

Demotion and Dissent in the Canadian Liberal Party

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Those who have not witnessed the making of a government have reason to be happier than those who have. It is a thoroughly unpleasant and discreditable business in which merit is disregarded, loyal service is without value, influence is the most important factor and geography and religion are important supplementary considerations.

The Borden Ministry was composed under standard conditions, and was not, therefore, nearly as able, honest, or as industrious an administrative aggregation as could have been had from the material available ... There were some broken hearts – in one instance, literally. In others, philosophy came to the rescue, but the pills were large and the swallowing was bitter.

Paul Bilkey¹

Prime ministers can typically rely on ideological agreement and norms of loyalty to deliver them a modicum of party cohesion. Beyond that, they have at their disposal a variety of institutional tools with which to enforce discipline. The powers to invoke the confidence convention and to dissolve parliament are the most well known and powerful of these tools, but these heavy-handed measures are ill-suited for securing unity on an on-going basis. The prime minister's monopoly over the distribution of preferment is a far more reliable means of ensuring members' loyalty. The rules of the game are simple: if the member of parliament (MP) wishes to climb the parliamentary career ladder, he or she must toe the party line. The prime minister's power over MPs' parliamentary careers is not without limit, of course. Some MPs must be brought into cabinet because they are too powerful and dangerous to leave on the backbench where they can openly challenge the prime minister. Representational concerns also have to be addressed. Inevitably, prime ministers find themselves in a position where, to quote de Tocqueville, 'talents and ambitions are more numerous than places', and where 'there are bound to be many who cannot rise quickly enough by making use of the body's privileges and who seek fast promotion by attacking them.'² Prime ministers, in short, exercise their power of appointment under constraints, and when they withhold or cannot provide their members with parliamentary advancement, their ability to compel loyalty is diminished. In this respect, the prime minister's control over the distribution of preferment is the linchpin of party unity.

This Note argues that party unity is built upon a *quid pro quo* with party leaders and MPs exchanging career advancement and loyalty. Furthermore, when party leaders cannot or do not provide their members with advancement, they expose their party to potentially divisive electoral and ideological forces. The theoretical basis of the Note is a decision-theory model of parliamentary behaviour in which MPs dissent when the blandishments of career advancement fail to offset the electoral costs of unpopular party policies. Empirical support for this model is drawn from the quasi-experimental case of the Canadian Liberal party's transition to power in 1993. At the start of the 1993–97 Parliament, Jean Chrétien, the new Liberal prime minister, withheld government

* Department of Political Science, University of South Carolina. The author would like to thank Neal Woods, Joseph Wearing, Lynda Erickson, Peter Regenstreif, Munro Eagles, two anonymous referees and several Canadian Liberal MPs. This research was funded by NSF (#SBR-9904249) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

¹ As quoted in Norman Ward, *Dawson's The Government of Canada*, 6th edn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), p. 204.

² Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1969), p. 265.

appointments from a large number of incumbent MPs – largely because these MPs had opposed his leadership bid or lacked independent influence in the party. These demoted incumbents then went on to cast more dissenting votes in the subsequent parliament than their colleagues. There is, moreover, little evidence to indicate that Liberal MPs' dissent was due to ideological disaffection, poor socialization or a prior history of rebellion. Thus, one can draw a tight causal connection between an MP's failure to support Chrétien's leadership, the MP's subsequent demotion and finally her dissent. These results suggest that parliamentary behaviour is shaped primarily by institutional rules governing the distribution of power and resources within parliamentary parties.

A narrative of the circumstances surrounding the Liberals' assumption of power follows this introduction. The subsequent section sets out a model of parliamentary behaviour rooted in career advancement. The third section describes the data and methods that I use to test the model and competing hypotheses. The results and implications of these tests follow in the fourth section. The fifth section pushes the investigation back in time to the beginning of the 1993–97 Parliament and develops a model of Chrétien's personnel decisions.

THE LIBERALS' RETURN TO POWER

The 1993 election brought the Liberals into government with a substantial majority (177 of 295 seats). The victory ended nine years in opposition and came just two and a half years after Jean Chrétien succeeded John Turner as party leader. Chrétien did not make extensive changes to the shadow ministry when he took over the party, instead waiting until after the election and using his first governmental appointments to settle scores and pay off debts. John Nunziata, for example, had also contested the leadership when Turner stood down, but he had not had the foresight to throw his delegates behind Chrétien. The consequences, a long-serving Liberal MP noted, were predictable: 'Nunziata was not going to get into cabinet, not in a hundred years. Remember, he was a leadership candidate against Chrétien.'³ Many other Liberals who were in the House when Chrétien took over from Turner also found themselves pushed off the front bench.

Not all of this was purposive. A convention of ensuring broad regional representation at the cabinet table and a promise not to repeat past excesses (previous Conservative cabinets had contained upward of forty ministers) constrained Chrétien's personnel decisions. Not every loyalist could be promoted, not every opponent, punished. Chrétien was also limited by the lack of experience within the parliamentary party. A significant majority (108 of 177) of Liberal MPs were neophytes, only six of whom had previously served in a provincial legislature.⁴ Chrétien's dilemma was not simply that ministerial talent was thin, but that he had to forge a disciplined party from a group of people, two-thirds of whom were unfamiliar with the inner workings of the Canadian parliament.

The new Liberal government also confronted a challenging political environment. The country's dire fiscal situation forced the cabinet to pass several austere budgets and retract a promise to repeal the Goods and Services Tax (GST). Controversial bills on gun ownership, hate crimes and pension reforms recognizing same-sex relationships were also pushed through the Commons to fulfil electoral promises. These policies upset many Liberal backbenchers. Left-leaning Liberal MPs looked askance at the cabinet's budgetary policies while MPs on the right of the party (many of whom had been elected only because the right-wing vote in their constituencies had been split between the Reform and Progressive Conservative parties), questioned the cabinet's social policy agenda.

³ I interviewed six Liberal MPs in November 1999.

⁴ Another nine Liberal MPs entered parliament later in the session via by-elections, all of whom are included in this analysis. Four other MPs were dropped, two because of their appointment to the Senate, two because they took on the relatively non-partisan offices of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the House, respectively.

Not coincidentally, Chrétien presided over one of the more fractious Liberal governments in recent memory. Liberal MPs dissented on 16 per cent of divisions in the 1993–97 Parliament, and they did so in numbers, an average of between five and six Liberal MPs dissenting at a time.⁵ The dissent never jeopardized the government's majority, but by the end of that parliament ninety-seven of 177 (54.8 per cent) Liberal MPs had voted against the party at least once, and the dissension – and Chrétien's harsh response to it – was highly publicized. The contrast with how Liberal MPs had behaved in the previous parliament was marked. Only forty-six of 976 divisions in the 1988–93 Parliament (4.7 per cent) had witnessed Liberal MPs voting against their party, with no evidence to suggest that Chrétien's takeover of the party in and of itself incited dissent. It is this stark before-and-after dimension that makes this case a useful one. To the extent that one can isolate a factor that is not just correlated with Liberal MPs' dissent, but which also changed alongside the party's move to government, one can say that one has identified a *cause* of intra-party dissension.

A MODEL OF CAREER ADVANCEMENT AND PARLIAMENTARY BEHAVIOUR

Demotion, Dissent and Institutional Incentives

MPs desire not just re-election, but also career advancement and policy influence, or in Müller and Strøm's terms, *policy*, *office* and *votes*.⁶ Institutional structures influence how MPs value and pursue these three goals. Two features of Canada's Westminster parliamentary system are critical in this regard: (1) the single-member plurality (SMP) electoral system, and (2) the distribution of power within parliament itself.

The aggregate effects of SMP electoral systems are well known: they tend to support a two-party system (an effect that is not completely realized in the Canadian case) and manufacture one-party parliamentary majorities. SMP systems may also generate electoral tension within parties. Party leaders have an overriding incentive to move their party's policies towards the position of the median voter *in the national electorate*. Elected in socially and economically diverse constituencies, MPs have similar – but not always compatible – incentives to cater to the median voter *in their constituencies*. The incentive to cater to local sentiment is amplified when the party's rules mandate that MPs have to be re-selected by local party associations as the party's official candidate. MPs in these situations have to respond to local party activists, a group that is even less representative of the national electorate. Thus, what is good electoral politics for the party leadership is not always good for the individual MP.⁷

These *potentially* centrifugal electoral effects are offset by the centripetal effects of Westminster institutions. Westminster parliamentary government is built around a double-monopoly of power: the system (1) concentrates office perks and policy influence in a single body, the cabinet, and then (2) provides one set of party leaders with exclusive control of cabinet and the recruitment channels that lead to cabinet.⁸ This double-monopoly of power fuses professional advancement and policy

⁵ An MP dissents when she votes against her party's instructions. This is the definition employed by Norton in his work on backbench dissent in Britain. See Philip Norton, *Dissension in the House of Commons: Intra-Party Dissent in the House of Commons' Division Lobbies, 1945–1974* (London: Macmillan, 1975); and Philip Norton, *Dissension in the House of Commons, 1974–1979* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980). Readers might be surprised that the Liberals experienced dissent so frequently. However, Wearing shows that this level of dissent, while high, is not unheard of in Canada. See Joseph Wearing, 'Guns, Gays, and Gadflies: Party Dissent in the House of Commons Under Mulroney and Chrétien' (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, Ottawa, 1998).

⁶ Wolfgang C. Müller and Kaare Strøm, 'Political Parties and Hard Choices', in Wolfgang C. Müller and Kaare Strøm, eds, *Policy, Office, or Votes? How Political Parties in Western Europe Make Hard Choices* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 5–9.

⁷ Brian J. Gaines and Geoffrey Garrett, 'The Calculus of Dissent: Party Discipline in the British Labour government, 1974–79', *Political Behavior*, 15 (1993), 113–35, p. 117–19.

⁸ Matthew S. R. Palmer, 'Toward an Economics of Comparative Political Organization: Examining Ministerial Responsibility', *Journal of Law, Economics and Organization*, 11 (1995), 164–88.

influence into a single indivisible good that is controlled by the party leadership.⁹ Unlike many Continental European legislatures there are no powerful committees through which a backbencher could wield some degree of policy influence, and there is rarely any division between positions of executive power and party leadership (as is sometimes the case in the United States or the Netherlands, for example).¹⁰ Nor is there a seniority system as in the US Congress;¹¹ re-election is necessary for career advancement and policy influence, *but it is not sufficient*. Therefore, no elected member in a Westminster system possesses a high degree of policy influence while holding nominally low executive or party offices. In this fashion, the cabinet's monopoly of perks and policy influence severely limits ways in which backbenchers can trade off policy influence against promotion. In a Westminster system, *promotion is necessary for policy influence*.¹²

The implications of the system are straightforward: an MP who wishes to exercise policy influence or enjoy the fruits of higher office must attain a ministerial post; party leaders control advancement to the ministry (or, in opposition, to the shadow ministry); the MP's advancement depends, therefore, on maintaining good relations with party leaders. Inevitably, this involves supporting the party leadership in voice and vote. Indeed, should the MP secure a ministerial position, the relationship is expressed formally in a constitutional convention of collective responsibility. Thus even as an MP gains access to office perks and policy influence, she loses the ability to distance herself from party policy. The pursuit of ministerial office is, therefore, a potentially costly activity in terms of lost votes if party policy turns out to be unpopular.

In theory, MPs might escape the negative electoral consequences of unpopular party policies by dissenting publicly. Certainly, MPs appear to believe that dissent frees them from the electoral costs of the party's policies.¹³ A Liberal MP, and sometime rebel, stated as much when he said to me: 'You know, I got some advice from Warren Allmand [a long-serving former Liberal MP], and he said to me: "You have to be prepared for the day that the party's fortunes change. You have to be able to swim against the stream. You know what lets you do that? It's the air of independence."' ' An interview with another Liberal rebel underscored the electoral incentive behind dissent. I had asked him to tell me what he thought about Chrétien's treatment of John Nunziata (who had been expelled from the parliamentary party):

The feeling in the PMO [the Prime Minister's Office] at the time was that if John wasn't stopped, others would start behaving the same way. It was like a cancer. It had to be cut out ... I understand where John was coming from. He campaigned publicly on the GST, and then he was hung out to dry. You have to remember that he was here in the dark days. If it weren't for people like him – the Rat Pack gang – facing up to Mulroney day after day, there wouldn't be a Liberal Party now. I was in a different situation than John, *but I do what I do* [rebel] *because I'm in a right-of-centre riding* [my emphasis].

QUESTION: And your independence helps you win there?

Yes. My independence creates a high profile [showing me that day's *Toronto Star* newspaper with his name in it] and it gets me a margin of around 10 per cent.

⁹ Michael Atkinson and Paul G. Thomas, 'Studying the Canadian Parliament', *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 18 (1993), 423–51.

¹⁰ Herbert Doering, ed., *Parliaments and Majority Rule in Western Europe* (New York: St. Martin's, 1995).

¹¹ David Epstein, David Brady, Sadafumi Kawato and Sharyn O'Halloran, 'A Comparative Approach to Legislative Organization: Careerism and Seniority in the United States and Japan', *American Journal of Political Science*, 41 (1997), 965–98.

¹² Philip Norton, 'The Individual Member in the British House of Commons: Facing Both Ways and Marching Forward', in Lawrence D. Longley and Reuven Y. Hazan, eds, *The Uneasy Relationships Between Parliamentary Members and Leaders* (London: Frank Cass, 2000).

¹³ MPs' beliefs regarding the potential electoral benefits of dissent are more relevant than the actual success or failure of the strategy. If, for example, dissenting MPs do worse at election time than loyal MPs one cannot conclude that dissent is irrational or ineffective; it may be the case that dissenting MPs dissented precisely because party policy put them in such dire electoral circumstances.

The MP went on to tell me that he knew that he had a substantial personal vote because at election time about 700 ballots had been spoiled by people who ticked his name while simultaneously crossing out the adjacent Liberal party label.

Freedom from the party line comes at the cost of promotion, however. The second Liberal MP quoted above had, in fact, been dismissed from his committee assignment. Chrétien did not treat dissidents lightly: three MPs who voted against the cabinet's firearms legislation were stripped of their committee assignments; Warren Allmand, who had voted against the budget, lost the chairmanship of the Commons' justice committee; and John Nunziata, who had done the same, was expelled. Clearly, MPs face a trade-off between professional advancement *and* policy influence, on the one hand, and freedom from the electoral costs of party policy on the other.¹⁴

The MP's Decision Calculus

The underlying model is one in which MPs' behaviour is governed by a calculation of the net utility of loyalty versus dissent. Toeing the party line brings the MP a better chance at getting promoted to the ministry offset by the potential electoral costs of party policy (potential because party policy need not be unpopular). Dissent offers the MP some shelter from these electoral effects, but simultaneously diminishes the MP's chance of promotion. Some formal notation can be put to good effect here. Assume that a loyal MP gets promoted to the party front bench with a probability p while a dissident MP gets promoted with a probability of q ($p > q$). Next, denote the (inter-temporally discounted) utility that the MP attaches to a ministerial post as **FB** (for front bench) and that attached to remaining a backbencher as **BB**. Finally, denote the electoral effects of party policy as **V|PP** (votes lost given party policy). One can then write the expected utility of loyalty as:

$$p\mathbf{FB} + (1 - p)\mathbf{BB} - \mathbf{V|PP} \quad (1)$$

and the expected utility of dissent as¹⁵

$$q\mathbf{FB} + (1 - q)\mathbf{BB} \quad (2)$$

These two equations can be combined and re-arranged to make the trade-off between promotion and electoral security clear; the MP toes the line iff:

$$(p - q)[\mathbf{FB} - \mathbf{BB}] > \mathbf{V|PP}. \quad (3)$$

From Theory to Practical Politics

What does this model tell us about the internal politics of the Canadian Liberal party – and about intra-party politics generally? First off, if party policy is uniformly popular, there is little incentive to dissent (Inequality 3 is likely to hold). This was not the case with Chrétien's legislative programme; the initial conditions for dissent were in place.

In this environment, Chrétien's demotion of a number of veteran Liberal MPs made dissent almost certain. Demoted MPs have to climb the parliamentary career ladder all over again, and while not impossible, the farther the MP falls, the less likely it is that he or she will be able to climb back to the ministry.¹⁶ In addition, demotion postpones the attainment of a ministerial post, forcing the MP to discount its value. In the context of Inequality 3, p and **FB** plummet in value, making it less

¹⁴ John E. Schwarz and Geoffrey Lambert, 'Career Objectives, Group Feeling, and Legislative Party Cohesion: The British Conservatives, 1959–1968', *Journal of Politics*, 33 (1971), 399–421; Gaines and Garrett, 'The Calculus of Dissent: Party Discipline in the British Labour government, 1974–79'.

¹⁵ For simplicity's sake, I assume that dissent completely frees the MP from the electoral cost of party policy. This is a strong assumption, and to the extent that it does not hold, dissent becomes a less attractive strategy.

¹⁶ A simple model based on the parliamentary careers of Canadian MPs elected at the 1972 election suggests that every rank that an MP is demoted reduces her probability of re-acquiring ministerial status by half. These results are available from the author upon request.

likely that the inequality required to induce loyalty will hold. Thus, the career advancement–dissent model offers a clear prediction of the relationship between dissent and demotion: all else equal – especially MPs’ electoral environments – demoted MPs should dissent more than both newly elected MPs and (crucially) veteran MPs who retained or improved their parliamentary status.

Alternative Hypotheses: Ideology and Socialization

The record of events supports alternative explanations of the surge in Liberal MPs’ dissent. The simplest is that the dissension reflected ideological disagreements with the cabinet’s legislative programme. One can argue that a Liberal MP’s decision to dissent or remain loyal was contingent on the MP’s ideological position *vis-à-vis* the cabinet, left-wingers opposing the cabinet’s economic policies, right-wingers opposing the cabinet’s social policies. The underlying construct here is the spatial voting model so often used to analyse and explain legislative voting behaviour.¹⁷ While it leaves some questions unanswered (e.g., what are the sources of MPs’ ideological preferences?), the spatial model does suggest that parliamentary behaviour is shaped more by distribution of MPs’ preferences in the party and the parliament than by the withdrawal or receipt of preferment.

Backbench dissent can also be viewed in sociological terms with the MP’s loyalty sustained by norms of intra-party solidarity, deference to party leaders, and the like.¹⁸ Kornberg, for example, reports that when asked why they supported their party, a significant majority of Canadian MPs stressed not self-interest, but rather, ‘pride in party membership, highly favourable attitudes toward the party, concern for the achievement of party relevant goals, and awareness of the functional efficacy of a cohesion norm.’¹⁹ Kornberg argues that these statements,

strongly imply that the majority of Canadian MPs act in concert with their parties *because they want to*. Their adherence to a cohesion norm is voluntary, and the influence that their party is able to exert upon them stems not from a fear of sanctions or hope of reward, but from willing acceptance of that influence.²⁰

On this account, the MP’s adherence to a norm of party loyalty, rather than the carrot of promotion, is the crucial determinant of parliamentary behaviour: the more attached the MP is to such a norm, the less she dissents. Attachment results from a process of socialization, with continued membership in the parliamentary party the most obvious avenue of socialization.²¹ The longer the MP is a member of caucus, the more firmly norms of loyalty and solidarity become entrenched, and the more strongly they constrain the MP’s actions.²² Thus, from a sociological perspective, it is no coincidence that dissension in the Liberals’ ranks coincided with a large influx of parliamentary newcomers. These neophytes had not yet learned of the value placed on loyalty, the limits of political independence in a parliamentary system, or how to resolve their grievances within the party’s private channels of communication.

¹⁷ See, for example, Keith Krehbiel, ‘Where’s the Party?’ *British Journal of Political Science*, 23 (1993), 235–66; David M. Wood and William G. Jacoby, ‘Intraparty Cleavage in the British House of Commons: Evidence from the 1974–79 Parliament’, *American Journal of Political Science*, 28 (1984), 203–23; and Jorgen S. Rasmussen and James M. McCormick, ‘The Influence of Ideology on British Labour MPs in Voting on EEC Issues’, *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 10 (1985), 203–21.

¹⁸ See, for example, Edward W. Crowe, ‘The Web of Authority: Party Loyalty and Social Control in the British House of Commons’, *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 11 (1986), 161–85; Donald D. Searing, *Westminster’s World: Understanding Political Roles* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994); and David Docherty, *Mr. Smith Goes to Ottawa: Life in the House of Commons* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997).

¹⁹ Alan Kornberg, *Canadian Legislative Behaviour: A Study of the 25th Parliament* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1967), p. 134.

²⁰ Kornberg, *Canadian Legislative Behaviour*, p. 134.

²¹ Crowe, ‘The Web of Authority: Party Loyalty and Social Control in the British House of Commons’, *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 11 (1986), 161–85, p. 177.

²² Crowe, ‘The Web of Authority: Party Loyalty and Social Control in the British House of Commons’, p. 168.

All of these hypotheses accord with a subset of the facts at hand, and so there is no reason to privilege one of them over the others. Indeed, these arguments are not mutually exclusive. The surge in backbench dissent could, for example, be the result of actions by both demoted incumbents and poorly socialized neophytes. That said, each hypothesis identifies a different variable as the *chief* source of dissent. The first hypothesis identifies Chrétien's personnel decisions as the cause of Liberal disunity. The second explanation roots the dissension in the ideological tension generated by the cabinet's policies. The third explanation pinpoints the large influx of (unsocialized) parliamentary neophytes as the source of dissent.

DATA AND METHODS

I test my argument with a negative binomial model of the number of dissenting votes cast by Liberal MPs over the 1993–97 parliamentary term. The convention in the literature is to count an MP as dissenting when he or she votes contrary to the leadership's clear preferences.²³ Consequently, the analysis encompasses both whipped divisions, that is, divisions in which MPs were under formal instructions to vote the party line, and divisions on Private Members' Bills.²⁴ Divisions on Private Members' Bills are not formally whipped, but are included because mechanics of voting in the Canadian Parliament make the cabinet's position quite clear to government backbenchers. MPs do not vote by passing through division lobbies as in Britain, but rather by rising in their seats and stating their position, party leaders rising and voting first, backbenchers following row by row.²⁵ A dissident Liberal noted the system's effects: 'A last minute flash of terror hits you when the prime minister turns in his chair and looks at you as you stand and vote against him.'²⁶ The Chrétien Cabinet, moreover, frequently took additional steps to control voting on Private Members' Bills. For example, the deputy prime minister circulated a pamphlet attacking C-216, a Private Members' Bill to make negative-option billing of cable television services illegal, and warning Liberal MPs not to vote for it.²⁷

The independent variables in the model are: (1) the importance the MP attaches to party loyalty; (2) the MP's parliamentary experience; (3) the MP's ideological position; (4) the number of ranks that the MP was promoted or demoted; (5) the age at which the MP first entered parliament; and (6) a set of variables measuring the MP's electoral security. The first two variables measure an MP's exposure to parliamentary socialization. I estimate the MP's attachment to party loyalty with data from the 1993 Canadian Candidate Survey (CCS).²⁸ Respondents to the 1993 CCS were asked to rate how important various tasks were to an MP's job. A factor analysis identified three tasks as key components of party loyalty: (1) supporting the party leader; (2) voting the party position in the House of Commons; and (3) defending party policy. MPs' scores on these items were rescaled and added to give a score between 0 and 3, higher scores indicating that the MP attached greater importance to party loyalty. Multiple imputation techniques were then used to deal with non-responses.²⁹ I enter this loyalty variable directly into the model and as an interaction with the

²³ Norton, *Dissension in the House of Commons: Intra-Party Dissent in the House of Commons' Division Lobbies, 1945–1974*; Norton, *Dissension in the House of Commons, 1974–1979*.

²⁴ Free votes are excluded by definition. Dissent was not restricted to Private Members' Bills. The Liberals experienced dissent on 12.8 per cent of whipped divisions (versus 16 per cent of all divisions). All told, Liberal MPs cast 1,278 dissenting votes; of these, 523 (41 per cent) were cast in whipped divisions.

²⁵ Standing Order 45 in *Annotated Standing Orders of the House of Commons* (Ottawa: The Queen's Printer for Canada, 1989), p. 150.

²⁶ 'If today to rebel again', *Winnipeg Free Press*, 15 June 1995. In fact, Liberal MPs were so sensitive to these dynamics that later in the session they tried to change the pattern of voting so that the backbenchers voted before the frontbenchers!

²⁷ 'Liberal backbench gets a taste of revolt', *The Globe & Mail*, 25 September 1996, A7.

²⁸ *Canadian Candidate Study, 1993*, Principal Investigator: L. Erickson. The response rate for the 1993 CCS was 53.1 per cent.

²⁹ I used *NORM 2.2 for Windows* to generate five imputation datasets. *NORM 2.2 for Windows* is written by Joseph Schafer and is available on-line at www.stat.psu.edu/~jsl/.

MP's parliamentary experience on the assumption that the effect of loyalty grows stronger over the course of an MP's career.

Estimates of MPs' ideological position within the parliamentary Liberal party were constructed in a similar fashion to the loyalty variable. I used a factor analysis to identify two ideological dimensions from responses to a battery of policy questions contained in the 1993 CCS, an economic left-right dimension and a social conservatism dimension.³⁰ Liberal MPs received scores on these scales based on their responses to the relevant survey items. Both scales were coded such that lower scores corresponded to left-wing positions. Multiple imputation techniques were used to estimate the scores of non-responding MPs. Expectations for the ideological variables follow from the narrative above, that is, that dissent is correlated with economic liberalism (i.e., a negative coefficient) and social conservatism (i.e., a positive coefficient).

The fourth and fifth variables measure the expected utility the MP attaches to a ministerial career. The number of ranks that the MP was promoted or demoted measures the deterioration (or improvement) in the MP's probability of building a ministerial career. This variable was calculated by coding parliamentary ranks, and then subtracting the rank an incumbent MP held in the 1988–93 Parliament from the rank that he or she was appointed to in the 1993–97 Parliament.³¹ Thus, the further down the parliamentary career ladder the MP slips, the more frequently he or she should dissent. In contrast, the MP's entry age should be negatively related to the value that the MP places on career advancement. Entering the House at a young age marks the MP as a career politician.³² Having forgone non-political careers, these MPs should prize a ministerial career more highly than MPs entering parliament later in life and so should be warier of defying the party whip.

The career advancement model set out above makes clear that these effects are conditional on the MP's electoral environment; an MP who holds an ultra-safe riding is unlikely to worry about the electoral effects of party policy and hence has little incentive to dissent. The MP's majority at the 1993 election is an obvious indicator of electoral safety (and one that should be negatively related to dissent), but it does not tell the whole story. The Liberal's 1993 electoral victory was partly due to the Reform and Progressive Conservative (PC) parties splitting the right-wing vote, and so the safety of any Liberal MP's majority was contingent on the extent to which right-wing support in the riding was divided. The more even the Reform and PC vote shares, the more vulnerable a Liberal majority would be to a coalescence of the right at future elections. To capture this dynamic I include in the model the fractionalization of the Reform and PC parties' vote shares.³³ *Ceteris paribus*, the greater fractionalization of the right, the more electorally insecure the MP, and the more likely he or she should be to dissent.

Re-election is not always the main challenge to MPs' careers. Some parties permit pre-selection challenges of sitting MPs, and in these parties maintaining the support of local party members is

³⁰ The economic scale was based on survey items tapping respondents' attitudes towards: (1) the employment-inflation trade-off, (2) equality of rights, (3) affirmative action, (4) capital punishment, (5) income inequality, (6) law and order, (7) universal versus means-tested government services, and (8) the desirability of the welfare state. The social conservatism scale was based on items tapping: (1) abortion rights, (2) respect for traditional authority, (3) homosexual marriage, (4) acceptability of pornography, (5) childbirth out of wedlock, and (6) women's familial roles.

³¹ I coded parliamentary ranks as follows: cabinet ministers and shadow ministers = 6; junior ministers, opposition critics for minor portfolios, chief whips, and House leaders = 5; parliamentary secretaries and deputy opposition critics = 4; deputy whips = 3; committee chairs = 2; and backbenchers = 1. Neophyte MPs received scores of 0 because, by definition, they could not have lost status. So, for example, an MP who was a shadow minister in the 1988–93 Parliament, but who was left on the back bench in the 1993–98 Parliament would receive a score of -5. Other coding schemes did not substantially change the results.

³² Anthony King, 'The Rise of the Career Politician in Britain – And its Consequences', *British Journal of Political Science*, 11 (1981), 249–85.

³³ Fractionalization was computed as $1/(\text{Reform } \%^2 + \text{PC } \%^2)$, where *Reform %* and *PC %* are the Reform and PC percentages of the combined Reform and PC vote share in the MP's constituency. Fractionalization ranged between 1 and 2, higher figures indicating a more even split of the right-wing vote.

a pre-condition to election. Liberal party rules normally protect incumbent MPs from pre-selection challenges, but a scheduled redistribution promised to force nomination battles between a few Liberal MPs.³⁴ In a showdown between local and national parties, MPs vulnerable at pre-selection can be expected to side with the local party, and this could mean voting against the parliamentary party in the House.³⁵ I measure MPs' vulnerability to a pre-selection challenge with two variables, the number of challengers that the MP faced at pre-selection (this was almost always zero for incumbent MPs) and the dollar amount of 1993 campaign contributions. A large number of pre-selection challengers indicates a permeable local party that is vulnerable to branch-stacking and infiltration by single-issue groups.³⁶ These sorts of associations cannot be counted on to provide the solid core of supporters required to win a nomination battle.

There are two reasons to think that a high level of campaign contributions reflects an MP's ability to fend off pre-selection challenges. First, because the average individual contribution is only about \$200, a high level of contributions signals that a constituency association has a large membership, and in and of itself this is a barrier to challengers. Secondly, loopholes in Canadian campaign finance law allow MPs to translate campaign contributions into unregulated financial resources that they can use for a variety of political activities outside of the campaign period, including nomination battles.³⁷ Dissent, then, should increase in pre-selection challengers and decrease in campaign contributions.

I also control for the number of dissenting votes the MP cast in the previous parliament (set to 0 for new MPs). An argument can be made that any correlation between demotion and dissent in the 1993–97 Parliament is spurious, merely reflecting the fact that both variables are functions of past dissent. Controlling for past dissent eliminates this possibility. The final control in the model is a variable counting the number of months that the MP held ministerial office. Ministers must maintain collective responsibility, and being on the government's 'payroll' is clearly an incentive to loyalty.

RESULTS

The results of the model are presented in Table 1. I run two versions, the first based on all Liberal MPs, the second on just incumbent Liberal MPs. This helps locate the source of dissent in the party and reveal similarities and differences in behaviour between neophytes and incumbents. Two main differences between the two groups of MPs are visible. The first difference revolves around pre-selection competition. On the one hand, the number of pre-selection opponents has no impact

³⁴ In Canada, redistributions are carried out by an independent electoral commission. MPs could not, therefore, manipulate constituency boundaries to avoid intra-party selection battles. This did not prevent Liberal MPs from trying to impede the passage of the redistribution legislation through the House, and certainly the attention that the enabling legislation received from Liberal MPs suggests that they were worried about its consequences.

³⁵ Canadian electoral law gives party leaders veto power on use of the party label. That said, a deeply ingrained tradition of local control of nominations severely limits the leader's ability to determine who will be the party's candidate in any given riding (constituency), and this makes it more likely than not that a sitting MP will side with the local rather than the national party in any sort of policy dispute. See Anthony M. Sayers, *Parties, Candidates, and Constituency Campaigns in Canadian Elections* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1999), pp. 4–5. Certainly, party leaders have almost always used this power to parachute an outside candidate into an open seat rather than to unseat an incumbent MP.

³⁶ Sayers, *Parties, Candidates, and Constituency Campaigns in Canadian Elections*, p. 35.

³⁷ On average, private campaign contributions cover 95 per cent of candidates' campaign expenses so the public reimbursement (for 50 per cent of expenses) leaves most candidates with a large surplus: the more money raised and spent, the greater the reimbursement and final surplus. Candidates must dispose of these surpluses by handing them over to the national party or their constituency associations (CAs), but as the *Canada Elections Act* (1974) does not regulate CAs, most candidates transfer their surplus to their CA – whereupon all public accountability ends. The CAs' funds are then used in a way 'that is likely to be politically beneficial to the MP' (William T. Stanbury, 'Financing Federal Politics in Canada in an Era of Reform', in Arthur B. Gunlicks, ed., *Campaign and Party Finance in North America and Western Europe* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1993), p. 102).

TABLE 1 *Negative Binomial Regressions of Liberal MPs' Dissenting Votes*

Covariate	Expectation	All MPs			Incumbents		
		<i>B</i>	90% CI		<i>B</i>	90% CI	
			Lower	Upper		Lower	Upper
Loyalty	—	0.02	— 0.10	0.14	0.01	— 0.20	0.22
Parliamentary Experience	—	— 0.01	— 0.07	0.05	— 0.01	— 0.07	0.06
Loyalty × Parliamentary Experience	—	0.00	— 0.03	0.03	0.00	— 0.03	0.03
Left–Right Position	—	— 0.05**	— 0.10	0.00	— 0.05	— 0.16	0.06
Social Conservatism	+	0.10	— 0.10	0.30	0.12	— 0.05	0.29
Change in Parliamentary Status	—	— 0.12†	— 0.19	— 0.05	— 0.14†	— 0.23	— 0.05
Entry Age	+	— 0.01	— 0.02	0.00	— 0.01	— 0.02	0.01
Log(Campaign \$)	—	— 1.01†	— 1.70	— 0.32	— 1.34†	— 2.18	— 0.50
<i>N</i> Pre-selection Opponents	+	0.19†	0.09	0.29	0.10	— 0.10	0.30
1993 Majority (%)	—	— 0.01	— 0.01	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.02
Fractionalization of Reform, PC Vote in 1993	+	0.30**	0.05	0.55	0.31*	— 0.09	0.71
Months in Ministry	—	— 0.01†	— 0.02	— 0.01	— 0.01**	— 0.02	0.00
Dissent in 34 th Parliament	+	0.06†	0.02	0.10	0.06†	0.02	0.10
Constant		6.19†	2.87	9.51	7.43†	3.38	11.48
ln(<i>z</i>)		— 1.10†	— 1.41	— 0.79	— 1.46†	— 1.99	— 0.93
Pseudo <i>R</i> ²			0.06			0.11	
χ^2			95.55			64.72	
Log Likelihood			505.08			180.93	
<i>N</i>			181			68	

Notes: One-tailed *p*-values: **p* < 0.10; ***p* < 0.05; †*p* < 0.01. Multiple imputation estimates follow a *t*-distribution with the degrees of freedom based on the proportion of missing data. The displayed confidence intervals reflect these facts and are calculated on the basis of Huber–White standard errors.

on incumbent MPs' propensity to dissent. The initial version of the model, on the other hand, has every additional pre-selection opponent increasing Liberal MPs' dissent by 21 per cent ($e^{0.19} = 1.21$). This effect is driven by the inclusion of new MPs in the sample; these were the MPs who had just fought and won nomination battles.

Secondly, when all Liberal MPs are included, dissent has an ideological dimension. The more left-wing the MP, the more frequently he or she dissented. This ideological dimension disappears when the sample is restricted to incumbents because incumbents as a group were further to the right than new Liberal MPs, and hence more comfortable with the Cabinet's economic policies. The ideological diversity of the large Liberal majority appears, therefore, to have been one source of dissent. That said, the marginal effect of ideology on dissent is not large, every unit shift to the left on the ideological scale increasing an MPs' dissent by about 5 per cent. Given the range of ideology in the parliamentary Liberal party, this means that very left-wing Liberals (0.25 on the left–right scale) cast only two more dissenting votes during the parliamentary term than very right-wing Liberals (6.5 on the scale).

Evidence in favour of the career advancement model is stronger. Dissent has clear roots in MPs' electoral insecurity, increasing alongside fractionalization of the right-wing vote and decreasing in campaign contributions. MPs in ridings in which the Reform and PC parties evenly split the vote (and in which Liberal majorities were therefore more fragile) cast 35 per cent more dissenting votes

than colleagues facing a consolidated right. The amount of campaign funds raised by the MP's riding association also affected the MP's willingness to dissent: the richer the association, the more loyal the MP. The marginal effect of campaign contributions is quite large, especially among incumbents. Incumbents in the bottom decile of fundraising cast 8.1 dissenting votes on average, those in the top decile, 5.4 on average, a reduction of 33 per cent.³⁸ An appropriate interpretation of this result is, I would argue, that campaign funding reflects a combination of a local party's electoral strength, organizational capacity and size. Hence, a wealthy riding association indicates that the MP possesses a large and solid base of political support, and is therefore insulated from both nomination and election challenges.

The impact of electoral security on dissent is, nevertheless, dwarfed by the impact of changes in MPs' parliamentary status. An MP who climbed three ranks, from the backbench to a parliamentary secretaryship, for example, is predicted to cast approximately 4.5 dissenting votes. Demote an MP three ranks, however, and the number of dissenting votes that the MP is predicted to cast over the parliamentary session rises to 9.5. The overall effect of a change in status, then, is to double the number of dissenting votes that an MP casts – and the magnitude of this career-related effect is substantially larger than the effects generated by other variables.

In contrast to the weak evidence supporting the ideological model and the strong evidence supporting the career advancement model, there is no evidence favouring the sociological model. The MP's attachment to a loyalty norm appears unconnected to his or her propensity to dissent, and time in the House neither alters this propensity nor magnifies the effect of loyalty. In short, there is no evidence that norms or socialization constrain parliamentary behaviour.

THE ROOT CAUSES OF PROMOTIONS AND DEMOTIONS

These results do not reveal the extent to which an MP's past behaviour influenced Chrétien's decision to promote or demote the MP. In light of this, it is worthwhile pushing the investigation back in time and asking what factors influenced Chrétien's personnel decisions. Doing so reveals that changes in incumbent MPs' parliamentary status depended on two factors, support of Chrétien's leadership and political influence. These results provide a clear picture of the Liberal party's internal politics, revealing a close connection between an MP's failure to support Chrétien's leadership bid, the MP's subsequent demotion, and finally her dissent.

The Organizational Dimension

The challenge in modelling Chrétien's personnel decisions is to separate political motives for an MP's promotion and demotion from natural organizational dynamics that lead to personnel changes. Older members inevitably step back from leadership roles because of weariness, poor health, electoral defeat, etc., and they must be replaced. This cannot be done entirely randomly; some attention has to be given to ambition, talent and experience. Ambition and talent are difficult to measure, but the former tends to be correlated with a youthful entry to parliament, and this variable is in turn highly correlated with career advancement.³⁹ Electoral success signals political talent, though it almost certainly picks up other factors too. If, for example, the leadership views promotion as an investment in the party's human resources, they are unlikely to promote MPs in marginal electoral circumstances. To some extent, however, whether leaders discriminate against marginal MPs because of a perceived lack of talent or risk aversion is moot. The important thing is to control for such discrimination if only to dismiss the alternative hypothesis that connection between dissent and demotion is entirely electoral in nature. I measure an MP's electoral security with the same variables used in the previous analysis, the MP's majority and the fractionalization of the right-wing

³⁸ These figures are computed with all variables held at their median values.

³⁹ Stuart Elaine MacDonald, 'Political Ambition and Attainment: A Dynamic Analysis of Parliamentary Careers' (doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 1987).

vote. The MP's majority should be positively correlated with changes in the MP's rank, the fractionalization of the right-wing vote should, in contrast, be negatively related to such changes.

The MP's parliamentary experience is also important to consider. Although Canadian parties do not operate seniority systems, experience does play a role in the advancement and decline of MPs' careers. Few Canadian MPs move directly to the front bench upon entering the Commons.⁴⁰ That said, an early start up the parliamentary career ladder is vital if one is to achieve a ministerial career. The effect of experience is curvilinear, then, aiding advancement at the start of a career, hindering it later on. To reflect this dynamic, the model includes the MP's parliamentary experience and its square.

Finally, MPs possess characteristics that make them more or less appealing to the party: sex, race, religion, language, region and the like. Of these the MP's region is the most important to control.⁴¹ First, it speaks to the fact that Canadian prime ministers must ensure regional representation in the Cabinet. Secondly, region is a useful proxy for language and religion; even today most Quebec MPs are francophone and Catholic. I use three dummy variables to identify MPs as being from the West, Quebec or Atlantic Canada. Ontario is left as the reference category because with the Liberals winning all but one of the province's ninety-nine seats, the province's over-representation in the Liberal caucus was a potential barrier to Ontario MPs' chances of promotion.

The Political Dimension

The organizational and representational constraints of cabinet-building in Canada are burdensome, but Chrétien still had room to manoeuvre. Government appointments could be used to repay debts, settle scores and secure his leadership of the party. I use three variables to assess the political motivations of Chrétien's personnel decisions: the MP's support of Chrétien's leadership, the amount of campaign contributions received by the MP's riding association, and the MP's past dissent.

The first political variable is a dummy variable marking the MP as having supported Chrétien's leadership bid.⁴² The Canadian Liberal party does not have formal factions, but it has identifiable camps of MPs. These camps are only weakly ideological as the Canadian Liberal party is intensely pragmatic, and they are better seen as teams of MPs formed around prominent personalities for the purpose of securing the leadership. Which candidate an MP supports for the leadership is incredibly important: MPs who back losing leadership contenders or who themselves head losing leadership bids are likely to be exiled to the back bench (recall the anecdote about Nunziata).

The second political variable is the amount of campaign contributions received by the MP's riding association during the 1993 election. As I argued above (see footnote 37), loopholes in Canadian campaign finance law provide a strong basis for assuming a positive relationship between campaign contributions and the amount of financial resources available to the MP for unregulated inter-election activities. There are reasons to think that MPs could translate such assets into parliamentary influence. First, a wealthy riding association can serve as a political base from which to contest the party leadership; MPs possessing these sorts of resources are too dangerous to leave on the back bench, unencumbered by collective responsibility and free to foment rebellion. Secondly, Chrétien's two recent bids for the party leadership (in 1984 and 1990) had cost the prime minister approximately \$4 million dollars.⁴³ MPs could respond to Chrétien's resulting financial

⁴⁰ David C. Docherty, *Mr. Smith Goes to Ottawa: Life in the House of Commons* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1997), pp. 217–19.

⁴¹ The small number of MPs from some of the provinces makes it impossible to control for the MP's province; controlling for region is the best that can be done. Other variables, such as the MP's sex, educational level, language and ideological orientation were tested, but had no effect.

⁴² I assigned MPs into leadership camps based on the assessment of Peter Regenstrief and the Liberal MPs with whom I spoke. Factional affiliation had no impact on how often MPs cast dissenting votes.

⁴³ Stanbury, 'Financing Federal Politics in Canada in an Era of Reform', pp. 99.

TABLE 2 *Multiple Regression Model of Incumbent Liberal's Change in Status*

Covariate	Expectation	B
Chrétien Supporter	+	1.12**
Log(Campaign \$)	+	3.17**
Dissent in 34th Parliament	—	0.05
Entry Age	—	0.03
Parliamentary Experience (Years)	+	— 0.07
Parliamentary Experience ²	—	0.01
1993 Majority (%)	+	— 0.02
Fractionalization of Reform, PC Vote in 1993	—	0.09
West		— 0.45
Quebec		1.57
Atlantic		— 0.19
Constant		— 16.94**
R^2		0.18
N		68

Notes: * $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; † $p < 0.01$. Calculated on the basis of Huber–White standard errors.

needs either by funnelling contributions to their local associations through the central party organization (thereby allowing the central party to take a percentage) or they could wait until the unregulated inter-election period and contribute to the leader's trust fund directly.⁴⁴ It is not unreasonable therefore to imagine that MPs who are particularly effective fund-raisers would (a) exert influence in the party at large, and (b) be rewarded for their efforts.

The final variable in the model is the number of dissenting votes the MP cast in the 1988–93 Parliament. This variable is obviously included in the hope of dismissing outright the possibility that past dissent drove demotion (which, in turn, drove dissent in the 1993–97 Parliament). However, the substantive argument here is worth spelling out, and it is that leaders punish dissent with demotion in order to discourage further rebellion. Certainly, this was how Liberal MPs (one of whom was quoted above) interpreted Nunziata's isolation on the backbench and eventual ouster from the party.

Table 2 presents the results of a regression model of promotion and demotion. The dependent variable is the number of ranks the MP lost or gained in Chrétien's reshuffle.⁴⁵ The sample is restricted to the sixty-eight incumbent Liberal MPs (because neophytes, by definition, could not have experienced a change in their parliamentary status).

The main control variables – the MP's parliamentary experience, age at entry into the House, and electoral performance – have no discernible effect on promotion or demotion. Nor does it appear that past dissent had any effect on the MP's career path. This null result is important in so far as it establishes that the effect of demotion on dissent in the 1993–97 Parliament was not spurious. On the contrary, this result clearly demonstrates that an MP's demotion at the start of the 1993–97 Parliament sparked his or her subsequent dissension.

The explanatory power of the model rests squarely on the variables designed to assess the political motivations for the personnel changes. Supporting Chrétien's leadership and possessing financial resources clearly offered the MP a better shot at advancement in the reshuffle. On average, Chrétien supporters emerged from the reshuffle one rank ($b = 1.12$) higher than MPs who had supported other

⁴⁴ The Liberal party traditionally operated an unregulated trust fund for the party leader to be used for a variety of activities. MPs with access to financial resources were also in a better position to fund Chrétien's leadership bid in the first instance. See Stanbury, 'Financing Federal Politics in Canada in an Era of Reform', p. 103.

⁴⁵ To be clear, the dependent variable is *MP's Rank*_{35th Parliament} – *MP's Rank*_{34th Parliament}.

leadership contenders. Financial resources exerted a greater marginal effect on MPs' career fortunes. With campaign contributions ranging from \$20,000 to \$135,000, financial resources could potentially move the MP up three rungs on the parliamentary career ladder. However, given the skewed distribution of MPs' campaign contributions, the average impact of financial resources was more modest, amounting to a promotion of between one to two ranks.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The opening quotation from Bilkey is an accurate summary of these results. Merit – if that is correlated with experience in the House and electoral performance – is disregarded at promotion time. Loyal service – if that is defined as toeing the party line – appears to be without value. Influence – in the form of financial assets – is a far more important factor in career advancement, rivalled only by demonstrated support for the PM. To be sure, this sort of support is one way to define and think of loyalty, but it is not a sociological one; it has little to do with the internalization of norms, and appears more as a patron–client relationship between the party leader and his supporters.

Indeed, one sees in the causes and consequences of Chrétien's prime ministerial appointments the terms of a fairly explicit agreement between party leaders and MPs: support in leadership campaigns is exchanged for advancement, and advancement, for support. When one side of this arrangement breaks down, so does the other. This conclusion rests on the quasi-experimental nature of the research design. We observe Chrétien demoting a set of incumbent MPs almost solely on the basis of their opposition to his leadership or their lack of political influence. These demoted incumbents then cast more dissenting votes in the subsequent term than their more fortunate peers. In addition, there is *no evidence* that these MPs were demoted because of past dissent. On the contrary, demotion was not a consequence of their dissent, but its principal cause. Conversely, ideology appears only to have exerted a weak influence on MPs' behaviour, and social norms, no influence whatsoever.

This analysis of the Canadian Liberal party's transition to government provides important insights into the motivational bases of parliamentary behaviour and the character of intra-party politics. The results here challenge the views that parliamentary behaviour is primarily ideological or sociological in nature. Quite the opposite, instrumental behaviour is readily visible, propelled by progressive ambition and revolving around the politics of leadership selection. It is characterized by the consolidation of power, the punishment of opponents and the rewarding of supporters. This is an observation that many students of parliamentary politics (in Canada and elsewhere) would readily accept, and its consequences are predictable: dissent by those who have been marginalized and loyalty by those who have been rewarded.

As significant in so far as comparative legislative behaviour is concerned is how profoundly the MP's decision calculus is shaped by the formal structure of Westminster parliamentary government. By creating what I have called a double monopoly of power, the constitutional conventions of Westminster government heavily constrain how MPs make choices over policy, office and votes. These rules provide prime ministers with a monopoly over the distribution of perks and influence, forcing MPs to choose between career advancement and policy influence *or* electoral survival. MPs are simply not allowed other options, the chance to develop, for example, a career as a policy specialist in a fairly powerful but less partisan committee system. The political incentives and consequences inherent in leadership contests and campaign finance laws are also visible. While I do not wish to dismiss ideological and sociological explanations entirely on the basis of a single case, the larger lesson here is clearly that parliamentary behaviour and intra-party politics are primarily shaped by institutional rules governing the distribution of power, perks and influence within parties.