Soroka et al., “Constituency Influence in Parliament,” *CJPS* 42:3 (September 2009)

**Overview**

“Dyadic representation” has received considerable attention in US but much less attention in parliamentary systems where party discipline strongly limits representatives’ capacity for individual action. This paper tests for evidence of this dyadic relationship in Question Period in the Cdn Parliament, across three policy domains: defense, taxes, and welfare. There is evidence of dyadic representation in Canada.

**Background**

* “Dyadic representation” refers to the relationships between constituency characteristics and individual legislators’ behaviour in a parliamentary system
* Parliamentary democracies – such as Canada – may exhibit stronger dyadic representation than previous work has suggested
* Authors expect to find a certain degree of individual behaviour from MPs for a number of reasons:

1. Canada’s SMP system provides a strong electoral incentive for constituency representation – possibility of individual electoral victory, as well as considerable local control over the nomination process creates conditions for which it may be beneficial for a candidate to cultivate an image or message shaped by local – and not party – concerns
2. Cdn legislative process provides a number of venues, outside the largely party-driven legislative votes, in which dyadic constituency representation may be manifest – oral Question Period is one such instance.

**Conclusions**

* Provide preliminary evidence that this kind of representation exists, and that the questions MPs ask in the Cdn Parliament are above and beyond partisan affiliation, regularly driven by constituency characteristics
* Contribution of paper – to revive the notion that individual MPs can matter in the Cdn political process, and suggesting the potential representative importance of QP, and confirming that there can in fact be dyadic representation in QP