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## PCO, not PMO, should provide enhanced oversight on aboriginal affairs, says expert

Saskatchewan Chief Perry Bellegarde says support is needed 'at the highest levels' of government to implement, enforce treaties. That's never happened before.

By JESSICA BRUNO

Prime Minister Stephen Harper recently agreed with the need to provide enhanced oversight from the Prime Minister's Office and the Privy Council Office on aboriginal matters, but there won't be any new positions created in the PMO or the PCO, says the government.

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## Over last 30 years, public service has been 'turned on its head' by private-sector style management, loss of front-line workers: Savoie

By JESSICA BRUNO

The federal public service has been "transformed by stealth" over the past 30 years to make it more like the private sector, but these reforms have increased the overhead cost of government, decreased the number of front-line workers and have turned the traditional role of public servants advising governments on policy "on its head," says Donald Savoie, a former mandarin and a leading expert on public administration and governance, in his upcoming book, *Whatever Happened to The Music Teacher? How Government Decides and Why*.

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## THE POWER OF IDLE NO MORE'S RESURGENT RADICALISM

The remarkable Idle No More movement is the biggest and most important national outpouring of grassroots aboriginal anger ever seen in Canada.



Photograph by Steve Gerecke, The Hill Times

**Taking it to the streets:** Idle No More is the most exciting development in aboriginal politics in two generations. It has rightfully scared the hell out of the entire First Nations leadership—from Shawn Atleo down to the hundreds of chiefs.



BY MURRAY DOBBIN

**P**OWELL RIVER, B.C.—The remarkable Idle No More movement is the biggest and most important national outpouring of grassroots aboriginal

anger ever seen in Canada. Not since the late 1960s when Indians (as they then referred to themselves) and Métis confronted governments with demands for justice has such a dramatic and passionate expression of resistance been seen. As the movement continues to grow we can only speculate on what its longer term outcome will be. Many movements begin with

such spontaneous explosions of pent up anger and frustration. The successful ones find their feet quickly and are able, through collective leadership, to focus their energy and passion on a unifying vision and on some organizational form to press for its realization. Idle No More will be no different.

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## First Nations divided, but no concerted effort to oust Atleo

Manitoba Grand Chief Derek Nepinak says First Nations want emancipation from Indian Act policy management, will 'change the game here in Canada.'

By BEA VONGDOUANGCHANH

First Nations are divided on how to move forward in dealing with the Canadian government, but there is no concerted effort to oust Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo, say insiders and observers.

"No, there's nothing like that," Derek Nepinak, grand chief of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, told *The Hill Times* last week.

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## Nepinak says Idle No More won't stop until PM, GG meet with chiefs across country

National aboriginal movement is 'an awakening from a long set of grievances.'

By BEA VONGDOUANGCHANH

The Idle No More movement, which started out as opposition to the federal government's changes to environmental laws and has since expanded to an "awakening" of sorts, is the "tipping point" in the Crown-First Nations relationship for which the status quo is no longer feasible, says an outspoken First Nation chief.

"It [Idle No More] will sustain itself until the Harper government decides to meet with the chiefs with the Governor General and

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## OPINION

## ANALYTICS &amp; CAMPAIGNING

# Why big data is good for the little guy

The truth of how big data analytics is used in modern campaigning. It's time to pull back the curtain.



BY WARREN FLOOD

TORONTO—Any mention of the words “big data,” “analytics,” or “micro-targeting,” in political conversation today runs the risk of conjuring up frightful images of an Orwellian Big Brother spying on citizens’ every move, infringing upon the electorate’s right to privacy by collecting information against their wishes, and feeding illicitly-obtained spools of data into a digital black box to produce nefarious propaganda and mind control. This science fiction couldn’t be any further from the truth of how big data analytics is used in modern campaigning.

Let’s begin pulling back the curtain on campaign data and analytics by eliminating what isn’t.

Firstly, big data usage by campaigns is not creepy. The most plentiful, useful data to any campaign is publicly known and freely available to all political parties—Elections Canada’s lists of electors and Statistics Canada’s census data.

Secondly, even private party data and lists are not secretly obtained. Since no party will ever know exactly who will vote for or against its candidates, they can only guess at future likely voting outcomes based on information freely given by individual electors. Of course, elector responses or actions can be used for future political interaction if a person browses a party’s website to donate, visits a local office to volunteer, or responds to a canvasser’s door knock or phone call asking which party they support. However, anyone can easily abstain from self-identifying simply by not participating.

Thirdly, micro-targeting does not rely on consumer lists. Much fuss has been made about the use of consumer data in political analysis, for example cat versus dog magazine subscriptions or bourbon versus cognac drinkers. The truth is, most consumer data is not useful because either the difference between groups’ preferences in large lists is too small to be predictive (e.g., The Beatles listeners tend to divide 50/50 between Democrats and Republicans), or small lists don’t have enough coverage to make expensive data purchases worthwhile (e.g., paying top dollar for a list that covers 0.01 per cent of the electorate is a waste of scarce campaign money).

Lastly, analytics should not be confounded with manipulating statistics in an effort to sell a misleading narrative, à la Karl Rove’s U.S. election night meltdown on Fox



**Micro-targeting in political campaigns:** In a nutshell, big data analytics gives a clear, amplified voice to each and every ordinary citizen, which can be good for democratic engagement if campaigns choose to listen closely and act accordingly.

News. Analytics doesn’t magically change who people are or what they believe—instead, it helps bring these realities into greater clarity for a campaign to act upon.

So then, what exactly does big data analytics do for campaigns? It allows a campaign to:

1. closely observe the behaviour of common political interactions between campaigns and the electorate (e.g., door knocks, phone calls);
2. remember the specific conditions and outcomes of each of these observations (e.g., if someone answered and responded on a particular day);
3. consolidate all these conditions and outcomes along with a multitude of other data points (e.g., census, historic data);
4. explore behavioural patterns beyond the traditional geographic or polling cross-tab groupings (e.g., social circles, affinity groups);
5. evaluate the significance of how all these disparate data points interact with each other;
6. recommend optimal next action steps to maximize a campaign’s effectiveness and efficiency (e.g., who to contact, when, how, and with what message or call-to-action);
7. empower quick, precise resource deployment customized down to the individual level (e.g., treating each and every elector as a unique person).

So why is all of this big data good for Jill and Joe Public? It’s very easy for disengaged citizens to feel that national, provincial, and even municipal elections are too large and too impersonal to care about what any single person thinks. Too often the electorate has been told they are looked upon solely as stereotypes, such as belonging to a large voting bloc of “hockey moms,” “rural voters,”

“urban voters,” or “youths.” Samara’s website eloquently states that “[d]espite Canadians’ strong support for democracy and concern for the health of their communities, more people are opting out of the political process.”

The personalized, one-on-one attention that big data analytics empowers a campaign to engage in with each and every elector holds the promise of helping to reverse the tide of citizen disengagement by demonstrating that each individual matters, and that their unique concerns, suggestions, and aspirations are important and heard and shared by others in their local communities.

Big data analytics is, at its very essence, listening to and interacting with electors as unique individuals, in a way that resonates best with each person, in the hopes that they become fully engaged and, ultimately, vote. When campaigns use big data analytics properly and completely, they ensure that every dollar donated, every hour volunteered, and every minute spent listening to and speaking one-on-one with individual electors is respected, remembered, responded to, and acted upon in the most personalized manner possible.

In a nutshell, big data analytics gives a clear, amplified voice to each and every ordinary citizen, which can be good for democratic engagement if campaigns choose to listen closely and act accordingly.

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## OPINION

## ONTARIO LIBERAL LEADERSHIP

# Ontario Liberal leadership race a real yawner

And the party is unlikely to see any spike in the polls once a new leader is in place.



BY MICHAEL QAQISH

OTTAWA—The race for a new Liberal leader in Ontario should be a time for renewal for a worn out government plagued with scandals and failure in recent years. Unfortunately, the race has been incredibly dull in terms of candidates and substance, and the party is unlikely to see any spike in the polls once a new leader is in place.

No single candidate has particularly stood out and there seems to be minor differences on policy. The only exciting twist came two weeks ago after the final debate when Glen Murray dropped out of the race to throw his support behind one of the perceived front runners, Kathleen Wynne.

The six candidates who remain in the race can be split into two front runners and four long shots as was confirmed by the delegate selection process this past weekend.

Either one of the two candidates most likely to win are both female candidates, Wynne and Sandra Pupatello. There’s a deliberate effort and awareness among Liberals that the time has come for a female Liberal leader and next premier for Ontario—even if that is tenure is short lived.

Pupatello is seen as the more conservative and pro-business while Wynne is more left leaning within the party. All candidates have Cabinet experience with the McGuinty government, but Pupatello left the party in 2011 for a job with the private sector and came back for the leadership race. She has been criticized for leaving, even though it’s been helpful according to the delegate numbers with Pupatello leading the way.

Wynne is closely associated with the government, but is also very well-liked, a rare principled politician and came a close second. Unfortunately, the Liberals and even the media are afraid of having an honest conversation about her sexuality and its realistic implications. Wynne is openly gay and while some voters—myself included—may not have an issue with that, the truth of the matter is that others will and that begs the question: are Ontarians ready for a gay premier? It is a

question of electability that Liberal delegates should take into consideration. Wynne supporters have pointed out the positive results of her campaign in the rural parts of the province over the weekend, but these aren’t average voters, they card-carrying Liberals.

Although long shots, remaining candidates like Harinder Takhir who surprised many by pulling 244 delegates or 13.28 per cent of those selected over the previous weekend will play key roles on the convention floor in two weeks where the elected delegates, plus 419 ex-officios such as MPPs and party insiders will select the new leader.

Once the leadership race is over, the house will resume with a new throne speech from the new Liberal leader and premier. Shortly after, Ontarians are expected to head back to the polls.

While political campaigns are unpredictable, one would expect the growing tensions between the teachers and the government to dominate the campaign. The good news for the Liberals—should they communicate the message successfully—is that they are best suited to resolve this conflict with the teachers.

The party should remind voters of the alternatives that will be adopted by the opposition should they get elected into office.

What are those alternatives? Starting at the left end of the spectrum, Andrea Horwath and the NDP will give the teachers everything they want and further increase the province’s deficit. On the other extreme, Tim Hudak and the PCs would adopt a harsh approach with the teachers, which would lead to increased tensions between them and unions.

Neither an extreme left-wing or right-wing approach will advance the ongoing disputes. Most Ontarians have lost sympathy for the teachers as the government allowed for 10 months of negotiations that led to nowhere.

It’s time for all parties involved in this dispute to realize that the Liberals hold the best solution and that’s a middle-of-the-road one. For the Liberals, a successful rebirth can only happen if they distance themselves from themselves.

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