theme or message designed to win” (Esselment, 2014, p. 24). This theme can be considered a master brand. Where this master brand is ingrained in the Executive’s decisions, it can lead to government administrations which are vulnerable to politicization. Under Stephen Harper’s tenure as prime minister and leader of the Conservative Party of Canada, decisions about government communications were often run through a partisan branding lens, through the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) or a departmental Minister’s office (Marland, 2016). This flow of communications is conceptualized by Alex Marland (2016) as the Branding Lens Thesis, entailing the application of a master brand to communications directed to all audiences, citizens and public administration alike (pp. 17-18).

As the federal government’s communication policy states, communication is central to the Government of Canada and contributes directly to the Canadian public’s trust in government

(Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat [TBS], 2016). In the normative approach to a healthy liberal democracy a “clear separation between government communication and party campaigning is deemed to be an important element of a properly functioning political culture” as well as helping instill trust (McNair, 2007, p. 96). This division allows for governments to inform citizens about publicly necessary information such as “the availability of services and benefits, access to services, eligibility for services, changes to such arrangements, and various rights and obligations” (Head, 2007, p. 44) without political “spin” or manufacturing. In other words, it informs citizens of what the government and its agencies are doing, planning, and thinking on their behalf (McNair, 2007), while being objective, timely, comprehensive, factual, and free from overt political partisanship. However, when public and political interests are perceived as blurred, “government communication tends to be viewed as part of an ideological apparatus of persuasion” (McNair, 2007, p. 97). This blurred state of affairs of government communications was exemplified in Canada’s sponsorship scandal, where Kozolanka (2006) found that:

The hyperapplication of strategic communications has shifted focus from substance to image, from information to promotion, and from policy to communications. While it is legitimate for governments to communicate with citizens and it is not unusual for them to want to persuade those citizens, the question becomes when and where to draw the line. (p. 344)

This is still the reality in Canada and, when conjoined with the permanent campaign and the adoption of political branding, it forms a public relations or publicity state. In this state, there is a notable emphasis and intensification of the strategic role of communication (Kozolanka, 2006). Further, “governing is combined with disciplined political communication to the point

that it can be difficult to discern what is apolitical, what is political, and what is partisan” (Marland, Giasson, & Esselment, 2017, p. 5), raising questions of the effectiveness and trustworthiness of government communications and if Canada Day would be used as a spectacle within political branding.

With the Liberal Party of Canada’s majority win in 2015, the release of their Open and Accountable Government Manual (Privy Council Office, 2015) and the Throne Speech (Johnston, 2015) both denouncing partisan politics in government, there was hope of relief from non-stop campaigning and partisan governing (Delacourt, 2015) and a turn towards the normative assumptions of government communication. In contrast to expectations, observers have noted that during their first two years of office, the Liberal government appeared to be using the same communications machinery that worked for them on the campaign trail (Marland, 2017c; Delacourt, 2016a; MacDougall, 2017), while also availing themselves of the government’s taxpayer-funded resources for communications purposes much the same as the Conservative government before them (Marland, 2017a). The traditional delineation between political branding (prevalent during electoral periods) and government communications continues to blur (Kozolanka, 2006; Rose, 2012; Marland, 2016; Lalancette & Tourigny-Koné, 2017); in other words, it is difficult to say where politicking stops and governing begins.

Despite the Liberal pronouncements to end the permanent campaign and partisan governing, in one form or another, it appears to continue to be pronounced in Canada (Curry, 2015; Delacourt, 2016a; Marland, 2017c). It is in this brand-centric realm that the Liberal Party needed to separate from their old image (Carty, 2015) and bolster their brand by envisaging Justin Trudeau in the eyes of the electorate as the ‘Sunny’ antithesis to Stephen Harper. With Trudeau’s brand-aware Liberal majority government, scholarly research can now focus on how

the Liberal party's master brand is melding with the Government of Canada's public communication. This focus on the Liberal's use of their master brand is germane because of the perception that the Liberal Party, more than any other party, "embodies the state, to the point of ownership and entitlement" (Marland, 2017b). The melding of leader, party and government brands, tangled with the permanent campaign, make it difficult for national spectacles such as Canada Day –especially a seminal date such as the Sesquicentennial anniversary– to be free of the grip of politicization.

Canadians can be assured that when they go to Canada Day events on Parliament Hill, they are in for a spectacle of celebration for the country, its people, and heritage. This was the case even with Dominion Day –the precursor to Canada Day– events as there were "a wide array of activities, including bonfires, picnics, sporting events, parades and pageants. Fireworks were often the highlight of the evening" (Hayday, 2017). July 1st was first designated Dominion Day to celebrate the granting of dominion status –from colony– to Canada; this was the name until 1982 and the patriation of Canada's Constitution from the United Kingdom.

Over this period the festivities of July 1st had consistently reflected the national identity that was popular at the time (Hayday, 2010), and accordingly, Dominion Day and Canada Day were generally seen as being free of partisan interference. The partisan politics were usually kept to speeches, aligning with the 1980 National Committee on Canada's birthday celebrations noting the day should continue to be "apolitical, non-partisan and decentralized" (as cited in Hayday, 2010, p. 305). Although not necessarily meddling, the Liberal government of Lester Pearson used Dominion Day on Parliament Hill as a way to build enthusiasm for the upcoming Centennial in 1967 (Hayday, 2017). Also, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau was found to have given politically sensitive speeches during Canada Day (Blake & Antonishyn, 2016). In the last

few decades with the adoption of the permanent campaign and branding's advances in politics, the level of politicization of Canada Day has appeared to shift away from just the speeches. Some have even pointed to Canada Day and other national celebrations moving into partisan territory, such as those conducted under Stephen Harper's Conservative government (Delacourt, 2007; Hayday & Blake, 2016). With this summary, it is shown that over time Canada Day has shifted from a non-partisan national day to a spectacle ripe for political branding and integration into a government's political master brand.

As will be examined in this thesis's literature review, globally, there is abundant and varied literature on the political branding of politicians and parties along the entire ideological spectrum. However, in Canada, scholarly and popular research on political branding has focused on the period of Conservative government led by Prime Minister Stephen Harper. In fact, Stephen Harper had been dubbed "Canada's first marketing prime minister" (Delacourt, 2013, p. 209) due to his impactful use of marketing and branding during elections and while in government. Thus, the current field of research does not adequately represent the reality of political branding in Canada since all parties, not only the Conservative Party, are utilizing branding, particularly while in office. The primary focus on the Conservative Party creates a gap in the Canadian political communication literature.

The absence of existing literature on political branding during the first two years of a Liberal-led Canadian government, offers an opportunity to examine whether Canada Day in 2017 is an example of a political party's master brand becoming much more transparently 'intertwined' with a national celebration. Specifically, in the age of the permanent political campaign, has Canada Day, a formerly non-partisan national holiday, become part of a political master brand? To answer this question, further questions must be answered: how is the master

brand of Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party defined, and how was Canada Day 2017 communicated to the public?

These questions help to inform and develop the overall argument of this thesis –that Canada Day 2017 is a case of a non-partisan national holiday being re-framed through the Liberal Party of Canada's master brand. This suggests that the spectacle of Canada Day is a further illustration of the growth of politicization of government communications. This also raises fundamental questions regarding democracy and government communication with the continued rise of the publicity state within Canada. It is important to note that this thesis does not argue the benefits of political branding, nor that the use of political branding is new to the Liberal Party of Canada. As a case study using Canada Day 2017, this thesis extends Marland's Branding Lens Thesis by testing it with a different party and using a single major federal communications initiative.

To answer the research question systematically, a qualitative case study utilizing a critical case type (Yin, 1984 as referenced in Bryman, Bell, & Teevan, 2012, p. 39), was conducted. The nature of a case study allows for a greater breadth of data to be collected while still maintaining a structured approach. The data collected for this research fell into three main channels: publicly available sources, documents obtained under access to information legislation, and semi-structured interviews. The interviews were conducted with political journalists and academics, government officials, as well as branding experts. The publicly available channel includes material such as Liberal Party campaign documents, Liberal Party branding and identity guidelines, government communications, and media reporting of Canada Day 2017 on Parliament Hill.

The method utilized throughout the research was Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The choice of thematic coding and categorizing is based on the necessity of a flexible analysis regime that is independent of epistemology, method, and theory (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 5). The analysis was conducted in three phases: coding and development of the Liberal Party master brand; coding and analyzing of the Canada Day data; and, interpretation of Canada Day through the Branding Lens framework of the Liberal master brand.

The thesis consists of five chapters, including the *Introduction*. The *Literature Review* includes two subsections: literature review and conceptual framework. The literature review frames the existing scholarly research of political branding, the permanent campaign, and political communication in a Canadian context. The conceptual framework subsection delves into the Branding Lens Thesis (Marland, 2016) and the theoretical assertions that underpin it. The chapter on *Methodology* presents the method of data collection and analysis for a case study. The *Results* chapter is broken into two main thrusts: the building of the Liberal master brand and the case of Canada Day 2017. The Liberal master brand section constructs the public facing Liberal Party of Canada branding that will be instrumental to analyzing the case. The Canada Day section describes and analyzes Canada Day 2017 in the National Capital Region, by testing the Liberal master brand through the Branding Lens. This section relays not just findings of the Canada Day 2017 case but also how the Branding Lens helped in its analysis. The final chapter summarizes key findings of this research and discusses the implications of the results. This conclusion also highlights the limits of the thesis and suggests future areas of research.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

This review will broadly cover *Permanent Campaign* and *Political Branding* with a focus on Canada. Within political branding, there are essential subsections which are highlighted, such as the ongoing debate of operationalizing branding for communications research; how political actors are utilizing branding; the use of identity within political branding; how place branding plays into politics with an inclusion of the use of spectacle; and the democratic implications of political branding. With the theoretical foundation in place, this chapter presents a number of conceptual frameworks, concluding that the *Branding Lens Thesis* is best able to provide the grounding for the central research question and research design.

Permanent Campaign

The permanent campaign blurs the distinction between campaigning and governing. If campaigns are attempts at winning elections, the permanent campaign should be viewed then as a politician or political party perpetually doing what is necessary to win subsequent elections (Medvic & Dulio, 2004). Of import is the emphasis on the incumbent and their access and control of taxpayer-funded personnel, monies, and tools such as advertising, opinion polling, and consultancy (Van Onselen & Errington, 2007; Kozolanka, 2013). The permanent campaign can hereafter be defined as a combination of image-making and strategic decision-making that turns government into an engine intended to sustain the entity's position (Blumenthal S. , 1980, p. 7).

The conception of the permanent campaign has a long history. Patrick H. Caddell, advisor to U.S. President Jimmy Carter, apparently first spoke of the permanent campaign in 1976. Caddell told *Time* magazine that after the election he told the president "it is my thesis governing with public approval requires a continuing political campaign" (as cited in Elmer, Langlois, and McKelvey, 2012, p. 1). Within the academic literature, there has also been a fair

amount of development, especially in the permanent campaign's birthplace, the United States of America. The catalyst appears to be an exposé of the changes to American politics by Sydney Blumenthal (1980) and extensive academic research on the permanent campaign in the United States of America (for example Ornstein & Mann, 2000). A recent stand out study is the longitudinal examination at how presidents are spending time while in office, highlighting the fact that since the late 20th century, priorities are more in line with an eye to future elections, rather than governing in the moment (Doherty, 2012).

The permanent campaign's limitations have also been analyzed, through the guise of the branding of party leaders such as Tony Blair and Bill Clinton (Needham, 2005). As soon as the governing leader's brand becomes tarnished, it is possible that the permanent campaign can also become irrelevant. Although a falling out is always possible, Bennett and Manheim (2001), suggest political entities are using sophisticated marketing strategies and a campaign-like apparatus, including polling and targeted advertising, to try and foster the best strategies and techniques to appease different segments of the electorate. This ties into the argument that "the perils of permanent campaigning lie in the privileging of partisanship over governance" (Elmer, Langlois, & McKelvey, 2012, p. 3).

Ornstein and Mann (2000) criticized the permanent campaign as technical management of the political sphere and view it primarily as a mediated phenomenon - a process of gaining greater control over political messages, particularly mass-mediated or reported events and spectacles, "staged" or otherwise (Kellner, 2005). An interesting example of this is how George W. Bush's administration attempted sweeping changes in policy by utilizing the permanent campaign apparatus and the media, aiming at winning over the emotions of American citizens to make Congress respond accordingly policy-wise (Edwards, 2007). Further still, Ornstein and

Mann (2000) also argued that a politician's travel and public appearances, particularly at public events or spectacles, serve as an indicator of the permanent campaign. This aligns well with Doherty (2007; 2012), who found that non-election-year-presidential travel indicated patterns of visiting the most electorally competitive states. In this regard, the permanent campaign is an "attention economy," a competition over the scarce commodity of citizens' attention (Lanham, 2007) and thus in the long run, votes.

The permanent campaign is typified by its characteristics of being nonstop and creating a pronounced political polarization. In the last few decades this polarization has been exacerbated by digital media (Elmer, Langlois, & McKelvey, 2012). Political wrangling thrives online, with the ardent willingness of political actors to harness its possibilities; this networked permanent campaign is always adapting to new communications platforms, such as live-blogging/tweeting, meme-usage, and the use of social media analytics (Elmer, Langlois, & McKelvey, 2012; Martínez-Rolán & Piñeiro-Otero, 2016; Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013).

Permanent campaign in Canada. Target marketing, public opinion polling, and the like were once confined to campaign periods; however, over the past three decades they have slowly found a permanent role in the Office of the Prime Minister (PMO, also Prime Minister's Office), in what appears to be an ever-increasing and enduring degree (Marland, 2012; Kozolanka, 2012). The academic literature is relatively sparse regarding the permanent campaign in Canada. The subject is so novel that the recently released *Permanent Campaigning in Canada* (Marland, Giasson, & Esselment, 2017) is the first volume of its kind to compile academic literature on the subject. Areas of particular interest to this thesis are; how the centralization of power—in particular, the political staff of the PMO—is driving the permanent campaign (Esselment & Wilson, 2017), and the possible impact on democracy of using mass quantities of

citizen data to micro-target communications with them, has in the permanent campaign (Patten, 2017).

There is no consensus on when the permanent campaign became a phenomenon in Canada; however, as noted it is suggested that the permanent campaign was born out of the uncertainty of minority governments (Flanagan, 2012; 2014). With Canada's fixed election laws, non-stop campaigning is most pronounced in the final year of a four-year cycle, during by-elections (Marland, Giasson, & Esselment, 2017), and during the rule of a minority government, when the possibility of a sudden election campaign is ever-present (Russell, 2008). However, it is now regarded more or less as a fixture of Canadian politics. This is a new environment in which legislation regarding an urban park requires a golden hour canoe trip for the Prime Minister (Westoll, 2016), an environment in which any event that can be made into a political spectacle is. Today, political actors have been noted to frequently make decisions based more on what is "good politics" and what is right for their brand, rather than sound policy and what is right for citizens. Lewis and Cosgrove (2017) argue that through the use of pre-branding during the permanent campaign, all of Canada's federal party leaders focused on boosting positive brand awareness for themselves while attempting to negate opponents' brands.

The rise of the permanent campaign and the advancement of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) are inextricably linked in Canada. The impact is that technology has transformed the communicative terrain for political actors, news media, and citizens who now are taking part in a "hybrid, accelerated, and partisan campaigning process" (Marland, Giasson, & Esselment, 2017, p. 15). Small (2012) believes that the development and increase in digital media have contributed to the permanent campaign in Canada, with websites and Facebook pages continually updated with new content; politicians tweet incessantly; and,

political pundits speaking on podcasts and writing blogs. Most important to Small (2012) however, are “e-ttack” websites, or purpose-built issue-specific websites that fall outside of election advertising laws. Online image management is also particularly of great importance to party leaders in the permanent campaign (Marland, 2012; 2017c; Lalancette & Raynauld, 2017; Lalancette & Tourigny-Koné, 2017). Marland (2017a) states that the Liberals have been said to be using the same machinery that worked for them on the campaign trail and availing themselves of the government’s taxpayer-funded resources. Interviewing political insiders, Marland (2017d) showed that Trudeau’s PMO might be divesting some elements of the Harper government communications apparatus that were seen as overtly partisan; however, it did not completely abandon central message and image control. This happened, despite the Liberal government’s pronouncement to end the permanent campaign and politically motivated government branding (Privy Council Office, 2015; Marland, 2017c). Solidifying the presence of the permanent campaign, political branding scholars have noted that with Trudeau’s Liberal government “the list of politicking is so long that it is confusing what constitutes legitimate government business and what is about image and persuasion with an eye on winning votes, and whether there can be any separation” (Marland, Giasson, & Esselment, 2017, p. 7). In one form or another, the permanent campaign is the “new normal” (Rose, 2012, p. 149) in Canada.

Political Branding

In the business world, branding’s purpose is to provide efficiencies through adding a perception of value and distinction to services, products, or organizations. Successful brands use a layer of emotional connection with their target audience above and beyond functionality and benefits (Scammell, 2014). Brands should signify ownership, act as symbolic representation, operate as a marker of quality, and thus reduce the perception of risk for consumers in their

decision making. As noted by Needham (2006) brands can provide reassurance by “promising standardization and replicability, generating trust between producer and consumer, much as parties emphasize unity and coherence in order to build up voter trust” (p. 179). For an audience, this helps them sort, choose, and assign brands to take on different roles in our lives (Reis & Trout, 2001). Branding is the use of a mix of tangible touchpoints such as logos, slogans, symbols, and colours (Kotler & Keller, 2012), while also attempting to tap into intangible elements such as values and emotional sentiment (Aaker, 1996; de Chernatony, 1993). The concept of branding relies on the theory of operant conditioning, the belief that it is possible to build a good image and demand by associating it with ‘positive’ reinforcement or hook (Kotler & Lee, 2008). Striving for these emotional hooks is the key to brand positioning, attempting to occupy a specific market space in the mind of the audience (Reis & Trout, 2001). In short, a brand acts as a mental shortcut or heuristic in an individual’s decision-making process. Thus a political brand can be defined as an associative network of interconnected political information, symbols, values, and attitudes, held in one’s memory and accessed when stimulated by the external environment (Smith, 2005).

Within politics, the positive reinforcements of operant conditioning would associate a politician, government, or political party with ‘positive’ elements like national symbols, slogans, identities, and values. While branding is crucial for companies, cities, parties, or politicians, there are differences of branding and marketing in the private and public sectors. In the private sector, branding is best seen as a tool designed to increase market share and revenues. The same in part can be said for city and nation branding, where part of the strategy is to attract more tourism or draw direct foreign investment (Potter, 2010; Aronczyk, 2013). With political entities such as politicians, parties, and their governments, the aim is to increase support via vote share

(Marsh & Fawcett, 2012), not to mention increasing or maintaining fundraising, party memberships, and public approval. Political branding then, is the use of consumer branding strategies in the political field through the assertion and adoption of the above beliefs and techniques by political entities for political ends (Marland, 2013).

O'Shaughnessy (2004) suggests that the effective use of political branding during elections creates an incentive for its use in government or so-called administrative communications. It has even been said that "the brand is the key communicative tool of contemporary politics" (Cosgrove, 2012, p. 121). With a history of fewer than three decades, the academic field of political marketing is decidedly still in its infancy. Scholarship into political branding is newer still. This does not mean that there is a dearth of literature; rather, there are specific pockets of research that have progressed far more than others. This also means however, that there are gaps in the current literature allowing for numerous opportunities to advance the body of scholarly work. Within many countries –Canada included– it has been argued that since the turn of the twenty-first century, political parties and the governments have been bound to the idea of branding (Marland, 2016; Scammell, 2015; Delacourt, 2013). Thus, as branding has become more heavily integrated into politics, it is telling that scholars have pointed to the adoption of the citizen-consumer concept by governments (van Ham, 2001; 2002; Scammell, 1999; 2007). Political branding is relevant to this thesis because it is one of the underpinnings of the thesis topic generally. Also, if Canada Day was integrated with a political master brand, branding of government communications is the likely vehicle in which it would be inserted.

Parties, leaders, and governments. Bang (2007, as cited in Marsh, 2011) argues that parties are no longer channels of representation, but instead are the means by which governing and opposition parties attempt to convince citizens that they should be in –or stay in– power.

From this perspective, branding is increasingly necessary to convince citizens of the perceived quality of the political product. An interesting thread found through the existing literature is that although it points to the overall use and effectiveness of branding in politics, no one element – such as a slogan, colour, or logo– is responsible for the benefits. For the Republican Party in the United States, branding was seen to help smooth out the leadership transitions and weaknesses over time. This was shown to be the case with the use of Ronald Reagan as one of the party’s pillars over the past three decades (Cosgrove, 2007).

Much of the political branding literature is geared at analyzing the brand from a strategic viewpoint. However, there is merit and insight to approaching political brands from the citizen’s perspective, Smith and French (2009) argue that a political entity’s brand can provide identity, reinforce self-perception, and provide rational and psychological benefits. Beyond delivering benefits, values also need to be at the core of a political party's brand strategy, as studies have shown that citizens make political decisions based more on emotions and values than self-interest (Lakoff, 2008; Brader, 2006). Despite different ideological stances among voters, when confronted with emotional appeals in political ads, voters can alter their positions and beliefs (Brader, 2006). This coincides with findings from Britain that the role of ideology in political parties has declined as they become more consumer-driven (Reeves, de Chernatony, & Carrigan, 2006). Thus, a political entity’s brand and narrative must contain a foundation of a specific and consistent set of values.

Schneider and Ferié (2015) analyzed the perception of branding decisions of German political parties by surveying voters and party members. The findings stressed that in the creation and maintenance of a party brand, internal considerations like members perceptions are as important as external perception (Schneider & Ferie, 2015). This ties in with Cosgrove (2012),

noting that branding in politics is a double-edged sword because it is only powerful if the brand is clearly and consistently maintained; when poorly implemented it exposes the political actors as failures and inauthentic (p. 121). In short, if party leadership create a brand strategy that members find favourable, the membership will do more to promote it to voters (Needham & Smith, 2015), becoming brand ambassadors.

Much like in the United States and the United Kingdom, in Canada there is a consensus that branding is highly prevalent in politics today as it helps to produce consistent political messaging and a common political product. Taras (as cited in Small, 2012), points out that marketing –and thus branding– to some extent “has always been a part of Canadian politics” (p. 185). Today, branding has become so deeply ingrained in Canadian politics that it has led to a surge in research. However, the academic body of knowledge is largely confined to the tenure of Stephen Harper as Prime Minister and the Conservative Party of Canada’s use of political marketing, with only a few recent entries looking at the Justin Trudeau’s Liberals. Such as a recent master’s thesis that created a branding term dictionary based on Liberal deliverables between 2006 and 2015; of particular interest to this thesis are the findings regarding the frequencies and categories of Justin Trudeau’s Liberal brand in 2015 (Corbett, 2017).

Cosgrove (2012), investigated the brand strategy of the Conservative Party of Canada, noting that it heavily resembled the style of the US Republican Party. He found that the core of the Conservative branding strategy was “taxes, accountability, justice and personal traits of the candidate, especially honesty,” (2012, p. 114), as well as ensuring that the average citizen saw how its policy actions impacted their everyday lives. This was mirrored in what Marland (2016), found to be the main components of Harper’s Conservative master brand (Figure 2.4, p. 44).

Canada's political parties' messaging, visuals, and tone are often adjusted to better fit the current leader's style and personality (Clarkson, 2005; Harris M. , 2014; Carty, 2015). This pivoting of the brand is important, as party brands offer politicians an opportunity to imagine themselves to voters under the umbrella of the party. Canada typically has a longer period between when federal party leaders are picked, and the writ is dropped; this inadvertently helps encourage brand coherence. For example, Thomas Mulcair and Justin Trudeau were leaders of their respective parties for more than two years before the start of the 2015 election, allowing the two leaders time to develop and strengthen aspects of their brand and be positioned in the minds of the electorate (Lewis & Cosgrove, 2017, p. 207). However, if a party's brand is too ingrained with the leader, a scandal or their departure might be overly detrimental to the party, including the collapse of its voting base (Nimijean, 2006b; Carty, 2015).

Unlike in autocracies, politicians in liberal democracies must court popularity from the populace, and in doing so, they become enmeshed in popular culture (Marland, 2013; Marland, 2012), for better or worse. Brands offer politicians a strategy to situate themselves with a unique value proposition (Scammell, 2015), the same as businesses and products need to do in the marketplace. Harris and Lock (2001) looked at the evolution of Charles Kennedy, leader of the UK Liberal Democrats party, through the branding of the leader's role and the interaction between the party and leader, particularly in how it established the public perception of the party brand. Needham (2005) looked at leader popularity and determined that a good brand requires six attributes: aspiration, credibility, reassurance, simplicity, uniqueness, and values. Through a balanced use of these attributes, a leader can help build a relationship with their party membership and citizens at large (Louw, 2010).

Examining political leaders, Street (2012) argues that small details of political personality and their resonance with popular culture might matter significantly for developing relationships with citizens. West and Orman (2003), define legacy as a specific kind of celebrity, relating to the children or spouses of former politicians, such as Trudeau. These individuals derive their celebrity directly from familial connections with former politicians, and thus “piggyback” themselves into office (2003, p. 3). A celebrity politician is defined as an elected politician or candidate who uses the forms and associations of celebrity to enhance their image, communicate their message, and relate to their target audience (Street, 2004; 2012). Central to the resurgence of the federal Liberal Party and a likely key component to the Liberal master brand, is the captivating celebrity brand of Justin Trudeau and the Trudeau legacy (Marland, 2013). Some scholars have pointed to Justin Trudeau as being an excellent case study in celebrity politics (Lalancette & Tourigny-Koné, 2017). Lalancette and Raynauld (2017), using the guise of celebrity politics (Street, 2004), examined how Trudeau’s governing style is framed visually, specifically how Trudeau’s personal life is portrayed on Instagram in support of Liberal Party’s values, ideas, and policies. It seems apparent however, that the research supports the suggestion that the Liberal Party exploited Justin Trudeau’s celebrity status and made him the focal point of their communication strategy and the party brand refresh (Thompson, 2014).

Beyond being a celebrity, personal branding can also help political actors better adapt to the fast-paced media environment urged on by ICT developments that have come about in the 21st century. This is due to the tenet of staying ‘on brand’ through strategic visuals, messaging, and brand management (Marland, 2017d; 2012; Delacourt, 2016a). For example, under the Conservative government, the Office of the Prime Minister (PMO) began a daily photo and weekly vlog series titled *24Seven* which was a highly polished and overtly partisan view of the

Prime Minister (Lalancette & Tourigny-Koné, 2017). Further still, on multiple occasions, any media that were a part of the Prime Minister's entourage were barred from taking photos, and were forced to use what was provided by the PMO (Marland, 2012). Although *24Seven* was dropped almost immediately under Trudeau, his government still relies heavily on visuals and photography to remain salient in the permanent campaign (Lalancette & Raynauld, 2017), and in an effort to prevent non-conforming messaging and visuals to be created.

User-generated content is an element that political branding must contend with due to ICT modernization. Likely the most famous recent case is the use of the "Hope" poster by the 2008 Barack Obama presidential campaign. The poster was created by Shepard Fairey, an artist with no connections to the campaign, but whose creative and attractive design became a campaign symbol (Veroni, 2014). Notably, user-generated content was analyzed for its varying levels of impact in the last two U.S. presidential elections (Ross & Rivers, 2017; Haddow, 2016). This is also noted as happening in Canada (Elmer, Langlois, & McKelvey, 2014; Wanless, 2017; Richler, 2016), but as of writing, no academic research is found to have studied the phenomenon in great depth. It is worth noting there are also risks associated with brands, digital media, and user-generated content, as political entities are not entirely in charge of their image online. The so-called open brand could be hijacked (Veroni, 2014). And for this reason, Sparrow & Turner (2001) note the uncertainty of user-generated content may require strict control of the political product, in other words, a branding strategy. User-generated content is relevant to this thesis as Canada 150 and Canada Day were spectacles which sought interaction both physical and digital, in the form of sharing and creating content. If Canada Day was integrated with a political master brand, any user-generated content would also be imbued with that partisan branding. Also of

note, the Government of Canada permitted the Canada 150 branding elements to be licensed out for official use by individuals and organizations through an application process.¹

A common theme in the available Canadian literature on political branding is the use of government advertising for partisan political purposes, allowing for the blurring of political party and government brand (Rose, 2012). A notable example is the Conservative government's promotion of its Economic Action Plan (Kozolanka, 2012; 2014a; Rose, 2014; Marland, 2016). A multitude of visual adjustments were made during the Harper-led Conservative government, a partisan coat of paint was literally and figuratively added to government advertising. Notable areas of these changes are Government of Canada websites including the public Canada.gc.ca and the private intranet, the Prime Minister's plane livery, countless media event podiums and backdrops, and even Parliament Hill's Canada Day staging (Harris M. , 2014; Kozolanka, 2014a; Marland, 2016). The Conservative government's development of the Economic Action Plan was widely reported in the media and framed as a challenge to the norms of government communication and branding (Delacourt, 2012; Cheadle, 2013; Mendes, 2014; The Canadian Press, 2013).

National identity. Conceptual national symbols can have a positive impact on creating an emotional bond to one's country (Butz, 2009). Whether this is the case or not, it is a common practice for businesses and political entities to craft brands around patriotic or national symbols to connect with citizens on an emotional and psychological level. A Statistics Canada survey (Sinha, 2015), examining Canadian identity found that over 90% of Canadians surveyed thought the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the national flag were the most important symbols of

¹ The official Canada 150 logo and typeface could be licensed through an online application, requiring the applicant to submit a description of the use and application of the brand elements. Each application was reviewed for approval by a team within the Canada 150 Federal Secretariat.

Canadian Identity (p. 4). Further, the same study found that key collective shared values for Canadians were human rights (92%), respect for the law (92%), and gender equality (91%), far outstripping linguistic duality (73%) and Aboriginal rights (68%) (Sinha, 2015, pp. 8-9). For political parties, the end goal is to have the positive emotional attributes anchored in national values and symbols transferred to the party for partisan gain (O'Shaughnessy, 2004). In a parliamentary system such as Canada, the political party that forms government can therefore use and manipulate the official national symbols and images to advance its partisan interests (Nimijean, 2014) through brand image transfer (Smith, 2005).

Political branding literature also considers political attempts at manipulating Canadian identity and values. Nimijean (2006b), for example, investigates the collapse of the federal Liberal party after Jean Chretien was essentially ousted as leader, due to the pulling of the party away from "Brand Canada." Under Chretien, the Liberals consciously used a brand strategy that stoked national pride and pushed "Canadian values" (2006b). This was done in an attempt to forge the "Canadian Way," a united national identity under the Government of Canada pedigree, but have it linked to the Liberal Party's policy agenda (Nimijean, 2005). Nimijean (2005) was not claiming the Liberal government was attempting to define Canadian values and identity; instead he writes: "[it was] linking them to its policy approach and policy agenda. In other words, there is a political dimension to the articulation of the Canadian identity" (p. 26).

Political branding is a two-way street. Political elites may have taken up the banner of branding from commercial enterprises; however, the same practices have been adopted by corporations to establish themselves in the political arena as well. Tim Horton's is perceived as one of Canada's most iconic Canadian brands. They use national identity to great effect such as with their "True Stories" advertising campaign (Delacourt, 2013). Furthermore, Cormack (2012)

found that the use of ostensibly Canadian symbols in political campaigns as part of a strategy to reach the average Canadian voter, was reciprocal. Tim Horton's benefitted from the Conservative Party's use of its brand, and the Conservative Party –choosing not to use an outlet like Starbucks– benefitted from Tim Horton's association with average Canadians as opposed to elites.

Often encountered and highly circulated elements such as stamps, coins, and currency are also a target for being etched with a partisan feel. Under Stephen Harper's Conservative government, iconography on Canadian bank notes was found to be explicitly partisan, denoting and visualizing the type of nation the party envisaged for Canada (Champagne, 2014). The use of emotionally charged branding by tapping into national narratives and emotional appeals (Travis, 2000), has probably never had more value in politics than at present.

National identity and themes of nationhood are central to many national-level spectacles. As such, understanding how national identity is used for political means in Canada is beneficial to this thesis.

Place branding. Canada as a nation, like many other states, is consciously branded. This form of branding is considered nation branding and is often promoted as the way for nations to increase tourism and investment. The study of international Canadian political branding is heavily founded around the concept of nation branding, which itself is a mix of marketing methods coupled with the notion of *soft power* conceptualized by Joseph Nye (1990; 2008). Soft power was found to be central to the Canadian government's use of image to bolster and project itself in a positive light abroad (Potter, 2010). In the same vein, soft power through nation branding is one of the methods Canada uses in attempts to attract increased foreign direct investment, international corporation expansions, and trade (Aronczyk, 2013). The use of nation

branding is perceived to be effective in achieving policy goals; it has not only transformed the Canadian state, but it has also transformed domestic politics (Nimijean, 2014). Nation branding is broadly conceived as apolitical in its creation (Varga, 2013); however, In Canada, Nimijean (2014; 2006a) notes that both Liberal and Conservative governments have used it in an attempt to shape the national image through a framing that is friendly to their political intentions and values.

Capital cities are often the focus of nation branding campaigns (Maitland & Ritchie, 2010). Ottawa, the short-lived “Technically Beautiful” capital of Canada, as noted by Andrew (2007), is a city that wants to be perceived as world-class, which means it has sought a branding strategy. As traditional tourist destinations, capital cities have an interesting dilemma, because the city’s, nation’s, and government’s nation-brand are possibly at odds with each other (Skinner, 2010). This appeared to happen in Ottawa in 2017 with multiple place brands vying for public attention –Ottawa 2017, Canada 150, and to a lesser extent, Ontario 150. A substantial portion of academic research on capital cities focuses on how they represent the nation to itself and the world; there is less focus on their location as the seat of power (Maitland & Ritchie, 2010). From a nation-branding perspective, capital cities –with their national museums and tourist destinations– are places for national spectacle and monumentality (Hall, 2002). Capital cities like Ottawa are designed and planned to enthrall foreign and domestic tourists alike. These spectacles are integral to the branding of not only the city but that of the nation and government as well.

Spectacle. Spectacle is an event or series of events that draws attention for the primary purpose of garnering positive media attention. Most spectacles have specific goals in their creation. There is likely no greater spectacle in contemporary times regarding reach and national image-making, quite like an Olympic Opening Ceremonies. It is vital that symbolism of the host

nation's national culture and pride be on display (Arning, 2013), but equally important that they do not de-nuance or rely on stereotypes. The 2010 Vancouver Olympics presented an "aboriginalized" Canadian identity to the world, promoting a view of inclusivity and depicted First Nations as a singular entity that willfully became a partner in establishing Canada as a nation (Adese, 2012).

For politics, spectacles do not necessarily have to be "megaspectacles" like the Olympics or U.S. President Clinton's impeachment scandal (Kellner, 2005). Events like budget day and the first session of Parliament can provide "earned media and social media brand-building opportunities for political actors" (Lewis & Cosgrove, 2017, p. 210). National days then, are an immense opportunity for the same. National days are often characterized by a continuous and ongoing search for an acceptable level of consensus (Hayday, 2016). These spectacles of the nation can be viewed as vehicles to attempt national unity while also reminding citizens who they should be, and who they are not (Blake & Antonishyn, 2016). In this light, national celebratory events can be prone to partisan reimagining and politicization. With national media coverage and the ability to generate large crowds, Canada Day can also be categorized as a spectacle. The political aspects of Canada Day have been researched, but typically through the lens of historical research, looking at its development as a tradition and its role at inculcating a Canadian culture (Hayday, 2010; 2016). Accordingly, from the first Dominion day until Canada Day 1992, the spectacles of Canada Day –particularly with regard to the form and content– were shaped by political and bureaucratic considerations of what it is to be Canadian, and were generally free of partisan interference (2010). Although not necessarily meddling, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau was found to have politicized numerous Canada Days (Blake & Antonishyn, 2016). He used Canada Day as a platform to speak directly to Canadians in an

attempt to gain the support of public opinion, and force the hands of provincial premiers on their position with regards to the adoption of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Library and Archives Canada, Trudeau Fonds, MG26, Series 011 and 014 as cited in Blake & Antonishyn, 2016). As noted in this chapter, with the influx of political branding, the permanent campaign, and politicization of other celebratory events like National Flag of Canada Day (Nimijean & Rankin, 2016), Canada Day has become a spectacle ripe to be integrated into a government's master brand (Wherry, 2017; Marland, 2016). Understanding spectacle is of particular importance to this thesis as Canada Day is designed in all purposes as a spectacle. To understand the impact of political branding on Canada Day, the spectacle as a site of ritual and image-making in the vision of the government of the day must be understood.

Democracy and political branding. Perception and image, and thus branding play an essential role in regards to modern governance. Peter van Ham (2002) notes as much when he writes that “the importance public relations has taken on in public diplomacy implies a shift in political paradigms, a shift from the modern world of geopolitics and power to the postmodern world of images and influence” (p. 252). This suggests that branding in politics is best viewed as part of a long-term transition of political entities adapting to the technological, social and political changes of the 21st century (Marsh & Fawcett, 2012). It also points out that every aspect of politics is now branded, including domestic policy shaping and diplomacy itself. In an age where it is argued that style, not substance is the central commodity (Lanham, 2007), it is no doubt or wonder that public policy is developed under a branding lens.

As public policy is increasingly driven by image and communication considerations (see Kozolanka, 2006; Evans, 2009; Rose, 2010), it is not surprising that branding and policy-making intersect. Marsh and Fawcett (2012) looking at Gateway UK note that branding helps to explain

not only the success of the original public policy itself but also “the success of its subsequent transfer to other jurisdictions” (Marsh & Fawcett, 2012, p. 332). A contemporary example of this for Canada could be the 2018 federal gender-sensitive budget, which took its cues from Sweden (Ayed, 2018).

With the intersection of branding and democracy, there are two distinct schools of thought. The first school views branding as a tool used by political entities to manage public opinion rather than as a tool to encourage more political participation by the electorate (Savigny, 2008; Smith, 2009). Another school believes that branding can extend democracy, but that it has yet to do so (Lees-Marshment, 2001b; Lees-Marshment, 2004). Extending this, Smith and French (2009) believe that branding can improve democracy, but only if the brand is based on authenticity. Branding can allow citizens to make a more efficient choice between politicians and parties by way of mental shortcuts or heuristics. It has been argued that this subsequently benefits democracy because more people can be civically engaged with the political process (Lees-Marshment, 2001b). Further, by having leaders, parties, and governments treat citizens as consumers, it means that these political entities will be more responsive to citizen wants and needs, and thus branding can contribute to citizens finding better representation (Lees-Marshment, 2001b).

In response, Savigny (2007) contends that branding is not utilized “to enhance the democratic process; rather, it is a means to an end” (p. 133), and thus does not necessarily entail democratic outcomes. Within Canada, governing parties want to be viewed as engaging the public in policy development rather than making difficult public policy decisions. Instead, it is said they opt for “superficial, cosmetic, and symbolic ‘changes’ via branding” (Rose, 2010, p. 266). It should be noted however, that according to Rose (2014), governing parties focusing on

changing perception and image is not necessarily an attempt at purposeful subterfuge or propaganda, but a possible side effect of the difficulty of changing policy (p. 134).

The increased use of branding tenets by political actors has raised concerns regarding governance and democracy, specifically the potential for political elites to employ political branding strategies as propaganda or propaganda-like communications within the public sphere (O'Shaughnessy, 2004). Ideal government communications in a liberal democracy are those where government provides citizens with comprehensive, objective, factual, and explanatory information free of political interests and their branding (Head, 2007; McNair, 2007). This ideal also creates ample but separate room for politically motivated communications to be shared with citizens, but as noted by McNair (2007), “should not be funded by the tax payer, but from a party’s own coffers” (p. 96). That said, it is noted that government communication is political by nature (Canel & Sanders, 2012), as it reflects the agenda of the governing party and chooses what policies, topics, and elements to emphasize or subdue (Liu & Horsley, 2007). Although political, government communication should not be partisan; to this end, Canadian government policy dictates communications must be “free from political party slogans, images, identifiers; bias; designation; or affiliation” (TBS, 2016, App. Definitions).

The normative considerations surrounding the use of branding and marketing in government communications and its impact on democracy is discussed in the literature regarding the modern “publicity state” within Canada (Kozolanka, 2014b). According to this thesis, the modern publicity state emerged under the Liberals of Chretien with the massive upscaling of the communications apparatus of the PMO (Kozolanka, 2014a), which ultimately lead to the sponsorship scandal and the illumination of the politicization of government communications (Kozolanka, 2006). When the Conservatives took power in 2006, they continued and refined the

process, endeavouring to deepen the use of branding by introducing the Economic Action Plan (EAP). Initially designed as the brand for the party's election platform, the EAP was then transformed into the platform for multiple government budgets and the highly advertised stimulus policy (Kozolanka, 2012; 2013; 2014a), all under the same name, theme, messaging, and colours. The EAP is a case study for what the merging of government and party, and policy and partisan government communication can look like. It has also been argued that the EAP demonstrated the increasing centralization of power, melding the political and the administrative areas of government (Kozolanka, 2012; Marland, 2016). At least according to those in power, the management of a state's communication is arguably as important as the management of the state itself (O'Shaughnessy, 2004, p. 173).

In Canada, it has also been theorized that branding strategy is now cemented in the upper echelons of government where "[t]he growing role of central agencies in managing communications allows the domestic brand state to flourish...thus allowing for more direct influence and direction" (Nimijean, 2014, p. 193). From this perspective, the rise of the modern "publicity state" in Canada reflected partisan government communication rather than the normative ideal of government communication. As Paré & Berger (2008) state, this "cannot be considered democratic communication, as the outcome is that the party in power gets what it wants rather than fulfilling the democratic needs of voting citizens" (pp. 58-59).

Conceptual Framework

The vast majority of political branding scholarship is focused on the implementation of the use of branding in politics, as well as how the brands are created or being utilized. The early models in political marketing literature borrowed from other academic areas of study like marketing (see Dick & Basu, 1994; Aaker, 1997). Over the past decade, new frameworks and

approaches developed specifically for political marketing. Examples of these include, the brand concept itself, which can be a theoretical framework from which to study other political phenomena, such as Needham (2005) to examine permanent campaigns, or an attempt at matching academia with praxis by producing a campaign planning framework for political entities (Baines, Harris, & Lewis, 2002). Some scholars have created models to operationalize the study of political brands, notably a model of brand distinctiveness (Scammell, 2015) and an analytical model that is predicated on comparing the brand identity (what is being promoted) and brand image (the target audience's perception) of political entities (Grönroos, 2000).

One of the more cited academic frameworks developed to analyze political parties was created by Lees-Marshment (2001a). The model attempts to segment party brands into one of three categories, based on their sales (membership and donation) strategy: Product-Oriented, Sales-Oriented, or Market-Oriented (2001a). The primary consideration in this framework –that parties pursue a marketing strategy by weakening their ideological stances surrounding policies– has not necessarily held. However, the structured approach to categorization can still be useful. The above frameworks have their noted benefits, but for this thesis, a framework was needed that could analyze how a governing party could use the machinery of government to possibly integrate non-partisan events with their brand. With this in mind, a framework was needed to consider the structure of Canada's Westminster system, the way the federal government communicates with Canadians, and the implication that applying a political master brand has on these elements.

Centralization of power. The concept of the presidentialization of democratic societies (Poguntke & Webb, 2007), asserts that political power is mainly held by the first minister instead of the cabinet or more broadly parliament. In the Canadian context, the presidentialization thesis

(Gillies, 2015), states that the concentration of political power is held not only by the Prime Minister but also by the executive's "centre," as well. "The Centre" importantly includes appointed members of the political Prime Minister's Office (PMO) and the non-political Office of the Privy Council (PCO). The government apparatus is beholden to The Centre as it is colloquially called, and its cadre of political elites who "dispense orders with the weight of the prime minister's authority" (Marland, 2016, p. 15). Thus, the PMO and PCO under the Prime Minister's direction and authority are now seen as the principal decision makers in the Canadian government (Marland, Lewis, & Flanagan, 2017).² Donald Savoie is the foremost proponent of the centralization of power thesis in Canada (Savoie, 1999a; 1999b; 2005; 2008; 2010; 2013).³

The Savoie thesis rightly focuses on the internal power struggles within government, but this led to some artificial silos that neglected the changing political and societal environment. With the ever-increasing prevalence of ICTs, Savoie (2010), moved to highlight their growing importance within the power structures of government, namely regarding digital government, and more importantly for this thesis, the central role of external communication for those in power (Savoie, 2013; Marland, Lewis, & Flanagan, 2017). With branding playing such a prominent role in the business of government and politics, especially in communicating with the public, the Savoie thesis (Figure 2.1) required a further step to better analyze a governing party

² Possibly more worrying than the concentration of power in the centre, is how few –if any– scholars dismiss that Canadian prime ministers hold greater power over the government apparatus than in any other parliamentary systems, particularly the Westminster system (Bakvis & Wolinetz, 2007). This kind of high-level political control over the "levers of power" –as Savoie (2010) deemed the government apparatus– is said to run counter to the principles of responsible government (Aucoin, 1986; White, 2006; Russell, 2008; White, 2012), and by extension possibly democracy itself.

³ Although scholars accept the outlining tenets of the Savoie thesis, not all scholars agree that stricter centralized control of government is harmful (Bakvis, 2000) nor that it is as deterministic (Gillies, 2015; White, 2006), as Savoie determined. It has also been noted by White (2006) that power concentration could actually be underestimated. It should also be said that this stands only for the federal level as there is not yet a consensus at the provincial level.

seeking “to influence public impressions and to set and advance agendas” (Marland, 2016, p. 17) with branding.

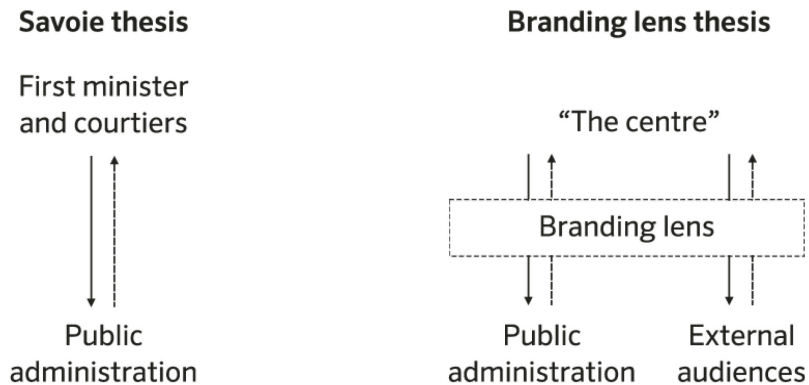


Figure 2.1. The Savoie thesis and Branding Lens Thesis. Reprinted from “Brand Command,” A. Marland. 2016, p.15.

Branding lens thesis. For its purposes, the Branding Lens Thesis (Figure 2.1; Marland, 2016, pp. 13-15, 17-18) extends the Savoie thesis by accounting for the prevalent use of branding by Canadian governing parties, showing how they communicate with external audiences in addition to internal government stakeholders, through a branding framework. As Marland (2016) states, “a branding lens is an evolving yet consistent and unifying approach to communications” (p. 18). It is the unspoken worldview that envelops the entire upper echelon of government decision makers, partisan and bureaucratic alike. This in turn, can help create a natural affinity between the master brand of the governing party, the Prime Minister, and the government. It is here that all government communicative elements must pass through The Centre’s approval and revision process before being disseminated (Scammell, 2015; Marland, 2017d). Examples of this centralized process have already been noted in this chapter, notably the Harper government’s Economic Action Plan. Other key examples of such branding are the Open Government initiative (Marland, 2016), and the renaming of “Canada’s New Government” and “Harper Government” (Rose, 2014). The prevalence of political branding at the highest levels of decision making

supports the continuation of Kozolanka's modern publicity state, further, it strengthens the likelihood that spectacles will be politically branded.

For Marland's (2016) Branding Lens Thesis to be useful requires three conditions: first, that branding is now a central tenet in Canadian politics, as is supported by the literature review; second, that political power is concentrated to a high degree in the hands of the Prime Minister and The Centre; and lastly, that most citizens do not want, nor have or make the time to spend monitoring the minutiae of political events and want to be given only what they really need to know to infer decisions (Zaller, 1999 as referenced in Marland, 2016). This assertion falls in line with the views that "brands simplify choice and reduce dependence on detailed product information, in much the same way as party labels relieve voters of the need to familiarize themselves with all the party's policies" (Needham, 2006, p. 179). As a result, politics is waged primarily through image and media management (Marland, 2016, p. 12). Much like Kozolanka (2014b) notes in the publicity state, Zaller (1999) states the style and substance of politics are "largely determined by the disparate interests of politicians, journalists, and citizens as each group jostles to get what it wants out of politics and the political communication that makes politics possible" (as referenced in Marland, 2016, pp. 12-13). With these conditions apparent in Canadian public life, political branding has permeated government communication, opening a myriad of opportunities for governing parties to promote their master brand in routine government communications, as well as in national spectacles.

The Branding Lens Thesis thus offers itself as the best framework through which to explore a governing party's master brand function in the context of the permanent campaign. It is in this environment this thesis asks: In the age of the permanent political campaign, has Canada Day, a formerly non-partisan national holiday, become part of a political master brand?

Conclusion

This thesis has three objectives: First, to define the public facing political master brand of Justin Trudeau's Liberal government. Canadian scholars of political branding have focused on how the federal Conservative government under Stephen Harper shifted from selling policy to marketing government policy. The election of the Liberal Party in 2015 created an opportunity for the examination of how the process of political marketing and branding would be carried out under the new government especially considering its public stance against partisan governance and the permanent campaign. Second, to examine whether Canada Day has become part of the Liberal master brand through the framework of the Branding Lens Thesis (Marland, 2016). The master brand concept allows for the analysis of the political communication of the governing party regarding identity, style, and strategy as "it can show whether and how style and substance are connected, and in the process advance our understanding of image and democratic norms." (Scammell, 2015, p. 7). This is important to note as these developments exist within the permanent campaign, where the governing party handles the levers of power not just over political administration but public administration as well. Third, to adapt Marland's (2016) Branding Lens Thesis to the micro level. The concept has only been applied at the macro level, spanning the tenure of Stephen Harper's Conservative government.

The study of political branding of governing parties is imperative. The blurring of party and government interests through image and media management strategies is widespread and transcends party ideology (Kozolanka, 2006; Rose, 2012). Marland (2016) agrees, that in Canada "we are heading toward a single brand that unifies the government, the governing party, and the first minister in the public eye" (p. 19). This research generally contributes to the body of knowledge by adding to the burgeoning international literature about political branding and the

relatively new area in Canada. Articulated in the above literature, political branding is well practiced by political actors in Canada. Where this research contributes specifically to academia, it is in examining spectacle as used within the permanent campaign from a political branding standpoint. It also contributes by expanding research to examine Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party of Canada, as contemporary Canadian scholarship of political branding is heavily focused on the Harper Conservatives. By being on the forefront of researching Justin Trudeau's Liberals, this thesis helps the Canadian body of knowledge be broadened beyond the Conservatives, better reflecting the existing political environment. With newer areas of social research, it is often seen that research is typically thin, with few studies replicating or utilizing similar techniques, as they often try and create their way forward. In this regard, the field will be advanced by this thesis use of the Branding Lens Thesis as a conceptual framework, as it has only been applied to the Conservatives at a macro scale. By analyzing the Liberal master brand through the Branding Lens, it will help thicken research under the framework.

Chapter 3 Methodology

Research Design

This thesis' methodology is based on a case study, utilizing thematic analysis as the systematic approach to the analysis of the case's data. As has been noted with brand-focused research (Scammell, 2007), qualitative-centric research is necessary because of the need to understand multiple layers of information (p. 181), not all of which is easily quantifiable. There are quantitative approaches that work with brand research as noted in the *Literature Review*, but when attempting to discover the use of a master brand, qualitative research offers more nuanced detail. The selection of a case study arose out of three requirements: a case study works extremely well with "how" and "why" research questions when there is little to no control over the events being studied, and when the focus is on contemporary events within real-life contexts (Yin, 2003). Within the social sciences, case studies are "one of the most common ways to do qualitative inquiry" (Stake, 2000, p. 435) and have been said to be a research design format that assists budding researchers (Creswell, 2014).

A key strength of case studies involves the flexibility of use with multiple sources and techniques, with all the diverse data sources focusing on a single case (Yin, 2003). A thicker and more thorough depiction of Canada Day as part of a political master brand was revealed than with just one data source. This method is also the best approach as it allowed for the freedom to conduct in-depth analysis and allowed for the research to "retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics" (Yin, 2003, p. 2) of Canada Day. This is important as Canada Day 2017 was "an object of interest in its own right" (Bryman, Bell, & Teevan, 2012, p. 38), being the pinnacle event of Canada 150 and also integral in elucidating the research question.

As a research method, one of the more lasting criticisms of case study research is the lack of external validity or generalizability as compared to other social scientific methods (Bryman, Bell, & Teevan, 2012). Generalizability was not an objective in this thesis, as the Canada Day case was chosen to illustrate the specific circumstances of a political master brand's use. Without generalizability, this thesis needed to ensure other measures of validation were in place. Case studies have a built-in method, which is itself a way to ensure a level of reliability, triangulation. Triangulation can be broadly defined as the use of multiple observers, theoretical perspectives, sources of data, and methodologies to corroborate findings (Bryman, Bell, & Teevan, 2012, p. 281). Triangulation has been known to help obtain more valid results by integrating and analyzing different evidence, as the cross-section helps ensure the analysis and synthesis of the data as more confident and concrete (Kohlbacher, 2005). With the varied sources of data collected for this thesis, a comfortable level of reliability was found. Further, this thesis allowed interviewees to comment on or assess the findings, interpretations, and conclusions related to their contribution. This is invaluable, as it acts as a fact check against researcher bias and can enhance the validity of the research (Bryman, Bell, & Teevan, 2012). Despite the drawbacks regarding the chosen method, a case study's described strengths outweigh and, in most cases, counter the weaknesses of this research design.

Thematic analysis

The data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, given its ability in identifying, analyzing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a disparate data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The choice of thematic analysis over other analysis types was based on the necessity of a flexible analysis that was not too closely associated with a specific epistemology and theoretical position, in so much as it could best allow multiple types of data, as is beneficial

when dealing with an array of data sources. While thematic analysis is flexible, this flexibility can lead to inconsistency and a lack of coherence when developing themes derived from the research data (Nowell, Noriss, White, & Moules, 2017). This inconsistency can be resolved by applying a framework to the analysis such as thematic analysis, to help guide the research and prevent a lack of coherency (Holloway & Todres, 2003).

Thematic analysis was chosen over content analysis due to the nature of the answers required, and two areas where content analysis were not as strong as thematic analysis. Content analysis is a strong analytical regime when looking at the frequency of words or statements in bodies of text; however, this thesis is also addressing more contextual elements like photographs, imagery, and other environmental assets that are fundamental to the application of branding as noted throughout the *Literature Review*. Thus, the research of these elements is integral to the constructive and meaningful research of political branding. As well, it is possible that content analysis will inadvertently remove the context of the text being studied and it can disregard the context that the text was produced in, as well as the overlapping elements that surround the text after it is crafted (Bryman, Bell, & Teevan, 2012). This is not to say that frequency does not matter, as an implicit quantification likely influences both identification and elevation of certain themes over others (Bryman, Bell, & Teevan, 2012).

When attempting to analyze how a brand and its key messaging are being integrated, context and environment are of the utmost importance, and can be lost or not developed when guided solely by content analysis. There was a necessity in this thesis to analyze written content through close reading of the content and outside of the written or spoken word. Therefore, the themes derived could not be determined through content analysis. Additionally, the general lack of context and emotional sentiment in a more frequency-based content analysis can make it more

difficult to draw thematic observations about the data collected (Nowell, Noriss, White, & Moules, 2017). The thematic analysis method may have weaknesses with regards to consistency, but with proper structure its strengths of being an approachable method, being flexible, and its ability to apply well to multiple data types, far outweigh the weakness and create an analytical method well suited for this thesis.

Data Types & Selection

The data that was collected for this case study fell into three main channels: publicly available sources; obtained through access to information requests; and in-depth interviews. Due to the nature of Canada 150 and specifically Parliament Hill's Canada Day being a national and public event, the first segment of data was publicly available, and gathered between June 30, 2017 and July 3, 2017, the 2017 Canada Day weekend. These data include government news releases and backgrounders, speeches, transcripts and the "run of play" for the Canada Day events, media reporting from the Canada Day weekend (including CBC's live broadcast of the event), field notes from direct observations of the Canada Day festivities, as well as media reports on the events themselves. A large part of the data collected were sources in support of the research but not directly related to Canada Day; these include those that helped define the Liberal Party master brand such as the party's 2015 election platform, policy backgrounders, brand guidelines, publicly available internal documents, and social media posts. This public data set also included surveys and media reports on the Liberal Party or Justin Trudeau relating to their branding, Canadian national symbols and identity, publicly available documents from the Privy Council Office such as the Open and Accountable policy and ministerial mandate letters.

Brands are purposefully shifted over time, and any attempt at defining a brand can only ever be a snap shot in time. With this in mind, it is important to note that the documents

supporting the analysis of the Liberal master brand were dated from August 4, 2015, until July 3, 2017. These dates were chosen to correspond with the writ being dropped to start the 2015 federal election and ended on Canada Day weekend. Although much of the Liberal master brand likely still exists today, certain elements could be realigned to best frame itself with the changing times as per the permanent campaign.

Determining an overall brand strategy is a large undertaking, recognizing the components of a brand strategy can be a subjective undertaking especially as it regards to analyzing the desired brand image. With the Liberal master brand, reliance on publicly available documents is a necessity, as the internal processes of political branding is a tightly controlled world, one encouraged by the strict communications control of political parties and by branding strategy itself (Thomas, 2013, p. 78). Yet, understanding how the creators depict their brand is a great insight. That is why it was imperative to get a Liberal Party insider's view through in-depth interviews. Unfortunately, as discussed in detail below, the lack of any interviews with Liberal leadership had a limiting effect on the thesis' analysis; however, this limitation was partially expected and mitigated through strategic interviewee choice.

The second segment of data involves documents obtained through the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Act (ATIPP). Using the Open Government portal (open.canada.ca), one formal request for information was made, and fourteen informal requests for previously completed ATIPP requests that appeared to have related material. All requests were directed towards the Department of Canadian Heritage and sought documents regarding Canada 150's branding, Canada Day in the National Capital Region, branding, content or design changes from the Minister of Canadian Heritage's office regarding Canada Day 2017, and any correspondence regarding the Canada Day festivities in 2017. The informal requests were broad

enough to cover the area of information being sought.⁴ The formal request was made in February 2018 and sought briefing notes and correspondence that was mentioned or referenced in other ATIPP requests but not obtained through the informal requests as well as fact sheets, backgrounders, and memos related to branding or theme choices of Canada Day 2017 or Canada 150 since November 2015. A known limiting factor with ATIPP requests is that when political staff are dealing with sensitive or political issues, the discussions will be made via phone or in person to prevent any possible entry into public access. Unfortunately, another limitation is any content seen as confidential by ATIPP censors or coming from the Office of the Prime Minister (PMO) –which is currently exempt from ATIPP legislation– was deemed unavailable either through partial redaction or by denying access to the requested documents. Many of the requests made for this thesis were partially redacted.

The third segment of data for this thesis is that of in-depth interviews. Interviews were conducted in an attempt to corroborate the other sources of data, gain new insight and expert perspectives, as well as to fill in the possible gaps of the other data sources. In-depth interviews were chosen because their data typically centres on “how the interviewee frames and understands issues and events” (Bryman A. , 2012, p. 471), in other words, what the interviewee views as important in understanding the themes, patterns, and data of the research. Additionally, the flexibility of interviewing respondents allows for questioning of unclear or interesting developments from other sources of data, which ultimately can yield to clearer and more resounding results (Bryman, Bell, & Teevan, 2012). That is why this type of insight can

⁴ See Appendix A for the list and summary descriptions of the formal and informal ATIPP requests that were requested for this thesis.

corroborate other data sources for this thesis, such as official documents from the federal Liberal Party and the Government of Canada.

Interviews were sought with various experts and insiders who would have insight into Canada 150 and Canada Day and their development, political branding, and the federal Liberal Party of Canada. Specifically, individuals who worked on the ideation, development, and production of the Canada Day 2017 festivities, from the federal Department of Canadian Heritage were sought; as well, this researcher contacted members of the PMO, federal Liberal Party leadership and communications personnel, political communication and branding practitioners, academics, and experts. Interviewees were initially contacted by email with a quick descriptive introduction and a Letter of Information (Appendix B) attached. If no return contact was made, a second email was sent two weeks after the first, asking for a confirmation of receipt and whether or not they were interested in being part of the research. For interviewees who did not reach out after the two emails, and a telephone number was known, a call was made and a message left if no answer. The message detailed the same information as in the first email and asked for a reply as to whether they were interested.

The interviews and follow-ups were conducted in-person or via telephone between February 2018 and June 2018. The interviews averaged 45 minutes in length, with the longest running 60 minutes. The interviews were completed in a semi-structured format, allowing the discussions to unfold naturally with open-ended questions (Bryman, Bell, & Teevan, 2012, pp. 165-174) with the flow of the interviews being facilitated by but not contained to an interview schedule (Appendix C). Before the interviews began, each interviewee signed the research consent form (Appendix D) or verbally agreed after a point by point review of the form. In-person and telephone interviews were audio recorded and later transcribed by the researcher for

ease of analysis. Any unclear sections of the recording that could not be fully transcribed – whether due to technical issues or unclear responses– were clarified through a follow-up email or phone call with the interviewee.

Table 3.1 Expertise, position, and respondent code of Interviewees		
Areas of Expertise	Position	Respondent Code
Government and Canada Day branding and communication	PCH Director, Capital Events	R1
Canada Day 2017 (Canada 150) branding and communication	Federal Secretariat, Canada 150, Brand Manager	R2
Political branding and communication	Political Branding Academic	R3
	Journalist, Political Communication	R4

Notes. PCH – Department of Canadian Heritage, LPC – Liberal Party of Canada, PMO – Office of the Prime Minister.

Sixteen individuals were initially contacted for interviews (Appendix E), with ten responding. Of those, four agreed to interviews and six declined.⁵ The six remaining individuals were emailed again, and further two were telephoned, with no reply from any. There was an attempt at snowballing, but in a show of how small the political branding space is in Canada, the individuals mentioned were already on the interview contact list. The small number of positive returns was limiting to the research. In total, this researcher was able to obtain four interviews. Unfortunately, no interviews were obtained with PMO staff or Liberal Party of Canada staff.

⁵ Two of the interview candidates who declined, guided me to three individuals who may be of interest to my research. One was already on my list, the other two were contacted, where one declined and one never returned contact.

Data Organization

The sizeable available store of data types with a case study allows for a broader and more varied approach to a subject, but it is also where the method can falter, specially if the data is collected and stored haphazardly (Yin, 2003). Establishing a case study database is a helpful technique given the complex and multifaceted nature of case study research. A case study evidence database (Yin, 2003) of the data gathered was developed; it housed an index of all documents, transcripts, images, videos, and research notes that were collected and created for the thesis. This database also contained details on each data source to include: when the source was collected, how it was collected, and researcher notes or observations regarding the collection of the source. The database was used for more than just easing the organization of data; it also helped strengthen the reliability of the research and increase the transparency of the findings through structured and deliberate actions (Yin, 2003).

Data Analysis

The analysis itself was broken into three phases: the thematic coding and development of the Liberal master brand; the coding and analysis of Canada Day; and, the interpretation of the Canada Day data through the theoretical framework of the branding lens thesis. Thematic analysis was utilized throughout the first two phases, in which it entails emphasizing the common themes and those codes or themes that are seen as most revealing about the data (Nowell, Noriss, White, & Moules, 2017). The content was manually analyzed and coded, despite it using more time than technologically assisted analysis. However, this ensured that any context, imagery, or other difficult to discern connections contained in the dataset were found and there was no requirement for a coding manual to ensure intercoder reliability.

Part of developing and analyzing the Liberal Party of Canada data was derived from the existing literature and the conceptual framework. During amalgamation and consolidating of theme categories this structure helped guide the process. A foundational level of themes were derived from the master brand hierarchy (Marland, 2016) and from the literature, such as a Liberal Party brand dictionary developed out of public facing party materials (Corbett, 2017, Appendix), and an analysis of the early Liberal brand under Justin Trudeau (Thompson, 2014). The master brand concept includes built-in hierarchical categories for the themes such as desired master brand, desired sub-brands, core message, and message themes. Corbett's (2017) dictionary also assisted in creating a foundation for thematic buckets as it had developed categories for the branded words, such as economy, social issues, social services, and security, international relations, and government. This foundation helped determine which elements of the data should be considered more closely and guide the analysis throughout. However, as the analysis went through its iterations, the themes began to morph closer into language derived from this thesis' data. This is because it is essential to develop the elements of interpretation as closely as possible to the data being analyzed and to formulate them vis-à-vis the language, ideas, and themes found within the data (Kohlbacher, 2005).

The building of the Liberal master brand is necessarily first and separate, as it is foundational for the analysis of the Canada Day case. As noted above, using the master brand concept, previous research into Trudeau's Liberal brand, and the available data related to the Liberal Party, themes revolving around the public-facing brand were created. These themes formed the outline of the Liberal master brand, which was utilized as the thematic categories for which the conceptual framework would base its analysis.

Following the construction of the Liberal master brand, the second phase began. Canada Day data was thematically analyzed iteratively in an inductive process and as the data became available. Themes were continuously reanalyzed, consolidated, and generated during each iteration, ensuring new data was being taken to account. Themes evolved from the dataset into operational thematic categories.

Following the thematic coding of the entire Canada Day dataset, the themes were analyzed for any possible patterns or contradictions –not only the manifest themes, but latent ones as well– that could be merged together to create thematic categories for a better frame of analysis. In an ideal situation, the third phase would begin upon reaching complete theoretical saturation, where finally the data would be interpreted by attaching meaning to significant findings and connecting these through the conceptual framework to discuss and draw on the results and conclusions. For this thesis, although theoretical saturation was not met in all areas of data, the limits of data collection were met in the time allocated for a master’s thesis. The coded data was interpreted through the Branding Lens Thesis, in an attempt to find thematic patterns and similarities between the Liberal Party master brand and Canada Day 2017. With this, the significant interrelating themes were also presented with the previous academic literature for interpretation of the results. Also, significant and illuminating quotations and content from interviews, speeches, documents, and other data sources were identified within the research to exemplify particular themes and findings to illustrate arguments.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this thesis has adopted a qualitative research design based on a case study format. Thematic analysis was judged to be the most useful method to employ within a case study in conjunction with the conceptual framework of the Branding Lens Thesis.

Chapter 4 Results

This chapter aims to investigate the extent to which Canada Day, a formerly non-partisan national holiday, has become part of the Liberal master brand in the age of the permanent political campaign. To analyze such aims, the results chapter is broken down into two main sections: first is the definition, description, and construction of the Liberal master brand; second is the analysis and discussion of Canada Day 2017 and how it is viewed through the Branding Lens, focusing in on the parallels and gaps with elements of the Liberal master brand and how they relate back to the reviewed literature.

Constructing the Liberal master brand

After multiple defeats and eventual third-party status in the 2011 election, the Liberal Party of Canada leadership did a post-mortem and concluded the status quo was not working. They realized a pivot to their branding was in order. With the election of Justin Trudeau as party leader in 2013, the Liberals had a bellwether to refresh their master brand. The brand under Trudeau, pivoted from what was once regarded as the party of national unity (Clarkson, 2005) to become far more synonymous with being the defender of human rights and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This change of direction away from the long-held position of national unity was noted in the interviews:

So, there may have been a time when the Liberals, they would have –I remember there is a famous quote from Lester B. Pearson, “If anyone ever asks what it is to be Canadian, you should answer in French.” So, it was kind of a way in saying the unity of these two different ethnicities and these two languages. But now, the Liberal party would never answer in that manner. (R3)

This ties in with a recent national survey, as noted in the literature review that the Charter is a key symbol and Human Rights is a key shared value of Canadians, far surpassing that of bilingualism (Sinha, 2015). The Liberals' master brand is no longer about unifying a bilingual Canada (Marland, 2017b), but instead about inclusivity, multiculturalism, and the like, all of which are grounded in the Charter. Thus, Charter values and rights-focused positioning is nascent throughout Liberal communications and make up the backbone of the Liberal Party of Canada master brand (Figure 4.1).



Figure 4.1. Components of Justin Trudeau’s Liberal Party of Canada brand, 2017. Adapted from “Brand Command,” A. Marland, 2016, p. 44.

To construct the Liberal master brand this thesis utilized the hierarchy from *Brand Command* (Figure 2.4, p. 44, Marland, 2016). That master brand was created for Stephen Harper’s Conservative Party of Canada, but the hierarchy of a desired master brand, desired sub-brands, core message, and message themes will be used for this thesis. Just as the Conservative master brand was portrayed in *Brand Command*, the Liberal master brand is made up of many connected values, messages, themes and desired brands that fall under the party’s banner around the time of Canada Day 2017. Also included as part of the master brand, but not depicted as part of *Figure 4.1* are the visual brand identity of the Liberal Party of Canada and how Justin

Trudeau's brand fits in with the party. The addition and analysis of the Trudeau brand is essential, as the Liberal party brand is heavily centered on the leader, where one is perceived, so will the other. Thus, any attempt at positioning and messaging had a deep interlacing of the Liberal Party and Trudeau brands.

The master brand for the Liberal Party of Canada can be defined as *prosperity by change*. This overarching theme is portrayed in everything the Liberal brand produced. Desired sub-brands of Justin Trudeau's Liberals were *compassion, community, and responsibility*. The overarching core message was that of *strength through diversity*. Following from this main message were the derivative themes of *unity through diversity, inclusive opportunity, diversity in security, and citizen-focused governing*. Although the Liberal master brand had many components as noted above, narrowing of the analytical focus was necessary due to the typical time constraints and expectations applied to a master's research thesis. The focal point for analysis of the Liberal master brand herein will be on the sub-brands of *compassion and community and responsibility* and the underlying themes except for *citizen-focused governing*. The exclusion of this specific theme from the analysis should not be seen as weakening the ability to answer the central research question, as this theme relates mainly to the inner-workings of government, government transparency, and policy creation, themes which were unlikely to be put forward during Canada Day. As well, it allowed for a greater depth of analysis and understanding of the remaining branding elements, including the visual identity system and the inculcation of Justin Trudeau into the Liberal brand.

Provided below is a summary of the critical Liberal brand elements, themes, their meaning, and examples as to their prominence in the brand.

Prosperity by change. The overarching master brand for the Liberal Party of Canada in 2017 was that of change for the betterment of Canadians. All three major federal parties promote prosperity for Canadians, particularly for the often ill-defined middle class, but the Liberal positioning went beyond the typical “change-messaging” and pushed not just for change in economic means, but inclusive, holistic change. In their own words the Liberal Party defined the Liberal brand as “about bringing Real Change to Canadians” (Dean & Guenther, 2016, p. 2). This ideological positioning was visible through their 2015 campaign slogan of “Real Change” and their election platform *Real Change: A New Plan For A Strong Middle Class*. The change that the Liberal brand was clarifying concerned social inequality in Canada. Liberal positioning with regards to social policies such as building nation-to-nation relationships with Indigenous peoples and looking into gender impacts of decision making are direct results of this brand message. The Liberal ideological position that real change happens from the bottom up, drives the party’s overall desire and theme for prosperity by change.

Desired sub-brands. Through communication instruments like their constitution, electoral platform, and messaging, the Liberal Party clearly articulates the sub-brands of *compassion, community, and responsibility*. These sub-brands are designed to be visionary as they are derived from party values, but are advanced through the themes, and messages of the master brand.

Compassion. Borrowing from the Party’s values and principles (Liberal Party of Canada, 2012), the *compassion* sub-brand speaks to their desire for their government to be seen as a progressive and caring organization, one which is “committed to providing a good and fair balance between the economy and social justice” (2012). They endorse a perception of being Canada’s champion of diversity and embracing difference, and the party promoting the

importance of providing fair and equitable treatment for all persons, while maintaining a clean, safe, and sustainable environment.

Community. The Liberals consider themselves as realistic optimists who believe in the sharing and benefits of the common good for members in the community (Liberal Party of Canada, 2012). The Liberals believe in the autonomy, responsibility, and freedom of the individual, all within a respectful society. They also state that every person has the right to be heard and represented in a democratic society (Liberal Party of Canada, 2012). Tying in with *compassion*, the Liberal Party promotes the dignity of each, noting it is a cardinal belief of any democratic community, and that such societies need to provide equal opportunity and security of the common good for all citizens (Liberal Party of Canada, 2012).

Responsibility. Again, borrowing the sub-brand from the Party's values (Liberal Party of Canada, 2012), *responsibility* to the Liberals is the belief that thinking long-term and not in electoral chunks of 4 years, is vital for a sustainable society at home and abroad (2012). In doing so, they promote "legitimate research and expertise" (2012) to make rational and common-sense decisions, in order to provide Canadians with "evidence-based policy" (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015a, p. 36). Also linking this back to *compassion*, the Liberals "believe that social, economic and environmental issues are interconnected" (Liberal Party of Canada, 2012), and that all three need to be taken into account by Canada and the world at large in building a stronger and more prosperous world.

Messaging. Throughout Liberal Party communications, the desired sub-brands are entwined and help act as a lodestar, driving purpose to their messaging. The messages below are in essence the operationalized approaches to the higher-level and visionary desired master and

sub-brands, and are the underlying tone of messaging found throughout the vast majority of Liberal communications.

Unity through diversity. “Canada’s story is the story of immigration” (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015a, p. 62), and thus is also one of diversity. The Liberal master brand utilizes this facet as one of the keys to Canada’s strength, what Marland (2017b) denoted as unity through diversity. This unification is value-based positioning, which contradicts the countering idea that a Canadian is a person born of a specific place with specific attributes. In its place, a Liberal idea of a Canadian is a person who holds ‘Canadian’ values, which in this case are articulated as Liberal values. Diversity is represented well throughout Liberal communications through their platform and visuals. Diversity in this sense is not just of ethnic background, but of experience as well, as can be seen in the election platform (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015a) through the positioning of temporary workers, remittances, and the hiring of caregivers (p. 63), with their own sections or particular mentions. The platform also speaks often of Canada’s “modern families” and gender equality, with their differing needs such as more flexible work hours and daycare access (2015a, pp. 19-20). Visual communications present a wide array of people—modern families from multiple cultures, ethnicities, and often not portraying typical nuclear families. A representative example of this is in the 2015 campaign manifesto, where a photograph was used to anchor the *Growth for the Middle Class* chapter (2015a, p. 3). The photo was of Justin Trudeau speaking with a mixed-race family at the front door of an apartment building, where the family is of a black male and an Asian female with two children.

Diversity in security. Security is often seen as a hard power element recalling security, intelligence, military, and police apparatus. This is in direct contrast to what the Liberal brand portrays, which appears derived from a values-based approach. The Liberal Party’s idea of

security does include the traditional hard power elements noted above, but it also includes the likes of Indigenous relations, protecting and promoting Canadian culture, official languages, creative industries, and environmental stewardship as key to the security of Canada. The Liberal Party's point is that greener and more sustainable communities will be safer and more resilient, through mitigating climate change impacts and growing the economy by green infrastructure spending (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015a, p. 13). Because of the bond between Indigenous peoples and the land, this environmental stewardship focus will help secure the relations with Indigenous peoples as well. In the Liberal campaign manifesto (2015), renewing Canada's relationship with Indigenous peoples was given first billing, and of consequence, equal footing alongside issues regarding veterans, military, and policing in the *A Strong Canada* chapter (pp. 45-60). This categorization was a critical, specific, and intended decision to downplay traditional motifs of security and change the perception of it. This change places a perception of renewing nation-to-nation relations with Indigenous peoples as elemental to securing and maintaining a strong Canada, as much as hard power approaches. It also adopted a mindset of security about being more than protection but also about livability and equality.

Inclusive opportunity. The Liberal Party believes that in order for Canadians to prosper, they must be given a chance to harness their strengths. With the largest swath of votes up for grabs by those who feel aligned with and are deemed in the middle class, resonating with this demographic was important. Aptly named, *Real Change: A New Plan For A Strong Middle Class* (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015a) was the Liberal platform for the 2015 election. Economic incentives for the middle class and increased taxes on the wealthiest Canadians, were core elements found throughout the 2015 campaign platform. This platform maintained the Liberal Party's typical centrist position, but also positioned the party slightly left on the political

spectrum with promises of large-scale changes to social infrastructure. This created a perception of a brand that offered Canadians social change, an opportunity to reset the balance and help Canadians from all walks of life, despite the campaign's middle class laden messaging. There is also a substantial focus on supporting opportunities for new immigrants who have chosen Canada as their new home and brought "their unique cultures, languages, and an entrepreneurial spirit that strengthens our economy" (2015a, p. 62).

Buoyed by Justin Trudeau being the youngest party leader in the 2015 election, the Liberal's branding attempted to embrace youth, specifically in shaping or readying the country for their future. This was done with promises of being the voice of the youth in federal politics and a plan to "leave to our children and grandchildren a country even more beautiful, more sustainable, and more prosperous" Canada (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015a, p. 39). Part of this plan was through the creation of more jobs, but not just any jobs, what the Liberals consider better opportunities, such as so-called green jobs (2015a, p. 6). All of this change was "grounded in compassion and economic opportunity for all" (2015a, p. 62), displaying core Liberal values in an attempt to balance the economic and social justice aspects of their positioning. Economic opportunity and security are central throughout much of the messaging and themes of the Liberal brand, and they attempt to tie in the protection of the environment, the correction/reversal of social inequalities, and immigration as foundational elements to building a stronger economy.

The Liberal Party visual identity. The visual identity of the Liberals has shifted over time but has always contained a level of continuity. Of specific importance for this research, the Liberal visual identity was updated after the 2015 election into 2017. The logo and wordmark of the Liberal Party remain unchanged, as do the typography, colour palettes, and their heavy reliance on photography of Trudeau. Photography is an essential element in portraying the

Liberal brand as it “helps to promote the emotional connection that the party, through the leader, makes with voters” (Sommer & Dean, 2015, p. 12) and Canadians as a whole, with the critical element being imagery of the leader, Justin Trudeau. The emotional connection is important, as it shows the Liberal’s are purposefully using branding heuristics with their visuals and specifically with Trudeau’s likeness. The last previously available version of the visual identity guideline (Liberal Party of Canada, 2009) made no mention of photography or the leader, with a sole focus on the logo and wordmark of the party, clearly showing a change in thinking towards embracing branding.

Looking at the Liberal visual guidelines for the 2015 election, as part of the visuals there was a tessellation pattern dubbed “The Fractal,” which depending on the situation, took the form of prisms or diamonds in varying shades and tints of red or white (Sommer & Dean, 2015, p. 13). This was used in the background with text or as an overlay over photographs, as an element used to “pull together disparate pieces and help maintain brand consistency” (Sommer & Dean, 2015, p. 13). The fractal was removed from use in the 2016 visual identity revision. Instead, the focus was retrained solely on the photography and ensuring nothing including the party’s logo crowded or blocked Justin Trudeau when used in conjunction (Dean & Guenther, 2016, p. 9).

Less is more. As noted by Corbett (2017), throughout the campaign manifesto, *Real Change: A New Plan For A Strong Middle Class* (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015a), the "Liberal" party name and the word “liberal” were not among the common branding words, but this is not to say that progressive and liberal ideas did not permeate their communications. This lack of “Liberal” was said to be due to the party focusing their communication efforts on Justin Trudeau's brand over the party's. Through analysis of text and also incorporating the photography and imagery, this thesis concluded the same for the Liberal manifesto and other

Liberal communications as well; that Trudeau held a far greater prominence than did the Liberal brand identity.

Having the emphasis away from the party was exemplified in the 2016 Liberal Party brand identity guidelines (Dean & Guenther, 2016), which in their own words does “[f]ocus on Justin Trudeau” (p. 2). The reimagining of the Liberal party was an attempt at seeking to change the pre-2013 party of national unity to one of mass, pan-Canadian support such as achieved in the Pierre Elliot Trudeau era. In many ways, the reliance placed in having Justin Trudeau as the figurehead and spokesperson of the brand, demonstrates the party’s willingness to embrace the connection between the Trudeau brand name and the party. Of particular interest, Corbett (2017) also noted through research that the Liberals were more than likely working within a permanent campaign mindset, as seen through equivalent use of “branding words” within the 2015 election period versus non-election period (p. 93).⁶

Justin Trudeau as leader. A master brand has many elements that make up its whole, pivoting over time, some of those elements come in and out of favour and slide from importance to background. With the Liberal Party of Canada, it is paramount that the leader brand of Justin Trudeau be analyzed as part of the overall party brand, as the Liberal Party and Trudeau brands, despite being distinct in some regards, were melded.

Trudeau as part of Liberal Party brand. Justin Trudeau proved to be a solid focal point for the Liberal Party of Canada. As noted in the literature, stronger elements within a brand can help carry the weaker elements. The Liberal Party placed Trudeau at the forefront of their brand for many reasons, not least of which him being the leader. However, his charisma and

⁶ Corbett (2017) found this to be the case in all election periods covered from 2006 to 2015, coinciding with the current literature that the permanent campaign mentality, although typically focused on governing parties, has permeated Canada’s political system.

appearance of wanting to connect with people, not to mention the manifestation and representation of change his being and personality signified as compared to previous leaders and competitors, were important reasons as well. The consensus among interviewees was that Trudeau effectively represented this motif of change in his presence, which due to the imbalance in brands inevitably was transferred to the Liberal Party.

The Liberal Party branding embraced Justin Trudeau's brand, but the reverse can also be said for Trudeau's personal communications embracing the Liberal brand. With the trend of today's media, marketing, and branding is focused on personification and personalization as a storytelling technique, the intertwining of the brands ties the party to Trudeau and his style. Cognizant of this fact, the Liberal Party worked hard to ensure Justin Trudeau was front and centre at events and photo opportunities, especially those where he could interact with Canadians. These staged interactions boded well since the interviews found that "people want to meet and talk with him and have that selfie taken with him, which I think is rare for a Canadian politician" (R4). As noted in the literature, Trudeau's personal Instagram feed promulgates Liberal brand elements, values and ideas. For example, posts have shown Trudeau attending Pride parades, giving speeches on the future of girls' and women's equality, and working on reconciliation efforts with Indigenous representatives (Lalancette & Raynauld, 2017). These elements are all found within the Liberal master brand and key policy positions. In the mediated political context of the permanent campaign, the melding of brands and image management is to be expected and could be considered a best practice. In this case, the Liberal Party portrays Justin Trudeau as a leader who is in tune with the party, the party's platform, and personal beliefs. Without considering the image management of Justin Trudeau's communications, the Liberal

Party would have run the risk of mixed messages, a confused brand, and weaker positioning in relation to the master brand.

Presenting a leader's brand prominently or first, is not a new technique, nor is it isolated to the Liberal Party. Political branding literature states that a leader's brand often influences the party's brand and also that the reverse can be true. In this case, the Trudeau brand was seen as being stronger and carried the party brand upon his election as party leader and through to a majority government in 2015. With a weaker party brand as compared to Justin Trudeau, a leader-first approach was selected as part of the master brand approach. By lessening the focus on the party, the intent is to direct the public gaze away from the party of the past and towards the refreshing, new leader Justin Trudeau, described as "a combination of the mythical constructs of historical figures Pierre Trudeau, Wilfrid Laurier, Jack Layton, JFK Jr. and Barack Obama" (Marland, 2013, p. 13).

In the interviews, there was a general understanding that the Liberals had purposefully placed a great deal of attention on a leader-first brand. Trudeau as a political personality was the answer from respondents when asked to describe what they felt was a significant element to the current Liberal brand: "Justin Trudeau is the liberal brand. It is an incredibly leader-driven image" (R4). The party's branding efforts towards a Trudeau-driven position were evident throughout their visual communications and exemplified by the cover of the Party's visual guidelines being an extreme close-up of Trudeau's face (Dean & Guenther, 2016).

The respondents also concluded that as part of the melding of the brands, the Liberals were attempting to be authentic and that this authenticity was derived from Trudeau's interests: "It is so wrapped up into what Justin Trudeau's interests are...the kinds of things they would try and emphasize are the things that Trudeau naturally is interested in" (R3). This helps articulate

the Trudeau-focused positioning of the Liberal brand and how the Liberal branding appears throughout Trudeau's public communications. In the 2016 visual guidelines of the Liberal Party (Dean & Guenther), the idea of Trudeau's brand as part of the whole comes across in a reminder to candidates, staff, and volunteers that they ensure "your efforts don't negatively affect the national brand, or that of the leader" (p. 1). This is not necessarily pointing to the protection of the Trudeau brand, but it articulates the positioning that the party's brand is thought of as separate, and in need of some distance from Trudeau whether as purposeful protection or as a lapse in copywriting.

What's in a name? As Marland (2017b) described, the Liberal Party brand and that of Justin Trudeau are anchored in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This is seen through the Liberal master brand, positioning, messaging, and policy actions, but also more plainly, the "Trudeau" name and its legacy.⁷ The name "Trudeau" itself has values and emotions ascribed to it that Canadians can resonate with (Marland, 2013). The association that Canadians make with the "Trudeau" brand was essential to getting Trudeau elected as party leader, refreshing the Liberal brand, and then also getting them elected in 2015. That is why it is important to note that Justin Trudeau was said to personify change, diversity, transparency, multiculturalism, and most importantly Canadian values (Marland, 2016), many values which were also attributed to the legacy of Pierre Trudeau. "Trudeau" acts as a reminder to many Canadians of the Charter era and the long reign of the Liberal Party as the naturally governing party.

Unlike previous research into Justin Trudeau and the Liberal Party brand (Thompson, 2014), respondents for this thesis did not go as far as to name Trudeau a celebrity. This could be

⁷ In an attempt to distinguish references to Justin Trudeau and to the legacy and brand name of Trudeau, any reference to the legacy will be in quotes (i.e., "Trudeau") and references to Justin Trudeau will be without.

representative of the end of the so-called honeymoon phase of Trudeau as Prime Minister or a case of specific word choice. Of particular interest in the interview responses, was the acknowledgement that Trudeau's being well-known compared to other Canadian politicians was an advantage: "Trudeau didn't need to 'introduce' himself to Canadians in the way politicians usually have to" (R4). This insight of the salient benefits fame provides in politics is supported by celebrity politics literature (Street, 2004; 2012), in that Trudeau was a part of popular culture by being in the news and popular media before entering politics. This foundation gave Trudeau a clear advantage in the sense that populations often have a notion of longevity and fame. This harkens back to politicians like Ronald Regan and Arnold Schwarzenegger who used their unrelated fame—in their case being actors—and the brand that surrounded them when running and serving in political office. Although Justin Trudeau was chosen as leader of the Liberal Party and then Prime Minister, his fame was derived more from a legacy of the name rather than previous personal successes:

He does have his own skillsets, obviously, but the reason he became leader of the Liberal Party and arguably became Prime Minister is because of the connections with his father...which is slightly different from most leaders, as most leaders don't already have that association with a former PM. (R3)

This idea of fame by legacy is supported in the celebrity politics literature, in that the concept of celebrity typically benefits those in politics (West & Orman, 2003), whether or not the fame being used be related or relevant to the pursuit and is directly attributable to the person's actions. The choice of bringing Justin Trudeau on as leader of the Liberals, and then bringing the Liberals to power in 2015 denoted a clear and alternative choice that change was needed, but it also meant choosing to adhere to the legacy the "Trudeau" brand carried with it.

Canada Day: The Case

Canada Day 2017 was not a typical Canada Day, as it was the sesquicentennial, the one-hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the Dominion of Canada's creation. Coined as Canada 150 (said as Canada one fifty), the spectacles and events celebrating the anniversary of Confederation extended the entire year from New Year's Eve 2016 through to New Years Eve 2017, with the pinnacle being July 1st, Canada Day. These spectacles were touted by the government as being the largest celebration of Canada and Canadians in history and were intended to "create the feel-good moment of a generation" (Government of Canada, 2017, p. 7). With such grand expectations and in such a digitally mediated world, these events and spectacles were seen by millions, not just physically at the events themselves, but multiplied through traditional and social media as well. With Canada Day 2017, this special occasion offered the governing Liberals and specifically The Centre an excellent opportunity to help set a lasting legacy in their brand's likeness... A legacy which could be tied to their master brand through publicly funded infrastructure and projects, themes, messaging, visual identity, and the Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau.

Funding. Coinciding with the perceived increased importance of Canada 150, funding was made readily available to an array of organizations for Canada Day activities. Across Canada \$20 million was allocated by Department of Canadian Heritage to deliver "Major Events" (Government of Canada, 2018). In the National Capital Region alone, \$7 million was budgeted for celebrations (2018), not including any sponsorship of the Canada Day spectacles.

Beyond funding celebrations, over \$600 million was allocated for Canada 150 projects of varying scales and degrees. Over two-thirds of those funds funnelled into grants and projects, with \$169 million earmarked for the Canada 150 Fund and \$300 million for the Canada 150

Community Infrastructure Program.⁸ Through the Canada 150 Fund, grants were given to assist communities across Canada to celebrate on Canada Day and throughout the year. With the Community Infrastructure Program, roughly 3,000 projects across Canada were actioned, with the guiding purpose being to renovate, expand and improve community infrastructure. All successfully funded projects would require direct and specific acknowledgement to the program and or have the Canada 150 logo emblazoned on them (Appendix F). The Community Infrastructure Program granted resources to smaller community-driven projects as well as signature initiatives which were to be national in scale. Funding was allocated through a bidding process where the winning bids were selected by public servant committee. The bids were required to support and embrace the official Canada 150 vision.

Analyzed through the Branding Lens, funding is not necessarily part of the framework; however, looking at funding lends itself well to see if the Liberal government viewed Canada Day as a spectacle worth supporting in the image of the Liberal master brand. Of the two-thirds of a billion dollars spent to celebrate Canada 150, \$7 million—a relatively minuscule amount—was spent on Canada Day itself, with a notable increase over typical years. The increases helped cover areas such as fireworks and performer and support staff remuneration. An essential note regarding funding is that Canada Day in the capital in 2017 went beyond just July 1st, such as including July 2nd's WE Day Canada which would have affected costs.

The vast majority of the Canada 150 funding was spent on grants and infrastructure spending, with the stipulation that those receiving the funds needed to embrace the Canada 150 vision. The guidelines of the “vision” being embraced and supported, added a layer of partisan

⁸ When the Community Infrastructure Program was first funded by Prime Minister Stephen Harper, it was set at \$150 million, in the first Liberal government budget, the funding was doubled to \$300 million.

branding over the selection (detailed in the next section). This was due to the vision being set out by the Liberal Executive; thus a branding lens was applied through the guise of Canada 150 themes and messages.

Theme and messaging. As with most transitions of government, there are changes in department names, focus and policy direction. With the handover of government from the Conservative Party to the Liberal Party in 2015, the Canada 150 vision and themes also changed. Promoted in public facing messaging as early as April 2015, the Conservative government had begun endorsing their vision for Canada 150 under the theme of “Strong. Proud. Free.” (Government of Canada, 2015a). The objectives of their vision were Celebrating and Bringing Canadians Together, Giving Back and Leaving a Lasting Legacy, and Honouring the Exceptional through four key thematic areas: A Rich Heritage, Active Citizens, Innovation and Prosperity, and Symbols and Strength (Government of Canada, 2015b, p. 8). Upon entering office, the Liberals considerably changed the outward facing vision and thematics of Canada 150, but kept intact some of the main objectives of the celebration.

The Liberal’s objectives for Canada 150 were slightly altered to: Bringing Canadians Together, Leave a Lasting Legacy; Showcase Canada’s Achievements; and, Incite Canadians to Explore Canada (Canada 150 Federal Secretariat, 2016, p. 3). The objectives mostly follow the same path as the Conservative government with the overall purpose of bringing Canadians together in celebrating Canadian innovation and excellence and leaving Canada a legacy, but with the addition of exploring Canada. This was explicitly tied to Parks Canada’s free entrance for all of 2017, which was a campaign election promise of the Liberals (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015a, p. 44). Trudeau’s brand image is as an avid outdoorsman, much like his father’s. Reconciling that knowledge with the literature review noting how party brands shift to better

align with the leader's image, we can see the Liberal master brand being played out in Canada 150's objectives. This is visible through the single major addition to the Canada 150 objectives related to getting more Canadians outside and into Canada's national parks.

From 'Strong' to 'Better.' Seemingly aligned with political ideologies, the Conservative objectives focused on individualism with Giving Back To Canada being geared at volunteerism and individuals supporting their communities through acts of service. In contrast, the Liberals Leave a Lasting Legacy was geared towards infrastructure, programs, communities and service groups, rather than individual achievements and volunteerism. More poignant towards noting politicization of the public facing branding on Canada Day itself, the Liberals dropped the "Strong. Proud. Free." theme, which had a tint of partisanship.⁹ In its place, the Liberal centre created and adopted the theme of "Better is always possible" (Government of Canada, 2016, p. 2). Although not directly found verbatim, the new theme was contextually located throughout Liberal Party campaign materials and notably within the 2015 throne speech: "We can be even better...It will prove that better is not only possible—it is the inevitable result" (Johnston, Making Real Change Happen: Speech from the Throne to open the first session of the forty-second Parliament of Canada, 2015).

Unlike the original explicit Conservative theme, there is no direct connection to the Liberal master brand with the new theme; however, the ideological positioning of the Liberal's brand is implicitly read in the theme. The idea of "better" and "possible" is ubiquitous throughout the Liberal master brand and speaks of the need for constant progress and change.

⁹ The original 'Strong. Proud. Free.' theme for Canada 150 could be seen as partisan hackery in that it is a continuation of the Conservative Party master brand, as that messaging was linked back to the 2011 election platform and also the 2013 speech from the throne. However, as Marland noted, it is also "something you could derive from the national anthem. There's nothing necessarily partisan about that" (as cited in Cheadle, 2015). Herein lies an issue of utilizing common Canadian symbols and themes for partisan use.

The theme also points to the notion of knowing where Canada's foundations are and what positive aspects drove the nation, but also importantly from the brand's perspective, includes what mistakes have been made in the past to learn and grow from. Canada 150's theme carried similarities with the Liberal master brand, yet the key messages of Canada 150 and Canada Day in particular, could be directly drawn through the Liberal master brand.

Messaging. Canada 150's key messages, defined by the Liberal government as priority thematic areas, were vastly altered from the Conservative's original. The Liberal's thematic areas were Diversity and Inclusion; Engaging and Inspiring Youth; National Reconciliation; and, the Environment (Government of Canada, 2016, p. 3). These thematic areas were intended to be imbued, embraced, and promoted during all celebratory events under the Canada 150 banner which included Canada Day, the anchor event for Canada 150. Looking at the Liberal master brand, there is a strong current between the two sets of messages, particularly when it comes to diversity and reconciliation. Interestingly, it was discovered in the interviews that Canadian Heritage was central to the CBC's broadcast of Canada Day: "my team also produced the broadcast for Canada Day, and so we worked with all the different stakeholders" (R1). This points to a possibility of inadvertent and unintended collusion by the public sector on spreading the Liberal master brand through tax-payer funded public broadcasting.

Reconciliation. With key messaging of having Indigenous peoples and their nations be put on equal footing with others in Canada, many of Canada Day's events were Indigenous or had Indigenous connections, including importantly the first prominent event of the day programme. Upon the arrival to Parliament Hill of the Prime Minister and his family, Prince Charles and Duchess Camilla, and the Governor General David Johnston and wife Sharon, the group were introduced to the leaders of the main Indigenous nations in Canada. These leaders

were the President of Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Assembly of First Nations Chief, and the President of the Métis National Council. Further, despite royal protocol and tradition, *God Save the Queen* and *O Canada* were not the first acts. Instead, a spoken word and musical number by nationally renowned Indigenous artist Buffy Sainte-Marie was the first stage act. Placing Indigenous individuals prominently and first during Canada Day had two connotations. First, these acts could be perceived as a well-orchestrated olive branch of reconciliation, like introducing the various Indigenous leaders as equals as the first official Parliament Hill activity on Canada Day. Second, it is also a nod to Indigenous peoples' presence in what is now Canada, centuries before settlement.

Throughout the main spectacle, there were reminders of Canada being settled on Indigenous lands, such as at the beginning of the day program when an announcer over the sound system noted that the day's ceremony and Parliament Hill itself were located on the ancestral Algonquin territory. It was also declared through multiple speeches like the Governor General's, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's and also the Minister of Canadian Heritage, Melanie Joly's speech. Raising awareness of the territory however, was only part of the Canada 150 messaging. There was also a push for Canadians to "continue to listen to one another, to engage, to learn and grow together, because that is what reconciliation and what Canada is all about" (Joly, 2017). Indeed, to reconcile is more than to be aware, but to change attitudes and behaviours.

Even more prominent in a push for the reconciliation messaging, was Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's speech, in which he returned continuously to the long-standing presence and importance of Indigenous Peoples even downplaying the purpose for the spectacle, the 150th anniversary: "A nice, round number that's as good a reason as any to celebrate...But let's not kid ourselves: this isn't really our 150th birthday" (Trudeau, 2017). He was speaking about how the

cultures and values of Canada have been around for thousands of years, alluding to Indigenous Peoples. During his speech, the Prime Minister made direct reference to Turtle Island, the name used by some Indigenous Peoples to refer to what is known as North America. It is important to note that the use of the term Turtle Island was made without any clarification or definition as if to denote it should be in all Canadian's lexicon and is part of the Prime Minister's everyday usage. This slight but pronounced phrasing appears to point to the Liberal's master brand peeking through.

Another event, although unplanned, also points to The Centre applying a branding lens. A few days before Canada Day, a teepee was erected in protest on the grounds of Parliament Hill, all in sight of the former U.S. embassy building. A building which weeks prior was anointed by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as the future home of a national Indigenous cultural centre, with large banners representing First Nations, Metis and Inuit hung from the building in honour of its new role (Appendix G). The government -through the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and the Parliamentary Protective Service (PPS)- granted the teepee and its protestors the ability to remain unaccosted on Parliament Hill throughout Canada Day's celebration, despite detentions, arrests, and confrontations during the first attempt to put up the teepee. This was likely due to the timing of the protest, the heavily mediated age, and Canada 150's messaging and the Liberal master brand.

Further still, they were allowed to move the teepee to a place of prominence near the front of the Canada Day stage and the Peace Tower in front of West Block (Appendix H). Some protestors also spoke privately and informally with the Prime Minister in the teepee. Although not planned, the way the government handled and reacted to the issue speaks to the use of a branding lens, especially in how it attempted to control the messaging and visuals associated

with the teepee protest, by having the Prime Minister's arrival to be perceived as informal. Once The Centre was made aware of the situation, the RCMP and the PPS changed its approach to the protest and a negotiated placement for the teepee began. In addition, some of the protesters who were given six-month trespassing bans from Parliament Hill were not confronted when they returned to Parliament Hill.

With regards to the Branding Lens, there appears to be a clear link as to how the idea of national reconciliation was addressed and assigned as part of Canada 150 and Canada Day. With such a drastic change in themes from the Conservative government's original idea to the Liberal government's adopted vision for Canada 150, the presence of a branding lens is the only reasonable explanation. The heavy focus on reconciliation speaks to The Centre's push to communicate that the Liberals are striving for a renewed relationship with Indigenous peoples, through changing the theming and vision of the celebration. This is not to say that the representation of Indigenous Peoples lacked in previous Canada Days. What is different is the tone and focus of the representation; instead of solely Indigenous art and artists on display, there was an apparent attempt at showcasing a relationship and dialogue with Indigenous Peoples on equal terms. This was especially evident with the government's management of the teepee protest and the greeting of Indigenous leaders to start Canada Day day programme. Regarding communicating the Canada 150 theme of national reconciliation on Canada Day, the Liberal master brand and the government's brand were in concert with each other, boding for the presence of a branding lens.

Youth. Adolescents and youth made a visible contribution to Canada Day, matching the Canada 150 theming. Youth participated, were represented, and noted throughout the spectacle, such as near the beginning of the day programme during the singing of "God Save the Queen"

and “O Canada,” where youth from *Orkidstra* played on stage in support of a Canadian opera singer.¹⁰ Of more import to branding was the day programme’s segment that announced the selection of Canada’s newest astronauts. Shania Twain acted as the segment’s host alongside Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Navdeep Bains, who oversees the Canadian Space Agency (CSA), and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau who returned to the stage. They joined on stage two young girls, Juliet and Sahana. Both girls submitted videos as part of the CSA’s astronaut selection process and were showcased on the stage’s screens during the segment. There were far more than these two youths who put in videos during the selection process; however, the girls on stage represented a political gold mine of diversity. Diversity of geography, culture, and ability, as Juliet was from Saskatchewan and Sahana was a visible minority from Quebec, who while on stage, used an assistive device similar to a wheelchair. The choice to bring these specific girls on stage was strategic and ties in with the Liberal master brand.

The youth-focused elements of Canada Day proper, however, was distinct from Canada 150’s WE Day (WE Day Canada), taking place on July 2nd on the Canada Day stage on Parliament Hill. WE Day is “an unparalleled celebration of young people committed to making a difference” (WE Charity, n.d.) that happens annually across Canada. WE Day Canada was slightly different as it was integrated heavily with Canada Day, not just in timing and location, but also in the theming. The event was framed around what were described as “four areas that are fundamental to our Canadian identity” (WE Charity, 2017), with a central connector being the development of youth leadership in each of the areas. The themes were: Diversity and Inclusion;

¹⁰ OrKidstra is an Ottawa-based social development charity that empowers kids aged five to eighteen from under-served communities through the use of learning to play music.

Youth; Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples; and, Environment (2017), matching identically to the four thematic areas assigned by the Liberal's for Canada 150. Pointing to those parallels, WE Charity was granted \$1 million through the Canada 150 Fund to make WE Day Canada a Signature Event (Government of Canada, n.d.).

From the Branding Lens, the parallels in themes between WE Day Canada and Canada Day are now to be expected due to the funding application process. However, because the Liberals developed the themes that the applicants must embrace, The Centre's presence and thus the Liberal Party's master brand is showcased through funded events like WE Day Canada. With regards to the Canada 150 theme, Engaging and Inspiring Youth, there is carryover in elements of the Liberal master brand, with youth engagement, inclusivity, and gender equality on display, part of the themes *Inclusive opportunity* and *Unity through diversity*. By showcasing the two girls alongside the Prime Minister -who is perceived as an outspoken feminist- during the CSA astronaut segment, the spectacle of Canada Day helped promote a narrative that girls and women are just as capable of working in fields that women were kept out of or not part of historically. The girls on stage represented the diversity of geography, culture, and ability. The visual diversity on display speaks to a communications strategy that aligned with the Liberal master brand, likely through the use of a branding lens.

Environment. Specifically added by the Liberals, the environment and promotion of it was an elemental thematic area for Canada 150. This was visible through various funded programs such as planting a Canada 150 forest and notably free entrance to national parks for the year, yet it only held a minuscule role as part of Canada Day. On Canada Day, the environment and more specifically its importance and need for protection was noted only in passing, through the speeches and in some performer lyrics. There were no specific programme segments or focus

on the environment throughout Canada Day's spectacle. Perhaps there should have been a greater inclusion. During the Prime Minister's speech, rousing applause rose from the crowd on Parliament Hill after he noted, "we have to work together to combat climate change, one of the greatest crises facing our planet" (Trudeau, 2017). Despite the clear appreciation for the environment on site and it being a key theme of Canada 150, Canada Day was left relatively untouched by this thematic element.

Unlike with Canada 150's themes, the environment is not a crucial standalone element of the Liberal master brand. The protection and appreciation of Canada's environment and green spaces does permeate throughout many aspects of the brand. Specific areas in the Liberal master brand are in the desired sub-brand *Responsibility* and the message theme *Diversity in security*. From the perspective of the Branding Lens, this can be viewed as a missed opportunity for the Liberal Party to secure another inroad and to meld its brand with that of Canada 150, Canada Day, and the government.

Diversity. Although it was Canada 150, and there was much hype surrounding Canada Day's spectacle, the Canada Day programme followed a traditional Canada Day setup. The focus throughout the programme was not geared towards the 150th anniversary but instead on diverse impactful Canadians. The downplaying of the 150th anniversary was likely purposeful to acquiesce to the various opposition which had cropped up to a supersized Canada Day. Since 1958, as Hayday (2010) noted, Dominion Day and then Canada Day had been used to help nurture national unity and foster a Canadian identity through an ever-increasing focus on the diversity of individual Canadians' achievements. This style of emphasis was evident during the day programme, through its highlighting and selection of popular acts to perform, like Walk Off The Earth; celebrity master of ceremonies during the day programme such as Sandra Oh; and,

the announcement of Canada's next astronauts. It was also present through Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's speech:

The valour of Francis Pegahmagabow. The courage of Viola Desmond. The leadership of Thérèse Casgrain. The tenacity of Terry Fox. It's in these people that the true story of Canada is told. Their triumphs are unique, but the values that underpin them are Canadian values. (Trudeau, 2017)

Undoubtedly, these individuals' achievements are outstanding, but they also fall within the Liberal's values and branding extremely well, not to mention the representation of what the Liberal Executive portrays as "Canadian." In these four people, there is more representation of diversity than just their laudable achievements. The remarks focused on two males and two females; a French Canadian, a visible minority, an Indigenous person, and an English Canadian who is also physically disabled; regional representation from the Atlantic provinces, Quebec, Ontario, and the Western provinces; and a soldier, activist, politician, feminist, athlete and philanthropist. In just four people, the vast majority of Canadians can find a small part of themselves to shine through. The diversity represented by those in Trudeau's speech was strategic and specific, it spoke to and fell in line with the Liberal master brand as much as, but likely more than, the need to celebrate individual Canadian's achievements as is typical for Canada Day.

Canada 150 demonstrates a centralized whole-of-government approach to messaging. The explicit reference to Viola Desmond –the first black person and non-royal woman to appear on a regular circulation banknote– in the Prime Minister's Canada Day speech, was undoubtedly designed to tie Canada Day to the broader progress of the Liberal government. This is reminiscent of Stephen Harper's Conservative government harnessing banknotes for political

currency, and thus the continuation of partisan handling of government communications. These actions do not necessarily depict direct partisanship; however, the continuity of messaging does speak to an effort of communication and messaging management from a branded perspective.

The above examples speak to the Prime Minister's speech, which would be expected to have some political intonations if previous Canada Day speeches serve as the record. However, in the interviews, attempts at applying a branding lens were noted as being present outside of politicians' speeches and in the development and creation of Canada Day's programming:

I can tell you that from my experience with working with anybody at the political level. They definitely want to make sure Canadians feel represented in the celebrations that we are offering, so diversity for sure, multiculturalism...that women are prominent. (R1)

Despite the noted direction coming from The Centre and parallels with the Liberal master brand, creating the feeling of representation and seeing oneself in Canada Day celebrations can be perceived as not overtly partisan. This goes hand-in-hand with previously noted research that values such as gender equality have been adopted and embraced by the vast majority of Canadians. Thus, having messaging that depicted those values during Canada Day would not be viewed as a political master brand being infused into Canada Day; rather it would be seen "merely" projecting Canadianess. In the interview responses, the blurring of government and political brands was noted by interviewees as being a possibility, in that the values that informed the Liberal master brand also informed Canada 150 and thus Canada Day: "I think with Canada 150, that was a lot of the ideas and values that Canada 150 had" (R1). Even more, "with the interactions that I have had with [political staff] throughout 2017 and ongoing. Yes, I do feel that those are part of the values that they have and are promoting" (R1). This speaks to values which

informed the theming of Canada 150 and Canada Day matching that of the Liberal master brand. Pointing back at the research of harnessing national identity and Canadianess for political influence, scholars note this has happened previously and appears to have continued under Trudeau's Liberal government, despite their call for less partisan governing.

Approaching the themes and messaging of Canada Day from the Branding Lens, the results are highly suggestive of a Liberal master brand being used. Looking at Canada 150's vision and themes found throughout Canada Day and tying them to the Liberal master brand, there is a strong association between the two; whether that is because of a branding lens used by The Centre is not entirely clear, but this thesis points to that distinct possibility. The examples provided speak directly to the Canada 150 theme of 'Better is always possible' and the key thematic message areas of National Reconciliation, Engaging and Inspiring Youth, the Environment, and Diversity and Inclusion. This also means that the examples illuminate the Liberal master brand, as the Liberal government had their hand in altering the narratives and theming of Canada 150. The Centre thus moved Canada 150 away from the original construction under the Conservatives and installed one that better corresponded with the Liberal master brand.

Canada Day visual identity. With 2017 being the 150th anniversary of Confederation, Canada Day had an added layer of interest and complication when it came to branding. Canada 150 had been developed with unique visual branding, in an attempt to have the celebration be unique and standalone amongst typical Canada Day's, both as a brand and a spectacle. Canada 150 was a far grander spectacle than a typical Canada Day with its increased funding, communications reach and appeal. With these came a greater opportunity to shape and inform Canadians representations of themselves, with a Liberal branding tint. The mediated spectacle of Canada 150 also created an environment in that the Canada 150 brand could be seen as

competing against the other brands present on Canada Day, such as that of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, the Liberal Party of Canada, and Canada Day generally.¹¹

The Canadian flag. Recalling from the literature review that the national flag was one of the most lasting symbols for Canadians, its expected presence during Canada Day was relatively absent. Rather than the ubiquitous Canadian flag from previous celebrations, in 2017, greater visibility was accorded the Canada 150 brand elements and to a smaller extent the Royal Standard. As per protocol, when a member of the royal family is officially visiting a government location, the Royal Standard is unfurled. For Canada Day it was in only one location, the Peace Tower, giving its prominence and protocol. There were no flags on Parliament Hill itself that could be seen as prominent and part of the spectacle. The nearest approximation within the Parliamentary Precinct were two Canadian flags that were observed by the researcher suspended from the front of The Office of the Prime Minister and Privy Council building, which faces Parliament Hill (Appendix I).¹² The Canadian flag did make a brief appearance on the stage's digital displays during the singing of *O Canada*, but otherwise, the flag was found only through clothing, flags, and merchandise adorned with the flag worn by hosts, performers, and guests. The lack of the flag during Canada Day itself, is likely not an issue to most observers but does argue for the power of the use of symbols and branding during spectacles. In this way, Canada 150 could stand out on its own, not for being the 150th Anniversary, but for being a unique brand.

¹¹ In a hint to how deep the branding of Canada 150 and specifically the Canada Day spectacle was, the evening fireworks display which caps off the evening show, had an exact run time of twenty minutes and seventeen seconds, representing the year 2017.

¹² Speaking again to the Liberal master brand, in a perception of reconciliation, two weeks before Canada Day 2017, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau renamed the building from Langevin Block due to objections by Indigenous Peoples. The grievances were due to Hector Langevin's role in establishing the residential school system in Canada, which is associated with the abuse and forced assimilation of Indigenous children. Also, of note, this building is directly beside the forthcoming national Indigenous cultural centre mentioned earlier.

Colour. One of the best heuristics in branding to create emotional connections with an audience through recall and conditioning is colour. This is why it is generally known in Canada that Liberals are associated with red and Conservatives with blue. When Canadians see those colours in political or government situations, brains subconsciously recall a connection to the respective parties, personnel, and positions. That is one reason why the branding agency that was hired by the Canada 150 Federal Secretariat to craft the Canada 150 brand attempted to use a unique colour pallet for Canada 150. As identified in interviews, this change was an attempt at staying away from partisanship: “we had thought of creating a brand that was more purplish in nature just because there is so –wanted to avoid the idea of partisanship or anything like that” (R2). They chose to move away from Federal Identity Program (FIP) Red -the official red of the Government of Canada and also importantly the red on the national flag- as it was identical to the modern Liberal Red and near identical to the current Liberal Red.¹³ Interviewees also explicitly pointed to the Open and Accountable Government policy (2015) which states “party symbols and identifiers and partisan content should not be present in department-supported communications, events and social media channels” (Privy Council Office, p. 74). In the interviews, public servant employees noted it was their role as non-partisan officials to abide by this policy document, especially when it came to communications:

There is a communication policy that the Liberals put in place, that we should avoid using partisan colours in government communications. So, we developed

¹³ To create colour with light or ink requires specific combinations of Red, Green, Blue or Cyan, Magenta, Yellow, and Black (Key) respectively. This allows for a precise reproduction. In the Federal Identity Program (Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, 1990), Flag red is C 0 M 100 Y 100 K 0 and Liberal Red as found in the visual identity guide (Liberal Party of Canada, 2009) is C 0 M 100 Y 100 K 0. They are an exact match. Interestingly, the most recent Liberal identity guides had changed the shade of the Red to be a darker shade, by adding ten percent more black, C 0 M 100 Y 100 K 10 (Dean & Guenther, 2016). This was likely in an attempt to showcase they are no longer using an identical colour, albeit, the difference in shading is minute.

this purplish kind of look and feel, as something to send up to try to follow the communication policy. That look was looked at, considered, and then rejected with the idea that Canadians wouldn't recognize themselves in a purple kind of branding. (R2)

With the rejection of the purple-focused colour palette from the Minister of Canadian Heritage's office, the Federal Secretariat and the consultants were steered to revise the colours. They landed back on red as the primary focus, but a tone that was muted, moving away from Flag -and thus Liberal- Red and using the purple as the main secondary colour (Government of Canada, 2017, p. 33; also see Appendix J).

Viewing the visual elements of Canada Day through the Branding Lens, there appeared to be a clashing of the outward perception of transparency and non-partisanship seen through the government communications policy of the Liberal government, with the realities and actions of message control, brand continuity, and a branding lens from The Centre. This is not to say that the election promise was insincere, but that due to the nature of branding and centralization the pull towards brand management is magnetic and can happen with the best intentions and promises of openness and transparency. Another interesting result was throughout the analysis for this thesis, the Canada 150 visual identity is the only noted attempt at pushback partisanship. In other words, directly noting public servants had actively sought to avoid possibly partisan encroachment. This bodes well for the Canada 150 Federal Secretariat and its public servants. This is not to say there were no other areas that attempted to reign-in partisan elements, but this was the sole one found in the results.

Leader of Canada or the Liberal Party? The Prime Minister on most occasions and situations is the chief spokesperson and personification of Canada both at home and abroad.

Appearing and speaking at international summits like the G20 or national events like Remembrance Day or Canada Day is part of the role. For interview respondents where issues can arise, is when the political and the governing sides merge:

For me a big challenge is any time the prime minister is front and centre as lead spokesperson for the Government of Canada, we have to remember that, that person is also the lead spokesperson for the party that's in power. It is hard for me to detach that, to separate them. (R3)

In other words, where Justin Trudeau as Liberal Party leader and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's roles and brands meld can create a partisan reflection at national events like Canada Day, whether intended or not. Historically, Prime Ministers have participated in Canada Day celebrations since its inauguration; this is typically done by hosting dignitaries and giving an address during the day programme. What is not typical for a Prime Minister is to be deeply integrated into multiple facets of the Canada Day spectacle. During the Canada Day weekend, Justin Trudeau was involved in seven significant segments, including his Canada Day speech as well as hosting the Canada Day evening programme and alongside his spouse, the WE Day Canada festivities.

As noted, a central element of the day programme of Canada Day 2017, are the dignitary speeches. 2017 was no different. During the Prime Minister's speech, Trudeau -adorned with his maple leaf tie and pocket square- was flanked by RCMP officers in their Red Serge dress uniforms (Appendix K). This imagery gives Trudeau and the content of his speech an air of Canadianess, officiality, and grabs at national symbols of Canada. However, there were many

times the speech smacked of a Liberal campaign rally rather than Canada Day.¹⁴ Language from the speech appeared ripped from Liberal campaign materials: “Canada is strong not in spite of our differences, but because of them” (Trudeau, 2017), “Canada’s diversity is its strength” (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015a, p. 57); “We must create the right conditions [for] the middle class, and those working hard to join it” (Trudeau, 2017), “Our plan offers real help to Canada’s middle class and all those working hard to join it” (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015a, p. 4); and, “It’s up to us to leave our kids and grandkids with a better future – through a present in which protecting our environment is an obligation, not an option” (Trudeau, 2017), “a sense of responsibility to protect our environment for future generations...give to our children and grandchildren a country even more beautiful, sustainable, and prosperous than the one we have now” (Liberal Party of Canada, 2015b, p. 2).

The above pairings from the Canada Day speech and Liberal campaign materials respectively have striking similarities in their lexicon, but the language is altered enough not to ring cries of outright partisanship, while still being overly familiar. As noted previously, speeches by politicians are understood to have some political intonations; however, on a national holiday such as Canada Day, that should be limited. As Andrew Scheer, Leader of the Opposition noted in an interview on Canada Day, “Today’s the day to kind of drop the partisanship and focus on the common ground we as Canadians share” (Scheer, 2017). Yet, the foundation of the Prime Minister’s speech cast a partisan shadow onto Canada Day.

¹⁴ The researcher would be remiss to not mention the Prime Minister forgetting to call out Alberta during his speech, when all other provinces were noted. Although not purposeful, it does fit a partisan accounting, as noted by the respondents “if he forgot to say Ontario, we probably wouldn’t have heard much about it. Because it’s the Liberals and Alberta, it fits the bigger narrative” (R1). Trudeau realized his mistake and amended it in the CSA segment and made a special shout out to Alberta, which was fitting as both of the new astronauts were from Alberta.

During the WE Day Canada event, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his spouse Sophie acted as Masters of Ceremonies and hosts during the daylong event; as well, Justin Trudeau gave what is called a pledge, in short, a speech about what future the speaker wants for Canada. As the Liberal government's Minister of Youth, Trudeau would be expected to make an appearance, at an event such as WE Day Canada, and had pledged at previous WE Days. Hosting the event, however, goes beyond what is expected of a serving Prime Minister, especially when viewed in conjunction with his intertwined presence with Canada Day in its entirety. The overstepping as it was, speaks to Trudeau not just as Prime Minister or leader of the Liberal Party, but as a celebrity and a brand, in that his star power allows him to carry events as a host or master of ceremonies for spectacles such as Canada Day, whereby just being a leader does not.

The above falls in line with the expectations formed from the literature that strong leader brands rely upon, thus the Liberals placed Trudeau front and centre with the assurance that he would attract more voters. Being in the spotlight and with throngs of people also spoke to "Trudeau" in that the brand image being presented is one where respondents felt, "Trudeau likes meeting people, he likes being out there. He likes taking selfies, working the crowds, shaking hands. He loves that stuff" (R4). This draws a strong parallel to the ever-present reminders in the Liberal Party branding guide, to "promote the emotional connection between Canadians and the Prime Minister" (Dean & Guenther, 2016, p. 9). With Trudeau as Prime Minister, The Centre also utilized his star power by having him heavily involved in the spectacles and mediated events of Canada Day. This also ensured that Trudeau, and by extension the Liberal master brand, was perceived as central to Canada Day and Canada 150, as his presence was near ubiquitous and well beyond what has been set as typical for a Prime Minister.

Looking at Trudeau's role on Canada Day through the Branding Lens, the language and themes used by Trudeau are inherently Liberal talking points. This is important because it is difficult for Canadians to discern the words that differentiate the Liberal brand and the government's policies when coming from the same place. In Trudeau's case, literally from the same mouth. This highlights in a personal way how The Centre can meld partisan attributes to non-partisan events.

Conclusion

No single element associated Canada Day 2017 to the Liberals, but through the framework of the Branding Lens Thesis, the master brand appeared everywhere as a communications scaffold on which the spectacle of Canada Day was constructed. The Liberal master brand was promoted through increased funding to expand reach and awareness; Canada 150 themes and key messaging were altered to parallel the Liberal master brand; programme segments followed the main themes of the Liberal master brand; politically tinted speeches were prevalent; and, an almost ever-present Trudeau dominated the Canada Day weekend.

The politicization starts at the top and can be seen through the form of the Liberal master brand permeating the guiding documents for Canada 150, through the vision. This vision was used to help form the guidelines for the application process for funding. Thus, any earmarked funds from the over \$600 million available during Canada 150, may have had a politicized process, highlighting issues discussed in the literature review where political branding and democracy meet. The themes and messages of Canada 150 were readily and widely used across Canada to tie the celebrations together. However, remembering that normative government communications are to be objective, factual, and free from overt political partisanship, when looking at the Canada 150 themes, questions are raised when The Centre altered and tweaked

showcase elements of the Liberal master brand, despite their government's policy to refrain from and prevent such changes for politically motivated gain.

The politicization of the Canada Day spectacle also directly relates to the concentration and centralization of power literature. Having a brand-aware Centre that controls the levers of communicative power, ensures that a branding lens is in place for all decisions and communications deliverables. For Canada Day 2017, this included decisions such as choosing which acts should perform and which Canadian achievements should be showcased, to the order of events and the hosts of segments; everything falls under the auspice of the Liberal master brand. With the implementation strategy of Canada 150 being imbued with the Liberal master brand, in turn all decisions and aspects regarding Canada Day 2017 were politicized. In other words, Government of Canada decisions and messaging relating to Canada Day became Liberal Party approved decisions and messaging on Canada Day.

As noted in the literature review, some political intonations are expected in the speeches given by politicians on Canada Day. The results of this thesis demonstrate this as well. Even though expected, the normative approach to a healthy liberal democracy demands a “clear separation between government communication and party campaigning” (McNair, 2007, p. 96). However, when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is a crucial figure in multiple events during Canada Day 2017 and is repeating messaging that is imbued with the Liberal master brand, it is difficult to see a clear separation, let alone any delineation between government and party communications. This is due to the fact that when Justin Trudeau is speaking as Prime Minister, he is also speaking as leader of the Liberal Party. This duality feeds into the uncertain nature of the politicization of government communications. Previously, the Liberal Party used Trudeau’s star power to help carry them to power; The Centre appears to have used that same star power by

placing him central in the spectacle of Canada Day 2017. This speaks to the literature review where strong elements of campaigning are carried over into government calling out to the continuation of the permanent campaign and the steady rise of the publicity state. These individual pieces viewed alone may be deemed innocuous. However, when illuminated through the Branding Lens Thesis, there is a clear strategy at work; in other words, a political master brand.

The results presented in this chapter indicate that approaching Canada Day through the Branding Lens of the Liberal master brand, the spectacle of Canada Day ties inseparably with the Liberal master brand. This level of integration illuminates a continued permanent campaign, centralized control of communication and branding, and the continuation of the modern “publicity state.” This result is far from coincidence, but instead a centralized strategy using a branding lens from the centre of power over all government communications. The spectacle of Canada Day demonstrates how political branding has infiltrated all government communications.

Chapter 5 Conclusion

This thesis asked if in the age of the permanent political campaign, has Canada Day, a formerly non-partisan national holiday, become part of a political master brand? The results showcased the parallels and gaps between the Liberal Party of Canada master brand and the themes, messaging, and branding of Canada Day 2017. All elements combined point to Canada Day 2017 as being part of the Liberal master brand. This thesis both substantiates and supports the articulated belief that there has been a rise and perhaps dominance of publicity in liberal democracies over the past two decades. In short, Canada Day 2017 is found to be a manifestation of the publicity state in action.

There were three key objectives used to help resolve the thesis question: to define the public facing political master brand of Justin Trudeau's Liberal government; to adapt Marland's (2016) Branding Lens Thesis to the micro level; and, to examine whether Canada Day has become part of the Liberal master brand through the framework of the Branding Lens Thesis (Marland, 2016). It is difficult to analyze a master brand in use isolating in on just a single event, because by its very nature it encompasses a whole worldview. Thus, although attempted in this thesis, the scope of a master's thesis required paring down the areas of the master brand that were analyzed and defined, and thus that could be used as a tool to analyze Canada Day through a branding lens. Marland's (2016) Branding Lens Thesis was instrumental in the analysis of the Liberal master brand. The use of the Branding Lens as a conceptual framework and applying the framework to a single case study at the micro level, was proven workable by this thesis; however, due to the complexities and widescale possibilities of a brand, a macro level analysis is a better fit. Canada Day is not typically a standalone event. It may draw in from surrounding events and is difficult to analyze in isolation as a case study. However, Canada Day 2017 appears

to be a perfect case to study because the Liberals so altered the Canada 150 theme, it provided the opportunity to study a whole branding worldview in a single event. This was quite pronounced as Canada Day was purported to be the apex spectacle of a year of Canada 150 celebrations.

The following is an accounting of the main limitations of this thesis. A discussion of the core revelations, insights and implications to the study of political branding and political communication in Canada are then covered. New and novel opportunities for research surrounding spectacles and branding that resulted from those findings are outlined, and lastly, we are left with a final key take away, to sum up the entire thesis.

Limitations

As noted throughout the *Methodology*, there were limitations that this thesis bumped up against, but two significant limitations were the most restrictive. Below is a detailed account of the major limitations of operationalizing branding and a small number of interview respondents.

The operationalization of branding is one of the most significant limitations of this thesis. Defining and analyzing branding in any capacity is particularly challenging because brands, for the most part, are intangible. It is difficult to determine the purpose of the imagery, text or colour, and how they were intended to be seen and how they were to be received by an audience. Further still, this thesis only approached what constituted the Liberal master brand and elements of the Canada 150 brand. This thesis did not measure how Canadians as the intended audience, received either brand, which is as much a part of what forms a brand as the brand itself.

As noted in the *Methodology* chapter, only a small number of interviews were conducted. This was limiting to the thesis' research as this meant the PMO, PCO, and the Liberal Party had no direct representation within the interviews, leaving out possible insider insight. Although

multiple attempts and approaches were used to reach out to prospective interviewees, likely a lack of access or possibly interest in an analysis of their organization's possible partisan activities prevented many from replying. The need to keep within the allotted time for a master's thesis determined that, although the number of interviews was less than ideal, the research had to move forward regardless. Despite the small number of interviews, the findings were still insightful and significant for the thesis.

Significant Findings and Implications

Through the analysis of in-depth interviews, publicly available and access to information request documents, it was revealed that Canada Day was generally used as a vehicle for the Liberal master brand through the use of a branding lens from The Centre. This is significant because the political branding research space is heavily monopolized by studies of the Conservative Party of Canada under Stephen Harper. With this thesis' findings, as well as other research that has been completed the past few years, that dearth of variety has begun to shrink, allowing for a more comprehensive understanding of the use of political branding in Canada beyond Conservative use. The implications are that Canadian political branding research will begin to be more rounded and possibly allow for a greater breadth of research to build theory.

Notably, this thesis confirms that although party ideologies differ, that in an environment of the permanent campaign, the concentration of branding and communication power in The Centre is continued. This happened despite the Liberal Party promise of a more open and transparent government, and delivery of a communications policy to act on this in 2015. This duplicity can fracture a respectively strong Liberal brand, under a weight of its own doing. Further still, Trudeau's celebrity and charisma threaten also to tighten, not reduce, the control from The Centre. As Marland (2016) noted, "Charisma is its own problem. It increases deference

to the leader, and charismatic figures attract followers whose judgment is clouded by their emotional connection” (p. xvii). The implication here being that despite attempts to produce a more open and transparent government, Trudeau’s popularity and celebrity, which ostensibly helped get him in power, can hurt his chances of holding onto said power by creating a dissonance between the Liberal brand and the party’s actions in government.

History and the reviewed literature pointed to Justin Trudeau being expected to play a role in the Canada Day spectacle due to his being Prime Minister and his celebrity. This is in line with how the Liberal party used his brand previously. However, his capacity in Canada Day far outreached what was expected, with his multiple engagements throughout the day programme and his hosting of the evening and WE Day Canada events, not to mention the image-managed impromptu visit to the protest teepee. Undoubtedly, a heuristic connection was made between Trudeau –and thus the Liberal master brand– Canada Day, and more generally Canada 150. These findings raised specific considerations. Was this connection as Prime Minister? As leader of the Liberal Party? As Canadian celebrity, Justin Trudeau? As Prime Minister, Trudeau is the face of Canada and Canadians, and the values they hold as a whole. As Leader of the Liberal Party, Trudeau is the face of his party and tasked with the promotion of his party, positions, and values, increasing donations, and ultimately gaining voters. Where this leads is toward the implication that Liberal objectives and values get passed through a branding lens in the centre of government, leading to the blurring of leader, party, and government brands.

Future Research Opportunities

Multiple avenues of future research were revealed throughout the development of this thesis. Two stuck out as extraordinarily novel and relevant; The role of political branding and celebrity politics on incumbent governments in Canada, and corporatizing of national spectacles.

Canadian politics is entering a fascinating time with the upcoming 2019 federal election and the uncertainty surrounding the continued polarization of political ideologies, political branding and incumbents' use of branding. Thus, additional investigation into Trudeau and political branding would further the existing theory of celebrity politics and political branding. Another area of research interest was not touched on in the thesis, but came up time and again during collection and analysis, was the ingraining of corporate brands in national events. Corporate sponsors pay countless dollars to have their branding integrated into public events and spectacles such as Northern Lights (and other iterations of the Sound and Light show on Parliament Hill) and Canada Day. Some typical examples from Canada Day are the fireworks being named President's Choice® Canada Day Fireworks, and in-between the different segments on the Canada Day stage, there were ostensibly radio commercials for the Chicken Farmers of Canada to go along with the banners on streetlights promoting their brand. The corporatizing of national events provides a research opportunity to delve into communication and branding perceptions of government spectacles teaming up with corporations for national events.

In Summary

With the results put forth in this thesis, it is hard to see how Canada Day was not co-opted to be used as part of the Liberal's master brand. It is also easy to see how it was, as the permanent campaign in Canada created an environment where politicking is normalized and politicalized intonations are now expected through government communications. Much in the same way that the Liberals are described as the naturally governing party, Canada Day –and likely other spectacles of the same ilk in the age of the permanent campaign– are part of the political branding landscape. This thesis serves to highlight Canada's continued march toward the "publicity state" through political branding in government. These results also raise further

normative questions about continued politicization in government communications branding, and the implications brought with it regarding the public sphere and how a government communicates within it. Having a government and a Prime Minister that emulates a party's brand through a centralized branding lens, events such as Canada Day have the Canadian government and their events being prodded to "speak" out of both sides of its mouth.

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Appendix A

List of Access to Information Requests made through Open Government portal

Formal Access to Information Requests:

Correspondence to the Minister and the Deputy Minister of Canadian Heritage, to include fact sheets, backgrounders, and memos related to branding or theme choices of Canada Day 2017 or Canada 150 since November 2015.

Informal Access to Information Requests:

A-2015-00254 November 2015 Briefing package to the Minister of Canadian Heritage on Canada's 150th Anniversary of Confederation and the Framework for Canada 150 (30 pages)

A-2016-00294 The briefing notes to the Minister and the Deputy Minister related to Canada 150 for the months of July, August and September 2016 and the most recent identifying the most recent records that identifies the confirmed events for Canada Day 2017. (232 pages)

A-2016-00426 Briefing notes to the Minister or the Deputy Minister of Canadian Heritage CH2016-01710: Strategic and Legislative Initiative 150; CH2016-02004: Collection of information related to Canada 150 projects across the federal family (125 pages)

A-2016-00473 Contract awarded to Tank regarding the Canada 150 logo. (21 pages)

A-2016-00318 **Briefing Notes** CH2016-00498: "Canada 150" & CH2016-01498: "Canada 150 Promotional Material Distribution Plan. (17 pages)

A-2017-00079 Briefing notes to the Minister and the Deputy Minister CH2016-01794: "Canada Day 2017 Programming in Canada's Capital Region" (28 pages)

A-2017-00111 All communications between Canadian Heritage and Privy Council Office pertaining to the choice and availability of entertainers on Canada Day on Parliament Hill, July 1, 2017, from September 1, 2016 to June 6, 2017. (40 pages)

A-2017-00162 Briefing note to the Minister CH2017-00925: "Hospitality for Canada Day 2017" (11 pages)

A-2017-00341 Briefing note to the Minister CH2017-01263: "Canada 150 Closing Events". (31 pages)

A-2017-00123 Briefing note related to Canada 150 Closing Events (5 pages)

A-2017-00109: documents related to financial payments for performers (5 pages)

A-2017-00146: documents related to payment to U2 performers (1 page)

A-2017-00476 (Briefing note to the Minister CH2017-01457: "Canada 150 - An Additional Canada 150 Legacy - Options") (3 pages)

A-2017-00582 (Briefing note to the Deputy Minister CH2017-02025: "Fact sheet for the Deputy Minister's briefing to Minister Joly on Canada 150 on November 2, 2017". (10 pages)

Appendix B

Letter of Information

Title of the study: Celebrating the True North:
Canada Day as part of a Political Master Brand

Researchers: Justin Prno (Student Researcher) and
Dr. Evan Potter (Supervisor)
Department of Communication, Faculty of Arts
University of Ottawa
Ottawa, ON
(613) 562-5800 ext. 3831
[removed]
[removed]

You are invited to participate in the above-mentioned thesis research conducted by Justin Prno and supervised by Dr. Evan Potter in partial fulfillment of a Master of Arts degree.

Purpose of the Study The purpose of this study is to assess how has Canada Day, a formerly non-partisan national holiday, become part of a political master brand, utilizing a case study of Canada Day, 2017.

Participation: During this research, your participation will consist essentially of a single audio-recorded semi-structured one on one interview of approximately one hour. The interview will be scheduled during typical business hours and will be in a location of mutual approval. If necessary, follow up questions or clarifications may be made via telephone, video conference system (e.g., Skype) and/or email depending on your preferred method.

Risks: Your participation in this study will entail that you provide your personal opinions, experiences, and, perspectives on the research. Participation involves no to minimal risk as the subject is regarding a public event and publicly available information. Any inadvertent information which could identify you will be removed to retain your anonymity.

Benefits: Thanks to your feedback, you will be contributing to the foundation of knowledge regarding political branding in Canada, which is a relatively new field of study. Your participation will also assist in shedding more insight on an area of growing concern in society, that of government's movement towards promoting over informing.

Confidentiality: The information that you will share will remain strictly confidential and will be used solely for the purposes of this research. The only people who will have access to the entirety of the raw research data are Justin Prno (Student Researcher) and Dr. Potter (Supervisor). Your answers may be used verbatim in the text of the thesis but you will not be identified.

- Anonymity:** Anonymity will be protected by only allowing Justin Prno (Student Researcher) and Dr. Potter (Supervisor) knowledge of participants. As well a codename system will be used to identify you in all notes, transcripts, and research. Your identity will not be revealed in the thesis.
- Review:** You may choose to review the transcript and quotes attributed to you. The full transcript will be ‘read receipt’ emailed in a password protected file to you. When available, you will also be given the section of the research to see your quote(s) in context or have the meaning of its use be described to you. You will be given two weeks from the date sent to review/revise your contributions. After two weeks, it will be deemed as being reviewed, unless expressly noted by you.
- Conservation of data** The physical and digital notes, transcripts, and recordings of the interviews will be kept on a password-protected USB key and/or in a lockbox in the Department of Communication on the uOttawa campus and a copy will be kept at the personal residence of Justin Prno for a period of five years at which time they will be permanently deleted and destroyed.
- Voluntary Participation:** You are under no obligation to participate. If you choose to participate, you can withdraw from the research at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions. You indicate your consent to participate in the study by signing the consent form on the day of the interview. If you choose to withdraw, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will still be included in the data, unless expressly asked by you.

If you have any questions or require more information about the research itself, you may contact the researcher at the number or email mentioned above.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact:
the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research
University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall
550 Cumberland Street, Room 154,
Ottawa, ON
K1N 6N5
(613) 562-5387
ethics@uottawa.ca

Please keep this letter for your records.
Thank you for your time and consideration.

[signed]

Justin Prno

Appendix C

Interview Schedule Outline for Semi-Structured Interviews

WARM UP/OPENING:

-Did you get out to see or participate in any of the Canada 150 events this past year? How did you find them? Any that blew your mind?

POLITICAL BRANDING:

-How would you describe Branding?

-How would you define the brand of Canada?

-Are there any ideas, values, symbols, or the like that you feel best represent Canada or “Canadianess”?

-Why does _____ make you think of Canada/Canadianess?

-How would you define the brand of the Government of Canada?

-Can you think of any ideas, values, symbols, or the like that the GoC embraces?

-How would you define the current brand of the federal Liberal Party of Canada?

-Can you think of any ideas, values, symbols, or the like that the Liberal Party embraces?

-Are there any ways you feel this is different from previous Liberal Party branding?

-Are there any parallels or divergences with how the Liberal Party embraces these elements as compared to GoC?

-What about compared with how you view Canada’s Brand?

CANADA DAY:

-Did you go to or watch any of the Capital’s Canada Day event this year, what did you think?

-How was it? (same/different as other years, boring/fun, too big of a spectacle/not big enough)

-Were there any standout moments for you, what made them standout?

-Was there anything you didn’t like?

-Did you hear about the protest Teepee that was erected? How, if at all, do you think that impacted Canada Day?

-How do you think the Liberal Government handled the situation [with the protestors]?

PARTISAN CANADA DAY:

-Do you think Canada Day and public events like it are being used for partisan political gain?

- Can you think of how this could be happening?

-In your opinion, how may have the Liberal Party politicized Canada Day this year (2017)?

-Do you think that the Liberal Party uses Canada Day as part of their branding?

-Is this problematic with you personally?

-Could this be problematic as a whole?

-How do you think the politicization of Canada Day or events like it impact society?

-Do you believe there are or will be any democratic ramifications from the politicization of Canada Day or events like it? How?

ROUND OUT/CLOSING:

-Do you have any questions for me or is there anything you would like to add?

Appendix D

Research Consent Form

Title of the study:

Celebrating the True North:
Canada Day as part of a Political Master Brand

Justin Prno (Student Researcher) and
Dr. Evan Potter (Supervisor)
Department of Communication, Faculty of Arts
University of Ottawa
Ottawa, ON
(613) 562-5800 ext. 3831
[removed]
[removed]

Invitation to Participate: I am invited to participate in the above-mentioned research conducted by Justin Prno and supervised by Dr. Evan Potter.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to assess how has Canada Day, a formerly non-partisan national holiday, become part of a political master brand, utilizing a case study of Canada Day, 2017.

Participation: My participation will consist essentially of a single audio-recorded semi-structured one on one interview of approximately one hour. The interview will be scheduled during typical business hours and will be in a location of mutual approval. If necessary, follow up questions or clarifications may be made via telephone, video conference system (e.g., Skype) and/or email depending on preferred method.

Risks: My participation in this study will entail that I provide my personal opinions, experiences, and perspectives on the research. Participation involves no to minimal risk as the subject is regarding a public event and publicly available information. Any inadvertent information which could identify me will be removed to retain my anonymity within the research.

Benefits: My participation in this study will be contributing to the foundation of knowledge regarding political branding in Canada, which is a relatively new field of study. My participation will also assist in shedding more insight from various perspectives on an area of growing concern in society, that of government's movement towards promoting over informing.

Confidentiality and anonymity: I have received assurance from the researcher that the information I will share will remain strictly confidential. I understand that the contents will be used only within Justin Prno's master's thesis and that my confidentiality will be protected by having any personal identifying information removed from the research. Anonymity will be protected by only allowing Justin Prno (Student Researcher) and Dr. Potter (Supervisor) knowledge of who I am. As well, a codename system will be used to identify my answers in all notes, transcripts, and research. My identity will not be revealed in the thesis.

Review: I may choose to review the transcript of the interview and quotes attributed to me. I will be 'read receipt' emailed the full transcript in a password protected file. When available, I will also be given the section of the research to view my quote in context or have the meaning of its use be described to me. I will have two weeks from date sent to review/revise my contributions. After two weeks, my contributions will be deemed as reviewed, unless expressly noted to the researcher.

Conservation of data: The data collected both physical and digital, to include notes, transcripts, and recordings of the interviews will be kept on a password-protected USB key and/or in a lockbox in the Department of Communication on the uOttawa campus and a copy will be kept at the personal residence of Justin Prno for a period of five years at which time they will be permanently deleted and destroyed.

Voluntary Participation: I am under no obligation to participate. If I choose to participate, I can withdraw from the research at any time and/or refuse to answer any questions. I indicate my consent to participate in the study by signing this consent form. If I choose to withdraw from this research, all data gathered until the time of withdrawal will still be included in the data, unless expressly asked by me.

Acceptance: I, _____, agree to participate in the above research study conducted by Justin Prno of the Department of Communication, Faculty of Arts, University of Ottawa which research is under the supervision of Dr. Evan Potter.

If I have any questions about the study, I may contact the researcher or his supervisor.

If I have any questions regarding the ethical conduct of this study, I may contact:
 the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research
 University of Ottawa, Tabaret Hall
 550 Cumberland Street, Room 154,
 Ottawa, ON
 K1N 6N5
 (613) 562-5387
ethics@uottawa.ca

Signed in duplicate.

Participant's signature:

Date:

I have provided an explanation of the research. I declare that I am prepared to answer any additional questions about the research to the best of my ability.

Researcher's signature:

Date:

Appendix E

<i>Expertise, position, and responses of possible interviewees contacted for this thesis.</i>					
Areas of Expertise	Position	Respondent Code	Accepted Interview	Declined Interview	No Response
Government and Canada Day branding and communication	PCH Minister				•
	PMO Director, Communications				•
	PCH Chief of Staff				•
	PCH Director, Communications			•	
Canada Day 2017 (Canada 150) branding and communication	PCH Director, Capital Events	R1	✓		
	Federal Secretariat, Canada 150, Senior Executive Director			•	
	Federal Secretariat, Canada 150, Director			•	
Liberal Party of Canada branding and communication	Federal Secretariat, Canada 150, Brand Manager	R2	✓		
	LPC Director				•
Political branding and communication	LPC Senior Director, Communications				•
	LPC Director, Creative & Digital				•
	Political Branding Expert			•	
	Political Branding Academic	R3	✓		
	Political Communication Academic			•	
	Political Communication Academic			•	
	Political Communication Practitioner			•	
	Journalist, Political Communication	R4	✓		
	Journalist, Political Communication				

Notes. PCH – Department of Canadian Heritage, LPC – Liberal Party of Canada, PMO – Office of the Prime Minister.

Appendix F

Canada 150 Manhole cover in Pembroke, Ontario



(Photo credit: Justin Prno)

Appendix G

The forth-coming national Indigenous cultural centre.



(Photo credit: Justin Prno. Note: All personal and corporate identities have been obscured)

Appendix H

Placement of protest Teepee on Parliament Hill



(Photo credit: Kimberley Molina)

Appendix I

Canadian flags hanging on the Office of the Prime Minister and Privy Council



(Photo credit: Justin Prno. *Note: All personal and corporate identities have been obscured*)

Appendix J

Collage of Canada 150 branding colours in use on Canada Day



(Photo credit: Justin Prno. Note: All personal and corporate identities have been obscured)

Appendix K

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau giving a speech on Canada Day



(Photo credit: The Canadian Press, Justin Tang)