

A NEW SHADE OF GREEN:
TRANSFERRING POLITICAL POWER AND ISSUE EMPHASIS ON TWITTER

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Abstract

Within the Canadian political arena, the Green Party is undergoing a shift away from its traditional emphasis on environmentalism, as a recent change in leadership has led to greater emphasis on a more diversified political platform. This shift can be recognized in the ways in which the Green Party, and their new leadership specifically, has formulated a change in the framing of their policy priorities in communications with the electorate and the world at large. One essential arena in which this framing shift has played out is Twitter, which functions as an important avenue through which political leadership may directly communicate with the general public. This paper seeks to better understand the difference in the Green Party Leaders' framing of issues on Twitter, as well as the impact of this new framing based on user engagement with the various types of Tweet. Comparing those issues emphasized by previous leader, Elizabeth May, to current leader, Annamie Paul, and the resulting engagement generated by these various policy frames, may lead to a better understanding of how the public is reacting to the shift that is currently taking place within the Green Party.

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Dedication

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Introduction

As a party rooted in its specific focus in environmental policy, the Green Party has traditionally been regarded as a niche, or single-issue, political party. Unlike their mainstream opponents, niche political parties occupy a unique political space, as they traditionally focus the majority of their platform on a single issue that they deem central to the party's political objective (Meguid, 2005; Meyer & Wagner, 2013; Spierings and Jacob, 2018). As such, niche parties face limited prospects with respect to actually gaining political power since voters recognize that politicians must deal with a plethora of policy issues; at the polls, party competence is evaluated organically rather than on the basis of single issues alone (Hughes, 2016). Thus, in order for a party to increase its access to political power, there exists an incentive to adopt a more mainstream stance with regard to policy priorities (Abou-Chadi, 2016).

Within the Canadian political arena today, the Green Party is undergoing such a shift, as a recent change in leadership has led to greater emphasis on a more diversified political platform (Paul, n.d.). In order to better understand how this shift in policy is communicated to the electorate and the world at large, I analyze Party Leader Annamie Paul's Twitter usage in comparison to the usage of previous Leader Elizabeth May's, examining each leader's Tweets during their most recent campaign periods. I code each tweet based on policy priorities as well as urgency framing, and identify noteworthy cooccurrences in order to discern significant issue emphasis from both leaders, tracking user engagement, and examining the effects of this transformation in framing on the public's interaction with their respective tweets. Specifically, I seek to answer the following research questions: How does Annamie Paul's issue framing on Twitter differ from Elizabeth May's? Is there a difference in issue coverage, and are certain

issues present as more urgent than others? And further, how does differing engagement with each leader's Tweets correspond to this difference in issue coverage?

I begin with an overview of the existing literature surrounding two relevant topics to this case study: niche party status in the political space, and the use of Twitter as a political tool. While both topics are directly related to my study, there exists a large gap in the literature at the intersection of these two realms of research. This study will contribute to addressing this gap. Next, I provide a step-by-step explanation of the methodology and sampling strategies used to conduct my research. I then discuss the key findings which were revealed from my data. Finally, I conclude with a greater analysis of these findings in relation to the literature, and a discussion of their applicability in the future of the Green Party of Canada. It is clear from this study that Annamie Paul has used Twitter as a tool through which to shift the narrative surrounding the Green Party of Canada's policy priorities, and that such a shift has contributed to an increase in user engagement with these new framing methods, as compared to engagement with Elizabeth May's tweets.

Literature Review

Niche Party Status in the Political Space

A common theme in the literature surrounding niche party status concerns the agenda-setting relationship between mainstream parties and niche parties. (Abou-Chadi, 2016; Hughes, 2016; Meyer & Wagner, 2013; Thompson & Pearson, 2013). Specifically, it has been recognized on multiple occasions that mainstream parties are largely responsible for establishing which issues should be deemed relevant. By either addressing a policy issue or dismissing it, mainstream parties signal to the public which issues matter most; parties may take either an adversarial or accommodative approach to a niche party's issue, depending on the issue itself (Abou-Chadi, 2016; Meyer & Wagner, 2013). This has profound implications for niche political parties, as their interests are largely reliant on the mainstream parties' responses. Abou-Chadi (2016) reveals an important difference in mainstream response to green parties as compared to far-right niche parties: whereas mainstream parties often react to far-right advances by taking up similar issues within their own platforms, they choose a dismissive approach when such advances are made by green parties. Such a discrepancy is attributed to the difference in issue ownership between the two types of parties: while far-right parties focus on positional issues, such as immigration, which offer a wide range of public opinion, green parties have monopolized expertise of the environment, an issue of valence which elicits either a generally positive or negative view. As such, this adversarial response occurs because green parties have secured such a high level of issue ownership that if mainstream parties acknowledge the importance of their issues, it may cause voters to re-allocate their ballots (Abou-Chadi, 2016). Further, Meyer and Wagner (2013) find that these responses may trigger a shift in programmatic strategies of niche

parties, veering away from focusing on a single issue and toward the acceptance of a more broad policy platform, as parties recognize the need to adapt in order to secure votes.

Rather than acting as a platform for smaller parties to reach the public, the traditional media exacerbates the effects of mainstream agenda-setting, largely omitting coverage and restricting participation of niche parties. (Camcastle, 2007; Hughes, 2016). Hughes (2016) suggests that a frame-building process is created through a dialogue between journalists and elites in politics; the media effectively streamlines the range of opinion available to the public “privileging, in particular, governmental views and other elite opinion” (p. 627). However, parties do not attract media coverage due to their status as mainstream or niche, but rather based on their perceived potential influence. As an example, the UK Green Party’s news coverage is largely restricted to issues surrounding the environment, and thus, their attempt to broaden their influence in a wide range of policies has effectively been dismissed by the media, creating a barrier to achieving such a shift in the minds of the public (Hughes, 2016). There is a gap in the literature with regards to agenda-setting processes, for example through algorithms, on social media, and thus, it is unclear if such a tool may be used to negate the disadvantages that niche parties face through the traditional media. As social media evolves as an alternative news broadcasting platform, further research is required to attain a complete picture of agenda-setting in the modern media.

The Green Party of Canada is seldom discussed in the literature. Camcastle (2007) makes the most notable contribution to this realm, surveying Party members to determine the makeup of the Party’s support. His results reveal that the majority of members consist of the ‘new middle class,’ characterized by their age and profession as scholars of the humanities and sciences. As compared to the demographics of members of other Canadian parties, the Green Party’s members

as a whole are far superior in terms of quantitative education level, and their policy interests primarily reflect a desire for social change.

Twitter as a Political Tool

Since its advent in 2006, Twitter has exploded in the political realm, vastly changing the way that citizens interact with politics, and the capabilities of politicians to reach fragmented audiences in turn. Prior to 2006, political parties had to rely on traditional broadcasting methods such as radio, newspaper, and television to transmit their messages, which consequently reflected a process of journalistic filtering of issues. Social media, and Twitter in particular, however, have allowed politicians and their parties to directly engage with users on issues set by their own agendas. This shift may have profound implications for smaller parties, whose coverage in traditional media has historically been null (Colliander et al., 2017; Enli & Skogerbø, 2013; Hughes, 2016; Keller & Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2018; Ross et al., 2020; Van Aelst et al., 2017).

Multiple studies have addressed the intersection between traditional media and social media, and their relationship to political success and increased publicity (Enli & Skogerbø, 2013; Meeks, 2019; Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013; Strandberg, 2013; Van Aeslt et al., 2017). Notably, multiple existing studies are concerned with whether social media has an equalization or normalization effect on the traditional dispersal of political publicity. Assuming that social media creates an opportunity for equalization implies that online competition for public attention is more equal than in the traditional media. Social media provides a platform through which people who may not usually engage with politics may stumble upon a politician's tweets, therefore broadening their reach; in this way, social media removes the need for users to make the active choice to engage with politics (Strandberg, 2013). Ross et al. (2020) point to the fact that the equalizing potential of social media makes it particularly attractive for smaller parties and female

politicians, who are, on average, afforded less coverage by the traditional media. Normalization, on the other hand, suggests that social media works only to exacerbate pre-existing power dynamics between politicians of differing popularity, financial levels, and status within the political arena. Here, it is implied that citizens are more likely to follow well-known politicians on Twitter, and thus be exposed to their Tweets (Strandberg, 2013).

Keller & Kleinen-von Königsłow (2018) apply the equalization versus normalization theories to the political arena in Switzerland, seeking to understand specific structural characteristics which influence political success on social media. Based on an analysis of Swiss politicians' twitter account activity, they find that follower counts were the greatest in young, leftist, urban politicians who were active in parliament. Traditional media coverage and platform adoption date were also indicators of follower counts: each mention in a news article and every day earlier that their accounts were created increased each politician's twitter followers by 0.1% respectively. However, it is important to note that follower count and Twitter activity do not necessarily produce the same results; Van Aelst et al. (2017) found that heightened activity on Twitter was negatively correlated with traditional media coverage. Their findings about age were, however, consistent with those of Keller & Kleinen-von Königsłow (2018), revealing that while older candidates experienced more coverage in the traditional media, younger politicians were more popular on Twitter; age was thus cited as a key predictor of Twitter's relevancy for candidates.

Social media also differs from the traditional media in its ability to promote interaction between users. In the political arena, this implies that unlike during the Web 1.0 era, politicians now have the ability to engage directly with the electorate via their social media accounts. However, the existing literature is quite consistent in revealing that the actual use of social media

by politicians in order to interact with citizens is limited (Jungherr, 2016; Keller & Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2018; Meeks, 2019; Ross et al., 2020; Small, 2010; Van Aelst et al., 2017). Keller & Kleinen-von Königslöw suggest that in fact, politicians are using social media platforms to broadcast their campaign messages in a Web 1.0 manner, rather than to create dialogue, as “[c]ommunication on social media platforms is still *from* political actors *to* citizens” (p. 2). Strandberg (2013) attributes such a lack of interaction to the potential it would create for a loss of control. When politicians engage in political conversations online, they invite criticism and potentially hate speech in the form of comments. As such, politicians need resources in order to be able to moderate public discussion on their posts; candidates with less resources may be less likely to take advantage of Twitter’s potential for constructive dialogue with voters (Ross et al., 2020). Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan (2013) also suggest that discrepancy in resources is often determinative of Twitter use. While most candidates they study use the platform for self-promotion and information sharing, those with greater allocation of resources are more active on Twitter, and greater activity levels lead to greater levels of interactivity. (Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013).

Jungherr (2016) does find a prevalence of political interaction on Twitter, but notes that this interaction usually occurs between politicians and journalists, or with other politicians, rather than with the general public. Ross et al. (2020) look specifically at Party Leaders, finding that most use social media mainly to promote their campaign, rather than to interact with the public. Variance in interaction levels do exist, however among different types of candidates. Notably, evidence suggests that female candidates and those from smaller parties may be more likely to engage in interactivity, and that globally, Green MPs are known to be highly active on Twitter. Ross et al. (2020) further found that while all other leaders were more likely to post on social

media about themselves than their party, the Green Party's leader was more likely to post about the party. This finding correlated with local news coverage: the majority of media coverage was concerned with party leaders rather than their parties, except in the case of the Green Party, where the Party itself was covered more often than its leader.

Politicians also use Twitter to signal to journalists which issues should be deemed important in the media, in attempt to set the political agenda (Enli & Skogerbø, 2013; Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2018; Meeks, 2019; Ross et al., 2020; Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan, 2013). Naturally, different parties and types of candidates have been found to emphasize different types of issues on Twitter. Meeks (2019) suggests that the issues that candidates choose to emphasize are often highly correlated to issues that are associated with both their party and gender; strategically focusing social media campaigning on certain issues that a candidate is inherently associated with allows that candidate's messaging to perform better on Twitter. This notion is directly related to issue ownership, as the general public is more likely to support a candidate on issues that they are already deemed to be tied to. For example, left-leaning parties and female candidates are often associated with health care, education, reproductive rights, and the environment, whereas right-leaning parties and male candidates are more often associated with foreign policy & defense, immigration, crime, and the economy. While Meeks's (2019) study does not find that candidates were more likely to interact with gendered issues than with those deemed associated with the opposite gender, they did find that the most successful candidates were those whose policy agenda was communicated via social media so as to emphasize those issues that were associated with both their gender and their party.

According to Ross et al. (2020), there may be a correlation between attention on social media and the specific tone of a post. In their study of Party Leaders' accounts, they found that

more posts were published with a positive outlook than a negative one, however those posts with a negative outlook attracted much more user attention. This finding fundamentally contrasts with trends found in the traditional media, whereby journalists are often highly critical of politicians. Oftentimes, posts about controversial topics such as refugee policy were met with racist or harmful comments, which may help to explain the hesitancy around posting anything on social media with a negative inflection (Ross et al. 2020).

Rather than acting as an arena to predominately promote party policies, vast research has revealed that a significant proportion of tweets released by politicians across Europe and North America feature personal content and personalized messaging; the rise of social media has corresponded with the democratic political arena becoming increasingly personified (Colliander et al., 2017; Enli & Skogerbø, 2013; Graham et al., 2013; Graham et al., 2016; Jungherr, 2016; Keller & Kleinen-von Königsłow, 2018; Small, 2010; Spierings & Jacobs, 2019). Enli and Skogerbø (2013) study this trend with a specific focus on use by Norwegian candidates in what has been dubbed “the first Twitter election” in 2009, determining that this campaign season marked a notable shift from traditional focus on the political party to a focus on the individual politician (p. 762). Their study reveals three predominant ways in which these politicians used Twitter during the campaign: marketing, mobilization, and dialogue with voters. Unlike traditional media broadcasting, marketing via Twitter was highly effective for its ability to simultaneously promote the candidate as both a politician and an individual. In terms of mobilization, it was revealed that personalizing the party narrative with regards to mobilizing voters effectively enhanced other traditional campaign strategies. Twitter’s ability to create a continuous dialogue between politicians and the public was also highly effective, as it encouraged greater partisan engagement as compared to traditional media (Enli & Skogerbø,

2013). Graham et al. (2013), on the other hand, find that in the UK, Twitter is used as a broadcasting tool, as politicians refrain, for the most part, from directly interacting with voters. As Norway and the UK have different electoral systems and political cultures, it is possible that such cleavages contribute to this differing Twitter landscape as well. Thus, further nation-specific research is needed before any assumptions may be made about the transferability of these studies to the Canadian case.

Colliander et al. (2017) contribute to the understanding of the motive behind personalized messaging, suggesting that maintaining a balance between professional and personalized tweets garners greater political support than maintaining a strictly professional public appearance. Although such a trend may be partially a result of the immense pressure that social media places on politicians to disclose elements of their personal lives, it is also a highly effective strategy, as tweets that revealed aspects of a politician's personal life received more 'likes' than those that were strictly professional (Colliander et al., 2017).

Jungherr's (2016) evaluation of trends in the political use of Twitter expands this idea of dialogue, citing that users felt more connected to candidates when they posted personalized tweets, than they did after watching them speak on television, for example. Moreover, these feelings of enhanced connection generally incited increased positive attitudes toward the candidate, although these positive inclinations did not always reflect an intention to alter voting intentions (Jungherr, 2016). In fact, it may be the case that social media usage has no effect on voting habits for most social media users at all (Strandberg, 2013). This trend may be explained by Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan's (2013) finding that Twitter was unlikely to alter the general public opinion, neither positively nor negatively, over time.

Similarly, Keller and Kleinen-von Königslöw (2018) attribute this notion of personalization to the importance of portraying an impression of relatability to the public, further correlating such a tone to overall success on the platform. While most users do not use social media primarily to keep up with politicians, if certain politicians present their messaging with a personalized tone, users may be more likely to engage with them. According to Keller and Kleinen-von Königslöw (2018), garnering public engagement, exemplified through reactions to tweets, is essential in ensuring politicians are successful on social media for five main reasons: visibility, organization, micro-donations, mobilization, and feedback. In terms of visibility, the more reactions that a tweet receives, the broader reach that tweet will have in terms of who sees it. This is especially important in order for politicians to broaden their network, as tweets with a large number of reactions will appear in people's feeds who do not follow that politician. Reactions can also contribute to organization and network expansion, as Twitter users can see what the people they follow are reacting to; this may prompt those users to follow a new politician whose tweet a friend, celebrity, or colleague has reacted to. Seeing what other people are reacting to may also influence more people to contribute financially to a political campaign in the form of micro-donations. Additionally, these increases in exposure to political messaging may in turn influence users' voting decisions, or lead to mobilization for certain social movements, due to the ease with which users can share information on social media. And aside from influencing public behaviour, reactions also provide critical feedback which may be evaluated by politicians in order to understand what issues are performing best with their publics (Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2018).

Meeks (2019) likewise discusses the importance of image construction for individual politicians, claiming that candidates must strategically curate and manage their public image via

social media in order to portray a certain impression. Such an impression is created as a result of the intersection between a candidate's personal characteristics and the issues they choose to emphasize in their communications. In her study of candidates in various US Congressional races, she determines that constructing an image on Twitter that is consistent with the candidate's political and personal characteristics is essential to electoral success. This form of communicative image construction is essential because candidates present issues on Twitter that represent their policy priorities on a larger scale, and thus, maintaining a consistent and reputable image signals competence in certain areas of political issue ownership (Meeks, 2019).

In some studies, employing Twitter as a central political strategy was found to be more essential for opposition parties, rather than parties currently holding political power (Enli & Skogerbø, 2013; Jungherr, 2016). Enli & Skogerbø (2013) further suggest that party size and timing also play a role in determining Twitter activity. In their study, the use of political mobilization tactics on Twitter varied, with heightened activity during electoral campaigns. While larger parties were highly active during campaign season, smaller parties used Twitter more consistently overall. Large parties had a tendency to follow a "campaign and withdraw strategy," drastically decreasing engagement on Twitter immediately following an election (Enli & Skogerbø, 2013, p. 766). Graham et al. (2016), on the other hand, find no such trends, but instead reveal that social justice-oriented parties place greater value in Twitter use than other political parties. Evaluating these findings in tandem may have important implications in the Canadian case, due to the fact that catch-all parties, rather than social justice-oriented parties, traditionally hold federal political power, although no such research exists at the time of writing.

The study of the political use of Twitter in the Canadian case in particular remains largely absent from the existing literature. The main contribution to this realm of knowledge is Small

(2010)'s findings regarding the following of Canadian political Twitter accounts. Whereas 86% of users studied followed a political leader's account, only 13% followed a political party's account (Small, 2010, p. 41). This finding further exacerbates the implications of previously discussed research regarding Twitter's function as a tool of political personalization. That said, it is clear that updated research of Twitter use in the Canadian political arena is necessary to draw any legitimate conclusions.

While there are large bodies of literature covering both the characteristic and spatial analysis of single-issue parties as well as the use of Twitter as a political tool, the intersection of these two topics is surprisingly under-researched. In addition, the existing body of literature reveals a large portion of the research conducted surrounding the use of Twitter in politics is outdated. As the social media landscape is constantly undergoing rapid adaptation, it is probable that the way that politicians use Twitter has changed as well. Moreover, while the development of European Green parties have been studied in depth, research on the Green Party of Canada is extremely limited. Thus, this study attempts to address these gaps.

Methodology

In order to better understand the developmental shift of the Green Party Leadership's framing, I chose Twitter as my medium of study. As noted in the literature, the platform is a prevalent medium in the arena of political communications and acts as a microcosm of the broader communication of a politician's platform, making it a sensible choice for this study.

Because I was interested in examining tweets from a variety of different years, I was unable to use a Twitter Scraper tool to extract my data. Twitter's Application Programming Interface (API) does not allow for the scrapping of tweets older than 7 days, and as such, I manually extracted and recorded my data using Twitter's Advanced Search function instead. One limitation of this method was that Twitter's Advanced Search does not retrieve tweets that are Retweeted by the user in question, and as such, these types of tweets are excluded from my sample. Such a limitation has certain implications for my research; without including retweets in my sample, I was unable to account for some of the issues that the leaders were sharing, and therefore emphasizing, from other users. I address this limitation further in my discussion section at the end of this paper.

When selecting my sample, I sought to select a period of time during which each respective leader would be quite active on Twitter, especially with regards to releasing policy-based tweets. As noted in the literature, it is clear that politicians are generally most active on Twitter during campaign periods (Enli & Skogerbø, 2013; Keller & Kleinen-von Königsłow, 2018; Meeks, 2019; Ross et al., 2020 Stieglitz and Dang-Xuan, 2013; Strandberg, 2013, Van Aelst et al., 2017). In order to confirm that this trend is applicable to the context of the leaders of the Green Party in Canada, I compared tweets released by both leaders at various points in their leadership cycles. I examined tweets released by both leaders during their most recent

pre-campaign periods, as well as during their most recent campaign periods. When examining Elizabeth May's tweets, I reviewed tweets released in February 2019, which marked the beginning of the pre-campaign period for the 2019 Federal election. According to various Green Party of Canada press releases, it seems that most 2019 federal candidates were announced during this month (Green Party of Canada, n.d.). When looking at Annamie Paul's pre-campaign period tweets, I employed a similar selection process, ultimately examining tweets released in March 2021. Paul's candidacy for the upcoming 2021 Federal election was announced in March 2021, marking the start of her pre-campaign period.

With regards to campaign period tweets, I reasoned that the weeks directly prior to election day would constitute the peak of each leader's campaign, as these final weeks present the last opportunity for voters to change their minds and for leaders to gain or lose supporters. Thus, I chose to look at May's tweets during the period leading up to the 2019 Federal Election, and Paul's tweets leading up to the 2020 By-Election in Toronto Centre. I chose to examine these consecutive elections so as to best understand the shift in framing between leaders that corresponded with the transferring of power. Paul was selected as the leader of the Green Party on October 3rd 2020, three weeks before the by-election, which took place on October 26th, 2020. I chose to cap my dataset at a single week before the by-election, excluding Paul's first two weeks as Leader of the Green Party. This decision was made so that the dataset would be reflective of tweets concerning priorities for the upcoming by-election, rather than tweets concerning her new position as Party Leader. The resulting dataset consisted of all tweets released by Paul between October 19, 2020 until October 25, 2020. I then recorded data from Elizabeth May's tweets released two weeks prior to the 2019 Federal Election, in order to keep

the time period of each data set consistent. The resulting dataset consisted of all tweets released by May between October 14, 2020 until October 20, 2020.

Upon this preliminary review, it was clear that both leaders released significantly fewer tweets during their pre-campaign periods than during the weeks directly leading up to the elections. Further, the content of the tweets released during these periods was significantly different, with campaign period tweets focused largely on policy and campaign promotion, as compared to pre-campaign period tweets which covered a broader range of both political and non-political topics. Therefore, in order to best fulfil my study's mandate in examining the narrative shift in policy priorities between leaders, it was clear that tweets released during respective campaign periods would offer the most useful sample for this study.

Once I had chosen the most efficient time period for my sample, I compared the quantity of tweets released by each leader for the week leading up to their election days so as to ensure that my datasets were similar in size. In these time periods, May and Paul released 49 and 54 tweets respectively, indicating that their activity levels on Twitter were comparable leading up to their elections. Ensuring that each leader exhibited a similar level of Twitter activity was essential to account for, because if one leader's activity levels had been vastly greater than the other's, it would be difficult to discern whether the issues tweeted about were of comparable importance. Because activity levels were generally the same, the tweets released by each leader could be reasonably considered to be treated with the same weight in regards to level of importance. However, although numbers of tweets released were quite similar, a discrepancy arose in content and language which would have important implications for the comparability of the datasets. While my dataset collected from May's Twitter account consisted entirely of tweets written in English, 50% of Paul's tweets were written in French and 50% were written in

English. Upon closer examination of the data, it is clear that Paul releases both a French and English version of each tweet. Because this discrepancy could have greater implications on audience accessibility, and therefore, engagement, I decided to exclude the French language tweets from my sample. This exclusion left me with a dataset from Paul which was comprised of about half of the number of tweets as my dataset from May. As such, I decided to collect an extra week's worth of tweets from Paul, so that the final number of tweets in each dataset would be more comparable. Thus, I altered my dataset for Paul to include all tweets released in English between October 12, 2020 and October 25, 2020. The resulting dataset featured 45 English-only tweets.

Once I had finalized my sample, I began extracting all relevant data from each tweet. For each tweet in the sample, I collected the publication date, the body of text, and the engagement response provoked by each tweet, taking note of the quantities of *favourites*, *retweets*, and *comments* associated with each tweet.

Once my data had been collected, I sought to determine a set of codes that I could apply to each tweet to help discern patterns of issue framing associated with each leader. I did so by examining campaign documents released by each leader respectively. Based on the policies outlined in Elizabeth May's 2019 platform, I was able to group her priorities into six categories: Economy, Environment, Good Governance, International Relations, Reconciliation, and Social Policy. I then turned to Annamie Paul's campaign website, which lists her policy priorities (Paul, n.d.). While the specific priorities are framed differently than those of May's 2019 campaign, each stated priority could fall into one of the same six categories as May's listed priorities. This thus confirmed that these six categories could act as effective preliminary policy-based codes.

From here, I applied one or more policy-based code to each relevant tweet I had collected from both leaders. For tweets that were not policy-based in nature, or had some other motive in addition to policy, I created a broad coding category called Partisan Politics. The types of tweets I placed in this category can be found in Table 1. Next, I broke down the categories further, determining a second set of codes based on a deductive content analysis of the tweets I had collected. This was an iterative process, as it took me multiple rounds of coding to determine which subcategories would be most accurate to include. These subcategories ultimately provided a more descriptive picture of the ways in which each leader was prioritizing certain policy issues over others, within the broader Green Party campaign. Table 1 breaks down the resulting sub-categories identified in the second round of coding.

After coding my datasets for policy-issue and / or alternative motive, I was able to analyze cooccurrences in the data. I noted policy-based tweets that fell under more than one policy category, as well as tweets that had both a policy motive and some sort of Partisan drive. Because many tweets were motivated by more than one category of policy, I applied a maximum of two codes and two subcodes to each tweet. If there were more than two codes and subcodes which could be applied, I chose the two that were the most central to each tweet. I discuss the limitations of applying only two codes later in this paper.

I further categorized the tweets released by each leader based on whether or not there was an underlying sense of urgency produced by the specific word choice. This indicator was chosen specifically to determine whether my hypothesized shift in policy framing was accompanied by a newfound sense of urgency, and further, which specific policy categories were being portrayed as the most pressing.

I then looked at user engagement with each category of tweet. I compared numbers of

Policy-Based	Partisan Politics
<p>Economy Poverty Carbon Tax Guaranteed Liveable Income Wages</p> <p>Environment Sustainable Food Climate Vote Climate Plan Natural Environment Energy</p> <p>Good Governance Cross-Party Cooperation Voting Age Indigenous Relations</p> <p>International Relations Refugees International Conflict</p> <p>Reconciliation Indigenous Rights Dialogue</p> <p>Social Policy Public health / COVID Race/Discrimination/Diversity Religion Food Security Women's Rights Universal Basic Income Treatment of Workers</p>	<p>Examples: Campaigning/Promotional Community Engagement Cross-Party Call Out Endorsement Event Promotion Media Coverage Personal Support Voting</p>

Table 1. Types of tweet found in each category.

favourites, retweets, and comments associated with each tweet to determine which category of tweet was most successful in promoting user engagement for each leader. Such an analysis may provide insight into which issues are most important to followers, and whether or not there are

discrepancies between engagement with certain issues based on the specific leader tweeting about the issue.

Research Findings

I started by looking at the different types of tweets that each leader was releasing leading up to her election. Here, the tweets fell into two broad categories: Policy-Based tweets and, and tweets that were motivated by Partisan Politics. Of 49 tweets released, 22 tweets (45%) at least mentioned something to do with one of May's stated policy priorities. 37 tweets (76%) were categorized as Partisan Politics, but 11 of these tweets (24%) fell into both the Policy-Based category as well as the Partisan Politics category. This left 26 tweets (53%) categorized only as Partisan Politics, with no relation to a Green Party policy priority, and 12 tweets (24%) which functioned solely to promote Green Party policies (Figure 1).

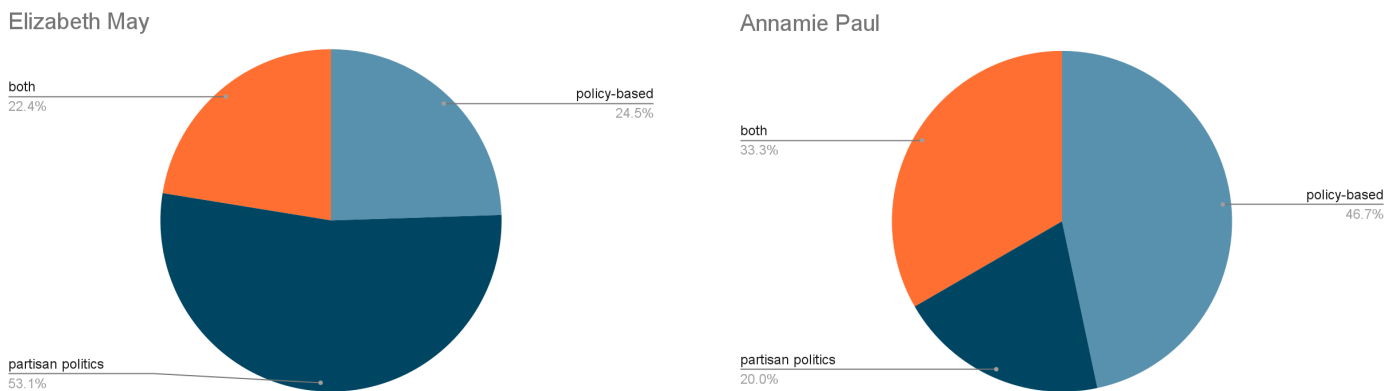


Figure 1. Distribution of all tweets.

In the period analyzed for Paul, she released 45 tweets (Figure 1). Of these, 36 (80%) mentioned a policy priority. 24 tweets (53%) were categorized as Partisan Politics, but 15 of these tweets (33%) fell into both the policy-related category, as well as the Partisan Politics category. As a result, only 9 tweets (20%) were categorized solely as Partisan Politics, and 21 tweets (47%) were solely policy-based.

In the first round of coding for policy-based tweets, there were clear discrepancies between the types of policy-based tweets released by each leader (Figure 2). For tweets regarding Social Policy, May and Paul released six (12%) and 28 (62%) tweets respectively. In comparison, May released 15 tweets (31%) about the Environment, whereas Paul released only three (7%). Both May and Paul released one tweet (2%) related to International Relations. May did not release any tweets regarding Reconciliation, however Paul released three (7%). In terms of tweets surrounding issues of Good Governance, May released only one tweet (2%), while Paul released 12 (27%). Finally, May released one tweet (2%) about the Economy, and Paul released three (6%).

Allocation of Tweets

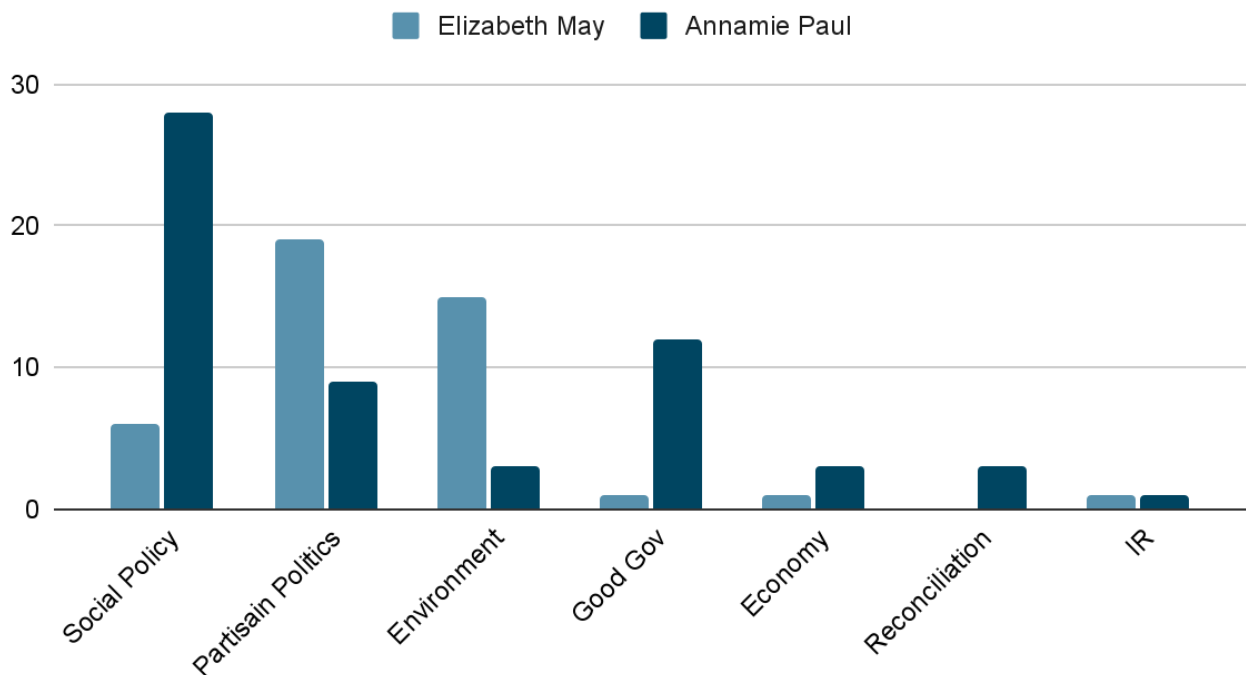


Figure 2. Frequency of categories tweeted about.

The second round of coding revealed that within these broader policy categories, each leader emphasized a different set of issues. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the distribution of tweets released by each leader within the identified subcategories. While there was some overlap in subcategory tweeting, there were also many categories that were unique to each leader. Additionally, the number of different categories that each leader employed in their tweets was not consistent. May's set of 49 tweets fell into 9 policy subcategories altogether, while Paul's set of 45 tweets fell into 15 policy subcategories altogether.

In terms of Social Policy, May's tweets fell into three subcategories: Public health (4) and Treatment of Workers (1). Paul's tweets regarding Social Policy covered a broader range of categories: Public Health / COVID (19), Diversity / Race / Discrimination (5), Poverty (2), Food Security (2), and Women's Rights (1). When it came to the Environment, May's tweets were related to the Climate Vote (6), the Party's Climate Plan (6), the Natural Environment (2), and Energy (1). Paul's tweets were focused on the Climate Plan (1), Climate Vote (1), and Sustainable Food (1). As previously mentioned, May did not tweet about Reconciliation, however Paul's tweets in this category covered Indigenous Rights (2) and Dialogue (1). In the International Relations category, May's single tweet was about International Conflict, while Paul's was about Refugees. In terms of Good Governance, May tweeted about Voting Age (1) while Paul tweeted about Cross-Party Cooperation (10) and Indigenous Relations (2). Finally, May's economic tweet was about Wages (1), while Paul's were about Guaranteed Liveable Income (2) and Carbon Tax (1).

In terms of Social Policy, May's tweets fell into three subcategories: Public health (4) and

Policy Priorities	Elizabeth May	Annamie Paul
Economy	1	3
Wages	1	0
Guaranteed Liveable Income	0	2
Carbon Tax	0	1
Environment	16	3
Climate Plan	6	1
Climate Vote	6	1
Natural Environment	2	0
Energy	1	0
Sustainable Food	0	1
Good Governance	1	12
Voting Age	1	0
Cross-Party Cooperation	0	10
Indigenous Relations	0	2
International Relations	1	1
International Conflict	1	0
Refugees	0	1
Reconciliation	0	3
Indigenous Rights	0	2
Dialogue	0	1
Social Policy	6	28
Public health / COVID	4	20
Treatment of Workers	1	0
Diversity / Race / Discrimination	0	5
Food Security	0	2
Poverty	0	2
Women's Rights	0	1

Table 2. Frequency of tweets within each sub-category.

Treatment of Workers (1). Paul's tweets regarding Social Policy covered a broader range of categories: Public Health / COVID (19), Diversity / Race / Discrimination (5), Poverty (2), Food Security (2), and Women's Rights (1). When it came to the Environment, May's tweets were related to the Climate Vote (6), the Party's Climate Plan (6), the Natural Environment (2), and

Energy (1). Party's Climate Plan (6), the Natural Environment (2), and Energy (1). Paul's Environmental tweets were focused on the Climate Plan (1), Climate Vote (1), and Sustainable Food (1). As previously mentioned, May did not tweet about Reconciliation, however Paul's tweets in this category covered Indigenous Rights (2) and Dialogue (1). In the International Relations category, May's single tweet was about International Conflict, while Paul's was about Refugees. In terms of Good Governance, May tweeted about Voting Age (1) while Paul tweeted about Cross-Party Cooperation (10) and Indigenous Relations (2). Finally, May's economic tweet was about Wages (1), while Paul's were about Guaranteed Liveable Income (2) and Carbon Tax (1).

For both leaders, the majority of tweets released fell into more than one category. Understanding the pairing of different issues and motives is important in order to best understand the way in which each leader frames the importance of certain priorities. For example, for those tweets in May's dataset in the Partisan Politics category that also had a policy priority attached, this policy priority was only ever the Environment. Within these tweets about the Environment, May most frequently tweeted about her Climate Plan and the Climate Vote. The Climate Plan category was associated with a campaigning / promotional tweet, two tweets calling out another party, and a tweet about media coverage. Similarly, the climate vote rhetoric was associated with two tweets about voting, two endorsements, and a cross-party call out. For Paul, however, tweets in the Partisan Politics category were associated with Social Policy, Environment, Good Governance, and Economy. These tweets were most frequently related to public health / COVID, but also occurred in relation to poverty, diversity / discrimination / race, the climate vote, and cross-party cooperation.

Paul's most tweeted about policy priority, Social Policy, occurred in correspondence with every other category of tweet aside from Reconciliation. Within the category of Social Policy, she most frequently tweeted about Public Health / COVID-19, which occurred in association with tweets about Cross-Party Cooperation (9), Voting (5), Community Engagement (3), Diversity / Discrimination / Race (1), Guaranteed Liveable Income (1), Poverty (1). For May, tweets about Social Policy only ever occurred with no relation to any other category, other than in one tweet that also addressed the Economy. May's most commonly tweeted about sub-category was also Public Health, however these tweets never occurred in relation to any other categories of tweet. Both leaders tweeted about the Economy in relation to Social Policy, but Paul also tweeted about the Economy in relation to the Environment, as well as in relation to Event Promotion.

In terms of Good Governance, May's single tweet, centred around voting age, did not occur in relation to any other category of tweet. Paul, however, tweeted about cross-party cooperation 10 times, which most frequently occurred in relation to public health / COVID (9), but also an endorsement (1). While May did not tweet at all about Reconciliation, Paul's tweets about both Indigenous Rights and Dialogue occurred in relation to tweets about Indigenous Relations. In terms of International Relations, May's tweet about International Conflict did not occur in relation to any other category, while Paul's tweet about Refugees occurred in a tweet that also featured a Cross-Party Call Out.

Urgency Framing

While coding each tweet for theme, I also conducted a lexical analysis of each tweet in order to determine whether or not the individual tweet was framed as being *urgent* (Figure 3). Of May's 49 tweets analyzed, 7 (14%) were framed as urgent. More specifically, May employed the

urgency framework in relation to tweets about Social Policy (4), Environment (2), International Relations (1), Economy (1), and Other (1). Paul's tweets were more frequently presented as urgent, with 19 (42%) framed in this way. Paul employed the urgency framework primarily in relation to Social Policy (15), but also in tweets about Good Governance (9), Partisan Politics (7), Reconciliation (3), Economy (1), International Relations (1).

Urgency Framing

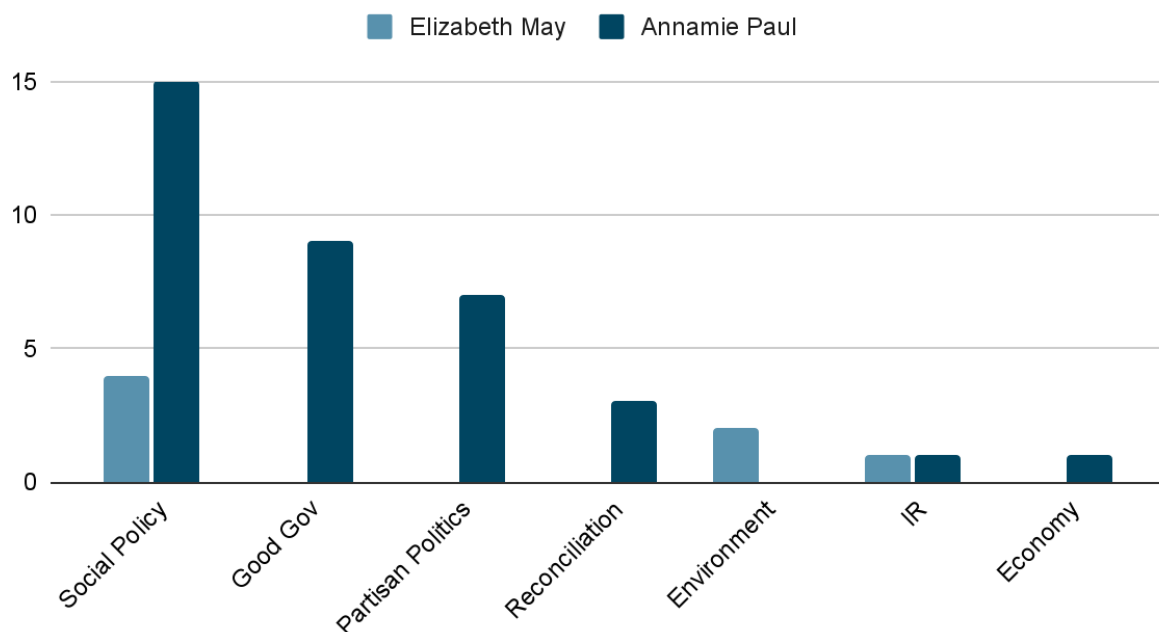


Figure 3. Quantitative occurrence of urgency framing in each category.

Looking at the specific occurrence of urgency framing within each category of policy is also telling. Within May's dataset, urgency framing is used in tweets related to International Relations tweets (100%), Social Policy (67%), and Environment (13%). Urgency framing is not used in May's tweets relating to Good Governance or the Economy. Within Paul's dataset, urgency framing is used in tweets regarding International Relations (100%), Reconciliation

(100%), Good Governance (75%), Social Policy (54%), and Economy (33%). Urgency framing is not used in Paul's tweets about the Environment.

Upon examination of the second round of codes in tandem with urgency framing, it is clear that both leaders most frequently employed the urgency framework in relation to public health. 43% of May's tweets which were framed as *urgent* covered issues of public health, while 63% of Paul's tweets framed as *urgent* covered public health / COVID. Paul also frequently employed the urgency framework when tweeting about cross-party cooperation, and community engagement portraying such a narrative in 90% and 100% respectively of tweets falling into those categories.

Engagement

Upon review of the engagement indicators for each leader's tweets, the public's interaction with each leader on twitter is neither consistent within different categories of tweet, nor between the leaders themselves. Overall, Paul gained more favourites and retweets than May, but received less comments on her tweets. Paul received 11848 total favourites in the period studied, averaging at 263 favourites per tweet, while May received 8180 total favourites, averaging at 167 favourites per tweet. In terms of retweets, Paul received 3049 in total, averaging at 68 per tweet, while May received 2811, averaging at 57 per tweet. May's tweets provoked a total of 1098 comments, averaging at 22 comments per tweet, while Paul's tweets received 771, averaging at 17 comments per tweet.

The areas in which the leaders received the most engagement with their tweets was also inconsistent. May's highest performing tweet was an endorsement, falling into the category of Partisan Politics, which received 827 favourites, 273 retweets, and 80 comments; it was not characterized by urgency framing. Her most commented on tweet also fell into the Partisan

Tweet	Code	Favourite Count	Retweet Count	Comment Count	Urgency?
Very grateful to have legendary Canadian Neil Young call on everyone to vote Green! #GPC #elxn43 #cdnpoli	Partisan Politics	827	273	80	no
Silliness from the bus! #elxn43	Partisan Politics	594	129	36	no
I tabled a bill to parliament to lower the voting age to 16... If only we had more Green MPs! #GPC #elxn43 #cdnpoli	Good Governance (Voting Age)	511	147	71	no
Just saying, I am well qualified and I would like to be prime minister. But only because we need real leadership to steer our way through the climate emergency. #GPC #climate	Environment (Climate Plan)	502	143	77	yes
Saddened by NDP trying to deliberately mislead voters. It put quotation marks around words I never said. Once again, I call on Mr. Singh to apologize. #GPC #https://www.thestar.com/politics/federal/2019/10/16/elizabeth-may-slams-jagmeet-singh-over-disgraceful-ndp-flyers.html	Partisan Politics	412	201	83	no

Table 3. The five highest performing tweets released by Elizabeth May in the period analyzed.

Tweet	Code	Favourite Count	Retweet Count	Comment Count	Urgency?
I stand with the Mi'kmaq fishermen attempting to freely exercise their right to self-determination. The racism and abuse they are enduring is intolerable. Reconciliation is an empty word unless we stand with First Nations whenever they seek to exercise their rights. #cdnpoli	Reconciliation (Indigenous Rights)	3585	1113	63	yes
.@CanadianGreens will always choose people over politics. Today, that means that we are voting against the motion to create a special committee. We won't let people in Canada down by indulging in partisan games when they need us to be focusing on their urgent needs. #cdnpoli	Good Governance (Cross-Party Cooperation) Social Policy (Public Health / COVID)	793	154	208	yes
In 1929, women in Canada were recognised as persons, but we didn't need the court to tell us that. In my victory speech, I celebrated the women on whose shoulders I stand. Only 5 women have ever been	Social Policy (Women's Rights)	753	118	22	no

elected leader of a major national party. Still a ways to go eh? #PersonsDay					
Ahead of today's vote on the Conservative motion to create a special committee, I would like to remind all Members of Parliament that people in Canada are counting on us to keep our eye on the ball and to focus on their needs. Anything else is just unwelcome drama.	Good Governance (Cross-Party Cooperation) Social Policy (Public Health / COVID)	718	174	117	yes
Has @yfblanchet ever been called the N word? I have, and it stung each time. Before making statements about an issue he clearly doesn't understand, I invite Mr. Blanchet to contact me so I can explain why the N word remains painful for many. #cdnpoli	Social Policy (Diversity / Race / Discrimination) Partisan Politics	471	159	54	no

Table 4. The five highest performing tweets released by Annamie Paul in the period analyzed.

Politics category, specifically featuring a cross-party call out, which received 83 comments in total, and was not characterized by urgency framing. Table 3 displays engagement levels with May's five highest performing tweets. Paul's best performing tweet overall was related to Reconciliation, and specifically, Indigenous Rights and sovereignty. This was the highest

performing tweet released by either leader, receiving 3585 favourites, 1113 retweets, 63 comments, and was characterized by urgency framing. She received the most comments, however, on a tweet related to both Good Governance and Social Policy, and more specifically, related to Cross-Party Cooperation and COVID. The tweet received 208 comments in total, and was also characterized by urgency framing. Table 4 displays engagement levels with Paul's five highest performing tweets.

With specific regard to policy-based tweets, Paul received quite a drastic spread of engagement levels across her different categories of tweets (Table 5). Her highest performing category of policy-based tweets was Reconciliation, in which she received an average of 3704 favorites, 399 retweets, and 25 comments per tweet. Her highest performing category in terms of comments specifically, however, was Good Governance, in which she received an average of 36 comments per tweet. Paul's lowest performing category was Environment, receiving an average of 101 favourites, 25 retweets, and 11 comments on each tweet. May also received varying levels of engagement on her tweets (Table 6). Her highest performing category of policy-based tweet was Good Governance, although she only released one tweet in this category. The tweet received 511 favourites, 147 retweets, 71 comments, and was not characterized by urgency framing. Her lowest performing category was Social Policy, which received an average of 59 favourites, 27 retweets, and 9 comments per tweet.

Annamie Paul	favourites	retweets	comments
Reconciliation	3704	399	25
Good Governance	245	49	36
International Relations	213	54	17
Economy	209	59	17
Social Policy	203	48	21
Environment	101	25	11
Overall Average	263	68	17

Table 5. Average engagement per tweet within each of Paul's policy categories.

Elizabeth May	favourites	retweets	comments
Good Governance	511	147	71
International Relations	314	74	21
Environment	137	45	21
Economy	133	66	23
Social Policy	59	27	9
Reconciliation	n/a	n/a	n/a
Overall Average	167	57	22

Table 6. Average engagement per tweet within each of May's policy categories.

Discussion

Upon review of the results, it is clear that each leader employed a distinctive approach in issue framing on Twitter, resulting in varying success in terms of engagement with the public. While Paul's Twitter account mainly released policy-based tweets, May's account focused primarily on promoting campaign initiatives. Such a finding could potentially be explained by the position each leader held at the time of their respective election; May had been leader of the Green Party since 2006, and thus her targeted audience may have been more likely to already be familiar with her policy priorities as compared to Paul who had just been elected as leader three weeks prior to the By-Election. Perhaps, then, Paul had felt a greater need to focus her Twitter account on policy-related issues specifically, so as to ensure her audience was made aware of her priorities leading up to the election.

Within the realm of policy-based tweets particularly, Paul's tweets predominately addressed Social Policy, while May most often tweeted about the Environment. This finding is especially notable given the Green Party's traditional focus on and association with the Environment: whereas Elizabeth May tweeted about the Environment 16 times in the week leading up to her election, Annamie Paul only tweeted about it three times in the two weeks analyzed. This is a stark difference, and Paul's environmental coverage seems uncharacteristically low a Green Party leader, contrasting with Meeks' (2019) finding that politicians are more likely to promote party-associated issues on social media; this finding could suggest that Paul is attempting to move her party away from its traditional association with the Environment. In addition, after assigning sub-codes to each leader's respective tweets, it was clear that Paul tweeted about a greater variety of policy issues overall than did May. Notably, Paul's tweets addressed diversity / race / discrimination, poverty, food security, women's rights,

reconciliation, cross-party cooperation, and guaranteed liveable income, while May refrained from tweeting about any of these categories. This finding has important implications, as in accordance with the literature, as patterns on Twitter are likely a reflective microcosm of each leader's respective policy priorities overall (Meeks, 2019). It is especially notable that May refrained from tweeting about Reconciliation at all, even though it was one of her stated priorities in her electoral platform. This finding seems to suggest that a political leader's stated campaign priorities may vary significantly from their day-to-day agenda as it is communicated to the public. Moreover, it is clear from the data that Paul's priorities as leader fall far beyond the Party's traditional focus on the environment, which is consistent with Meyer and Wagner's (2013) assertion that in order for niche parties to secure more support on election day, they must adapt to broaden their policy platforms. This shift could potentially be attributed to a lack of mainstream party engagement with the Environment, and thus, its lack of space within the mainstream political arena's agenda, if the Canadian case is consistent with Abou-Chadi's finding about mainstream parties' neglect of green parties' issue ownership.

The narratives each leader portrayed on Twitter, created by the combination of the issues they emphasized as well as patterns of urgency framing, were distinct from one another. Of Paul's policy-related tweets, 50% were framed as urgent, covering tweets in all policy categories other than the Environment. Of May's policy-related tweets, 30% were framed as urgent, including two tweets about the Environment, one tweet about International Relations, one tweet about the Economy, and four tweets about Social Policy. When examining urgency framing in relation to frequency of policy categories, this finding is significant. Even though May emphasized the Environment more than any other category related to policy, she rarely (12.5%) attributed it with urgency. Paul, on the other hand, employed urgency framing in 15 (54%) of her

tweets about Social Policy, her most tweeted about category, as well as 9 (75%) of her tweets about Good Governance, and all of her tweets about Reconciliation and International Relations. This increase in urgency framing in Paul's tweets creates a narrative that moves beyond a general social media campaign for election stating her policy goals at face value; change is portrayed as the driving motive in her running for a seat in Parliament, painted as a necessary goal that is attainable through her election. As such, the lack of urgency framing employed in her environment-based tweets stands out particularly. As the Green Party has traditionally focused its policy priorities on the Environment, with high levels of issue ownership that its supporters are likely to expect, it is peculiar that the Environment was the only issue area that was not categorized by urgency framing at all. This seems to suggest that the Environment is a lower priority for Paul than other areas, however a larger sample of Tweets is needed to help confirm this notion.

In terms of user engagement, although Paul had less followers than May at the time their respective tweets were released, her tweets performed better overall. This finding is consistent with the literature in predicting that younger politicians in urban settings are more popular on Twitter; Paul is 18 years younger than May, and represents the densely populated urban riding Toronto Centre while May represents the geographically larger riding Saanich-Gulf Islands, which is less densely populated and includes both Urban and Rural spaces. Specifically regarding policy categories, Paul's tweets performed better in the areas of Social Policy, Reconciliation, and the Economy, whereas May's tweets performed better when they addressed the Environment, International Relations, and Good Governance. Such performance levels are notably indicative of each leader's respective image construction and political ownership: while Paul is clearly associated with localized policy areas involving socioeconomic issues and human

rights, May is associated with globalized issues surrounding the Environment and International Relations, as well as the structural issue of Good Governance. May's comparatively lengthy history in her leadership role may help explain this discrepancy: it is quite possible that her audience associates her with such issues due to the fact that she has engaged with them for a longer period of time. Paul, on the other hand, is a relatively new politician whose narrative focuses on making change within her local community, which is reflected in the types of tweets she performs best on.

This study presents overwhelming evidence of Annamie Paul's strategy in transitioning her party away from a focus on the Environment and toward a broader range of policy priorities. As noted in the literature, such a transition may be necessary in order for a party to become more popular at the federal level. This could have important implications for the future of the party, as voters are likely to cast their votes for parties they feel will competently represent their interests in all policy issues. The contribution of this shift in framing to broadening the popularity of the party has already been proven effective, which can be viewed in the outcome of Annamie Paul's results in the 2020 By-Election in Toronto Centre. Paul gained a 25.66% increase in votes from her last election a year earlier, allowing her to finish in second place with a vote share of 32.73% (Elections Canada, 2020). Should such a trend continue, it is very plausible that the Green Party could gain traction in coming years, and will continue to accumulate more votes and seats in Parliament. This could have major implications for the Canadian party system as it currently stands, potentially leading to a situation in which no party is able to win a majority since a greater number of broad-issue parties exist.

Additionally, it will be interesting to note whether such a shift in framing has an effect on coverage of the party by the traditional media. If Paul's narrative transformation is effective in

broadening her reach on social media, then the literature would suggest that she will also experience an increase in media coverage. Such a revelation could provide some evidence in support of the theories presented in the literature surrounding the equalizing capabilities of Twitter for small parties. This study only scratches the surface of the issue of niche party expansion through effective use of social media, and more research is needed to examine the correlation between narrative framing and equalization, as well as to be able to better predict the future of the Green Party within the Canadian political system.

Limitations

Due to its scope, this study has several limitations. First, the twitter data analyzed excluded tweets that each leader had retweeted. As such, numerical data concerning the emphasis of certain issues over others may be skewed. For example, if a leader has retweeted several tweets from other users on a certain topic, they are clearly showing an emphasis of importance on that topic which has not been accounted for in this study. Additionally, the types of tweets that the leaders are retweeting may directly impact what original tweets they decide to release; if they have retweeted a message from another user about a certain issue, they may not feel it necessary to also release an original tweet on that topic. As such, an analysis of retweet data is needed to confirm the findings about policy priorities and issue emphasis suggested by this study.

The scope of this study also restricted the complexity of the data that resulted from my coding. As a maximum of only two codes and two subcodes were assigned to each tweet, this study does not account for some of the issues addressed in tweets that emphasized more than two issues. Therefore, assertions about the effectiveness of certain co-occurrences as well as the prominence of certain issues over others would be more accurate with more rounds of coding

applied. Additionally, while I tried to assign codes based on the two most dominant themes in each tweet, there is certainly a margin of error here created by researcher bias. Such a process is subjective in nature, and thus, a second set of coding assignments conducted by another researcher would enhance the internal validity of this study.

In terms of engagement levels, this study did not analyze specific comments in order to determine whether they were supportive or unsupportive of the leaders' tweets. As such, assumptions made about the tweet effectiveness based on engagement levels may be skewed, as negative comments are clearly not an inherently positive form of engagement in terms of increasing popularity. That being said, as noted in the literature, the more engagement a tweet receives, the more visible it becomes and the more people it reaches (Keller and Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2018). As such, even negative comments may be somewhat beneficial in expanding a politician's message. More research is needed here in order to determine the impact of comments on each leader's political success.

Further, this study focused solely on the textual messaging released by each leader. It did not account for the media embedded within some of the tweets, nor did it consider the impact of certain linked news sources or the individuals associated with certain quoted tweets. It is plausible that each of these different tweet elements had a direct impact on engagement with the tweets themselves. For example, users carry certain biases concerning individual news outlets that may impact their (dis)favour toward a tweet that includes a linked article. Biases also exist concerning other individuals such as celebrities or other politicians, which may impact their engagement with tweets that quote those individuals. Further, images and videos may elicit specific emotional responses in users that lead them to engage or refrain from engaging with

specific tweets. Thus, examining twitter data based solely on text does not provide a full image of the reasoning behind the success of certain tweets and lack of success of others.

It is also necessary to note that the contexts in which each leader was running for election were vastly different. In October 2020, during Paul's campaign period, the Second Wave of COVID-19 was beginning in Canada. In October 2019, during May's campaign period, the Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 had not yet been discovered. As such, May's campaign priorities existed outside of the context of a Pandemic, whereas Paul's priorities were fundamentally altered by this Pandemic. Clearly, the heightened prevalence of tweets surrounding Public Health in Paul's campaign occurred for this reason, as every tweet about Public Health that was released was directly about the COVID-19 Pandemic. Further, the Pandemic likely had a large impact on the use of urgency framing in Paul's campaign, as death rates and hospitalizations from the virus were a pressing issue that did not yet exist during May's campaign in 2019. As such, it is plausible that the Pandemic triggered Paul's change-based urgency narrative through which almost half of her tweets were framed.

Conclusion

This study is the first of its kind in analyzing the transformation in framing of Canadian Green Party policy priorities since Annamie Paul's leadership election in October 2020. The data confirmed that there has in fact been a significant change in issue prioritization on Twitter leading up to the most recent elections specifically, as Paul's tweets featured much greater diversity in policy areas while the majority of May's policy-focused tweets addressed the environment. Additionally, Paul was more likely to emphasize urgency in her tweets overall, as well as in all tweet categories except for the environment. On the other hand, the only policy-based tweets that were presented as urgent in May's dataset were related to the environment. In terms of engagement, frequency of policy category mention did not correlate with levels of engagement for either leader. May's most popular policy tweet category was Good Governance, while Paul's was Reconciliation. Paul's tweets performed better overall, and her tweets that performed the highest were categorized as urgent. May's highest performing tweets, on the other hand, were not categorized as urgent. As such, it is clear that the leaders varied from each other significantly with respect to what issues they were prioritizing, and how those issues were emphasized. As the first study of its kind, this research profoundly contributes to the gap in the pre-existing literature surrounding issue framing within the Green Party of Canada. However, further research is needed in order to determine what implications the findings of this study will have on Green Party support and success within the Canadian political arena.

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