PROFESSIONALS OR AMATEURS? EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY MAKING AND THE 2013 VOTER

REGISTRATION PROJECT

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Abstract

Using original interview data, this paper explores the decision-making processes behind a 2013 youth voter outreach project between an election management body (Elections BC) and a youth voter focused non-profit organization (Apathy is Boring) called the Youth Registration Project. The project idea that Apathy is Boring brought to Elections BC was new for Canada. Never before had a non-profit, non-partisan organization worked directly with an election management body to register voters by enumeration. My thesis discusses what Elections BC and Apathy is Boring did together to improve youth voter turnout rates, as well as how and why they came to these decisions. My main argument is that the professional policy maker, Elections BC, made decisions based on evidence, compared to Apathy is Boring, which tended to be more amateur in its decision-making, simply following intuition. These findings are useful because they reveal some of the decision-making processes behind youth voter turnout initiatives in Canada, which in turn can help policy makers improve upon engagement strategies related to the youth vote.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

For over a decade, Elections Canada, the non-partisan national body responsible for conducting federal elections, has attempted to reverse the trend of low voter turnout through a variety of initiatives aimed at encouraging young people to participate in democracy and to vote. Both Elections Canada and their partner organizations believe that they are making a difference with their efforts (Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada on the 38th General Election Held on June 28, 2004, 46-47). Elections BC, which has a similar mandate to Elections Canada, is solely responsible for provincial elections in British Columbia. Similarly, this electoral body has tried to encourage youth to vote, especially after the 2009 BC Election where overall voter turnout was at 51% and the youth voter turnout rate was at less than 27% (Elections BC Voter Participation by Age Group 2009). Elections BC has run fewer projects than Elections Canada in this area and has taken a different approach in the projects it has run. In particular, Elections BC does not allow, as Elections Canada does, for its District Electoral Officers to hire a specific person dedicated to reaching out to young people in the community, nor does Elections BC hold regular roundtables with stakeholders about young people and ways to encourage their democratic engagement. However, in 2013 Elections BC partnered with two non-governmental organizations, Apathy is Boring and (indirectly) Get Your Vote On, to try a unique and innovative initiative called the Youth Registration Project. This project was novel in Canada as never before had an election management body and non-partisan organization directly worked together to actively register young voters through enumeration. It is this project that I will be investigating for my thesis.

Young Canadians have never voted in the same numbers as their senior counterparts. Traditionally, as voters age they become more consistent at the polls and maintain their expected voter turnout numbers for their age demographic. However, beginning with the Baby

Boomers, not only has the voter turnout gap continued to increase between the youngest and oldest citizens, but younger Canadians can no longer be counted on to begin voting as they get older. This is problematic, as election turnout continues to be a vital marker for the health of Canada's democracy and "democratic systems are premised on the participation of a significant number of citizens in their processes" (O'Neill 2007, 1). Since the majority of young people are not participating in the political process, we see a "democratic divide" that is mostly generational (Gidengil et al. 2004, 172). Further, the large contingency of Canadian youth who do not vote contributes significantly to Canada's "democratic deficit" (Pammet and LeDuc 2003, 3). This deficit refers to the potential decline of the health of Canadian democracy, which can lead to the lack of accountability of Canada's political institutions to its citizens (Ibid.). Evidently, one of the significant causes for this impending problem is lower voter turnout numbers, especially amongst young Canadians (Milner 2010, 18).

The connection between Canada's democratic deficit and declining number of young Canadians who vote makes the study of youth voter initiatives important for the future of Canada's democracy. As such, I decided to embark on a case study of the partnership between Elections BC, Apathy is Boring, and Get Your Vote On during the 2013 British Columbia provincial election, which attempted to encourage youth voter turnout. In examining this case, my research questions are as follows: How did Elections BC, in partnership with Apathy is Boring and Get Your Vote On, attempt to encourage youth voter turnout in the 2013 provincial election in British Columbia? Why did these organizations choose these particular youth voter turnout initiatives and partnerships and how did they evaluate these initiatives? Did they adopt evidence-based policy making practices? In particular, my thesis will review the degree to which election management bodies and non-profits used evidence-based policy making throughout the policy cycle of this project. As such, I will be watching for proof of evidence-based policy making in the formation, application, and assessment of the project that I am examining.

While plenty of research has been published on why young people do not vote, there is scarce literature on how election management bodies and non-partisan, non-profit organizations are attempting to get out the vote in Canada in order to reverse the current trend

of large numbers of young people not voting. Very little has been written on what election management bodies and non-profits have done to improve low voter turnout, how these decisions were arrived at, if there is a process of due diligence, and how they evaluate their own projects. Therefore, the objective of my research is to develop a concrete understanding of the reasoning behind the development of youth voter turnout initiatives. Specifically, I want to explore if these initiatives are based on evidence or instinct. It is important that this topic is investigated to understand what has been done to encourage the youth vote and the reasoning behind youth voter turnout initiatives. Coming to a more complete understanding of these issues will help to improve the future processes by which these initiatives come about. As well, my research will allow for the investigation of how election management bodies choose their partners and how they evaluate their projects. Ultimately, I hope that my research can improve future joint ventures between election management bodies and non-profits.

In terms of my theoretical approach, a public policy framework is best suited for my thesis as I am not looking at why young people do or do not vote. Rather, I am examining the decision-making process that engenders projects designed to encourage young people to head to the polls. Public policy is defined as a set of "interrelated decisions of goals and the means of achieving them" (Marchildon 2011, 111) which is the "systematic laying out of the objectives of a government combined with the practical measures that are proposed to achieve these objectives…aimed at maintaining or changing the status quo" (Ibid.). As such, my thesis is conceived as an analysis of the public policy behind youth voter turnout initiatives. Following Marchildon, I am concerned with tracing how the status quo is maintained or changed.

In particular, I will be using the conceptual framework of "policy cycles" to examine the decision-making processes of election management bodies and youth voter engagement organizations. John Kingdon, in his ground-breaking work *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies,* defines policy cycles as the processes involving the agenda setting and the different branches of government involved in creating legislation and public policy (Kingdon 1995). However, most of his work is based on an American perspective, and since my work reviews a Canadian case study, I will also be referring to Michael Howlett and Michael Ramesh's work

from *Studying Public Policy: Policy Cycles and Policy Subsystems* (Howlett and Ramesh 2003) as they have adapted John Kingdon's work to a Canadian context.

The policy cycles conceptual framework is appropriate for my research because it allows for understanding the role of state actors and the influence of societal groups within policy making and decision-making processes (Kingdon 1995, 21). According to Kingdon, the policy cycle contains five stages: agenda setting, policy formation, decision making, policy implementation, and policy evaluations. Contrary to what many believe, "policy can proceed in an orderly process in stages" (Ibid., 78).

First, agenda setting is the stage where problems come to the attention of the government (Howlett and Ramesh 2003, 13). Only once a problem has been recognized by government can the policy cycle begin and thus, this is the most critical stage of the policy cycle (Ibid., 120-121). In this first stage, stakeholders make attempts to publicize an issue to create sufficient pressure on government decision makers to act (Howlett and Ramesh 2003, 136, Kingdon 1995, 198). This means that issues arise in civil society among non-governmental groups, then reach the public agenda, and then make it onto the formal agenda of the government (Howlett and Ramesh 2003, 135). In this process, "people recognize problems, then generate proposals for public policy changes" (Kingdon 1995, 197). Essentially, once a problem is recognized, a plan can be developed on how to correct the problem. Interestingly, Kingdon holds that ideas and plans for change can "come from anywhere… and the critical factor that explains the prominence of an item on the agenda is not its source but instead the climate in government or the receptivity to ideas of a given type, regardless of source" (Ibid., 72). This framework considers the consultation process that governments often undertake to be part of the agenda-setting process (Johnston 2007, 438-439).

The second step in the policy cycle is the policy formation stage. This stage is for defining, considering, and accepting or rejecting options (Howlett and Ramesh 2003, 144). This stage also provides legitimization to the options and choices before the decision makers as the policy makers must ensure that "that there is a meaningful definition of the problem as well as a clear problem statement" before proceeding (Hamilton 2010, 7). As well, this is the time to

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identify any procedural or instructional constraints to action (Howlett and Ramesh 2003, 145) and an opportunity to ensure that "policy options that are creditable within the current policy environment and in alignment with the government's objectives" (Hamilton 2010, 8).

The third stage of the policy cycle is the decision making stage. It is at this stage that actors make decisions regarding which proposed option they will follow (Howlett and Ramesh 2003,163). After conducting proper analysis, they do what they consider to be the most rational and effective course of action to solve the identified problem (Bretscher 2010, 11). In doing so, policy makers generally follow a "regularized set of standard operating procedures for producing certain types of decisions" (Howlett and Ramesh 2003, 164). This stage is an important part of the policy cycle, as it is where government institutions either commit or refrain from pursuing some sort of action (Ibid., 162).

Policy implementation is the fourth stage of the policy cycle. This stage is where decisions need to be turned to action and efficiently implemented. This stage can be difficult because every "actor" involved in the implementation has their own, ambitions, traditions, and expertise (Ibid., 187). Furthermore, as "decision makers must delegate responsibility for implementation to officials they only indirectly control," self-interest or unclear instructions can quickly derail the entire policy cycle (Ibid., 191). The important point here is that the effectiveness of even the best thought out public policy decisions can be undermined at the implementation stage.

The final stage of the policy cycle is policy evaluation. This is the stage where the actors "assess the effectiveness of a public policy in terms of its perceived intention and results" and determine "how a public policy has fared in action" (Ibid., 207). The evaluation stage in a traditional policy cycle is an "inherently political exercise" wherein the actors inside and outside of government compare their results to each other (Ibid., 219). As such, it is not uncommon for conflicting evaluations of public policies to be brought in front of the public as political actors present different versions of the outcomes associated with a policy.

My research is exploratory because there is very little information in regards to my case study. I conducted semi-structured elite interviews, in person, with eleven key actors of the

organizations (Elections BC, Apathy is Boring, Elections Canada, and Get Your Vote On) involved with the 2013 BC Youth Registration Pilot Project, referred to as the Youth Registration Project for the purposes of this thesis. I investigated which projects had been previously executed by these organizations, how they attempted to encourage the youth vote in the Youth Registration Project, why the projects were delivered in this manner, why the organizations chose the partnerships they did, and to what extent they believe they have been successful in their attempts to get more young people to register and to vote. The benefits of my chosen methodology are that I was able to access very specific, and otherwise unreachable information on a very recent and understudied new initiative. As well, the personal contact of face-to-face interviews allowed me to develop a rapport with the interviewees in order to gain a greater insight into my topic over a lengthier period of time, compared to using different mediums such as surveys or the telephone. My research design choice allowed me to determine how each step of the policy cycle occurred from the point of view of each of the organizations involved. Additionally, my research design ensured that I gained insight on the project from the perspectives of all of the different organizations involved.

An outline of my thesis is as follows. Immediately following this chapter, Chapter Two will discuss the literature that is pertinent to my case study. This chapter includes, from the existing academic literature, an exploration of the significant variables for the decline in youth voter turnout, proposed solutions based on evidence in the research, and the initiatives taken by election management bodies, by themselves and in partnership, towards improving this trend. The literature review allows me to compare what Elections BC has done similarly or differently compared to the initiatives and projects that have been conducted by Elections Canada in the past. Additionally, I identify the gap in the literature that my thesis is filling. That is, while much has been discussed of why young people do not vote in as high numbers as other age demographics, there is very little in the literature covering what has been done by election management bodies and non-profits to encourage youth voter turnout in a provincial election. Most importantly, this literature establishes the body of evidence that policy makers could be expected to draw upon when formulating youth voter turnout initiatives. Chapter Three is where I analyze the Youth Registration Project undertaken in British Columbia in the 2013

provincial election by Elections BC in partnership with Apathy is Boring and Get Your Vote On. This chapter presents the data from my semi-structured elite interviews with the main players from this project. In this chapter, I outline the project and explain why these organizations chose the initiatives used in the Youth Registration Project, how they came to complete these initiatives, and how they evaluated their project. Concurrently, I analyze the information I gained from my research and thoroughly answer my research question as to if these policy makers used evidence-based decision-making. Chapter Four will be my concluding chapter. I relate the case study back to the broader literature on youth voter turnout and I discuss the importance of my topic and my research. I also discuss the benefits of my research and I suggest areas for future research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Declining youth voter turnout is a phenomenon that is not exclusive to Canada (Milner 2005, 2). Several countries in Europe, as well as the United States, have seen a downward trend in the number of young people who vote (Milner 2005, 2). As such the existing literature on declining youth voter turnout is extensive. The purpose of my literature review is twofold. First, I will briefly outline the literature on voter registration and research that attempts to explain why youth voter turnout in Canada has declined over the last few decades. Second, I will describe the research on youth voter turnout initiatives in Canada and abroad.

The overall argument of this chapter is that there is a body of evidence on youth voter turnout initiatives that describes what has been previously attempted and what is effective. This body of evidence was readily available to policy makers within my case study and the next chapter will examine the extent to which policy makers used this body of evidence during the policy cycle that produced the Youth Registration Project run by Elections BC in partnership with Apathy is Boring and Get Your Vote On during the 2013 provincial British Columbia election. In particular, I ask the following questions: was the Youth Registration Project developed based on what the research indicates is most effective? Were the policy makers involved in the Youth Registration Project even aware of the evidence that exists concerning initiatives that increase youth voting? If they were aware of such evidence, did they use it to make their decisions?

The final section of the chapter points out that, while there is a solid foundation of research on voter registration, why young people do not vote, and what has been done to try and encourage young people to vote, researchers have yet to consider the policy making processes that determine which youth voter initiatives are pursued. As such, my thesis attempts to fill this gap in the knowledge base. Once there is a good understanding of the

possible reasoning behind the development of youth voter turnout initiatives, policy makers will be able to improve upon them in the future.

2.1 Research on Voter Registration and Youth Voter Turnout

The way in which voters register to vote in an election is different from jurisdiction to jurisdiction (Courtney 2004, 77). However, "voter registration is at the very heart of our democratic process…No election can be held (certainly no democratic one) without first compiling a list of those who are eligible to vote" (Ibid.). At the core of voter registration is the voters list, which according to Courtney, should be guided by the basic principle that as many eligible Canadians as possible are included on that list (Ibid., 78).

From 1938-1997, Canada's voters lists were developed from a "national door-to-door enumeration at the time of the election" (Ibid.,79). After 1997, the national list of electors has been populated from the National Register of Electors (Black 2000, 8). The shift from door-to-door enumeration, which created a temporary list for every election, to a permanent list occurred when Bill C-63, *an Amendment to the Canada Elections Act*, received Royal Assent on December 18, 1996. This switch to a permanent list was advocated by Elections Canada's Chief Electoral Officer Jean-Pierre Kingsley (Ibid.). Kingsley highlighted in his discussions with parliamentarians the fact that Elections Canada was falling behind in technological advancements, that the 110,000 low-paid enumerators needed were increasingly hard to recruit, and that on the door steps enumerators faced increasing personal safety issues, accessibility issues (i.e. apartment buildings) and language barriers, as reasons for the change (Ibid.).

Opponents to the changes in the voter registration methods were highly critical of the government's push to shift the burden of registration from the state (sending enumerators out to contact people) to individuals (who were now themselves responsible for ensuring that they were correctly registered). The biggest problem the opposition had with the change in how voters registered was that they felt that shift was directly correlated with the decreasing voter turnout rates (Black 2003, 18-19). These detractors also felt that Canadians were not making it

to the polls because enumerators were no longer making direct contact with potential voters to remind them that there was an election in a few weeks, acting as encouragement to vote. This problem was most acute with groups of Canadians who are typically less likely to vote, in particular, young Canadians. Indeed, critics felt that these changes in enumeration methods especially affected young people because as a cohort their voter registration numbers were already the lowest, in addition to being the group least likely to be reminded to register to vote (Ibid., 20).

In response to this criticism, Elections Canada started doing targeted enumeration for a few under-represented segments of voters including young people. Beginning in the year 2000, Elections Canada instituted the Youth Community Relations Officer program, where the Returning Officer (for pre-determined ridings) during election periods appointed one person dedicated to encouraging young people to register to vote (Local Outreach in the 41st General Election 2011). This confirmed the Chief Electoral Officer's statement that "Elections Canada is committed to addressing the issue of declining turnout amongst young Canadian voters" (Kingsley 2003, 1-2). The Youth Community Relations Officers, along with their Revisions Officers, enumerated voters at youth-friendly places during the Writ period, such as post-secondary institutions and student residences (Elections Canada Local Outreach in the 41st General Election 2011). Elections Canada has also attempted to set-up polling stations on campuses to make it more convenient for young people to vote (Menard 2010, 3).

British Columbia, on the other hand, has operated with "a revised voters list compiled at the previous election or, more recently, a continuously updated voters register" since the nineteenth century (Courtney 2004, 80-81). Only beginning in 1999 did Elections BC start conducting targeted enumeration (only going to certain pre-determined residences) in order to increase the accuracy of their permanent voters list (Ibid.). Similarly, but not quite as extensively as Elections Canada's Youth Community Relations Officer, Elections BC in 2005 and 2009 hired one Youth Liaison Officer for the province to "reach out to young people to encourage them to register and vote" (Elections BC Turning Youth Non-voters Into Voters 2009). This single employee in each provincial election was tasked with travelling the province

to speak at post-secondary institutions and reaching out to external partners to assist in the effort of getting young people registered and out to vote (Elections BC Turning Youth Non-voters Into Voters 2009).

An idea that has been floated to reverse the lower-than-average number of registered young women is that 16-year-olds should be allowed to pre-register to vote while they are still in high school so that they are already on the voters list when they turn 18-years-old (Archer 2003, 27-28). This is something that is already done in the United Kingdom (Howe 2010, 271) and in some states in the United States of America (United States Elections Assistance Commission National Voter Registration Form). Taking this suggestion one step further are those that believe the voting age in Canada should be lowered to 16-years-old, as this is the age when young people are still in high school and can have a sense of "civic duty" instilled in them (Howe 2010, 271). Voting is a habit (Howe 2007, 10-11), and unlike previous generations, "[t]hose who don't vote in the first few elections they are eligible to exercise their democratic franchise are less likely to become voters later in life" (Elections Canada National Roundtable on Youth Voter Engagement 2012).

In order to increase the number of young people registered, many academics have suggested online voter registration (Elections Canada National Youth Survey 2011; Howe 2010; Archer 2003) because they feel since young people are usually comfortable with, and have easy access, to the internet (Archer 2003, 29; Blais and Loewen 2011, 18-19; Elections Canada National Roundtable on Youth Voter Engagement 2012) it would then be very easy for young people to register to vote, check their registration, and update their registration online (Howe 2010, 271). British Columbia has had this system of online voter registration since 2004 (Howe 2007, 31-33) and Elections Canada introduced it before the 2015 general election (FAQ on Registration). Some academics have even gone as far as suggesting the idea of exploring new technologies and permitting online voting (Elections BC Internet Voting Panel 2013). These proposals try to address the complaint of some youth: that they are too busy with work or school to make the time to go and vote, that they are out of town on Election Day, or that they are unaware of where their polling station is (Pammet and LeDuc 2003, 17).

When it comes to literature that attempts to explain the reasons for declining youth voter turnout in Canada, most of the research comes from the voter behaviour subfield of political science (Blais et al 2002; Pammet and LeDuc 2003; O'Neill 2003; Howe 2010). This research finds that the 1980s were an important decade to note because, prior to this time, young people voted at approximately only ten points less than their senior counterparts (Blais et al 2002, 2). However, over the last thirty years not only has overall voter turnout decreased, but the age gap in voting between older and younger Canadians has increased by at least twenty percentage points. As such, young people not voting *is* the biggest reason for overall voter decline in Canada (O'Neill 2003, 15-18). Recent federal election data demonstrate that this is still the case. In the 1979 federal General Election, the overall voter turnout was almost 76 %, and amongst youth aged 18 to 24, turnout was approximately 66% (Adsett 2003, 251-252). In the 2011 federal election overall turnout increased slightly, from 2008's all-time low, to 61.1%, and youth turnout increased slightly, from 2008, to 38.8%. (Elections Canada National Youth Survey Report 2011).

There have been and continue to be some significant challenges for behaviouralists in researching youth voter turnout. One problem is that since many consider "did not vote" to be a socially inappropriate answer when responding to a researcher's questions, it is hard to get a complete view of the non-voter landscape (Harbaugh 1996, 1-2). As well, in the 2011 Federal Election, fifty percent of the surveyed "non-voters" between the ages of 18-24 stated that they did not cast a ballot because of "administrative and personal circumstances". This included being too busy, lack of knowledge of when to vote, where to vote, or had registration problems (Elections Canada National Youth Survey 2011). The level of truth behind the given reasons has not been determined (Wiseman 2006, 18-20) as election management bodies in Canada, including Elections BC, have actually increased their level of accessibility for voters to get this information in recent years (Elections BC Our Mission, Mandate, Values 2013). When asked about what would get a young person to the polls, for example internet voting, there is no telling if agreement to this idea is just lip service or a legitimate method that would actually encourage more young people to go the polls (Pammet and LeDuc, 2003). Since voter turnout in Canada is measured by the registered voter list against the number of people who cast a

ballot in an election, instead of against the most recent census numbers, the voter turnout percentage is not a representation of the entire eligible voting population (Elections Canada Estimation of Voter Turnout 2011). Voter turnout by age is based on Election's Canada methodology which, while not ideal, it is still a "more accurate measure of voter turnout than survey-based studies, which consistently overestimate participation" (Elections Canada Estimation of Voter Turnout 2011).

Despite some of the conceptual problems related to research on declining youth voter turnout and challenges in terms of youth voter registration, it is important to realize that such research does exist. The research points out that declining youth voting is a driver of overall voter turnout. Further, a significant portion of youth voters seem to not vote due to complications in the voting process such as not being registered, not knowing where to vote, not knowing when to vote, as well as perceiving themselves to be too busy to vote.

2.2 Research on Voter Registrations Projects in Canada and Abroad

In terms of large-scale experimental field research, there has been significant research and results in the area of voter turnout by American political scientists Alan Gerber and Donald Green (Green and Gerber 2008). The most famous and successful of these studies was conducted in 2006, where several hundred thousand registered voters received one of five different mailings to remind them about their civic duty to go and vote (Gerber and Green and Larimer 2008, 36-39). The most successful of these mailings was literature that "promised to publicize their turnout to their household or their neighbours" (Gerber and Green and Larimer 2008, 33). This incredibly successful experiment significantly raised turnout by up to 8.1 percentage points over the control group (Gerber and Green and Larimer 2008, 38). These same political scientists conducted another study three years prior, where they ran door-to-door enumeration projects in six locations around the United States (Green and Gerber 2003, 1083-1085). The result of the project was that the enumerators were able to register 5 to 12 voters per hour (Green and Gerber 2003, 1094).

Furthermore, research has demonstrated that all politics is local and as such the most effective way of reaching out in a campaign is personal, face-to-face, contact (Gerber and Green 2000, 853). If a young person is contacted directly by a political worker or enumerator, that young person is more likely to vote in the election (Gidengil et al 2003, 13; Wiseman 2006, 22). As well, "limited contact with political parties and candidates" (Elections Canada Youth Electoral Participation 2003) is constantly listed as one of the reasons why young people do not show up at the polls (Elections Canada Youth Electoral Participation 2003).

In addition to American research, Elections Canada studies the following topics after each federal election: youth participation, barriers to voting for young people and "steps that should be taken to increase participation by young people" (Menard 2010, 3). Elections Canada also regularly provides assistance for in-depth academic studies on youth electoral participation (Menard 2010, 3-4). It has also held multiple national forums on youth voting. These roundtables have brought together academics, researchers, youth group representatives, media and other affected parties in order to discuss the decline in youth voter turnout and what can be done to reverse the trend (Elections Canada National Forum on Youth Voting 2003; National Roundtable on Youth Voter Engagement). These sessions allow Elections Canada to consult with interested parties and gain insight for potential actions Elections Canada can take going forward in order to increase youth voting (Elections Canada National Forum on Youth Voting 2003). Research that was funded by Elections Canada has resulted in it branching out to work with a couple of non-profit, non-partisan organizations that are dedicating to improving the health of Canadian democracy by encouraging young people to participate in the democracy as well as to vote (Menard 2010, 4-5). In many ways, these initiatives were a reaction to a motion adopted by the Canadian House of Commons calling on Elections Canada to "take initiatives to encourage youth electoral participation in Canada" (Menard 2010, 3).

As such, the experience of Elections Canada in partnering with non-profit community organizations was another body of evidence that was available to the policy makers who I examine in this case study. When financially supporting an initiative to encourage democratic participation amongst young people Elections Canada always asks, as a condition of funding,

that the receiving organizations after the conclusion of the project submit a detailed report evaluating the program. If Elections Canada funds a project that is a recurring or annual project (Democracy Week, mock elections, and so on), Elections Canada still requires and receives a report each time the project is run.

There are several variables that demonstrate why many young people do not vote. Below I combine each of these variables with what Elections Canada has done to specifically address that particular factor and attempt to increase youth voter turnout. The first variable of youth voter turnout decline is what is referred to as the "Life-Cycle effect" (Pammet and Leduc 2003; O'Neill 2007; Blais et al 2002). This effect is caused by a "variety of structural, social, moral, and economic circumstances [and because of this] a smaller proportion of young people vote than do older people" (Barnes 2010, 5). In the past, pre-1980, the younger generation could be counted on to vote as they went through their twenties and thirties and "settled-down," though this is no longer the case (O'Neill 2007, 1-3; Rubenson et al 2004, 407; Blais et al 2002, 5). Usually when people make more money, marry, buy a home, and develop a stake in their community it strengthens their understanding of the political process and their stake within it (Rubenson et al 2004, 409-411; Blais et al 2002, 5). This leads to a related variable, what the literature terms "Generational Replacement" (Blais et al 2002, 2; Adsett 2003, 248). The lack of generational replacement refers to the situation where "despite the fact that young voters are more likely to vote as they get older, they are beginning at such a low level of participation that overall turnout can only be expected to decline" (Blais and Loewen 2011, 12).

In order to reverse these trends, reduce the life-cycle effect, and encourage generational replacement, Elections Canada partnered with Cable in the Classroom, a national, non-profit corporation. Cable in the Classroom wanted to help Canadian teachers enhance the learning experience of their students (Archer 2003, 28; Brown 2003, 47) by running a contest across Canada for Canadian high school students in grades ten to twelve to develop a thirty second public service announcement on "why the democratic process and voting are important" (Kingsley 2003, 2). As well, in the spring of 2003, Elections Canada in a financial partnership with Rush the Vote, an Ontario-based youth organization, held free concerts in high

traffic areas of downtown Ottawa, Toronto, and Edmonton (Milner 2010, 172). The purpose of these performances was to attract young people because "music is the tool by which kids really understand their world" (Brown 2003, 47). At these performances "speakers encouraged young people to get involved in political and social causes and use their right to vote" (Brown 2003, 47). Another project Elections Canada initiated in order to encourage more young people to vote was sending newly enfranchised young Canadians a birthday card. In 2004, over one million young people, all of whom turned eighteen after the 2000 federal election, received a letter from Elections Canada "with a message from the Chief Electoral Officer congratulating them on attaining the right to vote and reminding them to register" (Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada on the 38th General Election Held on June 28, 2004, 46). Part of the reasoning for this project was that being on The National Register of Electors, with the correct information, encouraged young people to vote (Report of the Chief Electoral Officer of Canada on the 38th General Election Held on June 28, 2004, 46).

Another significant variable identified as a cause of the decline in youth voter turnout is that young people no longer feel it is their "civic duty" to vote (Blais et al 2002; Chareka and Sears 2006; Goodman et al, 2011). Those who are newly of legal voting age have "different perceptions, attitudes, and values" (Blais and Loewen 2011, 16) and are less engaged with the political process and thus are less committed to the act of voting (Ibid., 16-17). The literature demonstrates that young people simply do not feel obligated, by nature of their citizenship, to participate in the democratic process by voting (Goodman et al 2011, 860). Not only do the majority of young people lack interest of the democratic arena, but young people who do not vote do not feel guilty about not participating (LeDuc and Pammet 2003, 11). This generation does not see the point of voting, that is, that young people simply do not care enough about politics to vote (Ibid., 17). They feel that not voting is socially acceptable, which is a major shift compared to generations prior (Goodman et al 2011, 860-861). Henry Milner, in his book *The Internet Generation: Engaged Citizens Or Political Dropouts* refers to these apathetic citizens as "political dropouts" (Milner 2005).

In order to combat this lack of "civic duty" feelings, Elections Canada has since 2011 partnered with Apathy is Boring to create "Democracy Week," which usually runs during the middle part of September and extends Democracy Day to an entire week (Canada's Democracy Week News Release 2012). The focus of the week, which is filled with panel discussion in cities across Canada, is to remind young people about the importance of democracy and their participation within it (Canada's Democracy Week About Us 2013). Democracy Week starts with the launch of the National Democracy Challenge, where Canadian residents between the ages of fourteen to thirty are encouraged to submit a visual or written piece of work that demonstrates what democracy means to them (National Youth Challenge 2015). The hopes of this annual initiative is to encourage more young people to get involved and to participate in the democratic process (Canada's Democracy Week About Us 2013).

In 2009, in conjunction with Democracy Day and in order to encourage "civic duty," Elections BC held a video contest where teenage students from around British Columbia "were asked to create a video about democracy in their lives at school, home or with their friends that encourages youth participation in democracy and/or illustrates the values and principles of democracy" (Elections BC Students and Youth 2009).

As mentioned earlier, online voter registration is a method young people are likely to consider, and Elections BC in 2004 was the first province in Canada that allowed for online voter registration, with a valid BC Driver's license (BC First with Internet Voter Registration 2005). Elections BC even went as far, in 2013, as to develop a mobile-friendly version of their website to make it easier for smart phone users to register to vote, update their registration, and find their polling place (News 1130 "How has Elections BC Tried to Boost Voter Turnout?" 2013).

Several studies have linked lack of political knowledge to lower youth voting, so proposed solutions are often based on educational reforms (Howe 2007, 35; Pammet and LeDuc 2003, 7-8). The most popular of these suggestions is that instituting, as part of the curriculum, civic education for senior high school students would assist in reversing the decline of youth voter rates (Howe 2010; Elections Canada National Youth Survey 2011; Gidengil et al 2003; O'Neill 2007). The reasoning behind this suggestion is that since there is a direct and

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significant correlation between political knowledge and casting a ballot (Howe 2010; Menard 2010; Blais et al 2002; Pammet and LeDuc, 2003), the more knowledgeable and informed a young person is about politics and the political players involved, the more likely they are to be motivated to vote (Elections Canada National Youth Survey 2011). However, the majority of young people have very little political knowledge. The youngest voting cohort is, for the most part, unaware whom the federal party leaders are, which party is the Official Opposition, or whom the Federal Finance Minister is (Blais and LeDuc 2002, 25; Gidengil et al 2003, 11). The youngest potential voters are also unable for the most part to name proposed policy promises with the corresponding political party (Blais et al 2002 5-6; Gidengil et al 2003, 17). In light of this, Elections Canada has developed free civic education lesson plans to fit into school curricula, as well as "free educational resources, tools, activities, information and links" for educators (Elections Canada Classroom Resources 2013). All of this information can be found on Elections Canada's young voters website that launched early in 2004 (Elections Canada Classroom Resources).

Student Vote is another example of one of Elections Canada's partnerships that focuses on increasing the political knowledge of young people. Since 2003, Elections Canada has partnered with Student Vote to run parallel elections, during federal and provincial elections, in participating elementary, middle, and high school classes across the country (Menard, 2010; Thiessen, 2006). The goal of this program is to hold mock elections in order to familiarize under age voters with the act of voting and provide an education that includes learning about Canada's political institutions, the political players, issues, and policy platforms (Howe 2010, 275-277; Thiessen 2006, 50-51). Other election management bodies, such as Election BC, also provide Student Vote in an attempt to accomplish the above goal, with ballot boxes, voting screens, electoral maps and ballots as part of their own partnership agreement (Thiessen 2006, 50-51).

It is important to note that with this newfound interest in "civic literacy", maintaining this initial interest of politics in young people is imperative (Milner 2010, 175). This is a difficult task once a young person has left an educational institution (O'Neill 2003, 18-19; Milner 2010, 175-180) as it requires reinforcing the connection between voting and one's life (Haid 2003, 33-

34). As such, research finds that it is important that a focus exist at the workplace on encouraging young people to vote (Stolle and Cruz 2005, 104). Co-workers can be just as influential in encouraging young people to vote (Ibid.). Thus, it has been suggested that election management bodies in Canada should take this connection into consideration when they design their advertisements and promotional material (Elections Canada National Youth Survey 2011; Elections Canada National Roundtable on Youth Voter Engagement 2012).

Finally, a unique idea from the literature is that there should be some fanfare that accompanies a young person's first ballot cast, as it can be an anti-climactic and not at all enticing experience for young people (Howe 2010, 269; Haid 2003, 32). Voting for the first time does not have the same excitement or social importance as other teenage milestones including getting a driver's license or becoming of legal drinking age (Howe 2010, 269). An example of something Elections BC has tried is handing out "I Voted" stickers at the polls to young voters after they cast a ballot (Elections BC - What to expect when you vote).

2.3 Chapter Summary

From this literature review, one can see that there is a large body of evidence concerning the reasons why youth voter turnout has declined and the types of initiatives that have taken place to reverse this situation. For the most part, this evidence is readily available to policy makers in Canada. In the next chapter, I will examine the extent to which this evidence was known and cited by policy makers in my case study as they went through the policy cycle that generated the Youth Registration Project for the 2013 British Columbia provincial election.

In terms of my own topic, it is noteworthy that the literature described above deals exclusively with explaining the reasons behind low youth voter turnout and the initiatives that have been taken to reverse this trend.   I was unable to find any research examining the decision-making processes that led to the creation of youth voter turnout initiatives in Canada or abroad. I could find no research exploring the reasons given for how or why election management bodies choose the methods they do in order to attempt to increase youth voter

turnout rates. As well, I could find no research on how or why election management bodies choose the partnerships they do, or their processes for evaluating the success of these partnerships. This gap in scholarly knowledge is unfortunate. In order to improve the decision-making processes that election management bodies follow to create youth voter turnout initiatives, researchers need to understand and analyze exactly what those decision-making processes are. My research will allow Canadians to understand the background factors, including the legislative, financial, and time constraints, that are involved in the creation of youth voter turnout initiatives and how such projects are evaluated. My research also explores the reasons why election management bodies enter into partnerships with non-for-profit organizations and the extent to which evidence is used when creating youth voter turnout initiatives. Ultimately, better knowledge of the decision-making process that leads to youth voter turnout initiatives could help in improving those initiatives and, hopefully, ensuring that greater numbers of young Canadians vote in future elections.

Chapter 3: 2013 BC Youth Registration Pilot Project

Democracy is an essential part of our Canadian culture and values. With declining voter turnout rates in Canada, especially amongst young people, it has become a priority for election management bodies and non-profits to try and reverse this trend. A healthy democracy depends on the participation of its citizens and the easiest marker of participation is voter turnout rates in an election. In this chapter, I use data from my interview sample analyzed through the theoretical framework of policy cycles to argue that evidence-based policy making is used by professional policy makers, usually those in governmental institutions. On the other hand, decision makers in non-governmental organizations are less likely to purse evidence-based policy making and more likely to follow their intuition.

Evidence-based policy making "represents a contemporary effort to reform or re-structure policy processes in order to prioritize evidentiary or data-based decision-making" (Howlett 2009, 153). The aim of evidence-based policy making is to decrease the likelihood of policy failures created by expectations versus actual outcomes by having as much policy related knowledge as possible before the policy is enacted (Ibid., 154). Ideally, evidence is to be used at each stage of the policy cycle. Evidence is used to identify the problem and the extent of the problem as it exists in the policy makers' jurisdiction. Research is then used to discern the policy options available and decide the optimal policy direction that should be taken. Evidence on the effectiveness of the policy is then gathered during the policy implementation stage and used to evaluate the policy once implementation is complete.

I will be looking at the Youth Registration Project that ran in the 2013 British Columbia Election between the non-profit organization Apathy is Boring and the election management body Elections BC. This project also involved Elections Canada and Get Your Vote On, who were involved in the project at its later stages but not in the initial project planning stages. This

chapter outlines the degree to which these organizations used evidence-based policy making during the policy cycle of this project. As such, I will be looking for proof, or lack thereof, of evidence-based policy making in the formation, application, and evaluation of this project to demonstrate that governmental organizations are more likely to pursue evidence-based decision-making than not-for-profit organizations.

3.1 Research Design

Since there is no literature describing decision-making processes between an election management body and a non-profit organization developing a youth voter outreach project, I had to conduct original primary research. I decided to use a case study because it allowed me to focus on a specific institution and project while at the same time looking at the "broader pattern of behaviour" in order to "shed light on the broader phenomenon" (Archer and Berdahl 2011, 145). In order to collect the data that I needed for my case study, I conducted semi-structured, elite, in-person interviews. I conducted interviews, approximately one hour long, with a total of eleven people, each of whom were a stakeholder in the project and worked for one of the partner groups (Elections BC, Elections Canada, Apathy is Boring, and Get Your Vote On). This was a purposive sample. I conducted prior research on the organizations involved to determine the appropriate actors to interview. My choices were based on the actors who were directly involved with the project or the financing of the project. The interviews were conducted in Victoria, B.C., Gatineau, Quebec, Montreal, Quebec, and Vancouver, B.C. at the offices of each of the organizations, between February 12-26, 2014. The reason that I chose to conduct elite, in-person interviews was because this method is useful for exploratory research: "When little knowledge exists about a subject or when researchers wish to go beyond existing theories and approaches, interview research can help establish a rich understanding of the topic" (Archer and Berdahl 2011, 224). Indeed, my research design allowed me to ask certain questions that needed to be asked in order for me to ascertain the data I needed. And, with semi-structured interviews, it allowed me to probe further in a certain area or ask related questions that a respondent's answer provoked.

The further advantage of doing interviews was that the answers to my questions cannot be found in "written documents and the questions may not be well suited to a survey" (Archer and Berdahl 2011, 224) and through elite interviewing, researchers can access very detailed, directed, and often private, otherwise inaccessible information. Further, it is obvious that "the respondent sets aside a greater amount of time for a personal interview than for telephone or mail back surveys, or for email communication. This allows for more detailed data than can be accessed by other means" (Ibid., 225). I needed the interviews to "take on the tone of a conversation" (Ibid., 223) as the material I was covering may have been seen as sensitive to the respondents as it covered actions performed as part of their job duties. Interviews worked well as "the personal contact that occurs during an interview allows for a sense of rapport to develop between the interviewer and the respondent" (Ibid., 225). Finally, I was examining what was essentially a policy making process and therefore, "intensive interviewing of program managers and staff is an important means of documenting current procedures used in organizational processes" (Ibid.).

Since I was conducting interviews for my research, I had to submit a human ethics application to the University of Saskatchewan's Behavioural Research Ethics Board. My application was accepted and I received confirmation that my project was exempt from an ethics review on January 29, 2014. As well, in order to ensure that my research data were accurate, I recorded all the interviews and had them transcribed. I reviewed all the transcriptions for errors and made any necessary corrections. This resulted in over 116 pages of interview data.

Then using a deductive method, I coded the data using the N-vivo 10 software that allowed me to make sense of my observations "through the identification of themes" (Wesley 2011, 127-141) and allowed me to search for and identify patterns. In Johnny Saldana's book, *The Coding and Manual for Qualitative Researcher* (2009), he makes the clear distinction between deductive and inductive coding. Deductive coding uses predetermined codes and allows for pre-existing frameworks, concepts, or research goals to be imposed upon the data whereas inductive coding does not use predetermined codes and allows the conceptual

framework to arise from the data themselves (Saldana 2009, 237). Since I had pre-determined that I was interested in evidence-based policy making and the manner in which the policy cycle played out, a deductive coding scheme was more appropriate.

I processed the data through two rounds of coding. In the first round I "provisionally coded" the data according to my initial, pre-determined, categories (Ibid., 237). Provisional coding means that I used pre-determined codes in order to analysis my data. Provisional coding also allowed me to initially organize the interview data in way that was appropriate for my second round of coding. In the second round of coding, I "pattern coded" the data merging codes together to form major themes. As such, pattern coding means that I grouped together all of my individual codes into similar ideas in order to identify the larger themes from my research.

3.2 Data Analysis

My interview questionnaire is contained in Appendix A and my list of provisional codes is contained in Appendix B. I expected all the interviewees to describe their desire to encourage young people to vote, their proposals on how to encourage democratic participation amongst young people, if the methods chosen for this were evidence-based, how the projects were executed, and the results of those projects. The provisional coding of the interview data resulted in over 400 instances of the provisional codes being identified (see Appendix C). In the second round of pattern coding, as shown in Appendix D, I determined that there were five themes apparent in the dataset: evidence/non-evidence, goals, project planning, project rationale, and evaluation. These themes made clear how and why the Youth Registration Project proceeded the way it did as well as why the project turned out the way it did. The descriptions of these themes are below.

The first theme was Evidence/Non-evidence. This theme generally captured discussions that showed an awareness of the body of evidence concerning why youth voter turnout is low or the initiatives that have been undertaken to reserve the trend. Additionally, the opposite is captured as well, i.e. guesses about causes of low voter turnout. The next theme was Project

Goals. This theme picked up on how policy makers used evidence when discussing the problem they were attempting to solve. The third theme I identified from my pattern coding was Project Planning. This theme captured any discussions that covered the partnerships involved in this project, as well as their formal agreements together. It also included any codes related to the developing of the project and how evidence played a role in that development. The fourth theme from my second round of coding was Project Rationale. This theme explored how evidence was used in justifying why the project was run and designing how the project was run. The final theme identified in my pattern coding was Evaluation. This theme addressed the challenges and successes of the project. The theme also covered how and why the partners evaluated the project the way they did as well as if policy makers evaluated the project in order to ensure the experiences from the project became evidence for future policy decisions. Based on these themes, it will be evident how evidence-based policy making was employed (or not employed) throughout the policy cycle. I will identify how the professional policy makers used evidence, while the amateur policy makers relied on intuition.

As I discussed earlier, I will be using the public cycle model for addressing the public policy process by which the "actors" went through the stages in the policy cycle and the extent to which they used evidence-based policy making throughout the policy cycle. Although not always the case, this project's development did in fact follow the chronological order of the policy cycle, as I described it in my first chapter.

Agenda Setting is the first stage in the policy cycle and the stage by which problems come to the attention of the government (Howlett and Ramesh 2003,13). In the 2009 provincial election in BC, less than 27% of eligible young people between the ages of 18-24 voted (Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on the 39th Provincial General Election and Referendum on Electoral Reform 2010, 39). Both Elections BC and Apathy is Boring recognized this as a problem that needed to be addressed and both believed that the solution had something to do with registering more youth voters. Furthermore, Elections BC maintains the province of British Columbia's permanent voter registry. Between several information sharing agreements with other provincial bodies and Elections Canada , Elections BC determined, from

their extensive research, that their voters list prior to the end of 2012 was 90-92% accurate. However, according to Apathy is Boring, that number was significantly lower when it came to young voters. Prior to the 2013 British Columbia election, Apathy is Boring hypothesized that only about half of eligible voters in BC between the ages of 18-29 were registered accurately on the provincial voter registry list.

On the other hand, Elections BC used evidence and placed the number of accurately registered youth under the age of thirty, as between 60-72% in 2011 (Elections BC 2011 Voters List Quality Measurement). Indeed, Elections BC's evidence showed two things. First, that their voter list was not as accurate for young people as it was for older cohorts and that it contained room for improvement (Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on Recommendations for Legislative Change 2011). Second, they knew from their extensive research conducted in 2011 that if a voter received an accurate Voter Information Card, they were more likely to vote (Report of the Chief Electoral Officer on Recommendations for Legislative Change 2011). So the Youth Registration Project for Elections BC represented an opportunity to not only increase the accuracy of the voter's list but to also increase the number of voters. Thus, the imperfect voters list and less than ideal voter turnout numbers are considered to be a "problem", as can be seen in Appendix C, for Elections BC due to the evidence that they had gathered and they wanted to address the issue using a research-based approach.

Election management bodies, especially federally, have often worked with non-partisan non-profits to promote voting and it is unofficially part of their institutional agenda. As I mentioned in my literature review, promoting voter turnout has been something that has been fairly regularly occurring for at the least the last ten years and as I mentioned above, it goes hand in hand with increasing the accuracy of the voters list. Encouraging democratic participation has taken many forms for election management bodies, including partnering with concert promoters, holding contests that focused on promoting democracy, having students participate in mock elections, and so on. Elections BC was no stranger to working with partners to promote democratic engagement and since those collaborations had worked in the past, Elections BC had plenty of evidence that a successful partnership was possible.

Prior to becoming to Chief Electoral Officer at Elections BC, Dr. Keith Archer was a professor at the University of Calgary. He had written and co-written several scholarly articles about electoral engagement and voter turnout amongst young people (Archer 1987; Archer and Johnson 1988; Archer 2004; Archer and Coletto 2007). The combination of Dr. Archer's experience and the research that Elections BC had produced internally meant that Elections BC was able to identify low youth voter turnout as a "problem" that they were attempting "solve" through the use of evidence. It also meant that Elections BC was knowledgeable about potential solutions and was open to suggestions for improving the situation with what they understood could work to increase voter turnout amongst young people. Dr. Archer was also very familiar, having worked on some of them himself, with Elections Canada's data on youth voter turnout.

Apathy is Boring is a non-partisan non-profit that was founded over a decade ago in order to specifically reach out to young people to encourage them to participate in democracy ventures, including going to the polls. Apathy is Boring has previously worked with Elections Canada on Canada's "Democracy Week" and the National Youth Challenge, where young people are encouraged to learn about and get involved in the democratic system. Through 'gut instinct', Apathy is Boring believed that there was a large segment of young people that were not being engaged through traditional mediums of post-secondary institutions and that a different segment of young people could be reached out to through the artistic community. This is captured by Apathy is Boring's mission statement which is to "use art and technology to educate youth about democracy" (Handfield et al 2014, 44). During Apathy is Boring's early years, they maintained a strong presence at music festivals in Montreal, gathering research for their `youth friendly' studies through surveys (Bastedo et al 2012, 5; 28). Apathy is Boring also encouraged young people to participate in the democratic process (Ibid.).

Apathy is Boring, in 2008, had started to slowly increase their social media presence and had begun producing guides on informing potential voters how to cast their ballot in upcoming elections. They had also begun to expand the scope of their projects and outreach beyond encouraging democratic participation, by conducting "youth friendly" audits for business and

municipalities where they would educate others about how to reach out to youth in a more meaningful way. This work was important to Apathy is Boring because they felt it showed they had the knowledge and experience to run other projects of this type.

Apathy is Boring also felt that peer to peer contact works best, so they believed their street team approach of using young people to reach out to other young people would be effective. In particular, Apathy is Boring felt that reaching out to young people through arts and technology was the most effective way to increase youth voter turnout. They believed that this was the best way to reach young people who may not be in a post-secondary education program. However, there is no research that supports these conclusions, so Apathy is Boring was making decisions based on intuition. According to their gut, Apathy is Boring strongly believed that they needed to go to cultural events that may have a broader appeal to young people. This is why they proposed that the Youth Registration Project be based on the street teams, who would only attend concerts, movie nights, and festivals even though there is no research that suggests that this venue specific outreach is a better way to find young people. This particular method of enumerating people significantly restricted the places that Apathy is Boring allowed their street teams to go. For example, the street teams were not permitted to enumerate at malls, bars, restaurants, sporting events, and so on.

So both groups identified above were aware of the issue of low youth voter turnout, both sets of "actors" possessed the requisite enthusiasm and the institutional position necessary (Howlett and Ramesh 2003, 128) and both organizations were willing to work together, which was crucial (Ibid., 16). Since Elections BC and Apathy is Boring both recognized the low youth voter turnout rates as a problem, it allowed the groups to work together and put this issue on the institutional agenda (Ibid., 128). However, at this first stage of the policy cycle, Elections BC had already illustrated a greater tendency for evidence-based policymaking than Apathy is Boring, which relied on intuition.

The second stage of the policy cycle is policy formation. In the Spring of 2012, Dr. Keith Archer, the Chief Electoral Officer at Elections BC, met Ilona Dougherty, who was the Executive Director of Apathy is Boring at the time, at an Elections Canada workshop on youth voter

engagement. This was the first time they had met and it began the relationship between the two organizations. Shortly after their initial meeting, Dr. Archer was in Montreal for another engagement and while there, he took some time to meet with Ilona Dougherty and the members of the Apathy is Boring staff. It was at this point they had their first discussion about the role Apathy is Boring could play in youth voter engagement and registration activities in British Columbia for the upcoming provincial election. Elections BC, as the election management body, was already doing targeted enumeration door to door and in public facilities around the province (grocery stores, libraries, etc.) to register and update voters' information as they prepared for the upcoming provincial election. Furthermore, Elections BC had already designed their budget for the 2013 election year and there was no money set aside for this specific project. Nonetheless, Elections BC strongly desired to invest in generating the highest possible quality voters list so as to increase voter turnout and what Apathy is Boring was offering as a pilot project perfectly meshed with this desire, so Elections BC found the resources necessary to invest in this project. This step in the policy making process is a very important component because if Elections BC had not agreed to Apathy is Boring's proposal, the project could not have progressed. As well, if Elections BC had not wanted to work with Apathy is Boring's choice of solution, the Youth Registration Project would also have not progressed.

The idea behind the Youth Registration Project was to have young voters to encourage their peers to get registered to vote by approaching them at events aimed at a younger demographic. Apathy is Boring believed based on their own intuition, that peer to peer contact was the best way to reach out and contact the younger segment of the population they were trying to reach. Apathy is Boring also proposed to take advantage of the legislation in BC that lays out pre-determined election dates. This meant that they could use the routinized political windows in which institutionalized procedural events dictate predictable window openings (Howlett and Ramesh 2003, 157). So in the meeting with Dr. Keith Archer, Apathy is Boring proposed a unique project for Canada. They would organize street teams who would attend arts and music events to reach out to young people and get them to register to vote at those events. Apathy is Boring, in their meeting with Elections BC, guessed what they felt they might

accomplish. Apathy is Boring guessed that they could recruit 50-60 volunteers who would attend at least 40 events across British Columbia to interact with 14,000 youth and register 8,000 young voters. As Apathy is Boring had never run a project similar to this one, nor had they run any significant projects in British Columbia, they had no evidence that their goals were realistic.

The rationale of Apathy is Boring in proposing and executing this project was that it fulfilled their mandate and mission. It was a priority for the organization to encourage youth voter turnout and this was an opportunity to work with an election management body, form a partnership, and conduct a pilot project that was unique to Canada. It was also an opportunity to form relationships with other youth-focused groups. Additionally, the Youth Registration Project gave Apathy is Boring the chance to test out their theory that this type of project would increase voter turnout and it gave Apathy is Boring practical 'on the ground' experience of reaching out to engage young potential voters through the arts.

While Elections BC knew that increasing the accuracy of the provincial voters list would increase voter turnout, they failed to calculate the risk of funding the Youth Registration Project. It seems that Elections BC did not do their due diligence in using evidence based policy making to determine if the number of voters Apathy is Boring proposed they could register was realistic since Apathy is Boring was pursuing a theory of increasing youth voter turnout that was solely based on intuition.

The third stage in the policy cycle is decision making: the process by which the government adopts a course of action or non-action (Howlett and Ramesh 2003, 162). After the first meeting/project proposal between Apathy is Boring and Elections BC, things moved quickly. Initially, Elections BC was hesitant to pursue the project as their budget for the 2013 provincial election had already been finalized, but they saw the potential benefit in pursuing this type of pilot project and wanted to move forward with developing a project in partnership with Apathy is Boring. Elections BC did follow proper action channels by having Apathy is Boring sign a formal contract to work on this project. As Howlett and Ramesh note, something government/ professional policymakers must do is follow a "regularized set of standard

operating procedures for producing certain types of decisions" (Ibid., 164). This stage is an important part of the policy cycle as this is where government institutions either commit or refrain from pursuing some sort of action (Ibid., 162). The parameters of this stage in the policy cycle process have several different variables that are discussed below. These variables are agents, setting, problem, information, and time (Ibid., 181). This process plays out differently for each of the actors in an institutional system (Ibid.).

From May to June of 2012, less than a year from the start of the upcoming writ period, Apathy is Boring and Elections BC agreed upon expectations, responsibilities, and compensation. Ideally, both parties would have had more time to present, research, and fine tune the project, but the reality of this stage in the process was that the actors involved did not have the time to make perfect decisions. Elections BC, as the professional policy maker, considered other groups that had informally approached them but they received no serious proposals, besides the one from Apathy is Boring, which made it easy for them to fulfill the obligation as part of the policy cycle to consider the full array of alternatives (Ibid., 162).

Elections BC felt that their evidence demonstrated that the Provincial Voters List could be more precise for younger voters and, according to the same evidence, an improved voters list would mean higher youth voter turnout. Their emphasis of evidence-based decision-making is evident here. Unfortunately, the unique type of project that Apathy is Boring was hoping to conduct did not have any supporting Canadian research. However, Elections BC knew that certain aspects of the proposed Youth Registration Project, like physical enumeration of potential voters, could improve the precision of the Provincial Voters List (Election Advisory Committee 2012). Elections BC decided to fund this project strictly as a pilot project to see if it could, in fact, improve the accuracy of the voting list. A pilot project was the perfect solution for the proposal, which did not have proper evidence to back it up. As such, Elections BC's decision to move ahead with the project as a pilot actually reveals their commitment to evidence-based policy making.

Elections BC agreed to financially support the project that Apathy is Boring was proposing (including costs covering travel, staff time, promotional material, and so on) as well

as provide material (Voter Information pamphlets), staff time (to receive registrations, track registrations, and train volunteers), and other necessary resources (t-shirts, counters, pens, etc.) for the entire duration of the Youth Registration Project. In return, Apathy is Boring was to, based on their own guess, register 200 voters per event they attended in BC, supervise the volunteers of the street teams, ensure that all of Elections BC procedures were met, and supervise the overall project. Elections BC signed a formal agreement with Apathy is Boring to this effect.

The Project involved several different pieces. There were official partnerships, formal agreements, stakeholders and interested groups, all of whom played a different role. The plan for this project was for Apathy is Boring to go out and register voters (mostly young voters between 18-29) in person at certain types of venues (including movies, concerts, festivals, and so on) in order to improve the accuracy of the permanent list of electors in British Columbia. The project proposed by Apathy is Boring was innovative for Canada. Never before had a non-profit, non-partisan organization worked directly with an election management body to register voters and improve the voters list, so the decision made to solve the identified problem was innovative and unique.

The next stage of the policy cycle is implementation. Generally, policy implementation in Canada is a top-down approach with the government passing legislation for the bureaucracy to enforce and for Canadians to follow (Howlett and Ramesh 2003, 185), and this project was no different despite the slightly different context. Elections BC and Apathy is Boring were making all the decisions, but it was Get Your Vote On (the B.C. based non-profit that Apathy is Boring sub-contracted) that was doing all the on the ground work. As I explain below, Get Your Vote On was confined to the project parameters set by Elections BC and Apathy is Boring. In this way, the project with Apathy is Boring and Elections BC was unique for a provincial election management body and a non-profit. It required multiple partners each of whom had a similar mission, which was to cooperate together and organize a province-wide project that was new territory for all those involved. This was apparent from the information gained in each stakeholder's interview. Once Elections BC and Apathy is Boring had signed a formal

agreement to partner on the Youth Registration Project it was time to get started on putting solutions into effect to solve the "problem" of lower rates of youth voting. This part of the policy cycle, policy implementation, or putting solutions into effect is a difficult task (Howlett and Ramesh 2003, 185) as I demonstrate in this section of my chapter.

Though Apathy is Boring is a national organization, their office, staff, and most of their community connections are based in Montreal. In order to have an on-the-ground team organizing, supervising, and conducting the street teams needed for the project, their Executive Director (Ilona Dougherty) reached out to a Vancouver-based organization, Get Your Vote On, and their Executive Director Kevin Millsip. The two Executive Directors had a pre-existing relationship that stemmed from their organizations both encouraging young people to participate in the democratic process. Fortunately, Get Your Vote On was interested in becoming involved in the project and running the on-the-ground operations of the Youth Registration Project, so Apathy is Boring formally sub-contracted them. Thus, Get Your Vote On reported directly to Apathy is Boring and not Elections BC, though they were all considered partners for this project.

Get Your Vote On in past provincial elections had actively reached out to young people to encourage them to vote and this project provided them an opportunity to be actively involved in British Columbia's 2013 provincial election. However, they had not actively registered voters before, although they had worked in a peer-to-peer street team manner before handing out stickers and information.

Get Your Vote On has been active in the Metro Vancouver region for just over a decade. Their focus is also on encouraging young people to vote but just at the provincial and municipal level. Get Your Vote On strives to encourage young people to vote in fun and engaging ways. For example, during electoral events between 2005 -2012 they held "speed dating" events for people to meet and ask questions of their local candidates in short-timed meetings (Thomson 2011). They also held bike rallies and excessive sticker campaigns which plastered stickers all over the Lower Mainland. Other initiatives Get Your Vote On had conducted to encourage

young people to vote included photo booths, vote mobs, and "caucus cabaret and candidate debates" (The Biltmore Caucus Cabaret; Candidates Debate Tickets).

Get Your Vote On, as an organization, had experience running voter outreach campaigns. Their rationale for taking on the Youth Registration Project was because it was an opportunity to fulfil their mission of encouraging young voters in British Columbia to cast a ballot. It was also a chance to build on their previous experience of reaching out to young people and a way to stay active in this provincial election, as they had not yet developed a project plan for the British Columbia's 2013 Election after being active for previous municipal and provincial elections.   They used no evidence to gauge the potential effectiveness of the project or estimate the impact that they efforts may have.

Get Your Vote On was responsible for coordinating and supervising the volunteers, collecting the number of people the volunteers interacted with, and mailing any completed registration forms to Elections BC. While Get Your Vote On was carrying out this project, it actually had very little control of the overall project. Any ideas that Get Your Vote On floated during the project based on what they were seeing, like enumerating at more than just cultural activities including transit and pedestrian hubs, required Apathy is Boring's final decision. Get Your Vote On was not a decision maker in any part of this public policy process.

Elections Canada was also not a part of the planning or the execution of the project. They were alerted to the project by Elections BC and Apathy is Boring, as it is the type of project that may be beneficial for their election management body to observe in order to improve the accuracy of their voter's list, the National Register of Electors, and to improve youth voter turnout. Elections Canada, as I mentioned in Chapter Two, has produced or been involved in the research and production of many reports, academic articles, and surveys that address low voter turnout amongst young Canadians including the very frequently referenced "Explaining the Turnout Decline in Canadian Federal Elections: A New Survey of Non-voters" by Jon Pammet and Lawrence LeDuc (O'Neill 2007; Rubenson et al 2007; Pammet and Doman 2004; Stolle and Cruz 2005; Howe 2007). Many of Elections Canada's practices (working with non-profits, producing educational material, holding mock elections in schools, and so on) have

been adapted by other provincial election management bodies (Election & Outreach 2015; For Educators 2015; Learning About Elections 2015; Past Results 2015) including Elections BC (Students & Youth 2015). Nonetheless, neither Apathy is Boring nor Get Your Vote On formally consulted with Elections Canada when implementing the Youth Voter Registration Project.

Elections Canada, as part of their continuing research and desire for evidence-based policy making, was looking at different enumeration efforts and wanted to know about the Youth Registration Project's effectiveness. In order to gain this information, Elections Canada provided Apathy is Boring with additional funds to produce a final report on this pilot project "to evaluate the effectiveness of key tactics using quasi-experimental methods and qualitative interviewing" (Handfield et al 2014, 9). Elections Canada had no input on how, when, where, or why the project was done; they simply observed part of the efforts and then waited to receive the final report for their own research. The rationale for Elections Canada to provide financial support in order to receive a final report on the project was that it was an opportunity for Elections Canada to see if this was a project worthwhile for the next federal election. In short, it was an opportunity to gather evidence for future projects, and this supports my argument that mature, government-based institutions are more likely to follow evidence-based policy making compared to amateur non-profits.

Neither Elections BC or Elections Canada was involved in the day-to-day operations of the project. Elections BC was only responsible for compiling the statistics on the registration forms collected and providing financial support. Elections Canada sent representatives to observe the enumeration process, but they had no involvement besides providing financial support. Overall, the rationale for all of the partnering organizations working together was their shared goals to increase the number of registered voters, increase voter turnout, and increase youth turnout numbers. Ultimately, the goal of all the partners was to see if this project significantly increased the accuracy of the voters list and youth voter turnout for British Columbia's 2013 provincial election.

Apathy is Boring and Get Your Vote On recruited volunteers, planned the locations that they would enumerate, and coordinated with venue staff. Get Your Vote On supervised all the

volunteers, ensured they had all necessary supplies, and communicated with Apathy is Boring on any questions or suggestions they had. Apathy is Boring did their best from Montreal to ensure that the project was running according to plan and to make any adjustments as they saw fit as the project progressed.

Once the project had been finalized, the contracts signed, and the expectations set, Apathy is Boring and Get Your Vote On started recruiting volunteers. They began the process in mid-February and both groups reached out to anyone in their networks (previous volunteers, mailing list subscribers, social media followers/posts, etc.) in British Columbia to encourage potential volunteers for "youth vote mobilization" (Email: 'Youth vote mobilizing - street team volunteers needed!' Feb 21, 2013) with the promise of "[f]ree shows, community engagement, and meeting awesome people" (Email: 'Youth vote mobilizing - street team volunteers needed!' Feb 21, 2013). They hoped to recruit fifty to sixty volunteers, preferably in the 18-35 age category as they were aiming for a peer to peer approach in registering voters. In the end, 79 individuals signed up for the opportunity and 33 actively participated in multiple Street Team events (Handfield et al 2014, 14).

In order to prepare the volunteers for what was expected of them, Apathy is Boring developed a Street Team Manual that outlined the process and expectations, and "acted as a comprehensive guide offering practical tips" for everyone involved on the street teams' activities including the Get Your Vote On coordinators (Ibid.). Apathy is Boring took pride in this manual as they felt it came from having "carefully documented lessons learned from seven years of nonelection Street Teams along with best practices in youth engagement tactics" (Ibid.). However, Apathy is Boring did not provide any explanations as to what these tactics were or what specific evidence the best practises drew from.

Once the volunteers had been recruited and the manual had been produced it was time to bring everyone together. On March 7th, 2013, Apathy is Boring held their first of two training sessions (the other being on March 10th) for their street team volunteers. The training session had several speakers from Elections BC including Chief Electoral Officer Dr. Keith Archer, Apathy is Boring, and Get Your Vote On who discussed the project, enumeration, expectations of the

volunteers, and tips for enumerating. At the training session, "volunteers were trained on the processes for receiving 200A forms [Elections BC's paper voter registration forms] and how to handle confidential information" (Ibid.). Training attendees were also taught techniques for how to approach a potential voter in public. At the conclusion of the training event the volunteers were given a uniform (a t-shirt designed by Apathy is Boring and Elections BC) and the opportunity to sign up for shifts at different concerts and event that had already been pre-determined. A link to a Google document was also sent out to volunteers post-training, to be used for volunteers to sign up for events, as they were added on to the schedule and Get Your Vote On coordinators were placed in charge of arranging for the Street Teams to attend the events.

When it came to arrange events for the street teams to attend, Apathy is Boring laid out the step-by-step process for Get Your Vote On and this process was specified in Apathy is Boring's report following the project: "The coordinators would contact the following persons in this order, until they had approval to send Street Teams to an event: the musicians themselves, the musicians' manager, the event promoter, and the venue manager" (Handfield et al 2014, 14-15). For six weeks between March 8, 2013 and April 19, 2013, Apathy is Boring and Get Your Vote On carried out Street Team activities across British Columbia in an attempt to register a significant number of youth voters at cultural events around the province. At each event attended by a Street Team (between one and five people), there was one staff person from Get Your Vote On, "a coordinator", who was there to supervise and was responsible for volunteer coordination and troubleshooting.

The coordinators also brought all the necessary materials, clipboards, clickers, t-shirts, registration forms, pamphlets, digicleans, et cetera. The street teams' outreach activities were carried out in several cities in British Columbia, including Vancouver, Burnaby, Kelowna, and Victoria, at events such as concerts, theaters, and other similar events. Enumeration was conducted using a "tabling" approach and by "talking to passers-by on the street." Social media was also used to promote the events to encourage people to register at the event. For the street team volunteers, the process was just as specific as the process for coordinating events

to attend. At each Street Team event, volunteers would approach youth to ask if they were registered to vote and if not, whether they wanted to register on the spot. The volunteers were told to approach other young people with an approachable manner and to start a conversation with them.

The Street Teams wore t-shirts that identified their association with the street team and they carried registration sheets and tally counter clickers. They also carried information pamphlets for people who wanted more information about voter registration, and a pamphlet and a screen cleaner to give to those who registered to vote. Elections BC, as part of their agreement, asked that Apathy is Boring keep track of every aspect of the Youth Registration Project for research purposes. So Apathy is Boring and Get Your Vote On asked that each street team member keep track of each "interaction", an attempt to try and register someone to vote, and the number of filled-in registration forms from each event. After each event, every registered form was counted and couriered to Elections BC headquarters where it was checked, entered into the provincial voters list, and tracked. This tracking system illustrated Elections BC's dedication to evidence-based policy making as the tracking would provide a concrete measurement of the outcome of the project which could be used to guide future decisions. Over the six weeks that this project was conducted, the Street Teams interacted with several thousand British Columbians and collected a few hundred 200As (voter registration forms) from over four dozen events (Handfield et al 2014, 13). The total number of volunteer hours given to this project from the street team members was 248 (Handfield et al 2014, 24).

The last stage of the policy cycle is evaluation (Howlett and Ramesh 2003, 219). My coding revealed that, as demonstrated in Appendix B and Appendix C, evaluation and problems were consistent themes identified by my interview subjects. I will expand on these themes in this section.

All of the stakeholders from the Youth Registration Project agreed that there were challenges, concerns, problems, and very high expectations for this voter enumeration project. They also agreed, as they reflected on the project, that there were successful parts of the project.   All the partners highlighted that it was important to remember that this project was a

pilot and thus the learning curve was steep for everyone involved. At the time of the interviews, all the partner organizations were holding off on giving their final perspective on the project as they were waiting for Apathy is Boring to submit their final report. Apathy is Boring did subsequently submit a final report a few weeks after my interviews with their employees and Elections Canada released that report publicly about five months after receipt.

Even before the Youth Registration Project had ended in April of 2013, it was clear that the project had experienced difficulties from the beginning. Apathy is Boring had promised to register two hundred voters per event when they proposed the project to Elections BC, but in practise they were averaging about eleven completed registration forms per event. Additionally, Apathy is Boring had promised to attend a large number of events that were artistic or cultural in nature, but they were unable to do that for two reasons, according to Get Your Vote On staff. First, there was simply not the same number of these types of events in the Lower Mainland and the rest of British Columbia compared to Montreal, where Apathy is Boring runs the majority of their events. Second, of the events that were happening in Vancouver, Apathy is Boring and Get Your Vote On often did not have the appropriate contacts to be able to enumerate at these venues, so that reduced the number of events the Street Teams were hoping to attend.

Apathy is Boring guessed that during the course of the Youth Registration Project they would have at least three hundred fifty "interactions" per event, that is the number of people approached about registering to vote, and at least 200 of these people would be registered to vote by the Street Teams. Apathy is Boring also guessed that the Street Teams would attend at least forty events for a total of 14,000 interactions, and 8,000 voter registrations over the course of the Youth Registration Project. These predictions by Apathy is Boring were the basis of their proposal and promises to Elections BC. However, Apathy is Boring did not have any evidence that these were realistic goals for the organization to achieve in attempting to register voters.

In the end, the Street Teams only interacted with a total of 10,511 persons over the course of fifty one events (19 concerts/live shows, 17 street outreach attempts on

sidewalks/public places, 10 on-campus events, 3 festivals and 2 movie nights) across British Columbia (Handfield et al 2014, 13). Since the Street Teams were not able to register as many potential voters or attend as many "arts" events as they had hoped, Get Your Vote On sought permission to try and increase the overall numbers by attempting to register young voters at the busy pedestrian intersections, transit hubs, and at post-secondary institutions rather than just at "arts" events. This did not make a significant increase in the overall number of young British Columbians registered, but it did increase the numbers of "interactions" and these "street outreach" events made up one third of the Youth Registration Project events attended.

Expanding the scope of venues that Apathy is Boring used to reach out to young people by in order to increase the number of interactions with youth did demonstrate that the organization recognized evidence based research and was capable of making some evidence-based decisions in conducting the Youth Registration Project.

The evaluation of this project was very different for each of the organizations involved in both opinion and method. Thus, I have divided the section below by each stakeholder to better describe the problems and issues with the project that were identified during the interviews and subsequent coding.

As I mentioned previously, Apathy is Boring proposed to Elections BC that they could register two hundred people per street team attended event. This seemed to be overly ambitious to Elections BC but they were intrigued by a project that was promising to significantly improve the quality of the voters list, especially for those under the age of thirty, so Elections BC agreed to the project. A significant barrier to registering the promised number of people per event, according to Apathy is Boring and Get Your Vote On staff, was that most people claimed to be registered already when asked by the Street Teams. This was not an excuse from uninterested potential voters, but was rather the result of Elections BC's information sharing agreements with various provincial agencies and Elections Canada. As mentioned previously, Elections BC's own research indicated that 90-92% of eligible British Columbians were accurately registered, so it was possible that many of the young people contacted by the project were already registered. Additionally, many of the events attended by

the street teams had far fewer than two hundred people in attendance so achieving 200 registrations would have been impossible.

Apathy is Boring staff was in the midst of writing their final report when I interviewed them. They knew the expectations for their organization were set unreasonably high but they also thought that they did well, considering that this was the first time they ran the project and they were pleased that they now had something to show other election management bodies in the future. Apathy is Boring admitted that since they did not have their own staff on the ground, they were fully dependant on Get Your Vote On and that led to a difficult relationship. It was also difficult because none of the Apathy is Boring staff who initially proposed the project to Elections BC were still with the organization at the conclusion of the Youth Registration Project. This further exacerbated a tough situation for Apathy is Boring because the individuals who were responsible for developing and proposing the Youth Registration Project were not involved in the execution or evaluation of the project, and were therefore not accountable for the project. Apathy is Boring's staff evaluated this project as a tremendous learning experience for a project they had never done before. They realised early on into the project that that their voter registration targets were too lofty, that they needed more on-the-ground staff directly from Apathy is Boring, and that they required a different communication strategy with partner organizations.

In their published report, Apathy is Boring was quick to point out all their successes with their project even though their results were not what they had initially believed could be achieved when developing this project. They were incredibly pleased that they achieved so many "interactions", even though there were fewer than what had been promised. Apathy is Boring found that "eye-catching banners, t-shirts, swag items and prize incentives were tactics that Street Teams were able to adapt—in varying degrees—to each event" (Handfield et al 2014, 17). Apathy is Boring felt that these resources were effective in breaking the ice with strangers at events (Ibid.).

Apathy is Boring learned, during the course of the project, that they could register the largest number of people at larger concerts where they could approach people with more time,

while they were in line and during intermission (Ibid.). They also found that stopping pedestrians on the street was not effective, as people were hesitant to stop for an unknown cause. As well, Apathy is Boring guessed that the outside factors that may have lowered the numbers of voters they registered included weather, time spent doing the outreach, and the nature of the crowd (already politically engaged, those not eligible to vote, older than targeted population, and non-English speakers).

At the end of their formal evaluation report, funded by Elections Canada, Apathy is Boring proposed recommendations based on two assertions. First, Apathy is Boring guessed that the reason people registered as part of the Youth Registration Project was because the "people who chose to engage with the Street Teams may have been more politically engaged and/or motivated to vote to begin with, thus explaining why they agreed to complete the 200A form" (Ibid., 28). Second, Apathy is Boring believed that "the effectiveness of face-to-face voter mobilization, and the peer-to- peer interactions may have acted as a reminder and an inducement to vote" (Ibid.). However, they did not present any evidence to prove these two assertions. Ultimately, Apathy is Boring came away from the Youth Registration Project firmly believing their work should continue as "increased interactions between election management bodies, community groups with access to youth, and organizations specializing in youth electoral engagement so that best practices and knowledge can be shared and messaging amplified" (Ibid., 44). However, Apathy is Boring gave no evidence that their approach of registering young people in a peer to peer manner or through "arts and technology" was at all effective or financially worthwhile.

As mentioned earlier in the chapter, Get Your Vote On, while responsible for executing the project, had very little to do with the design or decision-making of the Youth Registration Project, a reality they found quite frustrating. Both Apathy is Boring and Get Your Vote On were dedicated to increasing youth voter turnout, but these non-profits had vastly different philosophies and approaches on how to do so. All the staff I interviewed from Get Your Vote On who worked on the Youth Registration Project were very firm in their conviction that they could have had significantly more success in their youth outreach attempts if their work and ideas

were not constrained so severely by Apathy is Boring. Get Your Vote On had to run every question and suggestion for the project by Apathy is Boring's staff, which was problematic since Apathy is Boring's office and staff (at least after the first few days of the project) were in Montreal. The three-hour time difference and changeover of project staff at Apathy Is Boring mid-way through the project also made communication incredibly difficult. Additionally, Get Your Vote On found it very difficult to work with Apathy is Boring's constraints, which included difficult to reach targets and a lack of receptiveness to many of the changes suggested by Get Your Vote On that could have helped them to meet the registration goal, such as enumerating at sporting events.

Get Your Vote On did both an internal review of the project and debriefs with Elections BC and Apathy is Boring, although that conversation was confidential. Get Your Vote On's staff felt strongly that they would not partner again with Apathy is Boring, or any group, as they felt they had the knowledge and resources to run their own project. They also wanted to be able to design their own project, as they had for previous elections, and not have to follow the direction, ideas, expectations, rules, and the mission of another organization, as was the case with Apathy is Boring and indirectly with Elections BC.

Elections BC, after they had approved the project, was very hands off with its delivery. They were only collecting and tracking the voter registration forms that came in from the Youth Registration Project. In their interviews, the Elections BC staff emphasised that the project they ran with Apathy is Boring was a pilot project and would be evaluated as such. Though expectations had been set, it was a unique project and was an experiment of sorts. Elections BC was keen not to judge the project until the final report from Apathy is Boring had been submitted. They felt that they couldn't state if this was a project they would invest in again until that report was handed in.

That being said, Elections BC, from the initial data during the Youth Registration Project, was very aware that Apathy is Boring and Get Your Vote On were not delivering the two hundred registration forms per event that Apathy is Boring had stated they would deliver. This was traceable as all the labelled registration forms that the Street Teams were collecting went

directly to Elections BC after each event. Elections BC was not overly concerned about this as they knew this was a pilot project. However, Elections BC staff did point out that the Canadian Federation of Students, on their own initiative, registered three times the number of potential voters that Apathy is Boring did during a similar timeframe. The Canadian Federation of Students did this by asking student unions at universities and colleges around British Columbia to conduct voter registration drives. Though Elections BC did not want to pass judgement on the Youth Registration Project, based on information provided, they seemed disappointed by the initial results of the project.

Elections Canada, similarly to Elections BC, did not participate in the delivery in the Youth Registration Project but did provide funding for an evaluation report. They felt that Apathy is Boring may have overreached in what they indicated they could do, but they were waiting for the final report to make any conclusions. Elections Canada staff were keen to note that the main purpose of the project was for it to be an educational experience and they wanted to learn what they could from the project. As well, Elections Canada wanted to determine if it would be useful to pursue similar options in terms youth voter outreach in the future. It was also useful to them for planning and programming purposes. This approach is proof of Elections Canada pursuing evidence-based policy making as a professional policy actor. Even though Elections Canada was not funding the operations of this project, they did see merit in funding an evaluation of the project that could provide evidence for the decisions that the organization may need to make in terms of the upcoming federal election.

Elections Canada staff noted that they were worried that Apathy is Boring could be developing a habit of over-promising and under-delivering. As well, Elections Canada was concerned, with *The Fair Elections Act* having been introduced into the House of Commons, that they were not going to be able to run any programs, enumeration or otherwise, targeted at potential voters because of the restrictions that the legislation created.

Elections Canada staff stated that their main purpose in funding the Youth Registration Project was to be able to have solid evidence in order to evaluate if the project was a worthwhile endeavour. They said this would be useful information for decision-making around

future youth outreach projects.

3.3 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I discussed how the partner organizations involved in the Youth Registration Project followed the traditional policy cycle framework outlined in Chapter One. I described how Apathy is Boring and Elections BC recognized the problem of low voter turnout, proposed a joint venture, chose an enumeration approach, implemented the Youth Registration Project, and monitored the results. I also demonstrated how Elections BC made evidence-based decisions when supporting the Youth Registration Project, while Apathy is Boring pursued a decision-making approach based more on their intuition.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

The purpose of this thesis was to investigate the decision-making practises behind youth voter turnout initiatives that are run in partnership between election management bodies and non-profits by using a case study from the 2013 provincial election in British Columbia. This involved looking at the how Elections BC and Apathy is Boring tried to increase youth voter turnout rates, why they chose these initiatives and partnerships, and how they evaluated these initiatives and partnerships. It also included examining if these organizations used evidence-based policy making practices and the degree to which they did.

Elections BC and Apathy is Boring came together because they shared a similar goal: they wanted to encourage young people to vote in the 2013 provincial election in British Columbia. Elections BC chose to work with Apathy is Boring because Elections BC was approached with a reasonable proposal involving targeted enumeration and encouraging people to vote at cultural events by Apathy is Boring. Elections BC considered this proposal worth pursuing as a pilot project. Apathy is Boring chose to work with Elections BC because the election management body could provide the non-profit with the financial resources to support the project. While Elections BC did not publicly release an evaluation report on the Youth Registration Project, they did state that they would evaluate it as a pilot project. On the other hand, Apathy is Boring did submit an evaluation report to Elections Canada that was released publicly. The report detailed the Youth Registration Project and was quite self-congratulatory. The analysis in my third chapter made it very clear that both Elections BC and Apathy is Boring, although not the traditional type of organizations identified in the policy cycle literature, clearly followed the normal policy cycle framework. As well, the five major themes I identified in my second round of coding fit well with the policy cycle theoretical framework, demonstrating that though the basis for the decisions made by the two organizations were different, they still

made those decisions by going through the proper stages in the ideal order. From the data collected and analysis done, it was very clear that professional policy makers, those in government (in this case an election management body), made decisions based on evidence compared to their counterparts in the non-profit section who tended to be more amateur and more likely to follow their intuition.

What we learn from this project is that it is very important that each stakeholder must do their due diligence before agreeing to and subsequently delivering a project. Apathy is Boring and Elections BC should have conducted exploratory research to see if registering 200 young people per event was an appropriate goal. As well, my case study demonstrates that in order to avoid disappointing project results, election management bodies need to be cautious about with whom they partner, and that due diligence is done to ensure that realistic targets have been set and then are subsequently met by the partnering organization.

The gap in the literature that my thesis fills is the decision-making processes of election management bodies and non-profits in pursuing voter outreach projects and partnerships together. I have clearly demonstrated how the policy cycle is followed in a logical sequence by both types of organizations, though they do differ when it using evidence-based research. These organizations are using public funds to support projects so it is important to know the rationale behind their decision-making. All of this information is essential, because it creates a template for developing youth voter turnout projects in Canada in municipal, provincial and federal elections.

All election management bodies in Canada are arm's length government agencies responsible for conducting elections and every election management body in Canada is very similar in its policies, processes, and values. These similarities also exist for voter focused non-partisan non-profit organizations. Thus these parallels allow me to extrapolate my case study to the larger field of electoral administration in Canada and allows me assert that, in general, all election management bodies, when partnering with a non-profit organization, conduct voter

outreach projects by following the policy cycle framework in a logical order. However, I would be hesitant to apply the findings of my research to line departments within government bureaucracies that report directly to ministers. This research in this thesis applies more to arm's length government agencies and non-partisan non-profit organizations.

Based on the research presented in my thesis, I would make three recommendations for future partnership projects between election management bodies and non-profits.

My first recommendation is that election management bodies should have some method of demonstrating that their goals are realistic. This can be achieved by having partnering groups show that they are capable, through a small scale initiative, of the work they say they are capable of doing. Apathy is Boring stated to Elections BC and received funding on the promise that they would interact with 14,000 young people aged 18-34 and register 8,000 of those individuals. However, Apathy is Boring's street teams only managed 208 new youth voter registrations, or 2.6% of what they had promised Elections BC. This proposed 'test run' would show that the partnering non-profit organizations goals are legitimate. This would prevent organizations from setting very high expectations that they cannot possibly meet.

My second recommendation is that non-profits wanting to partner with election management bodies should be able to demonstrate, prior to the signing of a formal contract, a sample of the work they want to do within a specific geographic location. Apathy is Boring had never run a youth voter enumeration project before, nor had they been required to reach out to those responsible for organizing musical events in Vancouver or British Columbia. The lack of experience and lack of connections were part of the reason the Youth Registration Project did not meet anyone's expectations. The development of a portfolio of work done by non-profits working in the area of increasing youth voter turnout could be very useful to government policy makers looking to partner with these groups.

My third recommendation is that all policy actors designing and implementing youth voter turnout initiatives adopt evidence-based policy making. All of the actors in the Youth Registration Project were being supported by public funds directly or indirectly, but yet there was no evidence to suggest that registering young people at "cultural" events was the most effective way to reach young people. Organizations wishing to gain financial support from election management bodies to implement voter turnout initiatives should be required to demonstrate that their project proposals are based on evidence-based policy making.

I would recommend that further research be conducted on if other election management bodies have had disappointing results when partnering with a non-profit organization or if the poor performance of the Youth Registration Project was an anomaly.

While my thesis focused on the decision-making process of election management bodies for youth voter turnout initiatives, there are still ideas to be looked at for how effective these strategies are for increasing turnout in the short and long term. Indeed, one of the limitations of my research was that I was not able to determine the effectiveness of the Youth Registration Project in increasing youth turnout. We do not know how many of the 10,511 young people interacted with actually voted and if the Youth Registration Project encouraged them to vote in any way.

Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Questions

I used the same set of structured questions for every interview that I conducted and my questions centered around four main themes: Defined Problem/Agenda Setting, Options Considered to Problem Solve, Attempts to Problem Solve, and Implementation and Evaluation.

LOW YOUTH VOTER TURNOUT

What was the problem as you saw it, in regards to decreasing voter turnout in BC Elections?
PROBE: Why do you think young people are less likely to vote than their older counterparts?
PROBE: How did this problem come to your attention?
PROBE: What groups, if any, came to your organization to help
PROBE: Why is this problem a priority for your organization to solve?

What did your organization consider doing in order to solve this problem?
PROBE: What has your organization done in the past to solve this problem?
PROBE: What sorts of projects/ideas did your organization consider in solving this problem?
PROBE: How did your organization come to consider these projects/ideas?
PROBE: Why did your organization decide to execute the projects they did over other projects?

How did your organization try and increase the youth vote?
PROBE: Who did your organization work with to solve this problem?
PROBE: How did your organization come to know of these other organizations?
PROBE: Did your organization consider outreach suggestions from other groups?
PROBE: How did your organizations then come to work with these other organizations?
PROBE: Why did your organization work with these other organizations?
PROBE: Was there a formal written agreement?
PROBE: Did your organization have any concerns with the partnership?
PROBE: What was the expectation of the partners?
PROBE: What did your organization do, to try and solve this problem?
PROBE: What did your organization do, in partnership, to try and solve this problem?
PROBE: Why did your organization choose this solution?

How did this project, in partnership, to increase youth voter turnout work out?
PROBE: What did your organization do, in partnership, to solve this problem?
PROBE: How did this project work out for your organization?
PROBE: How did your organization evaluate the ultimately chosen project?
PROBE: Would your organization take on this partnership and/or project again?
PROBE: What would your organization do differently next time?
PROBE: How did your organization, in partnership, evaluate the ultimately chosen project?
PROBE: How did your organization evaluate the partnership with the other organizations?

Do you have any final thoughts and observations?

Appendix B

Provisional Codes and Definitions

Evidence: This code should include to conversations about what information, if any, the groups involved used in order to come to decisions about their projects. For example did they use a specific study to formulate their plan? This will likely come in response to all the questions including and after "What sorts of projects/ideas did your organization consider in solving this problem?" and "how did your organization come to consider these projects/ideas?" and "why did your organization decide to execute the projects they did over other projects?"

Rationale: This code should include the rationale that the groups employed when deciding what projects to run. For example did they rely on instinct, previous experience, academic literature, best practises or something else? Or does it appear that there was not any clear rationale? This will likely come in response to all the questions including and after "What sorts of projects/ideas did your organization consider in solving this problem?" and "how did your organization come to consider these projects/ideas?" and "why did your organization decide to execute the projects they did over other projects?"

Stakeholders/Partners: This code should include conversations about which organizations are involved in the GOTV partnership and their role. It will probably involve me asking questions about the activity of certain organizations and relationships between organizations. In particular, I am interested in which groups are seen as influential and the relationship between the Governmental and non-governmental agencies. The role of consultation between the government and advocacy organizations is important here as well as alliances between stakeholders. Note that these conversations will include people talking about their own organization but will also include people talking about other organizations 'behind their back.'

Agreement: This code should include conversations about having either an informal or formal arrangement to either work together or provide support to run programs between two or more identifies stakeholder/group/organizations. In particular I am looking for answers that discuss an arrangement made between one or more organization.

Connections: This code should include conversations about how they different groups/organizations came to know of each other and how they came to communicate about a potential partnership. I will be asking questions that relate to why or how an organization came to work (or didn't) with another organization. In particular I am looking for why organizations choose to work with the ones they did.

Decisions: This code should include conversations about why the different organizations came to work together. I.e. Their motivations to decide to work together. In particular they should also include how and why they came to this conclusion. i.e. We worked with X because…

Education: This code should include conversations about this specific way to increase youth voter participation. This will probably come from me asking about reasons that people

understand as a cause for lower youth voter turnout.

Engagement: This code should include conversations about ways to reach out to young people. I.e. different methods to engage young people, like peer to peer conversations or direct contact.

Evaluate: This code should include conversations around the method, results, and plans to evaluate, from the youth turnout initiatives and partnerships. I.e. number of voter registrations, number predicated compared to actual submitted. In particular I will be probing about how organizations asses their project and their partnerships, if they did at all.

Events: This code should include conversations that discuss the specific places and functions where volunteers attempted to provide information and register potential voters. For example, registering voters at a concert, university campus, night club, etc.

Outreach: this code should include conversations any attempt where people were engaged to get them registered to vote/update their voter information/get more information in order to vote. In particular I will be probing how the organizations attempted to solve the problem of low voter turnout. i.e. What did they do, or attempt to do to solve this problem. As well this code will include specific details about how outreach was conducted, i.e. street teams who consisted of volunteers who went to events to register voters.

Groups/Organizations: This code should include conversations about organizations which either formally or informally participated in the project in some way but were not official partners. I.e. organizations that assisted the "Partners" in their goals, like a venue that allowed enumerators.

Ideas: This code should include conversations that discussed possible outreach strategies to reach out to potential voters and/or increase voter turnout. This includes any proposed/thought about idea that was mentioned at any point during the interview. This will likely come in answer to these questions "What has your organization done in the past to solve this problem? And PROBE: What sorts of projects/ideas did your organization consider in solving this problem?"

Information: This code should include conversations that discuss providing education or informational resources in so far as outreach efforts to potential voters. In particular I am looking for different ways that voting related information was given to potential voters. i.e. A pamphlet with voter information that was handed out.

Low Voter Turnout (the problem attempting to be solved): This code should include conversations that discuss that decreasing number of people at the polls. I.e. a problem in our democracy is low voter turnout. This will likely be answered after the question "What was the problem as you saw it, in regards to decreasing voter turnout in BC Elections?"

Partnership: this code should include conversations that discuss a formal agreement for one or more organizations to work together. This will likely come in response to all the questions including and after "Who did your organization work with to solve this problem?" and "Why did your organization work with these other organizations?" and "Was there a formal written agreement?" and so on.

Plan: This code should include conversations that discuss a proposed, informal, formal, or actual strategy for increasing voter outreach. In particular I am looking to see if there was a formal structure for the projects executed both on a smaller and a larger scale. i.e. the overall voter registration program versus an individual outreach event.

Priority: this code should include conversations that discuss initiatives and partnerships that were more important than others. In particular I will be looking at the focus of the project's goals.

Problems: this code should include conversations that discuss issues with the project in regards to either the partnership or the initiates. i.e. an organization that under-delivered or uncertainty if there were going to be enough volunteers.

Social Media: this code should include conversations that discuss social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.), specifically the use of social media in the project.

Solutions: This code should include conversations that discuss resolutions, potential or actual, to the perceived "problems/difficulties". It should also include how this particular youth voter turnout initiatives and partnerships could be helped. In particular I am looking for how the partners troubleshot issues that may have arisen during the project.

Street teams: This code should include conversations about the individuals or groups, trained by the project leaders to reach out and register voters/update their info. i.e. The street teams went to a "Hey Ocean!" concert in Vancouver in order to register voters.

Turnout: this code should include conversations about the number of voters who cast a ballot versus the number of people eligible to vote in elections in Canada. In particular I am looking at conversations that discuss provincial voter turnout numbers in British Columbia for young voters. As well, this code will likely be used when discussing young voters and their lack of presence at the ballot box.

Voter Information Cards (VICs): this code should include conversation about the direct mail describing where/when the registered voter can go cast a ballot. i.e. British Columbians who were registered to vote in advance of the writ drop, received a Voter Information Card in the mail at their residence.

Voting: this code should include conversations about the act of going to a voting location and casting of a ballot in an election. I am specifically looking for reference to voting in the

provincial context.

Youth/Young People: This code should include conversations about potential voters who are between the ages of 18-35.

Youth Focused: this code should include conversations about specific attempt to target young people between the ages of 18-35 as well as organizations that target this demographic.

Miscellaneous: Code passages as miscellaneous if they do not fit into one of the 34 other codes. At the end of each province, go back and see if you can create new codes for these passages or if, on second consideration, they fit better into one of the existing codes.

Didn't work: this code should include conversations about specific ideas, plans, and goals that did not meet the partners or an interviewed individual's expectations.

Challenges: This code should include conversations about specific difficulties that existed for the organizations, individuals, and the project in general. I.e. none of the assigned volunteers came to the event they stated they would help with.

Concerns: This code should include conversations about the things the partner organizations were worried about. Concern may have existed over, geographic location, venue, time, money, employees, etc. i.e. We were worried that one of the organizations would not be able to hire enough people needed in order to get all the work done.

Expectations: This code should include conversations about what each partner organization was specifically responsible for and promised to do. I am specifically looking for what each organization was tasked with and promised to deliver on. i.e. Organization A promised to send 1000 letters to potential voters.

Non-Evidence: This code should include conversations about project decisions that were not based on evidence from the field of voter turnout. I am specifically looking for decisions that were based on instinct and not on research. i.e. "We held a party to register voters because we thought it would be fun".

Organizations: This code should include conversations about the partner groups that were involved in this project. i.e. Group A was going to do this.

Appendix C

Provisional Code Statistics

Provisional Code	Number of References
Agreement	22
Challenges	1
Concerns	13
Connections	4
Decisions	4
Didn't Work	4
Education	2
Engagement	6
Evaluate	75
Events	1
Evidence e	30
Expectations	2
Groups	32
Ideas	30
Information	1
Low Turnout	23
Misc.	29
Non Evidence	3
Organizations	10
Outreach	87
Partnerships	63
Plan	37
Priority	9
Problem	46
Rationale	57
Solutions	5
Stakeholders	4
Turnout	13
Voting	2
Youth	14
Youth Focused	20

Appendix D

Pattern Codes (in bold)

(1) Evidence/ Non-Evidence
Evidence
Non-evidence

(2) Project Goals
Youth Focused
Priority
Turnout
Outreach
Low Turnout
Youth
Voting
Education

(3) Planning
Ideas
Information
Plan
Partnership
Organization
Agreement
Groups
Connections
Stakeholders
Events

(4) Project Rational
Rationale
Solutions
Decisions

(5) Evaluation
Evaluate
Expectations
Didn't work
Problems
Challenges
Concerns Didn't work
Problems

Challenges
Concerns

Appendix E

Use of Evidence

	Apathy is Boring	Elections BC
Agenda Setting	Moderate use of evidence	Robust use of evidence
Policy Formation	Limited use of evidence	Robust use of evidence
Decision Making	Limited use of evidence	Limited use of evidence
Policy Implementation	Moderate use of evidence	Moderate use of evidence
Policy Evaluation	Moderate use of evidence	Moderate use of evidence

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