

# Why can they all just get along?

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## **Exploring influences on cross-party cooperation among backbench politicians in the Canadian and British Parliaments**

Paul Thomas, PhD Candidate



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

# APGs - characteristics

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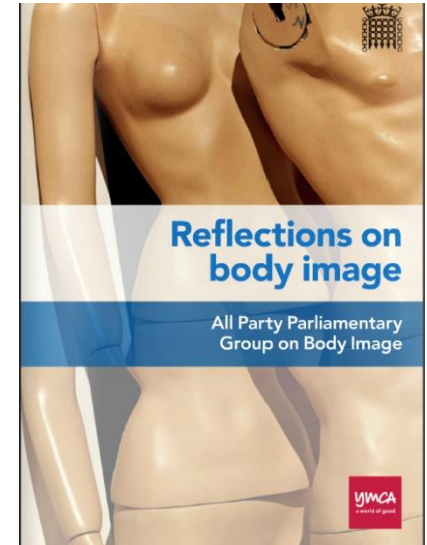
- Voluntary, informal
- Known by several names
- Backbench driven
- Two main types



# APGs – activities

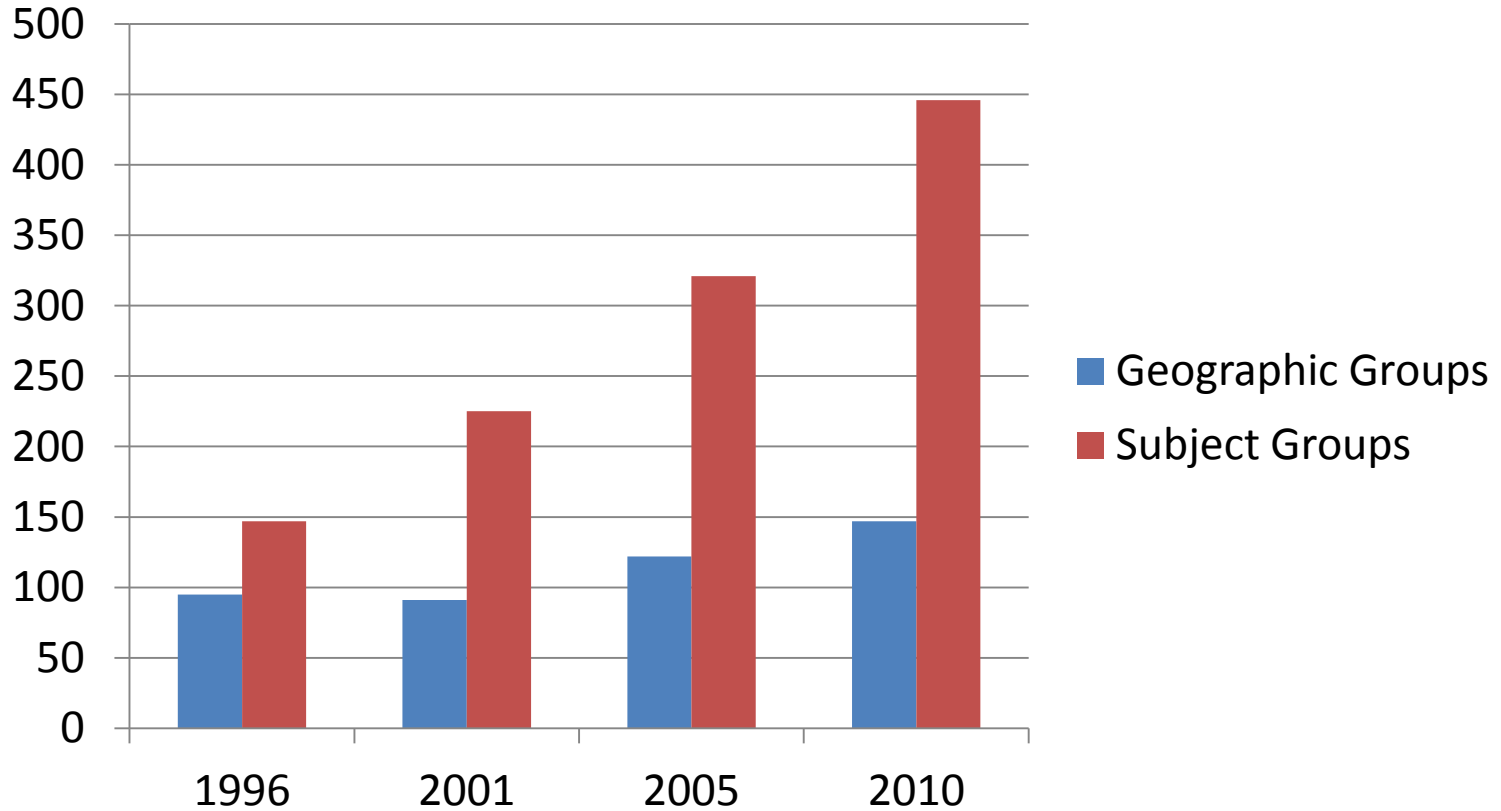
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- Distribute information
- Meet with stakeholders
- Conduct inquiries
- Lobby ministers
- Introduce motions and legislation
- Some policy influence



# UK - Growth

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# Research problem

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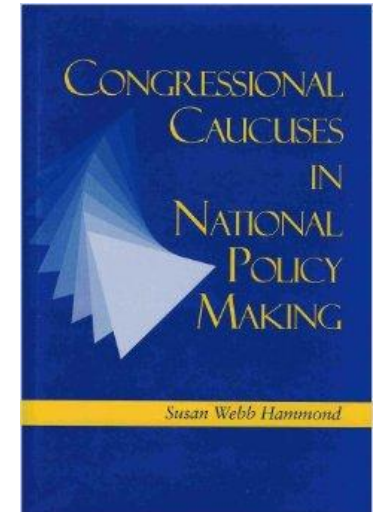
- Little research in Westminster context
- One extensive American study
- Can US research be transferred?



# Congressional caucuses

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- Hammond 1998
- Participation driven by goals
- Higher among:
  - Marginal representatives
  - Newer members



# Meanwhile in the Commonwealth

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- Similar goals
- Very different institutional context
  - More hierarchy in legislature and party
- Greater geographic focus, especially in Canada
- More emphasis on executive positions



# Research questions

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- Is participation in APGs in Canada and the UK shaped by:
  - Margin of victory?
  - Length of service?
- Are these relationships constant between group and position type?





# Data - UK

	Geographic APGs					Subject APGs				
	1996	2001	2005	2010	2012	1996	2001	2005	2010	2012
<b>Memberships</b>										
Total	-	-	1990	2200	1797	-	-	5407	7001	6810
# MPs holding	-	-	431	436	407	-	-	596	603	586
<b>Executive posts</b>										
Total posts	413	386	495	569	538	544	930	1301	1710	1654
# MPs holding	189	183	228	233	217	279	357	424	436	440



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# Data - Canada

	General members				Executive/Chair positions			
	2006	2008	2011	2012	2006	2008	2011	2012
<b>16 official geographic associations</b>								
Total posts	999	988	1134	1403	140	140	139	136
# MPs holding	256	204	192	231	97	97	97	96
<b>Other geographic groups</b>								
Total posts	-	-	-	-	29	35	35	59
# MPs holding	-	-	-	-	24	29	29	43
<b>Subject groups</b>								
Total posts	-	-	-	133	-	-	-	56
# MPs holding	-	-	-	109	-	-	-	45



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# Methodology

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- 11 DVs – membership + executive data
- Added controls:
  - Party and gender
  - Cabinet and Shadow cabinet
  - Number of MPs in a party
  - Number of Groups in operation





# Methodology

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- Largely panel data
- Interested in differences between panelists and over time
- Random-effects model using GLS
- OLS used for Canadian subject data



# UK – results

	Geog. members	Geog. executive	Sub. members	Sub. executive
	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)
Margin of victory	0.00000	0.00000	-0.00022****	-0.00002**
Incumbent	1.6107****	0.4241****	2.8562****	0.2165**
Female	-1.0935***	-0.3108***	1.1605*	0.3190**
# of MPs in party	-0.0034**	-0.0002	-0.0112****	0.0004
Cons.	2.3124***	0.3474	6.9757****	0.3541
Labour	1.9891**	0.1822	7.1938****	0.1983
Lib Dem	0.4205	0.1788	7.1828****	2.3114****
Intercept	-1.8277	-0.2832	-1.4837	0.0467
# of obs.	1901	3179	1901	3179
# of MPs	1010	1365	1010	1365
R <sup>2</sup> within	0.0821	0.0580	0.2436	0.1811
R <sup>2</sup> between	0.1031	0.0487	0.1176	0.2259
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Margin of victory	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
Incumbent	0.2721	0.1616****	0.3229****	0.0604
Female	0.2166	0.1138*	0.2227***	0.1848***
# of MPs in party	0.0164****	0.0012*	0.0027	-0.0033**
Cons	-0.8673	-0.0264	-	-
Liberal	-0.7422	-0.0589	0.5837**	-0.3562*
NDP	-0.7065	-0.1644	0.3896**	-0.2875**
Cabinet	-2.3771****	-0.5028****	-0.4320****	-0.2141**
Shadow Cabinet	0.1297	0.0165	0.0588	0.1316
Intercept	2.7444	0.2724**	-0.2952	0.6610***
# of obs.	1222	1223	307	307
# of MPs	566	567	-	-
R <sup>2</sup> within	0.0204	0.0389	-	-
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# Conclusions

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- Cannot directly extrapolate from US
- Similar link between participation and margin of victory in UK
- New members less likely to participate
- Substantial differences between geographic and subject groups
- Also differences by position type



# Conclusions

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- Women appear to have different engagement in APGs than men
- Smaller, more marginal parties more active in subject groups
- Canadian analysis limited by data



# Thanks!

# Questions?

Email: [paul.thomas@utoronto.ca](mailto:paul.thomas@utoronto.ca)



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE