

# Why can they all just get along?

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

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# All-Party Groups: characteristics

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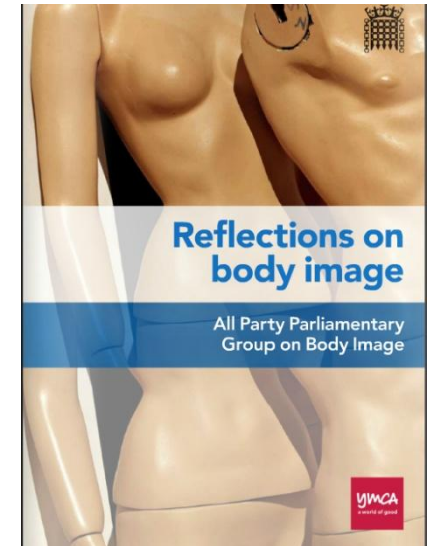
- Voluntary
- Informal
- Backbench driven
- Enormous variety



# All-Party Groups: activities

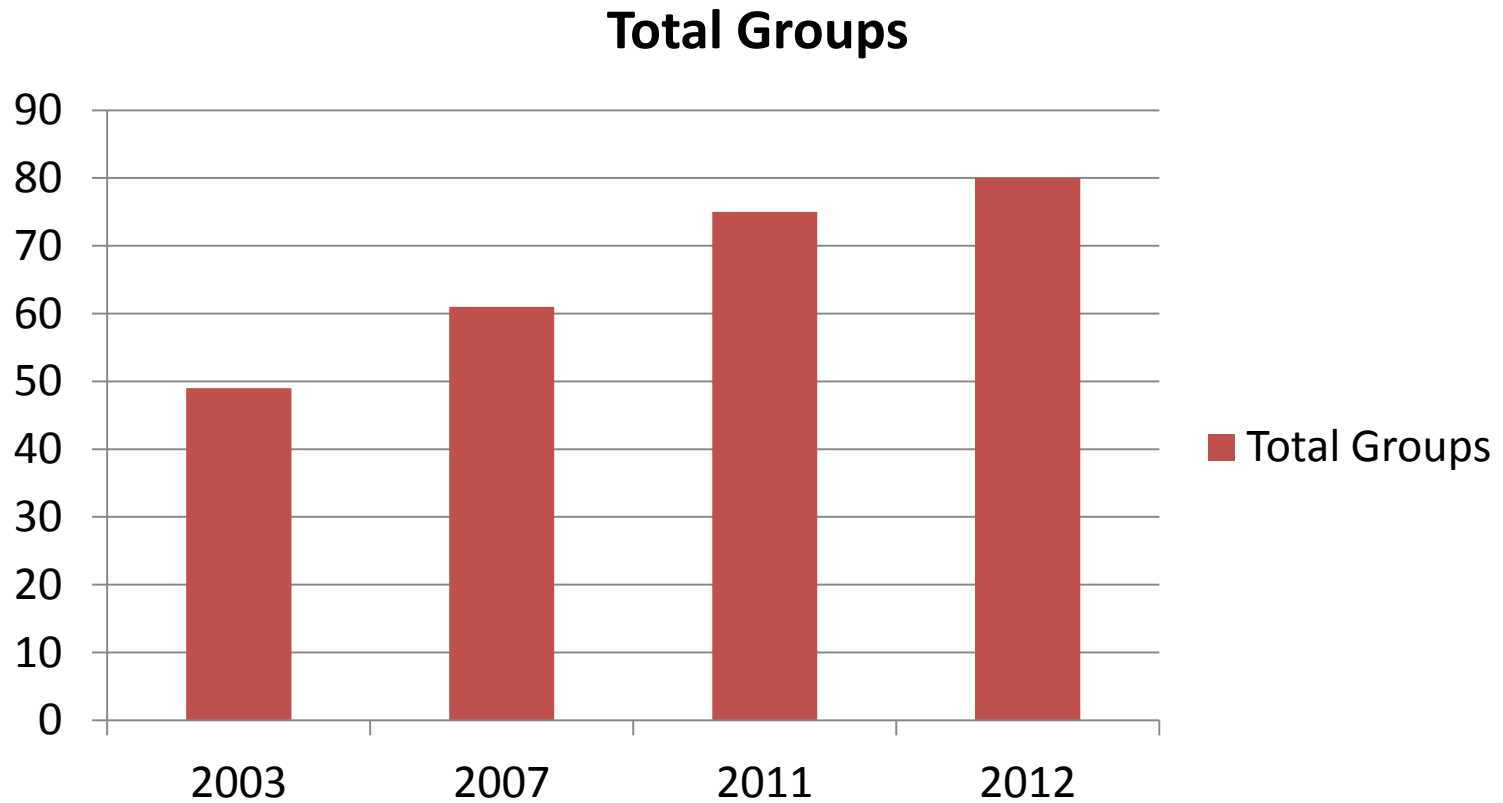
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- Distribute information
- Meet with stakeholders
- Conduct inquiries
- Lobby ministers
- Introduce motions and legislation
- Some policy influence



# Scotland - Growth

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# Research problem

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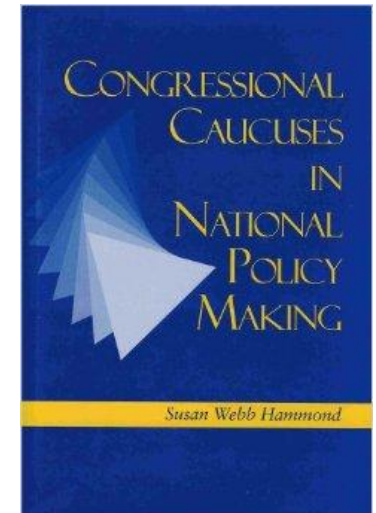
- Little research in Westminster context
- One extensive American study
- Can US research be transferred?
  - Greater hierarchy in Westminster legislatures and parties



# Congressional caucuses

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



# Research questions

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



# Methodology

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- 6 Dependent variables:
  - (executive + membership) x (regional + constituency + total)
- 2 Independent variables:
  - Years served
  - Margin of victory / regional vote share





# Methodology

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- Controls:
  - Party and gender
  - Cabinet and Shadow cabinet
  - Number of MPs in a party
  - Number of Groups in operation
- Panel data
- Random-effects model using GLS



# Scotland – Overall results

	Memberships held	Executive posts held
Regional	1.2133**	0.3079
Years Served	0.0611	0.0339
Female	1.1845**	0.1132
Cons.	-2.9010**	-1.4192****
Labour	-2.0738*	-1.2761***
Lib Dem	-1.7299	-0.8537**
SNP	-3.1526***	-1.4214****
Intercept	8.5899****	1.8429
# of obs.	516	516
# of MPs	242	242
R <sup>2</sup> within	0.2998	0.1989
R <sup>2</sup> between	0.2005	0.2093
R <sup>2</sup> overall	0.2654	0.2281



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# Scotland – results

	Constituency MSP Memberships	Constituency MSP Executive Posts	Regional MSP Memberships	Regional MSP Executive Posts
Margin of victory/ % of regional vote	-0.0001	0	-0.1263**	-0.0506**
Years Served	-0.0523	0.0192	0.0383	0.0344
Female	2.3019****	0.2503	0.0317	-0.0943
Cons.	-3.9543	-1.4862	-2.8423**	-1.5073****
Labour	-3.7283	-1.589*	-2.0613**	-1.2652**
Lib Dem	-3.7587	-1.1872	-2.3538	-1.1323*
SNP	-4.5889*	-1.5452	-3.5266**	-1.4203**
Intercept	9.2691****	2.244	13.0998	2.7111
# of obs.	291	291	225	225
# of MPs	137	137	139	139
R <sup>2</sup> within	0.3042	0.2925	0.2838	0.1204
R <sup>2</sup> between	0.38	0.2008	0.0968	0.2022
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# Conclusions

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- Cannot directly extrapolate from US
- Similar link between participation and margin of victory in UK and regionally in Scotland
- However, no relationship with seniority in Scotland; new members less likely to participate in the UK and Canada
- Substantial differences between executive and general membership positions in all three jurisdictions



# Conclusions

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- Women appear to have different patterns of engagement in APGs than men
- Smaller, more marginal parties are more active in APGs, especially in subject groups (Canada + UK)
- Notable differences between regional and constituency Members of Scottish Parliament





# [www.FreeAlexSodiqov.org](http://www.FreeAlexSodiqov.org)

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## #FreeAlexSodiqov



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# Thanks!

# Questions?

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