

**Why can they all just get along? Exploring influences on cross-party cooperation among backbench politicians in the Canadian, British, and Scottish Parliaments**

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Paper prepared for the 23<sup>rd</sup> World Congress of Political Science  
Montreal, Canada – 20 July 2014

Working paper – please do not cite without permission

**Abstract**

Why would backbench politicians, who compete on a partisan basis at election, cooperate across party lines to achieve policy goals? Despite receiving little study or media attention, the Canadian, British, and Scottish parliaments are home to a large and growing number of informal, cross-party organizations that facilitate cooperation amongst backbench politicians wishing to engage with particular policy issues. Such groups, which cover subjects as diverse as palliative care, climate change, and genocide prevention, facilitate information exchange, connect parliamentarians with external stakeholders, and even conduct independent research inquiries. Hammond (1998) argues that the growth of similar groups at the US Congress occurred because they served members' goals of re-election, policy change, and promotion. However, politicians in Westminster legislatures face very different incentives due to much stronger party discipline, the fusion of the legislative and executive branches, and government dominance over initiating legislation. This paper therefore examines whether the congressional findings can be extended to Westminster systems. Using a unique dataset tracking memberships in cross-party organizations, it explores the factors influencing the cross-party activities of Canadian, British, and Scottish legislators between 2001 and 2013. The study finds that while cross-party activity is not correlated with promotion to the executive, it increases with electoral vulnerability and years of service, suggesting it is used by politicians looking to signal to voters or develop an alternative career path.

## 1.0 Introduction

Why would Members of Parliament, who compete on a partisan basis for re-election, cooperate with politicians from other parties to achieve policy goals? Despite receiving little press coverage, the British, Canadian and Scottish Parliament have long been home to a series of informal cross-party organizations that have been formed to facilitate joint activities by politicians who wish to engage with particular policy issues or relations with a given country. Even more surprisingly, the number of groups in operation continues to grow at a rapid pace, with the UK now being home to 585, Canada 103, and Scotland 80.

The existence and growth of such organizations, which will be referred to here as “all-party groups” (APGs), would seem to violate several of the assumptions contained within the rational choice institutionalist literature regarding the behaviour of elected politicians. A landmark study on APGs at the US Congress conducted by Hammond (1998) found that APGs helped legislators to achieve goals such as re-election, with politicians becoming more likely to be involved as their margin of victory declined. APGs also provided junior members of Congress with opportunities for influence at an early point in their career, as well as the chance to demonstrate leadership potential in the hopes of later promotion. However, the dominance of disciplined political parties within Westminster-style political systems would appear to sharply curtail the benefits that can be derived from cross-party cooperation. In particular, it would appear to be counterintuitive for MPs to join APGs given that most of the prized positions within Westminster legislatures, such as cabinet posts, are awarded based on party loyalty, not interparty cooperation.

It is also unclear whether APGs in Westminster systems operate in the same way or serve the same function as those at the US Congress. A case in point is that Hammond (1998) spends virtually no time examining those APGs that focus on relations with other countries, such as the Congressional Caucus on Armenian Issues, instead concentrating on issue- or subject-focused groups, such as Congressional Steel Caucus or the Family Farm Caucus, which would likely have more direct links with voters and stakeholder groups. In contrast, country- or geographic-focused groups form the majority of Canadian APGs, a substantial portion of those in the UK, and a growing number of the groups in Scotland. Assuming that Hammond’s findings can be extended equally to all types of APGs may therefore be misleading.

Finally, a further issue can be found in the fact that Hammond concentrates on the behaviour of group *members*, while APGs in Canada, the UK, and Scotland tend to be driven by their *executives*. In fact, while the British Parliament has had a system for registering APGs since the 1980s, it was only in 2004 that groups were required to disclose any members beyond their officers. Similarly, several Canadian APGs, such as the All-Party Antipoverty Caucus and the All-Party Oceans Caucus, do not actually have general memberships. Instead, group events are organized by their executives with invitations being circulated to all parliamentarians. Given that serving on an executive implies a greater time commitment than membership, an effort must be made to explore whether the same factors contribute to both types of participation.

As part of a broader research project on APGs in Westminster systems, this paper evaluates whether Hammond’s explanations politicians’ involvement in APGs at the US Congress can successfully be transplanted to the British, Canadian and Scottish parliaments. Specifically, it examines whether MPs’ participation in APGs is shaped either by electoral concerns, or by the efforts of new politicians to develop and demonstrate leadership skills. It also explores if these factors apply equally to both subject and country-focused groups, and to both

regular members and those holding executive positions. To do so it utilizes specially constructed dataset that tracks MPs' participation in APGs over several electoral cycles (four in Canada and Scotland, five in the UK), making it possible to see if MPs' alter their behaviour based on changes in their electoral fortunes or as they advance in their parliamentary careers.

Overall, the results indicate that the factors shaping MPs' involvement in APGs in Westminster system are different than those at the US Congress. In particular, in none of the three jurisdictions was there any evidence that APG involvement is greater among new politicians. Instead, the opposite is true in Canada and UK, with MPs in both countries being more likely to be involved with APGs the longer they have served in parliament. However, there are some parallels with the US in that British MPs and the regionally-elected members of the Scottish Parliament do show an inverse relationship between their margin of victory and their participation in APGs. That said, in the UK this relationship between marginality and APG activity is only present for subject-focused APGs, and is smaller for involvement in executive positions than general membership. As such, the results show the need to disaggregate MPs' involvement in APGs by group and position type.

Notably, an unexpected finding was that female MPs in the three jurisdictions had different patterns of involvement in APGs than their male colleagues. In the UK, women were more likely to be involved in subject APGs and less involved in geographic ones – a trend that applied to both executive posts and general membership. Similarly in Canada women MPs were much more likely to be involved in subject groups as both members and chairs. In Scotland women legislators also had higher rates of APG membership, although there was no difference at the executive level. While Hammond examined the activities of the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues, she did not disaggregate participation in other groups by gender, making it impossible to know if this trend is consistent with the American experience.

The paper first proceeds with a brief overview of APGs followed by a review of Hammond's research on APGs at the US Congress. It then briefly outlines the operation of APGs in each country before outlining the methodology employed. Next the results are presented for each jurisdiction, followed by a discussion of the findings.

## **2.0 Background on APGs**

APGs are informal organizations that MPs from several parties form in order to pursue common interests on particular issues. As described by Norton, they involve "members coming together on a basis of shared interests or backgrounds, independent of party" (2008, 240). The number of APGs has grown sharply in recent years in the US, UK, Canada, and Scotland. In the UK alone, the number of groups more than doubled from 243 to 585 between 1996 and 2012. The issues addressed by these groups are highly diverse, with British APGs existing on topics including America, Beer, Cancer, Women in Enterprise, Yorkshire, and Zoos and Aquariums. However, APGs generally fall into two broad categories: those that focus on relations with other countries, and those dealing with a given issue or industry. While they may have written constitutions, APGs are informal in that they have no official role in parliamentary decision making (Hammond, 1998). Moreover, while the areas they address may overlap, APGs are independent from both official parliamentary committees and internal party caucuses. They also typically exclude cabinet members, making them largely independent from the executive as well.

In the UK, virtually every APG is referred to as an "All Party Parliamentary Group" (APPG), while in Scotland they are called "Cross-Party Groups" (CPGs). The situation is more

complicated in Canada, where country-focused APGs are usually referred to as either “Parliamentary Friendship Groups” or “Interparliamentary Groups.” Issue-focused groups, on the other hand, are typically known as either “All Party Caucuses” or “Parliamentary Caucuses.” This lack of consistency reflects the fact that Canada has no system for registering APGs.

APGs are active in each of the three core functions performed by legislatures (representation, legislation and scrutiny). APGs often meet with relevant stakeholders and then advance their concerns in parliamentary proceedings. Some APGs also undertake studies of particular issues to see if improvements can be made to government policies. A case in point is the APG on Autism at the UK parliament, which has published a series of reports investigating the support offered to those with the condition (All Party Parliamentary Group on Autism, 2012). APGs may issue statements in response to new government policy initiatives or legislation. Some also attempt to develop and introduce their own legislation via the private members’ system. For instance, in the 1990s the Canadian All-Party Sugar Caucus introduced the “United States Sugar Import Restrictions Retaliation Act” in response to proposed US legislation that would prevent the importation of sugar from any country doing business with Cuba (Zed, 1995).

### **3.0 American literature on congressional caucuses**

The APGs at the US Congress have been the subject of considerable investigation. Such research has largely been conducted using a rational choice based approach which assumes that legislators primarily will engage in those activities that contribute to the achievement of their goals and particularly to the task of securing re-election. As such, they tend to provide largely functionalist accounts for APG formation and activities. In this vein, researchers have found that APGs provide legislators with the opportunity to exchange information (Ainsworth and Akins, 1997), shape the legislative agenda (Hammond et al., 1985) and to serve as policy entrepreneurs (Burgin, 2003).

Hammond’s 1998 book on congressional caucuses is by far the most comprehensive work that has yet been written on APGs in a single jurisdiction. In it she identifies several factors affecting members’ involvement in APGs, for instance finding that participation declined with years served and ideological conservatism also reduced membership. However, Hammond’s major contribution comes from her work to explain APG formation and why their numbers have increased so sharply in recent years. She begins by examining why existing theories for explaining congressional organization – and particularly those regarding the the role and influence of formal committees – cannot account for APG formation given their informal nature and lack of direct connection to the legislative outcomes. Consequently, Hammond contends that any explanation must examine not only (1) the *objectives* of congressional representatives, but also (2) the *structure* of Congress itself and (3) the *external context*.

With regard to the context, Hammond stresses that the demands placed on congressmen and women have increased in recent decades as they deal with the growing complexity of policy issues, more contacts from constituents, higher rates of interest group mobilization, and a greater array of research studies. However, this rising pressure has not led to significant changes in the formal structure of Congress. Instead, Hammond argues that the inclusive and fluid structure of the institution has enabled informal adaptations. She describes Congress as “an organization of equals whose collegial decision making... is manifested in a general absence of hierarchy and integrative mechanisms” (1998: 16). What authority structure there is lacks strong inducements or sanctions to shape members’ behaviour. Furthermore, “Congressional norms favour inclusion

in group processes” (1998: 16). All told, this collegiality and absence of hierarchy is seen to produce more “organizational fluidity” than is the norm in many other bodies. It also creates challenges for congressional leaders who must integrate actions within the legislature in order to produce coherent outcomes.

Lastly, Hammond sees involvement in caucuses as contributing to all three of the goals that Fenno identified for members of congress: re-election, policy change, and influence in the institution (1998: 15). For re-election, Hammond reports that just joining a caucus without being actively involved can benefit representatives since “it sends a message to constituents that the member shares their concerns” (1998: 79). She further found that those from more marginal electoral districts had slightly higher more involvement in APGs than members with a greater vote share. APGs were also seen to be helpful for pursuing policy goals, with Hammond noting that: “Members formed caucuses... when deficiencies in the formal committee and party systems made achievement of individual goals difficult” (1998: 16). In terms of influence within the institution, Hammond stressed that involvement in APGs allowed members of congress to have an impact on policy at an earlier point in their careers than would be possible through the formal system, where positions are allocated by seniority. In addition, APG involvement provided representatives with opportunities to improve their chances for future promotion by developing leadership skills and building relationships with their colleagues. As could be expected, Hammond found that APG involvement was higher among newer members who were excluded from formal leadership positions and were hoping achieve future advancement.

#### 4.0 APGs at the British Parliament

APGs are a long-established feature of the British Parliament, with the oldest, the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee, dating back to 1939. As the result of a series of lobbying scandals (see below), the UK possesses a fairly elaborate system for registering APGs. While registration is voluntary, it brings benefits such as the ability for groups to identify themselves as “All-Party Parliamentary Groups,” to advertise their meetings on weekly notices, and also gives them priority when booking parliamentary meeting rooms (United Kingdom House of Commons 2012).

The rules for registration require APGs to identify themselves as either a country group or a subject group. While there are British APGs for countries from every continent, the coverage to some extent reflects the UK’s strategic interests, with a group existing for nearly every state in Europe, but less than half of those in Africa. As already mentioned, subject groups can address virtually any topic imaginable, and some, such as the APPG on East Asian Business, may actually overlap with country groups. Table I plots the growth in the number of British APGs during the five time periods included in this analysis. Notably, the rate of growth has been much higher for subject groups than geographic-focused ones.

Table I:  
Number of registered all-party parliamentary groups in the UK, 1996 - 2012

Year	1996	2001	2005	2010	2012
Geographic Groups	95	91	122	147	136
Subject Groups	147	225	321	446	449
Total	242	316	443	593	585

The rules governing APGs require them to be open to all members of both houses of the parliament. To be registered, groups require 20 “Qualifying Members,” half of whom must be from the governing party (or parties), and the remainder from the opposition. While there is no requirement for balance between the Lords and Commons, the group’s contact must be an MP since the registry is managed by the Commons. APGs can have more than the 20 members required for registration, and some groups claim to have hundreds. However, being a group member does not necessarily indicate that a parliamentarian is actively engaged, and even the 20 qualifying members may not have any direct involvement. Several of the MPs interviewed for the broader research project said that they had agreed to be on the qualifying list for an APG as a favour to a friend who wanted to establish a group. One also reported being listed as a qualifying member for a group without her knowledge.

Parliamentarians serving in the government are not formally prohibited from being involved with APGs. Instead, the rules state only that, “Mostly they [APGs] are run by backbenchers, though ministers may also be officers or members...” (United Kingdom. House of Commons 2012). However, most government ministers do not participate. In contrast, those holding shadow government positions are somewhat more engaged with APGs than their ministerial counterparts.

While those interviewed reported that there is usually little competition for executive positions within APGs themselves, there could be heated battles on some occasions, particularly for the post of group chair. Several respondents mentioned that there had been a “coup” within the APPG on China whereby a large number of Conservative MPs arrived in order to ensure the victory of the Conservative candidate for Chair. The action was reportedly caused by the belief that such a high profile group should be in the hands of the governing party.

APGs are mentioned in a number of studies on Parliament or policy development in the UK, but have seldom been examined as a distinct topic of study. One of the only exceptions is a piece by Richardson and Kimber (1971) which conducted a study of all APGs listed on the “All-Party Whip” (a weekly notice of APG meetings) over a seven month period. They found that some of the groups had existed for some time, others were created to campaign on current issues, and still others were formed on longer-term problems, but quickly died due to a lack of interest. While accepting that many APGs were largely inactive, Richardson and Kimber argued that they could be effective in mobilizing MPs to challenge government policy. They particularly noted the work of the APG on the Third London Airport, which opposed the creation of a new airport at Wing in Buckinghamshire. The group held meetings with stakeholders, issued media releases, organized Parliamentary debates on the issue, and mobilized cross-party support for an Early Day Motion against the choice of location. Ultimately, the government backed away from the proposal.

More recently APGs have been examined as parts of larger studies on Parliament. Searing, who studies the roles that MPs adopt for themselves, found that APGs are of greatest interest to “specialist” MPs, who typically “prefer working through party committees, all-party groups, Select Committees and personal contacts with ministers to generate steady pressure behind the scenes” (1994: 53). In contrast, those classified as “Older members” and “Cynical members” do not generally take part. In his study of the British Parliament, Norton (2005) notes that subject focused APGs can “provide a means of contact between outside organizations and MPs, and serve also as a means of reaching ministers through parliamentarians” (2005: 127). He also reports that Ministers may be more responsive to matters raised by APGs since they are perceived as non-partisan. Norton stresses that APGs are particularly valued by civil society

actors and interest groups that wish to avoid becoming identified with a given party. He adds that the value of APGs to these organizations is evident in the administrative and financial support that many advocacy groups provide to the APGs working in the same policy field.

Several policy studies also verify identify instances when British APGs have made an impact on government decision making. Whitely and Winyard (1987) describe how the APG on Disability was influential in lobbying for improved financial support for the disabled. Similarly, in their research on female genital mutilation in the UK, Dustin and Phillips argue that “the catalyst for fresh legislation was the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Population Development and Reproductive Health, which produced a report in 2000” (2008: 415).

However, this potential for influence among APGs has long led to concern that they can be used as a vehicle for inappropriate lobbying. Writing in the mid-1980s, Jordan observed that “In practice [APGs] are not always (or even usually) spontaneous signs of parliamentary interest and can be stimulated by lobbyists – and indeed financed and administered by groups... Indeed the essence of the All-Party system is the liaison between interested MPs and interested groups” (1985: 178). These anxieties eventually led to the establishment of an APG register that included a declaration of any outside support (Doig, 1986). However, despite the register, a 2006 investigation by *The Times* found that 36 APGs had received financial or administrative support not from interest groups, but rather from paid lobbyists, raising questions as to whether outside groups should be able to pay for such access (Parvin, 2007). The *Times* investigation prompted a Select Committee study into APGs, which found that three groups which had received support from public relations firms had breached the requirement to disclose the client on whose behalf the support had been provided (United Kingdom. Committee on Standards and Privileges, 2006). In 2012, a study of the APG registry found that the 300 APGs that declared benefits together received in excess of £1.8m in support from outside organizations (Ball and Belega, 2012).

## 5.0 APGs at the Canadian Parliament

APGs have been operating in Canada since at least 1959 when the Canada-United States Inter-parliamentary Group was established. However, in contrast to the US, UK and Scotland, geographic groups make up the vast majority of the Canada’s APGs. In fact, it has only been in the last decade that the number of subject groups reached into double digits. A further difference can also be seen in the fact that the Canadian Parliament provides support and oversight to a small group APGs, creating a multi-tiered system.

The Canadian Parliament provides full financial and administrative support to 12 geographic APGs. These include the Canadian delegations to seven inter-parliamentary bodies, such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, as well as five bilateral associations that facilitate exchanges between Canadian parliamentarians and those from major world powers (China, France, Japan, the UK and US) (Canada. Parliament 2011).<sup>1</sup> The Parliament also provides administrative support to “Parliamentary Friendship Groups” with a further four countries: Germany, Ireland, Israel, and Italy. All other geographic APGs, including those for major countries like India and Mexico, operate independently and are not subject to any regulation. The Parliament does maintain a list of these associations, which are referred to as “Other Interparliamentary Groups” (OIGs), although registration is voluntary and the only detail recorded is the identity of the group’s chair (Canada. Parliament 2013).

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<sup>1</sup> The UK manages its inter-parliamentary delegations completely separately from its APGs, with the latter receiving no parliamentary support, except for the British-American All-Party Group.

Table II:  
Number of all-party groups at the Canadian Parliament, 2006 – 2013

Year	2006	2008	2011	2013
Officially supported inter-parliamentary groups and associations	16	16	16	16
Other Inter-parliamentary Groups	31	43	47	62
Subject groups	4	7	20	25
Total	51	66	83	103

In contrast, even the limited oversight for OIGs is more comprehensive than the complete absence of any registry for Canada’s subject-focused groups. Although their numbers have been very low until recently, subject APGs are not a new phenomenon at the Canadian Parliament, with the All-Party Steel Caucus having been in operation since the late 1970s (Powell 2008). However, no rules have been established governing group formation or their relationships with stakeholders. In fact, the only somewhat complete list of groups in operation is maintained by the subscription-based government relations news website *Parliament Now* (Parliament Now 2013). This absence of rules or a registry makes quite difficult to identify who is involved with such groups, or even to say definitively how many groups are in operation at any given time. Despite these problems, Table II outlines the growth of geographic and subject APGs at the Parliament of Canada over the four parliaments analyzed.

As in the UK, cabinet members are not formally prevented from participating in Canadian APGs, but they do tend to refrain from holding executive positions in APGs. However, in a break with Britain, members of Canada’s shadow cabinet tend to be as active as a typical MP, if not more so. In particular, those serving in the current New Democratic Party (NDP) shadow cabinet have been highly active in subject-focused APGS. This trend may reflect the fact that many subject-focused groups do not actually have elections for their executives. Instead, most subject groups are structured with one co-chair from each party, with the posts going to an MP who puts themselves forward or who is nominated by their own party’s leadership.

While several groups have experienced little leadership change in the period studied, instances were found of strong competition for executive positions. Following the change in government from Liberal to Conservative in the 2006 election, Conservatives MPs were accused of joining the officially recognized geographic APGs en masse in order to ensure that a Conservative Party member was selected as the Chair (Vongdouangchanh 2006). Moreover, in 2011, all of the executive positions on the Canada-Israel Parliamentary Friendship Group were filled by MPs from the Conservative Party, casting doubt on the all-party nature of the group and further raising concerns from the opposition (Berthiaume, 2011).

There has been virtually no academic exploration of APGs at the Canadian Parliament, with one scholar noting that “all-party caucuses” were one of the “components of the parliamentary party structures that have not been carefully studied” (Thomas 2001, 222). However, in keeping with the American and British literature, a number of observers have recently suggested that several Canadian groups, including the Pro-Life (Delacourt, 2010), Canada-Israel (McDonald, 2010) and Canada-Taiwan APGs (Hulme, 2010), have each succeeded in shaping government policy in line with their preferences. On the other hand, a report from a think-tank (2003) has cast some doubt on the utility of Canada’s geographic-

focused APGs. In particular, it argues that the turnover in group delegations is too rapid to allow Canadian legislators to develop any expertise in parliamentary diplomacy.

As in the UK, concerns regarding the links between Canadian APGs and industry have begun to grow as the number of groups increased. The All-Party Aerospace Caucus attracted some criticism in October 2010 when it held a breakfast meeting with the Aerospace Industries Association of Canada, which had been lobbying for the purchase of F-35 fighter jets (Naumetz, 2010). Similar controversy occurred in 2008 when the Parliamentary Caucus on Intellectual Property, Anti-Counterfeiting and Anti-Piracy initially appeared to be meeting only with foreign governments and industry groups that were in favour of tougher copyright measures (Geist, 2008). There are also few signs such concerns will diminish in future. Instead, fostering the creation of subject-focused APGs is increasingly being seen by Canadian lobbyists as a way to help them “leverage” the messages they are trying to deliver to government (Mazereeuw 2012).

## 6.0 APGs at the Scottish Parliament

In contrast to the US, UK or Canada where APGs evolved organically over time, the presence of the APGs at the Scottish Parliament was largely planned in advance. APGs were already well established at the British Parliament during the lead up to the creation of the Scottish Parliament in 1999. Moreover, the non-partisan, cooperative nature of APGs was seen to be keeping with the consensus-focused ideals of “new politics” that the legislature was supposed to embody (Lundberg 2014). As such, provisions governing APGs were established very quickly after the first session began (Scottish Parliament. Standards Committee 1999).

Table III:  
Number of registered cross-party groups in at the Scottish Parliament, 2003 – 2012

Year	2003	2007	2011	2012
Geographic Groups	2	4	8	12
Subject Groups	47	57	67	68
Total	49	61	75	80

Scottish APGs further differ from their counterparts in other jurisdictions in that non-politicians can be group members, and can even hold lower-level executive posts, such as group secretary. This external membership, which again is seen to be in keeping with the inclusive ideals of “new politics,” extends not only to individuals, but even to institutions, such as corporations, government departments, non-governmental organizations, universities, or foreign consulates. Another divergence can also be found in the registration process. While new British APGs must register to gain the full benefits offered by their Parliament, approval is automatic once groups have met certain basic standards. In Scotland on the other hand, new APGs must not only meet a set of criteria, but also require the approval of the Parliament’s Standards Committee. In practice, however, such approval is typically granted with little debate.

Unlike Westminster, Scottish APGs do not have to declare themselves as being either a geographic or country group. As shown in Table III, just two geographic APGs were established in the Scottish Parliament’s first session. However, the number of geographic groups has since grown to 12 in the current session, a trend that is somewhat surprising given that the Parliament

has no responsibility for foreign affairs. Those interviewed as part of the broader research project suggested the increased geographic focus could reflect the desire of Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) from the Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP) for Scotland to have a larger international presence.

In keeping with Canada and the UK, Scottish parliamentarians holding cabinet or ministerial positions are not explicitly forbidden from being involved with APGs, but tend not to do so. Notably, no distinction is made between the Parliament's constituency or regional list MSPs in terms of their ability to create or be members of APGs.<sup>2</sup> However, the requirement that Scottish APGs must have at least one member from each party represented in the Parliamentary Bureau (i.e. those parties with at least five members) may increase the demand for participation by regional MSPs since several parties, such as the Scottish Conservatives, Greens, and Socialists, have had the majority of their members elected at the regional level.

Research on the APGs at the Scottish Parliament has been extremely limited, and consists primarily of Ringe et al.'s (2010) study of the extent to which they provide a network of "weak ties" that facilitate the exchange of policy information among MSPs themselves. However, there are also signs that Scotland's APGs also serve to promote the sharing of ideas between MSPs and civil society groups (Gardham 2013). In addition, Scottish APGs have lobbied for government action on particular causes, such as greater investment in cycling infrastructure (Stephen 2012) or support for the video games industry (Dundee SNP 2012).

Predictably, concerns over the links between APGs and lobbyists have also been raised in Scotland. Miller has argued that some Scottish APGs are "dominated by the corporations," and points out that the Oil and Gas APG has participation from 16 industry representatives but relatively few citizen groups (2010: 128). Most recently, the Scottish APGs on Chronic Pain and Health Inequalities were found to have broken the rules Parliament's regarding support they received from an outside member (Hutcheon 2014). Both groups had received secretariat services from a woman who claimed to be acting in a voluntary, unpaid capacity. However, she was also CEO of a consulting firm that was itself a member of both groups, and that worked with pharmaceutical companies.

## **7.0 Methodology**

### **7.1 Dataset construction**

To explore the factors shaping MPs' participation in APGs, datasets were created that tracked both the general and executive memberships for British, Canadian, and Scottish APGs over several parliamentary sessions. The UK parliamentary authorities only maintain copies of its APG registry for the past five years. However, older registries were found on the Internet Archive and the UK Web Archive, making it possible to extend the study to each of the past five parliaments, starting with 1992-1997. The Internet Archive also contained copies of the Scottish Parliament's registry for every session dating back to its creation in 1999. Notably, in each jurisdiction the number of APGs in operation rises during the time between elections as new groups are created, and also since existing groups may take some time to re-register. As such, for all jurisdictions an effort was made to find the last possible registry available for each parliament before the next general election. Webscraping software was then used to extract the data from the registries.

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<sup>2</sup> The Scottish Parliament employs a mixed-member plurality electoral system. There are 73 members elected from single-member constituencies and 56 additional members are chosen from party lists in eight regions.

While the Scottish data was complete for both executive and general members, the UK registry only began to include membership data in 2004, and even then the list is limited to the 20 “qualifying members” required for registration. As such, it is possible that the membership information obtained not reflect the true population values. However, given that many of the British MPs interviewed indicated that most APGs struggled to find even the 20 qualifying members, the data obtained will be assumed to be representative. All told, UK membership data was available for the years 2005, 2010 and 2012, while UK executive data executive data was obtained for those years as well as 1996 and 2001.

For Canada, the Parliament generously provided a nearly complete list membership and executive data for Canada’s recognized associations and friendship groups from for the past four parliaments, starting with 2004-2006. A small amount of missing information was located using the Internet Archive and the Government of Canada Web Archive, producing a full set of membership and executive data for each of the 16 recognized groups. The Parliament also provided their lists of OIGs for the same period, although these were limited only to the names of group chairs, and efforts to construct a full list of membership and executive data was blocked by the fact that many OIGs consider such information to be confidential. As such, information for geographic APGs beyond the 16 receiving parliamentary support is limited to chairs only.

The lack of a registry for Canada’s subject-focused APGs meant that one needed to be constructed using searches of the internet, the Parliament’s *Hansard*, and newspaper archives. While subject groups were found for previous parliaments, it has only been possible to confirm the identity of group chairs in the current session. Efforts to acquire membership data were also hindered by the fact that several groups either do not have formal memberships, or consider such lists to be confidential. However, complete membership lists were located for four subject-focused APGs in the current parliament: the All-Party Entrepreneur Caucus, the Parliamentary Committee on Palliative and Compassionate Care, the Canadian Association of Parliamentarians for Population and Development, and the All-Party Parliamentary Group for the Prevention of Genocide and Other Crimes Against Humanity. Given that these groups had a combined 130 members and deal with a diverse range of topics, the data is included in the analysis. However, given limited number of groups, the findings should be treated with caution.

## 7.2 *Variable selection and data analysis*

The paper examines whether APG participation in the UK, Canada, and Scotland is shaped by MPs’ electoral performance or by the desire of new members to develop and demonstrate leadership potential. Moreover, it investigates whether any relationships found are constant for both geographic- and subject-focused groups, and for general and executive members. The combination of these research questions and the available data produces six dependent variables for the UK, namely the membership and executive positions held in geographic APGs, subject APGs, and both combined. For Canada, five variables are examined: memberships and executive posts held in officially recognized geographic APGs, chair posts held in OIGs, and membership and chair posts held in subject groups in the current parliament.

In Scotland, the low number of geographic APGs meant that MSPs’ participation in APGs could not be disaggregated into separate variables based on group type. Moreover, the fact that Scotland employs a mixed-member plurality electoral system made it impossible to examine how electoral performance affects all MSPs in a single regression. Consequently three sets of regressions were conducted for Scotland. The first set examined all MSPs to look for differences

in APG participation between constituency and regional members. The second and third set then analyzed regional and constituency members on their own to capture the impact of electoral performance. Each set of regressions examined both total membership and total executive positions held, producing six dependent variables in all.

Except for the data for the Canadian subject groups, all of the dependent variables are measured at multiple points in time. Since many politicians in the three parliaments were serving when several (if not all) of the measurements were made, the data are structured longitudinally. As such, the data is analyzed through random-effects models using generalized least squares regression. Ordinary least squares regression is used to analyze the Canadian subject group data.

In all of the regressions MPs' electoral performance and seniority are operationalized using margin of victory in votes cast and incumbency respectively. The only exceptions are for Scotland, where seniority is operational through years served for all MSPs, and the electoral performance of regional members is measured through their party's regional vote share.<sup>3</sup> In every regressions control variables are included for demographic and career factors such as gender, party affiliation, as well ministerial or shadow cabinet position. Further controls are also added for the number of MPs in each party, and the number of APGs in operation. The former captures whether the need for APGs to have members from all political factions inflates the level of involvement by politicians from smaller parties. The latter is included to ensure that apparent changes in membership patterns are not just the result of a growth in the number of groups.

## **8.0 British results**

### *8.1 Data overview*

Tables IV and V present how the average number of APG memberships and executive posts held by British MPs varies over time and with the control factors mentioned above. Looking across both tables, it is evident that the growth in the number of groups has been matched by increases in the average level of MP involvement at both the general membership and executive levels. The only exception is in 2012, although the declines observed likely reflect the fact that the measurement was taken just two years into the current parliament while the others were measured after at least four years.

Moving down the rows, in most cases incumbents are more active than new MPs as both general and executive members. The only exceptions are in those years that follow a change in government (2001, after the 1997 Labour victory, and 2012 after the 2010 Conservative-Liberal Democrat victory). In these years, new MPs have a higher than average number of executive positions for both subject groups and in all groups combined. Moreover, while records were not available for 2001, the same trend is evident in the member data for subject groups from 2012. This post-election change may indicate that newly elected government members are being recruited to fill posts left vacant by defeated incumbents from the old governing party. It could also be that the winning party wishes to exert more control over these groups. However, it is notable that at no point are new members more active in geographic groups as general or executive members.

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<sup>3</sup> The Scottish Parliament was only founded in 1999, which greatly distorts a binary measurement of incumbency.

Table IV:  
Variations in the average number of APG *executive posts* held by British, by group type, demographic, party, and career factors

	Average executive posts in geographic APGs					Average executive posts in subject-focused APGs					Average executive posts in all APGs				
	1996	2001	2005	2010	2012	1996	2001	2005	2010	2012	1996	2001	2005	2010	2012
All MPs	0.64	0.59	0.76	0.89	0.84	0.84	1.42	1.99	2.68	2.57	1.47	2.00	2.74	3.57	3.41
Incumbent	0.76	0.76	0.78	0.97	1.03	0.86	1.17	2.06	2.78	2.30	1.62	1.93	2.84	3.75	3.33
Non-incumbent	0.25	0.35	0.51	0.66	0.51	0.80	1.83	1.67	2.31	3.11	1.05	2.17	2.18	2.97	3.62
Male	0.67	0.63	0.83	0.99	0.96	0.82	1.43	2.01	2.72	2.48	1.49	2.06	2.84	3.72	3.44
Female	0.29	0.38	0.41	0.47	0.41	1.02	1.36	1.88	2.48	2.90	1.31	1.74	2.29	2.95	3.30
Conservative	0.64	0.81	1.04	1.19	0.92	0.74	1.56	2.14	2.77	2.27	1.38	2.36	3.18	3.96	3.19
Labour	0.65	0.47	0.62	0.75	0.83	0.82	1.19	1.69	2.29	2.49	1.47	1.66	2.31	3.04	3.32
Lib Dem	0.76	0.81	1.04	0.81	0.51	2.28	3.11	3.87	5.00	4.40	3.04	3.91	4.91	5.81	4.91
Cabinet member	0.09	0.16	0.16	0.14	0.20	0.00	0.05	0.05	0.00	0.00	0.09	0.21	0.21	0.14	0.20
Gov. minister (incl. cabinet)	0.05	0.06	0.05	0.08	0.07	0.04	0.07	0.09	0.20	0.04	0.08	0.13	0.14	0.28	0.12
Shadow cabinet member	0.15	0.24	0.39	0.40	0.13	0.23	0.29	1.00	1.52	0.63	0.38	0.52	1.39	1.92	0.75
Shadow minister (incl. shadow cabinet)	0.40	0.63	0.81	0.90	0.57	0.67	1.43	1.81	2.17	2.05	1.07	2.06	2.61	3.07	2.62
<i>Total posts</i>	413	386	495	569	538	544	930	1301	1710	1654	957	1316	1796	2279	2192
<i># MPs holding</i>	189	183	228	233	217	279	357	424	436	440	349	403	463	466	474

Table V:  
Variations in the average number of APG *memberships* held by British MPs, by group type, demographic, party, and career factors

	Average memberships in geographic APGs			Average memberships in subject-focused APGs			Average memberships in all APGs		
	2005	2010	2012	2005	2010	2012	2005	2010	2012
All MPs	3.04	3.44	2.79	8.27	10.96	10.59	11.31	14.40	13.39
Incumbent	3.27	3.90	3.45	8.65	11.71	10.54	11.92	15.61	14.00
Non-incumbent	1.71	1.88	1.71	6.03	8.56	10.83	7.74	10.45	12.54
Male	3.24	3.72	3.16	8.25	11.07	10.25	11.50	14.78	13.41
Female	2.13	2.32	1.53	8.33	10.50	11.78	10.46	12.82	13.31
Conservative	4.52	4.44	2.78	11.09	12.43	8.94	15.61	16.88	11.72
Labour	2.51	3.23	3.11	6.86	10.26	11.63	9.37	13.49	14.73
Lib Dem	2.96	2.35	1.72	11.78	13.25	14.81	14.74	15.60	16.53
Cabinet	0.11	0.24	0.20	0.42	1.43	0.80	0.53	1.67	1.00
Gov. minister	0.62	1.09	0.34	2.48	4.30	1.18	3.10	5.40	1.52
Shadow cabinet	2.14	3.32	0.46	7.21	9.68	5.21	9.36	13.00	5.67
Shadow minister	4.07	3.69	1.91	10.58	10.77	10.58	14.65	14.46	12.48
<i>Total memberships</i>	1990	2200	1797	5407	7001	6810	7397	9201	8607
<i># MPs holding</i>	431	436	407	596	603	586	608	608	597

In terms of gender, the tables show remarkably consistent patterns, with women MPs having a lower than average number of executive and membership positions in both geographic-focused groups and total groups in each of the five parliamentary sessions. Among parties, Liberal Democrats have uniformly below average participation as members of geographic groups, but are far above the average for both general and executive posts in subject-focused groups and all groups combined. Notably, this higher level of subject group participation among Lib Dems continued even after the party moved into government in 2010. In contrast, Conservatives had higher than average memberships in both geographic and subject groups until the party entered the coalition, at which point they fell somewhat below. Labour MPs almost always had a lower than average number of executive posts relative to the other parties whether in government or opposition.

As could be predicted from the discussion above, the average number of APG membership and executive positions held was much lower among those serving in a cabinet or broader ministerial position. Those in the shadow cabinet were somewhat more active than their government opposites no matter which party formed the opposition. However, their level of participation was still well below that of the average MP. On the other hand, the broader shadow government had participation levels that were on par with or exceeded the general average.

Table VI:  
Regression results of factors shaping factors British MPs' participation in APGs

	Geographic exec. posts	Subject exec. posts	Total exec. posts	Geographic memberships	Subject memberships	Total memberships
	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)
Margin of victory	0.00000 (0.00001)	-0.00002** (0.00001)	-0.00002 (0.00001)	0.00000 (0.00002)	-0.00022**** (0.00005)	-0.00021**** (0.00006)
Incumbent	0.4241**** (0.0636)	0.2165** (0.0885)	0.6391**** (0.1200)	1.6107**** (0.2260)	2.8562**** (0.4651)	4.5154**** (0.6011)
Female	-0.3108*** (0.1131)	0.3190** (0.1462)	0.0067 (0.2023)	-1.0935*** (0.3447)	1.1605* (0.6886)	0.0746 (0.8851)
Cons.	0.3474 (0.2393)	0.3541 (0.3173)	0.7294* (0.4361)	2.3124*** (0.8013)	6.9757**** (1.6241)	9.3177**** (2.0898)
Labour	0.1822 (0.2560)	0.1983 (0.3439)	0.4067 (0.4711)	1.9891** (0.8757)	7.1938**** (1.7771)	9.2068**** (2.2905)
Lib Dem	0.1788 (0.2536)	2.3114**** (0.3284)	2.5056**** (0.4542)	0.4205 (0.8234)	7.1828**** (1.6446)	7.6052**** (2.1144)
Government minister	-0.3871*** (0.1408)	-1.0783**** (0.2016)	-1.4823**** (0.2720)	-0.9413** (0.4326)	-2.8322*** (0.8975)	-3.8767**** (1.1619)
Shadow cabinet	-0.6502**** (0.0816)	-1.8708**** (0.1160)	-2.5372**** (0.1568)	-1.9978**** (0.2523)	-5.9938**** (0.5217)	-8.0740**** (0.6753)
# of MPs in party	-0.0002 (0.0005)	0.0004 (0.0007)	0.0001 (0.0009)	-0.0034** (0.0016)	-0.0112**** (0.0034)	-0.0146**** (0.0043)
# of groups	0.0058**** (0.0013)	0.0052**** (0.0003)	0.0054**** (0.0004)	0.0241**** (0.0069)	0.0199**** (0.0026)	0.0203**** (0.0029)
Intercept	-0.2832 (0.2512)	0.0467 (0.2876)	-0.2893 (0.4045)	-1.8277 (1.1569)	-1.4837 (1.7207)	-2.9855 (2.3472)
# of obs.	3179	3179	3179	1901	1901	1901
# of MPs	1365	1365	1365	1010	1010	1010
R <sup>2</sup> within	0.0580	0.1811	0.1888	0.0821	0.2436	0.2331
R <sup>2</sup> between	0.0487	0.2259	0.1631	0.1031	0.1176	0.1243
R <sup>2</sup> overall	0.0514	0.1923	0.1666	0.0958	0.1331	0.1385

\* P = 0.1, \*\* P = 0.05, \*\*\* P = 0.01 \*\*\*\* P = 0.001

## 8.2 Regression results

Table VI presents the results for the six UK regressions. They indicate that as with members of the US Congress, a British MP's margin of victory is inversely related to his or her participation in APGs. However, the relationship exists only for subject-focused groups, and is stronger for general membership than executive positions. While the coefficient appears very small, it is important to keep in mind that the variable contains the absolute number of votes by which an MP defeated their next closest competitor. Therefore, we would expect that an MP with a margin of victory of 10,000 votes would hold 0.2 fewer executive posts and 2.2 fewer memberships in subject-focused groups than an MP with a one vote majority.

In contrast to the American findings, the results for incumbency show that newly elected British MPs are less likely to participate in APGs than those who have served at least one term. Moreover, with the exception subject group executives, the relationship between incumbency and participation is equally robust at both the general member and executive levels ( $P=0.001$ ). It also appears to be unaffected by the surge in activity by new members following changes in government. These findings suggest that instead of providing new MPs with an opportunity to develop or display leadership skills in search of a promotion, APGs in the UK instead provide some benefit for those further along in their career paths. Interviews conducted for the broader research project indicate that MPs often turn to APGs to increase their influence only after their hopes of a government or shadow government post have been dashed.

Among the control variables, serving as a government minister or shadow cabinet member greatly reduced an MP's participation in APGs. There was also a significant inverse relationship between the number of MPs in a party and the number of memberships its MPs held. However, the control variables for the individual parties also had their own independent impacts, with all but one of the party controls being significant for the membership regressions. The only exception was that Liberal Democrats were not significantly more likely to be members in geographic groups. In contrast, party affiliation appears to play a much smaller role in participation in executive posts. The most notable relationship was that Lib Dem MPs were more likely to hold executive positions both in subject groups and overall.

The regressions also showed that female MPs were significantly less likely to be involved in geographic groups as either an officer or a regular member. They were also more likely to be involved in subject groups in both capacities, although the significance for the relationship between gender and subject group membership was only  $P=0.1$ . Interview respondents suggested women's reduced participation in geographic groups likely resulted from their increased family responsibilities, which hindered their ability to travel. However, it was unclear why they should simultaneously also be *more involved* in subject groups. It is possible that the increased subject group involvement among both women and Lib Dems stems from the fact that both tend to have lower margins of victory, but more work is needed to explore the relationships.

Finally, results also indicate that involvement in geographic- and subject- focused groups are influenced by different factors. In addition to the differences in how margin of victory, gender, and party affect participation in the two types of groups, the R-squared values indicate that the models for participation in subject groups account for a greater proportion of variation than those for the geographic ones. Moreover, as could be predicted by the lesser commitment involved, the number of group memberships possessed by an MP appears to be more sensitive to factors such as margin of victory and the number of MPs in a party. As such, examining only an individual's memberships APGs as a whole could cause certain relationships to go unobserved.

## **9.0 Canadian results**

### *9.1 Data overview*

The lack of a registry means that the Canadian data is much less comprehensive than that from the UK. Nevertheless, the membership and executive data presented in Table VII do indicate some changes in MP behaviour over time. The most interesting finding is that while the number of officially recognized groups has remained constant at 16, the number of memberships held in these groups has grown. There is also less indication of the sharp divide between incumbents and new members that was observed in the UK. Instead, no clear trend is evident as

Table VII:  
Variations in the average number of APG membership and executive posts held by Canadian MPs, by group type, demographic, party,  
and career factors

	Average membership in official geographic APGs				Average exec. posts in official geographic APGs				Average chair posts in "Other" geographic APGs				Avg. subject memberships	Avg. subject chair posts
	2006	2008	2011	2012	2006	2008	2011	2012	2006	2008	2011	2012	2012	2012
All	3.25	3.26	3.72	4.57	0.45	0.46	0.46	0.44	0.09	0.12	0.11	0.19	0.43	0.18
Incumbent	3.13	3.46	3.71	4.63	0.50	0.47	0.50	0.53	0.11	0.13	0.14	0.17	0.48	0.19
Non-incumbent	3.50	2.67	3.73	4.46	0.37	0.43	0.31	0.30	0.06	0.08	0.03	0.23	0.35	0.16
Male	3.06	3.24	3.70	4.71	0.42	0.45	0.45	0.44	0.09	0.12	0.12	0.21	0.38	0.14
Female	3.98	3.33	3.79	4.15	0.60	0.52	0.47	0.46	0.12	0.11	0.11	0.15	0.58	0.31
Bloc	4.06	3.31	3.45	3.75	0.44	0.54	0.49	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.04	0.25	0.00	0.75
Cons	2.90	3.70	3.72	4.82	0.44	0.47	0.44	0.52	0.07	0.11	0.11	0.25	0.31	0.13
Liberal	3.36	3.05	4.38	5.15	0.46	0.45	0.51	0.41	0.16	0.17	0.21	0.15	0.74	0.29
NDP	2.32	2.07	2.75	4.00	0.58	0.37	0.36	0.34	0.00	0.03	0.03	0.12	0.55	0.19
Cabinet	1.64	1.10	1.11	2.42	0.03	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.00
Shadow cabinet	2.70	3.48	4.64	4.87	0.40	0.48	0.40	0.52	0.09	0.14	0.21	0.13	0.65	0.28
<i>Total posts</i>	999	988	1134	1403	140	140	139	136	29	35	35	59	133	56
<i># MPs holding</i>	256	204	192	231	97	97	97	96	24	29	29	43	109	45

to which has more group memberships, although incumbents do have a higher than average number of executive positions. In contrast to the UK, where men dominated the geographic groups, female MPs in Canada were actually more active in the 16 recognized geographic groups as both members (except in 2012) and officers. However, like their UK colleagues, Canada's women MPs had an above average number of memberships and chair positions in subject groups.

In terms of parties, NDP members had below average involvement as members in recognized geographic groups and chairs of OIGs until the current session of parliament. In contrast, Liberal MPs have tended to be above average in both of these categories, and also had higher than average involvement as both chairs and members of subject groups. Being a cabinet member greatly reduced an MP's average participation in all areas. Membership in the shadow cabinet had no clear impact on participation in geographic groups, but did appear to increase involvement in subject groups.

## 9.2 *Regression results*

The results of the five Canadian regressions are presented in Table VIII. In a break with both the US and the UK, there is no relationship between participation in APGs and an MP's margin of victory. Incumbency also had no impact in three regressions, but did significantly increase the number of executive positions in the official geographic groups as well as membership in subject groups. Canadian women MPs did have significantly greater involvement in subject groups, but unlike their UK counterparts they also had above average participation on the executives of the officially recognized geographic groups. However, the latter relationship was weaker, with a significance of just  $P=0.1$ .

As expected, cabinet members had significantly less involvement in any type of APG activity, but no significant relationships were found for members of the shadow cabinet. Another break with the UK can be seen in the fact that the number of MPs in a party actually significantly *increased* the number of positions its members held in both types of geographic groups. More study is needed to know whether those from the larger parties crowded out their smaller-party colleagues, or if the latter simply had less interest in such activities. The number of MPs in a party did significantly reduce its MPs' involvement in subject groups.

The link between the number of MPs in a party and their level of involvement in geographic groups may help to explain why none of the controls for the individual parties are significant for any of the three geographic group regressions. On the subject side, both Liberal and NDP MPs were significantly more likely to be members, but less likely to be group chairs. This outcome may reflect the fact that subject-focused APGs often prefer to have a chair from the governing party to mute concerns about partisanship and to improve access to ministers.

Although the differences are not as stark as in the UK, the Canadian results appear to suggest that there are different dynamics influencing MPs' participation in APGs as general versus executive members. These differences can be seen in the more comprehensive data from the officially recognized geographic groups, with incumbency playing a significant role in executive positions for those groups, but not for memberships. The results also suggest that there are different factors shaping MPs' involvement in geographic and subject groups. For instance, women are significantly more involved in the latter than the former. However, it is premature to draw any firm conclusions based only on subject group data from a single parliament.

Table VIII:  
Regression results of factors shaping Canadian MPs' participation in APGs

	Mem. in official geog. Groups	Exec. in official geog. Groups	Chair in "Other" geog. groups	Memberships in subject groups	Chair posts in subject groups
	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)
Margin of victory	0.0000 (0.0000)	0.0000 (0.0000)	0.0000 (0.0000)	0.0000 (0.0000)	0.0000 (0.0000)
Incumbent	0.2721 (0.2393)	0.1616**** (0.0445)	0.0344 (0.0259)	0.3229**** (0.0919)	0.0604 (0.0704)
Female	0.2166 (0.3494)	0.1138* (0.0678)	0.0132 (0.0372)	0.2227*** (0.0837)	0.1848*** (0.0642)
Cons	-0.8673 (0.5853)	-0.0264 (0.1121)	0.0540 (0.0618)	-	-
Liberal	-0.7422 (0.5620)	-0.0589 (0.1083)	0.0708 (0.0601)	0.5837** (0.2664)	-0.3562* (0.2042)
NDP	-0.7065 (0.5554)	-0.1644 (0.1075)	0.0091 (0.0607)	0.3896** (0.1587)	-0.2875** (0.1217)
Cabinet	-2.3771**** (0.3976)	-0.5028**** (0.0750)	-0.1329**** (0.0416)	-0.4320**** (0.1151)	-0.2141** (0.0882)
Shadow Cabinet	0.1297 (0.2934)	0.0165 (0.0545)	-0.0054 (0.0304)	0.0588 (0.1240)	0.1316 (0.0951)
# of MPs in party	0.0164**** (0.0039)	0.0012* (0.0007)	0.0008** (0.0004)	0.0027 (0.0019)	-0.0033** (0.0015)
# of "Other" groups	-	-	0.0024*** (0.0011)	-	-
Intercept	2.7444 (0.4693)	0.2724** (0.0901)	-0.1075* (0.0597)	-0.2952 (0.3179)	0.6610*** (0.2437)
# of obs.	1222	1223	1223	307	307
# of MPs	566	567	567	-	-
R <sup>2</sup> within	0.0204	0.0389	0.0100	-	-
R <sup>2</sup> between	0.0598	0.0734	0.0523	-	-
R <sup>2</sup> overall	0.0603	0.0633	0.0354	-	-
Adj R <sup>2</sup>	-	-	-	0.1189	0.0522

\* P = 0.1, \*\* P = 0.05, \*\*\* P = 0.01 \*\*\*\* P = 0.001

## 10.0 Scottish results

### 10.1 Data overview

The APG participation data for the Scottish Parliament, summarized in Tables IX and X, are the most comprehensive of the three jurisdictions studied, with both member and executive data available for each session since the Parliament's creation. The most notable trend is that the regional MSPs had a higher rate of APG involvement than their constituency counterparts in all instances. This consistency is also remarkable since the party composition of regional MSPs changed significantly over time, indicating that the different patterns of participation may result

Table IX:  
Variations in the average number of APG *memberships* by held Members of the Scottish Parliament, by group type, demographic, party, and career factors

	Average memberships in geographic APGs				Average memberships in subject APGs				Average memberships in all APGs			
	2003	2007	2011	2012	2003	2007	2011	2012	2003	2007	2011	2012
All	0.12	0.45	0.88	0.67	6.05	5.62	5.69	4.81	6.17	6.07	6.57	5.49
Regional	0.16	0.54	0.93	0.79	7.55	6.72	6.57	6.30	7.71	7.26	7.50	7.09
Constituency	0.08	0.38	0.85	0.59	4.99	4.75	5.01	3.67	5.07	5.13	5.86	4.26
Incumbent	N/A	0.43	0.78	0.60	N/A	5.15	5.03	4.56	N/A	5.58	5.81	5.16
Non-incumbent	N/A	0.52	1.04	0.78	N/A	7.10	6.71	5.17	N/A	7.61	7.75	5.94
Male	0.12	0.39	0.89	0.68	5.02	4.89	5.58	4.65	5.15	5.28	6.48	5.33
Female	0.10	0.54	0.87	0.67	7.79	6.78	5.89	5.11	7.90	7.32	6.76	5.78
Con	0.11	0.29	0.41	0.80	7.74	6.29	6.24	6.27	7.84	6.59	6.65	7.07
Lab	0.07	0.38	1.20	0.84	4.78	4.38	7.00	6.35	4.85	4.76	8.20	7.19
Lib Dem	0.06	0.24	1.06	1.20	5.94	4.65	6.06	9.40	6.00	4.88	7.13	10.60
SNP	0.18	0.38	0.60	0.52	6.18	5.31	3.38	3.21	6.36	5.69	3.98	3.73
Green	0.00	1.00	2.50	0.50	28.00	12.57	22.00	10.50	28.00	13.57	24.50	11.00
Minister	0.00	0.06	0.19	0.19	0.15	0.78	0.25	1.24	0.15	0.83	0.44	1.43
Shadow Cabinet	0.18	0.47	0.80	0.58	7.82	7.36	6.60	6.50	8.00	7.82	7.40	7.08
<i>Total posts</i>	15	58	114	87	781	725	734	621	796	783	848	708
<i># MPs holding</i>	15	40	71	56	102	107	108	106	102	107	111	108

from the regional position itself. A second unexpected finding is that while the number of groups nearly doubled over the period studied, the average number memberships held by MSPs showed only a marginal increase. This trend indicates that the average number of MSPs involved in each group has declined over time, such that the Scottish Parliament is now home to a larger number of smaller APGs.

As with Canada and the UK, there was an evident gender dimension to APG participation, with women being more active in all but three instances, one of which (average executive posts in 2003) was a tie. However, no clear pattern was evident with regards to incumbency, in part since there were no incumbents in the first year. With regard to parties, the three smaller parties (Conservatives, Liberal Democrats and Greens) tended to have higher than average numbers of executive positions, a fact that may reflect the need for APGs to have a member from each party to be registered. Parties also showed different participation patterns based on whether they were in government. The average number of membership and executive positions held by Labour and Liberal Democrat MSPs was lower in the first two sessions when they formed a coalition government, and then jumped in the last two after they were defeated by the SNP, which should the opposite trend. Lastly, as with Canada, government ministers had very low participation rates, but those for the shadow cabinet were as high or higher than that of the typical MSP.

Table X:  
Variations in the average number of APG *executive posts* held by Members of the Scottish Parliament, by group type, demographic, party, and career factors

	Average Executive posts in geographic APGs				Average executive posts in subject APGs				Average executive posts in all APGs			
	2003	2007	2011	2012	2003	2007	2011	2012	2003	2007	2011	2012
All	0.05	0.08	0.19	0.20	1.12	1.44	1.57	1.44	1.17	1.52	1.75	1.64
Regional	0.07	0.09	0.20	0.25	1.54	1.72	2.02	1.89	1.61	1.81	2.21	2.14
Constituency	0.04	0.07	0.18	0.16	0.79	1.22	1.22	1.10	0.84	1.29	1.40	1.26
Incumbent	N/A	0.06	0.21	0.21	N/A	1.24	1.27	1.51	N/A	1.31	1.47	1.72
Non-incumbent	0.05	0.13	0.16	0.19	1.12	2.06	2.02	1.35	1.17	2.19	2.18	1.54
Male	0.06	0.06	0.17	0.19	1.11	1.38	1.56	1.37	1.17	1.44	1.73	1.56
Female	0.04	0.10	0.22	0.22	1.13	1.54	1.58	1.58	1.17	1.64	1.80	1.80
Con	0.05	0.06	0.24	0.33	1.16	1.24	2.29	2.33	1.21	1.29	2.53	2.67
Lab	0.04	0.06	0.20	0.22	0.73	0.92	1.48	1.78	0.76	0.98	1.67	2.00
Lib Dem	0.00	0.06	0.19	0.60	1.65	1.71	1.88	2.20	1.65	1.76	2.06	2.80
SNP	0.06	0.08	0.13	0.15	1.12	1.15	1.00	0.92	1.18	1.23	1.13	1.08
Green	0.00	0.14	0.50	0.00	11.00	4.29	8.00	4.50	11.00	4.43	8.50	4.50
Minister	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.19	0.00	0.00	0.06	0.19
Shadow Cabinet	0.09	0.09	0.11	0.17	1.55	1.93	2.06	2.08	1.64	2.02	2.17	2.25
<i>Total posts</i>	7	10	24	26	144	186	202	186	151	196	226	212
<i># MPs holding</i>	7	10	21	22	70	78	84	82	70	82	86	88

## 10.2 Regression results

The Scottish regression results are presented in Table XI. They indicate that unlike the UK and Canada, there is no significant relationship between seniority (as measured by years served) and involvement in APGs as either general or executive members. However, electoral performance did appear to shape the behaviour of those MSPs elected from the regional party lists, whose levels of APG participation declined as their party's vote share increased. That said, the results also indicate that regional MSPs have significantly more memberships in APGs than their constituency counterparts, although the difference for executive positions was not significant. More research is needed to explore the different incentives faced by two types of MSPs, particularly since those elected at the regional level also compete for constituency seats, and vice versa.

As with the other cases, gender also shapes APG involvement in Scotland, with women MSPs having significantly more APG memberships than their male colleagues. However, when members are disaggregated by electoral method, the relationship only continues for female MSPs at the constituency level. Curiously, the party controls indicated that all of the major parties had significantly reduced involvement at the executive level, and that all but the Liberal Democrats also had significantly reduced group membership as well. Notably, these relationships largely disappeared among constituency MSPs, but continued for regional ones, suggesting that the results may have been skewed by the presence of smaller parties, such as the Scottish Greens,

Table XI:  
Regression results of factors shaping factors MSPs' participation in APGs

	All MSPs		Constituency MSPs		Regional MSPs	
	Memberships	Exec. Posts	Memberships	Exec. Posts	Memberships	Exec. Posts
	Coef. (SE)	Coef. (SE)				
Regional Member	1.2133** (0.5344)	0.3079 (0.1886)	-	-	-	-
Margin of Victory	-	-	-0.0001 (0.0001)	0.0000 (0.0000)	-	-
Regional vote share	-	-	-	-	-0.1263** (0.0601)	-0.0506** (0.0224)
Years Served	0.0611 (0.0666)	0.0339 (0.0234)	-0.0523 (0.0893)	0.0192 (0.0332)	0.0383 (0.1117)	0.0344 (0.0428)
Female	1.1845** (0.5635)	0.1132 (0.1973)	2.3019**** (0.6095)	0.2503 (0.2466)	0.0317 (0.8489)	-0.0943 (0.2796)
Cons.	-2.9010** (1.1661)	-1.4192**** (0.4093)	-3.9543 (2.6063)	-1.4862 (1.0145)	-2.8423** (1.3685)	-1.5073*** (0.4763)
Labour	-2.0738* (1.1905)	-1.2761*** (0.4193)	-3.7283 (2.6466)	-1.5890* (0.9654)	-2.0613** (1.6444)	-1.2652** (0.6085)
Lib Dem	-1.7299 (1.2089)	-0.8537** (0.4240)	-3.7587 (2.3127)	-1.1872 (0.8772)	-2.3538 (1.8737)	-1.1323* (0.6255)
SNP	-3.1526*** (1.2166)	-1.4214**** (0.4284)	-4.5889* (2.6891)	-1.5452 (0.9782)	-3.5266** (1.5342)	-1.4203** (0.5891)
Government minister	-4.9229**** (0.5322)	-1.1707**** (0.1888)	-4.8140**** (0.5750)	-1.1236**** (0.1870)	-6.0008**** (1.1815)	-1.5626*** (0.5656)
Shadow cabinet	0.1110 (0.4516)	-0.0351 (0.1602)	0.9986 (0.6807)	0.1380 (0.2092)	-1.0050* (0.6087)	-0.3047 (0.2720)
# of MPs in party	-0.0178 (0.0191)	-0.0096 (0.0068)	-0.0213 (0.0302)	-0.0086 (0.0100)	0.0484 (0.0357)	0.0082 (0.0142)
# of groups	-0.0020 (0.0188)	0.0155** (0.0066)	0.0223 (0.0296)	0.0139 (0.0106)	-0.0223 (0.0299)	0.0197* (0.0112)
Intercept	8.5899**** (1.4239)	1.8429 (0.5012)	9.2691**** (2.7525)	2.2440 (1.0142)	13.0998 (1.9850)	2.7111 (0.7724)
# of obs.	516	516	291	291	225	225
# of MPs	242	242	137	137	139	139
R <sup>2</sup> within	0.2998	0.1989	0.3042	0.2925	0.2838	0.1204
R <sup>2</sup> between	0.2005	0.2093	0.38	0.2008	0.0968	0.2022
R <sup>2</sup> overall	0.2654	0.2281	0.3641	0.2386	0.1453	0.1963

\* P = 0.1, \*\* P = 0.05, \*\*\* P = 0.01 \*\*\*\* P = 0.001

who are elected solely at the regional level and who tend to have very high rates of APG participation. As for the other controls, government Ministers were significantly less involved in APGs in all cases examined, while MSPs in the shadow cabinet were not significantly different from their regular colleagues. The only exception was that regional MSPs serving in the shadow cabinet had lower involvement as group members, although the relationship was only significant at P=0.1.

## 11.0 Discussion and conclusion

While the study is limited by the poorer quality of the Canadian data and the challenge created by the two types of parliamentarians in Scotland, it is still possible to conclude that Hammond's findings regarding APG participation at the US Congress can be only partially extrapolated to Westminster systems. In keeping with Hammond's results, British MPs and regional Scottish parliamentarians with lower margins of victory were significantly more likely to participate in APGs. However, given the different electoral systems involved, generalizing about this finding is challenging. The UK results suggest that British MPs may be willing to distance themselves from their own party and engage in cross-party cooperation if hopes of increasing their local popularity. Moreover, the fact that this relationship exists only for subject-focused APGs suggests that marginal British MPs concentrate on the activities with the most direct relevance to voters. In contrast, the Scottish finding may reflect the fact that those parties with lower regional vote shares tend to have few overall members and so may turn to APGs in hopes of achieving greater policy influence. Further research is required for both cases.

Despite the partial replication of Hammond's findings in terms of marginality, in no jurisdiction were new MPs more likely to participate in APGs. Instead, and in contrast to the US Congress, participation actually rose with seniority in Canada and the UK, a result which suggests that MPs in systems with greater levels of party discipline may face a different set of incentives. In particular, being seen to cooperate with those from other parties at an early stage in one's career may be detrimental to an MP's chances for promotion to a ministerial post.

Besides showing the limits on the portability of Hammond's findings, the results also indicate that care must be taken to disaggregate involvement in subject and geographic groups. In particular, looking at both types together could obscure important variations, such as the greater tendency of women MPs in Canada and the UK to be more involved in subject-focused groups and (at least in the UK) less involved in geographic ones. There were also substantial variations by party, with the British Lib Dems, for example, having a greater involvement with subject groups than Labour or Conservative MPs.

Finally, the data also suggest that those factors which influence whether an MP will become a *member* of a group may not be exactly same as those which shape whether he or she will also serve on its *executive*. In Canada, new MPs and incumbents are equally likely to be members of the officially recognized geographic groups, but the latter are much more likely to hold executive posts. The intensity of a relationship may also vary as well between the two types of positions, with British MPs' memberships in subject groups being much more sensitive to changes in their margin of victory than the number of executive positions they hold.

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