Making Political Party Leaders:

The Practice of Political Leadership in Canadian Party Leadership Races

by

Conor Donnie Columb

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Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

Party leaders are central to the Canadian party system because they represent their political parties at the national level, hold significant power within them over policy and messaging, and they often go on to form government following elections. Although scholars have studied leadership selection methods, party organization, and political campaigning, less attention has been paid to how aspiring party leaders develop political leadership in their respective campaigns. This gap invites the following questions: (1) how is political leadership constructed and communicated by aspiring leaders in Canadian political party leadership races; and (2) what campaign strategies do they most commonly use to present themselves as viable party leaders to party members? This study examined 16 candidates across three federal leadership races: the Liberal Party (2013); the New Democratic Party (NDP) (2017); and the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) (2022). Through a qualitative content analysis of the campaign materials of each candidate in these races, such as media coverage, debate performances, and websites, this study identified the ways that candidates construct and communicate political leadership through their campaigns to persuade party members to vote for them as the party leader. Overall, this study further contextualized how leadership is marketed and performed in party politics.

Keywords: leadership races, campaigning, Canadian politics, political communications, political leadership, political marketing, political parties.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated in its entirety to the life and memory of my dearest grandmother, Helena Columb (1928-2024). I was lucky to have her in my life for as long as I did, and I learned so much from her. She was one of the most intelligent and inspiring people that I have ever known. She also fervently supported my creative and academic aspirations from my childhood onward. Without her love, support, and wisdom, I would have never imagined it possible to pursue a master's degree, let alone this project.

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List of Abbreviations

CEO	Chief Electoral Officer
CIMS	The Constituent Information Management System
CPC	The Conservative Party of Canada
EDA	Electoral District Association
GOTV	Get Out to Vote
MP(s)	Member(s) of Parliament
MPP(s)	Member(s) of Provincial Parliament
NDP	The New Democratic Party of Canada
OMOV	One Member, One Vote
QCA	Qualitative Content Analysis

I. Introduction

Party leaders are typically the central object of interest to voters when observing Canadian politics. While voters and party insiders alike recognize and understand that the larger structure of Canadian political parties consists of several different actors, such as Members of Parliament (MPs), the leader tends to be the key public representative for their respective parties. This fact partially stems from Canada's parliamentary nature, which sees the leader of the political party that won the most seats in the House of Commons during an election form a government and thus become the prime minister (Malcolmson et al., 2021; Malloy, 2023). Additionally, the general landscape of electoral politics in Canada has always been skewed in focus towards the party leader (Bittner, 2021).[1] For example, it is common during federal elections for the major party leaders to hold a televised debate to represent their party's platform and members (Marland & Giasson, 2020). Additionally, not only are party leaders the key object of interest in party politics, but they also hold significant power within the political parties that they lead. For example, party leaders are largely influential in the formulation of the party's platform and its disciplined messaging (Marland, 2020).

Since party leaders are so important to the Canadian party system, it logically follows that political party leadership races are important to study because they select the leaders that go on to become the prime minister or other major political figures. Scholars have paid some attention to leadership races. For example, William Cross has made significant contributions to the literature by studying leadership selection methods and the general context of intra-party democracy (such as Cross, 2004; Cross et al., 2022; Cross & Pilet, 2015). Other studies on leadership races have typically focused on using these events as cases to speak to larger trends in the Canadian party system. Scholars have often used them to understand ideological

[1] Bittner (2011) refers to this phenomenon as the personalization of politics. While she does argue that Canadian politics is highly focused on the party leaders themselves rather than other political figures (such as MPs), she also states that politics are not as personalized as in the United States or the United Kingdom (Bittner, 2011).

shifts in electoral politics, party organization, gendered mediation in politics, party discipline, and so on (Currie-Wood & Pruysers, 2023; Lingier et al., 2024; Pruysers, 2024; Thomas & Sabin, 2019; Trimble et al., 2013; Wiseman, 2020).

Although these aforementioned studies are important to the literature on political party leadership races, they are nonetheless relatively narrow. There is less attention paid on the dynamics at play during leadership races, especially in the context of campaigning. Since leadership races themselves are elections insofar as party members vote for their preferred candidate to become their party leader, it follows that these dynamics (especially campaigning) are important to understand. Moreover, these races are unique opportunities for parties for two reasons. First, a new leader can raise a party's profile, which can help it to win more seats in the House of Commons, vault it into forming government, or even keep it in power.[2] For example, the rise of Sir Wilfrid Laurier to the Liberal Party's leadership significantly raised the party's profile in Quebec: the fact that he was French and Catholic contributed to the party's success at capturing a majority of the seats in the province during the 1896 federal election (Carty, 2015).[3] Moreover, he captured support in Western Canada for supporting free trade with the United States.[4] On the flip side, following the death of Sir John A. Macdonald in 1891, the Conservatives lost their dominant party status due to a string of unsuccessful and short-lasting party leaders, which only proves the importance of party

[2] Even if it is not a government party, a new party leader can help said party maintain a high degree of influence in politics. For instance, while the NDP has never (as of yet) formed a government, they (oftentimes) remain a highly influential third party in federal elections and parliament (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017; McGrane, 2019).
[3] It is important to note that leadership races did not exist in their current form (i.e., internal party elections) during the time of Sir Wilfrid Laurier (Cross, 2004). That being said, he is a significant example of how a new party leader can contribute to a political party's success at raising its profile, winning more seats, or even forming a government, or keeping power (Carty, 2015, 2022; Cross, 2004).
[4] Of course, this support was not to last very long, and the Liberal Party would go on to consistently fail to capture support in the region from then and well into the current party system (Carty, 2015; Jeffrey, 2021).

leaders to the profile and success of Canadian political parties in federal elections (Carty, 2015, 2022; Farney & Rayside, 2013; Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017).[5]

Second, leadership races present aspiring leaders with the opportunity to build or rebuild their party, formulate policy visions, and potentially become the prime minister of Canada (Cross et al., 2022; Jeffrey, 2021; McGrane, 2019). For example, when Stephen Harper won the Conservative Party of Canada's 2004 leadership race, he significantly contributed to shaping the political party, both as its leader and as the prime minister. Since conservatism in Canada is diverse and consists of several different factions (e.g., fiscal conservatives, social conservatives, conservative populists, etc.), Harper was presented with the unique opportunity to build a party that could organize its policy visions to both balance the interests of these groups and be electorally viable (Farney & Koop, 2017; Farney & Rayside, 2013; Flanagan, 2009). Specific examples of such actions include his decisions and attempts to keep the party neutral on same-sex marriage following its decriminalization in 2005 by the previous government (Tremblay, 2019). He also supported Quebec nationalism to attempt to bring Quebec nationalists into the Conservative fold by recognizing the province as a "nation within Canada" in parliament (Flanagan, 2009).

While scholars and pundits alike acknowledge the importance of both party leaders and leadership races in the Canadian party system, comparatively less attention has been paid to the campaigning dynamics of these races. After all, since leadership races allow for party members to vote for their preferred candidate, it follows that aspiring leaders engage in campaigning to persuade members to vote for them. In particular, there are a lack of studies on how aspiring leaders use the idea of political leadership in their campaigns to persuade party members that they are the most suitable candidate to lead their party. This study is

[5] Following the death of Sir John A. Macdonald in 1891, the Conservative Party had four successive leaders: Sir John Abbott (1891-1892); Sir John Thompson (1892-1894); Sir Mackenzie Bowell (1894-1896); and then Sir Charles Tupper (May of 1896 to July of 1896) (Carty, 2015; Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017).

interested in the intersection between political leadership and campaigning, which is to examine how leadership is constructed and communicated in political campaigns. Given this interest in a research area that is relatively underexplored, this study asks the following questions: (1) how is political leadership constructed and communicated by aspiring leaders in Canadian political party leadership races?; and (2) what campaign strategies do they most commonly use to present themselves as viable party leaders to party members?

Considering these research questions, this study seeks to examine how political leadership is constructed and communicated through the campaigns of aspiring party leaders. It will specifically examine 16 candidates across three Canadian political party leadership races: the Liberal Party (2013); the New Democratic Party (NDP) (2017); and the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) (2022). This study will conduct a qualitative content analysis (QCA) of their campaign materials, such as their media coverage, messaging, debate performances, and so on. By analyzing the way these 16 campaigns understand, convey, and present political leadership in their respective races, this study will identify common patterns of leadership as a political strategy in contemporary political campaigns. Such findings will further contextualize both party leadership and political campaigning in Canadian political parties. Moreover, it will further integrate conceptions of leadership into the study of political leadership in Canadian political parties and contemporary campaigning.

This study will be divided into seven Chapters, including this introduction. Chapter two will thoroughly investigate the literature within the Canadian party system (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017; Johnston, 2017, 2021). First, the literature review will appraise Canadian political parties (Cross et al., 2022). This appraisal includes their function, historical development, and their organizational structure (Carty, 2015; Carty & Cross, 2006; Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022; Sartori, 1976; Savoie, 2019). Second, it will outline political campaigning in the Canadian context (Flanagan, 2014). Moreover, this outline will identify

core features of campaigning, such as political marketing and permanent campaigning (Flanagan, 2007; Lees-Marshment, 2019; Marland et al., 2012; Marland et al., 2017). Third, it will describe political party leadership races in great detail and outline the timeline of these races from beginning to end (Cross, 2004; Cross & Pilet, 2015). This Chapter concludes that leadership races are campaigning events and, as such, the literature on political campaigning should be applied to them to better understand how candidates become party leaders.

Chapter three will provide a theoretical framework for this study. This theoretical framework will specifically focus on political leadership. The Chapter defines political leadership as a relational and context-dependent process in which individuals or groups seek to influence both others and political action (Blondel, 1987; Foley, 2013; Kellerman, 1986). This definition situates political leadership within a social constructivist framework, meaning that the conceptions of political leadership are shaped by social interactions between party leaders, followers, and political context (Dion, 1968; Kellerman, 1986). Finally, this Chapter will contextualize its social constructivist framework of political leadership in the larger settings of political marketing and communications: while political marketing shapes leadership because it involves the specific ways that candidates design their leadership through specific interactive processes, political communications shape leadership as an independent and external actor that shape leadership (and must be accounted for by candidates) (Durmaz & Dierkçi, 2015; Lees-Marshment, 2019; McNair, 2003; Small et al., 2014; Swanson, 2004). This Chapter is important because it defines political leadership, which is a central concept to this study. Moreover, it provides the theoretical grounding of this study, which has methodological implications on the scope of this study.

Chapter four will discuss this study's methodology, specifically its research design and the methods it chose to use. The study situates itself within an interpretivist paradigm, which is the philosophical view that research is a process of understanding the meanings and

patterns of social phenomena and structures and therefore makes it subjective in nature (Eaton & Morris, 2019). It is interpretive in design because it recognizes that research methodologies share a direct relationship with both ontological and epistemological assumptions about both what underpinning values are important to researchers (e.g., normative questions on what things we ought to know and research and which things are not worthwhile) and how they come to gain knowledge (e.g., observation, controlled environments, coding, etc.) (Hay, 2006). Moreover, it is interpretive because of the social constructivist assumptions in the previous Chapter. This study focuses on political party leadership races at the federal level: the Liberal Party of Canada (2013), the New Democratic Party (2017), and the Conservative Party of Canada (2022). In total, it focuses on 16 candidates across these three cases. The study engages in a qualitative content analysis (QCA) of the three leadership races and the campaigns of these candidates. It will specifically examine both primary (leadership race debates, interviews, and campaign materials) and secondary data (opinion pieces, political commentary, and media profiles).

Chapter five will outline the findings from this study's QCA. The findings include five major themes. The first theme was *personal leadership construction*, which refers to the specific processes outlined in the previous Chapter. This theme relates to the specific ways that candidates invoke traits and values, identity cues, and personal information to develop a personal leadership identity. The second theme was *vision and policy*, which consisted of a candidate's specific vision for Canada, outlining policy positions, and party renewal and rebuilding as a vision for the party itself. The third theme was *strategic positioning*, which referred to how candidates situate themselves within the context of their specific races and the larger political context. Such positioning involves candidates contrasting themselves against other candidates through attacks (whether within the party or outside of it) and the calls for party unity and/or cooperation. The fourth theme was *contextual framing*, which

referred to the larger external environment and structural factors that shape these leadership races, whether due to political context, party history and legacy, media coverage of candidates, and the party rules governing the races. The final theme was *campaign strategies*, which referred to the strategic development and practice of the central features of political campaigning that were outlined in Chapter two.

Chapter six will examine the analytical implications of this study's findings. This Chapter highlighted that political leadership in Canadian political party leadership races are actively constructed through a combination of personal, strategic, and contextual practices in the campaigning process, which is thereafter communicated through debates, interviews, and the larger media environment. These processes are also deeply influenced by the external media actors' coverage of the leadership identities made by candidates themselves. By analyzing the 16 candidates across the three leadership races examined, this study identifies recurring themes of leadership construction, which offer descriptive value for future studies on political leadership, campaigning, and broader Canadian party politics. Despite the partisan differences between each political party, common patterns confirmed the relational, performative, and social constructivist process of building a leadership identity, which is central to the design of a candidates' campaign brand. Moreover, the discussion of this study's findings indicate that these leadership races are also exercises in political marketing and serve as key moments of party renewal, which has implications on the health of parties.

The final Chapter wraps up the study with a conclusion. The Chapter will outline the significance of the findings and outcome of this study. Such a study will further provide theoretical insights to leadership in Canadian political parties specifically. Although it is focused on campaigning strategies in leadership races, it will also hope to advance findings towards the research on political marketing and campaigning in Canada. This contribution will be unique as it is from the perspective of internal leadership races. Overall, this paper

seeks to provide a thorough account of recent leadership trends in Canada's major federal parties and contextualize them comparatively. Moreover, it is especially important to understand the campaigning dynamics at play in leadership races to further understand the health of Canadian political parties. Since political parties are central to the political process in Canada, it follows that further contextualizing campaigning through the study of leadership races can contribute to understanding how political parties and party leaders serve their functions in Canadian politics or perhaps fall short of them.

II. Literature Review

Political parties are an important subject in the discipline because of their central role in Canadian democracy. These parties are, essentially, groups of organized partisans that contest elections and place candidates into public office (Sartori, 1976). Of course, they serve more functions than placing candidates in office. Political parties also form governments, develop legislation and public policy, represent and mobilize citizens, organize ideology, and provide resources for candidates such as personnel and funding (Cross et al., 2022; Katz & Mair, 1995). In addition to these functions, they also serve to address collective action problems in a political system, which motivate people to vote for parties and, in turn, motivate the parties to secure government and address said problems (Kirchheimer, 1966). Such functions effectively bring Canadian citizens into contact with their political system. As William Cross and his colleagues (2022) put it: "[political parties] make modern democracy possible and provide participatory opportunities for members and non-members alike."

Not only do political parties create participatory opportunities for citizens within the larger Canadian political system, but they also promote national unity. This unique feature of parties has historically been characterized by the practice of "brokerage politics." Simply put, brokerage politics refers to an approach that political parties use to appeal to a wide range of voters across Canada (Carty, 2013; McDougall, 2020). Siegfried (1978) first developed the concept by observing a lack of distinction between the two major political parties at the time— the Liberal Party and Conservatives.[6] He further argued that Canada's major parties have little to no principles because they seek to balance the "national equilibrium" (Siegfried, 1978). Such observations had merit because Canada had several conflicting cleavages, such

[6] The conservatives that Siegfried (1978) was discussing at the time did not refer to the modern-day Conservative Party of Canada, but instead the historical Conservative Party. This historical party was the one led by figures such as Sir John A. Macdonald and Arthur Meighen (Farney & Rayside, 2013). This party reorganized itself as the Progressive Conservative Party in 1942, which continued to operate and formed large majority governments in 1958, 1984, and 1988 (Johnston, 2017). Following their crushing defeat in 1993, they eventually stagnated until their merger with the Canadian Alliance/Reform Party in 2003.

as language, religion, region, race, and so on (Clarke et al., 2019). Contemporary scholars have abandoned the brokerage theory (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017). For example, Carty (2013) argued that brokerage politics had ended because the Liberal Party abandoned the model and the Conservatives (both historic and contemporary) never truly practised it. Johnston (2015) went even further and argued that practising brokerage politics was impossible because of the rise of regional voting blocs and partisanship, which turned the party model on its head. That being said, parties continue to offer unity for differing political factions in federal politics.

Given the central role that political parties play in Canadian politics and government, scholars often discuss it in the context of party systems (Johnston, 2017). The concept of the party system is rooted in Sartori's (1976) theoretical framework, which defines it as the complex series of patterns, interactions, and structures in a political system both within and between its political parties. Examples of these features in a party system include electoral competition, party financing, leadership selection, policy development, and so on (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017). Canadian scholars use this framework to study these dynamics because his work is the groundwork for the comparative literature on parties and party systems (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017; Strmiska, 2019). Moreover, it is rooted in the traditional theoretical studies of party systems as a relationship between electoral systems and political parties (for example Cairns, 1968; Duverger, 1954; Elkins, 1974), which is significant to the dynamics of party systems. Given the ever-changing nature of politics, scholars note that party systems are qualitative categorizations of these patterns, interactions, and structures (Carty et al., 2000).

Despite the subjective nature of the Canadian party system, scholars generally concur that there have been five party systems (Carty et al., 2000; Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017; Johnston, 2017). The area of debate between scholars is less so the amount of different party systems, but rather the specific time in which one ends versus the next one beginning (Walchuk, 2012). Regardless of these technical debates, party systems have significantly

changed the political landscape in Canadian politics several times. For instance, the first party system, which began following confederation in 1867, was characterized by highly decentralized political parties and patronage as a form of party politics (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017). As for the second party system, it was characterized by a change in Canada towards a multiparty system following the rise of the Progressive Party in the 1921 federal election (Johnston, 2023). Political parties also began to increasingly centralize (Cross, 2004). The third party system was characterized by the beginning of television and early telecommunications technologies that placed the party leader at the forefront of party branding (Marland & Flanagan, 2013). The fourth party consolidated these practices and was marked by the largest majority governments in Canadian history with Brian Mulroney leading the Progressive Conservatives. However, the party system would collapse following the crushing defeat of the government in 1993, which saw the rise of regional identity politics with the Reform/Canadian Alliance Party and Bloc Québécois (Johnston, 2017).[7]

The contemporary Canadian party system, the fifth one, began in 2003 following the merger of the Progressive Conservatives and the Reform/Canadian Alliance— creating the modern Conservative Party of Canada (Bélanger & Godbout, 2010; Farney & Koop, 2017; Farney & Rayside, 2013). The change in the number of parties in parliament saw the rise of the Conservative Party led by Stephen Harper into government, even securing a majority government in 2011. That particular election also saw the decline of the Liberal Party to third place and the NDP rose to official opposition. Despite the strength of the Conservative Party's organization, the 2015 federal election saw the rise of the Liberals back into government with Justin Trudeau— who revitalized the party following its near-death experience in the 2011 election (Jeffrey, 2021). Moreover, the party system is characterized

[7] The Reform Party was founded in 1987 by Preston Manning as a populist party that resented Western alienation (Srebrnik, 1997). In 2000, it rebranded itself as the Canadian Alliance party as an attempt to capture support beyond its Western Canadian base (Bélanger & Godbout, 2010). It shall be referred to as the Reform/Canadian Alliance Party whenever it is mentioned in this study.

by a frequent shift between minority governments (2004, 2006, 2008, 2019, 2021) and majority governments (2011, 2015) (Cross et al., 2022; Johnston, 2021).

In keeping with the central goal of this study (as laid out in the previous Chapter), that is, understanding the campaigning strategies used in political party leadership races, it is important to begin this work in the context of the Canadian party system. Since party systems are conceptual frameworks that encapsulate several patterns, interactions, and structures within Canada's political system, it follows that the key elements implied in the goal of this study can be found in it (Sartori, 1976). To reiterate, the research questions that this study posed are: (1) how is political leadership constructed and communicated by aspiring leaders in Canadian political party leadership races; and (2) what campaign strategies do they most commonly use to present themselves as viable party leaders to party members? Therefore, to answer these questions, it is important to understand political parties, campaigning, and leadership races. These are constitutive elements of the Canadian party system that are relevant to this work (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017; Johnston, 2017).

As such, this Chapter will review the academic literature on the Canadian party system (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017). It is important to understand the party system because it consists of several different elements and concepts that are relevant to this study (Carty et al., 2000; Johnston, 2017; Sartori, 1976). The first section of this Chapter will focus specifically on Canadian political parties (Cross et al., 2022). More specifically, it will focus on the historical development of political parties, their role in Canadian democracy, and their organizational structure (Carty, 2004, 2013; Carty & Cross, 2006; Cross, 2004, 2018; Katz & Mair, 1995; Malloy, 2023; Walchuk, 2012). The second section will explore political campaigning in Canada, which will refer to organized efforts seeking to place candidates in public office (Flanagan, 2014). Not only will this section identify the central tenets of political campaigning, but it will also outline how Canadian parties organize their campaigns

(Currie-Wood & Pruysers, 2023; Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022; Robbins-Kanter, 2022). The third section will explore political party leadership races, specifically investigating how they function as campaigning events (Cross & Pilet, 2015).

By exploring these three relevant features of the Canadian party system, this Chapter will conclude by situating the goal of this study into the larger context of the literature. It finds that political party leadership races are campaigning events. As such, it should apply the literature on political campaigning into the context of these races to better understand how candidates become party leaders. Since party leaders play a central role in Canadian political parties, it is especially important to understand how they campaign in the intra-party setting because it enriches scholarly knowledge on the visions that leaders have that capture momentum with the party membership. Moreover, this work would enrich the literature on political campaigning by bringing it into conversation with internal party democracy, which is an important subfield in the study of political parties since they have adopted direct elections as a means to select their leaders (Cross, 2004). Such a literature review will set up the context needed to study political leadership as a campaigning strategy.

Canadian Political Parties

As previously stated, political parties are central to Canadian democracy because they contest elections and form governments, develop policies, mobilize citizens, and provide essential resources, which in turn address collective action problems and connect citizens to the political system (Cross et al., 2022). That being said, there are some notable critiques of them. For instance, Savoie (2019) argued that as a result of Canadian politics and governance being managed by "the centre," parties have become election-day organizations that promote the brand of the party leader.[8] As such, he believed that they could not effectively serve their

[8] "The centre" refers to the concentrated executive power held by a very small group of politicians (Savoie, 1999). Donald Savoie first developed the concept in his groundwork book *Governing from the centre: The concentration of power in Canadian politics*.

functions of providing participatory opportunities or being uniting institutions. The notion of political parties being deinstitutionalized, as he asserts, is a fair observation of the changing nature of political parties from an organizational perspective. However, the organizational transformations of parties do not change their central role in Canadian democracy. Parties remain the primary means for candidates to enter the house of commons. For example, in the 2021 federal election, independent candidates received less than 30,000 votes. Moreover, 94 percent of the total votes casted in the 2021 election were casted to candidates belonging to a political party (Cross et al., 2022). Of course, it is reasonable to say that brokerage politics has ended, but that is not merely the result of deinstitutionalized parties.

Although one of the central functions of a political party is to get candidates elected to public office and subsequently form a government, they do not solely exist within the parliamentary setting (Malloy, 2023). In the first party system, parties were primarily creatures of parliament, but they have significantly expanded ever since (Carty et al., 2000; Cross, 2004; Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017). Modern Canadian political parties are large organizations with other components beyond the party leader and Members of Parliament (MPs). Scholars have referred to the concept of stratarchy when discussing Canadian political parties (Carty & Cross, 2006; Cross et al., 2022). Stratarchy refers to a structural form of party organizing where power is divided between different organizational components, which are often referred to as party "branches" (Carty, 2004). The concept was first introduced by Eldersveld (1964) to explain the distribution of power within American political parties amongst different "stratas" of power, which gave each organizational branch what he referred to as "mutual autonomy." This concept noted a significant shift in political party organization from highly centralized and elite-driven parties to ones that are diverted (Katz & Mair, 1995).

In Canada, political parties have historically undergone both periods of centralization and decentralization. That being said, scholars have argued that Canadian political parties are

overall far more centralized than those in the United States or Europe (Carty, 2013; Malloy, 2023). The height of centralization in Canadian political parties could be observed with the rise of the catch-all party structure (Cross et al., 2022). Catch-all parties are broadly situated on the ideological spectrum to gain broad support across the electorate (Kirchheimer, 1966). Although their spaces are ideologically broad, they are still ideological nonetheless (Carty, 2013).[9] Essentially, these parties emphasize practicality and electoral viability over ideologies and strict principles. Due to the several different members in such parties, they are highly organized through strong leadership and political staffers to ensure that they can serve their key functions— to have broad appeal across the electorate (Carty, 2013; Kirchheimer, 1966; Safran, 2009). Kirchheimer (1954) first developed the theory when studying West Germany's party system. In that case study, he saw a rise in support for a catch-all conservative party as well as ideological moderation in the Social Democratic Party (Krouwel, 2003).

Given the stratarchical nature of Canadian political parties, however, power is distributed horizontally amongst three different organizational components (Katz & Mair, 1995). First, there is the party in public office, which is sometimes referred to by scholars as the "national party" (Carty, 2004; Carty & Cross, 2006; Cross et al., 2022; Katz & Mair, 2002; Marland & Giasson, 2020). The national party is the branch of the political party that consists of its parliamentary caucus. The parliamentary caucus consists of the party's elected Members of Parliament (MPs), the party leader, and members of the Senate (Malloy, 2023).[10] By essentially being the political party's parliamentary branch, it also serves as the historic core of most parties in Canada (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017). The branch is responsible for

[9] Catch-all parties are different from the practice of brokerage politics because while the former is nonetheless ideological (just conceptually broad), the latter seeks to be above political ideology (Carty, 2013).

[10] Of course, the Senate is currently characterized by a rise in independent senators, that is, senators that are not members of political parties. This trend began in 2016 when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau appointed 22 independent senators in consultation with an independent advisory board (Macfarlane, 2021). As of the 44th session of Canadian Parliament, there are currently 12 senators affiliated with a political party, that being the Conservative Party of Canada (Senate of Canada, 2024).

representing party members and voters in parliament, formulating policy, and participating in the legislative process (Cross et al., 2022). It is important to note that, within this branch of the political party, party leaders hold significant power (in part) because of the prominence of party discipline, that is, regulating the activities of caucus members to ensure internal consistency (Marland, 2020). As such, party leaders are the key figure in the national party.

Table 1. The Stratarchical Bargain of Power in Canadian Political Parties

Party Branch	*Functions*	*Key Members*
The Party in Public Office (The National Party)	Representing party members and voters in Parliament; formulating policy; participating in the legislative process	Parliamentary caucus (the party leader, Members of Parliament, and members of the Senate)
The Party on the Ground (The Local Party)	Find local candidates to contest elections; engage in fundraising; administer local elections for party leadership races; recruit members	Electoral District Associations (EDA) across Canada, EDA presidents, volunteer coordinators
The Party in Central Office (The Central Party)	Office administration; coordinating resources across the party (personnel, financial, and messaging); money transfers	The political party's headquarters, party presidents

Second, there is the party on the ground, which is also referred to as the "local party" (Carty & Cross, 2006; Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022). The local party is the organizational branch found in each constituency that a political party contests in Canadian elections. This branch should not be thought of as a single organization, but rather a collective one consisting of hundreds of Electoral District Associations (EDAs) across Canada. EDAs give political parties a local presence in the constituencies they contest and consist of an office that manages its daily tasks and responsibilities (Cross, 2004).[11] The primary responsibility of the local party is to find local candidates to run in elections, engage in fundraising, and hold internal party elections such as leadership races (Cross et al., 2022). Another feature that is

[11] Constituencies are similar to the aforementioned EDAs. While EDAs refer to the local organization of a political party in a constituency, a constituency is the local unit and office for the MP.

not exclusively the local party's responsibility, but often occurs through it, is the recruitment of new party members (Marland & Giasson, 2022). This often falls into their jurisdiction because citizens who seek to become party members must be registered in their local EDA.

Finally, there is the party in central office, which is also referred to as the "central party" (Carty & Cross, 2006; Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022). This organizational branch of the political party is, essentially, the larger party's administrative component (Cross et al., 2022). As such, it is responsible for the coordination of resources across the political party. Such resources may include personnel or party messaging, but the most significant resource being money. The central party transfers funds to both the national and local parties, especially during federal election campaigns (Cross, 2004; Sayers, 1999; Young & Jansen, 2011). Scholars have studied financial transfers (for example Currie-Wood, 2020; Currie-Wood & Pruysers, 2023) because not only do these transfers demonstrate the stratarchy in practice, but they can also determine local elections. Examples of key figures in the central party include administrative staffers and the party president.

Although the concept of stratarchy suggests that power is equally distributed amongst the three party branches, Cross (2018) challenges the notion of mutual autonomy as a settled matter. Instead, he notes that the distribution of power is often contested and (re)negotiated.[12] For instance, the central party often gets involved in local candidate nominations— despite this power traditionally belonging to the local party (Marland & Giasson, 2022). Moreover, powers such as that of the leadership selection process are shared across all levels of the political party because all party members have the right to vote in leadership elections (Cross, 2004, 2018; Cross & Pilet, 2015). Considering these contestations of power, it is important to also treat stratarchical parties as sharing "mutual interdependence" (Cross, 2018). Mutual

[12] Both Kenneth Carty and William Cross should be recognized for their major feat in bringing in and fleshing out the concept of stratarchy and party organization in the Canadian literature, which has in turn made Canada a significant case study for comparative analysis (notably in the *Party Politics* journal).

interdependence does not refute mutual autonomy because these series of (re)negotiations ensure that such parties are not alienating any specific branch of the party. In this sense, this form of party organization is often referred to by scholars as a "stratarchical bargain" (Carty, 2004; Carty & Cross, 2006; Cross, 2004, 2018; Cross et al., 2022).

While this stratarchical bargain occurs throughout a political party's lifespan, these dynamics are often the subject of interest to scholars during federal elections. Elections are noteworthy for highlighting the practice of stratarchy because political party campaigns are two-folded: there is the national campaign led by the party leader and the 338 local campaigns led by party candidates in constituencies, which demonstrates the stratarchical bargain in action (Cross, 2004). In the traditional bargain of power, each party branch has specific functions during elections: the national party runs the national campaign and controls party messaging, the local party runs local campaigns and fundraises, and the central party coordinates resources (Cross, 2004; Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022; Sayers, 1999). Of course, the most significant resource that the central office can distribute in campaigns is money (Young & Jansen, 2011). However, given the central role of the party leader in campaigning, the national party tends to extend its reach and influence into local campaigns run by the local party (Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022). Moreover, the central party often distributes campaign resources unevenly based on factors such as the competitiveness of a specific constituency (Cross, 2004; Currie-Wood & Pruysers, 2023). Of course, campaigning shall be further discussed later, but it is first important to investigate the Canadian political parties themselves in greater detail (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017).

Canada is a multiparty system; however, scholars identify three political parties as its major federal parties— the Liberal Party of Canada, the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC), and the New Democratic Party of Canada (NDP) (Carty, 2013, 2015; Carty et al., 2000; Johnston, 2021). These three parties are considered Canada's major political parties for two

reasons. First, they are the three most successful parties in federal politics. For instance, in the 2021 federal election, they collectively won 304 of the total 338 seats in the house of commons, which is 90 percent of the total seats (Cross et al., 2022). Second, these parties significantly influence the patterns and interactions within the Canadian party system. For example, the Liberal Party is widely referred to by scholars as Canada's "natural governing party" because of its electoral dominance (Carty, 2015). Johnston (2017) notes that the party benefits from polarized pluralism because it dominates the ideological centre and therefore splits its opposition between the left (the NDP) and the right (the CPC). While the Conservative Party is influential as Canada's "opposition party" that occasionally interrupts Liberal governance, the NDP are influential as a consistent third party presence.

As stated above, the Liberal Party is Canada's natural governing party because it dominates the party system's ideological centre and therefore creates bilateral opposition (Carty, 2015, 2022; Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017; Johnston, 2017). The party did not secure this status until the late nineteenth century— following the instability in Conservative Party leadership following Sir John A. Macdonald's death and Sir Wilfrid Laurier's rise to the Liberal Party's leadership (Carty, 2015, 2022; Clarke et al., 2019). The Liberal Party's longtime success in the Canadian party system is the result of its ability to emphasize "national questions" in politics and its ability to secure a large number of seats in Quebec (Carty, 2015, 2022; Johnston, 2017). Of course, while the party has suffered massive electoral defeats as in the 2011 federal election, Jeffrey (2021) argues that the party has significantly reorganized itself to recapture support across the electorate. Following the rise of Justin Trudeau to the party's leadership in 2013, it underwent this process and returned to government in 2015 (Carty, 2022; Jeffrey, 2021). Stratarchy in particular has allowed the Liberal Party to balance itself ideologically because it allows for it to have a local presence without alienating the national party's centrist ideological approach.

The Conservative Party of Canada is a recent creation following the merger between the Progressive Conservative and Reform/Canadian Alliance parties in 2003 (Bélanger & Godbout, 2010). As briefly noted in this Chapter, the 2003 merger was a strategic move to address the disproportionate representation of right-wing ideology in the House of Commons, consolidate conservatism for electoral gains, and utilizing the brand value of the "Conservative" name (Bélanger & Godbout, 2010; Marland & Flanagan, 2013; Farney & Koop, 2017). As a catch-all party, it consists of the following factions: fiscal conservatives, social conservatives, Tories, evangelicals, and so on (Carty, 2013; Farney & Koop, 2017; Farney & Rayside, 2013; Malloy, 2011).[13] The party rose to government in 2006 under the leadership of Stephen Harper and eventually secured a majority government in 2011 (Flanagan, 2007). However, following the 2015 federal election, the party returned to opposition and had several leaders. It is a relatively moderate party to capture the diversity of Canadian conservatism, strictly disciplined in its messaging, and engages in grassroots fundraising at the local level through EDAs (Farney & Koop, 2017; Flanagan, 2007).

The NDP began as the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation in 1932 (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017; Johnston, 2017, 2021). The party was shaped by its close relationship with unions and organized labour, which advocated for socialism with state regulated production, distribution, labour, trade, and ownership (Naylor, 2016). While the party slowly rose to federal politics after the 1935 federal election, it would go on to rebrand itself as the NDP in 1961. The NDP rose to third party status and successfully captured the centre-left of the Canadian electorate. While socialism continued to characterize party politics through movements such as the Waffle Movement (see Cohen, 2020), the party significantly moderated over time. McGrane (2019) argued that the party's success in the contemporary

[13] Carty (2013) argued that the Conservative Party of Canada was a catch-all party for two reasons: (1) it sought to reconcile the different factions of the party into one mass centre-right party; and (2) to expand its electoral viability beyond its traditional ideological and regional bases to potentially form majority governments.

party system resulted in its internal organizational transformation. He specifically noted that it strengthened its administrative capacities through its central office, which allowed it to significantly discipline party messaging and engage in political marketing. Moreover, it also needed a stronger national party to effectively campaign in federal elections, as seen with its success in 2011 that brought it into official opposition and secured 59 seats in Quebec (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017; Marland et al., 2017; McGrane, 2019).

Canadian political parties, specifically the Liberal Party, the Conservative Party of Canada, and the NDP, are important to the larger party system. Despite some critiques of political parties as institutions, they have a clear function in parliamentary democracy (Malloy, 2023; Savoie, 2019). The most important points of this section are as follows. First, these parties are stratarchical in their organization (Carty, 2004; Carty & Cross, 2006). Stratarchy shapes the political party in Canada with three branches— the national party, the central party, and the local party (Cross et al., 2022; Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022). With this organizational division of power, Canadian parties are flexible in how they organize themselves, especially during election campaigns (Cross, 2018). Second, the Liberal Party, Conservative Party of Canada, and the NDP are the most significant political parties in the Canadian party system (Carty, 2022; Farney & Koop, 2017; Farney & Rayside, 2013; Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017; Jeffrey, 2021; McGrane, 2019). As Canada's major parties, they serve as the most suitable examples to study in the literature. With the context of political parties in mind, this Chapter will proceed to look at political campaigning, which is one of the key events that these parties engage in and therefore shows stratarchy in practice.

Campaigning in Canadian Politics

Campaigns are organized efforts to place a specific candidate in a position of public office with political power (Flanagan, 2014). In the democratic setting, these organized efforts build coalitions of supporters for a candidate so that said coalitions may vote for them

during an election. While the specifics of a campaign's efforts may vary both over time and based on an election's context, they nonetheless seek to build a relationship between the candidate and the electorate (Marland & Giasson, 2020). The literature on political campaigning can be traced to Ancient Rome in Quintus Cicero's *Commentariolum Petitionis*, which translates to "A short guide to electioneering" (Cooley, 2023). He wrote this work to help his brother Marcus Cicero during his campaign for the Roman consulship in 63 BC (Cooley, 2023).[14] In this text, Quintus outlines specific key features to a successful political campaign, such as oratory and communication skills, securing key supporters, coalition building, endorsements, travelling across the electorate, and so on (Cooley, 2023).

When discussing the *Commentariolum Petitionis*, Flanagan (2014) argues that while Quintus did not have the modern language to describe modern campaigning, he nonetheless provides its central tenets in the literature. He categorizes Quintus's work into the following tenets. First, he notes that the text requires Marcus to have strong message discipline, which would be centred around his skill and being an outsider to the Roman senate and creating a ballot question during the election, which would in turn shape his campaign and the election (Flanagan, 2014).[15] Second, he notes that a candidate needs a strong winning coalition to secure support and a set of committed voters. In Marcus's case, he needed the support of the nobles, wealthy businessmen, local governments, clubs and guilds, freed slaves, and allies (Cooley, 2023; Flanagan, 2014). Third, a candidate must have a clear brand, which in Marcus's case was to situate himself with the *optimates* ("elites") over the *populares* ("populists") (Cooley, 2023). Fourth, a good campaign requires thorough research on the opposition, that is, the candidates that ran against Marcus, those being Antonius and Catiline.

[14] The text is rhetorical rather than informative to Marcus Cicero directly as Quintus notes that he is already well aware of (most of) these campaigning strategies (Cooley, 2023). Marcus successfully won the consulship that year with the support of every century (the electorate in the Roman Senate) that year (Flanagan, 2014).
[15] Quintus calls Marcus Cicero a "*novus homo*," which refers to an individual that has no ancestors that ever belonged to the Roman senate (Cooley, 2023; Flanagan, 2014).

Fifth, a good campaign travels across the electorate to gain support in key electoral areas. Finally, a good campaign must be tactful by implementing strategies, such as outlining policy, making promises, having an entourage (a campaign team), and flattery.

Political parties continue to uphold these aforementioned tenets as key elements to their campaigning (Flanagan, 2014). However, in the context of the Canadian party system, these campaigns are highly organized affairs with several functions and actors (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017; Marland & Giasson, 2020). Considering this fact, it is important to understand how these political campaigns organize themselves. In relation to stratarchy, each branch of the political party has different responsibilities (Cross, et al., 2022; Cross, 2018). For example, the national campaign controls the messaging and party's platform at large (Currie-Wood, 2022). While the local party is responsible for curating the party's local presence, the central party coordinates campaign resources (Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022). Of course, money is a key resource that the central party transfers to the local EDAs depending on how competitive they are (Currie-Wood & Pruysers, 2023).

Of the many actors within political campaigns, the key ones include the party leaders, campaign directors, and the department heads (Marland & Giasson, 2020). Party leaders are crucial precisely because they are the national brand of the political party and therefore play that role during election campaigns (Cross, 2004). For example, it is common for party leaders to debate each other in televised debates, which allows voters to understand the policies and visions of each party.[16] The campaign directors (both national and local) are responsible for managing the campaign on behalf of the party leader or the local EDA candidate (Marland & Giasson, 2022). They typically hire the different department heads, consult with strategists and pollsters, and so on, to make informed decisions on how a party's

[16] The evidence of televised debates impacting voter decision is mixed, however, these debates are a good example of how party leaders represent a political campaign at the national level (Marland & Giasson, 2020).

political campaign should operate and what it looks like. Finally, there are the department heads, who are responsible for leading specific elements of the campaign. For instance, campaign directors typically hire a fundraising director, platform director, and communications directors, among others of course (Marland & Giasson, 2020).

Money and Party Financing

Since political campaigns are extensive and expensive, party financing and fundraising is an especially important feature of campaigning (Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022; Sayers, 1999). Party financing refers to the set of rules, regulations, and laws that determine eligibility criteria for donations, contributions, and funding (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017; Young & Jansen, 2011). These criteria consist of who can contribute to parties, how much they can contribute, and what is considered a contribution. In campaigns, contributions can either be monetary (donations) or non-monetary (volunteer hours, labour, etc.) (*Elections Canada*, 2022).[17] A good example of fundraising as an important feature of political campaigning can be seen with party leaders. They often travel across Canada during federal elections to make themselves visible in key constituencies (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017). While such a strategy is very important to the national campaign, it requires significant financial capital to fund such travels, whether that requires the party to buy or rent a private jet, to pay for the expenses of a campaign team bus, and so on (Flanagan, 2014; Marland et al., 2017).

Campaign finance is led by the director of fundraising, who will organize the strategies that a party uses to raise money: they often utilize their databases to contact party members and supporters for donations (Marland & Giasson, 2020). Essentially, they are responsible for planning fundraising strategies to motivate party supporters and sympathizers to donate to their cause. Across all levels of the political party (national, central, and local),

[17] Non-monetary contributions are typically calculated in terms of how much money those contributions are worth (*Elections Canada*, 2022; Young & Jansen, 2011).

fundraising during a campaign is typically more focused on one-time donations rather than monthly-contributions (Marland & Giasson, 2020; Wesley & Pawluk, 2024). Another key point of consideration is that not only is fundraising important, but so is cost-effective campaigning (Marland & Giasson, 2020). Since party financing laws require that only individuals may donate to political parties, campaigns engage in telemarketing, email chains, and other digital techniques through their membership databases to secure donations (Marland & Giasson, 2020; Small & Jansen, 2020; Young & Jansen, 2011).

Despite the centralized nature of political campaign organizing, most fundraising in campaigns occurs at the local level, that is, the EDAs. Local candidates and EDA teams engage in similar fundraising practices to those of the national campaign to ensure that they are capable of successfully contesting constituency elections (Cross, 2004; Cross et al., 2020; Marland & Giasson, 2022; Sayers, 1999). Of course, given the stratarchical division of power within Canadian political parties, the central party also provides financial transfers to local EDAs to ensure that they can compete in local elections (Carty, 2004; Cross, 2004, 2018; Cross et al., 2022; Young & Jansen, 2011). Typically, the central party transfers financial resources to local EDAs that are in competitive constituencies, that is, ridings where the party has a significant chance of winning the election (Currie-Wood & Pruysers, 2023). Fundraising in political campaigning is a good example of how party organization works in operating the key functions of political parties (Carty & Cross, 2006; Cross et al., 2022). In other words, while campaigns are centralized, they are bimodal insofar as there is a national campaign and local campaigns in the constituencies that parties run candidates in.

Table 2. Key Features of Campaigning in Canadian Politics

Features	*Definitions and Roles*	*Key Figures*	*Examples*
Money and Party Financing	The set of rules, regulations, and laws that determine eligibility criteria for donations,	Director of fundraising within the campaign team (Marland & Giasson, 2020);	Securing donations through telemarketers, email chains, and other digital techniques

	contributions, and funding (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017; Young & Jansen, 2011)	Fundraisers in local EDAs (Marland & Giasson, 2022)	(Marland & Giasson, 2020; Wesley & Pawluk, 2024); Money transfers from the central party (Cross, 2004, 2018; Young & Jansen, 2011)
Political Marketing and Campaign Branding	The application of business marketing practices in political parties and elections (Lees-Marshment, 2019; Marland et al., 2012); The process of creating a strong identity within the electorate through political marketing techniques to capture voter support (Marland et al., 2012; Marland & Wagner, 2020)	Political consultants, market researchers, pollsters, etc. (Lees-Marshment, 2019; Marland et al., 2012); Policy advisors, platform directors, campaign managers, etc. (Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022)	Data analytics, focus groups, polls, party member databases, etc. (Lees-Marshment, 2019; Marland et al., 2012; McGrane, 2019); The Liberal Party's national campaign chose the slogan "choose forward" in the 2019 federal election to rebrand the party as forward thinking (Gillies & Turcotte, 2020, 2021)
Party Discipline and Disciplined Messaging	The system of norms, rules, and consequences made to ensure that political parties have public alignment (Marland, 2020); The alignment of a campaign's messaging with the national campaign, party leader, and party platform to prevent criticism from competing parties or internal inconsistencies (Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022)	The central party, party leaders, party whip, campaign directors, etc. (Marland, 2020; Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022)	Political parties often institute parliamentary issues where party members must vote with the party leadership, which are often enforced by party whips (Malloy, 2023; Marland, 2020); The Conservative Party of Canada's national campaign in the 2006 federal election made significant policy announcements to ensure that it controlled the messaging at the local campaign level (Flanagan, 2009; Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022)
Going Negative and Opposition Research	The use of negative advertising and messaging by one candidate against others (Flanagan, 2014); Conducting research to identify weaknesses and potential campaign criticisms of competing parties (Flanagan, 2014)	Political consultants, research firms, party leaders, advertising firms, etc. (Ansolabehere & Iyengar, 1996; Flanagan, 2014; Marland, 2015)	The Progressive Conservatives ran an attack ad against Jean Chrétien asking voters "is this the face of a prime minister[?]" then showing a picture of his face (CBC News Archives, 2019); If a political party were to hire a consulting firm

			that conducted research on competing party leaders to identify potential scandals
Winning Coalition and Voter Mobilization	A clear group within the electorate that can allow a specific political party to secure enough seats in an election to form government (Flanagan, 2014); The methods in a campaign that not only get voters to support them, but also to go out to the polls and vote for their party (Flanagan, 2014)	Regional units (e.g., central Canada, Atlantic Canada, Western Canada, the North) and demographic coalitions (gender, race, sexuality, religion, class, Indigeneity, etc.) (Carrière & Koop, 2023; Flanagan, 2014; Johnson et al., 2021; Johnston, 2017; Malloy, 2011; Tremblay, 2019)	The Liberal Party often succeeded in forming government with the winning coalition of Ontario, Quebec, and Atlantic Canada (Johnston, 2017); While the Liberal Party often captures the demographic support of women and immigrants, the Conservative Party of Canada often captures that of Canada's religious and evangelical groups (Jeffrey, 2021; Malloy, 2011)

Political Marketing and Campaign Branding

As seen in *Table 2*, political marketing is another important feature of campaigning in Canadian politics. Political marketing refers to the application of business marketing practices in political parties and electoral politics (Lees-Marshment, 2019). Not only is it the application of these practices, but it is also treating politics as a marketplace. In doing so, it allows political parties to better understand party members and the electorate more broadly as consumers and position themselves as products (Marland et al., 2012). Lees-Marshment (2009) states that the primary goal of political marketing is for parties to identify their market (the electorate), segment the market into smaller sections that share commonalities, and then target these sections through different marketing and advertising practices. The larger goal is to advance specific ideologies, set the agenda in the media, and secure a winning coalition (Flanagan, 2014; Lees-Marshment, 2019; Marland et al., 2012). Such practices include focus groups, rebranding efforts, endorsements, controlled and targeted public events, and so on (Lees-Marshment, 2019; Marland et al., 2012). Creating a political product is different from

traditional political appeals because it targets and mobilizes key demographics within the electorate to vote for specific parties rather than persuade a general electorate.[18]

In Canada, political marketing began in the fifth party system following the rise of data-driven technologies that allowed parties to collect valuable data on their membership and the Canadian electorate (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017). The Conservative Party of Canada was the first political party to adopt these technologies by creating the Constituent Information Management System (CIMS), which helped them build their brand and create a political product to sell to the Canadian electorate (Wesley & Pawluk, 2023). Through the CIMS, they were able to have a thorough understanding of the specific issues that were of most importance to their members, which in turn allowed them to set the agenda in subsequent federal elections and mobilize their voters to go out and vote.

Of course, the Conservative Party of Canada is not the only one to engage in political marketing, so do the Liberals and NDP. The Liberal Party engaged in political marketing during this time, such as conducting and using market research analyses to reshape their platforms, policy decisions, and party leaders while they were rebuilding their party after the 2011 federal election (Jeffrey, 2021; Marland et al., 2012). The NDP have also significantly engaged in such practices to rebuild themselves from their significant loss of seats following the 2000 federal election (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017; McGrane, 2019).[19] In his analysis of the NDP, McGrane (2019) argues that political marketing contributed to the moderation and modernization of the party as it was an internal initiative led by political operatives, staffers, and the party leader (Jack Layton). He further argues that this process allowed the party to capture broad support on the centre-left of the ideological spectrum in the 2000s, especially

[18] The idea of creating a political product is often criticized as changing the political landscape because it removes the deliberative elements of democracy and political processes (Lees-Marshment, 2019).
[19] In the 2000 federal election, the NDP were reduced to 13 seats in the House of Commons (McGrane, 2019). They previously held 19 seats at dissolution and had experienced turbulent changes from very few seats in 1993 (only winning nine seats) to being somewhat stable in 1997 (with 21 seats) (Elections Canada, 2025).

given the unpopularity of the Liberals and the Bloc Québecois at that time (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017; McGrane, 2019).

Within the framework of political marketing, the concept of branding is quite important in campaigning. Political branding is a relatively new subfield within the literature; however, it has become a significant area of research to understand the role of political marketing in party politics and campaigning (Pich & Newman, 2020; Speed et al., 2015). Simply put, it can be defined as the process of creating a strong identity within the electorate through political marketing techniques to capture voter support (Marland et al., 2012; Marland & Wagner, 2020).[20] Essentially, through branding the parties try to cultivate a specific image of the party and campaign to secure support for the brand of a campaign consisting of ideology, policy, party organization, and party leaders to cultivate a specific image of a political party to voters (Marland & Flanagan, 2013).[21] Pich and Newman (2020) note that, on a conceptual level, a political brand consists of three elements: party brands, party leader brands, and policy brands. Furthermore, for these brands to successfully interact with the electorate, they must have both brand authority and authenticity (Speed et al., 2015). While authority refers to the perceived ability to deliver on the political brand promises, authenticity refers to the ability to represent and advocate for policies that voters perceive as sincere (Speed et al., 2015). A political brand consists of several interrelated elements, such as party messaging, image management, slogans, policies, and an identity that builds a sense of community with its supporters (Marland & Flanagan, 2013).

Political branding is very common in the Canadian party system, especially in political campaigning. For example, in the 2019 federal election, the Liberal Party's national

[20] Although political branding is an important element of political marketing, which itself is an important feature of political campaigning in Canadian politics, it is also a process that occurs outside of the electoral and campaign setting (Marland et al., 2017; Marland & Flanagan, 2013; Pich & Newman, 2020).

[21] Political branding is connected to political marketing because, since branding is about creating and managing a specific image, vision, and philosophy of a political party as an organization, party elites must utilize political marketing techniques to achieve successful branding (Marland et al., 2012; Speed et al., 2015).

campaign underwent specific rebranding, specifically focusing on the party leader and then-prime minister Justin Trudeau (Gillies & Turcotte, 2020). The campaign chose the slogan "choose forward" to convey an optimistic and aspirational brand of forward thinking leadership with an emphasis on the environment, economy, and middle class families (Gillies & Turcotte, 2020).[22] The Conservative Party of Canada also engages in political branding: throughout most federal elections, both the party's national and local campaigns emphasize fiscal responsibility as a central policy brand of the party across all its levels (Flanagan, 2009). Of course, as previously noted, the NDP utilized political marketing techniques to position themselves as the party of the broad centre-left, which successfully branded them as the viable alternative to the Conservative Party of Canada for large numbers of voters in the 2011 federal election (McGrane, 2019). Overall, a party's brand is important because it ultimately cultivates an image of the party that its insiders and elites wish to portray.

Party Discipline and Disciplined Messaging

Another important feature of a well-organized political campaign is party discipline (Flanagan, 2014). The concept of party discipline refers to a collective system of rules, norms, and consequences made to ensure that political parties have public alignment (Marland, 2020). Typically, party discipline is studied in the context of parliamentary democracy and legislative affairs (Malloy, 2023). For example, scholars often study it in relation to party whips, party rules on free-votes, messaging tensions between MPs and the party leader, and so on (Marland, 2020; Robbins-Kanter, 2022). Despite the interest in the parliamentary setting, party discipline is equally important in political campaigning because campaigns must have disciplined messaging to prevent criticism from competing parties or internal inconsistencies, which means that political party candidates must align themselves

[22] Of course, the rebranding efforts of the Liberal Party's national campaign in the 2019 federal election were mixed (Gillies & Turcotte, 2020). That being said, it remains an example of political branding in Canada.

with the national campaign, party leader, and the party's platform (Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022). Of course, there have been some instances of local candidates going off script from the national campaign's messaging. For instance, local candidates may disagree with central party policies that are inconsistent with the local context of politics (Robbins-Kanter, 2022). However, due to the prominence of message discipline, these instances are minimal.

Disciplined messaging is so important to a political campaign because of the organizational structure of Canadian political parties. That is to say, because Canadian political parties tend to be highly centralized to the national party and therefore require that local candidates must adapt their local speeches and promises to the priorities of the national party and party leader (Marland & Giasson, 2022). Parties tend to only allow their campaign messages to stray from the national campaign when there are local or regional tensions at play, such as curating their campaigns for the specific problems of Quebec (Marland & Giasson, 2022). Otherwise, the ability of local candidates to diverge from the national campaign depends on their status within the party itself (Marland & Giasson, 2022). There are examples of disciplined branding in virtually all of Canada's major political parties. For instance, the Conservative Party of Canada controlled their messaging in the 2006 federal election to set the agenda of the election and to control the platform and policy positions of both the national and local campaigns (Flanagan, 2009; Marland & Giasson, 2022).

Going Negative and Opposition Research

An interesting feature of political campaigning that is consistent in the current party system is negative campaigning, which is the use of negative advertising and messaging by one candidate against others (Flanagan, 2014). Going negative can be traced back to Quintus Cicero's *Commentariolum Petitionis* (see Cooley, 2023) but specifically became prevalent in Canadian politics following the 1993 federal election. The most notable attack ad was run by the Progressive Conservatives: the ad was against Jean Chrétien asking voters "is this the face

of a prime minister[?]" then showing a picture of his face (CBC News Archives, 2019).[23] In the contemporary party system, the Conservative Party of Canada is widely cited as the pioneers of going negative in political campaigning (Flanagan, 2014; Marland, 2015; Marland et al., 2017). The party used negative campaigning against both Stéphane Dion and Michael Ignatieff, which contributed to the Liberal Party's decline between 2006 and 2011. Generally speaking, negative campaigns are used by candidates to control the narrative of an election and prove that their competing candidates are not qualified (Brader, 2006).

Scholars have debated the merits and ethics of going negative in political campaigning (Brader, 2006; Flanagan, 2014; Marland, 2015). Ansolabehere and Iyengar (1996) argue that negative campaigns are problematic because they make voters resentful of politics and therefore disengage with elections— decreasing party support and voter turnout. Flanagan (2014) insists that negative campaigning is not a problem in electoral politics, but it is essential to campaigning. Instead, he argues that the problem with going negative is that the attack ads themselves tend to exaggerate the problems with the opposition (Flanagan, 2014). Regardless of these debates, negativity is nonetheless a significant feature of campaigning in Canadian politics. In addition to controlling the election narrative and attempting to disqualify the other candidates, going negative is also meant to generate fear by fuelling the anxieties of the public against a specific candidate (Brader, 2006). A notable example of generating fear through negative campaigning are the series of attack ads run by the Liberal Party against Stephen Harper between 2004 and 2006: they tried to connect Harper to a secret far-right think tank; they linked him to U.S. President George W. Bush; and stating that he had a hidden agenda (CBC News, 2006; Rose, 2004).[24]

[23] This negative ad in particular was controversial because it showed a picture of Jean Chrétien's face, to which he eventually replied, "They tried to make fun of the way I look… God gave me a physical defect, and I have accepted that since [I was] a kid" (CBC News Archives, 2019). The attack ad backfired against the Progressive-Conservatives (CBC News Archives, 2019).

[24] The idea of a hidden agenda was used in the infamous Liberal attack ad stating that Stephen Harper said that Canadians would not be able to recognize Canada when he was done with it (Rose, 2004).

Winning Coalition and Voter Mobilization

Political campaigns, through many of the aforementioned features outlined above, will identify a winning coalition to mobilize voters into supporting them. Since the central goal of a political campaign in Canadian politics is to secure seats and form government, it is important to have a clear winning coalition in order to understand where to disperse campaign resources, such as central party transfers, visits from the party leader, or local influence in both campaign policy positions and in local messaging (Flanagan, 2014). As such, a winning coalition can be defined as a clear group within the electorate that can allow a specific political party to secure enough seats in an election to form government (Flanagan, 2014). Historically speaking, winning coalitions tended to refer to regional blocks. For instance, the Liberal Party often dominated the party system by securing a majority of seats in Quebec, Ontario, and Atlantic Canada (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017; Johnston, 2017). In the 2011 federal election, the Conservative Party of Canada secured a majority government by securing a majority of the seats in Ontario and Western Canada (Elections Canada, 2025).

That being said, winning coalitions are not exclusively geographical. Although securing specific geographical regions (such as Quebec) is important to create a mathematical path towards forming government, demographic coalitions are equally important (Flanagan, 2014). Demographic coalitions range from gender, age, sexuality, race, Indigeneity, religion, class, and so on (Carrière & Koop, 2023; Flanagan, 2014; Johnson et al., 2021; Malloy, 2011; Perrella et al., 2019). For example, when the Liberal Party began rebuilding itself between the 2011 and 2015 federal elections, the party emphasized young voters as a key demographic in their winning coalition by advocating for policies that they supported, such as the decriminalization of marijuana (Jeffrey, 2021). The NDP markets itself in political campaigns as the party of unions and organized labour (McGrane, 2019; Naylor, 2016). The Conservative Party of Canada also identifies demographic coalitions, such as evangelicals

and farmers, among other demographics (Farney & Koop, 2017; Farney & Rayside, 2013; Malloy, 2011). While geographical demographics are most important for shaping electoral results, these demographics help shape a political party's brand and electorate.

Of course, it is important for a political campaign to identify its winning coalition, but it is just as important to mobilize voters to get out and vote. In the current party system, Canadian political parties more often than not mobilize their identified winning coalition through political marketing techniques to "Get Out to Vote" (GOTV) (Flanagan, 2014). This reality changed the nature of political campaigning because rather than persuading voters through traditional and deliberative means of persuasion, campaigning is more often than not about motivating members of a party's winning coalition to vote through GOTV strategies.[25] These strategies include canvassing throughout the ridings, transportation to the polls motivating voters to go to the early voting polls, and so on (Flanagan, 2014).

While these five features of campaigning in Canadian politics are not the sole ones, they are the ones most commonly identified in the literature (Flanagan, 2014; Marland et al., 2012; Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022). With these laid out, it is important to consider the political landscape of campaigning in the current Canadian party system. Scholars concur that the party system is characterized by permanent campaigning (Flanagan, 2014; Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017; Marland et al., 2017). Marland and his colleagues (2017) define permanent campaigning as the process of: "electioneering throughout governance, which often involves leveraging public resources" (329). Essentially, it is non-stop campaigning that occurs outside of electoral periods (Joathan & Lilleker, 2023). Although the concept was first

[25] The fact that Canadian political parties identify their winning coalitions through political marketing techniques also contributes to the idea that these parties (specifically the Liberal Party and Conservative Party of Canada) do not practise brokerage politics in the current party system (Carty, 2013; Johnston, 2015, 2017). Instead, scholars have often used the term "boutique politics" to describe the segmentation of the Canadian electorate into winning coalitions that parties specifically (and often solely) cater to (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017). This shift from brokerage to boutique also highlights the centrality of political marketing in both modern political campaigning and the Canadian party system (Gillies & Turcotte, 2020; Lees-Marshment, 2019; Marland et al., 2012, 2017; Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022; Pich & Newman, 2020; Wesley & Pawluk, 2023).

developed in the United States to discuss American presidential campaigns, it became prevalent in Canadian political science in the early 2000s with the rise of the Conservative Party of Canada and the Liberal Party under Stephen Harper and Justin Trudeau respectively (Marland et al., 2017). Not only did the parties each use campaigning strategies whilst governing, but the creation of fixed election dates changed the dynamics of elections (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017). Additionally, the current party system is characterized by minority governments, which means that parties must be prepared for pending elections.[26]

While permanent campaigning is important to note because of its prevalence in the political campaigning within the Canadian party system, it is of less importance to the larger context of this study. To reiterate, this study seeks to understand the campaigning strategies used by aspiring party leaders in Canadian political party leadership races and the extent to which political leadership is in itself a campaigning strategy. Considering this scope, the study is more interested in leadership race elections, which are naturally finite and have less of a relationship with the dynamics of permanent campaigning in Canada. That being said, it is nonetheless important to briefly outline its aforementioned prevalence. In relation to the goals of the study, it is important to understand the central features of political campaigning, which are: (1) money and party financing; (2) political marketing and campaign branding; (3) party discipline and disciplined messaging; (4) going negative and opposition research; and (5) a winning coalition and voter mobilization.[27] These features are important to situate the research of this larger study in the campaign setting. The following section will outline political leadership races, specifically what they are and how they function.

[26] As previously stated, there were minority governments in the fifth Canadian party system in 2004, 2006, 2008, 2019, and 2021 (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017; Jeffrey, 2021). Thus far (at the time of writing, which is before the 2025 federal election), there have only been two majority governments in 2011 and 2015.
[27] This list of key features to campaigning in Canadian politics is nominal and does not reflect any ranked scale of importance (e.g., key feature 1 is not more valuable to campaigns than feature 2, and so on).

Political Party Leadership Races

Political party leadership races are internal contests for parties to select their leaders. These races are exciting events for two reasons. First, a new leader allows for parties to raise their profile, help it to win more seats in the House of Commons, vault it into forming government, or keep it in power. For instance, Justin Trudeau oversaw the renewal of the Liberal Party after its near-death experience in the 2011 federal election, which brought it back to a majority government in 2015 (Jeffrey, 2021). Second, these races give candidates the chance of becoming party leader, which means the opportunity to build the party, formulate policy visions, and potentially become the prime minister. Another example is that of Stephen Harper— who built the Conservative Party of Canada's platform and deeply influenced its ideological and structural organization (Flanagan, 2007).[28] Of course, given the centrality of party leaders in Canadian parties, the way that they are chosen, and how leaders get to their position, is especially important to the larger context of the party system.

The process of selecting party leaders has significantly changed over time from a power of the political party caucus to one that is shared with all party members. Over time, the selection process slowly became a party-wide involvement. In 1919, the Liberal Party was the first political party to open its leadership selection process to its wider membership through the delegated conventions. These conventions were party-wide events where delegates would vote for their preferred leadership candidates— who in turn had to secure a majority of the delegates (Cross, 2004). These delegates were sent by Electoral District Associations (EDAs) to vote on their behalf but also consisted of *ex officio* delegates and special interest delegates (such as labour unions and women organizations) (Cross, 2004). This form of leadership selection was intended to be deliberative and representative. However, many scholars dismiss their deliberative utility: candidates often inflated the

[28] See Chapter one (introduction) for more context on the importance of political party leadership races.

number of delegates to secure several of their own supporters in conventions, which led to these events being far too large and performative (Cross, 2004; Wells, 2006).

Since 2013, the most common leadership selection process for Canadian political parties is the "One-Member-One-Vote" (OMOV) model, which is when each rank-and-file member of the party has the right to vote for their preferred leadership candidate (Cross, 2004).[29] Broadly speaking, the OMOV model can be treated as a direct election whereby the electorate is the party membership across all levels of the party (Cross, 2018; Cross & Pilet, 2015). As such, scholars believe that it avoids the issues associated with delegated conventions and allows for the leadership selection process to be more open and inclusive. Moreover, it allowed for individual party members to vote for their own preferred candidate rather than rely on delegates to represent their interests (Stewart & Archer, 2000). Delegates often shifted their support depending on the context of the convention, which meant breaking with the views of the EDAs they represented.

Leadership races are triggered when the party leadership becomes vacant, which can be the result of a leader resigning (the most common reason), dying, or losing support at a party convention. Whenever the leadership becomes vacant, the national executive of the political party will do two things. First, they will select an interim leader in consultation with the parliamentary caucus (if necessary).[30] Although interim leaders are not necessary as the resigning leader may wish to serve as the party leader until the next leadership election, it is common that they select an interim leader to execute the functions of a leader.[31] Second, they

[29] In 2013, the Liberal Party switched from the delegated convention model to the OMOV model, which in turn made the latter the primary mode of selecting party leaders in Canadian federal parties (Jeffrey, 2021).
[30] For example, following Michael Ignatieff's resignation from the Liberal Party's leadership in 2011, the national executive of the party chose Bob Rae as the interim leader until the 2013 leadership race, which is when Justin Trudeau was elected the party leader (Jeffrey, 2021).
[31] A good example of a leader not having an immediate resignation would be Andrew Scheer: following the 2019 federal election, Scheer announced his intention to resign. However, he remained the leader of the Conservative Party of Canada until the 2020 leadership race, which is when Erin O'Toole was elected as the party leader (Boutillier, 2020; Connolly, 2019).

develop rules and procedures for the leadership races. These include the election date, the eligibility requirements for leadership candidates, spending limits, and so on. Across all parties, candidates must typically submit all these requirements 90 days prior to the leadership race to ensure that they can participate in the entire campaigning period of the leadership race. Although leadership races are internal political party events, they are nonetheless governed by the *Canada Elections Act* and its guidelines are enforced by the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) (Cross, 2004; Marland & Giasson, 2020).

Across Canada's major federal parties, aspiring party leaders must meet specific eligibility criteria, which are often set by the central office of each party with consideration to the contexts of the leadership races. Although the specifics of these criteria differ across parties, they do have some common requirements, such as a standing membership in the political party, registration fee, and the need to secure internal party support (Cross, 2004; Cross et al., 2022; Cross & Pilet, 2015). First, the candidate must be a member of the political party that they wish to lead. Of course, this requirement is typically a given as most aspiring leaders are party members. That being said, it does occasionally occur that an "outsider" seeks to join a leadership race. For instance, Michael Ignatieff joined the 2009 Liberal Party leadership race as (essentially) an outsider: he had just returned to Canada from Oxford University and was not himself an MP, so he had to become a party member before entering the race (Jeffrey, 2021). However, this is less common as party members from the party in public office typically run in leadership races (Carty & Cross, 2006).

Second, aspiring candidates must pay a registration fee that varies across the parties and over time. *Table 3* below notes that the NDP had the lowest registration fee of the three major parties in its 2017 leadership race, which was $30,000 (NDP, 2017). The Liberal Party set its registration fee to $75,000 for candidates in its 2013 leadership race (Grenier, 2020). The highest registration fees were set by the CPC, which set them at $300,000— while

$200,000 was paid directly to the party in instalments, the other $100,000 was a compliance deposit (Conservative Party of Canada, 2022). These fees were an increase from the previous leadership race in 2020; the central office noted that it wanted to decrease the number of candidates running in the 2022 race.

Table 3. Eligibility Requirements in Canadian Political Party Leadership Races

Political Party Leadership Races			
Eligibility Requirements	*Liberal Party (2013)*	*New Democratic Party (NDP) (2017)*	*The Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) (2022)*
Party Membership	Required 90 days before election along with registration application	Required 90 days before election along with registration application	Required for at least six months before filing their registration application
Registration Fee	$75,000	$30,000	$300,000***
Signatures, support, and endorsements	300 signatures: - At least 100 of them must come from at least three least three provinces or territories	500 signatures: - At least 50 of them must come from all five of Canada's regions*; - 50% of them must be from self-identified female party members; - At least 100 of them must be from equity-seeking groups**	500 signatures: - They must come from across no less than 30 EDAs that represent seven different provinces and/or territories

* These five regions refer to Quebec, the Atlantic, Ontario, the prairies, and BC/North.
**Equity-seeking groups refer to traditionally marginalized groups within Canadian political processes, such as Indigenous Peoples, racialized groups, and the LGBTQ+ community (NDP, 2017).
***While the first $200,000 of the registration fees had to be paid directly and immediately to the party, the other $100,000 was a compliance deposit (CPC, 2022).

Third, candidates must secure a specific number of signatures from party members to prove that they have internal support to run in each leadership race. While the Liberal Party requires their candidates to secure 300 signatures, both the NDP and the CPC require them to secure 500 signatures. In addition to securing these signatures, the parties set quotas to ensure

that they can secure cross-party support. The most common quota is regional, that is, candidates must secure a specific number of signatures across (at least a few of) Canada's regions. The Liberal Party requires that at least 100 of a candidate's required 300 signatures must come from at least three provinces or territories (Liberal Party of Canada, 2021). The CPC requires that a candidate's 500 signatures must come from across no less than 30 EDAs that represent seven different provinces and/or territories (CPC, 2022). The NDP in particular have the most quotas for required signatures: the party requires that of a candidate's 500 signatures, a minimum of 50 signatures being from all five regions (i.e., Quebec, Atlantic Canada, Ontario, the prairies, and BC and the North) (NDP, 2017); 50% of them must be from self-identified female party members; and at least 100 signatures must be from members of equity-seeking groups, such as Indigenous Peoples, visible minorities, the LGBTQ+ community, and persons living with disabilities (NDP, 2017). The three requirements must be completed in a timely manner (see *Table 3* above).

As previously stated, the central office of political parties determines specific rules that are aligned with the *Canada Elections Act* (Marland & Giasson, 2020). Campaigning financing is one of these areas, which is quite significant given the centrality of money to campaigning (Young & Jansen, 2011). That is to say, a strong campaign must engage in strong fundraising (Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022). Each candidate must appoint a financial officer who in turn opens a bank account for their campaign spending. Currently, the maximum contributions that an individual can give to a campaign is $1,725, which increases by $25 at the beginning of each year (*Elections Canada*, 2022). In the context of leadership races, this maximum amount may be given to all candidates in the race or to any specific EDA, but cannot exceed that maximum amount (*Elections Canada*, 2022). Candidates themselves are also allowed to contribute to their own campaigns. However, this amount

cannot exceed $1,000. Of course, campaigns must have auditors to monitor these contributions and campaign spending and report to the CEO.

Once the campaigning period comes to an end, party members vote for their preferred candidates. The Liberal Party, NDP, and CPC all use a preferential ballot where members can vote for several candidates in a ranked order from most preferred to least preferred. The candidate with the fewest votes is dropped off the ballot, and their ballots are redistributed to the other candidates based on their supporters' second choices. This process occurs until a single candidate can secure a majority of the votes. For instance, the NDP states that a candidate must secure 50% plus one to win the leadership race (NDP, 2021). Both the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party of Canada adopted a mixed model of leadership selection. While they hold direct OMOV elections, each EDA is given 100 points and each candidate receives points based on the percentage of votes they receive in each specific EDA (CPC, 2023; Liberal Party of Canada, 2021). This mixed model allows for both party members to directly vote while also having each EDA represented.

Although a central claim of this study is that the focus on campaigning in political party leadership races is relatively narrow (see Chapter one), scholars have focused on specific elements of these events. As stated in the previous Chapter, William Cross in particular has made significant contributions to the literature on how leadership races work, which has been discussed above (Carty & Cross, 2006; Cross, 2004, 2018; Cross et al., 2022; Cross & Pilet, 2015). However, other aspects of leadership races have been examined. An interesting aspect of these races that has been recently studied (and is of interest to this Chapter) would be the gap between winners and losers in races. Cross and Pruysers (2019) first focus on the winner-loser gap in the context of Canadian party politics: they studied the participation rates of party members who supported unsuccessful leadership candidates across Canadian political parties and found that party members who supported an unsuccessful

candidate are less likely to be satisfied in their membership, less likely to engage in campaign activism, and less likely to retain their membership in the next three years. Pruysers (2024) narrowed the research on the winner-loser gap to the unsuccessful candidates themselves by studying 150 unsuccessful candidates between 1919 and 2020. He found that while these candidates are generally unsatisfied, do not attempt to run again in future leadership races after losing, they do not necessarily stop participating in party politics (Pruysers, 2024).[32]

Conclusion

The specific goal of this Chapter was to identify central concepts and ideas that are contextually necessary for the larger goal of this study— that being to understand common campaigning strategies used by candidates in Canadian political party leadership races and the extent that political leadership is in itself a campaign strategy. In keeping with that goal, this Chapter provided context on the Canadian party system (Carty et al., 2000; Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017; Johnston, 2017; Walchuk, 2012). Since party systems are broad categorizations of the complex series of patterns, interactions, and structures in a political system both within and between its political parties, it makes sense to begin this literature review in that research area (Sartori, 1976). Canadian political parties are central to understanding because they are the primary vessel for politicians to enter the House of Commons, and for aspiring leaders to become the prime minister (Cross et al., 2022). Moreover, their stratarchical structure (the national, local, and central parties) has significant influence on election campaigns, such as how power is divided or shared, how resources are allocated, and how party platforms and campaign messaging is regulated (Carty, 2004; Carty & Cross, 2006; Cross, 2018; Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022).

[32] Pruysers (2024) did find differences between political parties. For example, his study found that unsuccessful candidates in the NDP are more likely than unsuccessful Liberal Party candidates to withdraw from party politics; the latter is more likely to seek re-election in federal elections (Pruysers, 2024).

Campaigning in Canadian politics is equally important to understand because it is both the strategies and means that are executed to win a public office (Flanagan, 2014; Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022). Since political party leadership races are events wherein the party membership directly votes for their preferred leadership candidate (in the Liberal Party, CPC, and the NDP), it logically follows that these races are campaigning events. Not only can this reality be confirmed by the fact that the *Canada Elections Act* regulates leadership races, but it can also be confirmed by the fact that leadership contestants do engage in certain campaigning strategies that are found in the electoral setting, such as fundraising and having a campaign team with directors and staffers (Cross, 2004; Cross & Pilet, 2015; Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022). As such, it is necessarily important to understand campaigning in and of itself and leadership races as campaign events. To reiterate, the key features of campaigning in this Chapter were: (1) money and party financing; (2) political marketing and campaign branding; (3) party discipline and disciplined messaging; (4) going negative and opposition research; and (5) a winning coalition and voter mobilization (Flanagan, 2014; Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022; McGrane, 2019).

III. Theoretical Framework

The previous Chapter outlined the organizational structure of Canadian political parties, particularly the central role that party leaders play and how their internal democracies elect said leaders (Carty & Cross, 2006; Cross et al., 2022). Power within political parties is divided between the national, central, and local branches of the party. That being said, the party leader's power is significant because they influence the other party branches through local candidate nominations, campaign platforms, and message discipline, among others (Carty, 2004; Cross, 2018; Marland, 2020; Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022; Robbins-Kanter, 2022). As for their internal democracies, since party leaders are elected directly by their political party's members, it follows that these races are campaigning events. As such, the previous Chapter also outlined the key features of political campaigning in Canadian politics, including party financing, marketing and branding, disciplined messaging, going negative and opposition research, and voter mobilization with an identifiable winning coalition (Flanagan, 2014; Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022; McGrane, 2019).[33]

Although the existing literature offers significant insights into party politics and how party leaders are selected (i.e., leadership races, the rules governing them, and the electorate), there is significantly less attention paid to political leadership as a concept to be constructed and communicated by aspiring party leaders. Instead, the focus on political leadership tends to be institutional rather than conceptual. For instance, Savoie (1999, 2019) discussed political leadership from this institutional perspective: he made the case that political power was being concentrated into the "centre," which is the political executive, and being diverted from political parties.[34] From the political parties perspective, power is being centralized by

[33] Of course, since political party leadership races are set with a specific timeframe, it follows that the phenomenon of permanent campaigning does not apply (Marland et al., 2017). For more context, see Chapter Two (literature review), specifically *Table 2*, of this study.

[34] Savoie's (1999, 2019) argument was previously discussed in Chapter Two (literature review).

the party leader, which results in scholars examining party discipline, branding, and the stratarchical bargain (Carty, 2004; Cross et al., 2022; Marland, 2020). Essentially, studies into who holds power, how they attain it, and what power they can exercise are central objects of interest above the notion of the elements that create the image of leadership, which ultimately elects a candidate to a leadership position in the first place.

Such a conceptual gap is significant because of the conventional wisdom held by scholars that party leaders play a central role in party and electoral politics (Bittner, 2021). After all, campaigning in Canadian elections is treated as being two-folded: the local campaigns led by the candidates in EDAs and the national campaign led by the party leaders (Cross, 2018; Flanagan, 2014; Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022). Bittner (2011) takes this fact further by arguing that the perception of party leaders plays an important and decisive role in electoral outcomes, sometimes more important to voter decision-making than policy and party platforms.[35] This fact highlights the need to reconcile the theoretical conceptions of political leadership with studies on Canadian party politics. In the context of political party leadership races, even less research explores how leadership is defined, constructed, and communicated by candidates. While political campaigns in general have been widely studied, far less attention has been paid to how ideas of leadership are actively shaped through the strategic choices candidates make during these races. That is precisely why this study asks: (1) how is political leadership constructed and communicated by aspiring leaders in Canadian political party leadership races?; and (2) what campaign strategies do they most commonly use to present themselves as viable party leaders to party members?

This Chapter is organized in three sections. First, it will define political leadership with reference to leadership theories and studies (Ahlquist & Levi, 2011; Ammeter et al.,

[35] Bittner (2011) did a comparative study of 35 elections across seven countries (Australia, Canada, Germany, New Zealand, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States).

2002; Blondel, 1987; Burns, 1978; Dion, 1968; Foley, 2013; Kane & Patapan, 2012; Ofosu-Anim, 2022; Rhodes & Hart, 2014). This section will also explore the different stakeholders within leadership and social constructionism (Burr, 2003; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Grint, 2005; Kellerman, 1986). Second, this Chapter will investigate the theoretical perspectives of political marketing and communications to better understand the process of political campaigning and leadership in practice (Butler & Collins, 1994; Cwalina et al., 2012; Durmaz & Dierkçi, 2015; Henneberg & O'Shaughnessy, 2007; Lees-Marshment, 2001, 2019; Marland et al., 2012; Marland, 2016; McNair, 2003; Savigny & Temple, 2010; Small et al., 2014). Third, and finally, it will bring this study's definition of political leadership into conversation with political marketing and communications to better understand the context of leadership in political party leadership races.

Defining Political Leadership

This study defines political leadership as a relational and context-dependent process in which individuals or groups seek to influence both others and political action (Blondel, 1987; Foley, 2013; Kellerman, 1986). Such leadership emerges not exclusively from the environment of the political system, but from the interactions between leaders and followers (Dion, 1968). Through this interactive process, political leadership is also a public performance in which leaders do not merely exercise authority through influence and decision-making, but also through the projection of leadership traits and the articulation of political meaning, whether that be the values, identity, or expectations of the groups that they lead (Blondel, 1987; Foley, 2013; Kellerman, 1986). This definition is most appropriate because it treats leadership as a process rather than an institution itself.

Traditional studies of political leadership tend to focus either on normative questions about leadership or the institutional frameworks and their effects on producing specific types of leaders (Ahlquist & Levi, 2011; Blondel, 1987; Kellerman, 1986; Rhodes & Hart, 2014).

First, these normative debates often revolve around questions on who should lead, how leaders should exercise power, how much power should leaders have, and to what extent the public ought to be involved in political leadership. For instance, Plato argued that it was necessary for leadership to be consolidated in a "philosopher king" who could rationally lead and govern in the interests of the common good. Aristotle, on the other hand, believed in a participatory form of leadership guided by practical wisdom (or "phronesis") (Rhodes & Hart, 2014). Such ideas were further built by other theorists, such as Rousseau, who argued that legitimate leadership had to reflect the general will of the public (Curtis, 2008; Rhodes & Hart, 2014). Of course, Machiavelli represented a significant departure from such normative debates on political leadership following his most notable work, *the Prince*: instead of arguing for a common good, he offers a descriptive analysis of political leadership that emphasizes the stability of the state and a focus on its ends (Machiavelli, 2003).[36]

Second, traditional scholars tend to focus on the institutional frameworks of a state and how they contribute to the production of specific types of leadership (Ahlquist & Levi, 2011; Kellerman, 1986; Rhodes & Hart, 2014). This relationship, in many ways, is at the core of traditional leadership theory because scholars recognize the tension between the core values of democracy (e.g., representation, elections, participation, etc.) and the inevitable necessity of a capable leader and elite that can effectively govern on their behalf, which therefore makes the institutional environment an important area to study (Kane & Patapan, 2012; Ofosu-Anim, 2022; Rhodes & Hart, 2014). This work on political leadership is sparse because it tends to be investigated in other disciplines, such as psychology, sociology, and management studies (Blondel, 1987; Kane & Patapan, 2012). However, within the discipline,

[36] In the sixth Chapter of Rhodes and Hart's (2014) book *The Oxford Handbook of Political Leadership*, David Bell takes the notion that Machiavelli helped shape leadership studies further and says: "If philosophy is a footnote of Plato, [then] leadership study is a footnote of Machiavelli" (88).

leadership studies tend to focus on comparative research between different countries or regions to identify generalizable traits across cases (Bittner, 2011; Edinger, 1975).[37]

Together, these investigations of political leadership clearly identify its underlying values and the leadership styles and traits that most appropriately represent said values. In the democratic setting, leadership must be representative and reflective of the public, which themselves give leaders legitimacy (Ahlquist & Levi, 2011; Blondel, 1987; Curtis, 2008; Kellerman, 1986; Rhodes & Hart, 2014). Therefore, leaders must balance the tension between elite decision-making and reflecting public will (Kane & Patapan, 2012). According to theorists, traits that reflect these values and balance this central tension include charisma, responsibility, integrity, emotional intelligence, and so on (Burns, 1978; Kane & Patapan, 2012; Kellerman, 1986). Burns (1978) significantly contributes to the discipline's understanding of the specific traits and styles that leaders must exhibit to lead in democracies. However, some scholars note the theoretical limitations of an institutional focus on political leadership (Hartley, 2011; Kellerman, 1986). For example, Blondel (1987) argues that understanding political institutions is important to understanding the contextual factors of leadership but ultimately fails to examine leadership as a political activity.

In his book *Political Leadership: Towards a General Analysis*, Blondel (1987) identifies three categories of political leadership: (1) top leadership that consists of the traditionally studied leaders and are often the highest leaders in political systems (e.g., presidents, prime ministers, etc.); (2) intermediate leadership that mediates between top leaders and the political system (e.g., cabinet ministers, party leaders, diplomats, etc.); and (3) collective leadership that makes decisions as a larger group (e.g., cabinet decisions, votes in parliament, etc.) (Blondel, 1987). This typology is important to leadership studies because it identifies how leadership is not exclusively institutional: whereas traditional scholars focus

[37] This also aligns with the disciplinary trend in Canada known as the "comparative turn" (Vipond, 2008).

on top leadership, there are other figures in political systems that have considerable influence in the decision-making process of leaders. Moreover, emphasizing the activity of leadership rather than its institutional authority allows for a better understanding of the stakeholders in political leadership and resources used to evoke political leadership.

Many theorists concur that the stakeholders in political leadership are leaders and their followers (Ammeter et al., 2002; Blondel, 1987; Burns, 1978; Dion, 1968). It is precisely the relationship between leaders and their followers that make political leadership an activity. Dion (1968) argues that without understanding the behaviours of followers and the expectations they have of their leaders, one cannot understand the activity of political leadership because it is an interactive process. At the core of political leadership, Kellerman (1986) identifies the reciprocal relationship between leaders and their followers, which she conceptualizes as a triad consisting of: (1) the leader, who acts on behalf of their followers by responding to and shaping their expectations; (2) the followers, who actively influence the success and failure of leadership claims; and (3) the context, which is the environment including the political context, democratic rules, opposition, and so on that impact political leadership by constraining or promoting how it is performed and received. This view of leadership as a relational triad is significant because it treats the activity of leadership as a social construct (Elgie, 1995; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Rhodes & Hart, 2014).[38]

Viewing political leadership as a social construct situates this study's definition of the concept in the social constructionist paradigm (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). Social constructionism, unlike traditional positivist approaches to theory, asserts that reality is the interpretation of social phenomena based on factors, such as language, narratives, history, and culture (Burr, 2003; Rhodes & Hart, 2014). It takes a critical approach to the notion of

[38] Political leadership, according to Blondel (1987), is so complicated to define and generalize into theory precisely because it is a social construct. Elgie (1995) expands this idea by calling it an "abstraction" rather than a concrete conceptual framework to guide studies of political leadership in the discipline.

empirical knowledge because it recognizes the ontological assumptions rooted in theoretical notions of "objective reality," which means that there several contesting notions of reality and the dominant ones are typically temporary paradigms (Burr, 2003).[39] In keeping with Kellerman's (1986) triad of political leadership, it is a relational phenomenon between leaders, followers, and context: followers shape leadership through specific language and performances of leadership; followers shape it by interpreting the claims made by leaders, whether that be accepting or rejecting them; and the context shapes what leadership looks like in specific settings. Since political leadership involves reciprocity between these three elements, it cannot be static but is instead constantly renegotiated between them.

Since political leadership is not a static concept, but rather continually reshaped through the interactions of leaders, followers, and context, it follows that leadership is socially constructed— aligning with the social constructionist paradigm (Burr, 2003; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Grint, 2005). This position is not meant to discount the important work of theorists like Blondel (1987), who attempted to offer generalizable theories within leadership studies. Instead, it attempts to reconcile that, while developing general traits-based theories of leadership are difficult due to the constant social changes in the constitutive elements of political leadership, the fact that leadership is a socially constructed phenomenon between leaders, followers, and context should itself be treated as the general framework of such studies (Burns, 1978; Kellerman, 1986). A social constructionist conception of political leadership is theoretically useful because it recognizes that leadership, within the triad, is also concerned with how leadership is communicated and performed by leaders. This fact opens the discussion of political leadership to non-traditional variables, such as rhetoric, symbolism, emotional appeal, slogans, and media strategy (Rhodes & Hart, 2014).

[39] Scholars note that not all social constructionists believe that there is no reality. Instead, they believe that our conceptions of it that we assume to be objective are actually interpretive because they are informed by socially constructed features of life, such as language, history, values, culture, etc. (Burr, 2003; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Rhodes & Hart, 2014). Therefore, knowledge of social life and the objective are mere falsifications.

Considering the theoretical approaches to leadership studies explored above, this study's definition of political leadership is most appropriate because it is the most applicable to the study's setting: Canadian political party leadership races. Canadian political parties are institutional insofar as they are the organizations that contest federal elections and form governments (Cross et al., 2022; Malloy, 2023; Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022). However, their internal organization, especially as to how they select their leaders, typically fall outside the scope of traditional leadership theories because the central object of interest in that view is typically top leadership, namely the prime minister of Canada, premiers, and sometimes cabinet (Ahlquist & Levi, 2011; Blondel, 1987; Savoie, 1999, 2019). However, defining political leadership as an interactive process within Kellerman's (1986) triadic framework diffuses leadership studies in Canada to emphasize its social elements, which can be found in other places, including the internal organizations of political parties (see *Table 4*).

Table 4. The Political Leadership Triad in Canadian Political Parties

Stakeholders	*Constitutive Role*	*Examples*
Leaders: Party Leaders	Represents the political party and its members by communicating their political demands into action (Carty & Cross, 2006; Cross, 2004; Cross & Pilet, 2015; Kellerman, 1986)	Party leaders will support policy *x* over *y* because their followers oppose *y*, but not *x*.
Followers: Party Members	Support the leader depending on whether they adequately reflect membership interests (Cross, 2004; Kellerman, 1986)	Party members will support their leaders if they support policy *x*, but reconsider supporting them if they support policy *y*
Context: Party Politics	The constitutive elements of politics that occur independent of the party leader or members and impacts their relationship (Kellerman, 1986)	Party politics may be influenced by economic conditions or global political issues, which shape how party leaders and members discuss and design policy *x*

Applying this definition of political leadership to Canadian political parties helps clarify how leadership is constructed through the interaction of three key stakeholders: there is (1) the party leader, who represents the party membership by communicating their political

demands into political action; (2) party members, who not only follow the party leader, but support them in caucus, fundraising, campaigning, and so on; and (3) party politics, which is the context of the political party, such as ideological values, party policies and platforms, electoral landscape, and party rules (Carty & Cross, 2006; Cross, 2004; Cross & Pilet, 2015; Kellerman, 1986). Political leadership is therefore the relationship between the party leader, members, and party politics. For example, following the 2021 federal election, party members in the Conservative Party of Canada were dissatisfied with Erin O'Toole's articulation of their platform, especially in relation to public health mandates during the COVID-19 pandemic— resulting in the party's caucus voting to remove him as the party leader in February 2022 (Aiello & Turnbull, 2022). The divisiveness of public health mandates significantly impacted Conservative party politics at this juncture, which in turn influenced how aspiring leaders communicated political leadership.

Political party leadership races are therefore central events that animate the interactive process of leadership between party leaders (or aspiring leaders), party members, and party politics. Typically, leadership races occur following the resignation of a previous party leader, whether due to retirement (e.g., Pierre Trudeau in 1984) or losing the confidence of the party membership (e.g., Erin O'Toole in 2022). Therefore, the absence of a party leader presents the political party with an opportunity to renegotiate what political leadership should look like moving forward. Party members will present their revised visions of political meaning, such as their ideological or policy shifts based on current political or economic circumstances and support a member amongst themselves that can best articulate and represent this political meaning (Blondel, 1987; Foley, 2013; Kellerman, 1986; Torfing & Sørensen, 2019). Aspiring leaders, although not formally party leaders until they are elected (if they are elected), then must communicate how their vision of political leadership reflects the political meaning of their followers (Kellerman, 1986).

To reiterate, this study defines political leadership as a relational and context-dependent process in which groups or individuals influence the larger group and shape its meaning through political action (Ammeter et al., 2002; Blondel, 1987; Foley, 2013). This interactive process involves the leader, their followers, and political context (Dion, 1968; Kellerman, 1986). Since political leadership is interactive, its nature is in constant development and change. For instance, followers develop political meaning and support (or oppose) a leader based on the latter's ability to articulate their vision, which is always evolving based on the context of politics because politics in itself is responsive to social context (Kellerman, 1986; Rhodes & Hart, 2014). Therefore, this study also treats political leadership as socially constructed (Burr, 2003; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). Although traditional leadership studies are important for the development of normative values about democratic leadership and institutions, they are ultimately limited due to their focus on the institutional setting and top leadership (Blondel, 1987; Rhodes & Hart, 2014).

This conceptualization of political leadership as a socially constructed and relational process is particularly relevant to Canadian political party leadership races because, without a party leader, the contestations and debates over political meaning and what party leadership should look like based on the context of party politics by the party membership are on full display (Kellerman, 1986). Aspiring leaders must therefore communicate a compelling vision of the political party that captures support from party members and best articulates their political meaning, which includes their values, the rules of the leadership races, and so on (Ahlquist & Levi, 2011; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010). These dynamics at play highlight that these races are just as much about the public performances that aspiring leaders put on through rhetorical appeals, strategic messaging, and symbolic positioning to capture support as it is about party members developing political meaning (Burr, 2003). Considering the

performative feature of political leadership, the following section will further explore the political means used to communicate this definition of political leadership.

Political Marketing and Communication Perspectives

In the previous Chapter, political marketing was defined as the application of business marketing practices in political parties and electoral politics (Lees-Marshment, 2019).[40] While this definition was offered to contextualize political campaigning in Canadian politics, it demands further conceptual investigation. It demands further investigation because political marketing is not only the application of marketing practices into politics, but also a theoretical perspective that views politics as a marketplace that has political products, organizations, and markets (Durmaz & Dierkçi, 2015; Marland et al., 2012). The political product is the candidate, leader, political party, or ideology that is offered to voters (Butler & Collins, 1994; Henneberg & O'Shaughnessy, 2007). These elements are the product because, since parties compete in elections to successfully form governments and voters make choices as to who or what they vote for, it follows that candidates, leaders, parties, and ideologies compete against each other for the majority of votes to win power (Cwalina et al., 2012). The political market consists of both the people and organizations that have resources and influence over the outcome of elections, such as voters and donors. Essentially, those in the marketplace offer a trade exchange with the political product: they will vote for the product that they support the best. Thus, the literature treats members of the marketplace as "consumers" because they support a political party based on their personal wants and needs. Finally, there is the political organization, which is the entity within political processes that

[40] It was defined in the previous Chapter because said Chapter explored the central features of political campaigning in Canadian politics. It included political marketing as a feature of political campaigning because it is a common strategy used by Canada's major political parties to identify their voters and potential winning coalitions, which will in turn allow them to align their campaigns with them (Flanagan, 2014; Marland et al., 2012; McGrane, 2019). For more context, see the previous Chapter (literature review), specifically *Table 2*.

aim to achieve the goals of the political product— to secure votes in the marketplace and form government (Cwalina et al., 2012; Henneberg & O'Shaughnessy, 2007).

By offering the perspective of politics as a marketplace with products, markets, and organizations, it therefore assumes that the relationship between the supply provided by parties as products and the demand generated by voters as consumers is central. Within the literature, scholars like Lees-Marshment (2001, 2009) provide significant contributions to the subfield by developing political marketing theory as independent from the marketing literature and situates it within the discipline's studies of political party behaviour.[41] She adapts marketing perspectives into the behaviours of parties by identifying three marketing orientations: (1) product-oriented parties that emphasize its ideologies and policy positions over catering to specific demands of voters (who are the consumers); (2) sales-oriented parties that maintain their political product and orient their communications strategies in campaigns to persuade voters of their product's value; and (3) market-oriented parties that shape their political product based on consumer demands (Lees-Marshment, 2019).

Of course, it is important to note that these orientations are not mutually exclusive and political parties can adopt different orientations depending on political contexts (Cwalina et al., 2012; Durmaz & Dierkçi, 2015; Henneberg & O'Shaughnessy, 2007; Lees-Marshment, 2001). For instance, a party may be market-oriented during an election to capture voter support and form government but shift to a product-oriented approach in government to better reflect the delivery of the political product. That being said, it is generally accepted that market orientations are most common in democracies (like Canada) because the approach reflects the underlying assumptions of democracies— namely that parties must represent citizen interests and reflect their will (Kane & Patapan, 2012). Of course, some have

[41] Lees-Marshment (2001) connected traditional marketing theories to traditional theories of party behaviour, such as those developed by Duverger (1954) and Kirchheimer (1966).

criticized this notion (Scammell, 1999). For example, Henneberg (2004) argued that political parties with the most professional and technological organizations can dominate the political landscape. Even Lees-Marshment (2009) points to the fact that political marketing can have the unintended consequence of short-term policy planning. Despite the criticisms above, market orientations are also most common because they reflect the descriptive reality that political parties in democracies have undergone significant professional and technological transformations (Lees-Marshment, 2019; Marland et al., 2012).

Market-oriented political parties engage in a seven-stage process from the campaign planning stage to the election. These stages are market intelligence, product design, product adjustment, implementation, communication, campaign, election, and delivery (Lees-Marshment, 2019). Since this study is generally interested in Canada's three major political parties (i.e., the Liberal Party, the NDP, and the Conservative Party of Canada), it recognizes that not all parties form government. Thus, it is primarily interested in the first six stages of political marketing.[42] First, these parties engage in message development through market intelligence, which involves understanding the political landscape, context, relevant issues to voters, profiles of the electorate, and so on (Cwalina et al., 2012). This stage typically involves two forms of segmentation (1) primary segmentation, which divides voters based on party identification and voter strength; and (2) secondary segmentation, which is when parties develop a deeper profile of their targeted voter, including their demographic, psychological, and behavioural features (Cwalina et al., 2012). Parties use data-driven technologies, such as polling, focus groups, voter databases, and surveys to segment voters into targeted groups. Through the segmentation of the political marketplace and identification of the demographic, psychological, and behavioural features of voters, parties then engage in utilizing the

[42] The emphasis on the first five stages of the political marketing process in market-oriented parties is made in this study because its central object of interest is the construction and communication of leadership in Canadian political party leadership races. Therefore, this study is focused on the process of its construction through political campaigning (such as political marketing and communication) rather than its delivery post-election.

collected data to create an image of the product (whether it be the candidate, party leader, or the party itself) and develop a specific position on the relevant political issues (Durmaz & Dierkçi, 2015; Lees-Marshment, 2019).

Second, political parties will use the relevant data they collected on the electorate to design their product, whether it be the political party, its leader, candidates, or platform. Product design involves parties, among other things, reshaping their platforms, finding relevant candidates and/or a party leader, and developing a media strategy (Cwalina et al., 2012; Lees-Marshment, 2019; Marland et al., 2012; Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022). Third, the product design is tested and adjusted based the following considerations: (1) achievability, which is whether the promises made in their product design can be delivered in government (should they form government); (2) internal reaction, which is the assurance by the political party itself (e.g., candidates, party members, party elites, etc.); (3) competition, that being whether the product also identifies the weaknesses of their competing parties (i.e., opposition research and going negative); and (4) support, which not only refers to segmented supporters within the party, but also potential new voters (Lees-Marshment, 2019).[43] These considerations make a market-oriented party (re)shape itself to suit the political context of the time (Durmaz & Dierkçi, 2015; Lees-Marshment, 2001).

Fourth, the adjusted political product is implemented internally in the political party and thereafter treated as its finalized political product leading into a campaign (Lees-Marshment, 2001). Of course, in the permanent campaigning literature, this stage occurs regardless of whether there is an immediate election or not (see Marland et al., 2017), however, the focus of this study is political leadership and political parties. Fifth, the market-

[43] These potentially new voters are known as "untapped voters" (Lees-Marshment, 2001). In her book on political marketing, Lees-Marshment (2019) notes that this approach is not the same thing as the "catch-all" party structure because whereas the latter tries to capture broad support across the electorate, the former has its data-driven approach to identifying potential voters in their segmentations (see Kirchheimer, 1966 or Krouwell, 2003 for more information on the catch-all party structure). In *Canadian Parties in Transition*, Alex Marland calls this form of capturing votes "boutique" politics (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017).

oriented party engages in intense communication strategies to ensure that their political product is effectively communicated in the marketplace. These strategies often involve engaging with television, social media, direct mail (postal mail and email), and newspapers (Lees-Marshment, 2019; Newman, 1999; Thomas & Sabin, 2019). Finally, the last relevant stage of political marketing in this study for market-oriented parties is the campaign itself—where the final product and communications strategies are repeated and implemented with the hopes of capturing support and potentially form government.

Cwalina and colleagues (2012) further elaborate on this model of market-oriented parties by integrating micro and macro-economic theory into the political marketing subfield. This framework is interesting because they integrate both micro and macro theories into one framework to outline the elements of politics that shape political marketing.[44] At the macro-level, the political system, democratic orientation, demographic makeup, technological forces, and the media shape the parts of the political landscape (Cwalina et al., 2012; Newman, 1999). At the micro-level, on the other hand, voters, consultants, influential figures, politicians, candidates, and political parties contribute to how political products are designed to be aligned with consumer demand (Cwalina et al., 2012). Essentially, these are integrated because the political party must understand both of these levels of the political market because, as Cwalina and colleagues (2012) say: "[t]heir elements constitute a network of mutual casual influences both within a particular level and also between them."

This study explores political marketing as a theory because it effectively describes the contemporary reality of politics, especially Canadian politics in the fifth party system (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017; Marland et al., 2012; Marland & Giasson, 2020, 2022; McGrane, 2019). Of course, some scholars criticize the subfield as a distinctive theory and believe that

[44] In their article "the macro and micro views of political marketing: The underpinnings of a theory of political marketing," Cwalina and colleagues (2012) offer a great visual figure (see *Figure 1* in that article) showing the integration of these theories into the political marketing subfield.

the idea of politics as a marketplace is an abstraction of marketing theory simply applied to politics as an analogy (Durmaz & Dierkçi, 2015; Harris et al., 2002; Henneberg & O'Shaughnessy, 2007; Irshaidat, 2022). Of course, in the context of this study, political marketing theory is important for its descriptive value rather than disciplinary disputes between economics and political science, or even the normative concerns previously noted. That being said, this study acknowledges the particular importance of political communications within such a perspective of the political landscape.

Political communication refers to the process of disseminating a political actor's product and message to the electorate in the political marketplace (Durmaz & Dierkçi, 2015; Lees-Marshment, 2019; McNair, 2003). Small and colleagues (2014) expand on this definition by noting that political communication is not merely institutions generating their message to the public but is a triangulation of interactions between political institutions (e.g., government, political parties, leaders, etc.), the media, and citizens. Since it is interactive between the three groups, it follows that it is also an ever-changing landscape within politics (Swanson, 2004). Essentially, it is the production and generation of messages and brands that reflect the political product actors intend to sell and seeks to gain legitimacy and citizen compliance by communicating their activities (Lees-Marshment, 2019; Marland, 2016; Marland et al., 2012; Small et al., 2014). As previously mentioned, political communication involves intense communication strategies, such as producing television advertisements, engaging in social media, spreading pamphlets, and engaging in interviews (among other strategies) (Lees-Marshment, 2019; Newman, 1999; Thomas & Sabin, 2019).

The study of political communication is important to both political marketing and this larger study because it raises important considerations about the nature of politics. First, it emphasizes the fact that the media is not solely a resource or tool for political parties to use, but an independent political actor in its own right (Negrine & Lilleker, 2002; Savigny &

Temple, 2010). Scholars like Savigny and Temple (2010) argue that political marketing theory ignores the fact that media is not in and of itself a tool of communications and that the subfield needs to understand the role media has an independent actor that helps shape political context and reality that in turn is often observed by market-oriented parties in their market research and product design (Lees-Marshment, 2019; McNair, 2003).[45] Second, it reflects a constructionist framework of politics because it highlights how language, narratives, history, and culture, which are important features of political communication, shape both political meaning and reality (Burr, 2003; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Rhodes & Hart, 2014). This perspective recognizes that communication by either political institutions, the media, or citizens shape contested interpretations of social phenomena.

These two key considerations of political communication are important to expanding the conceptual understanding of political marketing as a theory precisely because they expand the subfield to consider the broader context of politics (Burr, 2003; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Marland, 2016; McNair, 2003). It can also be said that communication is the causal necessity of political marketing, media management, and public relations (see McNair, 2003), which makes it one of the most important features of political marketing: if the communication and messaging of the political product is unclear or does not resonate with consumers (i.e., voters), then the value of the data collected by market-oriented parties does not help contribute to a party's desired outcome. That is to say, communication in political marketing is important because persuasion is equally important to the substance of a political product (Cwalina et al., 2012; Lees-Marshment, 2001, 2019; Marland, 2016).

Together, the perspectives of political marketing and communication offer conceptual specificity to political leadership. In the previous section of this Chapter, political leadership

[45] They further argue that the media as an independent agent within politics can serve as a potential "corrective" to the democratic implications of political marketing and market-oriented parties (Savigny & Temple, 2010).

was understood to consist of the party leader, party membership, and party politics (see *Table 4)*, which makes it a socially constructed and relational process (Kellerman, 1986). This understanding of leadership means that aspiring leaders must communicate their vision of party leadership and politics through specific strategies, such as those found in political marketing and communications— focus groups, polling, meetings with party members, policy conventions, advertising, social media, interviews, and so on (Flanagan, 2014; Lees-Marshment, 2019; Thomas & Sabin, 2019). Since political party leadership races highlight the triadic and interactive elements and processes of leadership, it means that political marketing and communication are central objects of interest in understanding how aspiring leaders construct and communicate political leadership in these races, which of course is one of the central questions of this study (Blondel, 1987; Kellerman, 1987; Savigny & Temple, 2010; Small et al., 2014). Essentially, these perspectives are interpretive features of political leadership and its construction in leadership races.

Application of Theory

When developing this study's theoretical framework, it is important to acknowledge the assumption it makes based on leadership theory that political leadership is not a fixed trait or solely an institutional function, but instead a dynamic and relationship between leaders, followers, and context (Blondel, 1987; Dion, 1968; Kellerman, 1986). Such a view is consistent with social constructionism, which emphasizes that leadership is socially constructed through communication, interpretation, and shared meaning based on factors like language, narratives, history, and culture, among other things (Burr, 2003; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Grint, 2005; Rhodes & Hart, 2014). As previously stated, a constructionist view of political leadership means that it is performed by articulating political meaning and responding to the leader's followers and political context (Ammeter et al., 2002; Foley, 2013). Political marketing and communication perspectives therefore make these interactions

visible because they highlight the strategies implemented by leaders to construct leadership to their followers (Lees-Marshment, 2019; Marland et al., 2012). These processes allow for both followers to assess their support of leadership and for leaders to present it as responsive to context. This is important to consider in political party leadership races because leaders must secure support, which makes constructionism an important foundation.

Political leadership, under Kellerman's (1986) triadic view, is defined by the interactive relationship between leaders, followers, and context as stakeholders (Dion, 1968). This theoretical model closely reflects the central logic of political marketing, which itself positions political stakeholders into a marketplace consisting of products, consumers, and organizations (Lees-Marshment, 2001, 2019). In this model, political party leadership race candidates are the product because they are party figures whose ideologies, image, and message (among other things) are shaped to appeal to the party membership (Cwalina et al., 2012; Henneberg & O'Shaughnessy, 2007). As the voters in leadership races, party members are therefore the consumers because they evaluate leadership candidates based on how they communicate their vision of leadership and reflect their interests. The third element of the triad, political context, is an important feature of the political marketplace because it encompasses several elements of party politics, such as institutional party rules, relevant political issues, endorsements, and media narratives. These features shape the environment of leadership races by generating specific demand in the political marketplace, which contributes to how the product of leadership is constructed (Cross et al., 2022; Kellerman, 1986; Marland et al., 2012). By bringing these two theoretical models into conversation with one another, this study recognizes that the interactive process of leadership is constructed in leadership races and through political marketing and communications.

In the context of Canadian political party leadership races, political leadership is marketed because candidates as products design leadership based on consumer demand

(Cwalina et al., 2012; Lees-Marshment, 2019). Of course, marketed leadership does not automatically suggest that candidates are market-oriented— it is just as likely that they are product or sales-oriented (Lees-Marshment, 2001). That being said, since context plays a significant role in shaping demand and influencing the interactive process of political leadership, it is logical for this study to focus on market-oriented approaches to political marketing because it is consistent with its definition of leadership (Blondel, 1987; Foley, 2013; Kellerman, 1986). Since political leadership is a triad and democratic theory also suggests that the legitimacy of leaders is acquired from their followers, this study assumes that leadership race candidates are interested in shaping their product (i.e., leadership) in a manner that is reflective of party members (Ahlquist & Levi, 2011; Blondel, 1987; Kane & Patapan, 2012; Kellerman, 1986; Rhodes & Hart, 2014).

Of course, by bringing together (triadic) political leadership and political marketing and communication into conversation, it is also important to recognize the role of the media. In the previous section of this Chapter, the media was seen not as a tool for parties to use in political communication, but also a political actor itself (Negrine & Lilleker, 2002; Savigny & Temple, 2010). As a political actor, the media is situated within Kellerman's (1986) triad as context: it independently shapes political issues and engages in agenda-setting that influences internal party politics. Although a political actor, it is important to also recognize how the media is utilized by leadership candidates to articulate their vision of leadership (the product) in their campaigning and messaging (Flanagan, 2014; Marland, 2016; McNair, 2003; Small et al., 2014). This understanding of the media as a political actor and a communication environment is consistent with constructionist notions of political leadership.

This applied theoretical framework, rooted in political leadership and political marketing theories, concurs with leadership studies that explore leadership beyond institutional or trait-based factors (Ahlquist & Levi, 2011; Ammeter et al., 2002; Blondel,

1987; Burns, 1978; Kane & Patapan, 2012; Rhodes & Hart, 2014). Instead, it conceptualizes political leadership as constructed, communicated, and strategically negotiated by the interactions between leaders (party leaders and aspiring leaders during political party leadership races), followers (party members), and context (media, party politics, institutional rules, etc.) (Burr, 2003; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Grint, 2005; Kellerman, 1986). By connecting Kellerman's (1986) triadic model with political marketing theory, this study conceptualizes leadership race candidates as both political actors and products— marketed to party members through marketing and communication features such as branding, debates, interviews, slogans, advertising, and so on (Lees-Marshment, 2001, 2019; Marland et al., 2012; Small et al., 2014). In doing this theoretical work, this Chapter of the study provides a clear definition of political leadership and how it relates to campaigning in these races.

Conclusion

To reiterate, the goals of this Chapter were to define political leadership, situate it within political marketing and communication perspectives, and to develop a framework that brings these concepts into discussion to better understand political party leadership races. First, the study defined political leadership as a relational and context-dependent process in which individuals or groups seek to influence both others and political action (Blondel, 1987; Foley, 2013; Kellerman, 1986). This definition recognizes that leadership does not exclusively emerge from institutional or trait factors, but also from the interactions between leaders, followers, and context (Dion, 1968; Kellerman, 1986). Through this interactive process between the three stakeholders, leadership is therefore the projection of leadership and the articulation of political meaning, whether in values, identity, or expectations of the groups that they lead (Blondel, 1987; Foley, 2013).

Second, the study explored political marketing and communications perspectives. Political marketing was defined as both the application of business marketing practices in

political parties and electoral politics and the perspective of viewing politics as a marketplace with products, consumers, and organizations (Durmaz & Dierkçi, 2015; Lees-Marshment, 2001, 2019; Marland et al., 2012). Within political marketing, the study also explored its different orientations (sales-oriented, product-oriented, and market-oriented) with a particular emphasis on market-orientation and the stages involved in the process (i.e., market intelligence, product design, product adjustment, implementation, communication, campaign, election, and delivery). Political communication, which was defined as the process of disseminating a political actor's product and message to the electorate in the marketplace and conceptualized as a triangulation between institutions, the media, and citizens (Durmaz & Dierkçi, 2015; Lees-Marshment, 2019; McNair, 2003; Small et al., 2014; Swanson, 2004). It also recognized the fact that the media (within communications) is also an independent actor in its own right (Negrine & Lilleker, 2002; Savigny & Temple, 2010).

Finally, the study brought its definition of political leadership into conversation with political marketing and communications perspectives. It integrated Kellerman's (1986) triadic model of political leadership with the framework of politics as a marketplace to better contextualize Canadian political party leadership races (Lees-Marshment, 2001, 2019). While the political product is the leader and their vision of political leadership, the consumers are the party members because they vote for their preferred party leaders. The political context (e.g., party politics and the media) shape the supply and demand of the political marketplace because they influence political meaning, product design, the number of candidates, and so on (Durmaz & Dierkçi, 2015; Cwalina et al., 2012; McNair, 2003; Small et al., 2014). It also examined how market-oriented strategies (among others) animate the interactive process of political leadership during leadership races because aspiring leaders design their product based on follower demands and party politics. This section also maintained a social

constructionist position of leadership whereby, in leadership races, it is performed, constructed, and communicated by candidates to the party membership.

This theoretical framework is analytically significant to this study because it recognizes that leadership is not exclusively related to the office and authority of the party leader, but a relationship between key stakeholders in the political process. This distinction is important because the position of party leader is typically either vacant or contested during political party leadership races— they seek to find a new leader from the party membership (followers) that can adequately represent them and articulate their political meaning. As such, this definition of political is more appropriate for the context of this study. Moreover, the theoretical perspectives offered by political marketing and communications narrow the analytical focus of the study to specific features of leadership race campaigns, which will significantly inform the research methods used in it.

IV. Methodology

The aim of this Chapter is to outline the research design and methodological choices made to answer its research questions: (1) how is political leadership constructed and communicated by aspiring leaders in Canadian political party leadership races?, and (2) what campaign strategies do they most commonly use to present themselves as viable party leaders? To answer these questions, this study adopted a qualitative case study of 16 candidates across three Canadian political party leadership races: the Liberal Party (2013); the NDP (2017); and the CPC (2022). Based on the theoretical framework laid out in the previous Chapter, this study narrowed its focus on primary and secondary sources to understand how aspiring leaders shape their performance of political leadership during these campaigns, but also to recognize the role of the media as an independent actor in this constructive process (McNair, 2003; Newman, 1999; Savigny & Temple, 2010; Small et al., 2014).

This Chapter divides into five sections. First, it will outline the research design that shaped the scope of this study. It will specifically outline the ontological assumptions that shape the research epistemology and methodology, namely the assumptions made about finding knowledge as understanding meanings and patterns of social phenomena and structures (Eaton & Morris, 2019; Hay, 2006; McNabb, 2010). Second, this study will outline the 16 cases selected, including a discussion of their analytical value and the reasoning for including these specific candidates in the three specific races. Third, it will outline the process of data collection, which resulted in 141 pieces of data extracted from campaigning materials, leadership debates, interviews, and media coverage. Fourth, it will discuss the methods of analysis for the collected data, which employed a qualitative content analysis. Finally, it will acknowledge the methodological limitations of this overall study.

Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative and interpretive approach to examine the construction and communication of political leadership in the campaigns of aspiring leaders in Canadian political party leadership races. It specifically adopted such a perspective because it aligns with the theoretical framework and assumptions laid out in the previous Chapter and the nature of this study's research questions. First, it is important to reiterate the core theoretical assumptions made in this study. Political leadership was defined as a relational and context-dependent process in which individuals or groups seek to influence both others and political action (Blondel, 1987; Foley, 2013). It is a triadic and interactive relationship between leaders, followers, and political context (Dion, 1968; Kellerman, 1986). In relation to political party leadership races, leadership is constructed through political marketing whereby aspiring leaders shape a political product for consumers to support in the marketplace (Lees-Marshment, 2001, 2019; Marland et al., 2012). This product is carefully communicated through political campaigning and the media as an independent actor (Savigny & Temple, 2010; Small et al., 2014). Such a framework is rooted in social constructionist assumptions that leadership is continually reshaped through the interactions of leaders, followers, and context (Burr, 2003).[46] Political context is also, in turn, shaped by the interpretation of social phenomena based on factors, such as language, narratives, history, and culture (Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Grint, 2005; Rhodes & Hart, 2014).

Second, the nature of this study's research questions reflected qualitative assumptions about research. The first question asked how political leadership is constructed and communicated by aspiring leaders in Canadian political party leadership races. The question specifically guides this study towards the meanings embedded in the words, actions,

[46] This theoretical understanding of political leadership highlights the non-institutional factors that shape leadership. While institutions give authority and do help shape political context, traditional studies of leadership do not consider social factors (Blondel, 1987; Hartley, 2011; Kellerman, 1986; Rhodes & Hart, 2014).

presentation, and overall performance of the candidates in leadership races. Additionally, it points to the context of each race that shapes the construction process of political leadership for the candidates. The second question asked what campaign strategies were most commonly used by aspiring leaders to present themselves as viable party leaders. This question guided the study to focus on the specific areas in political campaigns where candidates present their constructed vision of political leadership. Both questions are descriptive rather than prescriptive because they seek to understand the constructive process of political leadership in campaigns rather than offer an explanatory theory on the relationship between campaign strategies and electoral outcomes (Day & Koivu, 2019).

Taken together, the points above align this study's research design with qualitative and interpretive approaches. Although qualitative research is diverse, it can be generally understood as inquiry that seeks to understand how people interpret, construct, or make meaning from their world or experiences (Eaton & Morris, 2019; Kahlke, 2014). Unlike quantitative research, it is low-inference and descriptive by nature (Sandelowski, 2000). Moreover, it is interpretive because, as McNabb (2010) states that research becomes interpretive when: "it builds on the assumption that humans learn about reality from the meanings they assign to social phenomena such as language, consciousness, shared experiences, publications, tools, and other artifacts" (229). This definition was especially relevant to this study because the campaign materials that are its objects of interest, such as formal policy platforms, symbolic speeches, and so on, are precisely the types of socially produced artifacts that offer meaning and require analytical interpretation. This is equally true of the study's research questions, which centre on interpreting how candidates build leadership through their words, actions, and strategic choices within the political and cultural contexts of each race. This research design was thus the most suitable methodological choice for studying political leadership in leadership race campaigns.

It is important to acknowledge these ontological and epistemological assumptions in this study's research design because, at the core of all research in the social sciences, there are implicit philosophical underpinnings that have a direct relationship to the larger goals of a researcher's project (McNabb, 2010). In his work *Political Ontology*, Hay (2006) argued that methodologies have a directional relationship with ontology and epistemology. While ontology refers to the implicit assumptions made by researchers, epistemology refers to how they study social phenomena, and methodology refers to the specific methods they use to study social phenomena. Political ontology in particular is important because it shapes the claims and assumptions that an approach or point of inquiry has on what the phenomena being examined is, which can be understood at "political being" (Hay, 2006). Considering these foundations, the core constructionist assumptions of political leadership directionally influenced this study to focus on understanding in-depth aspects of the human condition and social phenomena, which shaped its qualitative design (Eaton & Morris, 2019).

Overall, the directional relationship between ontology, epistemology, and methodology proceeds as follows. Ontologically, this study assumed that political leadership is socially constructed through the interactions between leaders, followers, and political context, and therefore both in constant evolution and a performance rather than institutional authority (Blondel, 1987; Burr, 2003; Dion, 1968; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Kellerman, 1986). Epistemologically, the study assumed that knowledge is derived from understanding the in-depth aspects of the human condition and social phenomena and is therefore interpreted based on the meanings people assign to these elements of social reality (Eaton & Morris, 2019; Kahlke, 2014; McNabb, 2010). Methodologically, the study adopts a qualitative design that sees candidates in Canadian political party leadership races as the ideal object of interest to examine the social phenomena of political leadership construction in political campaigns. These assumptions further shape the interest in specifically studying

campaign materials, debates, and interviews, to better understand these phenomena. The following sections will go into further detail below.

Case Selection

Given this study's research questions, it chose to focus on three Canadian political party leadership races: the Liberal Party (2013); the New Democratic Party (NDP) (2017); and the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) (2022). There were several reasons that this study chose to focus on these three races and parties. First, it chose to focus on federal politics specifically for methodological practicality and because the study's scope of interest was in the federal party system. Second, and as Chapter two set out, the Liberal Party, NDP, and CPC are considered Canada's "major" political parties; competing to lead any of these parties is a major event, and thus they offer similarities that permit comparison.

As for the specific leadership races, this study excluded three leadership races that occurred in recent times: the 2017 and 2020 CPC leadership races and the 2025 Liberal Party race. It excluded the 2017 and 2020 CPC leadership races because the interest of the study was to analyze the construction and communication of political leadership by candidates across parties. To maintain the comparative element between the three major political parties, it opted to select a single leadership race per party rather than multiple races per party. Future studies on commonalities within CPC party politics would be compelling but ultimately stray from the cross-party analysis that this study wanted to explore. The 2022 CPC race is the most recent leadership race for that party, which was also the case with the 2017 NDP race. Of course, in the case of the Liberal Party, it had another leadership race in April and March 2025. The most recent leadership selection race for the Liberal Party took place over February and March 2025, but this has been excluded from the study because the data collection for the 2013 race had already been collected, and enough time has passed that we

can glean valuable insights into how leadership is constructed and communicated and the specific campaign strategies used to achieve such ends.

Although there are other political parties in federal politics, such as the Bloc Québécois (BQ), Green Party, and the People's Party of Canada (PPC), leadership races in these parties were excluded. The PPC was omitted because it did not have any seats in the House of Commons, which permitted setting aside other political parties that did not hold any seats in the House either, such as the Christian Heritage Party and the Rhinoceros Party. The Green Party is not considered a major party because it did not hold enough seats in the House of Commons: it first successfully contested a seat in the 2011 federal election and has never exceeded three seats, and even its inclusion in leaders' debates during general elections has varied both within and between electrons. The BQ was left because the party solely focuses on Quebec rather than campaigning with national interests in mind like the three major political parties.[47] Moreover, the party has not had many competitive leadership races in recent times.[48] Since the party was regionally focused and therefore indifferent to national unity, it was considered qualitatively different from the other political parties in this study.

This study selected a total of 16 candidates across the three selected leadership races: six of these candidates were from the 2013 Liberal Party leadership race (Martin Cauchon, Deborah Coyne, Martha Hall Findlay, Karen McCrimmon, Joyce Murray, and Justin Trudeau); four of them were from the 2017 NDP race (Charlie Angus, Niki Ashton, Guy Caron, and Jagmeet Singh); and the final six were from the 2022 CPC's race (Scott

[47] This point is not to say that the BQ is not an influential player in Canadian politics. Of course, the BQ has been an influential political party in several instances, such as its rise to opposition in the 1993 federal election and its comeback to federal politics in the 2019 federal election— where it gained 32 seats after a steady period of relative electoral decline (Gillies & Turcotte, 2020). That being said, the cultural differences and regionally focused interest in Quebec does make the party different from other third parties like the NDP.

[48] The BQ has historically not had many competitive leadership races. First of all, its leadership selection model only became OMOV in 2011, which elected Daniel Paillé (CBC News, 2011). There have been other leadership elections in 2014, 2017, and 2019— with many interim leaders serving between them (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017). In the 2019 BQ leadership election, Yves-François Blanchet ran unopposed and was therefore acclaimed as the party's leader, which makes that race even less important to include in the context of this study (Gillies & Turcotte, 2020). These facts and the BQ's distinct political context together make it worthy of exclusion.

Aitchison, Roman Baber, Patrick Brown, Jean Charest, Leslyn Lewis, and Pierre Poilievre). These 16 candidates were selected for two reasons. First, these candidates met the eligibility requirements set by their respective political parties for these leadership races.[49] Therefore, candidates that announced their intention to run in their leadership races, but did not qualify, were excluded. Examples of such candidates include Leona Alleslev, a former Conservative MP who failed to secure the funds to pay the registration fee and was ultimately disqualified from the CPC's 2022 leadership race (Walsh & Bailey, 2022). Second, these candidates were either in their respective races throughout the entire campaign period (appearing on the ballot), or just long enough to have clear campaign dynamics and strategies. Third, and finally, some candidates were excluded for practical reasons given the scope of this study.

Data Collection

This study largely relied on publicly available qualitative data drawn from campaign materials produced during the three selected cases of Canadian political party leadership races— both primary and secondary data. The primary data consisted of televised leadership debates, candidate interviews, and other campaign events. The study collected a total of 11 televised debates: four from the 2013 Liberal Party leadership race, four from the 2017 NDP race, and three from the 2022 CPC race.[50] It truncated the debates to include roughly the same amount of debates per case spread out from the beginning of the races to their respective ends. French language debates were understudied for practical reasons related to translation and Quebec specificity.[51] In the case of the 2022 CPC leadership race, there were only four televised debates, so the excluded French debate meant that the total debates across

[49] See *Table 2* in Chapter two (literature review) for more context on the eligibility requirements of each political party leadership race. Those being the Liberal Party (2013), the NDP (2017), and the CPC (2022).
[50] These 11 televised leadership debates were accessed through the Cable Public Affairs Channel (CPAC) online archives and transcribed for this study.
[51] Of course, it would have been interesting to study the construction of leadership in the Quebec context, but that would not have been relevant to this study. A study on the construction of leadership in the Quebec context could be interesting in future research, especially to draw comparisons between that construction of political leadership as opposed to that of pan-Canadian national parties like the Liberals, NDP, and CPC.

cases was not entirely equal, but almost. The study collected a total of 64 interviews across the 16 candidates selected. It also collected a total of 26 campaign materials, including launch speeches, platforms, and campaign websites.

The secondary data collected is intended to contextualize the primary data and recognize the role of the media as an independent actor (McNair, 2003; Small et al., 2014). These data include 40 sources of opinion pieces, political commentary, and media profiles from *CBC News*, *CTV News*, *the Globe and Mail*, *the National Post*, *the Toronto Star*, *iPolitics*, and *the Hill Times*. The study drew on these specific media outlets because they tend to cover Canadian politics in the national context. To collect these secondary data, it used Factiva to collect the 40 sources. It used these key words: Canad* OR leadership race OR leadership selection OR political parties OR parties OR Liberal Party of Canada OR New Democratic Party of Canada OR NDP OR Conservative Party of Canada OR CPC OR federal OR 2013 leadership race OR 2017 leadership race OR 2022 leadership race. Within these searches, it narrowed its focus: Martin Cauchon OR Deborah Coyne OR Martha Hall Findlay OR Karen McCrimmon OR Joyce Murray OR Justin Trudeau OR Charlie Angus OR Niki Ashton OR Guy Caron OR Jagmeet Singh OR Scott Aitchison OR Roman Baber OR Patrick Brown OR Jean Charest OR Leslyn Lewis OR Pierre Poilievre. In addition to these data, the study also collected six party documents on party rules and formal policy platforms for institutional context on each race.

These data were most appropriate for this study because they reflected its research objectives and questions.[52] The primary data offered the study the direct language, meaning, traits, and visions of the 16 candidates as aspiring leaders for their respective political parties. For example, in the televised debates, candidates directly discuss their ideological positions

[52] To reiterate, this study's research questions are: (1) how is political leadership constructed and communicated by aspiring leaders in Canadian political party leadership races?; and (2) what campaign strategies do they most commonly use to present themselves as viable party leaders to party members?

and offer party members the opportunity to better understand their vision of leadership. The debates themselves are key cases of the interactive process of political leadership at work: candidates articulate political meaning that is (ideally) reflective of the membership (as followers and political consumers) and the members in turn support or reject them based on how well said articulation reflects their demands (Kellerman, 1986; Lees-Marshment, 2019). Thus, these data would be ideal to understand how candidates in political party leadership races construct and communicate leadership. The secondary data, however, is equally important because it provides the context of leadership races— context being an important stakeholder in the triad of political leadership. Moreover, such data also recognizes the independence of the media as a political actor in influencing the construction and communication of political leadership. Together, these data provide a full understanding of leadership races and the constructionist landscape of these campaigns.

Methods of Analysis

To answer the research questions of this study, it had to systematically organize the data. Although the study was small-n research (16), data organization was nonetheless important to ensure consistency when comparing different candidates and political party leadership races. Such consistency ensured that the patterns, trends, and social phenomena observed in political leadership construction and communication during campaigns were made more identifiable. It engaged in a qualitative content analysis (QCA) of all 16 candidates across the three leadership races. QCA was the most appropriate analytical method because it was the most well-equipped for a diverse range of data (Kuckartz & Radiker, 2023). As such, the method allowed for the systematic analysis of these diverse and non-numerical data without being too subjective for validity (Mahoney & Goertz, 2006; Schreier, 2012). This flexibility allowed the study to have a coding process that was both conceptually grounded in the established theoretical framework and the ontological and

epistemological assumptions in design whilst still being responsive to the interpretive and contextual nuances of each individual case— the 16 candidates across three different political party leadership races.

The data were first organized by Canadian political party leadership races: the Liberal Party (2013), the NDP (2017), and the CPC (2022) because this was the simplest approach. Next, the data within these categories were sub-divided between primary sources and secondary sources: (1) primary sources included the televised leadership debates, candidate interviews, and campaign materials; and (2) secondary sources included the party documents and media sources. These primary and secondary categories within the three leadership races (as larger categories) were divided amongst the candidates. For instance, any data on Justin Trudeau specifically was categorized to him as a candidate (whether primary or secondary). These categorizations were placed into a spreadsheet that organized and divided these data and served as the guiding spreadsheet for the subsequent coding process. This method of organizing the collected data made it easier to fairly assess all the candidates, regardless of whether they were high-profile frontrunners or low-profile hopefuls.

The first step in the coding process involved providing initial codes to use across the data in a preliminary scan of said data. It is important to note that these initial codes were inductive because they were largely drawn from the established theoretical framework to serve as a guiding framework for early coding. These initial codes included: leadership, political context, political meaning, articulation, political marketing, communications, media framing, media response, traits, values, follower response, and strategic messaging. Following these initial codes, the study reorganized codes and its analysis throughout the coding process. Following this preliminary coding process, the study then applied its final codebook across the entirety of the collected and organized data. The analysis proceeded by first conducting cross-case analysis within each specific Canadian political party leadership

race. Next, it conducted another cross-case analysis, but across the different leadership races. These further identified commonalities that are both specific to the political context of each party and those found across partisan lines. This study also looked to identify the contrast of leadership construction and communication between primary and secondary data.

Methodological Limitations

Although it is important to outline the research design and methodologies of this study, it is equally important to acknowledge its limitations because it ensures that there is methodological integrity by providing transparency about the scope, boundaries, and implications of the study's findings. By outlining the boundaries of this particular research design, it also strengthens the credibility because it recognizes what this study is not saying just as much as what it is saying. First, this study focused on three Canadian political party leadership races, and while these cases were appropriate, they were nonetheless only three specific races in Canadian history. Thus, they only reflect the patterns and social phenomena of recent times rather than a longitudinal study across time and party systems. Moreover, the exclusion of other parties was necessary and justifiable, but limited the scope to these three specific races in the three specific parties. Perhaps in future such a study could occur, but this study had practical considerations.

Second, this study must acknowledge the limitations of the collected data. While the data does encompass the many features of both political campaigning and leadership construction, such as debates, interviews, campaign materials, and media coverage, there were many instances of uneven data. In particular, interviews were uneven across candidates with the more high-profile candidates typically having more interviews readily available to analyze than lower profile candidates. This study made a concerted effort to ensure consistency regardless of the profile of the candidates, but this was an inevitable limitation. In some cases, there were absences of formal policy positions in campaign materials, which

made the study rely on other facets of the data to infer policy positions. While the data is sufficient for the scale and scope of this study, further studies on the subject could benefit from a larger amount of data. Such studies could especially benefit from in-person interviews with the candidates themselves, their campaign teams, and party insiders. Of course, such aspirations are beyond the scope of this particular project.

Third, the theoretical limitations of this study must be addressed. While the theoretical framework was thoroughly researched and conceptually grounded, its assumptions are vulnerable to subjective interpretation. Moreover, since this study recognized political leadership as context-dependent and an interactive relationship between leaders, followers, and context, it follows that the findings found through the coding and analysis process can only make smaller claims about leadership construction rather than a generalizable theory. These small claims were still relevant to justify this study because they offer the chance to explain contemporary trends in federal political party leadership but demonstrate the consistent problem in leadership studies— the lack of generalizability found in political leadership theory. This limitation is important to acknowledge but is not problematic because this study never claimed to offer a generalized theory of political leadership and was more interested in descriptive work.

Conclusion

To reiterate, the larger goal of this study was to understand how political leadership is constructed and communicated in Canadian political party leadership race campaigns and which campaign strategies are most commonly used by aspiring leaders to persuade party members. This study particularly focused on 16 candidates in three Canadian political party leadership races, these are the Liberal Party (2013), the NDP (2017), and the CPC (2022). These 16 candidates were: Martin Cauchon, Deborah Coyne, Martha Hall Findlay, Karen McCrimmon, Joyce Murray, Justin Trudeau, Charlie Angus, Niki Ashton, Guy Caron,

Jagmeet Singh, Scott Aitchison, Roman Baber, Patrick Brown, Jean Charest, Leslyn Lewis, and Pierre Poilievre. Given the social constructivist assumptions of political leadership and the subscribed methodological interpretivism, the study adopted a qualitative research design to more effectively understand how these candidates construct political leadership in their campaigns through their words, actions, symbols, and policy positions (Burr, 2003; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Grint, 2005; Kellerman, 1986; Kuckartz & Radiker, 2023).

The study collected 141 pieces of primary and secondary data to understand both how political leadership is constructed by campaign teams and by the media as an independent actor in the political setting of Canadian political party leadership races (Flanagan, 2014; Lees-Marshment, 2001, 2019; Savigny & Temple, 2010; Small et al., 2014). These data included leadership debates, interviews, campaign materials, and media coverage. They were organized amongst the three cases of leadership races and then divided amongst each candidate between primary and secondary. To analyze the data, this study conducted a QCA to engage with the diversity of the collected data with analytical rigour, which helped it further develop the following codes: leadership, political context, political meaning, articulation, political marketing, communications, media framing, media response, traits, values, follower response, and strategic messaging. Through these inductive codes and further deductive codes, this study explored the process of constructing and communicating leadership both within each party and across them.

Although the scope of 16 candidates across three specific Canadian political party leadership races limited the generalizability of this study's findings longitudinally, it did allow for an in-depth and descriptive examination of contemporary trends in Canadian political leadership and campaigning. Of course, there was an opportunity to collect greater volumes of data from more cases across historical periods, but the study acknowledged its scope and maintained its parameters to ensure validity. The chosen research design and

methodologies allowed for a greater recognition of the changing nature of political context in party politics both across parties and within them. This cross-comparative work allowed for greater nuance within a small-n research project. Overall, this Chapter outlined the methodological process of this larger study, which helped shape the findings. These findings will be discussed in greater detail in the following Chapter.

V. Findings

This Chapter will present the findings of this study by analyzing how political leadership was constructed and communicated, and the common campaign strategies used by aspiring leaders, in the three following Canadian political party leadership races: the Liberal Party (2013), the NDP (2017), and the CPC (2022). The study specifically focused on the following 16 candidates: Martin Cauchon, Deborah Coyne, Martha Hall Findlay, Karen McCrimmon, Joyce Murray, Justin Trudeau, Charlie Angus, Niki Ashton, Guy Caron, Jagmeet Singh, Scott Aitchison, Roman Baber, Patrick Brown, Jean Charest, Leslyn Lewis, and Pierre Poilievre. It directly answered the study's research questions, which set out to understand how political leadership is constructed and communicated in Canadian political party leadership races and the specific campaign strategies used by aspiring leaders throughout the campaign process.[53] In doing so, this Chapter provides descriptive insights into the ways these candidates shape their conception of political leadership based on the broader political context while also having significant comparative insights.

These findings are based on the wide and diverse range of (both) primary and secondary data collected from the aforementioned candidates. These primary sources included transcriptions of televised leadership debates, candidate interviews, campaign speeches, and other campaign materials, while the secondary sources consisted of media profiles, opinion pieces, political commentary, and official party documents.[54] Together, these data captured both the candidates' personal construction of political leadership through their campaign strategies and the external context that contributed (whether positively or negatively) to said construction process. Through the rigorous process of QCA, this study

[53] The research questions of this study ask: (1) how is political leadership constructed and communicated by aspiring leaders in Canadian political party leadership races?; and (2) what campaign strategies do they most commonly use to present themselves as viable party leaders?

[54] Official party documents that were collected as secondary data sources included the party constitutions and leadership contest rules of the Liberal Party, NDP, and the CPC.

designed a coding framework that organized the data into five major themes: *personal leadership construction*, *vision & policy*, *strategic positioning*, *contextual framing*, and *campaign strategies*.[55] This framework allowed for systematic comparison across cases while still leaving space for the unique dynamics of each party's race to emerge.

The following sections of this Chapter will be organized thematically according to the coding framework listed above. The sections below will define the themes (see *Table 5*) and present the major patterns identified in each theme. It will do so by drawing on the collected data from the debates, interviews, campaign materials, and media coverage. After outlining the major themes found across the collected data, the study will then turn to a cross-party comparative look on the Liberal Party, NDP, and the CPC to understand precisely how these themes reflect commonalities found across said parties. Outlining these themes and drawing on the collected data will set up this study for greater discussion in the following Chapter, which contextualize these findings in the broader context of Canadian party politics.

Table 5. Thematic Findings of Political Leadership in Campaigning

Themes	*Guiding Sub-Themes*	*Definitions*	*Examples*
Personal leadership construction	Traits & values; identity cues; personal information	The personal qualities and virtues that candidates highlighted to project themselves as credible party leaders; references made by candidates to gender, race, religion, economic class, etc.; the use of biographical information, such as their upbringing, personal hardships, and professional experiences to convey credibility in their potential leadership	"People are hungry for new leadership in our party and in Canada. Leadership that will bring people together" (Jagmeet Singh); As someone who immigrated when I was five years old, I am in the best position to relate to new Canadians. I know what it's like, what they have gone through" (Leslyn Lewis).
Vision & Policy	Political vision; policy; party renewal & rebuilding	The way candidates articulated their political meaning for their political party, country, and broader society	"Freedom means expressing yourself without fear, and freedom of the press by… giving every

[55] To reiterate, QCA refers to Qualitative Content Analysis. For more information, refer to the List of Abbreviations and/or Chapter four of this study— methodology.

		through both rhetoric and policy proposals	Canadian the liberty to speak without fear" (Pierre Poilievre); Jagmeet Singh proposed greater rebates for lower middle-class families from the Carbon Tax; "It is time to write a new Chapter one n the history of Canada's Liberal Party" (Justin Trudeau).
Strategic Positioning	Contrast with & attacks of other candidates (within the party or outside it); party Unity & Cooperation	How candidates situated themselves within the dynamics of their political party leadership race or in the larger context of Canadian party politics	"[We] all have [the exact] same goal… to replace Stephen Harper next time" (Martin Cauchon); If you are an elected representative anywhere, and you are given the privilege to make laws and change laws, you can't show support to people who break laws… That's just not an option" (Jean Charest).
Contextual Framing	Party history & legacy invoked; media portrayal; institutional rules shaping races (e.g., party constitutions, etc.)	The larger external environment and structural factors shaping leadership races, including relevant political context, party history and legacy, media coverage of candidates, and the formal party rules governing the contests	Niki Ashton quoted Tommy Douglas by saying: "[We] should [never] be afraid or ashamed about dreams"; The media landscape identified clear frontrunners, specifically Justin Trudeau, Jagmeet Singh, and Pierre Poilievre; Party enforcements, such as the Liberal Party's National Board, the NDP's Chief Returning Officer, and the CPC's Leadership Election Organizing Committee, interpret and apply the rules governed by these party documents.
Campaign Strategies	Money & party financing; political marketing & branding; party discipline & disciplined messaging;	The strategic development and practice of the central features of political campaigning	Justin Trudeau raised $1.3 million (by March 2013); Jagmeet Singh raised $618,779.62 (by September 2017); Pierre

	going negative & opposition research; winning coalition & voter mobilization	Poilievre raised $4 million (by August 2022); Martha Hall Findlay raised $150,000; Joyce Murray raised Karen McCrimmon raised $20,000; Deborah Coyne raised $10,000; Charlie Angus raised $374,146.88; Niki Ashton raised $250,937.11; Guy Caron raised $188,541.50; Jean Charest raised $1.3 million; Leslyn Lewis raised $709,060; Patrick Brown raised $541,706; Roman Baber raised $504,649; and Scott Aitchison raised $363,922. Pierre Poilievre's campaign team sold approximately 312,000 party memberships to build a winning coalition.

Personal Leadership Construction

Across the three Canadian political party leadership races examined, candidates engaged in *personal leadership construction* processes, which is consistent with the theoretical framework in Chapter three (see Blondel, 1987; Burr, 2003; Kellerman, 1986). It is consistent because it demonstrates how political leadership is carefully constructed by leaders through the interactive processes between aspiring leaders, followers, and political context (Kellerman, 1986). Candidates in these leadership races performed political leadership in specific ways that resonated with their respective party memberships. This constructive, communicative, and performative process involved invoking specific traits and values, drawing on identity cues, and personal information to convey political leadership. These invocations often overlapped because candidates often drew on their biographical information, such as economic background or upbringing, to convey specific values. Since candidates in leadership races do not hold institutional authority as the party leader, the

construction of political leadership is therefore an important feature of their campaigns to ensure that they appear as the most qualified candidate to be the party leader.

First, traits and values referred to the personal qualities and virtues that candidates highlighted to project themselves as credible party leaders.[56] Of course, these traits and values were not static or objective, but rather communicative performances by these candidates designed to resonate with their followers and reflect the broader political context. Across cases, candidates often evoked specific traits and values either by explicitly stating them or by indirectly communicating ideas reflective of them. For instance, inclusivity and collaboration as leadership traits were commonly communicated across cases. On Jagmeet Singh's campaign website, it discussed this by saying: "People are hungry for new leadership in our party and in Canada. Leadership that will bring people together. To build a Canada that is inclusive and where everyone can realize their dreams. And that is why I am running to be the leader of the New Democratic Party of Canada." Leslyn Lewis referred throughout her campaign on the traits of hope, unity, and compassion. Of course, indirectly, traits and values were animated through rhetoric. For instance, in a televised debate in the 2013 Liberal Party leadership race, Justin Trudeau said: "Being an MP for Papineau [taught me how] to go into the trenches and win the tough battles… [and how] to bring people together, despite or because of their differences and their range of opinions and perspectives." This part of his opening statement highlighted the traits of strength, unity, and collaboration.

Second, there were identity cues, which referred to any references made by candidates to gender, race, religion, economic class, and so on. For example, in the 2013 Liberal Party leadership race, Joyce Murray often referred to being a woman. On her campaign website,

[56] This definition of traits and values is rooted in the idea of political leadership being performative (as theorized by Blondel, 1987 and Foley, 2013) and that common traits such as charisma, responsibility, and integrity (Burns, 1978; Kellerman, 1986; Kane & Patapan, 2012). Since these are traits performed by candidates for party members to interpret and interact with, it follows that political leadership is indeed socially constructed and relational, as previously discussed in Chapter three (Burr, 2003; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010).

she not only discussed being "[A] woman [and] a mother who went back to school while building a business," but she further expanded that her success was attributed to being a woman, which meant: "working with people, collaborating, cooperating, finding a way forward and then delivering." The use of gender as an identity cue allowed her to make connections to traits and values of collaboration and problem solving.[57] In the 2022 CPC race, Leslyn Lewis referred to being an immigrant as her identity cue. In a leadership debate, she said: "As someone who immigrated when I was five years old, I am in the best position to relate to new Canadians. I know what it's like, what they have gone through." Roman Baber and Joyce Murray also each made such references as an immigrant.[58] In terms of regions as identity cues: both Martin Cauchon and Jean Charest referred to being from Quebec; Niki Ashton referred to being from rural Manitoba; and Joyce Murray referred to herself in debates as the "British Columbia candidate."

Third, the candidates utilized personal information about them, which referred to the use of biographical information, such as their upbringing, personal hardships, and professional experiences to convey credibility in their potential leadership.[59] Political experience in particular was the most relevant personal information used by candidates, which of course was no surprise given the value of experience as a leadership trait generally appreciated by followers (Blondel, 1987; Burns, 1978). With the exception of Deborah Coyne and Karen McCrimmon, the 14 other candidates made references to serving as MPs or

[57] This example of Joyce Murray connecting her identity as a woman to traits and values of collaboration and problem-solving demonstrated how the different features of the leadership construction process (traits & values, identity cues, personal narrative, biographical information) are not separate but do interact with each other to shape political leadership.

[58] In the leadership debates of the CPC in 2022, Roman Baber mentioned that he immigrated to Canada from Russia (specifically saying he fled the Soviet Union). On her campaign website, Joyce Murray referred to herself as an immigrant to Canada from South Africa— coming to Canada as a child.

[59] Professional experiences referred both to a candidate's work experience in the private sector and their political experiences as well. Some candidates drew on significant past political experiences, while others also drew on their private sector experience.

Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs), whether formerly or currently.[60] Martin Cauchon, Joyce Murray, Jean Charest, and Pierre Poilievre each made references to serving as cabinet ministers federally and/or provincially.[61] Jean Charest was distinct in terms of political experience because he was the only candidate to serve a provincial premier (in Quebec), which he often referred to in leadership debates. Patrick Brown also drew on his experience as the Mayor of Brampton. Of course, it was not merely political experiences that were discussed. Candidates referred to their work in the public and private sectors as well: Martin Cauchon, Martha Hall Findlay, Jagmeet Singh, Roman Baber, and Leslyn Lewis referred to their work as lawyers; Karen McCrimmon often referred to her military service in debates and across her campaign materials; and Justin Trudeau often referred to being a teacher.

Together, the construction of political leadership through traits and values, identity cues, and personal information was clear across the three Canadian political party leadership race debates. While the parties naturally had partisan differences, extending to partisan differences between candidates, they nonetheless held common patterns. The 16 candidates, whether directly or indirectly, emphasized traits of inclusivity, collaboration, experience, and resilience, which showed that credibility and reliability were seemingly cross-party findings in the leadership construction process— at least the part of that process that the candidate as an aspiring party leader shaped themselves in their campaign. Interestingly, references to identity cues and personal information were utilized specifically to convey these aforementioned traits and values, which were important to the party membership across party

[60] Although Karen McCrimmon did go on serve as the federal MP for Kanata-Carleton from (2015-2021) and currently serves as the Ontario MPP for Kanata-Carleton (since 2023), she did not have any experience as an MP at the time of the 2013 Liberal Party leadership race. She was the Liberal Party candidate for Carleton-Mississippi Mills in the 2011 federal election; she did not win.

[61] Martin Cauchon had served as the minister of Justice/Attorney General from 2002-2003; Joyce Murray served as the provincial minister of water, land, and air protection and as the minister of management services in British Columbia from 2001-2004 and 2004-2005 respectively; Jean Charest served as a minister of state and minister of the environment from 1986-1990 and 1991-1993 respectively; Pierre Poilievre served as the minister of state for democratic reform and as the minister of employment and social development from 2013-2015 and 2015 respectively.

lines. As seen with the examples of Leslyn Lewis and Roman being immigrants and Joyce Murray being a woman (and an immigrant), these cues were utilized to reflect those traits discussed. As for personal information, candidates across all 16 cases made constant references to their professional experiences (politically and in the private sector) to secure the position of experience and reliability. These indicate a high-level of social constructionism in the campaign of Canadian political party leadership race candidates.

Vision & Policy

The second theme found in this study was *vision and policy*, which referred to the way candidates articulated their political meaning for their political party, country, and broader society through both rhetoric and policy proposals. Unlike *personal leadership construction* above, which stated the construction of political leadership through traits and values, identity cues, and personal information, *vision and policy* reflected the translation of these features of their campaigns into concrete political agendas. This theme reflected the triadic relationship within political leadership because candidates shape their political visions and policies with consideration for their potential followers (party members) and what they believe in and wish to see in a future party leader and potentially future government. Moreover, *vision and policy* reflected the political context (party politics) of the leadership race within the triad, which already has relevant political issues of the day and party legacies that candidates must interact with when shaping their political meaning (Kellerman, 1986).[62] The most common features of this theme were political visions of democracy, policy proposals, and party renewal.

Political visions were often less substantive than the policy proposals within this theme, but they nonetheless were important because they reflected the rhetorical side of said

[62] To reiterate, the triadic relationship of political leadership consisted of: (1) the leader, who acts on behalf of their followers by responding to and shaping their expectations; (2) the followers, who actively influence the success and failure of leadership claims; and (3) the context, which is the environment including the political context, democratic rules, opposition, and so on that impact political leadership by constraining or promoting how it is performed and received (Kellerman, 1986). In Chapter three, this study's theoretical framework identified party leaders as the leader, party members as the followers, and party politics as the context.

theme. The most common rhetoric was related to a vision of Canadian democracy. The details of each vision varied, but they represented a common pattern across the cases. The 2022 CPC leadership race in particular had a wide range of political visions reflecting democratic values: both Roman Baber and Leslyn Lewis in particular discussed threats to democracy and the need for freedom of speech, movement, and protest— these were in response to public health mandates and the use of the *Emergencies Act* during the trucker convoy. Pierre Poilievre articulated a similar democratic vision, but specifically around the idea of freedom. Across the data on his campaign, he consistently discussed a vision of freedom for the party and Canada. In one case, he articulated this vision saying: "Freedom means you should be free to choose your own medical decision, free from vaccine mandates imposed on you by the state. [It] means you control your own money, free from government induced inflation that has made housing, food and gas unaffordable. Freedom means expressing yourself without fear, and freedom of the press by… giving every Canadian the liberty to speak without fear."

Of course, it was not just political visions that were discussed, there were concrete policy positions taken by the candidates. Interestingly, there were common policy issues that the 16 candidates across the three political parties engaged in, those being the economy, tax reform, Indigenous Peoples, and the environment. Of course, the policy positions proposed by the candidates differed, especially across parties, but reflected similar issues. For instance, on electoral reform, Justin Trudeau committed to a preferential ballot as his official position on the specifics of the issue. Trudeau and Joyce Murray also both held specific positions on the decriminalization of marijuana, which Murray advocated to tax. Within the Liberal Party, candidates also took on other policy issues, such as housing and tax reform. In the 2017 NDP leadership race, the candidates discussed environmental issues and taxation. For instance, when discussing the Carbon Tax, Jagmeet Singh advocated for larger rebates for the lower

middle-class Canadians. In the 2022 CPC leadership race, the candidates discussed similar issues, but naturally with a different partisan angle than the NDP and/or Liberals. The issues that differed from the CPC to the other two parties examined were those relating to vaccine mandates, inflation, abortion legislation, crime, and a greater emphasis on economics.

Party rebuilding and renewal seemed to be a central subtheme within *vision and policy* across the three political party leadership races. Interestingly, nearly all 16 candidates had specific visions for party rebuilding and renewal. For instance, in the 2013 Liberal Party leadership race, Justin Trudeau said: "It is time to write a new Chapter one n the history of Canada's Liberal Party. Now it is not just about passing on the torch, but creating a new flame, rekindling the flame, not just rebuilding what has been done in the past, but to create a new movement altogether, of leadership, with bold ideas, with strength and with vision." On her campaign website, Deborah Coyne said: "The Liberal Party must welcome much broader participation in choosing authentic and committed candidates. The party needs a strong virtual presence on the Web, and it should join forces with progressive movements and organizations to call Canadians to the polls in elections." In a televised debate, Martin Cauchon also reflected similar visions of renewal, saying: "I'm here because I want to rebuild the Liberal Party [to be a party that] will be able to inspire all Canadians."

In the 2017 NDP leadership race, the vision of party rebuilding and renewal was present, but had much more to do with rebuilding the party in specific regions. For instance, Niki Ashton talked about rebuilding the party's presence in Atlantic Canada, she said: "We need to elect New Democrats in this part of the country… [We] need to work with activists, with social movements, with labour to rebuild here in the Atlantic, and ultimately in 2019 to elect NDP MPs that will fight for you." In that race, Charlie Angus discussed rebuilding the party's grassroots: "[We have] got to rebuild a grassroots network… So, we have to rebuild that grassroots relationship." Although the candidates in the 2022 CPC leadership race did

not explicitly discuss party renewal, they did offer a vision for rebuilding the party's electoral strategy, which closely reflected the ideas of party rebuilding and renewal. For example, Scott Aitchison said on the subject: "Consistency of our message is absolutely crucial. We need to put together a principled conservative platform that resonates with all Canadians in all parts of the country, [and we] need to be consistent with that."

Strategic Positioning

The third theme was *strategic positioning*, which referred to how candidates situated themselves within the dynamics of their political party leadership race or in the larger context of Canadian party politics. *Strategic positioning* included when candidates criticized their opponents and opposition parties (including the leaders of those parties) and their calls for unity. Criticism towards opposition parties and leaders were common across all cases— in the 2013 Liberal Party leadership race, all six candidates explicitly criticized Stephen Harper and the then-CPC government.[63] For example, Martin Cauchon explicitly said: "[We] all have [the exact] same goal [to] replace Stephen Harper next time." In the 2017 NDP leadership race, all four candidates criticized Justin Trudeau and the Liberal government of the day.[64] In a leadership debate, Niki Ashton criticized Trudeau and the Liberals for: "Only working on behalf of the interests of their friends, their wealthy friends." Jagmeet Singh also strategically positioned his rhetoric on Truth and Reconciliation by saying: "Unlike [Trudeau], we must take genuine steps towards reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples, and we must correct the inequitable and discriminatory funding [by the government] to First Nation Children." Trudeau was also central in the strategic positioning of the four candidates

[63] During the 2013 Liberal Party leadership race, Stephen Harper was the prime minister at the time leading a CPC government between 2006 and 2015, when the Liberals formed government thereafter (Carty, 2015, 2022; Farney & Rayside, 2013; Jeffrey, 2021; Johnston, 2017; Wells, 2006).

[64] During the 2017 NDP leadership race, Justin Trudeau was the prime minister at the time leading a Liberal government between 2015 and 2025 (Carty, 2022; Jeffrey, 2021).

in the 2022 CPC race that this study examined. Leslyn Lewis positioned herself against the Liberals by arguing that they: "[divided, discouraged, and refused] to listen to Canadians."

The candidates in the 2013 Liberal Party leadership race were less direct in their opposition against specific candidates within the race. However, Justin Trudeau's campaign did position him as the frontrunner candidate in the race, which situated the other three candidates inadvertently in opposition to Trudeau. Of course, since it was indirect, it was context dependent. For example, when Martin Cauchon's implied that Trudeau lacked experience whenever he mentioned his previous experience in government as a cabinet minister. That being said, Martha Hall Findlay did directly challenge Trudeau by questioning his experience and criticizing his privilege. In a debate, she said: "[Justin] you keep referring to the middle class, [but] you yourself have admitted that you actually don't belong to the middle class. I find it a little challenging [that you understand] the challenges facing many Canadians." Despite this criticism by Findlay, the *strategic positioning* of the candidates generally prevented direct opposition of the candidates. For instance, both Deborah Coyne and Joyce Murray did critique specific policy positions of Trudeau, such as immigration and electoral reform, but these were not direct attacks at Trudeau himself. Although the candidates did indirectly position themselves against Trudeau, most *strategic positioning* by candidates was against Stephen Harper and the then-government of the day.

Charlie Angus, Niki Ashton, Guy Caron, and Jagmeet Singh in the 2017 NDP leadership race also followed similar patterns to the Liberal candidates that this study examined. Rather than directly positioning themselves in opposition to each other, they maintained the strategy of party unity while simultaneously disagreeing with specific policy positions.[65] When asked about party unity and discipline, Jagmeet Singh said: "[We] can't

[65] The policy positions covered in the 2017 NDP leadership race were covered in the *Vision and Policy* section of this Chapter above.

lose sight of our goal at the end of the day… Our goal is to implement our principles in this country— we're actually doing a disservice to Canadians if we don't try to get in a position of power so we can implement our amazing progressive social democratic values. So to do that, we need to look at the [issues]." This statement reflected the position of all candidates in this leadership race. For instance, Guy Caron said: "For instance, Guy Caron said on the subject of unity: "In the end, I do think that we need to take a [disciplined] position, because… the media are feasting on dissent all the time, and when [make] a decision, it might not be a unanimous decision, but if it's a consensus decision, [then] we need to move [on]... I would say, for where we need to draw the line is when those policies, those decisions, are directly contravening or going against the core principles and values of the party."

In the 2022 CPC leadership race interestingly positioned themselves in opposition to Pierre Poilievre in particular. Jean Charest and Leslyn Lewis specifically raised criticisms of Pierre Poilievre. Charest openly criticized Poilievre for supporting the 2022 Trucker Convoy. He said that: "If you are an elected representative anywhere, and you are given the privilege to make laws and change laws, you can't show support to people who break laws… That's just not an option." Lewis positioned herself as a socially conservative candidate in direct opposition to Poilievre, for example, she said: "[He] has run from the media the last few days because he doesn't want to declare whether he's pro-life or pro-choice… If he wants to be a prime minister, he is going to have to deal with social conservative issues, which he has been running [from] this entire campaign." By being the social conservative candidate, she positioned herself in a specific space of the party. Of course, Pierre Poilievre himself positioned himself as the frontrunner candidate, which reflected the media coverage of his campaign (this study will explore this coverage further below). He also situated himself in opposition to Jean Charest specifically over any other candidate. In an interview, he criticized Charest for not being a "true conservative," saying: "I just respectfully disagree with his

decision to raise the sales tax when he was a Liberal premier. He also brought in a carbon tax that makes life more expensive." Party unity was also discussed in the context of the CPC's electoral performance in the 2019 and 2021 federal elections.

Contextual Factors

The fourth theme, *contextual factors*, referred to the larger external environment and structural factors shaping leadership races, including relevant political context, party history and legacy, media coverage of candidates (which influenced how their leadership was perceived, both positively and negatively), and the formal party rules governing the contests such as party constitutions and leadership selection procedures. The races were all similarly designed in terms of structure. Generally speaking, each of the political parties' constitutions followed consistent rules that reflect those explained in Chapter two of this study.[66] The three leadership races were triggered as a result of the previous party leader resigning due to losing the confidence of the party membership— Michael Ignatieff resigned in 2011 following the party's near-death electoral performance; Tom Mulcair was ousted after losing a leadership review vote; and Erin O'Toole was voted out in a secret ballot by the CPC caucus in 2022 (Aiello & Turnbull, 2022; Jeffrey, 2021).[67] Moreover, their campaigns required party membership status, registration fees, and signatures of both support and endorsements.

A commonality found across the 16 candidates in the three Canadian political party leadership races was the invocation of party history and legacy. In the 2013 Liberal Party leadership race, they did not explicitly refer to specific party history such as former party

[66] For more context on the commonalities of the rules governing Canadian political party leadership races in the Liberal Party, NDP, and CPC, refer to *Table 3* of Chapter two (literature review).

[67] After Michael Ignatieff's resignation as the Liberal Party's leader, Bob Rae became the interim leader of the party until Justin Trudeau was elected in the party's 2013 leadership race (Jeffrey, 2021). Although Tom Mulcair was ousted in 2016, he stayed on as the party leader until Jagmeet Singh was elected in the NDP's 2017 leadership race. Finally, after Erin O'Toole was ousted by the CPC caucus in February 2022, Candice Bergen served as the interim leader until Pierre Poilievre was elected in that year's leadership race (Aiello & Turnbull, 2022; Tasker, 2022).

leaders, but they did invoke the legacy of the party as Canada's natural governing party.[68] Candidates connected their respective visions for rebuilding the party (see *vision and policy* above) to the idea that it is necessary to return the Liberal Party to its natural governing status. This connection was best seen with a statement Deborah Coyne made in which she said: "[I am in] this race to build the Liberal Party back to being the party of strong national government, one Canada." While this relates to *vision and policy*, the statement nonetheless connected to the party's history and legacy as a strong national government, or as the natural government party. In the NDP, candidates made references to both Jack Layton and Tommy Douglas.[69] While Charlie Angus mentioned Jack Layton, Niki Ashton mentioned Tommy Douglas. Ashton in particular quoted Douglas by saying: "[We] should [never] be afraid or ashamed about dreams." In the case of the 2022 CPC race, made references to historical conservative party figures. In a debate, candidates invoked such figures of party history when asked who their political idols were. For example, Patrick Brown and Scott Aitchison both mentioned the historical legacies of Bill Davis and John Diefenbaker respectively.[70]

The media landscape was perhaps one of the most significant features of the theme of *contextual framework* because it shaped many of the dynamics in the themes above. The most common contextual framing by the media was the identification of frontrunner candidates, particularly Justin Trudeau in the 2013 Liberal Party leadership race, Jagmeet Singh in the

[68] As discussed in Chapter two of this study, the Liberal Party is considered Canada's natural governing party because as stated above, the Liberal Party is Canada's natural governing party because it dominates the party because of its ideological centrism and bilateral opposition (Carty, 2015, 2022; Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017; Johnston, 2017). This status for the party in the Canadian party system resulted from its emphasis on "national questions" and ability to secure a large number of seats in Quebec (Carty, 2015, 2022; Johnston, 2017).
[69] Jack Layton was the former leader of the NDP between 2003 and 2011 (McGrane, 2019). Layton is credited with contributing to the modernization of the NDP and the subsequent "Orange Wave" in Quebec— that being the strong electoral performance and breakthrough in the province during the 2011 federal election (Gagnon & Tanguay, 2017; McGrane, 2019; Jeffrey, 2021).
[70] Bill Davis was a former premier of Ontario from 1971 to 1985 and served as the leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party (Paikin, 2016). John Diefenbaker was a former prime minister between 1957 and 1963 and was the federal Progressive Conservative Party's leader (1956-1967) (Ibbitson, 2023). Although neither of these figures were technically a part of the modern CPC, they were nonetheless figures that constitute the historical legacy of Canadian conservatism and the CPC.

2017 NDP race, and Pierre Poilievre in the 2022 CPC race. For both the Liberals and CPC, the leadership races were generally described as pre-determined, which is to say that Trudeau and Poilievre were already anticipated victors from the beginning of the contests.[71] For example, a journalist for the *National Post* titled an article "Liberal race a contest in name only; No candidate wants to challenge Trudeau directly." In the case of Poilievre, several articles referred to him as the frontrunner candidate and mentioned his having sizable crowds at campaign events. One *Globe and Mail* article even went further on the frontrunner narrative by suggesting that the dynamics of the race reflected a fight against Poilievre rather than a promotion of individual leadership. When discussing a critique that Jean Charest made about Poilievre in a debate, the article referred to it as: "effectively an admission that Mr. Poilievre is winning— and a call to stop him." In the case of Jagmeet Singh, the media utilized several terms when covering his campaign that were reflective of being the percieved front-runner candidate. He was referred to as: a breath of fresh air; the best choice for the NDP; a viral sensation; a fresh face for a fresh start; and the stylish MPP.

The institutional rules that shaped the race were, of course, important to framing the context of each Canadian political party leadership race. These rules, specifically the party documents collected such as political party constitutions and leadership race rules, determined who could run in the races (or how many of them could run) and how political campaigns were to be organized and practiced by the campaign teams of the candidates. For example, the cost of each leadership race (which was also outlined in *Table 2* in Chapter two) varied. The lowest entry fee cost across the three cases was the 2013 Liberal Party leadership race's entry fee of $30,000. The most expensive was the CPC's race at $200,000. Interestingly, the lower the costs were, the more candidates in total there were per race, and

[71] To say that the 2013 Liberal Party and 2022 CPC leadership races were pre-determined was not to suggest that the integrity of the intra-party electoral process was compromised. Rather, it was to suggest that Trudeau and Poilievre were the frontrunners from the outset.

the higher the costs, the fewer candidates there were. Other rules, which were common across the three leadership races, were noted, such as mandated membership cut-off dates, mandatory participation in leadership debates, and the utilization of an OMOV electoral model with a preferential ballot. Of course, these were not mere rules, but also enforced by intra-party forces, such as the Liberal Party's National Board, the NDP's Chief Returning Officer, and the CPC's Leadership Election Organizing Committee, which were each empowered to interpret and apply the rules governed by these party documents.

Campaign Strategies

The final theme was *campaign strategies*, which referred to the strategic development and practice of the central features of political campaigning. In Chapter two of this study, political campaigning was defined as the organized efforts to place a specific candidate in a position of public office with political power (Flanagan, 2014). The specific features of campaigning which constitute *campaign strategies* include money and party financing, political marketing and branding, party discipline and disciplined messaging, going negative and opposition research, and a winning coalition and voter mobilization. Essentially, the theme reflected the practice of these features. Although campaign strategies can also be featured in other themes, such as *personal leadership construction*, *vision and policy*, and *strategic positioning*, this category is considered distinct because it reflects the deliberate choices made by candidates and the structural strategies used to execute the campaigns.

The most common campaign strategy in this theme was fundraising. Candidates engaged in rigorous fundraising— some candidates doing so better than others. The strongest fundraisers across the examined candidates were interestingly the so-called front-runner candidates: Justin Trudeau's campaign raised $1.3 million by March 2013; Jagmeet Singh raised $618,779.62 by September 2017; and Pierre Poilievre raised $4 million by August 2022. Of course, the other candidates did engage in fundraising processes and fundraised as

follows: Martha Hall Findlay raised $150,000; Joyce Murray raised Karen McCrimmon raised $20,000; and Deborah Coyne raised $10,000; Charlie Angus raised $374,146.88; Niki Ashton raised $250,937.11; and Guy Caron raised $188,541.50; Jean Charest raised $1.3 million; Leslyn Lewis raised $709,060; Patrick Brown raised $541,706; Roman Baber raised $504,649; and Scott Aitchison raised $363,922.[72] These numbers were found in the data, specifically through media coverage tracking candidate fundraising efforts in March 2013, September 2017, and August 2022, roughly the final month before the elections.

Another deliberate campaign strategy choice that was all too common across the 16 candidates was the development of a winning coalition and voter mobilization. To create a winning coalition and mobilize voters, candidates not only identified specific party factions, but they also sold party memberships. Selling party memberships was perhaps the most unique feature of campaign strategies to Canadian political party leadership races. This process involves candidates recruiting supporters outside the party to become party members and therefore be able to vote for them as the party leader. In the 2013 Liberal Party leadership race, Justin Trudeau's campaign was the only one to offer a number of sales, which was 150,000 party memberships of the total 294,002 eligible voters.[73] In the 2017 NDP race, Jagmeet Singh's campaign team claimed to have sold 47,000, which was disputed by Charlie Angus. In a June 2022 article, Pierre Poilievre's campaign team disclosed that he had sold nearly 312,000 through their campaign's website. In that case, Patrick Brown had sold approximately 150,000 memberships. Interestingly, despite being a central campaign

[72] There is an important note to make here. These fundraising data reflect numbers found in the collected secondary data, specifically the media coverage of the candidates' fundraising efforts. Interestingly, an *iPolitics* article on the 2013 Liberal Party leadership race noted that there were no available numbers on Martin Cauchon's fundraising. Moreover, it should be noted that as the fundraising numbers found in the collected data, this study is not claiming these to be final numbers, but rather the available numbers in the data that happened to be the month before the leadership race elections themselves in the three political parties.

[73] Of course, those 294,002 eligible party voters included the "supporter" category (Jeffrey, 2021).

strategy, none of the campaigns sought to provide proof of their numbers, which were often disputed by other candidates. Regardless, this feature of campaigning was relevant.

Conclusion

This Chapter presented the findings of this study, which it identified and organized into five major themes. These themes were *personal leadership construction*, *vision & policy*, *strategic positioning*, *contextual framing*, and *campaign strategies*. These themes captured how aspiring leaders shaped their political leadership identities, articulated political visions, and how they navigated the intra-party dynamics and broader institutional context. Across the 16 candidates and three Canadian political party leadership races, several commonalities emerged. The candidates emphasized traits and values such as inclusivity, collaboration, and experience to establish credibility with party members as voters. They also used identity cues and personal information to reinforce these traits. Candidates also developed policy positions relating to issues such as the economy, tax reform, Indigenous Peoples, the environment, and so on. Of course, the candidates also position themselves within the dynamics of the race around the "front-runners" and the government of the day. The specific campaigning strategies they explicitly use include fundraising and selling memberships. The larger context also shaped the dynamics, specifically how the media landscape identified "front-runners" and attributed both positive and negative traits to leaders.

These findings directly answer this study's research questions by highlighting the several themes within their construction and campaigning process in Canadian political party leadership races that are most commonly used across the three examined parties. Despite these findings being descriptive in nature (see Chapter four), they provide significant insights into the contemporary dynamics of political leadership and campaigning in Canada. Despite these descriptive findings, the following Chapter will discuss the implications of said findings within the larger literature on political leadership and campaigning within the Canadian party

system. This discussion will draw out the theoretical implications of these patterns for understanding the construction process of leadership in political party leadership races.

VI. Discussion

Despite the findings from the previous Chapter being descriptive, they nonetheless hold analytical value because they answered this study's research questions and highlighted how political leadership is shaped in Canadian party politics through the practice of campaigning. By examining the 16 candidates across the three Canadian political party leadership races in the Liberal Party, NDP, and CPC, this study revealed both the distinct partisan cultures of each contest and the recurring patterns and commonalities across cases.[74] The themes found through the QCA process (*personal leadership construction*, *vision & policy*, *strategic positioning*, *contextual framing*, and *campaign strategies*) indicated how candidates actively performed political leadership by appealing to traits and values of collaboration and emphasizing specific policy visions, while also navigating external forces such as party rules, political context, independent media coverage, and political party legacies. Therefore, the findings of this study identified the practice of the constructionist theory of political leadership articulated in Chapter three. This Chapter will build on these findings of the previous one and interpret their significance in relation to the theoretical framework on political leadership and the literature on Canadian party politics at large.

Political leadership in Canadian political party leadership races, as found in the candidates examined in this study, was clearly and actively socially constructed through the interactions between them, party members, and party politics. This fact is consistent with the triadic view of political leadership by theorists like Kellerman (1986) and Blondel (1987). The descriptive findings from the previous Chapter demonstrate the practice of these theoretical claims because candidates had several features of their political campaigns that helped construct a clear leadership identity and effectively communicate it to party members

[74] To reiterate, the 16 examined candidates were: Martin Cauchon, Deborah Coyne, Martha Hall Findlay, Karen McCrimmon, Joyce Murray, Justin Trudeau, Charlie Angus, Niki Ashton, Guy Caron, Jagmeet Singh, Scott Aitchison, Roman Baber, Patrick Brown, Jean Charest, Leslyn Lewis, and Pierre Poilievre.

and the media landscape. The themes from the previous Chapter (*personal leadership construction*, *vision & policy*, *strategic positioning*, *contextual framing*, and *campaign strategies*) are essentially the features of this aforementioned process to shape political leadership as a product that could be appealing to consumers, the party members. Under this logic, the findings also reflect the constructionist perspective of leadership because product design involves continuous performance, negotiation, and legitimation by campaigns.

The construction of political leadership in Canadian political party leadership races was most clearly reflected in the themes of *personal leadership construction*, *vision & policy*, and *strategic positioning*. These themes represented the dimensions of leadership that are most directly shaped by the candidates themselves during the campaigning period. Unlike *contextual framing* and *campaign strategies*, which involved external factors such as the media, political party rules, or political context, these three themes captured the active performance and framing of their leadership. The findings from the previous Chapter demonstrated that candidates built their leadership by presenting personal qualities and values, articulating visions and policies that attract party members, and strategically position themselves in relation to their opponents and opposition parties. The articulation of social constructionism in political leadership, as explained in this study's theoretical framework (Chapter three), was reflected in these patterns and confirmed leadership as not being an inherent trait or institutional product, but rather a social product.

The most visible ways that political leadership was constructed in these leadership races was through *personal leadership construction*, where candidates invoked traits, values, identity cues, and personal information to develop a personality. These features constituted personality because they worked together to create a coherent image of the candidate as a potential leader— an image party members could identify with and potentially support. These features of *personal leadership construction* (traits and values, identity cues, and personal

information) were not isolated from each other but rather came together to reflect a clear personality. For example, as noted in the previous Chapter, Joyce Murray used her gender as an identity cue to evoke traits of "working with people, collaborating, cooperating, and finding a way forward and then delivering." These traits of collaboration, cooperation, and problem-solving, were anchored by her identity as a woman, which created a full image of a personality, which existed within her construction of political leadership. The other candidates did this as well— professional experiences, being an immigrant, regional origin, and so on were used to reflect traits of resilience, compassion, unity, and so on. These components helped create a distinct personality, which was important to developing a political product. Therefore, personality being shaped by such components meant that their notion of political leadership was constructed rather than inherently pre-existing.

Of course, personality is an important element of political leadership (as found through this study's QCA), but since political context is a key element of the triadic relationship within political leadership, it cannot be the sole element in constructed leadership. *Vision and policy* contribute to leadership construction by offering substance that reflects political context within the triad but also develops the political meaning of their leadership. As previously noted, all the examined candidates developed a vision that reflected Canadian democracy and general democratic political visions. Such visions reflect that political leadership can be distinctly constructed in relation to developing a personality, but must hold the common assumptions about Canadian democracy, such as freedom of speech and representation. Despite such assumptions being commonly held across political party lines, this does not contradict the theoretical claims of social constructionism. Rather, it suggests that the political reality shaped in Canadian politics is influenced by political culture, the constitution, and so on. Therefore, belief in democracy and articulated policy positions offer a candidate's political leadership substance.

Strategic positioning can be considered the third feature of political leadership construction because it involves candidates defining themselves within the dynamics of their respective political party leadership race. The relational nature of political leadership (see Blondel, 1987; Dion, 1968; Kellerman, 1986) means that leadership construction does not exclusively develop a personality for the candidate, but also a distinct identity from the other candidates. Such a view is consistent with the theoretical perspective of political marketing because it reflects the necessity to develop a unique product (Lees-Marshment, 2001, 2019). Since candidates within a political party will inevitably hold similar policy positions and values by virtue of being in the same party, *strategic positioning* is therefore important to create a distinct political product of leadership. The case of the 2022 CPC race was a great example of this because Jean Charest positioned himself as an alternative leader to Pierre Poilievre, which gave him the strategic advantage of a distinct product within the political marketplace of that leadership race. Therefore, leadership construction involves the relational definitions in opposition to another product (candidate) just as much as a positive descriptive of their own product to be distinct within these races.

While the features discussed above reflect the direct constructive process by the candidates, political leadership in Canadian political party leadership races also involves communication— how political leadership must be communicated to gain recognition, support, and ultimately victory in the race. As such, communication involves the ways in which political leadership (as the political product) is circulated, messaged, and validated through the external forces and other campaign practices. Thus, this category within political leadership is shaped by contextual dynamics, media narratives, institutional structures, and strategic tools of political marketing rather than the direct development of the product by the candidates themselves. In keeping with this study's theoretical framework, communication

therefore represents the external dimension of political leadership: how the product is effectively made visible and persuasive to consumers in these races.

In relation to the findings of this study, *contextual framing* and *campaigning strategies* were the themes most consistent with the communicative processes of political leadership in Canadian political party leadership race campaigns. *Contextual framing* played a critical role in this communicative process because it impacted the communication of political leadership as a product offered by candidates. In particular, the media's identification of "front-runner" candidates hindered the communication of the products of the non- "front-runner" candidates. Thus, candidates like Deborah Coyne, Karen McCrimmon, Guy Caron, Roman Baber, Scott Aitchison, and so on were impacted by the media's emphasis on Justin Trudeau, Jagmeet Singh, and Pierre Poilievre as "front-runners." As such, their political products were far less covered by them (as an independent actor), which hindered their product's overall exposure and articulation beyond their internal campaign events. These findings confirm that the media is indeed an independent actor and that *contextual framing* shapes how political leadership is communicated.

Political leadership was also communicated through *campaign strategies*, which were primarily centred around fundraising and selling memberships to create a winning coalition. These, of course, were central to the internal development of political leadership construction but should be considered communicative features because they offered practical and symbolic value to the campaigns of each candidate. Practically speaking, fundraising offered candidates the chance to effectively communicate their product of political leadership, however, symbolically speaking, fundraising also offered communicative signals to party members and the media that certain campaigns were more sophisticated than others and therefore reflected confidence and demand in their product. For example, the media widely covered how Justin Trudeau, Jagmeet Singh, and Pierre Poilievre had successful fundraising

efforts. Poilievre even utilized this fact by emphasizing the success of his campaign, which further contributed to the notion of him being the "front-runner." These practical and symbolic elements are also the case with selling memberships.

The findings suggest that political leadership in Canadian political party leadership races cannot be reduced to either the individual efforts of candidates to build the product of leadership or the necessity of communication to expose said product. Rather, construction and communication are mutually reinforcing processes within the campaigns of leadership race candidates. It is as such because candidates actively build their leadership identities and personalities but must also communicate them and be validated by party members (as the consumers of their product) and the media. A leadership personality without effective and disciplined messaging or organizational strength (specifically through the *campaign strategies* of fundraising and selling memberships) cannot themselves create support for a specific candidate. This interplay between construction and communication within political leadership reflects the relational, interactive, and context-dependent view of leadership developed in Chapter three. Moreover, it confirms the trends in the literature on the Canadian party system (discussed in Chapter two) that political marketing and the other features of our current (fifth) party system are equally present within leadership races.

By comparing candidates across the three Canadian political party leadership races, this study revealed the logics that underpin political leadership construction.[75] The consistent notion of party renewal and rebuilding were a commonly held logic with all the candidates. Of course, in the case of the 2013 Liberal Party leadership race, rebuilding was especially explicit because of the party's near-death experience in the 2011 federal election (see Carty, 2015, 2022; Jeffrey, 2021). However, even in the 2017 NDP and 2022 CPC races, the idea

[75] To reiterate, this study focused on the following Canadian political party leadership races: Liberal Party (2013), NDP (2017), and the CPC (2022).

that party renewal depended on the selection of a specific leader— each candidate communicating themselves as the solution to party renewal. This cross-party comparison highlights that Canadian political parties are centralized by party leaders, particularly in its branding and electoral success (or failure). Therefore, in leadership races across parties, themes of renewal and rebuilding further confirm the centrality of political leadership.

The discussion of this study's findings contributes to three specific strands of scholarship: leadership theory, political marketing, and Canadian party politics. First, it contributed to leadership studies because it connected the literature of Canadian political parties to the theoretical work of leadership studies. Of course, this claim does not suggest that political leadership was never fully studied within the context of Canadian political parties. Rather, it is to say that the theoretical underpinnings of social constructionism were less the primary focus of study in this academic. Thus, these findings, by offering substance to the theoretical work of Chapter three with the context of Canadian politics. Not only is social constructionism important to leadership studies within the discipline, but it also brings forth a clear definition of political leadership that can serve as a central ontological assumption for future work in the subject of Canadian political parties. Another important contribution was bringing Kellerman's (1986) triadic relationship within political leadership into discussion with Canadian parties (see *Table 4*).

Second, the implication of these findings contributes to the scholarship on political marketing because it demonstrated how political party leadership races are full-scale marketing efforts within the Canadian party system. It is important to note that since this study did not employ first-hand interviews, it cannot explicitly state that political marketing was utilized by campaign managers. That being said, the findings indicate high levels of political marketing because the political product of leadership is constructed by candidates and their campaign teams and promptly communicated in the media landscape. These

findings also confirm Lees-Marshment (2001, 2019) argument that political actors function within a market-oriented framework, where aspiring leaders are essentially products shaped by consumer demand. Across the Liberal Party, NDP, and CPC, candidates heavily relied on branding themselves through leadership construction and ensuring they had effective messaging of said brand. This brings political marketing into discussion with the intra-party setting of leadership races within the Canadian party system.

Third, and finally, this study contributes to the literature on Canadian party politics by highlighting how political party leadership races serve as a critical tool for the health of parties, particularly as opportunities for renewal and identity development. Leadership races serve as critical features for the health of Canadian political parties because they engage party members, redefine their image, and develop new political meanings that can reinvigorate a political party. This was suggested by the findings in the three political parties, which all candidates emphasized renewal (whether explicitly through rebuilding, like in the 2013 Liberal Party race, or indirectly in discussions of changing electoral strategies like in the 2022 CPC race). These races improve their health because they actively engage members in the intra-party democratic processes of selecting a leader (see Carty & Cross, 2006; Cross & Pilet, 2015), while also giving the political party the opportunity to develop political meaning, which occurs by candidates constructing and communicating political leadership that party members either support or reject.

Beyond the three contributions noted above, this study also offers practical insights into how political leadership races shape the strategies of candidates, party politics, and the larger context of the Canadian party system. The findings and their subsequent discussion in this Chapter suggest that successful leadership campaigns must go beyond personal ambition or policy expertise in particularly relevant issues. Rather, they demand a carefully constructed form of political leadership that can be effectively communicated to party members. For the

candidates, as aspiring party leaders, the findings suggest that personal narratives and personality (crafted with traits and values, identity cues, and personal information) are equally necessary to construct political leadership that is attractive to party members as consumers of their political product. While developing policy positions is important, these findings suggest that political leadership (despite being socially constructed) requires a strong personality to promote trust and support. These dynamics were particularly apparent with the so-called "front-runner" candidates in these races— Justin Trudeau, Jagmeet Singh, and Pierre Poilievre. The strategic implication on aspiring leaders is that they must therefore treat themselves as both political and communicative actors, which both constitute political leadership. It can be said that candidates who fail to integrate these elements in their construction of political leadership for their campaigns risk party members perceiving them as lacking credibility, regardless of their policy positions.

This Chapter discussed that political leadership in Canadian political party leadership races are a phenomenon socially constructed and communicated through the triadic relationships within the concept of political leadership (Kellerman, 1986). Candidates built political leadership identities and personalities by combining traits and values, identity cues, vision and policy, and strategic positioning. That being said, these identities and personalities within their constructed political leadership must involve effective communication through contextual framing, media coverage, fundraising, and selling membership. The interplay between construction and communication were both constituent features of the constructive process of political leadership aligned with the social constructionist theoretical framework of this study, which confirmed the notion of leadership being both relational and performative (Blondel, 1987; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Foley, 2013). The comparative analysis of the Liberal Party (2013), NDP (2017), and the CPC (2022) leadership races revealed that despite

the partisan differences between the candidates and their respective political contexts, they followed common logics across parties for developing political leadership.

When brought into conversation together, this discussion highlighted the reinforced theoretical view of political leadership as socially constructed, the extent to which these races are exercises in political marketing, and how said races are largely opportunities for renewal, which is reflected in how candidates shape their political leadership (Kellerman, 1986; Lees-Marshment, 2001, 2019). This discussion also highlighted the implications of the previous Chapter's findings, which are that aspiring party leaders must construct political leadership through the development of personality, policy positions, and a strong and effective communicative strategy of these constructed features. Overall, the findings align with the larger context of political campaigning in the Canadian party system, which these political party leadership races are indeed important features of in the literature. The following Chapter will further explain the overall goal of the study and its significance.

VII. Conclusion

This study sought to examine the development of political leadership in the campaigns of aspiring leaders in Canadian political party leadership races. These leadership races were central objects of interest in the study because they are in themselves campaigning events insofar as the races are OMOV elections and therefore aspiring leaders must capture the support of political party members through organized efforts (Cross, 2004). Despite their importance in selecting party leaders, who oftentimes go on to serve as prime minister, the races are far less studied in the context of political campaigning (Flanagan, 2014).This study asked two primary questions: (1) how is political leadership constructed and communicated by aspiring leaders in Canadian political party leadership races; and (2) what campaign strategies do they most commonly use to present themselves as viable party leaders? To answer these questions, the study examined 16 candidates across three major federal political party leadership races: the Liberal Party (2013), the New Democratic Party of Canada (NDP) (2017), and the Conservative Party of Canada (CPC) (2022). Through a QCA of both primary and secondary data, this study identified common themes and campaign practices that constitute the process of leadership construction and communication.

The findings in this study demonstrate that political leadership is not a specific attribute but instead is a product that is continuously constructed and communicated between aspiring leaders, party members (potential consumers), and political context (Kellerman, 1986). Candidates built specific forms of political leadership identity by incorporating personality (developed through traits and values, identity cues, and personal information), vision and policy (including political visions, policy positions, and party renewal and rebuilding), and strategic positioning (contrasts with and attacks of other candidates and parties and party unity). Of course, these constructed political leadership identities require extensive communicative strategies, specifically through the contextual framing of political

processes (such as party history, legacy, media coverage, institutional rules, and party documents) and the common use of specific campaign strategies (fundraising and selling memberships for a developed winning coalition).

Based on such an analytical approach to these research questions, political leadership construction in campaigning should be understood as a relationship between the constructive features of the candidates themselves and their communication efforts. Therefore, within the context of Canadian political parties, leadership construction should be understood as involving two key elements of political campaigning: the internal, candidate-driven process of construction and the external, communicative dynamics that how political leadership is presented and perceived. These two dimensions are mutually reinforcing since they both collectively constitute a well-organized conception of political leadership put forth by aspiring party leaders. Despite the partisan differences between the Liberal Party, NDP, and CPC, the constructive process and the findings above highlight commonalities across parties that reflect the structure of political campaigning in the contemporary party system in Canada. Noteworthy commonalities include candidates emphasizing the need to rebuild or renew their respective political parties through their political leadership identity, which was especially reflected by Justin Trudeau, Jagmeet Singh, and Pierre Poilievre. Thus, there are commonly held logics of political leadership.

This study contributes to the contextualization of leadership theory in the literature on Canadian political parties. It achieves this by bringing the theoretical work from Chapter three into discussion with the 16 candidates across the three examined political party leadership races. The theoretical framework itself also brought conceptual perspectives of political marketing and communications into conversation with leadership studies by framing political leadership as a political product that campaigns marketed to potential voters, the party members who are consumers. This theoretical contribution integrates the political

marketing perspective developed by scholars like Lees-Marshment (2019) into the framework of triadic political leadership developed by Kellerman (1986). That is not to say the discipline has neglected the study of political leadership, but rather that this study offers a contribution by connecting these research areas together in the context of the current party system.

Despite the importance of the theoretical work conducted in this study, the findings of this study also have practical implications for Canadian political party leadership race candidates. These leadership races demand the careful construction of a political leadership identity that is effectively reflected and communicated through a well-organized campaign. The successful candidates in particular serve as noteworthy examples within this study of effective campaigns that carefully construct and communicate leadership through their campaigns. Essentially, this study offers a clear guide for aspiring party leaders that political leadership must be treated as a performance of an embodied identity and the marketing efforts of a campaign to confirm said identity, which further has implications on the function of political campaigning in Canadian politics. Another important contribution this study potentially offers is that on the larger context of Canadian democracy and political parties. By better understanding the construction of political leadership, the study can further contextualize the Canadian understanding of specific leadership identities that attract voters, both within parties and in the larger electoral setting. Moreover, these findings suggest that candidates require more than policy positions or personal ambition to become a party leader, but also a political product that can be effectively advertised to consumers.

Of course, despite the descriptive insights of this study, its scope does hold limitations. The study focused on only 16 specific candidates within three specific Canadian political party leadership races, which meant that it had a narrow scope and was ultimately small-n in nature. Despite the methodological choices having practical merit, future studies should explore the constructionist features of political leadership in greater detail by

including more candidates and more political parties. Such a claim does not dismiss this study, which offers significant insights on political leadership, but rather is an illustration of these dynamics in political campaigning. Future research on the subject of this study should also engage with primary data through interviews with candidates themselves and their campaign staffers, which could thereafter offer more theoretical insights.

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