

Tories Should Understand What Chinese Canadian Voters Think!

By Amy Huang

As an example being mentioned, I have some supplementary comments on *Tories could have done a better job reaching out to Richmond Chinese Canadians: Party insider*, an article published by *Richmond News* on October 5, 2021.

I liked to help other people

When I immigrated to Vancouver 30 years ago, my husband introduced me to Raymond Chan and late Dr. K.K. Wan in a Centennial Toastmaster members' gathering. I was not a Canadian citizen yet, but I liked to help other people. Both of them were our friends. This was why I volunteered in the 1993 election for both Raymond Chan, a Liberal candidate for Richmond, and Dr. K.K. Wan, a Progressive Conservative candidate for Vancouver Quadra. Raymond Chan had more volunteers than Dr. K.K. Wan, so, I spent more time to help Dr. K.K. Wan. Attached is a photo of I and then Prime Minister and PC Party Leader Rt. Hon. Kim Campbell taken during the campaign in 1993.

Since then, only Raymond Chan continued to run and I kept volunteering for him in later elections. Attached is a Certificate of Appreciation presented to me by Raymond Chan and then Prime Minister Paul Martin in 2004.

Chinese Canadian voters are more realistic

Chinese Canadian voters evaluate the major parties from multiple angles, not only listening to what they say, but also watching what they do. In Tories' review on 2011 election loss, they agreed that weak support from the immigrant communities was a crucial issue. They attributed the big win in the 2011 election to Jason Kenney's reaching out to the immigrant communities, and regretted not reaching out more in this election.

This is a superficial reason. The losers should reflect what they did for the communities in previous tenure(s), and how much effort their teams put in the campaign. I read an article in *Rise Weekly*, which, by analyzing the total vote drops of the two Richmond ridings, and the vote losses of both Richmond Conservative candidates between 2019 and 2021, concluded that more than half of the vote loss of the Conservatives in the two Richmond ridings was due to their supporters not coming to vote because they were too disappointed with the unrealistic Conservative platform.

Why Tories won majority in 2011 election?

The main reason for Tories winning majority in 2011 election was that then PM Stephen Harper was a strong leader and then Liberal party leader Michael Ignatieff was a weak leader.

1. Tories' smear ad campaign

Historically, the Liberals were more friendly to new immigrants, and got more support from the immigrant communities. However, after the 2003 leadership election, significant infighting weakened the Liberals. Party leaders changed often. Michael Ignatieff became the Liberal Party Leader in 2009. He was an inexperienced politician.

Ignatieff did very badly in 2011. He started his ad campaign with a video called "This is who I am". As a second generation immigrant, he thought his family story would make him closer to the immigrant communities. He didn't think of the side effects of this ad. He spent 34 years outside Canada – as a journalist and academic in the UK and US, just returned to Canada in 2005, and entered into Canadian politics in 2006.

Tories immediately made his origin as an issue, and ran a series of attack ads against the Liberal Party, targeting Ignatieff in particular. With taglines like "Just visiting," "Just in it for himself," and "Didn't come back for you" , these bare-knuckles attack ads cast the Liberal leader as a gatecrasher who arrived too late to the politics, and painted Ignatieff as out of touch with average Canadians. These smear ads gave a very hard blow to Ignatieff and the Liberal Party, and made their polls and popularity downward .

2. Tories improved Canada-China relations

On the other hand, the Tory government also learned from the Liberals on how to improve Canada-China relations. Harper led a trade mission to China in December 2009. After this, many Conservative ministers visited China to promote two way trade between Canada and China. As the Canada-China relations got warmer before the 2011 election, Tories got more Chinese Canadian votes from previous Liberal supporters.

These two factors were more important than just reaching out to the immigrant communities, and resulted in Tories' big win in 2011 election.