

Divided, Yet Connected?
Political Career Paths within Divided Party Organizations in Canada

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Paper prepared for presentation at the *2019 Canadian Political Science Association Conference*, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada. 4 June 2019. Panel B01(a): 'Comparative Study of Intergovernmental Relations Through Administrative and Political Routes Between Central and Intermediate-Level Sub-National Governments.'

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1. Introduction

This paper examines how party organization shapes the political careers of parliament members in Canada. Many parliament members in the Canadian federal government started out in professional occupations (such as accounting, legal practice, and medicine) before transitioning directly to federal politics. This is because Canada's federal political parties are completely separated from provincial parties, and provincial and municipal (hereinafter called sub-national) politicians are not regarded as significant resources for the federal parliament. Even though it is often said that local autonomy is the school of democracy, in terms of political careers, Canada's sub-national politics is entirely separated from its federal politics.

It is conventional wisdom that party organization in Canada is completely separated between the federal and sub-national levels¹. As Carty points out, Canadian political parties have Franchise style party organization (Carty 2004). In this type of arrangement, national parties have different structures at sub-national levels than provincial political parties do. This causes disconnection in political career paths between federal and sub-national politics. Therefore, Members of Parliament (MPs) in Canada often pursue a wide variety of professions before being elected to Parliament.

On the other hand, studies on intergovernmental relations have suggested that political parties play a major role in connecting national and sub-national politics². Party organization serves as a political channel, reflecting reciprocal political interests of both national and sub-national governments at different levels. In addition, when politicians move from sub-national to national politics, they play a role in mediating these intergovernmental relations. In this sense, Canadian intergovernmental relations are lacking in mediators capable of transferring sub-national interests to the federal government. As a result, Canadian intergovernmental relations are often compared to diplomacy (Simeon 2006).

However, some studies have observed changes in Canada's party organization and intergovernmental relations³. Prusysers mentions that federal and provincial parties have established organizational linkages in recent years (Pruyseres 2014). Esselment describes party labels in Canada as having influence over intergovernmental negotiations (Esselment 2012). This study follows these

¹ Carty (2004), Gagnon and Tanguay (2007), Detterback (2011).

² See Rodden (2006), Watts (2008), Johnston and Sharman (2015).

³ See Esselment (2012), Prusysers (2014).

research trends, and reveals whether national and sub-national parties in Canada have political linkages.

We will interrogate this aspect of political careerism in Canada, and examine how many federal politicians come from provincial and/or municipal levels. To do so, this work will focus on how many politicians are moving into the federal government from provincial and/or municipal levels. Indeed, after the 2015 election, over 25% of House of Commons members had held previous political positions at provincial and/or municipal levels. This paper will investigate the former jobs of all parliament members in the House of Commons at the time of just after the general elections in 1988, 1993, and 1997. This study will analyse previous party affiliations and types of political careers (such as mayor, provincial legislative assembly member, etc.)

This paper considers these three time periods for the following reasons: First, in 1993, there was a landslide governmental change. By comparing 1988 and 1993, we can analyse how governmental changes reflect MPs' political backgrounds. Second, the landslide election in 1993 generated new MPs. It is possible to obtain substantial information on how/if members newly elected that year differed from veterans. Third, 1993 was the year in which Bloc Québécois (BQ) participated in the election for the first time. BQ is a Quebec-based party, and (due to their connections with provincial parties), BQ MPs would likely differ from members of other parties. Fourth, to investigate how the changes of 1993 constrained political career paths in subsequent years, we also include information on the 1997 election.

The paper consists of five parts, including this introduction. In the second section, we review past studies on parties' channels between the central and sub-national governments, as well as general studies on political career paths. In the third section, we briefly summarize the data and variables used in this paper. In the fourth section, we analyse political career paths in Canada, revealing that there are indeed political connections between the country's federal and sub-national governments. Such results contravene widely accepted explanations that a lack of party cohesion between levels determines politicians' career paths. The final section is the conclusion.

2. Multilevel Political Connections: Party Organization and Political Career Paths

In this part, we will briefly summarize past studies on party organization in Canada, and comparative intergovernmental relations, to construct this study's analytical framework.

First, many studies have clarified that Canadian federal parties have disconnected affiliations with sub-national levels of government⁴. For example, the Liberal Party of Canada (LPC), one of the country's major political parties, has a different organizational structure from its counterparts at sub-national levels.

As a result of separation between the national and sub-national levels, intergovernmental negotiation in Canada is best understood as diplomacy (Simeon 2006). Thus, provincial governments do not have political channels with national party organizations. Federal parties are different from sub-national parties, and therefore they needn't consider sub-national interests.

Second, in contrast, comparative studies have described political parties as playing major roles in fostering intergovernmental relationships⁵. National political parties use their organizations to recruit candidates for office from sub-national levels. In this sense, Canada's political recruitment system differs from other nations.

In most cases, Canadian political recruitment is decentralized to local party branches (Bittner and Koop 2013). Because of the separation of party organizations, local branches of federal parties must recruit candidates without support from sub-national parties. Past studies have noted that MPs in Canada pursue a wide variety of professions before becoming federal parliament members⁶. This point leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: There are small numbers of Canadian politicians with previous experience at sub-national (i.e., provincial and municipal) levels.

However, some studies in Canada also point out that there are exceptions to the typical methods of party organization. These are BQ, and the New Democratic Party (NDP). First, BQ was founded as kind of a national branch of Parti Quebecois (PQ), a provincial party in Quebec. Because of this pedigree, BQ informally shares a party organization with PQ. Second, the NDP also informally shares a party organization between the national and sub-national levels.

⁴ Carty (2004), Gagnon and Tanguay (2007), Detterback (2011), Johnston and Sharman (2015).

⁵ Rhodes (1981); (1985), Ashford (1982).

⁶ Kido (2015).

Hypothesis 2: BQ and the NDP have more politicians with previous experience at sub-national levels than do other national parties.

Third, even the LPC has exceptions. In the Maritime provinces⁷, the federal and provincial Liberal parties share an organization⁸. Past studies may have ignored these provinces because they are small in population, and therefore have fewer MPs than major provinces⁹. However, we should examine whether there are differences between Liberal MPs from the Maritime provinces and those from other provinces.

Hypothesis 3: There are more Liberal politicians from Maritime provinces with previous experience at sub-national levels than from other provinces.

We will attempt to describe our data and variables in the next part, in order to test these three hypotheses.

3. Data and Variables

In this section, we will review the data and variables used in this paper.

Data

This study collects MPs' former occupations from the Parliament of Canada website¹⁰. All figures and tables in this analysis were created by the author based on this data. This study includes all MPs at the beginning of each session of parliament in 1988, 1993, and 1997 (regardless of whether he/she finished their term). We do not include MPs who were elected at by-elections in the middle of each term. This manipulation enables us to unify conditions which might otherwise skew the backgrounds of MP candidates, since by-elections may differ from general elections.

We chose these three elections because of the importance of 1993 election (when one of the

⁷ We include New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Nova Scotia as Maritime provinces in this analysis.

⁸ Stewart and Carty (2008).

⁹ Carty and Cross (2010).

¹⁰ In cases where we could not collect enough data from the government website, we referred to politicians' personal websites, and newspapers.

most significant government shifts occurred, from the Progressive Conservative Party (PC) to the LPC). We can investigate how government change affect politicians' career paths by comparing the 1993 election with its preceding and subsequent elections. The 1993 election was also BQ's first election. It was possible to obtain information about the nomination of candidates by a formerly regional party in its first national election.

Variables

We included the following variables in our analysis to illuminate MPs' political careers at sub-national levels. These career variables are dummy variables, and are coded as 1 if one MP undertook that career before becoming a MP¹¹.

First, provincial experience includes MPs' careers as Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). Municipal experience includes serving as the head of a municipality, or as a member of a municipal assembly. Head-of-municipality positions include mayor and reeve, both of which mean he/she is top elected executive at municipality¹².

Second, we include assembly members and alderman as members of municipal assemblies. For simplification purposes, we did not include other political positions (such as head of the Education Board) in this analysis. This may negatively impact calculation of the number of MPs with sub-national experience. Including such disparate positions would work against our research, which attempts to confirm political linkage between the national and sub-national levels. Therefore, we could have a tenacious result, even with such negative factors in the analysis.

Third, this study includes other political variables, such as terms of office and party affiliation at both national and sub-national levels. We included the LPC, PC, BQ, the NDP, and other party affiliations in our analysis. We coded the Canadian Reform Conservative Alliance and the Reform Party as 'Others'.

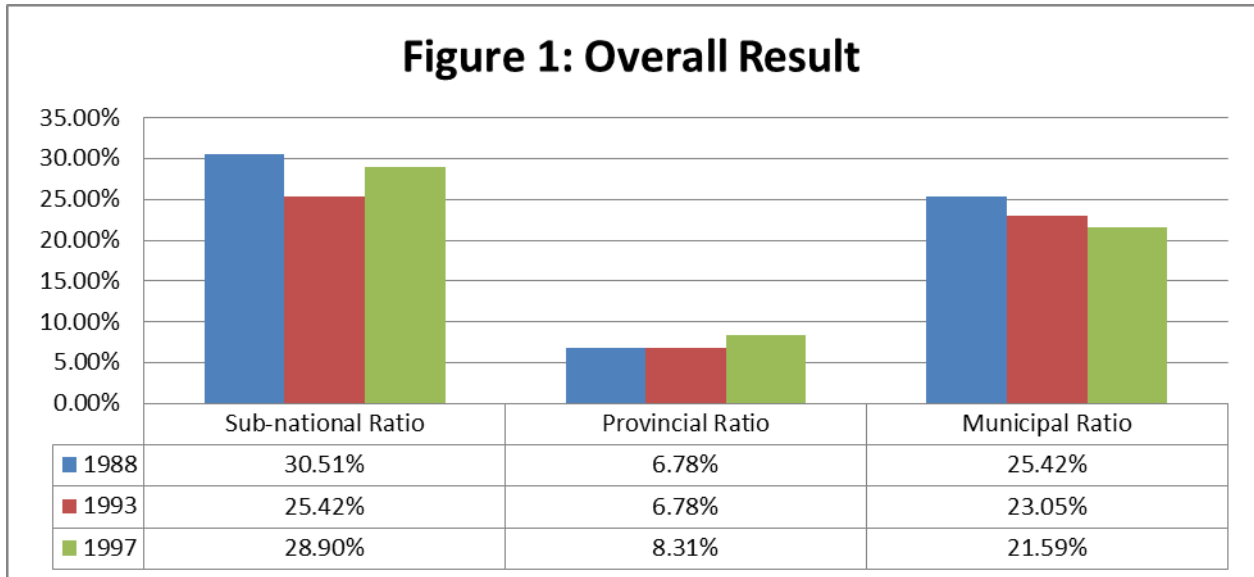
¹¹ We do not include careers after finishing as MPs.

¹² Therefore, we do not include the position of vice-mayor.

4. Analysis

4.1. Overall Analysis

In order to test Hypothesis 1, we began our analysis from general observations. Figure 1 shows the overall political experience of MPs at sub-national levels.



This figure provides interesting results, due to the rather higher ratio of MPs who have participated in sub-national politics. In particular, provincial politics provide fewer politicians to federal politics than municipal politics do. However, it is remarkable that 20-25% of federal MPs participate in municipal politics before entering federal politics. This implies there are some political routes which link municipal and federal politics.

In 1988, when a typical two-party system existed, politicians with sub-national political experience held a share of approximately 30% of the federal parliament. This ratio dropped slightly (to 25%) in 1993, when the landslide governmental change occurred. This is surprising, as newly elected politicians in 1993 would likely not have experienced sub-national politics before becoming MPs. In this sense, sub-national politics may not be a significant resource for providing candidates to federal politics.

We need to investigate this point further. Table 1 shows the number of terms per MP, and their sub-national experience between 1988 and 1997. This table shows that in 1993, there were fewer MPs with sub-national experience. Although more than 30% of MPs had sub-national experience in 1988 and 1997, only 23.4% first-time MPs had sub-national experience in 1993. This indicates (in contrast to claims from past studies) that sub-national politics is not a main resource from which

federal parties can recruit MP candidates.

Table 1: Term and Sub-national Experience of MPs

Term	1988	1993	1997
1	42/116(36.2%)	47/199(23.4%)	26/82(31.7%)
2	26/85(30.6%)	20/58(34.5%)	38/154(24.7%)
3	4/16(25.0%)	4/14(28.6%)	16/44(36.4%)
4	7/31(22.6%)	2/6(33.3%)	4/10(40.0%)
5	5/13(38.5%)	0/9(0%)	1/1(100%)
6-	6/33(18.2%)	2/9(22.2%)	2/10(20.0%)

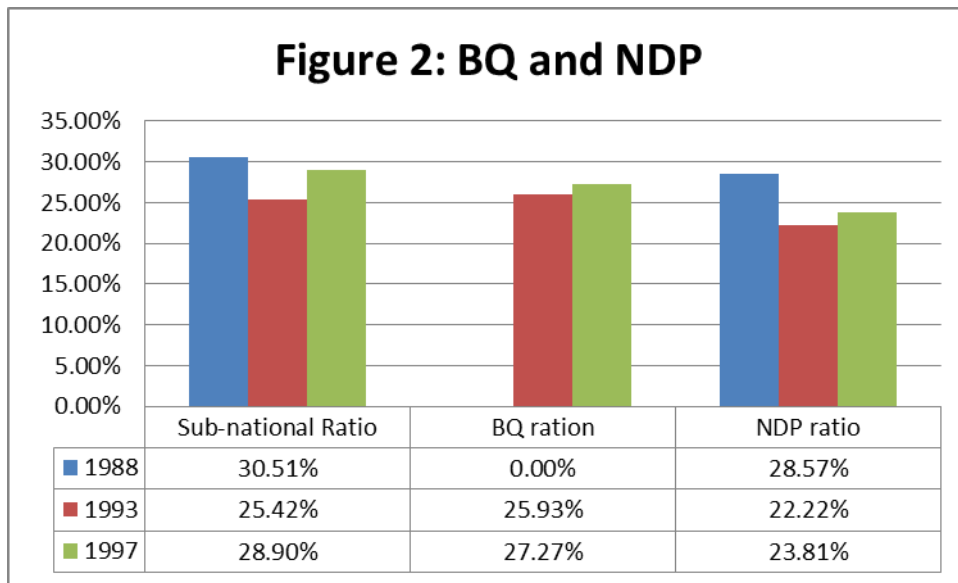
However, by comparing 1993 and 1997, we should note that sub-national experience may enhance MPs chances for re-election. It is evident that 38 MPs with sub-national experience survived their second election (in 1997). During the same term, their share increased slightly, from 23.4% in 1993 to 24.7% in 1997. We can observe this tendency during other terms; sub-national experience slightly improves the possibility of being re-elected.

Of course, with only a single comparison point, we need to reserve judgement. This tendency is not evident between 1988 and 1993. Since 1993 was a landslide election, PC MPs with sub-national experience were not re-elected. Partisanship played a major role in the 1993 election; candidates' electability was determined based more on party affiliation than their previous experience.

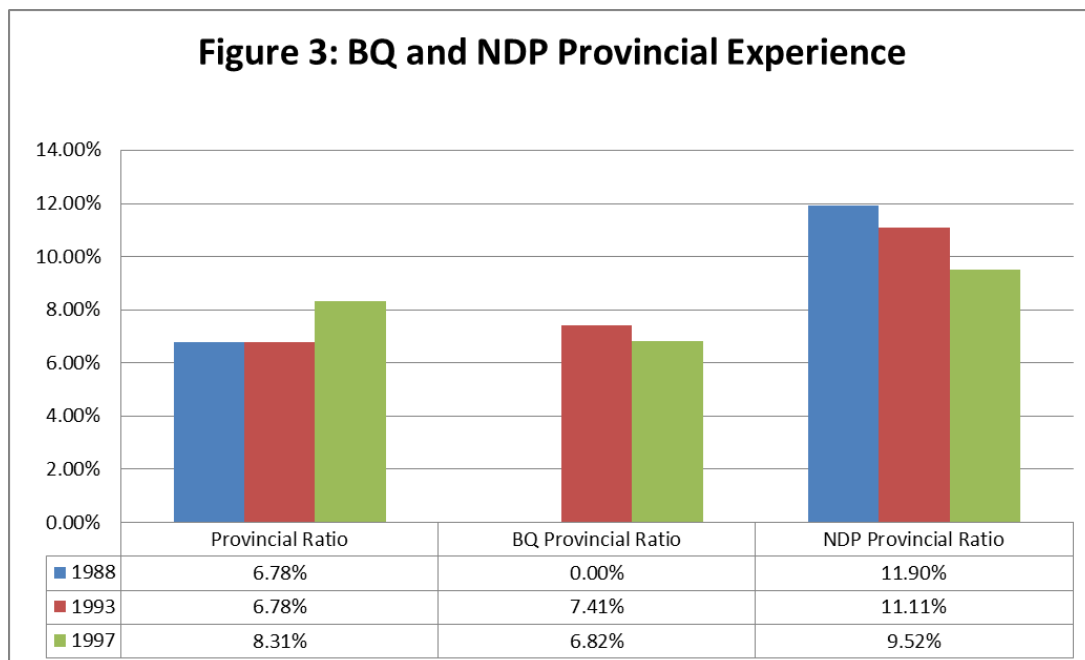
We reveal that our Hypothesis 1 is partly confirmed.

4.2. BQ and the NDP

This section investigates our second hypothesis by reviewing numbers of BQ and NDP MPs. Figure 2 shows the share of BQ and NDP MPs with sub-national experience. We can see that the ratio of these two parties' scores is quite close to the overall results. Clearly, federal BQ and NDP members have political connections at sub-national levels. However, they do not recruit more federal politicians from these affiliations than either the LPC or the PC (which do not have political links with sub-national interests). This result seems to deny Hypothesis 2, which assumes that parties having connections with sub-national level politicians would produce more federal MPs with sub-national experience.



However, different results are observed when we analyse the provincial experience of these two parties' MPs. Figure 3 shows the provincial experience of MPs from BQ and the NDP. Again, BQ's MPs have almost the same sub-national experience level as reflected in the overall results. In this sense, BQ is as same as other Canadian national political parties, regardless of its strong ties to the province of Quebec.



In contrast, the NDP is remarkably different from other parties in this time period. The NDP had more MPs with provincial experience than suggested by the overall results. In 1988 and 1993, more

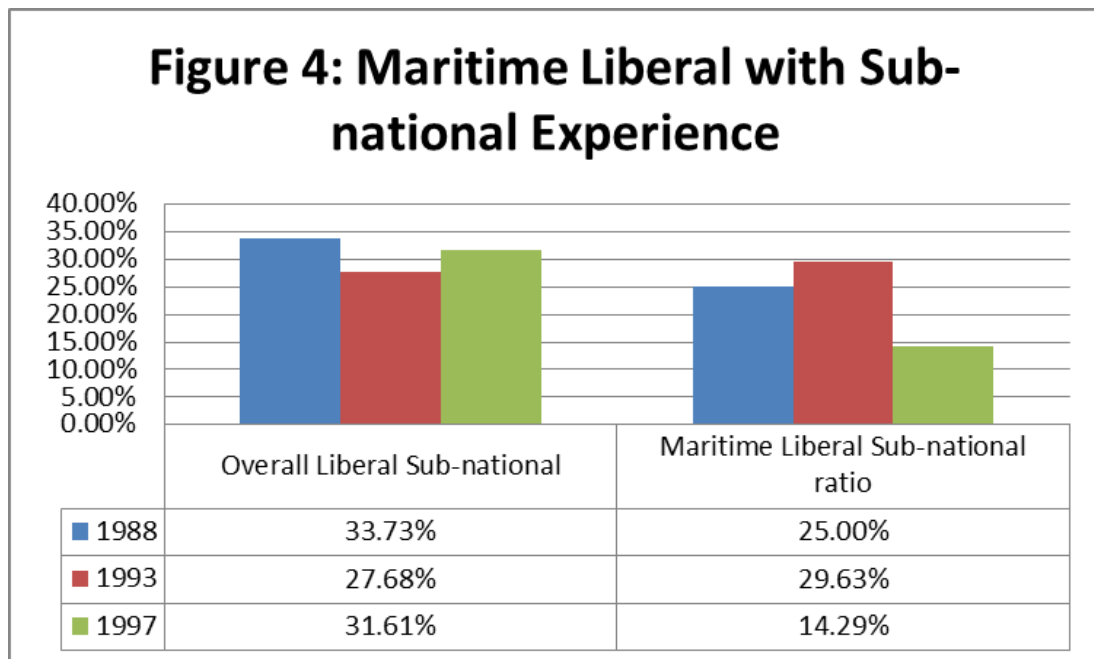
than 10% of the NDP’s MPs had provincial experience. This figure dropped to 9.52% in 1997, but was still higher than overall result. This indicates that the NDP recruits its federal candidates at the provincial level.

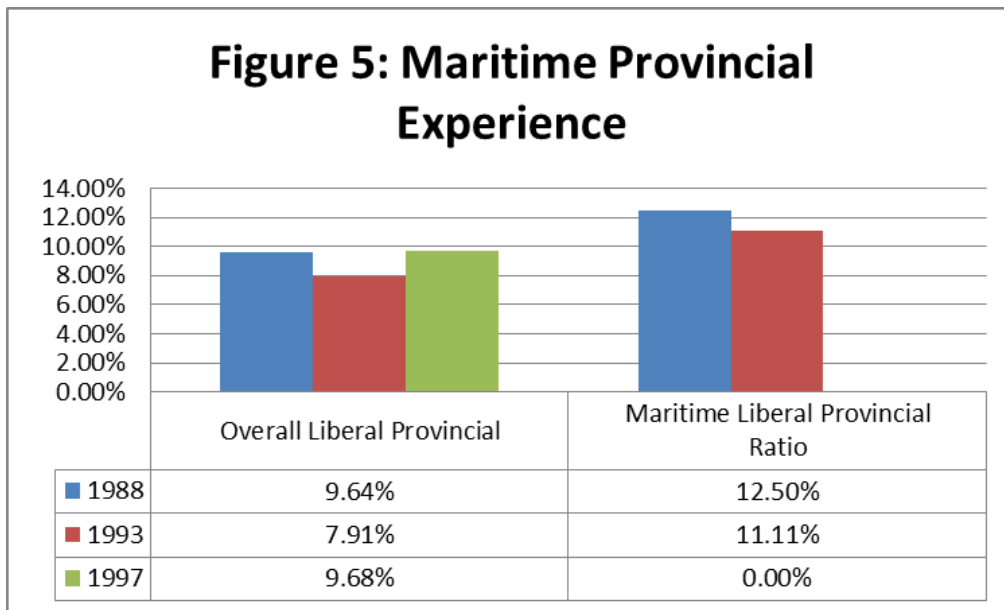
Reviewing BQ and NDP partly verified Hypothesis 2. Only the NDP has more MPs with provincial experience. This is because the NDP uses its connected political routes to recruit MPs at the provincial level. On the other hand, BQ has almost the same number of MPs with sub-national and provincial experience as shown in the overall results.

One of the causes for this is the formation of BQ. As previously mentioned, BQ was founded as a branch of Parti Quebecois, which is provincial, Quebec-specific party. This would create a political connection between federal and sub-national levels, as assumed in Hypothesis 2. However, BQ was originally formed by former LPC and PC members.

4.3. LPC

Finally, in this section, we investigate Hypothesis 3. Figure 4 shows the ratio of MPs with sub-national experience in the Maritime provinces. We cannot pinpoint any patterns regarding the sub-national experience of MPs from Maritime provinces. In 1988, the ratio in Maritime provinces is lower than the overall ratio. It slightly exceeded the overall ratio in 1993, but again recorded a sharp decline in 1997 (when liberals lost all their seats in Nova Scotia).





This pattern changes when we review experience at the provincial level. Figure 5 shows the provincial experience of Maritime MPs in the LPC. In both 1988 and 1993, we can observe more MPs with provincial experience in the Maritime provinces than in the overall results, as assumed in Hypothesis 3. This confirms that party connections between federal and provincial levels prevails, even for the LPC. However, there is a massive disruption of this pattern in 1997, when liberals lost in the Maritime provinces¹³. No Maritime MP was elected who had experience in provincial politics.

5. Conclusion

We have discussed how party organization affects political recruitment among national political parties by analysing Canadian MPs between 1988 and 1997. We investigated our three hypotheses as applied to Canadian cases, and made the following observations:

First, in Canada, approximately 30 % of MPs have sub-national experience. This indicates that provincial and municipal politics is one important source for federal parties to recruit their MP candidates. Thus, even though most past studies have ignored political connections between the federal and sub-national levels, there is nonetheless a significant tie in terms of political recruitment.

Second, we confirm that the NDP has rather strong political connections between the federal and

¹³ In 1993, liberals won 27 out of 28 seats in the Maritime provinces. In 1997, there are only 7 liberal MPs from Maritime Provinces (out of 28 seats).

provincial levels. The NDP recruits more MPs at the provincial level than other parties in Canada. This fits our prediction that party connections between national and sub-national levels increase recruitment of politicians from sub-national levels to serve in national-level positions. While BQ is regarded as a party representing the province of Quebec, in terms of political recruitment, it nevertheless has weak political ties with its own sub-national organizations. This is because BQ is similar to other political parties, such as the LPC and the PC, since BQ MPs originated from these two parties.

Third, we observed that even in the LPC, political connections affect MPs' recruitment from sub-national (especially provincial) levels. Most studies have ignored the importance of the LPC's connections to the Maritime provinces, but we verify the necessity of implementing further research regarding the LPC. As liberals lost the Maritime provinces in 1997, we can confirm the relationships in 1988 and 1993; however, we need to expand the analysis to cover a longer time period.

The following challenges exist for future research: First, we must expand the time span of our analysis. As we have just three cases between 1988 and 1997, we can only observe governmental change from PC to LPC. By expanding our analysis to the present day, we can observe other governmental changes. Increasing the number of analysed cases would also help us to implement large-N style analysis, and increase the robustness of our study.

Second, we need to clarify causality between federal political parties recruiting their candidates from sub-national (especially municipal) levels, even when they do not have political connections to these organizations. To do so, we must implement more detailed analysis, including interviews with MPs and other party members.

Third, we need to analyse how political career paths in Canada affect public policy making. As past comparative studies reveal, politicians with sub-national experience play important roles in advancing local interests in the national government¹⁴. We need to examine whether MPs in Canada engage in federal politics to enhance sub-national interests.

However, these points are beyond the scope of this paper, and also indicate that there are still rich possibilities for future research.

¹⁴ See Eaton (2004) and Bonvecchi and Lodola (2010).

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